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How to cite this thesis

Conflict management in post-merger further education and training colleges

by

MARK NATHAN BOSCH

THESIS

For the degree

PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR EDUCATIONIS

in

EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT

in the

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

at the

UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

Supervisor: Prof R MESTRY
Co-supervisor: Prof B R GROBLER

October 2010
Declaration

I, MARK NATHAN BOSCH declare that:

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN POST MERGER FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING COLLEGES

is my work, and that all resources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references, and that this thesis was not previously submitted by me for a degree at another university.

MN BOSCH

DATE
Acknowledgements

The following persons have been instrumental in making this study possible:

- First and foremost I thank God for having sustained me during all the times of my life. It is through Him that I managed to complete this study.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my dearest mother Loraine, Vanessa, my children Lee-Andre and Marco, for their constant love patience, encouragement and support.

My late father, Martin John who had the vision to treasure and value education.
The South African Higher Education landscape, after the democratic elections of 1994, saw various strategies being employed to effect significant change in the sector. As a result of political changes in South Africa in 1994, the Government of National Unity proposed that the higher education system should be reorganised to address past inequities. Subsequent investigations into restructuring the higher education system resulted in a wave of mergers across the sector. One mechanism of effecting such change was the merging of various higher education (HEIs) institutions. The establishment of Ekurhuleni West College (EWC) for Further Education and Training (FET) in 2004 was the result of the merger between the following former six technical colleges: Alberton, Boksburg, Germiston, Kempton, Lazarus Nhlapo and Usizo to form EWC. The newly merged institution was characterised by problems such as poor communication, participative management, minimal staff involvement and fear of demotion or loss of jobs; this led to increased conflict at the newly merged institution.

The aim of this study was to determine how conflict management can be effectively managed in post-merger Further Education and Training Colleges. The objectives were:

- to explore the meaning of conflict management and determine the implications on its use in post-merger Further Education and Training Colleges.
- to develop a model for the effective use of conflict management by managers in post-merger Further Education and Training Colleges.

The research design and methodology were quantitative in nature. By using a questionnaire, this study purports to investigate the perceptions of academic staff
on poor communication, participative management and the fear of demotion or the loss of jobs. Within the context of education, staff perceptions about the merger management process and effective conflict management emanating from the merger process were also investigated. A researcher-developed questionnaire was disseminated among a randomly selected sample of 300 academic staff of FET colleges in the Ekurhuleni district to determine their perceptions of conflict management of post-merger FET colleges.

The results of this study demonstrated that poor communication, lack of participative decision-making, minimal staff involvement and the fear of job losses contributed to the increase in conflict and the lack of conflict management resolution skills. In accordance with literature, it is likely that these perceptions are the result of perceived poor conflict management emanating from the management of the merger process. It can therefore be concluded – after analysing the evidence from the questionnaires - that the management of these FET colleges are perceived to lack conflict management skills and/or communications structures.

The researcher developed a conflict resolution model on the basis of the findings of this investigation (generated from quantitative data) and on the basis of the literature review, as well as empirical research. The proposed Conflict Resolution Model makes a valuable contribution to the academic body of knowledge concerning effective conflict management, as well as providing a basis for assisting managers to effectively manage conflict during future FET merging processes, or at newly merged institutions. The proposed model identifies stakeholder involvement as a process that occurs over time and is dynamic. The model also identifies the need to focus on a common mission-driven vision, leadership involvement, open communication structures and the engagement of all stakeholders in the post-merger process.
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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

After the democratisation of South Africa in 1994, many initiatives were embarked upon by the new government to contribute to the socioeconomic advancement of the majority of the people of the country, especially those people whose advancement was hampered during the apartheid era. One such initiative was the transformation of the education system to enable every person to benefit from those educational opportunities designed to meet the learning needs of all learners, to address social justice and equity, to reduce poverty, inequality, exclusion and, as a corollary, bring about greater citizenship, democracy and effect a better life for all (Barnes, 2004:1).

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in South Africa are experiencing substantial changes in their efforts to predict the needs of the future whilst addressing the imbalances of the country’s historical biases through restructuring of the higher education landscape (Bosch, 2005:1). As such, HEIs have been confronted with far-reaching demands and challenges. In December 2001 the Ministry of Education released its proposals, approved by Cabinet, on the transformation and restructuring of the higher education system (Ministry of Education, 2001:1). The change in national policy has been difficult to implement because the legacy of apartheid left South Africa with an education system characterised by fragmentation, inequity in provision, a crisis of legitimacy and, in many educational institutions, the breakdown of a culture of teaching and learning as well as a resistance to changing the way things had been done in the past (Smith, Thurlow & Foster, 1997:1).
The South African Schools Act No. 84 (South Africa, 1996) ushered in numerous changes, challenges, and complexities which led to resistance to change, and resulted in organisational conflicts. Higher education institutions no longer have a choice – they must change to survive. However, implementing organisational change is daunting and by no means an easy process. Educators frequently resist organisational change even when change is occurring for good reasons (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2001:658). It is clear that these Acts and policies were aimed at transforming the education system. However, legislation and policies were introduced and implemented at a rapid pace to improve education and address imbalances, but with devastating results. Many of the policy frameworks were not fully implemented and sustained because all stakeholders were either not consulted or informed of the changes that were to take place. One of the main tenets of educational policy was the merging of higher institutions.

Clearly, one would like to be able to say that the mergers between the colleges and technikons were the result of educational imperatives but that does not appear to have been the case. In the South African context, a political decision was made to alter the higher education landscape and according to the National Plan for Higher Education (South Africa, 2001:75), the purpose of this was to overcome the racial fragmentation of the higher education system. The inefficiencies and ineffectiveness of the inherited education system has been exacerbated by the restructuring and merger process which was time consuming and often required a change of mindset, culture and values of the people who staffed these institutions. Any change in an organisation requires people to make personal adjustments, a process which is made easier if staff are encouraged, properly trained, supported and rewarded. Ideally staff should embrace change confidently and if change is successful a paradigm shift can be accomplished which will ultimately impact favourably on the culture of the organisation (Carnall, 1999:3).
According to Anstey (2006:6) and Robbins (2005:194), conflict is a process that begins when one party perceives that another party has been negatively affected, or is about to be negatively affected, something that the first party cares about. They further assert that this definition is purposely broad because it encompasses a wide range of conflicts that people experience in organisations. These can include an incompatibility of goals, differences over interpretations of facts, and disagreements based on behavioural expectations. The phenomenon of mergers and incorporations in South Africa’s educational system introduced a new institutional landscape in higher education (Reddy, 2007:488). Plans for this new landscape were contained in the National Plan for Higher Education Policy document (Council for Higher Education, 2001:181). Section 23 of the Higher Education Act (South Africa, 1997) defines a merger as “the combination of two or more separate institutions into a single entity with a single governing body, whereby all the assets, liabilities and responsibilities of the former institutions are transferred to the single new institution.”

The aims of transforming the higher education landscape and the merging of various educational institutions were outlined in the Education White Paper: A Framework for the Transformation of Higher Education (July 1997) were stated as follows:

- to redress economical imbalances;
- to meet the demands of social justice and to address the social structural inequalities that characterise the higher education sector, which was the legacy of apartheid;
- to address the challenges associated with the phenomenon of globalisation by producing graduates with the skills and competencies to address the needs of South Africa; and
- to ensure that limited resources are effectively and efficiently utilised.
It is evident from the above that the merger of former technical colleges was politically motivated.

A very important milestone in the transformation process in education was the promulgation of the Further Education and Training Act (South Africa, Act 98 of 1998) which replaced the Technical Colleges Act (South Africa, 104 of 1981), and provided the legislative framework for the transformation of all the colleges. No regulations were promulgated for this Act which left a vacuum as far as the details of the implementation was concerned. Regulations in these instances usually deal with the finer details of an Act's implementation and facilitate a uniform understanding and interpretation of the Act's contents. Regulations also ensure that an Act is implemented in the same way by all the affected stakeholders, such as, the regulations which governed the implementation of the Technical Colleges Act 104 of 1981. The introduction of the FET Act in 1998 was to establish a national, co-ordinated further education and training system by promoting co-operative governance and providing for programme-based further education and training. In broad terms this Act made provision for transformation and redressing past imbalances by ensuring that opportunities for the previously disadvantaged learners gaining access to the colleges were created and that the new educational system would promote democracy based on the principles of human dignity, equality and freedom. The idea was to establish institutions in pursuit of excellence that were responsive to the labour market (South Africa, 1998).

In South Africa, the education system was (and still remains) divided by racial inequalities with white and black institutions bearing the markings (material, cultural and social) of their separate histories (Department of Education, 1997:1; Jansen, 2002:157). Jansen (2002:158) further explains that historically black universities and Technikons were, with a few exceptions, deeply entangled in ongoing conflict, instability and crisis and staff were in conflict with the vice-
chancellors while councils were deeply divided among themselves, especially on the issue of management.

South Africa inherited a plethora of post-school institutions that included 21 universities, 15 Technikons and 152 technical colleges. All of these public sector institutions were created on the basis of race, language and ethnicity under the apartheid system which and were shaped, enlarged and fragmented to serve the goals and strategies of successive apartheid governments (Bunting, in Jansen 2002:84). The merging of 152 technical into 52 Further Education and Training colleges was one of the key transformational activities that changed the college landscape in South Africa.

Equating the differences between historically white and historically black institutions was a central motivation for the South African government's restructuring plan for higher education which began in 2002 (Rossouw, 2004:1). The government's plan, which would merge 36 public institutions into 21, was intended to inverse opportunities for black students, streamline academic programmes, spread out management expertise and distribute resources more effectively (Rossouw, 2004:1). After the historic 1994 elections that ushered in the democratic era in South Africa, the desire to achieve social justice and equality for all led to the removal of the large number of departments, Acts and regulations made for the different race groups in the college sector (Barnes, 2004:40). In December 2002 the Ministry of Education released its proposal which was approved by Cabinet for the transformation and restructuring of the institutional landscape of the higher education system. The establishment of Ekurhuleni West College (EWC) for Further Education and Training (FET) after 1994 was the result of the merger between the following former six technical colleges: Alberton, Boksburg, Germiston, Kempton, Lazarus Nhlapo and Usizo to form EWC.
Jansen (2002:2) states that the South African context should to be driven by strong imperatives for mergers to inter alia, redress deep systemic inequalities inherited from the apartheid social system, and that this history and politics needed to inform research on the process and effects of merging educational institutions. Mergers can be deemed successful if it enhances access and equity goals for both staff and students, and enables economies of scale through the creation of larger multipurpose institutions with more efficient uses of buildings, facilities and human resources (Ministry of Education, 2001: 89).

According to Bagrain, Cunningham, Potgieter and Viedge (2007:191), since the 1990s there has been an increasing number of organisational mergers which has unfortunately resulted in anxiety, stress, frustration and uncertainty among the staff affected. For example, employees are often unsure of who their management or colleagues are. Organisational mergers normally introduce a number of organisational dynamics that have to be managed (Bagrain, et al. 2007:227). Bandi cited in Jansen (2002:100) is of the opinion that during the merging process staff were either seconded or redeployed without proper consultation and this had a negative impact on their future as lecturers. Some felt threatened by the sense of uncertainty as one lecturer interviewed commented, "we don’t know about our future and we feel threatened because we don’t know where we will be placed because we cannot even be placed in districts". Even in schools there is an excess of teachers (Lecturer: Selena, 13 November 2001 in Soobrayan 2002) cited in Jansen (2002:43).

These changes affected organisational structures, management, policies, salaries, labour relations, coordination devices and the management of information systems (Denhardt, Denhardt & Aristiqueta 2002; Daft, 2004; Brooks, 2003). The merger had an effect of polarising relations between staff unions of the institutions, and by extension, the staff in the merging institutions. For instance, the leader of the South African Teachers Union was at pains to defend the actions taken by his union, such as the negotiations of the new conditions of
service just a few days prior to the merger (Chalufu, cited in Jansen 2002:148). Furthermore, change usually has an effect on organisational and ethnic culture, and cultural changes refer to changes in the values, attitudes, expectations, beliefs, abilities and behaviour of employees (Daft, 2004; Brooks, 2003). Merger activities inevitably lead to change, and change tends to create anxiety, frustration and stress (Brooks, 2003:227). Kilfoil and Groenewald (2005:12) point out that merger of educational institutions are characterised by, amongst others, heightened emotions, fears of job losses, having to move sites, and changes to conditions of service that might be unfavourable. In South Africa the merger process brought about by the FET Act was not well implemented. At times, it is difficult to implement organisational change successfully, because employees frequently resist changes. Differences in perceptions precipitate disagreement and make joint decision-making and cooperation difficult and these differences are primarily, but not completely, attributable to communication problems, differences in goals, differences in time horizons, independent sources of information, mutual dependence on limited resources, interdependence and competitive reward systems (Osland David & Irwin, 2004; Champoux, 2000; Daft, 2004). Bass (1998: 39) argues that when one organisation merges with or incorporates another, the employees of the acquired organisation may be disturbed by a loss of identity and purpose. This may lead to anxiety, a rise in conflict, anger, depression and helplessness. Resignations, forced departures and threats to one's own security may also occur. People may be obsessed with survival in the merged organisation.

According to Brooks (2003:227) conflict arises between individuals, groups and departments; it is therefore, both an intra-group and an inter-group reality. Mullins (2005:904) and Robbins (2005:193) state that conflict can be seen as behaviour intended to obstruct the achievement of another person's goals. It is based on the incompatibility of goals and arises from opposing behaviours and can be viewed at the individual, group or organisational level. Jones (2004:430) concurs that that conflict is the clash that occurs when goal-directed behaviour of one of
the group blocks or thwarts the goal of the other, and because the goals, preferences, and interest of stakeholder groups differ, conflict is inevitable in organisations. Brooks (2003:229) and Hofstede, (1991:10) have also pointed out that conflict is inevitable and is the result of interaction in the organisation between the individuals and groups, and states that the causes of conflict are many and varied and include the following:

- Differences in status, often created by legitimate or hierarchical power differentials, as they tend to create barriers to communication and cause consequent friction which lead to confusion over accountability;
- Scarcity of resources, such as financial aid, promotion prospects and infrastructure;
- A complex organisational structure or configuration which frequently makes one group, or individual, dependent on another; and
- Cultural differences where, because almost everyone belongs to a number of different groups and categories of people at the same time, people unavoidably carry several layers of mental programming within themselves, corresponding to different levels of organisational and ethnic culture.

In terms of the above and a careful review of the literature, these aspects are the main causes of conflict in current merged academic institutions. It seems the managers and management teams lack the knowledge and skills of conflict management. Given the historical background to the problem and changes in the educational system in South Africa, it becomes imperative to investigate the effective management of conflict emanating from the mandated merger implementation process within the FET colleges in the Ekurhuleni District.
1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem to be investigated in this study is the effective management of conflict in post-merger Further Education and Training Colleges in the Ekurhuleni West District. The legacy of apartheid in the field of management, education and conflict management specifically has left some educational institutions such as schools and colleges in South Africa, especially then historically disadvantaged institutions, with ineffective and inefficient systems for the management of human, material and financial resources (National Education Policy Act, South Africa 1996:17-20, 1996a).

The researcher's own experience as a human resources representative at campus level found that after the merging of the Ekurhuleni West College for Further Education and Training and hereafter referred to as EWC FET, staff members in a dispute or conflict situation often adopt an aggressive and confrontational approach to conflict which aimed at producing a win-lose situation. For example, the scarcity of resources at post-merger EWC, such as one photocopying machine which had to be shared by 20 people became a nightmare in the institution; paper shortages resulted in staff members accusing each other of stealing paper. The result included name calling, the spreading of rumours, labelling, and interference with work. According to Jones (2004:436) and Owens (2001:316), when resources are scarce, choices about resource allocation have to be made, and subunits have to compete for their share. The different divisions in an organisation fight to increase their share of funding because the more funds they can obtain and invest, the faster they can grow. The creating and spreading of rumours about someone with whom one is in conflict can represent effective ways of undermining their position and credibility (Martin, 2001:855).

Against this background, the question to be researched in this study can be encapsulated as follows:
How can conflict be managed effectively in post-merger Further Education and Training Colleges in the Ekurhuleni West District?

The study is further divided into answering the following sub-research questions:

- What is meant by conflict management and its implications in employing it in post-merger Further Education and Training Colleges?
- What are the perceptions of lecturers on the use of conflict management by the managers and management teams in post-merger Further Education and Training Colleges?
- What model can be developed on the basis of this study for the effective use of conflict management by managers and management teams in post-merger Further Education and Training Colleges in the Ekurhuleni West District?

1.3 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

In light of the problem stated above, the aim and objectives of the study are given below:

The general aim of this study was to determine how conflict management can be used effectively in post-merger EWC FET colleges. In order to investigate the effective use of conflict management in post-merger FET colleges, the specific objectives were:

- to explore the meaning of conflict management and determine the implications on its use in post-merger Further Education and Training Colleges;
- to determine the perceptions of lecturers on the use of conflict management by managers in post-merger Further Education Training colleges; and
to develop a model for the effective use of conflict management by managers in post-merger Further Education and Training Colleges.

The research will now focus on the research methodology which was employed in this study.

1.4 METHODS OF RESEARCH

In order to achieve the main aim of the research, a literature study was used to form the basis of the research and a theoretical framework was provided for the research project. The information gleaned from the literature was used to formulate questions relating to conflict management in post-merger EWC as a method of improving conflict management in these academic institutions. According to Creswell (2002: 87), the purpose of a literature review is to emphasise the importance of the research problem; support the concepts used in the study; provide the basics for the research questions and assist in explaining the results of the study.

A thorough review of legislation, policies and existing literature on merger management and management of conflict emanating from the merger was conducted. This research centred on the behavioural sciences, a field that allows researchers to look at people's perceptions, their underlying fears, uncertainties and stressors. It is impossible to ignore the social sciences, as the situation that exists in higher educational institutions in South Africa is a result of political, economical, and historical occurrences (Henning, van Rensburg & Smit, 2004:12). This researcher adopted a positivism stance which is based on the assumption that there are universal laws that govern social events, and uncovering these laws enables researchers to describe, predict, and control social phenomena (Kim, 2003:10). Positivism asserts that knowledge and truth are questions of correspondence in that they relate to an external referent reality (Smith, 1993) cited in (Kim, 2003:11).
The research methodology adopted was quantitative in nature. As pointed out by Wellman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:9), the aim of this method is to be particularistic in approaching the collection of data. In the quantitative approach the researcher's role is that of an objective observer and studies are focused on specific questions that ideally remain constant throughout the investigation. Creswell (2002:5) describes quantitative research as a process of developing explanations for relationships among variables or of describing trends in terms of responses from participants in a study. Creswell (1994:4) further adds that quantitative research is value free, formal and unbiased. Quantitative research involves questionnaires and instruments that can be used to measure objectivity. Quantitative research refers to any approach to data collection where the aim is to gather information that can be counted or measured in some form or another (Taylor 2005: 35, Verma & Mallick, 1999:26).

In this study a quantitative research method in the form of a structured questionnaire was used. Reason and Bradbury (2001:329), Best and Kahn (2003:229), Esterhuyse, Horn and Liebenberg (2005:35) regard a questionnaire as a data-gathering instrument used when factual information is desired. Respondents respond to a list of written questions. The questionnaire is constructed to elicit information relevant to the researcher's subject of inquiry (Dodd & Konza, 2002:134). One of the advantages of structured questionnaires is that they are easily adapted to computerise scoring. Data collection procedures and types of measurement are constructed prior to the study and applied in a standardised format. Observers are not expected to add their own impressions or interpretations (Wegner, 2000:28; Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:105-106). The use of the questionnaire as a data-gathering instrument was employed to gather perceptions from academic staff members on different post levels regarding the management of conflict emanating from the mandated merger implementation process.
The questionnaire in this study was administered to a sample that was representative, adequate in size and drawn on the ground of unprejudiced equality. The population about which generalisations were be made can be defined as the FET colleges in the Southern Gauteng Province of South Africa, and more specifically, EWC. A random sample of the six Ekurhuleni West College for Further Education and Training, Alberton, Boksburg, Germiston, Kempton Park, Kathorus and Tembisa in the southern Gauteng province was selected. Each of the campuses, with an average of 50 lecturing staff members, provided approximately 300 respondents. The population of interest were the lecturers, senior lecturers heads of departments and managers at the selected colleges.

Section A of the questionnaire captured the biographical data of the respondents and provided the independent variables. For the research, Section B consisted of questions to elicit the perception of participants (lecturers, senior lecturers, heads of departments and managers) to determine the nature of the causes and effects of conflict management arising from the mergers in FET colleges and constituted the dependent variable. Mouton (2001:110) and (Babbie & Mouton 2003:166) maintain that during the process of selecting or sampling, the aim is to get a sample that is as representative as possible of the target population. According to Leedy and Ormond (2001: 206), in purposive sampling, people or other units are chosen for a particular purpose. Ekurhuleni West College for further Education and Training was selected for this study because of its diverse background and the high number of staff members and students.

1.4.1 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

1.4.1.1 Validity

In order to ascertain face validity, the instrument was designed and handed to the supervisor and professors in the faculty of Educational management, in the
University of Johannesburg for analysis and the provision of feedback. Thereafter, they were revised according to their comments. In addition, a content validity was also sought by requesting an expert in the field to provide comments on the relevance and suitability of the items on the instrument. The results of the comments were analysed to establish the percentage representation using the content validity index.

1.4.1.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the level of dependability of the items in the research instrument, and the consistency of the research instrument in taping information from more than one respondent. The items were tested during a pilot study, which administered how consistent they were in responding to questions using the pilot FET colleges in the Ekurhuleni West District. The reliability was measured by using the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient.

1.4.1.3 The Statistical techniques

The Statistical Consultancy Services of the University Of Johannesburg were approached for assistance in the analysis and interpretation of data collected. The SPSS 15.0 statistical package was employed to process data by running frequencies and cross tabulation of elicited responses.

1.5 RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS

The following research assumptions were made with respect to conflict management in post-merger FET institutions:

- The lack of effective conflict management systems are the cause of conflict.
- Styles of management contribute to increased conflicts on campuses.
• Managers are not well equipped with conflict management skills. New skills, knowledge and attitudes are required by managers to cope with a wide range of demands and challenges.
• The lack of communication between managers, lecturers and parents contributes to conflict in colleges.

1.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

The research instrument, being a structured questionnaire, was viewed as an intrusion into the lives of the participants due to the time it took to complete it, the level of threat or sensitivity towards the questions or the possible invasion of the participant's privacy. Participants were further viewed as subjects and not objects of research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000:245).

To comply with the ethical standards of the University of Johannesburg, the researcher first obtained permission from the Gauteng Department of Education under whose jurisdiction the sample of selected colleges fall. Secondly, the following issues concerning ethics were taken into account throughout the research process:

The right to privacy: non-participation

The researcher assured participants in the study that their participation was voluntary and that those who wished to withdraw at any stage of the research process; they could do so without any reprisals. According to Uys and Basson (1991:98), privacy means that a person may behave as they please without interruption and without the possibility that private conduct or thoughts may later be misused to embarrass or humiliate participants.
The right to remain anonymous

Uys and Basson (1991:98) state that the researcher should ensure the anonymity of any person or institution. To ensure anonymity, the researcher used letters of the alphabet to identify participants.

The right to confidentiality

The right to confidentiality is applied where participants are required to remain anonymous and in these cases, all information gathered is then treated as confidential. Researchers need to protect a participant's confidentiality from other persons in the setting where private information might enable the latter to identify the former. Researchers also need to protect the informants from the general public (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:421).

The study was organised in such a way that the research process did not interrupt normal college activities. The researcher also endeavoured to protect participants from the risk of harm or from a situation where information gleaned could be used to their detriment. The researcher also guarded against plagiarism, specifically in terms of acknowledging all sources of information from the existing literature and from this field of study (Creswell, 2002:13).

A copy of the proposal and the questionnaire was submitted to the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study has created a body of knowledge (that is knowledge in education management) on effectively managing conflict in post-merger EWC FET college. The research has identified "gaps" in knowledge. Most managers and management teams of these post-merger EWC FET colleges lack the knowledge
and skills of effective conflict management. Stakeholders across all racial, political and social spectrums as professionals need to contribute to the process of reconstruction and development by engaging in the implementation of the change process to reduce and prevent conflict and to facilitate the building and establishment of effective FET colleges.

It is the researcher's view that a model be devised for effective conflict management with the intent of assisting management teams in dealing with conflict in the post-merger college setting rather than relying on traditional aggressive modes/stances to resolve problems.

1.8 LIMITATION AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

1.8.1 Limitation of the study

Although it would have been useful to include more colleges to attain a broader understanding of how conflict management can be used in post-merger Further Education and Training colleges in South Africa, in this study it was not possible due to inadequate resources. Consequently, only 6 colleges from the Ekurhuleni District were sampled.

The research area was limited to the Ekurhuleni West District of the Gauteng Province. It was assumed that these colleges would render information-rich data, with some applicability in similar circumstances elsewhere in South Africa. No claim can be made, because of the limited scope of the investigation, that the results of the investigation be generalised with regard to all post-merger FET colleges in South Africa.
1.8.1.2 Delimitations of the study

The study was delimited to only one region and only six FET colleges. The target population for the study comprised only of campus managers, heads of departments, senior lecturers and lectures.

Given the limitations and delimitation of the study the focus will now move to the clarification of concepts.

1.9 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

1.9.1 Mergers

Pritchard (1993) provides a clear definition of an institutional merger as an amalgamation in which two or more component institutions give up their legally independent identities in favour of a new joint authority (cited in Sayed & Jansen 2001:140). Daft (2004:156) describes a merger as the unification of two or more organisations into a single unit, while Cummings and Worley (2005:456) explain the term merger as the integration of two previously dependant organisations into a complete new organisation. Merger integration involves the physical moves, structural changes, work designs, cultural integration and procedures that will be implemented to accomplish the strategic objectives and expected cost savings of the merger (Mullins, 2005:159).

For the purpose of this research, mergers were viewed as a process of merging the FET colleges for the re-integration of resources both human and material.

1.9.2 Organisational Culture

Shafritz, Ott and Jang (2005:352) describe organisational culture as the culture that exists in an organisation, something akin to a societal culture. Organisational
culture is a complex and deep aspect of organisations that can strongly affect an organisation's members (Champoux, 2000:56). This researcher is thus in agreement with the definition provided by Robbins (2005:230), Daft, (2001:116) and Osland, Joyce, David and Irwin (2001:269) that organisational culture is the set of values, beliefs, guiding beliefs, understanding, and ways of thinking that is shared by members of an organisation and that is taught to new members as a means of perpetuating what is believed to be correct assertions. Organisational culture is a social energy that moves people to act and it is to the organisation what personality is to the individual - a hidden, yet unifying theme that provides meaning, direction, and mobilisation (Shafritz et al., 2005:352).

Jones (2004:195) also points out that organisational culture is the set of shared values and norms that control organisational members' interactions with each other and with suppliers, customers, and other people outside the organisation. He maintains that just as an organisation's structure can be used to achieve competitive advantage, so must an organisation's culture be used to increase organisational effectiveness.

1.9.3 Conflict

Bezuidenhout, Garbers and Potgieter (1998:346) assert that conflict exists in a relationship when different parties are of the opinion that their aspirations cannot be achieved or when they perceive a divergence in their values, needs or interests and purposefully employ power in an effort to defeat, neutralise or eliminate each other to protect or further their own interests in the interaction.

Conflict according to Robbins and Judge (2010:195) arises in a relationship and relies on the perspectives of the parties involved. Conflict is the clash that occurs when goal directed behaviour of an individual or of one group blocks the goals of another (Jones, 2004; Martin, 2001). The researcher takes the view, as expounded by Osland et al. (2001:244) that sees conflict as a form of interaction
among parties that differ in interest, perceptions, and preferences. He further asserts that conflict is the process that begins when one party perceives that the other has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect something that they care about. Conflict management is crucial in this research to determine how managers and management teams should apply conflict resolutions in these post-merger EWC FET colleges.

1.9.4 Change Management

According to Nickols (2004:1), change management involves defining and instilling new values, attitudes, norms and behaviours within an organisation that support new ways of doing work and which overcome resistance to change. He further states that it also deals with planning, testing, and implementing all aspects of the transition from one organisational structure or work process to another. Managers face complex and challenging pressures and opportunities. There is a growing interest in learning how to manage change more effectively (Balogun & Hailey, 2004:1). Change today requires a new kind of learning and interaction amongst all players. Changes for one group trigger changes for others. Leaders cannot play the change game alone and they, too, must have space to learn. It is vital for leaders to be active, aggressive learners. Their challenge is to develop new leadership skills rapidly and openly (McLagan, 2002:33).

Change management for the purpose of this research study was regarded as inclusive of all processes and procedures to utilise the necessary people, materials and means as effectively as possible in order to achieve certain goals.

1.9.5 Organisational Change

The phenomenon of change has become a central management issue in modern
organisations. Change is a relatively recent management topic all over the world and, while it has always been an issue, it is one of the issues today (McLagan, 2002: 28). Van Tonder (2004:7) defines organisational change as a process resulting in a difference of varying magnitude and/or nature in the state and/or condition of the organisation over time. Organisational change is the reaction to any event which affects the activities of an organisation directly or indirectly (Martin, 2001:764; Paton & McCalman, 2000:4). They further state that change in the broadest sense of the word is a planned, but more often, an unplanned reaction to stimuli from the environment. It therefore means that without change progress is not possible.

Organisational change creates uncertainty which workers resent, a normal human reaction, and this causes conflict in an organisation (Gerber, Nel & van Dyk, 1999:326). Owens (2001:183) is of the opinion that educational organisations are expected not only to be vehicles for social change but they are also expected to preserve and transmit values to young members of society at the same time as they are expected to prepare them to deal with an ever changing world.

In this study organisational change refers to the transformation of institutions of higher learning by way of merging these institutions to create completely new institutions with new identities, structures, cultures, reward systems, information processes and work designs.

1.10 OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH

The research project is structured as follows:

Chapter one provided the background and orientation of the study and focused on the importance of the research, the statement of the problem, the aims of the
research and the research methodology employed. It also outlined certain assumptions involved and clarifies the concepts of the research.

In Chapter two the focus is on the literature study and the theoretical foundation pertaining to mergers, organisational culture, change, resistance to change and conflict management.

Chapter three deals with the empirical research and gives a detailed description of the methodology used for data collection, the instruments of research, the empirical investigation, the research group and the return of research instruments. The analysis and interpretations of the data is then presented in Chapter four.

Chapter five presents the model proposed by the researcher.

Chapter six presents the empirical research findings on perceptions of academic staff members of the EWC FET colleges. Chapter six also provides a summary of the study and a list of recommendations on how management teams can be assisted on effective conflict management in post-merger EWC FET colleges. This chapter will also provide topics for further research on the effective management of conflict in these colleges.

1.11 SUMMARY

Change invariably is a painful process and, as indicated in the literature survey, is often accompanied by a degree of discomfort. The objective of this study is to identify fears, uncertainties, perceptions and stressors of EWC staff in these post-merger academic institutions and points to the need for efficient conflict management structures within colleges.
This chapter has highlighted the need for college managers to adhere to official structures and procedures in the handling of conflict. This chapter has also emphasised the needs of EWC FET college managers who lack skills and consistency in the handling of conflict. An emphasis has also been placed on the lack of knowledge and skills of managers of these colleges in the handling of conflict effectively. In this research, the quantitative approach was followed. The structured questionnaire was used as an instrument to gather information regarding the effective management of the merger implementation process and the effective management of conflict emanating from the mandated merger process. Important concepts relevant to the research such as mergers, organisational culture, organisational change, resistance to change and conflict management were explained.

The next chapter presents the literature review and provides the theoretical framework for the study.
2.1 INTRODUCTION

The first chapter of this research provided an overview of the situation which exists in post-merger Ekurhuleni West college for further Education and Training and motivated for establishing effective conflict management initiatives in these colleges.

At the onset of this research a literature review was undertaken to identify and understand what has already been researched on this topic and to provide a context for the present study. The assumption in this research is that existing knowledge will provide insight into the field of empowering managers and management teams to manage conflict in these post-merged FET colleges effectively (Mouton, 2001:87). The literature review includes both national and international literature.

This study is underpinned by the theoretical framework in which modernist organisational theory is central. A theory attempts to describe complex situations so as to produce an understanding of reality (Daft, 2004:24; Mark, 1996:19). Various facets of merging educational institutions and conflict management stemming from the merger implementation processes are investigated here. The aim of a literature review is to investigate what available information exists with regard to merger management and conflict management. It is also used to guide the researcher and steer the researcher away from being biased.

This research will examine various theories and models to determine how managers and management teams can be empowered to implement effective
conflict management in post-merger FET colleges in the Ekurhuleni Wet District. This chapter also focuses on the policies on which the merger implementation process was based and the conflict emanating from the merger process. Change management and management styles will also be discussed. A literature review establishes a link between the literature and the topic of the researcher. It also minimises the problems for the researcher so that the researcher can be more focused (Kitchen & Tate 2000:279).

2.2. THE POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE UNFOLDING OF MERGERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

In the South African context a political decision was made to alter the higher education landscape. The National Plan for Higher Education (South Africa, 2001: 75) states that the purpose of educational reform “may be that of overcoming the racial fragmentation of the higher education system”. The rationale for mergers or the incorporation of colleges into universities should be understood in the light of the quest by the post-apartheid government in South Africa to rid its education system of its apartheid past (Sehoole, 2005:164).

FET academic stakeholders at the colleges were asked the following questions:

- What is your comment on the legislation regarding the merging?
- Can mergers redress inequalities in the education system?
- Why do mergers so often fail to meet planning expectations?

Almost all the respondents echoed the response that not much information has been disseminated to educators with regard to the merging of FET colleges and that they still need more information to do the necessary planning for proper implementation of the merger process (Bisschoff & Nkoe 2005:210; Jansen, 2002:1).
It can be argued that some of the respondents at EWC FET colleges seemed to have not been fully informed about the FET policy changes, an indication that there was a lack of effective communication between management, the Department of Education (DoE) and the FET stakeholders. Staff members did not receive enough information about the changes through workshops. This therefore raises suspicions that most people could be pretending to accept the transformation simply because of political pressures.

It is in the twin logics of the transition that the rationale for mergers in higher education in South Africa must be understood: the logic of resolving the apartheid legacy in higher education, and the logic of ensuring the higher education system can operate effectively in the context of a competitive, globalised economy. It is the incorporation of the six former technical colleges into one FET College (EWC) that this research is concerned with. It was this body of questions that led the researcher to embark on this set of empirical studies on the management of the merger implementation process and the management of conflict emanating from the mandated merger process at the FET colleges.

According to Sayed and Jansen (2001:140), Cloete, Bunting, and Kulati (2000:2), Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in most countries have undergone changes in recent years. However, while these changes were unfolding, the legacy of apartheid has led to inequities and distortion of the South African higher education system. The release of the White Paper in August 1998 on technical colleges was the culmination of an extensive process of investigation and consultation which was initiated with the establishment of the ministerial committee of National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE 1996:156). The consultative process brought about general consensus about the policy framework ensuring that it commanded the support of all the key stakeholders in FET. The foundation for the establishment of a new FET system was laid and the
long, complex, and urgent process was embarked upon (Department of Education: 1998b: iii).

The White Paper on Higher Education spelt out the sequence of implementation steps for FET (Department of Education, July 1997a). It also laid the foundation for the FET Act in that it outlined the direction to be taken by legislators in general terms for the Act. The colleges had to become responsive, autonomous open learning centres. As is usual for legislative processes in South Africa, the Bill followed the White Paper and shortly after that, the FET Act No. 98 of 1998 was enacted.

It was in this context that the merging of institutions was beginning to assume increasing importance as a strategy to overcome the problems outlined above and to lay the basis for an efficient and better quality higher education system that would transcend the institutional landscape created by apartheid (Reddy 1998; Habib & Parekh 1999; Asmal 1999). Eastman and Lang (2001:6) and Jansen (2002:2) are of the opinion that the South African context was driven by strong imperatives for mergers to, inter alia, redress deep systematic inequalities inherited from the apartheid social system.

This announcement emphasised the merging by reducing the number of higher education institutions from 36 to 21 through the process of mergers and incorporations (Eloff, 2007:21). Eloff (2007:22) is of the opinion that the rationale of the Minister of Education with these mergers was to overcome the racial divide, improve the equity profile, building capacity and enhancing sustainability through increased size. Mergers are extremely complex and touch on every level of operation and all functions of the institutions to be merged (Ministry of Education, 2001:2). Kilfoil and Groenewald (2005:12) is of the view that mergers are characterised by heightened emotions, staff fears of losing their jobs, having to move sites, and changes to conditions of service that might be unfavourable. Attention to human issues, good communication and speedy resolution of issues
can reduce the stress. Furthermore some aspects of the process touched on attitudes, values, patterns of behaviour, identities and perspectives of both individuals and groups, and obviously required careful and sensitive handling. Other aspects are likely to be more technical but definitely require thorough conceptualisation of the objectives to be achieved and the actions to be taken. Jansen (2002:2) poses the question whether mergers follow different processes and deliver different outcomes in the social, economic and political context of the third world institutions. According to Jansen (2002:2), writing on mergers in higher education seldom defines the merging of different kinds of higher education institutions adequately.

Eloff (2007:22) submits that the oversight on mergers by the DoE led to the expected hurdles of resistance to change and the low levels of trust at all campuses. He further highlights the challenges to seek and reach consensus on the management model for the new university created from a merger of a number of institutions, given its multi-campus nature, the geographical distance between the campuses and the various historical backgrounds of the campuses. Another merger-related challenge was the alignment of programmes across the various campuses. Soobrayan, in an article on mergers in higher education (2002:47), agrees that while disaffection among personnel is expected in any merger situation, the extent to which such disaffection pervades the process is a telling measure of the success of the process. For example, to many who had come from the historically privileged employment conditions of the white colleges, this incorporation process was the stark reminder of the loss of privilege.

A survey of literature on mergers and incorporations (Eastman & Lang, 2001:5; Kotecha & Herman, 2001:24) suggest that certain fundamentals need to be in place for mergers and incorporations to take place with minimal negative side effects. Communication in post-merged institutions between various role-players was often inscribed with tension, there was no clear plan for the process agreed
to by all parties, there was no commitment by all to the principle of incorporation and there was no identifiable overseer of the project (Soobrayan, Jansen, & Sehoole, 2001). Two-way communication is important in all phases of the merger and the scope of communication must be proportional to the extent of the change. In the case of the merger of the six former technical colleges, Alberton, Boksburg, Kathorus, Germiston, Kempton, and Tembisa, the change was huge. The joint institution had nearly 2 000 employees of which 600 were academic staff. Pollack (2003) cited in Kilfoil and Groenewald (2005:12) recommends a communication plan that shows what information is needed and/or should be shared in each phase and the methods/media to be used for this. A merger brings an increased workload, managers are busier than ever, they have less time to communicate, but it is more important than ever that they do so. One has to argue that the new management had no communication plan, based on perceptions of conflict in this area. Thus, the managers in these EWC FET institutions should create clear lines of communication, because it empowers all stakeholders and it will certainly decrease conflict.

Reddy (2007:486), in his study of a merger between two South African Technicons, identified employee dissatisfaction as a major contributing factor to merger failure and the subsequent decline in worker morale. He further points out that communication from senior leaders is a driver of success during post-merger integration and should be "significant, constant and consistent."

Bisschoff and Nkoe (2005:210) also argue that not much information was disseminated to educators with regard to the merging of FET colleges. In turn, not receiving enough information about the changes to come via various communication channels raised suspicions that most people could have been pretending to accept the transformation simply because of political pressures. Muller (2006:202) has argued that communication is often hailed as the most important factor in a merger's success. Communication is not just about passing on information. It also has a vital role in reducing anxiety, managing
expectations, demonstrating concern, promoting integration, building new networks, building trust and commitment, encouraging involvement through feedback and two way communications, and prompting behaviour changes. The literature on South African higher education mergers concurs and identifies leadership and communication as key human resource elements for successful merging, and suggests that personal factors take precedence over organisational factors (Kilfoile & Groenewald 2005:12; Muller, 2006:202; Bisschoff and Nkoe, 2005:210). After reviewing several higher education mergers, authors have argued that appropriate planning and management can reduce the negative feelings that mergers have on staff, especially since mergers can have a devastating impact on staff, both emotionally and professionally (Reddy, 2007:487; van der Westhuizen, 2004:153). In fact, van der Westhuizen (2004:154) referred to the effect of a merger on the emotions and experiences of staff as a "crisis in human life" similar to death, indicating the extent of stress and anxiety that was endured by post-merger EWC FET college staff during the transformation process. In view of the impact of a merger on employees, and the problems endured by the institution in a poorly managed merger, it is essential that at the very least, "people issues" must be adequately addressed in the pre- and post-merger situation.

Predictably, what permeated the whole process was an abundance of rumours that fuelled insecurities and engendered fear among staff and institutions. Essential to the success of the merger process would be the co-operation and understanding of affected employees. This would be difficult if staff members were kept out of the information loop (Reddy, 2007:488). It would also be fair and proper if employees were given information and as much certainty as possible at all times. Uncertainty fields rumours and undermines morale. Sehoole (2002) (cited in Jansen, 2002:77) states that employees must know what is going to happen and when. However, he further posits the view that many of the questions to which staff would require answers might require lengthy deliberations and consultations and the answers may not be readily available.
This should also be communicated. Decision-making bodies and consultation forums must continually report back and staff must be told when to expect decisions and finalisations (Ministry of Education, 2003:52).

Any merger process gives rise to a number of sensitive issues with regard to human resources and management. The way that these are addressed is of critical importance (Ministry of Education, 2001:52). According to Weil (1994:36), staff enthusiasm is by far the most important of the resource assets of the HEIs and staff passivity is certainly the most draining resource handicap. It is in this regard that Bisschoff and Nkoe (2005:214) indicated that some of the stakeholders, especially those occupying management positions, if not correctly placed or not well qualified, will have to be moved out of their comfort zones. Integrated and sensitive management of people, "places and spaces" can produce massive morale and efficiency dividends. It can be argued that after the merger of six former technical colleges into EWC, everyone in the sector regarded themselves as the best candidate for management positions. Managers from previous colleges with a different status all found themselves incumbent to leadership positions and this behaviour increased conflict in these new newly-merged institutions. The effective operation of a higher educational institution depends on the willing assent of the staff to work within the prescribed structural parameters. Both mistakes and successes are ascribed to people (Weil, 1994 cited in Bisschoff & Nkoe, 2005:215).

Mergers are extremely complex and affect every level of operation and function of the institutions to be merged. Some aspects of the merger process has an influence on attitudes, values, patterns of behaviour, identities and perspectives of both individuals and groups and obviously require careful and sensitive handling. Other aspects are likely to be more technical but definitely require thorough conceptualisation of the objectives to be achieved and the actions to be taken (Ministry of Education, 2001:2). Jansen (2002:2) poses the question whether mergers follow different processes and deliver different outcomes in the
social, economic and political context of the third world institutions. According to Jansen (2002:2), writing on mergers in higher education seldom defines the merging of different kinds of HEIs adequately. Research has not paid sufficient attention to the comparative process and effects of institutional combination when totally diverse types of institutions are merged in the same social context (Eastman & Lang, 2001:3; Kotecha & Herman 2001:24; Jansen 2002:2).

Mergers and acquisitions can introduce companies, and this applies to educational institutions as well, to different organisational practices and leads the way to organisational revitalisation (Vermeulen, 2005:47). The objective of implementing mergers and incorporations of educational institutions is to create institutions that are stronger and better able to offer their students academic programmes of a higher quality. Demanding as any merger process would be, it is vitally important for institutions to protect the academic integrity of their operations during the period of change (Ministry of Education, 2001:2). South Africa’s plan to eliminate its dual-university system meant merging historically black and historically white institutions (Rossouw, 2004:5).

Ultimately a merger can only be considered successful if, amongst other things, it enhances access and equity goals for both staff and students, it creates a larger multi-purpose institution with more efficient use of buildings, facilities and human resources and it creates new institutions with new identities and cultures that will contribute to deracialisation (Jansen, 2002:9). A danger of the restructuring of higher education in South Africa, however, was that it absorbed an enormous amount of energy during a time when South African universities were experiencing increasing competition from private universities in the United States, Europe and Australia that had also opened campuses in South Africa (Rossouw, 2004:2).

In summary, this researcher perceives the merger process in South Africa to be one that was mandated at a macro-political level and advocated via the DoE
rules and regulations to the micro-level where FET colleges were tasked with implementing government policy. Such an arrangement of bureaucratic structures lends itself to the idea that various positions in society have different amounts of authority (Ritzer, 2008:265). Authority does not reside in individuals but in positions and authority always implies both super ordination and subordination. Those who occupy positions of authority are expected to control subordinates and because authority is legitimate, sanctions can be brought to bear against those who do not comply (Dahrendorf, (1959) in Ritzer, 2008: 266). Seen in this light, authority can lead to possible conflicts which are merely one of the effects of mergers.

2.3 EFFECTS OF MERGERS

A growing body of national literature indicates that mergers can be a traumatic event in the lives of individuals (Bisschoff & Nkoe, 2005:211; Jansen, 2002:170; Eastman & Lang, 2001:6). Research indicates a common pattern in almost all mergers. In organisations merger activity leads to stressors, as discussed above and these stressors may have a variety of impacts on individual level as well as on corporate and societal level (Bosch, 2005:41). Muller (2006:198) argues that mergers are not an occasion, they are a process and that it is important to understand how such change processes unfold and the stress factors that are brought about by the change. Muller (2006:200) further states that for most people change hurts as it sometimes involves loss of the past, of routine, comfort, relationships, security, and identity. Very often it involves a change in knowledge of facts and of understanding. For example, Coffey, Garrow and Holbeche (2002:91) list the negative effects of mergers on employee behaviour which can include a deterioration in communication, poor productivity, deterioration in team playing and an increase in parochialism, increased power struggles which disrupt work, decreased levels of commitment, and a tendency of employees to "bail out".
Jansen (2002:172) also argues that the impact of mergers in cases has been devastating on the emotional and professional lives of staff at all levels. He furthers mentions that many staff members' careers ended abruptly, or were suddenly redirected in ways that were traumatic for the affected staff. This researcher's experience when interacting with staff at EWC found that some staff members were confronted with possible retrenchment or displacement during this process. For many members of staff who had come from the historically privileged white colleges such as Alberton, Germiston and Kempton, this incorporation process resulted in the loss of privileges. Muller (2006: 202) points out that job security was also threatened with regard to career progression as there would now be more contenders for the same job and some individuals would be discriminated especially those who had more experience, particular skills or had a higher qualification. Furthermore, staff were sceptical of messages received from institutional management about job security. In any merger there are job losses and it causes more scepticism among staff because they realise that at some stage there will be staff cuts and any messages received from management are perceived as management “merely pulling the wool over people's eyes” (Muller, 2006:203).

With the merger of the six former colleges (Alberton, Boksburg, Germiston, Kempton Park Kathorus and Tembisa) and the establishment of EWC, the creation of a new identity provided a possible means for addressing some of the difficulties of bringing together different institutional cultures. This merger of individual colleges to one super college has a negative influence on the individual college culture. Therefore, the culture of the college that had a strong influence such as the Germiston campus dominated the merger process and its outcomes. Staff at Kathorus and Tembisa possibly felt that this merger would lead to many of their college traditions and cultures being lost. The “feeling of belonging” as noted by Barnes (2004:58) was absent and loyalty had to be built amongst the staff of the new merged college virtually from scratch.
These differences were apparent in what had been the strategic and operational priorities of the institutions; in different focus areas of teaching and research; in different missions and in different student markets. With the new merger it was important for these institutions to show respect for the other and for what had been their primary endeavours in meeting different social and educational needs. Such a massive organisational change which a merger brings about can be a fertile ground for dissention amongst incumbents of the organisation. It is therefore, the researcher’s opinion that the implementation of the merger process was not conducted and managed well in these EWC FET colleges. It is critically important for all stakeholders to be fully involved in the discussions and planning processes to understand what the implementation of the merger entails. Thus, lecturers, senior lecturers and the management teams need to be involved and empowered as stakeholders of the college which, in turn, could lead to the effective management of conflict during the time of change.

From the above it is worth noting that the South African Higher Education landscape, after the democratic elections of 1994, saw various strategies being employed to effect significant change in that sector, with the rationale that the restructured landscape would be:

... socially just and equitable in its distribution of resources and opportunities,
... meet requirements of long-term sustainability and... enhance the productivity of the system through effectively and efficiently meeting the teaching, skills development and research needs of the country (Macozoma 2002:1).

Muller (2006:198) maintain that there are particular dynamics on institutions which occur within various phases during change, and particular interventions which may be needed to move employees on to the next stage or phase. It is thus important to understand how the merger process impacts on organisational change.
2.4 ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

As a result of political changes in South Africa in 1994, changes in the higher education system were also imminent (Reddy, 2007:485). Vinger and Cilliers (2006:1), state that organisational change in the context of present research refers to the transformation of higher education institutions by way of merging them to create completely new institutions with new identities, structures, cultures, reward systems, information processes and work designs. According to Fullan (2001: 30), all mergers involves loss, anxiety, and struggle, but above all, educational change is also a dynamic process involving interacting variables over time regardless of whether the mode of analysis is factors or themes. Real change, then, whether desired or not, represents a serious personal and collective experience characterised by ambivalence and uncertainty; and if change works out it can result in a sense of mastery, accomplishment, and professional growth (Fullan, 2001:32). Because so many of the responses to change are emotional, the change process can cause real pain, hence, informing people about what is happening can help to engender and maintain the staff's commitment to the change, especially if work on the change process is going on behind the scenes (Palmer, 2009:170). Paton and McCalman (2000:266) propose that when contemplating change, management should involve all people in the process from the onset and, therefore, concepts of open communication channels, involvement and openness are vital.

In reality it appeared that the academic staff at these FET colleges in the Ekurhuleni West District was never engaged in the process of planned change during the merger of these academic institutions. It is for these reasons that the conflict escalated during the merger implementation process. In today's economy, change is all-pervasive in organisations, and happens continually and often at a rapid speed. Muller (2006:198) concurs that mergers are not an occasion; they are a process, and it is important to understand how such change
processes unfold and the stress factors that are brought about by the change. Mergers are also particularly complex in terms of change management.

A framework for viewing organisational change as a process is presented by van Tonder (2004:4) who states that change consists of an initiative which alters critical organisational processes, which, in turn, influence individual behaviours and which subsequently impact on organisational outcomes. McMillan (2008:75) agrees that change and changes are not discrete events but are part of an ever flowing, ever present reality that is constantly undergoing change. Change is the underlying essence of life.

According to Lewin (1953:80-85) changes in an organisation should not be seen as static but as a dynamic balance of opposing forces active within an organisation. Van der Westhuizen, De Bruyn, Erasmus, Janson, Mentz, Steyn and Theron (2002:189) point out that increasing the forces of change without reducing the resistance to them will result in tension and conflict. Davidoff and Lazarus (2002:45) assert that change is an inevitable part of life. They further submit that it is important to recognise that within these circles of change, where the broader social issues affect our--day-to-day lives and where our--day-to-day lives shape broader social changes, we have the responsibility to engage consciously in changing chosen directions. Davidoff and Lazarus (2002:46) argue that it is important to recognise that such change, even though consciously chosen by an individual, is still very likely to be threatening, painful and difficult for those engaging in it. It can be argued that the merger of EWC in 2002 therefore, brought about change in these FET colleges which led to resistance and conflict. Planned organisational change according to Champoux (2000:345), and Tustin and Geldenhuys (2000:72), is the systematic efforts by management to move an organisation or subsystem to a new state. They further mention that planned change includes deliberately changing the organisation's design, technology, people, tasks, information systems and the like.
Organisational change involves moving from the known to the unknown and because the future is uncertain and may adversely affect people's competencies, worth and coping abilities; organisation members generally do not support change unless compelling reasons convince them to do so (Cummings & Worley, 2005:157). Jones (2004); Owens (2001); Paton and McCalman (2000) argue similarly that change is the process by which organisations move from their present state to some desired future state to increase their effectiveness. Mullins (2005:910) and Martin (2001:763) assert that most planned organisational change is triggered by the need to respond to new challenges or opportunities presented by the external environment, or in anticipation of the need to cope with potential future problems. Typical examples of these challenges and opportunities are intended government legislation, new policy implementation and further technological advances.

A merger or large-scale transformation creates change and transition occurs in the course of every attempt at change. While change in this context is external (the different policies, practice or structure that the leader is trying to bring about), transition is internal (a psychological reorientation that people have to go through before the change becomes effective (Bridges & Mitchell, 2000:2). Many merger plans fail to recognise the basic problems of organisational changes – that the required changes rarely are perceived as beneficial by those people who are required to change (Schneider, 1996:43). At first glance many mergers look eminently healthy, not only for the firms involved but also for the economy as a whole. They are portrayed as intelligent adaptations to a changing business environment. Many studies of mergers stretching back to the last century have shown that, despite some successes, the overall record is decidedly unimpressive (Schneider, 1996:44). Research has shown that less than half of the mergers and acquisitions succeed and that the majority of mergers and acquisitions actually destroy shareholders' value. Mergers have become associated with lowered productivity and higher absenteeism. Other studies have
shown that up to two hours of productivity per employee are lost daily during the early stages of a merger (Humpries, 2002:2).

Mullins, (2005:909), Jones, (2004); and Martin, (2001:763) state that change within an organisation can affect many different aspects of it, such as a change in technology, for example, which might impact on the traditional methods of work. Another aspect is that change can also lead to the relocation of work across an existing location as well as structural and other changes to the organisation. According to Martin (2001:763) change has always existed and it requires adaptation among those exposed to it, hence it should be a feature of life that humans can easily cope with. However, this does not appear to be the case. At EWC, a feeling of threat and anxiety came up repeatedly among staff. Many staff members felt threatened by the sense of uncertainty. Davidoff and Lazarus (2002:46) agree that there is very likely to be resistance to change as participants move from a situation which is known to a situation which is unknown and which might or might not be better than the one which has preceded it. It is in this context that mergers show that several factors contribute to merger success including employee commitment, good leadership, participation and transparency, employment guarantees, strategic planning, and intensive efforts to foster loyalty and a common culture at the new institution (Reddy 2007:486). Undoubtedly, change produces resistance because change disrupts the momentum and inertia of organisational processes and also disrupts organisational patterns and may create realignment of sources of organisational power (Mabin, Forgeson & Green 2001:165).

The introduction of change involves people and the social system. Social change is a major part of the change process in any organisation or institution and needs just as much effort as the changes in finance, administration or technology with which managers are familiar (Oosthuizen, 2002:2). Often a merger makes good sense to top management, but in the early merger stages most of the decision makers put little or no emphasis on people issues. One problem at EWC was that
some lecturers were placed in post that they were not qualified for. This impacted on attitudes among staff members and increased tension and conflict. Management should in all instances merge people, not institutions, to make mergers work (Thorsell, 2003:1). Although people react differently to change, according to Oosthuizen (2002:1), it is possible to identify seven stages of adaptation. With respect to the merger between the six former technical colleges, it was important for management to know, understand and help employees deal with their emotional reactions to the merger in deciding whether they could thrive in the new institution (Jones, Staub & Powers, 2005:1). These reactions focus on emotions and feelings listed below:

- **Immobilisation**: The individual feels overwhelmed by the change. They are unable to reason or plan.
- **Denial**: The changee denies the need for change and values the present.
- **Situation**: They refuse to acknowledge that something has changed or will change.
- **Depression/self doubt**: The changee begins to realise that change has occurred or will occur but doubts their ability to cope with the new situation. The changee needs to come to terms with the change and this leads to feelings of depression and frustration.
- **Accepting reality**: The changee lets go of the current situation and accepts that things will change. People begin to let go of the past and look forward to the future and optimistic feelings emerge.
- **Testing self**: The changee will test his or her ability to cope with change. Individuals want to learn and adapt.
- **Seeking for meaning**: The changee will try to make sense of what will happen. New relationships between people and processes need to be accepted.
- **Internalising**: The changee makes the new situation (changes) part of their behaviour and accepts change as a reality (Oosthuizen, 2002:1).
Resistance and reluctance to adapt to change appear to be a common reaction among adult human beings within an organisational environment. There would appear to be a desire, if not a predisposition among significant numbers of humans to remain with the familiar and to avoid the ambiguity or uncertainty that accompanies change (Martin, 2001:793; Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002; Robbins, 2005). Although managers try to follow a plan for change, it does not always move forward smoothly and hence the plan hits blockages, resistance or conflict.

2.5 CHANGE PROCESS

The South African education system, prior to 1994, was characterised by unequal access to learning opportunities based on the vestiges of legal, financial and other distinctions between formerly advantaged and disadvantaged institutions (Department of Education, 2001: 9). The National Department of Education decided to merge the FET institutions in an attempt to remove the aforementioned vestiges. Educational systems do not, however, just change because there is a change in government, but the existing structures and vested interests, material constraints and the interplay of competing ideologies do warrant changes in education systems (Bisschoff & Nkoe, 2005:203). It is in this context that it is critically important for lecturers, senior lecturers, heads of departments and management teams of the college to be involved in discussion and planning processes to understand the change process during mergers. The involvement and participation of all stakeholders at the college during the implementation process of the merger means a "shared vision" that could inspire the participation to attain the desired future goals of the institution (Senge, 1996:34).

Fullan (2001:69) explains that educational change is technically simple and socially complex, and while the simplicity of the technical aspect is no doubt overstated, anyone who has been involved in a major change effort will intuitively grasp the meaning of and concur with the complexity of the social dimension. He
further argues that a large part of the problem of educational change may be less a question of dogmatic resistance and bad intentions (although there are certainly some of both) and more a question of the difficulties related to planning and coordinating a multilevel social process involving thousands of people.

Fullan (2001:70) argues that change is not a simple process and neither is it a comfortable one. These authors further assert that the unlearning of habitual patterns can be anxiety provoking. The change process is the means of transforming an organisation, and although change is imperative for organisations to grow and thrive in the current and future environments, effecting change is not an easy undertaking (Lussier & Achua, 2000:394). The role of the leader is to facilitate change that results in better organisational performance. The question, however, is how to facilitate change effectively and successfully, given the stress, anxiety, discomfort and dislocation associated with it.

Balogun and Haley (2004:10) state that it is commonly accepted that during change it is necessary to consider three states: the current, the future and the transition. Essential inputs to the diagnosis of the current organisational state are an understanding of the organisation’s need for change and an understanding of the internal organisational context. It is also necessary to develop some sort of vision of the desired future organisational state. These authors further assert that the transition state is the process of changing the organisation from what it is now into the desired future organisation, and can only be designed once the current state is understood.

Duke (2004:29) in his analysis of educational change identifies the common elements of the change process as follows:

- Discovery: The initial phase of the change process during which a need for change is identified.
- Design: The phase during which a new and improved way to address the need is created or chosen.
- Development: The phase during which planning related to implementing change is undertaken and support is secured.
- Implementation: The phase when change is introduced and adapted to a particular setting.

In view of the above it is clear that the some managers at post-merger EWC lacked effective management skills to manage conflict emanating from the change process. Hence, it seems that staff members at the colleges were not consulted in any decision-making developments during the merger implementation process which escalated conflict in these colleges.

Change process theories describe a typical pattern of events that occur from the time the problem is identified to when it is resolved. Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, Roth and Smith, (2001:42) state that the most common tacit theory of why change initiatives should spread is the "better mouse trap theory". These authors further assert that if a change initiative is successful, interest will spread, and as the old adage goes, "the world will make a beaten path to our door". Lussier and Achua (2000:394) are of the opinion that change can be introduced proactively as planned change or as a result of an organisation's reaction to some forces.

To summarise, change comes about as a result of a turbulent environment, in other words, an environment where several changes occur rapidly and simultaneously, thereby becoming very challenging to management and sometimes very difficult for management to cope with.
2.6 A FRAMEWORK FOR ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE: MERGING INSTITUTIONS

The basic framework followed in this study to examine the change process is the model initiated by Lewin (1952). What this framework entails is that any theoretically sound and practically useful research on organisational change should involve the following three stages; unfreezing the status quo, movement to a new state, and refreezing the new change to make it permanent (Robbins & Judge, 2010:245; Applebaum and Wohl, 2000:288).

The argument here is that change should be seen, interpreted and linked both to an intra-organisational and a broader context. This means that change should not be understood as being separate from the historical, organisational, or economic circumstances that led to its initiation. For a better understanding of the change process in educational institutions, all of these factors have to be taken into consideration. For these reasons, this inquiry focused on change theories and a model which could empower college management teams in post-merger EWC to effectively manage conflict.

2.6.1 A Model of Organisational Change

The process of change reveals that change is not a straightforward, rational process devoid of problems and obstacles. It is rather a jointly analytical, educational and political process (Vinger, 2005:26). Over the years, a number of models have been developed in an attempt to explain the complex process and implementation of organisational change. Although heavily criticised, some of these models have shed some light on the concept of organisational change and have provided a relatively fair account thereof. Many authors on organisational change models mentioned Lewin’s (1952) model of “unfreezing”, “change”, and “refreezing” as the original and most influential model for organisation change. These authors include Robbins and Judge (2010:245), Applebaum and Wohl
It is worth noting, however, that Lewin's model is an organisational change model that has also been applied as an organisational development model (King & Anderson, 2002: 169). It is essentially "the identification of the gap between the present functioning of the organisation and where the organisation intends to move to in terms of its strategic plan, the closing of this gap through planned interventions, and the effective management of resistance to change" (Coetzee, 2002:4). Therefore Lewin's three stage model is needed to bring about organisational change in the FET colleges in the Ekurhuleni West District. The significance of this model for this research is that it focuses on planned change.

2.6.1.2 Lewin's change model

A number of models have been developed and have focused primarily on how change can be implemented. In this study only one model is examined as it is not the main focus of this research to discuss the process of change. Lewin's change model is a powerful cognitive tool for understanding the change situation. The underlying belief of this study is that the Lewin's three stage is important and can assist managers and management teams in improving their skills to manage conflict effectively in the FET colleges. This model consists of unfreezing, moving and refreezing stages (French & Bell, 1995:82).

Johns and Saks (2008:557) are of the opinion that this process view of change by Lewin assumes that the systems concept of homeostasis or dynamic stability applies in the change situation. What they further find useful about this framework is that it gives rise to thinking about a staged approach to effect changes.
Stroh, Northcraft and Neale (2002:432), and McMillan (2008:88) adopt a similar approach and state that while there are many ways of conceptualising the process of change in organisations, the model devised by Lewin is the best known and provides the simplest framework for understanding the process. Lewin 1952 cited in Martin, 2001:780) developed a change model which states that any situation exists as the result of a balance between the driving and restraining forces acting upon it. For Lewin, behaviour was determined by the totality of an individual's situation. In his field theory a "field" is defined as "the totality of coexisting facts which are conceived of as mutually interdependent" (Lewin, 1952:240). Individuals were seen to behave differently according to the way in which tensions between perceptions of the self and of the environment were worked through. The whole psychological field, or "life space", within which people acted, had to be viewed in order to understand behaviour. In this framework individuals and groups could be seen in topological terms (using map-like representations). Individuals participated in a series of life spaces (such as the family, work, school and church) and these were influenced by various force vectors (Lewin, 1952 cited in Smith 2001:1-3).

According to Senior (2002:308) and Stroh et al. (2002:433), Lewin's force field model states that organisations are held in equilibrium by equal and opposing, driving and resisting forces. They further state that driving forces might include competitive pressures, legislative mandates, new technology, and environmental concerns. Resisting forces on the other hand, could include established customs and practices, union agreements and the organisation's culture. Van Tonder (2004:207) states that Lewin believed that any organisational change process designed to achieve equilibrium must move through three phases of change, namely unfreezing, movement or change and refreezing. According to Van Tonder (2004:206) Lewin further stated that organisations change by moving through the stages of "unfreezing", changing and "refreezing" and that managers and practitioners are capable of managing this unfreezing-changing-refreezing process.
2.6.1.3 Unfreezing

Senior (2002:308) and Stroh et al. (2002:435) argue that the main focus of the unfreezing stage is centred on the "shaking up" of people's habitual modes of thinking and behaviour to heighten their awareness of the need for change. Van der Westhuizen et al. (2004:191) sees unfreezing as the replacement of old ideas and practices by new ones within educational institutions. The occurrence of crises in an educational institution is an indication that there are problems and that unfreezing is necessary for change to take place. With the merger of the former six technical colleges there was a movement away from established (previous) behaviour to create new behaviours in the future. Examples of such crises are personnel dissatisfaction and strikes by staff. Van Tonder (2004:208) similarly argues that the unfreezing stage is the time when resistance can be broken down and when barriers can be lowered. Stroh et al. (2002:435) states that once management has chosen a course of action, management has to share its insights about the problem, its probable causes and the identified solutions with the other members of the organisation. They further assert that the process helps employees to understand the need for change and promotes ownership of the problem by the entire workforce. Martins, (2001:781) sees the change process as a difficult period as the intentions for the future becomes clear and when resistance to the management's intentions surfaces. Lussier and Achua, (2000:395) point out that this stage may be instigated by the actions of a charismatic, strategic or transformational leader. The leader may inspire people with a vision of a better future that is sufficiently attractive to convince them that the old ways of doing business are no longer adequate. Leaders thus begin to unfreeze the process by psychologically disconfirming the suitability of the employees' current behaviour and attitudes (Cummings & Worley, 2001:23). The first step is to establish a sense of urgency. Stakeholders at the post-merger EWC FET colleges need to know that change is needed now and why. Awareness of the need for change and a leader's ability to inspire followers to transcend their own immediate interest for the sake of the organisation's mission
set the stage for the second phase of the change process to begin (Mullins, 2005:781; Daft & Noe, 2001:582).

2.6.1.4 Moving

Moving is essentially the process of making the actual changes that will move the organisation to the new state and involves new types of behaviour by individuals. This includes the establishment of new strategies and structures with associated systems to help secure the new ways of doing things (Senior, 2002:309). Van der Westhuizen et al. (2004:192) agrees that movement involves the development of new norms, values, attitudes and behaviour through the identification of changes in the structure. Lack of a carefully designed plan of action at this stage will result in an uninspiring outcome. Stroh et al. (2002:437) maintain that if implementation of the change plan creates confusion or unforeseen problems, early detection may be critical to prevent a groundswell of workforce resistance.

This is the stage where the following are important: the establishment of cross-functional teams; the development and articulation of a compelling vision that will guide the change effort; active communication of the new vision and strategies; empowering employees throughout the organisation with resources, information and the freedom to make decisions about the vision (Lussier & Achua, 2000:396). Empowerment also includes removing obstacles to change and organising the change activities in ways that allow for short-term accomplishments. Major changes take time to complete and without some visible signs of progress, the transformation effort may lose momentum. Confidence, enthusiasm and pride gained through the short-term wins will create the drive and motivation to tackle bigger challenges. It will also bring about a faster completion of the change (DuBrin, 1997:237). In general, the moving stage entails shifting the behaviour of the organisation, department or individual to a new level to intervene, for example, in the system to develop new behaviours, values and attitudes by changing organisational structures and processes.
2.6.1.5 Refreezing

According to Senior (2002:309) and Jones (2004:308), Lewin’s final phase in the change process, the refreezing stage, involves stabilising or institutionalising the changes. During this phase, the change process has been completed. They further assert that the continuing involvement of and support from top management is crucial in this step. During a merger commitment is part of getting everybody involved. This implies that all the stakeholders involved in the merger of the former six technical colleges should now be committed to making the new merged EWC successful. Senior (2002:309) mentions that once strategy, structure and systems have been changed, it is equally important to reinforce the changes through symbolic actions and signs such as a change of logo, forms of dress, moving to new buildings and the ways of grouping people to get work done. In the case of the merging of the colleges there was a name change. However, this phase also involves institutionalising the new approach in the organisational culture. Old habits, values, traditions, attitudes and mindsets need to be permanently replaced. New values and beliefs are instilled in the culture to avoid a reversal to the old ways after implementation (Lussier & Achua, 2000:396-397; Daft, 2001:585). Cummings and Worley, (2001:23) also argue that refreezing is usually accomplished by using supporting mechanisms that reinforce the new organisational state such as, organisational culture, norms, politics, and structures.

Though the stages in the change process generally overlap, each phase is critical for success. An attempt to start implementing change without first unfreezing old attitudes is likely to meet with strong resistance. Not freezing new attitudes and behaviour may result in the change being reversed soon after implementation. Understanding these phases is important for change-oriented leaders who must exercise good judgment throughout the change process (Lussier & Achua, 2000:397; Stroh, et al. 2002:437).
The discussion above shows that Lewin's change model for this research is critical to empower lecturers, senior lecturers, heads of departments and managers in these EWC FET colleges to think about change and identify what is required in order to change their attitudes, old behaviours and acquiring new ones so that change can occur smoothly. Needless to say, the reality is that before an individual lecturer at the post-merger EWC can change his/her attitude and behaviour and acquire new ones, that individual lecturer needs to have a sense of security during the change. Thus, lecturers who are not part of the EWC management teams need to be engaged in programmes such as policy changes and the application of theories and models in which they can meaningfully participate in order to make the merger implementation processes more successful. From this discussion it is evident that it is essential to engage all academic staff members of the post-merger EWC college in the merger and change process. If a conflict situation results from the debate lecturers should be allowed to express their views openly as opposed to suppressing their feelings and thoughts about the merger change process. The underlying belief in this study is that it is of paramount importance that issues bothering staff members are addressed at the beginning of the process of change rather than trying to solve problems at a later stage.

The reality is that ineffective management of the merger implementation process leads to escalating conflict in the college and, therefore, these issues can be better addressed if all staff members participate in decision-making. Goodwin and Griffith (2007:241) point out that the role of participatory management is to involve team members in decision-making processes in an attempt to reduce resistance to change. This discussion also indicates that all academic stakeholders in the college need relevant information and evidence which shows that change is desirable. Therefore Lewin's model is important to support lecturers, senior lecturers, heads of departments and managers to see the need for change, for changing the old behaviour and adapting to new ones.
2.6.1.6 Application

It is assumed that Lewin's model can be applied during the management of merging implementation processes of post-merger FET colleges in the Ekurhuleni West District for the following reasons:

- The process of change entails learning something new and discontinuing current attitudes, behaviours or organisational practices.
- Organisational change is contingent upon people. People are central to any change process irrespective of whether that change is in the structure, the group process, reward systems, or job design.
- There will always be resistance to change despite the high desirability of change goals.

In summary, Lewin's basic model of change leads to a whole range of insights and new concepts that enrich change theory and make change dynamics more understandable and manageable.

2.7 RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Having dealt with a framework for organisational change in merging institutions, the researcher will now focus on resistance to change as an aspect of escalating conflict emanating from the merger process.

Muller (2006:201) asserts that many people resist change especially if they do not understand why the change is being introduced. Resistance to change can hinder adaptation and progress. Change of the magnitude of a merger usually has a negative impact on employees, initially at least. Employees usually have no say in the matter and as this change is not of their own making, it is thus feared. Because there is no personal ownership of the decision, managers have to work hard to ensure some “buy-in” to the change. Robbins indicates that
resistance to change is not necessarily evident. It can be overt, implicit, immediate or deferred (Robbins, 2005:268).

Resistance has been defined as employee behaviour that seeks to challenge, disrupt, or prevent change from taking place (Folger & Skarlicki, 1999:36). Resistance to change can be caused by individual, group and organisational factors (Mabin, Forgerson & Green, 2001:169). Resistance by staff is a response to employees feeling threatened and anxious. Resistance to change is closely associated with a "fear of loss" and a "fear of the new" (Coker, 2000:24; Mabin et al., 2001, Tichy, 1997:78; Seely, 2000:24).

Resistance is an inevitable response to any major change. Folger and Skarlicki (1999:25) claim that organisational change can generate scepticism amongst and resistance by employees, sometimes making it difficult or impossible to implement organisational improvements. As an organisation consists of people, organisational change refers to changes in people, and, as has been said before, people rarely like change (Bosch, 2005:37). Muller (2006:200) indicates that these resistors stem from psychological emotions such as a fear of the unknown, a lack of information, any threats to status, threats to established skills, a fear of failure, reluctance to let go, a lack of perceived benefits, threats to any powerbase, a low-trust organisational climate, fear of looking stupid, feelings of vulnerability, threats to self esteem, a loss of control of one's own destiny, a loss of team relationships, high anxiety and stress.

An imminent merger between higher educational institutions inevitably creates stress. Stress is a normal part of life and a certain amount of stress is often necessary to stimulate peak performance. However, excessive stress can cause physical as well as mental health problems (Armstrong, Thomson & Browns, 1997:151). In the bureaucratically structured nature of academic institutions as organisations, actions and reactions, the maintenance of the status quo, change and resistance are always expected (Van der Westhuizen et al. (2002:218).
According to Paton and McCalman (2000:47), no matter how welcoming an organisation is to change, it will still face a degree of employee, stakeholder and consumer resistance to change. Mullins (2005:913) similarly argues that resistance to change or the thought of the implications of the change appears to be a common phenomenon. The mergers between the former technical colleges of Alberton, Boksburg, Germiston, Kathorus, Kempton Park and Tembisa into the EWC led to merger stressors. Therefore resistance is a given when any major changes occur in the area of employment (Humphries, 2002:1).

On the other hand, Robbins (2005:269) states that resistance to change can also be a source of functional conflict. He cites an example where resistance to a reorganisation plan or a change in a product line can stimulate a healthy debate over the merits of the idea which resulted in a better decision being made. Unfortunately, when change is legislated via mandates, then no healthy debate is possible as the change has already been decided at higher level in the bureaucratic structure. Robins further states that he agrees that resistance to change has a downside in that it can hinder adaptation and progress. Resistance to change can take many forms and is therefore difficult to pinpoint. Typical examples include employment levels and job security, de-skilling of jobs, wage differentials, changes to social structure and loss of individual control over work, and greater management control (Mullins, 2005; Osland, David & Irwin, 2001). These authors address the question on why people resist change arguing that this is simply because they fear the unknown and are comforted by the familiar.

Mullins, (2005); Jones, (2004); Paton and McCalman, (2001); suggest that one of the main reasons for an organisation inability to change is organisational inertia, the tendency to maintain the status quo. From the literature, it appears that authors identify various reasons for resistance to change. Organisations, by their very nature are conservative and identify the following major sources of organisational resistance (Robbins, 2005:270).
2.7.1 Power and Conflict

Robbins (2005:271) postulates that change may be seen as a threat to power or the influence certain groups enjoy within the organisation, such as their control over decisions, resources or information. For example, managers at EWC FET colleges may resist the introduction of quality circles or worker directors because they see this as increasing the role and influence of non-managerial staff, and a threat to the power of their own positions (Mullins, 2005:914). The process of the declaration and merging of FET colleges was introduced by the Department of Education as a means of removing connotations of inequities and inequalities in FET colleges. However, this leaves the FET sector with power problems among the stakeholders, especially at governance and management levels. In any merged colleges, governors, principals, and lecturers of both the historically white colleges and the historically black colleges, will compare themselves with one another and this will influence co-operation in a merged multi-site college (Bisschoff & Nkoe, 2005:213).

Information is power, and unequal information means unequal power. Unequal power may lead to resistance and unhealthy rivalry amongst employees. People want to feel informed and knowledgeable about their organisation. The underlying issue is inclusion. People want to be treated as equals and that means receiving the same information as that available to management. (Fullan, 2001:77; Martin, 2001:782; Jones, 2004:306). In order for the merger to be successful, open, honest and direct communication, based on trust is essential. Moorhead and Griffin (1999:485) point out that if an organisation is decentralising its decision-making structure, managers who used their decision-making powers in return for special favours from others may resist the change because they do not want to lose their power base. Jones (2004:306) concurs that when change usually benefits some people, functions, or divisions at the expense of others, the change causes power struggles and organisational conflict and, therefore, an organisation is likely to resist it.
2.7.2 Investment in Resources

Mullins (2005:914) and Martin (2001:797) maintain that change often requires large resources which may already be committed to investment in other areas or strategies. For example, assets such as buildings, technology, equipment and people cannot easily be altered. They therefore limit the ability to change because they represent assets that are not easily liquidated in the short term.

It is clear that the merging of the six colleges spelt the new profile of EWC with new or transformed resources. Existing resources have to be transformed and developed to meet the requirements of the new merged college. According to Bisschoff and Nkoe (2005:213) the transformation of resources includes human as well as physical resources and those resources that cannot be transformed will unfortunately be eliminated from the system to avoid barriers to effectiveness.

The groups, according to Robbins (2005:271), in the organisation that control resources often see change as a threat. They often view change suspiciously seeing it as a process which will reduce ultimately reduce their budgets or a cut down the number of staff they employ. Moorhead and Griffin (1999:485) concur that groups that are satisfied with the current resource allocation may resist any change that they believe will threaten their future allocations.

2.7.3 Organisational Culture

Organisational culture is a set of assumptions that members of the organisation have in common (Kruger, 2003:83). Culture is the general pattern of behaviour, shared beliefs and common values among members (Newstrom & Davis 2002:91; Bateman & Snell, 2002:206; Kreitner & Kinicki, 2001:105-107). Organisational culture is fairly stable and does not change fast. It sets the tone for the organisation and establishes implied rules for how people should behave.
Key elements that influence culture include history, ownership, mission, people, management style, Information Technology (IT), office layout, and types of buildings and style of working (Kruger, 2003:83-86). When change is inevitable, then culture needs to change. With the merger of the six former technical colleges the movement was one away from the colleges' established (previous) cultures to a new future culture. The researcher observed that staff members were aware of losses of familiarity and the way in which things were done previously. Staff members from different backgrounds were concerned that the new environment or new culture might not be what was hoped for. Staff members at the post-merger EWC were concerned that there was inadequate attention given to the cultural and emotional issues and to gaining employee commitment to the process. It is therefore, the researcher's belief that management should have played a firmer, more participative and active role in handling these issues. The strategy of the new institution would drive and dictate the culture (Kruger, 2003:83-86).

Merging institutions may also wish to preserve some aspects of the existing cultures that are considered to be particularly valuable and to combine these with new elements that will promote the character and ethos of the new institution (Department of Education, 2004:21). Mullins (2005:914) is of the opinion that the culture of an organisation develops over time and may not be easy to change. He further asserts that an ineffective culture may result in a lack of flexibility for, or acceptance of change. Newstrom and Davis (2002:91) concur that cultures attract attention, convey a vision, are a source of stability and continuity and provide a sense of security to its members. If organisational change disrupts taken for granted values and norms and forces people to change what they do and how they do it, an organisation's culture will cause resistance to change (Jones, 2004:307). For example, many organisations develop conservative values that support that status quo and make managers reluctant to search for new ways to compete.
2.7.4 Individual Resistance

The college is composed of different individuals with different personalities, backgrounds, age and educational levels. Therefore, due to these differences, individual resistance increases the level of conflict on a day-to-day basis. Individual sources of resistance to change reside in the basic human characteristics such as perception, personalities, and needs (Mullins, 2005:915; Martin, 2001:793; Van der Westhuizen et al. 2002:221). The following summarises the reasons why individuals may resist change.

2.7.4.1 Habit

Robbins (2005:269) and Jones (2004:308) suggest that as human beings, we are creatures of habit. They argue that life is complex enough and so, to cope with this complexity, we all rely on habits or programmed responses. When we are confronted with change, this tendency to respond in our accustomed ways becomes a source of resistance. For example, when a department of EWC is moved to a new office building across town, it means employees are required to have to change many habits such as finding new parking place, adjusting to the new office layout, or developing a new lunchtime routine. In this study it is argued that these processes of planned change, if communicated from management to all stakeholders timeously, effective management of conflict will have been implemented (See 2.5).

Van der Westhuizen et al. (2002:224) and Daft and Noe (2001:629) argue that most people are reluctant to leave the familiarly behind and therefore, are suspicious about the unfamiliar and are naturally concerned about how to get from the old to the new especially if it involves learning something new and risking failure. Moorhead and Griffin (1999:486) agree that learning an entirely new set of steps increases the job's difficulty and for the same amount of return, most people prefer to do easy rather than hard work.
2.7.4.2 Security

People who have a high need for security are likely to resist change because it threatens their feeling of safety (Robbins, 2005; Jones, 2004; Mullins, 2005). Martin (2001:794) asserts that the need for security can lead to a search for the past when things appeared simpler and more familiar. Jones (2004:308) concurs that people tend to resist change because they feel uncertain and insecure about what its outcome will be. The academic staff members at the former six colleges were affected in different ways by the merger. For example, some people became complacent in the face of possible loss of jobs at the expense of others and absenteeism and turnover increased. This was evident at the six campuses of EWC when absenteeism escalated.

Van der Westhuizen et al. (2002:222) concur that as soon as there is a deviation from the familiar situation or when existing practices are discontinued, a feeling of insecurity that could give rise to resistance to change is experienced. Moorhead and Griffin (1999:486) add that employees like the comfort and security of doing things the old way and gain a feeling of constancy and safety in knowing that some things stay the same despite all changes going on around them.

2.7.4.3 Economic factors

Mullins (2005:913) and Robbins (2005:270) point out that people are likely to resist change which they perceive may lead to reducing, directly or indirectly, their pay or rewards, or will require an increase in work for the same level of pay or threaten to their job security. McMillan (2008:85) concurs that if change means job losses then for some employees this is a threatening development and could lead to opposition and determined resistance. Another source of individual resistance is borne of the concern of employees that changes will lower their income. Owens (2001:188) and Jones (2004:308) agree that changes in job
tasks or established work routines can also arouse economic fears if people are concerned they won't be able to perform the new tasks or routines to their previous standards, especially when pay is closely tied to productivity. In view of the above, many stakeholders were affected by the merger process which created the EWC, particularly in terms of lower salaries. Severance packages were also offered to staff members during the merger process.

2.7.4.4 Fear of economic loss

Workers may disapprove of new processes because they feel it may result in job losses or demotions (Kirkpatrick, 2001:20; Oosthuizen, 2002:2). This was evident in the case of the former six technical college employees, as some of them may have felt inferior and believed that they would be the ones to lose their jobs in the restructuring process. They felt left out of the process by the college management. The researcher is of the opinion that job security acted as a resistor to staff working well together. In support of these views, Muller (2006:202) asserts that job security in a merged institution can also be threatened in terms of career progression as there would now be more contenders for the same job, and that some employees could possibly be pitted against individuals who had more experience, particular skills or a higher qualification.

Employees usually resist doing something new if they see no benefits or advantages in it for themselves. People perform those acts best that give them rewards, whether monetary or personal satisfaction, self-image or affection of power (Harvey, 1990:35). Leadership in the new institution should provide ongoing recognition for teams and individuals that contribute to the success of the merger. Recognition should be given according to consistent criteria and the process of rewards and promotions must be transparent.
2.7.4.5 Fear of the unknown

According to Mullins (2005:914) changes which confront people with the unknown tend to cause anxiety or fear. Robbins (2005:270) and Robbins and Judge (2010:247) agree that changes substitute ambiguity and uncertainty for the known, and people in general don't like the unknown. For example, the introduction of new technology or methods of working may escalate feelings of uncertainty. Moorhead and Griffin (1999:486) believe that some people fear anything unfamiliar and changes in reporting relationships and job duties create anxiety for such employees. The researcher observed behavioural patterns mentioned above during the merger of the six former technical colleges. For example two experienced mathematics lectures resigned because they refused to take a transfer to another college. Hay and Fourie (2002:121) point out that during a merger some employees see it as an end of their career and everything they worked for and that perceptions of unfairness lead to depression, a fear of the unknown, a fear of change, a loss of commitment, demoralisation, feelings of not being kept well informed, and a loss of confidence in themselves and in management.

Change usually scares people. New technology, new systems, new procedures and new managers can threaten security, which causes resistance (Oosthuizen, 2000:2). Employees live in an uncertain world and managers should deal with these negative emotions and trepidations. Change that enhances security holds a much better chance for success (Kirkpatrick, 2001:20). In the current environment staff members at the post-merger EWC may have become fearful of the implications of the merger. When employees are secure and enjoy freedom from fear they can use their energy to achieve the objectives of the new institution instead of using it to combat fear.
2.7.4.6 Selective perception

Individuals shape their world through their perceptions and once they have created this world, they resist changing it, and therefore individuals are guilty of selectively processing information in order to keep their perceptions intact (Mullins 2005; Robbins, 2005; Owens, 2001; Paton & McCalman, 2000). These authors state that people hear what they want to hear and ignore information that challenges the world they created. Mullins (2005:913) concurs that this can lead to a biased view of a particular situation and where they adopt views which fits most into their own perception of reality and this can also cause resistance to change.

However, Coetzee (1999:205) asserts that if management does not understand, accept and make an effort to work with resistance, it can undermine even the most well-intentioned and well conceived change efforts. Therefore, management’s ability to achieve maximum benefits from change depends in part on how effectively they create and maintain a climate that minimises resistance behaviour and encourages acceptance and support.

The focus will now shift to managing resistance to change.

2.8. MANAGING RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

While there are numerous reasons to resist change, there are processes of change management that can be introduced to facilitate or lessen this resistance (Mullins, 2005:913; Moorhead & Griffin, 1999: 485; Van der Westhuizen 2002:159). Van der Westhuizen et al. (2002: 227) are of the opinion that the manner in which the principal reacts to change depends largely on the extent to which they feel that such events threaten the interest of the college. Therefore they further point out that the principal should know how to manage resistance to change because change places enormous pressure on teaching staff. From this
it can be deduced that effective management of change depends on managers of educational institutions being aware of certain valid actions such as communication, participation and support.

2.8.1 Communication

Communication is a process that requires both a sender who begins the process and a receiver who completes the communication link (Johns & Saks, 2008:338; Hellriegel, 2004:313). When the receiver understands the communication, the cycle is complete. They further assert that communication is the transfer and exchange of information and understanding from one person to another by means of meaningful symbols, and is a way of exchanging ideas, attitudes values, opinions and facts. Communication takes place when a certain message is conveyed from one individual to another and this process is known as the communication process. It seems that during the merger process the management at EWC had little to offer in this regard. Communications between the various role players were often not clear and concise which led to increase conflict in the post-merger EWC FET college. During this process certain behavioural responses are elicited from the recipient.

The management of an organisation must have the ability to receive, transmit and act on information sent and received (Denhardt, Denhardt & Aristigueta, 2002:256). The communication process links the organisation to its environment as well as its various stakeholders. Hellriegel (2004:312) states that the purpose of effective communication is to ensure the flow of information and effective functioning of the institution. Communication was seen as central from the beginning. Kilfoil and Groenewald (2005:14) agree that communication is crucial in a merger and emphasise the need to send the proper messages to employees. Applebaum, Gandell, Shapiro, Belisle and Hoeven (2001:3) state that there is a strong need for employees to be constantly on the receiving end of information during a merger.
The issue of communication and participation in the higher education sector was well captured by Harman (2000:347) who reported that communication and participative management as a result of good leadership increases employee trust and fosters loyalty to the institution. Reddy (2007:487), and Gamage and Pang (2003:117) posit that communication is a process by which information is exchanged between individuals and groups and the glue that holds an organisation together. They further assert that communication assists organisational members to achieve both organisational and individual goals; implement and respond to organisational change; coordinate organisational activities; and engage in virtually all organisationally relevant behaviour. The views of Muller (2006:202) are shared by other authors (Coffey, Garrow & Holbeche, 2002:166) who go so far as to say that communication is often hailed as the most important factor in a merger's success.

Communication is not just about passing on information. It also has a vital role in reducing anxiety, managing expectations, demonstrating concern, promoting integration, building new networks, building trust and commitment, encouraging involvement through feedback and two way communication, prompting behaviour changes or “walking the talk”. Robbins (2003:283) is of the opinion that poor communication is probably the most cited source of interpersonal conflict, because employees spend nearly 70 percent of their working hours communicating – writing, reading, speaking, listening. Good communication is therefore essential for any organisation’s effectiveness. Robbins (2003:398) further mentions the following barriers such as word connotations, jargon and insufficient exchange of information to communicating potential antecedent conditions for conflict. The purpose of effective communication is to ensure the flow of information and effective functioning of the organisation (Denhardt et al., 2002:260; Hellriegel, 2004:312).

It can be argued that problems of communication appear to be basic to most conflict situations at the EWC FET colleges. During the EWC merger
implementation process at the college communication was often inscribed with tension. Furthermore there was no clear plan for the process. Rumours also fuelled insecurities. This, according to Johns and Saks (2008:342), is communication through the grapevine which is the informal communication network that exists in any organisation. Mishra (2001:213) defines the grapevine as the informal transmission of information, gossip or rumours from person to person and the grapevine is the informal and unsanctioned information network within every organisation. These authors further assert that the grapevine can become a real problem for the organisation when it becomes a constant pipeline for rumours. The abundance of rumours through the grapevine impacted negatively by fuelling insecurities and fears among staff members at EWC FET college, which forced some staff members into making personal choices because of uncertainty.

It is in this context that a lateral communication system becomes central in an academic institution because it empowers managers and management teams to perform their managerial responsibilities more effectively. The horizontal structure of a team-based organisation provides a lateral communication system in which members of a team communicate directly with one another in an organisation. Therefore, without effective communication, employees cannot be made aware of what is expected of them or how they should do their jobs, or what others think of their work. Robbins and Judge (2010:145) proved that one of the primary reasons for the facilitation of successful change is the inability of managers to communicate a consistent change message effectively. Coffey et al. (2002:168) ascribe this inability to communicate and facilitate successful change as one of the primary reasons for unfavourable employee reactions to organisational changes. Reddy (2007:486) points out that during organisational change, it is essential that communication is proactive, that it reduces uncertainty and maintains employee trust in management, especially since timeous communication from leaders influence employee anxiety and loyalty and ensures employee participation.
Robbins (2005:271) and Osland et al. (2001:479) argue that resistance can be reduced through communicating with employees to help them see the logic of a change. The lack of adequate information fuels rumours and gossip and adds to the anxiety generally associated with change. Therefore, effective communication can reduce this speculation and allay fears (Cummings & Worley, 2005:159). To ensure that stakeholders are empowered managers of EWC should communicate what they know as soon as possible to lower level employees and assure employees that they will never be intentionally deceived. Good and open communication is essential to provide information to empower all stakeholders to build a shared vision in order to achieve the goals of the organisation. The researcher argues that staff members at post-merger EWC FET colleges were not well informed about the merger implementation process and this led to an escalation in conflict after the merging of the colleges. Bartels, Douwes, de Jong and Pruyn (2006:52) state that communication is generally seen as an important factor in merger processes, and it is assumed that once employees are aware of a forthcoming merger, they will start to consider the post-merger situation and the possible consequences for their own situation. Therefore, it is in this context that the horizontal structure of a team-based organisation provides a lateral communication system in which members of a team communicate directly with one another in an organisation. It is in line with the views of Johns and Saks (2008:339) who state that horizontal communication occurs between departments or functional units usually as a means of coordinating effort.

Daft and Noe (2001:304) agree that communication is fundamental to the creation, maintenance and survival of any institution as it enables the stakeholders to define their objectives, share knowledge, learn skills, and identify needs and to encourage one another. These tactics therefore basically assume that the source of resistance lies in misinformation or poor communication. Therefore Grasmick (2000) cited in Garmage and Pang (2003:241) suggests that
managers should keep providing information; take advantage of technology; adapt processes as the project evolves; make engagement meaningful; and show evidence that feedback influences policy.

Mullins (2005:919) and Jones (2004:327) agree that if information about proposed change, its implications and potential benefits, is communicated clearly to all interested parties on time that may reduce the resistance to change. For example, communicating information to all stakeholders through formal group meetings, memos, one-on-one meetings, and, increasingly through electronic means such as e-mails and voice conferencing, this may be one way of reducing such resistance.

Open communication is an important factor in managing resistance to change and sharing information (Moorhead & Griffin, 1999:488). They further claim that in the absence of information, the gap may be filled with inappropriate or false information, which may endanger the change process. Therefore, if employees receive the full facts and get any misunderstanding cleared up, resistance will subside. However, it is effective provided that the source of resistance is inadequate communication and that management-employee relations are characterised by mutual trust and credibility (Goodwin & Griffith, 2007:69). If those conditions do not exist, the change is likely not to succeed. It then follows that effective communication is a prerequisite to every aspect of human functioning including the ability to resolve conflicts effectively (Kistan, 2000:31). Similarly, Johns and Saks (2008:358) suggest that managers should consider some basic principles of effective face-to-face communication. These are referred to as basic principles in that they apply to upward, downward, horizontal, and outside communication. These basic are outlined below.
2.8.1.1 Take time

Johns and Saks (2008:359) assert that good communication takes time and that managers have to devote extra effort to developing a good rapport with staff members. This researcher has observed a manager at Kathorus campus at EWC generalising a problem caused by two staff members in a staff meeting. What happened is that the remarks irritated forty five people and the two offenders really did not grasp the problem. The manager should have taken the time to meet face-to-face with the two people in question.

2.8.1.2 Be accepting of the other person

Try to be accepting of the other person as an individual who has the right to have feelings and perceptions that may differ from your own (Johns & Saks, 2008:359). Denhardt et al. (2002:266) agree that managers of organisations that foster positive interpersonal relationships among their members are more productive, are more effective at problem solving, produce higher outcomes, and have fewer conflicts than managers of organisations that do not. Therefore, managers at EWC colleges that acted “superior” or “arrogant” worked against the acceptance of change.

2.8.1.3 Listen actively

Effective communication according to John and Saks (2008:360) requires good listening skills, and good listening skills improve the accuracy of your reception, but it also shows acceptance of the speaker and encourages self-reflection on their part. Managers who listen well are able to pick up more and better information, they are likely to encourage and motivate employees, most of whom appreciate managers “who really listen.” In support of these views, Muller (2006:203) asserts that communication during a merger should not only focus on decisions, but should also discuss processes involved, for example who are...
involved, what ideas have been used or discarded, and what the anticipated timelines are.

In view of the above, it is clear that some managers and management teams of the EWC FET colleges lack communication skills and need to establish communication channels to empower academic staff members to perform their functions and responsibilities which could lead to the effective management of conflict emanating from the merger implementation process. The open communication system around teams is the only way of delivering it (Denhardt, Denhardt, & Aristiqueta, 2002:257). In fact, communication should draw on the intellectual capacity of all staff members so that the college can achieve its goals. Thus, the manager and management team of EWC FET college must create clear channels of communication for the exchange of information and ideas which could possibly lead to a decrease in conflicting issues.

Relative to the above, it needs to be noted that the merger process was politically motivated and legislatively mandated and it was assumed that all managers would comply with the regulations. Structures were prescribed and rules and regulations formulated by persons outside the colleges involved. Managers thus had no option but to comply as it is always easier to follow that which is written in the mandate than to risk the danger of non-compliance and possibly doing that which you think is best under the particular circumstances. Wise managers will always involve their staff to the greatest extent possible.

2.8.2 Participation

Garmage and Pang (2003:150) define participation as the mental and emotional involvement of an individual in a group situation that encourages them to contribute to the group processes and share responsibility with the group. An organisation that engages in participative management practices is interested in driving decision-making processes as far down the organisational chart as
possible (Goodwin & Griffith, 2007:240). Jones (2004:327) states that by inviting workers to participate in the change process management can reduce resistance to change. Jones further adds that participation complements empowerment, increases worker involvement in decision-making, and gives them greater autonomy to change work procedures and increase organisational performance.

Van der Westhuizen et al. (2002:233) points out that academic staff should be involved in the change as soon as possible so that they accept responsibility for it. They claim that the advantage of this method is that teachers will be motivated by their commitment to generate ideas and information and will cooperate in applying change. On the other hand, when, according to Newstrom and Davis (1997:237) employees are not allowed to contribute, they tend to have lower performance, less satisfaction, lower self-esteem, and more stress.

Osland et al. (2001:479) and Cummings and Worley (2005:159) state that encouraging others to help with the design and implementation of change creates commitment to change and usually improves the quality of the change decision. Furthermore, people who participate in making a decision are typically more strongly committed to the final outcome than those who were not involved and it is difficult for individuals or groups to resist a change decision in which they participated (Robbins, 2005; Mullins, 2005; Owens, 2001). Therefore, if the participants have the expertise to make a meaningful contribution, their involvement can reduce resistance, obtain commitment, and increase the quality of the change decision.

2.8.3 Provide Support

Managers and workers find change stressful because task and role relationships alter as it takes place. However, according to (Mullins, 2005) Robbins, (2005) Osland et al. (2001) Jones (2004) and Owens (2001) there are several ways in which organisations can help their members to manage stress, for example, by
providing them with training to help them learn how to perform new tasks, providing them with time off from work to recuperate from any stressful effects of change, or even giving senior members sabbaticals to allow them to recuperate and plan future work activities.

Van der Westhuizen et al. (2002:233) concur that provision should be made for re-educational and emotional support programmes for educators when the tension level of those involved are high or when staff members experience adjustment problems and consequently offer resistance. This is indeed true regarding the role of support from management to all stakeholders during a merger process. Van der Westhuizen et al. (2002:11) suggest that specialists in the field, such as social workers and psychologists, provide support during the change process in an organised fashion to support teachers and schools. However, this researcher observed little if any support provided to EWC FET college managers to alleviate perceived tensions experienced. For example, academic staff members at EWC FET college were alienated during the planning and implementation stages. There was no clear, open, frequent and honest communication support structure in place which had negative consequences. The lack of support impacted on staff member's health, welfare and commitment to the merger process.

2.9. DEFINITION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF CONFLICT

In the following section, the researcher will provide a review of conflict, the role of the college management or leadership as managers of change and how to lead change and effectively manage conflict in post-merger FET colleges such as EWC FET college.

There is no shortage of definitions for the term conflict. Ting-Toomey (1985:72) cited in an article by Havenga and Visagie (2006:22) define conflict as a form of intense interpersonal and/or intrapersonal dissonance between two or more
interdependent parties based on incompatible goals, needs, desires, values, beliefs, and/or attitudes. The Marriam Websters New International Dictionary (1986:477) defines conflict as "an emotional state characterised by indecision, restlessness, uncertainty and tension resulting from incompatible inner needs or drives of incompatible intensity."

Conflict arises when two or more people have incompatible goals, and one or both believe that the behaviour of the other prevents them from achieving their own goals. Mullins (2005:904) presents conflict as behaviour intended to obstruct the achievement of another party's goal. Roth (2007:300) recognised that poorly handled conflict tends to reduce productivity and increase labour relation problems. They further maintain that if any individual becomes emotional during conflict and that they lose focus on tasks, they become less effective resulting in a lack of performance. Although conflict according to Daft and Noe (2001: 448) is often uncomfortable, it is an inevitable part of life in organisations, and therefore, individuals, groups and organisations should benefit from knowing how to handle it constructively.

2.10. SOURCES OF CONFLICT

Careful examination of the literature seems to suggest a great variety of sources of conflict. Mullins (2005:906) asserts that much has been written about the implication of conflict as a social process. The author, however, points out that the important point is not so much whether competing subgroups and conflict are seen as inevitable consequences of organisational structure, but how conflict, when found, is handled and managed. Brumels and Beach (2008:373) and Davis (2002:260), writing on sources of conflict, also identifies power struggle, interdependence, role conflict and ambiguities as the main sources of conflict. An in-depth investigation into the causes of organisational conflict by Johns and Saks (2008:446); Mullins (2005: 907); Tustin and Geldenhuis (2000:109); Gibson, Ivancevich and Donnelly (1997:290) revealed the following to be the
most prevalent causes of conflict: organisational structure, limited resources, environmental change, a violation of territory, authority structures and differences in perception.

Each of the abovementioned sources of conflict will be discussed below.

2.10.1 Organisational Structure

An organisational structure refers to the way in which the college is formally structured. Colleges are very complex in nature and are structured in a unique and specific way. Any educational institution undergoing change faces structural conflict. This was evident to the researcher when observing the merger process at the college. At the head of the institution is the campus manager, followed by the heads of department, the senior lecturers and, finally, the lecturers. The campus manager, deputy and heads of department form the senior management team. Robbins and Judge (2010:224) posit that an organisation's structure exists to help management achieve its objectives.

Gibson, Ivancevich and Donnely (1997:290) indicate that an organisation's structure goes beyond the concept of the organogram and deals with more profound issues such as role functions, reporting mechanisms, hierarchical levels, interactions between staff and line managers, and the way in which the organisation conducts its core business. Conflict therefore occurs when the different participants in the college setting do not understand or do not comply with their duties and role functions. A lecturer, for example, who is a subject lecturer, is dependent on other lecturers to hand in the marks to the senior lecturer in order for students to receive their semester results. The senior lecturers then submit the marks to the head of the department who, in turn, submits the marks to the manager. After verification, these marks are released to the students. Therefore, there is a large group of staff members involved and
who are interdependent on each other. If one of them fails to cooperate or does not hand in information timeously, it is likely to lead to conflict.

2.10.2 Limited Resources

A common source of conflict in many educational institutions is the limit of resources such as physical space, a lack of books, equipment, human resources funding and services. The merging of the previously independent FET colleges in 1994 led to limited resources within these institutions. For example, lectures were now forced to share office space. Another common problem at EWC was the existence of a single copying machine with several people wanting to use it simultaneously. This lack of additional machines leads to conflict. Tustin and Geldenhuys (2000:108) point out that when different parties have to share resources there is a potential for conflict, especially when the shared resources become scarce. For example, when two departments need to share one secretary for all its administrative tasks, the secretary is likely to experience stress which could lead to conflict between him/her and the lecturer.

Therefore, according to Daft (2004:487), organisations with limited money, physical facilities, and human resources run the risk of increased conflict. Daft (2004:488) further points out that individuals or groups, in their desire to achieve their goals, want to increase their resources which ultimately generates conflict. According to Gibson, Donnelly, Ivancevich and Konopaske (2006:269) what often occurs in situations where there are limited resources is a win-lose competition that can easily result in dysfunctional conflict if groups refuse to collaborate. This view is supported by Champoux (2000:207) who sees dependence on scarce resources as a common latent source of conflict in organisations.
2.10.3 Environmental change

Mullins (2005:906) cites changes in an organisation's external environment, such as shifts in demand, increased competition, government interventions, new technology or changing social values as a major source of conflict. With the pace of technological, political and social change increasing and the marketplace hurtling towards a global economy, environmental changes will be ever present (Newstrom & Davis, 2002:263). For example, a fall in demand for or financial restrictions on, enrolments for a certain discipline in the college can result in conflict for an allocation of resources.

2.10.4 Violation of Territory

Mullins (2005:907) argues that employees tend to become attached to their own "territory" within work situations, for an example, to their own area of work, or their own office or parking space. Therefore, if a person's territory is violated this can lead to the possibility of retaliation and conflict.

Colleges being very complex organisations with complex interactions between the different participants represent the above as fundamental and common to all colleges of conflict issues of the present day college situation.

2.10.5 Authority Structure

Colleges are organs of the state and carry a certain degree of authority which is clearly stipulated in the South African Schools Act. Steyn (1996:13) states that the authority structure refers to the initial power vested in the educational institution to act as an agent of the state in fulfilling its mandate to provide relevant education to the community. The authority structure, according to Daft and Noe (2001:246), defines a hierarchy of reporting relationships and also defines who is supposed to lead the group and how the group is to fit into the overall organisation. The college manager is therefore the departmental
representative and, as such, has vested authority to carry out the mandate from the government. They are further empowered by the numerous governmental policies and directives as well as provincial circulars that regulate teaching and learning.

This argument indicates that authority within each group is dichotomous; thus two conflict groups can be formed within any association. Those in positions of authority and those in positions of subordination hold certain interests that are contradictory in “substance and direction” (Dahrendorf (1959:175) in Ritzer, 2008:266). Thus, the manager as representative of the department could have differing interests to those of the other college staff. Individuals who occupy given positions in the hierarchy will behave in the manner expected by the role they play and thus a conflict of interests will always be latent unless the individual becomes conscious of this interest. Interest groups are formed by individuals, the members, who have similar roles to play and they have a structure and goals to achieve. In this way the management of an FET college can form a group with similar interests, as can the lecturers who may have differing interests. This can give rise to conflict groups and the bureaucratic hierarchy can support the formations of such interest groups. For example, the officials from the departments of education who are tasked with controlling the legislative mandates have a political interest, the management of the colleges has a compliance interest and the lecturers can have a survival interest. In addition to these many group interests, there can also be self-interest which is likely to be present in all of the groups. Such group and self-interests are likely to produce conflicts and it would be useful for managers of EWC FET colleges to be aware of their possible existence.

2.10.6 Differences in Perception

People tend to view things in different ways because they have their own unique personalities, views and opinions (Mullins, 2005:908). For instance, a problem in
the academic department may be viewed in one way by the lecturing staff and in another way by the management of the college. People may therefore attach different meanings to the same thing. Owens (2001) and Champoux (2000) also reinforce this view by stating that, as perceptions become a person's reality, value judgments can be a potential major source of conflict. Newstrom and Davis (2002:263) point out that people often see their perceptions as real to them and that they feel that these perceptions must be equally apparent to others. They therefore fail to realise that others may hold contrasting perceptions of the same object or event.

2.11 ROLE CONFLICT

Dysfunctions in role performance have been associated with a large number of consequences, almost always negative, which affect the well-being of workers and the functioning of organisations. Brumels and Beach (2008:374) describe role conflict as the stress felt when an employee perceives role or job expectations as being contradictory or mutually exclusive.

Thus, all participants in the college need to have a very clearly defined understanding of their role. This view implies that the merger of the six colleges impacted on the employees' attitudes towards their work, and that these attitudes resulted in behaviour that was dysfunctional for the new organisations. Hence, conflict escalated in the colleges. For example, after the merger, conflicting role expectations and responsibilities were placed on some staff members who created stress for the role occupant due to their inability to complete the tasks or to complete them in a satisfactory manner.

De Beer et al. (2002:221) states that unclear job descriptions contribute to conflict because the jobholders will not know precisely what activities they are responsible for. Mullins (2005:907) and Hodge, Anthony and Gales (1999:536) contend that a role is the expected pattern of behaviour associated with
members occupying a particular position within the structure of the organisation. This may happen in the college, where, for example the head of a department may come into conflict with the head of administration when they attempt to set standards in administration, mistakenly regarding this as their role as well. Bendix (as cited in Slabbert, Erasmus & Nell 2002:227) and Gleason (1997:3) support this argument when they state that vagueness about responsibility and roles causes organisational conflict.

The researcher will now focus on conflict management as the function of the college manager in post-merger EWC FET colleges.

2.12 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AS THE FUNCTIONS OF THE COLLEGE MANAGER

Past experience teaches us that a college manager required only professional training and the experience to manage an educational institution. Therefore, as a result of the increasing complexity of the college as an organisation, the educational leader and his management team are subjected to changing demands especially in respect of their management tasks. It is therefore imperative that in addition to educational/professional training, college managers also require conflict management training (Kistan, 2000:39).

Owing to the expansion of their tasks and the complexities of the colleges in the present educational setting, it becomes increasingly necessary for college managers to become more proficient and professional in managing their educational institutions in general, and conflict in particular. Good management is an essential aspect of any educational service and therefore managers need a balance of technical, social and conceptual knowledge and skills, acquired through the blend of education and experience (Mullins, 2005:942). Managers of educational institutions are required to perform various tasks as part of their managerial duties which include problem identification, setting objectives,
planning, managing conflict, organising, coordinating, communication and evaluation. Management refers to the process by which managers attempt to use their human and other resources as effectively and efficiently as possible to ensure that the organisation achieves its goals (Slabbert, Erasmus & Nell, 2002:20). Mullins (2005:195) agrees that management is the process of achieving organisational objectives within a changing environment, by balancing the efficiency, effectiveness and equity, obtaining the most from limited resources, and working with and through other people. He further contends that within the framework of objectives, policy provides the guidelines for the operations and activities of the organisation. These authors further contend that management theorists regard management as consecutive actions which form a continuous cycle of planning, organising, supervising and controlling in order to achieve organisational goals. Therefore management is seen as a social interaction because the actions concern the relationship between people.

It is however quite ironic that with so much conflict occurring in South Africa's educational institutions, very few authors include conflict management as part of the professional training for college managers.

2.12.1 Conflict Management

Roth (2007:307) states that when people consciously or unconsciously disagree or express incompatible desires, interests, beliefs, values and act negatively and not constructively towards each other, we have good reasons to believe that the relation between those concerned is correctly interpreted as a conflict. Conflicts do not simply erupt, rather they develop through various stages and, in each of these stages, certain factors contribute to possible conflict (Mestry, 1999:103). Staff members of a FET college such as EWC have at their disposal their own personality, educational experience, experience of life and religion, which all have a certain amount of influence on their socialisation, domestic circumstances and career. Therefore, despite these differences they need to
work as a unit of individuals in a coordinated manner to realise the general aims of the college.

Nelson and Quick (2000:422) define conflict as any situation in which incompatible goals, attitudes, emotions, or behaviours, lead to disagreement or opposition between two parties. Conflict becomes natural wherever incompatible activities occur and vested interests are involved. In other words conflict is a situation involving people, or a group of people, with incompatible concerns (Garmage & Pang 2003:180; John, Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 2004:310).

It is very important for college managers to be efficiently skilled and trained in conflict management if they wish to minimise the effects of conflict at the colleges. Maurer (1996:15) is of the opinion that no meaningful teaching and learning can take place if the college is continually hampered by conflict. Escalating conflict can sour an organisation’s culture; therefore managing conflict in any organisation is an important priority (Jones, 2004:438). An organisation should balance the need to have “good” conflict (which overcomes inertia and allows new organisational learning) and prevent good conflict from escalating into “bad conflict” (which causes a breakdown in coordination between functions and divisions) (Jones, 2004, Owens, 2001). Roth (2007:307) suggests that the quality of conflict management is, however, not only a question of analysing the degree to which required dispositions are actualised. It is also a question of analysing structural conditions and their impact on the possibility of deliberation, the quality of deliberation and the legitimacy of the outcomes of deliberation; these matters concern participation, procedure, epistemic aspects and virtues.

Everard and Morris (1996:88) cited in Mestry (1999:104) state that the ability to handle conflict is a key managerial success. When conflicts arise among staff members the college manager should intervene and provide mediation to reduce the conflicts.
2.13 VALUE OF CONFLICT

Not all conflict is undesirable. Constructively handled conflict may lead to valuable insights, new ideas and creative situations. A manager should, however, be aware of what causes conflict, as well as the effects this has on the behaviour of individuals and groups. Conflict, according to Garmage & Pang (2003:181), is the sense of an honest difference of opinions, resulting from different positions on an issue and the possibility of two or more alternative courses of action, and is not only unavoidable but also a valuable part of life.

It helps to ensure that different possibilities are properly considered, and further possible courses of action may be generated from the discussion of the already recognised alternatives. Also, conflict often means that the chosen course of action is tested at an early stage, thereby reducing the risk of missing an important flaw (Mestry, 1999:105).

2.14 DANGERS OF CONFLICT

Conflict becomes a dangerous and disruptive force whenever personal glory is staked on the outcome, parties become hostile to each other. The further the conflict develops, the more "glory" is staked, the bitterer the conflict becomes and the less easier it is to achieve a solution (Garmage & Pang, 2003:182).

Conflict in a job context extends across a wide range of social relationships. It may occur in individuals (intrapersonal conflict), between two or more individuals (interpersonal conflict) and between groups of people (inter-group conflict). John, et al. (2004:311) argue that intrapersonal conflict often involve actual or perceived pressures from incompatible goals or expectations. For example, after the merger and establishment of EWC, staff members were asked to either accept a job transfer to another college in an undesirable location or to have their employment with the organisation terminated. Interpersonal conflict occurs
between two or more individuals who are in opposition to one another (Nelson & Quick, 2000:431). An example of interpersonal conflict is when staff members are in continual disagreement with managers or other staff over the allocation and selection of subjects that they have to teach. Inter-group conflict, according to Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly and Konopaske (2006:268) occurs among members of different teams or groups but it can also have substantive and/or emotional underpinnings. At the post-merger EWC FET college two different departments had to use the same resources, such as the photocopier machine mentioned above and this led to an increase of conflict within the organisation. When such attitudes escalate they could give rise to hostility which rapidly deteriorates into situations of win or lose at all cost. As a result management degenerates into preventing or avoiding conflicts of interest. This reduces the possibility of using conflict constructively.

2.15 RESOLUTION OF CONFLICT

A resolution of conflict occurs when parties involved understand each other’s position. They want to discuss it, because they want to resolve the conflict, regardless of their disagreement. Daft and Noe (2001:463) state that conflict resolution begins with recognising that there is a conflict and defining the conflict situation. The way parties define the situation will influence their reaction to the conflict.

Since conflict seems to be inevitable in the college, it is the task of the college manager to prevent conflict from obstructing the realisation of the college’s educational goals and objectives through the management of conflict. Managers therefore find themselves in a position of trust with respect to their colleagues, and the way they communicate with conflicting parties, will either be a motivating or demotivating force in solving the conflict. Special inter personal skills, the inspiring of confidence, listening skills, structured problem solving, as well as a
knowledge of the staff’s social standing and abilities, are required from the manager.

Each person uses a different strategy to cope with conflict. Since these strategies/skills are more often than not acquired, every person can adapt to it in order to follow a more effective strategy as dictated by the situation. When a manager attempts to eliminate destructive conflict, s/he may make use of a variety of possible conflict management styles before conflict is resolved. Conflict management styles which can be used are avoidance, accommodating, compromising, and collaboration (See: 2.17). Each of these management styles is appropriate in one or other situation, depending on the conflict situation and the factors which influence the conflict.

The methods used to manage all forms of tension, including severe conflict between members of staff, are of the utmost importance for the effective functioning of any organisation. For this reason it is important that the manager and management teams of EWC FET college be trained to resolve conflict effectively. Nelson and Quick (2000:450) state that conflict management skills are keys to managerial success and that the manager’s task is to stimulate functional conflict and prevent or resolve dysfunctional conflict. Unresolved conflict of whatever kind can cripple any organisation.

A popular way of describing conflict resolution strategies is in terms of winning and losing. John et al. (2004:317) describes these strategies broadly as follows:

- Lose – lose

The outcome of this strategy is when nobody really gets what they want. According to John et al. (2004:316), compromise occurs when each party gives up something of value to the other. Here, no one fully gets what they desire; the antecedent conditions for future conflict are established.
• **Win-lose**

One party achieves its desire at the expense and to the exclusion of the other party's desires. Win-lose strategies fail to address the root causes of the conflict and tend to suppress the desires of at least one of the conflicting parties. In all probability the conflict will erupt at a later stage in future (Cummins & Worley, 2005:229).

• **Win-win**

Both parties are satisfied with the outcome and the focus is on solving the problem and not defeating each other. John *et al.* (2004:318) and Cummings and Worley (2005:229) assert that when success is achieved, true conflict resolution has occurred.

### 2.16 MANAGING CONFLICT

The question that is constantly asked is how does one manage conflict? Robbins and Coulter (2005:527) state that conflict is a natural by-product of people's interactions in the organisation and cannot be – nor should it be – eliminated. These authors argue that conflicts arise because members of the organisation have different goals and organisations have limited or scarce resources. Therefore the ability to manage conflict is the most important skill a manager needs to manage conflict. Behavioural consequences of conflict in educational organisations can be undesirable. For example, the ineffective management of conflict can and frequently does create a climate that exacerbates the situation and is likely to develop a downward spiral of mounting frustration, a deteriorating organisational climate, and an increasing destructiveness (Owens, 2001:308). Owens further states that effective conflict management, on the other hand, can lead to outcomes that are productive and enhance the health of the organisation.
over time. Furthermore, Jones (2004:438) suggests that the method an organisation selects to manage conflict depends on the source of the problem.

Jones and George (2003:553) assert that conflict resolution means that the conflict is settled by compromise or by collaboration between the parties in conflict. The concept acknowledges the dynamic employee–employer relationship in which conflict is always present. Robbins (2003:404) concurs when he maintains that in organisations where conflict is too low, it needs to be increased by applying appropriate conflict management techniques. Given that colleges are central social agencies, the purpose of conflict management is to keep conflict moderate and let it function to the benefit of the college as an organisation.

It is clear from the above that effective conflict management is important for the success of an educational institution. The different conflict managerial styles will now be dealt with.

2.17 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES

Ting-Toomey (1988) (cited in Brew & Cairns 2004:30), proposed that conflict presents a potentially threatening situation in which personal vulnerability may be exposed and identity questioned. Therefore, conflict has to be negotiated through a set of communicative exchanges which essentially are concerned to save, protect, give or maintain face that involves self-worth and other identity concerns. Just as college managers have their own distinct leadership style, the way they respond to conflict is also unique to each individual. Given that most conflicts in FET colleges such as EWC are unexpected and often escalate very quickly, it is very difficult to prepare for all the uncertainties that any conflict episode may involve.
Mullins (1999:821) points out that a more participative and supportive style of managerial behaviour is likely to assist in conflict management. Bendix (1996:439) concurs when she states that democratic management, on the one hand, minimises conflict while on the other, autocratic leadership, high task orientation and a high degree of mobilisation normally lead to an escalation of the conflict potential. Kemp (1992:13) points out that democracy in the workplace implies a democratic style of management on the part of the leaders. He further argues that the struggle for greater democracy exists in institutions and is reflected in the conflict and strikes which are prevalent in organisations.

According to Kemp (1992:14), the prevalence of autocratic management styles is caused by the fact that managers are results-orientated. This leads to a tendency to “push” subordinates to achieve quick results by using autocratic power. According to this argument, autocratic and authoritarian style creates conflict in the modern organisation. Stanley and Algert (2007:55) summarise the styles as competing, avoiding, compromising, collaborating, and accommodating. The goal for each management style is: competing “to win”, avoiding “to delay”, compromising “to find a middle ground”, collaborating “to find a win–win solution”, and accommodating “to yield”. These authors (Mullins, 1999:821; Stanley & Algert, 2007:55; Aritzeta, Ayestaran & Swailes, 2005:163) concur that there is no best or one single method for dealing with conflict, and the instrument is used to help individuals understand how and why they use a particular style in a given situation. In this study the researcher concentrated on the five major conflict management styles as illustrated in Figure 2.1 below:
2.17.1 Avoidance

Aritzeta et al. (2005:163), define this avoidance management style as related to a low concern for self and a low concern for others and is related to withdrawal behaviour, hiding disagreements, and sidestepping confrontations with the other party involved in the conflict. Any strategy aimed at avoiding major confrontation or conflict is called avoidance. Robbins, Odendaal and Roodt (2003:294) as well as Maurer (1996:100) argue that ignoring conflict simply means withdrawing from conflict situations by hoping it will go away. The avoidance style refers to unassertive and uncooperative behaviours, as depicted in Figure 2.1 and is used
by individuals to stay away from conflict, ignore disagreements, or remain neutral (Hellriegel, Jackson & Slocum, 1998:373).

Kistan (2000:43) sees avoidance as a series of behaviours which include ignoring conflict, procrastination, delaying tactics, isolation, withholding interventions and withdrawal from the situation. Avoidance techniques do not actually resolve the situation, but attempts to evade it (Moorhead et al., 1999:224). In discussing this style, Kistan (2000:43) states that college managers who are not available at meetings with lecturers, parents and other stakeholders, either separately or jointly, are reluctant to answer pertinent questions and are guilty of avoidance. When asked to take a position or make a decision on some controversial issues, EWC college managers often use delaying tactics in the hope that the crisis will dissipate. In support of these views, Whetten and Cameron (2005:353) state that this is often the response of managers who are emotionally ill-prepared to cope with the stress associated with confrontation, or it might reflect recognition that a relationship is not strong enough to absorb the fallout of an intense conflict.

The avoidance strategy might appear to be suitable for handling some conflict since it implies taking no action at all. This style, according to Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly and Konopaske (2006:274) and Hellriegel et al. (1998:374), and indicated in Figure 2.1 may be desirable in some situations for instance: (1) the issue is minor or only of passing importance and is thus not worth the individual's time or energy to confront conflict; (2) there isn't enough information available to the individual to deal effectively with the conflict at the time; and (3) the individual's power is so low relative to the other person's that there is little chance of causing change. On the other hand, Goodwin and Griffith (2007:45) argue that the avoidance of important conflicts, such as employee and customer complaints or matters affecting organisational effectiveness, often leads to an escalation in conflict and results in a loss of trust, goodwill, and even revenue. They further state that the manager as “avoider” loses the respect of others who become
frustrated with his or her willingness to allow issues to be decided by default. Therefore, avoiding brings more negative consequences than positive ones. However, it appears that college managers lack skills for managing conflict effectively in the FET colleges in the Ekurhuleni West District.

Since the avoiding style is characterised by a low concern for the self and for others, it solves no problems and only serves to frustrate at least one party. It is ethically defensible only if other matters have greater moral importance at that time (Rahim, Butzman & White, 1999:160). In theory the avoiding style would not be frequently preferred by those in high development positions because it serves to prolong an unsatisfactorily situation, exacting a penalty on at least one of the disputants (Rahim et al. 1999:161). However, Kistan (2000:43) warns that managers of educational institutions may not be able to deal with every conflict situation in the colleges but choosing to ignore certain conflicts, even temporarily, requires that managers be knowledgeable about functional and dysfunctional aspects of conflict.

2.17.2 Domination

In the domination-type conflict handling style, college managers force the other parties to a conflict to comply with specific conditions and thereby accept their decisions through the use of authority or power. Terms associated with this style of conflict management include coercion, aggression, force and competition. Robbins et al. (2003:294) are of the opinion that "force" can include the use of institutional authority and power, reward and punishment, bribery and even physical force. Aritzeta et al. (2005:163), state that in this conflict-handling style the feelings and interests of others are disregarded and, in practice, this view of conflict sees that there are winners and losers only. It would appear that college managers use this type of management style as a result of their formal authority and hierarchical structure. Nelson and Quick (2000:444) and Robbins (2003:294) in supporting this view, state that through this process the conflict is not resolved.
but merely driven underground as the conflicting parties have not addressed the source of conflict. Discord is all that is eliminated not the source of conflict. College managers who use this style often do not tolerate any differences of opinion from their colleagues and subordinates and often pursue this to the extent of sacrificing interpersonal relationships. The problem with this conflict management style approach is that it breeds hostility, resentment and produces a backlash in the long run as people become increasingly unwilling to absorb the emotional cost and work to undermine the power base of the authoritarian leader (Whetten & Cameron, 2005:253). College managers using this style often assume that it involves a win-lose situation and they may threaten subordinates with demotion, dismissal, poor performance evaluation or any other punishment (Everard & Morrison, 1996:38).

2.17.3 Accommodation (smoothing)

This method used by college managers, as indicated in Figure 2.1, focuses on appeasement and the preservation of relationships. According to Martins (2001:869) and Robbins et al. (2003:294) this approach reflects a style that would allow the other party to achieve what they desire from the situation. It is an attempt to maintain unity and harmony by subjugating one's own wishes. Newstrom and Davis (2002:267) contend that managers who use this style is said to have an "accommodative" style which is characterised by self-sacrifice in the form of selfless generosity, charity, obeying another's orders or yielding to another's point of view.

Hellriegel et al. (1998:376) state that accommodators are usually favourably evaluated by others, but they are also perceived as weak and submissive. When using the accommodating style, an individual may act as though the conflict will go away in time and appeal for cooperation (Daft & Noe, 2001:458). Managers, according to Gibson et al. (2006:274), must explain to the conflicting groups that the organisation's work will be jeopardised if the group will not cooperate with
each other. As long as both groups see that the manager isn’t taking sides, they may rise to the occasion and agree, at least to a limited truce.

Users of this style appeal for cooperation and appear to be sympathetic in the hope of reducing tensions. However, Rahim et al. (1999:160) argue that this style is ineffective and only suitable as a short-term solution because it simply encourages individuals to cover up and avoid expressing their feelings. Goodwin and Griffith (2007:46) concur that a manager relying too heavily on this style will often find that the issues they really care are deferred, minimised, or ignored and therefore a manager must truly believe an issue does not warrant greater attention or otherwise gain skills in assertiveness to push for his ideas.

2.17.4 Compromise

This style involves each party to the conflict seeking to give up something and sharing occurs. This results in a compromised outcome (Robbins 2003:294). It is an attempt to resolve conflict by encouraging parties to a dispute to adopt a give-and-take approach. The main thrust, according to Newstrom and Davis (2002:267), of this style is involves individuals looking for middle ground in the conflict and searching for solutions that are satisfactory or acceptable to both parties. Goodwin and Griffith (2007:50) and Gibson et al. (2006:274) state that in conflict situations, compromise is common. Here employees will often press the manager for concession on issues such as vacation and other leave time, modification to work schedules, changes in duties, and opportunities for more challenging assignments. Whetten and Cameron (2005:354) state that a common mistake made by managers in mergers is placing undue emphasis on “being fair to both sides” by compromising on competing corporate policies and practises as well as decisions concerning which redundant staff members get laid off. A manager at EWC FET college may not give in to these demands or requests immediately because of concerns over the impact such a request will have on the institution, but where the requests are reasonable, the manager will
want to compromise. Goodwin and Griffith, (2007:50) further assert that managers operating in this mode may find themselves constantly having to make deals. This may lead some employees to attempt manipulation in order to wheedle concessions in exchange for their cooperation. Here compromise is inappropriate and the manager should reinforce the notion that staff cooperation is a basic requirement of work.

However, Nelson and Quick (2000 446) point out that all parties must be willing to settle for something less than the original, while Kistan (2000:46) warns that the compromise style of conflict management seems to be effective only in conflicts involving employees of equal status such as, for example, students versus students, and lecturer versus lecturer.

### 2.17.5 Collaboration

College managers at EWC FET colleges who strive to satisfy the concerns of all participants in a conflict optimally by seeking a win-win situation are often said to possess a collaborative management style. In collaborating, the intention is to solve the problem by clarifying differences rather than by accommodating various points of view (Robbins, 2003:295). Goodwin and Griffith (2007:51) and Whetten and Cameron (2005:354) state that collaboration is a problem-solving rather than a problem-generating approach. A typical collaborative process involves brainstorming multiple ideas that may resolve conflict, analysing the pros and cons of each idea, considering options and alternatives, and arriving at the best solution suitable to both parties.

Martins (2001:870) concurs that this style gives equal recognition to the need to resolve conflict through meeting the objectives and desires of both parties if a lasting settlement is to be achieved. Therefore, everybody, regardless of their motives, can make a positive contribution to the success of the college and in this sense, all stands to benefit from conflict. In this style, the college manager
acts as a facilitator to help each party to redefine its goals, considers alternative solutions and selects one which is mutually acceptable to all concerned. According to Mullins (2005:905), confrontation, collaboration and problem solving are similar in nature and are regarded to be the most effective form of conflict management. However, collaboration is not needed if the relationship is not worth preserving and where the opposing party has not demonstrated trustworthiness and is unlikely to change (Goodwin & Griffith, 2007:52).

The main idea is to cooperate in order to resolve the conflict permanently. This style is most useful in resolving conflicts stemming from semantic misunderstanding, such as ambiguity, distortion, inadequate information, as well as resolving interpersonal and structural conflicts common in an educational institution (Moorhead & Griffin, 1999:225). Cloke and Goldsmith (2000:34), Robbins et al. (2003:94) and Goodwin and Griffith (2007:51) all argue that the collaborative approach is the most effective way of ending the conflict completely and starting on a path to transformation because it is deeper, more lasting and encourages learning. These authors further assert that this is the only win-win strategy out of the five.

It can be argued that managers of FET colleges in the Ekurhuleni West District need to understand that adopting a collaborative approach to problem solving and conflict resolution works best in an environment supporting openness, directness and equality (Whetten & Cameron, 2005:355).

2.17.6 A Comparison of Five Conflict Management Styles

In an attempt to assist managers in dealing with a variety of different conflict situations, Whetten and Cameron (2005:354) use Table 2.1 included below, to show a comparison between the five conflict manager styles/approaches. In this table the fundamentals of each management style are laid out, including its objective, how that objective is reflected in terms of an expressed point of view, and the supporting rationale.
### Table 2.1 A comparison of the five conflict management styles/approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style/Approach</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Point of View</th>
<th>Supporting Rationale</th>
<th>Likely Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Domination</td>
<td>Get your way</td>
<td>&quot;I know what's right. Do not question my judgement or authority&quot;</td>
<td>It is better to risk causing a few hard feelings than to abandon an issue you are committed to.</td>
<td>You feel vindicated but the other party feels defeated and possibly humiliated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Avoiding</td>
<td>Avoid having to deal with conflict.</td>
<td>&quot;I am neutral on the issue. Let me think about it. That is because they are inherently bad and create tension.&quot;</td>
<td>Disagreements</td>
<td>Interpersonal problems don't get resolved, causing long-term frustration in a variety of ways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Compromising</td>
<td>Reach an agreement quickly.</td>
<td>&quot;Let us search for a solution we can both live with so that we can get on with our work.&quot;</td>
<td>Prolonged conflicts distract people from their work and engender bitter feelings.</td>
<td>Participants become conditioned to seek expedient, rather than effective solutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Accommodating</td>
<td>Do not upset the other person.</td>
<td>&quot;How can I help you feel good about this encounter? My position is not so important that it is worth risking bad feelings between us.&quot;</td>
<td>Maintaining harmonious relationships should be our top priority.</td>
<td>The other person is likely to take advantage of you. The problem is most likely to be resolved. Also, both parties are committed to the solution and are satisfied that they have been treated fairly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Collaborating</td>
<td>Solve the problem together.</td>
<td>&quot;This is my position. What is yours? I am committed to finding the best possible solution. What do the facts suggest?&quot;</td>
<td>The position of both parties are equally important (though not necessarily equally valid). Equal emphasis should be placed on the quality of the outcome and the fairness of the decision-making process.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Whetten & Cameron, 2005
Robbins (2000:535) asserts that the ability to manage conflict is undoubtedly one of the most important skills a manager needs to possess. Because problems and conflict occur widely in team-oriented organisations the way in which conflict is managed may determine the success or failure of team outcomes (Aritzeta & Ayestaran (2005:161). Goodwin and Griffith (2007:55) state that managers must carefully assess the conflict, as illustrated in Table 2.2. These conflict-handling styles to manage conflict are a function of how assertive you are in trying to satisfy your own or group’s concerns and how cooperative you are in trying to satisfy those of the other party or group (Johns & Saks, 2008:448).

Contrary to these views, it appears that most managers in EWC FET colleges lack conflict management skills to manage effectively the post-merger conflict in these institutions. The underlying belief of this study is that it is essential to engage all stakeholders in a conflict situation in which all staff members express their views openly as opposed to suppressing their feelings and thoughts about the issues. The reality is that conflict as a result of the merger can be addressed better where all staff members participate in decision-making processes.

Cloke and Goldsmith (2000:34) point out that for a manager, the ideal conflict handling style in most situations, particularly issues amongst employees, is collaboration. On the other hand, according to Goodwin and Griffith (2007:54), if the parties are not able to achieve a true collaborative outcome, the next preferred mode is compromise as is indicated in Table 2.1. In other words, the manager would have to encourage the parties at least to come to some resolution so they can move forward in their working relationship, even if the outcome is less than ideal.

Johns and Saks (2008:449); Goodwin and Griffith (2007:55); Robbins and Judge (2010:198); and Whetton and Cameron (2005:355) emphasise that none of the five styles for dealing with conflict in Table 2.1 is inherently superior. These
authors concur that each style might have its place given the situation in which the conflict episode occurs.

2.18 SUMMARY

In this chapter conflict management emanating from the merger implementation process was examined and used as a theoretical framework for the discussion of effective conflict management in post-merger FET colleges in the Ekurhuleni West District. The chapter focussed on various conflict management theories and models relating to effective conflict management in post-merger FET colleges. Issues explored included the effects of the mergers of educational institutions, organisational change within the context of a merger process, conflict management, and the various styles employed to manage conflict effectively. Present and future college managers face enormous and critical challenges, especially with regard to college management in general, and conflict management in post-merger EWC FET colleges in particular. The chapter showed that no single style of conflict management can be applied to any one situation. The challenges facing college managers are not based on the wish that conflict should go away but rather on the ways in which managers can become skilled to deal with such situations effectively.

A large component of the chapter was dedicated to an analysis of the available literature related to organisational change and which deal with issues such as resistance to change, managing resistance to change, communication, conflict management and conflict management styles. Lewin's change model was also explored and its applicability to the implementation of effective conflict management in post-merged EWC FET colleges, assessed.

The chapter provided the context for this study and used as a basis for developing the research questionnaire as the instrument of research in this
investigation of the perceptions of management, the merger implementation process and the management of conflict emanating from the mandated merger.

The next chapter will focus on the research methodology employed in this current study to design the research instrument and provide a process to be followed in the empirical investigation.
3.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature study in Chapter Two provided a theoretical background to the analysis of the effects of conflict management in post-merger FET colleges in the Ekurhuleni West District. The substantive literature study and the preliminary research served to identify some crucial issues concerning the effective management of conflict resolution. It also indicated where the gaps in the existing body of knowledge on the development of conflict management skills for FET college managers in EWC.

The overall aim of this study was to determine how conflict management can be used effectively in post-merger EWC. In this chapter all the relevant information concerning the quantitative research design and methodology is presented. The research design and methods will be used to investigate and develop a model for effective conflict management that can be used by managers in post-merger EWC FET colleges. The research design focuses on the following aspects:

- the purpose of quantitative research;
- the design of the questionnaire as a research instrument;
- a discussion of the selected questions used by the researcher;
- the empirical investigation;
- a discussion of the respondents used, their requested biographical details;
- the return of the questionnaires.
The research design will emphasise the merits of quantitative research as far as data collection, recording procedures and the instruments of research are concerned.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The quantitative research method was chosen as the most relevant and suitable for this research because the study is aimed at obtaining insight into the effective use of conflict management measures by managers in post-merger EWC FET colleges. The research design is a plan for collecting and utilising data so that desired information can be obtained with sufficient precision or a hypothesis can be tested properly (Burns & Grove, 2005:50). This research study examines the effect of conflict management in post-merger FET colleges with specific reference to EWC FET college. All research studies, whether historical, descriptive, or experimental, need a plan or general design to direct their inquiry about a problem question. The design, according to Taylor (2005:92) and Babbie (2002:106), is the master plan of inquiry. Educational research is interdisciplinary and provides descriptions, explanations, predictions, and evaluations of educational practices. Thus educational research can be defined as a systematic process of collecting data pertaining to education and logically analysing it in order to improve educational practice (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:21).

Keeves (1997:12) asserts that deductive reasoning is fundamental to quantitative research. Quantitative research, by virtue of deductive reasoning, assumes that a researcher should be able to proceed from general statements to statements that are more specific, which are objective and independent of human experience. These statements provide a link between theory and the observation made. The generalisations or theories that emanate from a piece of research must be applicable to a large number of cases or situations (Dzvimbo, 1995:13). This would mean placing the theory at the beginning of the study with the objective of verifying the theory, rather than developing it.
The design describes the procedures of conducting the study. In support of this statement, Babbie and Mouton (2003:74) contend that research design could be viewed as the “blue print” of the research project that precedes the actual research process. This research is aided by statistical analysis, which reveals trends in the sample’s behaviour. Quantitative researchers believe that such trends or laws are sufficiently strong to have practical value, even though they do not allow for perfect predictions or control. Mouton (2001:107) further maintains that the main function of a research design is to enable the researcher to anticipate what the appropriate research decision should be so as to maximise the validity of the eventual results. Quantitative researchers, in using a deductive form of reasoning, begin with constructing hypotheses and conclude by proving these, after analysing the assembled data. Use has been made of such hypotheses in this research study.

A statistical hypothesis usually assumes the opposite of what the researcher predicts. In this form it is known as a “null hypothesis” and is generally represented by the symbol “Ho”. If the researcher expects that there will be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of campuses pertaining to conflict management after the post-merger EWC FET colleges, then the hypothesis will be stated in the form of a null hypothesis. It is the null hypothesis that was tested using statistical techniques. In its null form the hypothesis will then read:

Ho: There is statistically no significant difference between the mean scores of campuses regarding the perception of the extent of effective management of the mandated merger at EWC.

The alternative hypothesis (usually represented by the symbol “Ha”) will be stated as:
Ha: There is a statistically significant difference between at least one of a pair of mean scores of the campuses regarding the perception of the extent of effective management of conflict of the mandated merger at EWC.

The null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis if a significant statistical difference is found between the mean scores of campuses concerning conflict management.

3.2.1 The purpose of quantitative research

"Quantitative" refers to any approach to data collection where the main aim is to gather information that can be counted or measured in some form or another (Fink, 2008:173; Taylor, 2005:91; Verma & Mallick, 1999:26). Babbie and Mouton (2001:49) draw our attention to the qualification of constructs in the quantitative research paradigm. Quantitative researchers make the assumptions that they can discover "laws" that lead to reliable prediction and control of educational phenomena. They view their task as the discovery of these laws by searching for irregularities in the behaviour of samples of individuals.

The quantitative researcher believes that the best or only, way of measurement is that of assigning numbers to the perceived qualities of things. A related topic concerns the central role of variables in describing and analysing human behaviour. This has become known as "variable analysis". The central role is afforded to control for sources of error in the research process. The nature of control is either through experimental control (in experimental design) or through statistical controls (in multivariate analysis). We obviously know by now that human behaviour is far too complex to try to explain it in this way.

Creswell (1994:5) asserts that the quantitative approach is termed the traditional, the positivist, the experimental, or the empiricist paradigm. He further argues that quantitative thinking emanates from an empiricist tradition. It is based on testing
theory composed of variables measured with numbers and analysed with statistical procedures in order to determine whether the predictive generalisations of theory hold true. In view of the above, questions have been formulated to determine staff members perceptions on effective conflict management in post-merger EWC.

One of the most important requisites in contemporary social science is that scientific information should be quantitative because it represents an endeavour to detect laws, relationships and explanations of various occurrences. Results obtained in such a way are always transcribed in a statistical manner. The results in this research were analysed and presented by means of statistics (See Tables 3.2 and 3.4). The extent to which observations are translated into numbers serves as an indication of the maturity of science (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004:3). Thomas (2003:133) further clarifies that quantitative research measures the reaction of many people to a limited set of questions, thus facilitating comparison and statistical aggregation of data, which give a broad, general set of findings.

It is imperative for the quantitative researcher to be as objective as possible when collecting and analysing data.

3.2.2 The relationship of the researcher to the subject

In quantitative research, the investigator's goal is objectivity. The researcher in this study kept his personal values, beliefs and biases from influencing the data-collection and analysis during the process. Thus, the test was administered in such a way that involved minimal personal interaction between him and the research sample. If interaction is necessary, as when conducting an interview, they try to standardise the interaction process so that it is identical for every individual in the sample. Conversely, the sample's role in the study is relatively passive. Their function is to react to the researcher's questions and interventions.
They do not ask to interpret the research data or to offer any opinions other than those requested by the measuring instrument (Borg, Gall & Gall, 1993:195 as cited by Mestry, 1999:183).

3.2.3 Sampling

In planning the study, researchers must select a sample which will be representative of the target population. The accessible population is the group from which the study participants are actually selected. The researcher chose a specific population which comprised of managers, heads of departments, senior lecturers and lecturers from the Ekurhuleni West College of Education and Further Training. The sample thus consisted of staff at six FET colleges in the Ekurhuleni West District.

According to Babbie (2002:105), researchers are almost never able to study all the members of the population that interest them, and they can never make every possible observation of them. In every case, then, they will select a sample from among the data that might be collected and studied. Cormack (2000:51), Best and Kahn (2003:12) and Leedy and Ormrod (2001:223) postulate that sampling is a process of choosing a small group of participants from a defined population. The assumption in the research was that these participants were knowledgeable and informative about the problem under investigation since they were directly involved in education at the college.

The above-mentioned authors further define sampling as a type of scientific research in which a number of individuals are stakeholders in establishing a concise conclusion about a large number of people. Babbie (2002:185) states that the ultimate purpose of sampling is to select a set of elements from the population in such a way that descriptions of those elements accurately portray the total population from which those elements are selected. Sampling procedures are ways of selecting a small number of units from a population to
enable a researcher to make reliable inferences about the nature of that population (Malgas, 2003:167). Babbie and Mouton (2003:164) argue that random sampling allows a researcher to make relatively few observations and generalise from those observations to a much wider population.

For the purpose of this research, a simple random sampling procedure was used. Simple random sampling according to Babbie (2002:185) means that each member of the population has an equal and independent chance of being selected. The researcher can choose a simple random sample by assigning a number to every member of the population, using a table of random numbers, randomly selecting a row or column in the table, and taking all the numbers that correspond to the sampling units in that row of columns. Six FET colleges were chosen. The participants from which a sample of this research was drawn comprised of managers, HODs, senior lecturers and lecturers (See Table 3.10). The total number of participants was 226. The researcher strove to obtain a sample which was representative of participants and in which both males and females were included in order to ensure balanced perceptions of conflict management in the post-merger EWC FET colleges. The participants were all professionally and academically qualified. The qualifications of the participants ranged from a three-year college and university diploma to a doctoral degree.

3.2.4 Data collection

The researcher used questionnaires to collect data. According to Creswell (2003:185), data collection is a process whereby the researcher meets the participant and thus obtains data from the participant. The researcher acquires information about people and things through collecting data. Fink (2008:182) and Mertens (1998:225) postulate that data collection is the vehicle through which researchers collect information to answer their research questions and defend their conclusions and recommendations, based on findings from the research.
Fink (2008:182) suggests that data collection is the core of research, and that an evaluation without data is, in fact, incongruous.

In order to pursue the empirical objective stated for this study, a questionnaire was developed as data collection instrument to investigate the 226 experiences of respondents during the post-merger phase of the six former technical colleges into EWC. In order to follow this course, the researcher had to obtain permission to conduct research in FET colleges in the Ekurhuleni West District from the Gauteng Department of Education (See Appendix B) and from the principal of EWC.

The collection of data allows researchers to anchor what they wish to discuss in the empirical world. There are essentially six methods used for collection of data: observation, questionnaires, interviews, documents, testing and unobtrusive assessments. All researchers use one or more of these versions, depending on the effectiveness and restriction of each of these considerations (Henning, van Rensburg & Smit, 2004:101-103). According to Mosala (2006:145), data collection forms an important part of any research because it does not only give a description of what data could be collected and how it should be collected but it also constitutes the basic information from which conclusions are drawn. The research information for this study was derived from data that divulged subjective assessment of an imminent merger process, perceptions, fears and uncertainties, all of which are intangible and not directly observable or measurable. A number of measurement scaling techniques were developed to assign numerical values to these intangible expressions.

Best and Kahn (2003:254) and Fink (2008:146) similarly argue that data collection is an essential component of any research because it does not only supply an explanation of what data is collected and how it is received, it further impacts on the important data from which conclusions are drawn. The primary purpose of gathering data is to gain the ability to construct reality consistent and
compatible with the inhabitants of the world of the research. Researchers use a variety of data-collection instruments, depending on the aim of the research.

3.3 THE INSTRUMENT OF RESEARCH

The questionnaire is an often-used observational instrument for collecting personal data and opinions (Babbie & Mouton 2003:239). Czaja and Blair (2005:59) assert that the questionnaire is the conduit through which information flows from the world of everyday behaviour and opinion into the world of research and analysis; it is our link to the phenomena we wish to study. It provides a way to collect personal information from subjects that may not be readily obtainable using other methods. Research of this nature must be structured to consider current views, theories and investigations around the topic. Structuring the research process ensures data collection and analysis strategies are in alignment. The questionnaire in this study provided structured responses and was carefully developed, pilot tested and revised to obtain valid data (Czaja & Blair, 2005:65). Complex responses were not required where the concepts or notion of conflict management were indicated in this research. Research in this study revolves around opinions, attitudes and perceptions.

3.3.1 The questionnaire as research instrument

The questionnaire was used in this research in order to collect data from a selected sample of participants. As mentioned above the questionnaire is the most broadly used technique for acquiring information.

Babbie (2002:241) defines the questionnaire as an instrument specifically designed to elicit information that will be useful for analysis. It is relatively economical, contains structured or unstructured questions, and ensures that the respondent remains anonymous and that the questions can be asked with a specific purpose in mind (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:194; Best & Kahn,
For this research, questionnaires were used to obtain factual data, attitudes and opinions in a structural framework from respondents from EWC. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:155) further argues that questionnaires are used extensively because they provide the best way of obtaining information for a wide range of research problems, surveys of large populations and reactions of students to different instrumental methods.

Babbie (2002:247) believes that developing and using questionnaires takes skill and experience. When the researcher specifies the subject and analytical use of each question, clearly the underlying expectation is that a valid measurement will be obtained in the survey. The instrument must therefore measure the attitudes, behaviours, or attributes required by each question (Czaja & Blair, 2005:65).

Using questionnaires is a way of getting data about people by asking them rather than watching them behave or by sampling a bit of their behaviour. Czaja and Blair (2005:65) and Babbie and Mouton (2003:234) postulate that participants must understand the question as the researcher intends, have the necessary information, and be able and willing to provide an answer in the form the question requires. Babbie and Mouton (2003:243/244) and Babbie (2002:247) believe that, as a general guideline, the questionnaire should be as attractive and brief, and as easy to respond to, as possible. An improperly laid out questionnaire can lead respondents to miss questions, confuse them about the nature of data desired, and even lead them to throw the questionnaire away. These authors feel that in order to meet this guideline, the researcher must carefully plan both the content and the format of the questionnaire.

Babbie (2002:242) and McMillan and Schumacher (2006:197) state that questionnaire items can either be open-ended questions, in which case the respondent is asked to provide his or her own answer to a question, or closed questions, in which case the respondent is asked to select an answer from among a list provided by the researcher. Fink (2008:150) suggests that closed
questions are efficient and reliable. Generally, also, it is desirable to design the questions in closed form so that the data can be quantified and analysed effectively.

For the purpose of the research, closed questions were used. The researcher, under the guidance of the promoter, formulated questions around the aspects of conflict management that he wished to measure. The researcher used a five-point Likert intensity scale for the questionnaire. A Likert scale is relatively easy to construct, easy to use and has an effective discriminating ability. It records the degree of support or non-support by a respondent for a particular attitudinal statement, as respondents have the opportunity to express a favourable or unfavourable attitude with regard to each statement (Wegner, 2000:86).

The respondents were required to make a choice according to a five-point scale as follows:

1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neither agree nor agree
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly agree

A possible question could be: Managers have been trained in conflict management.

EXAMPLE: To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Should the respondent disagree but not totally, then he/she should circle (2) on the scale.

3.3.2 The design of the questionnaire

The design of the empirical investigation was a structured questionnaire consisting of 30 items (see Appendix A). Members of the EWC college staff were required to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements concerning conflict management post-merger in their respective colleges. Thirty closed items were designed to obtain the perceptions of members of academic staff as to how the merger implementation process and conflict stemming from the mandated merger was managed at the FET colleges in the Ekurhuleni West District. In this study all questions were developed in accordance with the study objectives and conceptual framework. A range of closed questions was used to allow respondents to explain their responses if they wished. The format of the questionnaire comprised largely category-style questions, where categories of opinions were given.

On the basis of the literature study undertaken by the researcher, two key components were identified for the purpose of this empirical investigation. The two key components were management of:

- The merger implementation process; and
- Conflict emanating from the mandated merger process.

Section A of the questionnaire comprised seven items, which included the gathering of biographical information of the participants, as well as relevant information concerning their colleges. The items with their respective mean scores (Tables 3.1 and 3.3) and the distribution of responses (Tables 3.2 and 3.4) are presented below. This is followed by a discussion of some of the items in
Section B of the questionnaire, as well as a graphical presentation and discussion of items in Section A.

3.3.3 Grouping of Questionnaire Items

Of the 30 questions that appear in the questionnaire 10 questions relate to effective management of the merger implementation process. Twenty questions in Section B solicited the opinion of participants on issues related to effective conflict management emanating from the mandated merger process. These questions are represented in Tables 3.1 and 3.3. It also provides the mean score, and the rank order, from the highest to the lowest score in the group, derived from the responses of members of the post-merger EWC FET college academic staff. Items B2, B3, B4, B8 and B10 as depicted in Table 3.1 and items B13, B18, B25, B26 and B29 in Table 3.2 were recoded because of their negative correlation with the other questions in these factors respectively.

Table 3.1: Items associated with the extent of effective management of the merger implementation process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Rank Order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B.2</td>
<td>I experience fear in respect of possible demotion during the merger</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.10</td>
<td>Change brought about by the merger jeopardise my position at the college</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.8</td>
<td>Change brought about by the merger influence my personal values</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.4</td>
<td>I am uncertain of my future career as a result of the merger</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.7</td>
<td>The college management involved staff members in the discussion with regard to the change process</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The implementation process of the merger was clear 2.37 6
I experience stress as a result of the merger 2.35 7
The merger process was consultative 2.34 8
The merger process was transparent 2.30 9
New policies regarding the merger have been clearly explained to the staff 2.18 10

Table 3.2: Distribution of responses of academic staff and management teams pertaining to merger management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item no.</th>
<th>Frequency of respondents scoring 1-5</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% selecting 1 &amp; 2</th>
<th>% selecting 4 &amp; 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1  2   3   4   5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B9</td>
<td>52  110 34  23  4</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B6</td>
<td>57  86  40  29  11</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5</td>
<td>55  84  44  30  9</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>57  94  20  36  16</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>62  72  37  44  6</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B7</td>
<td>46  95  38  37  7</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>57  88  29  34  14</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B8</td>
<td>37  75  50  47  14</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B10</td>
<td>34  68  52  54  15</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>29  69  42  62  21</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The focus now shifts to the grouping of questionnaire items, which relate to (factor B2) the extent of effective conflict management from the merger at EWC.
The items with their respective mean score and the rank order in the group derived from the respondents are clearly illustrated in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Items associated with the extent of effective management of conflict from the merger at EWC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Rank Order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B.28</td>
<td>My immediate manager has an open door policy as far as disputes are concerned</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.26</td>
<td>During conflict the management team makes use of threats to resolve conflict</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.13</td>
<td>The management team is oblivious to conflict situations</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.22</td>
<td>The top down structure at my campus does lead to organisational conflict</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.29</td>
<td>My manager avoids conflict by postponing decisions on controversial issues</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.17</td>
<td>The management team attempts to consider the feelings of others in conflict</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.19</td>
<td>When dealing with conflict the management team consults all role-players</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.12</td>
<td>The college management team attempts to accommodate the needs of all stakeholders</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.11</td>
<td>The college management team uses an impartial party to assist staff members to settle their differences</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.27</td>
<td>The management team acts decisively to reduce potential conflict</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.18</td>
<td>The lack of communication between management and lecturers is a cause for conflict</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The college management team considers all possible solutions when conflict arises.

The management team uses a process of making joint decisions to solve differences.

The college management team resolves conflict by inviting role-players to participate in finding solutions to problems.

The management team uses a participative management style to reduce organisational conflict.

Management resolves all conflict issues/matters fairly.

The management team attempts to reduce potential conflict by inviting all lecturers to participate in decision making.

The conflict resolution management style is consistent in their dealings with the situation at my campus.

Scarcity of resources has the potential to increase conflict.

Table 3.4: Distribution of responses of academic staff and management teams pertaining to management of conflict

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ItemNo.</th>
<th>Frequency of respondents scoring 1-5</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% selecting 1 &amp; 2</th>
<th>% selecting 4 &amp; 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B25</td>
<td>80 109 11 15</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B15</td>
<td>59 90 37 28 4</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B23</td>
<td>51 104 37 33 1</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B16</td>
<td>53 105 30 32 5</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Having displayed the various items underlying the levels of effective management of conflict in the mandated merger at EWC, a discussion on selected items now follows.

3.4 DISCUSSION OF KEY ASPECTS UNDERLYING THE EXTENT OF THE EFFECTIVE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT OF THE MANDATED MERGER AT EWC

Questions were formulated in such a way that members of the college's academic staff could indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements relating to the effective management of the merger implementation process.
Each question was preceded by the following statement: to what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statement?
Example: The manager resolves all conflicting issues amicably.

3.4.1 Discussions on questions related to the extent of the effective management of the merger implementation process

- Question B2: I experienced fear in respect of possible demotion during the merger.

Daft and Noe (2001:629) argue that changes in job design, structure and technology may cause employees to fear the loss of power, status, pay, benefits, demotion or even their jobs. Employees may fear that, after changes are made, they will not be able to perform as well and thus will not be as valuable to the institution, their supervisors, or their co-workers. The researcher assumes that this might have been the case for the former employees of the six technical colleges as some of them experienced a feeling of inferiority and believed that they would be the ones to lose their jobs in the restructuring process.

Question B2 had a mean score of 2.90, which indicates that the majority of respondents were uncertain in their response to the new processes because they felt that it might possibly result in job losses or demotion (see Table 3.1). An analysis of the data showed that 43.9% of the participants sampled either disagreed or strongly disagreed by selecting 1 and 2 on the five-point scales and the question was ranked 1 out of 30, which indicates that fear in respect of possible demotion during the merger existed. In support of this, Kirkpatrick (2001:20) and Oosthuizen (2000:2) feel that workers may disapprove of new processes because they feel they may result in job losses or demotions (see: 2.3.4).
Referring to the above information, it could be concluded that the majority of respondents agreed that fear of possible demotion was an important contributing factor to conflict in the colleges. Furthermore, job security was also threatened with regard to career progression, as there would now be more contenders for the same job, and this could possibly count against individuals who had more experience, particular skills or a higher qualification. Staff also had fears of job loss through retrenchment and the offering of severance packages.

- **Question B8: Change brought about by the merger influence my personal values.**

Individuals shape their world through their perceptions and once they have created this world, they resist changing it, and, therefore, individuals can be guilty of selectively processing information in order to keep their perceptions intact (Mullins, 2005:913) (See 2.7.4.6). Gibson *et al.* (2006:107) define values as the constellation of likes, dislikes viewpoints, rationales, prejudices, and association patterns that determines a person's view of an institution. Values and assumptions can be impediments to change, particularly if the assumptions underlying the change are alien to the employees who are affected by them.

Mergers are extremely complex and touch on every level of operation and all functions of the institutions to be merged. The process touches on attitudes, values, and patterns of behaviour, identities and perspectives, of both individuals and groups, and obviously requires careful and sensitive handling. This question had a mean score of 2.68 and a ranking of 3 out of 30. The results confirm that change brought about by the merger possibly influenced personal values. The data reveals that 50, 2% of the respondents indicated that they either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that change brought about by the merger did not influence their personal values.
• **Question B4:** I am uncertain about my future career as a result of the merger.

There is a tendency for some people to find a sense of security in the past, and in times of frustration or difficulty, or when faced with new or unfamiliar ideas or methods, people may reflect on the past (Mullins, 2005:914). This may have been the wish of some staff members at EWC to cling to and retain old and comfortable ways of doing things.

This question had a mean score of 2.40 and had a ranking of 4 out of 30. The results indicate that a large percentage of the respondents partially disagreed tending towards disagreed that as a result of the merger they were uncertain of future careers. Some 65, 1% of the respondents selected 1 and 2 on a five-point scale. It could be concluded that the majority of the respondents disagreed that the merger did not bring uncertainty to their future careers and this could result in behaviour that produces conflict.

• **Question B7:** The college management involved staff members in the discussion with regard to the change process.

McLagan (2002:57) believes that change touches everybody involved in the process, and everybody influences it. Change is not easy. It is always resisted. Higher education institutions are facing many issues which require fundamental change at all levels. The institutions cannot escape these changes (See: 2.4). Mullins (2005:919) agrees that information about proposed change, its implication and potential benefits should be communicated clearly to all parties. This means that management has to find ways to adapt to these changes, and higher educational institutions of the future need to be more flexible, adaptable to change and involve all stakeholders in the change process. Successful change management can be seen as one of the most important management survival skills of this century (Oosthuizen, 2002:5).
This question had a mean score of 2.39 and a ranking order of 5 out of 30. It appears that most respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement as they did not believe that college management involved staff members in the discussion with regard to the change process. The results in this study suggest that the staff of the merged institution felt they were not valued by the organisation. This is reflected in the large proportion of participants (63%) suggesting that they had not been considered during merger decisions (Table 3.2). According to Reddy (2007:496), if employees do not feel valued, motivation, and consequently organisational performance, is compromised. Therefore staff feelings of not being valued by the institution as shown in this study could exacerbate existing merger problems.

It is evident that the chance of the failure of a change process is increased if the challenges that people will encounter at the onset of change are not planned for and addressed. Participation by employees in the change process needs to commence as early as possible to ensure that solutions are fully owned by the people who will be affected, and to provide a solid platform for integration (Muller, 2006:204).

The FET Act of 1998 was a political mandate that was supposed to address the imbalances of the past (See 1.1). This was, however introduced in a top-down way using minimal consultation and this paved the way for the resulting conflict and negative attitudes as expressed in this item.

Referring to the above information, it could be concluded that the majority of the respondents did not agree that the college management involved staff members in the discussion with regard to the change process and thus believed that this surely impacts negatively on management of conflict.
Question B3: I experience stress as a result of the merger.

Stress, according to Daft and Noe (2001:481) and John et al. (2004:337), is an individual's physiological and emotional response to stimuli that place physical or psychological demands on the individual and create uncertainty and lack of personal control when important outcomes are at stake. Newstrom and Davis (2002:366) state that merging of organisations, poor working conditions, sustained conflict with management and intentional harassment of employees are all causes of stress. Mestry (1999:208) is of the opinion that owing to the seriousness and extent of the problem of stress, it might be expected that a concerted effort be made to provide help for lecturers in this area.

Stress is caused by organisational changes and the demands of jobs, roles, and interpersonal relationships, and the staff of the former six technical colleges experienced stress as a result of the merger. (See 2.4).

This question had a mean score of 2.35 and a ranking of 7 out of 30. The data indicates that the majority of the respondents (68, 8%) polled either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that they did not experience stress as a result of the merger.

It could be concluded that the majority of the respondents experienced stress as a result of the merger.

- Question B5: The merger process was consultative.
- Question B6: The merger process was transparent.

Questions B5 and B6 are interrelated and are therefore discussed under one section.
Consultative management, according to Newstrom and Davis (2002:239), means that managers ask their employees to think about issues, share their expertise, and contribute their own ideas before a managerial decision is taken. They maintain that these managers may choose to use or ignore the information and advice received; however, if the inputs are seen as used, employees are likely to feel as though they have had a positive impact. On the other hand, if the inputs are consistently rejected, employees are likely to feel that their time has been wasted.

Question B5 had a mean score of 2.34 and a ranking of 8 out of 30. A high percentage (58%) of respondents indicated that they either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that the merger process was consultative. They consider inclusive consultancy as an important competency that managers should have for managing conflict effectively. It could thus be concluded that the majority of the respondents were not consulted during the merger implementation process. Muller (2006:204) states that participation by employees in the change process needs to commence as early as possible to ensure that solutions are fully owned by the people who will be affected, and to provide a solid platform for integration.

- Question B9: New policies regarding the merger have clearly been explained to the staff.

This question had a mean score of 2.18 and a rank order of 10 out of 10. A high percentage (72%) of respondents indicated that they either disagreed or strongly disagreed that management explained new policies during the merger process. Referring to the above information, it could be concluded that the majority of the respondents indicated that new policies about the merger process were not adequately explained to them. It appears that ambiguous policies are a possible source of escalating conflict. What is needed is for management to explain, carry out and sustain policy implementation for effective management of conflict.
It would thus appear to the researcher that very few (if any) of the various means for managing mergers were seriously considered. Political mergers are about who has the most power and it appears as if the Government of the day “paved the way” for managers of the merged institutions to fail in their endeavours to effectively manage the change process.

Having discussed all selected questions related to the effective management of the merger implementation process, a discussion on the extent of effective management of the conflict from the mandated merger now follows.

3.4.2 Discussions on questions related to the extent of effective conflict management from the mandated merger

- Question B22: The top down structure at my campus leads to organisational conflict.

Mullins (2005:920) states that top management has a full responsibility for the underlying philosophy and attitudes of the organisation, for creating and sustaining a healthy climate, and for establishing appropriate and supportive processes (See 2.10).

However, this researcher would wish to add that one can only expect top management to accept full responsibility if they were properly consulted in the merger process. This question had a mean score of 2.63 and a ranking order of 4 out of 20. High percentages (52, 7%) (Table 3.4) of respondents sampled either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the top down structure at the campus did not lead to conflict. The responses reflect that most of the respondents confirmed that the top down structures contributed to conflict at the campus.
• Question B29: My manager avoids conflict by postponing decisions on controversial issues.

Robbins et al. (2003:294) and Maurer (1996:100) argue that ignoring conflict simply means withdrawing from conflict situations and hoping it will go away.

When asked to take a position or decision on some controversial issues, college managers often use delaying tactics in the hope that the crisis will dissipate. The avoidance strategy might appear to be suitable for handling some conflict since it implies taking no action at all (See 2.17.1). This is in keeping with the researcher's observation that managers adopt the avoidance management style in the hope that the conflict will dissipate.

The mean score of 2.51 indicates that the majority of respondents, as many as 61.7%, either disagreed or strongly disagreed that their manager does not avoid conflict by postponing decisions on controversial issues. Almost daily, the management teams are called upon to act decisively and make decisions on issues which may appear to be complex, sensitive and controversial. These decisions are not taken because of a possible lack of capacity or fear of reprisals. They are often avoided in the hope that the situation will dissipate (See 2.17.1). Ongoing professional development which will include conflict management and decision making should increase the competency of managers to manage conflict more effectively.

Referring to the above information, it could be concluded that the majority of respondents agreed that managers use the avoidance management style by postponing decisions on controversial issues, and regarded this aspect as important for effective conflict management.

• Question B15: The conflict resolution management style is consistent in their dealings with the situation at my campus.
This question had a mean score of 2.17 and a rank order of 15 out of 20. The data alludes to a majority of 58% of respondents either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that the conflict resolution management style of the college is consistent in their dealings with conflicting situations. It appears that college management teams must be capacitated and empowered to deal effectively and immediately with the multitude of conflict situations that arise on a daily basis at the campuses.

- **Question B18: The lack of communication between management and lecturers is a cause for conflict.**

Problems of communication appear to be basic to most conflict situations in an academic institution (See 2.8.1). De Bruyn and Kruger (2001:208) state that communication is an important tool in the hands of leaders fostering change and can be used to build commitment to the change process. Robbins *et al.* (2001:409) state that conflict can be reduced through communicating with employees to assist them to see the logic of change, and if employees receive the full facts this is likely to clear up misunderstanding, and there could be less resistance. Bartels *et al.* (2006:300) views appropriate language, empathic communication, feedback, trust, and effective listening as some advantages that managers can benefit from when effective communication takes place during a merger process, and regards these as elements that could reduce conflict.

This question had a mean score of 2.34 and it had a ranking of 9 out of 20. The data reveals that a substantial number (71, 7%) (Table 3.4) of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the lack of communication between management and lecturers was not a cause for conflict. This affirms the researcher's assumption that poor communication impacts negatively on college effectiveness and would appear to be one of the main causes of conflict. Communication also has a vital role in reducing anxiety, managing expectations, demonstrating concern, promoting integration, building new networks, building
trust and commitment, and encouraging involvement through feedback and two-way communication (Muller, 2006:202). In a merger situation where emotions are running high, communication should be simple, consistent and repeated so as to reduce conflict in these institutions.

Referring to the above information, it could be concluded that the majority of the respondents agreed that the lack of effective communication was a cause for conflict.

- **Question B12:** The college management team attempts to accommodate the needs of all stakeholders.

This management approach reflects a style that would allow the other party to achieve what they desire from the situation (Martins, 2001:869; Robbins 2003:294). This method according to Mestry (1999:201) is used to manage all forms of tension, including severe conflict between members of staff, and is of the utmost importance for the effective functioning of the institution. This is not surprising, following the researcher's experience of college autocratic management styles.

This question had a mean score of 2.36 and a ranking of 7 out of 20. The data indicates that 63% of respondents polled either disagreed or strongly disagreed and the distribution of responses demonstrates that management makes limited attempts to accommodate the needs of all stakeholders to reduce conflict. This tends to mirror the general trend that college management teams do not accommodate the needs of all stakeholders.
• Question B24: The management team uses a participative management style to reduce organisational conflict.

Goodwin and Griffith (2007:241) posit that an organisation that engages in participative management practice is interested in driving decision making processes as far down the organisational chart as possible. Newstrom and Davis (2002:187) concur with the views of these authors. They maintain that participative managers still retain ultimate responsibility for the operation of their organisations but they have learned to share operating responsibility with those who perform the work and this result in employees feeling a sense of involvement in organisational goals.

"Synergism" is the term used for the process, in other words, decisions made by a group are often more effective than those made by an individual. The following are some advantages that managers can benefit from when including lecturers in the decision-making process (Mestry, 1999:205):

- More information and knowledge are gathered while expertise and experience are shared;
- A decision is more easily accepted by the whole group;
- Responsibility for decisions is shared; and
- Group decision making allows for expressions of the basic principles of the democratic rights of individuals.

By including lecturers in the decision-making process, employees are allowed to have a say in decisions that affect them. Participation complements empowerment, increases workers' involvement in decision making, and gives them greater autonomy to change work procedures to increase organisational performance (See: 2.8.2).
A participative style of managerial behaviour which encourages supportive relationships between managers and subordinates, and group methods of organisation, decision making and supervision are more likely to lead to sustained improvement in work performance (Mullins, 2005:919).

This question had a mean score of 2.28 and a ranking of 13 out of 20. The majority of respondents, as many as 85%, either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the management team uses a participative management style to reduce organisational conflict (see Table 3.3). It is evident that most staff members consider that it is important for management to include lecturers in the decision-making process when resolving conflict issues.

- Question B25: Scarcity of resources has the potential to increase conflict.

A common source of conflict in many educational institutions is the limited resources such as physical space, books, equipment, human resources’ funding and services. The merging of the previously independent FET colleges in 1994 led to limited resources within these institutions (See 2.10.2). Gibson et al. (2006:269) state that when resources must be allocated, mutual dependencies increase, and any differences in group goals become more apparent. What often happens in limited-resource situations is a win-lose competition that can result in dysfunctional conflict if groups refuse to collaborate. When resources are scarce, working relationships are likely to suffer, and this is especially true in organisations that are experiencing downsizing or financial difficulty or during a merger (John et al., 2004:315).

Managers have the responsibility towards their staff to provide resources to develop programmes. These resources must support lecturers in accomplishing their instructional goals as well as achieving the objectives of the institution.
This question had a mean score of 1.97 and a ranking order of 16 out of 20. A high percentage (84%) of respondents indicated that they either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that scarcity of resources does not have the potential to increase conflict. It therefore appears that the scarcity of resources increased conflict in these colleges.

- **Question B27: The management team acts decisively to reduce potential conflict.**

This question had a mean score of 2.35 and a ranking order of 8 out of 20. It appears that most respondents did not agree with the question that management acts decisively to reduce conflict. Some 63.6 of% the respondents selected 1 and 2 on the five-point scale. It would appear that the majority of the respondents disagreed that decisive action was taken to reduce potential conflict, which is an important aspect of conflict management.

- **Question B16: Management resolves all conflict issues/matters fairly.**

This question had a mean score of 2.23 and a ranking order of 14 out of 20. It appears from the low ranking of 14 that most respondents did not agree with the question that conflict issues are resolved fairly. Some 16, 4% of the respondents selected 4 and 5 on a five-point scale. Referring to the above information, it could be concluded that the majority of the respondents did not agree that management resolves conflict fairly.

Having discussed each of the questions on the management of the merger implementation process and the management of conflict emanating from the mandated merger it is now necessary to examine the empirical investigation in greater detail.
3.5 EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

3.5.1 Respondents

Respondents were chosen from various post levels of the teaching profession at the college and included a sample of managers, heads of department, senior lecturers, and lecturers. It was felt that the perceptions of these respondents at various post levels relative to manager and management competencies should vary and hence it was important to sample as wide a range of post levels as possible (see Section A of the questionnaire – Appendix A) In this regard the sample can be seen as a stratified one.

3.5.2 Biographical details

The following biographical details were requested:

- Gender;
- Population group;
- Age;
- Highest qualification;
- Post level;
- Management/leadership position; and
- What position the respondent reported to directly.

All the items listed are included in the tables below.
Table 3.5: Gender representation in the sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This sample represents gender equally and would point to the fact that both female and male staff members exhibit an equal interest in the management of conflict emanating from the mandated merger implementation process at the college. This is a representation of the overall staffing establishment of FET colleges in the Gauteng province.
Table 3.6: Population group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Majority (African)</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>69.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority (Asian, Coloured and White)</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For convenience, the population groups were collapsed (because of small frequencies) to form two broad groups: the Majority (African) and the Minority group (Asian/Indian, coloured and whites).

This sample reflects the diversity of the college where this study was conducted.
Table 3.7: Respondents' age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34 years and younger</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44 years</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>48.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 years and older</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents' ages ranged from 25 years to 62 years. The sample provides a fairly even distribution in term of the age cohorts identified.
Table 3.8: Respondents' highest qualification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest Educational Qualification</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-school certificate/diploma</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's Degree</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>49.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data indicates the largest number of respondents polled (49%) as having a Bachelor's degree, followed by 30.1% as having a post-school diploma. The 20.2% of respondents with a Post Graduate qualification can be viewed as those who possibly occupy management positions.
Table 3.9: Respondents’ present post level in the college

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post Level</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>79.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior lecturer</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Department</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data presented in (Table 3:9) represents the qualification status of the academic staff members at the college, the large proportion being lecturers, and occupying a post-level one post. The data clearly indicates that 79% of the sample was made up of lecturers at the college. It would appear that nine respondents who did not fall in any of the categories also completed the questionnaire and they were excluded from this analysis.

Table 3.10: Respondents’ present management/leadership position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manager/leadership position</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Department</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at present been in such a position</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never been in such a position</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>49.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in Table 3.10 indicates that 19 out of 221 respondents were in management or leadership positions. The 77.5% of respondents indicated that they were not at present or never in management or leadership positions.
3.6 RESEARCH GROUP

Questionnaires were distributed on a random basis to members of the academic staff at the six campuses of Ekurhuleni West College of Education and Further Training. The questionnaires were handed to managers, lecturers, heads of department, senior lecturers and lecturers, and were personally collected again after completion. Cooperation was excellent and this enabled a good return of questionnaires to be obtained. Of the 300 questionnaires distributed, 226 were found to be usable, representing a return rate of 75% as indicated below.

3.7 RETURN OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES

The following summarises the information relevant to the questionnaires on conflict management.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Handed out</th>
<th>Returned-usable</th>
<th>Percentage return</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>75.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The questionnaires were sent to the Statistical Consulting Services of the University of Johannesburg, where data was transcribed and processed.

3.8 SUMMARY

This chapter focused on quantitative research as a process the researcher used to collect and analyse data in a systemic way. This method uses numbers to describe people and its use is appropriate for determining the perception of the respondents in EWC FET colleges, concerning the effective management of conflict in this college. This chapter also indicated the purpose of quantitative research and the relationship of the researcher to the subject. A random sampling procedure was chosen in the current study. The research tool, which
was a structured questionnaire, was discussed. The study demonstrates that this technique was suited to collecting quantitative data.

The following aspects will receive attention in Chapter Four:

- The reliability and validity of the research instrument; and
- An examination, tabulation and interpretation of the data arising from statistical analysis.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF EMPIRICAL DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter three the following aspects were discussed:

- The instrument of research which included the design of the questionnaire and a discussion of some of the items in the questionnaire related to effective management of the merger implementation process and conflict management emanating from the mandated merger in FET colleges; and
- The empirical investigation which entails the respondent's chosen biographical data, the research group and the return of the questionnaire.

In this chapter the discussion will focus on the following:

- The validity and reliability of the research instrument;
- A comparison of the factor mean scores of two independent groups by stating appropriate hypotheses and interpreting the statistical data involved; and
- A comparison of the factor mean scores of the independent groups containing three or more groups by stating the hypotheses and analysing the appropriate statistical data.

Before embarking upon an analysis of the data derived from the questionnaire used in this research, it is important to establish the instrument's reliability and validity. In this regard, it is essential, firstly, to clarify these concepts and thereafter to relate them to the research.
4.2 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Reliability, according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000:117), is concerned with precision and accuracy, and for research to be reliable similar results must emerge if it was to be carried out on a similar group of respondents in a similar context. Reliability as applied to educational measurement may be defined as the level of internal consistency or stability of the measuring over time. When two forms of a test administered to the same sample of individuals, or when the same test is administered on two occasions, the same individuals will usually obtain different scores; these differences are in part attributable to errors in measurement. As such errors become larger, the reliability of the test becomes lower (Borg, Gall & Gall, 1993:257). The questions contained in the questionnaire in this study are aimed at concepts relevant to mergers and conflict management which safeguards that only relevant response will be given. Consequently their scores would be similar, which indicates the reliability of the items (Laws, Harper & Marcus, 2003:417; Kitchen & Tate, 2000:34).

Mertens (1998:287) believes that the extent to which measurement instruments are free from errors indicates their reliability. The more reliable the measurement, the closer the researcher can arrive at a true estimate of the attribute addressed by the measure. The purpose of measurement is to get an accurate estimate of a particular attribute such as, for example, the perceptions that educators have regarding the effectiveness of the implementation of the merger process and the management of conflict stemming from the mandated merger.

"Validity", on the other hand, refers to how appropriately a test goes about measuring what it is supposed to measure (Verma & Mallick, 1999:133). The relevancy, meaningfulness and usefulness of conclusions made by researchers can be defined as the validity thereof (Henning, van Rensburg & Smit, 2004:146-149). Verma and Malik (1999:133) state that validity is employed to guarantee that information includes everything it should and that it does not include
anything that should not be included. For this study, the questions posed in the questionnaire eliminated ambiguous responses.

Validity is the way of discovering a true and precise picture of what is claimed to be described and is dependent on the purpose of the research in which measurement takes place (Kitchen & Tate, 2000:35).

Validity, therefore, is the degree to which a survey instrument evaluates what it purports to measure (Best & Khan, 2003:166). A more appropriate definition of the concept "validity" is provided by Best and Khan (2003:166) below:

Validity is concerned with the accuracy of scientific findings. Establishing validity requires: determining the extent to which conclusions effectively represent empirical reality and assessing whether constructs devised by researchers represent or measure the strategies of human experience that occur.

The functionality of the present research is to ascertain the concepts pertaining to conflict management resulting from the merger process in FET colleges. Reality is represented in the questionnaire used in this research by posing questions which are relevant to the concept of conflict management and supported by the fact that it is relevant to the management of human experience as well. Therefore only EWC FET college managers, HODs, senior lecturers and lecturers were requested to complete the questionnaire. To obtain validity, the researcher had to employ standards which may have a meaningful link with research questions and with data analysis, in order to direct them in creating valid arguments, findings and reports (Leedy & Omrod, 2001:31).

There are several different kinds of validity (Cohen et al., 2000:105) but for the purposes of this research only content and construct validity are elucidated.
• **Content validity** – in order for an instrument to have content validity, it must show that it fairly and comprehensively includes the field it purports to include (Cohen *et al*., 2000:109).

• **Construct validity** – in this type of validity, agreement is sought on the "operationalised" form of the construct, which is abstract in nature. To establish construct validity, one would need to be assured that one's construction of an issue such as creativity, anxiety, intelligence and motivation agrees with other constructions of the same underlying issue (Cohen *et al*., 2000:110).

To ensure content validity, several educators reviewed the questionnaire to judge the relevance of each item. The questionnaire was also reviewed by experts in the research field, from the Department of Educational Management at the University of Johannesburg. The Statistical Consulting Services of the University of Johannesburg further scrutinised and refined the items.

The construct validity of the measuring instrument used in this research was investigated by means of factor analytical procedures. Factor analysis is a particularly useful tool for examining the validity of a test or measuring characteristics of attitude scales.

Borg *et al*. (1993:269) define factor analysis as a correlation technique that examines a large number of items and determines whether they cluster into a smaller number of variables (called factors) that do a good job of conveying the information present in a large number of variables.

In this research 30 items were designed to garner information on the extent of effective management of the mandated merger implementation process and management of conflict stemming from the mandated merger in FET colleges in the Ekurhuleni West District. The construct validity of the instrument in this study
was investigated by means of successive first- and second-order factor analytic procedures performed on the 30 items. The first-order procedure involves a principal component analysis (PCA1), followed by a principal factor analysis (PFA1). These procedures were performed using the SPSS 15.0. program to identify a number of factors that may facilitate the processing of the statistics.

4.3 Results

In the questionnaire seven questions were designed to elicit biographical information from the respondents. These seven items all formed part of Section A of the questionnaire. They served as the independent variables in this study. It would be more correct to refer to them as "quasi-independent variables" as the respondents assigned to a category already qualify for that category prior to completing the questionnaire (Heiman, 2001:44).

The essence of factor analysis according to Field (2005:620) is that if one asks a respondent to answer several questions about an aspect of some phenomenon the correlation between each pair of questions or variables can be arranged in what is known as the "R-matrix". An R-matrix is just a correlation matrix or table of correlation coefficients between variables. The diagonal elements of an R-matrix are all one (1) because each variable will correlate perfectly with itself. The off-diagonal elements are the correlation coefficients between variables or questions. The existence of clusters of large correlation coefficients between subsets of variables suggests that those variables could be measuring aspects of some underlying dimension. These underlying dimensions are known as "factors" (or latent variables) and they explain the maximum amount of common variance in the correlation matrix.

The 30 items of Section B of the questionnaire were designed to garner information on effective merger and conflict management in EWC. Prior to performing the factor analytic procedures, the suitability of the data for factor analyses was assessed. Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed that most
coefficients had values of ≥0.3. Question 30 was omitted from the analysis as the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) for this item had a value of less than 0.6. Furthermore the measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) as reflected by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was 0.839 for the merger implementation process and 0.928 for conflict management respectively, exceeding the recommended value of 0.6 (Kaiser, 1970:1974). The Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity (Bartlett, 1954) was also significant (p<0.05) (Pallant, 2007:197).

Both these tests thus supported the factorability of the correlation matrices. A first-order factor analysis using the principal axis factoring extraction method and varimax rotation yielded two factors for the items pertaining to the merger implementation process, and three factors pertaining to conflict management. Second-order factor analysis suggested that the two factors pertaining to the merger implementation process consist of one factor only. The three first-order factors pertaining to conflict management also formed only one second-order factor. The Cronbach Reliability Coefficients was 0.829 and 0.909, respectively as indicated in Table 4.1. Ideally the values of this coefficient should be above 0.7 (Pallant, 2007:95).

In view of the above it could be argued that the Minister of Education proposed the merging or amalgamation of existing higher and further education institutions to reduce the effort of “all institutions trying to do the same thing” and to build academic and administration capacity (Mail and Guardian, 19 November 1999).

A number of authors support that appropriate planning and management can reduce the negative feelings that mergers have on staff, especially since, mergers can have a devastating impact on staff, both emotionally and professionally (Reddy, 2007:489; Muller 2006:203; Van der Westhuizen, 2004:154 & Jansen 2002:3).

At the time merging of academic institutions seems to be the most viable route.
The factors thus derived and to be used forthwith are listed in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Factors constituting merger management and management of conflict

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Factor Name</th>
<th>No. of Items</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1:</td>
<td>Merger Management</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The extent of effective management of the mandated merger implementation process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2:</td>
<td>Conflict Management</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The extent of effective management of conflict emanating from the merger at EWC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The items, together with their respective mean scores associated with each of these factors established, are presented in Tables 4.2 and 4.3.

The items are ranked in ascending order according to their factor mean scores. The majority opinions for most of these items are on the “Disagree” side (< 2.5). The standard deviation reflects the spread of the responses around the mean where larger values indicate more variability and vice versa. Because of the reversal required for some items in the reliability analysis, items reworded accordingly in Table 4.2 are: B2, B3, B4, B8 and B10 and in Table 4.3, items B13, B18, B22, B25, B26 and B29. Item B30 was excluded.
Table 4.2: Items associated with the factor f1: extent of effective management of the merger implementation process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Rank Order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B9</td>
<td>New policies regarding the merger have clearly been explained to the staff</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>.946</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B6</td>
<td>The merger process was transparent</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>1.102</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5</td>
<td>The merger process was consultative</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>1.100</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>I did not experienced stress as a result of the merger</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>1.217</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>The implementation process of the merger was clear</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>1.169</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B7</td>
<td>The college management involved staff members in the discussion with regard to the change process</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>1.073</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>I am not certain about my future career as a result of the merger</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>1.207</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B8</td>
<td>Change brought about by the merger did not influence my personal values</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>1.167</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B10</td>
<td>Change brought about by the merger did not jeopardise my position at the college</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.160</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>I did not experience fear in respect of possible demotion during the merger</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>1.210</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 indicates that item B9 had the lowest mean score ($\bar{X} = 2.18$), with the respondents indicating that they would probably wish to have more information regarding policies surrounding the merger process and that these be clearly explained. From the above it can be concluded that the respondents felt that they were not adequately informed about the policies involved in the merger (See 3.4.1). Educational change concerns the individual struggle to find meaning in an experience that, intrinsically, involves venturing into the unknown, and so one moves into the realm of increased ambiguity (Hoyle & Wallace, 2005:23). They
further state that the government of the day has various instruments it can use such as the ability to make rules, spend money and to shift the balance of authority between organisations at different administration levels in order to obtain compliance. For example, governments use legislative mandates which are rules governing the actions of individuals and schools and are intended to produce compliance. The merger policies were issued as mandates. Wide use is also made of inducements, where money is transferred to individuals and schools in return for certain actions. An example of an inducement is the monetary reward received if one meets the criteria of the compulsory performance agreement (Hoyle & Wallace, 2005:65).

Item B6 (\(\bar{x} = 2.30\)) indicated in Table 4.2 shows that respondents viewed the management of the merger implementation process as not being transparent. It is possible that staff members believed that managers and line managers looked after their own interests first, and hence they felt sidelined (See 3.4.1). This response possibly indicates that the respondents had little faith and trust in the management of the merger process. Respondents thus disagreed that the management of the merger process was transparent and this could indicate the poor communication of policies during the merger implementation process. The items together with their respective mean scores associated with factor two, regarding the management of conflict from the mandated merger, are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Items associated with the factor 2: extent of effective management of conflict from the merger at EWC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Rank Order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B25</td>
<td>Scarcity of resources does not have the potential to increase conflict</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>1.033</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B15</td>
<td>The conflict resolution management style</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>1.013</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Value1</td>
<td>Value2</td>
<td>Value3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B23</td>
<td>The management team attempts to reduce potential conflict by inviting all lecturers to participate in decision making</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>.961</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B16</td>
<td>Management resolves all conflict issues/matters fairly</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>1.006</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B24</td>
<td>The management team uses a participative management style to reduce organisational conflict</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>.944</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B21</td>
<td>The college management team resolves conflict by inviting role-players to participate in finding solutions to problems</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>.904</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B14</td>
<td>The management team uses a process of making joint decisions to solve differences</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>1.016</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B20</td>
<td>The college management team considers all possible solutions when conflict arises</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>.949</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B18</td>
<td>The lack of communication between management and lecturers is not a cause for conflict</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>1.174</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B11</td>
<td>The college management team uses an impartial party to assist staff members to settle their differences</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>1.179</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B27</td>
<td>The management team acts decisively to reduce potential conflict</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>1.018</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B12</td>
<td>The college management team attempts to accommodate the needs of all stakeholders</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>1.016</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B19</td>
<td>When dealing with conflict the management team consults all role-players</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>1.093</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B17</td>
<td>The management team attempts to consider the feelings of others in conflict</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>1.079</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B29</td>
<td>My manager does not avoid conflict by</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>1.071</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
postponing decisions on controversial issues

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B22</td>
<td>The top down structure at my campus does not lead to organisational conflict</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>1.131</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B13</td>
<td>The management team is not oblivious to conflict situations</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>1.027</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B26</td>
<td>During conflict the management team does not make use of threats to resolve conflict</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>1.189</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B28</td>
<td>My immediate manager has an open door policy as far as disputes are concerned</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.136</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.1 Items in perceptions of the extent of effective management of conflict from the merger at EWC

The purpose of item B25 in Table 4.3 was to ascertain perceptions regarding whether the scarcity of resources had an impact on conflict at the college. It also served to investigate perceptions regarding cooperation between management and other stakeholders at the college. Responses to this statement indicate that the majority of the respondents tended to have the perception that scarce resources have the potential to increase conflict.

It can thus be concluded that a common source of conflict in many educational institutions is the limit of resources such as physical space, books, equipment, human resources, funding and other educational services.

Item B18 ($\bar{X} = 2.34$) indicated in Table 4.3 shows that respondents viewed communication as crucial for management in educational institutions. Effective management during the implementation of the merger process should involve open and direct communication to avoid escalation in conflict. The respondents would possibly have appreciated more information regarding the merger process and they probably believed management possessed more information than they shared with staff members regarding the process.
Communication problems could undermine the commitment required for the merger to be managed successfully (See 3.4.2). The lack of communication between management and staff is a cause for increased conflict during any merger. Communication is a prerequisite for principals in their challenging tasks of managing schools effectively (Van Deventer & Kruger et al., 2003:157). It is important for management to create and implement a communication strategy that consistently informs stakeholders about policy changes, new visions and new strategic plans.

For the purpose of further analysis, the average of the mean scores of all the items presented in the tables above were computed to arrive at factor mean scores for each of the established factors.

Having completed a representation of the factors in respect of merger management and management of conflict stemming from the mandated merger, it is appropriate to state hypotheses and to discuss statistical analysis.

### 4.4 HYPOTHESES TESTING

The researcher attempted to demonstrate a relationship in which, as the conditions of the independent variables change, respondents' scores on the dependent variables also change. Thus, as the independent variables of Gender, Campus, Race, Age and Educational Qualifications change, the dependent variable (Merger Management and Conflict Management) measures any change in behaviour of the independent group (Heiman, 2001:45).

The possible existence of such relationships was explored by means of hypothesis testing. For each of the independent variables, a choice was made as to whether parametric or non-parametric procedures should be used. The difference lies in the assumptions underlying the testing theory: parametric tests are generally far stricter requiring, for example, normality and equal variances of
the group populations. Tests can be run to ascertain whether these assumptions have been met, or not. If not, non-parametric testing procedures are used.

The researcher did a comparative analysis based on grouping the variables, Gender, Campuses, Race, Age and Qualifications, because it was hypothesised that group differences for all these variables could be statistically significant. Results of the different tests performed follow. For Gender see Tables 4.5, 4.6 and Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2. Tables 4.8, 4.9, 4.10 and Figure 4.3 represent the differences in campuses. Differences in racial groupings are indicated in Tables 4.11, 4.13 and Figure 4.5. The differences in ages are reflected in Tables 4.14, 4.15, 4.16 and Figure 4.6 and Tables 4.17, 4.18 and 4.19 indicate the difference in qualifications.

4.4.1 Testing for Differences Between Gender Groups

The stated hypotheses to test whether men and women scored significantly differently on F1 and F2 are tabulated in Table 4.6.

Table 4.4: Hypotheses for comparisons based on gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Grouping Variable</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>H₀</td>
<td>There is statistically no significant difference between the factor mean scores of the males and females regarding the perception of the extent of effective management of the mandated merger at EWC.</td>
<td>Student t-test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hₐ</td>
<td>There is a statistically significant difference between the factor mean scores of the males and females regarding the perception of the extent of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A box plot gives information on the distribution of a variable and Figures 4.1 and 4.2 contain a box plot of the variable gender.

Upon examining the distribution of the factor mean scores of F1 and F2 for males and females separately, it can be seen in Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2 that the assumptions for a parametric testing procedure have been satisfied, that is no major deviation from normality is apparent. Also variances are approximately the same so that the independent samples t-test was deemed appropriate to test for group differences.
Figure 4.1: Box plot for gender groups for management of merger

Figure 4.2: Box plot for gender groups for management of conflict
The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests are shown in Table 4.5 and determine whether the distribution of scores is significantly different from a standard normal distribution. Generally a p-value of less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) indicates a significant deviation from normality, but this test is notoriously affected by large samples in which small deviations from normality yield significant results (Field, 2005:94). When group sizes are smaller than 50 the Shapiro-Wilk is used to test for normality.

Table 4.5: Test of normality for gender groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tests of Normality</th>
<th>Kolmogorov-Smirnov(a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statisti c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean_Merger_2ndOrder Factor1</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean_Conflict_2ndOrder Factor2</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COMPARISONS OF TWO INDEPENDENT GROUPS

Results of the t-test

At the univariate level two groups can be compared by using the independent samples t-test, providing the underlying assumptions are met for possible statistically significant differences between the factor mean scores. The t-test is used to determine whether the observed difference between the mean scores of two groups on a measure is likely to have occurred by chance or whether it reflects a true difference in the mean scores of the populations represented by the two groups. The discussion now turns to possible differences between male and female respondents with respect to the two factors as indicated in Table 4.6.
Table 4.6: Gender groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>p-value of Student t-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extent of effective management of the mandated merger at EWC. (F1)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>.701</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>.727</td>
<td>0.641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent of effective management of conflict emerging from the mandated merger at EWC. (F2)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>.670</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>.633</td>
<td>0.976</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Males N=112
Females N=110

Although differences between the factor mean scores of gender groups were anticipated for both F1 and F2, Table 4.6 indicate that there were statistically no significant differences in the factor mean scores for males and females. Where differences were observed these could thus have been due to chance (p=0.641 and p=0.176) respectively. However, considering the mean scores of both groups, Men (\(\bar{X} = 2.44\)) and Women (\(\bar{X} = 2.49\)) for F1 and Men (\(\bar{X} = 2.42\)) and Women (\(\bar{X} = 2.42\)) for F2, it can be seen that on average respondents tended to select responses on the disagree side of the item scale of the questionnaire. There is not enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

The researcher now considers whether respondents on the various campuses differed significantly with respect to their perceptions of the management of the merger implementation process and the management of conflict emanating from the merger.
Having set hypotheses and tested them in respect of two independent groups, the same was done for three or more independent groups.

4.4.2 Testing for differences between FET campuses

4.4.2.1 Comparisons of three or more independent groups

In respect of three or more independent groups the factor mean scores are compared and a one-way ANOVA is the procedure conducted to determine whether any differences exist among them. Should any difference be revealed at this level, post-hoc tests are used to investigate specifically which groups differ significantly. Groups are analysed pair-wise by means of either the Scheffé or Dunnette T3 test. If the p-value of the homogeneity of variance (Levene’s) test is more than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$) then the Scheffé test is used to investigate which pairs of groups differ significantly, failing which, Dunnette’s T3 test is used.

In this study the independent groups consist of the six campuses sampled. These were Alberton, Germiston, Kempton, Boksburg, Kathorus and Tembisa. It is hypothesised that opinion at campuses may differ, as indicated in Table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7: Hypotheses for comparisons based on campuses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Grouping Variable</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1 Management of Merger</td>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>$H_0$</td>
<td>There is statistically no significant difference between the factor mean scores of campuses regarding the perception of the extent of effective management of the mandated merger at EWC.</td>
<td>ANOVA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is a statistically significant difference between the factor mean scores of the campuses regarding the perception of the extent of effective management of the mandated merger at EWC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F2 Management of Conflict</th>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>H₀</th>
<th>There is statistically no significant difference between the mean scores of the campuses regarding the perception of the extent of effective management of conflict of the mandated merger at EWC.</th>
<th>DunnetteT3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hₐ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>There is a statistically significant difference between at least one pair of mean scores of the campuses regarding the perception of the extent of effective management of conflict of the mandated merger at EWC.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The graphical representation of the group data as seen in Figures 4.3 and 4.4 suggests that deviation from normality is only apparent for the groups with outliers and also for Kathorus as shown in Figure 4.4. Also variances differ, and therefore a one-way ANOVA procedure was deemed appropriate to test for group differences.
Figure 4.3: Box plot for the campus groups for merger management

Figure 4.4: Box plot for campus groups for management of conflict
The result of the Shapiro-Wilk test for normality as shown in Table 4.8 indicates that scores from all campuses except Boksburg and Kathorus (with cases falling outside the interval between the whiskers referred to as outliers) can be regarded as coming from normal distributions ($p$-value > 0.05).

**Table 4.8: Test for normality for campus groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>Shapiro-Wilk Statistic</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean_Merger_2ndOrder_Factor1</strong></td>
<td>Tembisa</td>
<td>0.965</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Germiston</td>
<td>0.983</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boksburg</td>
<td>0.955</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alberton</td>
<td>0.949</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kempton Park</td>
<td>0.956</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kathorus</td>
<td>0.921</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean_Conflict_2ndOrder_Factor2</strong></td>
<td>Tembisa</td>
<td>0.936</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Germiston</td>
<td>0.978</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boksburg</td>
<td>0.892</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alberton</td>
<td>0.952</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kempton Park</td>
<td>0.961</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kathorus</td>
<td>0.877</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the Brown - Forsythe (a more robust form of the ANOVA to accommodate some deviation from normality) and post-hoc tests are as stated below. Table 4.9 refers to perceptions of merger management, whereas Table 4.10 refers to perceptions of conflict management.
Table 4.9: Significance of difference between campuses regarding merger management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
<th>Brown Forsythe ANOVA (p-value)</th>
<th>Dunnett T-3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extent of effective management of the mandated merger at EWC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>0.000 **</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Statistically significant at the 1% level (p < 0.01)

* Dunnett T3 used because homogeneity of variances could not be assumed (p=0.017 for Levene’s test)

Using the data in Table 4.9 one can conclude that there are highly significant statistical differences (p < 0.01) between the factor mean scores of the campuses with respect to perceptions of the management of the mandated merger. This is what was expected.

The effect size was medium (Eta = 0.383). One way that one can assess the importance of one’s findings is to calculate the effect size (also known as the “strength of association”). This is a set of statistics that indicates the relative magnitude of the difference between means, or the amount of the total variances in the dependent variable that is predictable from the knowledge of levels of independent variable (Pallant, 2007:207).
From the post-hoc analysis (using the Dunnette T3 results), the following conclusions can be made.

Respondents on the Alberton Campus had a statistically significant higher mean score \((X =2.99)\) compared with Germiston \((X =2.28)\), Boksburg \((X =2.29)\) and Kempton \((X =2.15)\) campuses \((p < 0.01)\). The mean scores of the latter three campuses were on the "disagree side", whereas perceptions at the Alberton Campus were neutral in the sense that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the effective management of the mandated merger.

The mean scores of Tembisa \((X =2.69)\) and Kathorus \((X =2.56)\) campuses do not differ significantly with Alberton \((X =2.99)\) in respect of perceptions of the management of the mandated merger. It would thus appear as if the campuses of Alberton, Tembisa and Kathorus could be grouped together as they all tended to be neutral regarding the effective management of the implementation of the mandated merger.

The campuses situated in Germiston, Boksburg and Kempton Park tended to disagree with effective management of the implementation of the mandated merger process. Furthermore the practical significance was medium \((\eta =0.383)\) and possibly indicates that the perceptions of the Alberton, Tembisa and Kathorus groups were different to those from the Germiston, Boksburg and Kempton Park groups regarding how effectively the implementation of the merger process was managed.

A possible explanation for this state of affairs is that these groups may not have been well informed about the merger process. They disagree to a smaller extent than Kempton, Boksburg and Germiston, which indicates that they disagreed less.
Hypotheses for the pair-wise comparisons of F1 as indicated in Table 4.9 are:

- **HoS/DT3.F1-** When compared pair-wise (1-6) there is statistically no significant difference between the six campus groups regarding perceptions of the extent of effective management of the mandated merger at EWC.

- **HaS/DT3.F2-** When compared pair-wise (1-6) there is a statistically significant difference between the six campus groups regarding perceptions of the extent of effective conflict management stemming from the mandated merger.

**Table 4.10: Significance of difference between the factor mean scores of the six campuses regarding effective conflict management**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
<th>ANOVA (p-value)</th>
<th>* Dunnett T-3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extent of effective management of conflict of the mandated merger at EWC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Statistically significant at the 1% level (p < 0.01)

* Used because homogeneity of variances could not be assumed (p = 0.017)

1= Tembisa =1 N=32
2= Germiston =2 N=52
3= Boksburg =3 N=31
4= Alberton =4 N=33
5= Kempton =5 N=34
6= Kathorus =6 N=44

158
The data in Table 4.10 indicates that there are statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) between the factor mean scores among the campus groups considered together with respect to perceptions of effective management of conflict stemming from the mandated merger. The null hypothesis $H_0$ thus cannot be accepted.

In respect of the extent of effective management of conflict stemming from the mandated merger at EWC, Alberton showed a statistically significant higher factor mean score than the respondents from Kempton, Germiston, Boksburg, and Kathorus (Table 4.10). A possible explanation could be that respondents on the Alberton Campus were managed by a female manager and it is possible that her management style was perceived to be more calm and less aggressive and confrontational when dealing with conflict situations. Respondents from Germiston, Boksburg and Kempton disagreed to a greater extent in their perceptions that the management of conflict stemming from the mandated merger was managed effectively. As already mentioned these campuses were predominantly composed of white lecturers pre-1994, and resistance could have been greater at these sites. The merger process was a political process and the policy of affirmative action meant that many of the white managers were replaced by managers from previously disadvantaged groups. Perceptions of unfair promotion probably gave rise to a situation where conflict was highly likely.

The respondents at Tembisa, being a so-called previously disadvantaged campus, had a slightly higher factor mean score than Kathorus which was also classified as a disadvantaged campus. This difference in mean scores is, however, not statistically significant. The differences between the factor mean scores are perhaps easier to observe if indicated with a histogram. Hence Figure 4.4 indicate these differences. The effect size, $\eta$ was large ($\eta = 0.294$) indicating that 2.94% of the variance could be explained by this factor.
A discussion concerning the differences in factor mean scores of the different racial groupings now follows.

4.4.3 Testing for differences between racial groupings

Comparisons of the perceptions of different racial groupings

The hypothesis used to test whether Africans (referred to henceforth as the “majority groups”) and other race groups (whites, coloureds and Asians, referred to henceforth as the “minority groups”) scored significantly differently on F1 and F2 is tabulated in Table 4.11. The groups investigated were collapsed (because of small frequencies) into majority and minority groups.

Table 4.11: Hypotheses for racial groupings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1 Management of Merger</td>
<td>Racial Group</td>
<td>$H_0$</td>
<td>There is statistically no significant difference between the ranking scores for race groups regarding the perception of the extent of effective management of the mandated merger at EWC.</td>
<td>Man-Whitney U-test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$u_a$</td>
<td>There is a statistically significant difference between the factor ranking scores of the race groupings regarding the perception of the extent of effective management of the mandated merger at EWC.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2 Management of Conflict</td>
<td>Racial Group</td>
<td>$u_o$</td>
<td>There is statistically no significant difference between the factor ranking scores of the race groups regarding the perception</td>
<td>Man-Whitney</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is a statistically significant difference between the factor ranking scores of the race groupings regarding the perception of the extent of effective management of conflict of the mandated merger at EWC.

The graphical representation of the group data as seen in Figures 4.5 and 4.6 shows that some respondents in the minority group had perceptions relatively more positive on average than the rest of the group for F1. The same applied for F2, except that there were also respondents who scored rather more positively on average. The outliers in the box plots are evidence of this and, because the adverse effect that outliers have on means which in turn could invalidate the results of a t-test, the non-parametric alternative to the independent sample t-test, the Mann-Whitney U test, instead of comparing means of the two groups, as in the case of the t-test was used. The Mann-Whitney U test actually compares medians (Pallant, 2007:220). This test is appropriate when assumptions of normality and equal variances have not been adequately met.
Figure 4.5: Box plot for racial groups for management of merger

Figure 4.6: Box plot for racial groups for management of conflict
The results in Table 4.12 of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality seem to suggest that only the minority group shows a significant difference from a standard normal distribution regarding F1. Scores of the majority for F1 can be regarded as normally distributed \((p = 0.061)\). However, refer to Table 4.8 for impact of large samples on the \(p\)-value of this test.

**Table 4.12: Test for normality**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ra2</th>
<th>Mean_Merger_2ndOrder_Factor1</th>
<th>Mean_Conflict_2ndOrder_Factor2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Majority</td>
<td>Minority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.070</td>
<td>0.123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.114</td>
<td>0.133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of the Mann-Whitney U-test are indicated in Table 4.13.

**Table 4.13: Significance of difference between racial groups regarding both merger management and conflict management**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>(p-value)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extent of effective management of the mandated merger at EWC</td>
<td>Majority</td>
<td>116.23</td>
<td>-1.690</td>
<td>0.091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minority</td>
<td>100.31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent of effective management of conflict of the mandated merger at EWC</td>
<td>Majority</td>
<td>120.72</td>
<td>-3.11</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minority</td>
<td>91.27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Statistically significant at the 1% level \((p < 0.01)\)**

Group: Majority = African \(N=158\)

Minority = Asian, coloured, white \(N=67\)
From the results in Table 4.13, the deduction can be made that there was a statistically significant difference between the mean ranks of the two groups in respect of the Conflict Management factor ($Z = -3.11$, $p = 0.002$). The effect size was small to medium ($\eta = 0.21$). The null hypothesis $H_0$ for F2 therefore cannot be accepted. Hence the majority and minority groups differed in their perceptions regarding effective conflict management stemming from the mandated merger.

The results in Table 4.13 could possibly be seen as resistance from the minority group, which probably stands to lose more regarding future promotions to higher post levels with respect to the politically mandated merger process. Therefore these respondents disagreed to the greatest extent with the effective management of conflict. A possible reason for this could be that the mandated political processes were not effectively communicated to staff members. The minority was represented by Asians, coloureds and whites, and they probably occupied the most senior management positions pre-1994.

4.4.4 Testing for Differences between Age Groups

Table 4.14: Hypotheses with age groups as the independent variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>$H_0 A$</td>
<td>There is statistically no significant difference between the factor mean scores for age groups regarding the perception of the extent of effective management of the mandated merger at EWC.</td>
<td>ANOVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$H_1 A$</td>
<td>There is a statistically significant difference between the factor mean scores of the age groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
regarding the perception of the extent of effective management of the mandated merger at EWC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management of Conflict</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>H₀ A</th>
<th>ANOVA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₀ A</td>
<td></td>
<td>There is statistically no significant difference between the factor mean scores of the age groups regarding the perception of the extent of effective management of conflict of the mandated merger at EWC.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The group data as seen in Figures 4.7 and 4.8 indicates that the distribution of data is not reasonably normal.
Figure 4.7: Box plot for age group for merger management

Figure 4.8: Box plot for age group for management of conflict
The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality in Table 4.15 shows that the distribution of scores was not significantly different from a standard normal distribution \( (p = 0.08 \text{ and } p = 0.200) \) for F1 and F2 respectively for some of the age groups. However, from the box plots in Figures 4.7 and 4.8 above, no undue skewness seems to prohibit the use of ANOVA in order to test for differences among age group factor mean scores.

**Table 4.15: Test for normality**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kolmogorov-Smirnov(a)</th>
<th>Ra3</th>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean_Merger_2ndOrder_Factor1 34 years and younger</td>
<td>0.105</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0.080</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 – 44</td>
<td>0.096</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>0.017</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 years and older</td>
<td>0.097</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>0.200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean_Conflict_2ndOrder_Factor2 34 years and younger</td>
<td>0.152</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 – 44</td>
<td>0.134</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 years and older</td>
<td>0.092</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>0.200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of these tests are tabulated in Table 4.16 below.

**Table 4.16: Significance of differences between the age groups in respect of merger management**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group Mean</th>
<th>ANOVA (p-value)</th>
<th>Sheffé</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extent of effective management of the mandated merger at EWC</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>0.010 **</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td></td>
<td>B *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td></td>
<td>C *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Statistically significant at the 5% level \( (p<0.05) \)

Group A = 34 years and younger \( N=63 \)
B = 35 – 44 years \( N=109 \)
C = 45 years and older \( N=53 \)
In Table 4.16 it can be seen that there is a statistically significant difference ($p = 0.010$) between the factor mean scores of the three age groups A, B, and C in respect of the effectiveness of merger management. The effect size was ($\eta = 0.04$) and this can be regarded as small.

The null hypothesis $H_0$ A cannot be accepted; hence, the perceptions of merger management are not the same amongst age groups.

Regarding the pair-wise comparisons of groups the following conclusions can be made using the results of the Scheffé post-hoc test. (Homogeneity of variance could be assumed ($p<0.05$).)

The respondents in the age group 35 – 44 years have the lowest factor mean score ($\bar{X} = 2.32$), which differs statistically significantly at the 5% level from the mean of the respondents in the age group 45 and older ($\bar{X} = 2.64$ and $p=0.026$). One hundred and seven out of 225 respondents fall in this group. The lecturers between the ages of 35 and 44 years are possibly those that one can assume to have dependents of school-going age and these respondents disagreed most strongly in their perceptions of the extent of effective management of the merger process. The management of the merger process probably did have a negative impact on their perceptions so that they felt that their positions at the college could be jeopardised.

Respondents who fall in the age “45 years and older” group have a relatively high mean score ($\bar{X} = 2.64$). A possible reason for this is that perhaps they were part of the minority and in managerial positions and therefore resisted change to a greater extent than the younger respondents. However, it appears that none of the groups viewed the management of the merger in a particularly positive light.
Table 4.17: Significance of differences between the age groups in respect of conflict management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group Mean</th>
<th>ANOVA (p-value)</th>
<th>Sheffe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extent of effective conflict management of the mandated merger at EWC</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>0.501</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group A = 34 years and younger N= 63
B = 35 – 44 years N=109
C = 45 years and older N=53

Table 4.17 reflects that there is no statistically significant difference \((p=0.501)\) between the factor mean scores of the three age groups A, B, and C in respect of the effective management of conflict stemming from the mandated merger at EWC. The null hypothesis \(H_0\) A cannot be rejected and the findings could be the result of chance factors.

4.4.5 Testing for differences among qualifications groups

The researcher anticipated possible differences among the groupings of respondents regarding their stated highest qualifications. The groups investigated were reduced (because of small frequencies) to respondents with a Grade 12 certificate and post-school certificate, a Bachelors degree, and respondents with a Post Graduate degree.
Table 4.18: Hypotheses for highest educational qualification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1 Management of Merger</td>
<td>Highest Qualification</td>
<td>$H_0$</td>
<td>There is statistically no significant difference between the factor mean scores for highest qualification groups regarding the perception of the extent of effective management of the mandated merger at EWC.</td>
<td>ANOVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1 Management of Conflict</td>
<td>Highest Qualification</td>
<td>$H_0$</td>
<td>There is statistically no significant difference between the mean scores the highest qualification regarding the perception of the extent of effective management of conflict of the mandated merger at EWC.</td>
<td>ANOVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1 Management of Conflict</td>
<td>Highest Qualification</td>
<td>$H_a$</td>
<td>There is statistically significant difference between at least one pair of mean scores for highest qualification regarding the perception of the extent of effective management of the mandated merger at EWC.</td>
<td>ANOVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1 Management of Conflict</td>
<td>Highest Qualification</td>
<td>$H_a$</td>
<td>There is statistically significant difference between at least one pair of mean scores for the highest qualification regarding the perception of the extent of effective management of conflict of the mandated merger at EWC.</td>
<td>ANOVA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The graphical representation of the group data as seen in Figures 4.9 and 4.10 suggests that deviation from normality is only apparent for the groups with outliers and this applies to the group with a Bachelors degree for both F1 and F2 as indicated in Figure 4.10. Also variances do not differ significantly, and therefore a one-way ANOVA procedure was deemed appropriate to test for group differences regarding F1.
Figure 4.9: Box plot for highest educational qualification for merger management

Figure 4.10: Box plot for highest educational qualification for management of conflict
The results of the Shapiro – Wilk test for normality shown in Table 4.19 seem to suggest only the group with a Bachelors degree as showing a significant difference from a standard normal distribution for both F1 and F2 (p = 0.007 and p = 0.000) respectively. The p-value of less than 0.01 (p < 0.01) indicates a significant difference from normality.

Table 4.19: Test for normality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean_Merger_2ndOrder_Factor1</th>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 12 certificate and Post-school certificate/diploma</td>
<td>0.058</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>.200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors Degree</td>
<td>0.102</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate Degree</td>
<td>0.113</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0.187</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean_Conflict_2ndOrder_Factor1</th>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 12 certificate and Post-school certificate/diploma</td>
<td>0.134</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>0.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors Degree</td>
<td>0.158</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate Degree</td>
<td>0.079</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>.200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.20: Significance of differences between the highest educational qualifications in respect of the merger management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group Mean</th>
<th>ANOVA (p-value)</th>
<th>Sheffé</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extent of effective management of the mandated merger at EWC</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>0.016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Statistically significant at the 5% level (p < 0.05 but p≥0.01)

** Statistically significant at the 1% level (p≤0.01)

Group A = Post-School Diploma  N = 69
B = B Degree  N = 110
C = Post Graduate  N = 46

Using Tables 4.19 and 4.20 the deduction can be made that there was a statistically significant difference (p = 0.016) between the average factor mean scores of the three qualifications groups A, B and C in respect of merger
management. The null hypotheses $H_0$ A thus cannot be accepted and the alternative hypothesis ($H_a$ A) is accepted.

Regarding the pair-wise comparisons of groups the conclusions outlined below can be made.

Lecturers who had a Grade 12 certificate and a Post-School Diploma had the highest factor mean score ($\bar{X} = 2.67$) and disagreed to a smaller extent than their peers did in their perceptions that the management of the merger process was effective. It is likely that respondents with the higher educational qualifications are more critical of the mandated merger process and hence disagree to a greater extent than do the respondents with lower educational qualifications.

The group of respondents with Post Graduate qualifications had the lowest factor ($\bar{X} = 2.30$) mean score, which differed significantly from the other groups.

Table 4.21: Significance of differences between the highest educational qualifications in respect of conflict management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group Mean</th>
<th>ANOVA (p-value)</th>
<th>Sheffe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extent of effective conflict management of the mandated merger at EWC</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>0.214</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.21 reflects that there was no statistically significant difference ($p = 0.214$) between the average scores of the three qualifications groups A, B and C in respect of conflict management. The null hypotheses $H_0$ A cannot be rejected.
Regarding a pair-wise comparison, the A group (Post-School Diploma) had the highest mean score and therefore disagreed to a smaller extent that conflict was effectively managed. This is understandable, since it is generally understood and recognised that younger and less experienced lecturers tend to be less impulsive, temperamental, aggressive and confrontational than their more qualified and experienced colleagues.

The respondents who fall into the group Post Graduate had the lowest mean score and disagreed to a greater extent with the factor effective conflict management. A possible reason is that the respondents with higher qualifications believe that meaningful communication contributes to effective management of conflict.

4.4.6 Model derived from findings of the factor analysis

The investigation into the perceptions of educators regarding the merged EWC campus indicates that two second-order factors could be involved namely a factor relating to the implementation process of mergers and a factor relating to conflict in merged institutions. However, as the implementation factor can be the cause of the conflict and vice-versa these two second-order factors are likely to be non-recursive. Also 30 items had a common scale and hence the researcher could do a factor analysis on all items. The first-order analysis revealed that six factors formed the foundation but in the rotated factor matrix loading only occurred on five of the factors. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) was 0.914 with a probability value (Bartlett’s test of sphericity) of 0.000. The five factors explained 65.32% of the variance present. The first-order factors were subjected to a further factor analytic procedure as the KMO had a value of 0.73 and p = 0.000. Only one factor resulted which explained 51.47% of the variance present. This could be named “perceptions of educators in post-merged EWC”.

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The researcher made an attempt to represent this diagrammatically in the form of a model which is given in figure 4.11. This indicates that the factors are the same as those derived earlier on when Section B and C were subjected separately to factor analytic procedures. However, this model shows that there are potentially positive as well as negative influences. One should thus interpret this as using the principles that facilitate mergers (FB1.1) namely transparency, involvement of staff members in consultation, a participative process where the merger policies can be discussed in an open and reflective manner together with the items in strategies that are aimed at resolving potential conflicts.

Figure 4.11 Model derived from the findings of the factor analysis
4.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter an analysis of some of the empirical data of the broad research was undertaken and interpretations of the results given. The chapter commenced with a clarification of the concepts “reliability” and “validity”. Two further concepts, content validity and construct validity, were also clarified.

The construct validity of the research instrument was investigated by means of two successive factor analyses, which reduced 30 items in the first-order factor analysis to two factors:

- Extent of effective management of the mandated merger at EWC consisting of 10 items with a Cronbach-alpha-reliability of 0.829 with no items rejected; and
- Extent of effective management of the conflict stemming from the mandated merger at EWC consisting of 20 items with a Cronbach-alpha-reliability of 0.909 with one item rejected.

The various biographical variables were grouped into two or more independent groups and their mean factor scores in respect of the factors merger and conflict management were compared with one another. This was done in order to determine whether the groups held different perceptions in respect of conflict management. Although differences were found in the mean scores, the groups disagreed to some extent with the factors.

Where significant differences were found between the groups in respect of merger management and conflict management, further statistical analyses were performed in order to find out which of the two underlying constructs were responsible for the significant difference.

Hypotheses were set and multivariate statistics were used to analyse and interpret the data in respect of the factors merger management and management
of the conflict emanating from the mandated merger. For the purpose of analysis independent groups were selected for comparison by stating the appropriate hypotheses and analysing data by means of statistical test.

In the next chapter, a model developed by the researcher is discussed.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CONFLICT RESOLUTION MODEL FOR POST-MERGER FET COLLEGES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

It has been largely acknowledged that mergers are characterised by heightened emotions, fear of losing one's job, having to move sites, increased conflict among staff members, lack of resources, attitudes and values, changes in environment and culture and changes to conditions of service that might be unfavourable (Kilfoil & Groenewald, 2005:12). Thus, attention to human issues, adequate conflict management skills, good communication and speedy conflict resolution of issues can reduce the stress levels of all. One therefore, has to conclude that most managers of these EWC FET colleges had limited conflict management skills or poor communications structures, based on the perceptions of poor performance during the merger process.

One of the most important findings of this research is that the managers and management team should make a positive impact in managing conflict effectively in post-merged FET colleges if they receive adequate training, support and guidance in conflict management skills. It is evident, from the literature study that the management team of FET colleges in the Ekurhuleni West District can be assisted in obtaining effective conflict management skills using the conflict resolution model (Cotton, 2005:25).

A model has been designed that will enable managers and management teams at post-merged EWC FET colleges to manage conflict emanating from the merger processes effectively. This model should also be able to assist new developments in future FET merging processes.
5.2 THE CONCEPT: "MODEL"

A model, according to Barlow (2005:18), Van Dyk (1997:240) and Wisniewski (2002:7) is a simplified representation of a real situation. It can be regarded as a substitute for the real system, stripping away a large degree of complexity to leave only the essential, relevant details. A model is used to facilitate understanding of a real object or situation.

A model must be able to answer the following questions (Fourie, 2000:252):

- What is its purpose?
- Does it give an indication of what is being required?
- Does it offer any alternatives?

Models emphasise certain aspects of a complex process and offers simplistic representations of those aspects. The purpose of this is to emphasise certain aspects in order to reach certain goals (Jansen & Steinberg cited in Nojaja, 2009:183). Fourie (2000:250) asserts that this explains the importance of considering the purpose of a model, and then applying the model for this specific purpose.

The “Conflict Resolution Model” developed in this study is aimed at assisting managers and management teams at the colleges with skills and knowledge to manage conflict effectively at post-merger educational institutions. The conceptual model is a representation of reality, indicating how integration and optimal involvement of all stakeholders could increase effective conflict management in these post-merger colleges.

5.3 CONFLICT RESOLUTION MODEL FOR FET COLLEGES

The model was developed to address the question of how management teams at post-merger FET colleges could be assisted, empowered or skilled in effectively
managing conflict emanating from a mandated merger. This implies that the role of each stakeholder in the change process and in the establishment of a sound learning culture of the college is important. Fullan (2001:33) argues that educational change is a process of coming to grips with the multiple realities of people who are the main participants in implementing change. Managers therefore need to manage conflict effectively at the college, for example, by considering the feelings and emotions of those involved in the change process (cf. 2.4; 2.5). Significant educational change can no longer be achieved in a step-by-step linear process (Palmer, 2009:349).

The participation of all stakeholders during a merger process is of paramount importance for the effective management of conflict at these FET colleges. It is, therefore, necessary that a model is designed that will enable all staff members to take part in decision-making during the merger process.

From the empirical evidence, it was established that collaborative management strategies facilitate conflict resolution.

Factor C1.1 ($\bar{X} = 2.41$) indicates that most of the respondents partially disagreed tending towards disagreeing with the items in this factor. This indicates that college management has not used the strategies suggested by the items in an effective manner. Analysis of the factor dealing with management principles when implementing mergers [FB1.1 ($\bar{X} = 2.32$)] indicate that the respondents partially disagreed with the items in this factor. The researcher thus decided to speak about potentially positive and negative influences as these factors have the potential to be either positive or negative depending on how management uses them. Just as the atom bomb has the potential to produce useful energy or to be used in a destructive way so too these two factors can have either a positive or negative influence. Using political mandates to merge institutions with differing organisational cultures can be likened to the use of atomic energy as it depends on how the mandate is implemented.
The factors with a potentially negative influence such as management strategies and structures were not seen in a positive light by the respondents and all the items in FB1.2, FC1.2 and FC1.3 (See 4.3) had to be reversed as they were negatively correlated with the other items. The respondents at most partially agreed with these factors and as they are largely concerned with dysfunctional effects, it indicates that the merger was not well received by the respondents at ground or chalk-face level. It thus appeared as if the respondents at these FET colleges had negative attitudes towards the way in which the merger was implemented and management would face an uphill task of attempting to change these negative attitudes.

These two factors prompted the researcher to search for ways in which conflicts can be reduced as indicated in the conflict resolution model (See Figure 5.1) model. The following paragraphs provide an exposition of the conflict resolution model postulate by the researcher, for contributing to effective management skills.

5.4 POST-MERGER CONFLICT RESOLUTION MODEL

The Higher Education Act (1997) brought about the merger of FET colleges. If one considers that Martin and Samuels (1994) estimate that “mergers take five years to occur and ten years for the wounds to heal” then South Africa’s FET colleges could still be in the “healing” part of the process. This researcher does not believe that the model which is suggested here will leave no wounds but does believe that the wounds could heal a great deal faster if this model is implemented. As argued by Michalenko (2010:290), that first the new merged institution should have a clear vision and mission-driven purpose and a culture acceptable for all stakeholders. Secondly, leadership must act authentically, which means they must actively utilise and involve all stakeholders and foster effective participation. Thirdly, all members of staff should be inclusively engaged to articulate the purpose of the organisation, connecting them to the common
vision, and dialoguing about future possibilities. Building trust and transparent relationships is critical. The leadership of the college should communicate the new vision of the post-merged college to staff members through numerous communication channels thereby empowering others to act on the vision in ways that will facilitate its implementation. For example, in all staff meetings and meetings, intranet, circulars and quarterly news letters.

The purpose of this conflict resolution model is to demonstrate that the horizontal or open communication system is crucial for managers to manage conflict in EWC FET colleges effectively. If successfully implemented, the application thereof will significantly reduce conflict and disruption associated with a merger process. The significance of this model for managers to manage conflict effectively lies in the fact that the horizontal/open communication system decentralises the decision-making authority among staff members rather than adopting a hierarchical structure which centralises authority in the hands of the manager. In this regard, the horizontal/open structure of a communication system ensures that each stakeholder in the college will have a sense of personal worth and growth.

The diagram below illustrates the phases of a conflict resolution model for assisting management of FET colleges in effectively managing conflict in post-merger FET colleges (Figure 5.1).
Davidson and Wood (2004:7) state that in many conflicts, the underlying issues are not clearly recognised by either party. Optimal solutions can only be found by going beyond the initial bargaining positions of the participants to explore these underlying needs and concerns with the expectation of being able to generate creative alternatives that more adequately address them. Management at the merged EWC FET colleges thus perhaps need to conceptualise change using Lewin's 1947 model where change progresses through successive phases called unfreezing, moving, and refreezing (See 2.6.1.2). The desired change begins with the unfreezing of present behaviours or attitudes. During the moving phase, the institution changes from its original behaviour or perception to a new one. The refreezing phase establishes the desired behaviours or perceptions and locks them into the new institution (Mark, 1997: 272).
For the researcher, the proposed model integrating Lewin’s three steps has the following stages: needs assessment, collaboration, generate alternatives, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

5.4.1 Phase 1: Needs Assessment

The merging of the EWC FET colleges was a strategy to overcome the problems within this education sector but that the people involved in the implementation process of the mergers lacked managerial skills, which led to the increase in conflict. Poor leadership at these EWC FET colleges was also evident. The sense was that respondents perceived that managers were more concerned about themselves than about the other staff members. Robbins and Judge (2010:36) assert that a problem occurs when there is a discrepancy between the current state of affairs and some desired state, requiring considering an alternative course of action. The empirical evidence reveals that problems existed during the merged process and this impacted negatively and led to conflicts in the FET colleges in this study. The negative effects included staff uncertainty, non-participative management styles and a lack of communication during the merging process.

The model proposed by the researcher indicates that a problem needs to be identified (See Phase 1). The empirical study reveals that participants indicated that they feared job losses, that their stress levels increased and this led to tension and an increase in conflict in these institutions. This model proposes that diagnosing the problem reveals the extent and reality of the situation (Van der Westhuizen et al., 2003:197). The resulting dissatisfaction has to be unfrozen and diagnosed. For example, a stakeholder may become aware of a situation that needs to change or be altered, and may report this concern to the manager. When management does not exhibit a supportive attitude, it may lead to insubordination. The acknowledgement of the existence of a problem gets the
communication process started. To the researcher, often, people in a conflict situation assume that the result of a negotiation is that one will win and the other will lose. In such a case, it is necessary to reframe the process in terms of cooperative problem solving, with a view to arriving at a mutually satisfactory conclusion.

The researcher thus proposes that the management in the new merged institution should follow interventions to facilitate post-merger integration such as:

- Focussing on the desired change that begins with the unfreezing of the present behaviours or attitudes;
- Changing the institution or environment from its original behaviour or perception to a new one. This means that articulating and developing the desired post-merged FET college; and
- Refreezing, which means to establish new processes that reinforce the desired behaviours or perceptions and to lock them into the new FET college.

The likelihood of a satisfactory outcome is improved when each person feels listened to and valued.

5.4.2 Phase 2: Collaboration

This model acknowledges that decisions in colleges should be made through participative processes. The belief is that the scope for change in the FET sector was determined by the government of the day and that only certain people had provided input into the merger process. This opinion is similar to that of Morgan (1997:154) when he indicates that all organisations are intrinsically political in that they can use formal power to control certain transactions while encouraging others. This change process was therefore literally forced upon the stakeholders of these institutions without any formal consultation. According to Hoag,
Ritschard and Cooper (2002:6) the scope for change in government organizations are limited by government legislation and these constraints have been around since the beginning of politics itself. Hence, if only a few people have access to important information, then clearly only a few people can make informed decisions about important matters. This by nature, the researcher (and corroborated by Morgan, 1997) points out that decision-making powers were centralised, downward communication was formal and unsatisfactory and all of this was symptomatic of increasing conflict in the EWC FET colleges during the merger.

Building on the literature review and responses from this study, it has emerged that the lack of communication between management and lecturers was a cause of conflict (Tables 3.3 & 3.4). Phase 2 depicted in this model (Figure 5.2) is that the EWC FET college management teams of the post-merged college should brainstorm creative options that address the concerns of all participants to enable them to manage the conflict that emanated from the merger process effectively and in future mergers. Denhardt et al. (2002:346) argue that during brainstorming sessions managers should first set time limits. Secondly, they must accept that no idea is “too extreme” and thirdly, managers must encourage everyone to participate. Denhardt et al. mention that once FET management have successfully achieve participative involvement they can hone the fourth rule, where no one evaluates or comments on any suggestion during the brainstorming session. In addition Marks (1997:275) suggests that managers and management teams should have venting meeting sessions with all stakeholders. A venting meeting is a forum in which staff members are given an opportunity to take a step towards letting go of anger, cynicism, distrust and other negative emotions that have built up over years of merger mismanagement (Marks, 1997:275). This researcher believes that during these venting meetings staff members can be helped to cope with the subtle loss of fond cultures and behaviours, be given guidance for dealing with and moving through uncomfortable or unsettling experiences. Most important the researcher does
belief that these venting meetings will establish a bond among staff members of the group. In this way a new organisational culture and a new community of people who identify with the vision of the post-merged EWC FET college can be developed. It is recommended that these venting meetings should be reviewed on a quarterly basis.

Therefore, once a problem has been identified all stakeholders must clearly identify the goals and objectives that a good decision should achieve. They must select the best ideas from the brainstormed list and combine them in order to address as much as possible the needs, concerns, and interests of the participants. The model proposed in this study indicates that the stakeholders in the new merged institution should apply their collective brainpower towards solving problems or generating exploratory ideas without being judgemental. During this stage every opinion voiced is acceptable, and the greater the number of ideas, the greater the chance of finding a workable idea from all the inputs.

In this research, empirical evidence reveals the importance of communication in merger processes. In the study 71 per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the lack of communication between management and lecturers was a cause for conflict (Table 4.3). This affirms the researcher’s assumption that poor communication between the management and other staff members impacts negatively on college effectiveness and would appear to be one of the main causes of conflict. Therefore, management that invests in facilitation, intranet providers and other resources that foster communication also builds trust among those involved in the merger (Michalenko, 2010:296). It can be argued that stakeholders had a low level of trust in management during the mandated merging of the former technical colleges. If this low level of trust is not addressed in the post-merged institution, the process can be sabotaged at an inopportune time (Michalenko, 2010:293).
According to Bartels, Douwes, de Jong and Pruyn (2006:56), the information supply about (forthcoming) organisational changes may help to reduce the employees' feelings of uncertainty and threats caused by these changes. In turn, the reduction of these uncertainties among employees must be considered to be a crucial success factor for organisational changes. The researcher, therefore, proposes in this model that inclusive engagement is crucial during the collaboration stage. According to Michalenko (2010:297), inclusive engagement allows conversation and gives everybody the opportunity to ask questions and give their opinions. In so doing all members of staff are given an opportunity to buy into the vision of the new merged institution and to build relationships with members who share common values. Other studies, by Bastien (1987) and Schweiger and Weger (1989) (cited in Bartels et al., 2006:57), underline the importance of communication during merger processes.

Consultation as proposed assists leadership in putting their personal imprints on people management in various ways (Michalenko, 2010:281; Marks, 1997:276). These include dedicating management time and focus, focusing management on success factors and modelling desired behaviours and rules of the road. This researcher suggests that consultants must do more than just articulate success factors; they should assist EWC FET college management in monitoring the decisions and other actions of all stakeholders to ensure that the vision and culture of the post-merged FET college is accepted and upheld. Consultation should also aid managers and management teams to assess stakeholder performance and anticipate staff perceptions of the new vision, mission and culture of the post-merged FET institution. This should form part of the strategic objectives of the college.

According to Marks (1997:278), escalating culture clashes can be countered by a consultation process that educates all members of staff about each other's culture and shows how staff can tolerate and accommodate each other. In addition, Schein (1999) cited in Michelanko (2010:281), states that the
consultation process is where the organisation is actively involved in identifying the problem and generating a remedy. Of equal importance for the researcher is the management of grapevine communication during this stage. Mishra (2001:224), states that since grapevine activities increases during the times of uncertainty, management must provide information through formal systems of communication about key issues and events that affects employees.

This model proposes that the grapevine activity that increased during the merger of the colleges should be managed in the post-merged college by providing information through communication to the effected stakeholders. For example, management at post-merger EWC FET colleges should inform staff members with a steady flow of accurate and timely information about any change that affects them directly. Davidson and Wood (2004: 8-10) posit that the grapevine can be controlled with prompt, clear and accurate information on the issues important to employees. These facts should be released quickly, which implies that formal communication lines must be kept open and the process as short as possible.

Based on the preceding statements, the researcher considers the following as key to the management of grapevine communication in order to reduce conflict in FET colleges:

- Keep staff members informed about what is going on;
- Create a picture of a desired future;
- Formal newsletters always seems to help;
- Listen to rumours;
- Act promptly; and
- Conduct workshops and training programs for all staff members.

Thus, in view of the above, it could be argued that conflict could be managed effectively if policy implementation is seen as an integral part of the relationship
between all stakeholders during future educational merger processes. For the researcher, this contributes to participative management and the effective management of conflict in these FET colleges in the Ekurhuleni West District. Thus, if agreement is not reached, the area of disagreement is identified and the process is repeated.

5.4.3 Phase 3: Generate alternatives

This model proposes that once a goal has been set, stakeholders should then generate alternative courses of action. Van der Westhuizen et al. (2003:195) and Robbins and Judge (2010:248), argue that each of the planned alternative solutions should have the potential to limit dissatisfaction, activate further forces and operate against forces of resistance to change. For example, the manager of the college concerned about a possible lack of human resources should consider drawing up a roster as to whom and when staff members can use the only secretary available for two different departments. In the view of Davidson and Wood (2004:7), the best ideas should be selected from the brainstormed list and combined in order to address as much as possible all the needs, concerns, and interests of the participants. The authors reiterate that among the strategies that may be considered are increasing overall resources, reducing the cost of the agreement to a disadvantaged party, and conceding on lesser-valued issues in multi-issue disputes. This will reduce the tension and conflict.

For the researcher, the following are appropriate questions to pose during this stage:

- Why is the situation problematic?
- Who will be affected by any changes that are made?
- What will be the point of departure?

From the empirical findings it is evident that most managers at the college err in their point of departure by attempting to force change upon the lecturers.
However, it was beyond their control, as it is more likely that the National Department of Education (as a means of further transformation) had decided to embark on a process of merging the FET colleges for reasons which include a redress in the education system and the re-integration of resources, both human and material (Department of Education 2001:1). These external influences, the researcher believes, was outside of the managers’ control. This approach rarely works, as some of the staff members have no vested interest in the change. For this reason, managers of these colleges should set up formal communication channels to enable them to manage conflict effectively. Furthermore an appropriate climate should be created by establishing work committees to investigate problems.

5.4.3.1 Implementation

Van der Westhuizen et al. (2003:196) state that implementation is the most difficult phase in the change process especially if it is seen as a separate process from the design phase of the change. Implementation means that new structures are created, rules and regulations changed, objectives set and training provided. The issues of implementation are important factors when choosing an alternative in the previous stage. It is at this point that change actually occurs when the manager decides on a roster to administer the use of the secretary by staff, as the best solution to his problem. This will, therefore, enable them to use the secretary in a more efficient way thus reducing conflict about who may use the secretary where and when.

However, resistance to change may also appear during this phase. According to Van der Westhuizen et al. (2003:196) and Robbins and Judge (2010:247), resistance to change can originate from the system or from individuals. The merger of the FET colleges was the result of acts, rules and regulations implemented by government regulations. These external factors impacted negatively in that managers were seen as nothing more than hostages to change.
and this led to the resistance by staff members to the change process (Hoag et al. 2002:7). For example, stress levels increased that led to an escalation in absenteeism, and acts of insubordination while other staff members exercised passive resistance. From the literature surveyed it is evident that some managers at the EWC FET colleges were not skilled in managing the conflict effectively that emanated from the merger process.

In this study some of the causes of resistance to change during this phase could include the following:

- The change was introduced as a political mandate in a top-down way;
- Stakeholders who were affected by the changes were not involved;
- The changes were not communicated and appropriately circulated;
- Lecturers' concerns that the changes might prove disastrous were not addressed; and
- Excessive pressure of additional work during the implementation process.

In this context, the researcher emphasises that an effective support measure from the EWC managers to counter resistance will have to be created during the implementation process. For the researcher, this should lead to the effective management of conflict in any post-merged educational institution. The following support activities should be pursued:

- Establish effective communication by the manager, and ensure that all stakeholders are involved in the change process;
- Develop strategies that address and respect lecturers' concerns;
- Adopt a collaborative management approach;
- Establish support structures during the implementation process;
- Establish a committee that is going to monitor the functioning of the model and evaluate anticipated outcomes;
• Send letters or notes of praise for achievements;
• Provide regular feedback; and
• Provide access to information on an ongoing basis.

5.4.4 Phase 4: Stabilisation and monitoring

During this stage new norms, according to Van der Westhuizen (2002:196), come into existence. For this reason this model stresses that loyalty to norms is achieved by increasing the involvement of all stakeholders in the processes. Managers should analyse staff progress, performance and provide continuous feedback during the monitoring phase. Monitoring also informs judgements about who is adapting and who needs support in this new post-merger FET College in the Ekurhuleni West District. Managers must encourage and reward staff members during the stabilisation phase to ensure that support for the change is maintained and to prevent regression to old ways. As emphasised in Lewin’s change model that during this phase in the change process, it involves stabilising or institutionalising the changes (See 2.6.1.5).

5.4.5 Phase 5: Evaluation and feedback

Although this stage is the last, it takes place during all the previous stages. After each stage, evaluation will be carried out before the next stage is embarked on. Evaluation will enable the manager to ascertain the success of the process and will also serve as a point of departure for other change processes that need to be tackled (Van der Westhuizen et al. 2003:196). During this evaluation stage the collection and interpretation of evidence should lead to a judgement of value with a view to action (Razik & Swanson, 2010:191). Furthermore, Whetten and Cameron (2005:307) explain that feedback as depicted in this model provides opportunities for clarifying expectations, adjusting goal difficulty, and gaining recognition.
This proposed model could assist in identifying areas in which managers and management teams will need training. Marks (1997:277) states that feedback on leadership behaviour is an important value added by consultation. In this particular research project analysis of the results showed that in respect of the extent of effective management of conflict most campuses agree that management lacks skills and, therefore, training is needed. For the researcher, training in problem solving, active listening, and brainstorming will produce significant improvement in developing expectations of win-win solutions. Denhardt (2002:311), points out that conflict resolution training should include general training in communication skills, listening, assertiveness, conflict resolution and goal setting, and other topics that provide the skills necessary to be an effective manager and team player. In addition, cooperative relationships characterised by mutual respect are conducive to a problem-solving approach to achieve mutually satisfactory outcomes (Davidson & Wood, 2004:10).

Conflicts are inevitable, and most managers are not equipped with the skills or knowledge needed to resolve conflicts or to manage their feelings in conflict situations. Further, this model stresses that the Department of Education should adopt more preventative approaches, and restructure or add social work services to create conflict resolution programmes that will provide managers with skills to handle, manage, and resolve conflict in these post-merger FET colleges.

In summary, this model proposes that it is clear that change, and, in particular, future mergers in educational institutions, has to be managed effectively to reduce conflict during the change process.

5.4.6 Uniqueness of the model

There are studies conducted on educational mergers, but based on the literature and empirical evidence this researcher considers that this model is unique, because no model has been designed to assist managers of post-merger FET
colleges to manage conflict effectively in South Africa. This model furnish a valuable contribution for merging of educational institutions in South Africa, but specifically for managers of FET colleges in assisting them to manage conflict effectively in post-merger FET colleges.

5.5 Summary

The model identifies the most significant variables for empowering managers and management teams to manage conflict effectively in post-merger EWC FET colleges. It offers specific advantages over many other discussions of the role and functions of managers and management teams in effectively managing conflict that is caused by mandated mergers. The empirical evidence revealed that most managers at EWC FET colleges had limited conflict management skills or lacked communication structures, based on the perceptions of poor performance during the merger process. The model therefore, identifies stakeholder involvement as a process that occurs over time and is dynamic. The model identifies the need to focus on a common mission-driven vision, leadership involvement and the engagement of all stakeholders in the post-merger process. It also supports the need for a lateral communication structure in post-merger FET colleges. The model supports the need for a shared vision of the new reality and leadership who and model the possibility for a new merged relationship. It also suggests that managers, HOD's, senior lecturers and lecturers taken together constitute the involvement in a post-merger process.

The next chapter provides a summary of the thesis and outlines the findings and makes recommendations.
6.1 INTRODUCTION

The South African education system has undergone profound changes over the last decade. Government has created a number of initiatives which have included democracy, transformation, the merging of educational institutions, employment equity and skills development. Higher educational institutions have been confronted with far-reaching demands and challenges. One of these challenges included the restructuring of the higher education landscape in South Africa.

However, while the policy framework attempts to transform education, the legacy of the past education system, characterised by fragmentation, inequity in provisions, a crisis of policy implementation as well as resistance to change, has created enormous managerial problems at post-merger EWC FET colleges.

The literature survey focused on an overview of mergers, change and conflict emanating from the mandated merger. The merger boom is a permanent part of bureaucratic capitalism and many businesses need to restructure to maintain their competitive position. The reasons for the merger of the FET colleges were ideological and not economical as they are in most mergers. In December 2002, the Department of Education released its proposal for the restructuring of the institutional landscape of the higher education system, which was approved by the Cabinet.

The results in this study demonstrated that poor communication, a lack of participative decision making, minimal staff involvement and insufficient extrinsic motivation contributed to decreased job satisfaction and employee loyalty. In
accordance with the literature, it is likely that these perceptions were reported as being the result of perceived poor merger management and an escalation of conflict between the merging entities such as EWC.

In this chapter a summary is followed by a discussion to determine the findings of the research. Recommendations on each of the findings are provided. Topics for further research are also discussed. In conclusion, this chapter establishes whether the research questions have been answered.

6.2 SUMMARY

Chapter 1 presented the rationale of the study. It introduced the problem of the study and presented the background of the research problem, which was associated with conflict management emanating from the mandated merger process.

The aim of this study was to determine how conflict can be managed effectively in post-merger Further Education and Training colleges in the Ekurhuleni West District and to make recommendations that will assist managers and management teams in these post-merged colleges to manage conflict effectively. In order to achieve the above, the following aim was formulated for this research:

- To develop a post-merger conflict resolution model for the effective use of conflict management by managers in post-merger FET colleges.

This specific research amongst a section of FET colleges across the Ekurhuleni District through questionnaires revealed that two key aspects were important in effectively managing conflict in post-merger FET colleges. A literature study was undertaken in chapter two with the aim of evaluating the existing knowledge in the field of effective conflict management. The literature study examined various theories and explored issues linked to merger
implementation processes and conflict management stemming from these merger processes. Research based on various aspects of merger implementation processes and conflict management in EWC FET colleges stemming from the merger processes was outlined to establish what constitutes effective conflict management in post-merged FET colleges and how it can be maintained. The literature study also revealed that effective conflict management does not just happen, but that management skills and effectiveness of college management are vital for continually increasing effective conflict management in these FET colleges.

It is evident from literature that the managers and management teams plays an important part in effective conflict management. Managers and management should possess knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that are essential in managing conflict effectively.

In chapter three, an overview of the empirical investigation was provided. The chapter began with a discussion on the research design and methodology, proceeded with the purpose of quantitative research, sampling, data collection and the research instrument used in this study. The methods of data collection of the study were clearly outlined. The designing of a structured questionnaire was described and an explanation of the population and sample, statistical analysis and data analysis was given. The role of the researcher in the study was also discussed.

In chapter four the quantitative data was analysed and ranked in an ascending order, according to the mean score of all items. The data was analysed and the findings of the empirical research described in order to compare how managers, HODs, senior lecturers and lecturers perceive effective management of the mandated merger and effective management of conflict emanating from the merger at FET colleges. This was also carried out to determine the need for the
development of a model for managers to manage conflict effectively at FET colleges in the Ekurhuleni West District.

Validity and reliability of the measuring instrument were determined by the use of Cronbach Alpha, while inter-item correlation was used and found reliable. A first-order factor analysis using the principal axis factoring extraction method and varimax rotation yielded two factors for the items pertaining to the merger implementation process, and three factors pertaining to conflict management. Second-order factor analysis suggested that the two factors pertaining to the merger implementation process could form one factor only. The three first-order factors pertaining to conflict management also formed only one second-order factor. The end results were that the 30 items were reduced to two factors relating to merger management and management of conflict. Factor 1, consisting of 10 items, was named “the extent of effective management of the mandated merger implementation process” with a Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.829. Factor two, consisting of 20 items, was named “the extent of effective management of conflict emanating from the mandated merger implementation process” with a Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.909.

All of these factors were valid and had high reliability coefficients which could serve, according to the perceptions of staff members, as a basis for determining the importance for managers to be competent in managing conflict effectively in their colleges.

The factor analytic procedure was followed by a series of multivariate and univariate statistical tests to test the various hypotheses, based on the perceptions of respondents in respect of the following independent variables:

- Gender;
- Campus;
- Race;
• Age; and
• Educational qualifications.

At the univariate level two independent groups were compared for possible statistical differences by means of the Student t-test. In respect of three or more independent groups univariate differences were investigated by means of ANOVA (analysis of variance) in respect of merger management and management of conflict. Where statistically significant differences were found at the univariate level, they were further investigated by means of either the Scheffe or Dunnett T3 test.

It became evident from the data collected that there was a need for the design of a post-merger conflict resolution model for managers of the FET colleges regarding effective management of conflict in these educational institutions.

In chapter five the information gathered from the literature review and the quantitative data was used to develop a post-merger conflict resolution model for the implementation at EWC FET colleges. The model was designed to serve as a guideline for effective management of conflict for future mergers in these FET institutions.

The next section contains a description of the findings to indicate how the research aim was achieved.

6.3 FINDINGS

Based on the empirical study responses to the questionnaire and the high validity and reliability of the questionnaire the findings were as follows.

FINDING 1
The empirical findings showed that the respondents of the FET colleges were of the opinion that they were not adequately informed about the policies involved in the merger (Table 3.1). The responses to the questionnaire show that among most respondents there was dissatisfaction with the implementation process of the merger. Analysis of the factor dealing with management principles when implementing mergers \([\bar{X} = 2.32]\) indicates that the respondents partially disagreed with the items in this factor. It appears as if respondents (72%) at these EWC FET colleges had a negative attitude towards the way the merger was implemented. These negative attitudes of the staff impacted on the management performance of managers as they had to change these negatives to positives. Most of the respondents were of the opinion that the management of the implementation of policies during the merger was the immediate cause of the conflict in EWC FET colleges, as these policies were issued as mandates.

**FINDING 2**

The participants indicated that the management of the merger implementation process at the EWC FET colleges was not transparent. Literature highlighted the importance of transparency and maintains it increases staff members trust in effective management of conflict. The majority (64%) of respondents were of the view that the lack of transparency increased conflicts and disempowered them, and they felt sidelined. Additional comments in the questionnaire indicate that respondents did not trust management during the merger process as they felt that managers were only concerned about their own interest.

**FINDING 3**

From the literature study it is evident that the respondents perceive that management used a hierarchical managerial approach rather than the collegial and participative management style (Table 3.3). The lecturers considered the top-down structure and control approach employed by the management to be
characterised as increasing uncertainty among them. To lecturers the collegial and participatory management style was important to empower lecturers during the merger implementation process. This participative management style provides lecturers with a right to participate in decision-making and to possibly influence decisions that directly affect their future careers which also leads to greater trust between participants.

FINDING 4

The lack of communication appears to be basic to most of the conflict situations at the post-merger EWC FET colleges. As was indicated in the presentation of the findings the responses to the questionnaire show that, among most respondents, there was a consensus that communication was central from the beginning of the change process. Communication is crucial in a merger and emphasises the need to send the proper messages to staff members on a continuous basis. There is a strong need for employees to be on the receiving end of information constantly. The lack of formal communication structures creates conflicts, increases stress and leads to tension among lecturers, with a subsequent negative effect on their morale at these colleges.

FINDING 5

The empirical findings in this research have revealed that a common source of conflict in these colleges is the limit of resources such as physical space, books, equipment and human resources (Tables 3.3 and 3.4). After the merger lack of resources resulted in a win-lose competition, which led to an increase in conflicts. Thus, when resources are scarce, working relationships are likely to suffer, which can result in dysfunctional conflict (See 2.10.2). This was borne out by the perception of the respondents during this investigation.
FINDINGS 6

The respondents from campuses situated in Germiston, Boksburg and Kempton Park disagreed with effective management of the implementation of the mandated merger process which resulted in the increase of conflict at FET colleges. However, respondents from Alberton disagreed to a smaller extent than respondents from Kempton, Germiston, Boksburg, and Kathorus in respect of the extent of effective management of conflict stemming from the mandated merger at EWC. This possibly indicates that management at Alberton adopted a more participative management approach.

FINDING 7

The results of the study show that the respondents belonging to the minority group differed in their perceptions regarding effective conflict management stemming from the mandated merger. The minority disagreed to the greatest extent with the effective management of conflict. It could be the case where the resistance of the minority is possibly seen as that they stand to lose more during the change process. In post-merger EWC FET colleges there are still some of the people from both white and black communities who feel that they cannot stay together, learn together or do any other thing together. This is realised from the division between whites and blacks in staffrooms of FET colleges, their not being able to share offices, their unwillingness to hold meetings together.

The findings of the study provided the basis for the recommendations.
6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The main aim of this research was an investigation of perceptions into the effective management of conflict stemming from the merger implementation process at the FET colleges. In order to realise this aim a literature survey was undertaken and this served as a basis for the empirical research. The findings of the research are now incorporated in the following recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Part of a post-merger policy should be to create an environment of certainty for employees. Clearly one would like to be able to say that the mergers between former technikons into EWC FET colleges were the result of educational imperatives but that does not appear to have been the case. In the South African context a political decision was made to alter the higher education landscape, The National Plan for Higher Education (South Africa, 2001:75). Managers and management teams must convene a meeting and communicate to staff members what the new vision as envisaged by the government of the day for the institution is. Encourage staff to work towards it. The management or leadership should make sure that new mandated policies are clearly communicated, understood and be accepted by all stakeholders. Management should convene monthly meetings with all stakeholders at the college in which they advocate the implementation of new policies and determine direction and assess staff commitment.

RECOMMENDATION 2

It is important to listen to and involve people who are affected by a merger. To ensure collegial and participation management approaches, relationship building and participation initiatives would lead to greater buy-in by all stakeholders (See 2.17.5). Management should repeatedly demonstrate transparency and trust
towards all stakeholders during the merger process. It is therefore, recommended that managers must manage people's expectations, energy and experience in order to successfully manage the post-merger institution. To ensure collegial and participatory management approaches the management should allow and motivate and encourage all stakeholders to participate in meetings and their participation needs to commence as early as possible to ensure that solutions are fully owned by the people who will be affected, and to provide a solid platform for integration. This discussion aligns with Lewin's change model (See 2.6.1.4) and with the researcher's proposed model as depicted in Figure 5.1. If staff members feel that they are trusted by their managers, they are almost certain to display an increased willingness to cooperate. Increasing the stakeholders trust in the merger will certainly lead to a stronger post-merger identification. Managers must give all stakeholders attention and support and communicate all the relevant information openly and honestly during the merger implementation process. Putting a face on the merger helps to build trust. Managers must be visible and accessible. On the other hand managers who trust their staff members make the merger process an open, honest and participative one.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Management in FET colleges should employ the collegial and participatory management style during a merged process rather than the hierarchical management approach. Literature also points to college managers employing autocratic management styles as a major impediment of effective management of conflict in post-merger EWC FET colleges (Whetten & Cameron, 2005:253). To ensure the participatory management style, college managers should allow all stakeholders to participate in meetings, brainstorming sessions and decision-making processes. In this regard, Goodwin and Griffith, (2007:241) argue that an organisation that engages in participative management practices is interested in driving decision-making processes as far down the organisational chart as
possible. The role of management in creating a participative and open culture is essential in addressing and overcoming negative staff perceptions in order to harness their collective potential in ensuring merger success. Evidently, poor communication from management during transformation impacts negatively on employee motivation, thus affecting job satisfaction and subsequently employee loyalty to the institution.

Newstrom and Davis (2002:187) suggest that participative managers still retain ultimate responsibility for the operation of their organisations but that they should learn to share operating responsibility with those who perform the work and that this should result in employees feeling a sense of involvement in organisational goals.

**RECOMMENDATION 4**

This study established that poor communication contributed to the increase in conflict at these post-merger EWC FET colleges. Communication is a vital factor in any change process. Communication during all phases of the merger, especially communication in the pre-merger phase, will have a positive impact on the success of the integrated process. Coffey, Garrow and Holbeche (2002) (cited in Muller, 2006:212) go so far as to write that communication is often hailed as the most important factor in a merger's success.

Managers should develop good communication skills to manage conflict effectively. For example, they should communicate regularly. Management should convene regular staff meetings and meetings with all stakeholders to ensure the collegial and collaborative management style. Management should allow and motivate all stakeholders to participate in staff meetings, brainstorming and decision-making sessions in which agreements are reached by consensus. Managers should have regular venting meetings, with staff members. Venting meetings helps people with obvious issues such as giving up a fond culture and
adapting to the new institutional culture (Marks, 1997:275). The role of the college managers in the communication cycle is extremely important. Management should establish a communication climate before the merger and motivate all staff to participate in these meetings.

Particular skills and training may be needed at such a sensitive time, even for those managers who under normal circumstances have a good rapport with their staff, and, in particular, in communicating information to them. In the absence of any communication from the leaders, employees rely on other sources such as the media and the grapevine to arrive at their own conclusions.

The manager as the accounting officer should have open communication channels. Not only should communication be among management as is usually the case but should flow from top management down to lecturers. Meetings should be held consistently with all staff members to inform and update them when new development arises. Managers should establish two-way communication structures and have feedback sessions. The lack of communication leads to tension, and therefore communication should be identified as a critical success factor.

It is essential that communication is proactive, and that it reduces uncertainty and maintains employee trust in management, especially since timeous communication from leaders influences employee anxiety and loyalty and ensures employee participation. For example, post-merger EWC managers and management teams must communicate the new vision, and strategies in a way that inspires understanding and buy-in among all staff members. Moloi (2005:57) and Davies (2005:150) write that successful managers are those who communicate the vision well, incorporate messages about the vision into their hour-to-hour activities, and use every communication channel to talk about the new vision of the institution. In a college where there is genuine trust and open communication the morale of lecturers will increase and managers will maintain a
competitive edge by opening up lines of communication for better conflict resolution, decision making and motivation. Managers should apply an open communication approach which would surely build deep trust, mutual appreciation and recognitions among staff members.

The conflict resolution model developed in this study is a useful tool for assisting managers to manage conflict effectively in post-merger EWC FET colleges.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Managers will need to be able to manage in tough and uncertain times by using a more collaborative management approach to prioritisation while maintaining motivation and improving performance. The morale of lecturers is deeply influenced by the physical environment in which they work. This means that management will also need to manage reducing their staff complement while retaining and developing the best people and resources both for now and the future.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Leadership and good management in conflict are vital to the effective management of the institution. The college management plays a major role during transformation because it needs to create a new vision for the new organisation in order to promote change, and because the success of the merger depends on the competence of the leaders who should be appropriately trained in transformation processes. Often, people in a conflict situation assume that the result of a negotiation is that one will win and the other will lose. It is, therefore, necessary to reframe the process in terms of cooperative problem solving with a view to arriving at a mutually satisfactory conclusion. Managers should receive training in assisting staff through the emotional wave of change. Even short
periods of training in conflict resolution should produce significantly better mutual outcomes in the management of conflict.

The skills required of a manager include conflict management, technical skills (the ability to apply specialised knowledge or expertise), human skills (the ability to work with, understand, and motivate other people, both individually and in groups) and conceptual skills (the mental ability to analyse and diagnose complex situations). Hence, there is an urgent need to establish a development programme for conflict management and leadership skills. Skills can be learned. The training programs should focus more deliberately on incorporating these skills in management programmes offered to managers of EWC FET colleges. Managers should also attend more relevant up-to-date management courses to sharpen these skills.

Appropriate planning and conflict management skills can reduce the negative feelings and reduce conflict that mergers have for staff, especially since mergers can have a devastating impact on staff, both emotionally and professionally.

RECOMMENDATION 7

Strong leadership characteristics shown by college managers are important to increase effective management of conflict. EWC college managers and management teams should be competent in facilitative and quality management. Managers should also be competent in participative, resource and consultative management and should encourage all members of academic staff to get actively involved in all aspects of management. Managers should encourage lecturers to increase their participation and consultation in management activities of the college.

It is recommended that managers at EWC should acquire skills to motivate and teach all staff members to compromise, sacrifice, tolerate and understand each
other in a democratic interactive situation. Training, through workshops must be conducted by external people who have a proven track record and should focus on advancement and not just remediation. These training programs should raise the skills levels of managers and management teams and allow them to effectively deal with occurrences of conflicting issues in these post-merger FET institutions.

Managers should teach other staff members problem solving skills and how to address controversial issues. Managers should motivate and support all members of the organisation to work in harmony irrespective of their race, cultural diversity or beliefs. The challenge for college managers is to find ways to empower all staff members to maximise their contribution in successfully attaining the goals of the organisation, which requires trust, patience and tolerance in the workplace.

6.5 TOPICS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Researchers should be encouraged to conduct research on the following topics which this study could not cover. These topics are:

- A pre-test and post-test into effective management and leadership for the management of the post-merger process. A study of the practical application of each of the management techniques and processes recommended should be conducted to determine the effectiveness of each technique in the merged environment;

- A study into the creation of a new identity for the merged institution, which may provide the means for addressing some of the difficulties of bringing together different institutional cultures; and
Comparison of the transformational leadership ratings between leaders in the different FET institutions and their consequent ability to manage conflict in their respective institutions.

6.6 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

The accuracy of an empirical research might be disputable because responses generated could have been greatly influenced by fluctuating emotions. The employees concerned at the former six technical colleges may have feared losing their jobs, power or status and may have feared a lowering of salaries or benefits; therefore, their responses could have been founded on incoherence and irrationality rather than reason. Seventy four questionnaires were not completed by EWC.

Academic staff might have been biased or feared retribution. As a consequence, they might not have given their objective opinions of their fears, uncertainties and perceptions or opinions on how management supported or did not support them during the time of change. In anticipation of this, participants were assured of anonymity and that management would have no insight into individual responses.

6.7 CONCLUSION

The research question asked: "How can conflict be managed effectively in post-merger Further Education and Training Colleges in the Ekurhuleni West District?" This question has been answered in the study. The study illustrates with necessary evidence that managers and management teams cannot effectively manage conflict in these post-merged EWC FET colleges. The managers of post-merger FET colleges are confronted with a variety of interrelated, complex problems and challenges that acquire managerial knowledge and skills. Systems, processes and people all need attention during a change process. It is, however, the "soft", intangible issues relating to employees that demand that managers
and management teams manage conflict effectively if change is to be truly successful. Managers thus play a vital role, and yet are often unsupported in their roles to encourage and motivate staff during the change process.

For these reasons, the study showed how managers in these EWC FET colleges could be assisted and empowered with conflict management skills and capacity to manage conflict effectively in their institutions. The findings of the empirical study demonstrate that managers of FET colleges lack conflict management skills. This is supported in the evidence that they exhibit an avoidance management style, and the lack of a lateral communication structure in which staff members communicate directly with one another in the organisation and as such with the consequence that conflict increases because stakeholders may feel that this borders on unprofessional action against them, thus becoming demotivated, stressed, confused and even reluctant to cooperate.

The findings in respect of how managers can be empowered in these FET colleges to effective manage conflict, emanating from the merger successfully, the development of a Conflict Resolution Model and the recommendations as well as topics for further research in the empowering of managers to manage post-merged FET colleges were also provided.

The merging of educational institutions cannot automatically take place without management’s direction and planning. Management needs to acknowledge staff perceptions at the newly merged institution since the essence of good teaching and learning is a supportive workforce. The staff who participated in this study identified a range of problems related to the merger process, including poor communication, top-down management style, no participative decision-making, lack of extrinsic motivation, decreased job satisfaction, and the absence of institutional loyalty. Mergers, it is clear, place an almost impossible strain on all concerned that leads to increase in conflict but the conflict can be managed effectively through managers carefully applying conflict managing skills, and an
excellent communication structure. Despite their dissatisfaction, most staff supported merger objectives and remained intrinsically motivated and committed to academia and students. The model proposed by the researcher poses to assist managers in effectively managing conflict in these FET colleges.

Since the merger of institutions of higher education in South Africa is an externally motivated organisational change, the role of management in creating a participative and open culture is essential in addressing and overcoming negative staff perceptions in order to harness their collective potential in ensuring merger success, especially since the literature is consistent that poor communication from management during transformation impacts negatively on employee motivation, thus affecting job satisfaction and subsequently employee loyalty to the institution.

This research clearly confirms the premise that managers of colleges should have the necessary knowledge and skills to manage conflict effectively. From the literature survey it is evident that EWC FET college managers should have competencies in change management, conflict management and human relations. Hence, there is an urgent need to establish a development programme for conflict management skills. These skills, knowledge and attitudes must be acquired, which will enhance the effective management of conflict.

For these reasons, the researcher trusts that in this study he has contributed towards fulfilling a major need in FET colleges in the Ekurhuleni West District, and possibly elsewhere in the country by developing a model for conflict management, to be implemented in order to increase conflict management skills and assist with effective use of conflict management in post-merger FET colleges.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Humphries, J. (2002). Managing through people: How to get the best from your most valuable resource. Hong Kong: Grolier International.


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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE
Dear Respondent

The implementation of the policy to merge higher education institutions has brought with it numerous challenges and conflicts. I am undertaking research on Conflict management in post-merger Further Education and Training Colleges. Ekurhuleni West College (EWC) for Further Education and Training is the result of the merger between the following former technical colleges: Alberton, Boksburg, Germiston, Kempton, Lazarus Nhlapo and Usizo.

Attached is a questionnaire which attempts to gain information on conflict management in post-merger FET Colleges. The researcher wishes to ensure you that your responses will remain completely confidential and anonymous.

Your participation is of utmost importance to the researchers. Would you please take a few minutes of your time to complete the attached questionnaire?

Please bear the following in mind:

• Your participation is highly appreciated. The success of this research relies on your honest opinion and your first spontaneous reaction is the most valid.
• Do not write your name on the questionnaire.
• There are no correct or incorrect answers in Section B.
• Please answer all the questions. Kindly return the completed questionnaire to the person from whom it was received.
• It will take approximately 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours faithfully

M. Bosch
011 925 1005 (w)
073 387 3007 (c)
markb@ewc.edu.za

Prof R Mistry (Supervisor)
(011) 559 2683

Prof BR Grobler (Co-Supervisor)
(011) 559 2518
APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please Note: Please answer all the questions by circling the block corresponding to your answer

Example for completing Section A:
1. Gender?
   (If you are male then circle 1 as follows):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SECTION A:

1. Your gender?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. To which population group do you belong?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>African</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Indian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Please indicate your age group:

| Under 25 years of age | 1 |
| 25 – 34               | 2 |
| 35 – 44               | 3 |
| 45 – 54               | 4 |
| 55 and above          | 5 |
4. Your highest educational qualification?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 12 certificate</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post school certificate/diploma</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honours degree</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Please indicate your post level:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post Level</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior lecturer</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Department</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Please indicate your management/leadership position.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Department</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Lecturer</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at present: been in such a position before</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never been in a leadership position.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. What management level do you “report” to directly?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Department</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Lecturer</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Section B**

Please provide your personal opinions for each of the following statements.

Remember that this is not a test of your competence. We are only interested in your opinion.

Indicate your response to each statement by circling the appropriate number using the following 5-point scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Example: Indicate to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement. Circle your response.*

The manager of my campus listens to the opinions of the lectures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

If the respondent’s response was “4”, it would appear that the respondent agrees with the statement.

**SECTION B:**

**TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS**

1. The implementation process of the merger was clear.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS

2. I experienced fear in respect of possible demotion during the merger.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

3. I experienced stress as a result of the merger.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4. I am uncertain about my future career as a result of the merger.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

5. The merger process was consultative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

6. The merger process was transparent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

7. The college management involved staff members in the discussion with regard to the change process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

8. Change brought about by the merger influences my personal values.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

9. New policies regarding the merger have clearly explained to the staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
10. Change brought about by the merger jeopardizes my position at the college.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements? Please by means of a tick in an appropriate column indicate your answer using the following 5-point equal interval scale where:

1. = Strongly disagree
2. = Disagree
3. = Neutral
4. = Agree
5. = Strongly agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATEMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. The college management team uses an impartial party to assist staff members to settle their differences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. The college management team attempts to accommodate the needs of all stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The management team is oblivious to conflict situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. The management team uses a process of making joint decisions to solve differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. The conflict resolution management style is consistent in their dealings with the situation at your campus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. The management team attempts to consider the feelings of others in conflict.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. The lack of communication between management and lecturers is a cause for conflict.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. When dealing with conflict the management team consults all role-players.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. The college management team considers all possible solutions when conflict arises.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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21. The college management team resolves conflict by inviting role players to participate in finding solutions to problems

22. The top down structure at your campus leads to organizational conflict.

23. The management team attempts to reduce potential conflict by inviting all lecturers to participate in decision making.

24. The management team uses a participative management style to reduce organizational conflict.

To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements? Please by means of a tick in an appropriate column indicate your answer using the following 5-point equal interval scale where:

1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATEMENT</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25. Scarcity of resources has the potential to increase conflict.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. During conflict the management team makes use of threats to resolve conflict.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. The management team acts decisively to reduce potential conflict.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. My immediate manager has an open &quot;door policy as far as disputes are concern.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. My manager avoids conflict by postponing decisions on controversial issues.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Training for management in conflict management will reduce conflict.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

FORMAL PERMISSION FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION