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Positive and Negative Sex Role Identities, Conflict Management Styles and Psychological Wellbeing

Chanel Chemaly

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University of the Witwatersrand

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DECLARATION

A research project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MA by coursework and Research Report in the field of Organisational- Industrial Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, February 2014.

I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at this or any other university.

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ABSTRACT

In this study, positive and negative sex role identities of 412 employees from organisations in South Africa were compared with regards to conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing. Three self- report questionnaires were administered to employees to measure the variables of positive and negative sex role identities, conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing. The self-report questionnaires included the 57- Item Revised Extended Personality Attributes Questionnaire (EPAQ-R), the Thomas- Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument, and the Warwick- Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale.

The results of the present study demonstrated overall significant differences among sex role identities and conflict management styles, sex role identities and psychological wellbeing, as well as conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing. In particular, the results were consistent with the proposed hypotheses in relation to sex role identities and conflict management styles. The results specified that the positively androgynous individual favoured the compromising conflict management style, the negatively androgynous individual preferred to avoid, the positively feminine sex role identity favoured the accommodating conflict management style, whereas the negatively feminine sex role identity preferred to avoid, and both the positively and negatively masculine sex role identities favoured the competing conflict management style. In relation to conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing, significant differences were found between compromising and accommodating, collaborating and accommodating, and avoiding and accommodating conflict management styles. In terms of sex role identity and psychological wellbeing, significant differences occurred between all the positive sex role identities and negative femininity, as well as between positive androgyny and the negative sex role identities. Unexpected findings relating to sex role identities and psychological wellbeing pertains to the significant difference between negative androgyny and negative femininity, as well as the undifferentiated sex role identity and negative femininity.

Therefore, these results have provided support for the Differentiated Androgynous Model indicating that positive sex role identities are more socially equipped in terms of psychological adjustment in relation to the negative sex role identities. Non- significant results were obtained when investigating the interrelationship among all three variables.

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INTRODUCTION

Conflict within any organisation is inevitable and poses as a managerial issue that almost every organisation experiences. Conflict can be viewed as a process that occurs within any social entity whereby an individual or a group may perceive differences and opposition between another individual or group that mainly arises due to work- and task- related issues, or socio-emotional and relationship issues (De Dreu & Beersma, 2005). Conflict can have detrimental consequences upon employees if it is not resolved effectively. If an organisation and its members are able to resolve conflict effectively, then the process of conflict can be regarded as a positive indicator of effective organisational management (Lee, 2008). Therefore, conflict resolution is a critical component to organisational functioning if the organisation is concerned with overall performance. The method by which organisational members handle interpersonal or intergroup conflict is usually described in terms of a resolution 'style' (Chusmir & Mills, 1989). An organisational member's conflict resolution style is influenced by several factors, whereby two of these factors, namely gender and managerial level, have been highly researched (e.g. Chusmir & Mills, 1989; Korabik, Baril, & Watson, 1993; Thomas & Thomas, 2008). It is important to note that the majority of research that has been conducted on gender influencing conflict management styles has mainly focused on biological sex and has not focused on sex role identity. For the purpose of the current research study, conflict management styles will be investigated in relation to one's sex role identity as opposed to an investigation based on one's biological sex.

The topic of sex role identity is gaining momentum in the research realm. Individuals have been taught to adhere to certain roles and behaviours depending on one's biological sex. Sex role identity provides an alternative explanation, indicating that it may not only be the biological sex of the individual influencing behaviour, but it may rather be attributed to the sex role identity of an individual. Sex role identity is a social construction that influences the sex- based behaviours that an individual adopts into his or her identity (Woodhill & Samuels, 2003). Sex role identity may influence an individual's course of action and the way in which one may behave and respond to stimuli. Therefore, an alternative factor that may influence one's behaviour when responding to conflict may be an individual's sex role identity. It must be noted that much of the

research that has been conducted on sex role identities has been solely focused on the socially desirable sex- based personality traits (e.g. Chevron, Quinlan & Blatt, 1978; Garnets & Pleck, 1979; Sharpe & Heppner, 1991; Whitley, 1985). Due to the inconsistent findings of these studies, as will be discussed within Chapter 1, sex role identity has been explored in terms of its positive and negative counterparts. Most research on sex role identity has been conducted in Europe and North America. Regardless of the importance of such research, there has been a shortage of research conducted in South Africa (Cook & Simbaya, 1998).

Furthermore, in terms of sex role identity, much of the research that has been conducted has investigated whether one's sex role identity may influence certain psychological outcomes, such as psychological wellbeing (e.g. Hinrichsen, Follansbee, & Ganellen, 1981; Shimonaka, Nakazato, Kawaai, & Shinichi, 1997; Woodhill & Samuels, 2003). In terms of conflict management and psychological wellbeing, the way in which an individual responds to conflict can have an effect on an individual's psychological wellbeing. Dreu and Beersma (2005) explained that much of the research on conflict management has focused on the effect that conflict has in relation to certain work outcomes such as productivity, and less research has been conducted on more of the 'softer' outcomes such as psychological wellbeing. Psychological wellbeing represents the point to which an individual displays a positive or negative mental state (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). An employee's psychological wellbeing can have a direct impact on one's job performance and so it is an important organisational concern. Although previous research has been conducted investigating the relationship among sex role identities, conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing (e.g. Chung- Yan & Moeller, 2010; Helgeson, 1994; Holt & DeVore, 2005; Korabik, Baril & Watson, 1993; Yelsma & Brown, 1985; Woodhill & Samuels, 2003; Zapf, 1999), to the researcher's knowledge no particular research has been done whereby the interrelationship among all three variables has been investigated, especially whereby sex role identities are conceptualised in terms of both positive and negative sex role identities. Therefore, considering that sex role identities as well as conflict management styles may influence one's level of psychological wellbeing, the research study will further attempt to investigate whether positive and negative sex role identities influence one's psychological wellbeing, as well as whether conflict management styles have any influence on an individual's level of psychological wellbeing.

In particular, the present research study aimed to investigate the following objectives:

1. Whether individuals with varying patterns of sex role identities have differing conflict management styles
2. Whether individuals with varying patterns of sex role identities have differing levels of psychological wellbeing
3. Whether individuals that prefer to resolve conflict based on certain conflict management styles have differing levels of psychological wellbeing
4. Whether individuals with varying patterns of sex role identities have differing conflict management styles, and whether this affects their levels of psychological wellbeing, thus the interrelationship between the three variables.

In summary, the current research study investigates the impact that positive and negative sex role identities have among South African employees in terms of their preference of conflict management styles as well as its impact on their level of psychological wellbeing. Within the following research report, each chapter outlines and discusses different components of the investigation. Chapter 1 includes the Literature Review discussing past research pertaining to the variables under investigation. Chapter 2 provides a rationale as to why this study was a feasible research investigation and outlines the research questions and hypotheses for the research study, as well as explains the methodological approach that was adopted for the purpose of this study. Chapter 3 illustrates the results obtained from the specified statistical analyses that were performed, and Chapter 4 includes a discussion regarding the results that were obtained.

CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Introduction

Conflict is a fact of life and organisations are constantly exposed to varying degrees of conflict. In an organisational setting, conflict is inexorable as people compete for jobs, resources, power, acknowledgement and security (Bagshaw, 1998). It must be noted that traditionally conflict had generally been perceived as an obstruction to progress (Bagshaw, 1998), however, as organisations evolve it becomes apparent that organisational conflict can successfully lead to greater overall organisational performance (Rahim, 2002). Therefore, because conflict has become an unavoidable aspect within the workplace and considering that conflict may lead to higher levels of organisational functioning, it is necessary for individuals to employ certain conflict management styles in order to resolve the conflicting issues effectively or functionally. As mentioned previously, there are certain factors that may influence an individual's choice of conflict management styles in organisations. For example personality disposition (e.g. Jones & Mills, 1985; Antonioni, 1998; Wood & Bell, 2008), biological sex (e.g. Chusmir & Mills, 1989; Duane, 1989; Holt & DeVore, 2005; Korabik, Baril, & Watson, 1993; Ohbuchi & Takahashi, 1994; Ting- Toomey et al., 2001; Thomas & Thomas, 2008), managerial level (e.g. Jablin, 1979; Rahim, 1983; Brewer, Mitchell, & Weber, 2002; Holt & DeVore, 2005), and organisational culture (e.g. Chua & Gudykunst, 1987; Holt & DeVore, 2005) may all have an influence on an individual's choice of conflict management style. However, it is evident that one of the most highly researched topics in relation to its influence of conflict management styles is that of biological sex.

Previous research has been conducted in order to establish the relationship between biological sex and conflict management. The increase in this research may be attributed toward the increasing number of women that are entering the workplace and are able to take up a significant role regarding organisational decisions (Brewer et al., 2002). Women have been able to enter the workplace with the intention of being promoted to various leadership positions for several years

due to gender equality laws being implemented which have ultimately resulted in women potentially being involved in the conflict management process. Therefore, an interest has grown in determining whether women are able to adopt certain managerial roles and responsibilities, both of which may often entail the management of conflict (Brewer et al., 2002). Although sex has been investigated as an exploratory variable in explaining individual differences in conflict management styles and although a substantial body of research has been undertaken in this regard, the results of such research have proven to be inconsistent (e.g. Korabik, Baril, & Watson, 1993; Sorenson, Hawkins, & Sorenson, 1995; McKenna & Richardson, 1995; Orbe & Warren, 2000; Chan, Monroe, Ng, & Tan, 2006). Due to such inconsistencies, it is necessary to identify a different determinant of conflict management styles such as sex role identities. Sex role identities may provide a more in- depth approach to explaining why certain conflict management styles are adopted. In particular, biological sex refers to an individual either being born as a male or a female, whereas sex role identity refers to the learned patterns of masculine or feminine characteristics that may determine how individuals' behave in certain circumstances (Cook, 1985). For example, an individual may be a female in terms of her biological sex but may portray traces of masculine sex role identity (See page 12 for more information on biological sex and sex role identity).

Therefore, it seems possible that perhaps sex role identity may provide a more in-depth investigation when identifying a determinant of conflict management styles. In order to explore the relationship between organisational conflict and sex role identities, the literature on these variables and their interrelationship will be explored in more detail in the following sections.

1.2 Defining Organisational Conflict

Within any organisation, conflict is a part of daily functioning. If an organisation is to function optimally then the appropriate conflict management skills need to be developed. Conflict is defined as a process that has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect something that a party or parties care about (Nel, 2009). According to Rahim (2002), conflict can further be defined as an interactive process demonstrated by a degree of incompatibility, disagreement or dissonance at an individual, group or organisational level. It is important not only for leaders

within the organisation but for all employees to demonstrate the appropriate conflict management styles.

It is important to note that different perspectives of conflict exist and have evolved over the years. There are three general views of conflict that exist: the traditional, human relations, and interactionist view. The traditional view of conflict is the oldest perspective and assumes that any form of disagreement is harmful and should be completely avoided. The human relations view of conflict perceives conflict as a natural occurrence among all groups and, as a result, conflict should be managed and not disregarded. The interactionist approach to conflict argues that conflict can be a positive influence within a group- setting and denotes that some conflict needs to occur if a group is to perform effectively (Nel, 2009). According to the interactionist school of thought, conflict can be categorised as either functional or dysfunctional (Nel, 2009). Functional conflict refers to any form of conflict that supports the goals of the group and improves group performance. In contrast, dysfunctional conflict refers to any form of conflict that thwarts group performance (Amason, 1996). Conflict has further been classified according to the type: task, relationship, or process. Task conflict refers to conflict relating to the disagreement among group members regarding the content, goals and ideas of the work. Relationship conflict is a perception of interpersonal conflict which typically includes tension, annoyance and animosity among group members. Process conflict refers to conflict that occurs as a result of how the work gets done (Simons & Peterson, 2000). It is noted that relationship conflict is almost always dysfunctional whereas low levels of process conflict, and low to moderate levels of task conflict are functional (Nel, 2009).

Conflict management styles have been and continue to be measured by a number of different classifications and over the past several years, a five- category scheme for classifying interpersonal conflict management modes have emerged in the realm of conflict and behavioural research (Kilmann & Thomas, 1975). One of the first conflict management schemes was developed by Deutsch (1947) which was based on a simple cooperation- competition contradiction. However, the simplicity of this dichotomy raised doubts about whether this scheme would capture the complexity of an individual's perception of conflict (Brewer et al, 2002). As a result, a new two- dimensional grid was developed by Blake and Mouton (1964) and

reinterpreted by Thomas (1976) in order to classify conflict management styles. The two separate dimensions include cooperativeness and assertiveness (see Figure 1). Cooperativeness refers to the degree to which one party attempts to satisfy the other party's concerns (Nel, 2009). Assertiveness refers to the degree to which one attempts to satisfy one's own concerns (Nel, 2009). The scheme, which is based on the two separate dimensions of cooperation and assertiveness, includes five conflict handling- intentions which are competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding and accommodating. These five modes reflect autonomous dimensions of interpersonal conflict behaviour.

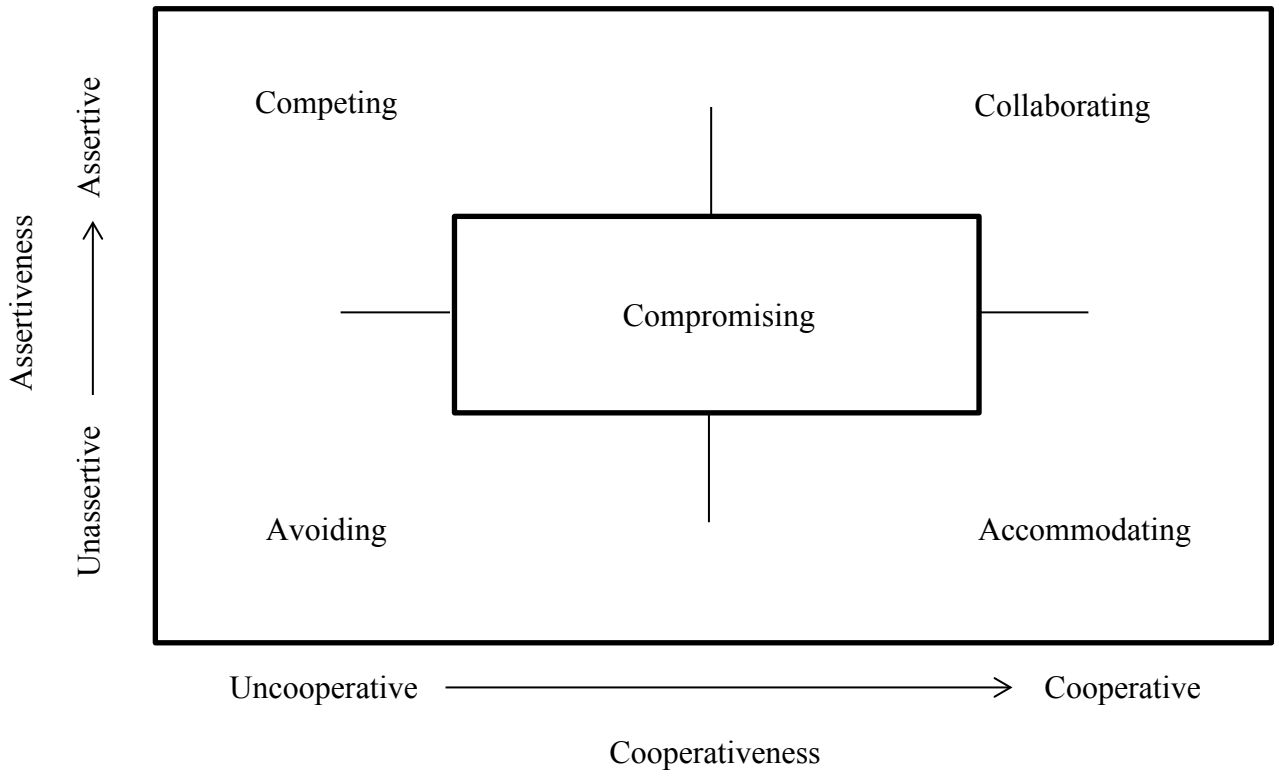


Figure 1. The graphical representation of the Thomas- Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument based on the two dimensions of assertiveness and cooperativeness (Adapted from Nel, 2009)

In relation to the present study it becomes important to consider the literature on the aforementioned definition of organisational conflict and how this has been linked to biological sex. The following section will discuss past literature that has investigated the interrelationship between these two variables.

1.3 Organisational Conflict and Biological Sex

In South Africa, the increase of women into the workforce can be attributed to the post-Apartheid era. The post- apartheid period, 1995 to 1999, had been involved in continual feminisation of the labour force. In particular, in 1995, 38% of all females aged between 15 and 65 were working or actively trying to get work in South Africa. In the year 1999, this percentage of women working or looking for work had increased to 47% (Casale & Posel, 2002). Post-1995, all previously disadvantaged groups were granted greater access to education, power and influential positions through reparative legislation such as Affirmative Action and Employment Equity, as well as the Constitution and the Bill of Rights (Albertyn, 2003 as cited in Bernstein, 2013). Within this previously disadvantaged sector within South Africa, women played a dominant role, particularly black women, whereby legislation was implemented in order to relieve the "double oppression" that was placed upon them due to race and gender pre- 1994 (Albertyn, 2003 as cited in Bernstein, 2013). Women of both genders were provided with access to education, and legislation was implemented ensuring that women were to be employed within the workplace.

In more recent years, the Commission of Employment Equity Annual Report (2011-2012) has indicated that women constitute almost half of the South African workforce (see Table 1), and their representation in management and other organisational levels is increasing (see Table 2).

Table 1

Female Composition of the economically active population in South Africa

	2010-2011 (%)	2011-2012 (%)
Females	44.8	45.4

(Information extracted from the Commission of Employment Equity Annual report for 2011 and 2012)

Table 2

Female distribution trends for organisational levels in South Africa from 2007 to 2011

	Top Management (%)	Senior Management (%)	Professionally Qualified (%)	Skilled Level (%)
2007	20.6	25.3	33.8	37.3
2009	18.4	27.8	43.1	45.2
2011	19.1	28.2	42.5	46.5

(Information extracted from the Commission of Employment Equity Annual report for 2011 and 2012)

Furthermore, women have been entering the workplace with the intention to move into decision-making positions within organisations (Korabik, Baril, & Watson, 1993). Consequentially, as ever increasing numbers of women enter into the workforce, and enter into managerial positions, the issue of whether gender differences exist in the ability to manage conflict effectively became an important concern. As a result, many research studies emerged with the purpose of investigating whether males or females differed in choosing their preferred conflict management strategies. For example, a study was conducted by Sorenson, Hawkins and Sorenson (1995) whereby gender, psychological type and conflict management styles were investigated. The results of this study demonstrated that only one of five conflict management choices was influenced by gender. This study demonstrated a surprising result whereby males scored higher on the obliging conflict management style than females, but only by a slightly higher score. Gender did not account for a substantial amount of variance in conflict style preference within this research investigation. Furthermore, studies conducted by Walters, Stuhlmacher and Meyer

(1998) investigating individuals conflict management styles according to one's gender demonstrated that females within a negotiation- type setting would be more likely to behave cooperatively than males, however, again, this difference was slight. Additionally, this study also illustrated that women were significantly more competitive than males in a situation whereby "tit- for tat" mentality is displayed (Walters et al., 1998, p. 8). Chan, Monroe, Ng and Tan (2006) also investigated the conflict management styles of males and females. According to Chan and colleagues (2006), males and females did not significantly differ according to the integrating, obliging and compromising conflict management styles. However, this study also demonstrated that females tend to use the avoiding conflict management style more than males while males tend to be far more dominating in their approach. Another study investigating the relationship among gender and biological sex was conducted by Holt and DeVore (2005) whereby females indicated that they were significantly more likely to compromise than males. Holt and DeVore (2005) further demonstrated a surprising result whereby males indicated that they were more likely to avoid conflict than females. Holt and DeVore (2005) explained this finding through the organisational culture that the study was conducted within. According to Holt and DeVore (2005), a culture that is more collectivistic in nature will be more likely to utilise the avoiding conflict management style. Brahnam et al. (2005) similarly investigated the preferred conflict management styles according to employees' biological sex. The results of this study indicated that when females are compared with their male counterparts, they are more likely to apply the collaborative conflict management style, and men are more likely to avoid any form of conflict. Due to such results, it was concluded that women possess more effective conflict resolution strategies as opposed to males. A study conducted by Thomas and Thomas (2008) also investigated employee's conflict management styles according to one's biological sex. The findings of this study illustrated that men score moderately higher than women on the competing conflict management style. Moreover, the results illustrated that women score significantly higher to men on the compromising, avoiding and accommodating conflict management style.

Further, research studies exploring the relationship between biological sex and conflict management styles were conducted based solely on employees that were positioned within a managerial role. McKenna and Richardson (1995) conducted a research study in Singapore investigating the association between gender and conflict management styles among managers.

The result of this study illustrated that Singaporean male managers prefer to use the compromising conflict management style while female managers preferred to use the avoiding conflict management style. It is important to note that an Asian culture has proven to be more collectivistic in nature (Morris, et al., 1998), which may have an impact on the results of the McKenna and Richardson (1995) study. Therefore, in an attempt to understand more individualistic cultures and their conflict management styles, more western studies were examined in relation to their biological sex and conflict management styles.

Korabik, Baril and Watson (1993) researched managers' conflict management styles and its impact on leadership effectiveness when moderating for biological sex in the United States of America. Results of this study indicated that women in non-managerial positions perceived themselves to be more obliging, integrating and compromising than males. This result corresponded to the cultural stereotype that females are more person- orientated than males. However, this study also found that women and men in managerial positions did not differ significantly in conflict management styles. In another study conducted within the United States of America, Chusmir and Mills (1989) studied men and women managers at three organisational levels of management. The results of this study indicated that men were more likely to compete than females at the higher managerial levels. However, the results of this study also demonstrated that females were more likely to compete at a higher managerial level as opposed to accommodate in their conflict management style. A possible explanation for this result is that women managers are a highly selected group who probably do not conform to the typical female stereotype of being more emotional, caring, kind and nurturing (Korabik, 1990). Furthermore, organisations have been male- dominated for many years therefore the schema of ideal managers is based on masculine characteristics. This may have an influence over the hiring and promotional decisions made by the organisation whereby women who do not portray certain levels of masculinity (more particularly in terms of assertiveness) will not be promoted into managerial positions (Korabik et al., 1993). Additionally, women may undergo a socialisation process whereby they become more masculine in their characteristics the longer they stay in a male- orientated profession (Korabik et al., 1993). Therefore, because these females may demonstrate more masculine characteristics, it seems possible that biological sex may not be a

thorough or in- depth investigation as it does not account for varying degrees of learned patterns of masculine and feminine characteristics within an individual.

As a result of these inconsistent findings whereby biological sex was used as an explanatory variable in conflict management styles, and the role that job level and sex role behavioural styles seems to play, it may possible that perhaps biological sex does not fully or consistently explain differences in conflict management styles but rather it is the sex role of the individual, that is, the sex typed personality traits that an individual has adopted independent of their biological sex, that may determine differences in conflict management styles. Thus the inconsistencies of these findings seem to suggest that the biological sex of the individual does not determine an individual's conflict management style but rather it is the sex- based behavioural traits that individuals manifest. Therefore, a different approach to understanding the sex differences in conflict management might better be explained through the investigation of sex role identities.

Consequently, in order to understand why such studies investigating the interrelationship between biological sex and conflict management styles may have yielded such inconsistent results, it is necessary to draw a clear distinction between the variables of biological sex and sex role identity.

1.4 Distinguishing between Biological Sex and Sex Role

As previously explained, sex role identity might provide a more accurate determinant of conflict management styles than biological sex, and so it is necessary to make a clear distinction between what is meant by biological sex and sex role identities. A major weakness in previous research is that biological sex was seen as equivalent to sex role identity (Brewer et al., 2002). While the terms sex and sex role or gender have been used interchangeably depending on different authors one does to need to make a clear distinction between them. According to Woodhill and Samuels (2003), sex is used to describe the biological differences between men and women; whereas gender or sex role is used to describe what is social and psychological in one's behavioural patterns. However, it must be emphasised that gender does not equal behaviour. Earlier theorists believed that there was a strong correlation between the biological sex and gender role of an

individual (McCreary & Rhodes, 2001). Gender involves gender role and gender display. Woodhill and Samuels (2003) suggest that individuals behave in a gendered manner and that this gendered behaviour is the result of a gender role identity, otherwise known as a sex role identity. It must be noted that gender pertains to the social construction perspective whereby social conditions and circumstances that individuals are exposed to prescribe and shape an individual's sex role identity (Woodhill & Samuels, 2003). In other words, an individual's sex role is influenced by the social context within which one exists, for example the family, culture or society in which the individual is raised, will determine the degree to which he or she adopts the stereotypical sex roles that society deems as appropriate.

Therefore, the following section will explain the development of sex role identity and outline what is meant by the stereotypical sex role identities in order to provide a clearer distinction by what it meant by this variable within the research investigation.

1.5 Theories of Gender Role Development and the History of Sex Role Identity Research

1.5.1 Development of Sex Role Identity

As explained above, a social constructionist perspective can be adopted in order to understand how sex role identities are formed, and for the purpose of this research investigation, this perspective has been utilised within the present research report. However, it is important to note that there are a number of theories that exist that relate to the development of sex role identity, and it is necessary to understand how these theories have evolved over the past several years. Therefore, this section will explain how sex role identity theory has evolved and developed.

Gender role development dates back to the psychoanalytic theories of Freud and Erikson. Freud's psychosocial theory explained the way in which parents manage their children's primitive impulses will determine the traits that their children will display (Shaffer & Kipp, 2009). Freud's theory was extended by Erikson. Erikson theorised that gender role development was a fundamental task of a developing person (Woodhill & Samuels, 2003). Erikson believed that it was due to the genital structure of individuals that males are predominately more aggressive and females are more passive (Muuss, 1996). The social learning theory by Bandura

contributes to gender role development as it is believed that individuals learn one's gender role through the rewards and punishments received for specific gender role behaviours, as well as observing and imitating the behaviours of others (Rosenstock, Stretcher, & Becker, 1988). Rosenstock et al. (1988) further elaborates that it is due to the process of socialisation that gender differences amongst males and females exist. The cognitive learning theory proposed by Kohlberg (1966) stated that an individual's own cognitions are ultimately responsible for gender role development (Greenwald, 1968). Kohlberg (1966) believed that children will identify with and imitate the parent from the same sex resulting in children labeling themselves as male or female. Gender related interests and behaviours will then begin to form. Kohlberg (1966) explained that children undergo two stages. These stages include gender identity and gender consistency. Gender identity is when children develop the concept of what sex group they belong to, and gender consistency refers to when a child adheres to the sex group and only displays gender based interests and behaviours (Bem, 1981). Bem (1981) further explained that the social learning theory and the cognitive learning theory have been collaborated to form the Gender Schema Theory. This theory suggests that children will use gender as a schema in order to shape and direct their view of the world. The Gender Schema Theory uses the concepts of the social learning theory to explain how gender- specific behaviours are acquired but that one's own cognitive processes will encourage gender development. The social constructionist theory of gender, which has been adopted for the purposes of this present research study, explains that there is no distinct character that is masculine or feminine, rather that behaviours are influenced by a range of factors including culture, religion and class. The social constructionist theory argues that individuals are actively involved in constructing their own gendered identities irrespective of biological sex (Courtenay, 2000). This theory has been used to explain how the development of an individual's sex role identity is learned and enacted (West & Zimmerman, 1987).

In terms of gender development, Kohlberg (1966) developed a developmental sequence and interrelationship of sex, gender, sex role identities and roles. The concept and distinction between gender and of sex roles starts to develop in the growing child (Ghosh, 2012). By the age of three, a child is aware of the difference between biological sexes. More specifically, research indicates that six month- old infants are able to distinguish between male and female voices, and

most nine month- olds are able to discriminate between photographs of males and females (Martin & Ruble, 2004). Furthermore, infants between the ages of eleven and fourteen months learn to recognise the associations between male and female's in photographs and their voices (Martin & Ruble, 2004). Martin and Ruble (2004) explain that by the time children are able to talk, they have accurate perceptual categories that distinguish 'male' from 'female'. By the age of four, a child is able to understand that biological sex is permanent and cannot be changed. Approximately by the age of six, a sense of gender identity is formed and it is from this age that a child will attempt to behave in a manner consistent with one's gender identity (Gerdes, Moore, Ochse, & van Ede, 1988). A person's sex role cannot be formed until a sense of self-conceptualisation is formed. An individual will form a perception of self through the environment, society and culture that one is exposed to. Throughout one's childhood and schooling years, a child's sex role identity is developing and reinforced. By late adolescence and by early adulthood, an established set of sex role identities is in place (Ghosh, 2012).

In relation to the research study, it is evident from the above section that when an individual enters the workplace the individual is of a certain age whereby an established set of sex role identities is in place. However, according to the social constructionist perspective, sex role identities are not fixed and so they may change slightly according to the social context that the individual is exposed to (Woodhill & Samuels, 2003). Considering that the development of sex role identities has been explained, it is now important to understand the possible measurements of sex role identity that make define and shape an individual's overall gender role.

1.5.2 Measurement of Sex Role Identity

With regard to how sex role identity was measured, during the period from 1920 to 1970 it was commonly believed that masculinity and femininity were bipolar and unifactorial (Hoffman, 2001). In other words, masculinity and femininity were seen as opposite ends on a single continuum classifying individuals as either masculine or feminine. Thus, individuals could only be classified as either masculine or feminine, and could not portray elements of both sex role identities. Additionally, the unifactorial approach assumed that individuals that displayed either a masculine or feminine sex role identity would stereotypically be male or female in their

biological sex, respectively. In particular, when assessing one's sex role identity based on the unifactorial model, individuals that scored high on the masculinity items, such as social dominance and aggression, would likely be males; whereas, individuals that scored high on the femininity items, such as warmth and dependence, would likely be females (Smiler, 2006). In conjunction with the unifactorial approach, the Congruence Model adopted the same stance and indicated that sex role identity is based on a single continuum with bipolar identities on opposite ends of the spectrum. In accordance with the unifactorial approach, the Congruence Model adheres to the notion that an individual must either have a masculine or feminine sex role orientation because these orientations are mutually exclusive and incompatible (Whitley, 1983). The Congruence Model states that an individual will experience higher levels of mental wellbeing if one's sex role identity is consistent with one's biological sex (Whitley, 1983).

In the 1970s, a new concept emerged based on the realisation that both men and women could possess similar characteristics (Bem, 1974). This concept became known as androgyny. The model for androgyny served as a framework for interpreting similarities and differences among individuals according to the degree to which they described themselves in terms of the traditional masculine and feminine characteristics (Bem, 1974). During the 1970s, the traditional view of the masculinity and femininity measurement had changed particularly due to the work of Bem and Spence (Hoffman, 2001). Masculinity and femininity were finally recognised as two independent dimensions. Additionally, characteristics that were typically associated with a particular sex came to be viewed as possible for both sexes to possess and demonstrate. Furthermore, research in the late 1970s by Helmreich, Spence and Holahan (1979), began to investigate the individual constructs of positive and negative masculinity and positive and negative femininity. Helmreich and colleagues (1979) realised that gender stereotypes do not include only desirable aspects of femininity and masculinity. Therefore, socially undesirable feminine and masculine traits are also important in understanding gender role as they may even be dominant. Woodhill and Samuels (2003) further indicated that it is then logical that the androgynous sex role identity may consist of a balance of negative feminine and negative masculine traits, known as negative androgyny as well as a balance of positive feminine and positive masculine traits known as positive androgyny. This theory encapsulating both positive and negative masculine, feminine and androgynous sex role identities has become known as the

Differentiated Model. Research has been conducted that examines the importance of being able to distinguish between socially desirable and undesirable, i.e. positive and negative, sex role identities (e.g. Helgeson, 1994; Helgeson & Fritz, 1999; Korabik & McCreary, 2000; McCreary & Korabik, 1994; Prentice & Carranza, 2002).

It must be noted that previous research conducted on only the socially desirable sex role identities in relation to psychological wellbeing have yielded inconsistent results (Burchardt & Serbin, 1982; Lubinski, Tellegen & Butcher, 1983; May & Spangenberg, 1997; Skoe, 1995; Ricciardelli & Williams, 1995; Spence, Helmreich & Holahan, 1979, as cited in Woodhills & Samuels, 2003). Such research has only focused on the positive masculinity, femininity or androgynous (i.e. socially desirable) sex role identities and do not include any of the negative (i.e. socially undesirable) traits that the Differentiated Model argues for. Woodhill and Samuels (2003) suggested that providing only socially desirable categorisations of sex role identities does not capture the important differences among the sex- based personality traits within individuals because such categorisation ignores gender- associated depravities. In other words, individuals that display high levels of negative sex role identities would not be expected to yield positive health outcomes. In fact, according to Woodhill and Samuels (2003), individuals that illustrate high levels of negative androgyny, negative masculinity, or negative femininity would be more likely to exert negative behaviours that may have a detrimental effect on any health- related outcomes. Previous research that only focused on the positive sex role identities were thus not sufficiently sound in terms of conceptualisation and were therefore innately defective. To address this conceptual problem, the Differentiated Model has been proposed with this model examining both the positive and negative sex role identities. Such a model provides a more in-depth and comprehensive analysis in relation to sex- based personality traits as it accounts for both the socially desirable and undesirable sex- based traits. It is for this reason that the Differentiated Model has been used in relation to the present research study.

Thus, sex role identities emerged from masculinity and femininity being placed on a single continuum to evolving into sex role identities being perceived along two separate continuums consisting of masculinity, femininity and androgyny, and finally to sex role identity being

perceived across several continuums consisting of positive and negative masculinity, femininity and androgyny (see Figure 2).

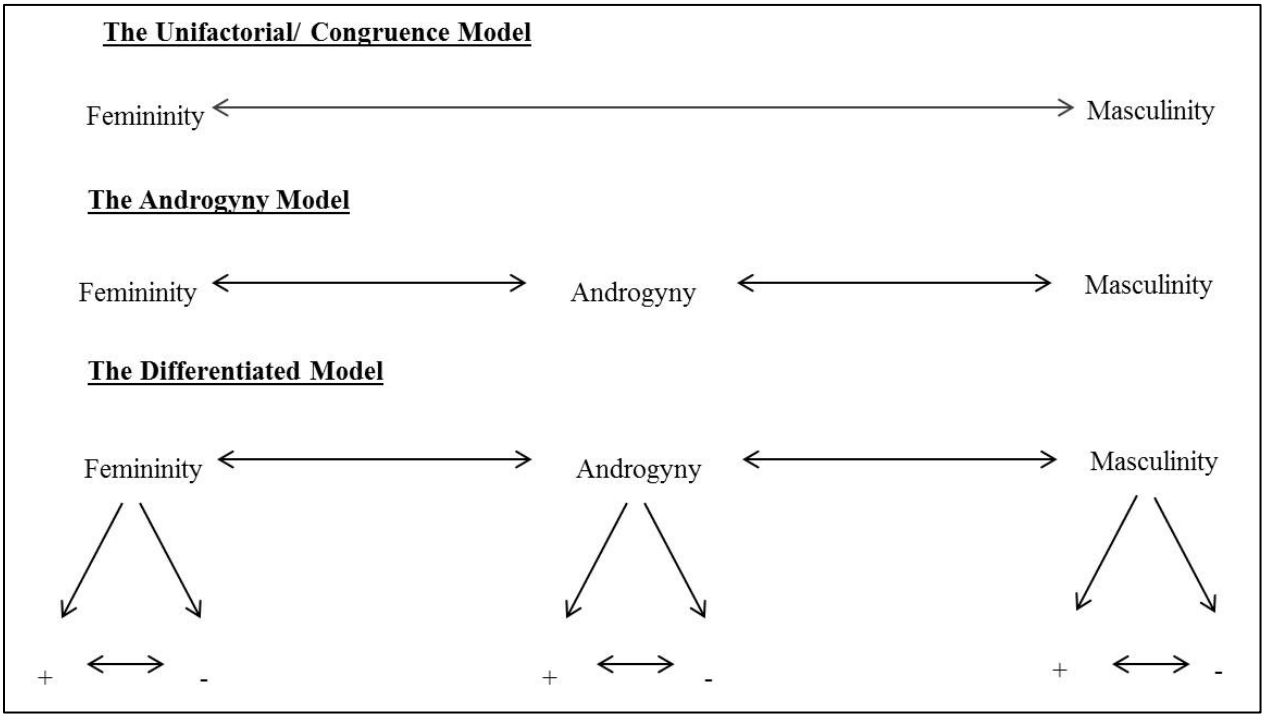


Figure 2. Graphical representation of the development and measurement of sex role identity

1.5.3 Defining Masculinity, Femininity and Androgyny

Sex role identity has been studied by several researchers (e.g. Bem, 1974; Kravetz, 1976; Helmreich et al., 1979; Korabik, 1990; Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Sorenson et al., 1995; Park, 1996; McCreary & Rhodes, 2001; Woodhill & Samuels, 2003). Park (1996) particularises on sex role identity and distinguishes between the two dimensions. The first dimension is masculinity. This sex role identity defines individuals as possessing traits such as aggression, independence, objectivity, rationality, ability to make decisions quickly and to be analytical. The next sex role identity refers to that of femininity. Femininity is the term given to individuals that possess traits such as being emotional, sensitive, warm, nurturing and cooperative. Since the 1970s, researchers have termed the two aspects of gender role socialisation as agentic (masculine) and communal (feminine). Agentic is stereotypically associated with males and the male role in

society, whereas communal is associated with women and the female role in society (McCreary & Rhodes, 2001). Woodhill and Samuels (2003) state no behavioural trait is innately or exclusively masculine or feminine, instead each society will assign specific traits to a specific sex and leave some traits as gender neutral. Therefore it is evident that sex is not gender and gender does not define the whole sum of an individual's personality. Rather one can conclude that the sex role identities of masculinity and femininity can be measured by observing one's behaviour.

The identifying and categorising of sex role identities into masculine and feminine sex roles have contributed towards gender- based stereotypes such as "women are unable to be independent and resourceful" or "men are incapable of being warm and compassionate towards others" (Woodhill & Samuels, 2003). Such stereotypes have caused a gender hierarchy amongst society based on different cultures. It is this hierarchy that has caused gender inequality due to the clear distinction between masculine and feminine sex role identities. Gender inequality is an issue that is prominent throughout the world. Gender inequality can be attributed toward gender stereotypes. Gender stereotypes reflect what perceiver's observe other people doing in daily life (Eagly & Steffan, 1984). Eagly and Steffan (1984) indicate that if perceivers often observe a particular group of individuals engaging in a particular activity, then they are likely to believe that the abilities and personality traits required to carry out that activity are typical of that group of people. Many of these gender stereotypes are a result of observations made according to societal roles. Within these social roles, it has been observed that men are perceived as being more agentic and women are more communal. According to Strebel et al. (2006), the social constructionist theory refers to the process of conceptualising gender as a system of social classification reiterating the sense of gender stereotypes being a result of social roles. Additionally, Rudman (2001) indicated that society is based upon a sense of paternalism whereby males are respected and deemed superior. Therefore, it can be said that gender stereotypes have been created based on observations whereby males and their respective personality traits and sex role orientation have been valued, respected and perceived as more important due to this paternalistic society. Due to these observations, these stereotypes have been maintained whereby males are deemed to be the breadwinners of the household, and women are required to be the homemakers causing gender hierarchy and a sense of gender inequality.

However, there has been advancement in the distinction between categorising individuals as purely masculine or feminine in their sex role identity and as mentioned previously, authors began to realise that it is possible to combine masculine and feminine psychological characteristics within a single individual irrespective of his or her biological sex. The term 'androgyny' is used to illustrate the existence of both masculinity and femininity within an individual irrespective of their biological sex (Marsh, 1987). Androgyny allows an individual to engage freely in both masculine and feminine behaviours without societal constraint (Bem, 1975). Traditional androgyny consists of a balance of positive feminine and positive masculine traits (Woodhill & Samuels, 2003). Woodhill and Samuels (2003) explain that androgynous individuals may respond to a broader range of positive and negative stimuli than traditional people because they are sensitive to both masculine and feminine cues. They thus have a wider behavioural repertoire and are more psychologically adaptive. Bem and Lenney (1976) explain that the androgynous individual will have no need to limit his or her behaviours to what is considered to be prescribed for a particular sex. Bem and Lenney (1976) continued to explain that the androgynous individual will have psychological freedom to engage in whatever behaviour seems the most effective at that time, irrespective of the stereotype of masculinity or femininity.

It must also be noted that in accordance with the measurement of the sex role identity, as discussed above, Bem (1981) acknowledges that an individual may be undifferentiated in their sex role identity indicating that this individual does not adhere to the masculine or feminine sex role identity. Furthermore, the undifferentiated sex role identity, i.e. an individual that is low on both feminine and masculine sex role identities, provides the seventh category when classifying sex role identities according to the Differentiated Model (Woodhill & Samuels, 2003).

1.6 Sex Role Identity and Conflict Management

Through the detailed discussion provided above on sex role identities, it is evident that due to the advancement of research pertaining to sex role identities suggesting that individuals are able to display varying degrees of both desirable and undesirable masculine and feminine sex role

identities, then perhaps sex role identities provide a better predictor for conflict management as opposed to biological sex. More specifically, it is possible that not all males are predominantly masculine in their sex role identity and not all females may predominantly be feminine in their sex role identity, providing a possible explanation as to why studies that have been conducted exploring the relationship between biological sex and conflict management styles have proven to be inconsistent (e.g. Brahnam et al., 2005; Chan et al., 2006; Chusmir & Mills, 1989; Holt & DeVore, 2005; Korabik et al., 1993; McKenna & Richardson, 1995; Sorenson et al., 1995; Thomas & Thomas, 2008; Walters, Stuhlmacher, & Meyer, 1998). Therefore, the present research study investigates conflict management styles in relation to sex role identity. Conflict management strategies have been defined as a set of consistent traits, general tendencies or modes of patterned responses to conflict in various hostile situations (Ting- Toomey, Oetzel, & Yee- Jung, 2001). However, other views of conflict management strategies exist whereby conflict management strategies are viewed as a choice or an intention to respond in a certain manner purely based on an individual's analysis of the situation (Putnam, 1988). For the purpose of this study, conflict management styles will be explored as a set of patterned responses or consistent traits. Sex role identities are considered as learned patterns of varying levels of positive and negative masculinity, femininity and androgyny which may determine how individuals behave in certain situations (Brewer et al., 2002), and it is therefore possible that such learned patterns may be linked to preferences in other types of behaviours, namely, conflict management behaviours.

As mentioned previously, research has mainly been conducted investigating the relationship between biological sex and conflict management styles. While some research has been conducted on sex role identities and conflict management styles this research has been limited as there have been very few studies investigating this relationship, and that the few studies that have been conducted focus only on the desirable sex role identities (e.g. Yelsma & Brown, 1985; Baxter & Shepherd, 1978; Jurma & Powell, 1994; Portello & Long, 1994; Brewer et al., 2002). One of the studies that were conducted in the realm of sex role identity and conflict management was by Baxter and Shepherd (1978). This study used a student sample at a university but seemed to produce interesting results as many of the hypotheses failed to receive confirmation. There were insignificant findings related to the feminine sex role identity and the accommodation

conflict management style. Furthermore, insignificant results were produced between the androgynous sex role identity and the compromising and collaborating conflict management styles. All three sex role identities indicated a preference of the collaboration conflict management style than any of the other four styles. The only significant finding that emerged from this study was that the masculine sex role identity would be more likely to choose a competing conflict management style. Another study was conducted by Yelsma and Brown (1985). Results of this study demonstrated that the androgynous individual was the most disposed to handle conflict constructively. Furthermore, results indicated that an individual that illustrates the masculine sex role identity has a significantly greater predisposition to manage conflict constructively as opposed to the individual with the feminine sex role identity. A study conducted by Jurma and Powell (1994) had similar results indicating that individuals that are androgynous in their sex role identity tend to handle conflict much more effectively as opposed to individuals portraying the masculine or feminine sex role identities. Portello and Long (1994) steered a study to determine the relationship between sex role identities and conflict management styles among females within an organisation. Results from this study indicated that females who demonstrated high- instrumental traits were more likely to utilise a dominating conflict management style, whereas females that were more androgynous in their sex role identity, high-expressive and high- instrumental traits, would be more likely to make use of the integrating conflict management style. The results of the Portello and Long (1994) study were interesting as it demonstrated that females are capable of possessing varying degrees of both masculine and feminine sex role identities. In studies conducted by Brewer et al. (2002), it was found that a masculine sex role orientation was associated with a more dominating conflict management style, and a feminine sex role orientation was associated with an avoiding conflict management style. Additionally, an androgynous sex role orientation was associated with an integrating (i.e. compromising) conflict management style.

From the limited literature that has been conducted investigating sex role identity and conflict management styles, it is evident that the results of these studies conclude that the androgynous individual is able to manage conflict more effectively than the masculine and the feminine sex role identities. Furthermore, the results of these studies indicate that the masculine identity is more dominant or competing while the feminine identity may be more accommodating or

avoiding. The results of these research studies adhere strongly to the Androgynous Model that was previously elucidated. However, as mentioned, more recently research has looked at a Differentiated Model of sex role identity, which is a model that examines both positive and negative sex role identities. To the researcher's knowledge, there has been no prior research conducted that adopts the differentiated approach when investigating sex role identities in relation to conflict management styles. It seems likely that an individual's preference in conflict management styles may depend on whether one adheres to more of a positive or negative sex role identity. It, then, seems possible to include positive and negative sex role identities as a determinant of conflict management styles as these indicate the socially desirable and undesirable sex role traits within individuals. More specifically, a positively feminine identity consists of compassion and tolerance; a positively masculine individual consists of independence and ambition. An individual that may display a positive androgynous sex role identity may demonstrate high levels of both the positive feminine and positively masculine sex role identities. In contrast, a negative feminine sex role identity consists of submissiveness and volatility; and a negatively masculine sex role identity consists of aggression and selfishness (Prentice & Carranza, 2002). Hence, a negative androgynous sex role identity may demonstrate high levels of both the negative feminine and negative masculine sex role identity. Therefore, these differences in positive and negative sex role identities and the personality traits that they embody may well impact upon the type of conflict management style chosen by such individuals that adhere to these sex role identities. It, thus, becomes of interest to determine whether positive or negative sex role identities do indeed have a differential effect on an individual's preference of conflict management style.

To conclude on the above discussion, there has been a significant amount of research conducted to explore the relationship between biological sex and conflict management styles. Research in investigating this relationship seemed appropriate due to the increase in women entering the workplace. However, such studies have yielded inconsistent results. In light of the inconsistencies, it became necessary for researchers to look for an alternative when investigating determinants of conflict management styles. Therefore researchers investigated whether sex role identity could be deemed as a better conflict management style determinant. Yet, the limited research that has been conducted to investigate the relationship between sex role identity and

conflict management styles has consistently produced inconsistent results (e.g. Yelsma & Brown, 1985; Baxter & Shepherd, 1978; Jurma & Powell, 1994; Portello & Long, 1994; Brewer et al., 2002). The most consistent finding that emerged from the majority of these studies was that the androgynous sex role identity is able to manage conflict more effectively than the masculine and feminine sex role identity. The lack of consistent findings may be due to previous researchers having not considered the negative sex role traits that the Differentiated Model postulates, as previously explained.

In South Africa, to the researcher's knowledge there has been no prior research conducted investigating the influence that positive and negative sex role identities have on the conflict management styles. That which has been conducted in investigating sex role identities according to the Differentiated Model has looked at the relationship between positive and negative sex role identities and variables such as psychological wellbeing, self- esteem, work- family conflict and stress (e.g. Bernstein, 2013; Chemaly, 2012; Solomon, 2013). These research studies have all concluded that a substantial amount of participants are negative in their sex role identities. In particular, 47% of participants in the study conducted by Chemaly (2012) were predominantly negative in their sex role identity; Bernstein (2013) reported that almost 45% of the study's sample adhered to negative sex role identities; and Soloman's (2012) research study indicated that 51% of the sample was negative in their sex role identities. In previous studies that determined the relationship between sex role identity and conflict management styles (Yelsma & Brown, 1985; Baxter & Shepherd, 1978; Jurma & Powell, 1994; Portello & Long, 1994; Brewer et al., 2002), the negative sex role identities were not investigated. Therefore, previous research that has been conducted in sex role identities and conflict management styles have ignored a major component in investigating how sex role identities may influence the choice in conflict management styles and this may account for their failure to find significant relationships between proposed variables, or for finding relationships that were contrary to those expected.

As a result, this study offers a more precise classification system by categorising individuals according to their positive and negative sex role identities. This study contributes to South African literature by exploring both the positive and negative sex role identities in relation to conflict management styles. Therefore, this present study investigates the relationship between

the socially desirable and socially undesirable sex role identities and an individual's preferred conflict management style. In doing so, the present study offers specific hypotheses regarding the relationship between specific positive and negative identities and specific conflict management style preferences in order to provide a more in- depth investigation. By investigating both positive and negative sex role identities the present study is providing a more in- depth analysis because it is not excluding information that may not be accounted for when only examining the positive sex role identities.

1.6.1 Linking Positive and Negative Sex Role Identities and Conflict Management Styles

Thomas and Kilmann's (1977) conflict management styles, as mentioned previously, consist of competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding and accommodating. An exploration of the literature on positive and negative sex role identities indicate that it may well be likely that positive and negative sex role identities may predict certain/specific conflict management styles by virtue of the types of traits obtained within the various sex role identities, and the likelihood that they would be linked to the behavioural dispositions described in the various conflict management styles. The following section provides a discussion of the positive and negative sex role identities and how they may specifically be linked to certain conflict management styles.

1.6.1.1 Negative Masculine Sex Role Identity and Preferred Conflict Management Styles

The first sex role identity to be discussed in relation to preferred conflict management styles is the negative masculine sex role identity. In broad terms, the negative masculine individual posits the sex role traits within the masculine sex role that are deemed to be socially undesirable. More specifically, according to Helgeson and Fritz (1999), negative masculinity focuses on the self to the exclusion of others. This sex role identity includes being hostile, cynical, greedy and arrogant. The negative masculine individual has a negative view on the world and of other people (Helgeson & Fritz, 1999). Ghaed and Gallo (2006) examined the negative and positive sex role identities in relation to the Interpersonal Circumplex Model developed by Wiggins (1996). The Interpersonal Circumplex is a model that is a fundamental tool for conceptualising, organising and assessing interpersonal behaviour, traits and motives (Ghaed & Gallo, 2006). The

circumplex model consists of two orthogonal dimensions: friendliness versus hostility and dominance versus submissiveness (see Figure 3). Helgeson and Fritz (1999) associated negative masculinity with hostility and dominance, therefore the negative masculine sex role identity falls within the hostile- dominant quadrant in the Interpersonal Circumplex Model. Within this quadrant, personality traits of arrogance, extreme selfishness and self-enhancement are evident (Ghaed & Gallo, 2006), which are consistent with the negative masculine sex role identity.

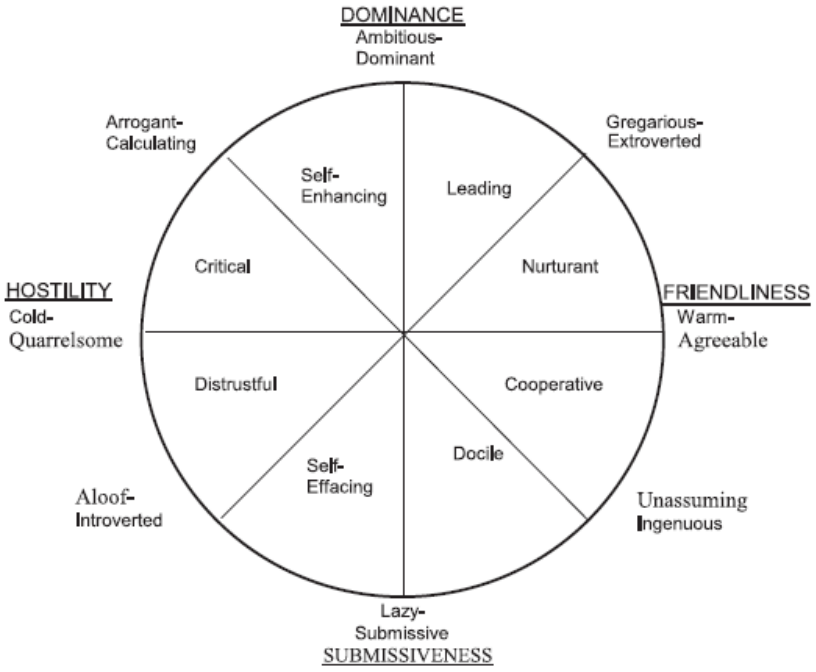


Figure 3. The Interpersonal Circumplex Model (adopted from Ghaed & Gallo, 2006)

An examination of the literature on social dominance also reveals some interesting parallels with negative masculinity. Social dominance can be defined as "the naturally occurring difference in resource- control status among individual members of a social group" (Roseth, Pellegrini, Bohn, Van Ryzin & Vance, 2007, p. 480). Hawley (1999) discusses that humans will employ different strategies of resource- control and implement these strategies based on a function of development, individual- level characteristics and the social context. Therefore, it is possible that certain sex role identities may influence individual- level characteristics as demonstrated by Ghaed and Gallo (2006) in the Interpersonal Circumplex Model. According to Hawley (1999)

there are two strategies known as ‘coercive strategies’ and ‘prosocial strategies’ that exist within the social dominance theory. The coercive strategy is whereby individuals compete for resources in order to gain control by means of utilising aggression, insults and threats (Hawley, 1999). Additionally, a coercive controller is unsociable, hostile and fails to consider others’ points of view and desires (Hawley, 1999). The coercive strategy clearly appears to be related to the negative masculine sex role identity as Ghaed and Gallo (2006) concluded that the negative masculine individual is physically and verbally aggressive, angry and does not perceive themselves as relating to a particular group. In turn, the coercive strategy that is characterised by the negative masculine individual appears to be most likely associated with the competing conflict management style. Competing is when an individual seeks to satisfy his or her own interests at the expensive of another individual. This conflict management style reflects individual- level characteristics that are assertive and uncooperative (Kilmann & Thomas, 1977).

An analysis of the negative masculine traits as proposed by Helgeson and Fritz (1999), the Interpersonal Circumplex Model presented by Wiggins (1996), and social dominance theorists (e.g. Hawley, 1999; Roseth et al., 2007), reveals that there seems to be a link in the traits exhibited when an individual portrays the competing conflict management style. Thus in terms of theory, it seems most likely that an individual who is negatively masculine would most likely aggressively compete in a conflict situation.

It must be noted, that through the examination of the social dominance theory, the negative masculine individual may not strictly adhere to just the competing conflict management style. According to the social dominance theory, humans will choose a resource strategy depending on the social context. According to this theory presented by Hawley (1999, p. 102), an adaptive rule of thumb is provided that states “depending on who your opponent is, assert when you can prevail, yield when you cannot”. With reference to this adaptive rule of thumb provided within the social dominance theory, is possible that the negative masculine individual will judge one’s ability to successfully compete with other group members and if they feel unable to successfully compete they may choose another strategy. Thus, although the negatively masculine individual is self- enhancing and arrogant (Ghaed & Gallo, 2006), they will not compete if they believe that the situation will not be successful. As a result, the negative masculine individual may rather

avoid in their conflict management style instead of losing the competition. The avoiding conflict management style is when an individual may recognise that conflict exists but would rather withdraw from the conflict and suppress it (Nel, 2009). Justifications as to why the individual may choose to avoid may be specific to the sex role identity. In this case, the negative masculine individual may choose to avoid the conflict in an attempt to reduce the individual's level of depression and anxiety, attributed by their poor emotional adjustment (Ghaed & Gallo, 2006), that may arise due to an unsuccessful conflict.

Therefore, it is evident that although the negative masculine individual is more likely to compete they could also engage in avoidance in terms of their conflict management style. However, due to the nature of the negative masculine individual, it is more likely that the negative masculine sex role identity will demonstrate the competitive conflict management style. For the purpose of this research it is hypothesised (as discussed below in the research questions) that the negatively masculine individual will favour the competing style but may also exhibit the avoiding conflict management style.

1.6.1.2 Positive Masculine Sex Role Identity and Preferred Conflict Management Styles

The next sex role identity to be discussed is the positive sex role identity. Through examination of previous literature, the positive masculine individual has been linked to the competing conflict management style. However, it must be noted that although the positively masculine individual may prefer to compete, their competition may be tempered by a degree of cooperativeness which may potentially alter a positive masculine individual's choice of conflict management style. The positively masculine individual may vary their approach their approach to the competing conflict management style if it increases this individual's chances of gaining the intended goal.

In relation to the positively masculine sex role identity and the competing conflict management style, the positive masculine sex role identity has been linked to individual- level characteristics such as putting one's self first and being independent (Helgeson & Fritz, 1999). Furthermore, the positive masculine sex role identity is associated with socially instrumental traits such as dominance and achievement (Ghaed & Gallo, 2006). Within the Wiggins (1996) Interpersonal

Circumplex Model, positive masculinity relates very closely to the dominance axis and is consistent with the extroversion personality factor illustrated on this model. Results from Ghaed and Gallo (2006) study utilising this model also indicated that the positive masculine sex role identity is associated with high levels of conscientiousness and low levels of neuroticism. In a study conducted by Yelsma and Brown (1985) masculine individuals were less likely than feminine or androgynous individuals in their sex role identity to vary their approach to the use of competition. The competing conflict management style stipulates that individuals will only be concerned with themselves, and within both the positive and negative masculine sex role identity the characteristic of being self- enhancing is evident (Ghaed & Gallo, 2006). With specific reference to the positive masculine sex role identity, Ghaed and Gallo (2006) stipulated that positive masculine individuals also have high levels of conscientiousness resulting in more positive implications for social functioning and wellbeing.

Thus, through examination of the Wiggins (1996) Interpersonal Circumplex Model and previous literature conducted on the positively masculine individual, it seems likely that these individuals would favour the competing conflict management style. However, as mentioned previously, the competing conflict management style may be altered due to certain degrees of cooperativeness that the positive masculine individual might act upon. This degree of cooperativeness may be explained through careful examination of the social dominance theory as presented by Hawley (1999).

Within the social dominance literature, Hawley (1999) presents Charlesworth's theory (1996) postulating that cooperating can function to a degree within competition. In other words, two or more individuals can work together in order to acquire certain resources which is normally at the expense of a third party, or individuals can coordinate their efforts to gain access to resources which in the end are distributed equitably (Hawley, 1999). In accordance with Charlesworth's theory (1996), Ghaed and Gallo (2006) concluded that the positive masculine sex role identity demonstrated moderate to large associations with the perceived support scales, thereby increasing the likelihood of these individuals displaying some degree of cooperation. According to Rigby (2000), social support is a multifaceted concept that refers to the provision of assistance, as in taking actions to further one's goals; cognitive aspects, as in helping one to think

through a dilemma; and an emotional or affective element, as in demonstrating a liking or acceptance of another individual. Therefore, perceived social support refers to the degree to which an individual believes that he or she will receive support from others when needed. In terms of social support theory, Monnier, Stone, Hobfoll and Johnson (1998, as cited in Bernstein, 2013) indicated that social support can be used as a coping mechanism whereby two dimensions exist: pro- social support, and anti- social support. Pro- social support denotes the positive utilisation of social resources; whereas anti- social support occurs when one exhausts all the resources available in one's social network to such an extent whereby personal needs may be answered at the expense of diminishing any possibility of future social support (Monnier et al., 1998). Individuals that portray pro-social support have been linked to display secure- attachment whereby positive models of the self and others are exhibited. In contrast, individuals that demonstrate anti- social support are aligned with insecure- attachment, whereby negative models of the self and others are maintained. In relation to secure- and insecure- attachment, the concepts of dependency and detachment arise. Bornstein, Geiselman, Gallagher, Ng, Hughes and Languirand (2004) distinguished between 'destructive overdependence' (DO) which is characterised by maladaptive and over dependent tendencies, 'dysfunctional detachment' (DD) characterised by a lack of trust toward others, as well as 'healthy dependence' (HD) characterised by flexible, adaptive, and help and support seeking.

In line with sex role identity theory, as well as social support theory, Ghaed and Gallo (2006) have also illustrated that positive masculine individuals are deemed to be independent, assertive, well- adjusted and embedded in a supportive social network. Furthermore, the positive masculine individuals were reported to be less hostile and less emotionally distressed, and display lower levels of insecure attachment than their negative counterpart (Ghaed & Gallo, 2006), increasing the likelihood of these individuals varying their approach to the competing conflict management style. It is important to note that although positive masculine individuals have reported to illustrate high levels of dominance and aggression, these individuals utilise these sex- based personality traits constructively and will only display these traits when it is perceived to be beneficial to them. These findings as indicated within the Ghaed and Gallo (2006) study are consistent with the healthy dependency (HD) attachment that Bornstein and colleagues (2004) described whereby these individuals are able to demonstrate considerable behavioural flexibility,

and are able to utilise their sex- based personality traits to delay short- term gratification in order to strengthen long- term support. Therefore, in relation to Charlesworth's theory (1996) as presented by Hawley (1999) whereby individuals will employ a certain degree of cooperation within competition to gain the upper-hand, positive masculine individuals will utilise their supportive social network and employ more pro- social behaviours in order to display some degree of cooperation if this increases the positive masculine individual's likelihood of gaining the intended outcome.

However, it must be noted that even though positively masculine individuals are aware of their social support systems and may be concerned with others, this is still to a much lesser degree than that of the positive feminine sex role identity (see discussion below in section 1.6.1.4 for a discussion on the positive feminine sex role identity in relation to conflict management styles).

Therefore, as this discussion illustrates, the positive masculine sex role identity is more likely to be associated with both the competing conflict management style with a degree of the collaborating conflict management style. Thus, in investigating this relationship, the hypotheses for the positive masculine sex role identity will to some extent be exploratory; proposing that both competing and collaborating may be evident.

1.6.1.3 Negative Femininity Sex Role Identity and Preferred Conflict Management Styles

Another sex role identity to be discussed in relation to conflict management styles is negative femininity. The negative feminine sex role identity refers to the focus of others to the complete exclusion of self (Helgeson & Fritz, 1999). In general, negative femininity predicts an imbalance in relationships and interpersonal problems of submissiveness (Ghaed & Gallo, 2006), and is associated with high levels of anxiety (Helgeson & Fritz, 1999). Within the Interpersonal Circumplex Model, the negative feminine sex role identity correlates with affiliation because of the positive orientation toward others; however, the negative feminine sex role identity also correlates to submissiveness due to the lack of attention to one's own needs (Ghaed & Gallo, 2006). An interesting result that Ghaed and Gallo (2006) mention in their investigation is that although negative feminine individuals correlate with affiliation within the Interpersonal

Circumplex Model, these individuals may also demonstrate the tendency to avoid close relationships due to the fear of rejection or mistreatment. Therefore, in accordance with this research, it seems possible that the negative feminine individual is most likely to prefer one of two conflict management styles, accommodating or avoiding. The negative feminine individual may choose the accommodation conflict management style in a response to totally accommodate the needs of others to the complete exclusion of considering one's own needs. Alternatively, the negative feminine individual may prefer the avoiding conflict management style in order to evade any rejection by others that may occur if they try to dominate for their own rights. It must be noted that individuals whom are high in the negative feminine sex role identity tend to be emotionally distressed (Ghaed & Gallo, 2006). A negative feminine individual will choose to accommodate in their conflict management style if they score higher on the affiliation factor within the Interpersonal Circumplex Model; however, if these individuals demonstrate high levels of emotional distress regarding interpersonal relationship then they would be more likely to avoid in one's conflict management style than be susceptible to facing rejection.

It is evident that the negative feminine sex role identity is likely to demonstrate the avoiding or the accommodating conflict management style. The negative feminine sex role identity is emotionally distressed, submissive, and demonstrates the fearful- avoidant attachment style (Ghaed & Gallo, 2006). Individuals with such traits are more likely to avoid conflict or, if they do engage in any attempt at conflict resolution, they could also accommodate fully as they will be giving in to the needs of the other party while not taking in their own needs at all.

1.6.1.4 Positive Femininity Sex Role Identity and Preferred Conflict Management Styles

The positive feminine sex role identity is the next sex role identity to be discussed. The positively feminine sex role identity embraces traits such as kindness and interpersonal warmth, and has been characterised as 'expressive' or 'communal' (Ward et al., 2006). In reference to the Interpersonal Circumplex Model, the positive feminine sex role identity is closely related to the horizontal axis which corresponds with the friendliness dimension (Ghaed & Gallo, 2006). Within the Ghaed and Gallo (2006) study, results indicated that the positive feminine sex role identity scored low in avoidant attachment indicative of the fact that positive feminine

individuals are more comfortable with social relationships, as opposed to the negative feminine sex role identity. Furthermore, Ghaed and Gallo (2006) mentioned that the positive feminine sex role identity scored high on perceived social support scales. In terms of communication behaviour, positive feminine individuals have been reported to have high levels of empathy and affiliation tendencies (Yelsma & Brown, 1985). Moreover, researchers have concluded that positively feminine individuals are higher in openness and are less defensive than the other sex role identities, particularly the masculine sex role identities (Berzins, Welling, & Wetter, 1978).The Interpersonal Circumplex Model positions the positive feminine individual within the cooperative quadrant. However, Helgeson and Fritz (1999) explained that although positive feminine individuals are emotional and helpful, they are not particularly independent or overly self- confident. Therefore, individuals that are helpful would be more inclined to be cooperative, while individuals that are less self- confident will also be likely to be less assertive. Therefore, the conflict management style of accommodating and compromising is most likely to be associated with the positively feminine sex role identity.

It is evident that because the positive feminine sex role identity scores high on cooperatives and less on assertiveness, it seems likely that these individuals would have a preference of the accommodating or compromising conflict management style. Therefore, it is hypothesised that individuals that are positive feminine in their sex role identity are more likely to choose the accommodating or compromising conflict management style.

It must be noted that although it seems likely that the positive feminine individual may also prefer to compromise, they may lack the assertion to do so. When an individual is more androgynous in their sex role identity, the tendency to compromise may be more evident due to the communality of the positive feminine sex role identity combined with the assertiveness of the positive masculine sex role identity. Refer to section 1.6.1.6 for a discussion on the positive androgynous sex role identity and the preferred conflict management styles.

1.6.1.5 Negative Androgyny Sex Role Identity and Preferred Conflict Management Styles

The next sex role identity is that of negative androgyny. The negative androgynous sex role identity consists of a balance of negative feminine and negative masculine traits, indicating a combination of the failings or the defects of both feminine and masculine sex role identities (Woodhill & Samuels, 2003). According to Woodhill and Samuels (2003), the negative androgynous individual has a repertoire of socially undesirable traits to choose from. For example, a negative androgynous individual may react to a situation in a negatively masculine manner (i.e. aggressively) but in a completely different situation, this individual may prefer to react in a negatively feminine manner (i.e. submissively). It must be noted that the Interpersonal Circumplex Model presented by Ghaed and Gallo (2006) did not include any dimensions of androgyny; however, due to the fact that negative androgyny includes undesirable traits from both the masculine and feminine sex role identities, it can be speculated that negative androgyny can be placed within the dominant- submissive vertical axis as well as the hostile vertical axis within the circumplex model. Considering that the negative androgynous individual combine the defects of both the negative masculine and negative feminine sex role identities, it seems plausible to hypothesise that the negative androgynous individual may choose to either compete or avoid in one's conflict management style. As discussed above within section 1.6.1.1, the negative masculine individual has the political savvy to judge a situation and choose a conflict management style that would be the most beneficial. In particular, as discussed on page 25, negative masculine individuals may compete if they believe that they may prevail, or may rather choose to avoid if they do not believe that they will succeed. Thus, the avoidance conflict management style among negative androgynous sex role identities may be evident not solely due to the negative feminine sex- based traits which typically avoid, but also due to a combination of negative masculine sex- based traits which know when it is strategically safer to avoid.

Because the negative androgynous sex role identity encompasses the failings from both the masculine and feminine sex role identities, it is obvious that the negative androgynous individual will be likely to use the conflict management styles according to the negative sex roles identities as previously discussed. In other words, the negative androgynous individual would be more likely to choose the competing or avoiding conflict management styles.

1.6.1.6 Positive Androgyny Sex Role Identity and Preferred Conflict Management Styles

The last sex role identity to be explored in relation to conflict management styles is that of positive androgyny. An individual that possesses the positive androgynous sex role identity has access to both the socially desirable masculine and feminine self- schemata and therefore demonstrates equal efficiency in processing positive masculine and positive feminine self-relevant behaviours (Yelsma & Brown, 1985). A positive androgynous individual is more competent on a wider variety of tasks irrespective of the sex that the task is typically associated with (Woodhill & Samuels, 2003). According to the Interpersonal Circumplex Model as presented by Ghaed and Gallo (2006), the positive androgynous sex role identity was not included when attempting to map the sex role identities onto the model. However, if an attempt were to be made, the positive androgynous individual would be placed very closely to the vertical axis portraying dominance as this indicates the socially desirable traits from the positive masculine sex role identity. Furthermore, the positive androgynous individual is closely related to the friendliness horizontal axis of the model demonstrating the socially desirable traits from the positive feminine sex role identity. The conflict management styles that are likely to be associated with the positive androgynous sex role identity are therefore collaboration and compromise.

The collaborating conflict management style refers to the intention to solve a problem by clarifying differences rather than by merely accommodating various points of view (Nel, 2009), and involves a search for a mutually beneficial outcome. Furthermore, studies have reported that the positive androgynous individual has a higher self- esteem in comparison to the other sex role identities (Bem, 1974; Spence, Fromes & Eccles, 1996; Helmreich, & Stapp, 1975), a higher degree of personality integration (Yelsma & Brown, 1985), are more socially competent (Bem, 1975), and tend to maintain an internal locus of control of reinforcement (Yelsma & Brown, 1985). All these factors combine and contribute toward the positive androgynous individual that is self- confident in the belief that he or she may create a mutually beneficial outcome. Hawley (1999), within the social dominance literature, states that if an individual is to meet one's own needs then it requires flexible strategies, coercive as well as cooperative, to navigate through the

complexity of societal demands. Considering that positive androgyny is flexible in the degree of positive masculine and positive feminine traits that are exhibited, a flexibility of strategies is possible. According to the social dominance literature that was previously mentioned, Hawley (1999) explained that there are two strategies that exist within the social dominance theory. The coercive strategy was associated with the purely masculine sex role identity as discussed earlier. However, the prosocial strategy is one that is a "socially acceptable" strategy used to gain the intended outcome. Hawley (1999) further explains that personal factors play an important role in making prosocial strategies possible. Two important personality factors include the degree to which an individual is orientated to the social world in terms of being accustomed to social cues and being agreeable, as well as the degree to which the individual has mastered impulse control and emotional regulation (Hawley, 1999). These two personality factors are evident in the positive androgynous sex role identity. Therefore this sex role identity would be likely to choose the compromising conflict management style. Compromising is the intention to find a beneficial and mutually acceptable solution that provides incomplete satisfaction of the parties' concerns. The distinguishing characteristic of compromising is that there is no clear winner and each party intends to give up something (Nel, 2009). According to the social dominance theory, individuals presumably have evolved to simultaneously promote personal resource attainment and at the same time, minimise interpersonal conflict (Hawley, 1999). An individual that is high in assertiveness and cooperativeness would be more willing to use a prosocial strategy in order to achieve the intended goal. The compromising conflict management style has a high concern for self as well as a high concern for others (Yelsma & Brown, 1985), therefore it is suggested that this behaviour is both stereotypically masculine and feminine indicating an androgynous sex role identity.

In conclusion, it is evident that the positive androgynous individual encompasses the socially desirable traits from both the masculine and feminine sex role identities. Therefore, it is possible that positive androgynous individuals would be likely to utilise the conflict management styles of collaborating and compromising depending on the situation.

1.6.2 The Influence of Job Level and Decision Making Power

A very important consideration within the present research was the job level and the extent to which an employee has authority to make decisions. It has been suggested that an individual's behaviour in an organisation may vary according to the position that the individual holds in the organisational hierarchy (Fagenson, 1990). When looking at conflict management styles in the workplace, job level may help to explain the possible variance in conflict management styles. For example, job level may provide an explanation as to why a negatively masculine individual who has little authority or power may prefer to avoid in one's conflict management style instead of choosing to compete.

Research has been conducted that has aimed to investigate the communication between employees of different job levels (e.g. Infante & Gorden, 1981; Jablin, 1979; Rahim, 1983). Rahim (1983) indicated that when employees communicate with their superior, these employees will often conform to their superior's wishes even if they do not feel that it is necessarily appropriate. Therefore, the differences in communication evidenced between superiors and subordinates may also have some degree of effect upon the employee's conflict management style. Some studies have asserted that job level may cause an inconsistency in an employee's conflict management style preference (e.g. Watson, 1994; Brewer et al., 2002). For example, Watson (1994) reported that high status individuals used a competitive conflict management style, whereas low status individuals tended to use more of a cooperative conflict management style. Brewer et al. (2002) indicated that lower status individuals reported greater use of the avoiding conflict management style after controlling for biological sex. As a result, it is necessary to include job level as a biographical variable within the present study. This variable may provide a more in-depth understanding of an individual's conflict management style preference, and this variable will be analysed to determine if it influences conflict management style preferences independent of sex role identities. or if it contributes to any of the variance among conflict management styles.

1. 7 Sex Role Identities, Conflict Management Styles, and Psychological Wellbeing

Up until this point, conflict management has been discussed in relation to an individual's sex role identity. As the above section illustrated, an individual's choice of conflict management styles could be determined according to one's sex role identity. However, it is also important to note that sex role identities and conflict management styles are independently related to an individual's wellbeing.

1.7.1 Conflict Management Styles and Psychological Wellbeing

With regard to conflict management styles, an individual's response to conflict can have a consequential impact on one's health and wellbeing. Research directly investigating the relationship between conflict management styles and employee wellbeing is limited (Chung-Yan & Moeller, 2010; De Dreu et al., 2002; De Dreu & Beersma, 2005; De Dreu, van Dierendonck, & Dijkstra, 2004; Dijkstra et al., 2005; Zapf, 1999). Most of these studies that have investigated the relationship between conflict management and wellbeing have been in terms of worker health and the physical symptoms of wellbeing. Therefore, this study further attempts to investigate the difference between conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing.

A theoretical model of psychological wellbeing encompasses six distinct dimensions of wellness. These dimensions include: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self- acceptance (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). An individual's response to conflict, i.e. the individual's chosen conflict management style, can have consequences for one's health and wellbeing (Chung- Yan & Moeller, 2010). Therefore, it is necessary to discuss each conflict management style in relation to how an employee's preference to manage conflict may alter one's level of psychological wellbeing.

The following section explores each conflict management styles as stipulated by Thomas and Kilmann (1977) in relation to the affects that these styles may have on one's level of psychological wellbeing.

1.7.1.1 Competing Conflict Management Style and Psychological Wellbeing

An individual that adopts the competing conflict management style adheres to a rigid stance of asserting one's own interests and needs irrespective of the other party's needs. These individuals using the competing conflict management style aim to dominate, occasionally with the use of various intimidation tactics (Chung- Yan & Moeller, 2010). Previous research that has been conducted to investigate the effect that the competing conflict management style has on wellbeing has mainly focused on individuals' health. For example, behaviours in response to conflict that excessively express antagonism, i.e. a high degree of competition, have been linked to heart disease (Chung- Yan & Moeller, 2010), eating disorders (Van den Broucke, 1995), and a decreased immune function over time (Kiecolt- Glaser, et al., 1993). Chung- Yan and Moeller (2010) state that individuals displaying competitive behaviours, i.e. involving a low drive to reach mutually agreeable solutions, are generally ineffective in resolving disagreements.

However, in terms of psychological wellbeing, it must be noted that the competing conflict management style has also been associated to more positive outcomes. More specifically, individuals with conflict management styles that involve a high concern for self, i.e. competition, are able to cope with potential stressors more adequately than those individuals that have a low concern for self (Friedman, Tidd, Currall & Tsai, 2000). Additionally, resources such as mastery, self- efficacy and internal locus of control tend to decrease the impact of potential stressors on individuals (Jex & Bliese, 1999; Schaubroeck & Merritt, 1997), thereby contributing toward a more positive psychological wellbeing. In particular, Jex and Bliese (1999) stated that when an individual has increased levels of self- esteem as well as a high perceived level of competence, an individual is likely to deal with stressors more positively. An individual that competes in one's conflict management style has been associated with high levels of self- efficacy and self-esteem resulting in a lower perception of stressors (Friedman et al., 2000), thereby increasing levels of psychological wellbeing. In a study conducted by Cann, Norman, Welbourne and Calhoun (2008), the conflict management styles were investigated in relation to attachment styles, and this study noted that the competing conflict management style demonstrates high levels of avoidance yet low levels of anxiety. Lower levels of anxiety have been linked to higher

levels of psychological wellbeing (Ryff, 1995), therefore indicating that people that employ the competing conflict management style may display higher levels of psychological wellbeing.

Thus an individual that excessively competes in one's conflict management style could positively alter several dimensions of the theoretical model of psychological wellbeing. It is, therefore, hypothesised that individuals that compete in one's conflict management style may display positive outcomes of psychological wellbeing.

1.7.1.2 Avoiding Conflict Management Style and Psychological Wellbeing

The next conflict management style in relation to psychological wellbeing that is to be discussed is avoiding. Avoiding involves withdrawing from or evading the issues at hand (Chung- Yan & Moeller, 2010). According to Chung- Yan and Moeller (2010), the avoiding conflict management style also involves a low drive to reach a mutually agreeable solution, and is therefore generally unsuccessful in solving conflict. An individual that chooses to avoid in one's conflict management style distances oneself from his or her social environment. Such a tendency, whereby the individual isolates oneself from others, is likely to lead to a less constructive way of dealing with the conflict and therefore, further intensifies the conflict (De Dreu et al., 2004). An increase in conflict threatens one's self- esteem, and generally produces feelings of fear, disgust and anger (De Dreu et al., 2004). Therefore, it can be seen that the avoiding conflict management style actually intensifies the negative effects of conflict impacting upon an individual's wellbeing.

Research that has been conducted by Wissing and van Eeden (2002) investigated certain determinants of psychological wellbeing. Results of this study indicated that an individual's coping ability may influence on one's psychological wellbeing. In relation to the avoiding conflict management style, an individual that utilises this conflict strategy has a low coping ability due to high levels of avoidance and high levels of anxiety, as indicated by Cann et al. (2008), therefore the avoiding conflict management strategy may negatively affect one's psychological wellbeing. In accordance with one's coping strategy, a study by Tyler and Cushway (1992) investigated differing coping strategies in relation to mental well-being. Tyler

and Cushway (1992) demonstrated that avoiding coping strategies whereby individuals ignore the situation have been negatively associated with mental wellbeing. Furthermore, in a study conducted by Friedman et al. (2000), work- related stress was investigated in relation to the various conflict management styles and the results from these studies indicated that the avoiding conflict management style was positively associated with work- related stress. Likewise, van Dierendonck and Mevissen (2002) concluded that individuals who avoid in their conflict management style are more likely to experience higher levels of burnout. Such factors that are a result of choosing to avoid in one's conflict management style may contribute toward increased psychosocial strain thereby having a direct negative impact on one's level of psychological wellbeing (Zapf, 1999).

Consequently, individuals that consistently avoid in their conflict management style may experience a decreased level of overall wellbeing. Thus, in relation to the present study, it is hypothesised that individuals who prefer to avoid in their conflict management style are more likely to experience lower levels of psychological wellbeing.

1.7.1.3 Accommodating Conflict Management Style and Psychological Wellbeing

Likewise, the conflict management style of accommodating has also been negatively associated with wellbeing, however not to the extreme extent as the avoiding conflict management style.
While the scope of the present study precluded the measurement of work stress and its relationship to the proposed variables, through the examination of literature conducted by Friedman and colleagues (2000), there seems to be an indirect relationship associated between stress management, conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing. In particular, conflict management styles are used to resolve certain stressors usually related to task, relationship or process issues. As previously discussed task conflict refers to disagreements pertaining to the goals and objectives of the task at hand, relationship conflict refers to interpersonal disagreements among a group, and process conflict relates to discrepancies associated with the way in which a task should be performed (Nel, 2009). Through the utilisation of different conflict management styles, these stressors are sought to be managed. Therefore, depending on which conflict management style has been adopted, these stressors are either

resolved or exacerbated, which may have an indirect effect on one's level of psychological wellbeing.

In relation to the accommodating conflict management style, an individual that demonstrates a low concern for self will experience higher levels of stress. Friedman et al. (2000) indicated that both the avoiding and accommodating conflict management styles have been linked to higher levels of stress due to a low concern for self, lack of critical resources needed to solve problems, as well as perceiving existing problems as highly threatening. Additionally, the accommodating conflict management style displays lesser levels of self- efficacy, mastery and an internal locus of control thereby increasing the impact of job stressors (Friedman et al., 2000). As a consequence of the higher levels of stress that are evident among individuals that usually accommodate in their conflict management styles, the individual's overall wellbeing may be negatively affected, thereby reinforcing the indirect relationship among conflict management styles, stress and psychological wellbeing. The relationship between stress and psychological wellbeing is a topic that has been well- documented in relation to previous research indicating that high levels of stress negatively affect one's psychological wellbeing (e.g. Daniels & Guppy, 1994; Fielden & Cooper, 2001; Goh, Sawang & Oie, 2010; Haines, Hurlbert & Zimmer, 1990; Schabracq & Cooper, 2000; Sheffield, Dobbie & Carroll, 1994). Therefore, considering that the accommodating conflict management style is correlated to higher levels of stress then it is likely that they would indirectly demonstrate lower levels of psychological wellbeing.

Additionally, van Dierendonck, and Mevissen (2002) illustrated that the accommodating conflict management style fails to satisfy individuals' conflict goals by unquestioningly obliging to others' requests, thereby adversely impacting on an individual's health and wellbeing due to an overwhelming feeling of burnout, incompetence and frustration in not getting their own needs met. In research conducted by De Dreu et al. (2002), it was also suggested that individuals that deal with conflict in a passive and obliging manner whereby they accommodate others to an extreme degree have more negative consequences for health and individual wellbeing than a more proactive and collaborating approach to conflict.

Therefore, the accommodating conflict management style may result in a decreased overall wellbeing as it is a style that fails to resolve work stressors. Consequentially, although the study is not measuring the extent to which styles resolve stressors and thereby reduce the impact on wellbeing, due to this style's characteristic of being excessively concerned with others to the exclusion of oneself and thereby not gaining any or little advantage in stress situations those that accommodate may experience poorer psychological wellbeing. Accordingly, it is hypothesised that individuals that display the accommodating conflict management style are more inclined to display lower levels of psychological wellbeing.

1.7.1.4 Collaborating and Compromise Conflict Management Styles and Psychological Wellbeing

The last two conflict management styles that are to be discussed in relation to psychological wellbeing include collaboration and compromise. These two conflict management styles have both been associated with positive outcomes for wellbeing, because both these styles seek for mutually satisfying solutions by being active and cooperative. These conflict management styles tend to result in greater confidence and a sense of accomplishment, which in turn, improves individual health and wellbeing (Chung- Yan & Moeller, 2010). Chung- Yan and Moeller (2010) continued in explaining that the conflict management styles that emphasise mutual gains is generally the most effective and long- lasting approach; improving interpersonal communication and social interaction, thereby also decreasing the likelihood of future conflict. The stress literature in relation to wellbeing, as presented by Friedman et al. (2000), indicated that individuals that have a moderate to high concern for self have the necessary resources, such as mastery, self- efficacy and internal locus of control, to be able to successfully cope with job stressors and conflict related stressors, thereby increasing overall wellbeing. In the studies conducted by Chung- Yan and Moeller (2010), results have indicated that the collaborating and compromising conflict management styles were negatively related to psychosocial strain. Therefore, as the section within 1.8.3 discusses, conflict- related stressors and the manner in which they are resolved have an indirect effect on psychological wellbeing. Therefore, the comprising and collaborating conflict management styles that attempt to reduce or eliminate

these stressors will most likely have an indirect positive effect on levels of psychological wellbeing.

Additionally, individuals portraying the compromising or collaborating conflict management style are able to balance the needs of one's self as well as the needs of others in a manner that integrates concerns with autonomy and connectedness which is often associated with positive psychological development (Bowlby, 1988), as well as positive interpersonal relationships (Grotevant & Cooper, 1986). Furthermore, it has been proven that individuals that compromise and collaborate in their conflict management styles have been most constructive in interpersonal conflict. In particular, these conflict management styles have been positively associated with factors such as enhanced communication (Stein & Albro, 2001), closeness (Gottman, 1994), and relationship satisfaction (Zacchilli, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 2009). Park and Antonioni (2007) explained that the big five personality factors such as conscientiousness, openness to experience, agreeableness and extraversion are all evident in the compromising and collaborating conflict management styles. Furthermore, the big five personality factor of neuroticism is negatively associated with the compromising and collaborating conflict management styles (Park & Antonioni, 2007). These results indicate that an individual who employs either one of these two conflict management styles are more likely to experience more positive outcomes, such as a higher level of psychological wellbeing.

Hence, it is evident that the conflict management styles that seek to satisfy the other party as well as oneself are more likely to be associated with positive wellbeing outcomes. In relation to the present study, it is, therefore, hypothesised that individuals that adopt the compromising and collaborating conflict management styles are more likely to display higher levels of psychological wellbeing.

In conclusion, in relation to conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing, the conflict management styles that demonstrate a low concern for self may result in lower levels of psychological wellbeing; whereby those styles that have a moderate to high concern for self may result in moderate to high levels of psychological wellbeing.

1.7.2 Sex Role Identity and Psychological Wellbeing

In addition to determining whether conflict management styles have an impact on psychological wellbeing, it is possible to examine the relationship between sex role identities and psychological wellbeing. The concept of psychological wellbeing has been researched to consist of six distinction components of psychological functioning. In particular, these six dimensions include 'self- acceptance', which refers to positive evaluations of oneself and one's past life; 'personal growth', as in the sense of continued growth and development as an individual; 'purpose in life' which refers to the perception that one's life is meaningful; 'positive relations with others' whereby individuals value and possess positive relationships with others; 'environmental mastery', in that an individual has the capability to effectively manage one's life and their surrounding world; and lastly, 'autonomy' whereby an individual maintains a sense of self-determination (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

Previous research that has been conducted in relation to sex role identities and psychological wellbeing have considered the various models of sex role identities such as the Congruency Model, the Masculinity Model and the Androgyny Model (see Figure 2 on page 18). To the researcher's knowledge, there is very limited research conducted on the Differentiated Model of sex role identity within the South African context in relation to psychological wellbeing except for the aforementioned studies conducted by Bernstein (2013), Chemaly (2012) and Solomon (2013).

With regard to earlier research, the Congruency Model, as previously explained (see page 15), indicated that feminine and masculine sex role identities existed on opposite poles on a single continuum and stated that psychological well-being will be optimal only when an individual's sex role orientation is congruent with one's gender (Whitley, 1984). Research conducted by Garnets and Pleck (1979) provided results that were consistent with the more traditional approach that the Congruency Model stipulates, and indicated that if an individual's traits and interests are not aligned with his or her biological sex then the individual's sex role identity is said to be insufficient and disturbed. These views were maintained in research conducted by Erikson (1963), Kagan (1964), and Mussen (1969) (as cited in Whitley, 1983). Such researchers

indicated that psychological wellbeing would only be maintained if one's sex role orientation was congruent with one's gender. The Congruency Model was then altered and modified after the conclusion that a sex role identity is a multi- dimensional concept and encompasses complementary dimensions of masculinity and femininity (Spence & Helmreich, 1978). The new model stipulated that optimal psychological well-being was a result of high masculinity and low femininity in men, and high femininity and low masculinity in women (Lubinski, Tellegen, & Butcher, 1983). In accordance with the adjusted Congruency Model, research conducted by Chevron, Quinlan and Blatt (1978) concluded that individuals who received low levels of psychological wellbeing, and high levels of psychological depression also rated themselves low on sex- typed traits and high on cross- sex- typed traits, thus providing validation for the Congruency Model. Therefore, according to the Congruency Model, individuals had to be sex-typed and behave in a way that was congruent to their sex in order to obtain optimal well-being.

The sex role dichotomy suggested by the Congruency Model was then challenged as the development of the Androgynous Model came into light. Bem (1974) introduced the concept of 'psychological androgyny', which is a term denoting the integration of both the masculinity and femininity sex- based personality traits within a single individual. In particular, Bem (1974) investigated the development of a new sex role conceptualisation that treats masculinity and femininity as two independent dimensions, thereby making it possible to characterise an individual as masculine, feminine, or androgynous. In particular, Bem (1974) hypothesised that the androgynous individual might display both masculine and feminine sex- based personality traits depending on the situational appropriateness of these behaviours. Alternatively, Bem (1974) hypothesised that strongly sex- typed individuals might be limited in the range of behaviours available to them as they move from situation to situation. Therefore, according to Bem's (1974) predictions, masculine or feminine sex- typed individuals might inhibit behaviours that are stereotypic of their opposite sex role, whereas androgynous individuals will freely engage in both masculine and feminine behaviours, thus questioning the traditional assumption of the Congruency Model. Results from the Bem (1974) investigation proved that the masculine and feminine sex role identities were independent dimensions allowing for both these sex- based personality characteristics to exist within a single individual, thus creating the development of the Androgynous Model. Due to the advancement of the way in which sex role identities were

classified, it became noted that an individual is able to possess high levels of both masculine and feminine sex- based personality traits (an androgynous sex role identity), or incorporate a high degree of one particular sex role identity's sex- based personality traits and a low degree of the other (a masculine or feminine sex role identity), or incorporate a low degree of both sex role identity's sex- based personality traits (an undifferentiated sex role identity) (Whitley, 1983). In relation to psychological wellbeing, the Androgyny Model stipulates that when one adheres to an androgynous sex role identity, then he or she will demonstrate the highest levels of psychological wellbeing (Bem, 1977). Bem and Lenney (1976, p. 48) arguing for the Androgyny Model questioned the traditional assumption that is the Congruency Model and stated that "it is now the 'androgynous' person capable of incorporating both masculinity and femininity into his or her personality, who is emerging as a more appropriate sex role ideal for contemporary society". This view suggests that androgyny is basically a synonym for 'mental health' thereby indicating that the androgynous individual has higher levels of psychological wellbeing as opposed to the other sex role identities. Research that was conducted internationally discovered that androgynous individuals had an increased positive self- concept and psychological well-being as opposed to individuals that displayed masculine and feminine sex role identities only (Hinrichsen, Follansbee, & Ganellen, 1981). Several years later, research was conducted to determine the relationship between androgyny and successful adaptation among the lifespan of Japanese adults. The results illustrated that androgyny was related to high self- esteem and high levels of well- being across both sexes (Shimonaka, Nakazato, Kawaai, & Shinichi, 1997), providing further support for the Androgyny Model. In more recent years, a study conducted by Guastello and Guestello (2003) researched sex role identities in relation to emotional intelligence and psychological wellbeing. The results of this study supported the Androgyny Model indicating that individuals that are androgynous in their sex role identity have higher levels of emotional intelligence, contributing toward higher levels of psychological wellbeing.

In relation to psychological wellbeing, the Masculinity Model emerged as a response to researchers questioning the findings of the Androgynous Model. In other words, these researchers questioned whether the high levels of psychological wellbeing seen among androgynous individuals were, in fact, due to the integration of both the masculine and feminine sex- based personality traits. These researchers (e.g. Antill & Cunningham, 1979; Kelly &

Worrell, 1977; Silvern & Ryan, 1979, as cited in Whitley, 1983) suggested that the androgynous sex role identity is associated with high levels of psychological wellbeing primarily due to the masculinity dimension of androgyny. Such researchers advocated that the reason as to why the androgynous individual illustrated high degrees of psychological wellbeing was primarily due to the high levels of the masculine sex- based personality traits within the androgynous sex role identity. Therefore, the Masculinity Model stipulates that psychological wellbeing is regarded to be a function of the extent to which an individual has masculine sex- based personality traits, irrespective of one's gender (Whitley, 1983) thus stressing that femininity is less relevant to well-being (Adams & Sherer, 1985). While most research that has been conducted suggests that the androgynous sex role identity is most closely associated with psychological well-being there are other models, particularly the Masculinity Model, which argues that masculinity is the overriding health predictor (Wolff & Watson, 1983). In conjunction with Wolff and Watson's (1983) findings, Kopper and Epperson (1996) also indicated that the masculine sex role identity is more likely than the feminine or androgynous sex role identity to experience higher levels of mental health. However, research has also been conducted that yielded results contrasting the idea posed by the Masculinity Model. Inconsistent results have been found in a body of research studies which were focused on gender- role personality traits (e.g. Cheng, Hui & Lam, 1999; Lu & Wu, 1998; Upmanyu, Upmanya, & Lester, 2000). Some of the findings illustrated that individuals who are masculine in one's sex role identity are less depressed than others, yet a small number of studies contrasting these results and indicated that individuals who are feminine in one's sex role identity are less depressed than others. Considering that depression is an indicator of mental health/ psychological wellbeing (Kopper & Epperson, 1996), this provides evidence to counteract the argument that individuals who are masculine in their sex role identities have higher levels of well-being.

It is obvious due to the studies mentioned above that many discrepancies exist among which sex role identity leads to higher levels of wellbeing. Due to such inconsistent results, researchers decided to examine both the socially desirable and undesirable sex- based behavioural traits within individuals in relation to psychological wellbeing in an attempt to get more conclusive results. Through the examination of both positive and negative sex role identities, researchers are subscribing to the Differentiated Model of sex role identities. Research that has been conducted

in relation to positive and negative sex role identities and wellbeing has indicated that the positive sex role identities have higher psychological wellbeing. Helgeson (1994) investigated whether positive and negative sex role identities have higher physical and psychological wellbeing. Results from this study indicated that negative feminine and negative masculine sex role identities were related to poorer psychological wellbeing. Helgeson (1994) did not include the androgynous sex role identity. However, a study conducted by Woodhill and Samuels (2003) investigated all the positive and negative sex role identities including androgyny. Results from this study illustrated that positive androgyny, positive masculinity and positive femininity scored a higher level of psychological health and wellbeing than negative masculinity, negative femininity and negative androgyny. Positive androgyny in particular is associated with high levels of well-being.

Within South Africa, research studies conducted by Bernstein (2013), Chemaly (2012) and Solomon (2013) investigated positive and negative sex role identities in relation to psychological wellbeing. The results of all three studies indicated that a significant amount of individuals predominantly have negative sex role identities and that these negative identities are more highly associated with poorer wellbeing outcomes. Therefore, previous research with its inconsistent findings on androgyny and/or the Masculinity Model may have occurred in that the previous research did not account for the socially undesirable sex role identities, thus ignoring a large proportion of sex- based behavioural traits. For example, Bernstein (2013) investigated positive and negative sex role identities among a female sample which indicated that a total of 298 females reported to be negative androgynous, 101 females were negative masculine, and 167 females were negative feminine in their sex role identity. Results from the Bernstein (2013) research study demonstrated that individuals who were negative in their sex role identities, particularly those that were negatively feminine or negatively androgynous, had significantly lower levels of health and psychological wellbeing. Therefore, not only is this evidence indicating that sex role identities are not specific to biological sex, but also specifying that it is important for future research to account for both positive and negative sex role identities. Further support for the Differentiated Model can be seen in research conducted by Solomon (2013) whereby the negative sex role identities that accounted for 51% of the sample experienced the lowest levels of psychological functioning outcomes, such as work- family conflict. Furthermore,

research conducted by Chemaly (2012) whereby 47% of the sample reported to be negative in their sex role identities, produced results indicating that the negative sex role identities were related to higher levels of stress, and lower levels of wellbeing and self- esteem.

While the main focus of this present research study is not to examine sex role identities and psychological wellbeing, this study will still attempt to confirm previous findings as obtained in the studies conducted by Bernstein (2013), Chemaly (2012) and Solomon (2013) by examining the relationship between positive and negative sex role identities and psychological wellbeing. It is evident that the research that has been conducted, in relation to the present study, concludes that the positive sex role identities, and in particular the positive androgynous sex role identity, results in higher health benefits. However, as mentioned, research is limited that investigates all the positive and negative sex role identities. Therefore it is of interest to further determine whether positive or negative sex role identities have a differential effect an individual's psychological wellbeing in South Africa.

1.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, the main investigation within the present research study is to investigate the impact that both positive and negative sex role identities have in relation to choice of conflict management styles. However, in light of the current research study, it is possible to extend the study to investigate how an individual's preference in conflict management styles may affect one's level of psychological wellbeing, and how positive and negative sex role identities influence psychological wellbeing, as well as the interrelationship between all three variables (i.e. sex role identities, conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing). This study thus contributes towards South African research on sex role identities and provides a fuller understanding on how positive and negative sex role identities may relate to differences in an individual's preferred conflict management style, and thereby, differences in levels of psychological wellbeing.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

2.1 Introduction

The present chapter considers the method that was undertaken to complete the research study. Specifically, this chapter includes the aims and rationale of the present study, the research questions and hypotheses, the research design and the instruments used to assess the hypotheses. Additionally, this chapter discusses other methodological considerations such as the data analyses used to investigate the proposed hypotheses, the procedure that was used to operationalise the investigation, as well as ethical considerations pertaining to the current research study.

2.2 Aims and Rationale of the Study

A discussion regarding the importance of conflict management in organisations was provided in the previous chapter. As indicated previously, conflict management forms a fundamental aspect of organisational functioning and therefore it is important to investigate different determinants of conflict management styles. Previous research conducted on conflict management has investigated the relationship of various determinants on the different conflict management styles. These determinants include personality disposition (e.g. Jones & Mills, 1985; Antonioni, 1998; Wood & Bell, 2008), biological sex (e.g. Brahnam et al., 2005; Chan et al., 2006; Chusmir & Mills, 1989; Holt & DeVore, 2005; Korabik et al., 1993; McKenna & Richardson, 1995; Sorenson et al., 1995; Thomas & Thomas, 2008; Walters, Stuhlmacher, & Meyer, 1998), managerial level (e.g. Brewer, Mitchell, & Weber, 2002; Holt & DeVore, 2005; Jablin, 1979; Rahim, 1983), and organisational culture (e.g. Chua & Gudykunst, 1987; Holt & DeVore, 2005). These factors may all have an influence on an individual's choice of conflict management style. One of the most highly researched factors in relation to its influence on conflict management styles is that of biological sex. However, it must be noted that these research studies have all been inconsistent in their findings indicating that biological sex may not be an appropriate

determinant of conflict management. Researchers, as discussed previously, then began to investigate the influence of sex role identities on conflict management styles in an attempt to provide a more comprehensive and in-depth investigation when attempting to investigate gender in relation to conflict management styles. Previous research exploring the relationship between sex role identities and conflict management styles are limited and further also provided inconsistent results (e.g. Baxter & Shepherd, 1978; Brewer et al., 2002; Jurma & Powell, 1994; Portello & Long, 1994; Yelsma & Brown, 1985). These researchers solely focused on the desirable traits within each sex role identity and did not investigate the latest development in the measurement of sex role identities that encompasses both the desirable and undesirable sex role traits. Consequently, the main purpose of this investigation is to provide an in-depth investigation that accounts for both the positive and negative sex role identities in relation to its influence on conflict management styles.

Within the present study, psychological wellbeing was also a variable of interest as both sex role identities and conflict management styles have an influence on one's level of psychological wellbeing. It must be noted that previous research conducted on sex role identities and psychological wellbeing have rarely accounted for positive and negative sex role identities (Cheng et al., 1999; Hinrichsen et al., 1981; Lu & Wu, 1998; Marsh & Byrne, 1991; Shimonyaka et al., 1997; Upmanya et al., 2000). Furthermore, research conducted on conflict management styles in relation to wellbeing is fairly limited and many of these studies do not directly consider conflict management styles in relation to psychological wellbeing (e.g. Chung- Yan & Moeller, 2010; De Dreu et al., 2002; De Dreu & Beersma, 2005; De Dreu et al., 2004; Dijkstra et al., 2005; Zapf, 1999). Therefore, the present research study aimed to further previous research by investigating the effect that both sex role identity and conflict management styles have on one's level of psychological wellbeing, as well as the interrelationship between all three variables. Based on the above rationale, the research questions and hypotheses are outlined next.

2. 3 Research Questions and Hypotheses

2.3.1 Research Question 1

Is there a relationship between different sex role identities and conflict management styles?

Hypothesis 1a:
The negatively masculine sex role identity will be positively related to the competing or avoiding conflict management style.

Hypothesis 1b:
The positively masculine sex role identity will be positively related to both the competing and collaborating conflict management style.

Hypothesis 1c:
The negatively feminine sex role identity will be positively related to the avoiding or accommodating conflict management style.

Hypothesis 1d:
The positively feminine sex role identity will be positively related to the compromising or accommodating conflict management style.

Hypothesis 1e:
The negatively androgynous sex role identity will be positively related to both the competing and avoiding conflict management styles.

Hypothesis 1f:
The positively androgynous sex role identity will be positively related to both the collaborating and compromising conflict management styles.

2.3.2 Research Question 2

Is there a difference in the levels of psychological wellbeing for different conflict management styles?

Hypothesis 2a:
The avoiding and accommodating conflict management styles will display lower levels of psychological wellbeing.

Hypothesis 2b:
The competing conflict management style will display higher levels of psychological wellbeing.

Hypothesis 2c:
The compromising and collaborating conflict management styles will display higher levels psychological wellbeing.

2.3.3 Research Question 3

Is there a difference in the levels of psychological wellbeing based on positive and negative sex role identities?

Hypothesis 3a:
Individuals with positive androgyny, followed by positive masculinity and then positive femininity will experience higher levels of psychological wellbeing.

Hypothesis 3b:
Individuals with negative androgyny, followed by negative masculinity and then negative femininity will experience lower levels of psychological wellbeing.

2.3.4 Research Question 4

Do individuals with different sex role identities have different conflict management styles and does this relate to differences in levels of psychological wellbeing?

Hypothesis 4a:
Individuals that are negatively masculine are more likely to experience negative implications for psychological wellbeing depending on whether they dominantly display the hypothesised competing or avoiding conflict management style.

Hypothesis 4b:
Individuals that are positively masculine are more likely to experience more positive implications for psychological wellbeing depending on whether they display the hypothesised competing conflict management style with some degree of collaboration.

Hypothesis 4c:
Individuals that are negatively feminine are more likely to experience negative implications for psychological wellbeing depending on whether they dominantly display the hypothesised avoiding or accommodating conflict management styles.

Hypothesis 4d:
Individuals that are positively feminine are more likely to experience more positive implications for psychological wellbeing depending on whether they display the hypothesised compromising conflict management style with a degree of accommodation.

Hypothesis 4e:
Individuals that are negatively androgynous are more likely to experience negative implications for psychological wellbeing depending on whether they dominantly display the hypothesised competing and avoiding conflict management styles.

Hypothesis 4f:

Individuals that are positively androgynous are more likely to experience more positive implications for psychological wellbeing depending on whether they dominantly display the hypothesised compromising and collaborating conflict management styles.

The research questions can be represented graphically, see Figure 4 below.

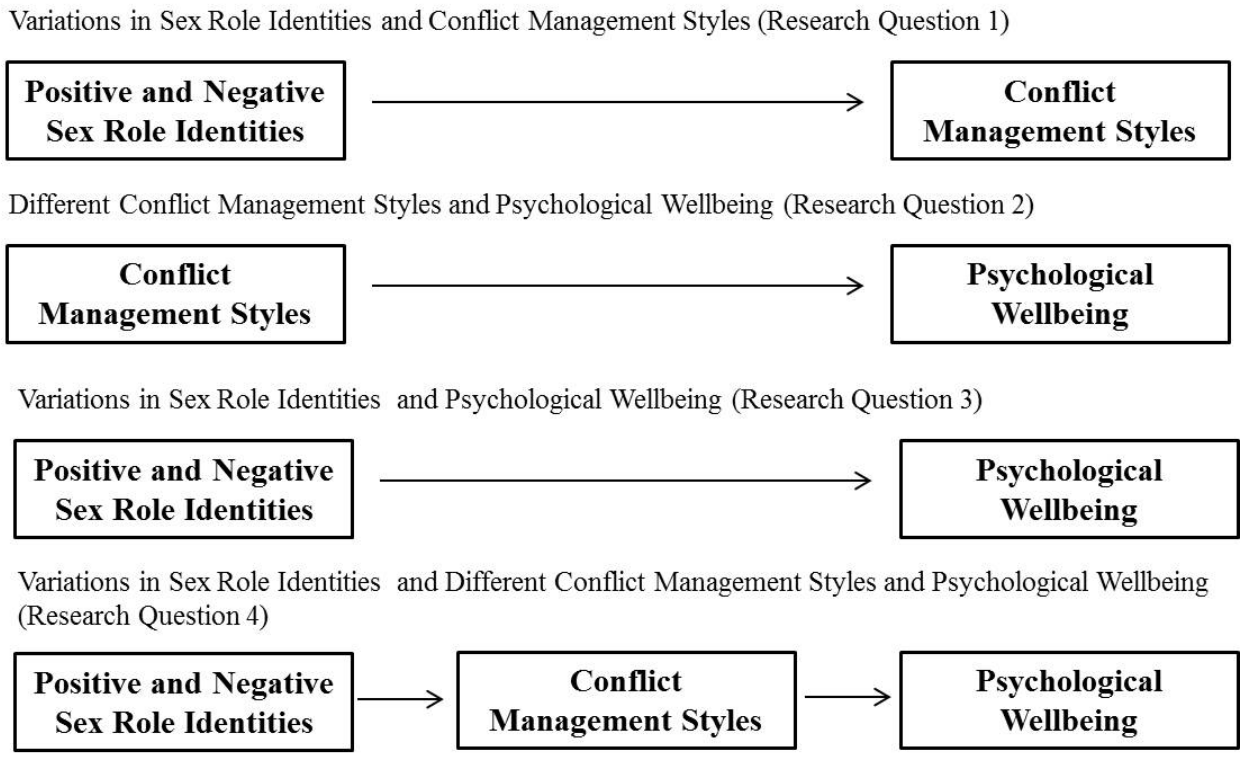


Figure 4. Graphical representation of the research questions

The hypotheses can be reflected diagrammatically:

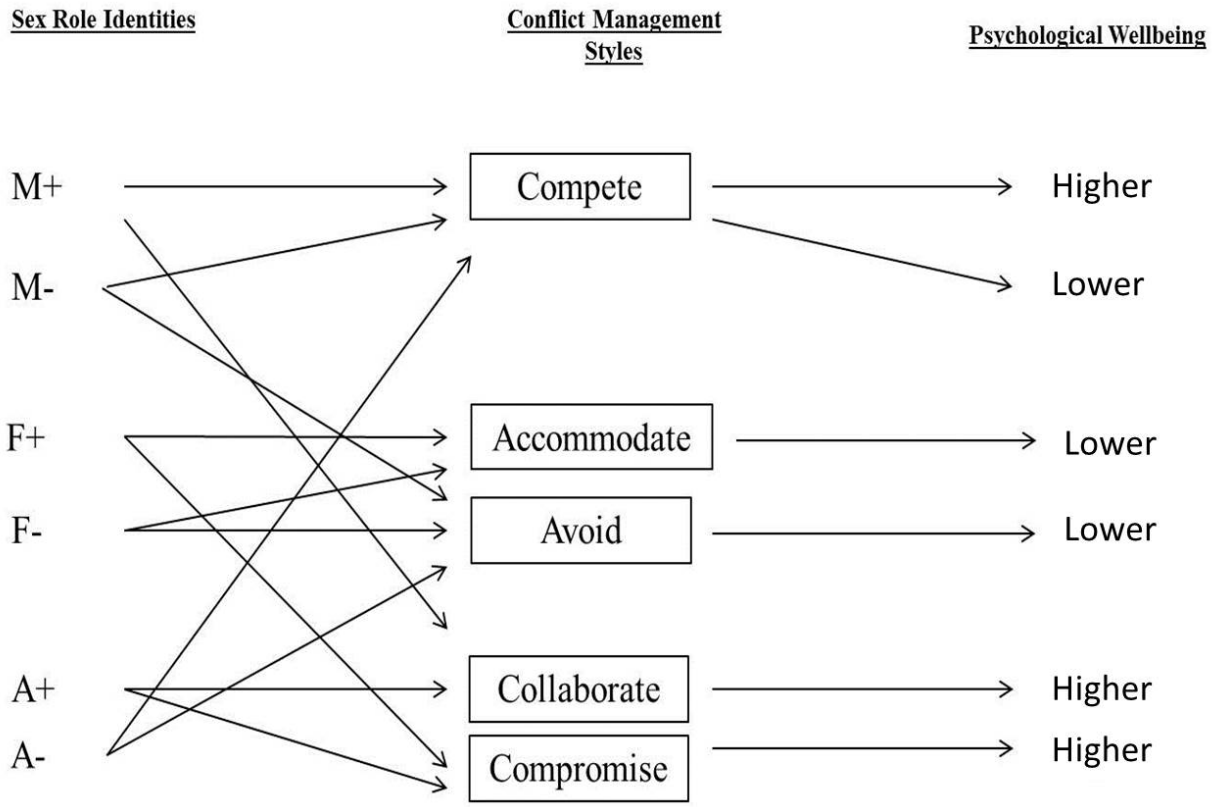


Figure 5. Diagram illustrating the interrelationships among all three variables within the current research study

2.4 Research Design

The present study made use of a quantitative non- experimental design because none of the variables (i.e. sex role identity, conflict management styles, and psychological wellbeing) were manipulated. Furthermore, the design of the study is cross- sectional because the participants were only studied at one point in time (Huck, 2009).

2.5 Sample (Participants)

The sample in this research study consisted of both male and female employees across a range of managerial levels and included those at non- managerial levels within a number of organisations within South Africa. The sample size was originally 460 employees; however due to 48 participants not having completed the whole questionnaire, the final sample size for this investigation consisted of a total of 412 participants. The participants for this study were chosen because the main variable that was investigated concerns conflict occurring within an organisational setting. As it is proposed within the literature that conflict is an inevitable occurrence within all organisations (albeit to varying degrees depending on the culture of the organisation and the sector within which the organisation is housed) it was expected that all participants would have experienced some degree of conflict within their organisational setting. The study utilised a non- probability convenience sample. The employee population within all the organisations that allowed access to conducting this research within their workplace reflected the diversity of gender, race and culture that is representative of the South African population. The selection procedures of these organisations in hiring employees in South Africa attempts to ensure diversity among employees therefore attempting to provide diversity of participants within this study. Three organisations assisted in granting access to use employees within their organisations. For the purpose of meeting ethical considerations, these organisations will remain anonymous within the research study. However, it must be noted that each organisation that participated in the current research study functioned within the financial sector of the business realm.

Furthermore, due to limited responses gained from these organisations, the sample size was also attained through the process of snowball sampling. Snowball sampling refers to the process whereby existing participants recruit future participants that are among their own personal acquaintances (Huck, 2009). It is important to note that individuals were only allowed to participate in the research study if they were employed within an organisational work-setting as the aim of the study was to specifically assess organisational conflict in relation to the variables of sex role identity and psychological wellbeing. Ensuring that employment in South Africa was controlled participants had to complete a demographic questionnaire. The information attained

through the completion of a demographic questionnaire was examined by the researcher and participants were excluded from the study if they did not meet this criterion. Refer to Figure 6 for a graphical representation indicating how many participants were obtained from the organisations and from snowball sampling.

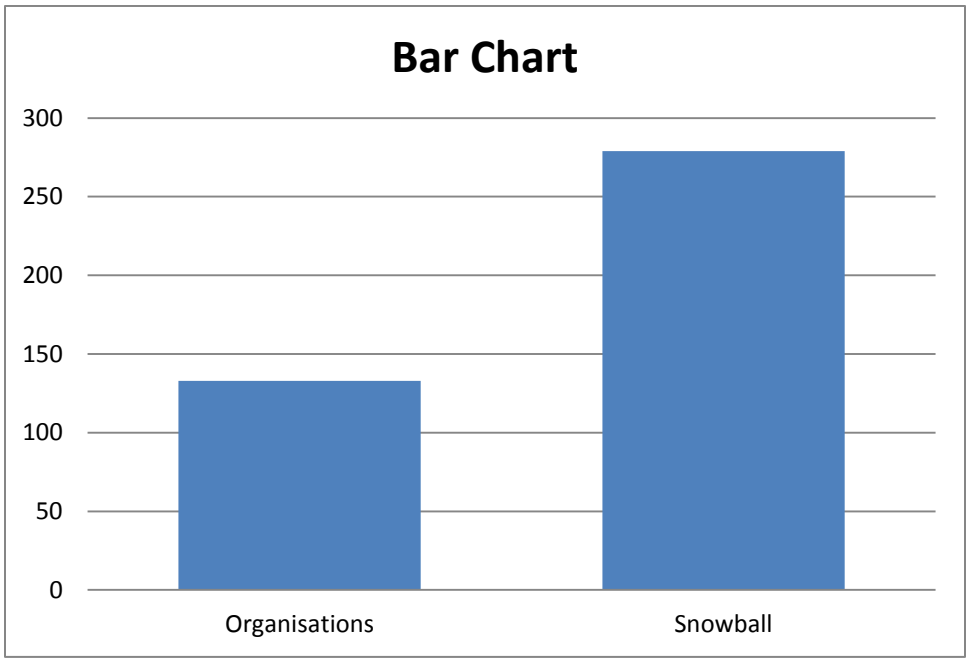


Figure 6. Bar chart illustrating the quota of participants obtained from the organisations and the snowball sampling

2.6 Instruments

Three measures were used to collect the data for the present study. The Bernstein (2013) 57-Item Revised Extended Personality Attributes Questionnaire (EPAQ-R) was used to measure the positive and negative sex role identities. The Thomas- Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (1977) was utilised to determine an individual's preferred conflict management style. The Warwick- Edinburgh Mental Well- Being Scale developed by researchers in the University of Warwick and Edinburgh in 2006 was used to measure psychological well-being.

2.6.1 Bernstein (2013) 57- Item Revised Extended Personality Attributes Questionnaire (EPAQ-R)

As the previous literature discussed, sex role identities were initially perceived to consist of masculinity and femininity along a single continuum. In particular, according to this view, an individual had to adhere to one specific sex role identity and could not be varying degrees of both sex role identities. This perspective was labelled as a 'unifactorial approach' according to Terman and Miles (1936, as cited in Bernstein, 2013) and proposed that the sex role identities of masculinity and femininity existed on a single bipolar continuum whereby extreme masculinity was positioned on the one end and extreme femininity on the other. Instruments were used to assess an individual's M-F that distinguished between behaviours that were stereotypically aligned to males or females (Hoffman, 2001). However, research was conducted by Constantinople (1973) and Lewin (1984) whereby the assumptions of the M-F scale were criticised. The most notable critiques that shared commonalities among these researchers was assumption of bipolarity of the M-F scale, as well as the assumption that using sex differences in responses was an acceptable criterion for measuring masculinity and femininity (Hoffman, 2001). More recently, it has been noted that sex role identities are in fact multidimensional as opposed to being placed on opposite ends of a single continuum, and that instruments strictly measuring M-F had "constrained the relationship between masculinity and femininity" (Lenney, 1991, p. 576 as cited in Hoffman, 2001).

Due to the advancements of sex role identities and the inclusion of the androgynous sex role identity, the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) was developed. According to Hoffman (2001), the BSRI differed from the M-F scales as it included a separate masculine and separate feminine scale, and that an individual could demonstrate varying degrees of sex- based traits from both sex role identities. The BSRI prompted revolutionary changes in the way that femininity and masculinity were intellectualised. However, due to the abundance of research that was being conducted on androgyny through the utilisation of the BSRI, a large amount of inconsistent results were being obtained (Hoffman, 2001). At the same time that the BSRI was being developed, Spence, Helmreich and Stapp (1974) were focusing on another measurement instrument for sex role identities known as the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ). The

PAQ measures two scales of masculinity and femininity in order to measure the socially desirable sex role identities of individuals. The PAQ differed from the BSRI in that the PAQ's masculine and feminine scales included items judged to be desirable for both sexes but seen more typical of one sex than the other; in contrast, the BSRI's masculine and feminine scales only included items judged to be significantly more desirable for one sex than for the other (Hoffman, 2001). However, as research became more advanced within the sex role realm and interest within the negative sex role identities began to emerge, the PAQ was not designed to measure the socially desirable and undesirable sex- based traits and so this posed as a major limitation.

The Extended Personality Attributes Questionnaire (EPAQ) was created in response to account for the limitations on the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ). The interest in the negative components of masculinity, femininity and androgyny led to the development of additional scales. As discussed within the literature, interest in the negative sex role identities resulted from inconsistent findings in research based on sex role identities and wellbeing. In particular, in contrast to the Androgyny and Masculinity Model, the androgynous and masculine sex role identities did not always predict the highest levels of psychological wellbeing. Therefore, researchers began to investigate whether it was negative sex- based personality traits within the sex role identities that caused the confounding results (Woodhill & Samuels, 2003). These scales that were developed in response to the inconsistent findings pertaining to the Androgyny and Masculinity Model distinguished between the sexes and used an item scale similar to the Personality Attributes Questionnaire Masculine and Feminine scales (Helmreich, Spence, & Wilhelm, 1981). The new masculinity scale is labeled as negative M ("M-") or M to distinguish the scale from the original positive masculinity scale. This new scale consists of eight trait descriptions that have each been judged in pilot work to be stereotypically masculine in their characteristics but are deemed negative in both sexes (Helmreich et al., 1981). These eight chosen traits reflected the negative characteristics that were instrumental (i.e. arrogant and egotistical). The new femininity scale is labeled as negative F ("F-") or F to distinguish the scale from the original positive femininity scale. This scale consists of eight trait descriptions that have each been judged in pilot work to be stereotypically feminine in their characteristics but are deemed negative in both sexes. Helmreich et al. (1981) had the intention to develop a

conceptually parallel scale that identified the undesirable expressive traits, however two clusters of negative feminine traits were chosen. The first cluster of traits is four items that are referred to as "communion" (i.e. gullible, submissive, and dependent on others). The second cluster of traits is four items that describe a sense of verbal aggression (i.e. nagging, complaining, and fussy). These additional 16 items have been added to the PAQ to form the EPAQ (Spence & Helmrich, 1981). The EPAQ consists of 40 sets of opposite adjectives which relate to personality traits that are gender- differentiating (e.g. not at all emotional vs. very emotional) (Roehling, Koelbel, & Rutgers, 1996). On a scale from one to five, participants will rate the point between the two opposing adjectives that best describes them. It must be noted, according to Roehling et al. (1996), that the EPAQ is not a general measure of "masculinity" and "femininity". This instrument measures and assesses the specific features of these multi- faceted constructs. The original scale developers reported the Cronbach alpha's for the male and female college students in United States of America. The Cronbach alpha for each of the subscales is demonstrated in Table 3. Due to the poor reliabilities of a few of the subscales, Bernstein (2013) developed a 57-item Revised Extended Personality Attributes Questionnaire (EPAQ-R). This questionnaire yielded much higher Cronbach alpha coefficients demonstrating excellent internal consistency (see Table 4). Furthermore, a study conducted on sex role identities and wellbeing among students utilised the Bernstein (2013) 57- Item Revised Extended Personality Attributes Questionnaire. The reliability coefficients from this study indicated relatively high internal consistency (Chemaly, 2012) (see Table 5). Additionally, another studying investigating the impact of sex role identities on work- family conflict conducted by Solomon (2013) also utilised the EPAQ-R and similarly produced excellent internal consistency (see Table 6).

Table 3

Cronbach Alpha's for the original EPAQ

	Males (α)	Females (α)
M	.74	.74
F	.75	.75
M-F	.54	.63
M-	.69	.70
F-$_{VA}$	.60	.63
F-	.46	.41

Table 4

Cronbach Alpha's for Bernstein (2013) EPAQ-R original study

	(α)
M	.83
F	.85
M-	.85
F-	.81

Table 5

Cronbach Alpha's for Bernstein (2013) EPAQ-R among student sample (Chemaly, 2012)

	(α)
M	.76
F	.79
M-	.83
F-	.83

Table 6

Cronbach Alpha's for Bernstein (2013) EPAQ-R among South African working mothers sample (Solomon, 2013)

	(α)
M	.79
F	.79
M-	.85
F-	.79

Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the Bernstein (2013) 57- Item Revised Extended Personality Attributes Questionnaire scale has been used. A Cronbach alpha was computed to assess the internal reliabilities for each of the subscales in this sample. All reliability coefficients indicated relatively high internal consistency with positive masculinity scale (α) = (0.829), negative masculinity scale (α) = (0.882), positive femininity scale (α) = (0.876) and negative femininity scale (α) = (0.904).

Furthermore, based on the Differentiated Model and the EPAQ-R, respondents within this study were classified into one of seven sex role identities:

1. Positive Androgyny (A+)
2. Positive Masculinity (M+)
3. Positive Femininity (F+)
4. Negative Androgyny (A-)
5. Negative Masculinity (M-)
6. Negative Femininity (F-)
7. Undifferentiated (AU)

It must be noted that the undifferentiated sex role identity has not been included in the present research study's hypotheses (see page 53). According to Woodhill and Samuels (2003),

individuals with an undifferentiated sex role identity show no clear preferences with regard to sex- based personality traits, thus indicating that they do not adhere to a particular sex role identity. In line with Woodhill and Samuels (2003), considering that the undifferentiated identity does not adhere to a dominant sex role identity, it would become problematic to predict the relationship of such an ambiguous sex role in relation to psychological wellbeing. Therefore, for the present research study, no specific predictions were postulated relating to the undifferentiated sex role identity. However, the remaining sex role identities were all included within the hypotheses mentioned previously, and each participant's sex role identity classification will be calculated based on a z- score method.

In relation to classifying each participant's sex role identity classification, it must be noted that traditionally measures of sex role identity had been calculated based on a median- split method whereby individuals were categorised as either masculine, feminine, androgynous or undifferentiated (Bernstein, 2013). The limitation of this method is that it does not account for the slight variations in masculine and feminine sex- based personality traits. Therefore, Woodhill and Samuels (2004) explained that sex role researchers should utilise another method of scoring that enables the examination of both desirable and undesirable feminine and masculine sex-based traits. Woodhill and Samuels (2003) state that in order to make valid statistical comparisons between positive and negative raw scores, all scores need to be transformed into z-scores. Thus, the z- score methodology was proposed. The z- score method enabled individuals to be categorised into one of the seven categories as listed above. Individuals that obtained high scores on a particular subscale (i.e. z- scores above zero) would be considered to belong to a specific sex role identity category (Bernstein, 2013). The present research study adopted this measurement methodology through the utilisation of the z- score as proposed by Woodhill and Samuels (2003; 2004).

2.6.2 The Thomas- Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument

The Thomas- Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument consists of 30 items designed to assess an individual's behaviour in situations where one experiences conflict. A five category scheme has emerged for classifying interpersonal conflict management styles. This scheme was first

introduced by Blake and Mouton (1964), and was then reinterpreted by Thomas (1976). Blake and Mouton (1964) illustrated that one can describe a person's behaviour along two basic dimensions: assertiveness, and cooperativeness. Assertiveness refers to the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy one's own concerns (Nel, 2009). Cooperativeness refers to the extent to which an individual attempts to satisfy others' concerns (Nel, 2009). These two basic dimensions of behaviour can then be used to define five specific methods of dealing with conflict. These five modes of conflict management are competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating (Kilmann & Thomas, 1977).

Kilmann and Thomas (1977) developed the Thomas- Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument to ensure that the conflict management styles would be more validly assessed than other conflict management style instruments. Thomas and Kilmann (1977) focused specifically on developing an instrument that would minimise the large social desirability factor found in other conflict management instruments. It must also be noted that the Thomas- Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument is designed to take an individual's personal predispositions and the requirements of a situation into consideration (Amanatullah, Morris, & Curhan, 2008).

Respondents were asked to consider themselves in a conflict situation before answering the Thomas- Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument. Thirty pairs of statements were provided to the respondents describing possible behavioural responses. Each item in the instrument represents a forced- choice decision between two potential behavioural responses to everyday conflict situations. The respondent was instructed to then circle the statement "A" or "B" depending on which statement was more consistent with the individual's characteristic. For example, one pairing was between an 'avoiding' statement such as "I sometimes avoid taking positions that would create controversy", and an 'accommodating' statement such as "If it makes other people happy, I might let them maintain their views". The instrument then determined which conflict management style the individual exhibited the most demonstrating the individual's preference of a conflict management style. The instrument measures five dimensions: competing, accommodating, avoiding, collaborating and compromising. Each of the five dimensions is paired with the other four dimensions three times, providing a possible score for each dimension that ranges from 0 (very low use) to 12 (very high use).

Because of the nature of the response format of the Thomas- Kilmann Conflict Mode Inventory, that is, it is a forced- choice and ipsative measure, typical reliability statistics, specifically the Cronbach alpha, do not accurately measure the scale reliability (Amanatullah, Morris, & Curhan, 2008). The test- restest reliability is a more accurate estimate which past empirical testing has shown to be satisfactory for this measure (Kilmann & Thomas, 1977). Kilmann and Thomas (1977) calculated the test- retest reliability ranging from 0.61 to 0.64. Thomas and Kilmann (1977) focused on creating a structured model of conflict that is organised based on a relative frequency of conflict styles in a particular situation. It is important to note that the relative frequency is inherently an ipsative construct, meaning that as the relative frequency of one conflict management style increases, the relative frequencies of the remaining styles decrease (Thomas & Thomas, 2008). The average inter-correlations between ipsative measures should be -0.25 (Thomas & Thomas, 2008), which is the case with the Thomas- Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (Kilmann & Thomas, 1977). Thomas and Kilmann (1977) decided on a forced-choice rating system for two reasons. The first reason was to control for response biases as social desirability had been a concern for previous conflict management instruments (Thomas & Thomas, 2008). The Thomas- Kilmann Conflict Mode Inventory reduces social desirability by forcing respondents to choose between pairs of statements that have been matched based on ratings of social desirability, therefore making it increasingly difficult to answer on that basis. Additionally, the forced- choice format eliminates common response biases that would arise due to the use of the Likert scale such as leniency and strictness (Thomas & Thomas, 2008). Therefore, through the use of forced- choice rating and ipsative measures that are utilised in the Thomas- Kilmann Conflict Mode Inventory, the trade- offs between the five conflict management styles are well- captured.

For the present research study, internal consistency was calculated among each of the conflict management style preferences that ranged from 0.41-0.84 (see Chapter 3). The internal consistency calculated for each conflict management styles are consistent with the predictions of Amanatullah et al. (2008) indicating that internal consistencies calculated among ipsative measures will always be lower than usual and are not an accurate reflection of the reliability. The most appropriate reliability measure for the Thomas- Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (1977)

is test- retest reliability; however, the research design that has been implemented for this investigation does not allow for this reliability test to be conducted.

2.6.3 The Warwick- Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS)

The Warwick- Edinburgh Mental Well- Being Scale (WEMWBS) is a 14- item scale measuring mental well- being that covers subjective well- being and psychological functioning. All of the items that are mentioned in the scale are worded positively and address aspects of positive well-being (Stewart- Brown & Janmohamed, 2008). Positive mental health is often used interchangeably with the term mental well-being. Positive well- being is a complex construct that focuses on both affect and psychological functioning with two distinct perspectives (Tennant, et al., 2007). The first perspective is the 'hedonic perspective' which focuses on the subjective experience of happiness and life satisfaction. The second perspective refers to the 'eudaimonic perspective' which focuses on the psychological functioning and self- realisation. Tennant et al. (2007) explains that positive mental health is recognised as having major consequences for health and social outcomes. The 14- item scale is scored by summing responses to each item answered on a 1 to 5 Likert scale ranging from "none of the time" to "all of the time". The minimum scale score is 14 and the maximum is 70.

The WEMWBS was developed through research that was conducted at the University of Warwick and at the University of Edinburgh. The initial phase for the research was a pre-existing scale called the Affectometer 2 which was developed in the 1980s in New Zealand (Stewart- Brown & Janmohamed, 2008). The Affectometer 2 consisted of 20 statements and 20 adjectives relating to mental health in which positive and negative items are balanced. This scale had been used in a number of countries however the United Kingdom did not validate the scale. Using the framework from the Affectometer 2, a new scale was developed composing only of positively worded items relating to aspects of positive mental health. The final scale consists of 14- items covering both hedonic and eudemonic dimensions of mental health including positive affect (feelings of optimism, cheerfulness and relaxation), satisfying interpersonal relationships and positive functioning (energy, clear thinking, self- acceptance, personal development, competence and autonomy) (Tennant, et al., 2007).

Validation of the WEMWBS has been performed in the United Kingdom with those aged 16 and above. The WEMWBS was initially validated in student samples recruited at the universities of Warwick and Edinburgh with a sample size of 348 students in 2006. The internal consistency of the scale is high with the Cronbach alpha coefficient being 0.89 (Stewart- Brown & Janmohamed, 2008). The population scores on the WEMWBS approximate to a normal distribution making the scale suitable for monitoring mental well-being in population samples. Participants involved in the study of face validity found the scale to be clear, unambiguous and easy to complete. The Cronbach alpha for a previous study was calculated on the WEMWBS scale (α) = 0.903 indicating very high internal consistency (Chemaly, 2012). In relation to the present research study, the Cronbach alpha was calculated on the WEMWBS scale (α) = 0.939 representing very high internal consistency.

2.7 Procedure

Permission to conduct the present research study was obtained from the Department of Psychology within the School of Human and Community Development at the University of the Witwatersrand in terms of Ethics (see Appendix A). Additionally, consent for the present research project to use employees as participants was obtained from the Human Resource departments from the various organisations. The names of the various organisations will not be mentioned for confidentiality purposes. A letter requesting permission to use employees as participants in the research study was sent to the Human Resource Manager of the specific organisations (see Appendix B). The organisations that replied with an interest to help the researcher in completing this investigation were then sent an email which included the participant information sheet (see Appendix C) as well as the online address link where the participants were able to complete the demographic information sheet and the other relevant questionnaires (see Appendix D). The organisations then forwarded the email to all employees in the specified workplace where access to the questionnaires was made possible.

In order to yield a larger sample size that was necessary for the present investigation, the researcher made use of the snowballing technique to gather more responses from participants.

Participants that were acquired through snowballing were contacted via current participants who knew other acquaintances employed within organisations in South Africa. These participants were sent the same email that was sent to organisations whereby a participant information sheet was provided, as well as the online address link allowing participants to gain access to the demographic information sheet and the relevant questionnaires.

The questionnaire did not require the employee's name, staff number or ID number in order to ensure that anonymity was maintained. The questionnaires that were provided online consisted of a demographic questionnaire as well as all the above mentioned scales. The allocated time to complete all the questionnaires was approximately 25 minutes. The online questionnaire was available to employees over a two month period in order to yield a large sample size. Employees' informed consent was deemed to have been given once the completed questionnaire had been submitted. For more details on informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, see Ethics section on page 75.

2.8 Data Analyses

Descriptive statistics were obtained for all the variables under investigation (see Chapter 3, page 77). It must be noted that an employee's job level within the organisation was captured within the demographic questionnaire. The employee's job level was an important variable which may have influenced the individual's preferred conflict management style.

The data analyses made use of a Chi- Square analysis, one- way ANOVAs, and a two- way ANOVA. A Chi- Square analysis was conducted in order to determine the main research question which investigated the relationship between sex role identities and conflict management styles. The one- way ANOVA statistical method was used to analyse the relationship between sex role identities and psychological wellbeing, as well as to determine whether there was a difference between the different conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing. Additionally, a two- way ANOVA was used to assess the last research question which aimed to investigate whether there were differences in the relationship between sex role identities and psychological wellbeing depending on one's conflict management styles. It must be noted that all

the statistical analyses that were conducted within this research study utilised the computer program known as IBM SPSS Statistics 21.

2.8.1 Chi- Square Analysis

The Chi- Square analysis is a traditional measure for evaluating overall model fit. Within a chi-square analysis, it is necessary to get an insignificant result at a 0.05 threshold in order to indicate a good model fit (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). If the Chi- Square values yields a significant result then it can be said that the variables being measured in this analysis indicate a 'lack of fit' (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). The essential characteristic of a Chi-Square analysis is that variables that are included in this statistical analysis are categorical. This means that for the Chi- Square, the only measure of participants' behaviour on both variables is what categories participants are allocated to (Greene & D'Oliveira, 2006). Within the present study, the variables of sex role identities and conflict management styles are both categorical data. The categories for the independent variable in this analysis, i.e. sex role identity, include positive and negative androgyny, positive and negative masculinity, as well as positive and negative femininity. The categories for the dependent variable in this analysis, i.e. conflict management style, include accommodating, avoiding, compromising, collaborating, and competing.

In order to conduct a Chi- Square analysis, it is essential that certain assumptions have been met. These assumptions include: a) the sample size must be large enough that the expected cell count in each cell is greater than or equal to 5; b) the data must be ordinal (i.e. categorical) and there must be two or more categorical independent groups; and c) the sample must be randomly drawn from the population (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). For this purpose, a larger sample size was ensured for the conduction of this study. However, if the assumptions were not met then an alternative test would have to be conducted such as Fisher's Exact Test.

2.8.2 One- Way ANOVA

One- way ANOVA is a statistical technique that is used to compare three or more means to determine whether one group differs from another (Huck, 2009). The one- way ANOVA has

been conducted to determine whether there is a significant difference between the different conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing. Additionally, a one- way ANOVA was performed to determine whether there is a significant difference between the variations in the sex role identity groups and psychological wellbeing.

All ANOVAs are alike in terms of the fact that they focus on means. The difference between ANOVAs depends on three main aspects: the number of independent variables, the number of dependent variables and whether the samples in the study are independent or correlated (Huck, 2009). The one- way ANOVA has one independent variable, one dependent variable and independent samples.

The one- way ANOVA has to meet certain assumptions in order to be conducted. This statistical analysis has four main assumptions that need to be met: independent and random sampling, normality, interval data and homogeneity of variance (Huck, 2009).

Independent and Random Sampling: The sample procedure in this study may not have been purely random, however every employee in the organisations that had access to a computer and internet had an equal chance of participating in the study. Furthermore, no employee participated in the study twice indicating that no participant has more than one set of scores, as well as that no score had an influence on another individual's score. Therefore, the assumptions of random and independent sampling were met.

Normality: This assumption is examined by determining the Skewness coefficient. The Skewness coefficient is a method in order to determine whether normal distribution of the sample has occurred (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Skewness coefficients are used to indicate whether the sex role identity, conflict management styles, and psychological wellbeing scales were all normally distributed. The Skewness coefficients that indicate whether scales have been normally distributed are values that lie within the +1 and -1 range (Huck, 2009). If the Skewness coefficient lies within this range then the assumption of normality has been met, and parametric statistical analyses can be conducted on condition that the other assumptions for the one- way ANOVA have been met too.

Interval Data: In order for this assumption to be met, it is necessary that dependent variables are interval data (Huck, 2009). In accordance with this study, the dependent variable within the one-way ANOVA, i.e. psychological wellbeing, is interval.

Homogeneity of Variance: In order to determine whether this assumption has been met, it is necessary to conduct Levene's test for Homogeneity of Variance. The Levene's test of Homogeneity of Variance was used to determine whether the variances were equal across all scales. If the Levene's tests prove to be insignificant, then the assumption of homogeneity of variance has been deemed to be met.

Furthermore, if a one- way ANOVA indicates significant results then it is important to calculate the Cohen's d for effect size in order to gain a deeper understanding as to how significant the results are.

Cohen's d Effect Size: In order to understand how strong the significance is between two variables, it is necessary to calculate the effect size. In parametric statistical analyses, the Cohen's d is calculated in order to determine the effect size (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). According to Huck (2009), the cut offs used to estimate a large effect size is 0.80 or higher, a Cohen's d value within the range of 0.65-0.8 is considered a moderate to large effect size, a cut off of 0.5 is deemed to be moderate in effect size, a Cohen's d value within the 0.3-0.35 range is considered to have a moderate to small, whereas a cut off of 0.20 is considered to be a small effect size.

It must be noted that if the assumptions that have been outlined above have not been met then the statistical test fails to be parametric. If the test fails to be parametric then the non- parametric alternative must be conducted. The non- parametric alternative for the one- way ANOVA is the Kruskal- Wallis test. The Kruskal- Wallis test is a non- parametric method used to compare more than two groups within a data set (Huck, 2009). If the Kruskal- Wallis test provides significant results then one may conclude that there is at least one difference between the groups within the data set.

It must be noted that even non- parametric tests are required to meet certain assumptions. These assumptions differ significantly from the parametric test assumption. The assumptions that need to be met when conducting a Kruskal- Wallis test are as follows:

Assumption1: The dependent variable is measured at the ordinal or interval level (Green & Salkind, 2008).

Assumption 2: The independent variable consists of two or more categorical independent groups (Green & Salkind, 2008).

Assumption 3: Homogeneity of variance for non- parametric tests must be met. In order to test this assumption, it is necessary that the absolute difference between the rank cases and mean scores for the dependent variable is conducted (Green & Salkind, 2008). Once this is performed, then the Levene's test must be conducted on the absolute difference scores of the dependent variable. It is important that the Levene's test proves to be insignificant thereby indicating that homogeneity of variances for the non- parametric test has been met.

2.8.3 Two- Way ANOVA

In a two- way ANOVA two independent variables are tested (Greene & D'Oliveira, 2006). Each independent variable is made up of two or more levels (Huck, 2009). Within the two- way ANOVA in the present study, the two independent variables are sex role identity and conflict management style. Sex role identity consists of seven levels which are positive and negative androgyny, positive and negative masculinity, positive and negative femininity, and undifferentiated. Conflict management style consists of five levels including competing, compromising, collaborating, avoiding and accommodating. Therefore a 7 x 5 two- way ANOVA will be conducted for the dependent variable of psychological wellbeing. The two- way ANOVA in this study has been used to determine whether the relationship between sex role identity and psychological wellbeing differs according to the individual's chosen conflict

management style. The assumptions for the two- way ANOVA are the same as the one- way ANOVA.

2.9 Ethics

Ethical clearance to conduct this research study was obtained from the Department of Psychology within the School of Human and Community Development at the University of the Witwatersrand in terms of Ethics (see Appendix A). Once ethical clearance was obtained, the process of data collection commenced. Participants were provided with a cover letter indicating what the research study aimed to achieve. In addition, the cover letter provided to participants explained that their participation in the research study is purely voluntary and that they will not be advantaged or disadvantaged if they choose to participate or not to participate in the study.

In addition to the cover sheet, the participants were provided with a secure and encrypted online address link allowing them access to complete the relevant questionnaires. Participants were required to complete a demographic information sheet; however, this information sheet did not require any form of identifying information from the participants, such as name, ID number, staff number or telephone number. Additionally, the IP addresses that were obtained from using the online link have been deleted. Therefore, and as mentioned within the cover letter, participants remain anonymous and the individual results from this study will be kept confidential. In terms of confidentiality, the results from a participant's individual survey were only to be seen by the researcher and the researcher's supervisor. Within the cover letter, it was also specified that the data collected would only be used for the purpose of the present research and would not be used or accessed for any other purposes. Furthermore, participants were informed in the covering letter that they were able to withdraw from the research at any time; however once they had completed the survey and submitted the questionnaire their informed consent to participate in the study had been deemed to have been given. Data has been stored by the researcher's supervisor in a safe place under lock and key, and will not be accessible to anyone other than the researcher and the researcher's supervisor.

Organisations that participated in the present research study were promised anonymity, as seen within the letter granting permission (see Appendix B). For this reason, no identifying information was provided within the research report such as specifying the names of the organisations. If these organisations were interested in the results of the study, then a summary report was given to the organisation pertaining solely to the results involving their specific organisation. It must be noted that individual employee information was not given to these organisations, but was rather provided in a group summary report.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 outlined the research questions for the present study, as well as identified the methodological approach necessary to conduct this investigation. As mentioned within Chapter 2, different statistical analyses have been conducted in order to analyse the results of this study. The statistical analyses that have been conducted in relation to the research questions included a Chi- Square analysis, one- way ANOVAs and a two- way ANOVA. Furthermore, a Chi- Square analysis was conducted in order to explore the relationship between the participants' current management levels and their preferred conflict management style. Although this was not considered to be a specific research question, as Chapter 1 explained, this biographical variable may be used to explain any possible variances among the sample's choice of conflict management styles.

This following chapter includes information pertaining to the description of the data, the results of the assumption tests performed for each statistical technique, and the findings for each analysis conducted in relation to the specific research questions examined within the present study.

3.2 Descriptive Statistics

The sample of the research study consisted of 412 participants. Table 7 provided below illustrates the descriptive statistics obtained within the current investigation. The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 70 years of age (M = 34.04), whereby the majority of participants reported to be within the 20-29 age range (44.9%). In terms of gender, the majority of respondents were female (61.4%). With regard to the race of the participants, 75.5% of participants were White, 11.7% were Black, 6.3% reported to be Asian, 4.4% were Coloured, and the remaining 2.2% were Indian. The most predominant home language that was spoken by

the respondents was English (77.7%), 12.4% reported to speak Afrikaans and 6.8% indicated that they speak an African language. With regards to the respondents' marital status, 43.2% indicated that they were single, while 38.6% reported that were are married. The remaining participants were divorced (6.3%), cohabiting with a partner (10.4%) or widowed (1.5%). Within the demographic information sheet, respondents were also asked to indicate whether they were currently in a management position at work, and if so, they were required to specify the management level. The majority of the respondents specified that they were currently in a management position at work (50.7%), and among these respondents 12.6% were in Top Management, 16.3% were in Senior Management, 15.3% were in Middle Management, and 6.6% were in Junior Management. The remaining participants reported that they were currently not in a management position at work (49.3%).

Table 7

Demographic information provided for 412 participants

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	**Female**	253	61.4
	Male	159	38.6
Age	**Under 20**	3	0.7
	20-29	185	44.9
	30-39	111	26.9
	40-49	69	16.7
	50-59	32	7.8
	60-69	11	2.7
	70-79	1	0.2
Race	**Black**	48	11.7
	Coloured	18	4.4
	White	311	75.5
	Asian	26	6.3
	Indian	9	2.2
Home Language	**English**	320	77.7
	Afrikaans	51	12.4

	African Language	28	6.8
	Other	13	3.2
Marital Status	**Single**	178	43.2
	Married	159	38.6
	Divorced	26	6.3
	Cohabiting/ Living with partner	43	10.4
	Widowed	6	1.5
Current Management Level	**Top Management**	52	12.6
	Senior Management	67	16.3
	Middle Management	63	15.3
	Junior Management	27	6.6
	Currently not in Management Position	203	49.3

3.3 Reliability- Cronbach Alpha

For each scale that was used within the investigation, it is important to assess the internal consistency for each instrument and its relevant scale. When items are used to form a scale it is essential that these scales have internal consistency. The items within the scale should all measure the same thing therefore they should all be correlated with one another. A useful way to assess internal consistency is by examining an instrument and its relevant scales' Cronbach alpha (Bland & Altman, 1997). Therefore, this section below provides the Cronbach alpha's for the relevant instruments.

3.3.1 EPAQ-R

The 57- Item Revised Extended Personality Attributes Questionnaire (EPAQ-R) was used as the instrument to capture each respondent's sex role identity. A detailed discussion on the EPAQ-R has been provided within the previous chapter (Chapter 2). The internal consistency of the EPAQ-R has previously been reported to range from 0.81-0.83 (Bernstein, 2013) and 0.76-0.83 (Chemaly, 2012). Table 8 reports on the Cronbach alpha for each subscale included within the EPAQ-R for the present investigation.

Table 8

Internal consistencies reliability for EPAQ-R

EPAQ-R Subscale	**Cronbach Alpha Coefficient (α)**
M+	0.83
M-	0.88
F+	0.88
F-	0.90

The reliability coefficients presented in Table 8 are all indicative of excellent internal consistencies. According to George and Mulley's (2003) rule of thumb, any Cronbach alpha coefficients ranged between 0.80-0.90 are excellent reliability scores.

3.3.2 Thomas- Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument

As mentioned within Chapter 2, the Thomas- Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument has been used to identify the participants' preferred conflict management styles. The Thomas- Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument assesses conflict management in terms of 5 styles: accommodating, avoiding, collaborating, compromising, and competing. Table 9 provided below identifies the internal consistency coefficients for each subscale.

Table 9

Internal consistencies reliability for Thomas- Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument

Conflict Mode Instrument Subscale	**Cronbach Alpha Coefficient (α)**
Compromise	0.53
Avoid	0.61
Accommodate	0.64
Collaborate	0.41
Compete	0.84

After examining the Cronbach alpha coefficients provided in Table 9, it is evident that two of these subscales have provided unacceptable Cronbach alpha coefficients (Compromise, $\alpha = 0.53$; Collaborate, $\alpha = 0.41$). However, as mentioned in Chapter 2, many researchers have reported that internal consistency measured by means of a Cronbach alpha is not suitable when examining the reliability of the Thomas- Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (e.g. Amantullah et al., 2008; Brown et al., 1981; Kilmann & Thomas, 1977; Thomas & Thomas, 2008; Volkema & Bergmann, 1989; Womack, 1988). As Chapter 2 explained, the reason as to why Cronbach alpha's are not appropriate within this instrument is because of the ipsative and forced- choice nature of the questionnaire (see Page 80). Furthermore, it must be noted that the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument scale differs from the EPAQ- R and the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale because those instruments utilise Likert- type scales, and so Cronbach alpha's are appropriate indicators of the internal consistencies of those items. According to Thomas and Thomas (2008), the design of the Thomas- Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument violates key assumptions underlying conventional psychometrics and statistics, and these five scale scores are not independent since they all sum to a constant. Hicks (1970) further explains that the Cronbach alpha is not an appropriate index of scale reliability because there are only four degrees of freedom among the five scale scores. This affects the accuracy of the Cronbach alpha because the upper limit of the five Cronbach alpha reliability estimates is four rather than five (Hicks, 1970). A more accurate predictor of calculating reliabilities for ipsative measures pertains to test- retest reliability. However, the nature of the current research study does not allow for such reliability estimates to be calculated.

3.3.3 WEMWBS

The Warwick- Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS) was utilised in order to identify the respondents' levels of psychological wellbeing. Each respondent's score was calculated by summing up the score from the 14 items; the higher an individual scored- the higher one's psychological wellbeing was. Table 10 provides the overall Cronbach alpha coefficient for the scale as this instrument does not have independent subscales.

Table 10

Internal consistencies reliability for the WEMWBS

	Cronbach Alpha Coefficient (α)
WEMWSB	0.94

As Table 10 has indicated, the Cronbach alpha coefficient is very high. According to George and Mallery's (2003) rule of thumb, a Cronbach alpha coefficient above 0.9 is deemed as excellent in terms of its internal consistency.

3.4 Categorical Variable Frequencies

Additionally, frequencies were calculated based on the categories included within sex role identity and the conflict management styles. Table 11 and Table 12 provide the descriptive statistics indicating the number of different respondents that adhere to the particular groupings. The frequencies that are provided within Table 11 indicated that the majority of respondents were positive androgynous in their sex role identity (N=90), followed by positive femininity (N=75); whereas the lowest frequency counts occurred among the positive masculine (N=40), and the undifferentiated (N=25) sex role identity. Table 12 displayed the frequencies associated within the different conflict management styles. The majority of participants favoured the avoiding conflict management style (N=141), whereas the least favoured conflict management style was collaborating (N=25).

Table 11

Frequency table for sex role identity categories

SRI Categories	N
Positive Androgyny	90
Negative Androgyny	71
Positive Femininity	75
Negative Femininity	67
Positive Masculinity	40
Negative Masculinity	44
Undifferentiated	25

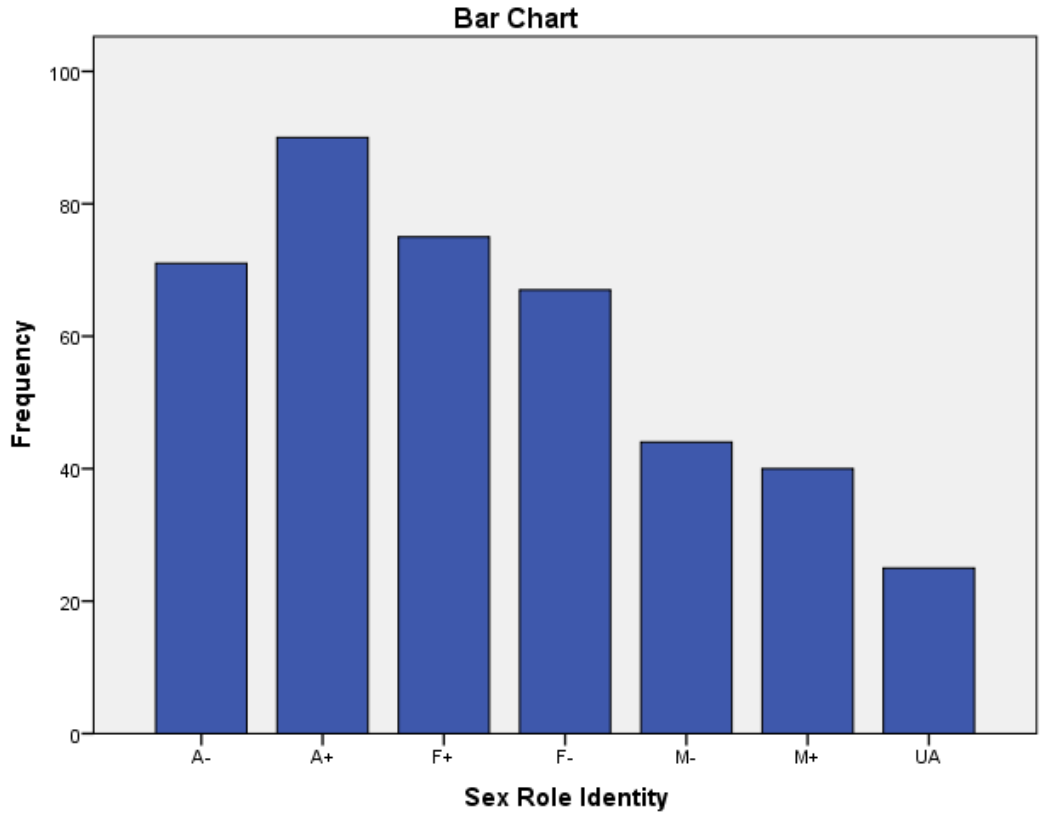


Figure 7. Frequency bar chart for sex role identity

Table 12

Frequency table for conflict management style categories

CMS Categories	N
Compromise	96
Collaborate	25
Compete	84
Avoid	141
Accommodate	66

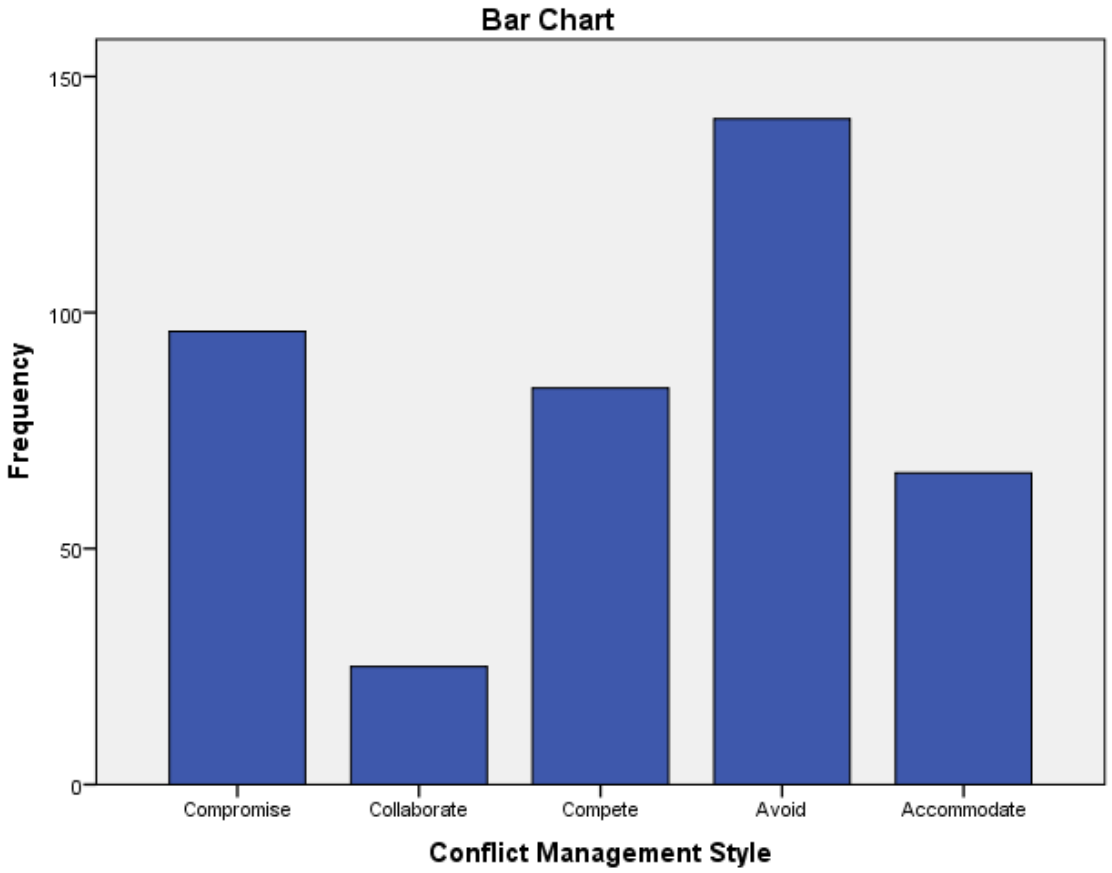


Figure 8. Frequency bar chart for conflict management style

3.5 Assessing the Relationships Proposed in the Research Questions

Within this section, the results for each relationship proposed in the research questions (as outlined in Chapter 2) will be elaborated upon. The way in which the research questions were answered was through utilising different data analyses as previously mentioned. The data analyses that were conducted include a Chi- Square analysis, one- way ANOVAs, and a two-way ANOVA. However, before these analyses could be conducted, it was necessary to ensure that the data relevant to each analysis adhered to certain assumptions.

The following section provides information pertaining to the assumptions relevant to the specific data analyses, and then provides the results obtained from each analysis that was conducted.

3.5.1 Chi- Square Analysis

The Chi- Square analysis was used to determine the relationship proposed within Research Question 1. This research question aimed to determine whether there was a relationship between conflict management styles and one's sex role identity. In order to have conducted this statistical procedure, it was essential that the data met the relevant assumptions necessary to perform the test.

i. Expected Cell Count Assumption

The first assumption that the data was required to meet refers to the sample size needed in order to perform a Chi- Square analysis. It is necessary for the sample size to be large enough that the expected cell count in each cell is greater than or equal to 5 (Hooper et al., 2008). A violation of this assumption occurs if the analysis reports that more than 20% of the expected cell count is less than 5. Therefore, the assumption is regarded to have been met if this percentage of expected cell count that is less than 5 is between 0%- 20%. For the present investigation, this assumption was met as although 7 cells (20%) of the expected cell count have less than 5, this was not greater than 20% and was therefore deemed to be acceptable.

ii.Ordinal Data Assumption

It was necessary for the variables under investigation to be ordinal or categorical in order to perform a Chi- Square analysis. Furthermore, it was essential that there are two or more categorical independent groups under investigation. For the purpose of the present investigation, this assumption was met as both variables (sex role identity and conflict management styles) were categorical and was independent from each other.

iii. Random Sampling Assumption

The assumption of random sampling states that the sample has to be randomly drawn in order for the sample to be representative of the population. As mentioned within Chapter 2, the sample procedure in this study may not have been entirely random; however this assumption was deemed to have been met as every employee within the three organisations that had access to a computer and internet all had an equal chance of participating in the study.

Therefore, considering that these assumptions were met, the investigation was able to commence in conducting a Chi- Square analysis in order to determine the relationship between sex role identities and conflict management styles.

3.5.1.1 Investigating the relationship between sex role identities and conflict management styles

Considering that the assumptions were met for the Chi-Square analysis, the statistical procedure was able to be conducted. This section provides a detailed description of the results obtained when conducting the Chi- Square analysis in order to investigate the relationship between sex role identities (SRI) and conflict management styles (CMS).

The research study sampled 412 employees across organisations in South Africa, and evaluated whether there was a relationship between the different sex role identities among the different conflict management styles. The Chi- Square goodness of fit test was used to evaluate this relationship.

The Chi- Square analysis tested the following hypothesis:

H_o= SRI and CMS are not associated with each other

H_1= SRI and CMS are associated with each other

Where α=0.05

When referring to the inferential statistics obtained from the statistical analysis, the null hypothesis was rejected, $\chi_{(24)}^2 = 242.691$, $p < .05$ (see Table 13). Because the null hypothesis was rejected, it is clear that there is an association between sex role identities and conflict management styles. In order to identify how large the significance is between the two variables, it is essential to identify the effect size. For a Chi- Square analysis, the size of the effect is illustrated through analysing the Phi or Cramer's V value. The Phi value should be utilised when the variables are binary, and the Cramer's V value should be used when categorical variables have two or more categories within them. Therefore, the Cramer's V value has been used within the present research study and indicated a medium effect size ($\varphi_c = 0.384$, $p < .05$).

Table 13

Chi- Square Tests table illustrating the inferential statistics

	Value	**df**	**Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)**
Pearson Chi- Square	242.691	24	0.000

The purpose of the Chi- Square test is to examine whether the difference between the observed and expected frequency is large enough to be considered significant. Considering that the null hypothesis has been rejected, the difference illustrated in Table 14 is large enough to be considered significant at a medium level effect size. Therefore, it is important to examine the observed and expected frequency for each category provided within each variable in order to understand where the major differences occurred.

Table 14

*Sex Role Identity * Conflict Management Style Cross-tabulation table displaying the descriptive statistics*

			Conflict Management Styles				
			Compromise	**Collaborate**	**Compete**	**Avoid**	**Accommodate**
Sex Role Identities	**A+**	Count	32	11	6	18	4
		Expected	16.5	4.3	14.5	24.3	11.4
	A-	Count	23	2	27	31	7
		Expected	21	5.5	18.3	30.8	14.4
	F+	Count	5	2	1	26	41
		Expected	17.5	4.6	15.3	25.7	12.0
	F-	Count	11	3	1	44	8
		Expected	15.6	4.1	13.7	22.9	10.7
	M+	Count	7	3	28	4	2
		Expected	10.3	2.7	9.0	15.1	7.1
	M-	Count	8	2	16	12	2
		Expected	9.3	2.4	8.2	13.7	6.4
	UA	Count	10	2	5	6	2
		Expected	5.8	1.5	5.1	8.6	4.0
	Total	Count	96	25	84	141	66
		Expected	96	25	84	141	66

Within Table 14, it is evident that all the categories within the two variables differ in the observed frequency from the expected frequency. Table 14 illustrates that the majority of A+ participants chose to compromise in their conflict management style (*f*=32; 45.1%), whereas the conflict management style that was least favoured by A+ participants is to accommodate (*f*=4; 5.6%).

A- participants preferred to avoid (*f*=31; 34.4%), and least preferred to collaborate (*f*=2; 2.2%).

F+ participants favoured the accommodating conflict management style (*f*=41; 54.7%), whereas the F- participants preferred the avoiding conflict management style (*f*=44; 65.7%). However,

both the F+ and F- participants least preferred to utilise the competing conflict management style (*f*=1; 1.3%, and *f*= 1; 1.5% respectively).

Both the M+ and M- preferred to compete in their conflict management styles (*f*=28; 63.6%, and *f*= 16; 40% respectively). However, M+ participants are 1.75 times more likely to compete in their conflict management style than M- (M+/M- (Compete) = 1.75:1). The M+ participants least preferred to accommodate (*f*=2; 4.5%), whereas the M- participants indicated that they would least favour the collaborating (*f*=2; 5%) and accommodating (*f*=2; 5%) conflict management styles.

Refer to Figure 9 to see the clustered bar graph illustrating the trends displayed in Table 14.

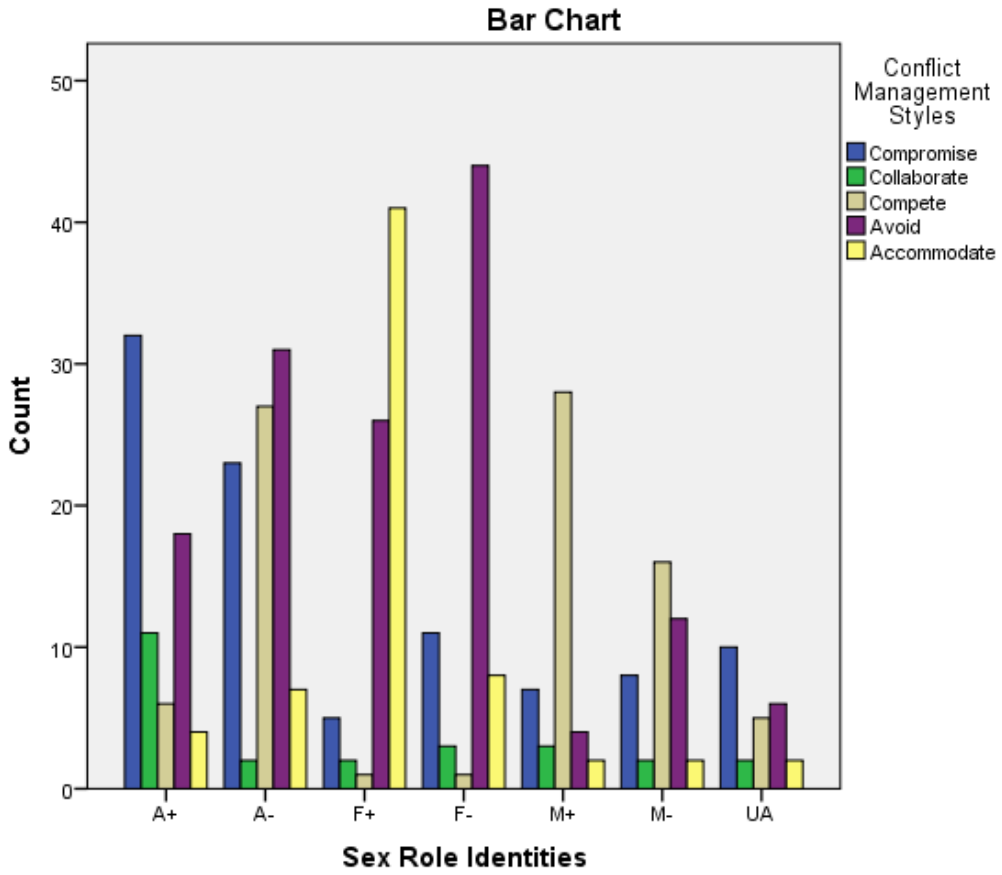


Figure 9. Clustered bar chart for Chi- Square analysis for sex role identity*conflict management style

3.5.2 One- Way ANOVA

The one- way ANOVA was used to investigate two research questions, as indicated in Chapter 2. More specifically, the one- way ANOVA was used to investigate whether there was a difference in the levels of psychological wellbeing for different conflict management styles (Research Question 2), as well as to determine whether there was a difference in the levels of psychological wellbeing based on the positive and negative sex role identities (Research Question 3).

The following section will explain the assumptions and results obtained in relation the Research Question 2, and then it will be followed by the assumptions and results obtained in relation to Research Question 3.

However, before the assumptions regarding the one- way ANOVA are explained, Table 15 provides descriptive statistics on all three variables under investigation (this table includes the Skewness coefficients which are discussed under the Normality Assumption below).

Table 15

Descriptive Statistics and Skewness table for all three variables

Variable	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Minimum**	**Maximum**	**Skewness**
Negative Masculinity	37.76	9.76	16	70	.414
Positive Masculinity	44.68	7.94	13	60	-.847
Positive Femininity	46.25	7.76	16	59	.278
Negative Femininity	43.24	11.45	17	85	.793
Compete	4.42	3.27	0	12	.538
Collaborate	5.12	2.28	0	12	.132

Compromise	6.71	2.07	0	12	.036
Avoid	7.06	2.54	0	12	-.225
Accommodate	5.63	2.68	0	12	.215
Psychological Wellbeing	48.09	10.07	14	70	.696

As the above table illustrates, the descriptive statistics were obtained for all the scales and subscales obtained within the present research study. The subscales of the EPAQ-R are demonstrated within Table 15 and illustrate the following:

The negative masculine subscale had a mean of 37.76 with a standard deviation of 9.76, and minimum and maximum scores of 16 and 70 across 15 items; according to Bernstein (2013) the EPAQ-R negative masculine subscale has a theoretical range of 15 and 75. Positive masculinity had a mean of 44.68 with a standard deviation of 7.94 and minimum and maximum scores of 13 and 60 across 12 items with a theoretical range of 12 and 60. Positive femininity had a mean of 46.25 with a standard deviation of 7.76 and a maximum and minimum of 16 and 59 across 12 items with a theoretical range of 12 and 60. Lastly, the negative femininity subscale had a mean of 43.24 with a standard deviation of 11.45 and minimum and maximum scores of 17 and 85 across 18 items with a theoretical range of 18 and 90.

The descriptive statistics for the subscales within the Thomas- Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument were also demonstrated within Table 15. The competing conflict management style had a mean of 4.42 with a standard deviation of 3.67; the collaborating conflict management style had a mean of 5.12 with a standard deviation of 2.28; compromising had a mean of 6.71 with a standard deviation of 2.07; the avoiding conflict management style had a mean of 7.06 and a standard deviation of 2.54; and the accommodating conflict management style had a mean of 5.63 with a standard deviation of 2.68. It is interesting to note that all the conflict management styles yielded a minimum value of 0 and a maximum value of 12, which also reflect the theoretical range of the instrument. However, due to the ipsative and forced- choice design of the

Thomas- Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument it is likely that participants will experience such minimum and maximum values.

Lastly, the Warwick- Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale representing the variable of psychological wellbeing among participants was also illustrated within Table 15. The mean value for psychological wellbeing was 48.09 with a standard deviation of 10.07 and a minimum and maximum of 14 and 70 with a theoretical range of 14 and 70.

3.5.2.1 Conflict Management Styles and Psychological Wellbeing

As indicated above, before a statistical procedure can be conducted it is necessary to ensure that the assumptions of the particular statistical analysis were met.

i. Independent and Random Sampling Assumption

As already explained within Chapter 2, an assumption necessary to conduct a one- way ANOVA is to ensure that the sampling is random and independent. The sampling procedure within this study may not have been entirely random, however every employee within the workplace that participated in this research study that had access to a computer with internet had an equal chance of participating in the research. Additionally, no employee participated in the study twice indicating that each participant only has one set of score, as well as that no individual score had any form of influence on another participant's score. Thus, the assumptions of random and independent sampling were met.

ii. Normality Assumption

It is important for parametric tests to be normally distributed. In order to examine the normality of data, it was essential to observe the Skewness coefficient. Skewness coefficients for Research Question 2 were used to determine whether conflict management and psychological wellbeing were normally distributed. The Skewness coefficients that indicate whether scales have been normally distributed are values that lie within the +1 and -1 range (Huck, 2009). If the Skewness coefficient lies within this range then the assumption of normality has been met, and parametric statistical analyses can be conducted on condition that the other assumptions for the one- way

ANOVA have been met too. Listed in Table 15 are the Skewness coefficients for each of the variables under investigation. It is evident that all the conflict management style subscales, as well as psychological wellbeing were normally distribution.

It must be noted that the Skewness coefficient for psychological wellbeing originally indicated that it was negatively skewed. In order to apply the log transformation, it is essential that data is positively skewed. Therefore, the log transformation was applied to psychological wellbeing after the scores were reversed. Once this transformation was completed, the data indicated normal distribution (as seen in Table 15). Consequentially, the assumption of normality regarding conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing was met (see Appendix E).

i. Interval Data Assumption

The assumption requiring interval data pertains specifically to the dependent variable. It is essential that the dependent variable in a one- way ANOVA is interval regarding its scale of measure. The dependent variable within Research Question 2 was psychological wellbeing which was interval. Therefore, this assumption was met.

ii. Homogeneity of Variance

In order for this assumption to be met, it was essential that a Levene's test for Homogeneity of Variance was conducted. As Chapter 2 specifies, the Levene's test was used to determine if variances are equal among all the relevant scales. In order to ensure that homogeneity was met, it was necessary that the *p*- value was insignificant. If the *p*- value was less than .05 then homogeneity of variances cannot be assumed, and this assumption would not get fulfilled.

Before the psychological wellbeing scores were transformed using the log transformation, Research Question 2 failed to meet this assumption as $p = 0.000$. However, after the log transformation was applied and data was normally distributed, the Levene's test statistic and the *p*- value met the requirements in order to fulfil this assumption where $F_{4, 407} = 2.139$, $p>0.05$ (see Table 16).

Table 16

Levene's Test for Equality of Variance table

Levene Statistic	**df_1**	**df_2**	**Sig.**
2.139	4	407	0.075

Therefore, all the assumptions regarding a one- way ANOVA for Research Question 2 were met and so the statistical procedure was conducted. The following section provides the results that were obtained regarding the one- way ANOVA when investigating the difference in the levels of psychological wellbeing for the different conflict management styles.

3.5.2.1.1 Investigating the difference between levels of psychological wellbeing for different conflict management styles.

The overall total mean for psychological wellbeing in relation to conflict management styles was 48.09. The specific means relevant to the different types of conflict management styles are provided in Table 17 and Figure 10. The compromising conflict management style had the highest mean (M = 51.30), whereas the accommodating conflict management style had the lowest mean (M = 43.27). The mean difference between the collaborating and compromising conflict styles was 0.022 which was a very small difference. Additionally, the mean difference between the avoiding and competing conflict management styles was 0.569 which was also fairly small.

Table 17

Descriptive Statistics table for conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing

	Psychological Wellbeing	
CMS Category	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
Compromise	51.30	7.043
Collaborate	51.28	7.882
Compete	47.42	10.940
Avoid	47.99	10.294
Accommodate	43.27	11.004

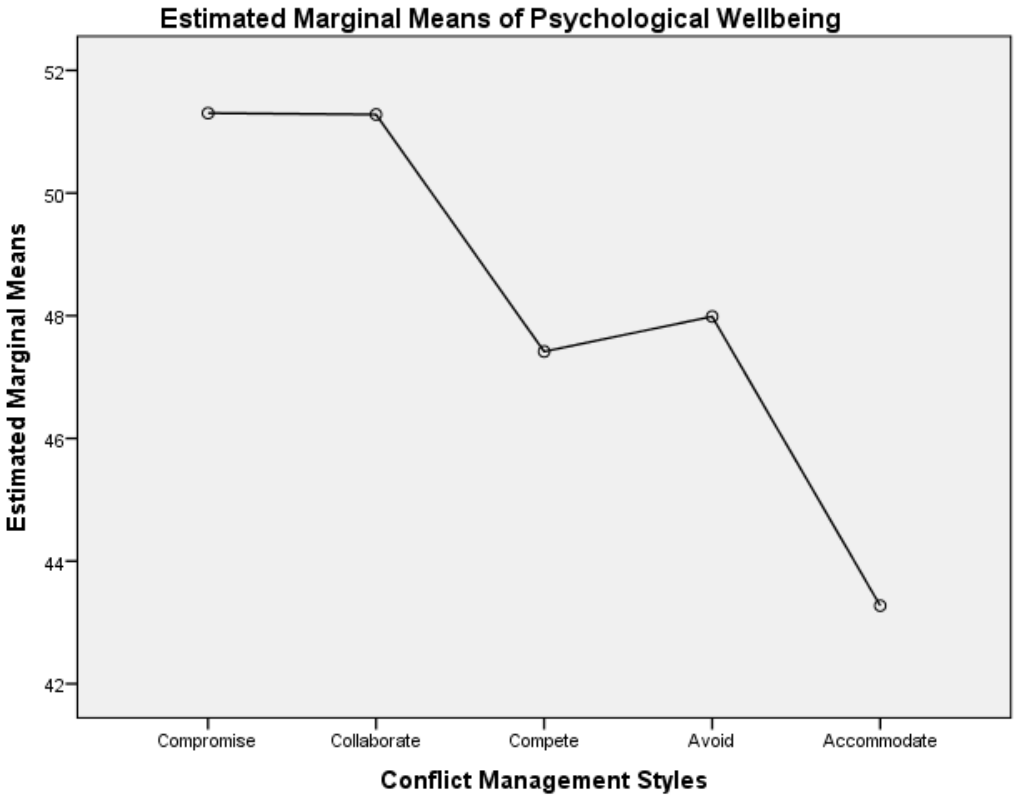


Figure 10. Plotted means for conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing

In order to have determined whether there was a difference between conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing, it was necessary to test for significance for the relevant hypotheses.

In relation to Research Question 2, the hypotheses were as follows:

H_o: $\mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_3 = \mu_4 = \mu_5$
H_1: At least one pair of means not equal
Where α=0.05

As demonstrated within Table 18, the overall model for this ANOVA was significant as $F_{4,407}$=7.376, $p<0.05$. Because there was significance, it is evident that there was some relationship between psychological wellbeing and the different conflict management styles. In order to determine how large the effect of conflict management styles was on psychological

wellbeing, the effect size for the overall ANOVA model was calculated. The overall effect size displayed a medium effect on the relationship between the two variables (η^2=0.07).

Table 18

ANOVA table for conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing

	Sum of Squares	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Between Groups	2816.096	4	704.024	7.376	0.000
Within Groups	3.8844.759	407	95.442		
Total	41660.854	411			

Because the overall ANOVA model indicated that there was a significant difference between conflict management style and psychological wellbeing, it was then necessary to determine which specific conflict management styles had a significant difference according to psychological wellbeing. Therefore, post- hoc tests were conducted using the Tukey- HSD test because the independent variable had more than three levels. The conflict management styles that had demonstrated a significant difference according to psychological wellbeing have been listed in Table 19. Significant differences occurred between the compromising and accommodating group with a large effect size (η^2=0.8), collaborating and accommodating group also demonstrated a large effect size (η^2=0.8), and the avoiding and accommodating group illustrated a medium effect size (η^2=0.5). The remaining groups within the different conflict management styles had no significant difference according to their levels of psychological wellbeing.

Table 19

Tukey- HSD Post- Hoc Test table for conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing

Group Comparisons	Mean Differences	Cohen's D	95% CI	
			Lower	Upper
Compromise and Accommodate	8.029*	0.8	-7.3	7.4
Collaborate and Accommodate	8.007*	0.8	2.15	17.86
Avoid and Accommodate	4.713*	0.5	1.44	17.42

The results from the one- way ANOVA were in partial support of the hypotheses for Research Question 2. The compromising and collaborating conflict management styles displayed the highest level of psychological wellbeing, as predicted in the hypotheses. A surprising result was that the competing conflict management style displayed slightly lower levels of psychological wellbeing in comparison to the avoiding conflict management style; however the competing conflict management style did not group to be significantly different from the other conflict management styles. It was predicted in the hypotheses for Research Question 2 that the avoiding and accommodating conflict management styles would display similar low levels of psychological wellbeing, however, these two groups proved to be significant from each other according to the levels of psychological wellbeing, indicating a medium difference in the levels of psychological wellbeing.

3.5.2.2 Sex Role Identities and Psychological Wellbeing

The next research question that was investigated pertains to Research Question 3, as specified in Chapter 2. This research question considered the difference in levels of psychological wellbeing based on positive and negative sex role identities. Therefore, as was conducted above, another

one- way ANOVA was used in order to investigate whether there was a relationship between sex role identities and psychological wellbeing.

However, as specified previously, in order to have conducted a one- way ANOVA it was necessary that the same assumptions was explained in the above section were met pertaining to these two variables, i.e. sex role identities and psychological wellbeing. Therefore, the following section provides the assumptions that were necessary pertaining to Research Question 3.

i. Independent and Random Sampling Assumption

As indicated above, this assumption pertains to the sampling procedure whereby the sample must be random and independent. Considering that the same sample was used for all the research questions, this assumption has been met based on the same grounds that were provided in the above section (see Page 92).

ii. Normality Assumption

Listed in Table 15 above are the Skewness coefficients for each subscale under investigation. Through careful examination of all the relevant subscales pertaining to Research Question 3, it was evident that all the sex role identity subscales and psychological wellbeing were normally distributed. As mentioned above, a log transformation was performed for psychological wellbeing as it was originally negatively skewed. Therefore, it can be noted that the assumption of normality has been met through analysing the relevant Skewness coefficients (see Appendix E).

iii. Interval Data Assumption

The dependent variable under investigation within Research Question 3 is psychological wellbeing. Psychological wellbeing is regarded as interval according to its scale of measurement. Therefore, the assumption of interval data was fulfilled.

iv. Homogeneity of Variance

When conducting a Levene's test in order to assess whether the homogeneity of variance was met, it was originally performed on the psychological wellbeing scale before the log

transformation was conducted. The Levene's test for the original wellbeing scores indicated that variances were heterogeneous in nature and so this assumption had failed to be met ($F_{4, 405}$=2.549, p=0.020). However, once the wellbeing scores were transformed and the normality of distribution was corrected, the Levene's test indicated that this assumption was met and it was assumed that homogeneity of variances occurred (see Table 20).

Table 20

Levene's Test for Equality of Variance table

Levene Statistic	**df_1**	**df_2**	**Sig.**
0.698	6	405	0.651

It is evident that all the assumptions regarding a one- way ANOVA in order to analyse Research Question 3 were met. Therefore, the following section provides a description of the results gained through the statistical procedure of a one- way ANOVA when investigating whether there was a difference in the levels of psychological wellbeing for positive and negative sex role identities.

3.5.2.2.1 Investigating the difference between levels of psychological wellbeing for positive and negative sex role identities.

The total mean for psychological wellbeing with reference to one's sex role identity was 48.09. Table 21 and Figure 11 provide information relating to each specific sex role identity in relation to psychological wellbeing. According to Table 21, the positive androgynous individual had the highest mean (M=53.59), as opposed to negative femininity that had the lowest mean (M= 40.01).

Table 21

Descriptive Statistics table for sex role identities and psychological wellbeing

	Psychological Wellbeing	
SRI Category	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
Negative Androgyny	47	10.087
Positive Androgyny	53.59	8.081
Negative Femininity	40.01	10.032
Positive Femininity	49.39	7.775
Negative Masculinity	45.52	10.730
Positive Masculinity	50.90	7.441
Undifferentiated	52.12	7.518

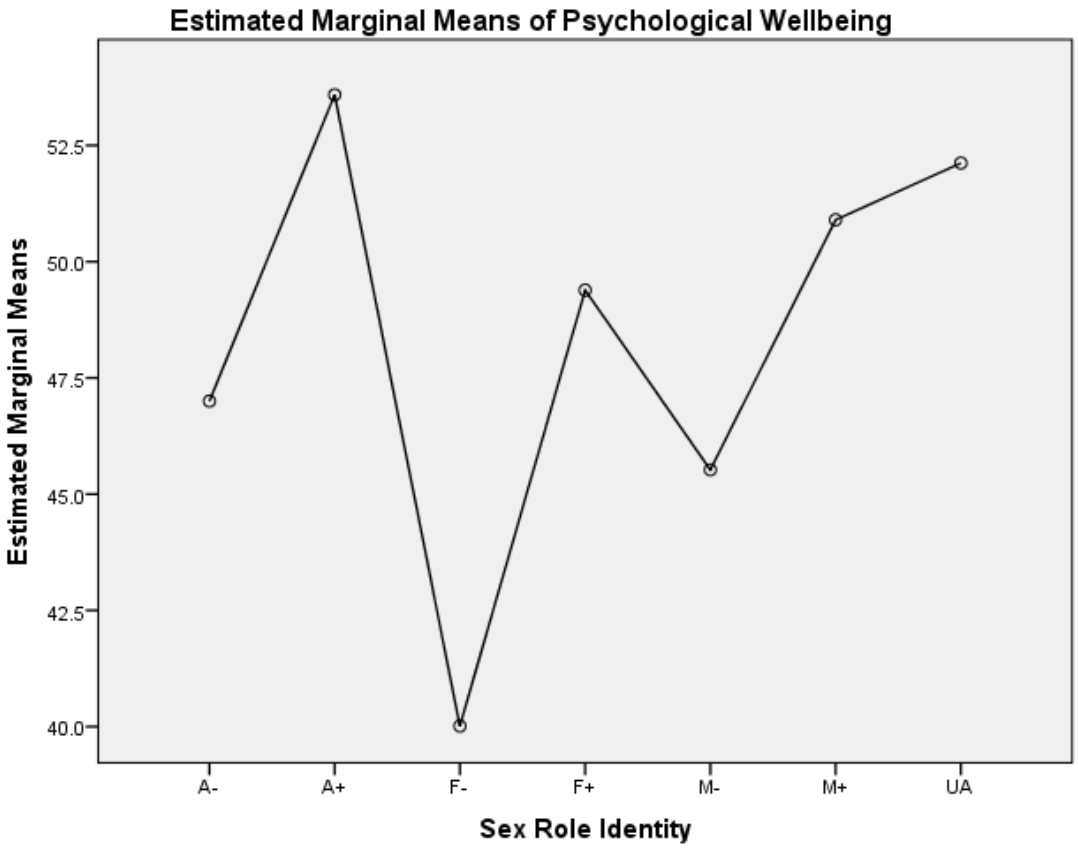


Figure 11. Plotted means for sex role identity and psychological wellbeing

For the analysis of Research Question 3, the hypotheses consistent to the one- way ANOVA statistical analysis were formulated:

H_o: $\mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_3 = \mu_4 = \mu_{5=} \mu_6 = \mu_7$

H_1: At least one pair of means not equal

Where α=0.05

Table 22 illustrates the F- statistic and its relevant *p*- value in accordance with the overall model for this ANOVA. It is evident that the overall model had a significant difference between the two variables under investigation, i.e. sex role identity and psychological wellbeing where $F_{6, 405}$=18.136, p<0.05. In order to understand how large the difference was between these two groups, an effect size was calculated (η^2= 0.21) indicating a very large difference.

Table 22

ANOVA table for sex role identity and psychological wellbeing

	Sum of Squares	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Between Groups	8822.951	6	1470.492	18.136	0.000
Within Groups	32837.903	405	81.081		
Total	41660.854	411			

Up until this point, it has been established that there was a significant difference between the variables presented in Research Question 3. In order to gain a more in-depth understanding, it was necessary to identify where the significant differences between the different groups of sex role identities in relation to psychological wellbeing took place. Therefore, an analysis of the post- hoc test was conducted used the Tukey- HSD test. Listed in Table 23 are the different groupings where significant differences occurred.

Significant differences occurred between the positive androgynous and negative androgynous sex role identities, negative androgynous and negative feminine sex role identities, positive androgynous and negative feminine sex role identities, positive androgynous and negative masculine sex role identities, positive feminine and negative feminine sex role identities, positive masculine and negative feminine sex role identities, and undifferentiated and negative feminine sex role identities. All these significant differences indicated very large effect sizes. The remaining groups did not display any significant differences among them according to their level of psychological wellbeing.

Table 23

Tukey- HSD Post- Hoc Test table for sex role identity and psychological wellbeing

Group Comparisons	**Mean Differences**	**Cohen's D**	**95% CI**	
			Lower	**Upper**
A+ and A-	6.59*	0.73	12.88	24.32
A- and F-	6.99*	0.77	3.34	14.81
A+ and F-	13.58*	1.51	6.23	11.75
A+ and M-	8.07*	0.90	3.50	14.41
F+ and F-	9.37*	1.04	4.7	1.54
M+ and F-	10.89*	1.21	4.7	13.3
UA and F-	12.11*	1.34	4.4	13.6

The results from the one- way ANOVA are consistent with the hypotheses presented for Research Question 3. The positive androgynous sex role identity displayed the highest levels of psychological wellbeing, followed by positive masculinity. The negative feminine sex role identity displayed significantly lower levels of psychological wellbeing in comparison to all of the other sex role identities.

3.5.3 Two- Way ANOVA

The two- way ANOVA was utilised in order to assess the influence of both categorical variables on the dependent variable. In particular, the two- way ANOVA was used to explore Hypothesis 4 that aims to investigate whether individuals with different sex role identities adhere to a preferred conflict management style and whether this has an impact on one's level of psychological wellbeing. Within a two- way ANOVA it is required that there are two categorical variables for the independent variables, and one interval dependent variable. As mentioned, both sex role identity and conflict management styles are categorical and consist of several categorical groups within them. Therefore, the two- way ANOVA that was performed was a 7 x 5 ANOVA as sex role identity consists of 7 indicators, and conflict management styles consist of 5 indicators.

Before the two- way ANOVA can be discussed, it was essential that the assumptions of an ANOVA have been met. The assumptions of a two- way ANOVA are the same as those discussed within the one- way ANOVA (refer to page 92 for ANOVA assumptions). However, the only assumption that may need a separate discussion refers to that of the Homogeneity of Variance. As mentioned previously, the log transformation was applied to the psychological wellbeing scale. Therefore, after the transformation was applied, the two- way ANOVA Levene's test assured that the variances have proven to be homogenous ($F_{34, 377}$= 1.416 where $p>0.05$) (see Table 24).

Table 24

Levene's Test for Equality of Variance table

Levene Statistic	**df_1**	**df_2**	**Sig.**
1.416	34	377	0.066

Therefore, in accordance with the one- way ANOVA assumptions, the assumptions for the two- way ANOVA were all met. The following section provides a description on the results that were obtained through the analysis of the two- way ANOVA.

3.5.3.1 Investigating whether different sex role identities have different conflict management styles and whether this influences levels of psychological wellbeing

Table 25 includes the descriptive statistics relevant to the variables under investigation within the two- way ANOVA. Included within this table is the means of psychological wellbeing relevant to each specific sex role identity and conflict management style. Figure 12 provides a graphical representation of the means provided in Table 25.

Table 25

Descriptive Statistics table for sex role identity, conflict management style and psychological wellbeing

	Compromise		**Collaborate**		**Compete**		**Avoid**		**Accommodate**	
SRI Categories	**N**	**Mean**	**N**	**Mean**	**N**	**Mean**	**N**	**Mean**	**N**	**Mean**
A-	32	48.41	11	51.27	6	45.33	18	43.11	4	44.00
A+	23	54.48	2	60.50	27	49.85	31	54.77	7	57.86
F-	5	45.80	2	51.00	1	29.00	26	39.31	41	39.69
F+	11	51.91	3	44.00	1	37.00	44	49.66	8	48.00
M-	7	52.57	3	49.67	28	42.29	4	50.25	2	50.50
M+	8	53.75	2	46.00	16	52.31	12	50.25	2	37.00
UA	10	52.50	2	61.00	5	55.60	6	46.83	2	48.50

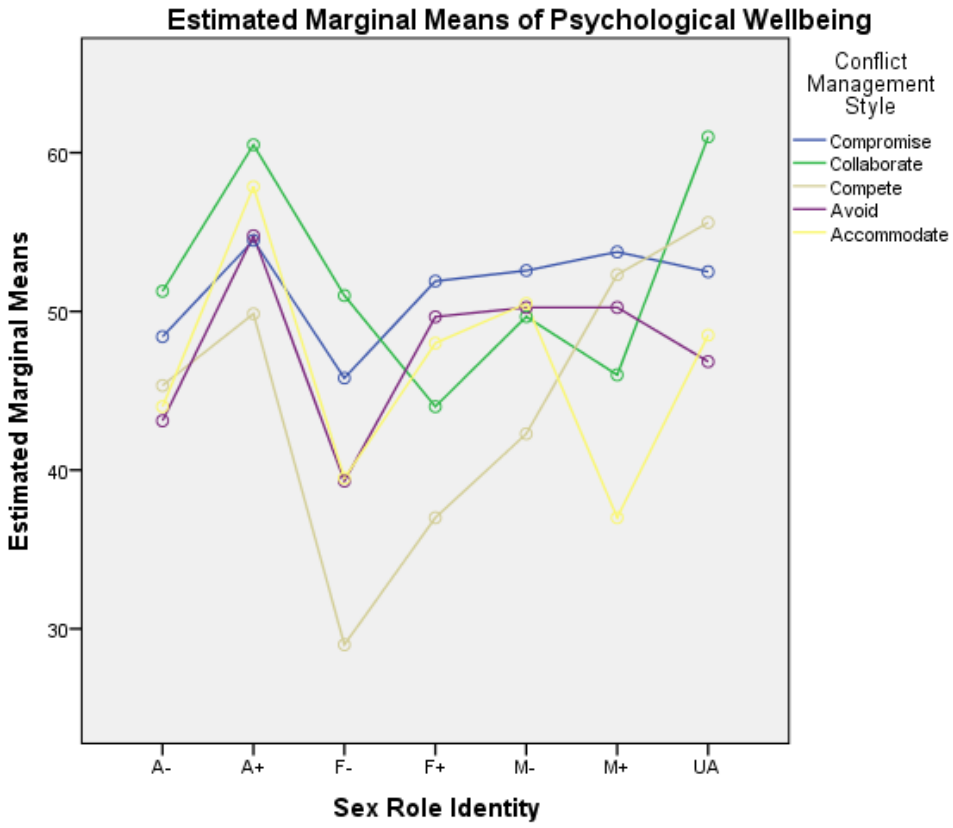


Figure 12. Plotted means for sex role identity, conflict management style and psychological wellbeing

As Research Questions 2 and 3 have indicated, there is a relationship between conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing, as well as sex role identity and psychological wellbeing. However, it was necessary within this statistical process to determine whether the interactional effect of the independent variables influenced the dependent variable.

Therefore, the hypothesis for the interactional effect is as follows:

> H_o: There is no interaction effect on sex role identity and conflict management styles in terms of levels of psychological wellbeing.
> H_1: There is an interaction effect on sex role identity and conflict management styles in terms of levels of psychological wellbeing.

Where α=0.05

In order to have determined whether there was an interactional effect, it was necessary to test the null hypothesis and assess whether there was a significant difference. According to Table 26, it is observable that both sex role identity and conflict management styles have a significant difference according to the level of psychological wellbeing. However, the level of significance provided for the interaction effect proves to be insignificant ($F_{24, 377}$=106.904, p>0.05).

Table 26

Tests of Between- Subjects Effects table for sex role identity, conflict management style and psychological wellbeing

Source	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
SRI	6	502.424	6.549	0.000
CMS	4	296.136	3.860	0.004
SRI*CMS	24	106.904	1.394	0.105
Error	377	76.716		

Considering that the interaction effect proved to be insignificant, it can be concluded that there was insufficient evidence to indicate that there was an interaction effect on sex role identity and conflict management styles in relation to their levels of psychological wellbeing.

3.6 Examining the Impact of Management Levels on Conflict Management Styles

As indicated within Chapter 1, an important factor that may have a direct influence on one's conflict management style refers to the managerial level of the employee. Individuals that are not in any managerial position may prefer different conflict management styles as opposed to those individuals that are in top managerial positions. Thus, this section provides an investigation indicating whether managerial level has an influence on conflict management styles. It must be noted that although this was not a research question within the present study, this investigation may provide a more comprehensive analysis of the variance within the different conflict management styles.

Before this analysis was conducted, it was essential to ensure that the data obtained relevant to this investigation adhered to the assumptions necessary to conduct a Chi- Square analysis. The assumptions are outlined and explained above (see Page 85), and so it was concluded that the assumptions for the Chi-Square analysis were met.

Therefore, considering that the assumptions were satisfied, the investigation was able to commence in conducting a Chi- Square analysis in order to determine the relationship between current managerial level and conflict management styles.

3.6.1 Investigating the relationship between current managerial level and conflict management styles

The Chi- Square analysis tested the following hypothesis:

H_o= Current Managerial Level and CMS are not associated with each other
H_1= Current Managerial Level and CMS are associated with each other

As indicated within Table 27, the null hypothesis was rejected indicating that there is some association between current managerial level and conflict management styles ($\chi_{(16)}^2$= 46.193, p<.05). To determine how significant the difference is among these two variables, the Cramer's V value was used indicating a small difference among the two variables (φ_c = 0.167, p <.05).

Table 27

Chi- Square Tests table illustrating the inferential statistics

	Value	**df**	**Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)**
Pearson Chi- Square	46.193	16	0.000

In order to understand where some of the differences between the two variables occur, it is essential to examine the cross-tabulation table. Table 28 displays the occurrences among the different categories within current managerial level and conflict management styles.

Table 28

*Current Managerial Level * Conflict Management Style Cross-tabulation table displaying the descriptive statistics*

		Conflict Management Styles					
Current Managerial Level		**Compromise**	**Collaborate**	**Compete**	**Avoid**	**Accommodate**	**Total**
Top Management	Count	10	7	19	11	5	52
	Expected	12.1	3.2	10.6	17.8	8.3	52
Senior Management	Count	18	3	19	25	2	67
	Expected	15.6	4.1	13.7	22.9	10.7	67
Middle Management	Count	22	2	14	17	8	63
	Expected	14.7	3.8	12.8	21.6	10.1	63
Junior Management	Count	3	2	2	12	5	27
	Expected	6.3	1.6	5.5	9.2	4.3	27
Non-managerial Position	Count	43	11	27	76	46	203
	Expected	47.3	12.3	41.4	69.5	32.5	203
Total	Count	96	25	84	141	66	412
	Expected	96	25	84	141	66	412

As Table 28 illustrates, not all the categories within the two variables differ in observed frequency from the expected frequency. However, the majority of the categories do differ between the two frequencies. The competing conflict management style is favoured among the participants that are within the top management position (*f*=19, 37%), whereas individuals within the non- managerial position prefer to utilise the avoiding conflict management position (*f*=76,

37%). Refer to Figure 13 to see a graphical representation of Table 28. These findings were to some extent expected in relation to the literature in Chapter 1 and will be more fully elaborated upon in Discussion Chapter (Chapter 4) to follow.

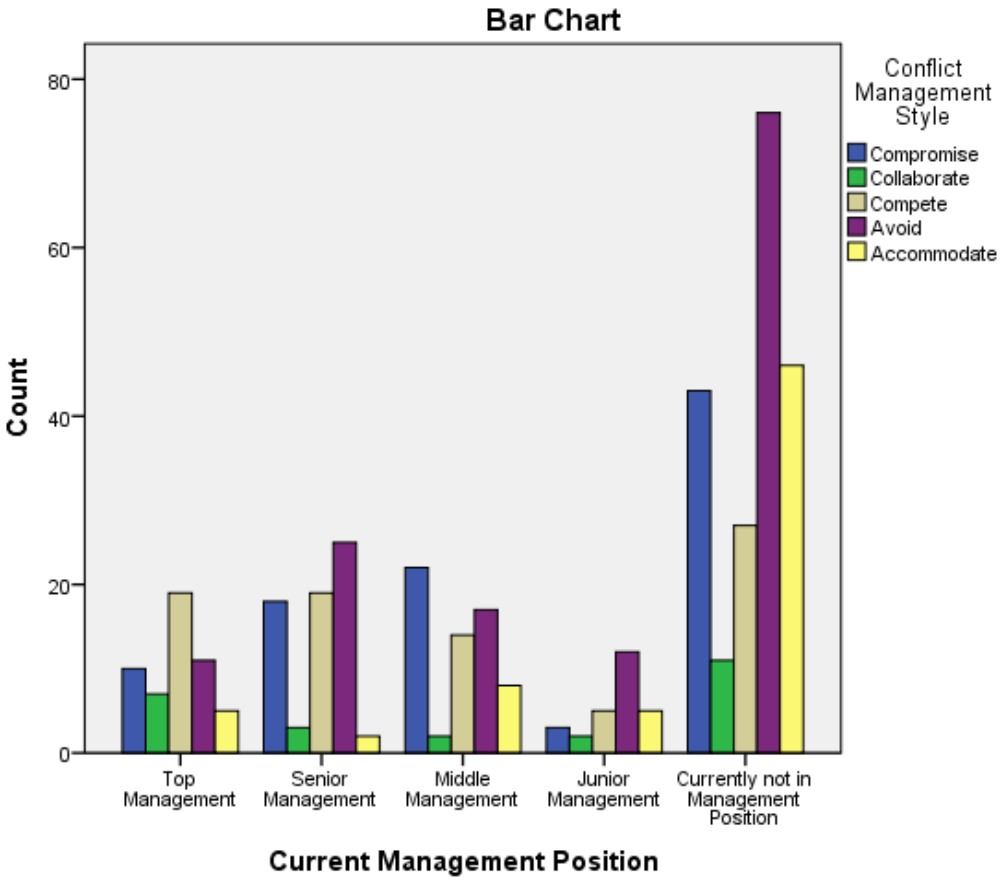


Figure 13. Clustered bar chart for Chi- Square analysis for current management level*conflict management style

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The main objective of the present study was to explore the relationship between sex role identity and conflict management styles. Furthermore, because each of these variables have been associated with psychological wellbeing (as discussed within Chapter 1), the study further attempted to identify whether 1) sex role identity and the different conflict management styles had an impact upon psychological wellbeing, and 2) the interrelationship among these three variables. However, the distinguishing feature of this study was that it addressed and accounted for *both* positive and negative sex role identities that previous research studies did not investigate in relation to conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing.

Chapter 3 provided information pertaining to the results that were obtained when performing the different statistical analyses. This chapter will provide a comprehensive discussion based on the results that were stipulated in the previous chapter in relation to the proposed hypotheses postulated in Chapter 2.

4.2. Support for the Differentiated Model

As the previous chapters have illustrated, the present research study investigated sex role identities in relation to the Differentiated Model. The Differentiated Model argues that sex role identity is perceived along several continuums consisting of positive and negative masculinity, positive and negative femininity and positive and negative androgyny (Woodhill & Samuels, 2003). As Chapter 1 explains, the Differentiated Model was developed due to inconsistent results of previous sex role identity models, i.e. the Androgyny Model and the Masculinity Model, in relation to psychological wellbeing. The Differentiated Model argued that it was the negative sex- based personality traits within the androgynous, masculine and feminine sex role identities that may have caused inconsistent results among these models. Therefore, the Differentiated

Model attempts to account for both positive and negative sex role identities to ensure that research on the construct of sex role identity is more rigorous.

In relation to the present research study's findings, the frequencies obtained for both the positive and negative sex role identities provided strong support for the Differentiated Model as there were a significant proportion of individuals that proved to be negative in their sex role identities within the study. The findings illustrated that the negative sex role identities represented 44% of the present research study's sample. In particular, 71 participants were classified as the negative androgynous sex role identity, 44 participants were negatively masculine, and 67 participants were negatively feminine in their sex role identity. Refer to Figure 14 to examine the frequencies of each sex role identity in relation to their negative and positive counterparts.

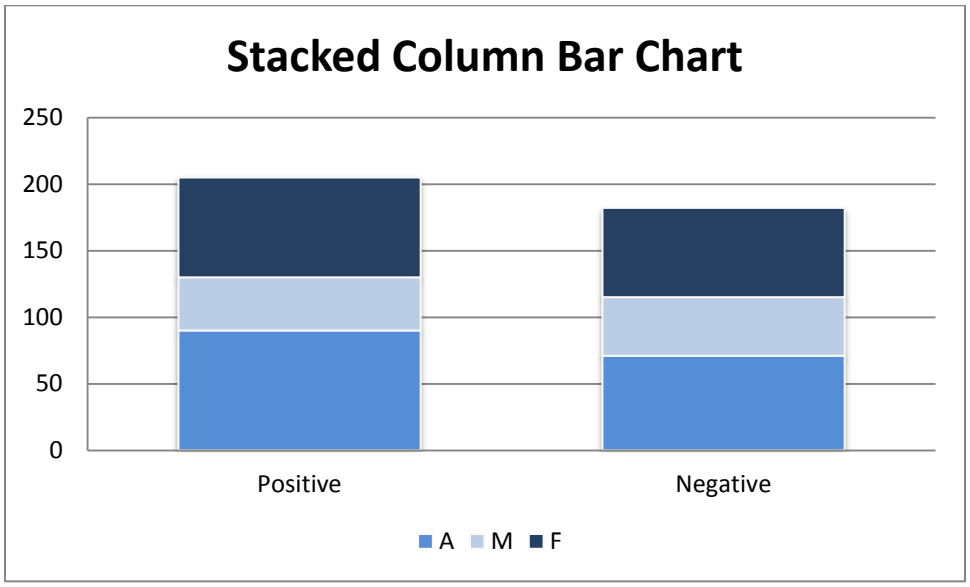


Figure 14. Stacked column bar chart representing the frequency of the negative and positive sex role identities

The distribution of the sex role identities within the present research study, as indicated in Figure 14 above, elucidate that previous research studies that did not account for the socially undesirable sex- based personality traits may not have provided a full account of the relationship of sex role identities to other variables of interest. Research studies conducted internationally that identify the importance of examining both positive and negative sex role identities are limited

(e.g. Helgeson, 1994; Korabik & McCreary, 2000; Ricciardelli & Williams, 2000; Woodhill & Samuels, 2003), as discussed in Chapter 1. Within South Africa, studies that have been conducted that highlight the importance of the negative sex role identities include Bernstein (2013), Chemaly (2012) and Solomon (2013). The findings of the present study are consistent with the limited research that has been conducted on both positive and negative sex role identities whereby a significant proportion of participants in each of these mentioned studies demonstrated the negative sex role identities. Consequently, the findings of the present research study explicate the importance of distinguishing between both the socially desirable and socially undesirable sex- based personality traits due to the large proportion of participants adhering to the negative sex role identities, thereby providing support for the Differentiated Model of sex role identities that consider the positive and negative sex role identities as separate dimensions.

Another important finding related to the dispersion of sex role identities includes the number of males and females that demonstrated non- traditional and retro-typical sex role identities. According to the traditional view of sex role identities, men and women should demonstrate the sex role identities that are congruent with their biological sex. More specially, men should adhere to the masculine sex role identities, and women should adhere to the feminine sex role identities. However, according to the results obtained from the present research study, it is evident that men and women are steering away from the stereotypical sex role identities. Although females demonstrate the highest proportion of the feminine sex role identities, both positive and negative (20.9% and 19.8% respectively), it is evident that some females are still displaying the nontraditional sex role identities, such as positive and negative androgyny (19% and 18.2% respectively) and positive and negative masculinity (8.7% and 7.9% respectively), and the remaining 5.5% of the female sample were undifferentiated in their sex role identity. According to the present research study's results, the male participants favoured both the positive and negative androgynous sex role identity (26.4% and 15.7% respectively) more than both positive and negative masculine sex role identities (11.3% and 15.1% respectively). In fact, more male participants seemed to adhere to the positive feminine sex role identity (13.8%) than the positive masculine sex role identity (11.3%). The remaining 6.9% of the male sample represented the undifferentiated sex role identity, and 10.7% represented the negative feminine sex role identity.

Refer to Figure 15 for a graphical representation of the dispersion of sex role identities according to gender.

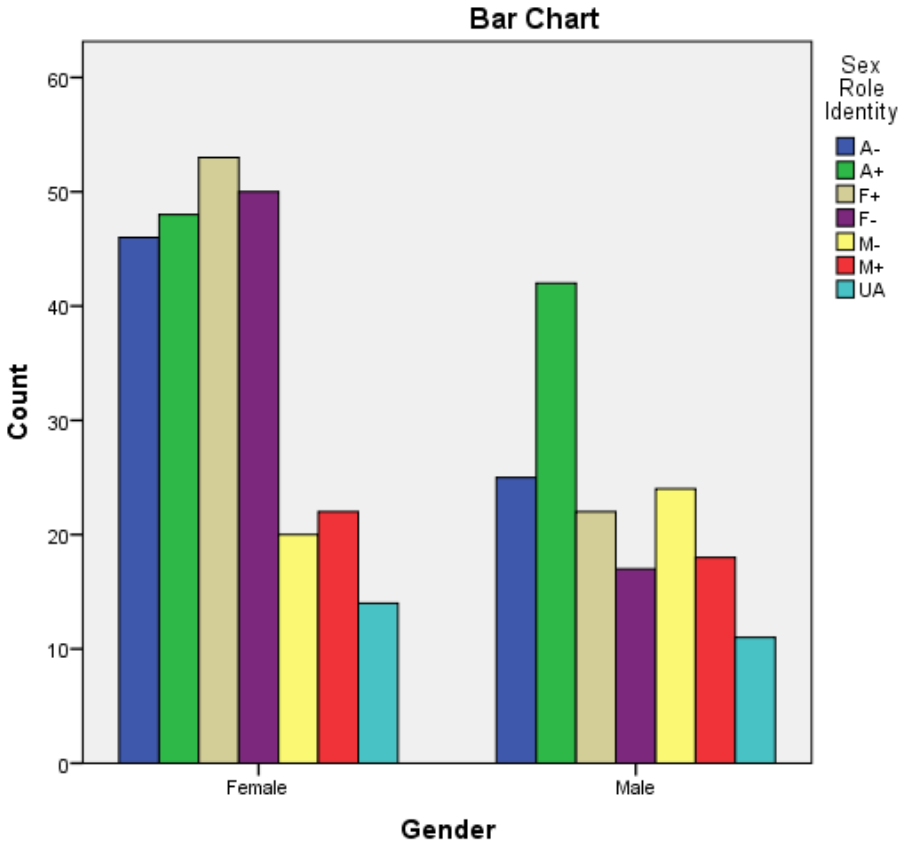


Figure 15. Bar chart representing the dispersion of sex role identities according to biological sex

These findings from the present research study indicate that there is a shift in male and females embracing more nontraditional sex role identities. In particular, the present research study's findings demonstrate that males are embracing sex role identities that are not congruent with their biological sex. These findings correlate with the social constructionist and gender-schemata theories that postulate that men and women adopt gender roles based on societal and cultural recommendations. In particular, social constructionism and the gender- schema theory denote gender differentiations and gender roles as a result of social and institutional practices rather than biologically assigned (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Therefore, due to society and cultural evolution, for example, a society whereby females are entering more of a male-

dominated organisational realm, gender differentiation is shifting and gender role stereotypes are being challenged, as seen within the results obtained in the present research study.

An interesting finding that emerged due to the dispersion of the sex role identities according to biological sex is that males favoured the positive feminine sex role identity in comparison to the positive masculine sex role identity. Not only does this finding suggest a shift in gender differentiation and gender role stereotypes, as discussed above, but it may, too, represent a shift in the way in which masculinity is being perceived in modern society. In a research report by Hall, Gough, Seymour- Smith and Hansen (2012), it was mentioned that the male sex has increasingly participated in female practices and are thereby becoming more comfortable in doing so. Due to the male sex being more open to adopting female practices new forms of masculinity have emerged known as 'ubersexual' and 'metrosexual' masculinity. Ubersexual masculinity refers to the practice of the male sex combining the more traditional masculine sex role traits such as strength and honour in conjunction with positive traits associated with females such as nurturance and cooperation (Salzman, Matathia & O'Reilly, 2005). Metrosexual masculinity refers to males embracing activities such as shopping, socialising and pampering themselves which echoes a lifestyle normally adopted by a woman (Hall et al., 2012). It is evident due to these new forms of masculinity that are gaining prominence in today's society that the male individual is embracing more female traits and practices. The latest advancements in the way in which masculinity is being perceived among the male sex may explain why the males in the present research study favoured the positive feminine sex role identity in comparison to the positive masculine sex role identity.

Therefore, through careful examination of the way in which the various sex role identities were dispersed among the present research study's sample, it is evident that the nontraditional sex role identities are prominent indicating an overall shift in gender stereotypes and gender differentiation. Additionally, the dispersion of sex role identities illustrates the prominence of the negative sex role identities, thus providing support for the Differentiated Model.

4.3 Statistically Significant Findings

Overall, as indicated above, the dispersion of the sex role identities from the present research study's result provides support for the Differentiated Model's argument stressing the importance of both the positive and negative sex role identities. In addition to the dispersion and frequency of the positive and negative sex role identities, the results obtained in the statistical analyses that were conducted within the present study provide further support for the Differentiated Model in relation to the conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing, as will be discussed in the following sections.

4.3.1 Sex Role Identity and Conflict Management Style

The main investigation of the current research study was to determine whether there was a relationship between positive and negative sex role identities and conflict management styles. The results from this analysis illustrated that there was a significant difference between these two variables, meaning that an individual's sex role identity does influence one's conflict management style. Furthermore, the results from the Chi- Square analysis indicated a difference among all the observed and expected frequencies for all the different conflict management styles, indicating that a significant difference occurred between the various conflict management styles and sex role identities. The results from this analysis, as displayed within Chapter 3, adhere to what was expected from the present study. Therefore, each of the conflict management styles in relation to sex role identities will be discussed, according to the proposed hypotheses presented in Research Question 1.

4.3.1.1 Negative Masculine Sex Role Identity and Competing or Avoiding Conflict Management Styles

The first hypothesis predicted that the negative masculine sex role identity will be positively related to the competing or the avoiding conflict management style. The results specific to this hypothesis in the present study have displayed that the negative masculine individual favours the competing conflict management style, followed by the avoiding conflict management style.

Therefore, the results obtained within the present study are consistent to what was originally expected, and are aligned with the social dominance theory, as presented within Chapter 1.

Social dominance theory states that all societies are structured according to group based social hierarchies, therefore creating societies where one or few dominant groups are superior while the rest are inferior (Poch & Roberts, 2003). Poch and Roberts (2003) further explain that in order for these dominant groups to maintain their superior position and the structural hierarchy, it is essential that these groups continue to keep their wealth, power and high social status within their position. Additionally, within the social dominance theory there are two strategies that exist, as discussed within Chapter 1. However, the strategy that the dominant group is likely to act upon is referred to as the 'coercive strategy' (Hawley, 1999). The coercive strategy is whereby the dominant group competes for resources in order to gain control by utilising power, dominance and aggression to maintain their social hierarchical position (Hawley, 1999). In relation to the social dominance theory presented, individuals that form part of the dominant group have been shown to demonstrate typically masculine traits such as dominance and aggression (Poch & Roberts, 2003). Ghaed and Gallo (2006) examined the positive and negative sex role identities in relation to the Interpersonal Circumplex Model, as discussed within Chapter 1. According to Ghaed and Gallo (2006), the masculine traits that correspond with dominance and aggression are placed within the dominant- hostile quadrant of the Interpersonal Circumplex Model. It is within this quadrant that Ghaed and Gallo (2006) placed the negative masculine sex role identity. Therefore, considering that the dominant group in the social dominance theory adheres to the traits that are associated with the negative masculinity sex role identity as indicated within the Interpersonal Circumplex Model, it is evident that the negative masculine individual is likely to attempt to be highly socially dominant. Furthermore, in relation to the coercive strategy that a socially dominant individual may adopt, Hawley (1999) states that a coercive controller is unsociable, hostile and fails to consider others' points of view. In order for a coercive controller to be successful it would require an individual to satisfy his or her own interests at the expense of others which is suggestive of the competing conflict management style. Hence, it is evident that through the explanation of the social dominance theory, individuals that are negatively masculine in their sex role identity do prefer to compete in their conflict management styles, as illustrated in the results obtained from the present study.

In relation to the social dominance theory, a particular masculinity type has emerged known as 'hegemonic masculinity'. Hegemonic masculinity refers to a form of masculinity that dominates society and exercises its power over others (Wetherell & Edley, 1999). Hegemonic masculinity refers to an ascendency achieved through cultures and institutions that are exacerbated through patriarchal control (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). It must be noted that although Groes-Green (2009) indicated that hegemonic masculinity is associated with the African culture, other research opposes this view and states that hegemony is the "centrality of controlled violence in the upbringing of both white and black individuals" (Breckenridge, 1998 p. 669), indicating that hegemony is not a distinct characterisation of a particular race group. Furthermore, research conducted by Morrell (1998) stated that it is important to realise that 'white' and 'black' cultures do not lie in isolation, and urban and rural lives are not separate from one another. Thus, the important distinctions for hegemonic masculinity to exist and prevail is not based on racial groupings, but rather based on a society that value and adhere to patriarchy (Morrell, Jewkes & Lindegger, 2012). Coetzee (2001) related the ideology of patriarchy within a South African context and explained patriarchy to be the common denominator of the South African nation and defines the South African culture as a whole to be patriarchal. Thus, despite the descriptive statistics obtained for the present research study illustrating that only 11.7% of participants were assigned to the black- African racial grouping, it is evident that hegemonic masculinity can be applied to all the racial groupings making this type of masculinity relevant to the present study.

In terms of hegemonic masculinity and negative sex role identities, Cornwall (1997) indicates that the dominance, aggression and power that hegemonic masculinity portrays is not associated specifically with the male sex, but it is rather associated with certain hegemonic masculinity traits that exude such behaviour. An overall evaluation of hegemonic masculinity seems to suggest that this type of masculinity shares the same traits as the negative masculine sex- based personality traits. Ghaed and Gallo (2006) further illustrate that negative masculinity reports hostile- dominant behaviour that is situated within the circumplex model which includes characteristics of aggression and anger. Similarly and in accordance with the social dominance theory, it is according to these social roles, beliefs and stereotypes with which the South African social hierarchy is maintained demonstrating the need for individuals to continue to compete in

their conflict management style. Consequently, given the above arguments, it is clear as to why those that were negatively masculine preferred to compete.

However, it is important to note that hegemonic masculinity is distinguished from others masculinities, such as positive masculinity, in that individuals that display traits of hegemonic masculinity will demonstrate behaviour that appears to be pragmatically useful for continued domination (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Therefore, in accordance with the adaptive rule of thumb presented by Hawley (1999) within the social dominance theory, these individuals will assert their power when they believe that they can win, yet they will yield when they cannot. Therefore, it is evident by the results obtained from the present study as to why those that were negatively masculine would also choose to avoid. This is evident as negative masculine individuals may not compete if they believe that the situation will not be successful and may rather choose to avoid. It is in this instance, that is, awareness that their choice to compete will not be successful, that the negatively masculine individual will avoid. The avoiding conflict management style is when an individual recognises a conflict but would rather withdraw from it, especially when these individuals believe that they have nothing to gain from the outcome (Chusmir & Mills, 1989), correlating with the adaptive rule of thumb presented by Hawley (1999).

4.3.1.2 Positive Masculine Sex Role Identity and Competing or Collaborating Conflict Management Styles

The second hypothesis within Research Question 1 predicted that positively masculine individuals would be most likely to compete or collaborate in their conflict management style. The results from the present study indicated that an overwhelming majority of participants that are positively masculine preferred to compete (64%). An unexpected finding relates to the positively masculine individual's second preference of conflict management styles. Hypothesis 1b predicted that the positively masculine individual would prefer to utilise the collaborating conflict management style; however, the results from the present research study indicated that positive masculine individuals favoured the compromising conflict management style (16%) as opposed to collaborating (7%). More specifically, the present research study indicated that

positively masculine individuals are 2.3 times more likely to choose the compromising conflict management style instead of the collaborating conflict management style.

The following section will first provide a discussion pertaining to the expected significant finding whereby the positive masculine individual favoured the competing conflict management style. Secondly, this section will then provide a distinction between the use of competition among the positive masculine individuals and the negative masculine individuals. Additionally, a discussion on the counterintuitive finding pertaining to the positive masculine individual's second preference in conflict management style will then be discussed. This finding was counterintuitive because it yielded unexpected significant results that were not postulated within hypothesis 1b (see Chapter 2).

4.3.1.2.1 Expected significant finding for the positive masculine sex role identity and the competing conflict management style.

In relation to the expected significant result specifying that positively masculine individuals preferred the competing conflict management style, Yelsma and Brown (1985) explained that masculine individuals are less likely than any other sex role identity to vary their approach to the use of competition. This finding by Yelsma and Brown (1985) is indicative of the present research results as both the positive and masculine sex role identities favoured the competing conflict management style. It must be noted that positively masculine individuals demonstrate significant levels of self- enhancing characteristics and are positioned very closely to the dominance axis within the Interpersonal Circumplex Model (Ghaed & Gallo, 2006). Consequentially, these individuals will be most likely to utilise the win/lose conflict management style, i.e. competing, whereby they are willing to put themselves first at the expense of others in order to get the desired outcome.

4.3.1.2.2 Distinguishing between competitiveness as utilised by the negatively masculine individual and the positively masculine individual.

However, it is important to understand the difference in the competing approach between the negatively masculine and positively masculine individual. As demonstrated within the previous section, negatively masculine individuals share traits with hegemonic masculinity that demonstrates traits that are hostile- dominant such as aggression and anger. In contrast, a study conducted by Twenge (1997) indicated that there has been a shift in sex- based personality traits among the sex role identities. In particular, Twenge (1997) noted that the positively masculine individual encompasses more traits of assertiveness and independence as opposed to hostile-aggression. In other words, although both positive and negative masculine sex role identities are both dominant, according to an assertion- aggression continuum, positively masculine individuals would be more assertive while negatively masculine individuals would be more aggressive in their approach when competing (see Figure 16).

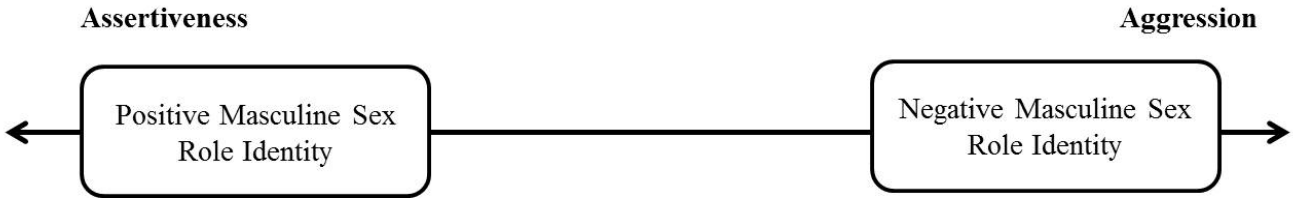


Figure 16. Assertive- aggression continuum in relation to the positive and negative masculine sex role identities

4.3.1.2.3 Counterintuitive findings for the positive masculine sex role identity and the compromising conflict management style.

An unexpected finding that proved to be significant in relation to positive masculinity and conflict management styles relates to results having indicated that positively masculine individuals favour the compromising conflict management style as opposed to collaborating. Research conducted by Brewer et al. (2002) specified that the compromising conflict management style is stereotypic of both masculine and feminine sex role traits. Brewer and

colleagues (2002) further indicated that when an individual is positively masculine and in a high managerial position then these individuals will be likely to compromise in their conflict management style. The compromising conflict management style results in no clear win or loss, but rather there is a willingness to ration the object of the conflict and accept a solution that provides incomplete satisfaction of both parties' concerns (Nel, 2009). The collaborating conflict management style involves high degrees of cooperation in order for both parties to search for a mutually beneficial outcome. In order for an individual to collaborate, it is essential that both parties' concerns are deemed to be important and that individuals are willing to meet on several occasions before a mutually beneficially outcome is sought, once again illustrating the importance of time available to manage conflict (Nel, 2009). It must be noted that both the collaborating and compromising conflict management styles result in functional outcomes and increase peer ratings of the leader (Nel, 2009). Considering that a high degree of cooperativeness is expected from individuals intending to collaborate as well as the high degree of social competence needed, the positive masculine individual, although they are equipped with the necessary social skills, lacks regard for others and the willingness to cooperate with others (Ghaed & Gallo, 2006). Additionally, even though the positively masculine individual is equipped with better social skills as opposed to its negative counterpart, it is still to a lesser degree than the positive androgynous and positive feminine sex role identities. For this reason, it is possible that the positively masculine individual would prefer to employ the compromising conflict management style that is still favoured by peers and subordinates whereby less social interaction and cooperativeness will be needed.

A noteworthy differential finding between the two masculine sex role identities pertains to their second choice of conflict management style. This is an interesting finding to discuss because although both positive and negative masculine sex role identities favour the competing conflict management style, these masculine sex role identities do not only differ according to assertive-aggression continuum (as discussed above) but also differ significantly according to their second preference of conflict management styles. As mentioned within the above section, the second highest proportion of positively masculine individuals favours the compromising conflict management style, whereas the negatively masculine individuals favoured the avoiding conflict management style. In relation to the social dominance literature, Kalma and Peeters (1993)

distinguished between two types of dominance: aggressive dominance and sociable dominance. Aggressive dominance is characterised by individuals that display threatening and aggressive behaviour towards others that very rarely show any conciliatory and friendly behaviour, and display poor social relations (Kalma & Peeters, 1993). In accordance with Ghaed and Gallo (2006) and the theory of hegemonic masculinity (as discussed above), it is evident that aggressive dominance would be likely of the negatively masculine individual. Results from the study conducted by Twenge (1997) illustrated that the aggressive dominant individual (i.e. negatively masculine) evades others, makes very few attempts to behave in a friendly and sociable manner and is less satisfied with friendships as opposed to the sociable dominant individual. In contrast, sociable dominance is characterised by strong communicative intention, considers themselves and others to be friendly, and is highly engaged in social relations. The positive masculine individual would be more likely to utilise sociable dominance as Ghaed and Gallo (2006) stipulated that positive masculine individuals are usually embedded in a social support network, and display high levels of conscientiousness resulting in increased social functioning compared to their negative counterparts. According to the conflict management styles as categorised by Thomas and Kilmann (1977), these conflict management styles are based within assertiveness- cooperativeness dimensions (Nel, 2009) (see Figure 1 in Chapter 1, page 7). In particular, the avoiding conflict management style displays very low levels of assertiveness and cooperativeness, whereby the compromising conflict management style displays moderate levels of assertiveness and cooperativeness. In relation to the findings of the study, as well as the literature of aggressive and sociable dominance, the negative masculine sex role identity would display the avoiding conflict management style if these individuals believe that the competing style would not prevail due to their poor social relations and evasiveness, resulting in low levels of cooperation. In contrast, the positive masculine individual would be more likely to compromise instead of avoiding in their conflict management style due to the positively masculine individuals having higher levels of cooperativeness and assertiveness, as demonstrated within the social dominance literature.

However, another potential factor that may influence a difference in the preferred choices of conflict management styles among positive and negative masculine sex role identities may be due to levels of conscientiousness and emotional intelligence evidenced by those in leadership

positions (House & Howell, 1992). In a separate Chi- Square analysis used to investigate managerial levels and sex role identities (see Appendix F), it was evident that the majority of individuals in top management were positively masculine. House and Howell (1992) investigated various personality characteristics for particular leadership styles. In particular, House and Howell (1992) investigated two types of leadership: socialised and personal. Socialised leadership is based on egalitarian behaviour, serves collective interests and is not driven by the self- interest of the leader, and aims to develop and power others. Personal leadership is based more on personal dominance and authoritarian behaviour, is self- interested and self-aggrandising, and will exploit others in order to gain the intended outcome. It is evident, based on the discussion in the previous section on negative masculinity as well as on the literature presented in Chapter 1 that negative masculine individuals would be more inclined to utilise personalised leadership, and thus primarily compete in their conflict management style. However, in relation to the positive masculine sex role identity, House and Howell (1992) note that these two styles of leadership are not mutually exclusive and it is possible that certain leaders will display behaviour that reflects some aspects of both personalised and socialised leadership tendencies. In particular, House and Howell (1992) state that individuals that possess high levels of conscientiousness display greater cognitive and emotional control, and may result in these individuals altering their leadership style to suit their own intentions. According to Ghaed and Gallo (2006), and as previously mentioned, the positively masculine individual has high levels of conscientiousness and emotional adjustment, thus equipping positively masculine individuals with the necessary repertoire to alter their approach of leadership to suit their own intentions. Furthermore, it has been found that positive sex role identities are more concerned with creating and maintaining long- term relationships and being embedded in a network of social support, whereas the negative sex role identities lack the skills to do so (Ghaed & Gallo, 2006). Thus, the positively masculine individual in high managerial positions has the conscientiousness and emotional intelligence to know when the competing or the compromising conflict management style would be more advantageous. The competing conflict management style, which utilises more of a personalised leadership strategy, would be favoured when unpopular actions can be easily implemented (Nel, 2009) and will not in any way threaten the positively masculine individual's support in his/her high managerial position. However, the compromising conflict management style, which adopts more of a socialised leadership

approach, will most likely be used when the positively masculine individual is climbing the ranks of leadership and relies on gaining the support of their peers and subordinates; or this conflict management style may be utilised by positive masculine individuals when they feel that by making an unpopular decision, his or her support within their managerial position may be threatened in the long term and so they would prefer to compromise instead of damaging his or her support network that may be beneficial to them later. By means of the positively masculine individuals utilising the compromising conflict management style, a social support network will be created and relationships will be formed, thus allowing positively masculine individuals to strategically reach their goals. This may thus account for the fact that that those who were positively masculine did at times adhere to a compromising style of conflict management as opposed to plain competing as they were strategically ensuring that they did not alienate their support base which may be needed with in the future.

4.3.1.3 Negative Feminine Sex Role Identity and Avoiding or Accommodating Conflict Management Styles

Up until this point, the positive and negative masculine sex role identities have been discussed in depth in relation to the relevant hypotheses and results. The third hypothesis that was formulated was based on the negative feminine sex role identity. It was predicted that the negative feminine sex role identity would be more inclined to choose the avoiding or the accommodating conflict management style. The results of the present study have illustrated that the negative feminine sex role identity prefers to utilise the avoiding conflict management style (66%) as opposed to the accommodating conflict management style (12%). In other words, the negative feminine individual would be 5.5 times more likely to utilise the avoiding conflict management style instead of the accommodating conflict management style. While such a significant difference between the two conflict management styles in relation to the negative feminine sex role identity was not expected, the negatively feminine sex role identity utilising avoidance was in line with the hypotheses and much of the literature on this sex role identity and its particular behavioural traits.

Results illustrating that the negative feminine individual is more likely to avoid in their conflict management style is consistent with research conducted by Baxter and Shepherd (1978), Brewer et al. (2002), as well as Yelsma and Brown (1985). Ghaed and colleagues (2006) note that negative feminine individuals possess intra- individual characteristics that demonstrate high levels of submissiveness resulting in unstable relationships in which the negative feminine individual expresses high levels of a fear of rejection and mistreatment, therefore resulting in these individuals avoiding close relationships. Spence and colleagues (1979) further explained that negative feminine individuals possess antisocial tendencies which are combination of the factors explained previously, and these tendencies may be exaggerated in threatening situations. Within an organisational work-setting, this fear of rejection and mistreatment may be exemplified in threatening situations such as conflict management, thereby increasing the negative feminine individual's preference to avoid conflict. Moreover, research conducted by Diehl et al. (1996) demonstrated that individuals displaying feminine characteristics are more likely to utilise internalising defenses against threatening situations. In particular, Diehl and colleagues (1996) explain that feminine characteristics such as dependence, neuroticism and submissiveness (i.e. typically negative feminine traits) utilise escape avoidance as their coping strategy. Therefore, considering that conflict may be perceived as a threatening situation, this may be an indicator of why negative feminine individuals prefer to avoid than accommodate in an organisational setting, as avoiding may be the individual's favoured coping strategy.

4.3.1.4 Positive Feminine Sex Role Identity and Compromising or Accommodating Conflict Management Styles

It was predicted that the positive feminine sex role identity would be more likely to compromise or accommodate in one's conflict management style. Results from the present study are consistent with the hypothesis in that the positive feminine individual did prefer to accommodate in their conflict management style (55%); however, results differed in that the avoiding conflict management style (35%) was more favoured than the compromising style (7%) among these sex-typed individuals.

Individuals that are positively feminine exude intra- individual characteristics such as kindness, nurturance and interpersonal warmth (Ward et al., 2006), as well as demonstrate high degrees of empathy and affiliation tendencies (Yelsma and Brown, 1985). Ghaed and Gallo (2006) illustrated in their research study that positive feminine individuals are more comfortable with social relationships than their negative counterparts, and so it seems obvious as to why these individuals prefer to accommodate in their conflict management style. The reason as to why individuals may prefer to avoid in their conflict management style as opposed to compromise may, too, be a result of the coping strategies that feminine individuals may utilise in threatening situations. Diehl et al. (1996) explained that if feminine individuals do not seek social support in threatening situations, then they may be more likely to utilise an escape- avoidance strategy. Furthermore, an investigation on the relationship between management level and sex role identity within the present study was conducted (see Appendix F) and demonstrated the very low proportion of positive feminine individuals within managerial positions. Considering that positive feminine individuals were most predominant within non-managerial positions they may have lacked the power to compromise as the compromising conflict management style relies on some degrees of assertion. Individuals in non- managerial positions do not hold any form of power over their colleagues and therefore may lack the power to assert themselves and so, they will not be able to utilise the compromising conflict management style and may therefore choose to engage in accommodation if they can or avoid when the situation may be too threatening. Alternatively, in accordance with power dynamics, these individuals may prefer to accommodate or avoid in their conflict management style if their opponent in the conflict situation holds more power within the organisational setting.

4.3.1.5 Negative Androgynous Sex Role Identity and both the Competing and Avoiding Conflict Management Styles

The hypothesis relevant to this section predicted that the negative androgynous sex role identity would be more likely to utilise both the competing and avoiding conflict management style depending on the situation. The results from the present study are consistent with what was expected. In particular, 34% of negative androgynous individuals preferred to avoid, whereas 30% of these individuals preferred to compete.

The negative androgynous individual combines the failings or the defects of both the feminine and masculine sex role identities (Woodhill & Samuels, 2003). The negative androgynous individual has a range of socially undesirable traits to choose from depending on the situation (Woodhill & Samuels, 2003). If a negative androgynous individual perceives a situation as a 'lose- lose' then they are likely to utilise the avoiding conflict management style. Negative androgynous individuals, like their negatively feminine counterparts may draw on their negatively feminine traits of high degrees of submissiveness and the tendency to withdraw from conflict due to an intense fear of rejection (Ghaed & Gallo, 2006). However, if these individuals believe that the situation encompasses some degree of a win, then they draw on their negative masculine sex- role traits and utilise the competing conflict management style. Consequentially, the results of the present study illustrated that the negative androgynous individual will draw on their negative feminine or negative masculine counterparts depending on their perception of the situation.

4.3.1.6 Positive Androgynous Sex Role Identity and both the Collaborating and Compromising Conflict Management Styles

The last hypothesis to be discussed within this section pertains to the positive androgynous sex role identity. It was predicted that the positive androgynous individual would be most likely to choose to collaborate or compromise in one's conflict management style. The results of the present study indicated that 45% of positive androgynous individuals prefer to compromise in their conflict management style, while only 16% of these individuals chose to collaborate. The interesting and counterintuitive finding pertaining to these results was that 25% of positive androgynous individuals preferred to avoid conflict.

An individual that displays positive androgyny possesses both the socially desirable masculine and feminine traits (Yelsma & Brown, 1985). As discussed within Chapter 1, within the literature provided on social dominance, positive androgynous individuals may display prosocial strategies in order to gain the intended outcome (Hawley, 1999). An individual that is high in assertiveness and cooperativeness would be more willing to use a prosocial strategy, and so it is

understandable as to why compromising was the favoured conflict management style among the positive androgynous individual. However, an additional prosocial strategy that was not favoured among positive androgynous individuals was the collaborating conflict management style. A potential explanation as to why a prosocial strategy such as compromising was favoured over the collaborating conflict management style may be due to the need for development of long term relationships among positive androgynous individuals and the degree of urgency to resolve conflict in terms of potential time constraints.

Research conducted by Weitz and Bradford (1999) distinguished between the compromising and collaborating conflict management style and indicated that the collaborating conflict management style is important when long- term relationships are vital and there is a long period available dedicated to the resolution of conflict. Alternatively, the compromising conflict management style is utilised when there is an urgency of conflict needing to be resolved which provides temporary settlement and will still serve to maintain long- term relationships. Therefore, individuals that have more time and value long- term relationships would be more inclined to utilise the collaborating conflict management style, whereby individuals that have less time or are not so concerned with long- term relationships would prefer to compromise. In addition, the positive androgynous individual did not encompass the majority of the top management position (see Appendix F), and so may therefore not felt the need to establish long-term relationships and would merely prefer to compromise in their conflict management style.

Counterintuitively, the results illustrated that the positive androgynous individual would be more likely to avoid in their conflict management style as opposed to collaborate. Positively androgynous individuals have high levels of conscientiousness and emotional intelligence as they combine the socially desirable traits of both positive masculine and positive feminine sex role identities (Ghaed & Gallo, 2006). Therefore, these individuals are able to vary their approach to conflict depending on the situation. Considering that the majority of positive androgynous individuals were not in top managerial positions as shown in Appendix F, they may be more inclined to avoid conflict in order to minimise tensions arising from disagreements about unimportant issues, thereby having a positive effect on relationships (Weitz & Bradford, 1999). Therefore, when issues are not considered main priorities and do not hold much

importance, then the positively androgynous sex role identity may perceive the avoiding conflict management style as the most useful in order to avoid creating any further tension and to avoid threatening their social support network within the organisation. In other words, the positive androgynous individual may rather be strategic in choosing their conflicts as they would rather prefer to lose a 'battle' if the conflict is of minor importance in order to increase their chances of winning the 'war'.

In concluding, the majority of the hypotheses for Research Question 1 were met, although there were some unexpected significant findings that were managed to be explained to some extent through an examination of the South African context within which these organisations exist, as well as the managerial level of employee participants and the power dynamics inherent in these positions. In particular, through the examination of the hegemonic masculinity sex- based personality traits, it was explained that negatively masculine individuals are likely to compete in their conflict management style adopting more of an aggressive approach than their positive counterpart. The positively masculine individual, will too, compete in their conflict management style, however they will display less levels of hostile aggression and more levels of assertiveness. The negatively feminine individual favoured the avoiding conflict management style due to coping strategies utilising escape- avoidance, whereas positive feminine individuals preferred to accommodate due to high levels of empathy and affiliation tendencies. The negatively androgynous individual favoured both the avoiding and competing conflict management styles due to the defects of the negative feminine and negative masculine sex role identities, opposing the positive androgynous individual who favoured a more prosocial strategy such as the compromising conflict management style. Through the examination of the results and in conjunction with social dominance theory, many of the results were consistent to what was discussed within the literature in Chapter 1.

The section that follows provides a discussion on the significant findings obtained relevant to the variables of conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing.

4.3.2 Conflict Management Styles and Psychological Wellbeing

As noted within Chapter 1, an individual's choice in conflict management styles may have a significant effect on one's level of psychological wellbeing. The significant results obtained from the present study will be discussed in relation to all the proposed hypotheses relevant to Research Question 2.

4.3.2.1 The Compromising, Collaborating and Accommodating Conflict Management Styles and Psychological Wellbeing

A significant difference occurred in the results pertaining to the compromising and the accommodating conflict management styles, as well as the collaborating and accommodating conflict management style in relation to psychological wellbeing. The mean value of the compromising conflict management style associated with psychological wellbeing was 51.30; the mean value for collaborating was 51.28, whereas the mean value for the accommodating conflict management style was 43.27. Although the hypotheses within Research Question 2 postulated that the compromising and collaborating conflict management styles would display higher levels of psychological wellbeing, and the accommodating conflict management style would display lower levels of psychological wellbeing and thus these hypotheses are in line with the literature, it is necessary to discuss these significant findings.

Chung- Yan and Moeller (2010) explained that individuals that utilise the compromising and collaborating conflict management styles result in a greater sense of self- confidence, and a sense of accomplishment which ultimately affects one's level of psychological wellbeing. Additionally, these conflict management styles have been correlated with high interpersonal communication and social interaction, thereby decreasing the risk of any future conflict. Additionally, individuals that compromise and collaborate in their conflict management styles have been shown to score highly on the positively related to big five personality factors such as openness to experience, agreeableness, and extraversion (Park & Antonioni, 2007) which are in turn associated with wellbeing (Sheldon, Ryan, Rawsthorne & Ilardi, 1997).

Alternatively those who accommodate tend to adopt more of a passive stance when dealing with conflict and may result in feelings of emotional exhaustion, absenteeism and turnover intentions among employees if the conflict is not resolved appropriately (De Dreu & Beersma, 2005). These consequences of unresolved conflict that are indicative of the accommodating conflict management style may result in the significantly lower levels of psychological wellbeing (De Dreu et al., 2004). Furthermore, as discussed within Chapter 1, Friedman et al. (2000) explained that individuals that accommodate in their conflict management style display low levels of self-efficacy, mastery and internal locus of control which may thereby increase the impact of job stressors which in turn may negatively impact upon one's level of psychological wellbeing. Friedman et al. (2000) also indicated that when an individual accommodates he or she only focuses on the interests of others but not on their own interests. This may seem like the easier alternative in managing conflict as one party simply gives in to the other and so the conflict is reduced, however this may have negative implications on the neglected party in the long- term. The accommodating conflict management style may thus resolve a dispute for the short- term but only one side's problems may have been solved and the losing party will in the long- term feel aggrieved and this will have deleterious impact on their psychological wellbeing over time (Friedman et al., 2000).

Additionally, research conducted by Dierendonck and Mevissen (2002) expounded that individuals that accommodate in their conflict management style unquestioningly oblige to the needs of others and may lead to severe feelings of burnout, frustration and incompetence having a direct impact upon one's psychological wellbeing. In relation to the present study, the accommodating conflict management style occurs most prominently within individuals that are placed in non-managerial positions in organisations (49%). These individuals that are constantly accommodating to the needs of others to the complete exclusion of oneself may result in the above mentioned feelings of frustration, incompetence and burnout. It is for this reason that there may be such a prominent significant difference in psychological wellbeing among the accommodating conflict management style and the other conflict management styles.

To sum up, the hypotheses relating to conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing were partially met in that the compromising and collaborating conflict management styles

yielded significantly higher levels of psychological wellbeing than the accommodating conflict management style. Therefore, through utilising successful conflict management strategies, such as the compromising and collaborating conflict management styles, prevention of the negative outcomes of interpersonal conflict in organisations occurs, and more positive outcomes are expressed. In contrast, as seen in the above discussion, the accommodating conflict management styles may result in negative consequences due to feelings of incompetence and frustration thereby lowering individuals' levels of psychological wellbeing, resulting in a significant difference between both the compromising and collaborating conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing.

4.3.2.2 The Avoiding and Accommodating Conflict Management Styles and Psychological Wellbeing

The counterintuitive finding that was recorded for conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing refers to the significant difference in psychological wellbeing according to the avoiding and accommodating conflict management styles. The hypothesis relevant to the avoiding and accommodating conflict management styles predicted similar lower levels of psychological wellbeing among these two conflict management styles. However, an unexpected finding occurred within the results indicating a substantial significant difference in psychological wellbeing among the avoiding and accommodating conflict management styles. When referring to the mean values of the avoiding and accommodating conflict management styles in relation to psychological wellbeing, the mean value for avoiding was 47.99 whereas the mean value for accommodating was 43.27.

The avoiding conflict management style is characterised by low levels of assertiveness and cooperativeness. As Chapter 1 has demonstrated, the avoiding conflict management style has been associated with low levels of psychological wellbeing and the present study's results prove to be consistent with the previous literature as the avoiding conflict management style has illustrated lower levels of psychological wellbeing. However, a possible explanation indicating why there is a significant difference among the avoiding and accommodating conflict management style can be the degree to which these individuals cooperate. The accommodating

conflict management style has a high degree of cooperativeness as opposed to the avoiding conflict management style (Nel, 2009). Individuals that consistently cooperate but receive nothing in return may experience feelings of frustration and burnout because they are being proactive in helping other individuals but are receiving nothing in return for themselves. Cooperative individuals have been associated with the agreeableness personality factor (McCrae & Costa, 2008). Park and Antonioni (2007) investigated the big five personality factors in relation to the conflict management styles. Park and Antonioni (2007) explained that reasonable degrees of agreeableness lead to positive implications for psychological wellbeing. However, when agreeableness is displayed to extreme degrees whereby a sense of autonomy, personal mastery and internal locus of control start to decrease, then an individual's level of psychological wellbeing will be negatively affected. Individuals within the avoiding conflict management style isolate one's self from social interaction (De Dreu et al., 2004), and although this has been linked to low levels of psychological wellbeing, in the present study this was to a significantly lesser extent than the accommodating conflict management style. This may be due to the fact that less cooperation occurs among individuals that avoid and so they are not exerting extra energy in order to help gain others' needs irrespective of their own. Hence, these individuals may not be susceptible to experiencing such high degrees of frustration and burnout as the accommodating conflict management style. Additionally, research conducted by Weitz and Bradford (1999) specified that the avoiding conflict management style can, in fact, have positive effects on relationships if the issues to be resolved are perceived to not be important or less important to the person engaging in the avoidance. If the issues that are instigating the conflict are perceived to be trivial matters, then the avoiding conflict management may be best suited for short- term resolution as it will decrease stress levels, thereby having short- term positive effects on one's psychological wellbeing.

Research conducted by Upton (2010) investigated the effect that different coping strategies had in relation to psychological wellbeing and bullying in the workplace. The findings of Upton's (2010) research study also produced interesting results in that the avoiding coping strategy yielded higher levels of psychological wellbeing as opposed to the other coping strategies that were investigated. In particular, Upton (2010) noted that the avoiding coping strategy is deemed useful when the possibility of negative consequences on individual and organisational outcomes

is considered. Upton (2010) explained that the avoiding coping strategy is characterised as emotion- focused coping; that is, the efforts to regulate emotional distress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984 as cited in Upton, 2010). According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), emotion- focused coping is only utilised when the individual perceives the situation to be anxiety- provoking and cannot be easily changed. Therefore, individuals may employ emotion- focused coping through the utilisation of the avoiding coping strategy in a conflict situation where a solution cannot easily be implemented in order to reduce levels of anxiety, thereby reducing the negative impact of the situation on levels of psychological wellbeing.

Consequently, although both the avoiding and accommodating conflict management styles resulted in lower levels of psychological wellbeing, the fact that the two styles were significantly different can be explained through the utilisation of coping strategies and the degree to which individuals cooperate.

The following section pertains to Research Question 3 whereby hypotheses were conducted based on positive and negative sex role identities and psychological wellbeing.

4.3.3 Sex Role Identities and Psychological Wellbeing

The third investigation within the present research study was to analyse the relationship among positive and negative sex role identities and psychological wellbeing. The analysis, as illustrated in Chapter 3, has indicated an overall significant difference among positive and negative sex role identities and psychological wellbeing. The following section discusses the specific significant results that were obtained between the different sex role identities in relation to psychological wellbeing.

4.3.3.1 Positive Androgyny, Negative Sex Role Identities and Psychological Wellbeing

The results of the present research study indicated that there was a significant difference in positive androgyny and negative androgyny, positive androgyny and negative masculinity, and positive androgyny and negative femininity in relation to psychological wellbeing. These results

were expected as the hypotheses relevant to Research Question 3 predicted that the positive sex role identities would experience higher levels of psychological wellbeing as opposed to their negative counterparts.

The significant difference between positive androgyny and the negative sex role identities in relation to psychological wellbeing provided support for both the Androgyny and the Differentiated Model that was explained within Chapter 1. Firstly, the results indicating that the positive androgynous individual encompasses the highest levels of psychological wellbeing with a mean score of 53.59 were consistent with the predictions of the Androgyny Model. The Androgyny Model stipulates that an individual will experience optimal health and wellbeing when they adhere to a sex role identity that combines a high degree of socially desirable masculine and feminine sex role traits, irrespective of biological sex (Whitley, 1984). Furthermore, research conducted by Bem and Lenney (1974) proposed that the positive androgynous individual is the more appropriate sex role identity that has emerged from society that typifies mental health. The results of the present study are also consistent with research conducted by Hinrichsen et al. (1981), Shimonaka et al. (1997) and Guastello and Guestello (2003) that indicated that the androgynous sex role identity produces high levels of psychological wellbeing outcomes.

The significant difference between positive androgyny and the negative sex role identities further provide support for the Differentiated Model for sex role identities. In particular, the Differentiated Model states that sex role identities consist of both the socially desirable and socially undesirable sex- based personality traits, and therefore, sex role identities should be divided into positive and negative categories. Research previously conducted on sex role identities based on the Differentiated Model indicated that the negative sex role identities experienced lower levels of psychological wellbeing (e.g. Bernstein, 2013; Chemaly, 2012; Helgeson, 1994; Solomon, 2013; Woodhill & Samuels, 2013). Within the majority of these research studies and consistent with the present study's results, the negative masculine and negative feminine sex role identities have been negatively correlated with psychological wellbeing outcomes. It is for this reason that negative androgynous individuals may have experienced significantly lower levels of psychological wellbeing in relation to positive

androgynous individuals, as the negative androgynous individual displays significant levels of both negative feminine and masculine sex- based personality traits. According to Woodhill and Samuels (2003), the presence of significant levels of negative feminine or negative masculine sex- based personality traits within individuals may have a damaging effect regarding an individual's psychological wellbeing. Consequently, Woodhill and Samuels (2003) state when an individual encompasses both negative feminine and negative masculine sex- based personality traits a detrimental effect on the androgynous sex role identity may occur to the extent that such negative sex- based personality traits may cause behaviours that override any of the positive benefits proposed for the androgynous individual. Woodhill and Samuels (2003) predicted that the negative androgynous individual would display sex- based personality traits such as submissiveness, selfishness, volatility and aggression, indicating that the negative androgynous individual encompasses the failings or defects of the negative feminine and negative masculine sex role identities correlating negatively with psychological wellbeing outcomes. In contrast, the positively androgynous individual encompasses the socially- desirable sex role identities from both the positive feminine and positive masculine sex role identities, such as independence, compassion, ambition and tolerance. In fact, according to Helgeson (1994), it is these socially desirable sex- based personality traits observed within the positive masculine and positive feminine sex role personality traits that contribute toward these individuals yielding higher levels of psychological wellbeing. Additionally, the positive androgynous individual has a repertoire of socially desirable sex- based personality traits to choose from depending on different situations and such adaptability whereby positive traits will always be exhibited to suit a variety of situations lead to higher levels of psychological wellbeing (Woodhill & Samuels, 2003).

Therefore, to conclude, the overall reasoning as to why the positive androgynous sex role identity scored significantly higher levels of psychological wellbeing in comparison to the negative sex role identities may be due to the degree to which positively androgynous individuals align themselves with the positive sex- based personality traits from both the positively feminine and masculine sex role identities. In contrast, due to the complete exclusion of positive sex-based personality traits within negative sex role identities, these individuals that possess negative sex role identities will have significant lower levels of psychological wellbeing.

4.3.3.2 Positive Sex Role Identities, Negative Femininity and Psychological Wellbeing

The above discussion focuses on the reason as to why the positive androgynous sex role identity was significantly higher than the negative androgynous, negative masculine and negative feminine sex role identities. However, it must be noted that all the positive sex role identities were significantly higher in terms of psychological wellbeing in relation to the negative feminine sex role identity. It is not only within this present research study that negatively feminine individuals received the lowest levels of psychological wellbeing, but the same results were obtained within research conducted by Bernstein (2013), Chemaly (2012) and Solomon (2013). These results provide support for what was expected within the hypotheses as well as for the Differentiated Model that shaped the argument for the present research study. In particular, the positive androgynous sex role identity had a mean score of 53.59, positive masculinity had a mean score of 45.52, the positively feminine sex role identity had a mean score of 49.39, and the negatively feminine sex role identity had a mean score of 40.01.

The results from the present study illustrating that significant differences occur between the means of negative femininity with all the other sex role identity groups are consistent with research conducted by Chemaly (2012). The results from the current study depicted a very large effect size among negative femininity and the other sex role identities indicating that the negative feminine individual displays significantly lower levels of psychological wellbeing than the other sex role groupings. The reason for negatively feminine sex role identities scoring significantly low levels of well-being compared to the positive sex role identities may be due to the fact that the feminine sex role traits are focused on an excessive concern for others and places other's needs before one's own (Helgeson & Fritz, 1998). Results from the study performed by Ghaed and Gallo (2006) demonstrated that individuals who are negatively feminine in one's sex role identity may be overly nurturing. Individuals that portray the feminine sex role identity, specifically the negative sex role identity, may focus on others and nurture others to the exclusion of one's self resulting in neglect of one's own well-being. Additionally, negatively feminine individuals positively correlated with affiliation and submissiveness in relation to the circumplex model. These results from the Ghaed and Gallo (2006) study demonstrate how negative femininity may have a detrimental effect on one's well-being. An individual portraying

the feminine sex role identity has a positive orientation towards others; however the negative feminine sex role identity may result in one neglecting one's own needs and lacking a sense of self- focus. Additionally, in a study conducted by Helgeson and Fritz (1999), the negative feminine sex role identity was compared to the positive sex role identities and scored significantly lower on health- related outcomes such as self- esteem, perceived social support and anxiety. An interesting finding in the Helgeson and Fritz (1999) study was that the negative feminine individual was positively correlated with hostility however, the main distinction in hostility among the other sex role identities and the negatively feminine sex role identities was that the negatively feminine individual feels hostile towards others but does not act upon it demonstrating their lack of assertiveness. These feelings of hostility that are not being acted upon may exacerbate negative psychological outcomes thereby decreasing levels of psychological wellbeing in comparison to the other sex role identities.

In concluding for the above section, it is evident that the results pertaining to the present research study are in full support of the Differentiated Model and are consistent with previous research in that the positive sex role identities scored significantly higher levels of psychological wellbeing in relation to the negative feminine sex role identity, and that positive androgyny scored significantly higher than all the negative sex role identities.

4.3.3.3 Negative Androgyny, Negative Femininity and Psychological Wellbeing

An unexpected significant finding relating to sex role identities and psychological wellbeing pertains to the negative androgynous and negative feminine sex role identity. In particular, the negative androgynous sex role identity had a mean score of 47, whereas the negative feminine sex role identity had a mean score of 40.01. This was a counterintuitive finding as the hypotheses relevant to Research Question 3 predicted that all the negative sex role identities would display lower levels of psychological wellbeing, which they did, however, a significant difference among the negative sex role identities was not expected.

The reason as to why the present study's results depicted a significant difference between the negative androgynous sex role identity and the negative feminine sex role identity may be

attributed to the degree to which negatively androgynous individuals aligns themselves with the negative masculine sex- based personality traits. As previously discussed, hegemonic masculinity shares the same traits associated with negative masculinity, and these traits are favoured within a patriarchal society. In particular, traits such as aggression, assertiveness and hostile dominance are evident within hegemonic masculinity. Considering that the negative androgynous sex role identity encompasses both negative masculinity and negative femininity sex- based personality traits, these hegemonic masculinity traits are therefore, identifiable within the negatively androgynous person. According to Courtenay (2001) there are a number of health-related beliefs and behaviours that are stereotypically associated with hegemonic masculinity. These health related beliefs include the denial of weakness or vulnerability, emotional and physical control, the appearance of being strong and robust, dismissal of any need for help, and the display of aggressive behaviour and physical dominance (Courtenay, 2000). Therefore, it seems likely that on a self- report measure, such as the WEMWBS that was utilised to measure psychological wellbeing for the present research study, that a negatively masculine individual prepossessed of some of these traits will be able to display a greater degree of resilience and strength in a conflict situation as compared to a negatively feminine individual who does not have any of these traits.

Linked to this is the fact that a negative androgynous individual has the ability to respond to a situation in either a negatively masculine or a negatively feminine manner (Woodhill & Samuels, 2003). In other words, if a certain situation requires an individual to adopt more of an aggressive stance, then the negatively androgynous individual will benefit through the utilisation of more of negative masculine sex- based personality traits. Likewise, if a situation requires more submissiveness, then the negatively androgynous individual is able to adopt more negatively feminine sex- based personality traits. It is within this scenario that it may thus have been advantageous for an individual to be negatively androgynous as opposed to merely negatively feminine in one's sex role identity due to the degree of adaptability. Consequently, although the negatively androgynous individual stills yields low levels of psychological wellbeing, their prepossession of some of the negatively masculine traits enable them to cope slightly better with conflict and therefore not experience the more extreme effect of psychological wellbeing as evidenced by the negatively feminine individual.

4.3.3.4 Undifferentiated, Negative Femininity and Psychological Wellbeing

Results from the present research study indicated that there was a significant difference between the undifferentiated sex role identity and negative femininity. As previously discussed, the negative feminine sex role identity has been linked to low levels of psychological wellbeing due to the possession of sex- based personality traits such as anxiety, neuroticism and depression that typify mental ill-health. In relation to the present research study, the undifferentiated sex role identity was not accounted for because this sex role identity displays lower levels of either masculine or feminine sex role identities (Korabik & McCreary, 2000), thereby not adhering to or scoring high enough to be identified as belonging to any specific sex role identity. However, with reference to other research studies that did account for the undifferentiated individual this finding is unexpected, in that the undifferentiated sex role identity yielded significantly higher levels of psychological wellbeing in relation to the negative feminine sex role identity.

In previous research studies that did account for the undifferentiated sex role identity, undifferentiated individuals had been linked to lower levels of psychological wellbeing (Woodhill & Samuels, 2003), as well as lower levels of self- esteem (Chusmir & Koberg, 1991; Lamke, 1982). However, Koopman and Schiff (1978) indicated that individuals that possess sex role identities that are not traditionally sex- typed, such as androgyny and undifferentiated, have a higher level of ego development than that of the traditional sex- typed identities, such as masculinity and femininity. Koopman and Schiff (1978) specified that such findings support the theoretical notion proposed by Block (1973) whereby the moderation and tempering of one's sex role by the other is necessary and characteristic of greater levels of ego maturity. However, it must be noted that what may be important for ego development is not necessarily the possession of high degrees of masculine and feminine traits, but rather possession of both in a nonpolarised and more balanced way, even if the sex role identity has significantly lower levels of masculine and feminine sex- based personality traits, as is the case of the undifferentiated sex role identity. Furthermore, research that has been conducted by King and Raspin (2004) investigated ego development in relation to wellbeing. The results from this study noted that ego development

positively influences high levels of ego maturity which has been linked to higher levels of subjective wellbeing (King & Raspin, 2004).

Thus, this counterintuitive finding whereby the undifferentiated sex role identity scored significantly higher levels of psychological wellbeing in comparison to the negative feminine sex role can be attributed to the advancement of ego development and ego maturity among the undifferentiated sex role identity, which in turn, has an impact upon one's level of wellbeing.

4.4 Non- Significant Findings

4.4.1 Competing Conflict Management Style and Psychological Wellbeing

Within the analysis regarding conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing in Chapter 3, an unexpected finding was that the competing conflict management style did not prove to be significantly different in terms of its level of psychological wellbeing among any of the other conflict management styles. In particular, it was surprising that the competing conflict management style was not significantly higher in comparison to the avoiding and accommodating conflict management styles.

A potential explanation indicating the reason as to why the competing conflict management style did not produce any significant results could be attributed to the short- term or long- term effect that this style can have on one's social support network and psychological wellbeing. It must be noted that social support and psychological wellbeing have consistently been proven to be positively correlated and there is a vast body of evidence supporting this notion over the last five decades (e.g. Cohen & Wills, 1985; Lindorf, 2000; Parasuraman, Greenhaus & Granhose, 1992; Sheffield et al., 1994; Skok, Harvey & Reddihough, 2006; Taylor, 2007; Thoits, 1995; Turner, 1981); and so this may provide an explanation as to why the competing conflict management style did not yield significant results. The competing conflict management style may satisfy one's own objectives initially; however, it may have considerable adverse consequences for social interactions in the long term (Walters, Stuhlmacher & Meyer, 1998). Therefore, considering that the competing conflict management style allows for immediate gratification

which may be beneficial in the short- term, it may damage long- term relationships with the duration of time thereby having an indirect effect on one's psychological wellbeing. More specifically, and in relation to the social support literature presented in Chapter 1, individuals who compete in their conflict management styles are likely to engage in antisocial coping behaviours that may cause strain upon their social support networks by means of exhausting all the available resources in his or her network (Monnier et al., 1998). Consequently, these individuals that participate in antisocial coping behaviour, such as those individuals that favour the competing conflict management style, may diminish any possibility of future social support in the long- term in an attempt to receive his or her intended outcome (Monnier et al., 1998). However, it is important to note that when the competing conflict management style has initially been utilised then the social support network that this individual is embedded within has not yet been depleted, resulting in higher levels of psychological wellbeing in the short- term.

Considering that the present research study was a cross- sectional research design where participants were investigated at only one point in time, it was not possible to identify if these participants had been utilising their favoured conflict management style for short or long periods of time and whether this had a changing effect on their levels of psychological wellbeing. Such information would have been useful in order to identify the effects that the competing conflict management style had on one's level of psychological wellbeing depending the time duration of utilising this conflict management style, due to the above argument on social support. In particular, if the individual had been using the competing conflict management style over a long-term period then it may have been possible that a large part of their social support network was depleted thus decreasing levels of psychological wellbeing. In contrast, if the individual had been using the competing conflict management style for a short period of time then perhaps their social support network had not yet been affected thus increasing psychological wellbeing. Therefore, the time frame with which the competing conflict management style was used can result in differing levels of psychological wellbeing and this may account for the non-significant findings relating to the competing conflict management style and psychological wellbeing.

4.4.2 Two-Way ANOVA

Within the present research, an attempt was made to examine the interrelationship between sex role identities, conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing using a Two-Way ANOVA. However, the Two- Way ANOVA did not produce an overall significant effect when investigating the interrelationship between these three variables. This was unexpected as the individual Although the individual one- Way ANOVAs that were conducted investigating the relationship between sex role identities and psychological wellbeing, as well as conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing were all significant there is possible statistical and contextual reasons as to why the Two-Way ANOVA utilised to investigate Research Question 4 and its appropriate hypotheses proved to be insignificant. The possible reasons are outlined below.

In terms of statistics, a possible explanation as to why a Two- Way ANOVA may prove to be insignificant can be attributed to the power level and the sample size yielded for the research study (Zuur & Ieno, 2005). Through the utilisation of a statistical package known as G*Power 3, the required sample size for a 7 x 5 research design is approximately 544 participants whereby a power level of 0.95 would occur. In other words, if a sample size of 544 participants were obtained then there is a 95% chance that the Two- Way ANOVA would have produced significant results. Therefore, considering that the present research study was only able to yield a total of 412 participants, the sample size is likely to have affected to overall significance of the Two-Way ANOVA model.

Consequently, the lack of significant effect for the overall model is likely to be due to the limited sample size but it may also be attributed to more contextual reasoning. With reference to the present research study, a factor that may have influenced the level of significance for the Two-Way ANOVA is referred to as ‘omitted variable bias’. Omitted variable bias occurs when a model is created which may overlook one or more important causal factors. The ‘bias’ occurs when the model compensates for the missing variable by over- or underestimating the effect of one of the other variables (Clarke, 2005).

In order to identify if any variable was omitted from the study that may have attributed toward omitted variable bias, it is essential to determine a variable that is correlated with both the included independent variables (i.e. sex role identity and conflict management styles) and the dependent variable (i.e. psychological wellbeing). As Chapter 1 explained, a number of research studies have been conducted investigating conflict management styles in relation to stress management and the impact that the different conflict management styles would have in relation to job stressors (e.g. Giebels & Janssen, 2005; Friedman et al., 2000; Sheffield et al., 1994). Additionally, these researchers have indicated that these levels of stress that may be exacerbated through utilisation of particular conflict management styles have an influence on one's level of psychological wellbeing. Therefore, an indirect relationship has occurred whereby individuals' preferences in conflict management styles may influence their stress levels which consequentially may have an impact on their psychological wellbeing. In relation to the other independent variable within the present research study, i.e. sex role identities, there is also some correlation between the different sex role identities and stress. Research studies conducted by Bernstein (2013), Chemaly (2012), Gianakos (2000), Janes (1990), Jick & Mitz (1985), Matud (2004) and Preston (1995) investigated the impact that the different gender roles would have on individuals' stress levels, and clarified that a relationship between the two variables do exist. As mentioned the measurement of this variable, i.e. stress, was beyond the scope of this research study but in retrospect it may have been possible that this variable would have influenced the interrelationship among sex role identities, conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing.

Therefore, in relation to the non- significant finding of the Two- Way ANOVA model, it is possible that the assumed specification of the interrelationship among sex role identities, conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing was incorrect in that it omitted another potential independent variable such as stress, as stress is correlated with both psychological wellbeing (i.e the dependent variable) and both the included independent variables (i.e. sex role identity and conflict management styles). For that reason, the model that was used in the present study may have underestimated the effect of the other variables due to the exclusion of a potential important variable, which is stress.

4.5 Conflict Management Style and Management Level

The investigation regarding conflict management style and managerial level did not form part of a Research Question or any respective hypotheses, but it was investigated in order explore whether this demographic variable could have had any influence on research findings.

In relation to the Chi- Square analysis that was used to investigate the relationship between conflict management styles and managerial level, it was noted that most individuals within top management competed in their conflict management style (36%), within senior management the majority of participants preferred to avoid (37%), within middle management the preponderance of participants favoured the compromising conflict management style (35%), in junior management the majority of participants indicated that they prefer to avoid (44%). Those in non-managerial positions also indicated that they favoured the avoiding conflict management style (37%). As mentioned within Chapter 1, the compromising conflict management style was expected among higher levels of management, and the avoiding conflict management style is stereotypically favoured among non-managerial employees. However, with reference to the results obtained within the present research study, it was surprising that the competing and avoiding conflict management styles were favoured among several of the managerial levels.

With reference to the favoured conflict management style among non-managerial positions, it was not surprising that these participants favoured the avoiding conflict management style. In research conducted by Chusmir and Mills (1989) it was suggested that the avoiding conflict management style can be attributed toward the management level of the individual. More specifically, Chusmir and Mills (1989) suggested that individuals are more likely to avoid conflict when they believe that they have nothing to gain from the outcome of the conflict. Individuals may feel as though they have nothing to gain as the outcome of the conflict may not benefit them in terms of perhaps, advancing and gaining a potential managerial role in the future and so they may rather choose to avoid as opposed to creating tension among the conflicting parties. In support of this notion, research conducted by Brewer and colleagues (2002) clarified that individuals display certain behaviours depending on the position and power that they hold within organisations. Individuals within non-managerial positions may prefer to avoid in their

conflict management style as they believe that they do not have anything to gain from the situation as they are not in top powerful positions within their respective organisations. Additionally, as previously discussed, individuals that are not in any managerial position may rather choose to avoid in their conflict management style instead of creating further tension among their colleagues if the issues that are being argued are perceived as not important (Weitz & Bradford, 1999).

In accordance with the results obtained relating to conflict management styles and managerial levels, the present research study demonstrated that individuals in top management positions prefer to compete in their conflict management style. The competing conflict management style is characterised by individuals that pursue their own goals at the expense of others. This competing conflict management style correlates to a more authoritarian approach of leadership (Mohammed, White, & Prabhakar, 2008). Individuals within top management positions may prefer to compete and exhibit an authoritarian leadership style due to the patriarchal society that South Africa is regarded as. The traditional ideology prominent within a patriarchal society is that South African's are focused on the belief that in order to be in power, one must be dominant and assert the power that one gains upon another. In a patriarchal society, it is normally the men that pertain to such roles and men are deemed to be in higher positions than women (Strebel, et al., 2006). Therefore, through careful examination of this cultural structure, individuals within an patriarchal society that are in powerful positions may believe that it is necessary to be dominant and assert power on others in order to remain in the higher position, thus explaining the pertinence of the competing conflict management style among top management. Such an explanation corresponds with the coercive strategy within social dominance theory presented in the literature in Chapter 1, as well as what has been discussed above. In particular, Hawley (1999) indicates that the dominant group will utilise means of power and dominance in order to gain the intended outcome, i.e. compete. However, Hawley (1999) indicates that coercive controller is strategic with regards to the methods that they will employ. More specifically, these dominant individuals will assert their power when they believe that they can win the desired outcome (i.e. compete), otherwise they will employ a strategy typical of yielding if they believe that they cannot win the desired outcome (i.e. avoid). Therefore, if dominant groups within managerial positions do not believe that they will win the conflict, then they may prefer to avoid

the conflict as oppose to losing. Additionally, individuals within the senior management and junior management positions may prefer to avoid in their conflict management style in order to avoid creating any unnecessary tension among colleagues that may hinder their potential advancement within the organisation.

Therefore, through careful examination of the social dominance theory, it is possible that individuals within managerial positions may be expected to and prefers to compete but it is not entirely surprising that they may also avoid in their conflict management style when it is strategically appropriate to do so.

4.6 Strengths of the Present Study, and Theoretical and Practical Implications

The current research study was conducted with the intention of examining the impact upon and the relationship between sex role identities and conflict management styles. Furthermore, the current study analysed the relationship of these two variables among a common dependent variable, psychological wellbeing. The present study has a number of strengths that are worthy of being discussed, and these strengths have positive implications toward South Africa and its relevant research realm.

The first strength that is worth discussing is that the present study included that analysis of both positive and negative sex role identities, adhering to the Differentiated Model of sex role identities. There is very limited research investigating positive and negative sex role identities within a South African context. Globally, and as discussed within Chapter 1, very limited research has also been conducted regarding positive and negative sex role identities and psychological wellbeing. Additionally, to the researcher's knowledge there has been no previous research conducted regarding the positive and negative sex role identities in relation to conflict management styles. Previous research has only focused on the socially desirable sex role traits in relation to conflict management styles, and consequentially, these results were inconsistent. Within the present research study, as Chapter 3 and 4 have mentioned, the results have remained consistent with the hypotheses proposed for Research Question 1 proving that the Differentiated

Model, i.e. examination of both the positive and negative sex role identities, may be an improved and more in-depth predictor when investigating conflict management styles.

In accordance with the descriptive statistics, the present study's sample comprised of an overwhelming amount of untraditional sex role identities (i.e. positive and negative androgyny, and the negative sex role identities). This is interesting result as it illustrates that individuals do adhere to the negative sex role identities, irrespective of biological sex, which previous research did not account for thereby increasing the strength of the present research study. Additionally, considering the large amount of participants adhering to the nontraditional sex role identities, this may portray a shift in sex role identities indicating that South African individuals are perhaps becoming more comfortable with displaying their inherent sex role identity regardless of the social stereotypes associated with biological sex.

Practically, the present study provides a notion as to which sex role identities and conflict management styles portrayed by South African employees affect their level of psychological wellbeing. Informing employees as to which sex role identities allow for higher levels of wellbeing may provide them with the necessary knowledge to extend extra effort into developing such roles. However, it is important to note that the results of this study will not only be useful for South African employees but will also be useful for organisational managers. As indicated within Chapter 1, conflict is inevitable in organisations and so it is important for managers to be able to deal with conflict effectively. Therefore, with reference to the present study, managers are able to gain insight as to which conflict management styles lead to higher levels of psychological health ensuring a more productive workforce. Additionally, in terms of sex role identity and conflict management styles, organisations could employ the EPAQ-R (as developed by Bernstein, 2013) as a selection tool to act as a predictor as to how these employees could respond in threatening situations, as this could ultimately have a significant impact on the organisation's functioning.

In conclusion, it is evident that the present research study contributes toward the research literature on both sex role identities and conflict management styles. Nonetheless, it is important to consider the limitations pertaining to the present research study. Therefore, the following

section provides a discussion regarding the limitations that have emerged within the present study.

4.7 Research Study Limitations

A potential limitation of the research study may be attributed to the organisations that made up the sample. In particular, each organisation may have a different organisational culture which has been linked to influence the way in which employees manage conflict (Elsayed- EkJiouly & Buda, 1996; Holt & DeVore, 2005). For example, if an organisation adheres to a collectivistic culture then this may influence employees to utilise more cooperative conflict management styles such as compromising, collaborating and accommodating. Although the present study attempted to ensure that organisations that participated were within the same business sector, the organisational culture within each workplace may differ. Additionally, through the use of snowball sampling and participants therefore being employed within a variety of organisations, there was a lack of knowledge regarding the variation of organisational culture that existed within the present research study.

With regards to the sample size obtained, the 412 participants that formed the present study's sample size was large enough to produce significant results for the Chi-Square analyses, as well as both the One- Way ANOVAs. However, a major limitation to the present research study pertains to the required sample size needed to conduct a 7 x 5 Two- Way ANOVA. As previously discussed, a minimum sample size of 544 participants was needed in order to produce significant results for the Two-Way ANOVA. Due to the constrained sample size, the interrelationship among sex role identities, conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing was not able to be investigated.

Additionally, and as discussed previously, the fact that work stress was not measured within the present research study may have contributed toward the lack of findings within the Two-Way ANOVA model. Considering that stress is a variable that is associated with sex role identity, conflict management style and psychological wellbeing, it may have had an indirect effect on the interrelationship among all three variables. Consequently, a potential limitation may be attributed

toward the present research study having not accounted for an extraneous variable that is work stress.

In relation to the measurement scale that was used to assess participants' conflict management style preferences, another limitation may arise. The Thomas- Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument is an ipsative and forced- choice measure therefore reliability scores can only be calculated based on test- retest reliability. The present research design does not allow for test- retest reliability as the participants' conflict management styles were only measured at one point in time. Therefore, appropriate reliability scores for the Thomas- Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument were not calculated. However, the internal consistency calculated among the different conflict management styles that were presented in Chapter 3 (Table 9) were consistent with Kilmann and Thomas (1977), and Thomas and Thomas' (2008) research studies.

4.8 Directions for Future Research

The present study was successful in its attempt to establish a relationship between positive and negative sex role identities and conflict management styles. Furthermore, the current study was also able to successfully determine the relationship between positive and negative sex role identities and psychological wellbeing, as well as conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing. However, the research study found an insignificant effect in the final research question investigating the interrelationship among all three variables. Therefore, future research could attempt to investigate the interrelationship of all three variables using a larger sample; as well as perhaps investigating stress and determining if stress may in fact have been an omitted variable from the present research study, as discussed previously, impacting on the insignificant results obtained within the Two- Way ANOVA.

Additionally, in terms of sex role identity and psychological wellbeing, an unexpected finding emerged whereby the undifferentiated sex role identity had relatively high levels of psychological wellbeing. The results of the undifferentiated sex role identity in relation to psychological wellbeing proved inconsistent with previous literature (Chusmir & Koberg, 1991; Lamke, 1982; Woodhill & Samuels, 2003). Much of the research on sex role identities does not

account for the undifferentiated sex role, and therefore there is very limited research conducted on it (e.g. Ghaed & Gallo, 2006; Helgeson, 1994; Hinrichsen et al., 1981; Shimonaka et al., 1997). Thus, further research may be conducted to explore the undifferentiated sex role identity and its impact upon psychological wellbeing within a South African context.

It is evident through the recent research studies conducted on positive and negative sex role identities (e.g. Bernstein, 2012; Chemaly, 2012; Soloman, 2012), as well as the present research study, that significant findings emerge. Therefore, future research within the realm of sex role identities should encompass both the socially desirable and undesirable sex role traits as depicted within the Differentiated Model in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of sex role identities in relation to various dependent variables.

CONCLUSION

The present research study aimed to investigate whether there is a relationship between positive and negative sex role identities and conflict management styles. Furthermore, the study intended to investigate the relationship between conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing, as well as sex role identity and psychological wellbeing. The results of the present study indicated that there is a significant difference among the above mentioned aims. However, insignificant results were obtained when investigating the interrelationship among all three variables.

The current research study has also provided evidence that South Africa is moving away from the traditional values and norms, and South African employees are beginning to feel comfortable displaying untraditional sex role identities, such as positive androgyny and negative androgyny. In conjunction with the descriptive statistics obtained, as well as the results that were achieved, it is evident that the concept of sex role identities has moved away from the Congruence Model that viewed sex role identity as either masculine or feminine. Moreover, this research study has provided support for the Differentiated Model as the positive and negative sex role identities concluded significant differences in their effects.

The study has concluded that the positive sex role identities are more likely to utilise conflict management styles that have higher degrees of cooperativeness and assertiveness than the negative sex role identities. Additionally, the study established that the conflict management styles that have higher degrees of cooperativeness and assertiveness demonstrate higher levels of psychological wellbeing. Likewise, and in relation to the sex role identity variable, the positive sex role identities proved to have the highest levels of psychological wellbeing.

In conclusion, through the investigation of positive and negative sex role identities in relation to conflict management styles and psychological wellbeing, significant findings occurred. Therefore, this research has contributed toward to our knowledge of sex role identities, specifically through the inclusion of the negative sex role identities.

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APPENDIX A:
ETHICAL CLEARANCE AND PROPOSAL ACCEPTANCE LETTER

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Faculty of Humanities – Postgraduate Office

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa • Tel: +27 11 717 8210• Fax: +27 11 717 4037

Student Number: 393623

Miss Chanel Anne Chemaly
Po Box 650327
Benmore
2010

09 July 2013

Dear Miss Chemaly

APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS BY COURSEWORK AND RESEARCH REPORT

I am pleased to be able to advise you that the readers of the Graduate Studies Committee have approved your proposal entitled *"Positive and negative sex role identities, conflict management styles and Psychological wellbeing"* I confirm that Ms Colleen Bernstein has been appointed as your supervisor in the Psychology department.

The research report is normally submitted to the Faculty Office by 15 February, if you have started the beginning of the year, and for mid-year the deadline is 31 July. All students are required to RE-REGISTER at the beginning of each year.

You are required to submit 2 bound copies and one unbound copy plus 1 CD in pdf (Adobe) format of your research report to the Faculty Office. The 2 bound copies go to the examiners and are retained by them and the unbound copy is retained by the Faculty Office as back up.

Please note that should you miss the deadline of 15 February or 31 July you will be required to submit an application for extension of time and register for the research report extension. Any candidate who misses the deadline of 15 February will be charged fees for the research report extension.

Kindly keep us informed of any changes of address during the year.

Note: All MA and PhD candidates who intend graduating shortly must meet your ETD requirements at least 6 weeks after your supervisor has received the examiners reports. **A student must remain registered at the Faculty Office until graduation.**

Yours sincerely

MR NTSEARE

Mpho Ntseare
Postgraduate Division
Faculty of Humanities
Private Bag X3
Wits, 2050
Tel: +27 11 717 4002
Fax:+27 86 211 7362

APPENDIX B:
LETTER GRANTING ACCESS TO ORGANISATIONS

SCHOOL OF HUMAN & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND
Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050
Tel: (011) 717 4500
Fax: (011) 717 4559

To whom this may concern

My name is Chanel Chemaly and I am presently completing my Master's Degree within the Department of Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. In the fulfillment of this degree my area of research is designed to investigate the relationship between gender- specific personality traits and conflict management styles among South African employees. Furthermore, I aim to investigate how an individual's preference in dealing with conflict may affect one's psychological wellbeing.

The hypotheses of my research is that gender- specific personality traits can influence the extent to which employees manage conflict, as well as that an individual's preference in conflict management styles will affect one's wellbeing.

In order to conduct my research project, I will need to obtain access to a sample of employees at any level within an organisation in South Africa. This letter is asking for permission to be granted access to use male and female employees at any organisational level within your organisation.

In terms of Participation Anonymity and Confidentiality:
Participation is voluntary and no employee will be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to complete or not to complete the questionnaire.

Anonymity will be assured as the questionnaire does not ask for any identifying information that will lead to the exposure of a participant's identity. While questions are asked about personal circumstances, such as age, marital status, level of education, no identifying information, such as name, staff number or I.D. number, is asked for, and as such your participants will remain anonymous.

In terms of Data Collection:
Data will be collected electronically. Employees will be provided with a secure encrypted website through which they can access the survey. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Participants will be provided with a covering letter attached to the survey which outlines all the conditions of participation above. Informed consent is assumed by the completion of the questionnaire. However, participants will be able to withdraw from the study until such time as they submit the questionnaire.

Usage of the Data and Presentation of Results:

Be assured that the data will solely be used for academic purposes and will remain strictly confidential. Please note that individual results will not be made available to any organisation or within the university to anyone other than myself and my research project supervisor. In this regard, I am more than willing to sign a non- disclosure agreement if the organisation feels that this is necessary. The results of the study will be presented to the organisation, in a written report, as group trends, which make it impossible to identify any individual respondent.

Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. This research will contribute toward a larger body of knowledge on South African research on gender, and provide further understanding on how gender may influence an individual's preference in managing conflict and individual health outcomes. Information from this study can also be used to assist organisations in understanding how effective conflict management is essential when dealing with an employee's psychological wellbeing which ultimately affects the organisation's productivity and wellbeing. Furthermore, the results of this study may assist in management techniques with regard to conflict management.

The research study will be conducted under the supervision of Dr. Colleen Bernstein, a lecturer and Registered Industrial Psychologist at the University of the Witwatersrand. Please contact me should you have any further questions. If you wish to meet with me for a discussion regarding my research, please feel free to contact me and I will meet with you.

Kind Regards

Chanel Chemaly
Organisational Psychology Masters Student
University of the Witwatersrand
Email: chanel.chemaly@gmail.com

Dr. Colleen Bernstein
Lecturer, and a
Registered Industrial Psychologist
University of the Witwatersrand
Email: colleen.bernstein@wits.ac.za

APPENDIX C:
COVER LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

SCHOOL OF HUMAN & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND
Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050
Tel: (011) 717 4500
Fax: (011) 717 4559

To whom this may concern

My name is Chanel Chemaly and I am presently completing my Master's Degree within the Department of Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. In the fulfillment of this degree my area of research is designed to investigate the relationship between gender and conflict management styles among South African employees. Furthermore, I aim to investigate how an individual's preference in dealing with conflict may affect one's health.

In order to conduct my research project, I will need a number of employees at any level within an organisation in South Africa to fill in my research survey.

In terms of Participation Anonymity and Confidentiality:
Participation is voluntary and you will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to complete or not to complete the questionnaire.

Anonymity will be assured as the questionnaire does not ask you for any identifying information that will lead to the exposure of your identity. While questions are asked about your personal circumstances, such as age, marital status, level of education, no identifying information, such as name, staff number or I.D number is asked for, and as such participants will remain anonymous.

In terms of Data Collection:
Data will be collected electronically. You will be provided with a secure encrypted website through which you can access the survey. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. You may withdraw from the research at any time until you have submitted the survey online. Informed consent is assumed by the completion and submission of the questionnaire.

Usage of the Data and Presentation of Results:
Be assured that the data will solely be used for academic purposes and will remain strictly confidential. Please note that your individual results will not be made available to your organisation. Only I and my research project supervisor will have access to the data. In this regard, the results of the study will be presented to the organisation, in a written report, as group trends, which make it impossible to identify your individual responses.

Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. This research will contribute toward a larger body of knowledge on South African research on gender, and provide further understanding on how gender may influence an individual's preference in managing conflict and individual health outcomes.

The research study will be conducted under the supervision of Dr. Colleen Bernstein, a lecturer, and Registered Industrial Psychologist at the University of the Witwatersrand. Please contact me

should you have any further questions. If you wish to meet with me for a discussion regarding my research, please feel free to contact me and I will meet with you.

Kind Regards

Chanel Chemaly
Organisational Psychology Masters Student
University of the Witwatersrand
Email: chanel.chemaly@gmail.com

Dr. Colleen Bernstein
Lecturer, and a
Registered Industrial Psychologist
University of the Witwatersrand
Email: colleen.bernstein@wits.ac.za

APPENDIX D:
SELF- REPORT QUESTIONNAIRES

The Demographic Questionnaire

1. **What is your gender?**
   □ Male □ Female

2. **How old are you?**

   _____

3. **Please indicate your racial group:**

   □ Black □ Coloured □ White

   □ Asian □ Other, Please specify: _____

4. **Please indicate your home language:**

   _____

5. **Please indicate your marital status:**

   □ Single □ Married □ Divorced □ Cohabiting □ Widowed

6. **Please indicate whether you have any children:**

   □ No □ Yes, Please specify how many: _____

7. **Please specify your current job title:**

   _____

8. **Please specify whether you are currently in a management position at work:**
   □ Yes □ No

9. **Please specify if you have ever been in a management position before:**
   □ Yes □ No

10. **Please specify your management level (e.g. junior, middle, senior, top management)**

    _____

The Extended Personality Attributes Questionnaire

Instructions:

The items listed below consist of a pair of contradictory characteristics i.e. you cannot experience both at the same time. The numbers form a scale between both extremes that are listed. You are to select the number that describes where you fall on the scale.

Not at all aggressive	1	2	3	4	5	Very aggressive
Not at all whiny	1	2	3	4	5	Very whiny
Not at all independent	1	2	3	4	5	Very independent
Not at all arrogant	1	2	3	4	5	Very arrogant
Not at all emotional	1	2	3	4	5	Very emotional
Not at all submissive	1	2	3	4	5	Very submissive
Not at all dominant	1	2	3	4	5	Very dominant
Not at all boastful	1	2	3	4	5	Very boastful

Not at all panicked in a crisis	1	2	3	4	5	Very panicked in a crisis
Not at all passive	1	2	3	4	5	Very passive
Not at all egotistical	1	2	3	4	5	Very egotistical
Not at all able to devote oneself completely to others	1	2	3	4	5	Very able to devote oneself to others
Not at all spineless	1	2	3	4	5	Very spineless
Not at all tough	1	2	3	4	5	Very tough
Not at all complaining	1	2	3	4	5	Very complaining
Not at all helpful to others	1	2	3	4	5	Very helpful to others
Not at all considerate	1	2	3	4	5	Very considerate
Not at all competitive	1	2	3	4	5	Very competitive

Not at all shy	1	2	3	4	5	Very shy
Not at all greedy	1	2	3	4	5	Very greedy
Not at all kind	1	2	3	4	5	Very kind
Not at all anxious	1	2	3	4	5	Very anxious
Not at all forgiving	1	2	3	4	5	Very forgiving
Indifferent to the approval of others	1	2	3	4	5	Very needful to the approval of others
Not at all dictatorial	1	2	3	4	5	Very dictatorial
Not at all eager to soothe hurt feelings of others	1	2	3	4	5	Very eager to soothe hurt feelings of other
Not at all nervous	1	2	3	4	5	Very nervous
Feelings are not hurt easily	1	2	3	4	5	Feelings are very easily hurt

Does not nag at all	1	2	3	4	5	Tend to nag a lot
Not at all aware of the feelings of others	1	2	3	4	5	Very aware of the feelings of others
Not at all hard headed	1	2	3	4	5	Very hard headed
Does not worry at all	1	2	3	4	5	Tends to worry a lot
Not at all adventurous	1	2	3	4	5	Very adventurous
Has difficulty making decisions	1	2	3	4	5	Can make decisions easily
Not at all soft hearted	1	2	3	4	5	Very soft hearted
Not at all willing to take risks	1	2	3	4	5	Very willing to take risks
Not at all fussy	1	2	3	4	5	Very fussy
Gives up very easily	1	2	3	4	5	Never gives up easily

Not at all cynical	1	2	3	4	5	Very cynical
Never cries	1	2	3	4	5	Cries very easily
Not at all selfish	1	2	3	4	5	Very selfish
Not at all daring	1	2	3	4	5	Very daring
Not at all self-confident	1	2	3	4	5	Very self-confident
Looks out for oneself-unprincipled	1	2	3	4	5	Does not look out for oneself-principled
Not at all outspoken	1	2	3	4	5	Very outspoken
Tends to feel very inferior	1	2	3	4	5	Never tends to feel inferior
Not at all hostile	1	2	3	4	5	Very hostile
Not at all understanding of others	1	2	3	4	5	Very understanding of others

Never feels superior	1	2	3	4	5	Feels very superior
Not at all bossy	1	2	3	4	5	Very bossy
Very cold in relations with others	1	2	3	4	5	Very warm in relations with others
Not at all subservient	1	2	3	4	5	Very subservient
Not at all gullible	1	2	3	4	5	Very gullible
Goes to pieces under pressure	1	2	3	4	5	Stands up well under pressure
Not at all active	1	2	3	4	5	Very active
Not at all gentle	1	2	3	4	5	Very gentle
Not at all abrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Very abrupt

The Thomas- Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument

Instructions:

Consider situations in which you find your wishes differing from those of another person. How do you usually respond to such situations?

On the following pages are several pairs of statements describing possible behavioural responses. For each pair, please circle the "A" or "B" statement which is more characteristic of your own behaviour.

In many cases, neither the "A" nor the "B" statement may be very typical of your behaviour, but please select the response which you would be more likely to use.

1. A There are times when I let others take responsibility for solving the problem.
   B Rather than negotiate the things on which we disagree, I try to stress those things upon which we both agree.

2. A I try to find a compromise solution.
   B I attempt to deal with all of another's and my concerns.

3. A I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.
   B I might try to soothe the other's feelings and preserve our relationship.

4. A I try to find a compromise solution.
   B I sometimes sacrifice my own wishes for the wishes of the other person.

5. A I consistently seek the other's help in working out a solution.
   B I try to do what is necessary to avoid useless tensions.

6. A I try to avoid creating unpleasantness for myself.
   B I try to win my position.

7. A I try to postpone the issue until I have had some time to think about it.
   B I give up some points in exchange for others.

8. A I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.
   B I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.

9. A I feel that differences are not always worrying about.
   B I make some effort to get my way.

10. A I am firm in pursuing my goals.
    B I try to find a compromise solution.

11. A I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.
    B I might try to soothe the other's feelings and preserve our relationship.

12. A I sometimes avoid taking positions which would create controversy.
    B I will let another have some of their positions if they let me have some of mine.

13. A I propose middle ground.
    B I press to get my points made.

14. A I tell others my ideas and ask them for theirs.
    B I try to show another the logic and benefits of my position.

15. A I might try to soothe the other's feelings and preserve our relationship.
    B I try to do what is necessary to avoid tension.

16. A I try not to hurt the other's feelings.
    B I try to convince the other person of the merits of my position.

17. A I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.
    B I try to do what is necessary to avoid useless tensions.

18. A If it makes the other person happy, I might let them maintain their views.
    B I will let the other person have some of their positions if they let me have some of mine.

19. A I try to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.
    B I try to postpone the issue until I have had some time to think it over.

20. A I attempt to immediately work through our differences.
    B I try to find a fair combination of gains and losses for both of us.

21. A In approaching negotiations, I try to be considerate of the other person's feelings.
    B I always lean toward a direct discussion of the problem.

22. A I try to find a position that is intermediate between mine and another person's.
    B I assert my wishes.

23. A I am often concerned with satisfying all my wishes.
    B There are times when I let others take responsibility for solving problems.

24. A If the other's position seems important to them, I would try to meet their wishes.
    B I try to get the other person to settle for a compromise.

25. A I try to show the other person the logic and benefits of my position.
    B In approaching negotiations, I try to be considerate of the other person's wishes.

26. A I propose a middle ground.
    B I am nearly always concerned with satisfying all my wishes.

27. A I sometimes avoid taking positions that would create controversy.

B If it makes the other person happy, I might let them maintain their views.

28. A I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.
B I feel that differences are not always worth worrying about.

29. A I propose middle ground.
B I feel that differences are not always worth worrying about.

30. A I try not to hurt the other person's feelings.
B I always share the problem with the other person so that we can work it out.

The Warwick- Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale

Instructions:

Below are some statements about your feelings and thoughts. Please circle the response that best describes your feelings and thoughts.

Statements: **Lately ……..**	**Not at all**	**Rarely**	**Some of the time**	**Often**	**All of the time**
I've been feeling optimistic about the future	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling useful	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling relaxed	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling interested in other people	1	2	3	4	5
I've had energy to spare	1	2	3	4	5
I've been dealing with problems well	1	2	3	4	5
I've been thinking clearly	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling good about myself	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling close to other people	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling confident	1	2	3	4	5

I've been able to make up my own mind about things	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling loved	1	2	3	4	5
I've been interested in new things	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling cheerful	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX E:
NORMALITY GRAPHS

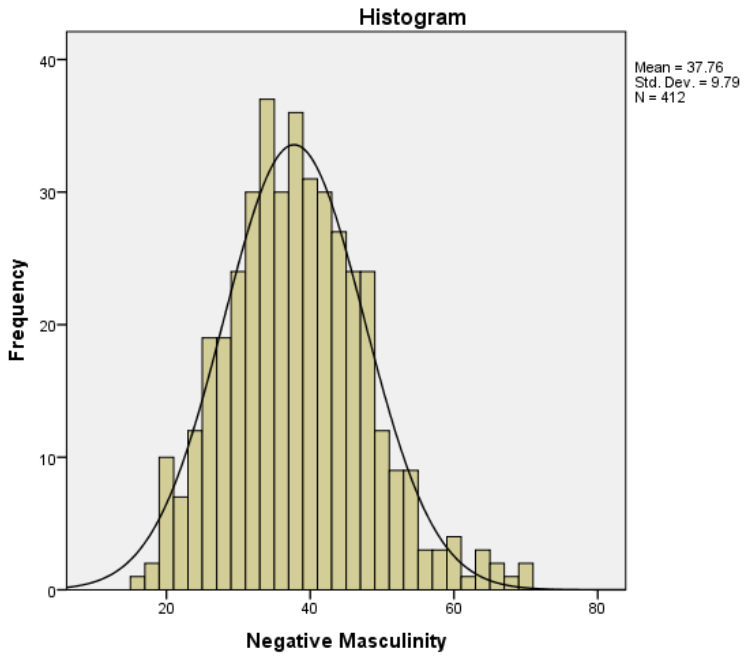
EPAQ Subscales

CMS Subscales

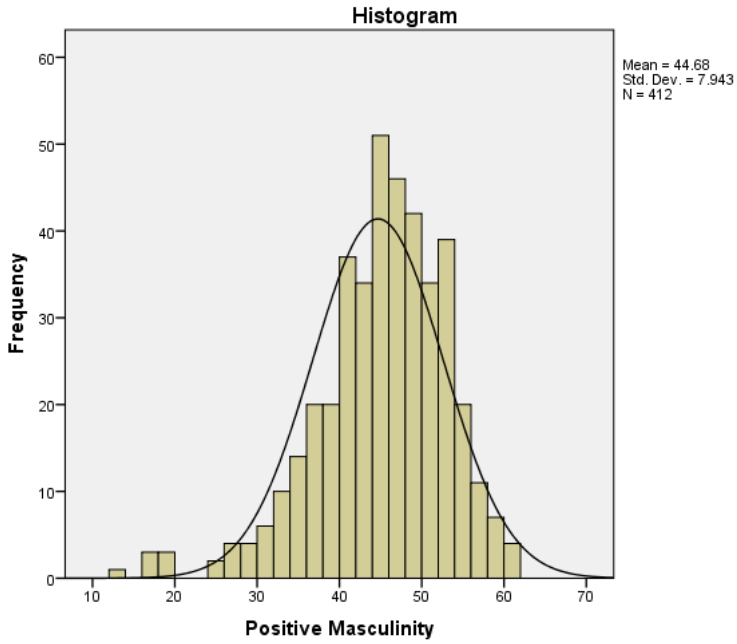
Psychological Wellbeing

Histogram Displaying Normality Curve for the EPAQ Subscales

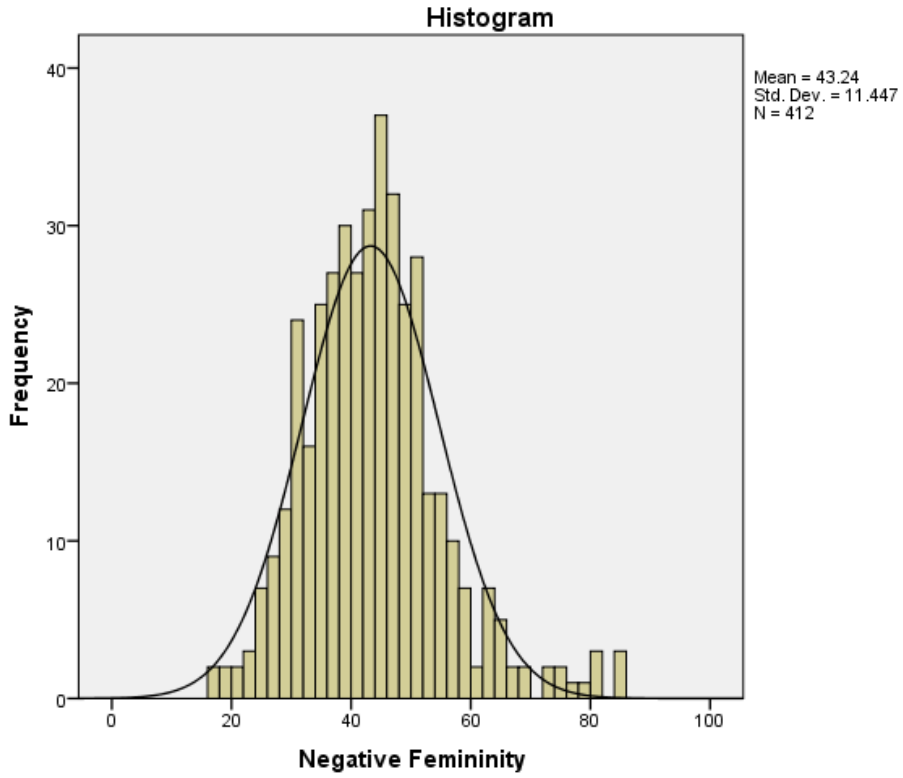
Negative Masculinity



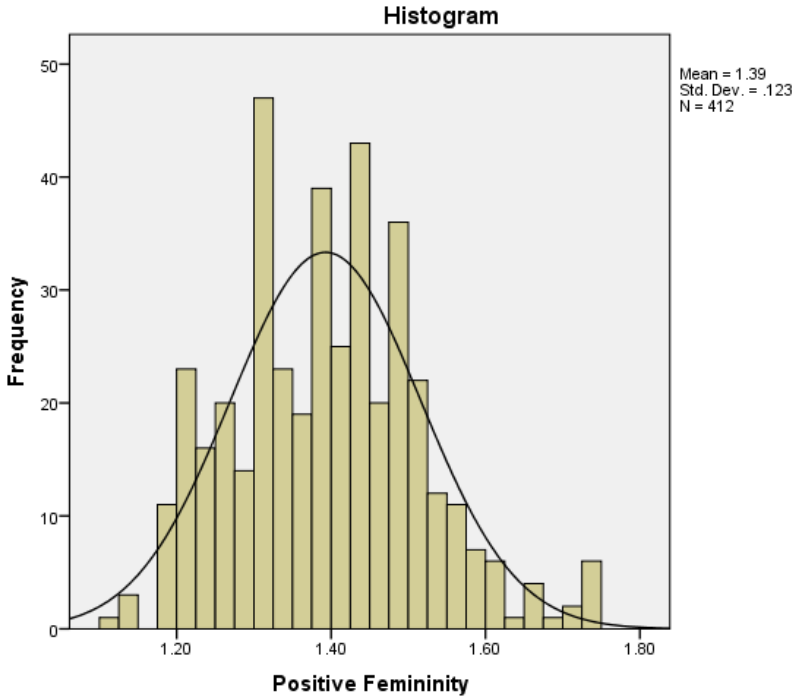
Positive Masculinity



Negative Femininity

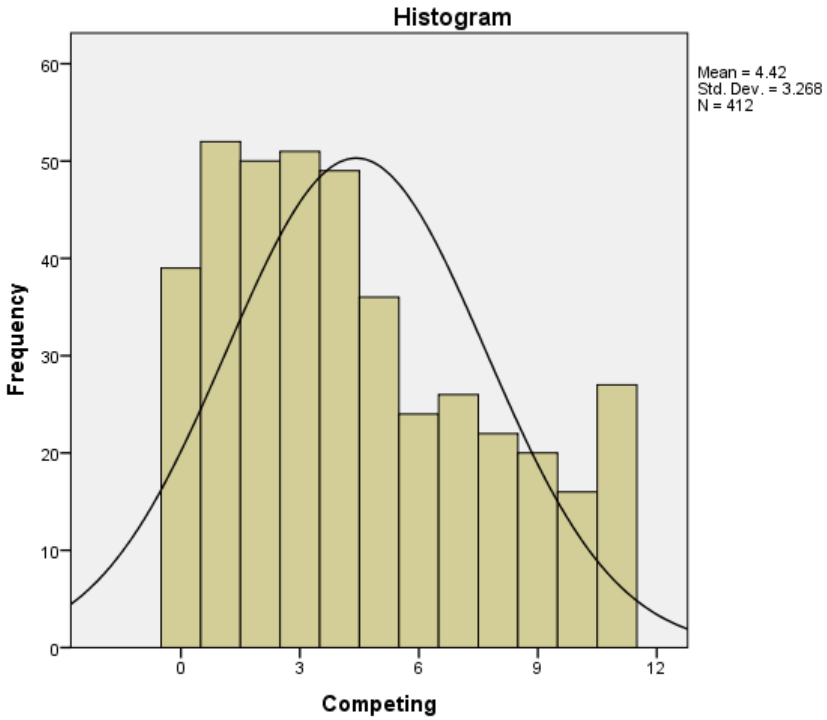


Positive Femininity

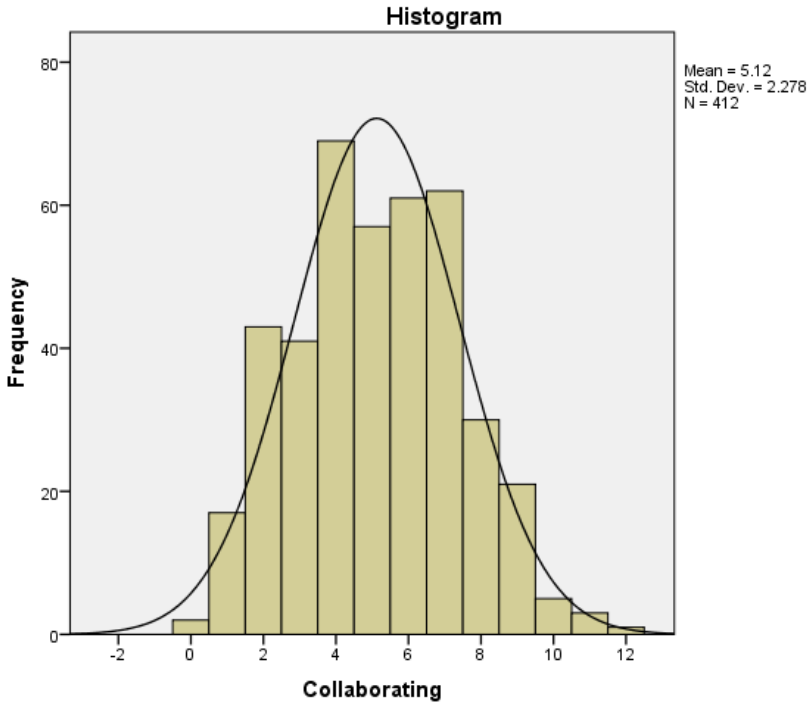


Histogram Displaying Normality Curve for the CMS Subscales

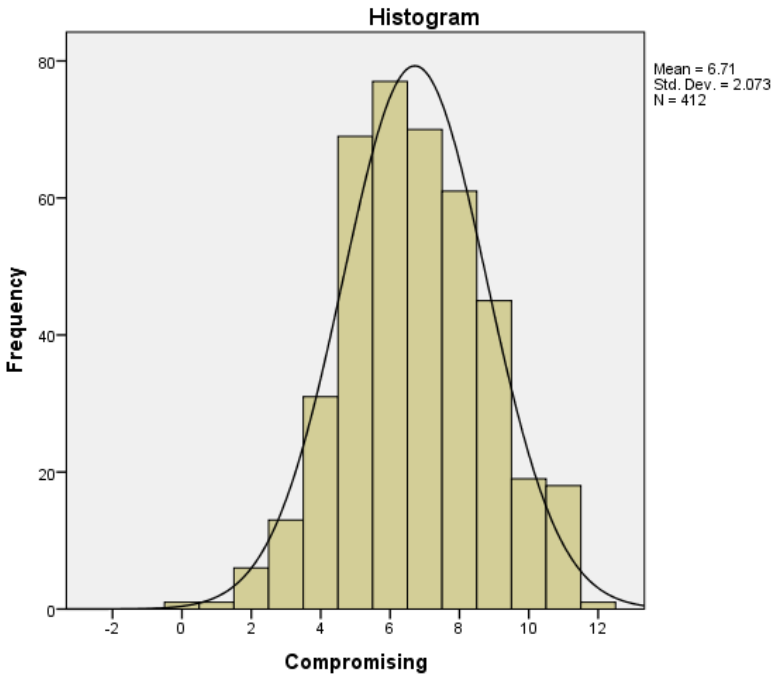
Competing



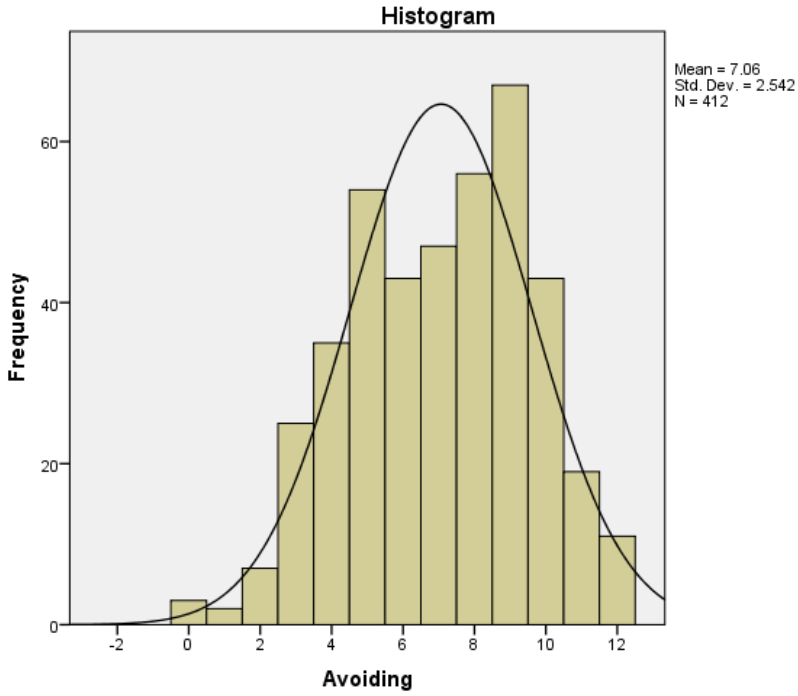
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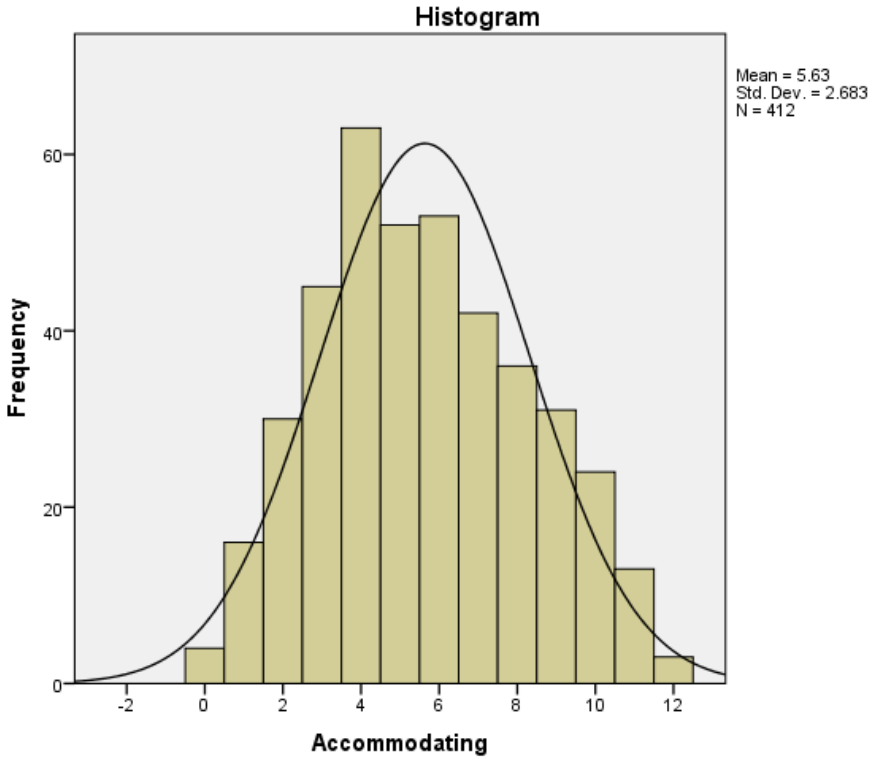
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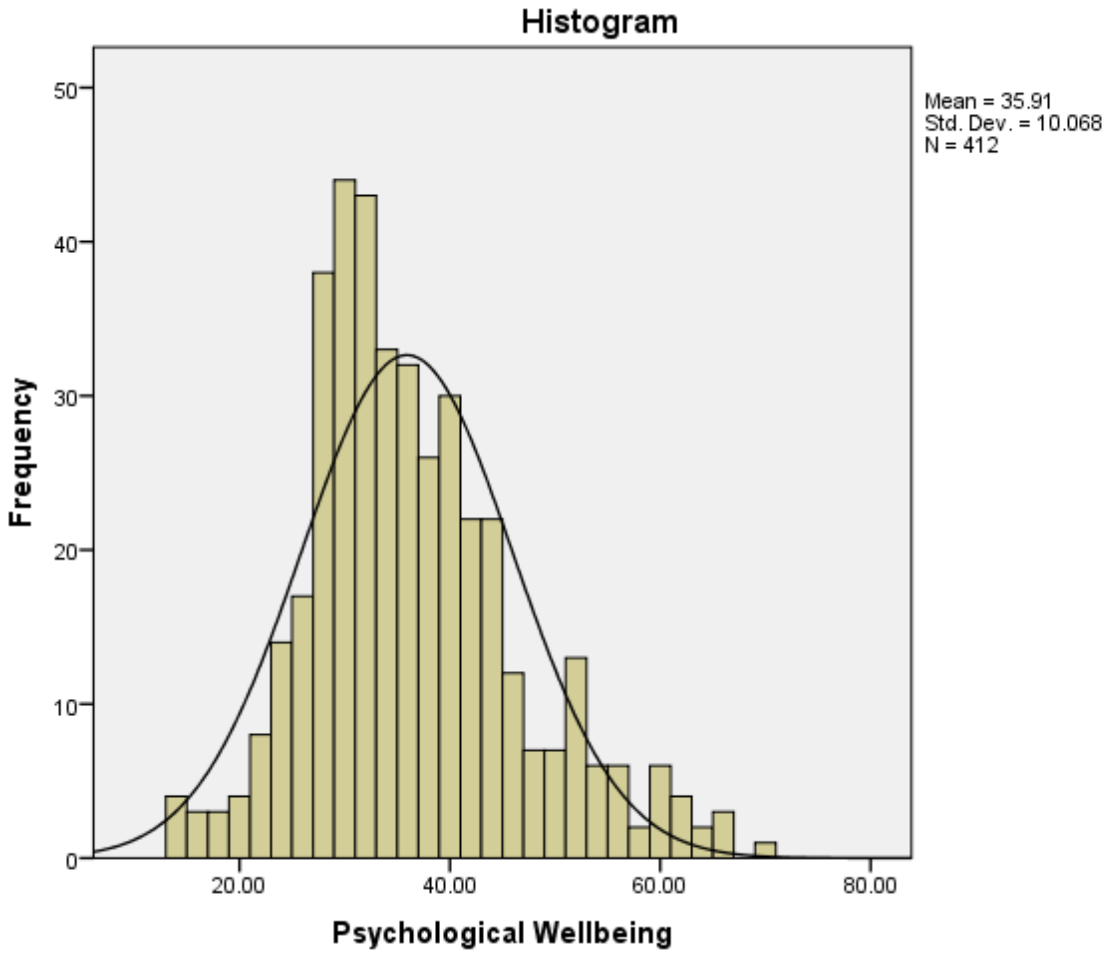
Avoiding



Accommodating



Histogram Displaying Normality Curve for the Psychological Wellbeing



APPENDIX F:
CHI- SQUARE ANALYSIS

Sex Role Identities and Current Managerial Level

Examining the Impact of Management Levels on Sex Role Identities

Investigating the relationship between current managerial level and sex role identities

The chi- square analysis tested the following hypothesis:

H_o= Current Managerial Level and SRI are not associated with each other
H_1= Current Managerial Level and SRI are associated with each other

As indicated within Table 29, the null hypothesis was rejected indicating that there is some association between current managerial level and sex role identity ($\chi_{(24)}^2$= 55.656, p<.05). To determine how significant the difference is among these two variables, the Cramer's V value was used indicating a small difference among the two variables (φ_c = 0.184, p <.05).

Table 29

Chi- Square Tests table illustrating the inferential statistics

	Value	**df**	**Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)**
Pearson Chi- Square	55.656	24	0.000

In order to understand where some of the differences between the two variables occur, it is essential to examine the cross-tabulation table. Table 30 displays the occurrences among the different categories within current managerial level and sex role identities.

Table 30

*Current Managerial Level * Sex Role Identity Cross-tabulation table displaying the descriptive statistics*

		Conflict Management Styles					
Sex Role Identity		**Top Management**	**Senior Management**	**Middle Management**	**Junior Management**	**Non-managerial**	**Total**
A+	Count	5	11	14	4	37	71
A-	Count	11	15	12	8	44	90
F+	Count	5	5	9	5	51	75
F-	Count	6	15	10	3	33	67
M+	Count	17	9	7	1	10	44
M-	Count	4	9	5	3	19	40
UA	Count	4	3	6	3	9	25
Total	Count	52	67	63	27	203	412

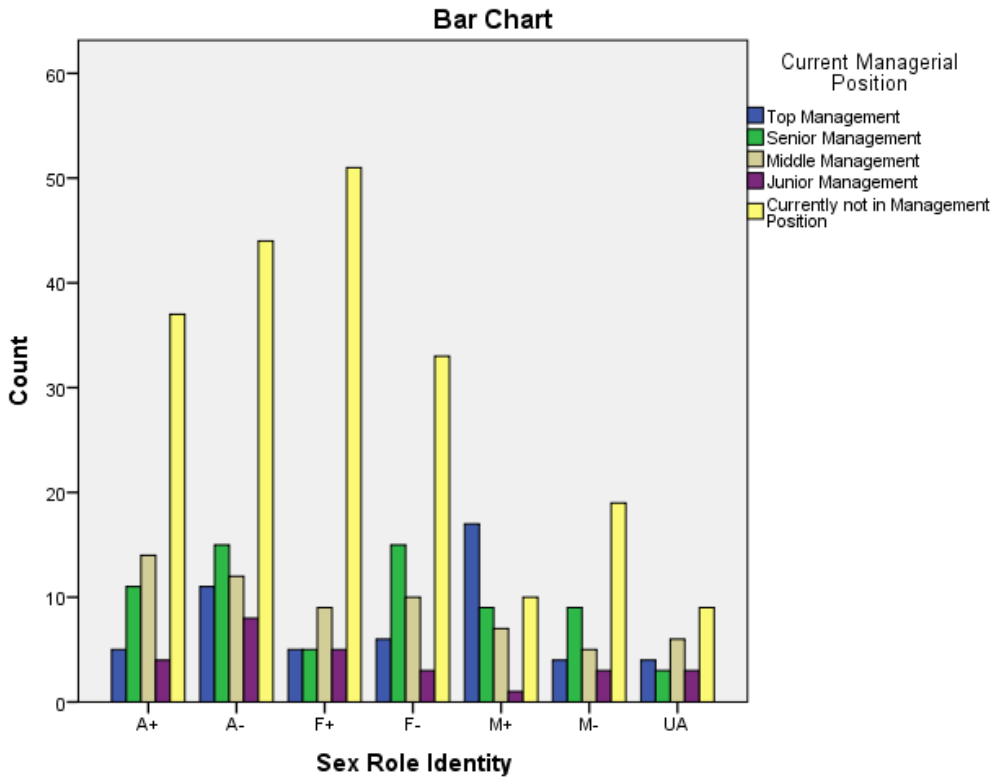


Figure 17. Clustered bar chart for Chi- Square analysis for current management level* sex role identity