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THE PREVALENCE OF INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT IN THE WORK PLACE AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO GENDER, FUNCTIONAL POSITION AND STYLE OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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THE PREVALENCE OF INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT IN THE WORK PLACE AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO GENDER, FUNCTIONAL POSITION AND STYLE OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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ABSTRACT

At present there is limited research on the prevalence of interpersonal conflict in the workplace. This study developed an escalation model on interpersonal conflict in the workplace and used it to research the prevalence of interpersonal conflict in the workplace and its interaction with conflict resolution styles. One hundred and twenty three employees from a public and a private organisation responded to a questionnaire, which included the Rahim Organisational Conflict Inventory. The results of this study identified that the prevalence of interpersonal conflict in the workplace is very high and that this prevalence decreased as the intensity of the conflict increased. Furthermore, the findings suggested that peoples' use of conflict resolution strategies vary as the intensity of the conflict increases. Lastly, the prevalence of conflict resolution styles in this study did not match previous research findings on cultural differences in dealing with interpersonal conflict. The implications of this study are that extensive research should be conducted on the escalation model of interpersonal conflict in the workplace. This would establish national norms so organisations could use these to determine whether their organisation has too little or too much interpersonal conflict.

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