

Managerial Values in Transcultural Conflicts in South Africa

Findings from the Schwartz-Value-Model

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Abstract

The significant globalisation and post-apartheid challenges faced by managers in international organisations in South Africa are well known. Coping with transcultural conflicts is one of the major challenges. The aim of this article is to assess managerial values and their occurrence in transcultural conflicts in the international automotive organisation in South Africa. The Schwartz Value Model is used as theoretical background. This empirical study is a qualitative case study research. It presents selected qualitative findings on values in transcultural conflicts in the selected organisation. Findings show culture-specific insights into the selected international South African organisations and lead to conclusions and recommendations for further research and international management in South Africa.

Keywords: *transcultural conflicts, managers, Schwartz Value Model, South Africa, values*

Introduction

Value research across cultures has gained interest during the past decades (Harris, Daniels and Briner 2003; Malka and Chatman 2003; Spini 2003), and has been conducted across disciplines such as social psychology (Bond, 2004; Pool 2000; Schwartz and Bardi 2001), development psychology (Colby and Kohlberg 1978; Kohlberg 1976; Piaget 1984), cultural psychology (Hofstede 1985, 1993, 1997, 1998; Triandis 1995), organisational psychology (Von Rosenstiel 2003), sociology (Inglehart and Abramson 1994; Klages and Gensicke 2006), political sciences (Huntington and Harrison 2004) and management sciences (Fish, Bhanugopan and Cogan 2008). However, most of this research has been conducted in Western rather than in African contexts.

The emergence of international co-operation and global changes, as well as the increase in transcultural encounters, has changed social, political and economic value sets in South Africa as well as the way business is conducted. The political shift from apartheid to democracy has impacted on the international South African automotive industry. Because of these changes, managers of diverse cultural origins and cultural values are working together more closely, experiencing challenging transcultural [1] interactions and work-related conflicts on a daily basis. These conflicts are often connected to perceived differences in interpersonal value sets. This study focuses on the perceived differences in the interpersonal value set of managers in the South African organisational context.

This is extremely important, not least for historical reasons, because management in South Africa is often based on Western principles (Beaty 1996; Binedell 1992; Christie 1996; Manning 1997), even though the face of South African management is becoming more diverse and inclusive of all cultural groups. This trend poses a challenge to the dominant management values and practices (Anstey 1997; Beaty and Booyesen 1998; Booyesen 1999; Booyesen 2000). Value shifts and multiple value concepts are connected to organisational and individual managerial processes (Gandal, Roccas, Sagiv and Wrzesniewski 2005; Smith, Peterson and Schwartz 2002).

This study contributes to understanding (emic) managerial values which could improve the comprehension of action-motivation and at the same time reduce the potential for (transcultural) conflict

in the globalising and diversifying South African organisational context. This is particularly important since differences in values of managers can lead to conflicting experiences and impact negatively on the organisation (Berkel 2005; Kluckhohn and Stroedtbeck 1961; Wallace, Hunt and Richards 1999).

The purpose of this article is to contribute to an increase in understanding value conflicts in the international automotive management context in South Africa, and thereby develop new ideas about how to manage conflicts more effectively across cultures.

The two central research questions are:

- Which values are important in managerial transcultural conflicts?
- Which values are important regarding the Schwartz Value Model (SVM)?

From a methodological and theoretical viewpoint, the application of the SVM to a South African organisational context contributes to the body of knowledge about values in transcultural conflicts (Schwartz, 1992, 1994). This article adds to filling the void of value research in a South African organisational management context by focusing on transcultural conflicts and using the SVM as a theoretical base.

The South African Contest

South Africa has undergone tremendous change on societal, political, economic and individual levels in the post-apartheid era (Hart 2002). This process of “double transition” (Webster and Adler, 1999) -- both the socio-political intra-national transformation since 1994 and increasing globalisation trends -- has impacted on values and management in the society and in organisations. Owing to the increase in cultural complexity, hybrid managerial identities and transculturality in South African management contexts, new transcultural management approaches as well as new communication techniques and ways of thinking are required (Luthans, van Wyk and Walumbwa 2004). Managers need to prepare for managing complex transcultural situations with differences in value sets and understanding of managerial realities. Employees need to be empowered (Denton and Vloeberghs 2003) by gaining a deeper insight into the value-orientations of their colleagues, and understanding their perceptions and interpretations inside management.

Understanding the value concepts of colleagues and employees in an organisation can also increase the understanding of societal transcultural conflicts, particularly, since these conflicts – which are often based on differences in values – tend to spill over into organisations (Booyesen and Nkomo 2007; Bornman 2003; Chrobot-Mason, Ruderman, Weber, Ohlott and Dalton 2007). Not only the recognition and comprehension of societal and organisational values and their complex interrelationships are important, but also the understanding of how these values influence communication processes (Fletcher, 1999) and conflict situations across members of various cultural groups. This is due to the fact that transcultural miscommunication and the impact of cultural diversity can lead to transcultural conflicts, if not well managed (Booyese, 2001; van der Waal 2002). At the same time, it needs to be considered that globalisation trends and intra-national value shifts may result in further value shifts (Boness 2002; Mayer 2001).

Several authors (Booyesen, in Nel, van Dyk, Haasbroek, Schultz, Sono and Werner 2004:177) emphasise that in South African management contexts, cultural awareness needs further consideration to promote transcultural and healthy organisational cultures (Booyese, 2001; Viljoen and Rothman 2002).

Values and conflicts in African organisational contexts

“Human values” are commonly defined as trans-situational goals that vary in importance and that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or a group (Mayton, Ball-Rokeach and Loges 1994; Rohan 2000; Rokeach 1973; Schwartz 1992). Such values are essentially viewed both as interlinked with the cultural background of a person (Kitayama and Markus 1991) and as dialectic and contradictory (Stewart, Danielian and Foster 1998). Differences in values often contribute to interpersonal conflicts (Moore 1996), particularly when values are experienced as competing or incompatible (Berkel 2005). Clashing

values are common phenomena, particularly in diverse and transcultural settings (Miller, Glen, Jaspersen and Karmokolias 1997) as in the context of this study.

In organisational contexts, value conflicts are often negotiated (Berkel 2005; Bond 1998; Kluckhohn and Stroedbeck 1961; Wallace, Hunt and Richards 1999). Employees need to exchange their ideas on values and the reason for their value priorities with regard to certain actions which are founded in their personal and cultural value set (Mayer, 2008).

Values conflicts need to be managed (Gandal, Roccas, Sagiv and Wrzesniewski 2005; Smith, Peterson and Schwartz 2002). Adequate conflict management models are needed to manage value conflicts effectively and successfully. These required conflict management models focus on assessing underlying value concepts (Horowitz and Boardman 1994; Wall and Callister 1995). On the base of this study and the recognition of specific values concepts, particular transcultural and value-based communication techniques can be developed. Research has shown that open communication and value discourses generally contribute to managerial co-operation and conflict management (Druckmann, Broom and Korper 1988). This study aims at opening up value discourses to improve conflict management and managerial co-operation.

Western research on transcultural values has intensified, and increasingly focuses on the African continent (Burgess and Harris, 1998; Schwartz and Bardi 2001; Schwartz, Melech, Lehmann, Burgess, Harris, and Owens 2001). Multiple nation studies have included African countries (Neto et al. 2000; Smith, Peterson and Schwartz 2002): while research particularly on cultural, racial or professional subgroups in African societies, like South Africa, has intensified (Bluen and Barling 1983; Mayer 2008; Watkins, McInerney, Akande and Lee 2003). In the South African context, Kropp and Lindsay (2001) highlight the differences in value between White and Black South African entrepreneurs. The findings indicate that, compared to White South Africans, Black South Africans experience a greater sense of accomplishment, a greater sense of belonging, more fun and enjoyment in life and a greater sense of security, in addition to considering themselves as being more well-respected and having a greater sense of self-fulfilment.

The Schwartz Value Model: Value domains and dimensions

Values are cognitive representations that form patterns of thoughts and actions (Kluckhohn and Stroedbeck 1961). Schwartz (1994:24) states that values are “desirable trans-situational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or other social entity. Implicit in this definition of values as goals is that (1) they serve the interests of some social entity; (2) they can motivate action – giving it direction and emotional intensity; (3) they function as standards for judging and justifying action; and (4) they are acquired both through socialization to dominant group values and through the unique learning experience of individuals”.

The SVM was developed in the 1980s (Schwartz and Bilsky 1987) and has been (re-) evaluated and extended (Schwartz 1999, 2007). Schwartz and Bilsky (1987:551) have defined ten value domains, as shown in Table 1. These universal value domains carry culture-specific implications and variations (Schwartz 1994:19). According to Schwartz (2007:711), “being helpful and forgiving are highly valued across most groups and societies”.

Values are related through dynamic interactions with, and dependencies on, each other. Every action strives to fulfil value requirements. Bordering value domains are more transparent than value domains that are in opposition. Schwartz (1994:22pp) presents the relationship patterns of conflict and compatibilities between values and value priorities as in Figure 1:

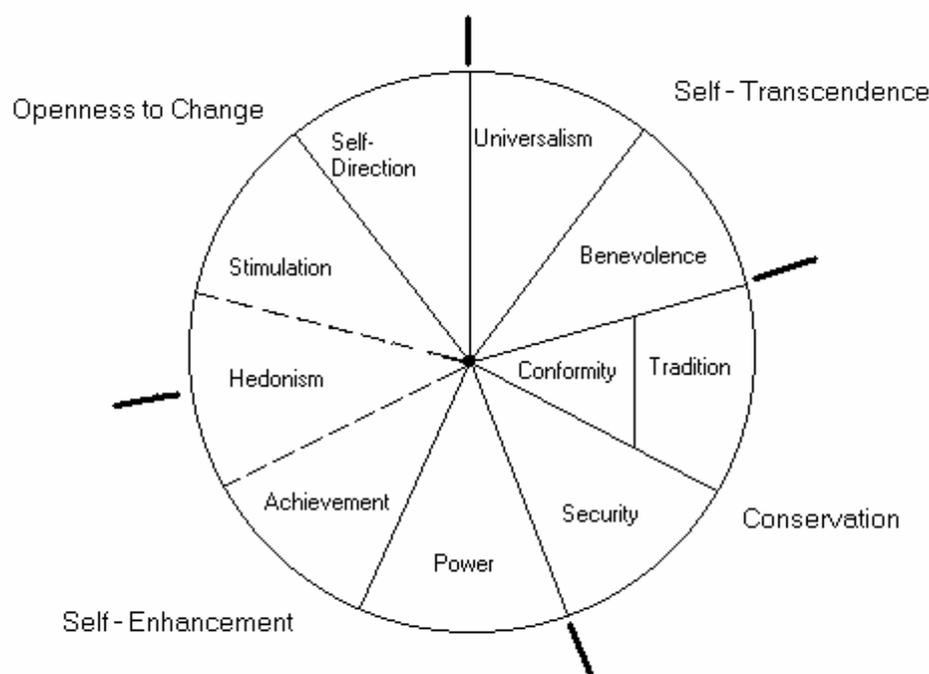


Figure 1: Model 1 of Motivational Value Domains and Dimensions

Source: Boness (2002, p. 180), Mayer (2001, p. 29), Schwartz (1994, pp. 24-25). Further on, Table 1 provides a short definition of value domains and the associated exemplary values (Schwartz, 1994:22).

Definition Value Domain	Exemplary values
Power: Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources	Social power, authority, wealth
Achievement: Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards	Successful, capable, ambitious
Hedonism: Pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself	Pleasure, enjoying life
Stimulation: Excitement, novelty and challenge in life	Daring, varied and/or exciting life
Self-direction: Independent thought and choice of action, creating, exploring	Creativity, curiosity, freedom
Universalism: Understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature	Broad-minded, social justice, equality
Benevolence: Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact	Helpful, honest, forgiving
Tradition: Respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide	Humble, devout, accepting my 'portion in life'

Conformity: Restraint of actions, inclinations and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms	Politeness, obedience, honouring parents and elders
Security: Safety, harmony and stability of society, of relationships and of self	National security, social order, cleanliness

Table 1: Motivational Value Domains and Exemplary Values

The SVM has been validated by different researchers (Oishi, Schimmack, Diener and Suh 1998; Sagiv & Schwartz, 2007; Schwartz and Bardi 2001; Schwartz and Sagiv 1995; Spini 2003). Schwartz and Sagiv (1995) have re-evaluated the propositions of the SVM and provided criteria for identifying culture-specific value meanings and structure. They confirm the widespread presence of ten value types, arrayed on a motivational continuum and organised on the following virtually universal, orthogonal dimensions. Schwartz and Bardi (2001) have also found, beyond striking value differences in the value priorities of various groups, a widespread consensus on the hierarchical order of values.

Research Design and Methodology

Research approach and strategy

This qualitative case study within the interpretative paradigm focuses on gaining a deeper understanding of the research issue (Cheldelin, Druckman and Fast 2003), deep data and “thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1987).

Research method

An explanatory case study (Yin 2002) has been used with the intention of understanding and explaining values in transcultural conflicts from an in-depth, content-based perspective, to provide “thick” qualitative data.

Research setting

The researched organisation operates in 120 countries world-wide and belongs to one of Europe’s leading German engineering groups (Organisational, 2006). One of its largest sales regions is Southern Africa (Organisational, 2006a:65) where the organisation consists of a head office, parts division and bus and coach manufacturing plant in Gauteng, as well as a chassis assembly plant in Natal). Central to this research are the key issues of guiding organisational principles and policies regarding conflicts and values (Organisational:2006b) and diversity-related and conflict-handling policies, such as the employment equity, affirmative action and conflict management policies of the organisation are based on these principles, and are in place and well managed (Organisational, 2002a, 2002b:1).

Sampling

The sample was representative of the top and middle management levels at the selected organisation’s head office and three of its branches. Out of 110 managers, 45 agreed to participate in the interviews. In total, 45 in-depth interviews (with 37 male and 8 female managers) were analysed. In terms of nationality, 37 managers were South African; three were German; 3 each hailed from the Netherlands, Zimbabwe and England; one with South African citizenship, hailed from the Netherlands; and one neglected to record nationality. Of the 45 managers, 31 worked at the head office (Gauteng), 3 worked at branch I (Gauteng), 4 worked at branch II (Gauteng), 6 worked at branch III (Natal) and one neglected to record a place of work.

Data collection methods

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation and document analysis in accordance with the principles of case study research (Babbie and Mouton 2006:291). Open-ended interviews were constructed, using 7 interview questions, referring to the managers' subjective experiences of transcultural conflicts, conflict management, actions to resolve conflict, and managerial values, as follows:

- Please describe a specific incident of interpersonal or intergroup conflict that you have experienced personally.
- What do you think: why did the conflict take place? What were the reasons and causes of conflict in your opinion?
- What did you do to resolve it? What did the other parties do?
- How do you rate the need for outside intervention, like outside consultancy, mediation or conflict management processes in the company?
- Where do you see the need for improvement in management and conflict resolution processes in the company?
- Please describe your personal values and how they impact on your way of perceiving and managing conflict situations.
- Please describe which issues of your identity impacted on the conflict situation.

In-depth-interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

The researcher spent several weeks in the organisation to conduct observations on interactions and interpersonal relationships. Internal organisational documents, such as conflict management guidelines and organisational value guidelines were analysed. Observations and the analysis of the internal documents supported the process of data analysis and interpretation.

These qualitative data were interpreted by using the SVM. Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003:1164) note the lack of qualitative studies addressing the understanding of specific processes in organisations. This study therefore assesses values and interprets them by using a universal theory and model to understand the value constellations in transcultural conflicts. This approach made it possible to gain data on values in transcultural conflicts, and not only assess general data on managerial values. Although the researcher had wanted to use the Schwarz-Value-Survey (SVS) questionnaire to gain additional general data on the managerial values, the use of the SVS was not permitted by the HR department in the organisation.

Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted through the 5-step process of content analysis (Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Kelly, 2006: 322-326): Step 1: Familiarisation and immersion; Step 2: Inducing themes; Step 3: Coding; Step 4: Elaboration and Step 5: Interpretation and checking.

Research ethics and quality criteria

This research is based on defined research ethics that ensure the quality of data, including, among others, the respect accorded to and the rights of the managers, the creation of informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and transparency (Mayer 2008:111).

Criteria for judging qualitative research were established: confirmability (confirmation of data analysis and interpretation by another researcher), credibility (convincing and believable findings), transferability (generalisability of findings to selected contexts) and dependability (reliability of analysis and interpretation/"interrater reliability") for this organisational case study (Mayer 2008; Van der Riet and Durrheim 2008: 90).

Limitations of the study

This study is a single qualitative study which does not lead to broader generalisations of findings. It can only be generalised with regard to its specific context, and might provide new and specific insights into transcultural conflicts and underlying values. By using qualitative data and interpreting them in the frame of a quantitative model, new insights are provided particularly with regard to African management contexts, in which the SVM has hardly been used.

This case study approach is limited to a single organisation in which members of various cultural groups work. There are a broad majority of White South African managers in top and middle management positions, as in many other large international organisations in South Africa.

Findings

Values in conflicts

Based on the findings from this case study, it can be assumed that the interviewed managers were generally aware of transcultural conflicts and the underlying clashing values in the conflictual situations: 37 of the 45 managers described transcultural conflicts by referring to values, as defined and previously quoted, by Schwartz (1992, 1994) and Bardi and Schwartz (2003).[2]

In the following section, selected interview excerpts (P6 and P18) will be presented to provide insights into how managers saw transcultural conflicts and their underlying values. Following on this, values highlighted in the interviews on transcultural conflicts will be presented (frequency analysis) and values will be analysed with regard to the SVM.

Examples of values in narrations of experienced conflict

A White Zimbabwean female (P6) manager who had already spent several years in the South African organisational context described a conflict with a Black colleague:

It's sometimes extremely difficult to...ahm...work with people...from previously disadvantaged background...that aren't always active to speak...they have got possessions...but they do the work...but...they don't necessarily do it properly....or...they do it half and...it's a huge...frustration...because then you've got to come in and fix it up at the end. Nobody is perfect, I understand that...or finish the half job...and it creates a huge amount of conflict, because...you get so frustrated that you actually...eventually...sometimes...are so aggravated with that...ahm...and that has been my main problem. I worked on...when I first started I was employed to run a government tender and one of the ...so-called Blacks in our department...he was to run it on the technical side...and it was just one hiccup with the next that...it...became a nightmare and...it became huge conflict, I mean...I eventually used to scream at him without actually realising that I was doing that and I was realising that when he used to come to me and say: "Please don't shout at me." (laughing)...but that is actually what I did. And then I realised that I was actually aggressive with him and I was shouting at him and...that project has come to an end now so...that ended the conflict.

P6 referred to a "hiccup with Black colleague" which escalated into a conflict. She feared that it might be politically incorrect to talk about the incident and insisted on confidentiality. She referred to "affirmative action" and admitted that she experienced the new work circumstances and the inclusion of previously disadvantaged people into the workforce as "extremely difficult". These colleagues might take on new responsibilities and implement work properly, but had in the final analysis been given employment through governmental legislation, not through their pride in work or company commitment. She recounted a situation involving a government tender in which a Black colleague had to render assistance and the "hiccup" that occurred between the two of them.

P6's value orientations of organisational commitment and a structured and transparent work routine were not matched, and in her hurt she screamed at her colleague, who criticised her for her emotional

behaviour and lack of communication skills. She experienced it as unfair that Blacks were receiving special protection in their jobs, “simply because of their race”. The values she missed were equality, equal treatment and lack of discrimination. Her conflictual experiences at work had caused a negative attitude towards work. She observed that the Blacks were standing back, relaxing and letting others take care of the situation. The values of “pride in one’s work” and “doing one’s work properly” were important to her. She missed values of pride in work and organisational commitment on the one hand. On the other hand, she experienced a lack of equality (of race and gender) and responsibility at work with regard to her colleague and the work challenges.

Another conflict example (P18) was described by an Indian male manager who had joined the company one year ago:

Coming into the company and it has just been one year and we try very hard to...ah...work together...ahm...the team...I have only worked for one company before, so this is my second one (...). When you come to another one, you want to redefine the level of commitment and the level of your team habit and try and achieve the goals and objectives and I am in this position and it was actually new created and, you know...and people here, on this side of the company, you know the people here...when the managers...who were involved...they have actually very little knowledge of what should be going on and how long and how should they react to something and I came in and I have a very high knowledge of things and of what is going on because I have done this in the past and so...I have my...and I say this to you now, I have had my own conflict of...and you meet the people and there is just that they fear...that...at times there are things that I know and then they experience me as being to superior and too knowledgeable and so now...now I started to hold back, because, because I feel like now...I am victimised...and...ah...ah...because of that now I feel very sad about it, because now I am in a state now where...in which I feel like I’m not wanted, you know, with all this knowledge and the skills that I have...I wanted to put this in the company. I wanna increase my knowledge here, I wanna increase the business and I wanna show them that you know what, we wanna make a difference to the time before I came. Because I believe if I’m not making a difference, I don’t matter.

P18 reported a conflict titled “Share knowledge”. This Indian manager started his career in the organisation in a newly-created position one year ago. He was the only Indian staff member among White managers, and his White colleagues were uncertain about what was expected of the incumbent in the new position. At the same time, P18 was experienced as being superior and higher qualified – or too qualified? – in comparison to his colleagues. The Indian interviewee consequently “felt victimised” and started to “hold back information”. P18 valued “working hard” and “being successful at work”. He believed in teamwork, encouraging people and mutual co-operation to achieve optimum results. He confessed that he liked to be happy, because he believed that “happy people can achieve happy results”; however, his reality perception was different in that he felt disrespected and unappreciated. As a result, he did not see the conflict as a racial one, although he repeatedly emphasised that he was the only Indian manager among many Whites. He tried, however, to keep thinking positively, because “there is always light at the end of the tunnel”.

Focusing on the values and the frequencies of mentioned values in transcultural conflicts, Table 2 shows values which stay unfulfilled in transcultural conflicts according to managers interviewed in this organisation. The values shown in Table 3 were found in the in-depth interview narrations of the managers by using the 5-step process of content analysis.

VALUE	FREQUENCY
Equality	11
Communication	08

Respect	08
Open-mindedness	03
Honesty/Truth	03
Calmness	03
Appreciation	03
Politeness	03
Co-operation	03
Teamwork	02
Punctuality	02

Table 2: Values and Frequencies, Source (Mayer 2008)

These findings show that equality values and concepts of equality (including equality issues with regard to race, gender, and human equality) were highly conflictual owing to differences of definition of equality and ways of expressing and dealing with it. This might be explained by the impact of apartheid, during which inequality was implemented through laws and the political system, particularly with regard to racial definitions. Equality is here bound to racial and gender as well as to being equal before God.

The frequently-mentioned equality values were followed in frequency by values of communication (proactive, open, and transparent) and respect (for self and others). Obviously, managerial concepts of transcultural communication and respect were experienced as conflictual because of differences in perceptions and ascriptions of how these values motivate action. Particularly with regard to communication, managers experienced differences of ideal communication, which is shown by calm, respectful and rational behaviour and day-to-day interactions of managers in the organisation. Managers of all cultural groups emphasised calm communication as important. However, Black and Indian managers felt that White South African managers particularly did not act accordingly. Black and Indian managers felt disrespected in the narrated transcultural conflicts. This disrespect was mainly interpreted and ascribed to communicating with each other and the interpreted attitudes which were expected with regard to a particular behavioural pattern.

The values that were less frequently mentioned were open-mindedness, honesty and truth, calmness, appreciation (of work and persons), politeness, co-operation, team-orientation, and punctuality. Often these values were interlinked: Communication was often connected to being honest, truthful and straightforward, as well as exhibiting calm and polite communicative behaviour. In conflicts, these values were experienced as unfulfilled. This might have been caused by the fact that interviewees from the different cultural groups interpreted values such as honesty in various ways. The Afrikaans-speaking managers connected honesty with a direct and exact way of speaking, which was followed by actions. Black managers, however, linked honesty to the construction of realities between human beings. This reality construction was viewed as being flexible and changeable at any time. These two different culturally-rooted definitions of honesty clashed in the described organisational setting.

Table 3 summarises examples of the values and the reframed values mentioned in the conflict narrations. Negatively connoted values were transformed into positively connoted values through a reframing procedure. Where an interviewee spoke of bad, unfriendly behaviour, such a statement was reframed into the value of politeness. This reframing was done because values in this study are defined according to Schwartz as positive goal orientations, as highlighted above.

P1 to P45	Values and reframed values
P1	Pleasure, enjoyment, helpfulness, honesty
P2	Politeness, commitment to company, support of colleagues
P3	Transparency, truth, clear rules, regulations and orders
P4	Flexibility, prove properly, punctuality, equality of man
P5	Transparency, open communication, sensitivity
P6	Open-mindedness, equality of race and gender, pride in work, job protection, responsibility, communication
P7	Respectful behaviour, equality of race and gender, ethical principles
P8	Open-mindedness, honesty, acceptance through feedback, friendliness
P10	Punctuality, independence
P11	Competition
P13	Confidence, appreciation, openness, harmony, co-operation
P14	Equality of race
P15	Politeness, calmness
P17	Respect
P18	Working hard, success, teamwork, achievement, appreciation, equality, optimism
P20	Forgiveness, co-operation
P21	Straightforwardness, truthfulness
P22	Teamwork, politeness
P23	Acceptance, discipline, straightforwardness, commitment to company
P24	Equality of race, appreciation
P25	Racial tolerance, humanity
P27	Personal communication, time value
P29	Benefit of shareholders, clear hierarchy
P30	Self-responsibility

P32	Respect, co-operation, mutual understanding
P33	Freedom of speech, open communication, respect, honesty
P35	Calm communication, free communication
P36	Respect, equality
P37	Equal treatment
P38	Freedom of work, equality of race and gender, decent communication
P39	Trust, peaceful social environment
P40	Equality of gender, giving and taking, human equality
P41	Acceptance through adequate salary
P42	Respect, recognition
P43	Mutual respect
P44	Family values, respect for parents, calm communication
P44	Open and proactive communication, mutual respect

Table 3: Values and Reframed Values, Source: (Mayer 2008)

Value statements were mainly referring to either unfulfilled or desired values in conflictual situations. For Participant 5, for example, transparency, open communication and sensitivity were unfulfilled values which the other person involved in the conflict wished to be fulfilled.

Managerial values in relation to the Schwartz value domains and dimensions

Finally, the distribution of values was matched with the SVM regarding the value domains and dimensions of Schwartz and Bilsky (1987:550) to show the following findings.

Regarding the findings, the value domain of *universalism* was highly scored: 23 of 37 managers mentioned values attached to this domain. This leads to the assumption that universalistic values, such as respect, transparency, open-mindedness, tolerance, understanding and appreciation were highly vulnerable in conflicts and often stay unfulfilled.

The value domain of *conformity* scored second highest with 12 marks. This domain includes values such as obedience, politeness, honouring parents, sticking to norms and orders and restraint of emotional impulses, like shouting. These findings led to the assumption that interviewees valued conflict partners with a calm and polite demeanour.

The value domain of *self-direction* was also appreciated, as indicated by its score of 8 marks. This domain includes singular values such as independent thought, exploring truth, freedom and the direct expression of the personality.

The value domain of *benevolence* scored 6 marks. It contains values that serve the enhancement and welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact, for example, to be helpful, honest, forgiving and mutually giving and taking. Obviously, these kinds of values were not respected in many of the conflicts recounted, and therefore need to be re-established to guarantee effective co-operation in the company.

The value domain of *security*, which includes values such as harmony, trust in the social order and a peaceful social environment, also scored 6 marks. It is evident that the work of individuals and teams in a company is more satisfying if social parameters are accepted and valued.

Power proved another important value domain, even if not cited very often. Many conflicts that belong to another value domain are, at the same time, also attached to underlying power issues (Mayer 2008).

The domain of *stimulation* was not represented at all in the findings. This finding may be influenced by the fact that the work values of these interviewees did not necessarily coincide with stimulation values.

While there is no value domain of communication in the SVM, the value of *personal communication* proved very important for the participating interviewees in the selected organisation. Transcultural conflicts erupted as a result of differences in virtual communication. Findings showed a strong emphasis on communication in general: several managers complained that the collateral effects of digital information exchange had resulted in an abstract communication structure that was removed from any analogue, human contact.

The value dimension of *self-transcendence*, according to the value domains of Schwartz (1994, p. 19) and Schwartz and Bilsky (1987:550), comprised the highest number of values (29) mentioned. This dimension includes the value domains of *universalism* (23 values mentioned) and *benevolence* (6 values mentioned).

The *self-transcendence* dimension was followed by the dimension of *conservation* (20 values mentioned) which includes *conformity* (12 values mentioned), *security* (6 values mentioned) and *tradition* (2 values mentioned) as domains.

The counter-dimensions of *openness to change* and *self-enhancement* were mentioned in 9 and 6 value statements respectively. Openness to change contains the domains of *self-direction* (8 values mentioned), *stimulation* (no value mentioned) and partly *hedonism* (one value mentioned).

The dimension of *self-enhancement* had the lowest number of statements (6 values mentioned) and includes the domains of *power* (2 values mentioned), *achievement* (3 values mentioned) and partly *hedonism* (one value mentioned).

Discussion and Conclusion

Values in transcultural conflicts

Focusing on the first research question “Which values are important in managerial transcultural conflicts?”, managers are consciously aware of the impact of values in transcultural conflicts, as mentioned earlier in the literature review (Moore, 1996). They are quite clear about their personal value set and their value priorities, and regard values as guiding principles of their life (Feather, 1975; Schwartz, 1992). However, they seem to lack competencies in managing the dialectic and contradictory aspects of values and value sets of individuals and across colleagues (Steward, Danielian and Foster, 1998).

Highly important values in transcultural conflicts include equality, communication, respect, open-mindedness, honesty and truth, calmness, appreciation, politeness, co-operation, teamwork and punctuality. It is clear that values which have been under-represented in apartheid (Hart, 2002),

particularly, lead to conflicts in the described context in South Africa. Managers highlighted equality as one major value which still stayed unfulfilled in their work context. Values such as calm and appropriate communication, mutual respect, equality, appreciation, politeness and co-operation were experienced as missing. This shows that values which were described as “missing” in the apartheid society and which have not completely been reinstalled in post-apartheid South Africa still spill over into today’s organisations in this country (Booyesen and Nkomo, 2007).

Misunderstanding and transcultural conflict seemed to arise through miscommunication between members of different cultural groups. They particularly included values, such as non-existence of collective transparency in communication processes, as well as unacceptable and inappropriate behaviour, such as shouting or cursing. Transcultural conflicts were interpreted as occurring due to cultural variations in values across managers of different cultural groups. Managers did not seem to have appropriate skills to manage these value conflicts appropriately in all respects and therefore cultural and value diversity within the organisation could lead to transcultural conflicts, as described in the literature (Booyesen, 2001). This study therefore confirms many of the above-mentioned aspects, and emphasises that the assumptions are also valid in the South African organisational context studied.

Referring to the second central research question and SVM, the self-transcendence value dimension (Schwartz and Bilsky 1987; Schwartz 1994) was most frequently mentioned by the managers. This dimension includes the value domains of:

- *universalism* - referring to issues of respect, transparency, open-mindedness, tolerance, understanding and appreciation; and
- *benevolence* - referring to helpfulness, honesty, forgiveness, and mutual giving and taking.

The value domains of *universalism* and *benevolence* are highly appreciated values of managers working in post-apartheid South Africa, striving for globalising organisations in the period of “double transition” (Webster and Adler 1999). The values found in the domain of *universalism* and *benevolence* support coping with the “double transition” (Webster and Adler, 1999), paying respect to the diversity in the country which was destructively stressed during apartheid, and at the same time coping with values such as openmindedness and understanding in line with global trends.

These findings support Schwartz’s assumption (2007) that “being helpful” and “forgiving” are not only highly valued across most cultural groups and societies, but are also highly prioritised in organisations. Schwartz and Bardi (2001) assert that this also applies to value concepts such as equality, as supported by the findings of the study.

In this study, the value dimension of self-transcendence is followed in importance by the value dimension conservation, which includes the value domain of conformity. In this research, conformity and loyalty were also emphasised. Conformity includes values such as politeness, obedience, sticking to norms and orders, and restraining emotional impulses like shouting. Managers experienced these values as missing in transcultural conflicts in the selected organisation, and ascribed this organisational value trend to the “influence of the German organisational culture” which was experienced as emphasising strict hierarchies and rigid values, such as obedience, sticking to norms and orders, control and conformity (Mayer 2008).

The methodological approach

The qualitative research criteria were followed throughout the data analysis: confirmability (two researchers confirmed the data analysis and interpretation independently and thereby contributed to the “inter-subjective validation process”), credibility (the findings are believable and convincing), transferability (the generalisability from findings to selected contexts is given) and dependability (reliability of analysis and interpretation/“interrater reliability”).

The qualitative methodological approach and the in-depth interviews showed that values in transcultural conflicts, such as equality, can have different (cultural) meanings. This was also found by Schwartz, (1992). The variations in value meanings could be analysed through the qualitative approach, using

content analysis. The SVS questionnaire would not have been able to assess the meanings. This study therefore does not only contribute to the body of knowledge on meanings of culture-specific values in transcultural conflicts in South Africa.

Recommendations

Recommendations can be given with regard to future research as well as to managing values and thereby transcultural conflicts in the South African organisational context.

Future research should focus on further exploring the inter-relationship of values and transcultural conflicts in managers with regard to their cultural background. If possible, multi-method studies should be conducted, using the SVS as well as in-depth interviews to further explore values, transcultural conflict and cultural and organisational influences in-depth and from different perspectives.

International organisations investing in South Africa should be made aware of the strong cultural diversity within the organisation and the strong impact of historical issues in the organisational context, as well as the variations in values. Managers should be trained in diversity and transcultural conflict management to be able to respond to the growing complexity of international management.

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[1] In this research, the term "transcultural" is used in accordance with the concept of transculturality according to Welsch (1999): The concept is a "consequence of the inner differentiation and complexity of modern cultures" (Welsch, 1999:196) and of "external networking" (Welsch 1999:197). Cultures are defined as being characterised by hybridisation and inner complexity. Transculturality is therefore viewed as a new cultural condition in which culture is not defined as homogeneous and coherent, but rather as a network of various hybrid aspects which are dynamic and interlinked (Welsch, 1999). This new cultural concept appears as a consequence of migration processes, material and immaterial communication

systems, and economic interdependencies and dependencies. These aspects are all relevant with regard to the post-apartheid South African context which is strongly hybrid, e.g. with regard to socio-cultural, political, global and African cultures and identities (Mayer, 2008).

[2] The narratives of P12, P16, P19, P26, P28, P31 and P34 do not include any value statements and are excluded from the analysis.