

Contributory Factors to Conflict in Intimate Relationships among Students: The case of the University of Venda

By

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned **Manjowe Joyce (11613014)**, hereby declare that this research being submitted by me for the degree of Master of Arts in Youth In Development has not been previously submitted for a degree at this or any other higher institution of learning and that it is my own work in design and execution and that all reference materials contained therein have been fully acknowledged.

Signature Date

Manjowe Joyce (11613024)

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents, Mr Nicholas Manjowe and Mrs Margaret Manjowe, my lovely sisters, Florence, Moreblessing and Nyasha, and my brothers, Munyaradzi, Takudzwa and Allen for their invaluable support throughout my academic journey. Their guidance and encouragement kept me going. Above all, I dedicate this work to the Almighty God for all the guidance and protection throughout my studies.

ABSTRACT

Conflicts in intimate relationships causes enormous problems for the well-being of individuals. Young people are particularly vulnerable as they may make bad choices or decisions that may breed conflict in their relationships. This may have far-reaching implications on their well-being. Such conflicts may lead to stress, isolation, violence and suicide among other things. The rate of conflict in intimate relationships has greatly increased among youths. The aim of this study was to explore the contributory factors to conflict in intimate relationships among students at the University of Venda. This study used a qualitative research approach and was exploratory in nature. The study was conducted at the University of Venda, Thohoyandou in Limpopo province, South Africa. The population of the study comprised of University of Venda's students. Non-probability purposive technique was used for the selection of the study sample. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The interview guide was pre-tested in a pilot study involving the research participants to identify errors in the research questions and to ensure that the data collected would be relevant and as precise as possible. Findings from this study revealed how conflicts are bred in intimate relationships and the ways in which students react and deal with the conflict in intimate relationships. The research recommended that there should be laws enforced to protect the people in intimate relationships.

Key words: *Conflict, intimacy, intimate relationship, student, university, young people*

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
DECLARATION	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
DEDICATION	iii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	x
LIST OF TABLES.....	xi
CHAPTER 1	1
1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY.....	2
1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	3
1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	3
1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	4
1.5.1 Aim of the study.....	4
1.5.2 Objectives of the study	5
1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	5
1.7 MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY	5
1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW	5
1.8.1 Styles of conflict	6
1.8.1.1 Compromising style of conflict	6
1.8.1.2 Collaborative style of conflict	6
1.8.1.3 Competitive struggling.....	7
1.8.1.4 Avoiding-conflict style.....	7
1.8.1.5 The yielding/ accommodating conflict style	7
1.8.2 Contributory factors to conflicts in intimate relationships.....	8
1.8.2.1 Alcohol and substance abuse.....	8
1.8.2.2 Communication.....	9
1.8.2.3 Insecurity.....	9
1.8.2.4 Cultural differences.....	9
1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	10
1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	10
1.11 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY	10

1.12 DEFINITION OF THE MAJOR CONCEPTS	10
1.12.1 Conflict	10
1.12.2 Intimate relationship.....	11
1.12.3 Intimacy.....	11
1.12.5 Wellbeing	11
1.13 CHAPTER OUTLINE	11
Chapter 1.....	11
Chapter 2.....	11
Chapter 3.....	12
Chapter 4.....	12
Chapter 5.....	12
CHAPTER 2	13
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	13
2.1. INTRODUCTION.....	13
2.2. BACKDOUND OF THE STUDY.....	14
2.3. FREQUENCY OF CONFLICTS IN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS.....	14
2.4. LEGISLATION ON INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS.....	15
2.5. NATURE OF CONFLICTS.....	16
2.6. TYPES OR STYLES OF CONFLICTS	17
2.6.1 Compromising style of conflict	17
2.6.2 Collaborative style of conflict	18
2.6.3 Competitive struggling style	18
2.6.4 Avoiding-conflict style.....	18
2.6.5 The yielding/ accommodating conflict style	19
2.7. POSITIVE ASPECTS OF CONFLICTS.....	20
2.8. NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF CONFLICTS.....	21
2.9. CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS TO CONFLICTS IN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS.....	22
2.9.1 Alcohol and substance abuse.....	23
2.9.2 Communication.....	24
2.9.3 Insecurity, jealousy and possessiveness	25
2.9.4 Failure to balance school work and relationship	26
2.9.5 Cultural differences.....	26
2.10. LEVELS OF CONFLICT	27

2.11. OUTCOMES OF CONFLICT	27
2.12. CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES	28
2.13. STEPS IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION.....	30
2.13.1 Address recurring, disturbing issues	30
2.13.2 Identify new desired behaviours	30
2.13.3 Identify perceptions to change	31
2.13.4 Summarize your partner’s perspective.....	31
2.13.5 Generate alternative win-win solutions	31
2.14. SUMMARY.....	31
CHAPTER 3	33
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	33
3.1. INTRODUCTION	33
3.2. RESEARCH METHOD.....	33
3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN	34
3.4. AIM OF THE STUDY	34
3.5. POPULATION AND LOCATION OF THE STUDY.....	35
3.5.1. Population of the study.....	35
3.5.2. Location of the study	35
3.6. SAMPLING PROCEDURE	35
3.7. DATA COLLECTION METHODS.....	36
3.7.1 Secondary data collection.....	36
3.7.2 Primary data collection	37
3.8. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT	37
An interview guide was used to.....	37
3.9 DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS	37
Content analysis.....	38
3.9.1 Familiarization.....	38
3.9.2 Identifying a thematic framework	38
3.9.3 Indexing.....	38
3.9.4 Charting.....	39
3.9.5 Mapping and interpretation	39
3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	39
3.10.1 Informed consent.....	39

3.10.2. Voluntary participation	39
3.10.3. No harm to participants	40
3.10.4. Anonymity	40
3.10.5. Plagiarism	40
3.11. PILOT TESTING	41
3.11.1. Reliability	41
3.11.2. Validity	41
3.11.3. Trustworthiness	42
3.13. SUMMARY	42
CHAPTER 4	43
4. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS	43
4.1 INTRODUCTION	43
4.2 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENTS OR PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS	43
4.3 EMOTIONAL FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO CONFLICT IN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS	45
4.3.1 Factors caused by lack of attention in intimate relationships	45
4.4 SOCIAL PROBLEMS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO CONFLICT INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP	48
4.5 CULTURAL DIFFERENCES WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO CONFLICT IN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS	53
4.6 STUDENTS' REACTION TOWARDS CONFLICT IN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS	57
4.7 STUDENTS' WAYS OF DEALING WITH CONFLICT IN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS	59
4.8 CONCLUSION	64
CHAPTRE 5	65
5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	65
5.1 INTRODUCTION	65
5.2 AIM OF THE STUDY	65
5.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF THE STUDY	65
5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY	67
5.3.1 Recommendations for society	67
5.3.2 Recommendations for policy	67
5.3.3 Recommendations for Youth Work Profession	67
5.3.4 Recommendations for Future Research	68
5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	68
5.5 CONCLUSION	68
REFERENCES	70

ANNEXTURE A: ESTIMATED BUDGET FOR THE RESEARCH STUDY	76
ANNEXTURE B: PROPOSED WORK PLAN FOR THE RESEARCH	78
ANNEXTURE C: ETHICS LETTER.....	80
ANNEXTURE D: CONSENT LETTER.....	81
ANNEXTURE E: PROOF READING LETTER.....	82
ANNEXTURE F: PLAGIARISM REPORT.....	83
ANNEXTURE G: INTERVIEW GUIDE	84

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

UNIVEN: University of Venda

SA: South Africa

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE

PAGE

Table 4.1 Profile of Respondents in intimate relationships

41

CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Even the healthiest relationships at times experience conflict. This basically means that people who care about one another often find it essential to make vital decisions. In the process of doing so, the intimate partners may find that people differ in perceptions and views. These differences may happen around the description of a problem, how it is to be solved or even what is assumed to be an appropriate outcome. The vital thing to recall is that people who care and love each other do not constantly think or act alike, hence conflicts arise.

Conflicts in intimate relationships cause enormous problems for the well-being of individuals. Young people are particularly vulnerable as they may make bad choices or decisions that may breed conflict in their relationships which may in turn have far-reaching implications on their well-being. Such conflicts may lead to stress, isolation, violence and suicide, among other things. This study examines conflicts in intimate relationships, their causes and how university students react and deal with these conflicts.

Conflicts in intimate relationships among college students are common all over the world. In support of this view, Yabiku and Gager (2009:188) argue that young people experience many problems in their intimate relationships. According to these scholars, problems encountered in intimate relationships are also experienced by more than half of the population of the students worldwide. This means that since most young people, including college students, are at one stage in their lives involved in some kind of intimate relationships. They are likely to encounter some form of conflict, be it positive or negative.

Conflict is unavoidable in intimate relationships (Papa and Canary, 1995). Partners enter into the relationship with different family backgrounds, ways of communication, cultural values, religious beliefs, norms, goals and expectations. When partners fail to reconcile these differences, conflicts are likely to arise as a way to prove that their needs are not the same (Papa and Canary, 1995). Previous studies have shown that the major areas of conflict in intimate relationships are communication difficulties, sexual morals and values in a relationship, personality, division of household duties, relationships with families and friends, issues of jealous and insecurities and

substance abuse (Schaap, Buunk, and Kerkstra, 1988). Conflicts are caused by a couple of factors some of which were explored in this study. The purpose of the study was to explore the contributory factors to conflict in intimate relationships among students in South African rural university.

This chapter covers of the introduction and background of the study whereby the researcher explained what the research is all about. Aims and objectives of the study as well as the motivation of the study were also discussed in this chapter. This chapter also points out the relevance of the topic to social work discipline as well as justification of the study. The chapter also foregrounds the literature reviewed in the study as well as the research methodology employed in the study. In addition, the delimitation of the study is explained and key terms and concepts are defined. Lastly, an outline of the chapters whereby the researcher gives a brief explanation of the issues covered in each chapter was also given in this chapter.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Conflicts in intimate relationships among college students are common in each and every university or college all over the world. The study therefore is going to point out what is conflict and causes of these conflicts in relationships. Yabiku and Gager (2009:188) posits the problems that are associated with intimacy in other words, these indicates the conflicts that are encountered in intimate relationships as well by college students. More than half of the population of the students worldwide are or were once involved in some kind of intimate relationships at some point, making it a point that the couples were once engaged into some form of conflict, be it positive or negative.

Among other the contributory factors to conflicts in intimate relationships, jealousy is one of the commonest factors that contributes towards conflicts among couples (Sahlstein, 2004:660). Jealousy in intimate relationships can cause conflicts when partners have a feeling that others might interest their partner more than they do. This leads to partners fighting. Lack of communication or poor communication either verbal or non-verbal can result in conflict whereby partners start criticizing one another as well as blaming the other (Schwebel, Moss and Fine, 1999).

Alcohol and substance abuse can create an unhappy, stressful partnership that increases the risk of conflict (Kersten & Kersten 2002). Insecurity or infidelity are some of the factors that have been

found to contribute to couples having conflicts (Sahlstein, 2004:660). Relationship conflicts are also caused by the failure of partners communicate with one another.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

There is likely to be conflict wherever there are two people. This is because people always have different views, personalities and beliefs. Such views are likely to spark a conflict if they are not handled properly. In their day-to-day interactions, people have to ensure that they make clear their intentions, views, thoughts, or actions so that they are not misunderstood. Otherwise, such a misunderstanding may lead to a conflict between or among people.

Young people who are battling with their transition to adulthood, get involved in intimate relationships. Once these relationships are established, there is a likelihood of conflict between the two as both of them come from different backgrounds and also have different views, ideas, thoughts, beliefs and personalities. Conflict may arise if the two fail to handle their differences properly. Many students also get involved in intimate relationships hoping to be happy, but, there may be conflict in some of these intimate relationships. Unfortunately, some young people fail to attend to the problems in their intimate relationships and end up moving from one relationship to another. Such an action may have disastrous consequences on young people's health and well-being.

1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this research some relevant theories that can be helpful in explaining conflicts in relationships are discussed. Only one theory was used to inform the study. Some of the theories to be discussed included, among others, conflict theories and personality theories social conflict.

The theory of social change (Lewis Horton, 1966; Guerrero and La Valley, 2012) states that clash of values and interests, the tension between what is and what some groups feel ought to be, the conflict between vested interests and new strata and groups demanding their share of power, wealth and status. For the purpose of this study, this theory was suggested since conflicts may arise mainly because there is a clash of interests between partners. The theory of social change also states that within social groups people tend to have the quest for power so are the intimate relationships. In intimate relationships conflicts may arise because one wishes to be heard and wants things to be done their way, resulting in conflict.

The psychoanalytic theory by Sigmund Freud states that, people's personality is shaped and influenced by the way in which they were raised, (Reuters, 2015). The adult personality appears as a combination of early childhood experiences, based on how these experiences are consciously and unconsciously processed within human developmental stages, and how these experiences shape the personality. Reuters (2015:75) stated that; "Psychoanalytic theory defines the mechanisms of ego defense which serve to protect the individual against external and internal threat". The way in which people deal with conflicts depends on how they have been raised. Some have better problem or conflict solving skills than others. Not every individual manages to complete all the compulsory duties of every developmental stage. When they do not, the outcomes can be a mental condition demanding psychoanalysis to attain appropriate operational. Failure to do this may result in personality flaws such as poor conflict management skills and mental disorders.

The analytical theory by Carl Jung as mentioned by Ewen (2003) states that people generally cannot afford to confront the world with their true feelings, but instead, they must fashion an outward appearance that will satisfy the demands of society. This shows that sometimes people try to avoid some conflicts by repressing their feelings and choose to keep what is bothering themselves. The shadow is "the primitive and unwelcome side of personality that derives from our animal forebears," (Ewen, 2003:43). It consists of material that is repressed into the personal unconscious because it is disgraceful and not pleasing, and also plays a compensatory role to the more constructive persona and ego. According to this study, the shadow allows people to portray the behavior which they do not possess. People in intimate relationships sometimes repress their feelings for different reasons and which also includes trying not to hurt their partners. This may result in the change in behavior.

1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.5.1 Aim of the study

The aim of the study can be defined as the target or goal that one hopes to achieve. These can be further explained as statements of intent which are stated in far-reaching terms. It was also further described as, "the set out of what the researcher hopes to achieve at the end of the project or research" by (Welman, Mitchell and Kruger, 2012:65). The aim of this study was to explore the contributory factors of conflicts in intimate relationships and their effects on the well-being of

students at the University of Venda. The aim of the study was fulfilled with the support of research objectives outlined below.

1.5.2 Objectives of the study

These are goals or steps in a research. Objectives use explicit proclamations which define calculable outcomes (Welman, Mitchell and Kruger, 2012). The following are the objectives of the study:

- To determine the nature of conflict in intimate relationships among the selected students
- To identify the causes of conflict in intimate relationships among the selected students
- To investigate how the students react to conflict in intimate relationship
- To determine how the selected students deal with conflict in their intimate relationships

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following are the research questions on which this study will be anchored:

- What is the nature of conflict in intimate relationships among the selected students?
- What are the causes of conflict in intimate relationships among the selected students?
- How are the selected students affected react to conflict in their intimate relationships?
- How do the selected students deal with conflict in their intimate relationships?

1.7 MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY

The researcher became interested in exploring this issue since a few studies have looked into how students in relationships get themselves into conflicts and how they tend to solve them. The researcher being a student at the University where the research is being conducted had witnessed some cases in which couples engage in some conflicts hence the researcher was motivated to find the reasons for this kind of behavior. Many studies have focused on those relationships among married couples while neglecting relationships at a dating and courtship level. It is the researcher's wish to find out about conflicts among students in intimate relationships.

1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW

Welman and Kruger (2005:17) state that literature review is when materials such as books, journal articles, congress papers and unpublished research reports from past research are being used

by the researchers for further research. According to Fink (2005), literature review can be defined as a system that is explicit and reproducible, method for identifying, evaluating and synthesizing the existing body of completed and recorded work produced by researchers, scholars and practitioners.

To put this study into perspective, relevant literature on conflicts in relationships was reviewed in order to provide a better understanding of conflicts in relationships and their effects on young people's well-being. According to Miller (2012), interactive conflict occurs whenever one's motivations, aims, principles, feelings or performance inhibit with, or are unsuited with those of another. Conflict is innate and may be short-lived in the system of moods or lasting in the system of opinions and behaviour.

According to Fischer (2012), conflicts are some form of misunderstanding, disagreements or discord that arises within a group whereby beliefs or actions of one or more members of the group are either attacked by or not acceptable to one or more members of another group. This means that conflicts often occur when people hold different views and when they fail to agree. On the other hand, Knox and Schacht (2008:281) view conflict 'as the process of interaction that results when the behaviour of one person interferes with the behaviour of another.' Conflicts are inevitable in relationships because people have different personalities and also view things differently.

1.8.1 Styles of conflict

Knox and Schacht (2008), Guerrero and La Valley (2012) and Gross and Guerrero (2000) identify five styles of conflict which are discussed below:

1.8.1.1 Compromising style of conflict

This happens when an individual gives up on something so that both companions can complete some of their stipulated goals. This means that both parties seek a middle-ground solution. The goal is to get a common tolerable solution which will partly satisfy everyone.

1.8.1.2 Collaborative style of conflict

This is also known as integrating and problem-solving. According to Rahim (2011), cited by Guerrero and La Valley (2012) the collaborating conflict style embraces conveying moods, creating reassuring remarks, and winning and stimulating disclosure. This style tends to meet the

needs of all people involved by cooperating effectively and acknowledging that everyone is important.

1.8.1.3 Competitive struggling

This is also known as 'direct fighting', 'dominating' and 'quarrelsome conflict' (Sillars et al., 2004; Rahim, 1983; Guerrero and La Valley, 2012). It is characterized by actions like disapproval, aggressive interrogations, intimidations, mockery, and name calling. Guerrero *et al.* (2007) hold the view that competitive fighting tends to lead to negative spirals of behaviors; when one partner engages in competitive fighting, the other partner's natural tendency is usually to retaliate. People who use competitive style pursue their own goals at the expense of others; usually they operate from a position of power and they know what they want.

1.8.1.4 Avoiding-conflict style

According to Hocker and Wilmot (1998), as cited by Guerrero *et al.* (2007), avoiding-conflict style involves attitudes such as change of the subject, posing inappropriate commentaries, and being elusive. When people in conflict avoid each other, nothing is accomplished and the companion using the avoiding style is assessed as useless and unsuitable (Gross and Guerrero, 2000). Sometimes, avoiding style is assessed completely, specifically if the conflict is not vital or cannot be fixed (Roloff and Ifert, 2000). People tend to use this style when they do not want to hurt each other's feelings. Thus, the avoiding style is neither supportive nor unsupportive.

1.8.1.5 The yielding/ accommodating conflict style

This is seen being more homogeneously supportive. The style is mainly used when people honor their partner's wants over their personal ones. One person might be too ignorant to deal with the situation, hence she/he might decide to go with whatever the other partner had suggested or come up with.

Although yielding is normally understood as unproductive in task-oriented circumstances (Gross and Guerrero, 2000), in interactive contexts it can be an operative style that endorses congruence, especially when the problem is more significant for one mate than the other. In this case, a person may have a different view on an issue but that person may decide to share or accept the view of the other person just to avoid conflict. This means that one person would opt to have a similar opinion just for the sake of maintaining peace in the relationship. In such a situation there will be no signs of direct fighting, which is characterized by inactive belligerent

behaviors such as, “rolling one’s eyes, ignoring one’s partner, and giving dirty looks, which may be particularly destructive to relationships because of the hostility exhibited by such behaviors (Sillars *et al.*, 2004). The yielding-conflict style is important if one wants to avoid the above belligerent behaviors since they can create hostility in a relationship, (Guerrero and La Valley, 2006).

It is not in all cases that conflicts can cause harm to a relationship. Marcus and Swett (2002) note positive aspects of conflicts as well as negative ones. Negative aspects of a conflict can lead to separation, violent behavior or even death (Marcus and Swett, 2002). If people fail to solve their conflict this may lead to violent behaviors, as both partners have failed to come up with a solution to solve their problem. A separation of partners can have a long-term effects on the psychological health of the individuals involved. Positive or beneficial aspects of conflicts also occur when conflicts arise. These positive outcomes have been found to strengthen the relationship if partners on the verge of breaking up find a solution to a problem; the feeling of getting another chance to be with one’s partner will make the relationship strong probably from the fear of losing them again. If conflicts are dealt with properly, they provide a reconciliation of the partners’ concerns which can lead to an agreement benefiting both partners and their relationship as well. Marcus and Swett (2002) note that despite most conflicts being fixed calmly with optimistic consequences, conflicts have certain undesirable and occasionally even severe costs.

1.8.2 Contributory factors to conflicts in intimate relationships

There are several factors that play a role in causing conflicts in intimate relationships. Some of the factors have been identified and are discussed below

1.8.2.1 Alcohol and substance abuse

According to Kersten and Kersten (2002), strong links have been found between alcohol use and the occurrence of intimate partner conflicts in many countries. The use of alcohol has been found to increase the occurrence and severity of conflict and domestic violence. Alcohol consumption as a direct cause of intimate partner conflicts has often been contested on the basis of additional factors accounting for its presence. Frequent heavy drinking can create an unhappy, stressful partnership that increases the risk of conflict and violence. Alcohol has also been found to directly affect cognitive and physical function, reducing self-control and leaving individuals less capable of negotiating a non-violent resolution to conflicts within relationships.

1.8.2.2 Communication

Schwebel, Moss and Fine (1999) stated that communication between partners can lead to conflicts in intimate relationships. Bad communication can lead to the rise of conflicts in a relationship. Bad communication relates to criticizing of one another as well as shouting or quarreling. Communication can be either verbal or non-verbal. Shouting to one another can typically cause the rise of a conflict in a relationship if the partners cannot calm down and talk in an understanding manner. Non-verbal communication is also a serious problem that leads to conflicts since one partner might want to solve the issue through discussions and failure of the other partner to communicate might stimulate the anger of the partner willing to discuss matters. When one partner is angered this will result in a conflict.

1.8.2.3 Insecurity

This is also a contributor of conflicts in intimate relationships. Lack of trust on another can result in some form of conflict in an intimate relationship. According to Prospero and Vohra-Gupta (2007), deception may be the most damaging aspect of infidelity. The betrayal of trust brought about by a partner's secret involvement with another person leads to shocking and painful realization on the part of the deceived party that the person he or she is involved with has a secret life and that there is an aspect of his or her partner that he or she has no knowledge of. Once someone's trust is damaged in an intimate relationship, this will lead to the other party engaging in some fights with their partner in trying to understand the situation, especially when the other partner is not opening up.

1.8.2.4 Cultural differences

Because couples might have different cultural experiences, a couple might have different norms and values about how things are done. A conflict might arise about the dos and don'ts of a certain culture. To one's culture, these may not be a problem whereas to another partner, it might be affecting them. In some cases, even couples from seemingly similar cultures may still have to navigate differences. Inter-cultural relationships can cause some conflicts when couples fail to understand one's cultural differences and perspectives, (Strong, De Vault and Cohen, 2008).

1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Most students at the University of Venda have been at least engaged in some intimate relationships. In every relationship, conflicts over different issues have arisen. This topic is relevant to the students since dating mostly happens among the youth. Students at the University of Venda have, undoubtedly, been exposed to circumstances which have caused conflicts in their relationships. Subsequently, this has also affected their wellbeing and the other people around them. The study will help to identify factors contributing to conflict in the personal relationships of the students at the University of Venda as well as all young people in intimate relationships. The effects of these conflicts on the health and wellbeing of young people will also be identified and thereafter solutions are suggested. The study will also explore intervention models that will help students and other young people to deal or manage conflict in their intimate relationships.

1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research approach will be used in this study. Qualitative research method is used in order to gain an understanding of some opinions and provides insights into problems as well as developing ideas (Silverman, 2013). According to Gray (2009:203), qualitative research is “a method of inquiry employed in different academic disciplines, traditionally in the social sciences but also in market research and further contexts”.

1.11 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study was about conflict in intimate relationships among university students who are between the ages of 18 and 30. The study focused on undergraduate first and second year university students. These students constitute the largest group of all the students at the university

1.12 DEFINITION OF THE MAJOR CONCEPTS

The following are the concepts that will be used more frequently in this research.

1.12.1 Conflict

Conflict refers to some form of friction, disagreements or discord arising within a group when the beliefs or actions of one or more members of the group are either resisted by or unacceptable to one or more members of another group (Fischer and Michael, 2012).

1.12.2 Intimate relationship

It is an interpersonal relationship that involves physical or emotional intimacy. Physical intimacy is characterised by romantic or passionate attachment or sexual activity. This relationship commonly implies the inclusion of a sexual relationship (Miller, Rowland and Perlman, 2008).

1.12.3 Intimacy

It refers to the feeling of being in a close personal association with someone and belonging together. It also refers to a familiar and very close affective connection with another person as a result of a bond that is formed through knowledge and experience of the other (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2010).

1.12.4 Dating

It is a form of courtship consisting of social activities done by two people with the aim of each assessing the other's sustainability as a partner in an intimate relationship or as a spouse (Sapolsky, 2005).

1.12.5 Wellbeing

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2010), wellbeing is a state of being comfortable, healthy, and happy.

1.13 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 1

Chapter one informs the reader about the major research idea. The chapter introduces and gives the background of the study, aim and objectives, significance of the study, literature review, research methodology, limitations of the study, definition of major concepts and the division of the study (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell, 2004).

Chapter 2

Literature review is about reviewing and providing information on what previous efforts, research and other relevant work discussing matters relevant to the issues of the current study (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell 2012). Therefore, this chapter will cover the literature which is relevant for the

topic. The literature will provide different views of scholars and researchers on issues related to the topic. The chapter serves to introduce and give a broader background of the major issues that are pertinent to the topic of this study. A greater understanding of conflict in intimate relationships will be provided and this includes sources of conflict as well as the styles of conflicts. The positive and negative effects of conflicts will also be discussed in the literature.

Chapter 3

This chapter is about the research design and methods and their justification as well as the explanation of practical implementation of the research design and method, (Babbie, 2007). In this research, qualitative approach will be used. An exploratory approach will be used so as to get a deeper understanding by investigating thoroughly the effects of conflicts in intimate relationships among students and seek to understand how conflict affects their wellbeing. Non-probability snowball sampling was used as the technique to select the participants. To conduct this research some ethical principles were followed and these include informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymity and no harm to participants.

Chapter 4

This is the chapter about factual information, a status report about facts not what we think about the facts, (Babbie, 2007). It is about what the researcher found not what he or she thinks about the topic. This chapter focuses on the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the collected data will be influenced by the structure of the research instrument. Therefore, it must link the nature of the research instrument utilized and the outcomes. Every question in the research instrument will be dealt with in this chapter.

Chapter 5

This is the last chapter of the study wherein the findings of the collected data were and presented, discussed and recommendations made. The chapter also entails a general conclusion of the entire study, (Neuman, 2011). This chapter is where the findings on the effects of conflicts in intimate relationships were presented, discussed and interpreted.

CHAPTER 2

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a review of the relevant literature. In order to guarantee an in depth understanding of the topic under study, a review of prior studies and literature was conducted to help in finding the causes of conflict in intimate relationships among students in tertiary education institutions. The aim of literature review was to showcase the relationship between the current knowledge on the key areas of the topic under study. The review showcased the state of the present conflicts being faced, which provided the basis for the selection of the methodology in this study.

Interpersonal conflict manages to stay out of common discussion even though it is completely predominant amongst relationships. Segal and Jaffe (2007) stated that disagreements occur in any intimate relationship and there is no a relationship without conflicts. This means that two people cannot possibly always have the same needs, opinions, goals and expectations. Successfully working on the differences is crucial for the preservation and development of any kind of a relationship. In most cases, conflict is often times perceived of as being negative, disapproving, and unnecessary; however, conflict can be fruitful and produce positive outcomes such as bringing a stronger bond between partners. Conflicts are entirely inevitable in any intimate relationship.

Segal and Jaffe (2007) outlined that it is important to consider the issue of conflict as well as conflict management in relationships because everybody belongs to and needs relationships. People need to understand and accept that conflicts do happen in relationships and by so doing they would therefore willing to know when they arise and find a way to manage them. If people can better understand conflict then they could potentially reduce the amount of conflict and increase relationship satisfaction since they would have the knowledge of what is coming their way and try to avoid it or solve it. Reviewed relevant literature discovered what studies have already found and what people in real life relationships know about relationship conflict and why conflict occurs in various relationship types, how often conflict happens, the duration of conflict, and the its effects on relationship satisfaction and quality.

2.2. BACKGOUND OF THE STUDY

Intimate relationships have been there for a very long time. How-ever being in an intimate relationship before marriage which is also called dating did not exist long way back since arranged marriages were the case in many cultures. People did not have a choice to the partner. According to Knox & Schacht (2008: 116), the Traditional Chinese Dating Norms did show that more than 77% of the women and 66% of the men reported dating no one or only their spouse prior to marriage.

During the Puritan Era in the United States which was in the seventeenth century, the Puritans valued marriage and fidelity and this was reflected in a very rigid pattern of courtship. Building or tarrying was a courtship custom commonly practiced among the Puritans where the man will sleep in the girl's bedroom in her parents' home without engaging in sex. Bundling, however, was one of the few opportunities a couple had to get to talk and learn about each other (Knox and Schacht 2008:117).

Change in dating practices in the past fifty years have continued after the Industrial Revolution. In today's life, dating has changed drastically since people can date for a long period of time before they decide to get married. Dating helps people understand and learn each other's weaknesses and strengths and view if they can be able to solve their differences. Knox and Schacht (2008) stated that individuals now date more partners and more often live together, but also gender role relationships have become more egalitarian.

2.3. FREQUENCY OF CONFLICTS IN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

Several studies had focused more on violence in relationships rather than conflicts in intimate relationships. Conflicts happen frequently, but the answer varies with the population studied as well as the way in which conflict is demarcated and evaluated. Adolescents encounter an average of seven disagreements per day in their various relationships (Gross and Guerrero, 2000), and dating couples report 2.3 conflicts per week in their relationships (Lloyd, 1987). Spouses report seven memorable differences in their beliefs or opinions every 2 weeks (Papp et al., 2009), and they experience one to two "unpleasant disagreements" each month (Guerrero et al 2012). Conflict is not only common in close relationships, but it also probably occurs more often than we realize. However, as you might expect, some people experience more conflict than other people do. Various influences are correlated with the amount of conflict we encounter: Basing on

personality, people who are high in neuroticism are thoughtless and irritable, and they have more unhappy disagreements with others than people of low neuroticism do (Heaven et al., 2006). In contrast, people with high agreeableness are good natured, cooperative, and generally easy to get along with, and they have fewer conflicts. Therefore, if a conflict does occur, they also react more constructively than people of low agreeableness do (Jensen-Campbell and Graziano, 2001). People who are anxious about abandonment tend to fear that their partners may leave them, and perhaps because they nervously expect the worst they think that there is more conflict in their relationships than more secure partners do. In addition, when conflict does occur, they consider it to be more damaging to the relationship than their partners do (Heaven, Smith and Ciarrochi, 2006), Attachment anxiety apparently leads people to danger and threat where it does not exist, and, ironically, their apprehension may gradually create the disputes and tension they fear (Rahim, 2011). The frequency of conflict is also measured by maturity or stage of life. Young adults are more likely to experience more conflict with their partners compared to adolescents. It's typical for people to develop lasting romances and to begin professional careers in their mid-20s. According to a longitudinal study of young adults in New York State, these life changes are routinely associated with increased conflict (Chen et al., 2006). Miller (2012) stated that conflict in romantic relationships among young adults include many changes accompanying passage into adulthood-which often includes graduation from college and entry into new careers-are associated with increased conflict in our romantic relationships. But things settle down after a while.

2.4. LEGISLATION ON INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

According to the Club Magazine (2013:38) on the issue of youth and intimate relationships while other countries have specific lists of rights, especially for people in relationships, South Africa does not have such a list. But, what is important is that although one is involved in an intimate relationship, one still has right to have friends outside the relationship, the right to express one's opinion and the right to never be physically attacked or emotionally degraded. Unfortunately, some people, particularly men, tend to try to dominate and undermine the rights of others (their partners). Consequently, this is likely to cause conflict with far reaching repercussions between the two.

2.5. NATURE OF CONFLICTS

According to Fischer and Michael (2012), conflicts are some form of resistance, dissimilarities or discord arising within a group when the opinions or actions of one or more members of the group are either attacked by or not acceptable to one or more members of another group. This means that conflicts often occur when people hold different views and when they fail to agree. Tillet and French, (2012:287), stated that a conflict arises when two or more people or groups perceive that their values or needs are incompatible whether or not they propose, at present or in the future, to take any action on the basis of those values or needs. On the other hand, Knox & Schacht (2008:281) similarly view conflict as the process of interaction that results when the behaviour of one person interferes with the behaviour of another. Conflicts are inevitable in relationships because people have different personalities and also views things differently. Conflicts are more likely to arise when people's values do not match, therefore the fight for their partners to view things in their own begins. Conflict occurs whenever one person's motives, goals, beliefs, opinions, or behavior interfere with, or are incompatible with, those of another. Conflict born of dissimilarity, which may be passing in the form of moods, or lasting on the form of personality. Two people always differ in important ways that is the way in which they view things. Conflict occurs when one's wishes or actions actually obstruct or impede those of someone else. When two partners are both able to do as they as they wish, no conflict exists. On the other hand, if one or both of them have to give up something that they want because of the other's influence, conflict occurs.

Guerrero, Andersen, and Afifi (2001) define conflict as a difference between two interdependent people who perceive that they have incompatible goals. Conflict plays an important part in relationships, not only possibly affecting the relationship duration, but also relationship satisfaction and quality. Rahim (2011) elaborated that conflict affects power dynamics between couples by compelling them to negotiate and renegotiate the level to which they share their power. Furthermore, Guerrero et al. (2001) argue that close or intimate relationships that do not have conflict are very rare and are highly exceptional. Basically, there is no a relationship that can happen without conflict. Generally, satisfied couples are more likely to talk about issues of disagreement, whereas dissatisfied couples are more likely to talk less about things that they do not agree on so as to avoid conflict (Guerrero et al., 2001). Despite the fact that conflict seems to be unavoidable, few scholars have researched the darker side of close relationships (Gross and Guerrero, 2000). The darker side can be unfortunate events such as fighting, disagreement, or conflict. The point that scholars have yet to fully research the phenomenon known as

interpersonal conflict makes it difficult for people to better understand conflict and to learn how to manage conflict. Guerrero et al, (2001) state that the need to examine the negative side of close relationships is more important than focusing on the optimistic aspects of interpersonal relationships. Walker (2000) also pointed out that individuals need to be open, truthful, respectful, and attractive in their relationships, and they tend to ignore other negative relational dynamics in the relationship. Walker (2000:341) states that conflict is as an integral and common part of relationships which also has the positive side which may create legitimacy and necessity for better understanding in relationships.

2.6. TYPES OR STYLES OF CONFLICTS

Knox and Schacht (2008), Guerrero and La Valley (2012) and Gross, Guerrero (2000) and Guerrero et al. (2001) identify five styles of conflict which are discussed below. These are competing conflict style, collaborating conflict style, accommodating conflict style, avoiding conflict style, and compromising conflict style. These conflict styles describe how people tend to deal with conflict. Conerly and Tripathi (2004) stated that no one manages all conflicts the same way and that different styles fit different situations. It is important to know about the changing styles in order to further reduce disagreements or conflicts. Conerly and Tripathi (2004) have also found that there are basically two things that affect the way you manage conflict in a given situation. One is how much you care about achieving your own goals and also it depends on how assertive you are. The other one is how much you care about relationships or how cooperative you are.

2.6.1 Compromising style of conflict

This happens when an individual gives up on something so that both companions can complete some of their stipulated goals. This means that both parties seek a middle-ground solution. The goal is to get a common tolerable solution which will partly satisfy everyone. This style is somewhat focused on the self as well as on others. Conerly and Tripathi (2004) describe users of compromising style of conflict as flexible, adaptive, moderately assertive, cooperative, and tend to seek middle ground. Guerrero et al., (2001) propose that this includes appealing to fairness, suggesting a trade-off, maximizing gains while minimizing losses, and offering a quick, short-term resolution to the conflict at hand. This conflict resolution leaves both parties satisfied since their needs will be partly considered just as much as the ones of the other part. The seeking of the middle ground can leave both parties pleased since there will be fairness between both parties.

2.6.2 Collaborative style of conflict

This is also known as integrating and problem-solving. According to Rahim (1983), cited by Guerrero and La Valley (2012), the collaborating conflict style embraces conveying moods, creating reassuring remarks, and winning and stimulating disclosure. It tends to meet the needs of all people involved by cooperating effectively and acknowledging that everyone is important. Guerrero et al. (2001) use synonyms for the collaborating style such as integrating, solution oriented, or problem solver. People who use the collaborating style have dual concern for themselves and for others involved. Furthermore, the collaborating style focuses on cooperative problem solving that leads to a win-win situation. This style allows both parties to work on a solution that will solve their problem through integration and aiming to achieve a certain goal together.

2.6.3 Competitive struggling style

This is also known as direct fighting, dictating and argumentative conflict (Sillars et al., 2004; Rahim, 1983; Guerrero and La Valley, 2012 and Klein and Johnson, 1997). It is characterized by actions such as disapproval, aggressive interrogations, intimidations, mockery and name calling. Guerrero et al. (2001) describe competing style user as being more concerned with their own interests than their partner's interests. People who use the competing style tend to be assertive and are typically uncooperative attempting win-lose situations (Guerrero et al., 2001). Guerrero et al. (2007) hold the view that competitive fighting tends to lead to negative spirals of behaviors when one partner engages in competitive fighting, the other partner's natural tendency is usually to act upon retaliation. People who use competitive style pursue their own goals at the expense of others and they usually operate from a position of power and they know what they want. The people who use competitive struggling style are people who know what they want and they aim to achieve it no matter the cost. They are less considerate of the other people's feelings.

2.6.4 Avoiding-conflict style

According to Hocker and Wilmot (1998), as cited by Guerrero et al. (2007), avoiding-conflict style involves attitudes such as change of the subject, posing inappropriate commentaries, and being vague. When people in conflict avoid each other, nothing is accomplished and the companion using the avoiding style is assessed as useless and unsuitable (Gross and Guerrero, 2000). Sometimes, avoiding is assessed completely, specifically if the conflict is not vital or cannot be fixed (Roloff and Ifert, 2000). People tend to use this style when they do not want to hurt each

other's feelings. The avoiding style is therefore neither supportive nor unsupportive. The avoiding style is also known as non-confrontational or withdrawal. Theorists maintain that the style is about having little or no concern for oneself or others (Guerrero et al., 2001). Guerrero et al. found that avoiding occurs when people physically or psychologically remove themselves from the conflict scene, refrain from arguing, and refuse to confront their partners in any meaningful way. Papa and Canary (1995, cited in Guerrero et al, 2001) stated that the avoiding style is a diminishing response to conflict because avoidance reduces the importance of the conflict and the actual interests of both parties (Guerrero et al., 2001). It can also be problematic because some avoiding behaviors tend to be uncooperative and cause additional conflict to the issue at hand. This is associated certain with actions such as purposefully ignoring the partner, holding a grudge, or even administering the silent treatment (Conerly and Tripathi, 2004).

2.6.5 The yielding/ accommodating conflict style

This style is similar to collaborating. However they two not identical. Users of the accommodating style tend to be indirect and fairly passive (Guerrero et al., 2001). This includes being the "peacemaker" or giving in and letting the other individual to take. This is seen being more homogeneously supportive. The style is mainly used when people honor their partner's wants over their personal ones. One person might be too ignorant to deal with the situation, hence she/he might decide to go with whatever the other partner had suggested or come up with. Although yielding is normally understood as unproductive in task-oriented circumstances (Gross and Guerrero, 2000), in interactive contexts it can be an operative style that endorses congruence, especially when the problem is more significant for one mate than the other. In this case, a person may have a different view on an issue but that person may decide to share or accept the view of the other person just to avoid conflict. This means that one person would opt to have a similar opinion just for the sake of maintaining peace in the relationship. In such a situation there will be no signs of direct fighting, which is characterized by inactive belligerent behaviors such as, "rolling one's eyes, ignoring one's partner, and giving dirty looks, which may be particularly destructive to relationships because of the hostility exhibited by such behaviors (Sillars et al., 2004). The yielding-conflict style is important if one wants to avoid the above aggressive behaviors since they can create resentment in a relationship, (Guerrero and La Valley, 2006). Conerly and Tripathi (2004) said that people who give up goals to preserve relationships are highly compliant, not very assertive though, or goal oriented. Individuals with yielding style want to be acknowledged and liked by others, they believe that conflict should be avoided at all cost in favor of harmony. The people who use this style set aside or compromise their goals, keep

their ideas to themselves, and worry that people cannot deal with conflict without destructing the relationships (Conerly and Tripathi, 2004). The accommodating style however tends to put more strain on the relationship because personal goals are not being met that is people do anything to make others happy at the expense of their own happiness.

After recognizing the levels of conflict and conflict styles it is imperative to be prepared for managing conflict. After all, managing conflict and knowing how to respond is the most important part.

2.7. POSITIVE ASPECTS OF CONFLICTS

It is not in all cases that conflicts can cause harm to a relationship. Marcus and Swett (2002) note positive aspects of conflicts as well as negative ones. Positive or beneficial aspects of conflicts also occur when conflicts arise. These positive outcomes have been found to strengthen the relationship if partners on the verge of breaking up find a solution to a problem; the feeling of getting another chance to be with one's partner will make the relationship strong probably because the fear of losing them again. If conflicts are dealt with properly, they provide a reconciliation of the partners' concerns which can lead to an agreement benefiting both partners and their relationship as well. Marcus and Swett (2002) note that despite most conflicts being fixed calmly with optimistic consequences, conflicts have certain undesirable and occasionally even severe costs.

There are several positive effects of conflict as noted by (Tillet and French, 2012:14), and these may include the following:

- i. Encourages communication – When a conflict arises, people who succeed in solving this problem would have used good communication skills and they therefore realize that having good communication can solve their problems in most cases.
- ii. Motivates and promotes problem- solving – Conflict itself enhances the way in which people deal with their problems. When people are fighting they are both willing to make things right, they are forced to come up with a way to use as to end their conflict.
- iii. Assists in personal growth, identity, and development – In the process of trying to deal with a conflict, people tend to know who they are and how best can they cope when a conflict when it arises and their ways to make peace with their fellow partners.

- iv. Prevents stagnation – Conflict allows relationships to grow. When a conflict is handled in a good way the level at which individuals feel about each other is enhanced. The need to grow to be better is noticed.
- v. Stabilizes and integrates relationships – When people engage in a conflict they become less attached but if the conflict is managed well this enhances the stability of the relationship as well as integrating people in a relationship.

Conflict is not bad if the couple works through the problem and are respectful of one another in communication and action.

2.8. NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF CONFLICTS

Conflict can lead to separation, violent behavior or even death, (Marcus and Swett, 2002). If people fail to solve their conflict this may lead to violent behaviors, as both partners would have failed to come up with a solution to resolve their problem. A separation of partners can have a long-term effect on the psychological health of the individuals involved. All couples have conflict at some time. This is because we have a strong emotional connection with those we love. Tillet and French (2012: 16) indicated the negative effects of conflicts which are:

- i. Hinders or breaks down communication – When conflict fail to be solved this may cause partners to never communicate with each other again. Failure to deal with a conflict will totally ruin the communication probably become worse than before the conflict arose.
- ii. Breaks down relationships – Relationships are prone to conflict so when a conflict arises and a possible solution is not found that a relationship is likely to breakdown. The failure to come up with a solution will make people to separate as they look for something else to suit their needs.
- iii. Provokes anger/ distress/ fear/ aggression – When people fail to solve their problems in their relationships this will stimulate a lot of things including violent behavior distress and sometimes they even transfer their anger to other innocent individuals.
- iv. May provoke self-destructive behavior – When some individuals fail to deal with a conflict this may have an impact on the way they handle themselves. The feelings of anger, anxiety or fear may lead them to do things that will destruct them from facing the reality such as using drugs or being in denial.

- v. Hinders self-development – Failure to cope with conflict may lead people to feel worthless therefore, these feelings obstruct self-development. They find no reason to try to build themselves as they would have a feeling that they will be disappointed.

2.9. CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS TO CONFLICTS IN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

A wide-ranging review of conflict studied by Tillett and French (2012) established that couples may disagree about anything that happens in the relationship such as how to spend time together, how to manage money, how to deal with the in-laws, who should do which chores, not getting enough affection, exaggerated expressions of affection such as being moody or angry, personal habits, political views, religious or cultural beliefs, jealousies towards other men and women, relatives, and the couples' own children. When partners keep track of all their differences over a period of 15 days, some topics reappear more often than others (Papp et al., 2009). To understand this variety, Peterson (2002:370) classified the things that activate conflicts into four common categories which are criticism, illegitimate demands, rebuffs, and cumulative annoyances.

- i. Criticism - This involves verbal or nonverbal acts that are mediated to communicate dissatisfaction with a partner's behavior, attitude, or trait (Spitzberg and Cupach, 2007). This does not matter what the actor intends by his or her remark or behavior; what matters is that the target interprets the action as being unjustly critical.
- ii. Illegitimate demands – this involves requests that seem unfair because they surpass the normal expectations that the partners embrace for each other. A case might be when one partner is desperately trying to complete a major project or having too much workload, the other partner may be upset by being asked to prepare dinner and do the dishes three nights in a row or in dating relationships not finding enough time to spend with their partner. These demands where one has to compromise a lot may activate conflicts in relationships.
- iii. Rebuffs - It involves a situation in which "one person requests to another for a desired reaction, and the other person fails to respond as expected" (Spitzberg and Cupach 2007). When someone's needs are turned down by their partner such as a situation where one goes to sleep after receiving an implicit invitation to have sex is likely to feel rebuffed or failing to fulfill any request from the partner, the one who is turned down feels rebuffed.
- iv. Cumulative annoyances – These are relatively slight events that become irritating with some recurrence. These events usually take the form of social allergies: Through repeated exposure to small recurring nuisances, people may develop hypersensitive reactions of

disgust and frustration that seem out of proportion to any particular incitement. Women are especially likely to become annoyed with men's rude habits, such as belching when people are having dinner, and men are also likely to grow irritated with women's lack of consideration, such as not being time conscious for appointments and taking too much time doing shopping (Spitzberg and Cupach, 2007).

Emotions are highly communicative. An increasing body of research shows that the change from casual dating to serious commitment is marked by intensified emotions, increased emotional jealousy, greater reactivity to conflict and uncertainty, and more negative appraisals of irritations (Theiss and Solomon, 2006). A couple's first fight may occur at this point of relationship development. It has been reported that couples who broke up after their first big fight reported feeling confused or uncertain about their relationship (Guerrero et al., 2001). Subsequently, partners who stayed together gained a greater understanding of their feelings for each other and felt that they could solve problems together and were confident that they would both be willing to make sacrifices for each other. Guerrero et al. (2001) estimated that most of the romantic relationships have somewhere between 1-3 disagreements per week of which 1 or 2 disagreements per month are mostly so unpleasant. To add up, couples who are not satisfied often experience more incidences of conflict over a 5 day period. Guerrero et al. (2001) state that most conflicts are related to the fair division of household labor, jealousy and possessiveness, sex, how to spend money and who possess what, the social network (including in-laws), and children. In addition, individuals may complain that they are not spending enough time together with their partners therefore engaging in emotional or sexual infidelity such as sexual or emotional deception (Guerrero et al., 2001). Disagreements about household chores, jealousy and possessiveness, sex, money and possessions, social network, and children are not the only sources of conflict couples experience but tend to be the most common types of conflict within intimate relationships. There are other contributory factors to conflict in intimate relationships that can be found in intimate couples and these may include the following

2.9.1 Alcohol and substance abuse

According to Kersten and Kersten (2002), strong links have been found between alcohol use and the occurrence of intimate partner conflicts in many countries. The use of alcohol has been found to increase the occurrence and severity of conflict and domestic violence. Alcohol consumption as a direct cause of intimate partner conflicts has often been contested on the basis of additional factors accounting for its presence. Frequent heavy drinking can create an unhappy, stressful

partnership that increases the risk of conflict and violence. Alcohol has also been found to directly affect cognitive and physical function, reducing self-control and leaving individuals less capable of negotiating a non-violent resolution to conflicts within relationships. Alcohol and substance use therefore increase the lack of self-control within individuals. People tend to become more violent when they are under the influence of alcohol or drugs. This will eventually lead people to lose control of their behavior by saying hurtful things towards the other person or by being physical. A conflict will therefore arise and in this state it is mostly difficult to curb or to bring peace to both partners until they are in their right senses again. However, evidence that is there to support relationships between alcohol and intimate partner violence includes:

- i. Alcohol use directly affects cognitive and physical functions, reducing self-control and leaving individuals less capable of negotiating a non-violent resolution to conflicts within relationships.
- ii. Excessive drinking by one partner can worsen financial difficulties, infidelity or other family or relationship stressors. This can create tension and conflict, increasing the risk of violence occurring between partners.
- iii. Individual and societal beliefs that alcohol causes hostility can boost violent behaviour after drinking and the use of alcohol as an excuse for conflicts and violent behaviour.
- iv. Children who witnesses violence or threats of violence between parents are more likely to display harmful drinking patterns later in life. Therefore the trend of conflict being caused by drinking is ever expanding due to late experiences.

2.9.2 Communication

Not all conflict is caused by miscommunication or lack of effective communication. Clear and real communication can cause or worsen conflict, (Tillet and French 2012: 21). They stated that sometimes open and honest discussion can make things worse, more especially in cases where there is no ongoing relationship or where both parties do not have the obligation or inspiration to work through the conflict and to try to resolve it. Schwebel, Moss and Fine, (1999), on the other hand stated that bad communication can lead to the rise of conflicts in a relationships. Bad communication relates to criticizing of one another as well as shouting or quarreling. Communication can be either verbal or non-verbal. Shouting at one another can typically cause the rise of a conflict in a relationship if the partners cannot be able to calm down and talk in an understanding manner. Non-verbal communication is also a serious problem that leads to conflicts since one partner might want to solve the issue through discussions and failure of the

other partner to communicate might stimulate the anger of the partner willing to discuss matters. When one partner is angered this will result in a conflict by failing to focus on the problem that needs to be addressed. Some people try to change the subject so that they do not have to focus on the problem. Others may try and bring in all of the problems the couple ever had to avoid the original issue. When couples are unhappy, resolving conflict is more difficult. Unhappy couples often have miscommunication. Here are some of the causes of miscommunication (Bailey, 2009:2):

- i. Not listening to one's spouse or partner causes problems. Interrupting one's spouse or partner is one way to tell the person you are not listening. This will definitely triggers the conflict between them.
- ii. Assuming that one's spouse or partner can read your mind. People need to understand that no one read minds so this miscommunication can lead to a conflict in a relationship. The other person will not know how one is feeling unless they let them know.
- iii. When one always tries to find fault with everything their spouse or partner brings up as a solution does not help. This is when one person cannot find anything to agree on basing on what their partners are contributing.
- iv. Competing with your spouse to try and make your problem seem worse does not help when there is conflict. This does not help when trying to solve a problem.
- v. Displaying a negative attitude does not help when there is conflict. The negative attitudes can include being defensive, trying to withdraw from the conversation, mocking or trying to insult the other as well as being hostile or aggressive.

2.9.3 Insecurity, jealousy and possessiveness

This is also a severe factor of conflicts in intimate relationships. Lack of trust on another person can result in some form of conflict in an intimate relationship. According to Prospero and Vohra-Gupta, (2007), deception may be the most damaging aspect of infidelity. The betrayal of trust brought about by a partner's secret involvement with another person leads to shocking and painful realization on the part of the deceived part that the person he or she is involved with has a secret life and that there is an aspect of his or her partner that he or she had no knowledge of. Once someone's trust is damaged in an intimate relationship, this will lead to the other engage into some fights with the partner in trying to understand the situation especially when the other partner is not opening up. Insecurity in intimate relationships can cause people to doubt their partners in most cases for example when one has to work late and make an excuse of coming back late or

one not picking their phones due to some reason, all these may not be considered to be true by someone who has trust issues therefore a conflict will arise. This is a severe cause of conflict in relationships because once one feels insecure and has trust issues all they think of is they being cheated or being lied and therefore every chance they get they attack their partners. Without working on their insecurities and trust issues relationships are most likely to fall because they would have to quench the conflict that is raised by suspicions of things which might not even true or happening. Feelings of jealousy is also one big issue in causing conflict especially the part which is being accused of being liked by someone else. The conflict will start when one starts asking a lot of questions about the other person they are suspicious about and this might end up annoying the other person, resulting in a conflict.

2.9.4 Failure to balance school work and relationship

Prospero and Vohra-Gupta (2007) proposed that people who are at school and intimate relationships mostly fail to balance time for school and for their partners. When students are encountering pressure, especially during the times of assessment, they tend to forget that they are in relationships. This however, becomes an issue on the other party as they will be complaining about being neglected or not being given a priority. After one has failed to balance school work and the relationship, this will lead to failure in academic performance or losing the partner due to not having time together. The failure to give time to the partner will cause some conflicts in this relationship.

2.9.5 Cultural differences

Every culture and society has unwritten rules about how to communicate, to conflict and relationship between the two. This means that knowing about fights, arguments and where to have them that is either in private or in public. Knowing when to say what to whom is also socially defined (Tillet and French 2012). When people from different societies enter into a relationship, the way they communicate to each other can bring in a conflict since there might be some misunderstandings and misinterpretation of what they mean. One might take silence as a way of not cooperating whilst in other societies they believe that one has to keep quiet (especially the woman) when they are having an argument. Because partners have different cultural experiences, a couple might have different norms and values about how things are done. A conflict might arise about the dos and don'ts of a certain culture. To one's culture, these may not be a problem whereas to another partner, it might be affecting them. In some cases, even couples

from seemingly similar cultures may still have to navigate differences. Inter-cultural relationships can cause some conflicts when couples fail to understand one's cultural differences and perspectives (Strong, De Vault and Cohen, 2008).

2.10. LEVELS OF CONFLICT

Guerrero, Andersen, and Afifi (2001) identified four levels of conflict and whenever a conflict arises it falls on one of the following levels. The first level of conflict as defined by Guerrero et al. (2001) is when couples argue about specific, concrete behaviors and this happens when partners argue about small issues like how to specifically clean the kitchen or how to budget. The second level of conflict is when couples argue about relational rules and norms and this include circumstances such as working late without informing your partner as this will raise suspicions or forgetting special days in your relationships such as your significant other's birthday or anniversary (Guerrero et al., 2001). The third level of conflict is when couples argue about varying personality traits. This can be illustrated by maybe when one is interested in sports and what is happening globally and for the one who is not interested in all this may be labelled as too old fashioned for the other. Conflict in this category is about being incompatible and having different personality traits. Finally, the fourth level of conflict and probably the most interesting is when couples argue about the process of conflict itself otherwise known as meta-conflict (Guerrero et al., 2001). This may also include accusing your partner of pouting, nagging, throwing a temper tantrum, not listening, or fighting unfairly (Guerrero et al., 2001)

2.11. OUTCOMES OF CONFLICT

Peterson (2002:218) described four ways in which conflicts can end. They can be categorized ranging roughly from the most destructive and harmful to the most productive and useful. The four ways in which conflict end depends on how hard the people had tried to resolve the conflict and the outcomes are as follows:

- i. Separation – This one occurs when one or both partners withdraw without resolving the conflict. Separation that ends a heated encounter may prevent irreparable harm to the relationship, and time apart may give participants time to cool off and to think about their situation more constructively. This outcome does not offer any solutions to a couple's problem, however, and may simply delay further discord. Separation can be a result of partners being tired of trying to solve the problem several times but still could not

permanently erase the problem and this is a stage in which they choose to give up and move on with their lives separately.

- ii. Conquest – This is also called domination. One partner gets his or her way when the other submits or surrenders. This happens most of the times when one person is more powerful than the other usually the one who is being conquered chooses to give in to their partner's request but at the same not satisfied with the result and on the other hand, the more powerful partner will typically be pleased with the outcome. Domination is aversive for the loser since they are not pleased. However, it may breed ill will and bitterness (Zacchilli, Hendrick and Hendrick; 2009).
- iii. Compromise – This outcome occurs when both parties reduce their goals or targets so that a mutually acceptable alternative can be found. As Peterson suggested (2002:380), the partners' "interests are diluted rather than reconciled"; which means that neither partner gets everything they want, but as well neither goes empty handed. Compromising may be the best outcome available because all parties are at least getting something from the decisions they both agree to make. In other outcomes, one person's gain can come only at the expense of the other, but in other situations, better solutions are usually available.
- iv. Integrative – These are agreements that satisfy both partners' original objectives and targets, usually through being creative and flexible. This outcome is not easy to reach and it can actually take some work; since partners may need to refine and prioritize their wishes, make selective concerns, and discover new ways of achieving their goals that do not enforce upon their partners. Nevertheless, through determination, ingenuity, imagination, and generous cooperation, partners can often get the things they really want. This outcome needs partners who both need to work together and who do not have selfish desires like the ones who would only want their request to be granted at the expense of the other partner's.

2.12. CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES

Conflicts need to be resolved. Resolving conflicts can be done in a constructive way. There are small changes that can be made in order to possibly minimize conflict. There are certain principles of constructive conflict management that may help ease the conflict at hand. In relationships, partners need to avoid bringing up a past argument or an inappropriate irritation. Another principle mentioned by Guerrero et al., (2001) is to avoid bringing other people into the conflict such as

parents or friends. Partners need to try to solve their conflict alone without involving third parties. Another principle is to never say things that one does not mean. This means that people tend to regret in the future after they would have said things that they do not mean and this cannot be reversed hence ending up with regrets. Guerrero et al (2012) concluded that verbally aggressive language entails such acts as name calling and defamation, behaviors that tend to escalate the competitive/distributive dynamics of an interaction and that are deemed damaging to constructive conflict resolution and the relationship of the parties involved. Guerrero et al., (2001) state that the final changes we can make in conflict resolution is to practice active listening, avoid complaints and criticisms, contempt and disgust and respond with positive validating messages as well as avoiding defensiveness such as mind reading or punctuation corrections. Research states that by applying these methods of resolution strategies, conflict can be resolved more responsibly and more successfully. Some good strategies to use when there is a conflict include (Guerrero et al., 2001):

- i. Using active listening skills. - The “I” statements are less offensive to the other person for instance instead of saying, “You never spend time at home with me,” say, “I would like to spend more time with you. I get lonely sometimes when you are gone for so much time. Can we think of a way to be together more often?” Active listening involves paying attention when the other person is talking as well as being able to notice inconsistencies in one’s story.
- ii. Focus on the topic of the conflict – When a conflict arises partners need to deal with the problem at hand rather than bringing what happened in the past or using what the other person did or said as an excuse to escape the matter at hand. Partners do not need to bring in other problems. People who tend to bring in past things in the current situation are likely to be the ones at fault therefore try to justify themselves by bringing on the faults of their partners. If partners manage to deal with the topic of conflict of that moment then they will be likely to positively solve that matter at hand.
- iii. Saying what we mean – Partners need to be clear in their messages and also should be able to ask the other person what they heard. Some intimate partners have problems in understanding what their partners are saying so a follow up question can be helpful to avoid miscommunications. When one is speaking they should try by all means to find out that the other person has a clear understanding of what they are trying to say. Some conflicts arise because there would be a misunderstanding in what the other person is trying to say so clearing one’s statement can be helpful.

- iv. Being polite and staying cool – In situations where the issue is too tense, partners should take a break and come back to the issue later after they have both calmed. Partners need to be sure to set a specific time when the issue will be revisited and dealt with before its' left unresolved. Allowing at least a few hours to pass before revisiting the issue will help both parties to be calm and when they would decide to solve the issue they will be both calm and polite, without exchanging harsh words therefore the talk is more likely to be constructive.
- v. Offering respect and validation – Even if the couple disagrees, they should at least be able to be respectful and validating of another's feelings in their relationship. Offering one respect is helpful and partners who respect and value their partners are more likely to produce positive outcomes when dealing with a conflict.
- vi. Asking yourself whether or not the issue is important enough for a conflict - Sometimes couples argue over small issues that can be resolved by agreeing to disagree. Partners need to see first if the issue is really worth involving themselves into a conflict. Some issues are not important enough to conflict about therefore these issues can only be handled in an easier way than a conflict.

2.13. STEPS IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Knox and Schacht (2008:266) addressed five steps in conflict resolution, which are:

2.13.1 Address recurring, disturbing issues

Addressing issues in a relationship is important. Couples who stack resentments rather than discuss conflictual issues do not service to their relationship. The healthiest response to feeling upset a partner's behavior is to engage the partner in a discussion about the behavior. It is also important to use good timing to discuss difficult issues with a partner.

2.13.2 Identify new desired behaviours

When partners are dealing with conflicts, it is more likely to result in resolution if the partners focus on what they want rather than what they do not want.

2.13.3 Identify perceptions to change

Instead of changing behaviour, it may be easier and quicker to change one's perception of behaviour. Instead of expecting a partner to be always on time, it is better to drop that expectation by stopping being angry about something that does not matter.

2.13.4 Summarize your partner's perspective

Instead of assuming how one's partner thinks and feels about a particular issue, asking the partner open-ended questions in an effort to get him or her to tell their thoughts and feelings about a particular situation will be able to help.

2.13.5 Generate alternative win-win solutions

Solutions in which one person wins and the other person loses mean that one person is not getting his or her needs met. Therefore a person who loses may develop feelings of resentment, anger or hurt toward the winner and even look for ways to get even. In this way, the winner is also a loser. In intimate relationships, one winner really means two losers.

2.14. SUMMARY

Conflicts in intimate relationships happen all the time and they are inevitable. People need to understand that all intimate relationships, even the healthiest ones also experience conflicts at some point. Conflicts do not only breed negative outcomes, but sometimes help the relationship to grow and help partners understand each other more. When conflict arises, there are different ways in which people respond and these are styles of conflict whereby different attitudes are being used. There are also different reasons why partners engage into conflicts and these include how partners communicate with each other, bad communication causes more conflicts in intimate relationships especially when one feels disrespected. In cases whereby one does not want the relationship anymore, even genuine and honest communication can still cause conflicts in the relationship. Substance abuse and cultural differences have impact in causing conflicts as well. There are ways to resolve conflicts in intimate relationships and these include active listening

skills and focusing on the topic at hand rather than bringing what happened in the past. The next chapter describes the research methodology employed in this study.

CHAPTER 3

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the research approach, research design, study population and location, sampling techniques and procedures which were used in the study. It also explains data collection instrument, pilot study, data collection procedures, ethical considerations, study limitations and finally the way data was analyzed. The purpose of this chapter is to have a clear understanding regarding the strategies that the researcher has used when conducting the study. The research question aims to find the contributory factors to conflict in intimate relationships among students.

3.2. RESEARCH METHOD

Research method includes different procedures, systems and processes used in research. All the methods that are used by a researcher during research are called research methods. Through the use of research methods, a researcher is able to gather samples of information and discover a result to a problem (Gough, Oliver, and Thomas, 2012). There are two common research methods used which are, are the quantitative research and the qualitative research.

The qualitative research method is carried out in order to gain an understanding of some opinions and provides insights into problems as well as developing ideas (Silverman, 2013). According to Gray (2009: 203), qualitative research is “a method of inquiry employed in many different academic disciplines, traditionally in the social sciences, but also in market research and further contexts”. This method can also be used to discover movements in thoughts and opinions and get deeper into problems. There are some common methods that can fall under qualitative research which are; individual interviews, group discussions and observations. The sample size is normally small and respondents will be selected to fulfil a given proportion.

For the purposes of this study, the qualitative research method was chosen since it allows one to gather an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reasons that govern such behaviour. The researcher wanted to find out the reasons which lead to conflicts at a profound level and exploring the contributory factors to conflicts in intimate relationships among students at a South African rural university. The researcher used this method in order to get the opinions

of students in intimate relationships about how the conflict behaviour can be reduced in intimate relationships.

3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN

Van Wyk (2010) stated that research design is the overall plan for connecting the conceptual research problems to the pertinent empirical research. A research design is a comprehensive outline of how a study will be carried out. Burns and Grove (2003: 85) define research design as “a blueprint for performing a study with maximum control over factors which could interfere with the validity of the findings”. Parahoo (2006:105) defines a research design as “a plan that describes how, when and where data is to be collected and evaluated”. Polit and Hungler (2001) define a research design as “the researcher’s overall for answering the research question or testing the research hypothesis”. Research design includes how data will be collected, the instruments which are to be used, how the instruments will have to be used and the planned means that will be used to analyze the collected data. The aim of research design is to help the researcher to complete research purposes. This study adopted the explorative research design.

Explorative research is a study which is undertaken when a new area is being investigated or when little is known about an area of interest (Polit and Hungler 2001). It is used to inspect the full nature of the phenomenon and other factors related to it. This kind of a study aims to build new knowledge on some topics which have very few information. This study used explorative research to investigate the factors leading to conflicts in intimate relationships among young people. Very little knowledge has been found about the phenomena, therefore, the researcher wants to investigate on this topic of interest. Most studies have focused more on conflicts in general while neglecting its causes from the students’ perspectives and its effects on students and how their well-being is being affected.

3.4. AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of a study is defined as a set of what the researcher hopes to achieve at the end of the project or research (Welman, Mitchell and Kruger; 2012: 65). This is a statement of intent which is written in broad terms. The aim of this study is to explore the contributory factors to conflict in intimate relationships among students at the South African rural university.

3.5. POPULATION AND LOCATION OF THE STUDY

3.5.1. Population of the study

Basically, a population refers to a group of objects or people which the researcher is interested in investigating or experimenting (Babbie, 2007). According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2012:123), population is, “the study object and consists of individuals, groups, organisations, human products and events or the conditions to which they are exposed”.

The population of this study consists of registered full-time students at the University of Venda. The participants were undergraduate students who were in a relationship for at least three months and might have engaged in some conflict in their relationship. The participants were also dating fellow university students.

3.5.2. Location of the study

According to Chen, and Kotz (2000), a location is a geographic place under study where the respondents are extracted from. The study was conducted at the University of Venda (UNIVEN) which is a South African university, located in Thohoyandou, in Thulamela Municipality within Vhembe District in Limpopo Province.

3.6. SAMPLING PROCEDURE

It is virtually impossible to study every individual in a target population. The target population maybe too large, may be far apart, or may take time or it could be expensive (Stephan & McCarthy, 1958). To make the research more controllable, therefore, a sample should be chosen that represents the whole population; meaning that the sample can be similar to the target population in all relevant characteristics.

According to Welman, Mitchell & Kruger (2004:46), sampling is “the process of selecting units from a population of interest so that by studying the sample, we may fairly generalize our results back to the population from which they were chosen”. Sampling helps to limit the number of respondents which will be selected to represent the whole population. In this the sample was drawn from the third year students who constitute the population of the University of Venda. For the purpose of this study, non-probability purposive or judgemental sampling was used to select the respondents from the large population. Purposive sampling was used in this study as a strategy to deal with the people whom the researcher already knows have the characteristics

needed for the study, this is basically based on the researcher's judgement on the participants. In non-probability sampling, not every person in the selected group has the chance to be selected for the study (Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee, 2000). The samples are selected based on the individual or personal judgment of the researcher and normally used when the researcher is running out of time and also has a limited budget. No possibility or chance can be attached to a population element for it to be selected (Bryman, 2012).

Purposive sampling involves taking elements which possess characteristics that a researcher is interested in. The researcher will select subjects based on his/her own judgement on the potential participants who are likely to carry the qualities needed (Maree, 2009:47).

Sample-size refers to the number of units that are chosen from which data is gathered or the number of sample units selected for contact or data collection (Desu, 2012). Using very large samples has the challenge of taking too much time and resources. This may be costly as well whilst on the other hand; small samples may produce unreliable information.

In study this research, a sample size of fifteen students is going to be selected through snowball sampling technique. Since the data is going to be collected through interviews, a small sample is also going to be used because interviews are time consuming.

3.7. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Data collection is a process of preparing and collecting data or the regular gathering of data for a particular purpose from various sources is systematically observed, organized and recorded. These are the tools used by a researcher to collect the information needed in order to answer the research problem. Before collecting the data, the researcher should decide what data to collect, how to collect the data, who will collect the data, when and where to collect the data?

The selection of data collection methods should be based on the identified hypothesis or research problem, the research design and the information gathered about the variables. Data is collected to find information, to keep records, to make decisions about important issues or to pass information to others. There are two common data collection methods, namely, primary data and secondary data methods.

3.7.1 Secondary data collection

This is the collection of data from the field under the supervision and control of the investigator. (O'Leary, 2013). The data is generally fresh, more relevant and collected specifically for a purpose

or to answer the research problem at hand. The data collected is useful for the current research as well as for future research purposes too, For instance, a personal interview. Primary data collection is concerned with gathering original data to answer questions which are specific to achieve the research objectives.

3.7.2 Primary data collection

This is the collection of data from the field under the supervision and control of the investigator. (O'Leary, 2013). The data is generally fresh, more relevant and collected specifically for a purpose or to answer the research problem at hand. The data collected is useful for the current research as well as for future researches purposes too for instance a personal interview. Primary data collection is concerned with gathering original data to answer questions which are specific to achieve the research objectives.

For this research, the researcher used both secondary and primary data collection methods. For literature review to be carried out, secondary data collection methods were used that is journals, articles, books and internet. This assisted in helping the researcher gain an insight into some previously researched similar studies. Primary data collection was used through interviews. The researcher went to all the students who were part of the sample with an interview schedule which had open-ended questions.

3.8. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

These are devices used to collect data and to facilitate variable observation and measurement. Research instruments ask questions in order to get answers that satisfy the research objectives. For the study face to face interview were used to record the information.

An interview guide was used to conduct face to face interviews (Floyd, 2004). The questions appeared in order which they were to be asked. The researcher used an interview guide for the face to face interviews because it is easy to facilitate since the questions which were asked were open ended. It made it easier for the researcher to know the order in which they should follow.

3.9 DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS

This is a process of inspecting, cleaning, transforming, and modelling data with the goal of discovering useful information, suggesting conclusions, and supporting decision-making (Vogt, Vogt, Gardner and Haeffele, 2014). Data from various sources is gathered, reviewed, and then

analyzed to form some sort of findings or conclusions. The derived information was compared with research hypothesis in order to prove whether they are right or not. Validation of data first before analyzing it is very important and this can be done through editing, coding, cleaning, and verification.

Content analysis was used since the information was gathered through interviews. It is a procedure for the categorization of verbal or behavioral data for purposes of classification summarization and tabulation (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006). There are two levels at which content can be analyzed:

- Basic level or the manifest level: it is a descriptive account of the data that is this what was said, but no comments or theories as to why or why
- Higher level or latent level of analysis: a more interpretive analysis that is concerned with the response as well as what may have been inferred or implied

The following are five stages of data analysis in the framework approach;

3.9.1 Familiarization

It is the immersion into raw data by listening to tapes, reading transcripts, studying notes and so on in order to list key ideas and recurrent themes.

3.9.2 Identifying a thematic framework

Identifying all the key issues, concepts, and themes by which the data can be examined and referenced. This is carried out by drawing on a priori issues and questions derived from the aims and objectives of the study as well as issues raised by the respondents themselves and views or experiences that recur in the data.

3.9.3 Indexing

Applying the thematic framework or index systematically to all the data in textual form by annotating the transcripts with numerical codes from the index, usually supported by the short text descriptors to elaborate the index heading.

3.9.4 Charting

Rearranging the data according to the appropriate part of the thematic framework to which they relate and forming charts. The charting process involves considerable amount of abstraction and synthesis.

3.9.5 Mapping and interpretation

This can be accomplished by using charts to define concepts, map the range and nature of phenomena, create typologies and find associations between themes with a view to providing explanations for the findings.

3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics centres on what is or is not right to do or what “moral” research measures involve (Neuman, 2011:96). Research ethics help to avoid immoral behaviour towards research participants (Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee, 2000; 151). The ethical principles that the researcher considered in this study will apply in this research are informed consent, protection from harm, voluntary participation, anonymity and confidentiality.

3.10.1 Informed consent

The researcher obtained letter from the supervisor and the University Higher Degrees Committee granting her permission to conduct interviews with the selected respondents at the University of Venda (See Appendix) The researcher also obtained the consent of the students to participate in the study after they had been comprehensively and truthfully well-versed with the research they were be involved in (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell; 2012: 201).

The participants in this research were be furnished with all the information regarding all the aspects of the study and upon understanding the information they were expected to decide whether they would participate or not. Once they decided to participate, they indicated their agreement through a verbal consent.

3.10.2. Voluntary participation

According to Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2000), this principle refers to “a human research subject’s exercise of free will in deciding whether to participate in a research activity”. The

participants should volunteer to be part of the study as the principle requires that respondents should not be coerced into participating in any research (Neuman, 2011).

Participants will be free to refuse to be part of the study if they do not feel comfortable or due to other personal reasons. The respondents therefore, have to give their consent first if they want to be part of the study. In this research the researcher did not threaten or force the participants to be part of the study, but participated that willingly and they gave their consent voluntarily.

3.10.3. No harm to participants

The participants should be given the guarantee that they will be protected against any emotional or physical harm (Welman et al., 2012:201). The participants were assured that no emotional questions would be asked so as to avoid hurting their feelings. They were assured that no physical harm would occur if they did not open up on what is going on in their relationships.

3.10.4. Anonymity

Anonymity as stated by Neuman (2011:173) is “the ethical protection that participants remain nameless. Their identity is protected from disclosure and remains unknown. A participant’s data must not be associated immediately and obviously with his or her name or any other identifier”. When the research participants know that their identity would not be revealed, they will most likely participate actively and give more information needed for the study being conducted. For the purpose of this study, the respondents were assigned numbers to make sure that their information remains anonymous. This served to protect the participant from harm as anybody who read the results would be unable to identify them.

3.10.5. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is presenting another author’s work making it your own without acknowledgement (Welman et al 2012). It is regarded as unethical to “copy and paste” and writing one’s idea as yours. The study comprises of information from different sources and all ideas and quoted phrases are cited for acknowledgement. The information where it has been taken from is included in the reference list for future use when necessary. To achieve research integrity, in-line with plagiarism, the final research thesis was loaded into Turn it in.

3.11. PILOT TESTING

Pilot testing refers to when an instrument is administered to a limited number of subjects from the same population as that for which the eventual project is intended. It is a “dress rehearsal” for the actual research investigation. The interview schedule was pretested in order to validate its appropriateness to the study (Welman et al., 2012).

3.11.1. Reliability

It is the degree of consistency and accuracy with which an instrument measures a variable. The instrument should stand the test to generate similar results if the research is replicated under conditions that are similar (Babbie and Mouton, 2002). Cooper and Schindler (2003) note that score of 0.7 is the acceptable reliability coefficient but lower thresholds are sometimes used in the literature. Babbie and Mouton (2002) state that instrument reliability can be enhanced by pre-testing the questionnaire, consulting experts in its development, keeping open-ended questions to a minimum as well as performing a thorough review of literature to develop the instrument.

The instrument can be tested through stability, internal consistency and test of equivalence

- **Stability:** It is the extent to which the same results are obtained with repeated use of an instrument through either test/retest or repeated observations
- **Internal consistency:** This refers to the point to which all parts of the measurement techniques are measuring the same concept
- **Test of equivalence:** It refers to the consistency of the results by different investigators or by similar tests at the same time.

3.11.2. Validity

This refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure. It refers to how accurate sample results can represent the population. Cooper and Schindler (2003) highlight that validity can be ensured by a panel of experts and reliable statistician to evaluate the research instrument for theoretical clearness, pre-testing the research instrument in a pilot study, using self-administered questionnaires which generally have a high answer rate and comprehensively reviewing the literature for theoretical constructs and empirical conclusions. There are different categories of testing the validity of data collection instrument

1. **Self-evident measures:** This refers to the fact that the device appears like what it is supposed to measure. It takes either face validity or content validity
2. **Pragmatic measures-** This procedure tests the practical value of a particular research tool by attempting to answer questions like; 'does it work?'

3.11.3. Trustworthiness

According to Given and Samure (2008), trustworthiness allows the researcher to describe the virtues of qualitative terms outside of the parameters that are typically applied in quantitative research. The concepts of generalizability, internal validity, reliability and objectivity are reconsidered in qualitative terms.

3.13. SUMMARY

This chapter provided a blue print on how the study at hand was carried out. It was explained in the chapter how the researcher planned for data collection, collected the data, analyzed it and made conclusions. The wholesome purpose of the chapter was to provide a clear plan that makes the study more feasible as well as obtaining valid and reliable results. After the data collection the data were analyzed and the results emanating from the analysis are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

4. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents, interprets, discusses and analyses the research findings. The purpose of the study was to explore the contributory factory to conflicts in intimate relationships among students at a South African rural university, using the University of Venda as case study. The presented in this chapter were sourced and gathered from sixteen participants through face to face interviews. Content analysis was used as an overall approach of data analysis. The findings presented are in line with the research aim, objectives and research questions outlined in chapter one of the study.

The data analysis commences with the presentation of biographical data, which is the information which was relevant to be asked to t participants as well as information which states their gender, nationality and age, followed by the contributory factors to conflicts in intimate relationships. This is followed by a discussion on how students react after a conflict has happened in their relationship and how these students manage or deal with a conflict when they encounter it in their relationship. Analysis will look on the above mentioned issues based on the information gathered from sixteen Univen students who are currently involved intimate relationships.

4.2 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENTS OR PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

The researcher used qualitative research and the profile of the information is presented in Table 4.1 below. This information was gathered through interviews and the responses were provided in detailed responses.

Table 4.1: Profile of Respondents in intimate relationships

Responded	Age	Gender	Nationality	Duration of relationship
A	19	F	South African	3 months
B	25	F	South African	8 months
C	23	M	Zimbabwean	1 year
D	25	F	South African	4 months
E	24	M	Zimbabwean	2 years
F	27	M	Congolese	2 years
G	29	F	Nigerian	10 months
H	30	M	South African	3 years
I	21	F	South African	7 months
J	24	M	South African	5 months
K	28	F	Zimbabwean	2 years
L	28	F	Nigerian	2 years
M	23	M	South African	9 months
N	21	M	South African	7 months
O	20	F	Zimbabwean	4 months
P	26	F	Nigerian	1 year

Table 4.1 above indicates the students who were in intimate relationship. The researcher illustrated the data which were found out from the respondents. The data were sourced from 16 participants in order to explore the contributory factors to conflicts in intimate relationships among students at the University of Venda, South Africa. There were nine female students and seven male students who participated in the study. The youngest participant was a female aged 19 and the oldest was a male student aged 30.

Information was sourced from both local and international students such as Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Nigeria and Zimbabwe in order to get views from different groups. In terms of nationality the Congolese students consisted of 6.25% of the respondents, the Nigerian students consisted of 18.75% of the respondents, the South Africans consisted of 50% of the respondents and the Zimbabweans consisted of 25% of the total respondents. In terms of gender, 56.25%

were females and 43.75% were males. This was done to ensure a fair representation of all the genders. Since the university consists of more female students this was a fair representation. The shortest period of a relationship in this study was 3 months and the longest relationship period was 3years. These differences in time can also help in understanding conflicts in relationships. The reason for including students of different ages, sex, nationalities and duration of the relationship was to avoid bias.

4.3 EMOTIONAL FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO CONFLICT IN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

This section focused on conflict which arose as a result of emotional factors. This section is therefore comprised of responses which the participants gave pertaining to conflicts that arise due to emotional aspects.

4.3.1 Factors caused by lack of attention in intimate relationships

All the respondents interviewed, all (100%) were quite aware that conflicts can triggered by different reasons. On the question of how lack of attention can contribute to a conflict in an intimate relationship, different views were given by participants. 75% of the respondents explained it this way:

When my partner starts to give me less attention this makes me feel and think that there is someone that is given the attention that was supposed to be given to me. I need that sense of belonging from my partner which is also one of the reason of being in a relationship and by my partner not paying attention to my needs and failing to see when I need them makes me realise there might be a new person where all that attention is going. So by trying to understand what is going on, it will end up in a fight.

As highlighted above the lack of attention has led to the increase in conflicts in intimate relationships among youth or young people. Such situations are believed to generate conflict as the people would try to make their partners understand that what they are doing is not accepted. According (Guerrero et al., 2001), individuals may complain that they are not spending enough time together with their partners therefore this lack of attention may lead to emotional breakdown due to feelings of insecurity and jealous. Nevertheless among these emotional factors the respondents further highlighted that the lack of attention can lead to conflict because they felt like

they were being ignored. This is possible because a partner can be easily be ignored when the other partner chooses friends over their partner. The following statement attests to this assertion:

'Mostly our partners spend most of their time with their friends forgetting that they also have their partners who needs to spend my time with them. By raising this issue, trying to understand why they always see it fit to spend most of their free time with their friends, we would end up in a conflict'.

As can be seen above, the lack of attention due to intentional reasons can cause a lot of trouble in the relationship. This is the case because the partner may feel like their partners chose to be with other people instead of giving the affection and attention to them. One female respondent further substantiated that the lack of attention can only have an impact when you are the victim. This is what she actually said:

'At some point my partner accused me of not giving him attention but I would not understand that. He ended up doing the same thing and when I realized that, we would start to fight and he would remind me of what I was doing to him'.

The response above testifies the extent and effect of the pain due to lack of attention form their partners. When only one partner is feeling neglected no matter how much they try to talk about the issue the other partner always tries to avoid the matter. Some people in relationships are so good at playing victim. This means that they do not want their partners to complain about certain issues but when tables turn against them, this may lead to quarrels between the two. Some partners intentionally stop giving attention to their partners they would be diverting their attention to other things or other people.

This shows that feelings of insecurity and jealousy as well as lack of communication are the main factors which lead to conflicts. The majority of the responses revealed that mot conflicts in intimate relationships were as a result of lack of attention. About 81, 3% of the respondents confirmed that insecurity and jealousy lead to conflicts in intimate relationships among students. This can be traced in the following extract:

'Feelings of insecurity predetermine some arguments in a relationship because no none wants to be cheated and personally I will fight for what is mine. The moment you start asking questions so as to understand what is happening one can become so defensive. This defensive behaviour can stimulate the anger in the person who wants to understand what is going on and hence a conflict may arise'.

In addition to this, one female student also explained it this way:

'The moment I would suspect that something is going on, my partner will try to defend himself by being too emotional. The fact that he acts so defensive about the whole issue makes me angry and somehow makes me feel like I don't matter to him anymore. This feeling that I will have makes me want to keep on pestering until I get answers and probably this pressure will lead us into fighting.'

As shown above, it can be seen that insecurity can cause a lot of trouble in relationships. The fear of losing your partner to someone can lead to conflict. One can worsen one's partner's anger by being defensive when asked and such a behaviour makes the victim to feel as if they are being cheated. According to Prospero and Vohra-Gupta(2007), insecurity is a severe cause of conflict in relationships because once one feels insecure and has trust issues all they think of is they being cheated or being lied and therefore every chance they get they attack their partners.

Furthermore, some respondents (31, 3%) indicated that issues of insecurity and trust can be linked to lack of attention in a relationship. They stated it this way:

'Definitely, the feeling of insecurity in our relationship leads us to conflicts and we actually relate this to lack of attention in a relationship. When things start to change in a relationship especially when the time you used to spend together begin to deteriorate this will definitely rise up some suspicions that there is someone new where they spend their time with. This will definitely bring us to a point where we engage in an argument and sometimes to a severe fight.'

The statement above demonstrates the fact that both lack of attention and insecurity are intertwined. Both are linked to conflicts in intimate relationships. When one is given less attention, they start to think that they are being cheated on and this affects the trust. Conflict can easily occur in a relationship that is without security and trust.

In addition to this, some respondents indicated that insecurity can cause their partners to doubt in whatever they have to say. The issue of broken trust is therefore one of the factors that lead to conflicts in intimate relationships. About 12, 5% of the respondents alluded this. One of the respondents had this to say:

'Issues of insecurity can cause people to doubt their partners in most cases for example when one has to study late, having a group discussion and make an excuse of coming back late to the

room or just visiting late or one not picking their phones due to some reason, all these reasons may not be considered to be true by someone who has trust issues therefore a conflict will arise’.

Similarly another respondent said:

‘If I start to notice some changes in our relationship in which I am putting all my efforts, this will disturb me and leads us to fight. I have invested so much into my relationship and if my partners tells me something that I don’t believe or trust this may lead us to fight unless they provide evidence of where and what they have been doing’.

From the above sentiments, it can be seen that conflicts can arise as a result of emotions. When people’s emotions are not being considered or being prioritised people tend to fight for that attention and in the process of doing that conflicts may arise. People long for a sense of belonging and when they feel like they are being ignored or neglected it becomes an issue for them, which may also lead to conflict between them. When one feels that they are no longer cared for like they used to be, this may lead partners to be suspicious as they will think their attention is now being diverted to someone.

From the above it can be seen that all the respondents pointed out that lack of attention in a relationship as playing a major role in bringing about conflict in a relationship. 13 respondents also confirmed that feelings of insecurity and lack of trust can also lead to some conflicts in a relationship. This view was also supported by Prospero and Vohra-Gupta (2007) who pointed out that betrayal of trust in an intimate relationship can contribute to conflict and in cases where one partner fails to open up conflict will be triggered by past experiences.

4.4 SOCIAL PROBLEMS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO CONFLICT INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP

This section is aimed at finding out if social problems can lead to conflicts in a relationship. There were different views expressed by the respondents in this regard. They said that partners may experience conflict as a result of social problems they experience in life.

4.4.1 Lack of communication as a contributory factor to conflict in relationships

The respondents had different views on what communication can do to a relationship. Most respondents (93, 8%) indicated that conflicts will always arise if there is a miscommunication or misunderstanding. They further indicated that the conflicts they encounter in their relationships

were caused by the manner in which they communicated in their relationships. For example, some of the respondents said that:

'It is really frustrating when you are trying to initiate a conversation and the person is not interested in what you are saying. This mostly happen when the other person fails to communicate with you like giving you only stares when you try to engage them into a serious conversation. Non-verbal communication can be so irritating that you end up being angry. Obviously this will make me angry and ends in a conflict'

Another respondent added by saying:

Nothing really works without communication I can say. When we do not open up to our feelings by talking one will remain being hurt inside. When someone does what pleases them only without communicating, that may lead to conflicts.

In addition another respondent said:

'It is so annoying when my partner looks at me without saying a word when I am trying to talk about something that they are not doing right which is bothering me. To me this attitude of not wanting to talk can clearly show me that they are not interested or they are just trying to ignore the topic. I am easily offended by this and this will lead me to start a fight with my partner. All the courage to speak nicely will be replaced by a voice full of anger'

The above statements show that lack of communication has a serious negative impact on a relationship. This is also supported by other scholars who argued that lack of communication may lead to conflict between partners. This mostly happens when one partner might want to solve the problems whereas the other one reluctant to engage in a discussion. The refusal to discuss issues by one partner may make anger the other partners. When one partner is angry, this may, subsequently, lead to conflict between the two (Tillet and French, 2012). This shows that conflict arises when one partner wants to talk about their problem while the other one is not willing to talk.

Contrary to the above some conflicts still arise even when the communication is good. A respondent said that sometimes pure and direct communication can cause conflicts as well. This is stated as follows:

'I have realised that no matter how honest I am my partner will always find a way to make it look bad and use those words against me. There are times that I would want to tell him maybe what I did maybe that was bad. My goal would be for him to forgive me maybe but this honest

conversation will turn out to be a bad one and we will end up fighting. So to me I think a person only want to be told what they want to hear even if it takes lying as long as I avoid a conflict. I now do this because I feel like my partner does not look forward to have a long relationship with me so I just tell him what pleases his ears’.

From the above extract, it can be seen that every kind of communication can trigger a conflict in a relationship. Even an honest conversation can lead to conflict when the other person is not interested in the relationship. Tillet and French (2012:21) stated that sometimes open and honest discussion can make things worse, more especially in cases where there is no ongoing relationship or where both parties do not have the obligation or inspiration to work through the conflict and to try to resolve it.

It is important to note that any form of communication can cause a conflict in a relationship. Bad communication as well as miscommunication can cause a severe impact on a relationship. This was also pointed out by all the respondents when they said that:

‘Actually this is a big issue in relationships if partners do not know how to speak nicely then it means we are going to have a problem and nothing will ever be good. When my partner shouts at me to me it seems like they do not have respect and I don’t like feeling like someone is not respecting me especially my partner. This has no good ending at all hence a conflict becomes so inevitable in cases like these’.

In support of the above another respondent reported that:

‘I have a problem with my partner who always want to bring the past in the current situation. When I did something in the past they always want to use it against me especially when I am correcting them for the same mistake. I would prefer them to speak out when I do something wrong not to use it against me in future and this will result in us fighting and this is a bad means of communication which I cannot approve’.

From the above statements it can be concluded that some conflicts may arise due to bad ways of communication. When partners show each other attitudes when talking and issues like irony and sarcasm are used this may cause conflicts in a relationship. In addition, people may bring their problems from them their previous relationships. Such issues may trigger conflict in the current relationship. This may therefore serve as a justification of their wrong doing which may ultimately trigger a conflict in the new relationship. Schwebel, Moss and Fine (1999), stated that bad communication can lead to conflicts in a relationships. Bad communication relates to criticizing

one another as well as shouting or quarreling. Shouting at one another can typically cause conflict in a relationship if the partners are not able to calm down and talk in an understanding manner. In short, good communication and non-verbal communication can lead to a conflict between partners as this may be annoying or irritating to the other partner.

4.4.2 Substance and alcohol abuse

There were different views amongst the respondents on the contributory factors of conflicts in intimate relationships. In this section the respondents gave their views on what they think of substance use and if it has any effect in a relationship. All of the respondents expressed a common view that the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to conflicts. This is likely to happen because substance and alcohol abuse may cause conflict because some people become violent when they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol. About 57% of the respondents said that they had a conflict in their relationship because of substance abuse. One of the respondents had this to say:

'When you are drunk you tend to lose control of yourself and sometimes this will lead you to fight with my partner when they are trying to control your bad behaviour. Sometimes we cannot face the real facts of the world and in terms you know you cannot stand or win an argument with your partner taking alcohol will help you boost your confidence hence you say whatever you've been failing to communicate. Under the influence of substance you wouldn't mind if you fight because you are not yourself and this feels like taking risks to do what you cannot do when you are sober.'

In support of the above another respondent reported that:

'I now know that my partner cannot handle a situation or a crisis in our relationship when he is sober. I think he has less confidence and he cannot stand telling me something that he dislikes that is when he drinks so he can come and shout at me. This will definitely lead us into fighting (looking disturbed).'

The opinion expressed in the above paragraph confirms that the use of substance may lead to conflicts. When people are under the influence of any substance they are likely to lose control of themselves. They mostly become violent and this behaviour has been found to happen to many couples who use substance and alcohol. Kersten and Kersten (2002) indicated that the use of alcohol has been found to increase the occurrence and severity of conflict and domestic violence. Alcohol consumption as a direct cause of intimate partner conflicts has often been contested on the basis of additional factors accounting for its presence. Frequent heavy drinking can create an

unhappy, stressful partnership that increases the risk of conflict and violence. About 43, 8% of the respondents also mentioned that:

'When you staying with your partner and sharing everything with them including the money that you buy groceries with it becomes a problem when your partner wants to use that money to buy alcohol or drugs. Since they do this without the other approving since probably the money would have to be used for something you both need in the room, food for example, this will lead to fighting'.

The above statement indicates that the use of substance can bring about other problems in the relationship such as financial problem. Such a partner would take the money that is supposed to be used for other important family needs. This will therefore result in some conflict. Too much drinking by one partner can worsen financial difficulties, or other relationship stressors. This can create tension and conflict, thus increasing the risk of violence occurring between partners, Kersten and Kersten (2002).

Contrary to the above views, some of the respondents indicated that they had never experienced any effect of alcohol in their relationships. They reported that they had not encountered anything different even when they were dating drinking partners or those who use substance. This sentiment is conveyed in the following way by some respondents:

'People who occasionally drink alcohol hardly encounter substance related problems in their relationships. So this can say that not all people who drink alcohol can end up being violent'.

Another respondent added by saying that:

'I have no idea how this will lead to conflicts because we both do not use substances. I have never been exposed to substance use before but I think people only want to overrate substance use as one thing leading to conflicts and I think people want to use substance use as a scapegoat for their ill behaviour'.

The above statements suggest that not always does the consumption of substance and alcohol lead to conflicts. It is in some cases though where substance and alcohol abuse may lead to conflicts, probably very little of it would have been consumed. However, one of the respondents did not agree with the fact that substance and alcohol abuse can lead to conflict. She said that her partner also occasionally drank alcohol but was never violent. Some of the respondents stated that no one in their relationship uses substances, hence that problem had not been encountered.

This was supported by Kersten and Kersten (2002) who stated that to a less extent, alcohol and substance abuse does not always lead to conflict but it is however used by other people in a relationship to run away from reality. It is however confirmed that substance can or cannot lead to conflicts. The answer is balanced and depends with a person's behaviour people's behaviour after they take substances or alcohol. To those who consume substances this may lead to conflict due to the misuse of the finances, hence couples fight. To sum up, these social problems, lack of proper communication therefore have been found to be having an impact in causing conflicts from the study findings and the literature. Substance and alcohol use have an impact on conflicts, to some extent, but not in all cases.

Interaction with the respondents also has led to an understanding that substance use can cause conflict in intimate relationships. Many students who have experimented with alcohol or drugs stated that their use of substance and alcohol caused conflicts in their relationships. All respondents pointed out that communication is a key to any successful relationship and without communication, conflicts will always rise since people will end up doing as they please without agreeing with the other part. The ways of communication in relationships play a vital role in causing conflicts. It is not every conflict that is caused by miscommunication or lack of effective communication, clear and real communication can cause or worsen conflict in a relationship as well.

4.5 CULTURAL DIFFERENCES WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO CONFLICT IN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

The section presents data to determine if cultural differences can also contribute to conflict in intimate relationships. The researcher was interested to know about the kind of problems that respondents encounter when dating a person of a different culture and if failure to understand their partners' culture can lead to some conflicts in their relationships.

4.5.1 Problems encountered when dating a person of a different culture

Cultural differences have been understood to have contributed to conflicts in intimate relationships (Tillet and French 2012) and (Strong, De Vault and Cohen, 2008). This is evidenced by 50% of the respondents who pointed out that dating someone from a different culture promotes the misunderstanding of each other's values, norms and traditions. A respondent explained this way:

'When my partner looks down upon my culture, I can easily get irritated and get angry because I do not want what I do to be mocked by someone who does not understand it. My partner is Nigerian and I am South African. This means we have things that we do differently including the cooking itself. There are small things that we don't understand each other and hence we end up in an argument'

Another respondent said:

'Yes it leads to some conflicts because everyone at some point they are ethnocentric. So they think their culture is important. When I don't understand my partner's culture not because it is intentional, she thinks I am being ignorant and we end up quarrelling over that'

Some respondents came with this response:

'It cannot be really said that we end up conflict but there is always an element of thinking that your own culture is superior and this will just end as a minor debate between us. People have that perception in them that what they practise in their culture is more relevant than anyone else' culture and by so doing if you happen to say that loud, your partner might not like that and this will cause some minor problems in your relationships'

The above responses elaborated that cultural differences have a potential for a negative impact on the relationship. The above respondents mentioned that it is so unpleasant for someone who does not understand your culture to pass some judgements especially being negative or looking down upon one's culture. Strong, De Vault and Cohen, (2008), stated that inter-cultural relationships are likely to face conflict by failing to understand one's culture. About 31, 3% of the participants described it in this way:

'We hardly experience problems but the feeling that everyone has that their culture is more powerful is irritating but it always feels good when you are the one being prestigious of your culture. We don't want our partners to brag about their culture and for example how well-groomed people of a specific culture are as compared to the other people. These are some issues that lead people to argue in relationships'

The above response shows that there were problems that were being encountered in cross cultural relationships. The issues might not be too serious to lead to a severe conflict but there are some irritations caused by the difference in cultures. People are so protective of their own

cultures and hence become defensive when someone is trying to attack them Strong De Vault and Cohen (2008).

Despite the differences in cultural traits, some participants further highlighted that this issue did not bring about conflict in their relationships. They said that cultural differences instead gave them an opportunity to grow and also to learn other people's cultures. Some of the respondents have been open minded and brought out the importance of intercultural relationships and diversity. One respondent said:

'I find it interesting dating someone from a different culture since this allows you to grow and know what other people do in their cultures. I am dating a South African and I am from Congo. I have learnt a lot from my partner's culture and I can say I am open minded and eager to learn new things. Despite that I have passion to learn new things, I still don't want someone to mock my culture and this can make me a little bit offended'.

The above statement shows that some young people are so eager to learn from other cultures. This shows that they believe in intercultural aspects where people from different cultures come together and learn all about each other's cultures. From the responses above, it shows that differences in cultures can still be a problem to a relationship when one does not respect their partner's culture. However, for open-minded people, this is an opportunity to learn about other people's culture which may enrich one's life.

However, the most dominant point in this discussion is that most of the respondents indicated that cultural differences can cause conflicts in intimate relationships. It must be noted that that tension in the relationships may be caused by undermining the other person's culture. No one wants or can allow anyone to walk over their cultural beliefs. Otherwise, disregard of somebody's culture may lead to conflict even between people who are in a relationship. Strong, De Vault and Cohen (2008) also stated that inter-cultural relationships can cause some conflicts when couples fail to understand one's cultural differences and perspectives.

4.5.2 Cultural misunderstanding in intimate relationship

The majority of the respondents interviewed seemed to agree that the failure to understand your partner's culture can cause some conflicts in a relationship. People have different ways of doing things and this can definitely be misread by your partner as they may think they are being disrespected or being taken for granted. Almost 50% of the respondents concurred with this view in the following manner:

'There are obviously certain things one does not understand that happens in their partner's culture. In some cultures when one keeps quiet and looks away when one is talking is considered being disrespectful and at the same time some cultures do not allow you to interrupt when someone is speaking and having eye contact with them can be seen as a sign of disrespect. This miscommunication can therefore leads into some fighting in a relationship'.

Other respondents added by saying that:

'Some cultures are so sensitive and sometimes if you say something in public that you would think is not wrong can be a big issue that can easily offend them. Failing to understand the does and don'ts of your partner's culture can generate a conflict in a relationship'.

Misunderstanding of one's culture can therefore cause conflicts in relationships. People from different cultures communicate in different ways. When a person communicate with a person from a different culture, there may be misunderstandings which may trigger conflict between them. Tillet and French (2012) also supported this view by saying that when people from different societies enter into a relationship, the way they communicate to each other can cause conflict since there might be some misunderstandings and misinterpretation of what they mean. One might take silence as a way of not cooperating whilst in other societies they believe that one has to keep quiet (especially the woman) when there is an argument. It is then difficult to understand a culture that you did not grow up in. Failure to do so may have some consequences if one is to be involved with someone from a different culture. Not only miscommunications can cause conflicts but a number of things can also contribute and some respondents mentioned these below:

'Failing to understand your partner's culture can cause conflicts yes because this means we have different traditions and some other aspects. Sometimes you would even intentionally plan to offend your partner but it is all due to lack of knowledge. The excuse you have might not even be heard and you will be already in a conflict about the whole issue'.

Another respondent supplemented by saying:

'This definitely will cause a conflict because in some cultures it is not acceptable for a man to be seen doing the chores. Man must be related with masculine activities but here at school you will find out that we both need to go to study maybe and when you ask your male partner to help out in cooking they will feel offended as they will say those are women's duties. To me this would seem like the person is overdoing it because we are both students and to make it worse I am not

even married to them for me to do all those housewife duties. This will definitely cause some conflicts in the relationship and I just have a feeling that people sometimes overrate the whole culture thing’.

In light of the above, it can be highlighted that not understanding one’s culture can cause some conflicts. When one’s culture, traditions and norms are undermined, people tend to feel threatened about that. When one behaves in a way that their partner despise in their culture this may result in some conflicts.

The above evidence demonstrates that dating a person of a different culture and by failing to understand the partner’s culture may lead to conflict in the relationship. The arguments highlighted in this study endorse the fact that people who are in inter-cultural relationships may experience conflicts when one fails to understand their cultural differences and perspectives. People have problems in accepting other people’s cultures as they think that their own is more important than their partner’s. The ways in which people communicate differ from society to society. The failure to understand one’s partner’s culture may result in some conflict.

4.6 STUDENTS’ REACTION TOWARDS CONFLICT IN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

This section focused more on how students reacted to a conflict when they were faced with that situation. In order to get their views, the researcher asked respondents the following question: How do you react to a conflict when it arises?

For the question on how students react to conflict in intimate relationships, about 88% of the respondents indicated that when there is a conflict arise they do not want to give up on fighting until what they want or fighting for is in their favour. Most students said that they would keep on fighting as long as the matter is not yet resolved. This view is expressed in the following manner:

‘When a conflict arise in a relationship obvious no one wants to be the one losing in that fight so it means the fight is ongoing and one will do all it takes just to win the argument. This might actually mean bringing all the past mistakes of your partner so just you can get away with this. If you give up first it seems as if you are weak and that is a feeling no one ones. So because of fear of losing we then keep on quarrelling unless we both compromise and agree to that everyone make mistakes.

Another respondent added by saying that:

'When I fight with my partner and if I know for sure that I am at fault I would rather look for his past mistakes too and bring them to the current situation so that we can be equal. When a conflict arise we usually shout at each other unless one of us decides to walk out of the room to cool off. The reaction I have to every conflict that happens in the relationship is to shout at my partner.'

In the light of the above, it can be concluded that people chose to keep on with the fighting. This means they were not willing to compromise. People react in different ways when there is a conflict arise, there are people who do not want to lose. About 43, 6% of the female respondents responded that:

'Conflicts can make one so emotional and when you begin to fight with your partner sometimes severe fights can make you cry as you could not be able to say anything. This usually happens when you have a talkative partner who doesn't give you a chance to speak and most probably when they are saying mean words to you. When this happen and when the conflict becomes to go out of control this would just end in some partners crying. Men like to win so sometimes you have to surrender but the outcome will not be pleasing so that is the reason you end up being so emotional and cry.'

The response above explains a different reaction of students when conflicts arise in their relationships. Some people are easily offended and so become emotional that whenever a conflict arises this may result into crying and they might just let the issue go away by doing that. These people are usually the ones who are dominated by the talkative ones hence they cry or they surrender. This was also supported by Zacchilli et al (2009) who said that most of the times when one person is more powerful than the other, usually the one who is dominated chooses to give in. They do that even though they would not satisfied with the result. Another responded said that:

'If a conflict arise in our relationship sometimes I would not want the issue to escalate so I usually walk out of the room so that we will talk about the issue when we have both calmed. Nothing can be solved when we are both fuming with anger. In cases where I see that the situation is terribly bad and we cannot easily deal with it this might actually make you think of separation or just want to have your own space for a couple of days maybe until you are ready to deal with the matter if there is still hope.'

The respondent above stated that some people chose to take time away from the relationship when there is conflict. In order to avoid being violent, they opt to walk away from whoever they may be in conflict with until the situation cools down. When partners find themselves in a serious

conflict, they may decide to separate until they figure out a way to solve their issues. This was also supported by Peterson (2002) who said that separation may prevent irreparable harm to the relationship, and time apart may give participants time to cool off and to think about their situation more constructively. Another female student highlighted that:

'When a conflict arise in a relationship I sometimes do not even respond at all. I quickly take note that things are now going out of hand and I will keep quiet no matter how much my partner shouts and sometimes this makes them angry but I will still not say a word as I will know they will keep quiet at least for that moment. I don't like fighting so I would prefer to keep quiet and I would like to deal with the matter when my partner is now less emotional'.

The response above indicates that some people have the tendency to be silent when there is a conflict in a relationship. They would be trying to prevent causing too much trouble in the relationship. This reaction can be viewed as withdrawal since one will just withdraw from the issue and be quiet without dealing with it even though some prefer dealing with the issue later.

4.7 STUDENTS' WAYS OF DEALING WITH CONFLICT IN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

The respondents were also asked to talk about the different ways in which they deal with conflict in intimate relationships. The majority of the respondents (94%) indicated that they used a variety of strategies to resolve conflict and to restore peace again in their relationships. Only 6% of the respondents opposed this view. About 35% of the respondents indicated that when there is conflict in their relationships they opt for effective communication as a way of bringing about a solution. The following quotation highlights the strategies used by the respondents when there is a conflict in their relationships:

'When conflicts arise in relationship it is difficult to solve the matter when you are both not calm. In situations like these one has to cool down first then you communicate in a respectful manner towards each other. This means talking and agreeing on what went wrong and you come with a solution that will satisfy both of you. Both partners need to make sure that what they are trying to mean is really understood without some misinterpretations'.

Another respondent said:

'Whenever you fight in a relationship you need to talk about the issue whenever you feel like you are both in a good condition to talk. You need to give each other chance to speak what they think and do less opposing when one is talking. One thing that also need to be taken into consideration

is to observe the root of the problem and talk of ways to solve that problem. If one is complaining about lack of attention then you have to agree on both students are free to see each other or even compromising. This all happens through good communication’.

Taking into consideration the above responses, it can be concluded that effective communication is viewed by most respondents as the most strategy of dealing with a conflict in a relationship. The above information emphasises that communication can save a relationship which might be in danger. When partners do not communicate about things that bother them and when they choose to ignore a problem in their relationship, this may lead to them slowly drifting away from each other. The issue of effective communication was supported by Tillet and French (2012) when they stated that effective communication is when people understand each other and when one makes sure that the message they are saying is received and by also checking if they understood the message as well. This goes a long way in salvaging the relationship between partners. Furthermore, some respondents said that active listening is also one of the ways in which a conflict can be dealt with. The respondents made the following remarks:

‘A conflict can be managed or dealt with when one is willing to listen carefully when one is talking. As a couple you need to talk as well as be good in listening when your partner is talking. This will help in avoiding misinterpretations of what someone is saying and to avoid further arguments’.

Another respondent confirmed by saying that:

‘Some of the problems that cause conflicts in intimate relationships is that one would have not took time to understand what their partner is saying and they also not do follow ups to check if they heard well rather they just attack. One needs to listen attentively and ask what their partners mean if they do not understand’.

In taking the argument further, the respondents said that being able to listen attentively when one is talking can help prevent a lot of trouble. This indicates that some conflicts can easily be dealt with by understanding what one is trying to say. In most cases people fight because of misinterpretation of each other’s statements which can be avoided through active listening. According to Guerrero et al (2001), listening and paying attention is one best way in which a conflict can be dealt with.

In addition, some of the respondents said that they deal with conflict by being respectful towards their partners. In so doing, conflict can be minimised or dealt with in a more fruitful way. Two

respondents explained how they deal with a conflict in their relationship and what has worked for them:

'Where respect is being given it also becomes easier for couples to deal with a conflict in their relationship. Respect comes with a lot of other good attitudes such as listening carefully and avoid interruption. When you respect your partner it also becomes easy to handle a conflict'.

Linked to the above another respondent said:

'When you want to successfully deal with a conflict it needs people who respect each other. When partners show respect towards each other they are already in a better position in solving a conflict as they will give each other to speak and being able to listen'.

As evidenced by statements above, it is argued that respect for each is the best way for couples to deal with conflicts. When there is respect for each other, it is also likely that the conflict at hand is going to be resolved amicably. Effective communication only comes when there is respect and in this way conflict may be resolved in a positive way. According to Gross and Guerrero (2000), offering one respect is helpful and partners who respect and value their partners are more likely to produce positive outcomes when dealing with a conflict.

Moreover a significant number of respondents reported that they manage to deal with conflicts through a various strategies and these include people saying what they mean and also being polite and staying cool. The following statement aptly captures this view:

'In order to deal with conflicts well you need to be able to be polite and cool first before you decide to tackle the problem. You cannot solve a conflict when you are still angry therefore take time to cool off then think of ways of solving your problem when you are both cool.

Another respondent added by saying that:

'Avoiding miscommunication can help in dealing with a conflict. When a conflict arise one can worsen it by misinterpreting what their partner is trying to say. One has to ask their partner to say what they heard to check if there was no misinterpretation. When a fight starts you need to calm down first so that you can speak politely when you have to solve the conflict'.

Taking into consideration the above responses, it is noted that conflicts can be dealt with through having a good attitude and this includes staying calm and being polite. The respondents also indicated that one has to ensure that their message is heard correctly to avoid r hurting each other

further. Misinterpretation of words can worsen the situation. Therefore, it is important for one to check if their information is understood. Guerrero et al., (2001) also stated that in situations where the issue is too tense, partners should take a break and come back to the issue later after they have both calmed down. This will help the couple to have a more constructive talk that will help in dealing with the conflict.

Conflict in intimate relationships was attributed mainly to lack of attention, insecurity, lack of communication and trust, substance and alcohol abuse and cultural differences. Lack of attention is one of the key findings that can lead to conflict in intimate relationships. The study found out that when one lacks affection from their partner this may bring conflict. People need to be with someone who pays attention to their needs, so when this does not happen a conflict will arise. Lack of attention has been also found to lead to partners developing a sense of insecurity and mistrust. This is evident in the large proportion of respondents who indicated that they would start feeling insecure and having little trust to their partners as they like the attention is given to someone new. The study also found out that in a relationship where trust is gone, the partners are not at peace as they are always fighting over everything especially when someone provides information about their whereabouts which does not satisfy the other partner, resulting in a conflict. These factors can be entangled and they are found to cause serious conflict in intimate relationships.

Another key finding from the research is that the social issues which are communication and the abuse of substance and alcohol had been also confirmed to play a role in causing conflict in an intimate relationship. According to the study results a larger percentage of 93.8% indicated that lack of communication has a great impact in causing conflicts. Without proper communication conflicts were confirmed to be always there in a relationship since a lot of respondents pointed out that this is a big concern in every relationship. The study has also pointed out that even proper communication can still lead to conflicts as some people cannot stand genuine and honest communication. Failing to understand each other can greatly influence conflict in a relationship. This cause of conflict was also supported by Tillet and French (2012) who posit that conflict arises when one partner wants to talk about their problem while the other is not willing to talk.

According to the study results only a few participants who have encountered alcohol and substance abuse pointed out that this attribute can lead to conflict in a relationship. In relation to substance and alcohol use, it was found that not every person who takes alcohol will be prone to

conflicts in a relationship. The study results indicated that substance and alcohol use can or cannot lead to conflicts. This, however depends on people and on how much is consumed.

According to the study results, differences in culture have been found to contribute to conflict. Respondents in intercultural relationships have pointed out that the differences in cultural traits and failing to understand one's culture can lead to misunderstandings and conflict. The perception that people have of considering their culture as superior than others also happens in relationships and by so doing, conflicts have been found to arise. The study findings however were in line with the literature which pointed out that different cultural backgrounds play a role in leading to some conflicts in a relationship (Strong, De Vault and Cohen 2008). The study however, pointed out that this happens to some but not everyone in a mixed cultural intimate relationship.

The study also pointed out to how students react to conflict when it arises in a relationship. Different opinions were given and 88% of the students stated that when a conflict arises their reaction towards it is doing anything that does make them lose in this fight. A lot have stated that they keep the fight going on until what they want is granted. Many students have indicated that they do not want to be the ones giving in first so they prefer keeping on with the conflict. Furthermore, basing on the study, it can be argued that students who get emotional easily react to a conflict by crying and these kind of people are the ones who are usually dominated or conquered by the talkative ones. Moreover, some people have reported that when a conflict arises they prefer taking some time away from their partners so as to cool down and sort out their issues. This also means people who keep quiet so as to let their partners keep notice and also keep quiet so that they can deal with the issue when they are both calm. The study also pointed out that to some students, separation is the way in which they react to conflicts. The respondents stated that separation will avoid too much harm to a relationship by avoiding making hurtful things to one another, but to some students they prefer separating for good if they do not see their relationship issues be able to be solved.

The study pointed out different ways in which conflicts can be dealt with in intimate relationships. It indicated that effective communication is one way of dealing with conflicts. This means that partners with the courage to what they want and what is bothering them in the relationship. By so doing, they will discuss issues that need be to be sorted out and agree on them without anyone being left unsatisfied. Good communication can save a relationship and one needs to make sure that their partner understands well what they are trying to say so as to avoid misinterpretations. In addition, the study also argued that active listening can also help in dealing with conflict in a

relationship. By listening attentively one can be able to notice some inconsistencies in one's story and this can also help in avoiding misinterpretations since a lot of people engage in some conflicts due to misunderstanding one another. This however is one of the best way in which a conflict can be solved. Furthermore, another way of dealing with conflict was indicated which is respect. By respect one's partner this can also help partners to solve conflicts in a more constructive way. Having a good attitude also improve ways of dealing with conflict. When one is calm they are mostly able to handle their issues in a more productive way and also give them an opportunity to solve the conflict. Staying calm and polite therefore is the attitude that helps partner have effective communication as well as a constructive talk that will help them in dealing with the conflict.

4.8 CONCLUSION

Chapter 4 t presenting the data gathered through interviews with respondents who have are involved in intimate relationships. The data showed that there many and different factors that contribute to conflict in relationships. The data also helped to highlight the effect of conflict in intimate relationships. A number of ways used by the respondents in dealing with conflict in their relationships were also discussed.

CHAPTRE 5

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding of five chapters, the nature and scope of the study, the exploration of contributory factors to conflict in intimate relationships were discussed in detail. The chapter commences by giving a review of the aim of the study before giving the summary of findings of the study. The findings were drawn from the data which was qualitatively collected. This chapter made conclusion for this study and recommendations for future studies. These are briefly presented here under.

5.2 AIM OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to explore the contributory factory of conflict in intimate relationships among students of the University of Venda. The aim of the study was fulfilled with the support of research objectives and the anticipation is that the study will provide practical solutions on how to deal or manage conflict in intimate relationships among youth in South Africa.

In carrying out the research, semi structured interviews, based on the research objectives were issued out to the targeted population to collect primary data.

5.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Conflict in intimate relationship occurs when people hold different views and when they fail to agree (Fischer and Michael, 2012). The research supports this view through providing evidence that people in intimate relationships do have different needs and this will result into disagreements. The research explored the factors that can lead to conflict in intimate relationships which are lack of communication, the use of substance and alcohol, lack of trust and insecurities as well as cultural differences. From the findings of the research study, the main conclusion is that all the research constructs (lack of communication, insecurities, lack of attention, the use of substance and alcohol, lack of trust and cultural differences) have some significance into contributing to conflict in an intimate relationship.

According to the study and to the data which was collected, the researcher realized that lack of proper communication therefore has been found to be having an impact in causing conflicts. Bad communication can trigger some conflict in a relationship and this negative attitude in communicating is further revealed as a majority of respondents indicated that conflict is mostly to arise and get out of hand if the way in which they do communicate does not show respect of one another.

The research also concluded that students who are affected by conflicts have different ways in which they can react to conflict. The findings have shown that separation is one of the ways in which couples react when a conflict arise. This was also supported by the literature (Peterson 2000), and it stated that separation can be a result of partners being tired of trying to solve the problem several times but still could not permanently erase the problem therefore choose to live their life separately.

Another finding which was a result on how partners react to conflict in intimate relationship is that bitterness may result due to conquest or domination. The research concluded that when a conflict arises in an intimate relationship the one who is dominated usually have bitterness since they will not be pleased with the outcome and after they have given in to their powerful partner. This will however leads to sadness, bitterness, ill will and emotional breakdown. Zacchilli (2009) literature have also pointed out that the dominated partners have an ill reaction towards conflict.

The research also concluded that effective communication and effective listening are the effective ways in which a conflict can be dealt with. Being able to give one partner's attention when they are speaking can be a way of showing respect and wanting to work out on the issue at hand. The study findings have confirmed that understanding each other in communicating and making sure that their message is well received by their partner. Listening attentively and paying attention was found in the study to be one of the best ways in which conflict can be dealt with. Respect for one's partner was also found to be an effective way in dealing with conflict. This was evidenced by the responses which were given in the study and where there is mutual respect it is likely that the conflict will be able to be solved harmoniously.

In summary, the research confirmed that conflicts can be caused by lack of communication and insecurities, lack of trust and different cultural backgrounds. The research further recognized that there are some ways in which students react to conflict and separation was one of them. The

research came to the conclusion that good communication is the way to solve conflict in intimate relationships. Finding a better way of communicating can easily bring partners together so that they work on their differences.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher made the following recommendations focusing on the society, the policy, to the youth work profession and for the future researchers.

5.3.1 Recommendations for society

The society as a whole needs to appreciate or accept people's relationships. By so doing, the couples themselves will learn to respect themselves if the society has done that. The society needs to be non-judgemental to people in intimate relationships. This will lead to successful intimate relationships. In some cross-cultural relationships, the society needs to accept these kind of relationships as well as not looking down upon relationships of this nature. Being able to accept and respect people's decisions is how these relationships can be sustainable without anyone judging them. The acceptance and respect of people's intimate relationships can as well lead to confident and assertive couples who speak out what they want if they are well pleased by their partner's behaviour. By enhancing communication through self-confidence therefore a successful relationship.

5.3.2 Recommendations for policy

In South Africa there is no or specific policy that is there for people who are in intimate relationships. A policy should also be formulated to help safeguard relationships. To couples who are staying together but not married, the Domestic Violence Act (Act 116 of 1998) should be implemented to end violence. This will however help protect dating couples from violence or conflicts.

5.3.3 Recommendations for Youth Work Profession

Youth workers should be placed in universities which have the specific duty to help the youth with issues such as dating, lifestyles, conflicts in relationships, among other things. These youth workers need also to introduce some activities that can help young people to be their own self as well as being assertive and be able to make their own decisions. The more the students are kept

busy with other extra curriculum activities the more they worry less about someone not giving them attention.

5.3.4 Recommendations for Future Research

The researchers who intend to pursue studies further in this area should dig deeper to come up with more effective strategies to resolve conflicts in intimate relationships. They should aim to get perceptions of people from those in mixed cultural relationships to see what problems they are likely to face as well as try to find possible strategic ways to solve these conflicts. They should as well get perceptions from those dating couples from the same culture and understand the level of conflicts from these categories.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitation of this study were that its sample was very small as such its findings could not be generalised to the entire student body of the University of Venda. The results which were found might not necessarily be the real situation faced by everyone in an intimate relationship. During the time of data collection, the researcher faced some challenges which however limited the study. The timeframe for data collection was short therefore the interviews which were conducted were short therefore limited the responses from the respondents. The researcher could not find participants who would be willing to take more time in an interview due to their personal business. Since the study was a multi-cultural study, the failure to express one's self was also a problem since more information would have been better expressed in vernacular. This however limited the respondents to fully express their ideas and therefore limited the information the researcher got from the respondents.

5.5 CONCLUSION

The study was an exploration of contributory factors to conflicts in intimate relationships among students at the University of Venda. It was found that lack of attention was a major cause of conflicts among young people in intimate relationships. Not being given attention by one's partner can trigger some conflicts because of insecurity and jealousy. Moreover, too much focus on school work and neglecting relationships has more impact to female students since this will lead to the rise of conflicts. Communication, substance and alcohol abuse were also found to be a contributor of conflict in relationships. People who consume substances can have some uncontrolled behaviours hence end up fighting. Substance use also brings other problems such

as financial problems, resulting in conflicts. Cultural differences also have an influence on conflicts because of failure to cope with one another's cultural norms and values. The study however established that the four focus areas play a role in contributing to conflicts. By implementing conflict resolution steps these will be prevented. Ways in which students react to conflicts were also pointed out and this included separating, letting the powerful or the dominating win as well as refusing to give up. To conclude, ways of dealing with conflict were discussed and these included effective communication, active listening, respecting one another as well as having a good attitude, and being calm and polite so as to have constructive conversations which help in dealing with conflict.

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ANNEXTURE A: ESTIMATED BUDGET FOR THE RESEARCH STUDY

Item	Description	Quantity	Unit price	Total cost (R)
Assistance type and salary	Stipends for 2 research assistants @ R 180 per day for 15 days	2	R180 x 15 days x 2 assistants	5 400.00
	Stipend for data analysis (content analysis for 15 interviews @ 600 per interview)			9 000.00
	Subtotal			14 400.00
Technical Production	5 Bond paper @ R260 each	5	R 260 x 5	1 300.00
	Proposal writing and editing @R35 per copy	10	R35 x 10	350.00
	Proposal language editing @R35 per page	35	R35 x 40pages	1 400.00
	Final copy language editing of 200 pages @ R35 per page	200	R35 x 200 pages	7 000.00
	Printing of 8 final copies with 200 pages @ R1 per page	8	R1 x 200 pages x 8 copies	1 600.00
	Spiral binding of 6 copies @ R50 per copy	7	R50 x 7 copies	350.00
	Final binding of 8 copies @ R420 per copy	7	R450 x 8 copies	3 600.00
	Duplicating 8 thesis copies @ R300 per copy	8	R300 x 8 copies	2 400.00
	Subtotal			18 000.00

Stationery and Consumables (Specify)	Stapler and staple pins			400.00
	Puncher	1	R200	200.00
	Blue Pens and Highlighter pens	10+4	R10 x 10+ R20 x 4	180.00
	Files, folders and note pads			280.00
	Memory stick	1	R300 x 1	300.00
	Voice recorder MD 60	1	R3500 x 1	3 500.00
	External hard drive for data storage	1	R1500 x 1	1 500.00
	Modem	1	R600 x 1	600.00
	Data bundles			3 500.00
	Subtotal			10 460.00
Subsistence specify	Refreshment for 15 days for the period of the data collection @ R80 per person for 3 persons			3 600.00
	Miscellaneous expenses			3 540.00
	Subtotal			7 140.00
Grand Total			50 000.00	

ANNEXTURE B: PROPOSED WORK PLAN FOR THE RESEARCH

Activity	Responsible person	Completed by	Evidence of completion
1. Scanning the business environment for research topic and research area	Student	August 2015	Approved research topic
2. Proposal development	Student	October 2015	Approved proposal for seminar presentation
3. Seminar presentation	Student	February 2016	Approved proposal at seminar presentation
4. Proposal presentation to the school of Management Higher Degrees Board	Student	April 2016	Presented and given corrections
5. Submission of research proposal to the University Higher Degrees Committee (UHDC)	Student	May 2016	Approved research proposal
6. Detailed literature review	Student	July 2016	Completed literature review
7. Data collection	Student	August 2016	Collected data
8. Data analysis and presentation	Student	October 2016	Analysed data
9. Submission of first draft dissertation	Student	October 2016	Draft of dissertation
10. Submission of second draft dissertation	Student	November 2016	Draft of dissertation

11. Proof reading	Qualified proof reader	January 2017	Complete dissertation
12. Submission of final draft dissertation	Student	February 2017	Complete dissertation

ANNEXTURE C: ETHICS LETTER

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:
Ms J Manjowe

Student No:
11613024

PROJECT TITLE: Exploration of contributory factors
to conflict in intimate relationships among
students in South Africa rural University.

PROJECT NO: SHSS/16/GYS/11/2709

SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS

NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Dr NR Raselekoane	University of Venda	Supervisor
Dr TJ Mudau	University of Venda	Co-Supervisor
Ms J Manjowe	University of Venda	Investigator - Student

ISSUED BY:
UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Date Considered: September 2016

Decision by Ethical Clearance Committee Granted

Signature of Chairperson of the Committee: 

Name of the Chairperson of the Committee: Prof. G.E. Ekosse



University of Venda

PRIVATE BAG X5050, TSHOHYANDOU, 0950, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA
TELEPHONE (015) 962 8504/8313 FAX (015) 962 9060

"A quality driven financially sustainable, rural-based Comprehensive University"

ANNEXURE D: CONSENT LETTER



University of Venda

My name is Joyce Manjowe. I am a student doing Masters of Arts (Ma) in the Department of Youth and Gender Studies at the University of Venda. I am conducting a research on **EXPLORATION OF CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS TO CONFLICT IN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS ON THE STUDENTS AT A SOUTH AFRICAN RURAL UNIVERSITY.**The research is for academic purposes only. Your input to this research will be of great value. This interview is to help me collect valuable information on the causes of conflicts in intimate relationships. Please answer the questions below and provide as much detail as possible. Information obtained will only be used for the purpose of this search. The interview should not take more than 30 minutes of your time. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without penalty. Your responses will be kept confidential. The outcome of this research may be used for academic and general purposes such as research reports, conference papers or books. If you have any concerns, please contact me or my supervisor. Our details are provided below.

Researcher: Joyce Manjowe

Research supervisor:

Dr NR Raselekoane

Email: manjowejoylin@gmail.com

Email: Raymond.raselekoane@univen.ac.za

Phone No: 0730133511

Phone No: 076 9898259

The responded consented to participate in the survey

YES	NO
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ANNEXTURE E: PROOF READING LETTER

23 February 2017

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE:EDITING OF Ms JOYCE MANJOWE'S MASTERS DISSERTATION
(STUDENT NUMBER 11613024)

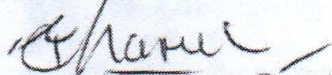
This letter serves to confirm that I have edited MANJOWE'S MASTERS DISSERTATION whose title is "AN EXPLORATION OF CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS TO CONFLICT IN INTIMATE RETIIONSHIPS AT A SOUTH AFRICAN RURAL UNIVERSITY"

My work entailed identifying and correcting grammatical, typographical, formatting and related editorial errors in the document.

I have recommended a number of corrections related to grammar, typographical errors and sentence construction.

Should there be any queries regarding the editorial aspects of the document please do not hesitate to contact me.

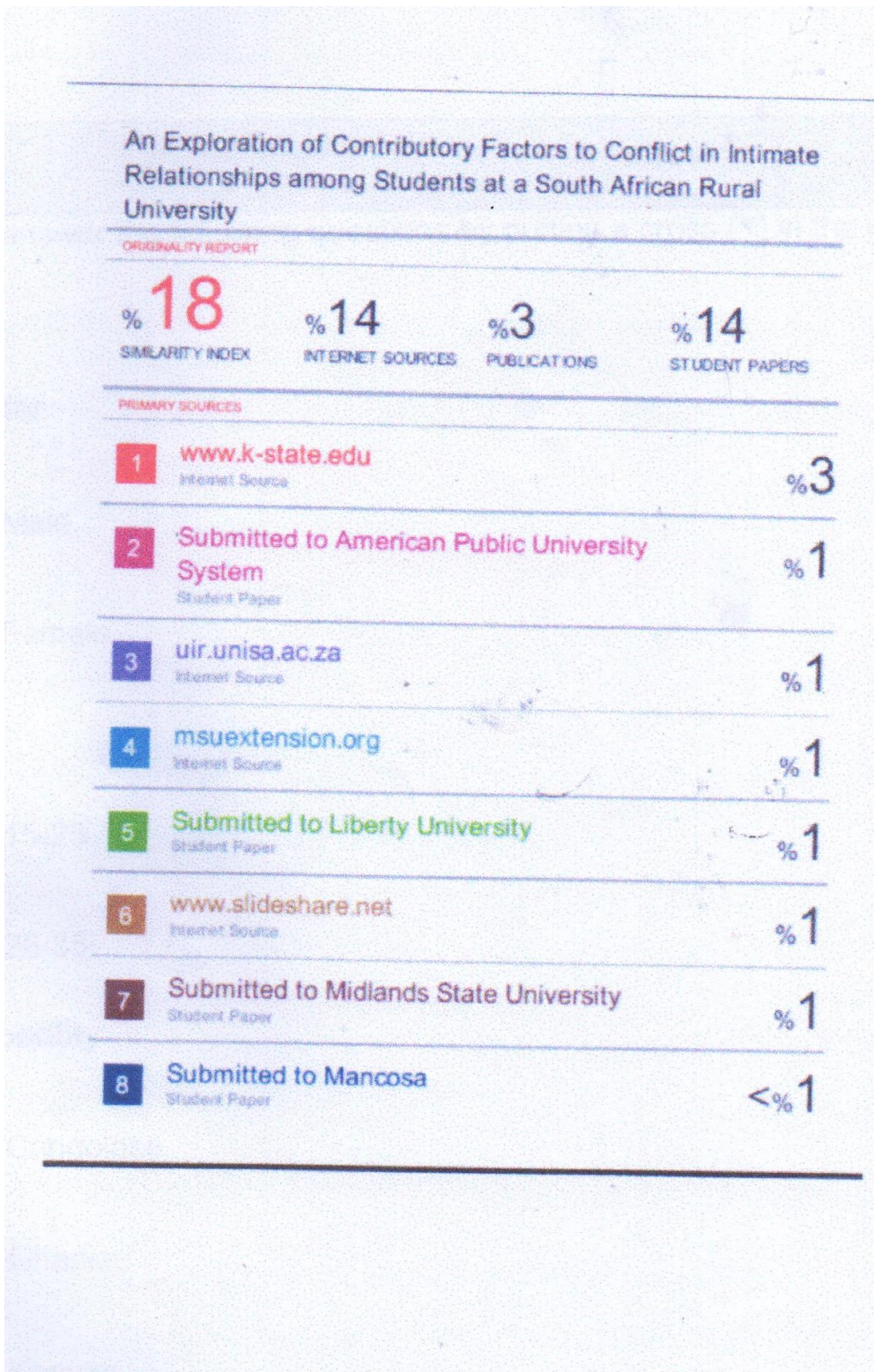
Yours sincerely



Dr T. Chari, Lecturer, Department of Communication and Applied Language Studies,
University of Venda (BA, DMCS, MA)

Cell: 0838626747

ANNEXTURE F: PLAGIARISM REPORT



ANNEXTURE G: INTERVIEW GUIDE

NB: NO IDENTIFICATION REQUIRED

Your co-operation is appreciated

Section A – Biographical Information

Please answer the following questions by putting a cross (x) in the relevant block

1. Gender

- Male
- Female

2. Age

- 15-25
- 26-35

3. Nationality

- Congolese
- Ghanaian
- Kenyan
- Nigerian
- South African
- Zimbabwean

Students' interview guide

Section B: Confirmation questions

- Are you currently in an intimate relationship?
- For how long have you been in your intimate relationship?
- Have you ever engaged in a conflict with your partner?

Section C: Social Issues

- How does lack of communication lead to conflicts in your relationship?
- Do you think that the abuse of substance leads to conflicts in your relationship?
- If so how?

Section D: Emotional Aspects

- How does lack of attention contributes to conflicts in your relationship?
- How does feeling of insecurity lead to conflicts in your relationship?

Section E: Cultural Aspects

- What are the problems that you encounter in dating a person of a different culture?
- Does failure to understand or cope with your partner's culture leads to some conflicts in your relationship?

Section F: Students' response to conflict

- How do you react when a conflict arise in your relationship?
- How do you deal with a conflict in your relationship when it arises?

THANK YOU