THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN COPING, GENDER, AND PERSONALITY ON THE EXPERIENCE OF INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT AT WORK

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

of

Master of Applied Psychology

at

The University of Waikato

by

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The University of Waikato

2011

Abstract

The present study explored the relations between task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict and several outcomes of employee well-being and organizational importance, examined the role of coping styles as moderators in the stressor-strain process, and investigated how the individual difference characteristics of gender and personality affect these processes.

An online questionnaire measuring task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict, dispositional coping styles, job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, turnover intentions, social dysfunction, loss of confidence, anxiety and depression, and several personality dispositions was completed by 178 participants working in the Toronto, Ontario region. All of the participants worked in the IT industry and were recruited from a single organization and the business-orientated networking site LinkedIn.

Results showed that both task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict were negatively correlated with job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment, and positively correlated with turnover intentions, social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression. The coping styles of problem-focused, emotion-focused and avoidance moderated several of the relationships between task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict and the criterion variables.

No gender differences were found in perceptions of relationship-based interpersonal conflict. When faced with relationship-based interpersonal conflict, female employees indicated significantly lower levels of job satisfaction than their male counterparts. While no gender differences were found in the reported use of the problem-focused coping style, female employees reported using the emotion-focused and avoidance coping styles more often than their male counterparts.

Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Locus of Control were examined as direct and moderator variables in the experience if interpersonal conflict at work. Conscientiousness was negatively correlated with perceptions of task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict, while Neuroticism was positively correlated with perceptions of both. Internal Locus of Control was positively correlated with perceptions of task-based interpersonal and did not show a significant correlation with relationship-based interpersonal conflict. Both

Neuroticism and Conscientiousness moderated the relationships between task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict and the coping styles of problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidance. Findings indicated that Locus of Control did not moderate any of the relationships between both types of interpersonal conflict and the coping styles.

Limitations and strengths of the present research are discussed in the final chapter, along with recommendations for future research, practical implications, and a conclusion is drawn from the findings presented.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisors Professor Michael O'Driscoll and Dr Donald Cable for their patients, support, and guidance throughout the course of my study. My decision to enter the Organizational/Industrial Psychology program was extensively grounded in their enthusiasm for this fascinating field. Their encouragement has initiated within me a true appreciation for this subject and an immense desire to build a career in this profession.

Thank you to all of the individuals who took part in this study by dedicating their time and energy to completing the questionnaire. Without their invaluable contribution this research would have truly been impossible. I would like to offer a special thank you to my aunt Taka, for securing their participation and for all of the years of relentless encouragement and support from afar.

To Heather Morrell, who was willing and able to help me with my extensive assortment of computer problems. Thank you for quickly replaying to my frantic emails, meeting with me on numerous occasions, calming me through my crises, and enabling me to complete my thesis.

Most importantly I would like to thank Mama, Tata, and Maki. Thank you for all the sacrifices you made to ensure I persevered and accomplished all of the things you knew that I could. In moments when my own convictions faltered, your belief in me paved the way. My accomplishments in life will lie firmly in the foundations you built.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The impact of occupational stress on health, safety, and the well-being of employees has received significant attention from researchers across a variety of disciplines (Lee, 2007). The United States National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH, 2007, as cited in Lee 2007) recognizes occupational stress as a major workplace hazard with many potential physical and psychological outcomes. According to the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (2007, as cited in Dijkstra, Carsten, Dreu, Evers, & Dierendonck, 2009), stress was the second most reported work-related health problem, affecting over 20% of workers in the European Union, and costing an estimated €20 billion annually. Frequent stressors include workload conditions, job responsibility, work-home interference, and organizational culture and politics. The most commonly studied stressors within occupational stress research have been workload and role stressors, such as role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload (Bruk-Lee & Spector, 2006). However, researchers have also begun to recognize the significance of stressors resulting from the social environment, specifically conflict resulting from interpersonal relationships at work.

Interpersonal conflict is defined as "a dynamic process that occurs between parties as they experience negative emotional reactions to perceived disagreements and interferences with the attainment of their goals" (Barki & Hartwick, 2004, p. 8). Two primary types of interpersonal conflict have emerged from recent literature: task-based and relationship-based conflict (Lee, 2007). Task-based interpersonal conflict refers to tension in regard to task issues, such as differing viewpoints regarding the objectives of work tasks. Relationship-based interpersonal conflict denotes conflict emerging from personality clashes and/or emotionally charged interactions with others due to issues of a personal nature. This differentiation was first made by Pinkley (1990) in a multidimensional scaling study intended to understand the cognitive interpretations of conflict by those involved. The typology was later verified in research by Jehn (1994), who made clear distinctions between the two types of conflict. However, even recent studies have often failed to appreciate this distinction, viewing all types of interpersonal conflict alike. The following section outlines some of the research on the prevalence of interpersonal conflict in the workplace.

Prevalence of Interpersonal Conflict at Work

Keenan and Newton (1985) used the Stress Incident Report (SIR) method to collect stressful incidents that occurred at work during one month with a sample of engineers. They found that seventy-four percent of the incidents reported were social in nature, related to social interactions with work colleagues. Interestingly, interpersonal conflict at work was one of the most cited sources of stress among the engineers. Also using the SIR method, Narayanan, Menon, and Spector (1999a) asked respondents from clerical, sales, and academic groups to describe a stressful incident that occurred within the past month. Both the sales and academic group reported interpersonal conflict as the most stressful incident.

Research on interpersonal conflict at work has shown evidence that this type of stressor spans across occupations and cultures (Lee, 2007). In a study surveying employees in a variety of occupations from three different organizations in the United States, Smith and Sulsky (1995) found that approximately 25% of the respondents nominated interpersonal issues as their most distressing job stressor. In a study employing the diary method, Hahn (2000) asked full-time workers (in a variety of occupations) to record and describe the number of conflicts they experienced at work over a 14 day period. The major advantage of the diary approach is that it yields information which is temporally ordered (Breakwell, 2006). Consequently, this allows the researcher greater understanding of the sequence of events, profile of behavioural responses, and feelings and thoughts across time. Content analysis showed that respondents recorded interpersonal stressors on 50% of their workdays (Hahn, 2000).

Narayanan, Menon, and Spector (1999b) conducted a cross-cultural comparison of job stressors and reactions among clerical workers holding comparable jobs in India and the U.S. The stressors were not predetermined but generated by the individuals themselves within each cultural context. Eleven possible stressor categories emerged and were considered. The authors found that interpersonal conflict was the third most cited source of stress among the U.S respondents and the fourth most cited source among the Indian sample.

Research has established that stressors resulting from the social environment at work have significant effects on the emotional and psychological well-being of employees, as well as having direct relationships with outcomes of organizational importance (Lee, 2007). Conflict at work is recognized as a leading source of

stress for workers across occupations, cultures, and age groups. The aim of my research was to extend this growing body of knowledge by examining the experience of interpersonal conflict at work among a Canadian sample of Information Technology (IT) workers. This study aimed to investigate the relationship between interpersonal conflict at work and job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, turnover intentions, and psychological strain, to examine the role of coping styles as moderator variables in the stressor-strain transaction, and to explore how gender and several personality dispositions affect these processes. Because a person's social environment depends not only on the external conditions, but also their own approach to people and problems (Friedman, Currall, & Tsai, 2000), gender and personality will affect the way people perceive and experience interpersonal conflict at work. Previous research has identified gender and personality as critical individual difference characteristics that influence an individual's stress experience (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995; Jick & Mitz, 1995). Hence, this study aimed to systematically investigate the effects of gender and several personality dispositions in the exposure to, and experience of, interpersonal conflict at work.

Theoretical Models of the Stress Process

The experience of stress is a subjective phenomenon that many are familiar with, however it can mean different things to different people (O'Driscoll & Brough, 2006). Numerous definitions exist, which has hampered efforts to understand exactly what stress is and how it can be effectively managed. For this research I developed a theoretical framework which emphasizes the person-environment (P-E) fit model of human behaviour. The P-E fit model, as posited by French, Caplan, and Harrison (1982), views the stress process as an interaction between the individual and the environment. It simultaneously takes into account environmental demands and a person's response to those demands. Additionally, I supplemented this model by including several components of the transactional model, as outlined by Richard Lazarus and colleagues (see Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The transactional model extends the P-E framework by recognising that individuals can be proactive in their efforts to counteract the potential stress in their work settings. To examine the experience of task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict at work I included several components of the P-E fit framework and the transactional model. Both theoretical frameworks emphasize

the importance of treating stressors, strain, and coping as vital mechanisms within the stress process. To provide effective interventions for workplace stress, the organizational sources of strain must first be detected and understood (O'Driscoll & Brough, 2006). Subsequently, researchers must also recognize the influence of the moderating effects of coping and individual difference characteristics which influence these processes.

Stress cannot be understood as merely a factor which resides in the individual or the environment, but as a dynamic process consisting of several components (O'Driscoll & Brough, 2006). Stress occurs when the demands of a situation tax an individual's resources and capacity to cope, and therefore threaten the individual's well-being, requiring some change in cognition or behaviour to manage the encounter. The stress transaction is used to denote the entire process linking stressors, strain, and coping, rather than any single component. Stressors refer to environmental stimuli or events, while strain is used to indicate the individual's reactions to the stressor. While the experience of job-related strain is subjective, affecting people in different ways, there are several indicators of strain commonly manifested. These manifestations can be divided into three categories: emotional, cognitive and behavioural indicators. The experience of interpersonal conflict at work has been shown to have significant relationships with various organisational and personal outcome indicators including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions (Lee, 2007).

Studies have shown that the way people endeavour to cope with job-related stressors is an important determinant of the impact of those stressors on the individual's well-being (O'Driscoll & Brough, 2006). For example, effective coping may minimise the impact of stressors and in some cases reduce or even eliminate them. Coping is defined as "cognitions and behaviours adopted by an individual following the recognition of a stressful encounter, that are in some way designed to deal with that encounter or its consequences" (Dewe, Cox, & Ferguson, 1993, p. 7). The coping process consists of several elements: the occurrence of an event that impinges upon the person, appraisal of that event as potentially threatening to well-being, and the activation of some cognitive or behavioural response that is intended to remove or alleviate the consequences (O'Driscoll & Brough, 2006). Research has indicated that the experience of interpersonal conflict at work correlates with numerous stress related outcomes,

and that these outcomes are significantly moderated by passive and active coping strategies, including problem, emotion, and avoidance coping (Dijkstra et al., 2009).

The Present Study

The theoretical framework guiding this study builds on the P-E fit model of stress and elements of the transactional model. Occupational stress research typically focuses on three main themes that establish the stress process: stressors, moderator variables (coping behaviours) and the manifestations of strain. This study explored the relationship between interpersonal conflict at work and several strain indicators, examined the role of coping styles as moderator variables in the stress-strain transaction, and investigated how the individual difference characteristics of gender and personality affect these processes. A few studies have shown significant correlations between interpersonal conflict and several outcomes, and while some have speculated that gender and personality moderate these relationships (Bruk-Lee & Spector, 2006; Lee, 2007; Spector & Jex, 1998), few studies have examined coping as a moderator variable in this particular context.

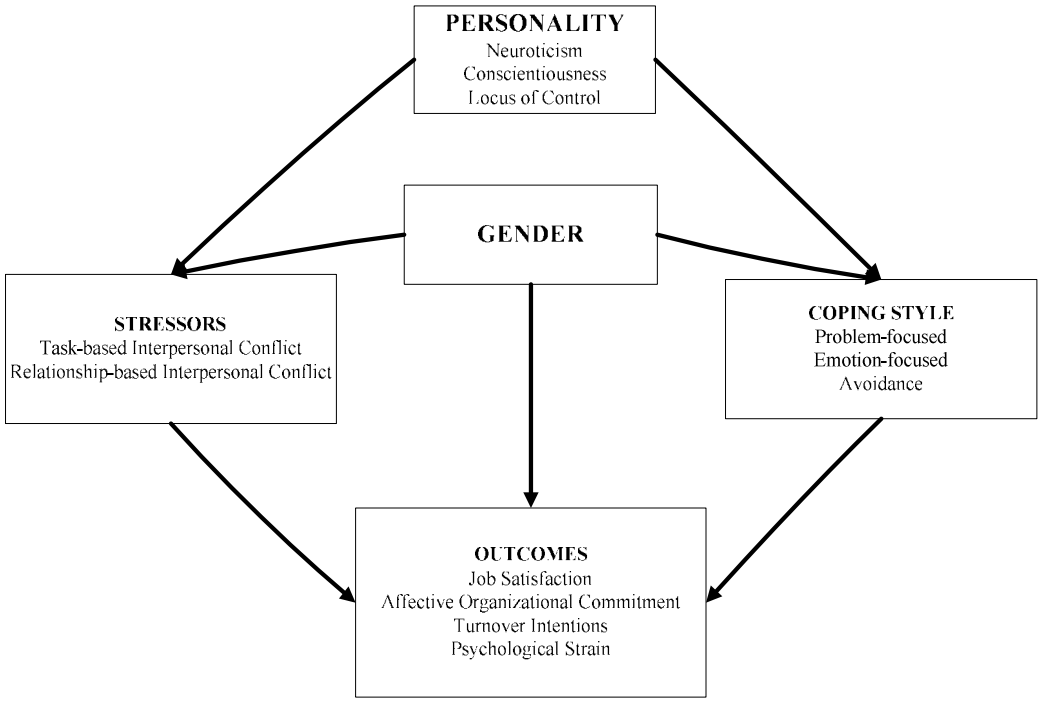

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

Figure 1 depicts the theoretical model showing the rationale behind the current study and will be explained in greater detail in the following section.

The greatest limitation in many studies (Frone, 2000; Hahn, 2000) has been that researchers have often disregarded the typology of different conflict types, particularly task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict (Lee, 2007). Interpersonal conflict is defined as a process that occurs between parties as they experience negative emotional reactions to perceived disagreements, misunderstandings, and differences (Barki & Hartwick, 2004). However, it is important to note that these perceptions are dependent on conflict frames, which represent facets individuals consider important when negotiating, such as task-based and relationship-based issues. Task-based interpersonal conflict relates to perceptions of disagreements among group members or individuals about the content of decisions, and involves differences in viewpoints, ideas, and opinions (Medina, Munduate, Dorado, Martinez, & Guerra, 2005). Examples of task-based conflict include disagreements regarding the distribution of resources, about procedures and guidelines, and about the interpretation of facts. Relationship-based conflict is a perception of interpersonal incompatibility, and includes annoyance between and animosity among individuals. The present study was developed to distinguish between the two types of interpersonal conflict.

Researchers warn that studies exploring gender differences in stress may be confounded if occupation is not controlled; reported gender differences are more likely to be due to the nature of the job as opposed to genuine differences in how the two genders experience stress (Jick & Mitz, 1985). Hence, it is important to note that in this study gender differences in the experience of stress were examined within a single occupational group (IT workers) with a relatively even distribution of male and female employees. The inclusion of gender differences is grounded in previous empirical research which has recognized gender as a critical individual difference characteristic that affects the nature of an individual's stress experience (Jick & Mitz, 1985). It is assumed that individuals are affected and respond differently to various stressors as a function of roles determined partly on the basis of their gender.

The Stressor-Strain Relationship: Manifestations of Stress

The following section explores some of the outcomes of interpersonal conflict at work. I was particularly interested in the relations between task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict and job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, turnover intentions, and psychological strain. The hypotheses were grounded in previous empirical evidence which has indicated that interpersonal conflict at work is associated with several important personal and organizational outcomes (Lee, 2007). However, this study is distinct in that it extends previous methodologies by differentiating between task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict. It is important to note that any of the assumed differences in the relations between task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict will be discussed later in this chapter.

The effects of task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict on the outcome variables of job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, turnover intentions, and psychological strain have been examined through the Conservation of Resources theory (COR, Harris, Harvey, & Kacmar, 2009). According to the COR theory individuals can gain or lose sources from four principal categories of valued resources including object resources, condition resources, personal resources, and energy resources. The COR theory suggests that individuals make efforts to conserve their valued resources, so as to better attain desired goals. When resources are threatened or lost, individuals may experience negative consequences. In terms of the stressor-strain relationship, COR theory can serve as a guiding framework as it suggests that individuals are most likely to experience strain when they perceive threats of resource loss, actual losses, or when invested resources do not result in the anticipated returns (Harris et al., 2009). Social stressors in the workplace, such as interpersonal conflicts, may threaten and/or cause a depletion of valued resources. For example, being viewed less positively in the workplace (losing conditional resources), experiencing feelings of failure (losing personal resources), or spending time dealing with bad interpersonal situations (expending energy resources) all diminish valued resources, resulting in job strains.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction denotes the extent to which one finds work personally meaningful and is defined as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting

from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (Locke, 1976, p. 1304). Job satisfaction is multidimensional, encompassing several facets such as job factors, rewards, work conditions, and external and personal influences (O'Driscoll & Brough, 2006). Because work is such a large part of an employee's life it is believed that individuals who are more satisfied with their work experiences and environment will stay longer, attend work regularly, and perform at their optimum level (Spector & Jex, 1998).

Various studies have consistently found a significant negative relationship between the experience of interpersonal conflict at work and overall levels of job satisfaction (Frone 2000; Lee 2007). For example, Frone (2000) found that employees who reported more interpersonal conflict with supervisors also described lower levels of overall satisfaction with their job (r=-.44). The following hypotheses differentiate between the two types and propose that both have a negative effect on job satisfaction. According to the COR theory employees invest a significant amount of emotional labour (time and feelings) developing relationships at work (Harris et al., 2009). Favourable interactions give employees a positive return on their emotional investment, while negative interactions in the form of interpersonal conflict deplete these resources. This depletion of resources harms an individual's capacity to cope with future stressful events, eventually reducing levels of job satisfaction.

> H1. Task-based interpersonal conflict will be negatively correlated with job satisfaction.
>
> H2. Relationship-based interpersonal conflict will be negatively correlated with job satisfaction.

Affective Organizational Commitment

Affective organizational commitment refers to an employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization (Fields, 2002). According to Fields (2002) affective commitment is imperative for organizations, as committed employees are more likely to remain in the organization and strive towards the organization's mission, goals, and objectives. For the employee, the positives include enhanced feelings of belongingness and stability (O'Driscoll & Brough, 2006).

Frone (2000) found that employees who reported more interpersonal conflict at work also expressed lower levels of organizational commitment. His findings indicated a correlation of -.49 between interpersonal conflict and organizational commitment. While Frone (2000) examined general commitment levels, the present study was particularly interested in affective organizational commitment. This is because affective commitment has been linked to several important behavioural outcomes, such as turnover intentions and organizational citizenship behaviour (O'Driscoll & Brough, 2006). It is proposed that both types of conflict will have a negative relationship with affective organizational commitment. According to one of the tenets of the COR theory, individuals experience strain when invested resources do not result in anticipated returns (Harris et al., 2009). The presence of interpersonal conflict in the workplace may affect employees' perceptions of their organization. This may degrade the extent to which employees feel an emotional attachment to and identify with their respective organization.

H3. Task-based interpersonal conflict will be negatively correlated with affective organizational commitment.

H4. Relationship-based interpersonal conflict will be negatively correlated with affective organizational commitment.

Turnover Intention

Turnover intention is defined as the conscious and deliberate desire to leave the organization, and is the immediate precursor for turnover behaviour (Tett & Meyer, 1993). Employees leave for a number of reasons, for example to escape negative work environments, because it is more in alignment with their career goals, and to pursue other opportunities. It has been recognised that the identification of variables associated with turnover intentions is considered a prelude to reducing actual turnover.

Chen and Spector (1992) examined the relationship between interpersonal conflict at work and intentions to quit among four hundred employees from fourteen different organizations. They found a moderately strong positive correlation (r=.39) between the experience of interpersonal conflict and intentions to quit the organization. In a more recent study of employees from a variety of occupations, Lee (2007) found a significant association between interpersonal

conflict, as measured by the Interpersonal Conflict in Organizations Scale (ICOS), and intentions to quit. The findings indicated a correlation of .42 between task-based interpersonal conflict and intentions to quit, while the correlation between relationship-based interpersonal conflict and intentions to quit was .50 (Lee, 2007). In accordance with previous research findings it is proposed that both task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict will have a positive correlation with turnover intentions. As suggested by the COR theory, social stressors reduce employees' overall coping abilities as they drain valued resources (Harris et al., 2009). Employees subjected to interpersonal conflict may feel overwhelmed at work because of their depleted resources. Feeling overwhelmed by work in this way may contribute to turnover intentions. It is also possible that the depletion of valued resources, such as time and energy exerted in dealing with conflict, may cause employees to think about alternative, less-stressful job opportunities.

H5. Task-based interpersonal conflict will be positively correlated with turnover intentions.

H6. Relationship-based interpersonal conflict will be positively correlated with turnover intentions.

Psychological Strain

Psychological strain is defined as the psychological, physiological, and behavioural changes that occur as a result of exposure to stressors (Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Psychological strain has been shown to affect behaviours, attitudes, and feelings that represent an individual's level of personal effectiveness, success, and satisfaction (Banks, Clegg, Jackson, Kemp, Stafford, & Wall, 1980). Strain can lead to stress-related illnesses and reduced physical health, subsequently resulting in absenteeism, accidents, and poor performance (Thompson, Kirk, & Brown, 2006).

Interpersonal conflict is associated with several measures of personal health and well-being (Lee, 2007). For example, in a diary study employing the use of content analysis, Bolger et al., (1989) assessed measures of anxiety, hostility, and depression and found that interpersonal conflict accounted for 80% of the variance in daily mood. While examining the work context specifically, Frone (2000) found that interpersonal conflict affected depression. For example, using various measures of depressive symptoms, including mood, feelings of hopelessness, and

sleep disturbance, results indicated that conflict with coworkers was positively related to depression (r=.31).

Negative affect reactions to the experience of interpersonal conflict at work have been cited by numerous studies (Frone, 2000; Keenan & Newton, 1985). For example, among a sample of engineers who reported interpersonal conflict as one of the most commonly experienced work stressor, anger, frustration, and annoyance were the most reported outcome variables (Keenan & Newton, 1985). Although several studies have found a negative relationship between interpersonal conflict and psychological strain (Frone, 2000; Keenan & Newton, 1985), none have differentiated between the different types of interpersonal conflict. The following hypotheses are exploratory and assume that the presence of either task-based or relationship-based interpersonal conflict will negatively affect psychological strain. As argued by Dijktra et al., (2009), to most people interpersonal conflict is threatening and elicits negative emotions. Hence, enduring conflict eventually drains the psychological system and brings about psychological strain.

> H7. Task-based interpersonal conflict will be positively correlated with psychological strain.
>
> H8. Relationship-based interpersonal conflict will be positively correlated with psychological strain.

The preceding hypotheses predict that both task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict will have a negative effect on job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment, and a positive effect on turnover intentions and psychological strain. Empirical research on the effects of conflict in organizational groups has reflected some contradictions (Jehn, 1995). While some researchers have suggested that the stimulation of task-based interpersonal conflict, in groups performing non routine tasks, may be beneficial (Van de Vilert & De Dreu, 1994), others have found that both types of interpersonal conflict have detrimental effects on job satisfaction (Jehn, 1995). Since task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflicts have been differentiated I examined whether the relationships between these two stressors on the outcome variables are also different. While I assume that both task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict will have negative relationships with job satisfaction and

affective organizational commitment, and positive relationships with turnover intentions, and psychological strain I believe that the strength of these relationships will differ.

While task-based interpersonal conflict exists when there are disagreements among group members about the content of the tasks being performed, relationship-based interpersonal conflict exists when there are interpersonal incompatibilities among group members, including tension, animosity, and annoyance. An investigation into individuals' affective reactions revealed relationship-based interpersonal conflict as a significant influence on group processes and outcomes (Jehn, 1995). For example, coworkers experiencing interpersonal conflict may be less satisfied with the group in which they are working, because interpersonal problems enhance negative reactions such as anxiety and fear, decreasing their satisfaction with the group experience. Employees are also likely to feel frustration, strain, and uneasiness when they dislike or are disliked by others in the group, with a typical response being psychological or physical withdrawal from the distressing situation. The personal nature of relationship-based conflict may arouse uncomfortable feelings and dejection among group members, which inhibit their ability to enjoy each other and their work in the group. Hence, it seems reasonable to expect that the highly personal nature of relationship-based interpersonal conflict will demonstrate stronger effects on all of the affective outcome variables under examination.

> H9. Relationship-based interpersonal conflict will exhibit stronger negative relationships with job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment, and stronger positive relationships with turnover intention and psychological strain than will task-based interpersonal conflict.

Coping with Interpersonal Conflict at Work

Coping forms part of the person-environment transaction that occurs when a person perceives a situation as stressful (O'Driscoll & Brough, 2006). The coping process entails several related components. The stress process begins with an occurrence of an event that impinges upon the person. Subsequently, there is appraisal of that event as potentially threatening or unthreatening to well-being. Finally there may be activation of some cognitive or behavioural response that is

intended to remove or alleviate the consequences. Coping can be used to effectively minimise stress and in some cases, reduce or even eliminate it.

Coping has two widely recognized major functions: altering the troubled person-environment relation causing the distress (problem-focused coping) or regulating stressful emotions (emotion-focused coping), also known as palliative coping, that occurs when the individual does not attempt to remove or reduce the intensity of the stressor, but instead attempts to change their emotional reactions to the situation (Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, & Gruen, 1986). To cover the full range of coping behaviours, Endler and Parker (1990) added a third coping dimension, avoidance coping, which reflects the tendency to escape the stressor through physical and psychological withdrawal. Empirical evidence, garnered through factor analysis of the Multidimensional Coping Inventory (Endler & Parker, 1999), a standard measure of coping styles, has indicated that the correlation coefficients between problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidance coping strategies are low, which confirm that they represent three independent dimensions.

Coping theorists often distinguish between the particular cognitive or behavioural strategies employed by individuals in response to specific stressful situations, and the more enduring coping styles that represent the strategies typically used when confronting most stressful situations (Jang, Thordarson, Stein, Cohen, & Taylor, 2007). Coping styles denote consistent and stable preferences for using particular strategies to deal with stressful situations, while contextual approaches focus on transitory, situation-based factors that shape coping responses in specific stressful encounters (Moos, Holahan, & Beutler, 2003).

This research assumed that relatively stable, person-based factors underlie habitual coping efforts (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989). The strategies utilized most often by individuals depend on their learned styles of responding to stress due to the success of previous stress management experiences (Jang et al., 2007). Hence, if an individual has free choice of coping strategies, they are likely to cope according to a habitual tendency and respond the same way across stressors (Heszen- Niejodek, 1997). According to this perspective, people do not

approach each coping context anew, but rather bring a preferred set of coping strategies that remain relatively fixed across time and situations.

The notion that such stable coping styles exist is somewhat controversial (Carver et al., 1989). For example, Folkman and Lazarus (1985) argued that coping should be conceptualized as a dynamic process that shifts in nature from stage to stage of a stressful transaction. An alternative possibility may be that preferred ways of coping with stress derive from traditional personality dimensions (Carver et al., 1989). According to this perspective, certain personality characteristics predispose individuals to cope in certain ways when they confront adversity. For example, Carver et al., (1989) conceptualised coping in dispositional terms and developed measures of coping styles. From the dispositional perspective, coping strategies are posited to exhibit similar characteristics to personality traits. Accordingly, when assessing dispositional coping styles, items are framed in terms of what people usually do when under stress.

One of the objectives of this study was to explore the effects of coping style on the relationship between interpersonal conflict and job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, and turnover intentions. The current theoretical model focused on three distinct coping styles: problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidance. I assumed that people have preferred coping styles that they use relatively consistently when dealing with task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict and that these coping styles relate in a systematic way to the individual difference variables of gender and personality. The effects of gender and personality on the experience of interpersonal conflict at work will be discussed in greater detail later.

Problem-Focused Coping

Problem-focused coping is defined as a person's attempt to deal with the demands of a situation, either directly or indirectly (O'Driscoll & Brough, 2006). Problem-focused coping is aimed towards problem solving or doing something to alter the source of the problem. According to Clark, Bormann, Cropanzano and James (1995), the use of an active problem-focused coping strategy will predict greater coping effectiveness because the use of such coping contributes to a greater sense of control over the stressor. Coping strategies are argued to be

potentially beneficial or detrimental based on the extent to which they exhibit control over the situation (Dijkstra et al., 2009). The use of problem-solving strategies to deal with social stressors is aimed at directly altering or resolving the stressful situation. Hence, employees using problem-focused coping may feel a greater degree of control over the stressful situation, regardless of whether they actually achieve a resolution. The following hypotheses extend previous research findings:

> H10. The use of problem-focused coping to deal with task-based interpersonal conflict will be positively correlated with reports of (a) job satisfaction and (b) affective organizational commitment, and negatively correlated with (c) turnover intentions and (d) psychological strain.
>
> H11. The use of problem-focused coping to deal with relationship-based interpersonal conflict will be positively correlated with reports of (a) job satisfaction and (b) affective organizational commitment, and negatively correlated with (c) turnover intentions and (d) psychological strain.

Emotion-Focused Coping

Emotion-focused coping occurs when the individual does not endeavour to remove the stressor or to reduce its intensity, but rather attempts to change their own emotional reactions to the situation (O'Driscoll & Brough, 2006). This type of coping response is frequently referred to as 'cognitive restructuring', because it involves a realignment of one's thinking about the significance of the stressor, as opposed to any direct action to minimise or alleviate it. Problem-focused coping strategies are more likely to lead to greater well-being, whereas emotion-focused coping tends to produce negative outcomes (Norris & Hart, 1998, as cited in O'Driscoll & Brough, 2006). It is important to note that studies have not supported this assertion consistently (O'Driscoll & Brough, 2006). For example, in certain situations, in particular when the individual has little control over the stressor, emotion-focused coping may have beneficial effects.

The rationale for the following hypotheses is grounded in a previous study which specifically examined the effects of interpersonal conflict at work on stress related outcomes, Dijkstra et al., (2009) found that passive responses, such as emotion-focused coping, amplified employee strain. Since interpersonal conflict is social in nature, the use of emotion-focused coping has no direct impact on the

actions and behaviours of the significant others involved in the situation. Emotion-focused coping does not directly address the source of the problem, for example it has not effect on competition for resources or disagreement over course of action. Individuals may use cognitive restructuring on themselves, but this has no effect on the actions of others. It is possible that by not dealing with the situation directly, the actions of others may progressively escalate to a point where one's attempts to change their own emotional reactions and cognitive restructuring is no longer effective. The following hypotheses extend previous research findings:

> H12. The use of emotion-focused coping to deal with task-based interpersonal conflict will be negatively correlated with reports of (a) job satisfaction and (b) affective organizational commitment, and positively correlated with (c) turnover intentions and (d) psychological strain.
>
> H13. The use of emotion-focused coping to deal with relationship-based interpersonal conflict will be negatively correlated with reports of (a) job satisfaction and (b) affective organizational commitment, and positively correlated with (c) turnover intentions and (d) psychological strain.

Avoidance Coping

Avoidance-focused coping is an independent coping dimension, reflecting a tendency to escape stress through some form of physical or psychological withdrawal (Endler & Parker, 1990). Avoidance is a maladaptive strategy, empirically shown to be less useful in dealing with stressful transactions (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989). Avoidance coping emphasises the venting of emotions, as well as behavioural and mental disengagement.

Numerous studies have indicated that the avoidance strategy increases the effects of stressors on strain (Dijkstra et al., 2009; Matud, 2004). In regards to interpersonal conflict specifically, Dijkstra et al., (2009) found that avoidance-focused coping intensified the experience of strain and exhaustion. Due to the social nature of interpersonal conflict and the need for employees to attend work, it is very unlikely that individuals can escape conflict. While the extent to which individuals are able to mentally and behaviourally disengage varies, the effects of such strategies do not have any impact on the causes of the problem or the actions of others. Since avoidance-focused coping fails to directly target the source of

problem or address resolution, it is possible that conflict gradually escalates. This in turn may diminish employees' sense of job satisfaction, affective commitment, and mental health, as well as lead them to disengage from their jobs and seek alternative employment. The following hypotheses extend previous research findings:

> H14.The use of avoidance-focused coping to deal with task-based interpersonal conflict will be negatively correlated with reports of (a) job satisfaction and (b) affective organizational commitment, and positively correlated with reports of (c) turnover intentions and (d) psychological strain.
>
> H15. The use of avoidance-focused coping to deal with relationship-based interpersonal conflict will be negatively correlated with reports of (a) job satisfaction and (b) affective organizational commitment, and positively correlated with reports of (c) turnover intentions and (d) psychological strain.

The Role of Gender in the Experience of Relationship-based Interpersonal Conflict

The inclusion of gender differences in this study is grounded in previous empirical evidence which has identified gender as a critical individual difference characteristic that influences the nature of an individual's stress experience (Jick & Mitz, 1985). Generally, it is posited that individuals are affected and respond differently to various stressors as a function of roles determined partly on the basis of their gender. According to the theoretical framework developed by Jick and Mitz (1985), gender may influence the stress process at different points in different ways, not only as a direct predictor of the source of stress but also as a moderator affecting how stress is perceived, what coping strategy is utilized, and how stress is manifested (Jick & Mitz, 1985). Their conceptualization of gender differences suggests that men and women are likely to be exposed to different stressors and that the relationships between stressors and appraisal, appraisal and coping, and coping and strain indicators may be moderated by gender. The present study focused specifically on gender differences in the exposure to stress, manifestations of stress, and coping. One of the aims of this study was to explore the role of gender as a predictor and moderating variable in the experience of relationship-based interpersonal conflict at work.

Previous research indicates that women rate emotional support as more imperative than men (Thompson, Kirk, & Brown, 2006) and the reliance of social networks in times of stress is more important for women (Greenglass, 2003). The present study was particularity interested in exploring gender differences in the experience of relationship-based interpersonal conflict. In their gender based analyses of stress among professional managers, Iwasaki, McKay and Ristock (2004) found that the female participants indicated that work relationships contributed to their experience of emotional stress because they cared about other people who were important to them. Female participants identified emotional stress as detrimental and tough to deal with because it involved being "worried about the other people" (Iwasaki et al., 2004, p. 66). Female participants agreed that work relationships were primary contributors to stress. They tended to consider their relationships with other people very personally and very seriously. For example, females were much more likely to consider emotional stress caused by interpersonal relationships as "quite draining" (Iwasaki et al., 2004, p. 67). In contrast male participants did not discuss the issue of emotional stress involving relationships. They tended to consider relationships less personally and less emotionally than their female counterparts. While admitting that dealing with interpersonal issues in business situations was stressful, male participants stated that problems with interpersonal relationships were often beyond their control. Consequently, some preferred not to think about these interpersonal problems.

Iwasaki et al., 2004 argued that these two contrasting orientations (i.e. taking responsibility for others vs. focusing on self) seem to reflect the social construction of femininity and masculinity in society. While male participants felt responsibility primarily for themselves and did not have to take on the added responsibility of emotional aspects of interpersonal relationships, female participants seemed to be feeling the stress of meeting expectations that women should be responsible for caring for others. The present study assumed that gender differences exist in the way individuals experience relationship-based interpersonal conflict. The following section will discuss the rationale in further detail. However, it is important to note that task-based interpersonal conflict is not included in this discussion.

Gender Differences in the Exposure to Relationship-based Interpersonal Conflict

Narayanan et al (1999a) argued that gender contributes significantly to employees' job stress experiences and that men and women experience different stressors. Research confirms that men and women experience the same work environment differently in regards to stressors (Vaag, Spielberger, & Wasala, 2002). Of particular interest to this study, it has been shown that women's stressors are more likely to relate to issues of an interpersonal nature. In a study examining the relationship between gender and self-esteem, Josephs, Markus, and Tafarodi (1992) empirically determined that women have a greater tendency to base their self-esteem on social relationships. It seems reasonable to expect that since women have a greater tendency to base their sense of worth on interpersonal relationships, they would find interpersonal conflict more stressful than men.

Narayanan et al., (1999a) found that interpersonal conflict played a greater role in causing job stress for women than for men. McDonough and Walters (2001) found that women tended to report a greater number of stressors related to their social life, interpersonal relationships, and job stressors than did men. Two qualitative studies on policewomen confirmed that interpersonal stressors were more salient for policewomen and that these women experienced stressors uncommon for males in their occupation (Thompson et al., 2006).

Occupational stress researchers have suggested that differences in job perceptions among men and women may be due to the way in which gender is socially constructed, especially that there are different gender role expectations and responsibilities for men and women (Liu, Spector, Shi, 2008). Women are expected to be more relationship-focused than men, hence interpersonal issues are more salient for women. Since interpersonal issues are more salient and important for women than for men, interpersonal problems may be more serious for women. Thus, women may experience greater interpersonal stressors than do men (Thompson, Kirk, & Brown, 2006).

> H16. Female employees will report more relationship-based interpersonal conflict at work than will their male counterparts.

Gender Differences in Strain

Studies have suggested that women experience higher levels of job strains than do men (Greenglass, 1991; Jick & Mitz, 1985). Researchers have offered several explanations. For example, McDonough and Walters (2001) have proposed that women tend to perceive more strain than men when facing identical situations, because women are more sensitive to discomfort and more willing to report problems. Roxburgh (1996) speculated that women face more objective stressors and accordingly experience more strains. It is also possible that women might set higher standards for themselves, and accordingly they experience more strains when those standards are not met. This may be especially palpable in relation to social relationships. For example, studies suggest that women are more likely than men to have a collectivist schema for the self (Josephs et al., 1992). In such a self-schema the quality of one's interpersonal relationships with others is crucial to one's identity and self-esteem. Thus, it is possible that women set greater standards for the quality of relationships they have with others and conflict may affect them to a greater extent because it erodes the quality of these relationships.

Findings have indicated higher levels of strain in women than in men, across various occupational groups (Liu et al., 2008). For example, while exploring gender differences in perceptions of strain and the utilization of social support among university students, Day and Livingston (2003) found that perceptions of strain varied depending on gender and that women reported greater levels of strain than men. In regards to interpersonal conflict specifically, Narayanan et al., (1999b) found that while this type of stressor was frequent among both men and women, a greater proportion of females reported this to be stressful; women were also more likely to report higher levels of associated strain. In light of empirical evidence suggesting that women have more of a tendency to base their self-esteem on social relationships, it seems reasonable to expect that women would find interpersonal conflict to be more stressful than men, and to manifest higher levels of strain.

H17. The correlations between relationship-based interpersonal conflict and (a) job satisfaction, (b) affective organization commitment, (c)

turnover intentions and (d) psychological strain will be greater for female employees than their male counterparts.

Gender Differences in Coping

Gender may also play a moderating role in the choice of coping strategy when dealing with interpersonal conflict in the workplace. Coping plays an important part in the stress transaction; it is used to minimise stress, and in some cases it may reduce or even eliminate it (O'Driscoll & Brough, 2006). I have discussed three distinct coping strategies: problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidance-focused. Furthermore, they have been conceptualized as styles, which are consistent and stable preferences when dealing with stressors. I argue that gender is an important individual difference characteristic which predisposes individuals to employ certain coping styles when dealing with relationship-based interpersonal conflict in the workplace. Studies have empirically shown that women have more of a tendency to base their self-esteem on social relationships (Josephs, Markus, & Tafarodi, 1992). Hence, it seems reasonable to expect to that women would find interpersonal conflict more stressful than men (Narayanan, Menon, & Spector, 1999a). There is evidence from the socialization perspective which states that men are socialized to deal more instrumentally with stress while women tend to be socialized to express emotion. Studies have found that, even in similar stressful situations men are more likely to be problem-focused and women more emotion-focused coping (Narayanan et al., 1999a).

In a study examining gender differences in stress and coping style, Matud (2004) found that women scored significantly higher than men on the emotional and avoidance coping styles and lower on rational and detachment coping. Men were found to have higher levels of emotional inhibition than women. Matud (2004) concluded that women suffer more stress than men and that their coping style is more emotion-focused than that of men. These findings are consistent with a previous study conducted by Carver et al., (1989), who also found several gender differences in the reported use of various strategies. For example, the largest and most reliable of these differences were that women tended to focus on and vent emotions and to seek social support.

H18.When faced with relationship-based interpersonal conflict female employees will be (a) more likely to use emotion-focused and (b)

avoidance- focused coping styles, and (c) less likely to use problem-focused coping than their male counterparts.

The Role of Personality in the Experience of Interpersonal Conflict

The following section examines the effects of several personality dispositions as direct and moderator variables in the stress process. Research has shown that people with different personality dispositions tend to create different social environments for themselves (Friedman et al., 2000). Hence, a person's situation depends not only on external conditions, but also on his or her own approach to people and problems. Personality plays an important role in almost every aspect of the stress and coping process. As noted by Lee-Baggley, Preece, and DeLongis (2005), personality may be related to the likelihood of experiencing stressful situations, the appraisal of an event as stressful, the probability of engaging in certain coping strategies, and the effectiveness of these coping strategies.

Cooper and Marshall's (1987) work stress model specifically recognizes the influence of the moderating effects of individual personality characteristics and the effects of home and work factors within the stress process. For example, factors such as the availability of social support and an individual's levels of neuroticism and anxiety have been found to have significant effects in the experience of stress (Parkes, 1994). Studies have reported significant effects of personality on the experience of interpersonal conflict at work (Friedman et al., 2008; Graziano, Jensen-Campbell, & Hair, 1996). For example, Graziano et al., (1996) explored personality differences, specifically agreeableness, in the perceptions of and reactions to interpersonal conflict. They found that individuals exhibiting low levels of agreeableness showed a higher tendency to perceive provocative behaviours as 'conflict', resulting in higher levels of negative affect and aggression.

The present discussion of personality as a direct predictor of exposure to interpersonal stressors and as a moderator in the stress process when dealing with interpersonal conflict at work was extensively grounded in the framework developed by Bolger and Zukerman (1995), which identified several pathways through which individual differences may affect stress. They suggested that

personality may influence the stress process through differential exposure and differential coping choice. Bolger and Zuckerman (1995) posited that personality may affect the frequency of experiencing a stressor, differential exposure, as well as the choice of coping strategies utilized to deal with the stressors. According to the differential coping choice model, personality influences the choice of coping strategies, but once strategies are employed, they are similarly effective for everyone. Hence, it is possible that some personalities are less reactive because they choose more effective strategies to deal with stressors. It is proposed that several personality dispositions will affect the experience of both task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict, differential exposure, and subsequently the choice of coping strategy when dealing with these stressors, differential coping choice. Bolger and Zuckerman's (1995) pathways have been incorporated into my theoretical model, as direct variables affecting exposure to task-based and relationship-based stressors, as well as moderator variables in the choice of coping strategies when dealing with these stressors.

I have chosen to include the personality dispositions of Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, and Locus of Control. The rationale for their inclusion is grounded in several previous studies which have identified all three as important variables in the experience of occupational stress and the coping strategies employed when dealing with these stressors (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995, Brousseau & Mallinger, 1981; Hahn, 2000; Watson & Hubbard, 1996,). For example, Bolger and Zuckerman (1995) found that participants exhibiting high-Neuroticism tendencies reported greater exposure and reactivity to conflicts, as well as differed in their choice of coping efforts and the effectiveness of those strategies. Conscientiousness has been shown to be a powerful predictor of coping: specifically related to active, problem-focused response strategies when dealing with interpersonal conflict (Watson & Hubbard, 1996). Locus of Control has been shown to effect perceptions of occupational stress (Brousseau & Mallinger, 1981), as well as the choice of coping strategy when dealing with interpersonal conflict at work (Hahn, 2000)

Differential Exposure to Stressors

In accordance with Bolger and Zuckerman's (1995) differential exposure model, it is expected that the personality dispositions of Neuroticism,

Conscientiousness, and Locus of Control will be related to perceptions of exposure to task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict at work.

Neuroticism represents individual differences in the tendency to experience distress, and in cognitive and behavioural styles that follow from this tendency (McCrae, 1992). Individuals who score high in Neuroticism experience chronic negative affect, such as anxiety, depression, sadness, hostility, self-consciousness, and a propensity to be impulsive. They are also prone to the development of a variety of psychiatric disorders. The persistent nervous tension, depression, frustration, guilt, and self-consciousness that such individuals feel is often associated with irrational thinking, low self-esteem, poor control of impulses and craving, somatic complaints and ineffective coping (McCrae & Costa, 1987). Individuals who score low in Neuroticism exhibit a higher tendency to be calm, even-tempered, and composed.

Bolger and Schilling (1991) examined the role of Neuroticism in the exposure and reactivity to daily stressors among a community sample of couples. They found that high-Neuroticism respondents were, in general, more exposed to stressors than low-Neuroticism respondents. Of particular significance, it was determined that high-Neuroticism individuals were more likely to report stressful events in regards to interpersonal conflict, compared to low Neuroticism respondents. They argued that there may be a lower threshold among high-Neuroticism individuals for reporting stressful events. In accordance with previous findings, the following propositions are made:

> H19.Perceived exposure to task-based interpersonal conflict will be positively correlated with Neuroticism.
>
> H20. Perceived exposure to relationship-based interpersonal conflict will be positively correlated with Neuroticism.

Conscientiousness has been defined in numerous ways. Tellegen's (1982, as cited in McCrae, 1992) and Hogan's (1986, as cited in McCrae, 1992) frameworks reflect Conscientiousness as a dimension that holds impulsive behaviour in check. Digman and Takemoto-Chock (1981, as cited in McCrae, 1992) extend this concept to include a dimension that organizes and directs behaviour. Conscientiousness is governed by conscience and highly correlated with is diligence and thoroughness. Individuals who score high in Conscientiousness are

characterised as having a tendency to be careful, reliable, hard working, determined, and well organised.

Although the role of Conscientiousness has been examined in the context of coping within stress research, no known study has examined Conscientiousness as a predictor of exposure to stressors (O'Brien & DeLongis, 1996). Individuals high on Conscientiousness have been regarded as having a tendency to be habitually careful, reliable, hard-working, well-organized, and purposeful. Conscientious people tend to be disciplined, well organized, punctual and dependable. Conscientiousness is associated with being highly diligent in the workplace. Hence, it seems reasonable to expect that a person who is high on Conscientiousness will be more orientated toward accomplishing work tasks, and less likely to notice nonessential issues which may interfere with this. Highly conscientious individuals may be less likely to notice conflict since their priorities lie in completion and the delivery of results. The following hypotheses are exploratory:

H21.Perceived exposure to task-based interpersonal conflict will be negatively correlated with Conscientiousness.

H22. Perceived exposure to relationship-based interpersonal conflict will be negatively correlated with Conscientiousness.

Locus of control is a personality variable that concerns people's generalized expectancies that they can or cannot control reinforcement in their lives (Spector & Connell, 1994). People who believe their actions influence outcomes, or expect that they can control reinforcements, are identified as having an internal Locus of Control. Those who believe their behaviour has little influence on events, or hold expectancies that outside forces or luck controls reinforcements, have been labelled as having an external Locus of Control.

Spector and O'Connell (1994) determined that Locus of Control correlated significantly with interpersonal conflict. It was found that internals experienced lower levels of job stressors and subsequently reported less strain. In addition, internals experienced significantly higher levels of job satisfaction and lower levels of job anxiety, compared with individuals with an external Locus of Control disposition. They argue that internals' enhanced beliefs that they are in control mitigate the stressfulness within the work environment. In accordance with previous findings, the following propositions are made:

H23.Perceived exposure to task-based interpersonal conflict will be negatively correlated with an internal Locus of Control.

H24. Perceived exposure to relationship-based interpersonal conflict will be negatively correlated with an internal Locus of Control.

Differential Coping Choice

Bolger and Zuckerman's (1995) pathway model identifies personality not only as a significant predictor of exposure to stressors (differential exposure) but also as a moderator affecting how individuals cope with stress (differential reactivity). Coping choice, one of the primary pathways within this model, refers to the coping efforts people engage in, in response to stressful events. It is posited that personality will influence individuals' reactivity to stress by affecting the type of coping strategy they utilize when exposed to stressors. Research on the effects of personality on the stress-coping process has assumed two distinct approaches, although contemporary researchers are working towards more comprehensive and differentiated models that explicitly recognize the importance of both paradigms (Watson & Hubbard, 1996). Bolger and Zuckerman's (1995) pathway model proposes the dispositional approach, whereby coping styles are assessed as dispositional tendencies (Watson & Hubbard, 1996). Hence, individual differences in the tendency to use particular coping styles are predicted to be moderately stable over time.

Neuroticism Research has shown that Neuroticism plays a particularly important role in the stress-coping process. Findings have indicated significant links between this disposition and virtually every stage in the stress-coping process (Watson & Hubbard, 1996). In a study exploring the role of Neuroticism on coping with interpersonal stress, Lee- Baggley et al., (2005) found that individuals who scored higher on Neuroticism reported higher scores on avoidance and passive forms of coping, compared to those low in Neuroticism. They argue that those individuals higher in Neuroticism experience more negative emotions when faced with stressful situations, and therefore may be more likely to channel their coping efforts toward managing their disruptive emotions. It appears that those high on Neuroticism have problems coping in constructive ways, tending to utilize coping strategies associated with poorer outcomes. Neuroticism is associated with the increased use of wishful-thinking, self-blame, escape,

avoidance, and emotion-focused coping; and the decreased use of problem-focused coping (Watson & Hubbard, 1996; Carver et al., 1989). In accordance with previous findings, the following propositions were made:

H25. When faced with task-based interpersonal conflict Neuroticism will be positively correlated with the use of the (a) emotion-focused and (b) avoidance coping styles and negatively correlated with the use of the (c) problem-focused coping style.

H26. When faced with relationship-based interpersonal conflict, Neuroticism will be positively correlated with the use of the (a) emotion-focused and (b) avoidance coping styles and negatively correlated with the use of the (c) problem-focused coping style.

Conscientiousness is emerging as an equally important disposition affecting the utilization of certain coping styles to manage stress (Watson & Hubbard, 1996). In a study exploring the role of Continuousness on coping with interpersonal stress Lee- Baggley et al., (2005) found that individuals higher on Continuousness were significantly more likely to report engaging in problem-focused coping, than were those lower on Continuousness. Previous research findings suggest that those higher on Conscientiousness tend to use direct, active, problem-focused strategies, abstaining from avoidant emotional strategies (Watson & Hubbard, 1996). Individuals who are high in Continuousness generally act in a cautions, meticulous, and highly organized manner. Accordingly it is assumed that conscientious individuals develop careful and precise plans to help them cope with stress. In accordance with previous findings, the following propositions were made:

H27. When faced with task-based interpersonal conflict, Conscientiousness will be positively correlated with the use the (a) problem-focused coping style and negatively correlated with the use of (b) emotion-focused and (c) avoidance coping styles.

H28. When faced with relationship-based interpersonal conflict, Conscientiousness will be positively correlated with the use of the (a) problem-focused coping style and negatively correlated with the use of (b) emotion-focused and (c) avoidance coping styles.

Locus of Control Hahn (2000) used Bolger and Zuckerman's (1994) pathway framework to examine the effects of Locus of Control on differential coping choice. She found that internals and externals differed in their choice of coping strategy when faced with interpersonal conflict. Findings indicated that individuals exhibiting an internal Locus of Control reported a higher tendency to engage in problem-focused strategies, while externals used more emotion-focused strategies. Hahn (2000) argued that because individuals with an internal Locus of Control have a higher tendency to perceive stressors as controllable, they are more likely to engage in coping strategies that focus on modifying or eliminating the problem. Individuals with an external Locus of Control, who are more likely to evaluate events as uncontrollable, will use strategies to minimize immediate negative outcomes (avoidance-focused coping) and that do not necessarily alleviate the stressor. In accordance with previous findings, the following propositions were made:

H29. When faced with task-based interpersonal conflict, internal Locus of Control will be positively correlated with the (a) problem-focused coping style and negatively correlated with the (b) emotion-focused and (c) avoidance coping styles.

H30. When faced with relationship-based interpersonal conflict, internal Locus of Control will be positively correlated with the (a) problem-focused coping style and negatively correlated with the (b) emotion-focused and (c) avoidance coping styles.

Summary of Key Research Aims

Stress cannot be understood as merely a factor which resides within the individual or the environment, but as a dynamic process consisting of numerous components (O'Driscoll & Brough, 2006). Hence, to provide effective interventions for workplace stress, researchers must strive to detect and understand the organizational sources of strain, the effects of which can be moderated by coping and individual difference characteristics (O'Driscoll & Brough, 2006; Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995; Jick and Mitz, 1985). This research had three primary aims which were to examine the:

1. Relations between task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict and several outcome variables.

2. The role of coping styles as moderators in the stress-strain process.
3. The relationships between the individual differences characteristics of gender and personality on the experience of interpersonal conflict at work.

The four specific objectives of the present research were:

1. To examine the relations between task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict on the outcome variables of job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, turnover intentions, and psychological strain.
2. Explore the relationships between the coping styles of problem-focused, emotion-focused and avoidance strategies on the outcome variables of job satisfaction, affective organisational commitment, turnover intentions, social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression.
3. Investigate gender differences in the exposure to task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict, strain, and coping styles.
4. Explore personality differences, specifically Neuroticism, Conscientiousness and Locus of Control, on the differential exposure to task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict and choice of coping when dealing with these stressors.

Chapter Two: Method

Background

An online questionnaire measuring task-based interpersonal conflict, relationship-based interpersonal conflict and other variables of interest, such as coping styles and personality dispositions, was distributed among Canadian Information Technology (IT) employees working in a single organization in Toronto, and through the business-orientated networking site LinkedIn. LinkedIn is the world's largest online professional networking site with over 80 million registered users. All of the participants from LinkedIn lived in Canada and worked predominately in the Toronto, Ontario region.

Participants

Of the 550 invitations to participate, 181 surveys were completed, representing a response rate of 32.9%. Three surveys were rejected from further analysis because the participants either omitted too many questions or were not employed as IT workers. For example, one of the participants whose completed questionnaire was rejected from further analysis worked in the IT department as a receptionist, as opposed to an IT professional. At an alpha level of 0.01 and a total participant pool of 178, the power of this analysis is acceptable at 0.8 (Friedman, 1982).

The final sample (N= 178) consisted of participants between 24 and 67 years of age, with the average age being 45 years and 5 months (SD= 8.6). The participants included 75 females (43%) and 103 males (57%). Organizational tenure ranged between 4 months and 36 years, the average being 8 years and 5 months (SD=7.6). The participants held numerous occupational titles within their respective organizations. Table 1 presents the number and percentage of participants holding each occupational title. These groups were categorised into 13 distinct categories through a collaborative effort with a senior Subject Matter Expert (SME) working in the Canadian IT industry.

Table 1. Number and Percentage of Participants Holding each Occupational Title

Occupational Title	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Sample
Solution Analyst	29	16.3
Advisor/Executive	27	15.2
Programmer	22	12.4
Project/Vendor Manager	22	12.4
Technical Support/Planner	19	10.7
Solution Architect	14	7.9
Functional Manager/ Team Leader	13	7.3
Data Architect	6	3.4
I.T Administrator	6	3.4
Enterprise Architect	6	3.4
Data Administrator	5	2.8
Relationship Manager	5	2.8
Quality Assurance Analyst	4	2
TOTAL	**178**	**100%**

Instrument

The data were collected through an anonymous online questionnaire, designed and circulated via the survey software package Qualtrics. The questionnaire encompassed quantitative measures of task-based interpersonal conflict, relationship-based interpersonal conflict, dispositional coping styles (problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, and avoidance coping), job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, turnover intentions, psychological strain, personality dispositions (Neuroticism, Continuousness, and Locus of Control), and demographic particulars. In the demographic section of the questionnaire participants were asked to specify their gender, age, occupational title, and tenure at their current organization. A sample of the cover letter and online questionnaire accompanying it are presented in Appendix A and B, respectively. The Research and Ethics Committee of the School of Psychology at the University of Waikato granted ethical approval for this research.

Measures

All scores were computed by taking the mean across item responses. Raw data were imported from the survey software package Qualtrics into SPSS version 18 for subsequent analysis.

Task-based interpersonal conflict was measured using four items from Jehn's (1995) Conflict Scale. The scale asks respondents to consider the amount of task-based interpersonal conflict they experience with others in their workplace. An example item is *"How often do the people you work with disagree about opinions regarding the work being done?"*. In the original version of this questionnaire, responses were garnered through a five-point response format anchored by 1 'none' and 5 'a lot'. However, the connection between the items and response format is somewhat ambiguous. The wording of the 5-point response format was slightly modified to 1 'Never', 2 'Very Little', 3 'Some', 4 'A Moderate Amount', and 5 'A lot'. Jehn (1995) reported a reliability of .92 for the scale. Factor analysis provided support for the presence of only one factor in this scale (see Appendix C, Figure C.1 for a Scree Plot and Table C.1 for factor loadings). The Cronbach's alpha in the present study was .90.

Relationship-based interpersonal conflict was measured using Friedman, Currall, and Tsai's (2000) abbreviated version of Cox's (1998, as cited in Friedman et al., 2000) Organizational Conflict Scale. By abbreviating the original scale to five items, Friedman et al., (2000) found that the underlying construct was better represented. Instead of indicating perceptions of an overall state of conflict, the revised version of the scale focused on active hostility, indicating perceptions of active conflict behaviour. Abbreviation did not affect the reliability of the scale, which was calculated at .93 by both Cox (1998) and Friedman et al., (2000). An example item is *"Much plotting takes place behind the scenes"*. The scale uses a 6-point response format anchored by 1 'Strongly Disagree' and 6 'Strongly Agree'. Factor analysis of the current data provided support for the presence of only one factor in this scale (see Appendix C, Figure C.2 for a Scree Plot and Table C.2 for factor loadings). The Cronbach's alpha in the present study was .95.

Dispositional coping styles were measured using Carver's (1989) dispositional COPE Inventory, a multidimensional coping measure used to assess the different ways people respond to stress through problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidance coping styles. Respondents were presented with thirty-six items, twelve items for each style of coping. The COPE measure was administered twice and respondents were asked to report the extent to which they usually engage in particular coping styles when dealing with task-based and

relationship-based interpersonal conflict at work. An example item from the problem-focused scale is "*I concentrate my efforts on doing something about it"*. An example item from the emotion-focused scale is *"I discuss my feeling with someone"*. An example of an avoidance item is *"I get upset and let my emotions out"*. Responses were ascertained through a four-point response format anchored by 1 'I usually don't do this at all' and 4 'I usually do this a lot'. Carver et al., (1989) reported Cronbach's alpha reliabilities ranging from .62 to .92.

Factor analyses were conducted twice on the COPE measure; in relation to task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict (see Appendix A, Figure A.3 and C.4 for a Scree Plots and Table C.3 and C.4 for factor loadings). Items which did not display a high factor loading or were not present in both versions of the measure were omitted from further analysis. In cases where factor analyses indicated items loaded into different factors from those intended by the original version, the items were either retained or omitted from further analyses based on their theoretical grounding. For example, the items "I look for something good in what is happening" and "I try to see it in a different light, to make it seem more positive" displayed factor loadings in the problem-focused category as opposed to emotion-focused, as intended in the original version. Their inclusion in the problem-focused category could not be justified theoretically, since they denote cognitive restructuring, a major facet of emotion-focused coping (O'Driscoll & Brough, 2006). Similarly, the item "I accept the reality of the fact that it happened" loaded into avoidance coping, as opposed to emotion-focused coping, as intended by the original version. The inclusion of this item in the avoidance coping category cannot be theoretically justified as the term 'accept" denotes acknowledgment as opposed to evasion. However, the items "I let my feelings out' and "I get upset and let my emotions out" were retained in the emotion-focused category even though they belonged to the avoidance category in the original version of the measure. This is because both items represent indirect, passive coping where emotional responses are recognized (O'Driscoll & Brough, 2006), as opposed to the evasion of the stressor or one's emotional reaction to it. Following factor analysis, nine items were retained in the problem-focused category, eight in the emotion-focused, and five in avoidance coping. The Cronbach's alphas in the present study were .84 for problem-focused, .86 for emotion-focused, and .72 for avoidance coping in relation to task-based interpersonal conflict. The Cronbach's alphas for problem-focused, emotion-

focused, and avoidance strategies in relation to relationship-based interpersonal conflict were .91, .90, and .74, respectively.

Job Satisfaction was measured using Randall and O'Driscoll's (1997) Facet Satisfaction Scale. The scale contains 16 items asking respondents how satisfied they are with several aspects of their job, the last item in the scale measured global satisfaction. It uses a 7-point response scale, anchored from 1 for 'Very Dissatisfied' to 7 for 'Very Satisfied', including 'Not Applicable to me'. O'Driscoll and Randall (1999) reported a Cronbach's alpha of 0.94 for this scale. Factor analysis provided support for the presence of only one factor in this scale (see Appendix C, Figure C.5 for a Scree Plot and Table C.5 for factor loadings). The global satisfaction item and overall job satisfaction items were highly correlated (r=.79) providing strong evidence for convergent validity, hence the global item was omitted from further analysis. The Cronbach's alpha in the present study was .93.

Affective organizational commitment was measured using Allen and Meyer's (1997) revised commitment model. The scale contains six items relating to an employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in their organization. Responses were ascertained through a 7-point response format anchored by 1 'Strongly Disagree' and 7 f 'Strongly Agree'. An example item is "*I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization"*. Studies have indicated coefficient alpha values ranging from .77 to .88 for this scale (Fields, 2002). Factor analysis provided support for the presence of only one factor in this scale (see Appendix C, Figure C.6 for a Scree Plot and Table C.6 for factor loadings). The Cronbach's alpha in this study was .89.

Turnover intentions were assessed using Bozeman and Perrewe's (2001) measure. The scale contains five items asking respondents to indicate the extent to which they agree with the items regarding the likelihood of leaving their organization. Responses are garnered through a 7-point response format anchored by 1 'Strongly Disagree' and 7 'Strongly Agree'. An example item is *"I will probably look for a new job in the near future"*. Bozeman and Perrewe (2001) reported coefficient alpha reliability estimates of .94 and .90 in their samples. Factor analysis provided support for the presence of only one factor in this scale

(see Appendix C, Figure C.7 for a Scree Plot and Table C.7 for factor loadings). The Cronbach's alpha for the present study was .88.

Psychological Strain was measured using the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) twelve-item scale developed by Banks, Clegg, Jackson, Kemp, Stafford, and Wall (1980). Respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they had experienced each situation in the past three months, on a 5-point scale anchored by 1 'Very Occasionally' and 5 'All the Time'. An example item is *"Been able to concentrate on what you are doing?"*. Banks et al., (1980) reported high alpha coefficients falling between .82 and .90 for this scale. Factor analysis provided support for the presence of three factors in this scale (see Appendix C, Figure C.8 for a Scree Plot and Table C.8 for factor loadings).

As one of the most common screening instruments for mental disorders, substantial research has been conducted on the stability of the factor structure of the GHQ-12 (Werneke, Goldberg, Yalcin, & Ustun, 2000). Previous factor analysis on the GHQ-12 has yielded two and three factor solutions. The identified factors sample the domains of social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression. Based on the factor analysis conducted in the present study and past research confirming the viability of a three factor solution (Werneke et al., 2000), further analyses of the psychological strain measure will be separated into three separate scales. Social dysfunction included six items, while both loss of confidence and anxiety and depression retained three. Cronbach's alpha reliability tests reported a .85 value for the social dysfunction scale and a .75 for both the loss of confidence and anxiety and depression scales.

Personality dispositions of interest included Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, and Locus of Control. Neuroticism and Conscientiousness were assessed using the PI-R domains from the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP), developed by Goldberg (1999). The IPIP is an internationally renowned and widely-used public domain measure. Items from the IPIP collection were used to measure personality dispositions deemed to be significant in the experience of interpersonal stress at work.

Neuroticism loaded on the same factors as the NEO Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) developed by Costa & McCrae (1986). The PI-R Domains consisted of a 10-item measure of personality and was completed by the participants to

assess levels of Neuroticism. Each item was rated on a 5-point scale, anchored from 1 'Very Inaccurate' to 5 'Very Accurate'. An example item from the Neuroticism scale is *"Am often down in the dumps"*. Factor analysis provided support for the presence of one factor in this scale (see Appendix C, Figure C.9 for a Scree Plot and Table C.9 for factor loadings). Goldberg et al., (1999) reported a coefficient alpha reliability of .86 for this scale, the Cronbach's alpha in the present study was the same.

Conscientiousness also loaded on the same factors as the NEO-FFI (Costa and McCrae (1986) and consisted of 10 items. Each item was rated on a 5-point scale, anchored from 1 'Very Inaccurate' to 5 'Very Accurate'. An example item from the Conscientiousness scale is *"pay attention to details"*. Goldberg (1999) recorded a Cronbach's alpha levels of .81 for this scale. Factor analysis provided support for the presence of one factor in this scale (see Appendix C, Figure C.10 for a Scree Plot and C.10 for factor loadings). However, two items from the Conscientiousness scale did not have acceptable factor loadings. The items "Pay attention to details' and "Shirk my duties" were omitted from further analysis. The Cronbach's alpha in the present study was .78.

Locus of Control was assessed using facets from Goldberg's (1991) Personal Attributes Scale. This measure consists of five items rated on a 5-point scale anchored by 1 'Very Inaccurate' and 5 'Very Accurate'. An example item from the Locus of Control scale is *"Believe that unfortunate events occur because of bad luck"*. Goldberg (1991) reported a Cronbach's alpha of .71 for this scale. Factor analysis provided support for the presence of only one factor in this scale (see Appendix C, Figure C.11 for a Scree Plot and Table C.11 for factor loadings). However, according to factor analysis the item "Believe in the power of faith" did not display a substantial factor loading. Cronbach's alpha was computed with and without the inclusion of this item. The exclusion of this item increased the alpha value from .50 to .55. The item was excluded from further analysis; however given the low Cronbach's value of this scale subsequent analysis will be interpreted with caution.

Procedure

The data collection phase took place between March and to July, 2010. Recruitment of participants was achieved through two distinct approaches, a single organization and the business-orientated networking site LinkedIn.

The organizational sample was secured by contacting the Associate Vice President (AVP) of IT. An email was sent explaining the research goals, its intended benefits, and how the findings could be accessed once the thesis was complete. There was a brief explanation of the questionnaire, how long it took to complete, and information regarding consent and confidentiality. A sample of the introductory letter is presented in Appendix D. The AVP was asked to circulate a cover letter and the questionnaire around the IT workers in her organization through an email link. The AVP asked two of her Project Managers to compile a distribution list, containing the names and email addresses of all the employees working in the IT department; one of these Project Managers circulated the cover letter and questionnaire.

Each employee on the distribution list was contacted via email. Respondents were presented with a cover letter outlining the objectives of the research and the rational for the study. They were notified about the duration of the questionnaire and how they could access the findings once the research was complete. Respondents were advised to contact me via my personal email address and provide me with their details so that I could send an abbreviated summary of the findings once the study was complete. Respondents were informed that their anonymity would be guaranteed, that no identifiable information would be requested, that their participation was voluntary, and that they had the right to withdraw should they wish to. Respondents were notified that the research was granted ethical approval from the Research and Ethics Committee of the School of Psychology at the University of Waikato. A reminder letter (see Appendix E) was sent three weeks after the initial contact. The cover letter contained a direct link to the questionnaire. Respondents were asked to click on it should they wish to proceed and complete the questionnaire. Once they completed the questionnaire they were asked to submit by clicking on a submission icon. As the questionnaires were distributed through a survey software company no questionnaire could be traced to the person who completed it.

The second procedure involved recruitment through the business-orientated social networking site LinkedIn. A distribution list was secured through a personal contact in the Canadian IT industry. She agreed to provide me with access to her personal network of connections, all of whom were individuals working in the IT industry in Toronto. From this point the procedure was the same as the one outlined above. The respondents who were contacted via LinkedIn were given the

same information as the organizational sample, identical cover and reminder letters were sent out (see Appendix B and E).

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Data was analysed using SPSS version 18. Composite scores for each variable in this study were derived by averaging responses across the relevant items for each individual. Factor analyses were conducted on all items for each measure.

Exploratory factor analysis was carried out on each variable used in the present study to ascertain whether items used were tapping into the same constructs in the current sample, as intended by the original authors (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). Principal axis factoring (PFA) with oblique rotation was utilized, as opposed to varimax rotation, as PFA provides a better solution when the factors are inter-correlated. It was assumed that an item contributed meaningfully to a factor if it demonstrated a factor loading of .4 or above. KMO statistics in all of the analyses were > .6, confirming the reliability of the underlying structure. Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant at values of less than .05.

Scree plots and factor loading tables for all of the variables are presented in Appendix C. Results of the factor analyses for task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict, job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, turnover intentions, and the personality dispositions of neuroticism, conscientiousness, and locus of control indicated that in all cases each variable consisted of one factor. In cases where an item did not indicate an acceptable factor loading value, that item was omitted from further analyses.

Factor analysis was conducted on the COPE scale twice since this measure was administered in relation to both task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict. Analysis of the scree plots for the COPE measure suggested the presence of multiple factors, greater than the three specified by the original authors. Items which did not display acceptable factor loadings or were not present in both versions of the measure were omitted from further analyses. Several items loaded into different factors to those specified by the original authors. In such cases, each item was carefully examined and either omitted or retained based on whether their presence in the new factor could be theoretically justified. Following factor analysis, nine items were retained in the problem-focused category, eight in the emotion-focused, and five in avoidance coping.

Analysis of the scree plot and factor loadings for psychological strain, as measured by the GHQ-12, suggested the presence of three factors. Several researchers have reported similar findings when conducting factor analysis on the GHQ-12. Previous research has specified two and three factor solutions (Werneke et al., 2000; Goldberg et al., 1997). Based on research conducted by Werneke et al., (2000), the three identified factors were separated into new scales and accordingly labelled: social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression. Social dysfunction contained six items, while both the loss of confidence and anxiety and depression scales contained three.

Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of responses. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for most variables were acceptable (>.70), indicating moderate to high internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978). As mentioned previously the alpha coefficient for locus of control was less than acceptable (.55). Due to the low reliability of the Locus of Control measure findings using this scale will be interpreted with caution.

Chapter Three: Results

This chapter presents the statistical analyses (N=178) conducted to examine the thirty hypotheses and includes descriptive statistics, correlations, regressions, and independent-groups t-tests.

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics for all variables, including means, standard deviations, skew and Cronbach's alphas are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	M	SD	Skew	Cronbach's Alpha
Task-based Interpersonal Conflict(a)	2.8	.75	.5*	.90
Coping with Task-based Interpersonal Conflict(b)				
Problem-focused	3.0	.58	-.6*	.84
Emotion-focused	1.9	.64	.9*	.86
Avoidance-focused	2.2	.58	.5*	.72
Relationship-based Interpersonal Conflict(c)	2.6	1.4	.7*	.95
Coping with Relationship-based Interpersonal Conflict(b)				
Problem-focused	2.7	.72	-.4*	.91
Emotion-focused	1.9	.71	.9*	.90
Avoidance-focused	2.2	.64	.2	.74
Job Satisfaction(d)	5.3	1.1	-.9*	.93
Affective Organizational Commitment(e)	4.6	1.4	-.4*	.89
Turnover Intentions(e)	3.1	1.6	.6*	.88
Social Dysfunction(f)	2.9	.87	.3	.85
Loss of Confidence(f)	2.0	.87	.9*	.75
Anxiety and Depression(f)	2.6	.96	.8*	.75
Personality Dispositions(g)				
Neuroticism	2.1	.74	.9*	.86
Conscientiousness	4.0	.63	-.5*	.78
Locus of Control	3.4	.92	-.0	.55

Note
(a) 5 point scale (1= Never, 5= A Lot)
(b) 4 point scale (1= I usually don't do this at all, 4= I usually do this a lot)
(c) 6 point scale (1= Strongly Disagree, 6= Strongly Agree)
(d) 7 point scale (1= Very Dissatisfied, 7 = Very Satisfied)
(e) 7 point scale (1= Strongly Disagree, 7= Strongly Agree)
(f) 6 point scale (1=Never, 6= All the time)
(g) 5 point scale (1=Very Inaccurate, 5= Very Accurate)
(*) indicates significant Skew

Task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflicts were measured using of two distinct scales, given that no known single scale measures both simultaneously. Task-based interpersonal conflict was measured on a 5-point frequency scale. Participants indicated experiencing moderate levels of task-based interpersonal conflict (2.8). Relationship-based interpersonal conflict was

measured on a 6-point rating scale. Participants indicated experiencing low-to-moderate levels of relationship-based interpersonal conflict (2.6). Since each type of conflict was measured using a different scale, anchored by different response formats, it is not appropriate to make comparisons between the two using the mean scores alone.

Coping with task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict was measured on a 4-point rating scale. Participants reported using problem-focused coping to a moderate extent across both conflict situations. However, the reported use of problem-focused coping was slightly higher when dealing with task-based interpersonal conflict (3.0) compared to relationship-based interpersonal conflict (2.7). When faced with task-based interpersonal conflict participants indicated using emotion-focused coping (1.9) to a low-to-moderate extent and avoidance coping (2.2) to a moderate-to-high extent. The mean scores were the same in relation to the reported use of emotion-focused and avoidance coping when dealing with relationship-based interpersonal conflict. The reported use of problem-focused coping had the highest mean score across both task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict, followed by avoidance and emotion-focused coping, respectively.

Job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment were measured on 7-ponit rating scales. However, job satisfaction was measured by examining levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the response items, while affective organizational commitment was measured thorough agreement or disagreement with the items. Participants indicated moderate-to-high levels of job satisfaction (5.3) and low-to-moderate levels of affective organizational commitment (4.6). When asked how likely they were to leave their respective organizations, participants indicated a low-to-moderate inclination (4.6).

Psychological strain was measured through a 7-pont frequency scale by examining social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression. On average, participants indicated experiencing social dysfunction (2.9), loss of confidence (2.0), and anxiety and depression (2.6) at a low-to-moderate frequency. In relation to the personality dispositions, most participants indicated low-to-moderate levels of neuroticism (2.1), moderate-to-high levels of conscientiousness (4.0), and low-to moderate levels of an internal locus of control (3.4).

Table 3. Correlations between Conflict, Coping, Outcomes and Personality

	Job Satisfaction	Affective Organizational Commitment	Turnover Intentions	Social Dysfunction	Loss of Confidence	Anxiety and Depression	Neuroticism	Conscientiousness	Locus of Control
Task-based Interpersonal Conflict	-.38**	-.27**	.25**	.37**	.13*	.26**	.18*	-.18**	.05
COPEt Problem	.17*	-.02	.09	-.23**	-.11	.03	-.18**	.31**	.06
COPEt Emotion	-.20**	-.13*	.27**	.17*	.30**	.27**	.39**	-.15*	-.05
COPEt Avoidance	-.10	-.00	.02	.14*	.13*	.03	.07	-.11	.10
Relationship-based Interpersonal Conflict	-.54**	-.44**	.40**	.52**	.29**	.28**	.32**	-.32**	-.17*
COPEr Problem-focused	.14*	.08	.00	-.23**	-.10	-.00	-.20**	.29**	.06
COPEr Emotion-focused	-.17*	-.12	.15*	.17*	.38**	.22**	.45**	-.26**	-.09
COPEr Avoidance	-.05	-.09	-.01	.01	.15*	-.03	.10	-.15	-.04

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Note. COPEt= coping in relation to task-based interpersonal conflict; COPEr= coping in relation to relationship-based interpersonal conflict

Table 4. Correlations between Conflict and Problem-focused Coping, Emotion-focused Coping, and Avoidance Coping

	Task-based Interpersonal Conflict	COPEt Problem	COPEt Emotion	COPEt Avoidance
Task-based Interpersonal Conflict				
COPEt Problem-focused	-.07			
COPEt Emotion-focused	.10	.25**		
COPEt Avoidance	.04	.09	.24**	
Relationship-based Interpersonal Conflict	.54**	-.09	.28**	.09
COPEr Problem-focused	-.10	.65**	.22**	.08
COPEr Emotion -focused	.04	.11	.80**	.24**
COPEr Avoidance	.03	.10	.12	.57**

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Note. COPEt= coping in relation to task-based interpersonal conflict; COPEr= coping in relation to relationship-based interpersonal conflict

Interpersonal Conflict and Outcomes

Correlations

Hypotheses 1 and 2 predicted that both types of interpersonal conflict would have a negative relationship with job satisfaction. Results showed significant negative correlations between task-based interpersonal conflict and job satisfaction ($r=-38$, $p<0.01$), and relationship-based interpersonal conflict and job satisfaction ($r=-.54$, $p<0.01$). Hypotheses 1 and 2 were supported, confirming that for the participants in this study both task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict lead to a decrease in job satisfaction.

Hypotheses 3 and 4 predicted that both types interpersonal conflict would have a negative relationship with affective organizational commitment. Results showed significant negative correlations between task-based interpersonal conflict and affective organizational commitment ($r=-27$, $p<0.01$), and relationship-based interpersonal conflict and affective organizational commitment ($r=-.44$, $p<0.01$). Hypotheses 3 and 4 were supported, confirming that for the participants in this study both task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict lead to a decrease in affective organizational commitment.

Hypotheses 5 and 6 predicted that both types of interpersonal conflict would have a positive relationship with turnover intentions. Results showed significant positive correlations between task-based interpersonal conflict and turnover intentions ($r=.25$, $p<0.01$), and relationship-based interpersonal conflict and turnover intentions ($r=.40$, $p<0.01$). Hypotheses 5 and 6 were supported, confirming that for the participants in this study both task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict lead to an increase in turnover intentions.

Hypotheses 7 and 8 predicted that both types of interpersonal conflict would have a positive relationship with social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression. Results showed significant positive correlations between task-based interpersonal conflict and social dysfunction ($r=.37$, $p<0.01$), loss of confidence ($r=.13$, $p<0.05$), and anxiety and depression ($r=.26$, $p<0.01$). Similarly, the correlations between relationship-based interpersonal conflict and social dysfunction ($r=.52$, $p<0.01$), loss of confidence ($r=.29$, $p<0.01$), and anxiety and depression ($r=.28$, $p<0.01$), indicated significant positive correlations. Hypotheses 7 and 8 were supported, confirming that for the participants in this study both task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict lead to an

increase in social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression.

Regressions

Standard multiple regressions were carried out to determine the relative contributions of task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict to satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, turnover intentions, social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression.

Table 5. Regressions: Task-based and Relationship-based Interpersonal Conflict

	β	t
Predictors of Job Satisfaction		
Task-based Interpersonal Conflict	-0.13	-1.73
Relationship-based Interpersonal conflict	-0.47	-6.19**
Adjusted R Square=.29; F= 37.3;df=2,174		
Predictors of Affective Organizational Commitment		
Task-based Interpersonal Conflict	-0.04	-0.51
Relationship-based Interpersonal conflict	-0.41	-5.04**
Adjusted R Square=.18;F=20.16;df=3,173		
Predictors of Turnover Intentions		
Task-based Interpersonal Conflict	0.04	0.49
Relationship-based Interpersonal conflict	0.38	4.55**
Adjusted R Square=.15;F=16.49;df=2,172		
Predictors of Social Dysfunction		
Task-based Interpersonal Conflict	0.13	1.7
Relationship-based Interpersonal conflict	0.45	5.81**
Adjusted R=.27;F33.48;df=2,174		
Predictors of Loss of Confidence		
Task-based Interpersonal Conflict	0.05	0.52
Relationship-based Interpersonal conflict	0.31	3.63**
Adjusted R Square=.07; F= 8.04;df=2,174		
Predictors of Anxiety and Depression		
Task-based Interpersonal Conflict	0.16	0.52
Relationship-based Interpersonal conflict	0.19	2.23*
Adjusted R Square=.09; F= 9.04;df=2,173		

*p<.05, **p<.01 β=beta coefficient t=regression coefficient divided by its standard error

The results of the multiple regression analysis showed that task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict together explained 29% of variance in job satisfaction, 18% in affective organizational commitment, 15% in turnover intentions, 27% in social dysfunction, 7% in loss of confidence, and 9% in anxiety and depression.

Hypothesis 9 predicted that relationship-based interpersonal conflict would demonstrate stronger negative associations with job satisfaction and affective

organizational commitment, and stronger positive associations with turnover intentions and psychological strain, compared to task-based interpersonal conflict. Regressions were carried out to test the relative contributions of task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict on the outcome variables. While correlations simply indicate whether bivariate relationships exist between variables, multiple regression analysis is used to determine the strength of the relationships between a set of predictors and the criterion variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996).

The results of the regression analyses suggest that only relationship-based interpersonal conflict was a significant predictor of perceptions of job satisfaction (β=-.47, $p<0.01$), affective organizational commitment (β=-.41, $p<0.01$), turnover intentions (β=.38, $p<0.01$), social dysfunction (β=.45, $p<0.01$), loss of confidence (β=.31, $p<0.01$), and anxiety and depression (β=.19, $p<0.05$). Hypothesis 9 was supported, confirming that for the participants in this study relationship-based interpersonal conflict had stronger negative associations with job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment, and stronger positive association with turnover intentions, social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression, compared to task-based interpersonal conflict.

Coping with Interpersonal Conflict at Work

This research assumed that relatively stable, person-based factors underlie habitual coping efforts (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989), hence individuals are likely to cope according to a habitual tendency and respond the same way across stressors (Heszen- Niejodek, 1997). The following section describes the relationships between the coping styles of problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidance on the associations between task-based interpersonal conflict and relationship-based interpersonal conflict and job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, turnover intentions, social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression.

Correlations

Hypotheses 10 and 11 predicted that the use of problem-focused coping with both types of interpersonal conflict would be positively related to job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment and negatively related to turnover intentions, social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression. The

reported use of problem-focused coping to deal with task-based interpersonal conflict was significantly positively related to job satisfaction ($r=.17$, $p<0.05$) and significantly negatively related to social dysfunction ($r=-.23$, $p<0.01$) and anxiety and depression ($r=-.23$, $p<0.01$). Problem-focused coping did not show any significant correlations with affective organizational commitment, turnover intentions, and loss of confidence.

The reported use of problem-focused coping to deal with relationship-based interpersonal conflict was significantly positively related to job satisfaction ($r=.14$, $p<0.05$) and significantly negatively related to social dysfunction ($r=-.23$, $p<0.01$). It did not show any significant correlations with affective organizational commitment, turnover intentions, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression. Hypotheses 10 and 11 were therefore partially supported.

Hypotheses 12 and 13 predicted that the use of emotion-focused coping with both types of interpersonal conflict would be negatively related to job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment and positively related to turnover intentions, social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression. All of the correlations for emotion-focused coping in relation to task-based interpersonal conflict were significant. The reported use of emotion-focused coping in relation to task-based interpersonal conflict was significantly negatively correlated with job satisfaction ($r=-.20$, $p<0.01$) and affective organizational commitment ($r=-.13$, $p<0.05$), and significantly positively correlated with turnover intentions ($r=.27$, $p<0.01$), social dysfunction ($r=.17$, $p<0.05$), loss of confidence ($r=.30$, $p<0.01$), and anxiety and depression ($r=.27$, $p<0.01$). Hypothesis 12 was fully supported.

The reported use of emotion-focused coping in relation to relationship-based interpersonal conflict was significantly negatively correlated with job satisfaction ($r=-.17$, $p<0.05$) and significantly positively correlated with turnover intentions ($r=.15$, $p<0.05$), social dysfunction ($r=.17$, $p<0.05$), loss of confidence ($r=.38$, $p<0.01$), and anxiety and depression ($r=.22$, $p<0.01$). Affective organizational commitment did not demonstrate a significant correlation with the use of emotion-focused coping. Hypothesis 13 was partially supported.

Hypotheses 14 and 15 predicted that the use of avoidance coping with both types of interpersonal conflict would be negatively related to job satisfaction and

affective organizational commitment and positively related to turnover intentions, social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression. The relationships for avoidance coping in relation to task-based interpersonal conflict were significantly positively correlated with social dysfunction ($r=.14$, $p<0.05$) and loss of confidence ($r=.13$, $p<0.05$). Avoidance coping in relation to task-based interpersonal conflict did not show significant correlations with job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, turnover intentions, and anxiety and depression.

The correlations for avoidance coping in relation to relationship-based interpersonal conflict was significantly positively correlated with loss of confidence ($r=.15$, $p<0.05$). Avoidance coping in relation to relationship-based interpersonal conflict did not show significant correlations with job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, turnover intentions, social dysfunction, and anxiety and depression. Hypothesis 14 and 15 were partially supported.

The correlations between the three different coping styles were examined to determine whether individuals demonstrated a habitual tendency to respond in the same way across task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict situations. Findings indicated strong positive correlations between problem-focused coping ($r=.65$, $p<0.01$), emotion-focused coping ($r=.80$, $p<0.01$), and avoidance ($r=.57$, $p<0.01$) across both stressors. The correlations indicate an exceptionally high consistency for the emotion-focused coping style. Results indicate that the participants in this study are highly likely to use the same coping style when dealing with both task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict situations. Furthermore, it is exceptionally likely that the participants who use emotion-focused coping to deal with task-based interpersonal conflict will use emotion-focused coping to deal with relationship-based interpersonal conflict and vice versa.

Regressions

The coping styles of problem-focused, emotion-focused and avoidance in relation to task-based interpersonal conflict and relationship-based interpersonal conflict were regressed to determine the relative contributions of these predictors to job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, turnover intentions, social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression. Results are

described in table 6 and 7. Table 6 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis relating to the relationships between the three coping styles and job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, and turnover intentions.

Table 6. Regressions: Coping Style with Job Satisfaction, Affective Organizational Commitment and Turnover Intentions

	β	t
Predictors of Job Satisfaction		
COPEt Problem-focused	0.15	1.54
COPEr Problem-focused	0.04	0.43
Adjusted R Square=.02; F=2.92; df=2,170		
COPEt Emotion-focused	-0.11	-0.83
COPEr Emotion-focused	-0.09	-0.67
Adjusted R Square=.02; F=2.83; df=2,170		
COPEt Avoidance	-0.07	-0.71
COPEr Avoidance	-0.02	-0.16
Adjusted R Square=.01; F=.48; df=2,172		
Predictors of Organizational Commitment		
COPEt Problem-focused	-0.09	-0.93
COPEr Problem-focused	0.14	1.31
Adjusted R Square=.00; F=.91; df=2,169		
COPEt Emotion-focused	-0.01	-0.1
COPEr Emotion-focused	-0.12	-0.89
Adjusted R Square=.00; F=1.33; df=2,169		
COPEt Avoidance	0.1	1.04
COPEr Avoidance	-0.14	-1.54
Adjusted R Square=.00; F=.1.21; df=2,169		
Predictors of Turnover Intentions		
COPEt Problem-focused	0.14	1.34
COPEr Problem-focused	-0.09	-0.84
Adjusted R Square=.00; F=.90; df=2,168		
COPEt Emotion-focused	0.44	3.15**
COPEr Emotion-focused	-0.2	-1.45
Adjusted R Square=.07; F=7.01; df=2,168		
COPEt Avoidance	0.01	0.18
COPEr Avoidance	-0.03	-0.23
Adjusted R Square=.00; F=.0.04; df=2,168		

*p<.05, **p<.01 β=beta coefficient t=regression coefficient divided by its standard error

Table 7 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis relating to the relationships between the coping styles of problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidance and the psychological strain indicators of social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression.

Table 7. Regressions: Coping Style with Social Dysfunction, Loss of Confidence and Anxiety and Depression

	β	t
Predictors of Social Dysfunction		
COPEt Problem-focused	-0.17	-1.8
COPEr Problem-focused	-0.12	-.1.18
Adjusted R Square=.08; F=6.25; df=2,170		
COPEt Emotion-focused	0.00	-0.01
COPEr Emotion-focused	0.17	1.33
Adjusted R Square=.02; F=2.44; df=2,170		
COPEt Avoidance	0.14	1.46
COPEr Avoidance	-0.07	-0.71
Adjusted R Square=.00; F=.1.07; df=2,170		
Predictors of Loss of Confidence		
COPEt Problem-focused	-0.01	-0.17
COPEr Problem-focused	-0.09	-0.93
Adjusted R Square=.00; F=.93; df=2,170		
COPEt Emotion-focused	-0.09	-0.73
COPEr Emotion-focused	0.31	2.60*
Adjusted R Square=.14; F=14.46; df=2,170		
COPEt Avoidance	0.12	1.24
COPEr Avoidance	-0.09	-0.92
Adjusted R Square=.02; F=.2.71; df=2,170		
Predictors of Anxiety and Depression		
COPEt Problem-focused	0.03	0.32
COPEr Problem-focused	-0.02	-0.21
Adjusted R Square=.00; F=.05; df=2,169		
COPEt Emotion-focused	0.29	2.17*
COPEr Emotion-focused	-0.02	-0.16
Adjusted R Square=.07; F=6.91; df=2,169		
COPEt Avoidance	0.08	0.86
COPEr Avoidance	-0.08	-0.86
Adjusted R Square=.01; F=.47; df=2,170		

*p<.05, **p<.01 β=beta coefficient t=regression coefficient divided by its standard error

Multiple regression analysis showed only three situations in which the use of a particular coping style significantly predicted an indicator of stress; these relate to hypotheses 12 and 13. Hypothesis 12 predicted that the use of emotion-focused coping in relation to task-based interpersonal conflict would be positively related to turnover intentions and anxiety and depression. The results indicate that when faced with task-based interpersonal conflict the reported use of emotion-focused coping contributed significantly to increasing turnover intentions (β=.44, $p< 0.001$) and anxiety and depression (β=.29, $p< 0.05$).

Hypothesis 13 predicted that the use of emotion-focused coping in relation to relationship-based interpersonal conflict would be positively related to loss of confidence. The results indicate that when faced with relationship-based interpersonal conflict the reported use of emotion-focused coping significantly predicted loss of confidence (β=.31, $p< 0.05$).

The Role of Gender in the Experience of Relationship-based Interpersonal Conflict

Gender Differences in Exposure to Relationship-based Interpersonal Conflict

Hypothesis 16 predicted that female employees would report more relationship-based interpersonal conflict at work than would their male counterparts. An independent-groups t-test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between the male and female employees in relation to perceptions of relationship-based interpersonal conflict. Tables 8 describes the group statistics and the results of the independent-groups t-test for gender differences in perceptions of relationship-based interpersonal conflict.

Table 8. Gender Differences in Perceptions of Relationship-based Interpersonal Conflict

Gender	Mean	Std Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t
Male	2.54	1.43	.14	-.48
Female	2.64	1.43	.17	

N=175: M=102, F=73

Results showed that the mean scores were relatively similar for the male (M= 2.64, SD= 1.43) and female (M= 2.54, SD= 1.43) employees. The results of the independent-groups t-test indicate a non significant difference in the perceptions of relationship-based interpersonal conflict between the two groups t (-.48) =.67, $p < 0.01$. Female employees did not report more relationship-based interpersonal conflict at work than their male counterparts. Hypothesis 16 was not supported, indicating that among these participants there were no significant gender differences in exposure to relationship-based interpersonal conflict.

Gender Differences in Strains

Hypothesis 17 predicted that the correlations between relationship-based interpersonal conflict and job satisfaction, affective organization commitment,

turnover intentions, social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression would be greater for female employees than their male counterparts. Table 9 describes the correlations between relationship-based interpersonal conflict and job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, turnover intentions, social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression for the female and male employees.

Table 9. Correlations between Relationship-based Interpersonal Conflict and the Outcome Variables for Female and Male Employees

	Female	**Male**
Job Satisfaction	-.70**	-.40**
Affective Organizational Commitment	-.43**	-.43**
Turnover Intentions	.51**	.31**
Social Dysfunction	.58**	.46**
Loss of Confidence	.29**	.31**
Anxiety and Depression	.26**	.29*

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

As shown in Table 9, all of the correlations between relationship-based interpersonal conflict and job satisfaction, affective organisational commitment, turnover intentions, social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression were significant for both the male and female employees. However, hypothesis 17 requires a comparison of the correlation coefficients across two independent populations (Millsap, Sheldon, & Xenos, 1990). Millsap et al., (1990) provide a quick assessment of significance. Accordingly, only the job satisfaction correlation is statistically significant between the male ($r = -.40$, $p < 0.001$) and female ($r = -.70$, $p < 0.001$) employees. Hypothesis 17 was partially supported, as only the job satisfaction correlation can be considered significant across male and female employees.

Gender Differences in Coping

Hypothesis 18 predicted that when faced with relationship-based interpersonal conflict female employees would be more likely to use emotion-focused and avoidance- focused coping styles, and less likely to use problem-focused coping than their male counterparts. Independent-groups t-tests were used to determine whether there were significant differences in the use of particular coping styles between male and female employees. Tables 10 describes the group

statistics and the results of the independent-groups t-test for gender differences in the use of problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidance coping styles.

Table 10. Gender Differences in Coping Styles when Dealing with Relationship-based Interpersonal Conflict

	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	t
Problem-focused	Male	2.76	.74	1.15
	Female	2.60	.70	
Emotion-focused	Male	1.69	.50	-489
	Female	2.18	.82	
Avoidance	Male	2.06	.61	-2.69
	Female	2.33	.66	

N=169: M=100, F=69

In relation to the use of problem-focused coping, the mean scores were relatively similar for the male (M= 2.76, SD= .70) and female (M= 2.60, SD= .70) employees. The results indicate a non significant difference in the use of problem-focused coping by the male and female employees t (1.15) =.35, $p < 0.001$. In relation to the reported use of emotion-focused coping, the results of the independent-groups t-test indicate a significant difference between the male and female employees t (-4.89) = .00, $p < 0.001$. Female employees (M= 2.18, SD= .82) reported using emotion-focused coping more often than the male employees (M= 1.69, SD= .50). The results of the independent-group t-tests also indicated a significant difference between male and female employees in the use of avoidance coping t (-2.69) = .00, $p < 0.001$. Female employees (M= 2.33, SD= .66) indicated using avoidance coping more often than the male employees (M= 2.06, SD= .66). Therefore, while the reported use of problem-focused does not differ between the two genders, women do report using emotion-focused and avoidance coping more often than their male counterparts. Hypothesis 18 was partially supported.

Personality and Differential Exposure to Stressors

The following section examines the relationships between the personality dispositions of Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, and Locus of Control, and

perceptions of exposure to task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict. The relevant correlations are displayed in Table 3.

Hypotheses 19 and 20 predicted that perceptions of exposure to both types of conflict would be positively correlated with Neuroticism. Results showed significant positive correlations between task-based interpersonal conflict and Neuroticism($r=.18$, $p<0.05$), and relationship-based interpersonal conflict and Neuroticism ($r=.32$, $p<0.01$). Hypothesis 19 and 20 were supported.

Hypotheses 21 and 22 predicted that perceptions of exposure to both types of conflict would be negatively correlated with Conscientiousness. Results showed significant negative correlations between task-based interpersonal conflict and Conscientiousness ($r=-.18$, $p<0.05$), and relationship-based interpersonal and Conscientiousness ($r=-.32$, $p<0.01$). Hypothesis 21 and 22 were supported.

Hypotheses 23 and 24 predicted that perceptions of exposure to both types of conflict would be negatively correlated with an Internal Locus of Control. The correlation between task-based interpersonal conflict and Locus of Control was insignificant. Hence, hypothesis 23 was not supported. The correlation between relationship-based interpersonal conflict and an internal locus of control was significant and negative ($r=-.17$, $p<0.05$). Hypothesis 24 was supported. However, considering the low reliability alpha of the Locus of Control measure (see Chapter 2), these results need to be interpreted with caution.

Personality and Differential Coping Choice

The final section examines the role of personality in the tendency to use the coping styles of problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidance. The relevant correlations can be found in table 3.

Hypotheses 25 and 26 predicted that, when faced with both types of conflict, Neuroticism would be positively correlated with the use of emotion-focused and avoidance coping styles, and negatively correlated with the use of problem-focused coping. When faced with task-based interpersonal conflict, Neuroticism was significantly positively correlated with emotion-focused coping ($r=.39$, $p<0.01$) and significantly negatively correlated with problem-focused coping ($r=-.18$, $p<0.01$). When faced with relationship-based interpersonal conflict Neuroticism was significantly positively correlated with emotion-focused coping ($r=.45$, $p<0.01$) and significantly negatively correlated with problem-focused

coping (r=-.20, p <0.01). Avoidance coping across both types of interpersonal conflict did not show significant correlations with Neuroticism. Hypotheses 25 and 26 were partially supported.

Hypotheses 27 and 28 predicted that, when faced with both types of conflict, Conscientiousness would be positively correlated with the use of problem-focused coping and negatively correlated with the use of the emotion-focused and avoidance coping styles. When faced with task-based interpersonal conflict, Conscientiousness was significantly positively correlated with problem-focused coping (r=.31, p <0.01) and significantly negatively correlated with emotion-focused coping (r=-.15, p <0.05). When faced with relationship-based interpersonal conflict Conscientiousness was significantly positively correlated with problem-focused coping (r=.29, p <0.01) and significantly negatively correlated with emotion-focused coping (r=-.26, p <0.01). Avoidance coping across both types of interpersonal conflict did not show significant correlations with Conscientiousness. Hypotheses 27 and 28 were partially supported

Hypotheses 29 and 30 predicted that when, faced with both types of conflict, an internal Locus of Control would be positively correlated with the use of problem-focused coping and negatively correlated with the use of emotion-focused and avoidance coping styles. An internal Locus of Control did not show any significant correlations with problem-focused, emotion-focused, or avoidance coping. Nevertheless, considering the low reliability alpha of the Locus of Control measure (see Chapter 2), these results need to be interpreted with caution.

Chapter Four: Discussion

The impact of occupational stress on employee health, safety, and well-being has received attention from researchers across a variety of disciplines, including psychology and management (Lee, 2007). Although the most frequently considered work-related stressors have been workload and role stressors, researchers are beginning to distinguish the significance of stressors resulting from the social environment at work. The aim of this study was to broaden this growing body of knowledge by examining, among a Canadian sample of IT workers, the relationships between interpersonal conflict at work and several outcomes of organizational importance and employee well-being. The present study investigated the relationships between interpersonal conflict at work and job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, turnover intentions, social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression, explored the role of coping styles as moderator variables in the stressor-strain transaction, and examined how gender and personality affect these processes.

This research assumed that a person's social environment depends not only on the external conditions around them, but also their own approach to people and problems (Friedman, Currall, & Tsai, 2000). Consequently, the theoretical framework guiding this study builds on the P-E fit model of stress and human behaviour and elements of the transactional model (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The present study defined stress holistically, as a process involving stressors, coping behaviours, and manifestations of strain. In addition, it considered the affects of gender and personality on these processes.

This chapter is divided into specific sections. Firstly, the main findings regarding the direct effects will be considered, which includes a discussion of the relationships between interpersonal conflict and job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, turnover intentions, social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression. Next, the moderator variables of problem-focused, emotion-focused and avoidance coping are reviewed in regards to their relationships with the outcomes variables. This is followed by a discussion of the relationships between gender and personality on the aforementioned processes. The final section of this chapter discusses the strengths and limitations of the present study, areas for possible future research, and finally practical implications and a conclusion is drawn from the findings presented.

Direct Relationships

One of the primary aims of this research was to explore the associations between task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict at work and several variables pertaining to employee well-being and important organizational outcomes. The present study was particularly interested in exploring the criterion variables of job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, turnover intentions, social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression. The results of the statistical analysis used to assess these relationships are discussed below.

Results are interpreted in conjunction with previous relevant academic research, as well as the Conservation of Resources theory (COR). The COR theory is a comprehensive model of stress based on the central tenet that people strive to obtain, build, and protect the resources they value, including object, condition, personal, and energy resources (Harris et al., 2009). Psychological stress occurs when these resources are lost, threatened with loss, or there is inequitable return on investment. Individuals continually strive to conserve valued resources, so as to better attain desired goals. When resources are threatened or lost, individuals may experience negative consequences. Social stressors in the workplace, such as interpersonal conflicts, may threaten and/or cause a depletion of valued resources, resulting in strain.

The following section discusses the direct relationships between task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict and job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, turnover intentions, social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression. The present study has differentiated between task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict and observed differences in the strength of their relationships with the criterion variables will be explored in more detail in the following section.

Interpersonal Conflict and Job Satisfaction

It was predicted that both types of interpersonal conflict would be negatively associated with job satisfaction. These hypotheses were based on research conducted by Frone (2000), who found that employees who reported interpersonal conflict at work also indicated lower levels of overall satisfaction with their jobs.

The present study demonstrated that both types of interpersonal conflict lowered employees' perceptions of job satisfaction.

As posited by Harvey et al., (2007) social stressors, such as interpersonal conflict, can diminish individuals' perceptions of competence and self-worth. Negative self-perceptions can encourage low levels of job satisfaction, as was demonstrated in the present study which found negative correlations between both task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict and job satisfaction. When work place factors cause the degradation of employees' self-perceptions, lower levels of job satisfaction result (Pierce et al, 1989, a cited in Harvey et al., 2007).

According to COR theory, employees invest a significant amount of emotional labour, through time and feelings, developing and maintaining interpersonal relationships in their workplaces (Harris et al., 2009). Consequently, favourable interactions award employees a positive return on their investments, while negative interactions in the form of interpersonal conflict deplete these resources. While employees strive to develop positive interpersonal relationships at work through personal investments, the presence of conflict may affect the amount of reinforcement and return on emotional investment, depleting individuals' capacity to cope and reducing levels of job satisfaction. According to Harvey et al., (2007), in such cases individuals may engage in a self-fulfilling cycle in which social stressors diminish self-perceptions. This leads to pessimistic expectations for success at work, in turn, promoting a lack of effort and poor performance.

Interpersonal Conflict and Affective Organizational Commitment

Frone (2000) found that employees who reported more interpersonal conflict at work also expressed lower levels of organizational commitment. Affective organizational commitment refers to an employees' emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in their organization (O'Driscoll & Brough, 2006). It was hypothesised that the presence of both task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict would be negatively associated with affective organizational commitment. The results have indicated that both types of conflict have a negative relationship with affective organizational commitment.

According to COR theory, individuals experience strain when invested resources do not result in anticipated returns (Harris et al, 2009). It is possible that as employees invest in their organization through personal resources, such as time and effort, they expect their organizations to return on those investments through the provision of comfortable working environments. The presence of task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict creates hostile and uncomfortable working environments, consequently employees' perceptions of attachment, identification, and involvement in their organization is eroded.

Affective organizational commitment has been linked to several behavioural outcomes, particularly turnover and organizational citizenship behaviour (Meyer, 1997, as cited in Paton, Jackson, and Johnson, 2007). For instance, committed employees are less likely to leave their organization and to be absent, and less resistant to organizational change initiatives (Iverson & Buttigieg, 1999). Organizations need to consider the factors which affect employees' levels of affective organizational commitment and ensure that these issues are addressed in their human resource (HR) strategies.

Interpersonal Conflict and Turnover Intentions

It was hypothesised that both task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict would be positively associated with turnover intentions, which is a deliberate desire to leave an organization and the immediate precursor for turnover behaviours. Lee (2007) found significant positive correlations between both task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict and intentions to quit. The results in the present study support these findings, both types of conflict were significantly negatively associated with turnover intentions.

As suggested by COR theory, social stressors reduce employees' overall coping abilities and drain valued resources (Harris et al, 2009). It is possible that employees working in the presence of task-based and-or relationship-based interpersonal conflict may feel overwhelmed at work, due to their depleted resources. Feelings of being overwhelmed may increase employees' desire to leave their organization. It is also possible that the presence of interpersonal conflict may cause employees to think about alternative, less stressful job opportunities. For organizations where employee retention is a strategic goal, the

consideration of social stressors, such as task-based and relationship-based interpersonal, conflict is imperative.

Interpersonal Conflict and Psychological Strain

It was hypothesised that both task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict would be positively associated with psychological strain. The hypotheses were supported. Both types of interpersonal conflict were positively associated with social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression. Previous research had identified similar findings (Frone, 2000; Lee, 2009). For example, in a diary study employing the use of content analysis, Bolger et al., (1989) found that interpersonal conflict accounted for 80% of the variance in daily mood, particularly levels of anxiety, hostility, and depression. In a more recent study, Lee (2009) found that both task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict had significant correlations with depression, somatic complaints, and negative emotional states.

The results of the present study indicate that levels of interpersonal conflict have significant consequences on individuals' daily mood and affect. It is possible that the presence of social stressors in one's work environment drains people's ability to cope and influences their affectivity. It is important to note, that the strength of the correlations for both types of interpersonal conflict did not differ significantly in relation to the criterion variables of social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression. Hence, the frequency of experiencing social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression does not differ considerably across both stressful situations.

The results of the present study support the notion that conflict can be deleterious to important organizational outcomes and employee well-being. Although previous occupational stress research has also found support for the detrimental effects of conflict, research has rarely distinguished between conflict types (Lee, 2009). This study showed that the presence of both task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict was negatively associated with employee perceptions of job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment, and positively associated with turnover intentions, social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression.

Additionally, the results of the regression analyses indicated that in the case of all six criteria, one of the conflict types emerged as having incremental validity above the other. Specifically, relationship-based interpersonal conflict was the only significant predictor of all of the criterion variables examined. A contribution of this research was to distinguish between task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict. Although both types indicated significant relationships with all of the criterion variables examined, it seems that task-based interpersonal conflict relates to these through its shared variance with relationship-based interpersonal conflict.

It is generally posited in conflict literature that nominal levels of task-based conflict may be beneficial to work groups, whereas relationship-based conflict is detrimental (Yang & Mossholder, 2004). Recent studies have examined the benefits of organizational conflict and some are calling for the stimulation of task-based conflict as a way to improve organizational performance and growth (Eisenhardt & Schoonhoven, 1990). However, this goal may be difficult to achieve as the two conflict types often appear entangled (Yang & Mossholder, 2004). For instance, across eleven studies Simons and Peterson (2000, as cited in Yang & Mossholder, 2004) found the average association between task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict to be .47. The present study demonstrated a similar finding. The correlation between task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict was significant and moderate at .54. While there may be some benefits of task-based interpersonal conflict (Eisenhardt & Schoonhoven, 1990), the present study has shown significant negative relationships with job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment, and significant positive relationships with turnover intentions, social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression. Furthermore, the correlation between the two types of conflict indicates that it may be difficult to promote task-based interpersonal conflict while negating the role of relationship-based interpersonal conflict.

One of the limitations of this study is that it did not examine the role of performance in relation to the two types of interpersonal conflict. If organizational performance is truly increased through the stimulation of task-based interpersonal conflict (Eisenhardt & Schoonhoven, 1990), it is important to consider whether it's worth the possibility that perceptions of job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment may decline and turnover intentions, social

dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression increase. Further research is needed to explore the mechanisms through which the two conflict types interrelate and how conflict can be managed so that the supposed benefits of task-based interpersonal conflict are promoted while the detrimental aspects of relationship-based interpersonal conflict are avoided. However, the present study has demonstrated that both types of interpersonal conflict have detrimental relationships with outcomes of employee well-being and organizational importance.

Relationships with Coping Styles

Coping styles denote consistent and stable preferences for using particular strategies to deal with stressful situations (Moos et al., 2003). As acknowledged earlier, this research assumed that relatively stable, person-based factors underlie habitual coping efforts (Carver et al., 1989). Accordingly, people do not approach each coping context anew, but rather bring a preferred set of coping strategies that remain relatively stable across time and situation. One of the objectives of this study was to explore the effects of coping style on the links between task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict and job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, turnover intentions, social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression. The present theoretical framework focused on three distinct coping styles: problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidance. I assumed that individuals have preferred coping styles that they utilize relatively consistently when dealing with task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict.

Interpersonal Conflict and Problem-Focused Coping

It was hypothesised that the use of problem-focused coping to deal with both types of interpersonal conflict would be positively associated with job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment, and negatively associated with turnover intentions, social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression. Problem-focused coping is defined as a person's attempt to deal with the demands of a situation, either directly or indirectly, and is aimed towards problem solving or doing something to alter the source of the problem (O'Driscoll & Brough, 2006). The use of problem-focused coping to deal with social stressors is directly

aimed toward altering or resolving the stressful situation (O'Driscoll & Brough, 2006).

While the reported use of the problem-focused coping style in relation to both task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict moderated the relationships with job satisfaction and several psychological strain indicators, it had no influence on affective organizational commitment and turnover intentions. It is posited that an active problem-focused coping strategy will predict greater coping effectiveness because such coping contributes to a greater sense of control over the stressor (Clark et al., 1995). However, the use of problem-focused coping to deal with both types of interpersonal conflict did not show significant relationships with affective organizational commitment and turnover intentions. It is possible that while a problem-focused coping strategy may influence the source of stress and the amount of control individuals have over it, it may not affect how employees feel about their respective organization or how likely they are to leave it. The present study has demonstrated that the presence of both types of interpersonal conflict decrease affective organizational commitment and increase turnover intentions. However the use of problem-focused coping to deal with these stressors does not moderate the relationships between both stressors and affective organizational commitment and turnover intentions in a predictable way.

Interpersonal Conflict and Emotion-focused Coping

Emotion-focused coping denotes the realignment of one's thinking about the significance of stressors, as opposed to the application of any direct action to minimise or alleviate them (O'Driscoll & Brough, 2006). It has been suggested that while problem-focused coping strategies are likely to lead to greater well-being, emotion-focused coping tends to produce negative emotional outcomes (Norris & Hart, 2006). Dijkstra et al., (2009) found that the use of passive responses, such as emotion-focused coping, to deal with interpersonal conflict amplified employee strain.

It was hypothesised that the use of emotion-focused coping to deal with both types of interpersonal conflict would be negatively associated with job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment, and positively associated with turnover intentions, social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression. Based on the research conducted by Dijkstra et al., (2009), it was assumed that

emotion-focused coping would be a relatively ineffective strategy, in accordance with the notion that it does not directly address the source of the problem. It is possible that by not dealing with the situation, the actions of others may progressively escalate to a point where the realignment of one's own thinking is no longer feasible. There is a threshold for how much pressure an individual can take through the realignment and suppression of their own emotional reactions and feelings.

The reported use of emotion-focused coping to deal with task-based interpersonal conflict was significantly negatively associated with job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment, and positively associated with turnover intentions, social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression. The reported use of emotion-focused coping to deal with relationship-based interpersonal conflict demonstrated the same results, excluding affective organizational commitment which did not show a significant correlation.

The present study demonstrated that use of emotion-focused coping in relation to both types of interpersonal conflict moderates the relationships between the stressors and the criterion variables examined, in a relatively predictable way. As posited by Dijkstra et al., (2009) passive responses to interpersonal conflict intensify employee strain. The use of emotion-focused coping, particularly in the context of interpersonal stressors, may be especially detrimental to employee well-being and outcomes of organizational importance. Because of the social nature of interpersonal conflict, emotion-focused coping has no direct effects on the actions and behaviours of the significant others involved in the situation. It is possible that inaction may lead conflict to progressively escalate and even generate new conflict. As individuals place greater pressure on themselves to cognitively restructure stressful situations, strain is likely to escalate. Furthermore, individuals' perception of satisfaction with their job is likely to diminish along with the amount of commitment they feel for their organization. In addition, they are likely to have an increased desire to leave their organization to pursue other less stressful work environments.

Interpersonal Conflict and Avoidance Coping

Avoidance coping is a maladaptive strategy, reflecting a tendency to escape stress through physical or psychological withdrawal (Endler & Parker, 1990) and

has been empirically shown to be less useful in dealing with stressful transactions (Carver et al., 1989). Occupational stress research has demonstrated that the use of avoidance coping increases the effects of stressors on employee strain (Dijkstra et al., 2009; Matud, 2004). For example, Dijktra et al., (2009) found that the use of avoidance coping to deal with interpersonal conflict at work intensified employee strain and exhaustion. It is possible that while the extent to which individuals are able to mentally and behaviourally disengage varies, the effects of such strategies have no effect on the causes of the problem. Inaction and the avoidance of problems opposes resolution and may contribute to the progressive escalation of stressful situations. It was hypothesised that the use of avoidance coping to deal with both types of interpersonal conflict would be negatively associated with job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment, and positively associated with turnover intentions, social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression.

The reported use of avoidance coping to deal with task-based interpersonal conflict was significantly positively associated with social dysfunction and loss of confidence. The reported use of avoidance coping to deal with relationship-based interpersonal demonstrated a significantly positive association with loss of confidence. Previous research by Dijkstra et al., (2009) and the present study indicate that the relationships between interpersonal conflict and several psychological strain indicators is strengthened by avoidance coping. The results did not support all of the hypothesised relationships; both types of interpersonal conflict had no significant relationships with job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, and turnover intentions. The present study has demonstrated that the presence of both types of interpersonal conflict decrease job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment, and increase turnover intentions. However the reported use of avoidance coping to deal with task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict does not moderate their relationships with job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, and turnover intentions in a predictable way.

For easier comprehension Table 11 provides a visual representation of the findings. As mentioned earlier, the results of the statistical analysis indicated that some of the hypothesised relationships were not supported. Table 11 presents only the associations which were statistically significant between the coping styles of

problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidance in relation to task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict and job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, turnover intentions, social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression.

Table 11. Summary: The Relations between Coping Styles, Conflict Types, and Outcome Variables

	Task-based Conflict	Relationship-based Conflict
Problem-focused Coping	+Job Satisfaction -Social Dysfunction -Anxiety and Depression	+Job Satisfaction -Social Dysfunction
Emotion-focused Coping	-Job Satisfaction -Affective Commitment +Turnover Intentions +Social Dysfunction +Loss of Confidence +Anxiety and Depression	-Job Satisfaction +Turnover Intentions +Social Dysfunction +Loss of Confidence +Anxiety and Depression
Avoidance	-Loss of Confidence -Social Dysfunction	-Loss of Confidence

+ indicates positive relationship
-indicates negative relationship

The results of the multiple regression analysis indicated that only emotion-focused coping emerged as a significant predictor of several of the outcome variables. In relation to task-based interpersonal conflict, the use of emotion-focused coping significantly contributed to increasing turnover intentions and anxiety and depression. The use of emotion-focused coping to deal with relationship-based conflict significantly predicted loss of confidence. Interestingly, most of the hypotheses relating to the reported use of emotion-focused coping to deal with both types of conflict were supported. This may indicate that emotion-focused coping is especially detrimental as a coping strategy in workplaces where there are high levels of task-based and/or relationship-based interpersonal conflict. Emotion-focused coping is a strategy of cognitive restructuring, where individuals strive to change their own emotional reactions to a stressor, as opposed to taking direct action (O'Driscoll & Brough, 2006). Since interpersonal conflict is social in nature, the use of emotion-focused coping has no effect on the significant others involved in the situation. In fact, emotion-focused

coping may negate the role others play in interpersonal conflict, leaving the situation to escalate further.

Relationships between Coping Styles

Coping research often distinguishes between the particular cognitive or behavioural strategies individuals employ in response to specific stressful situations, and the more enduring coping styles that are consistent and stable over time (Jang et al., 2007). This study was based on the dispositional approach and assumed that relatively, person-based factors underlie habitual coping effects (Carver et al., 1989).

Significant relationships were found for each of the three coping strategies, problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidance, in relation to task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict, demonstrating that the bivariate relations between the variables were significant. The correlation coefficients between the coping styles were high, especially for the emotion-focused coping style.

While some researchers have argued that coping should be viewed as a dynamic process that shifts in nature from stage to stage of the stressful transaction (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). This study provides support for the alternative model, which emphasizes that people have preferred methods of coping when faced with a stressor. Given the strong correlations between the coping strategies, the present study indicates that the participants within this sample displayed a habitual tendency to use the same strategy across the stressors. The present study provides further support for the dispositional perspective, reinforcement the argument that individuals have habitual coping tendencies as opposed to transitory situation-based responses to stressful encounters.

Gender Differences in the Experience of Relationship-based Interpersonal Conflict

Some researchers have argued that individuals are affected and respond differently to stress as a function of roles determined partly on the bases of their gender (Jick & Mitz, 1985). Accordingly, gender may influence the stress process as a direct predictor of stress, moderator affecting how stress is perceived, what coping strategy is utilized, and how stress is manifested. The following section discusses the findings relating to the role of gender in the experience of

relationship-based interpersonal conflict at work. The present study was particularly interested in the role of gender in the exposure to stressors, manifestations of strain, and the choice of coping strategy.

Before discussing some of the implications of the findings it is important to note the unique methodological issues which were observed before designing and conducting this study. Researchers warn that studies exploring gender differences in stress may be confounded if occupation is not controlled (Jick & Mitz, 1985). Reported differences may be due to the nature of the job as opposed to genuine differences in how males and females experience the stress transaction. The present study was designed with the above considerations in mind. To negate the possibility that gender differences could be a reflection of the nature of the job, as opposed to actual differences, I targeted the IT field as I believed that the roles performed by male and female employees were identical. Furthermore, I secured a sample of participants in which the distribution of male to female employees was relatively even.

Gender Differences in Exposure to Relationship-based Interpersonal Conflict

Narayanan et al (1999a) posited that gender contributes significantly to the amount of job stress employees experience in their workplace and that men and women experience different stressors. Studies have demonstrated that men and women experience the same work environment differently in regards to stressors (Vaag et al., 2002). The present study hypothesised that female employees would report more relationship-based interpersonal conflict than their male counterparts. The rationale was based on a study conducted by Narayanan and colleagues (1999a) who found that interpersonal conflict played a greater role in causing job stress for women then for men. Two other qualitative studies confirmed that interpersonal stressors were more salient for female employees (Thompson et al., 2006). Social psychology research has found that women have a greater tendency to base self-esteem on social relationships. Hence, it seems reasonable to expect that since women have a greater tendency to base self-worth on interpersonal relationships, they would find interpersonal conflict more stressful than men.

The results of the present study do not support this prediction. There were no significant differences between male and female employees in perceptions of relationship-based interpersonal conflict at work. In their 2005 literature review,

Gyllensten and Palmer concluded that the role of gender in workplace stress and stressors was inconsistent. While interpersonal conflict has been cited as a stressor affecting a greater proportion of female employees (Narayanan et al 1999a; Thompson, 2006), the results of the present study do not support these findings.

Martocchio and O'Leary (1989, as cited in Gyllensten & Palmer) assert that there are few consistent gender differences in work stress and that the research used in the analysis of gender-based differences has limitations. For instance, there is often limited information on the reliability and validity of the stress measures used. As argued by Gyllensten and Palmer (2005), there has been a lack of studies investigating women and workplace stress, and many studies have included samples of either exclusively male or female participants. One of the strengths of the present study is that it included a sample with a relatively even distribution of male and female employees, working in a single occupational group. Furthermore, the results of the factor analysis conducted before gender differences were explored, confirm reliability of the measures used. The results of the present study demonstrated that differential gender vulnerability may not be as common as reported by previous studies (Narayanan et al 1999a; Thompson, 2006), especially when the males and female surveyed are evenly represented and work in the same occupation. Further research is needed to clarify these inconsistencies.

Gender Differences in Strain

Some researchers have suggested that women experience higher levels of job strains compared to men (Greenglass, 1991; Jick and Mitz, 1985). For example, while exploring gender differences in perceptions of strain and the utilization of social support among a university group sample, Day and Livingston (2003) found that perceptions of strain varied depending on gender and that women reported greater levels of strain than men. The present study hypothesised that the links between relationship-based interpersonal conflict and job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, turnover intentions, social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression would be greater for female employees than their male counterparts.

While relationship-based interpersonal conflict was significantly related to all of the criterion variables across both genders, only the correlation between

relationship-based interpersonal conflict and job satisfaction was statistically different between the genders. When faced with relationship-based interpersonal conflict female employees reported experiencing lower levels of job satisfaction, than their male counterparts.

The findings demonstrated in the resent study challenge the notion that women experience greater strains than males. According to the differential vulnerability hypothesis, female employees tend to experience more job strains then do men (Roxburgh, 1996). It has been argued that women may be more vulnerable to stressful work situations. The results of the present study challenge this notion as only one of the criterion variables was significantly different for the female employees in this sample. It is important to note that many of the studies maintaining the gender vulnerability hypothesis are over a decade old (Greenglass, 1991; Jick and Mitz, 1985; Roxburgh, 1996). Differential vulnerability may be dependent on the level of control employees perceive in their workplace. It is no longer uncommon for women to be employed in highly skilled, professional roles. Furthermore, as women's labour force participation increases, women are no longer the minority in many occupations and organizations. Hence, the concept of differential vulnerability may be out of date, particularly in industries and occupations where women's participation and job roles are equivalent to those of men.

Gender Differences in Coping

The present study assumed that gender may play a moderating function in the choice of coping strategy when dealing with interpersonal conflict in the workplace. It was hypothesised that when faced with relationship-based interpersonal conflict female employees would be less likely to use the problem-focused coping style and more likely to use the emotion-focused and avoidance coping styles, than their male counterparts. These predictions were grounded in previous research conducted by Matud (2004) who found that women reported significantly higher levels of emotional and avoidance coping and lower rational coping then men.

The results of the present study indicated that when faced with relationship-based interpersonal conflict, male and female employees did not differ significantly in their reported use of the problem-focused coping style. While

some studies have reported gender differences in the use of direct coping (Matud, 2004), others have not found reliable variation (Gonzalez-Moralez et al., 2006). It has been suggested that the inconsistent evidence could be the result of differences is status, power and type of job held by the male and female participants surveyed (Torkelson & Muhonen, 2004, as cited in Gonzalez-Moralez et al., 2006). Empirical research has demonstrated that if these variables are controlled, few differences are found (Gonzalez-Moralez et al., 2006). The results found in the present study support those obtained by others who have not found gender differences in the use of problem-focused coping when the targeted sample consists of male and female employees who are employed in the same occupation (Gonzalez-Moralez et al 2006).

However, the present study demonstrated that female employees are more likely to report the use the emotion-focused and avoidance coping styles, then their male counterparts. Previous research has been more consistent regarding gender differences in the utilization of these coping strategies, demonstrating that females report using more emotion-focused and avoidance coping than males (Matud, 2006). As argued by Matud (2006) it is likely that females are socialized to use more passive and emotion-focused strategies. However, given that such behaviours are more commonly seen to fit a female role, it may also be plausible that women are more willing to acknowledge the use of such coping strategies. Men's willingness to report the use of emotion-focused and avoidance coping may be effected by gender role stereotypes and the socialization that such strategies are incompatible with their gender role. Consequently, when using self-report measures to determine coping tendencies it is important to be cautious of social-desirability biases. In actuality, male and females may exhibit differences in their willingness to report emotion-focused and avoidance coping, as opposed to genuine differences in their utilization.

Relationships with Personality

The role of personality in the present study was grounded in Bolger and Zuckerman's (1995) theoretical framework, which identified several pathways through which individual differences may affect stress. Bolger and Zuckerman (1995) suggested that personality may affect the frequency of experiencing a stressor (differential exposure) and the choice of coping strategy utilized to deal with the stressor (differential coping choice). The following section discusses the

role of Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, and Locus of Control as direct predictors in the exposure to task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict, as well as moderators affecting how people cope with these stressors.

Before discussing the results pertaining to the personality findings it is important to highlight some of the issues in the use of the personality measures. The descriptive statistics relating to the personality dispositions indicated that most participants reported low-to-moderate levels of Neuroticism and moderate-to-high levels of Conscientiousness. Given the self-report nature of the present study, responses may have been influenced by social desirability. The skew towards low levels of Neuroticism and high levels of Conscientiousness may reflect an overall tendency by the participants to be viewed more positively. Furthermore, it is important to note that one of the measures is statistically unreliable. Locus of Control was measured using Goldberg's (1991) Personal Attributes Scale, who reported a Cronbach's alpha value of .71. However, the Cronbach's alpha in the present study was only .55. Interpretation of the results relating to the use of the Locus of Control measure need to be considered cautiously.

Neuroticism with Interpersonal Conflict

As stated earlier, Neuroticism represents individual differences in the tendency to experience distress and in cognitive and behavioural styles that follow from the tendency (McCrae, 1992). Individuals high in Neuroticism are prone to experiencing chronic negative affect. The persistent nervous tension, depression, frustration, guilt, and self-consciousness that such individuals feel is often associated with irrational thinking, low self esteem, poor control of impulses and cravings, somatic complaints and ineffective coping (McCrae & Costa, 1987).

It was hypothesised that perceived exposure to both task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict would be positively associated with Neuroticism. Hypotheses were based on previous research by Bolger and Shilling (1991), who found that the high-Neuroticism respondents demonstrated elevated levels of exposure and reactivity to daily stressors. According to the moderated effect model, as posited by Grant and Langan-Fox (2007), the relationship between stress and strain is more or less potent for people with certain traits.

Neuroticism has been found to intensify the appraisal of a situation as stressful and direct the selection of less adaptive coping strategies in response to stress.

The results of this study supported the hypotheses and previous research. There are several possible explanations for why Neuroticism correlated positively with perceptions of both task based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict. According to Bolger and Zuckerman (1995) it is possible that because high Neuroticism individuals experience elevated levels of daily negative affect, predominantly anger and depression, these may lead to interpersonal problems. It is also possible that their strategies of coping with conflict cause these conflicts to continue or to spawn new conflict. This is especially plausible given that high Neuroticism individuals tend to exhibit poor control of impulses. Poor control of impulses may affect individuals' mood and temperament causing them to act irrationally and make impulsive poorly thought out decisions. Furthermore, it is probable that their threshold may be lower due to their tendency to exhibit irrational thoughts and behaviours and their inclination for self-consciousness and low self-esteem.

It was also predicted that when faced with both types of conflict, Neuroticism would be positively associated with the reported use of the emotion-focused and avoidance coping styles, and negatively associated with the reported use of problem-focused coping. These hypotheses were based on research conducted by Lee-Baggley et al., (2005) who found that individuals who scored higher on Neuroticism reported higher scores on avoidance and passive forms of coping. Results indicated that Neuroticism was significantly positively associated with emotion-focused coping and negatively associated with problem-focused coping, as expected. Individuals higher on Neuroticism have a propensity for experiencing negative emotions and are therefore more likely to channel their coping efforts toward managing their disruptive emotions (Lee-Baggley et al., 2005). It is also possible that their tendency to have lower self-esteem affects their confidence in taking direct actions to manage and alleviate stressful interpersonal problems. However, avoidance did not demonstrate a significant relationship with Neuroticism. This is interesting as previous research has associated Neuroticism with the increased use of escape and avoidance (Carver et al., 1989; Watson & Hubbard, 1996). A possible explanation may be that the use of avoidance is dependent on stressor type; it may be difficult to escape interpersonal stressors

when one is expected to turn up to work. Hence, even if a person is highly neurotic, the use of avoidance to deal with interpersonal conflict may not be possible in a work situation.

Conscientiousness with Interpersonal Conflict

Conscientiousness was hypothesised to be negatively associated with both task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict. These hypotheses were exploratory as no known study has examined the role of Conscientiousness in the exposure to stressors. However, research has found that individuals who score high on Conscientiousness are habitually careful, reliable, well-organized, and purposeful (O'Brien & DeLongis, 1996). Conscientiousness is governed by conscience and highly correlated with diligence and thoroughness. The present study found evidence supporting the hypotheses. Conscientiousness was negatively associated with perceived exposure to both task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict. A possible explanation may be that individuals high in the Conscientiousness disposition are more orientated toward diligence and the accomplishment of work tasks. They may be more likely to get on with their work, as opposed to focusing on side-line issues, such as conflict, which may disrupt completion of work tasks.

Furthermore, when faced with both task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict it was predicted that Conscientiousness would be positively associated with problem-focused coping and negatively related with both emotion-focused and avoidance coping. The rationale for these hypotheses was that individuals who score highly on Conscientiousness are more likely to exhibit purposeful, disciplined, and rational behaviour, so are more likely to engage in direct problem solving and abstain from emotional and avoidant behaviours. Results indicated that Conscientiousness was indeed positively related to the use of problem-focused coping and negatively related to emotion-focused coping. However, there was no relationship between Conscientiousness and the use of avoidance coping, as was the case with Neuroticism. Again, this may be an indication that the social nature of interpersonal conflict makes it difficult for people to use avoidance coping, especially in a work situation where attendance is relatively mandatory.

Locus of Control with Interpersonal Conflict

It was hypothesised that an internal Locus of Control would be negatively associated with the perceived exposure to both task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict. The rationale for these hypotheses was based on a study by Spector and O'Connell (1994), who examined the relationship between Locus of Control and interpersonal conflict at work. They found that individuals demonstrating an internal locus of control experienced lower levels of job stressors and subsequently reported less strain. Results showed that these hypotheses were supported. Internal Locus of Control was negatively correlated with perceived exposure to both types of interpersonal conflict.

Locus of control is a personality variable concerning people's generalized expectancies that can or cannot control reinforcements in their lives (Spector & O'Connell, 1994). People who hold expectancies that they control reinforcements are considered internals. It is possible that these people are less likely to perceive interpersonal conflict as stressful due to their enhanced beliefs that they are in control. Individuals who believe that rewards are contingent upon their own actions, generally experience less anxiety than externals, individuals who believe rewards to be conditional on factors beyond their personal control (Brousseau & Mallinger, 1981). Internals, who are less likely to be anxious, may be lower in stress reactivity and less likely to perceive situations as stressful.

Furthermore, it was predicted that when faced with both types of conflict, an internal Locus of Control would be positively related to the problem-focused coping style and negatively related to emotion-focused and avoidance coping. Results indicated insignificant correlations between internal Locus of Control and the coping styles of problem-focused, emotions-focused, and avoidance were insignificant. It is important to note that the locus of control measure used in this study had a low Cronbach's alpha, hence the results may be attributable to the unreliability of the measure as opposed to genuine insignificance.

The present study assumed that personality may affect the frequency of experiencing task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict, as well as the choice of coping strategy employed to deal with these stressors. Findings indicated that participants who reported higher levels of Neuroticism were more likely to experience both task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict.

Those who reported higher levels of Conscientiousness and an internal Locus of Control were more likely to report lower levels of task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict. The results of this study provide support that personality, specifically Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, and Locus of Control, relates to incumbent perceptions of task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict.

In addition, the present study was interested in exploring the moderating effects of personality in the choice of coping strategy when dealing with task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict. Results have shown that Neuroticism and Conscientiousness moderate the relationships between both task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict and the use of the problem-focused and emotion-focused coping styles when dealing with these stressors. Locus of Control did not significantly correlate with any of the coping styles, while avoidance coping did not correlate with any of the personality dispositions. The findings relating to the Locus of Control measure need to be interpreted cautiously given that in the present study this scale was unreliable. Further research is needed to clarify the relationships between Locus of Control and coping with social stressors. Interestingly avoidance coping did not show any significant correlations with the personality dispositions. This was unexpected given that previous research had found correlations between both the Neuroticism and Conscientiousness dispositions and the avoidance coping style (Lee-Baggley et al., 2005; Watson et al., 1996). It is possible that the within this particular context avoidance is not possible, regardless of the individual's dispositional preference for the strategy.

Strengths of the Current Research

The present study had a number of strengths, including the complexity of the theoretical model which acknowledged the role of stress as a process involving several components consisting of stressors, coping and strain. All of these elements were explored in relation to interpersonal conflict at work. Furthermore, this framework was complemented by the inclusion of the individual difference characteristics of gender and personality. The inclusion of gender and personality was grounded in previous empirical research (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995; Jack & Mitz, 185), although few studies have examined these thoroughly within this particular context.

The major limitation in many of the studies exploring interpersonal conflict (Frone, 2000; Hahn, 2000), has been that researchers have often disregarded the typology of different conflict types (Lee, 2007). The present study was developed to distinguish between task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict. Furthermore, given that the present study was interested in gender differences it was important to substantiate that any observed differences were genuine, rather than attributable to the nature of the job roles. The present study explored gender differences in the experience of stress within a single occupational group.

Furthermore, despite the growth of occupational stress research, Iwasaki et al., (2004) warn that gender-based analyses of stress have not been carried out extensively. Greenglass (1995, as cited in Iwasaki, 2004) posited that stress research has primarily focused on men. Consequently, the conceptualization of stress has been predominantly based on male normative perspectives. The present study has aimed to reduce this research gap by exploring a sample of male and female employees with a relatively even distribution of the two genders.

Limitations of the Current Research

The present study had a number of limitations. The self-report nature of the study may have been influenced by common method variance. Common method variance occurs when the ratings of two or more constructs are generated by a single source; the artificial covariance may be due to single-source bias (Avolio, Yammirino, & Bass, 1991). The present study found high levels of skew in several of the measures and it is possible that the self-report method could have elevated these. Given that stress is a subjective phenomenon, it was necessary to ascertain personal feelings since stress can be experienced quite differently across individuals. However, several factors reduce the concerns of common method variance (Friedman et al., 1987). According to Spector (1987, as cited in Friedman et al, 2000) using appropriately developed and standardized instruments reduces the risk of common method variance. All of the scales used in the present study have been used previously, some, such as Carver's et al., (1989) COPE measure, extensively. In addition, the conflict measures were differentially related to task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict and to the criterion variables, findings which are unlikely to occur as a consequence of common method effects (Friedman et al., 2000).

The use of self-report measures leaves the assessment vulnerable to social desirability bias. People may prefer to present themselves in a positive light when answering questionnaires, which leads to potential biases in response patterns (Breakwell, Hammond, Fife-Schaw, & Smith, 2006). Social desirability responding may have been evident in the findings relating to the personality dispositions. For instance, participants indicated low-to-moderate levels of neuroticism and moderate-to-high levels of conscientiousness.

This study was particularly interested in two types of interpersonal conflict; task-based and relationship-based. However two distinct scales were used to assess these variables, given that no known single scale measures them both. Task-based interpersonal conflict was measured using Jehn's (1995) Conflict Scale, a five-point frequency response format anchored by 1 for 'none' and 5 for 'a lot', while relationship-based interpersonal conflict was measured using Cox's (1998) Organizational Conflict Scale, a 6-point response format anchored by 1 for 'Strongly Disagree' and 6 for 'Strongly Agree'. Given that one of the scales has a frequency response format and the other a rating response format, it was impossible to make valid comparisons between the amounts of each type of conflict individuals experience in their work place. Ideally the two types of conflict should have been evaluated by a single measure, through the same response format.

The present study utilized a quantitative approach. However, some researchers have called for alternative approaches to examine stress (Cox, 1985). Narayanan and colleagues (1999a) argued that measuring stress may require more than just a general agreement that events are present in the workplace. The use of qualitative methodologies may allow for an in-depth exploration of employees' evaluations of specific stressful experiences encountered at work. It is also important to note, that the present questionnaire administered the coping measure twice in relation to task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict. Because this measure contained thirty-six items and was administered twice it is uncertain how motivated the respondents were to actually really consider the issues presented. Respondents may have rushed to complete the questionnaire, generating responses which may not be particularly reflective of 'real-world' situations. A bias may have occurred due to the difference in employees who

decided to complete the full questionnaire and those who did not. The effects of such a bias are notoriously difficult to determine.

The present study explored coping styles through a retrospective design. However, Lee-Baggley et al., (2005) argue that the retrospective nature may contribute to inaccuracy in memory. To strengthen the validly of stress research it may be more productive to use multiple assessments and a cross-sectional design. Furthermore, it is important to note that the correlational evidence between the different variables examined in the present study does not necessarily reflect causal links between them.

Future Research

The present study was unique in that it differentiated between task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict and examined their differential relationships with several variables of employee well-being and organizational importance. Results suggest that both conflict types have significant relationships with job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, turnover intentions, social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression. However, regression analysis indicated that relationship-based interpersonal conflict was the only significant predictor of all of the criterion variables examined. This suggests that that task-based interpersonal conflict may relate to these variables through its shared variance with relationship-based interpersonal conflict. Furthermore, the results of this present study demonstrated a significant moderate correlation between task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict. Further research is needed to examine this relationship and explore the mechanisms through which these variables become interrelated.

The present research is limited in that aggregate measures of task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict were examined. The present study did not explicitly distinguish between interpersonal relationship with supervisors and coworkers. As posited by Frone (2000) it seems plausible that an individual's relationship with a supervisor is qualitatively different from his or her relationship with a supervisor. Future research needs to consider whether there are differences in organizational and personal outcomes, depending on whom the interpersonal conflict is with. It is also possible that the coping strategies used to deal with

interpersonal conflict may differ in accordance with whom the conflict is with. For instance, there may me differences in the level of problem-focused coping one is willing to take when conflict is between themselves and a superior. Employees may be less willing to engage in direct action to deal with conflict between themselves and a boss or supervisor.

The present findings are limited in regards to the personality disposition of Locus of Control, as the measure used was determined to be statistically unreliable. However, previous research has reported that Locus of Control correlated significantly with perceptions of interpersonal conflict (Spector & O'Connell, 1994) and moderated the relationships between conflict and choice of coping strategies employed to deal with it (Hahn, 2000). Further research is needed to clarify these relationships, using a measure which is statistically sound.

Most importantly, further research is imperative to replicate the current findings. The present study is limited in that it surveyed a single occupation; generalizability would be improved with the inclusion of additional occupational groups. Further research may benefit from using a diary method, so that the information attainted is temporally ordered. This would allow greater insight into the sequence of events, profile of behavioural responses, and feeling and thoughts across time (Breakwell et al., 2006). It is important to note that a longitudinal design would overcome numerous limitations of the present study. Longitudinal research generates information with greater consistency and over a longer period of time, allowing for stronger causal predictions (Breakwell et al., 2006)

Practical Implications and Conclusion

The theoretical framework guiding this study rested on the P-E model of stress and elements of the transactional model. Stress was defined holistically as a process involving stressors, coping behaviours and manifestations of strain. The present research explored the relationships between task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict and the criterion variables of job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, turnover intentions, social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression, examined the role of coping styles as moderator variables in the stressor-strain transaction, and investigated how gender and personality affect these processes.

To provide effective interventions for workplace stress, organizations must strive to detect and understand the organizational sources of strain (O'Driscoll & Brough, 2006). Social stressors in the work environment have significant impact on stress and the well-being of employees. The present study indicated that both task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict lead to decreased perceptions of job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment, and increase turnover intentions, and the psychological strain indicators of social dysfunction, loss of confidence, and anxiety and depression. The implications of these results are that in order to provide comfortable work environments and to manage the stress of their employees, organizations need to be aware of the levels of interpersonal conflict in their workplaces.

Some researchers have argued that nominal levels of task-based interpersonal conflict may be beneficial to work groups and are calling for the stimulation of task-based interpersonal conflict as a way to improve organizational performance and growth (Eisenhardt & Schoonhoven, 1990). The present study challenges this notion and warns that organizations considering the stimulation of task-based conflict need to be aware that it can adversely affect employee well-being and several variables of organisational importance. Furthermore, given the evidence that task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict are correlated, as indicated by previous research (Simons and Peterson, 2000, as cited in Yang & Mossholder, 2004) and the present study, it may be especially difficult to encourage one without promoting the other.

The present research provided evidence that the coping styles of problem-focused, emotion-focused and avoidance moderated several of the relationships between task-based and relationship-based interpersonal conflict and the criterion variables. Furthermore, the findings indicated significant relationships between the coping styles. This suggests that individuals who use a particular coping strategy to deal with one type of interpersonal conflict are highly likely to use the same strategy to cope with the other. Organizations can benefit from initiatives aimed to educate employees on the types of dispositional coping strategies they use. If individuals understand how they cope with stress they are better equipped to orient their efforts toward positive outcomes.

The present study explored how the individual difference characteristics of gender and personality affected the experience of interpersonal conflict at work. It was assumed that individuals are affected and respond differently to relationship-based interpersonal conflict as a function of roles determined partly on the basis of their gender. The results indicated that gender did not affect participant's perceptions of relationship-based interpersonal conflict. Furthermore, findings indicated limited support for the argument that women experience greater strain as a result of workplace stress. However, gender differences in the reported use of emotion-focused and avoidance coping styles were observed. Women reported greater use of these strategies, compared to their male counterparts. Organizational initiatives targeting stress may be enhanced through programs aimed at educating women on the effects of such coping styles and ways to increase well-being though their management.

The personality dispositions of Neuroticism, Contentiousness, and Locus of Control were explored in relation to exposure to interpersonal conflict and as moderator variables affecting choice of coping strategy. Findings support the notion that people with different personality dispositions tend to create different social environments (Freidman et al., 2000). The practical implication is that if individuals are made award of their disposition and its effects on exposure to stressors and choice of coping strategies, they are better able to manage their behaviours and reactions to pressure and strains.

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Appendix A: Cover letter sent to Participants
Request to complete questionnaire

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a Masters student at the University of Waikato (New Zealand), conducting my thesis research on how people experience and cope with several interpersonal interactions at work. I am undertaking this research thesis in the Master of Applied Psychology program, offered at the University of Waikato. My supervisions are Professor Michael O'Driscoll and Dr. Donald Cable. I have received ethical approval for my study from the Waikato Department of Psychology Research and Ethics Committee.

This email is an invitation to you to complete my questionnaire, which looks at two types of interpersonal interactions; task-based and relationship-based. Additionally I will be examining how gender and personality may affect how people experience and deal with these interactions. You will be asked to indicate how you cope with these situations, and how you feel about your organization on several aspects.

This questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your personal responses and your identity will be kept completely confidential at all times. The results of the survey will be anonymous and you will not be identified in any publications of the research findings.

Your participation in this study would be extremely beneficial to my research. I believe that the proposed aims of my research have many practical applications for stress management and employee well-being.

Your participation is voluntary and completely confidential. Please take note that completing the questionnaire represents your consent. During the questionnaire, please read each question carefully and try to answer each question as truthfully as possible. You may withdraw your consent at any stage before submitting your answers

If you are interested in the findings of my research, please let me know by contacting me via the email address listed below, and a summary will be sent to you. If you want to complete the questionnaire, please click on the following link and proceed.

Link to Questionnaire

In case you have any problems or concerns, please feel free to contact me or my supervisors. If you have any queries regarding the ethics of this research please feel free to contact Dr. Robert Isler, the convener of the Ethics Committee at the University of Waikato. All of the contact details are listed below.

Your contribution is immensely appreciated.

Jovana Marovic

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Appendix B

THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS SURVEY, YOUR CONTRIBUTION IS GREATLY APPRECIATED

As part of this survey you will be asked to make observations regarding two types of interactions you may have experienced in your workplace. The first section relates to task-based, while the second section relates to relationship-based interactions. Each will be described in more detail as you progress through the survey.

PART A: TASK-BASED INTERACTIONS

Task-based interactions refer to interpersonal relations with regard to task issues, such as differing viewpoints regarding the objectives of a work task. While completing Part A, please keep in mind that task-based interactions relate solely to disagreements regarding the work tasks being performed.

Using the rating scale below, please indicate the amount of task-based tension you experience in you workplace.

	Never	Very Little	Some	A Moderate Amount	A lot
How often do people you work with disagree about opinions regarding the work being done?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How much conflict about the work you do is there among the people you work with?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How frequently are there conflicts about ideas among people you work with?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To what extent are there differences of opinion among	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Never	Very Little	Some	A Moderate Amount	A lot
those you work with?					

Keeping these events in mind (i.e. situations in which you encounter task-based interactions), please indicate to what extent you engage in the following activities. Use the drop-down function to choose the appropriate response from the options listed. The options are: I usually don't do this at all, I usually do this a little bit, I usually do this a medium about, I usually do this a lot.

I concentrate my efforts on doing something about it.

I discuss my feelings with someone.

I get upset and let my emotions out.

I make a plan of action.

I try to grow as a person as a result of the experience.

I admit to myself that I can't deal with it, and quit trying.

I keep myself from getting distracted by other thoughts or activities.

I get used to the idea that it happened.

I turn to work or other substitute activities to take my mind of things.

I take additional action to try to get rid of the problem.

I try to get emotional support from friends or relatives.

I get upset, and am really aware of it.

I try to come up with a strategy about what to do.

I try to see it in a different light, to make it seem more positive.

I just give up trying to reach my goal.

I focus on dealing with this problem, and if necessary let other things slide a little.

I accept that this has happened and that it can't be changed.

I daydream about things other than this.

I take direct action to get around the problem.

I get sympathy and understanding from someone.

I let my feelings out.

I think about how I might best handle the problem.

I look for something good in what is happening.

I give up the attempt to get what I want.

I try hard to prevent other things from interfering with my efforts at dealing with this.

I accept the reality of the fact that it happened.

I sleep more than usual.

I do what has to be done, one step at a time.

I talk to someone about how I feel.

I feel a lot of emotional distress and I find myself expressing those feelings a lot.

I think hard about what steps to take.

I learn something from the experience.

I reduce the amount of effort I'm putting into solving the problem.

I put aside other activities in order to concentrate on this.

I learn to live with it.

I go to the movies or watch TV, to think about it less.

PART B: RELATIONSHIP-BASED INTERACTIONS

The next section relates to interactions emerging from personality clashes and/or emotionally charged interactions with others, due to issues of a personal nature.

Using the rating scale below, please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements regarding your workplace.

	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
The atmosphere here is often charged with hostility.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Backbiting is a frequent occurrence.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
One party frequently undermines the other.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
There are often feelings of hostility among parties.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Much "plotting" takes place "behind the scenes".	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Keeping these events in mind (i.e. situations in which you encounter relationship-based interactions), please indicate to what extent you engage in the following activities. Use the drop-down function to choose the appropriate response from the options listed. The options are: I usually don't do this at all, I usually do this a little bit, I usually do this a medium amount, and I usually do this a lot.

I concentrate my efforts on doing something about it. [ ]

I discuss my feelings with someone. [ ]

I get upset and let my emotions out. [ ]

I make a plan of action. [ ]

I try to grow as a person as a result of the experience. [ ]

I admit to myself that I can't deal with it, and quit trying. [ ]

I keep myself from getting distracted by other thoughts or activities. [ ]

I get used to the idea that it happened. [ ]

I turn to work or other substitute activities to take my mind of things. [ ]

I take additional action to try to get rid of the problem.

I try to get emotional support from friends or relatives.

I get upset, and am really aware of it.

I try to come up with a strategy about what to do.

I try to see it in a different light, to make it seem more positive.

I just give up trying to reach my goal.

I focus on dealing with this problem, and if necessary let other things slide a little.

I accept that this has happened and that it can't be changed.

I daydream about things other than this.

I take direct action to get around the problem.

I get sympathy and understanding from someone.

I let my feelings out.

I think about how I might best handle the problem.

I look for something good in what is happening.

I give up the attempt to get what I want.

I try hard to prevent other things from interfering with my efforts at dealing with this.

I accept the reality of the fact that it happened.

I sleep more than usual.

I do what has to be done, one step at a time.

I talk to someone about how I feel.

I feel a lot of emotional distress and I find myself expressing those feelings a lot.

I think hard about what steps to take.

I learn something from the experience.

I reduce the amount of effort I'm putting into solving the problem.

I put aside other activities in order to concentrate on this.

I learn to live with it.

I go to the movies or watch TV, to think about it less.

PART C: WORK ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

Now I would like to find out how you feel regarding several aspects of your job, your workplace, and yourself in general.

I would like to ask you how satisfied you are with various aspects of your present job. Please indicate which rating best describes how you feel about each of the following aspects of your job and workplace.

	Very Dissatisfied	Moderately Dissatisfiedd	Slightly Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N/A
Financial rewards (pay, fringe benefits).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Job security.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My workload.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Opportunities for promotion/advancement.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Relations with my co-workers.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The way my boss handles his/her subordinates.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Physical work conditions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Variety in my work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The competence of my supervisor.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Amount of challenge in my job.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Support from others.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Opportunities to use my skills and abilities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The praise I get from doing a good job.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Amount of freedom to decide how to do my work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The way organizational policies are put into practice.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My job as a whole.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Very Dissatisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Slightly Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N/A

The following section relates to the amount of commitment you feel for you organization. Using the rating scale, please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I do not feel like "part of the family" in my organization.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organization.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

The following section relates to how likely you are to leave your organization. Using the rating scale, please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I will probably look for a new job in the near future.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
At the present time, I am actively searching for	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
another job in a different organization.							
I do not intend to quit my job.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It is unlikely that I will actively look for a different organization to work for in the next year.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am not thinking about quitting my job at the present time.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

I would like you to indicate how often you have experienced each of the following events in the past three months. Please choose one of the following responses to each statement.

	Never	Very Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	All the Time
Been able to concentrate on what you are doing?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lost much sleep over worry?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Felt you are playing a useful part in things?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Felt capable of making decisions about things?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Felt constantly under strain?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Felt you couldn't overcome your difficulties?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Been able to enjoy your normal day-to-day activities?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Been able to face up to your problems?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Been feeling unhappy or depressed?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Been losing confidence in yourself?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Never	Very Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	All the Time
Been thinking of yourself as a worthless person?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Been feeling reasonably happy, all things considered?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

PART D: PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The following statements describe people's behaviour. Please use the rating scale below to describe how accurately each statement describes you as you generally are, not as you wish to be in the future. Use the drop-down function to choose the appropriate response from the options listed. The options are: very inaccurate, moderately inaccurate, neither inaccurate nor accurate, moderately accurate, and very accurate.

Often feel blue.	
Am always prepared.	
Rarely get irritated.	
Believe that unfortunate events occur because of bad luck.	
Waste my time.	
Dislike myself.	
Pay attention to details.	
Seldom feel blue.	
Believe that the world is controlled by a few powerful people.	
Find it difficult to get down to work.	
Am often down in the dumps.	
Get chores done right away.	
Feel comfortable with myself.	
Believe that some people are born lucky.	
Do just enough work to get by.	
Have frequent mood swings.	
Carry out my plans.	
Am not easily bothered by things.	
Believe in the power of faith.	
Don't see things through.	
Panic easily.	
Make plans and stick to them.	
Am very pleased with myself.	
Believe that my success depends on ability rather than luck.	
Shirk my duties.	

PART E: DEMOGRAPHICS

The following questions are included to give me some additional information to describe in broad terms the characteristics of the people who participated. Again, this information is completely confidential and you will not be identified.

Please specify your gender.

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

How old are you?

What is your current job (occupational) title? Please be specific.

How long have you been employed in your current organization?

Congratulations you have come to the end of the survey. Please click on the arrows in the box on the left hand side to send me your responses.

Appendix C: Scree plots and factor loadings for all measures

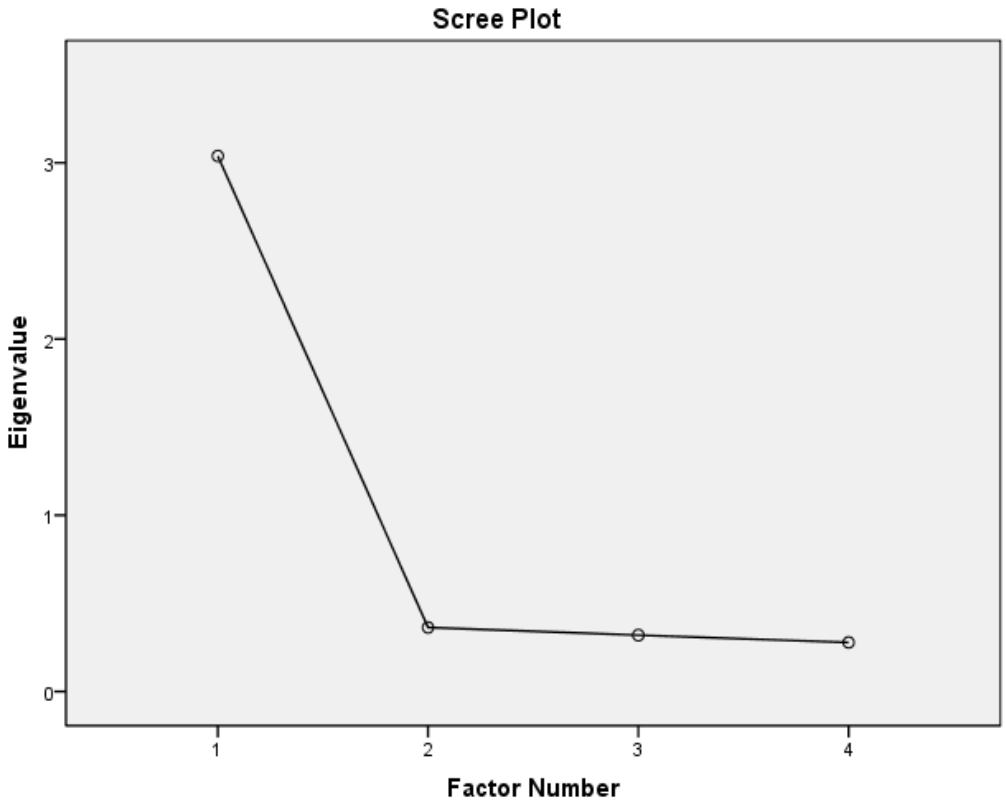

Figure C.1 Scree plot: task-based interpersonal conflict

Table C.1 Factor loadings: task-based interpersonal conflict

Factor Matrix[a]

	Factor
	1
How much conflict about the work you do is there among the people you work with?	.836
How frequently are there conflicts about ideas among people you work with?	.832
How often do people you work with disagree about opinions regarding the work being done?	.823
To what extent are there differences of opinion among those you work with?	.807

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

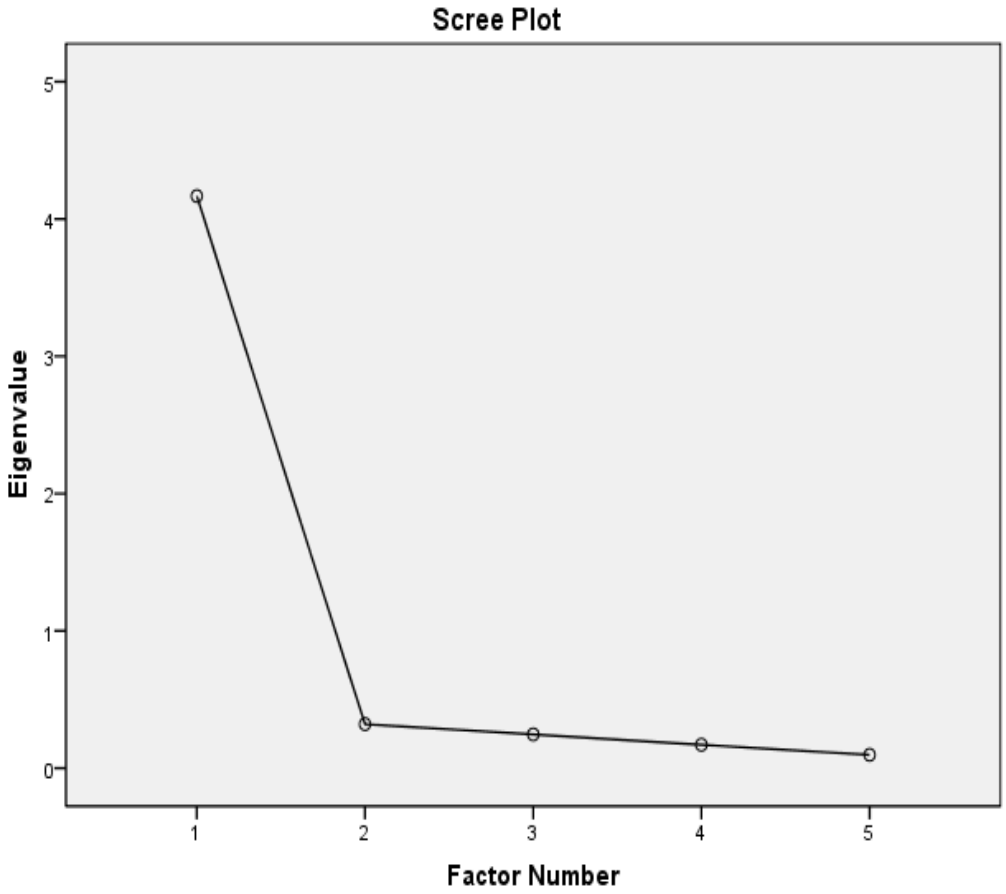

Figure C.2 Scree plot: relationship-based interpersonal conflict

Table C.2 Factor loadings: relationship-based interpersonal conflict

Factor Matrix[a]

	Factor
	1
There are often feelings of hostility among parties.	.931
One party frequently undermines the other.	.908
Backbiting is a frequent occurrence.	.886
Much "plotting" takes place "behind the scenes".	.863
The atmosphere here is often charged with hostility.	.861

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

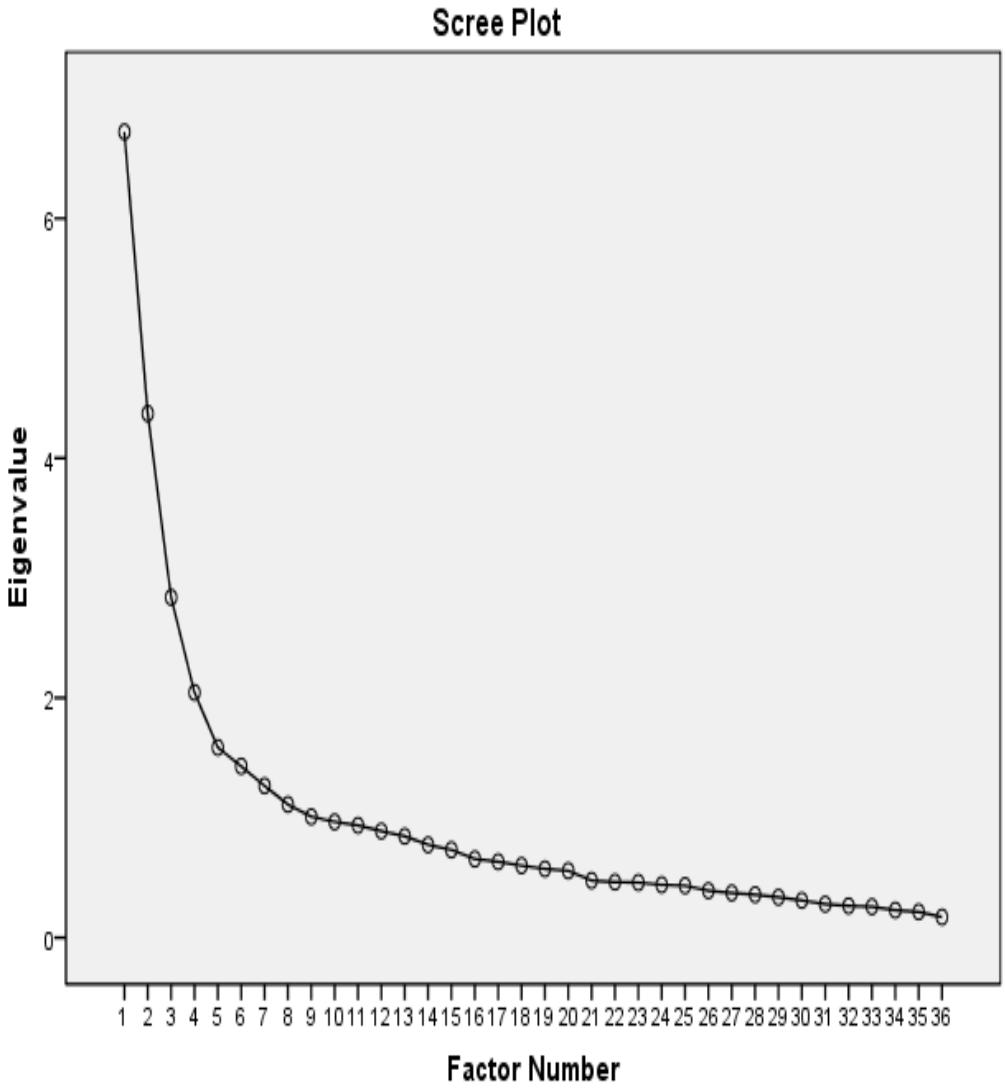

Figure C.3 Scree plot: Coping with task-based interpersonal conflict

Table C.3 Factor loadings: Coping with task-based interpersonal conflict

Pattern Matrix

	Factor		
	1	2	3
I try to come up with a strategy about what to do.	.797		
I think about how I might best handle the problem.	.734		
I think hard about what steps to take.	.680		
I learn something from the experience.	.651		
I look for something good in what is happening.	.612		
I make a plan of action.	.576		
I do what has to be done, one step at a time.	.541		
I concentrate my efforts on doing something about it.	.539		
I try to see it in a different light, to make it seem more positive.	.524		
I try to grow as a person as a result of the experience.	.517		
I take direct action to get around the problem.	.507		
I take additional action to try to get rid of the problem.	.481		
I put aside other activities in order to concentrate on this.	.408		
I try hard to prevent other things from interfering with my efforts at dealing with this.			
I focus on dealing with this problem, and if necessary let other things slide a little.			
I try to get emotional support from friends or relatives.		.721	
I talk to someone about how I feel.		.634	
I let my feelings out.		.629	
I get upset, and am really aware of it.		.618	
I get sympathy and understanding from someone.		.617	
I get upset and let my emotions out.		.583	
I feel a lot of emotional distress and I find myself expressing those feelings a lot.		.576	
I discuss my feelings with someone.		.541	
I go to the movies or watch TV, to think about it less.			
I give up the attempt to get what I want.			.596
I learn to live with it.			.568
I accept that this has happened and that it can't be changed.			.556
I admit to myself that I can't deal with it, and quit trying.			.479
I get used to the idea that it happened.			.463
I accept the reality of the fact that it happened.			.449
I just give up trying to reach my goal.			.408
I reduce the amount of effort I'm putting into solving the problem.			.403
I turn to work or other substitute activities to take my mind of things.			
I daydream about things other than this.			
I sleep more than usual.			
I keep myself from getting distracted by other thoughts or activities.			

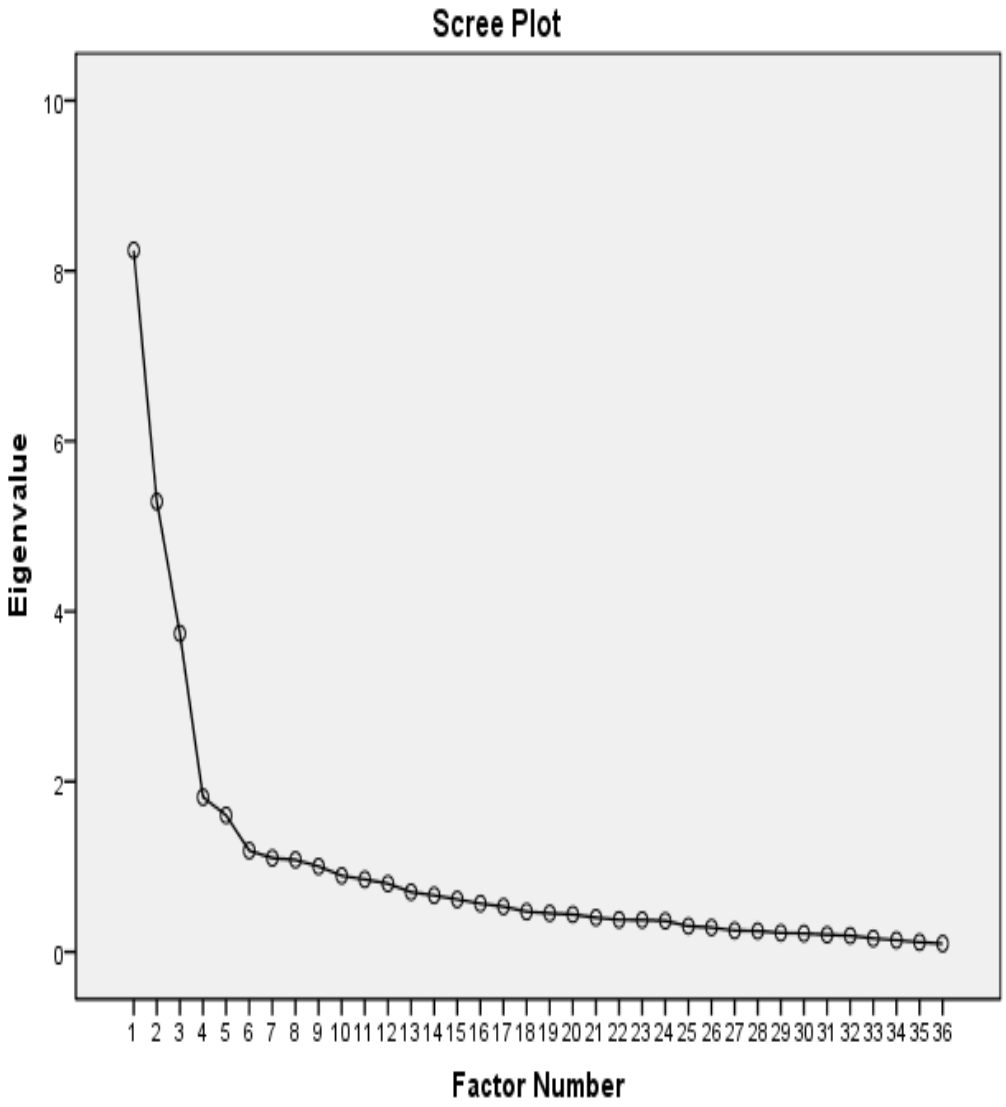

Figure C.4 Scree plot: Coping with relationship-based interpersonal conflict

Table C.4 Factor loadings: Coping with relationship-based interpersonal conflict

Pattern Matrix

	Factor		
	1	2	3
I think hard about what steps to take.	.830		
I think about how I might best handle the problem.	.817		
I try to come up with a strategy about what to do.	.814		
I make a plan of action.	.797		
I take additional action to try to get rid of the problem.	.698		
I concentrate my efforts on doing something about it.	.696		
I do what has to be done, one step at a time.	.664		
I try to grow as a person as a result of the experience.	.659		
I take direct action to get around the problem.	.655		
I learn something from the experience.	.650		
I look for something good in what is happening.	.629		
I try to see it in a different light, to make it seem more positive.	.599		
I put aside other activities in order to concentrate on this.	.533		
I try hard to prevent other things from interfering with my efforts at dealing with this.	.516		
I focus on dealing with this problem, and if necessary let other things slide a little.	.510		
I get sympathy and understanding from someone.		.829	
I feel a lot of emotional distress and I find myself expressing those feelings a lot.		.816	
I talk to someone about how I feel.		.782	
I try to get emotional support from friends or relatives.		.768	
I discuss my feelings with someone.		.710	
I get upset and let my emotions out.		.660	
I get upset, and am really aware of it.		.650	
I let my feelings out.		.644	
I go to the movies or watch TV, to think about it less.			
I daydream about things other than this.			
I sleep more than usual.			
I get used to the idea that it happened.			.725
I learn to live with it.			.721
I accept that this has happened and that it can't be changed.			.709
I turn to work or other substitute activities to take my mind of things.			.547
I accept the reality of the fact that it happened.			.523
I reduce the amount of effort I'm putting into solving the problem.			.416
I admit to myself that I can't deal with it, and quit trying.			.400
I give up the attempt to get what I want.			
I just give up trying to reach my goal.			
I keep myself from getting distracted by other thoughts or activities.			

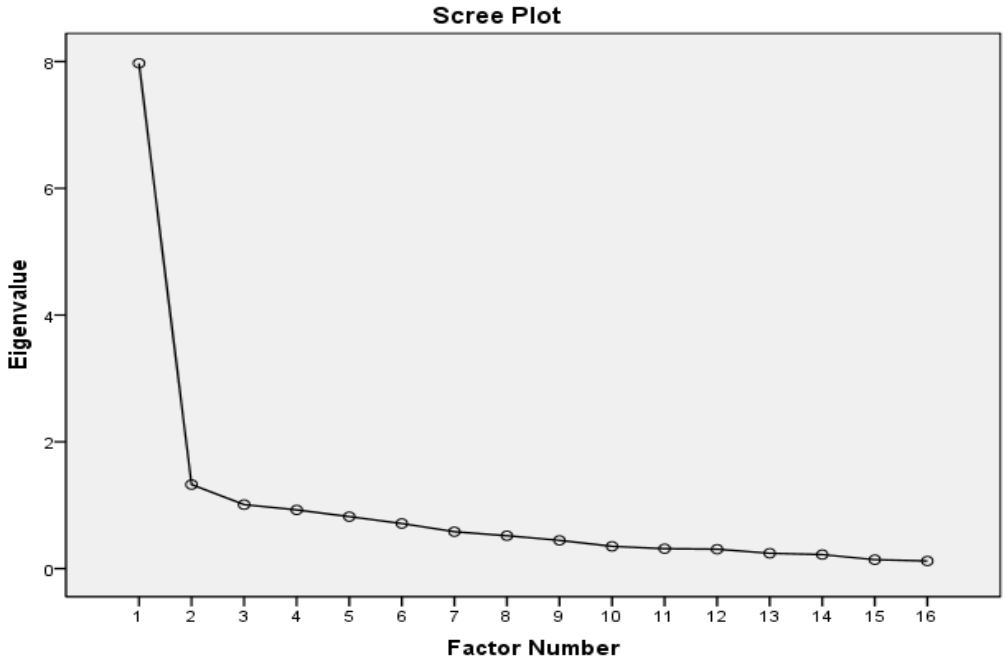

Figure C.5 Scree plot: job satisfaction

Table C.5 Factor loadings: job satisfaction

Factor Matrix

	Factor
	1
My job as a whole.	.862
The praise I get from doing a good job.	.802
Opportunities to use my skills and abilities.	.767
Amount of freedom to decide how to do my work.	.717
Amount of challenge in my job.	.710
Support from others.	.710
The way my boss handles his/her subordinates.	.701
The competence of my supervisor.	.693
Opportunities for promotion/advancement.	.683
Relations with my co-workers.	.676
The way organizational policies are put into practice.	.663
Variety in my work.	.648
My workload.	.644
Job security.	.610
Physical work conditions.	.492
Financial Rewards (i.e. pay, fringe benefits)	.442

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

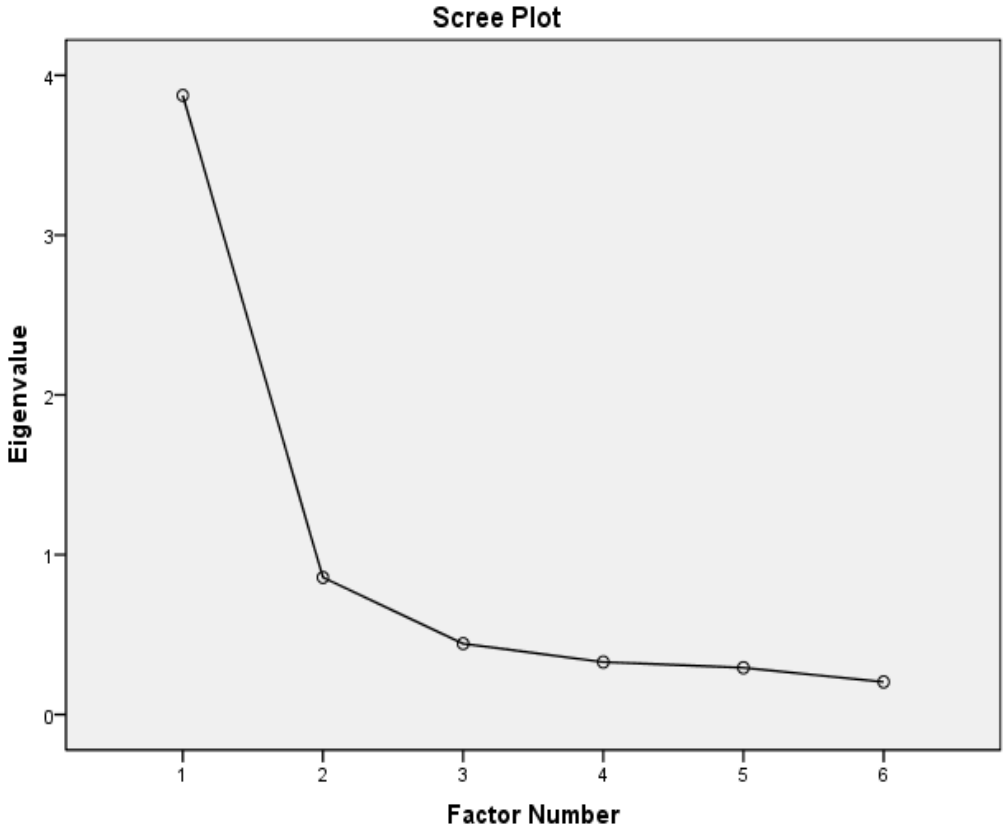

Figure C.6 Scree plot: affective organizational commitment

Table C.6 Factor loadings: affective organizational commitment

Factor Matrix

	Factor
	1
I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organization.	.850
I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization.	.782
I do not feel like "part of the family" in my organization.	.751
This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.	.746
I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.	.709
I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.	.708

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

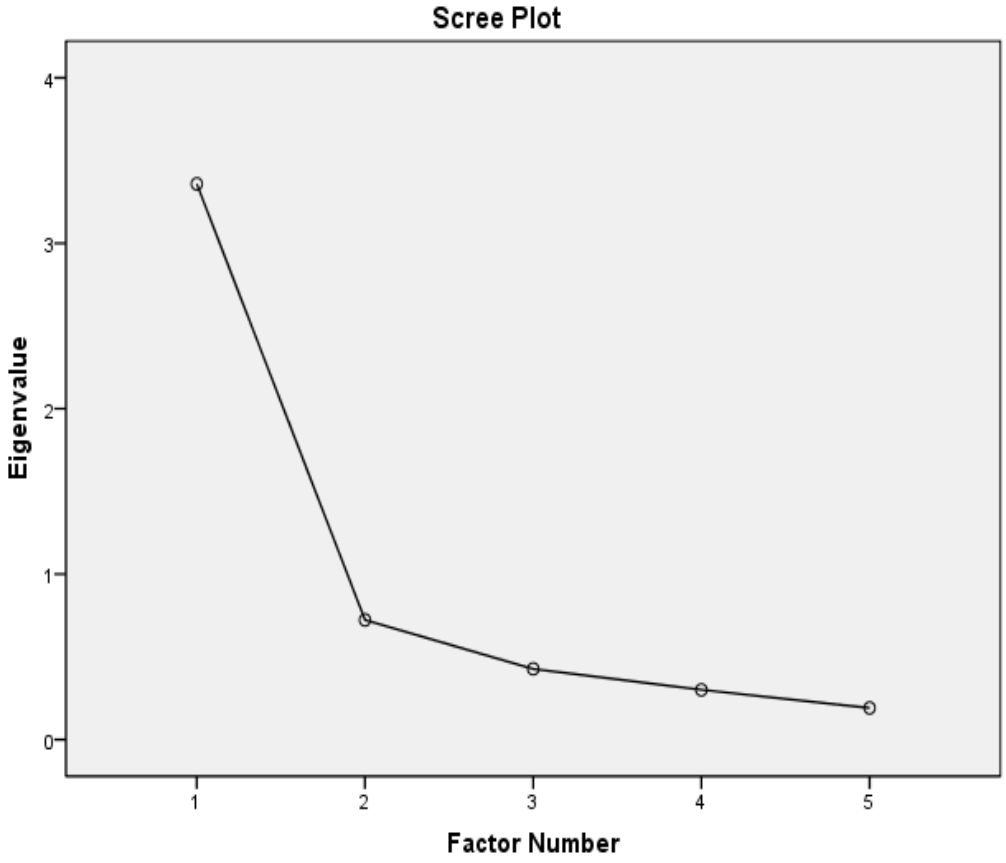

Figure C.7 Scree plot: turnover intentions

Table C.7 Factor loadings: turnover intentions

Factor Matrix[a]

	Factor
	1
I am not thinking about quitting my job at the present time.	.827
I will probably look for a new job in the near future.	.777
It is unlikely that I will actively look for a different organization to work for in the next year.	.753
At the present time, I am actively searching for another job in a different organization.	.748
I do not intend to quit my job.	.734

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

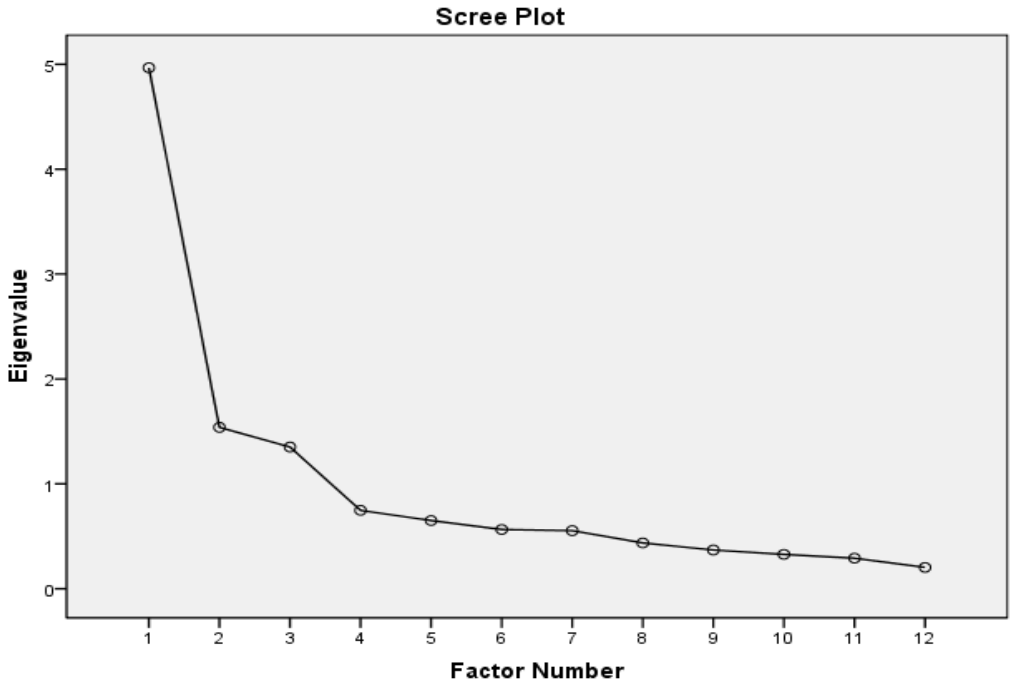

Figure C.8 Scree plot: psychological strain

Table C.8 Factor loadings: psychological strain

Pattern Matrix

	Factor		
	1	2	3
Felt capable of making decisions about things?	.731		
Been able to enjoy your normal day-to-day activities?	.695		
Been able to concentrate on what you are doing?	.661		
Been able to face up to your problems?	.639		
Felt you are playing a useful part in things?	.638	.	
Been feeling reasonably happy, all things considered?	.526		
Been losing confidence in yourself?		.743	
Been thinking of yourself as a worthless person?		.710	
Been feeling unhappy or depressed?		.494	
Felt constantly under strain?			.836
Lost much sleep over worry?			.637
Felt you couldn't overcome your difficulties?			.447

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

.

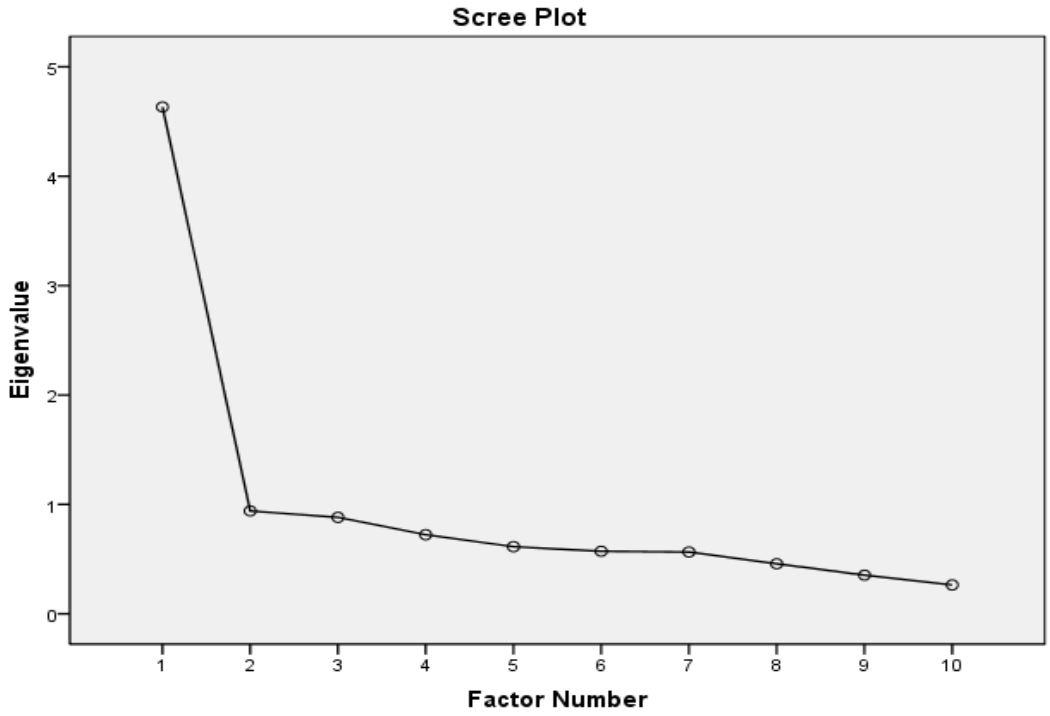

Figure C.9 Scree plot: Neuroticism

Table C.9 Factor loadings: Neuroticism

Factor Matrix

	Factor
	1
Am very pleased with myself.	.732
Often feel blue.	.722
Am often down in the dumps.	.715
Dislike myself.	.653
Feel comfortable with myself.	.647
Have frequent mood swings.	.639
Am not easily bothered by things.	.595
Panic easily.	.590
Seldom feel blue.	.555
Rarely get irritated.	.477

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

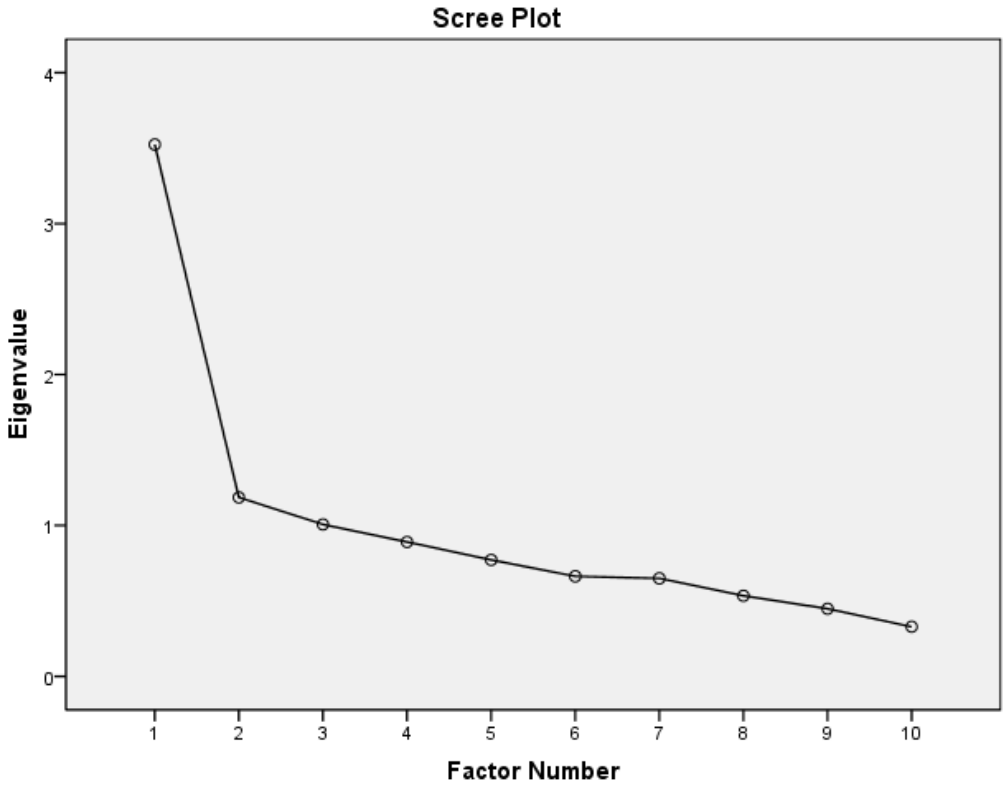

Figure C.10 Scree plot: Conscientiousness

Table C.10 Factor loadings: Conscientiousness

Factor Matrix

	Factor
	1
Carry out my plans.	.714
Waste my time.	.650
Find it difficult to get down to work.	.646
Make plans and stick to them.	.632
Don't see things through.	.541
Do just enough work to get by.	.482
Am always prepared.	.442
Get chores done right away.	.430
Shirk my duties.	
Pay attention to details.	

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

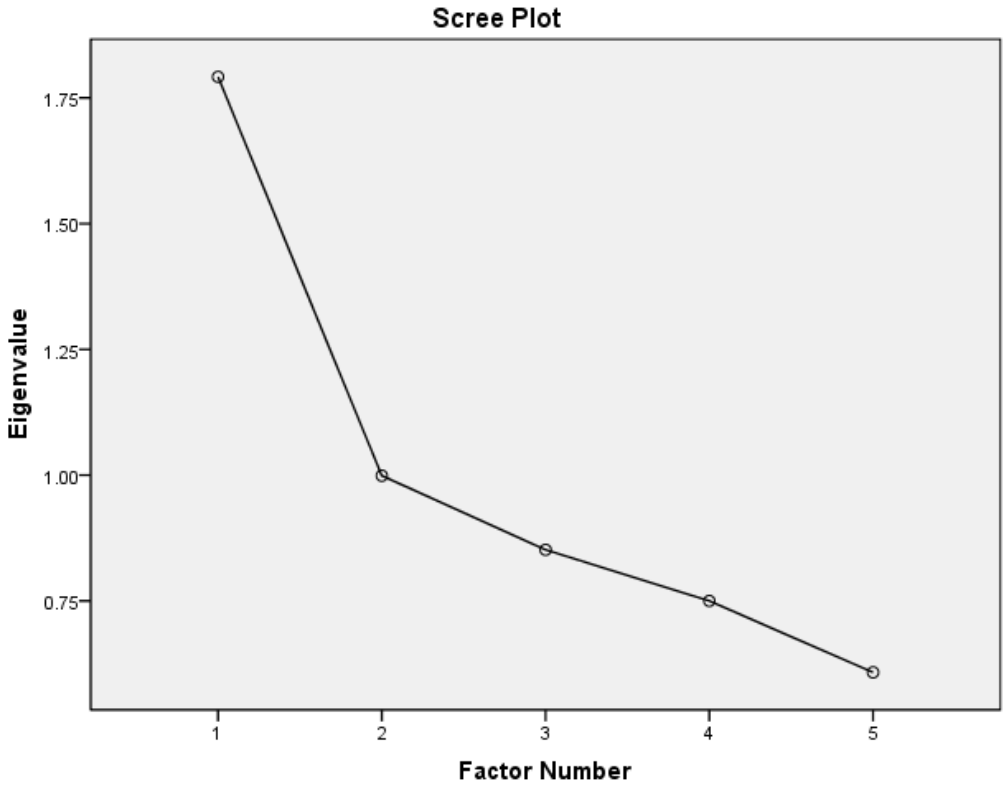

Figure C.11 Scree plot: Locus of Control

Table C.11 Factor loadings: Locus of Control

Factor Matrix

	Factor
	1
Believe that some people are born lucky.	.643
Believe that unfortunate events occur because of bad luck.	.547
Believe that my success depends on ability rather than luck.	.415
Believe that the world is controlled by a few powerful people.	.410
Believe in the power of faith.	

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Appendix D: Cover letter sent to Associate Vice President of IT

Request of support to distribute questionnaire

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a Masters student at the University of Waikato (New Zealand), conducting my thesis research on how people experience and cope with interpersonal conflict at work. I am undertaking this research in the Master of Applied Psychology program, offered at the University of Waikato. My supervisors are Professor Michael O'Driscoll and Dr. Donald Cable. I have received ethical approval for my study from the University of Waikato Department of Psychology Research and Ethics Committee.

As part of my thesis I am conducting a study on the way gender and personality affects the experience of interpersonal conflict at work. I am interested in finding out how much interpersonal conflict people experience in their work place, how they cope with it, and how it affects the way they feel about their organization. I believe that the proposed aims of my research have many practical applications for stress management and employee well-being. Your cooperation will allow for an in-depth perspective of an important issue facing employees today. To gather the necessary information I have composed a 15 minute online questionnaire, which I am hoping to distribute to IT workers. Their participation is completely voluntary and confidential.

The reason I have contacted you is to ask whether you would be interested in taking part; this would entail distributing via email an invitation letter to the I.T workers in your organization. This letter would contain a description of the questionnaire, an explanation of the research goals, and an invitation to participate. Your employees can choose whether they want to participate; if so there will be a link to the actual questionnaire.

Upon the completion of my study, I would be more than happy to share my research findings with you. You may find them valuable in identifying and hopefully managing some work place stressors. If you are interested in obtaining a summary of the findings, please let me know by emailing me and I will send them to you.

I look forward to hearing from you, in the next week and I welcome any feedback you may have. In case you have any problems or concerns, please feel free to contact me or my supervisors. If you have any queries regarding the ethics of this research feel free to contact Dr. Robert Isler, the convener of the Ethics Committee at the University of Waikato. All of the contact details are listed below.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Kind Regards,

Jovana Marovic

Department of Psychology
University of Waikato
jm148@waikato.ac.nz
Professor Michael O'Driscoll m.o'driscoll@waikato.ac.nz
Dr. Donald Cable dcable@waikato.ac.nz
Dr. Robert Isler r.isler@waikato.ac.nz

Appendix E: Reminder letter sent to participants

Dear Sir/Madam,

Recently you received and email inviting you to respond to an online questionnaire as part of my Master's thesis research on how people experience and cope with several interpersonal interactions at work. Thank you very much if you have completed the questionnaire, I really appreciate your time and effort.

If you have not done so and would like to complete a questionnaire please click on the link below and proceed.

Link to Questionnaire

All of you responses are extremely beneficial for my research. Your personal insights hold invaluable information that I believe can have many practical applications for stress management and employee well-being. This research has received ethical approval from the Department of Psychology Research and Ethics Committee at the University of Waikato. This questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your personal responses and your identity will be kept completely confidential at all times. The results of the survey are anonymous and you will not be identified in any publications of the research findings.

Again, thank you very much if you have already completed the questionnaire. If you have yet to complete it your participation would be immensely appreciated. In case you have any problems or concerns, please feel free to contact me or my supervisors. If you have any queries regarding the ethics of this research please feel free to contact Dr. Robert Isler, the convener of the Ethics Committee at the University of Waikato. All of the contact details are listed below.

Kind Regards,

Jovana Marovic

Department of Psychology

University of Waikato
jm148@waikato.ac.nz
Professor Michael O'Driscoll m.o'driscoll@waikato.ac.nz
Dr. Donald Cable dcable@waikato.ac.nz
Dr. Robert Isler r.isler@waikato.ac.nz

Appendix F: Histograms, Skew, and Standard Error of Skew

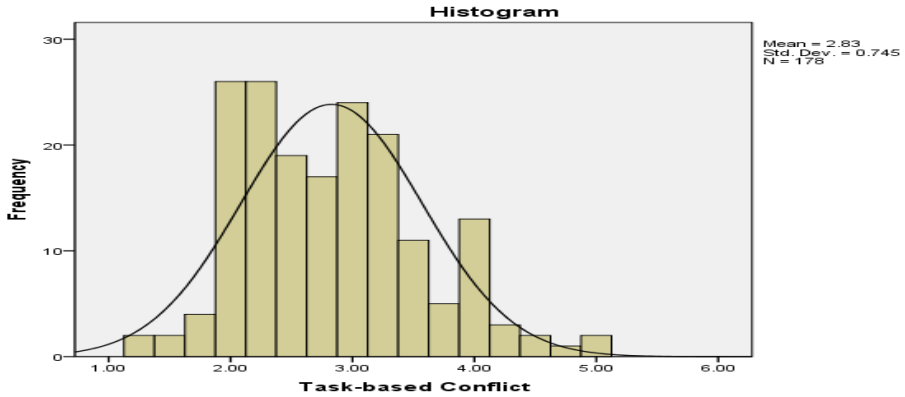

Figure F.1 Histogram: task-based interpersonal conflict

Table F.1 Skew: task-based interpersonal conflict

Statistics

Task-based Conflict

Skewness	.521
Std. Error of Skewness	.182

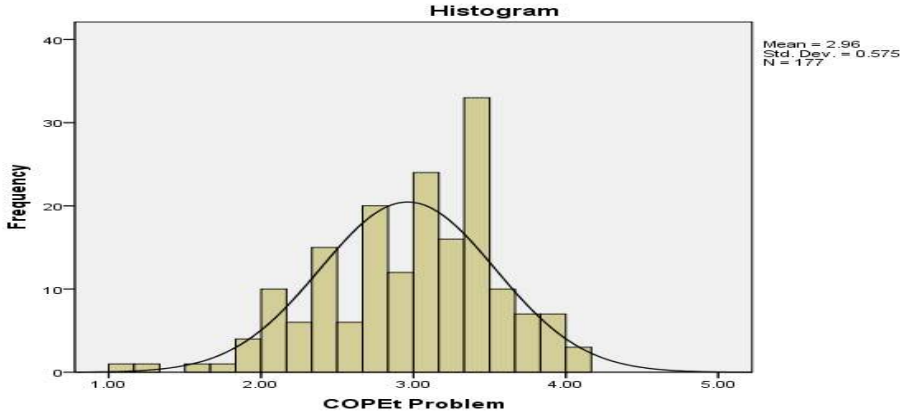

Figure F.2 Histogram: problem-focused coping with task-based interpersonal conflict

Table F.2 Skew: problem-focused coping with task-based interpersonal conflict

Statistics

COPEt Problem

Skewness	-.551
Std. Error of Skewness	.183

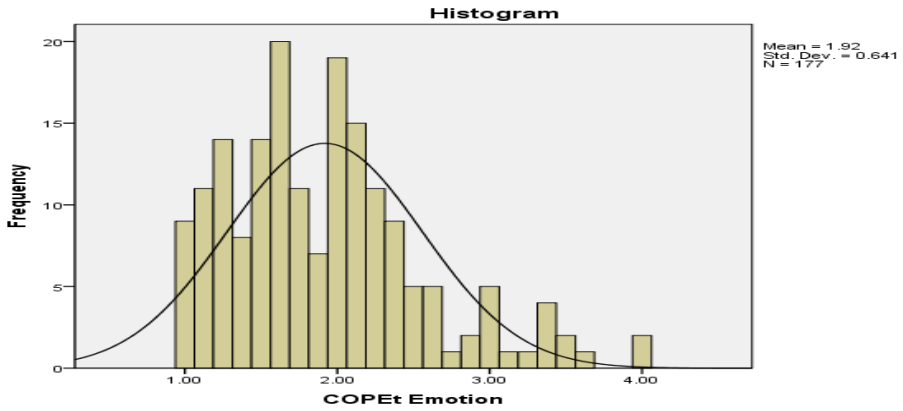

Figure F.3 Histogram: emotion-focused coping with task-based interpersonal conflict

Table F.3 Skew: emotion-focused coping with task-based interpersonal conflict

Statistics

COPEt Emotion

Skewness	.892
Std. Error of Skewness	.183

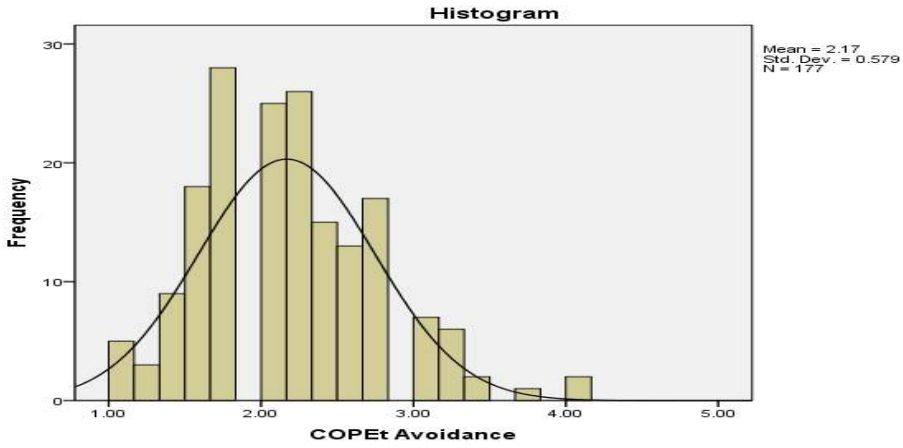

Figure F.4 Histogram: avoidance-focused coping with task-based interpersonal conflict

Table F.4 Skew: avoidance-focused coping with task-based interpersonal conflict

Statistics

COPEt Avoidance

Skewness	.499
Std. Error of Skewness	.183

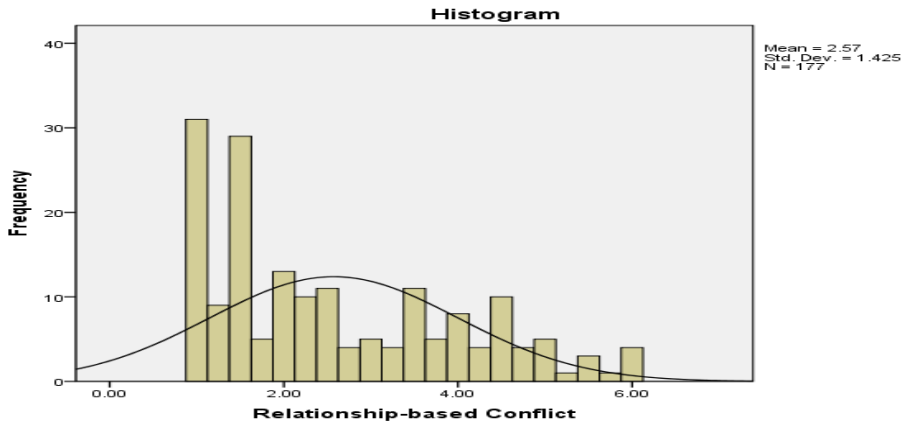

Figure F.5 Histogram: relationship-based interpersonal conflict

Table F.5 Skew: relationship-based interpersonal conflict

Statistics

Relationship-based Conflict

Skewness	.684
Std. Error of Skewness	.183

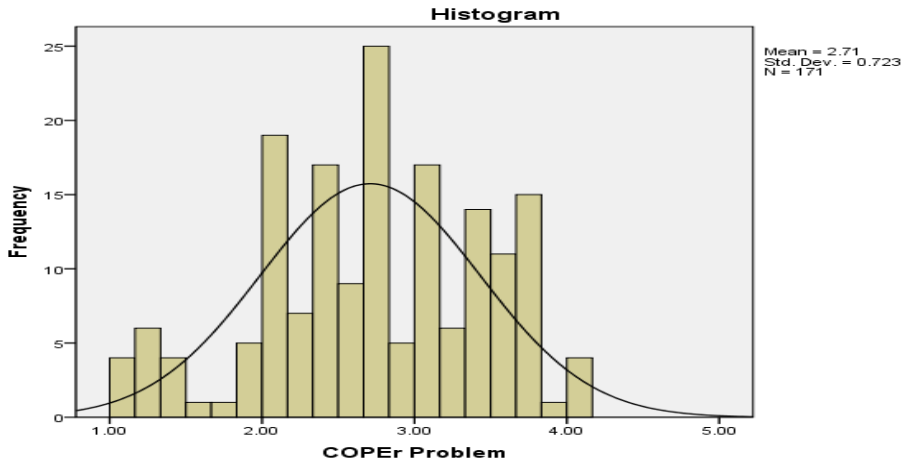

Figure F.6 Histogram: problem-focused coping with relationship-based interpersonal conflict

Table F.6 Skew: problem-focused coping with relationship-based interpersonal conflict

Statistics

COPEr Problem

Skewness	-.361
Std. Error of Skewness	.186

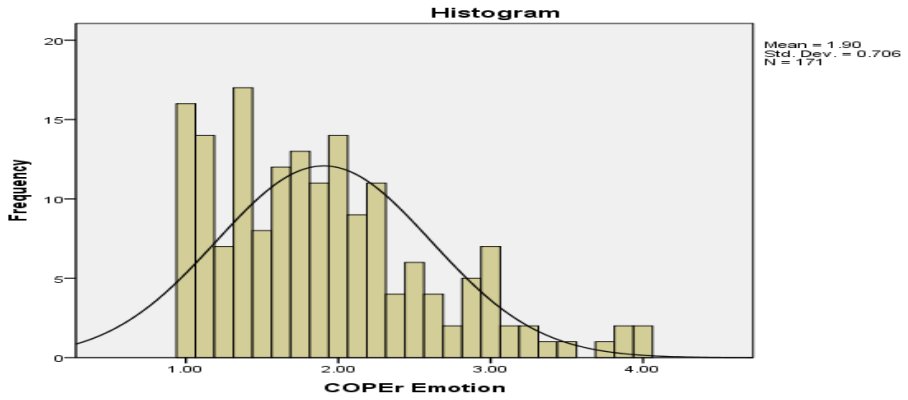

Figure F.7 Histogram: emotion-focused coping with relationship-based interpersonal conflict

Table F.7 Skew: emotion-focused coping with relationship-based interpersonal conflict

Statistics

COPEr Emotion

Skewness	.859
Std. Error of Skewness	.186

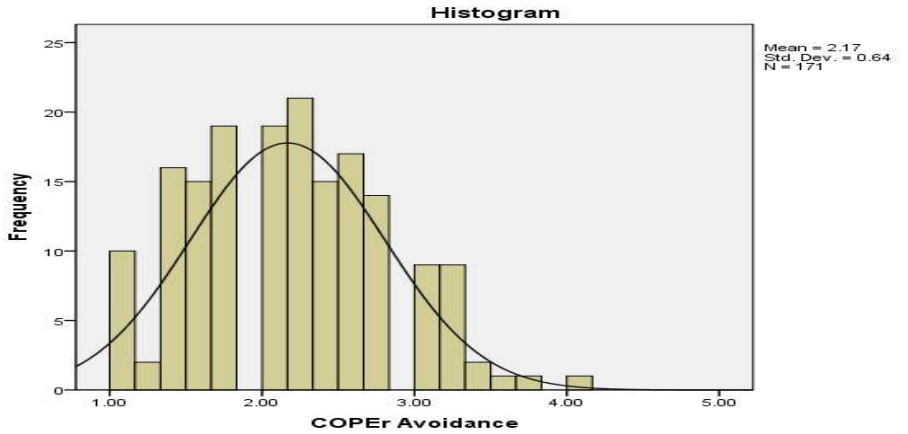

Figure F.8 Histogram: avoidance-focused coping with relationship-based interpersonal conflict

Table F.8 Skew: avoidance-focused coping with relationship-based interpersonal conflict

Statistics

COPEr Avoidance

Skewness	.198
Std. Error of Skewness	.186

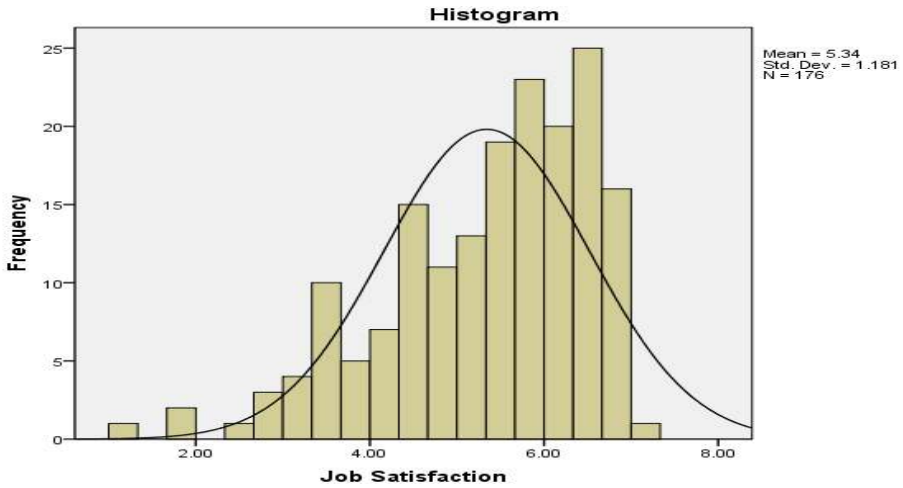

Figure F.9 Histogram: job satisfaction

Table F.9 Skew: job satisfaction

Statistics

Job Satisfaction

Skewness	-.945
Std. Error of Skewness	.183

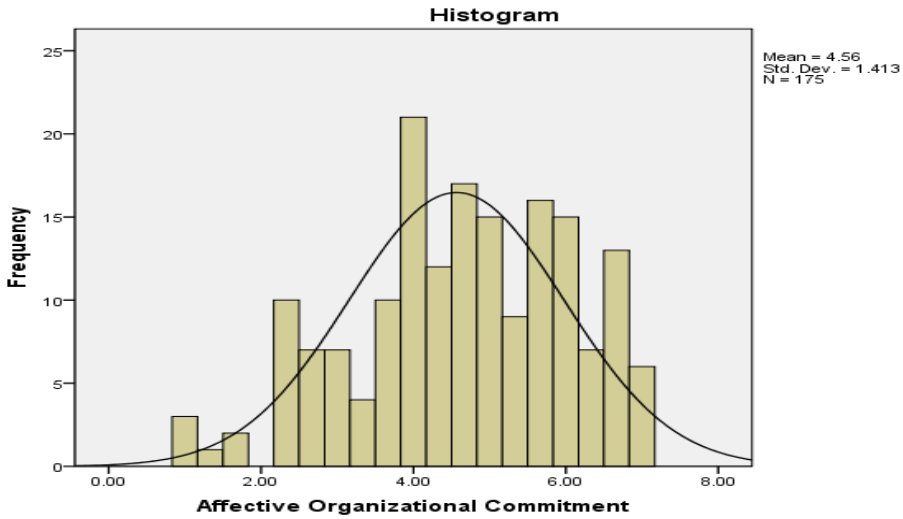

Figure F.10 Histogram: affective organizational commitment

Table F.10 Skew: affective organizational commitment

Statistics

Affective Organizational Commitment

Skewness	-.357
Std. Error of Skewness	.184

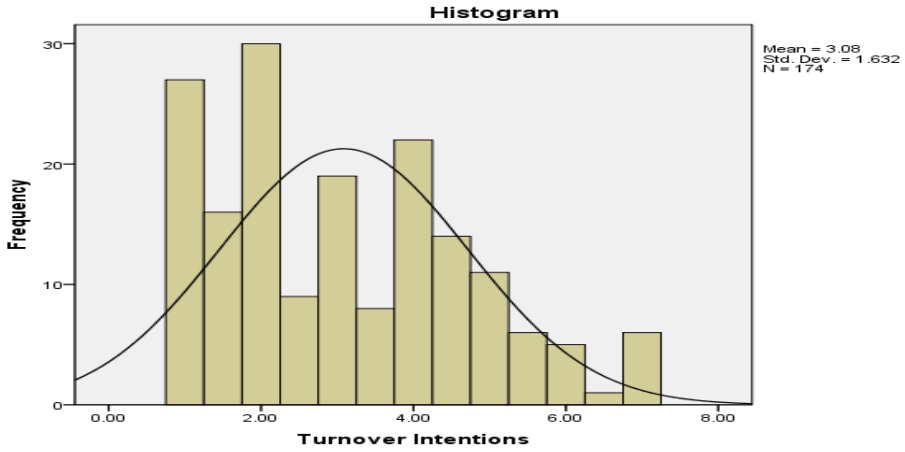

Figure F.11 Histogram: turnover intentions

Table F.11 Skew: turnover intentions

Statistics

Turnover Intentions

Skewness	.551
Std. Error of Skewness	.184

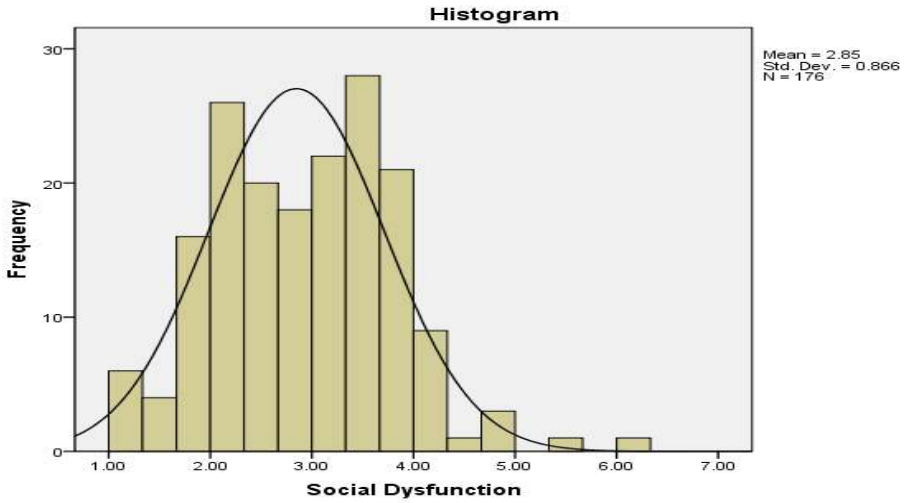

Figure F.12 Histogram: social dysfunction

Table F.12 Skew: social dysfunction

Statistics

Social Dysfunction

Skewness	.330
Std. Error of Skewness	.183

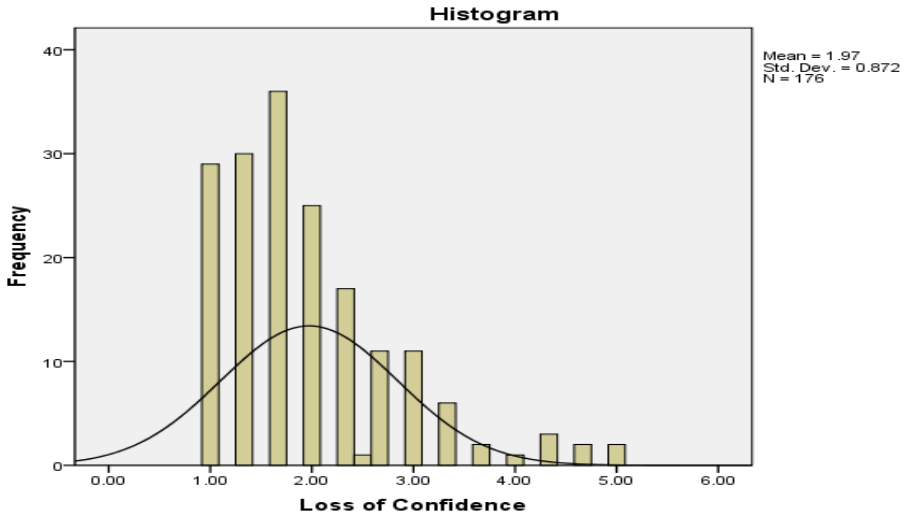

Figure F.13 Histogram: loss of confidence

Table F.13 Skew: loss of confidence

Statistics

Loss of Confidence

Skewness	1.293
Std. Error of Skewness	.183

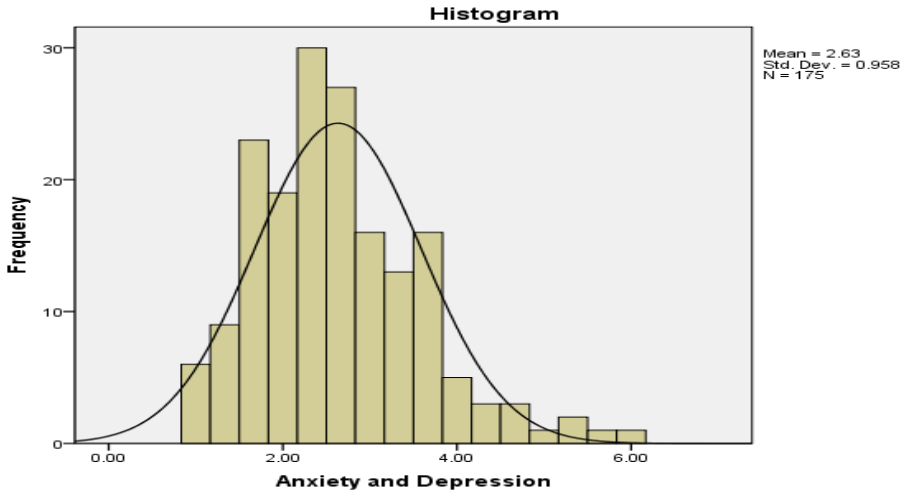

Figure F.14 Histogram: anxiety and depression

Table F.14 Skew: anxiety and depression

Statistics

Anxiety and Depression

Skewness	.809
Std. Error of Skewness	.184

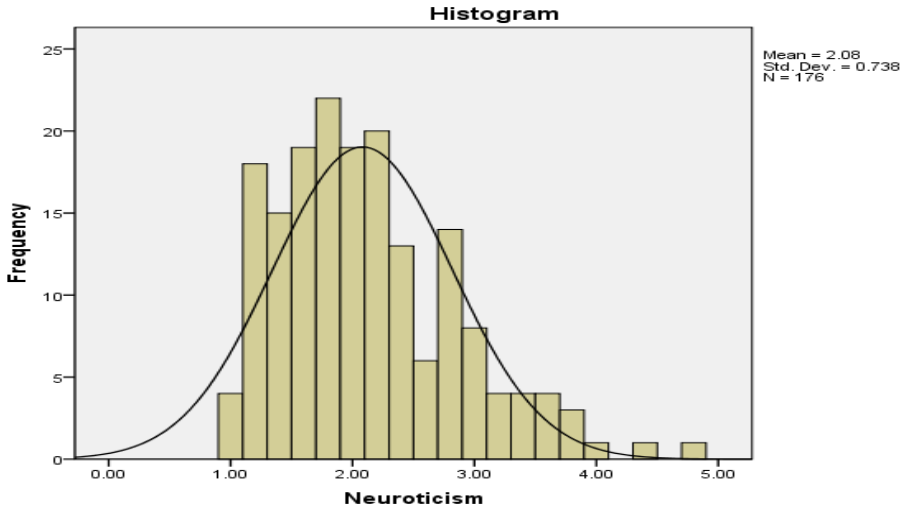

Figure F.15 Histogram: Neuroticism

Table F.15 Skew: Neuroticism

Statistics

Neuroticism

Skewness	.860
Std. Error of Skewness	.183

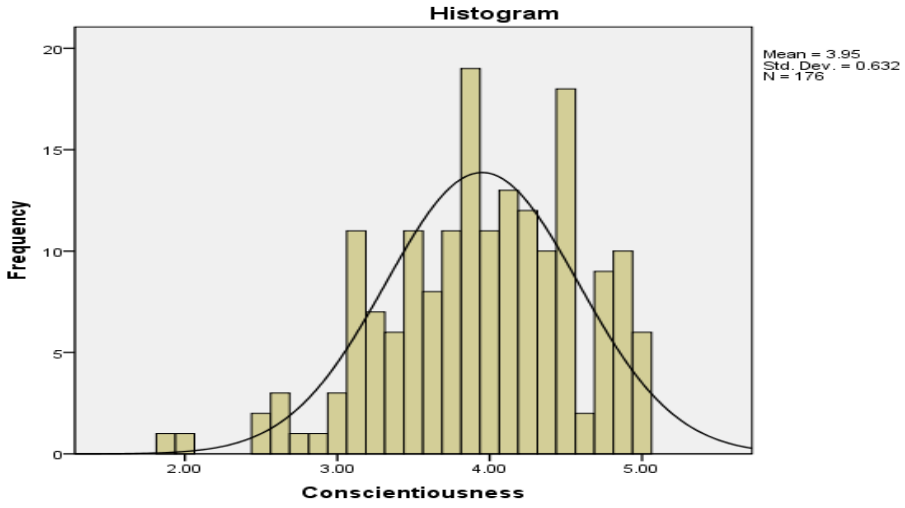

Figure F.16 Histogram: Conscientiousness

Table F.16 Skew: Conscientiousness

Statistics

Conscientiousness

Skewness	-.500
Std. Error of Skewness	.183

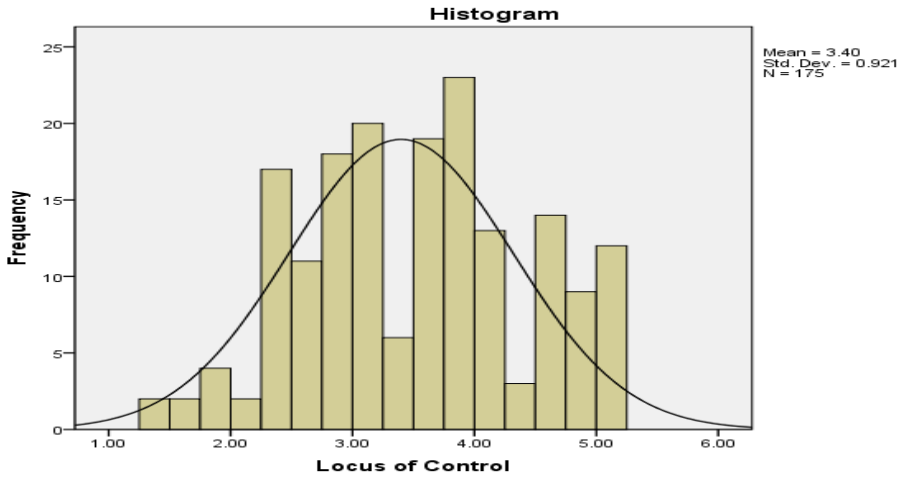

Figure F.17 Histogram: Locus of Control

Table F.17 Skew: Locus of Control

Statistics

Locus of Control

Skewness	-.004
Std. Error of Skewness	.184