

# Managing the personal and organisational values of Higher Education Professionals in an African development institution

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## **Abstract**

### **Managing the personal and organisational values of Higher Education Professionals in an African development institution**

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Anecdotal evidence, personal experience and existing literature suggest that staff members of development organisations experience a conflict between their personal and organisational values arising from the neo-liberal paradigm that underpins their activities. If not addressed, such conflicts can affect staff members' commitment to institutional goals, encourage them to work at cross purposes and create a dissonance between the goals set by the organisation and the results it actually achieves. This study explored how Higher Education Professionals working for an African development institution experience this conflict and whether they consider the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue as a potential way of managing the conflict. In this study, the conflict of values was discussed with regard to the commercialisation of higher education.

The research adopted a case study approach and spanned a period of one year. It involved a group of 11 purposively selected Higher Education Professionals, who were invited to go through three stages of the study. In stage 1, participants were asked to complete a semi-structured questionnaire on how they experience the conflict, if any, between their personal and organisational values and how they have attempted to address any conflict. Stage 2 was an open discussion and dialogue in a workshop, based on the theoretical propositions that guided the formulation of research questions. The Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue was adopted for the discussion in stage 2. In the third stage of the study, participants were individually interviewed to obtain their perspectives on how useful the regular use of the dialogue modelled in stage 2 could be in addressing the conflict, if any, between their personal and organisational values.

The data collected during this study was analysed thematically to obtain answers on: (a) whether Higher Education Professionals in the research site experience the conflict between their personal and organisational values; (b) how Higher Education Professionals in the research site experience the conflict between their personal and organisational values; (c) how they have attempted to address the conflict; and (d) whether they consider the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue as a potential way of addressing any such conflict.

The findings of the study revealed that 7 of the 11 Higher Education Professionals that participated in the study reported some form of conflict between their personal and organisational values. They claimed to experience this conflict in complex and dialectical manner as shown by the themes that emerged from the study: Core academic values versus consumerism; Equity versus sustainability; Quality assurance versus profit motive; and Good Governance versus role differentiation. The study revealed that for cultural reasons, most of those who experienced the conflict avoided addressing it. Most of the respondents stated that they experienced the conflict in a procedural rather than substantive manner. The findings also suggest that, unless carefully managed, addressing the conflict between personal and organisational values can be sensitive and challenging, especially in the African context, where the articulation of personal values that might conflict with organisational values is problematic because of deeply held cultural values about hierarchies. It was, therefore, proposed and confirmed by the study that, as opposed to simply persuading staff members to adopt different values, adopting an instrument or way of working such as the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue can be useful in proactive conflict management. The result of the study revealed that all the research participants interviewed considered the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue as a useful way of managing the conflict between personal and organisational values, especially if used proactively.

Although this study suffers from the lack of generalisability which is characteristic of case studies with a small number of participants, it is hoped that it will help to create an environment for proactive management of values conflict in the institution where the research is based.

**Keywords**

Values, Conflict of values, African development institution, Conflict between personal and organisational values, values alignment, and the Bohm-Isaacs model of conflict management.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Background of the practice-based problem

During the past twenty years, the African higher education sector has experienced a remarkable paradigm shift. Together with the core academic values, the sector has been compelled to adopt values such as cost efficiency, commercialisation, managerial ethos, profit or sustainability motive and the need for consumer satisfaction which, until recently, had been identified with the private sector. Altbach & Knights (2007), Lynch, K. (2006) and Wangenge-Ouma (2008) believe that these changes are linked with the globalisation of the knowledge economy and driven by the activities of development organisations.

Most of the existing studies on this subject concentrate mainly on the impact of the changes on higher education institutions and treat issues that relate to the exacerbation of educational and social inequalities, the loss of academic autonomy and the possibility of conflict between academic and managerial values (McNay, 2007; Sharrock, 2010; Waugh, 1998, Eastman, 2007; Strohl, 2006).

However, knowledge gaps still exist on how the policy shift affects Higher Education Professionals employed by development institutions to drive the changes. Existing literature, particularly Gunetilleke, De Silva, and Lokuge (2011), suggests that professionals who work for development institutions experience a conflict between their personal and organisational values due to the neo-liberal policies that drive their activities. As a staff member of an African development institution, I have had personal experiences and witnessed anecdotal episodes that suggest the existence of such a conflict. At a seminar organised in 2009 to discuss the effectiveness of the development strategies adopted in the continent, a Higher Education Professional questioned the adoption of what he referred to as “neo-liberal policies” by African development institutions and acknowledged that his organisation’s support for neo-liberal policies, including private sector participation and the commercialisation of higher education, conflicted with his values. If not addressed, the kind of values conflict suggested by the foregoing episode can sap the zeal of staff members, discourage creative and critical thinking, compromise the quality of advisory services Higher

Education Professionals provide and ultimately result in a disjuncture between the objectives set by the institution and the goals it actually achieves (Posner, 2010).

This study seeks to address the problem by exploring how Higher Education Professionals in an African development institution experience and deal with the conflict between their personal and organisational values and whether they consider the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue as useful in the proactive management of the conflict.

As described by Burson (2002), the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue rejects the traditional method of conflict management in which the best-advocated idea or value triumphs at the expense of others. The model creates a forum where questions are asked in order to explore meaning, encourage collective mindedness and resolve conflicts by self-introspection rather than seeking to win advantage in a zero sum game.

The use of the Bohm-Isaacs model creates an avenue for words, ideas and thoughts to be spoken into a shared space, described as a 'container', where they cease to be considered as personal properties to be defended. Rather, they are viewed as part of a puzzle that can help group members construct their own realities, engage in self-reflection and enrich their experiences. By creating an opportunity for group members to discuss the assumptions behind their individual convictions and the group dynamics, they learn to view divergence of opinions not as a threat but "an opportunity to dig deeper and seek not only consensus or common ground, but creative "third ways" that were not visible before." (Isaacs, 1999; pp. 242, 243).

In my opinion, the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue falls within the framework of an emerging conflict management approach, the Quantum perspective, which Fris & Lazaridou (2006) recommend as an approach that can complement the traditional, Newtonian approach to conflict management. Unlike the Newtonian dimension which considers knowledge as predictable, the Quantum perspective empowers individuals within a group to broaden their thinking by learning from others, applying existing knowledge in a new way and going through several iterations of data collection and analysis before a new perspective emerges.

The Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue facilitation will be treated in much more detail in Chapter 2, the Literature review.

### **Context**

In the course of seeking authorisation to conduct this research, I made a commitment to protect the identity of the institution where the research is conducted and that of its staff members. That explains why the name of the research site has not been disclosed. However, in order to provide a context that will enable the reader to grasp the complexity of the subject of this study, I will attempt a description of the research site bearing in mind the need to protect its confidentiality. Given the mutual alignment of the policies and operations of the research site with those of other multilateral development institutions, I will use the experience of the World Bank, by far the largest and the most prominent of the development institutions in influencing higher education policy development in low income countries, to illustrate the role that multilateral institutions play in fostering higher education in developing economies. This research is carried out on the assumption that neo-liberalism has become the dominant economic paradigm that drives policies and operations in the service sector, including the higher education services. Following the entry into force of the General Agreement in Trade and Services (GATS), a World Trade Organisation (WTO) treaty, in 1995, the extension of the multilateral trading system to the service sector including higher education services, and the removal of cross-border trade barriers, development institutions became advocates of globalization of services and purveyors of the neo-liberal doctrine. Therefore, attention will be given to discussing the doctrine of neo-liberalism and associated concepts such as commercialisation of higher education and managerialism. As much as possible, I will attempt an analysis of these concepts across national boundaries with a view to highlighting the engagement of higher education with other sectors of the economy on the one hand and the higher education sector in sub-Saharan Africa with other regions of the World, on the other hand.

The institution is an African development organisation which finances infrastructure projects in sectors that are considered to be crucial for the development of African countries, including the higher education sector.

In simple language, the institution is like a cooperative, made up of member countries from Africa and other continents of the World. Membership is acquired through a subscription to the authorised capital, which the institution uses to finance development. In addition to the shareholders' funds, the institution also raises money through bilateral and special funds and also from the capital market with which it finances its interventions. The primary mandate of the institution is to reduce poverty by providing loans and grants to sovereign companies and private sector concerns and financing infrastructure projects in sectors that are considered to be crucial to the development of the continent. However, it also provides knowledge products in the form of statistics, economic and sector diagnosis and advisory services. In addition, the institution organises sensitisation seminars and training or capacity building sessions to create a platform where it can exchange ideas with policy makers in its member countries, the private sector and civil society organisation. During such seminars it is common for development practitioners working for this institution to be informed of policy, governance or implementation or procedural inadequacies in the member countries and what the civil society perceives as weaknesses in the process adopted by the institution in its interaction with clients.

The institution has a wide range of business in sectors such as Energy, Climate change, Agriculture, industrialisation and Transportation. It has a portfolio of business in the area of Higher Education, Science and Technology and employs Higher Education Professionals to manage this portfolio. This study focuses mainly on the possibility of conflict between the personal values of these Higher Education professionals and the values of the organisation.

The values of the organisation with regard to higher education include education for poverty reduction and inclusive development, access to higher education, sustainability of projects, quality assurance and private sector participation in higher education. While, in substance, these values align with the personal values of most Higher education professionals, some processes associated with the implementation of these values, especially as they relate to the commercialisation of higher education give rise to conflict. For example, the commercialisation of higher education might call for some contribution by beneficiaries but

how can cost sharing be balanced with the need for access in an atmosphere that is characterised by extreme greed in the name of capitalism. In a culture where it is common for the girl child to be withdrawn from school and given out in early marriage so as to use the bride price to sponsor the education of the male sibling, how do you advocate cost sharing, knowing that a girl child might be penalised for no fault of hers. These are some of the issues that higher education professionals encounter in the course of their assignment. These issues are highlighted in Gunetilleke et al (2011), the index study that inspired my research, and it is my personal experience with these realities that developed my interest in carrying out this study.

The nature of this institution will be better appreciated if understood within the context of the role of development institutions in the formulation of higher education policies, especially in the developing countries.

Led by the World Bank, development institutions have played a prominent role in influencing higher education policy orientations, particularly the funding policy in sub-Saharan Africa. The World Bank began lending for higher education in 1964 to finance the establishment of two agricultural universities in Pakistan. Between then and June 2015, the Bank has maintained the lead in financing higher education in developing countries with a business portfolio of US\$14 billion, with operations in 76 countries (World Bank, 2015). Since 2000, the Bank has invested more than US\$1 billion in African higher education (MacGregor, 2015). Given its strong funding leverage, the Bank exercises considerable influence on governments within the region with regard to higher education policies and operations; and on other development institutions, who model their higher education policies on those of the World Bank.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the World Bank unfolded two far reaching policy frameworks that drastically modified the higher education funding paradigm in sub-Saharan Africa. First, the institution reversed its previous position and recognized higher education as the engine for the development of low income countries (Naidoo, 2010). Secondly, it issued two policy papers: Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Policies for Adjustment, Revitalization, and

Expansion (World Bank, 1988) and Higher Education: The Lessons of Experience (World Bank, 1994), which advocated that the partial divestment of the state from providing educational services and a greater reliance on market values for these services will have a positive impact on equity and efficiency in higher education. Given that this period coincided with the down turn in the economies of most sub-Saharan African countries, it was easy for these nations to accept the prescriptions of the development institutions in the form of loan conditionalities and advisory services.

However, critics of the World Bank prescription, particularly Naidoo (2010) consider the World Bank's approach as neo-liberal. According to Naidoo (2010), Neo-liberalism means to "roll back state control, deregulate domestic markets and open up to international trade and competition." (p. 71). She creates a linkage between Neo-liberalism and the work of development institutions by explaining that through a combination of loan conditionalities and direct advisory services, multilateral institutions have advocated the adoption of market forces and cooperation with the industry. Naidoo (2010), further, argues that since neo liberalism encourages extreme competition, fee charges and profit which the disadvantaged social groups cannot afford, it is inappropriate for the provision of public good such as higher education.

With the rise of neo-liberalism as the mainstream development paradigm, Governments all over the world started adopting the deregulation and commercialization of their service sectors including the higher education sector. According to Chorney (2008), the commercialisation of higher education manifested by way of the increasing attempt to share the cost of education with the beneficiaries and the movement to privatise and run for profit those higher education institutions that had been previously fully sponsored by government.

Brown & Carasso (2013) discuss commercialisation with regard to how it results in managerialism within the higher education sector. Managerialism means the import of managerial values, which until recently were only known in the industries and commerce into higher education. Brown & Carasso (2013) identified certain features of managerialism in higher education to include a change in nomenclature from that of students, rights,

welfare and solidarity to that of customers, service users and competition; a focus on outputs which is achieved through a measured monitoring of employee and institutional performance, and the encouragement of self-monitoring through the widespread use of performance indicators, such as league tables, target-setting and benchmarking.

The relevance of the foregoing to this thesis is that, as Naidoo (2010) suggests, the neo-liberal framework and in particular the marketization of higher education can complicate issues of equity in higher education, lead to the bifurcation of standard and quality and the hegemony of the developed knowledge economies which, in simple terms, dictate measures and quality to the low income countries, aptly considered by Altbach (2004) as the “periphery” of the global knowledge economy.

Although Naidoo (2010) and Brown & Carasso (2013) wrote from the background of the United Kingdom, which is a non-borrowing member of development institutions and therefore, spared from policy imposition, their views agree with those from developing countries in Africa as expressed by Wangenge-Ouma (2008), Asia as expressed by Sharma (2005) and Latin America going by the views of Gregorutti (2011). The only difference is that while the policy frameworks in developed countries in Europe like the United Kingdom, France and Germany; and the United States and Australia are organic and self-imposed, those in developing countries seem to be dictated by development institutions and driven by a combination of external influence and external and internal shocks and realities.

Kaneko (2006) suggested a framework for international comparison and analysis of the commercialization of higher education. This framework has three categories of commercialization which capture the nature of influence exerted by the three competing bodies that seek to control higher education. While the State has always exerted enormous influence in almost all national higher education systems, the authority of the state tends to be mediated based on the model of commercialization the state has decided to adopt. In certain parts of Europe, namely Italy, Germany and to a certain extent France, the State has combine the state facility system with the concept of elite fee paying “grandes écoles”. This then produces a duality where Government sponsored facilities exist side by side with for

profit institutions, where the Faculty wields considerable influence with regard to academic content and administration (Clark, 1983). In the United Kingdom, the professoriate or academic staff are still influential although they do not exert the same influence as their colleagues in continental Europe, as they are a bit contained by state supervision and market forces in the form of charter or civic corporation model, which allows institutions that can accumulate endowed funds to be run on commercial lines. This tends to be a feature the UK shares with the United States. In the USA, the consumers – the students and corporations which finance research - have a major impact on the higher education sector and endow it to ensure free choices and market forces.

Depending on where the Head of the Higher Education supervisory body of each country trained and the political leaning of the Government in power, the dominant influence on higher education in sub-Saharan Africa tends to gravitate between these three options. Given that Governments still retain the policy making powers and share a considerable part of the cost of higher education, what development institutions do is to influence government's decisions through a combination of coercive and persuasive means to deregulate higher education so as to open up the opportunity for cost sharing with beneficiaries or allow the industry and the market to make endowments as is the case in most developed economies. It is these aspects of cost sharing and the endowment by the market and integration of managerialism in higher education that lay the foundation for conflict of values.

This thesis explores the conflict of values that arise from the above stated claims and counterclaims through a case study of the African development institution selected for the study. It focuses on how higher education professionals within the institution experience the conflict, if any, between their personal and organisational values as they relate to the commercialization of higher education. Brown & Carasso (2013), and Chorney (2008) suggest that the commercialization of higher education involves some form of payment by consumers of higher education services and the adoption of market values for the provision and organisation of higher education services. The African concept of commercialization of higher education, as used in this thesis is not different from those of Brown & Carasso

(2013) and Chorney (2008). As described by Wangenge-Ouma (2008), it means partial contribution to the funding of higher education by the consumers and the adoption of market and industry values for the provision of higher education services.

I also believe that a description of the societal context that gave rise to this study will further enrich the understanding of the rationale for the research. From 2011, the African continent has experienced social and security upheavals that seem to signal the failure of the African educational system to address societal realities, including the problem of violence and job creation.

In Nigeria, Tunisia and other countries mainly in Central and East Africa, the context was marked by the constant disruption in the higher education calendar, due to lack of agreement between the policy-makers who sought to institutionalise the policy of cost-sharing and academic staff union of higher institutions which called for increased funding of higher education by Government if not a total reversion to the full and exclusive funding of the sector by the Government. As reported in the *This Day Newspaper* of 14 December 2013 (p.1), a similar disagreement in Nigeria led to the closure of federal universities for more than nine months in 2013. One of the key aspects of that disagreement was the role of development institutions, which Fagge (2014) described as purveyors of neo-liberal policies in the national higher education systems.

The period of disruptions in academic activities was preceded by the Arab spring, championed by young, highly educated Africans who possessed prestigious degrees but could not find jobs in their countries. It also coincided with the upsurge of violence in West and Central Africa, especially the Boko Haram insurgency led by highly educated but unemployed graduates who, disenchanted that they were jobless in spite of the possession of master degrees, used the cover of religion to place a ban on western education. Following these challenges, higher education stakeholders had to find a solution to what was generally considered a disjuncture in the African education system.

The institution where this research is based reacted to the above-mentioned realities in two positive ways. First, it scaled up effort in the production of knowledge and established a special business portfolio for Higher and vocational education, Science and Technology. Secondly, it set up a knowledge publication series and actively encouraged its staff members to study and propose solutions to issues which might be responsible for the dissonance between theory and practice in Africa and between knowledge and its application. One of the areas of concern was to determine whether the higher education development paradigm adopted by the institution was appropriate for the realities of the current thinking in Africa.

This study falls within that general context of finding a solution to issues that might impede the African development institution, where this research is based, from providing the quality of higher education services tailored to meet the needs of the continent that it was established to serve.

### **Research questions**

While describing the context of this study, I relied on the studies carried out by Naidoo (2010) and Brown & Carasso (2013) to suggest that neo-liberalism has become the mainstream development paradigm all over the world. Since neoliberalism encourages extreme competition, fee charges and profit which the disadvantaged social groups cannot afford, it is inappropriate for the provision of public good such as higher education (Naidoo, 2010). Based on this assumption, the index study which inspired this research, Gunetilleke et al, (2011) asserts that development professionals experience a conflict between their personal and professional values by reason of the neoliberal paradigm that underpins their activities. They called for another study to establish how the professionals experience these conflict and explore ways of addressing the conflict. This research therefore flows from the recommendation of the index study by asking questions on how higher education professionals in the research site, which is a development institution, experience the conflict, if any between their personal and organizational values and exploring ways in which the conflict can be addressed.

In order to find out how Higher Education Professionals in the research site experience the conflict between their personal and organisational values, this study asked and answered the following research questions:

- (i) How do Higher Education Professionals working for an African development organisation experience the conflict, if any, between their personal values and organisational values?
- (ii) How do the Higher Education Professionals address the conflict, if any, between their personal values and organisational values?
- (iii) Do the Higher Education Professionals consider the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue useful in managing the conflict between their personal values and organisational values?

### **Theoretical basis**

The entire research is framed within the social constructivist theory which “recognises the importance of the subjective human creation of meaning but doesn’t reject outright some notion of objectivity” (Crabtree & Miller, 1999, p. 10). Findings, therefore, reflect the perception of the participants and researcher, although other sources in the form of existing literature are used from time to time to validate the study.

The research questions were based on theoretical propositions drawn from Gay’s (1981) classification of conflict of values, Roche’s (1997) framework for classifying responses to conflict of values and Burson’s (2002) interpretation and application of the Bohm-Isaacs model of conflict management.

### **The insider-researcher**

This is an insider research and Moore (2007) asserted that studying a context where the researcher works has advantages and disadvantages. One advantage that I had as an insider-researcher was that I had a good grasp of the context and could easily understand the participant’s day to day experience. Also, being an insider facilitated my connection with colleagues which explained their willingness to endure three stages of data collection. On

the adverse side, researching my place of work exposed me to the ethical dilemma of dealing with power and fraternal relationship which, if not well handled, could affect the trustworthiness of the results. To avoid the possibility of pressure on the participants arising from power or fraternal relationship, all those who directly supervise me and those who report to me were excluded from the study, as Cohen, Manion, & Morrison (2011) and Oliver (2003) suggest.

Another ethical dilemma that arose from my position as insider-researcher was whether the research participants would be willing to discuss a topic as sensitive as the conflict between their personal and organisational values in the presence of a colleague that they meet almost on a daily basis. To address this concern, I offered a detailed disclosure of what the research was intended to achieve, which helped to dispel suspicion and mobilised all the participants behind the research because they saw it as an opportunity to improve practice. Given that the institution has a culture of research, the participants knew that the outcome of the research would be of benefit to the world of knowledge, which fostered their commitment (Bennett, 2004). The issue of insider-researcher will be treated in greater detail in the third chapter of this study while discussing the researcher's reflexivity and positionality.

### **The approach**

This research is a case study which, according to Stake (1994), analyses and interprets data through perspectives that are influenced by personal experiences, meanings and values. Although Guba & Lincoln (1994) believe that this approach does not necessarily violate the doctrine of objectivity as every research is guided by the researcher's worldview, they emphasised the need to acknowledge the possibility of researcher bias. However, to ensure objectivity in the outcome of the study, I have adopted several sources of data collection to ensure the triangulation of findings.

Another limitation of the study is that the sample size of 11 participants "may or may not be a reasonable sample of the larger universe" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 15). Therefore, the findings of this research might not be generalisable. I, however, hope that while this study might share the lack of generalisability which is characteristic of most qualitative studies, it

will help to create an environment for proactive management of values conflict in the institution where the research is based.

### **Significance of the study**

This research is significant by providing improved education to Higher Education Professionals in the research site on creating an environment for proactive management of values conflict. It will help to popularise the adoption of the Quantum approach (Fris & Lazaridou, 2006) to conflict management in the institution where the research is based, particularly the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue (Burson, 2002).

From the theoretical point of view, the findings of this research mark a departure from what Gunetilleke et al. (2011) consider as the mainstream approach to the study of conflict between personal and organisational values in development institutions. The mainstream approach favours the study of the phenomenon from a neo-liberal, dogmatic or dialectical perspective (Sutherland, 2003) whereas the findings of this research emphasises the need to adopt several approaches including not only the neo-liberal and dogmatic perspectives but also the gender, the rights based and the pragmatic or value based approaches.

### **Summary of the thesis**

This introduction is the first chapter of the thesis. Chapter two is the review of existing literature on the subject of values, conflict of values and values alignment and management. Chapter three discusses the research questions bearing in mind the theoretical framework that led to their formulation and provides further information on the context of the study as well as possible areas of researcher bias and how they were addressed. The fourth chapter is made up of the research design and methodology, the fifth chapter focuses on the analysis and discussion of data while the sixth chapter discusses the impact of the findings on practice and related knowledge. The Conclusion simply sums up the important findings, the recommendations and the significance of the study.

## Chapter 2: Literature review

### Introduction

The focus of this research might appear commonplace to some readers given the abundance of literature on values and conflict of values especially in the Western world (Fitzpatrick, 2007). However, the subject of values conflict is still current in Africa. As Edoho (2001) and Hofstede (1984) suggest, the traditional African society lays emphasis on respect for hierarchy and authority; it also privileges the avoidance of uncertainty and high power distance and these are attributes that make it delicate to openly discuss issues relating to the conflict between personal and organisational values. As part of this review, I conducted a literature search using the key concepts of the study such as: “African development institutions”, “Conflict between personal and organisational values”, “values alignment”, and “the Bohm-Isaacs model” and found no literature linking the key concepts. Two reasons might be responsible for the dearth of literature on organisational values and conflict of values in Africa. First, people hardly create the time to consciously match their personal values with those of the institution where they seek to be employed, much less explicitly defining their values thresholds and how they can conflict with other values (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). The second reason is related to culture. Corey, Fok & Payne (2014) established a linkage between culture and values conflict management. They suggested that in a culture that is characterised by high power distance, high uncertainty avoidance and high level of collectivism, individuals who experience a conflict between their personal values and the values of their organisation tend to suppress their own values and pretend to accept the organisational values. The African society tends to uphold high power distance and respect for hierarchy and authority, which makes the discussion of conflict between individuals and corporate authorities a sensitive topic (Edoho, 2001). Therefore, apart from addressing the practice-based problem of conflict between the personal and organisational values of Higher Education Professionals in the institution where the study is based, this study will also seek to fill the literature gap that exists in Africa in the area of value conflict management especially among Higher Education Professionals that work for development institutions.

This literature review will focus on the key concepts of this study, such as: (i) the definition of key terms; (ii) development institutions and the commercialisation of higher education in sub-Saharan Africa; (iii) the definition and interpretation of values; (iv) conflict of values in the context of higher education commercialisation; (v) conflict of values and conflict management strategies; and (vi) the Bohm-Isaacs model of conflict management.

### **Definition of key terms**

To ensure a common understanding of concepts as used in this thesis, I would like to include the definition of some of the key terms and concepts.

The term “**Development institutions**” means organisations set up to promote and finance sovereign and private investments with the aim of fostering the economic growth and sustainable development of member countries. These organisations promote development mainly through the provision of loans, grants, advisory services, research and other knowledge products (Massa, 2011). The well-known multilateral development institutions include the African Development Bank, the African Finance Corporation, the Asian Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Investment Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Finance Corporation and the World Bank. These institutions started by dealing strictly with sovereign entities. However, following the adoption of the General Agreements in Trade and Services and the integration of services, including higher education services, into the legal structures of world trade through the World Trade Organisation, development institutions and government agencies started viewing higher education from the private sector perspective – as commodities that can be commercialised and the beneficiaries of higher education as consumers of knowledge (Altbach, 2004).

**The commercialisation of higher education** means the establishment of a stronger linkage between higher education institutions and industry, the private sector and the market (Turk, 2000). Kaneko (2006) suggests that the commercialisation of higher education is an age-old phenomenon given that market forces have always played a role in the growth of the university system, from the original universities in the medieval periods to the modern

universities of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The only difference has been in the source of funding. As suggested by Altbach (2004), the commercialisation of higher education can be traced to the General Agreement in Trade and Services (GATS), a World Trade Organisation (WTO) treaty which entered into force in January 1995 following the Uruguay Round negotiations. That treaty extended the multilateral trading system to the service sector including higher education services and removed cross-border trade barriers, allowing members the freedom to choose which sectors of development to progressively liberalise, that is, privatise and commercialise. One of the outcomes of GATS was the incorporation of higher education as one of the services that could be traded within the context of the global knowledge economy. The World Trade Organisation, therefore, recognised higher education products as commodities that are tradable across international borders and in the global market. Development institutions, being supranational carriers of the doctrine of globalisation, started championing the free movement of knowledge products and activities across national borders and private sector involvement in and the commercialisation of higher education (Altbach, 2004).

According to Chorney (2008), the commercialisation of higher education is made up of two components. The first component is related to the governance and structure of higher education institutions. It requires the institutions to source funding from non-public sources, industry and the market in exchange for research or other knowledge products. To ensure that the resources received are prudently managed, this first component lays strong emphasis on managerialism, accountability and the need for profit or sustainability of higher education institutions. The second component of commercialisation, according to Chorney (2008), is soft or symbolic – a process by which the perception of higher education changes from the acquisition of knowledge as a public good to the acquisition of knowledge as a private good. This means that, unlike in the past, when higher education was valued as the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake and for the service of the entire society, the new trend is to discuss higher education with regard to market values – the generation of adequate resources and support to ensure the survival of institutions if not profit making and the need to meet private sector and client requirements. The change of perception also manifests in a change of language in the sector, where knowledge is increasingly described

as a commodity which would increase the consumer's chances of earning higher wages and competing successfully in the global economy; the students are now described as clients or consumers and the institutions and teachers are referred to as service providers.

The development institution where this study is carried out has its Headquarters in Africa and serves mainly African countries. That is why it is described as an “**African development institution**”. Apart from financing infrastructure projects in sectors that are deemed to be crucial for the development of African countries, including the higher education sector, the institution also makes knowledge products available to these countries on demand in the form of statistics, economic and sector diagnosis and advisory services. The institution has a large portfolio of business in the area of Higher Education, Science and Technology and employs Higher Education Professionals to manage this portfolio.

**Higher Education Professionals** as used in this study, therefore, represent a group of professionals employed to work in the Higher Education, Science and Technology Unit, the Human Capital development division or the Training and Development Unit of the African development institution under study. The basic qualification for those that are employed as Higher Education Professionals in the institution is the possession of a post-graduate qualification in higher education or a post graduate qualification in other fields with extensive job experience in the higher education sector, such that the professionals are empowered to take decisions with regard to initiating loans or grants for, supervising and successfully delivering higher education projects or advisory services to African countries.

Most often, to ensure the sustainability of higher education activities or programmes, the Higher Education Professionals of the African development institution insist on private sector participation in funding and the contribution of beneficiaries, as a conditionality for approving higher education grants or loans. Involving all the stakeholders in higher education funding not only creates ownership, which seems to be lacking in people's perception of public sector ventures in Africa but also it ensures that the stakeholders demand accountability from those who have been assigned the responsibility of managing the higher education sector. The role of the Higher Education Professionals in development institutions in

championing the commercialisation of higher education has been given prominence within the last few years because African countries, following the downturn in their economies are gradually divesting from the full funding of higher education and are increasingly turning to development institutions to assist in providing higher education infrastructure, programmes and advisory services (Faniran, 2012).

### **Multilateral development institutions and the commercialisation of Higher Education in sub-Saharan Africa**

Faniran (2012) and Wangenge-Ouma (2008) carried out in-depth analyses of the role of multilateral development institutions in influencing higher education policy and particularly the funding policies in Africa. Wangenge-Ouma (2008) considered these institutions as the supranational and institutional carriers of the pressures and flows of neo-liberal globalisation. He, therefore, treats the role of development organisations in the higher education sector in Africa, especially their role in setting the funding models, within the context of globalisation. Like Vaira (2004), he believes that, through a combination of coercive and persuasive pressures, development institutions have succeeded in compelling African governments to adopt a market-oriented approach to higher education funding. For example, between 1988 and 1994, the World Bank issued two main policy papers for African Governments which recommended a shift of public investment from higher education to primary and basic education. The policy papers are: Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Policies for Adjustment, Revitalization, and Expansion (World Bank, 1988) and Higher Education: The Lessons of Experience (World Bank, 1994).

The World Bank's (1988) policy paper requests African governments to reduce public sources of funding higher education in favour of greater involvement of beneficiaries and their families. It also suggested a number of reforms that were aimed at improving the efficiency of higher education in sub-Saharan Africa such as increasing the staff/student ratios, expanding access for part-time, fee-paying students, and assigning to non-public sources the full cost for housing, food and other welfare services provided to staff and students. The World Bank's (1994) policy paper was more pointed in its recommendation. The paper stated that '...the extent of government involvement in higher education [in Africa]

has far exceeded what is economically efficient' (World Bank, 1994, p. 9). These policy papers, therefore, called for policy reforms that would lower public costs of higher education, through cost sharing and the deregulation of the sources of funding.

Wangenge-Ouma (2008) describes the intervention method of the multilateral organisations and, in particular, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as coercive because they are mainly tied to aid and loans. In Nigeria, for instance, the interventions of multilateral development institutions, particularly the World Bank in the commercialisation of higher education were tied to infrastructure development loans (Ita, 2004). The first loan was the US\$120 million Federal Universities Sector Adjustment Credit (FUSAC) to rehabilitate universities in line with the requirements of the structural Adjustment programme. The second loan was the US\$102.4 million Nigerian University System Innovation Project (NUSIP). These interventions, in the early 1990's, laid the foundation for the deregulation and commercialisation of higher education in the country in 1999 (Bako, 2002).

Fagge (2014) concurs that the commercialisation of higher education in sub-Saharan Africa is the fall out of the globalisation of the knowledge economy but rejects the phenomenon which he considers to be too neo-liberal and an imposition by multilateral donors. However, given that countries are sovereign entities that would not accept any idea of foreign interference; would it not be more logical to believe that multilateral donors only intervene at the invitation of these countries? If that is the case, it would be interesting to probe further into whether forces of globalisation and neo-liberalism are solely responsible for the commercialisation of higher education in Africa or whether local realities also contribute to the need for commercialisation.

Faniran (2012) suggests that local realities contribute significantly to the commercialisation of higher education by African Governments. According to him, countries only approach multilateral development institutions for assistance because national economic resources can no longer sustain Government's full involvement in the funding of higher education. However, beyond the ability to pay, Okebukola (2010) believes that the reasons which prompted most African Governments to solely fund higher education immediately after

independence no longer exist (Okebukola, 2010). At independence, most African countries were in dire need of the human capital so as to run and sustain development. The demand for highly qualified human resources justified the heavy investment in higher education. Having trained an adequate number of personnel to sustain its bureaucracy, the emphasis of most Governments in the area of education shifted to inclusiveness and a focus on basic and primary education, which prompted most Governments to opt for commercialisation and the deregulation of the sources of higher education funding.

Okebukola (2010) reports that, in Nigeria, the commercialisation of higher education was not an imposition by development organisations but was preceded by a National Summit on higher education to discuss ways of ensuring the sustainability of the sector. At that summit, stakeholders agreed, among other things, that universities must deregulate their sources of funding and increase their internally generated level of funding, that all stakeholders should be involved in contributing to the financing of higher education, and that accountability and transparency must be the watch word in the management of resources made available to higher institutions by the stakeholders.

While most scholars including Altbach & Knight (2007), Faniran (2012) and Wangenge-Ouma (2008) agree that the commercialisation of higher education in Africa is prompted by both the forces of globalisation and the local realities of dwindling economic resources from public coffers, they differ in their perception of how the phenomenon impacts on higher education. Some scholars including Eastman (2007); Strohl (2006) and Fagge (2014) believe that adopting a capitalist/neo-liberal approach to higher education such as its commercialisation can exacerbate educational and social inequalities and conflict with some of the core values of education such as widening of access, equity, education for empowerment and inclusiveness. Others such as Faniran (2012), Okebukola (2010), and Aturupane & Millot (2009) contend that commercialising higher education would ensure sustainability and quality control and enable the students who are consumers of the knowledge products to benefit not only from core academic values but also other soft values and cutting edge skills such as creativity and critical thinking which they need to operate in the current post-modern world.

However, after reviewing the practice of higher education institutions to profit financially from athletics, research and education, Bok (2003) believes that, where it is well managed, the commercialisation of higher education can serve as a good avenue for income generation and sustainability of higher education institutions. He, however, cautioned that, if not well handled, such a practice can undermine core academic values. He, therefore, suggests a careful balance between commercial values and core academic values to limit the possible disadvantages of higher education commercialisation.

In a study conducted in Sri Lanka, Gunetilleke et al. (2011) suggested that the activities of development organisations are driven by neo-liberal/capitalistic paradigms, which conflict with the personal values of the professionals who work for these organisations. They, therefore, recommended the need to reconcile the personal values of staff members of development institutions with their organisational values in order to eliminate the dissonance in values and development efforts.

Based on my experience, the closest linkage between neo-liberalism and the higher education sector in Africa, especially among the Higher Education Professionals in the institution adopted for this study, is the commercialisation of higher education. This study, therefore, seeks to explore an African perspective to Gunetilleke et al.'s (2011) study by probing, through a case study of the experience of Higher Education Professionals in an African development institution, whether a conflict exists between their personal values and the values of their organisation.

### **The definition and interpretation of values**

The term, 'values', is a contested concept given that it is open to a wide range of interpretations (Zupan, 2012; Richmon, 2005). According to Williams (1979, p.16), the term "values" has been loosely interpreted to mean various psychological and social phenomena including: "interests, pleasures, likes, preferences, duties, moral obligations, desires, wants, goals, needs, aversions and attractions, and many other kinds of selective orientations." Richmon (2005) acknowledged the difficulty that researchers have in agreeing on a single

definition for “values” and posited that the disparity in the definitions of “values” over time has resulted in the lack of a uniform theoretical and methodological approach for studying the subject. Perhaps the best known definition of “values” is that of Kluckhohn (1951, p. 395) who defined the term as “a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable, which influences the selection from available modes, means and ends of action.” Kluckhohn’s definition influenced other researchers such as Feather (1975) who defined values as standards that influence thoughts and actions and Hodgkinson (1991) who suggested that values relate mainly to concepts that are desirable. However, some scholars (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004) consider Kluckhohn’s definition as deterministic and functionalistic as it emphasises action, thereby viewing values mainly in terms of how they cause observed behaviours.

Rokeach (1973, p. 5) improves on Kluckhohn’s definition by considering values not only in relation to behaviour but also to thought processes and the “end-state of existence”. The difference between these two definitions, as suggested by Hitlin & Piliavin (2004), is that while Kluckhohn treats values as static mental structures or cultural imperatives that lead to positive actions, Rokeach introduced an additional dimension by suggesting that values incorporate those beliefs that give meaning to personal or corporate actions or existence.

Marini (2000, p. 2828) defined values as “evaluative beliefs that synthesize affective and cognitive elements to orient people to the world in which they live.” The merit in Marini’s definition is the recognition that values are not only behavioral or affective but have cognitive elements that enable those who take decisions based on values to reason out the implications of their decisions.

The African conception of values is not much different from the western perspective except that it lays emphasis on collectivism, which imposes a burden of restraint, responsibility for others, communal entitlements and obligation (Cobbah, 1987). Therefore, the only difference between the African conception of values and that of the Western culture is that the African culture foregrounds collectivism as a value.

These widely recognisable definitions of values complement each other as they incorporate the five features that Schwartz & Bilsky (1987, p. 551) identified as common to most definitions of values, namely that values: (i) are concepts or beliefs; (ii) are about desirable end states or behaviours; (iii) transcend specific situations; (iv) guide selection or evaluation of behaviour or events; and (v) are ordered by relative importance.

Hodgkinson (1991) developed a framework that links values to educational leadership and allows for the classification of values. In the framework, Hodgkinson classifies values into three basic levels based on the motivational factors for each class of values. According to Hodgkinson, (1991, p. 99), Type 1 values are made up of “ethical codes, injunctions or commandments”. This category of values is trans-rational and grounded on metaphysical principles. It cannot be verified scientifically or justified by critical reasoning given that it is based on beliefs, faith and commitment rather than logic. However, Type I values play a critical role in the choices that individuals make, given the critical role of metaphysics and spirituality in human orientation (Fris & Lazaridou, 2006).

Type II values are rational and can be sub-categorised into two groups: Type II (a) which is grounded on consequences and Type II (b) which is grounded on consensus. Values of consequence relate to “a reasonable analysis of the consequences entailed by the pending value judgement” (Hodgkinson, 1991, p. 98), while values of consensus relate to “the will of the majority in a given collectivity” (Hodgkinson, 1991, p. 98). Although other classes of values will be given importance in this study, I intend to pay special attention to Type II values because, being rational, it bears relevance to the cognitive input that is required in the decision-making process of Higher Education Professionals.

Type III values are sub-rational, “grounded in individual affect and constitute the individual’s preference structure” (Hodgkinson, 1991, p. 98).

In practice, these three classes of values are so interwoven that they are difficult to separate one from the other. However, the merit of Hodgkinson’s classification, especially with regard to the Type II classification of values, is to suggest that there is a cognitive control over

value-based decisions (Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz, & Knafo, 2002). While recognising the role of affective elements, Hodgkinson emphasises the cognitive aspect of values in choice or decision-making.

### **Personal Values**

According to Gunetilleke et al. (2011), personal values result from a combination of religious beliefs, family background, and circumstances that people may have gone through in their lives and they include issues such as respect and care for others, integrity, honesty, decency and other private evaluative beliefs that orient people towards the world in which they live. Discussing personal values within the context of commercialisation, Gunetilleke et al. (2011), enumerated moderation, non-accumulation, self-control, generosity and equity as some of the values that might conflict with the consumerism and individualism which characterise organisational values especially as they relate to commercialisation and belief in market forces. One of their key findings was that religious beliefs and spirituality played a crucial role in firming up the personal values which conflict with the neo-liberalist ideas which they referred to as the root of the commercialisation of development initiatives.

Begley (2003) also emphasised the crucial role of spirituality in shaping values. However, he treats the spiritual aspect of values or what he refers to as the transcendental arena which relates to faith, spirituality and God as separate from the personal arena. By so doing, he not only underscores the importance of spirituality or transcendental ideas in influencing the process through which individuals make value-based decisions but also accommodates the case of people who may not really claim to be religious or spiritual but who consciously make their decisions on the basis of ideas borrowed from established philosophical, moral or religious persuasions.

In my view, the most balanced description of personal values is the one provided by Beck (1993). While acknowledging the important role spirituality plays in shaping personal values, he also demonstrates that the spiritual arena is only one among the several areas through which personal values develop. According to Beck (1993, p. 24), there are five arenas of personal values: basic personal values result from fundamental human needs including

“intellect, survival, health, happiness, friendship... freedom.” Spiritual values sprout from affective qualities such as “awareness, breadth of outlook, integration, wonder, gratitude, hope, detachment, humility, love... gentleness.” Moral values are formed from ethical concerns such as honesty, reliability and fairness; and social and political values result from civic sensibilities such as justice, participation, and citizenship. Beck (1993) also mentioned intermediate range values which result from broad personalised sensibilities such as shelter, entertainment, fitness; and specific values which relate to preferences about almost any personal thing.

In this study, I intend to adopt a conception of personal values that emulates that of Beck (1993). This is because Beck’s conception is objective, inclusive and eclectic enough to cover all the domains of human development: affective, cognitive and psychomotor. It gives room for the expression of emotions without sacrificing the basic human value for intellect and reason in decision-making.

### **Organisational Values**

With regard to organisational values, Speculand and Chaudhary (2008) defined them as core beliefs or principles enacted by organisations to guide the conduct of their activities and ensure the attainment of their goals. They enumerated communication, integrity, excellence, team work, creativity, critical thinking, hard work, discipline and mutual respect as some of the values that are common to most organisations.

With regard to development institutions which advocate the commercialisation of higher education, particularly the African development institution where this study is based, some of their tacit values include the profit motive, the need for sustainability, team work, competitiveness, quality control, human empowerment, access to higher education, consumerism and individualism – values which, going by Gunetilleke et al. (2011), would conflict with some of the personal values of higher education professionals.

According to Fris & Lazaridou (2006), most organisations in articulating their values do not think of individuals within the organisation but rather focus on the goals and objectives that

the organisation intends to achieve. In most cases, organisations seek to develop individuals only to the extent that they can help to achieve organisational goals and values. This is desirable given that it helps the individuals to achieve the goals of the institution more effectively and efficiently but when organisational values fail to acknowledge the development and expression of staff members' private self - including dimensions such as religious, affective and psychological, a conflict is bound to arise between the values of the staff members concerned and the values of the organisation (De Dreu & Beersma, 2005).

### **Conflict of values in the context of higher education Commercialisation**

In the past two decades, the higher education sector, especially, in Africa has experienced a remarkable shift in paradigm. In addition to the core academic values, the sector has been compelled to adopt values that had previously been identified with the private sector such as commercialisation, cost efficiency, managerial ethos, the need for consumer satisfaction and profit or sustainability motive. One of the remarkable changes in the higher education sector in sub-Saharan Africa is the change in funding arrangement. Faniran (2012) notes for example that in Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya, there has been a change from the era when higher education was fully funded by the Government to the current era of deregulation of the sources of funding and the commercialisation of higher education. Altbach & Knights (2007) and Wangenge-Ouma (2008) posit that these changes are the outcome of the globalisation of the knowledge economy and that they are driven by the activities of development organisations.

Studies carried out on the conflict of values as they relate to the commercialisation of higher education have focused mainly on the impact of the phenomenon on institutions of learning.

Knowledge gaps still remain on how the conflict affects higher education professionals that are employed by development institutions to drive the changes. However, existing literature and, in particular, Gunetilleke et al. (2011) suggests that these professionals experience a conflict between their personal values and organisational values due to the neo-liberal paradigm that underpins their activities in the higher education sector. However, beyond attributing the conflict of values to neo-liberalism, Gunetilleke et al. (2011) did not go into details of how development practitioners experience the conflict. This study will, hopefully,

help to bridge the gap by exploring how higher education professionals in an African development institution experience the conflict between their personal values and the values of their organisation.

However, my literature search has revealed that the bulk of the literature on the conflict of values as they relate to the commercialisation of higher education discuss the subject from the view point of higher education teachers and administrators in western countries and, to a lesser extent in Africa.

Sharrock (2010) suggests that one of the ways in which staff members of higher education institutions experience the conflict between their personal values and values of the organisation is through the tension between core academic values, in particular, the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake and for general empowerment versus managerialism which implies the incorporation of business ethos into academic institutions. This can manifest in the form of choice of academic discipline (emphasising those disciplines that can easily lead to students employment), the commercialisation of research by way of linkage between the academia and business in the area of research and the incorporation of certain soft skills that are valued by the industry and demanded by the students who are considered as consumers or clients. Lynch (2006) concedes that the link between the higher education institutions and the industry might sometimes be desirable and necessary. Yet he cautions that, even when the institutions have the need and responsibility to work with a wide range of interests, including private sector interests, they should guard against allowing the values of the for-profit sector to drive their teaching activities and research.

Eastman (2007) believes that the conflict between academic and managerial values does not amount to an outright rejection of the commercialisation of higher education but an opposition to how the phenomenon is introduced into institutions of higher education. He believes that institutions are driven to adopt commercialisation as a means to raise more resources to ensure their survival and the fulfilment of their mission. However, when it appears that academic values are sacrificed on the altar of commercialisation, the Professoriate estate reacts against what they perceive as managerialism and its effect on

academic autonomy (Sharrock, 2010). Most literature and, in particular, Bok (2003) acknowledged the need for universities to respond to societal and industry demands in teaching and research. He also believes that it is right for corporate institutions to support university activities. However, as suggested by Waugh (1998), when corporate values tend to drive academic values, the sense of academic autonomy is lost. The answer to the tension would lie in the approach envisaged by Sharrock (2010) who believed that a mutual re-evaluation of values is required for both the corporate entities and the academia to derive benefit from their collaboration based on positions of strength.

Lynch, R. (2006) identified another area of possible conflict between personal and organisational values as it relates to the commercialisation of higher education, which is the tension between the democratisation of access to higher education and the need for merit and qualitative standards. Again, the issue at conflict is not an outright rejection of the massification of higher education, but that of creating a careful balance between access and quality. Aturupane & Millot (2009, p. i) in a World Bank publication on Sri Lankan Higher Education suggest that countries that can successfully combine the improvement of access to higher education with the sustainability of merit and standard end up creating higher education institutions that are 'the Towers of Learning'.

McNay (2007) suggests that where the faculty is carried along in the process of massification and standard assurance, the level of conflict is reasonably reduced as the tendency is for faculty to resist any measure that is imposed by Government policy, which might constrain them in the performance of their roles.

The tension between academic and entrepreneurial values brings to mind Bourdieu's (1986) analysis of the social, economic and cultural capital in the society. Eastman (2007) interpreted Bourdieu's analysis by stating that although cultural capital, which in this context includes knowledge, can be converted into economic capital, any cultural capital that is too economically motivated loses its value. That explains why the faculty is uncomfortable when commercialisation tends to drive academic endeavours.

Kaneko (2006) approaches the commercialisation of higher education from a historical context by describing how the modern university has evolved in relation to the state and market forces. He concluded that from the original universities in the medieval periods to the modern universities of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, market forces have always played a part in the growth of the university system. The only difference has been in the source of funding. The church and state shared the cost of funding when the medieval universities were run as Guilds and the States took over the funding of higher education when it became clear that national development needs and industrialisation would be better served with public funding. Now that a combination of global and local factors have made it necessary to deregulate the sources of funding by commercialising the higher education sector, he advocated that the most efficient way of carrying out the commercialisation is for the State not to completely pull out from funding but to emphasise cost sharing.

### **Conflict of values and conflict management strategies**

Winter (2009, p. 122) defined the conflict between personal and organisational values as they relate to the commercialisation of higher education as the extent to which a person “seeks to separate her/his inner professional self from an outer organisational self that privileges commercial principles and practice”.

Moore (2006) described the circumstances that give rise to the conflict between personal and organisational values. He explained that a conflict occurs between the personal values of staff members of an institution and the organisational values if, for reasons of incongruences, individuals within the organisation fail to align their values with those of the institution. He, therefore, advocated that organisations should ensure that the values they adopt are “embedded virtues” to which staff members of the organisation can willingly subscribe; otherwise the values will be treated as ordinary codes which may be obeyed or disobeyed at the discretion of staff members.

Hodgkinson (1991, p. 93) establishes a link between the decision-making process of higher education professionals in an organisation and the conflict of values they experience. He states:

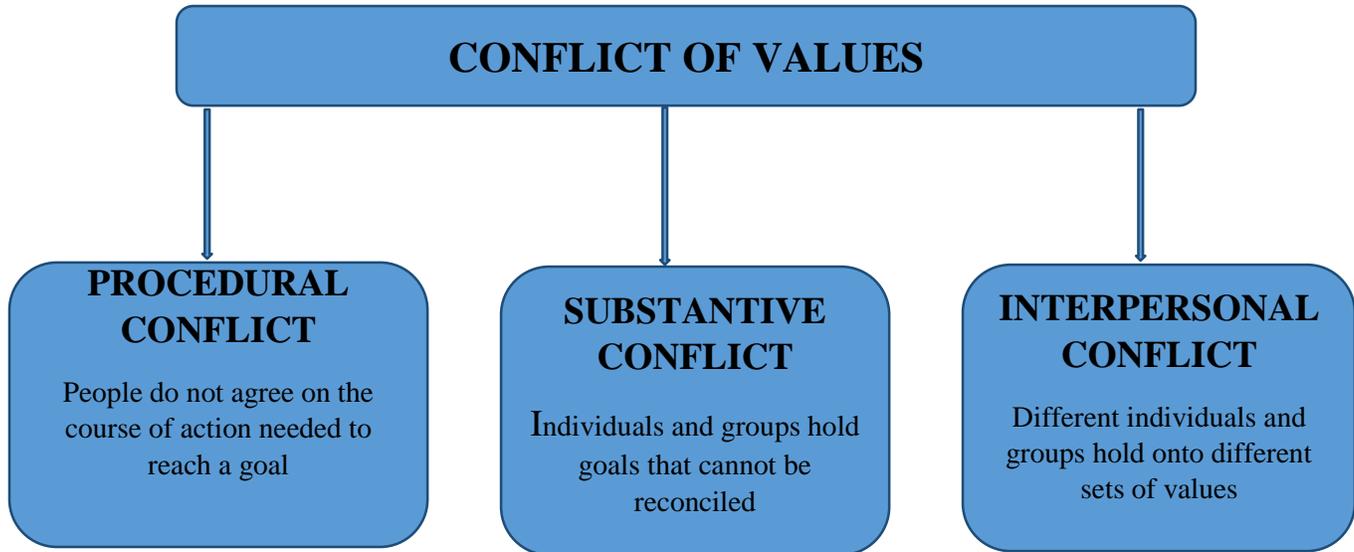
“To govern is to choose. One can accept or not accept the value dictates imposed by the particular organizational culture in which one works...One can allow, or not allow, one’s leadership to be swayed by values deriving from ...or by.....affinities one has for colleagues and peers. Each day and each hour provides the occasion for value judgements”

The above quotation suggests that, on a daily basis, an education professional in an organisation is bound to leverage on personal or organisation values and take decisions which involve selecting a course of conduct or end state and rejecting others. This act of taking a course of action or end state in preference to other alternatives has been referred to in this thesis as value-based decisions (Zupan, 2012).

Posner (2010) describes the process through which conflict occurs when an individual takes value-based decisions. He submits that if the personal values of the individual are aligned with the organisational values or the values of other members of the organisation, then the decision-making process becomes seamlessly smooth. However, a conflict results when the personal values of the individual are opposed to the organisational values and/or values of other members of the organisation. Posner (2010, p. 536) argues that “where there are differences or gaps between these two values arenas, attitudes will be formed which suppress motivation, hinder performance and result in greater levels of dissatisfaction, turnover, and stress.” Given the overarching influence of post-modernist thinking in the higher education setting in Africa, it is doubtful that any organisation exists where higher education professionals are spared from the practice-based problem of conflict between the personal values of staff members and the values of the organisation.

According to Gay (1981), conflict of values can be classified into three main categories: procedural conflict, substantive conflict and interpersonal conflict. Procedural conflict occurs when the personal values of staff members of an organisation disagree with the course of action taken by the organisation or related organs as they strive to attain institutional objectives. Substantive conflict results when the personal values or personal goals of staff members do not agree with the values or goals of the organisation. Interpersonal conflict arises if the beliefs, attitudes, and values of the different groups and individuals cannot be

aligned one with another. Gay's (1981) conflict classification can be captured graphically as follows:



**Figure 1: Gay's (1981) values conflict classification**

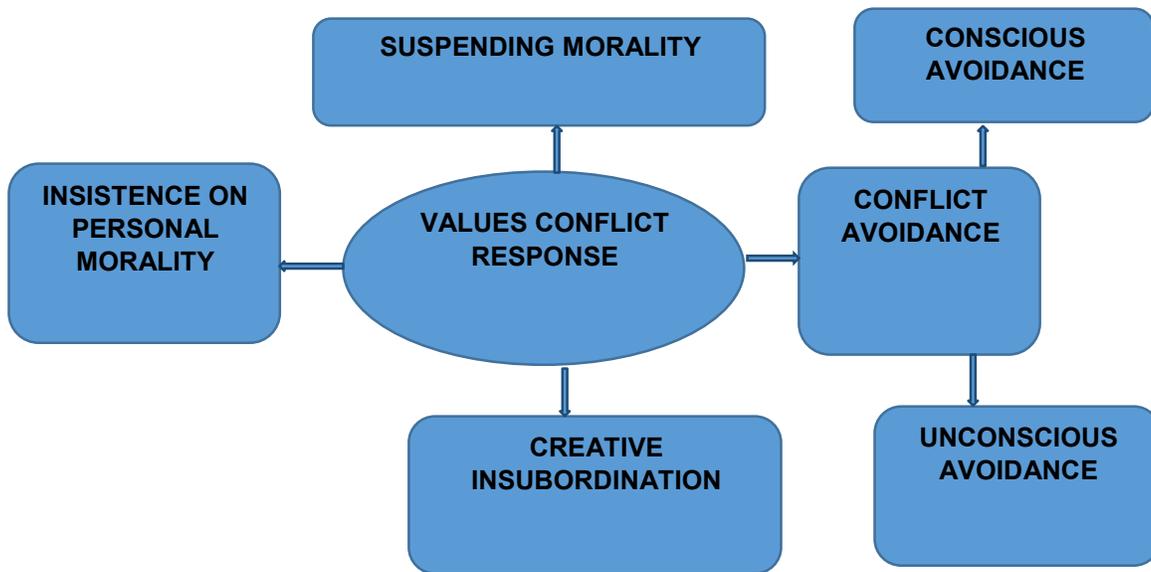
In this study, Gay's (1981) classification served as the basis for the formulation of the first research question which seeks to determine how higher education professionals in the institution designated for the study experience values conflict, if any, as it relates to the commercialisation of higher education.

Zupan (2012) suggests that conflict of values is not necessarily negative. Cooze (1989), for example, states that what determines whether a conflict of values is good or bad is the way it is managed. If not addressed or if badly managed, the conflict between personal and organisational values can cause members of an institution to work at cross purposes, it can sap the zeal of staff members and even result in a disjuncture between the objectives set by the institution and the goals it actually achieves (Posner, 2010). However, as stated by Content (1986), conflict of values when well managed can have many positive effects such as creating an avenue for personal and social change, stimulating critical thinking, curiosity and interest in new ways of doing things, preventing stagnation and strengthening team dynamics. According to Deutsch (1973), if managed creatively and proactively, conflict of

values can serve as a motivation for members of an organisation to seek solutions to problems which otherwise would have been ignored.

Based on his analysis of the literature on the experience of educational administrators and how they handled the conflict of values that occurred in the course of their professional assignment, Roche (1997) developed a framework for classifying responses to conflict of values. Roche's (1997) framework is made up of four responses: when people are faced with the conflict of values the responses are: (i) avoidance of the conflict; (ii) suspending morality; (iii) creative insubordination; or (iv) insistence on personal morality. Roche (1997) further explains that avoidance of values conflict can either be conscious or unconscious. Conscious avoidance occurs in a situation where an individual knows about the conflict of values and wilfully avoids addressing it, while unconscious avoidance takes place when an individual adopts inappropriate organisational procedures to deal with conflict of values without understanding the full ramifications of the conflict. The second response to values conflict which is to suspend morality occurs when an individual, in the face of conflict, sets aside personal values and adopts the values of the organisation in the belief that official responsibilities and professional obligations so demand. The third response which is creative insubordination implies that the individual whose personal values conflict with organisational values interprets the institutional mandate in a way that suits the personal values. In other words, the individual gives the impression of supporting the organisational values while actually working to frustrate the process of their implementation. For the fourth response which is to insist on personal morality, the individual sticks to "personal moral principles in the face of any and all consequences." (Roche, 1997, p. 72). The individual who adopts the fourth response has the choice to either remain within the organisation and endure the consequences of insisting on personal morality or leave the institution.

Roche's (1997) values response classification is of importance in this study because it is the theoretical proposition that underpinned the formulation of the second research question which seeks to explore how the Higher Education Professionals in the research site respond to or address the conflict, if any, between their personal and organisational values. Roche's (1997) values response classification has been captured graphically in Figure 2 below.



**Figure 2: Roche's (1997) values conflict response framework**

Irrespective of the kind of values conflict response an individual may choose to adopt, existing literature on values conflict emphasise the need not to suppress the problem of values conflict but to manage it through values alignment (Fitzpatrick, 2007). Rokeach (1973), for instance, recognised the need for values alignment and suggested that conflict of values can be addressed by the ranking of values in order of importance and either eliminating those that are deemed to be less important or modifying them to align with the more important values. Brief, Dukerich, Brown, & Brett (1996) supported Rokeach's model and suggested that it can result in change of value priorities and behaviour. However, Rokeach's ranking approach has its shortcomings. A careful reading of Rokeach (1973) reveals that the idea of ranking was based on the assumption that the values to be ranked were all personal values over which the individual has absolute control. It is doubtful that the scenario of a conflict between personal values and organisational values over which the individual has limited control was envisaged, although the applicability of ranking can be stretched to the conflict between personal values and organisational values. The second issue about ranking, elimination or modification is the suggestion that it is behavioral, predictive and perhaps not flexible enough to accommodate the ambiguity and uncertainty that individuals experience in the course of taking value-based decisions in real life situations. Ranking seems to belong to what Zohar (1997, p. 9) describes as "a Newtonian

approach” to values management.

Fris & Lazaridou (2006) trace the Newtonian approach to conflict management to the pre-Socratic thinking of Parmenides who viewed reality as constant and resistant to change. Values managers that adopt the Newtonian approach, therefore, try to create the situation or causes that would help them arrive at the outcomes that they need in order to succeed (Stacey, Griffin, & Shaw, 2000, p. 7). Based on the works of Fairholm (2004); Pascale, Millemann, & Gioja (2000) and Zohar (1997), Fris & Lazaridou (2006, p. 7) outlined eight characteristics of the Newtonian perspective to conflict management. They suggested that the Newtonian perspective: i) is atomistic by focusing only on the functional parts of the conflicts and ignoring the relational aspects; (ii) is deterministic by assuming certainty and predictability and emphasising control; (iii) is reductive by advocating that the whole is the sum of the parts, that the parts exist independently, that the parts are interchangeable and that coordination must be imposed; (iv) is exclusionary by believing in absolutism (there is only one truth, a best way and there is inescapable tension between the individual and the group); (v) favours duplication by mirroring uniformity; (vi) focuses on the here and now, on facts and actuality sometimes to the extent of ignoring values; (vii) favours the subject-object split which encourages the scientist to be detached from the object of inquiry and consider the world as “out there”; (viii) advocates that emptiness fills the space between objects of the universe; and objects are all there is.

The Newtonian perspective is comparable to Modernism. Milliken (2004, p. 10) defines Modernism as “the idea that desirable social change is conceptualized and pursued as social progress in the modern sense; that is, that “modern progress” is the idea that forms of human knowledge, social organization, and creative expression are progressively improved over time, either gradually or through successive waves of intellectual revolution”. Although Milliken traced the origin of Modernism to “Enlightenment”, he did not make much effort to explain what “Enlightenment” entails. It was Bloland (2005, p. 122) who complemented Milliken by defining Modernism as “strongly held assumptions both in and out of academia regarding the core values of the Enlightenment: the centrality of reason, the belief in progress, the virtues of individualism, and faith in the scientific method.” There is more to

Modernism than Enlightenment, but it is mainly the Enlightenment aspect of Modernism that bears comparison with the Newtonian perspective.

Fris & Lazaridou (2006) described how the Newtonian approach is reflected in modernist management models including the management of values conflict. In modernist views of management, the individual within an organisation is treated dialectically as possessing private and public dimensions. Each individual is perceived as an isolated unit, who if left alone might be driven by anti-social instincts such as aggression, greed and selfishness, which is why the organisation introduces certain constraints in the form of norms, rules, regulations and enforcement tools like rewards, punishment and supervision. According to Fris & Lazaridou (2006), the Newtonian influence on the modernist western way of thinking about people “leads managers to look on an organisation’s members, clients, resources, and environment as things to be used, manipulated, and controlled. They speak of employees as “valued resources”, “human capital”, and “intellectual capital”. Their methods and structures also contribute to a split between the private and public aspects of people’s lives; Newtonian managers create spaces for and nurture only those personal characteristics that are relevant to effective and efficient performance of the work that the organisation requires (Fris & Lazaridou, 2006).

### **Emergent trends in the management of values conflict**

Emerging research such as Fris & Lazaridou (2006) suggests that the Newtonian approach needs to be complemented with the “Quantum perspective” so as to ensure that values conflict management reflects the prevailing post-modernist thinking which celebrates uncertainty and change. Fris & Lazaridou (2006, p. 7) described the Quantum perspective in distinction to the Newtonian perspective. According to them, the quantum perspective is holistic and focuses on relationships and integration. It is indeterminate as it values uncertainty and ambiguity and requires trust and faith. It is emergent and self-organising given that each part is defined by relationships with other parts; that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts and that patterning and order emerge spontaneously. With the Quantum perspectives, divergent views are embraced, which means that the perspective is inclusive, synergistic and both the individual and the organisation mutually define one

another in dialogue with experience. Moreover, the Quantum perspective celebrates potentialities by focusing on creativity, thinking outside the box, exploring the unknown and the possible and factoring in values. The perspective considers the universe as participatory – the scientist is ‘in the world’ and both are mutually co-defined.

The Quantum perspective is slightly related to the concept of post modernism. Lyotard (1984) defined postmodernism as questioning the assumptions that give legitimacy to modernism. It is instructive that just as Fris & Lazaridou (2006) did not call for a wholesale rejection of the Newtonian perspective but suggested that it be complemented with the Quantum perspective, Lyotard’s (1984) use of the word “incredulity” seems not be an outright rejection of modernism but an invitation to question the assumptions of modernism. It is only such interrogations that can result in new insights which could not have emerged otherwise.

Bloland (2005, p. 124) uses postmodernity to explain changes in higher education in the new millennium. He stresses that “history is not a smooth, rational, progressive unfolding of events but a series of ruptures and fragmenting disjunctures”. This also seems to be the dominant idea behind Fris & Lazaridou’s (2006) proposition as they recommend the Quantum perspective as an additional way of managing the conflict of values including the conflict between personal and organisational values.

Fris & Lazaridou (2006 p. 6) sum up the divergence between the “Newtonian thinking” and the “Quantum perspective” as follows:

“In the Newtonian perspective it is assumed that the laws of nature are knowable, events are predictable, and control is possible – even in social matters. The job of the scientist is to reveal the organised simplicity that lies beneath nature’s apparent complexity such that it can be controlled. In the quantum paradigm, in contrast, nature is seen as often being complex, chaotic and unpredictable, and beyond much control through direct human intervention. The job of the scientist is to reveal ways of living with nature and capitalising on its potentialities;”

How then is the quantum perspective an improvement on the Newtonian dimension in dealing with the conflict between personal and organisational values?

Unlike the Newtonian perspective, the quantum perspective enables individuals within an organization “to expand their thinking, to learn from each other and others outside of the immediate team, to build on existing know-how, to apply knowledge in new ways, and to go through many iterations of collecting and analysing data before a solution emerges” (Beatty & Barker Scott, 2004, pp. 2-3). In such a situation the duty of the organisational management goes beyond work supervision and incorporates asking the right and difficult questions, building a learning community by encouraging open communication and systems. By so doing they will help the individuals within the organisation to reconcile the conflict of values that they are bound to experience in a world characterised by uncertainty and flux (Nind & Todd, 2014)

It should be emphasised that as suggested by Fris & Lazaridou (2006), the quantum perspective is not exclusive of other perspectives but offers flexibility and lends itself to seamless interface with other perspectives.

At this juncture, it would be useful to recapitulate the points made in this literature review before introducing the conflict management model that I intend to use as an instrument in this research. I have attempted to describe and develop arguments as to the origin and nature of the conflict between personal and organisational values and, to an extent, the challenges faced by organisations and their staff in addressing this conflict. I also suggested that this conflict is not simple but highly complex and, therefore, requires an instrument or way of working to resolve, as opposed to simply persuading staff to adopt different values. In the African context where the articulation of personal values that might conflict with organisational values is problematic because of deeply held cultural values about hierarchies, it becomes, even more, challenging to resolve the conflict between personal and organisational values, unless the issue is carefully managed. My proposition is that

adopting an instrument like the Bohm-Isaacs model of conflict management can help to go a little further than conflict resolution to proactive conflict management.

The Bohm-Isaacs model of conflict management which I intend to use in this study incorporates certain aspects of the Quantum perspective. Like the Quantum perspective, the Bohm-Isaacs model of conflict management shares the idea that values in an institution are in constant flux and the recommended way of managing them is to create a forum for the assemblage or interaction of the personal values of each individual within the institution with the values of the organisation. Burson (2002) suggested that the Bohm-Isaacs model can be useful for the management of conflicts within an organisation. One of my propositions is to explore whether the same model would be useful for the proactive management of the conflict between the personal and organisational values of Higher Education Professionals in an African development institution.

### **The Bohm-Isaacs Model of Dialogue**

The term “Bohm-Isaacs Model” was used by Burson (2002) to describe a discussion facilitation approach which combines Bohm’s (1985) theory of conflict management with that of Isaacs (1999). Bohm (1985) rejected the traditional method of conflict resolution in which the best-advocated value or idea triumphs at the expense of others. He suggested the adoption of problem posing, a process where people in conflict suspend their argumentative desire and restrict themselves to asking questions which seek to encourage collective mindedness, explore meaning, deepen self-reflection and broaden their experiences.

Through the use of the Bohm-Isaacs model, thoughts and ideas are spoken into a shared space described as “the container” (Burson, 2002). People no longer consider what belongs to a shared space as personal properties that must be defended but view the various ideas in conflict as part of a puzzle which group members should unravel and leverage on to build their individual and collective realities. When an opportunity is created for members of an organisation to explain the assumptions underpinning their individual convictions and the group dynamics, they learn to freely express and clarify their own views and consider divergence of opinions not as an affront but “an opportunity to dig deeper and seek not only

consensus or common ground, but creative “third ways” that were not visible before.” (Isaacs 1999, pp. 242, 243).

Isaacs (1999, pp. 242-243) described the “container” as follows;

“The active experience of people listening, respecting one another, suspending their judgement, and speaking their own voice are four key aspects of the container for dialogue. ... The container is the circle that holds all, that is a symbol of wholeness, and a setting in which creative transformation can take place.”

The idea of “container” in the Bohm-Isaacs model of conflict management can be compared to the concept of “Quantum vacuum”, as described by (Zohar, 1997).

Like the “container” in the Bohm-Isaacs model of conflict management, the “Quantum vacuum” is not a vacuum in the conventional sense of the word. Quantum thinkers believe that there is no emptiness in space given that the universe is an infinite field of energy (Zohar, 1997, p. 71). Like the “container which is a circle that holds all” (Burson, 2002), the quantum vacuum, is a field where objects including individuals and their organisations are embedded as recognisable patterns of energy or perturbations (Fris & Lazaridou, 2006). Just as individual ideas within a container can only make meaning as part of the whole, ideas and entities in the quantum vacuum have no fully fixed identity until they can relate with others and co-create within their environment (Zohar, 1997, p.50).

The main assumption therefore behind the Bohm-Isaacs model of conflict management is that ideas which express human values and the environment within which these values thrive are in constant flux and co-create the relationship between them, such that the optimal way of managing the conflict of values is to create an environment where the various ideas interact and create an infinite number of possibilities into the future.

The Bohm-Isaacs Model, as applied by Burson (2002), requires a facilitator who is conversant with the model to lead the group discussion. The facilitator’s role is to pose the

problems that may have given rise to conflict and encourage individuals in conflict to seek explanation based on theoretical propositions and practical experience. The facilitator can intervene to share his/her experiences, encourage individuals within the group to interact and generally steer the conversation away from the “a crisis of suspension”, during which “extreme views are stated and defended ... [and] fragmentation that has been hidden [appears].” (Isaacs, 1994, p.362). The facilitator should also be knowledgeable in the subject matter of discussion and in guiding group members to suspend judgement and the desire to advocate the entrenched individual values or the values of the organisation. The facilitator encourages group members to ask open-ended questions, listen actively and explore the assumptions and ideas of other group members to find out if there is a possibility of working out new ideas or course of action. The ultimate aim of the Bohm-Isaacs model of discussion is to build trust within the group, eliminate the notion of rightness or wrongness of values and address the challenge of values alignment through self-reflection (Burson, 2002).

Leung, Yu, & Qi Liang (2014) suggest that hard values management techniques are limited when confronted with complex, dynamic, technical and poorly defined problems that involve multiple stakeholders. According to them, hard values management techniques involve a step by step logical process of categorising the ideas in conflict, and evaluating them by screening, ranking, voting and various other criteria and soft values management techniques involve the use of “a social constructivist perspective to solve conflicts, establish a shared understanding, and achieve consensus among all involved parties” (p. 1-2). The Bohm-Isaacs model of conflict management falls under what Leung, et al. (2014) consider as soft conflict management technique which might be suitable for conflicts that are encountered in post-modernist settings. This study is interested in finding out whether Higher Education Professionals in the project site will perceive the model as useful for the proactive management of the conflict between their personal and organisational values.

This study seeks to explore an African perspective to the subject by probing, through a case study of the experience of Higher Education Professionals in an African development institution, whether a conflict exists between their personal values and the values of their

organisation and if so, whether they perceive the Bohm-Isaacs model of conflict management as a proactive option of addressing the conflict.

### **Chapter Summary**

I started the literature review by defining and clarifying the key concepts such as African development organisation, the commercialisation of higher education and Higher Education Professionals as used in the thesis. I then laid the foundation for the study by reviewing the literature relating to the commercialisation of higher education and establishing the role of development organisations in the commercialisation of higher education in sub-Saharan Africa. The rest of the chapter then reviewed the literature related to the key concepts in the study, particularly values, conflict of values, emergent trends in value conflict management and finally the Bohm-Isaacs model of conflict resolution which this study seeks to apply as one of the emerging models.

In the next chapter, I will elaborate on the objectives of this study and the research questions already outline in Chapter 1 and link them to some of the theories and concepts discussed under this literature review.

### **Chapter 3: Practitioner research questions and objectives of the study**

#### **Introduction**

According to Baxter & Jack (2008), the trustworthiness of case studies can be further enhanced if the research questions that are posed and answered are based on strong theoretical foundations. Therefore, in this chapter, I have decided to include a detailed discussion of the objectives of the study and the research questions for this thesis. This chapter will elaborate further on the research questions already outline in Chapter 1 and link them to some of the theories and concepts discussed in Chapter 2. As suggested by Lincoln & Guba (1985), I will also include, in this chapter, a discussion of my positionality within the research and the context of the research to enable the reader appreciate the factors that led to my choices of methods and research questions.

#### **Objectives of the study**

The objective of the study is to explore how Higher Education Professionals in an African development institution manage the conflict, if any, between their personal values and the values of their organisation. It should be emphasised that in the context of this thesis the values that are discussed are those that relate to the commercialisation of higher education. Therefore, as Kaneko (2006) suggests, discussions may revolve around issues like access and massification, equity and justice, affordability and sustainability and quality assurance. As indicated in the introductory chapter, a study had been conducted on a related topic in Sri Lanka (Gunetilleke et al., 2011). My study intends to contribute an African perspective to the conversation. The originality of the study therefore lies in the extent to which it confirms or disproves the existence of conflict between personal and organisational values in the African institution where the research is based.

In addition, my study will seek to address a practice based problem already identified in the introductory chapter of this study. Essentially, Gunetilleke et al. (2011) suggested that a conflict exists between the personal values of development practitioners and the values of their organisations. If it is confirmed that this conflict exists in the research site, then there is the need for it to be addressed in a way that goes further than simply requesting staff members to adjust their values. My study will therefore explore whether the Bohm-Isaacs

model of conflict management would be useful as a proactive way of managing values conflict. Burson (2002) has applied this model to resolve interpersonal conflict within an establishment. My interest is to find out whether research participants would find the theory useful in resolving the conflict between their personal values and the values of their organisation. Burson (2002) applied the model retroactively. This study intends to find out if it could be useful as a proactive measure.

### **Research questions**

Three research questions were proposed for this study:

- (i) How do Higher Education Professionals working for an African development organisation experience the conflict, if any, between their personal and organisational values as they relate to the commercialisation of higher education?
- (ii) How do Higher Education Professionals working for an African development organisation address the conflict, if any, between their personal and organisational values as they relate to the commercialisation of higher education?
- (iii) How do Higher Education Professionals working for an African development organisation perceive the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue as a way of managing the conflict between their personal and organisational values as they relate to the commercialisation of higher education?

I will take each of the questions in turn and discuss their significance, bearing in mind the theory that informed their formulation.

#### **Question 1: How do Higher Education Professionals working for an African development organisation experience the conflict, if any, between their personal values and organisational values as they relate to the commercialisation of higher education?**

The first research question seeks to obtain data on how Higher Education Professionals at the research site experience and deal with the conflict between their personal values and the values of their organisation with regard to the commercialisation of higher education.

The question is deliberately formulated as a compound question, made up of two

components: The first component of the question is to find out whether the research participants in the research site experience any conflict in their day to day assignment between their personal values and the values of their organisation with regard to the commercialisation of higher education. This component foregrounds the entire study because it would be needless to seek to address or explore how the conflict is experienced and managed if it does not exist. Therefore, if contrary to the findings of Gunetilleke et al. (2011), the research participants report that they do not experience any conflict between their personal values and the values of their organisation, then I will have to seek a different explanation for the difference in findings.

The second aspect of the first research question, then was to seek data on how the research participants experience the conflict between their personal values and the values of their organisation. Even in answering this aspect of the first question, I was mindful of the possibility that this conflict might not exist in my research site, which explains why I decided to adopt a hybrid of inductive and deductive data presentation and interpretation approach. Should the conflict not exist, I will use inductive analysis to identify the themes that emerge from research participants' narratives and seek an explanation for the absence of conflict (Mills, Durepos & Wiebe, 2010). However, if the conflict exists, then I will conduct a hybrid of inductive and deductive analyses to answer the research questions bearing in mind the theories that underpinned each of the questions. It should be recalled that the formulation of question 1 was partly informed by Gay's (1981) classification of conflict of values. According to Gay (1981), conflict of values can be classified into three main categories: procedural conflict, substantive conflict and interpersonal conflict. The responses will be compared with this theory to determine whether they match the theory or whether there is a different trend that indicates some deviation.

**Question 2: How do Higher Education Professionals working for an African development organisation address the conflict, if any, between their personal values and organisational values as they relate to the commercialisation of higher education?**

The second research question was based on Roche's (1997) framework for classifying responses to conflict of values. Roche (1997) posited that people respond to conflict of values in four main ways: when faced with conflict of values, people respond by: (i) avoidance of the conflict; (ii) suspending morality; (iii) creative insubordination; or (iv) insistence on personal morality. Again, the data obtained from research participants would be analysed thematically to find out the views of professionals in the research site before they are compared with Roche's (1997) framework to find out if there might be different responses to Roche's about conflict of values.

**Questions 3: How do Higher Education Professionals working for an African development organisation consider the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue as a way of managing the conflict between their personal values and organisational values as they relate to the commercialisation of higher education?**

Part of the recommendations made by Gunetilleke et al. (2011) was that the conflict between the personal values and the organisational values of professionals working for development institutions be addressed, otherwise it can frustrate the efforts made to achieve the goals sets by the organisation. Question 3 is included to explore ways of managing the conflict between personal and organisational values if it exists in the research site. In answering the question, I will not limit myself to whether the participants perceive the model of conflict management as useful or not, but will also explore how they feel the model can be improved on to perfectly suit the context of the development organisation under study.

The above-mentioned research questions suggest that findings, in this study, will be based mainly on the participants' perception and interpretation of how they experience and deal with the conflict between their personal values and organisational values in real life situation. Hakim (1987) believes that the qualitative paradigm is best suited for studies that incorporate the participants' and researcher's perception and interpretation of realities.

Qualitative design deals primarily with verbal data and derives meaning from research participants' perspectives and the meaning they attach to the phenomenon under study (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The qualitative approach is appropriate for this study because the data collected and used focuses on the participants' and researcher's subjective experiences. Therefore, I consider it useful to declare my positionality within the research, as Guba & Lincoln (1994) suggest.

### **The Researcher**

Halliday (2002) and Guba & Lincoln (1994) agree that researchers in educational values should disclose their personal stance to preserve the trustworthiness of their studies. Aspects of my life history bear relevance to the choices I have made in this study. After my first degree in Education/French, I registered for a postgraduate degree in Theories of Literature and Literary Criticism. The programme on Literary theories involved exposure to the different literary canons through which world literature can be appreciated: the Marxist, neo-liberal, feminist, sociological, psychoanalytical and eclectic approaches to interpreting literary work of arts. When I then decided to take up a career in multilateral development organisations, I discovered that development practitioners, including higher education practitioners, sometimes view their work from the above-mentioned literary-ideological prisms (Gunetilleke et al., 2011). This story of my career is important to this discussion. First, it means that, since my training was in liberal arts, I am likely to approach research problems through the qualitative paradigm which requires that knowledge be perceived through a broad overview (Leavis, 1963). This career history therefore offers me a unique insight into all the ideological poles that might affect the study of values and the commercialisation of higher education in any development institution.

The subjectivity of my literary training also suggests that I am most likely to interpret knowledge through a prism that is coloured by my experiences and bias, which is why I prefer the constructivist paradigm. This approach recognizes the researcher's freedom to create subjective human meaning without necessarily rejecting the need for objectivity (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Crabtree & Miller, 1999). Findings in this study, therefore, will be

based mainly on how research participants and the researcher perceive and interpret events surrounding the phenomenon under study (Hakim, 1987).

Furthermore, Stake (1994) suggested that while deciding on how to interpret and analyse the data, the researcher could adopt a lens that is influenced by personal experience, meanings and values. Data from this study therefore, will be viewed from the Social Constructivist lens. According to Kroll & LaBoskey (1996), social constructivism means that knowledge is not absolute on its own but only evolves through individual interpretation. Knowledge is therefore constructed by the participants' and researcher's interpretation of data based on their past experiences, cultural background and personal views. To use the expression of Crabtree & Miller (1999; p. 10), social constructivism "recognizes the importance of the subjective human creation of meaning but doesn't reject outright some notion of objectivity." Findings, within the context of this research, will therefore reflect the perception of participants and the researcher.

Applied to values as they relate to the commercialisation of higher, the adoption of social constructivism would mean that higher education need not be boxed into a particular ideological or economic pattern or objective. It should incorporate various economic objectives and patterns that I have had the privilege of encountering through the course of my life and experience. My personal position, therefore, is that adopting a capitalist/neo-liberal or any other ideological approach to higher education can exacerbate or distort educational and social inequalities or standard (Eastman, 2007; Strohl, 2006).

Given that social constructivism regards knowledge as dependent on the context from which it emerged (McMahon, 1997), I will attempt a brief description of the wider context of the study before discussing the research questions in further detail.

### **The context of the study**

In the introductory chapter of this study, I had given a description of the development institution and policy environment where this research is based. However, that description did not include the macro-context that had given rise to the issues raised in the study which,

I believe, will enrich the understanding of the general context and rationale of the research. I registered for the Professional Doctor of Higher Education programme during a period of turbulence that signposted the failure of the African educational system to address social realities, including the problem of violence and job creation.

The first macro contextual reality was the constant and prolonged disruption in the higher education calendar, occasioned by the lack of agreement between the policy makers and academic staff union of higher institutions. While the policy makers had opted for the paradigm of cost-sharing, the academic staff Union were fighting for increased funding by Government if not a total reversion to those days when Government bore the full burden of funding higher education. According to a report in *This Day Nigeria Newspaper* of 14 December 2013 (p.1), a similar disagreement in Nigeria resulted in the closing down of federal universities for over a period of nine months in 2013. One of the key aspects of that disagreement was the role of development institutions, which Fagge (2014) alleged was creating a strangling grip on the jugular of the national higher education system.

That period of university teachers' strike almost coincided with the Arab spring which was championed by young, highly educated Africans who possessed prestigious degrees but could not find jobs in their countries. That period also coincided with the upsurge of Boko Haram in West and Central Africa, led by a group of young men who, disenchanted they were jobless in spite of the possession of master degrees, went under the cover of religion and declared that western education was forbidden. These challenges sparked a general effort by stakeholders in higher education to find a solution to what was generally considered a disjuncture in the African education system.

The institution where this research is based was affected in two positive ways. First, the organisation decided to pay more attention to the production of knowledge and set up a special business portfolio to take care of issues relating to higher and vocational education, science and technology. Secondly, the institution set up a knowledge publication series for its staff members and actively encouraged them to study and propose solution to issues which might be responsible for the dissonance between theory and practice in Africa and

between knowledge and its application. One of the areas that were specifically targeted was to find out whether the higher education development paradigm adopted by the institution was appropriate for the realities of the post-modernist thinking.

This study falls within that general context of finding a solution to issues that might impede the African development institution where this research is based from providing the quality of higher education services that are tailored to meet the needs of the continent that it was established to serve.

### **The Investigator as an insider-researcher**

Under this section, I would like to discuss the issue of my positionality and reflexivity in the study. In the introductory chapter of this thesis, it was specified that the entire study is framed within the context of social constructivism which relies on how the research participants use their experience to interpret the phenomenon under study (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). For the researcher, interpreting the subjective experience of participants in a trustworthy manner requires a process of phenomenological reflection, known as reflexivity (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). As described by Archer (2003), reflexivity means a process of internal dialogue through which the researcher interrogates and clarifies issues that underpinned the conduct of the research and the choices made during the study.

While discussing reflexivity, Archer (2003, p. 103) emphasised the need for the researcher to also reflect on personal development. For me, as a researcher, the process of carrying out the study not only increased my appreciation of the conflict of values as they relate to the commercialisation of higher education but made me more conscious of the need for critical thinking in order to develop my self-awareness and improve my practice (Jasper, 2003); a process which led to transformative change (Mezirow, 1990). I discovered that as, Schon (1983) suggests, I constantly had to ask myself the question “Why” for every decision I took but I also kept asking “Is there more to this than meets the eye?” As Horsburgh (2003) recommended, reflexivity constantly surfaced all through the research process from the framing of the topic, through the choice of approach to the process of data collection and analysis.

I will now illustrate my process of reflexivity using one of the reflexive lenses that Berger (2015) discussed, namely, reflexivity from the perspective of an insider-researcher.

As an insider researcher, I shared the cultural and generational experiences of most of the respondents. I had a good understanding of the context and could easily understand the issues that surround the participant's day to day experience. This positionality played a role in the formulation of the thesis title and the approach adopted for the study. I understood that in the face of the homogeneity of cultural experience and organisational values which contrasted with the variance and contingency of the participants' personal values, the ideal way in which the study could improve practice was to formulate the title in a way that would foster congruence, alignment and the building of a learning organisation (Wenger, 1998). This explains why I settled for the use of the term "Managing" in the title.

Reflexivity as an insider-researcher also guided the adoption of a hybrid of both the inductive and deductive data analysis approaches for the research. As an insider-researcher, I shared the experiences of the participants and in order to avoid the risk of allowing my assumptions to distort the data, I decided to adopt the hybrid method of analysis, with one complementing the other. This ensured that more premium was placed on the terms used by the participants, as the hybrid method does not create the room for the substitution of the participants' sense-making with the researcher's assumptions (Brookfield, 2009). That was also the reason why I opted not to adopt Ethnography as the research approach, despite my passion for the topic and the approach, because I wanted to systematically and consciously create some distance that will ensure as little biased data as possible (Cohen et al., 2011).

Rossmann & Rallis (2010) suggested that reflexivity as an insider-researcher also entailed some sense of responsibility for some of the ethical dimensions of the research. They argued that "morally grounded researchers are ethically reflexive practitioners" (p. 380). Moore (2007) asserted that studying a context where the researcher works has advantages and disadvantages. One advantage in the course of this investigation was that I had a good

understanding of the context and could easily understand the issues that surround the participant's day to day experience. Also, being an insider facilitated my connection with colleagues which explained their willingness to endure three gruelling stages of data collection. On the adverse side, using my place of work as a research site also exposed me to the ethical dilemma of dealing with power and fraternal relationship which, if not well handled, could affect the trustworthiness of the results. To avoid the possibility of pressure on the participants arising from power or fraternal relationship, all those who directly supervise me and those who report to me were excluded from the study. People whom I considered as close friends were also not approached to take part in the study (Cohen et al., 2011; Oliver, 2003).

Another ethical dilemma that I identified from the onset of the study was the extent to which participants would be willing to sincerely discuss a topic as sensitive as the conflict between their personal and organisational values in the presence of a colleague that they meet almost on a daily basis. My initial concern in this regard was that they may volunteer less information than may be required for a comprehensive analysis. To address this concern, I offered a detailed disclosure of what the research was intended to achieve, which helped to dispel suspicion and mobilised all the participants behind the research because they saw it as an opportunity to improve practice. The fact that the institution has a culture of research and the participants knew that the outcome of research would be of benefit to the world of knowledge also fostered participants' commitment (Bennett, 2004).

One of the advantages of insider research can also constitute a weakness. The fact that insider- researchers know much about their institution could also result in an unintended bias. Based on their knowledge, they may inadvertently introduce, into the analysis, issues not reflected in the data and thereby jeopardise the integrity of the data. In my own Case, for example, one of the reasons I opted for this topic of research was that as a staff member of the institution where this research is conducted, I have had personal experience of the conflict between my personal and organisational values. That explains why I preferred to remain a non-participant researcher in the belief that establishing such a distance will preserve the integrity of the study and keep me from imposing my personal opinion that may

not have been reflected in the data. To avoid this risk, I opted to discuss my findings informally with colleagues, some research participants and my thesis supervisor to see how their views integrate with each other and with mine. (Cohen et al., 2011).

### **The Audience**

This study will primarily be beneficial to Higher Education Professionals who work for development institutions as it will help to develop ongoing conversation on the role of development institutions in the commercialisation of higher education in Africa. It is hoped that it will help to enrich the ongoing conversation on whether the development paradigms adopted by these institutions in Africa actually respond to the needs and culture of the continent. However, other intellectuals and the entire world of knowledge, especially people who are interested in the conflict of values and the commercialisation of higher education in Africa would still find the study useful.

### **Chapter summary**

This chapter discussed the research questions bearing in mind the theoretical framework that led to their formulation. It also provided additional information on the macro context of the study and discussed possible areas of researcher bias and how they were addressed. The next chapter will dwell on the research design and methodology, including issues that relate to ethical considerations, access and plan for impact.

## **Chapter 4: Research design and methodology**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to investigate how Higher Education Professionals in an African development institution experience and deal with the conflict, if any, between their personal values and the values of their organisation and whether they would consider the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue as a proactive way of managing the conflict.

As explained in the introduction to this research, the study was prompted by Gunetilleke et al.'s (2011) proposition that the activities of development organisations are driven by neo-liberal/capitalistic values, which conflict with the personal values of the professionals who work for these organisations. They, therefore, recommended the need to reconcile the personal values of staff members of development institutions with their organisational values in order to eliminate the dissonance in values and ensure effectiveness.

This study therefore seeks to explore an African perspective to Gunetilleke et al.'s (2011) proposition and at the same time address a practice-based problem. The anecdotal experience described in the introduction to this thesis indicates the possibility of a conflict in the research site between the personal values of Higher Education Professionals and the values of their organisation as they relate to the commercialisation of higher education. This study will therefore seek ways of addressing the conflict by exploring a proactive method of managing the conflict.

In this chapter, I will describe the research design and methodology in detail and try to justify why one approach has been selected over another. The chapter will incorporate the research approach, the theoretical framework, the sampling and data collection methods, data analysis methods, access and ethical issues and the plan for impact.

### **Research design and methodology**

This study adopts a qualitative research approach and in particular the case study approach. It can be described as a single-case study because it fits one of the criteria defined by Yin (2008) for single case study designs. According to Yin (2008), a study would

be suitable for a single case study design if the sample is representative of the type of group or institution under study. There are only about seven similar development institutions in the world and according to the principles of donor coordination these seven institutions are required to operate mostly on comparable policies. Therefore, I consider the group under study as a representation of a group of Higher Education Professionals in a typical development institution.

Several reasons account for my choice of the case study approach. Given the complexity of the subject matter, I am using a mixed grid of methods and a limited sample of 11 participants to address the “How” questions that need to be answered in the study. Adopting a “case” around which I can weave my narrative, therefore, strengthens the consistency of analysis (Yin, 2008).

Secondly, it should be recalled that this research was partly inspired by a study carried out in Sri Lanka by Gunetilleke et al. (2011). The study suggested that the activities of development organisations are driven by neo-liberal/capitalistic paradigms, which conflict with the personal values of the professionals who work for these organisations. They, therefore, recommended the need to reconcile the personal values of staff members of development institutions with their organisational values in order to eliminate the dissonance in values and development efforts. This present study seeks to explore whether the findings of Gunetilleke et al. (2011) will be confirmed in the context of the African development institution under study, which means that context will play a prominent role in the outcome of the study. Yin (2008) suggests that the case study approach would be appropriate for a similar situation where the phenomenon and the context within which it is studied cannot be separated.

Two other approaches could have been applicable to this study, namely, the Ethnographic approach and the Grounded Theory approach. Although the use of ethnography would have yielded deeper and richer data, the trustworthiness of the data would be called to question given that some aspects of the workshop organised during the study involved an intervention, a demonstration of the use of the Bohm-Isaacs model of conflict management

which, in my opinion, would not fit into the real life setting required for the effective use of ethnography (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2006). My role and positionality in the institution would also have constituted a serious bias if I adopted the ethnographic approach. It would have been difficult to arrive at bias-free findings by daily observing my colleagues as they deal with a phenomenon as sensitive as the conflict between personal and organisational values.

Grounded theory was also excluded because the complexity and length of analysis at various stages would have extended the scope of the study beyond the research objectives and timeline. Therefore, the use of case study appears to be more in line with the research aims and timeline as well as the chosen data collection and analysis methods.

### **Theoretical framework**

The research questions were formulated based on the following theoretical propositions on values and value conflict: Gay's (1981) categorisation of values conflict underpinned the framing of the first research question. Gay's (1981) theory categorises value conflicts into three main groups, namely: procedural conflict, substantive conflict and interpersonal conflict. Following an inductive analysis of the data from the participants, I will try to determine how the results obtained in this study compares with Gay's (1981) categorisation. Roche's (1997) classification of value conflict responses formed the basis for the second research question. Roche (1997) classified people's responses to conflict of values into four categories: (i) avoidance of the conflict; (ii) suspending morality; (iii) creative insubordination; or (iv) insistence on personal morality. Again after an analysis of research participant's responses, I will discuss how the data obtained in my study compares with Roche's (1997) classification. Fitzpatrick's (2007) article on exploring values alignment through dialogue as a proactive approach to conflict management influenced the formulation of the third research question. All these theories together with the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue as interpreted by Burson (2002) and used as an instrument in this study were discussed under the literature review.

### **Sampling method**

Participants in this research were selected by purposive sampling. Cohen et al. (2011, p. 157) and Merriam (2009, p. 77) suggested that purposive sampling can be employed if research participants are expected to be “knowledgeable” in the field under study. Therefore, as Zupan (2012) suggests, pre-determined criteria were set to ensure that participants were knowledgeable on the subjects that relate to this study, namely: values and values conflict, the higher education setting in Africa and the African development organisation within which the research is based. They were also expected to be people with a personal experience of living and managing the conflict between their personal and organisational values within their work setting. Therefore, the inclusion criteria for this study were that the participants should be Higher Education Professionals who work for the African development institution under study. They were also expected to be familiar with the higher education setting in Africa and of the organisation under study and could express an opinion that will count in a small inquiry like this with a total number of eleven participants. In addition, research participants were expected to be professionals who take value-based decisions. A value-based decision means preferring a line of thinking or course of action over others based on personal or organisational values (Zupan, 2012). From insider knowledge, all professionals in the institution at the rank of Senior professional and above take value-based decisions. Therefore, no professional below that rank was approached to participate in the study.

The research site has a group of Higher Education Professionals dedicated to the development of its Higher Education, Science and Technology business portfolio. It also employs Higher Education Professionals in its Human Development department and Training and Development Unit. A typical profile of staff members employed in these three operational departments is that the staff members have various professional backgrounds, such as government, economics, development studies, the private sector and the not-for-profit sector. In addition, they have a post graduate degree in higher education or long years of teaching in the university. A number of the participants had experience across multiple sectors.

An inventory of staff members in these three structures amounted to about 55 staff members. To limit the study to a scope that was doable within the time allotted for the programme, only 15 professionals were approached to take part in the study. A breakdown by nationality revealed that the invited participants hailed from ten sub-Saharan African countries. This wide geographical representative was not a deliberate choice by the researcher but a reflection of the policy of the research site which, being a supranational institution, recruits its staff members from as wide a geographical spread in Africa as possible. However, this geographical spread, in my opinion, helped to strengthen the trustworthiness of research data, given that the views of professionals from various higher education settings in Africa were taken into account.

Similarly, no deliberate effort was made to ensure equal gender representation in sample selection. However, of the eleven research participants who chose to take part in the study, 4 were female while 7 were male. Once again, the gender representation in the research sample appeared to be a reflection of the gender representation in the institution where the research is based, which is 40% female staff members and 60% male staff members.

The institution where the study is based has a public directory of staff members, their designation and personal contact details. The permission of the Learning and Development Office of the institution was sought and obtained to use the directory for the initial contact. An email was, therefore, sent to the first 15 professionals who met the inclusion criteria based on the alphabetical order of their surnames requesting their voluntary participation in the study.

Fourteen of the fifteen Higher Education Professionals approached by email indicated their willingness to take part in the study. Participants Information Sheet and Consent forms were then delivered by email to participants who replied positively and they were allowed a minimum of seven (7) days to read the documents, seek clarifications and counsel before granting their informed consent. Twelve (12) participants returned their completed and signed consent forms and the questionnaires were sent to them by email. Only eleven (11) participants returned their completed questionnaires, 4 by email, 7 in hard copies.

For the workshop, the eleven participants who returned their questionnaires were contacted to participate through a combination of email and telephone contacts. Eight of them agreed to participate in the workshop. Only seven participants agreed to take part in a face to face interview.

### **Data collection methods**

One of the limitations of the qualitative case study approach as identified by Miles & Huberman (1994, p. 15) is that while it treats the phenomenon under study in real life context and in depth, the relatively small number of participants normally used may or may not represent “a reasonable sample of the larger universe.” In order to address this weakness, Shenton (2004) recommends increased rigour in methodology through the use of many sources of data to ensure triangulation. Therefore, consistent with the decision to adopt the case study approach, several methods of data collection were used for this study to ensure the integrity of the findings. Three data collection methods were adopted, namely, the questionnaire method, the workshop and the interview method. The choice of these three methods was not gratuitous. Initially, I intended to use a combination of the questionnaire and the interview methods as Cohen et al. (2011) suggest. The questionnaire in that case was meant to produce the base data which could be confirmed or complemented by the data from the interview. The idea was that the questionnaire will allow the participants enough time to think through their responses before submitting their completed questionnaires. The interview questions would then be made to match the questions in the questionnaire as closely as possible and then the data from the interview would be used to compare and contrast the data from the questionnaire and to measure change. However, given that the third research question required participants to specify whether they consider the adoption of Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue as useful in the proactive management of the conflict between personal and organisational values, I decided to organise a workshop between the questionnaire and the interview to enable the participants experience the use of the model in conflict management. Fortunately, the discussion that took place within the framework of the workshop turned out to yield substantial data, which will further strengthen the trustworthiness of the study.

### ***The Questionnaire***

A semi-structured anonymous questionnaire (See Appendix 1) composed of both closed and open ended questions was administered at the beginning of the study. It was delivered by email because, given the sensitive nature of the subject, I felt that the research participants needed to be given an option either to return their questionnaires in hard copies or by mail. The decision to give them options turned out to be well informed because most of the research participants, for reasons of confidentiality, opted to submit their responses in hard copies. The data which the questionnaire sought to obtain included:

- (a) a confirmation that research participants met all the initial criteria set out for their recruitment, namely, that they are Higher Education Professionals who work for an African development institution, that they have worked long enough in the institution (a minimum of five years) to understand its values and working modalities, that they take value-based decisions on a regular basis and that by reason of their education and work experience, they are knowledgeable enough to discuss issues of conflict between personal and organisational values as they relate to the commercialisation of higher education in Africa;
- (b) Participants' determination as to whether they experience any conflict between their personal values and organisational values and, if so, how they experience the conflict;
- (c) Participants' explanation of how they address the conflict between their personal and organisational values, if any.
- (d) Participants' response as to whether they have heard about or used the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue for values conflict management.

I settled for the topic of this thesis shortly after I had registered for the professional doctoral degree in higher education. Therefore, drawing inspiration from Zupan (2012), I had an opportunity to develop a questionnaire on a related topic which was piloted in the fifth module of the course on values in higher education and then on the seventh module of the

course on research methodologies. The same questionnaire was modified and adapted to suit the purpose of this thesis.

The questionnaire was sent to twelve participants but only eleven of them completed and returned the document by the deadline of 15 August 2015 set for collection. The person who failed to meet the deadline called to express regrets claiming that he was too busy.

### ***The workshop***

The second method of data collection for this research consisted of a face-to-face dialogue and discussion of the conflict between the personal values and organisational values of Higher Education Professionals within the institution where the research was based.

The workshop was designed, primarily, to:

- a) enable the researcher to observe the use of the Bohm-Isaacs model in a research created situation and determine whether the group dynamics observed during the discussion can strengthen the development of collective mindedness, shared objectives and the management of conflict within the group;
- b) enable the research participants to experience the use of the Bohm-Isaacs model in a specific research made event and be able to give their individual perspectives on whether the model would be useful as a proactive way of addressing the conflict between their personal values and organisational values.

The content of the discussion was also transcribed to obtain data on:

- a) the participants' determination of their personal values with regard to the commercialisation of higher education;
- b) the participants' understanding of the values of the research site with regard to the commercialisation of higher education; and
- c) the participants' account and discussion of the various ways in which they experience the conflict between their personal and organisational values with regard to the commercialisation of higher education.

An external professional experienced in the use of the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue, was invited to facilitate the discussion.

Only eight of the eleven participants that submitted their questionnaires agreed to participate in the workshop. Given that the workshop was primarily designed as an intervention to enable participants experience and evaluate the usefulness of the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue in managing the conflict between personal and organisational values, it could have taken place even in the absence of the researcher. However, I opted to attend as a non-participant observer and limited my role to making the logistical arrangements for the discussion and observing the group dynamics to determine whether the discussions fostered any element of collective mindedness and resolution. Since the discussion was also guided by the research questions, I was also aware that it could yield additional data that might confirm, explain or contradict the data collected from the other sources. As the number of participants reduced to 8, the balance of nationality changed from ten to seven nations and the gender balance was slightly affected. However, the balance in terms of the representation from various linguistic and educational backgrounds, regions of the continent and operational units in the institution was not affected.

As part of the opening formalities, the researcher was given an opportunity to address the research participants and thank them for agreeing to participate in the second segment of the research. He reminded the participants of the content of the Participants' Information sheet and recalled that the assumption is that by appearing for the workshop, they were confirming the informed consent given at the beginning of the research. In addition, they were reminded of their right to withdraw their participation at any stage of the study without negative consequences and assured that arrangements had been made for psychologists who would be willing to attend to any participant that might experience any discomfort during the discussion. Participants' permission was also requested to record the discussion.

Given the sensitive nature of the subject of conflict between personal and organisational values, participants were requested to ensure that whatever happened or was said during the workshop remained within the group. Participants were also assured that the data

collected from the questionnaires still remained confidential and would not be discussed during the workshop. They were, therefore, free to base their discussions on theoretical propositions and not on the responses they had given in the questionnaire.

The aims of the workshop were to: (a) enable the researcher to observe the use of the Bohm-Isaacs model in a research created situation and determine whether the group dynamics observed during the discussion can strengthen the development of shared objectives within the group; and (b) enable the research participants to experience the use of the Bohm-Isaacs model in a specific research made event and be able to give their individual perspectives on whether the model would be useful as a proactive way of addressing the conflict between their personal values and organisational values. The content of the discussion was also noted for data that might confirm, enrich or contradict the data from other sources.

The workshop took place during non-office hours in an office meeting room mutually agreed by the participants and the researcher. The entire session lasted for about one and a half hours and was made up of three segments: The first segment was that of problem posing. During this segment, the facilitator recalled the title of the thesis “Managing the personal and organisational values of Higher Education Professionals in an African development institution” and explained that the workshop was built into the research as a form of intervention to enable research participants determine whether the model of dialogue used for the workshop would be useful as a proactive way of managing the personal and organisational values of Higher Education Professionals in the development institution. He reiterated the need for confidentiality and informed participants that to ensure anonymity, he had requested that each participant attend the session with a personal computer to be connected to a printer. This was to enable participants make their anonymous contributions from their computers and send directly to the printer kept in front of the researcher. He assured participants that his role was to moderate the workshop, encourage group interaction and sharing of experience and try to bring the group back on the task, if there is “a crisis of suspension”, during which “extreme views are stated and defended ... [and] fragmentation that has been hidden [appears].” (Isaacs, 1994, p. 362).

Let me repeat here that of all the aspects of the research, the workshop was the one where I encountered the greatest challenges. At the design stage of the study, it was included as an artificial intervention to enable research participants experience the use of the Bohm Isaacs method of dialogue facilitation and be able to make a determination of its usefulness in addressing the conflict between personal and organisational values. However, in the course of the research, it was discovered that the session yielded a large amount of data which were useful to the study, and given that the participants' information sheet and the consent form covered the use of such data, I decided to incorporate them into the research. Other ethical dilemmas also surfaced during the workshop. Given the need to ensure confidentiality, how would I organise a workshop without the research participants meeting one another? I could not find a way out of that dilemma except to allow them to meet but I appealed to them to ensure that the composition of participants or whatever transpired during the workshop was not discussed with others or outside the group. However, certain aspects of the discussion that were deemed to be sensitive were carried out in a way that made it difficult for participants to recognise each other's contributions. For example, when asked during the workshop to list out their personal values and organisational values as they relate to the commercialisation of higher education and specify where the two sets of values conflict, participants were requested to do so directly from the personal computers that they brought to the workshop and send anonymously for printing from a computer that was accessible only to the researcher. The researcher then collated the responses and presented only an assemblage of all the views expressed.

The second ethical challenge encountered related to the subject matter of the study. Conducting an insider research on a subject like the conflict between personal values and organisational values is a sensitive exercise. Would the researcher and research participants feel free enough to express their views without fear or risk of jeopardising their careers? What if, in the course of the research, a participant experiences discomfort and needs special attention due to the sensitive nature of the discussion?

These challenges were handled in two ways. First, the protection of the Learning and Development Officer of the institution was sought and obtained by the researcher for himself

and the research participants that views expressed within the framework of the research will be viewed as an academic and professional exercise meant to contribute to solving practice based problem in absolute good faith. With the Learning Officer's authorisation which was attached to the recruitment letter, the researcher and research participants were considerably reassured.

With regard to the possibility of discomfort during research, the research site has a well-equipped medical centre that provides cover to its staff members on a 24 hour, seven days a week basis. The researcher approached the Medical Director who provided the numbers of the institution's psychologists who could be called in case of emergency. Fortunately, the services of the Psychologists were not required throughout the research, as no case of discomfort was indicated or observed.

With regard to participants' activity during this segment, the facilitator suggested three questions, which each participant was requested to answer succinctly:

- a) What are my personal values with regard to the commercialisation of higher education?
- b) What are the organisational values with regard to the commercialisation of higher education?
- c) How do my personal values conflict with the organisational values, if there is any conflict?

Each participant attempted to answer these questions and sent the answers to the printer. The researcher was requested to quickly assemble the answers and project them on the screens provided in the meeting room.

The second segment of the workshop was an open ended questioning session with a view to agreeing on a statement of conflict, that is, the main issue surrounding the conflict of values. Under this segment, the facilitator encouraged the participants to speak to the "container", that is, "speak only by asking questions ....to uncover and suspend

assumptions, test implicit values, or anticipate possibilities“ (Burson, 2002, p. 27). Again, questions were asked anonymously by participants from their computers and sent to the printer and the questions were collated by the researcher and projected on the overhead screen. Following a question and answer session, participants reduced all the questions to the following essential ones:

- i) What are the advantages of the commercialisation of higher education?
- ii) What are its disadvantages
- iii) Are there ways of reconciling the advantages with the disadvantages
- iv) The public funding of higher education and the commercialisation of higher education: are they mutually exclusive?
- v) The way I experience the conflict between my personal values and the organisational values, can I describe it as a conflict of substance, a conflict of process or interpersonal conflict?

The third segment of the workshop flowed from the second segment. In the third segment the participants discussed the questions formulated followed by a moment of self-reflection with a view to resolving possible areas of conflict.

The third segment and the workshop were concluded by the facilitator who formulated a single question, expected to “truly reflect the deep causes of the conflict, the heart of the situation, a gestalt shared by all” (Burson, 2002, p. 27):

“There are many ways of funding higher education and commercialisation of higher education is the option that current realities demand. Do we allow the diversity of means to distract us from keeping an eye on the ball?”

In other words, the facilitator wanted to draw attention to the fact that, based on the discussion during the workshop, disagreements on the funding of higher education including whether it should be commercialised or not, dwelt mostly on the procedure and detail. There was little disagreement on the substance. Each of the participants agreed that the question

represented a balanced and proactive way of looking at the conflict between their personal values and the values of the institution.

The report of the workshop was prepared by the researcher and shared with the participants who agreed that it reflects their discussions and that they are happy with the level of anonymity in the report.

### ***The interview***

The third and final stage of data collection was made up of an individual semi-structured interview to obtain data on how the professionals perceive the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue as a proactive way of addressing the conflict between their personal and organisational values. The interview questions were both closed and open ended questions. Using this combination ensured that the same general areas of data are obtained from each interviewee; but allowed a degree of freedom and adaptability that would enable the researcher to get additional information from the body language of the interviewee. Only seven of the sub set of eight participants who attended the workshop agreed to be interviewed.

The data that I sought to collect through the interview were similar to those collected through the questionnaire and included:

- (a) Participants' determination as to whether they experience any conflict between their personal values and organisational values and, if so, how they experience the conflict;
- (b) Participants' explanation of how they address the conflict between their personal values and organisational values, if any.
- (c) Participants' response as to whether they believe that the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue for value conflict resolution can be useful for the proactive management of the conflict between personal values and organisational values.

While the similarity between the questions used for the interview and those asked in the questionnaire was meant to ensure triangulation, the researcher also looked out to determine whether there was a general change in the perception of the conflict between personal and organisational values before and after the introduction of the Bohm-Isaacs model of conflict management during the workshop.

With regard to procedure, interviews were initiated by mail as a follow up of the previous stages of the research but confirmed by telephone. All the interview sessions took place in the research site at a meeting room mutually decided by the researcher and the interviewee. To avoid distractions, interviews were scheduled during non-office hours mostly in the evening and on weekends.

Normally, each session was made up of the following steps: an explanation of the aim of the study and purpose of the interview, a reiteration of the information in the Participants' Information sheet and confirmation of informed consent, an indication of how long the interview might last, an opportunity for the interviewee to ask questions or clarify any doubts about the interview and a request to the interviewee to allow the recording of data and, finally a word of thanks for the time they had invested in the research process.

### **Data analysis**

This study is a descriptive case study (Yin, 2008). In order to narrow down the study to a scope that I could successfully complete within the timeline allowed for the completion of the doctoral programme, I opted to use a single unit of analysis, as Yin (2008) suggests.

Therefore, although data collection was carried out on individual basis, the unit of analysis for this study was a group of Higher Education Professionals working for an African development institution and how they experience and manage the conflict, if any, between their personal and organisational values as they relate to the commercialisation of higher education. In this study, the conflict between personal values and organisational values as they relate to the commercialisation of higher education was operationalised as the extent to which a person “seeks to separate her/his inner professional self from an outer organizational self that privileges commercial principles and practice” (Winter, 2009, p. 122).

Thematic Analysis was adopted for the research. Data collected during the study was analysed to find out: (a) whether Higher Education Professionals working for the research site experience any conflict between their personal values and their organisational values; and if so, how they experience the conflict; (b) how they have attempted to manage the conflict in their day to day life; and (c) whether they would consider the Bohm-Isaacs model of conflict resolution as a proactive way of managing the conflict.

Data from the questionnaires were obtained in written form, while data from the semi-structured individual interviews and workshop were audio recorded and later transcribed or reported in written form. The three data collection methods adopted yielded a significant amount of data which were thematically coded and analysed.

Mills et al. (2010) endorsed the use of thematic analysis where a large amount of qualitative data is available and the researcher needs to make sense out of the data and weave a coherent description of the phenomenon under analysis. The use of the qualitative paradigm and the adoption of three methods of data collection yielded a large amount of data. Therefore, to make meaning out of the bulk of data, I studied the data closely for topics, themes and descriptions that fit together and marked similar passages with the same code and different themes with different codes. The themes or codes were then categorised and analysed through a hybrid of inductive and deductive analyses based on their similarities and differences. It should be specified that data analysis and the interpretation of results was done on the basis of the themes that emerged and the research questions and not on the basis of the methods of data collection. That means that sources of data will hardly be mentioned unless if there are inconsistencies that need to be cleared.

I started with inductive analysis because, as Mills et al. (2010) suggest, it helped me to avoid the possibility of rigidity or premature closure, which is one of the risks of deductive analysis. Grounded purely on the data, inductive analysis enabled me to explore how the participants described their experience of conflict between their personal and organisational values. Inductive analysis also helped me to define and compare the emerging trends or

themes, build an interpretative pattern or insight and develop a descriptive narrative based on the findings of the case (Yin, 2008).

The inductive analysis was then followed by a deductive analysis. In this regard, I compared the emergent trends or themes with the theoretical propositions that underpinned my study and informed the formulation of the research questions and highlighted similarities and differences in relation to them too. This approach helped me to directly answer the research questions taking into account the intra case comparisons, the possibility of rival explanations and the absence of specific themes or issues. To strengthen the validity of my findings, I discussed my findings informally with course colleagues and my thesis supervisor to see how different views integrate with each other and with mine. (Cohen et al., 2011).

### **Access issues**

This study was carried out as an insider research. The research site is a knowledge institution, meaning that it has a culture of research. Indeed, staff members are encouraged to routinely carry out research in their areas of specialty on which basis they provide advisory services to member countries. Therefore, the institution has an Ethics department which, among other assignments, studies research proposals by staff members and grants or declines approval. The proposal for this study was approved by the Ethics department of the institution where the research is based. The only condition attached to the approval was that the identity of the institution and staff members who participate in the research be protected and this condition was accepted by the researcher. I sought and obtained the written permission of relevant authorities of the institution to conduct the research and approach the staff who will participate in the study. I was also authorised the use of office space and facilities during non-office hours. The participants' consent to take part in the study was also sought after obtaining the institutional authorisation and the participants' information sheet and questionnaires were sent only to the participants that granted their consent. It should be recalled that, with the permission of the relevant authorities, the participants' contact information were obtained from the directory of staff members posted on the intranet of the research site.

### **Ethical considerations**

This research was carried out in my place of employment and as Floyd & Arthur (2012) suggest for an insider research, participants were informed that my role as a Doctor of Higher Education Student Researcher in the University of Liverpool is separate from my professional position as a staff member of the institution. To avoid any conflict of interest or coercion, staff members who directly supervise me or report to me were not approached to take part in the study. Participants were informed that participation in the research was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any stage of the project with no negative consequences. The aim of the research was disclosed to participants so as to encourage them to share their perspectives, aware of the purpose of the study. In the process of data collection and analysis, participants' identity was coded and shielded to ensure anonymity and confidentiality (Cohen et al., 2011). Moreover, the name and location of the institution were kept confidential so that research participants would not be recognisable to external readers. Data was analysed in such a way as to make it impossible to pick out individual contributions since recognisable statements were not used and codes were used in the place of participants' real names. Participants' identities were not revealed in the final thesis report even where their contributions were quoted. Only anonymised verbatim quotes were used, where necessary. All the data collected during the research was secured in a password protected hard drive or secured locked file cabinet (Oliver, 2003) to be destroyed five years after the study.

### **Plan for impact**

This study has implications for theory, research and practice. This study could have a significant impact on my organisation, especially if the Higher Education professionals perceive the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue as a useful way of addressing the conflict between personal values and organisational values. Already, the study has been discussed with several colleagues in the institution. It is expected that the discussion will continue after the period of research and serve as a starting point for regular corporate conversation on managing the conflict between personal values and organisational values.

My institution has requested a copy of the study when completed and the practice is to publish portions of the thesis as part of the “Knowledge Series” – an online data base of studies carried out by staff members of the organisation which is accessible to other development organisations and interested institutions.

I may also think about presenting my findings to any international conference or for publication in an international peer reviewed journal.

### **Chapter summary**

This chapter reviewed the methodology used for the study. It incorporated the research questions, the research design and methodology, the proposed theoretical framework and ethical issues. The next chapter will focus on the presentation and analysis of the data obtained from the study.

## **Chapter 5: Presentation and discussion of data**

This chapter focuses on the presentation and analysis of the information obtained from the three different methods of data collection used in the research, namely, the questionnaire, the workshop and the interview. The data collection instruments were structured to include both open and closed ended questions, so as to provide the respondents ample opportunity to comment on the subject of values conflict with regard to the commercialisation of higher education, without necessarily stepping out of context. The reason for adopting three different data collection instruments was to strengthen the trustworthiness of the study through triangulation. Therefore, similar questions were repeated in all the instruments and responses were compared to sort out and explain any inconsistencies. The data collected through the instruments is, however, presented holistically and reference will be made to a particular source of data only if it becomes necessary to clarify the context within which the data was collected or in situations where there are inconsistencies that need to be cleared or if there is any need for comparative analysis.

As explained in the previous chapter, data in this research was presented and analysed thematically. No computer data analysis software was used in the research as I preferred to interact manually and directly with the data. Therefore, I adopted the six phases of coding recommended by Braun & Clarke (2006) in order to create meaningful patterns from which I derived my themes. The phases included: familiarization with the data by reviewing the written text over and over again, generating and marking initial codes, searching for themes among codes by grouping codes that highlight similar issues together, reviewing the grouped themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report.

A hybrid of the inductive and deductive analyses was adopted to ensure a comprehensive approach to the subject matter. Mills et al. (2010) recommended the use of a hybrid approach, where the adoption of the deductive approach alone would raise the possibility of a premature closure to the research. According to Mills et al. (2010), an inductive approach involves the analysis of the data based purely on the themes as they emerge from the participants own words, while deductive analysis means interpreting the themes that

emerged from the data in the light of the theoretical propositions that informed the formulation of the research questions. The advantage of combining both approaches, as Mills et al. (2010) suggest, is that it allows for a more robust and comprehensive analysis. It also creates room for the emergence of research results that might deviate from theories and lead to a different explanation of the phenomenon under study. Therefore, for each research question, data was first analysed on the basis of the responses by participants, after which the themes that emerged from the responses were compared with the theories that underpinned the formulation of the research questions. In this chapter I will not only present and analyse the data, but will also discuss it where necessary.

### **Unit of analysis**

Although data collection for this study was carried out on an individual basis, the unit of analysis was a group of Higher Education Professionals working for an African development institution and how they experienced and managed the conflict, if any, between their personal and organisational values as they relate to the commercialisation of higher education.

The research site is unique in location and stature and there are only about seven similar institutions in the world. According to the principles of donor coordination, these seven multilateral development institutions operate on comparable policies. Therefore, as Yin (2008) suggests, I considered the group of Higher Education Professionals and the concept of development institution for which they work as an idea which can be studied using a case approach.

### **Data and group profile**

As indicated in the previous chapter, fifteen (15) Higher Education professionals working for the research site were selected purposively and invited to take part in the study, fourteen (14) of them accepted the invitation. Participants Information Sheet and Consent forms were then sent by email to the 14 professionals who responded. However, only twelve (12) respondents confirmed their willingness to participate in the study by returning their consent form. Questionnaires were sent by email to the 12 respondents and 11 of them returned their duly completed questionnaires. The eleven participants that returned their

questionnaires were contacted through a combination of email and telephone contacts to attend the workshop. Eight of them agreed to participate in the Workshop. Although the invitation for interview was extended to all the eleven participants, only seven of the eight participants who attended the workshop agreed to take part in the face to face interview. The reason given by participants for their inability to participate in all the stages of the research was their busy work schedule. Most staff members of multilateral development organisations engage in a wide variety of tasks and a considerable amount of travel and so find it difficult to create adequate time for a coordinated study such as this research. In fact, to be able to accommodate the participants' divergent schedules, I had to take a three month special leave from June to September 2015, a period when most staff members take a recess to spend time with their families. The decision to take leave from work during that period and concentrate on this research turned out to be a good one. The bulk of the data collection process which I found to be emotionally and physically exhausting was accomplished during this period. A breakdown of the participants and the stages of the research in which they agreed to participate is presented in Table 1:

***Table 1: Breakdown of the participants and stages of research in which they participated***

	Questionnaire	Workshop	Interview
1F1	Yes	No	No
2M1	Yes	Yes	Yes
3M2	Yes	Yes	Yes
4M3	Yes	No	No
5F2	Yes	Yes	Yes
6F3	Yes	No	No
7M4	Yes	Yes	No
8M5	Yes	Yes	Yes
9M6	Yes	Yes	Yes
10F4	Yes	Yes	Yes
11M7	Yes	Yes	Yes

For the sake of anonymity and confidentiality, the identity of participants was protected by assigning a code to each of them. Codes were assigned based on the order in which questionnaire responses were received and the gender of the respondent. For example, 2M1 means that the participant was the second respondent to send in his questionnaire but the first male participant to do so. The same codes were maintained for the participants through all the three stages of research.

A mixture of five considerations guided the analysis of my data. First, I confirmed that all the participants fulfilled the inclusion criteria set out in the research methodology. Secondly, I ensured that a precursor question to my three research questions was answered as it provided a basis on which the three research questions stand. Thereafter, the data was then used to address the three research questions in the study. Therefore, information obtained from the three sources of data was analysed in five different ways to:

1. Confirm that each of the respondents met the inclusion criteria specified for research participants, that is, that they were: (i) Higher Education Professionals who work for the African development institution under study; (ii) were familiar with the higher education setting in Africa and the organisation under study and can express an opinion on the subject matter; and (iii) were professionals who take value-based decisions;
2. Determine whether the Higher Education professionals reported any conflict between their personal and organisational values with regard to the commercialisation of higher education;
3. Establish how the Higher Education professionals experienced the conflict, if any, between their personal and organisational values with regard to the commercialisation of higher education;
4. Explore how they attempted to address the conflict, if any, between their personal and organisational values with regard to the commercialisation of higher education; and
5. Determine whether they considered the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue useful for the proactive management of conflict between their personal and

organisational values, with regard to the commercialisation of higher education.

### **Compliance with inclusion criteria**

The participants' responses confirmed that they all met the inclusion criteria. Table 2 below contains a summary of their profile:

***Table 2: Group Profile of Research Participants***

CODE	Work for the Research site/Cadre	Years of Experience	Qualification	Takes Value-Based Decisions
1F1	Yes/Professional	6-10 years	Post Graduate degree	Very Often
2M1	Yes/Managerial	16 years & above	Post Graduate degree	Very Often
3M2	Yes/Managerial	6-10 years	Post Graduate degree	Very Often
4M3	Yes/Professional	6-10 years	Post Graduate degree	Very Often
5F2	Yes/Professional	11-15 years	Post Graduate degree	Often
6F3	Yes/Professional	6-10 years	Post Graduate degree	Very often
7M4	Yes/Professional	6-10 years	Post Graduate degree	Very often
8M5	Yes/Professional	6-10 years	Post Graduate degree	Often
9M6	Yes/Professional	6-10 years	Post Graduate degree	Often
10F4	Yes/Professional	11-15 years	Post Graduate degree	Very often
11M7	Yes/Managerial	16 years & above	Post Graduate degree	Very often

### **Complexity of research participants' backgrounds and attitudes**

My primary concern, in analysing the participants' profiles, was to confirm that each of them fulfilled the criteria set for inclusion in the study. However, the data obtained during the workshop yielded additional information on the background of the Higher Education Professionals that participated in the study. In addition to post graduate degrees in higher education, most of the professionals had acquired long years of teaching in the university and some level of qualification in disciplines other than education, such as: Economics,

Development Studies, Finance and Procurement, and Civil Society, private sector and the not-for-profit sector coordination. A number of the participants had experience across several sectors. The complex background of some of the participants had an unexpected effect on the group dynamics as a few of them initially talked at cross purposes, approaching the discussion of value conflict from lenses that reflected their particular experience and education.

An extract of the early part of the conversation that took place during the workshop indicates that some participants may have started out determined to defend entrenched positions and flaunt the additionality in their background:

“As a development expert, my personal value for equity is completely opposed to commercialisation and private sector participation in the Higher education sector because it calls for payment of fees which students from disadvantaged backgrounds cannot afford.”

[8M5]

The reply was in some ways polemical:

“Yes, but with my procurement background, I know that higher education institutions pay for their infrastructure and equipment. Who will fund those payments if end users don't contribute?”

[5F2]

However, another contribution revealed the positive side of the cross sector experience that was characteristic of the group:

“Let's look at this issue holistically: I am an economist. Like some of us sitting around this table, I was trained with public funds. My children are still studying in the university, which means that I pay their fees and I feel the pinch. So when you talk about the commercialisation of higher education, there is a personal side of me that thinks of equity, access and massification...[...]. There is even a part of me that feels guilty that I support a programme that can require payment of fees when I paid

nothing to be educated. But the economist in me asks: How do you fund equity; how do you fund the access and massification if the Government is broke. Access can only be possible if the higher education system is sustained and for it to be sustained, Government needs help. That is the truth.”

[11M7]

The above contribution did not only serve the purpose of putting the discussion back on an objective track. It also demonstrated that, as Rizvi & Lingard (2001) suggested, personal and organisational values may contrast or compete one with another but they need not be treated as always mutually exclusive. It is possible for a professional to approach the issue of values as an assemblage by considering all sides of the arguments involved and arriving at an objective value-based decision through critical thinking.

Having explained the basic issue of participants' group composition, I will now go on to the research questions, beginning with the question as to whether any conflict exists in the research site between the personal and organisational values of Higher Education professionals working in the institution.

**Do Higher Education professionals in the development institution under study experience any conflict between their personal and organisational values with regard to the commercialisation of higher education?**

The above question was not part of the three research questions envisaged for this research but I have decided to give it significance because, in my opinion, it foregrounds the entire study. To me, the question is important because it would not make sense to discuss how Higher Education Professionals in the development institution under study experience and deal with the conflict between their personal and organisational values unless the conflict exists. Therefore, questions were incorporated in each of the research instruments which required the participants to specify whether they experienced any conflict between their personal and organisational values with regard to the commercialisation of higher education.

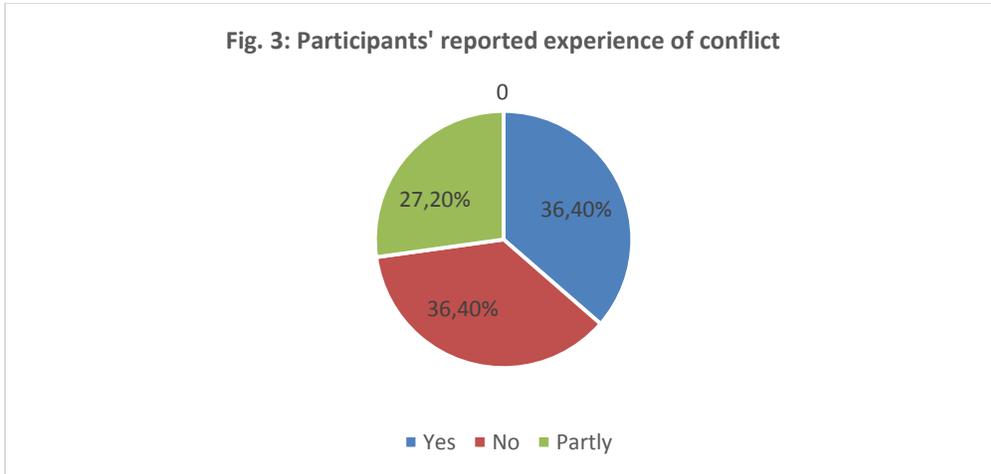
When I formulated the question: “Do you experience any conflict between your personal values and the values of your organization?” I expected “Yes” or “No” answers. However, the responses that I got from the data fell into three categories: “Yes”, “No” and “Partially”. Some of the respondents not only provided these one-word responses but also went into considerable detail to justify the responses they had provided.

The following table provides a breakdown of the participants’ responses:

***Table 3: Breakdown of participants’ reported experience of values conflict***

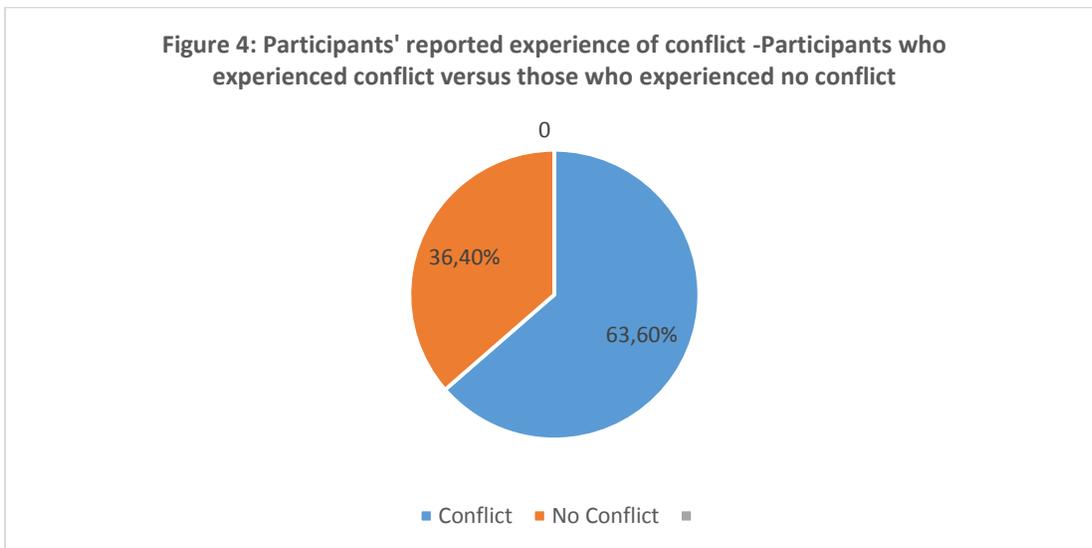
	Response
1F1	No
2M1	Partially
3M2	Yes
4M3	No
5F2	Partially
6F3	No
7M4	Partially
8M5	Yes
9M6	Yes
10F4	No
11M7	Yes

Four of the participants acknowledged that they had experienced a conflict between their personal and organisational values with regard to the commercialisation of higher education and the same number gave a negative answer to the question. The remaining three participants provided an answer which indicated that they experienced such conflict only partially. Figure 3 presents a graphic picture of the responses in percentages:



**Figure 3: Participants' reported experience of conflict of values**

However, when the number of participants who reported a conflict between their personal and organisational values was added to the number of those who experienced only partial conflict, the total number of respondents who experience some form of conflict rose to seven of the eleven participants in the study compared to 4 participants who experienced no conflict. The following graph illustrates this breakdown:



**Figure 4: Participants' reported experience of conflict of values - Participants who experienced conflict versus those who experienced no conflict**

Given that a majority of the participants, that is, seven of the eleven participants agreed that they experienced some form of conflict between their personal and organisational values, I

drew the conclusion that my study, by and large, confirmed one of the key findings of Gunetilleke et al. (2011) which is that professionals who work for development institutions experience a conflict between their personal and organisational values.

This result - that a conflict exists between the personal and organisational values of Higher Education Professionals in the research site - is consistent with the existing literature on the subject. Sharrock (2010), Eastman (2007) and Bok (2003) discuss the existence of conflict between personal and organisational values within the context of higher education institutions. Gunetilleke et al. (2011) affirms that the same conflict exists among professionals working for development institutions. Given the level of education and experience of the research participants, it would have been a surprise if there was no element of conflict between their personal and organisational values as that would have suggested a docile adherence to organisational norms and the risk that they may be deficient in critical and creative thinking (Content, 1986). Deutsch (1973) agrees with Content (1986) that the existence of conflict between personal and organisational values is a sign of a learning institution because, if managed creatively and proactively, conflict of values can serve as a motivation for members of an organisation to seek new solutions to institutional challenges which otherwise would have been ignored.

### **Themes that emerged**

However, ending this analysis at this point would amount to a premature closure to the subject. Beyond their “Yes”, “No” or “Partially” answers, some of the participants made further comments which more explicitly justified their positions. In addition, questions were also asked that required the participants to give a determination of their personal values, their organisational values and possible areas of conflict between the two. The themes that emerged from the analysis of the participants’ responses included: Morality and spirituality; professionalism; and pragmatism.

### **Morality and spirituality**

Morality and spirituality belong to what Begley (2003) considers as the transcendental value arena which relates to Faith, Conscience, God and a belief system and culture that

approach issues from the viewpoint of the good, the bad and the ugly. According to Rokeach (1973, p. 8), Morality and spirituality refer to the kind of personal values which, “when violated, arouse pangs of conscience or feelings of guilt for wrongdoing.” Certain words like “guilty” [11M7], “fair”, “right’ or wrong” [3M2] indicated the presence of this theme within the data. The theme of morality and spirituality was predominant in the data collected from participants who claimed to have substantive conflict between their personal and organisational values. In accordance with Gay (1981), when personal values conflict directly with the development paradigm that underpins the commercialisation of higher education and not just the implementation procedure, then the conflict can be considered as substantive. However, when personal values conflict with the process of implementation of the commercialisation of higher education, the conflict can be considered as procedural. Therefore, the theme of morality and spirituality was repetitive in the responses of those that claimed to have substantive conflict:

“I was trained with public funds. And my understanding of commercialisation and private sector involvement in higher education is that poor people will be forced to pay in order to be educated. That is why I cannot advocate private sector participation and commercialisation of higher education. I will not kick away the ladder that took me to the top.”

[9M6]

To “kick away the ladder” is an expression borrowed from the title of a book by a Cambridge Professor of Economics, Chang (2002). The book was popularised in the research site in 2009 when the author visited the institution as a lead speaker in a seminar organised to assess the appropriateness of the development paradigms used by the institution. The statement therefore suggests a lack of morality in advocating state divestment from the funding of higher education, especially if those championing the policy are former beneficiaries of public investment in the higher education sector. It is a metaphor to prick the conscience of those who abandon the personal values of equity, fairness and collectivism for individualism and materialism which Gunetilleke et al. (2011) associate with the organisational value of linkage to the market and industry and the commercialisation of higher education.

Another variation of the theme of morality and spirituality emerged from the data in the form of dogma, an economic dogma couched as collective-mindedness:

“I consider commercialisation and the market values that go with it as capitalist and neo-liberal. Education should not be for sale. Count me out of values that destroy the core educational value of pursuing knowledge for its own sake.”

[8M5]

As demonstrated by Gunetilleke et al. (2011), the theme of spirituality, morality and civic education versus a culture of consumerism is a popular theme in literature on the commercialisation of higher education. Begley (2003) wrote extensively on the subject of personal values and suggested that much of the conflict between personal and organisational values can be traced to the morality or spirituality of the individuals involved. Gunetilleke et al. (2011) agree with Begley (2003) in the way they explain the conflict between personal and organisational values in terms of how the spirituality and personal morality of their research participants conflicted with the capitalist development paradigm. However, the theme of morality and spirituality as it emerged from my study is much more varied, covering issues of dogma, which to a certain degree relates to the intellect. To that extent, the theme of spirituality and morality as it emerged from my research is closer to Beck's (1993) conception which seems not to divorce spirituality from “intellect and awareness” (p. 24). The import of this last assertion is that where spirituality as a source of value conflict is combined with intellect, then there is room to reason out the values in conflict and work towards an alignment (Zohar, 1997).

### **Professionalism**

“Professionalism”, in this context is used to describe a situation where individuals, faced with difficult choices in their professional space, consciously overlook their personal values and pretend that they are acting strictly as professionals (Winter, 2009). It is comparable to what Roche (1997) describes as suspending morality. For example, a Higher Education Professional in the African development institution where this study is based is constantly faced with the choice of funding a higher education project either in a rural environment,

where a high number of economically disadvantaged and girl students can be helped out of poverty or funding a similar project in the urban city, which is more economically viable. The Higher Education Professional can decide to ignore the equity imperative of reducing poverty and fund the project in the city because “professionalism” demands the prioritisation of economically viable projects. The theme of professionalism emerged mainly from the responses of those who reported that they experienced no conflict between their personal and organisational values. This theme manifested in various forms. The first form was the attempt by certain participants to separate personal values from their professional selves:

“I am a professional and, for me, professional judgment and personal sentiments don’t mix. I don’t experience any conflict because I know that by the time the Government of a nation approaches a development institution for aid, that Government is broke and must have exhausted all avenues to raise funds for higher education development. Therefore, despite my concern for equity and access, I remember that the survival of the higher education system is at stake unless Government is encouraged to share the funding obligations with other stakeholders”

[6F3]

Professionalism also involves the ability to work out solutions to the conflict between personal and organisational values; i.e. the ability to reason out a solution by way of critical thinking:

“Commercialisation is not only about payment of fees, it includes working with the industry and providing students with the soft skills that are needed by the market and the industry. There is nothing wrong with that.”

[10F4]

“There is no doubt that our organization is in favour of the commercialisation of higher education but that is implied. The institutional strategy emphasises the need to link higher education, science and technology (HEST) to the productive sector, which implies that both the public and private sectors are expected to finance it through combined efforts. Yes, the institution believes in access, equity, inclusiveness and

affordability of higher education but it also believes in excellence and sustainability which cannot be attained only from public funding. So, where is the conflict?”

[6F3]

### **Pragmatism**

In its everyday usage, the term “pragmatism” as defined by the Collins English Dictionary means an ‘action or policy dictated by consideration of the immediate practical consequences rather than by theory or dogma.’ It must be specified that all the respondents who acknowledged partial conflict between their personal and organisational values were actually in support of the commercialisation of higher education and of market values. However, they were pragmatic in recognising the conditions under which market values and commercialisation of higher education would make positive impact:

“Some measure of fairness is necessary to broaden access to the less privileged (economically underprivileged, women) through specific instruments that may be tied to education funding”

[2M1]

Another respondent who acknowledged partial conflict between his personal and organisational values wanted assurance that academic values will not be sacrificed:

”Commercialisation is acceptable to me provided it does not compromise core principles and values associated with teaching, research and scholarship across all traditional disciplines and schools involved in graduate and undergraduate education”

[11M7]

I would also categorise as pragmatism, the views of a participant who wanted the research site to go beyond advocacy and encouraging the adoption of market values in the higher education sector and empower private sector organisations through grants so as to strengthen their role in funding higher education.

“I feel frustrated when I know that there are private higher education institutions that do a very good job promoting excellence and they receive no support ... while public

higher education institutions often receive grants while in terms of performance on ... most indicators, they are lagging behind private institutions.”

[7M4]

This indicates that the pragmatists did not only reason in one direction. While one of them was in favour of public subsidy for higher education so as to improve access, another advocated an increased funding from development institutions to private higher education ventures based on his belief that private institutions perform better.

The reason why I have gone into this detailed analysis of participants' responses is to demonstrate that, unlike in Gunetilleke et al. (2011), my investigation did not yield a uniform position on the issue of conflict between personal and organisational values. While a majority of research participants acknowledged the existence of conflict, others denied it. A third group admitted the existence of conflict but qualified their responses. The implication of these various positions is that the subject of conflict between personal and organisational values is much more complex and varied than captured by Gunetilleke et al. (2011). For an institution in which the conflict exists to work harmoniously towards the achievement of common goals, it would be necessary to introduce an effective way of aligning the divergent personal values with the organisational values, a value management model that goes beyond merely asking the staff members to change their values to align with the organisational values.

The next step of this analysis will be to present the data with a view to answering the three research questions explicitly formulated for this study.

**Question 1: How do Higher Education Professionals in the research site experience the conflict, if any, between their personal and organisational values with regard to the commercialisation of higher education?**

To answer the above-mentioned question, the data collection instruments were structured to obtain information on: (i) the participants' personal values with regard to the commercialisation of higher education; (ii) the participants' understanding of the values of

the research site with regard to the commercialisation of higher education; and (iii) the participants' account of how they experience the conflict between their personal and organisational values with regard to the commercialisation of higher education. Out of the 11 participants that accepted to take part in the study, 4 of them acknowledged that they experienced conflict, while 3 stated that their experience of conflict was only partial. This analysis will therefore focus on the response of the 7 candidates who acknowledged the existence of conflict between their personal and organisational values.

### **Themes that emerged**

The data obtained on how the research participants experienced conflict was coded manually and four themes emerged from the coding. Given that the issue of conflict is most often stated in dialectical if not polarized terms, I have decided to maintain the dialectical approach in presentation and analysis so as to faithfully reflect the data. The following themes emerged from the data: Core academic values versus consumerism; Equity versus sustainability; Quality assurance versus profit motive; and Good Governance versus role differentiation. I must, however, specify that, in the course of analysis, I found it challenging, at times, to draw a line between the various themes due to the fluidity of participants' contributions. For example, a single statement by a participant can contain both the theme of core academic values versus consumerism and the theme of Quality assurance versus profit motive, thus blurring the boundary between the two themes. It is important to bear this point in mind to understand why some aspects of this analysis might overlap or appear superfluous.

### **Core Academic values versus consumerism**

Core Academic values in this context means education for its own sake or public good and consumerism suggests education that leans more towards market values (Posner, 2010). The existence of the above theme was signalled in the data by an accumulation of expressions such as "core educational values" [3M2], "education for general empowerment" [1F1], "civic education" [8M5] to indicate the personal values identified by respondents which conflicted with organisational values such as "vocational education", "education that is fit for purpose", and "education that would ensure job placement or creation".

A questionnaire response by one of the participants succinctly summarises this theme:

“...my strong belief [is] that higher education is not just to prepare potential employees for the job market but should also incorporate... the values associated traditionally with education and knowledge as a public good, something worthy to be pursued for its own sake and serving the needs of all members of society”

[3M2]

Generally, respondents who shared the above position expressed preference for the kind of education that ensures general human empowerment as opposed to the kind that is tailored purely to respond to prevailing economic realities such as the ability to find employment after graduation or become an entrepreneur and an employer of labour after graduation.

Participants were informed that they were free to present their experience of conflict in the form of a story and one of them recounted his experience while on a site visit of some of the higher education projects funded by the institution where the research is based. He expressed frustration that the organisational values of linkage with the market and industry, and private sector participation in higher education was encouraging higher education institutions to fashion their programmes to favour the consumer or sponsor preferences:

“I remember that feeling: Visiting this Information Technology institution and discovering that students can hardly express themselves. I was given the impression that it did not matter how bad the students’ prose was. What mattered was their ability to write a computer programme. And I was supposed to endorse the graduation of those students simply because they could write basic computer programmes, as demanded by the market?”

[9M6]

Another respondent framed the theme in a slightly different way by stating that the emphasis placed by the organisation on science and technology frustrates his personal value for civic education and aesthetics:

“In principle, what this organisation advocates is good, [...] emphasise science and technology, vocational and functional higher education. They want the private sector to play a role. That is good... but not at the expense of civic education. The way I see it, aesthetics is no longer valued in our higher education system. Is that the right path to go?”

[11M7]

Thus, one area where the participants experienced conflict was that their personal attachment to core academic values, i.e. education for societal good conflicted with the emphasis that the organisation placed on the kind of education that simply ensured employment after graduation and responded to the values of the market.

In one of the interview sessions, a participant introduced another variation of how he was affected by the conflict between the personal value for civic education and the organisational value of linkage to the market, which leads to consumerism. He couched the conflict as an indirect consequence of the constant disruption in academic activities when teachers of higher education institutions go on strike to protest the way that higher education is commercialized in their setting:

“You end up divided between the support for your former colleagues and doing your job. I have been where they are so I understand their helplessness. Yet I have to do my job: support my employers; advocate close relationship with the private sector and the market. Can't you read a conflict there?”

[8M5]

The above statement was actually made in response to a follow up question. The participant had painted a scenario of disruptions in academic activities in Nigeria because academic

staff members of the universities constantly go on strike to protest the low level of funding by Government and the commercialisation of higher education. Given that the link between what he was describing and the subject of value conflict among Higher Education professionals in a development institution was not obvious at that point, I asked a follow up question requesting him to explain how the action of academic staff members amounted to conflict in his job as a Higher Education professional in a development institution.

Going by the data that emerged from this study, consumerism is presented as an impediment to core academic values and certain literature such as Chorney (2008) tend to support that notion, especially with regard to the area of research. Gunetilleke et al. (2011) were understandably silent on this theme because unlike this research, their study had no specific focus on higher education, although the research participants were development practitioners. However, writing from the experience of higher education administrators, Bok (2003) and Eastman (2007) suggest that consumerism on its own is not negative provided the need for client or sponsor satisfaction does not overshadow the core academic value of learning for its own sake.

### **Equity versus Sustainability**

I am using the terms equity and sustainability in the same sense as Sutherland (2003) used them in her thesis. Equity means the notion of being fair and impartial to both the rich and the poor with regard to access to higher education and sustainability means the ability to ensure the survival of the higher education system. The theme of Equity versus sustainability was recurrent in the responses of all the participants. However, it was discussed in much more detail during the workshop that was organised as an intervention during the research. Those who spoke in favour of market values and the commercialisation of higher education pointed out that higher education institutions need not be run as charity organisations because for them to survive, talk less of maintaining standards, they must be properly funded and all the stakeholders must contribute to the funding:

“I feel for the underprivileged but that feeling will not fund higher education. If Government has no resources to fund the system, stakeholders must come together and contribute to sustain it. My understanding of commercialisation is that you are

requested to pay for part of the services you obtain. Otherwise, the system will not survive.”

[6F3]

Actually, at the workshop, this theme seemed to be the least contentious. The participants all agreed that their organisational values incorporated “equity” and “inclusiveness”:

“Our organisational values with regard to the commercialisation of higher education and indeed, every other development initiative include inclusiveness... and sustainability of the system.”

[1F1]

Most of the research participants did not approach the values of equity and sustainability in dialectical manner, i.e., as one against the other. Rather, they emphasised that while the commercialisation of higher education has obvious benefits, a careful balance has to be struck between the implementation of that policy and the need for equity. A typical contribution in this regard is reproduced below:

“Insofar as ... commercialisation fits the general development paradigm, it is acceptable. However, some measure of fairness is necessary to broaden access to the less privileged (economically underprivileged, women) through specific instruments tied to education funding”

[2M1]

The theme of equity versus sustainability is not only restricted to this research. Gunetilleke et al. (2011) discussed the theme at length in their study, although much attention was paid to the equity side of the argument with only a slight mention of sustainability. In my opinion, Sutherland (2003) discussed the theme in a manner that is more objective, giving equal attention to both sides of the argument. While conceding that the idea of allowing market values to guide the development of higher education has some merits as it could ensure adequate funding and survival of the system, she also argued that market values and the commercialisation of higher education might involve elements of cost bearing by higher

education beneficiaries which most intelligent but underprivileged students cannot afford. Given that higher education in sub-Saharan African countries is seen more as a ticket to overcoming poverty and under privilege, most citizens consider the provision of subsidised access to Higher Education for the underprivileged as a tacit social contract that Government must fulfill in order to ensure equity.

### **Good governance versus role differentiation**

In a report entitled “Governance and Development”, the World Bank (1992) defined good governance as the way in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development. It is in the same sense that I am using that concept in this thesis.

Role differentiation is a concept that describes the development of role structure within a group. In simple terms, it means assigning specialised but interdependent roles to different members of a given group and ensuring that the leadership roles are coordinated in a way as to achieve the goals of the group (Prince, 1984). The theme of good governance versus role differentiation emerged most prominently from the information obtained during the workshop but was confirmed in lesser degrees by the data collected from the questionnaire and the interview. In the course of the discussion and in other data, expressions such as “good governance”, “curbing waste” and “transparency” constantly emerged as part of the personal values indicated by participants and “role differentiation” was mentioned as the organisational value that was in conflict with “Good governance”.

A careful study of the World Bank (1992) publication entitled “Governance and Development” revealed that the institution, like other development institutions, takes seriously the issue of good governance both within the organisation and in its member countries. However, the data that emerged from my study seemed to suggest that Higher Education Professionals in the African Development institution under study would want the institution to strengthen its effort to ensure good governance.

An explanation of the organisational context will help to throw more light on this theme. The development institution where the research is based believes in strict specialisation and division of labour. It recruits people who are specialised in higher education to handle the activities of its Higher Education, Science and Technology department. Other departments exist, within the same organisation which also consist of experts in various fields. For example, Governance experts are employed to work in the Governance department which has the responsibility of supporting good governance in member countries; Gender experts work in the gender department whose duty is to mainstream gender in the activities of the institution; and Civil Society experts are recruited by the Civil Society Unit whose job is to engage civil society organisations in a way that will ensure adequate pressure on Government to fulfil its social mandate to the citizenry. However, although the organisation advocates “specialisation” and “role differentiation”, the effort made to coordinate or harmonise the activities of the various departments is inadequate. Therefore, unless a conscious effort is made, there is the possibility that Higher Education professionals might carry out their advisory services without an agreement with the gender or governance departments on how to mainstream governance or gender. Therefore, when I encountered the theme of governance versus role differentiation in the data, it occurred to me that there is a problem of coordination or harmonisation of the activities of the Higher Education Professionals with those of Governance experts. In reaction to a participant who posited that African Governments approach development institutions for funding only when they have no resources left to fund the programme for which borrowing is needed, another participant stated:

“Let’s ask them hard questions. How can government pretend that it is broke when we read of so much waste in the newspapers?”

[8M5]

Although not directly, the answer to the above question is indicative of role differentiation:

“I will focus on market values and the commercialisation of higher education. I think we need to commercialise higher education. I don’t know about waste and governance. I will concentrate on what I know.”

[7M4]

The picture that emerged therefore was that while some Higher Education Professionals in their personal space would like to ensure that all avenues of public funding of higher education are exhausted including the need for good governance in public finance management, the organisational system upholds the value of role differentiation, which results in compartmentalisation or division of labour. Therefore, to the Higher Education professional, the resulting tension manifests as a conflict between good governance at a personal level and role differentiation at the organisational level. It should be emphasised at this point that, as with the conflict between equity and sustainability, the conflict between the personal value of good governance and the organisational value of role differentiation is not a conflict of substance, given that the organisation also values good governance. It is a conflict of procedure. The difference between the conflict of substance and conflict of procedure will be discussed in further detail when I analyse the data with regard to Gay's (1981) classification of conflict of values. Before then, I will present the fourth and final theme that emerged from the data, that is, Quality assurance versus profit motive.

### **Quality assurance versus profit motive**

“Quality assurance” is used in the same way as it is defined in Craft (2005) to mean the concept of ensuring that the standard of higher education offered is sound and acceptable and encouraging continuous improvement in the management of standards. “Profit motive” in this context means the extreme pursuit of profit to the detriment of maintaining high academic standards (Kaneko, 2006). Gunetilleke et al. (2011) used a strong word “greed” (p. 45) to describe the pursuit of profit to the detriment of higher education standards. This theme emerged from the responses of research participants through their constant reference to the conflict between their personal value for quality education and the profit motive that is commonly associated with market values and the commercialisation of higher education. According to Posner (2010), commercialisation encourages market competition. Therefore, to remain competitive, higher education institutions are compelled to lean heavily towards academic programmes that are popular with consumers and also endeavour to keep the cost as low as possible, thereby cutting corners and lowering standards. The quote

that is reproduced below had already been cited but it bears repetition in this context as a data that reveals questionable behaviours that market values might entail:

“Academic standards suffer in an atmosphere of extreme market competition and profiteering. That is my concern with commercialisation. Look at the questionable academic behaviour it entails! Look at the proliferation of institutions and certificates!”

[9M6]

Reflected in the above response is also the issue of proliferation of institutions and certificates, with the unexpressed concern that academic qualifications might be reduced to commodities that can be paid for by the highest bidder irrespective of the content of the course that led to the qualification. However, the concern about proliferation of institutions and certificates was moderated by another respondent who suggested a way by which proliferation can be checked:

“In my opinion, issues of standard would not be a problem if the supervisory authorities monitored policy implementation in a robust manner. In that case, market forces could be trusted to play its role because institutions will be compelled to play by the rules and maintain a good reputation in order to attract more students. But in an environment like ours where the oversight function is weak, God have mercy!...”.

[7M4]

These two contributions summarise the theme as reflected in participants’ data. Once again, the data indicate a conditional acceptance of the commercialisation of higher education provided the supervisory authorities ensure that profit motives are kept within bounds and academic standards are maintained. There was also some concern about checking the proliferation of academic institutions and certificates.

An intriguing aspect of the participants’ responses was that the list of their personal values submitted side by side with their organisational values did not reveal much difference between the two lists. For example, during the workshop, participants listed quality assurance, equity and inclusiveness under their personal values and the organisational

values. Nevertheless, they still perceived a conflict between their personal and organisational values owing to the fact that the institution supports a linkage between higher education institutions and the industry. In my opinion, this indicates the need for values management and alignment within the institution.

However, my intention up to this point has been to present the data seeking to answer Question 1 of my research on how higher education professionals experience the conflict between their personal and organisational values with regard to the commercialisation of higher education. Thus far, the presentation and analysis of data has been inductive, that is, I have analysed the themes based purely on the participants' own terms. I will now analyse the same data bearing in mind the value conflict theory that informed the formulation of the first research question, namely, Gay's (1981) classification of value conflict.

### **Participants' Response in the light of Gay's (1981) classification of values conflict**

Gay (1981), classified conflict of values into three main categories: substantive conflict, procedural conflict, and interpersonal conflict. Substantive conflict occurs when the personal values or personal goals of staff members do not agree with the values or goals of the organisation. Procedural conflict results when the personal values of staff members of an organisation disagree with the course of action taken by the organisation as it strives to achieve its objectives. Interpersonal conflict arises if the beliefs, attitudes, and values of the different groups and individuals cannot be aligned one with another.

Data was collected from a total of eleven participants. Out of that number, four respondents claimed that they did not experience any conflict between their personal and organisational values. Therefore, they were not considered for this aspect of the analysis. Therefore, the data for question 1 was drawn mainly from the responses of the participants who acknowledged that they experience a conflict between their personal and organisational values.

### **Substantive Conflict versus procedural conflict**

A careful analysis of the data from these participants revealed that only two of the seven participants had substantive conflict between their personal and organisational values. For one of those who acknowledged having a substantive conflict, the conflict was on ideological grounds, as he considered the development paradigm and the adoption of market values in the higher education sector as “capitalist and neo-liberal”.

“I consider commercialisation and the market values that go with it as capitalist and neo-liberal. Education should not be for sale. Count me out of values that destroy the core educational value of pursuing knowledge for its own sake.”

[8M5]

The source of conflict for the second person was moral or spiritual, related to conscience as he felt that, having been educated with public funds, advocating the payment of fees would amount to betraying the subsequent generation of students who needed to be trained using public funds.

“I was trained with public funds. And my understanding of commercialisation and private sector involvement in higher education is that poor people will be forced to pay in order to be educated. That is why I cannot advocate private sector participation and commercialisation of higher education. I will not kick away the ladder that took me to the top.”

[9M6]

Data from the remaining five participants revealed that the kind of conflict they experienced between their personal and organisational values was procedural. None of the five respondents disputed the merits of market values or the commercialisation of higher education. They, however, traced their conflict to the way the policy is implemented. The External Facilitator who was invited to coordinate the workshop captured the same picture in his summation of the discussions that took place during the workshop:

“We have agreed that a conflict exists between our personal values and the organisational values with regard to the adoption of market values and

commercialisation of higher education. [.....] However, we also agreed that the conflict is not substantive. And my understanding here is that there are complaints mainly about certain contextual realities that impede the effective implementation of the policy.”

[Workshop Facilitator]

Based on the acceptance of the Facilitator’s summing up, he then went on to formulate a statement that was to be adopted by all as a final resolution which stated as follows:

“There are many ways of funding higher education and commercialisation of higher education is the option that current realities demand. Do we allow the diversity of means to distract us from keeping an eye on the ball?”

[Workshop Facilitator]

This resolution means in effect that the commercialisation of higher education and market values should not be thrown away with implementation weaknesses. The fact that research participants even adopted a resolution, instead of settling for a hung workshop that could not come to a decision was an indication that the conflict between the participants’ personal and organisational values with regard to the commercialisation of higher education was not a substantive but a procedural conflict.

Therefore, when interpreted in the light of Gay’s (1981) value conflict classification, most Higher Education professionals in the research site experienced the conflict between their personal and organisational values not as a substantive conflict but a procedural conflict.

This outcome differs sharply from the findings of the study which inspired this research. In Gunetilleke et al. (2011), the conflict between the personal and organisational values of the research participants was treated as a substantive conflict, a conflict between personal values and the market oriented development paradigm that underpins development efforts. In contrast, data from my research indicated that a majority of respondents appreciated the merits of market related values in the development of higher education but disapproved of

the implementation related organisational values that impede the optimisation of the gains that can be drawn from the dominant development paradigm.

### **Interpersonal values conflict**

No interpersonal conflict emerged from the data. The absence of this theme is understandable given that discussions were focused mainly on the conflict between personal and organisational values. However, given the multiplicity of the personal values expressed during the study which conflicted to varying degrees with some of the organisational values, the various shades of beliefs, attitudes and values of the different groups and individuals within the research site would need to be aligned one with another.

The implication of this interpretation is that, within the context of this research, the conflict between the participants' personal and organisational values is not substantive. The core problem lies with the implementation procedure of the Higher Education development paradigm and my proposition is that this conflict can be addressed through proactive management of values.

### **How do Higher Education Professionals in the research site address the conflict, if any, between their personal and organisational values with regard to the commercialisation of higher education?**

To address this question, provision was made in the questionnaire, the workshop and the interview to enable participants who acknowledged that they experienced conflict between their personal and organisational values to describe how they attempted to address the conflict. Only seven participants responded to the question, four participants who experienced the conflict and three who stated that they experienced it partially.

2M1 responded that he had made no attempt to address the conflict

“due to...inability to have any reasonable impact on institutional policy”.

7M4 stated that he had made no attempt to address the conflict because

“Policies are made at a higher level and I am not implicated [sic]...”

Three other participants also reported that they believed that they could not make any difference, which is why they made no attempt to address the conflict.

One participant gave a response that is subject to a lot of interpretations:

“The nature of my job is such that nobody dictates to me. So I have a lot of room to think outside the box”

[11M7]

When I asked a follow up question to clarify what “think outside the box” meant in this context, the participant simply added that he was not interested in continuing the discussion on values conflict.

Another participant, however, gave a detailed account of his effort to bring about change as an insider:

“Apart from identifying the job market of the next decade and revising the university curricula to meet the needs of this future market, I also injected my strong belief that higher education is not just to prepare potential employees for the job market but should also incorporate... the values associated traditionally with education and knowledge as a public good, something worthy to be pursued for its own sake and serving the needs of all members of society. ... I have made proposals to management on the need to strike a balance between those two opposing poles...”

[3M2]

Therefore, out of the seven participants who acknowledged the existence of conflict, only one of them made any attempt to address the conflict. Another participant expressed the opinion that the circumstances of his job were flexible enough to allow him to take decisions as he wished. Others were of the opinion that they were not in a position to make a difference. The high number of respondents who expressed the view that their opinion might not make a difference indicates the need to improve channels of communication, not just

from top down but also from bottom up. It also indicates the need for a deliberate and proactive management of values conflict.

One participant, in the interview, recognized the need for improved proactive communication as a way of managing the conflict within the research site when he stated that conflict management is possible when people are:

“...ready to move away from their entrenched positions to consider what the other party or parties have to offer. Through skilful discussion that does not label other values as “opposing”, “right” or “wrong”, listening becomes active and thinking processes assume visibility, with synergetic understanding as the perceived outcome.”

[2M1]

### **Participants’ Responses in the light of Roche’s (1997) framework for classifying responses to conflict of values.**

According to Roche (1997), people’s response to conflict of values can be classified into four main categories: (i) avoidance of the conflict; (ii) suspending morality; (iii) creative insubordination; or (iv) insistence on personal morality. Values Conflict avoidance can either be conscious or unconscious. Conscious avoidance means a situation in which an individual knows about the conflict of values and wilfully avoids addressing it, while unconscious avoidance means that an individual adopts inappropriate organisational procedures to deal with conflict of values without understanding the full ramifications of the conflict. Suspending morality occurs if an individual, in the face of conflict, sets aside personal values and adopts the values of the organisation in the belief that official responsibilities and professional obligations so demand. Creative insubordination means that in a situation of conflict between personal and organisational values, an individual opts to interpret the institutional mandate in a way that suits the personal values. In other words, the individual gives the impression of supporting the organisational values but actually seeks to frustrate the process of their implementation. Insisting on personal morality means that an individual sticks to “personal moral principles in the face of any and all consequences.” (Roche, 1997,

p. 72). That individual would be left with the choice to either remain within the organisation and endure the consequences of insisting on personal morality or leave the institution.

### **Conflict avoidance**

Interpreted in the light of Roche's (1997) theory, the data obtained from the study indicated that most of the respondents completely avoided the conflict between their personal and organisational values. Given that most of the respondents also believed that their views would not have made any difference, it can be stated that the conflict avoidance within the institution under study was conscious. Conscious avoidance occurs in a situation when an individual knows about the conflict of values and wilfully avoids addressing it (Roche, 1997). The scenario of conscious avoidance in this study seamlessly emulates Roche's description of suspending morality since it is impossible to consciously avoid a conflict in the situation described by the respondents and not suspend morality.

### **Suspending morality**

However, the theme of suspending morality emerged more glaringly from the data when I reviewed an intervention that I had already reproduced earlier in this chapter:

“You end up divided between the support for your former colleagues and doing your job. I have been where they are so I understand their helplessness. Yet I have to do my job: support my employers; advocate close relationship with the private sector and the market. Can't you read a conflict there?” [8M5]

This is a case of a participant who decided to do his job even though his personal values would have drawn him in the opposite direction.

### **Insistence on personal morality**

This theme was reflected in the contribution of only one participant:

“I also injected my strong belief that higher education is not just to prepare potential employees for the job market but should also incorporate... the values associated traditionally with education and knowledge as a public good, something worthy to be pursued for its own sake and serving the needs of all members of society. ...”

[3M2]

Insistence on personal morality can manifest in two ways (Roche, 1997). It is either the person who experiences the conflict gives up the job and moves to another that accommodates personal values or the person stays on the job and battles from within. This is a case of somebody who decided to stay on the job and seek ways of correcting the conflict from within.

### **Creative insubordination**

This theme was absent from the data. The closest case to creative insubordination was that of the participant [11M7] who stated that his job provided adequate freedom to interpret corporate values as he wished. However, I was uncomfortable categorising this response as creative insubordination given that the participant avoided further clarifications even when prompted to do so. It would be unsafe to put words in his mouth.

However, the absence of this theme speaks volumes. It might reveal a culture of docile compliance with organisational norms, especially as the data also revealed a response that I did not initially factor into the study and which fell outside the scope envisaged by Roche (1997). In answer to why he did not make any attempt to resolve the conflict between his personal and organisational values, a respondent stated:

“It did not occur to me. We don’t have that culture here...”

[8M5]

Initially, I could not figure out how to classify the above assertion under Roche’s (1997) category of conflict classification. It would sound interesting to add cultural peculiarities to Roche’s (1997) categorisation so as to cover this statement in the African context. It is difficult to ascertain whether the respondent was referring to the culture of the institution or the African culture as a whole. However, irrespective of whether the reference was to African or organisational culture, the mere idea that value alignment and value conflict management does not form a part of staff members’ normal experience is quite revealing. The implication is that the institution under study which aspires to become a knowledge and learning organisation needs to pursue a programme of values threshold definition and

alignment and a conscious means of encouraging communication and creating a sense of collective mindedness. One of the propositions of this study is that the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue can be useful as a proactive way of managing the conflict between the personal and organisational values of Higher Education Professionals.

**Do Higher Education Professionals working for the African development institution consider the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue as a useful way of managing the conflict between their personal and organisational values?**

In their study, Gunetilleke et al. (2011) underscored among other things the need to manage the conflict between the personal and the organisational values of professionals working for development institutions, otherwise it can frustrate the efforts made to achieve the goals set by the organisation. In addition, Posner (2010) argued in favour of working towards the congruency of personal and organisational values and Burson (2002) demonstrated that the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue is a soft and flexible conflict resolution model and therefore can serve as one of the emergent dialogue management models for complex organisations. Based on the foregoing, Question 3 was incorporated into this study to determine whether Higher Education Professionals in the institution under study would find the model useful in managing the conflict between their personal and organisational values.

I proposed to answer the question from three perspectives: i.e. (i) determine, based on my observations and the participants' responses whether there was any change in the participants' perception of values conflict following the intervention with the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue (ii) determine, based on the language used by the research participants, whether they consider the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue as useful for the proactive management of conflicts; and (iii) suggest based on the perception of research participants how the model can be improved on to perfectly suit the context of the development organisation under study.

**Was there any change in Participants' perception following the application of the Bohm Isaacs model of dialogue?**

A detailed description of the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue was given under the literature review (Refer to Page 44) and it might not be necessary to repeat it at this juncture. To enable the participants to answer the third research question, a workshop was incorporated into the research so that they can experience the use of the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue and determine its usefulness. The workshop was also designed as an intervention. In that regard, I attended the event to take notes and observe the body language of participants and the group dynamics. I also designed the interview which came after the intervention in such a way as to repeat the questions that had already been asked in the questionnaire. The reason for that repetition was to determine whether the Participants' responses in the interview which was conducted after the application of the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue would differ from the earlier responses given in the questionnaire which was administered before the intervention.

To capture the group dynamics during the workshop, I consider it useful to provide a detailed description of how the event was organised.

Given the sensitive nature of the subject of conflict between personal values and organisational values, participants were assured that the data collected earlier from the questionnaires would not be discussed during the workshop. Discussions were therefore based mainly on theoretical propositions and not on the responses they had given in the questionnaire.

The workshop was to be made up of three segments. The first segment, described as problem posing started as planned. The facilitator recalled the title of the thesis "Managing the personal and organisational values of Higher Education Professionals in an African development institution" and explained that the workshop was built into the research as a form of intervention to enable research participants determine whether the model of dialogue adopted for the workshop would be useful as a proactive way of managing the personal and organisational values of higher education professionals in the development institution. He then started asking questions and to ensure anonymity, he requested participants to answer the questions asked from their computers and send directly to the computer kept in front of the researcher.

My first major observation was that halfway through the second segment, one of the participants took over from the facilitator and the following conversation ensued:

“Let me help the facilitator, because I think we are becoming too academic: I know that the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue as applied by Burson does not envisage detailed discussion of questions raised. But I think we can attempt answering these questions without resorting to arguments....And please, talk because I know that the researcher needs a reasonable amount of data to work with. After all, this is a research project.”

[2M1]

“That sounds like a good idea. But is it acceptable to all. Yes? Now then, let’s proceed. I will ask the first question: What are the advantages of the commercialisation of higher education?”

[Workshop Facilitator]

Given the sensitive nature of the subject, I did not expect the participants to opt for an open discussion. Therefore, to me, this conversation was a mark of positive group dynamics. I could not attribute this to the use of the Bohm-Isaacs model. Borrowing from the suggestion made by the research participant, I would attribute this group dynamics to the issue of social acceptance, that is, the participants were conscious that the workshop was organised as part of a research and they were willing to be open so as to afford the researcher “a reasonable amount of data to work with...” and because they assumed that the research context is artificial with no real threatening consequences.

Another observation that I made was that the situation which I initially regarded as positive group dynamics quickly ran into what Isaacs (1994) describes as “a crisis of suspension”, a period of exchanges during which “extreme views are stated and defended ... [and] fragmentation that has been hidden [appears].” (Isaacs, 1994, p. 362). The participants’ exchanges below had already been used in another part of this chapter but they bear repetition for the sake of emphasis:

“As a development expert, my personal value for equity is completely opposed to commercialisation and private sector participation in the Higher education sector because it calls for payment of fees which students from disadvantaged backgrounds cannot afford.”

[8M5]

“Yes, but with my procurement background, I know that higher education institutions pay for their infrastructure and equipment. Who will fund those payments if end users don't contribute?”

[5F2]

“Let's look at this issue holistically: I am an economist. Like some of us sitting around this table, I was trained with public funds. My children are still studying in the university, which means that I pay their fees and I feel the pinch. So when you talk about the commercialisation of higher education, there is a personal side of me that thinks of equity, access and massification...[...]. There is even a part of me that feels guilty that I support a programme that can require payment of fees when I paid nothing to be educated. But the economist in me asks: How do you fund equity; how do you fund the access and massification if the Government is broke. Access can only be possible if the higher education system is sustained and for it to be sustained, Government needs help. That is the truth.”

[11M7]

This last intervention offered the facilitator an elbow room to steer the discussion to a more conciliatory tone.

The third observation I made was that, once the participants started listening to each other, a bridging of gaps emerged on the issues that first appeared to be major differences. In that regard, I reproduce verbatim at length a conversation during the workshop which facilitated the resolution of the conflict:

“For me, the most serious disadvantage is that it can deny access to poor but intelligent students who may not be able to afford the fees. And for somebody like me who would not have had the privilege to obtain higher education if it were not financed from public funds, I find the denial of access frustrating. But I agree with the idea ..... If the Government sets up and runs an efficient scholarship scheme through which disadvantaged students could obtain loans, if the universities also set up financing scheme for poor but outstanding students and if the industry plays its role of funding research and education infrastructure, in addition to the partial funding from the states and if the parents that can pay do so without politicising the issue, I think there would be no problems with commercialisation.”

[3M2]

“I like the last point you made, because there are a lot of parents who can afford to fund the cost of educating their children and it would be unfair to let them depend on public funding. There are also well placed alumni and companies who should be allowed to contribute to funding higher education.”

[5F2]

“We are all higher education professionals, an enlightened group, if you permit the use of that expression. So we perfectly understand the need for the commercialisation of higher education. But the context is such that there are no safety nets, no coordinated system to subsidise the cost of education for bright but disadvantaged students and these stand as a source of frustration when you get to the fields.”

[2M1]

“I agree. But the fact remains that there is always a way of looking at all sides of the coin and then by critical thinking and introspection, working out how the jigsaw puzzle around the commercialisation of higher education falls into place. For me, the question is: can our personal values not be accommodated within the context of commercialisation? Does it have to be one or the other, with one winning over the

other? Can our personal values not co-exist with the commercialisation of higher education?”

[11M7]

“My opinion is that the tension develops between personal values and organisational values when the issue is approached from the lens of ideology. ... I personally find it easy to sort out the different trends related to the commercialisation of higher education and arrive at an assemblage.”

[7M4]

“So then what is needed to make commercialisation work is to .... ensure that all stakeholders are carried along. The devil is not in the concept itself, it is in the process.”

[5F2]

“I think I need to round off now because I sense that the group dynamics is heading towards a consensus. Simply listening to you, I can tick out that your contributions adequately address the questions raised. There is an expression somebody used in the course of the conversation and I noted: “The devil is not in the concept itself, it is in the process.” I will use that expression to formulate what Burson describes as single question that “truly reflects the deep causes of the conflict, the heart of the situation, a gestalt shared by all” (Burson, 2002, p. 27). And that question is: “There are many ways of funding higher education and commercialisation of higher education is the option that current realities demand. Do we allow the diversity of means to distract us from keeping an eye on the ball?”

[Workshop Facilitator]

The exchanges that I have reproduced in this chapter were not scripted or acted but looking at them with the eyes of a former literary critic, I could see the situation evolve like in a drama from what initially constituted a conflict to a resolution at the end.

My notes indicate that the group dynamics was positive. The workshop was designed bearing in mind the possibility of a hung discussion, that is, that it could be concluded without a clear cut decision. Therefore, it was an indication of positive dynamics that the group reached a consensus in less than two hours. However, one aspect of the workshop that featured prominently in my notes was the willingness of participants to listen to contending views without disagreeable responses. For example, all those whose values conflicted with the commercialisation of higher education pointed out the areas of conflict while at the same time recognising the merits of market values and the commercialisation of higher education. Those who advocated commercialisation on their own part did not down play the possibility of conflict. At the end of the exercise, all the participants were willing to look at both sides of each argument. Therefore, going by the ability of the group to arrive at a decision acceptable to all, I marked the group dynamics as positive.

By and large, I sensed that there was a general endorsement of the usefulness of the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue in the research context and is consistent with the views expressed by Isaacs (1994) when complementing the works of Bohm (1985). Isaacs suggested that when ideas and thoughts are spoken into a shared space which he described as 'container', they cease to be perceived as personal properties to be defended and are viewed as part of a whole puzzle that can enable group members construct their own realities, engage in self-reflection and build on their experiences. By creating a platform where group members can discuss the assumptions behind their individual convictions and the group dynamics, they learn to view divergence of opinions not as an affront but "an opportunity to dig deeper and seek not only consensus or common ground, but creative "third ways" that were not visible before." (Isaacs, 1999, pp. 242, 243).

### **Comparative analysis: Responses from the Questionnaire and Responses during interview**

As part of the effort to determine the usefulness of the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue in addressing the conflict between personal and organisational values, I decided to carry out a comparative analysis of participants' questionnaire and interview responses. It will be recalled that the workshop was introduced into the research not only as a standard data

collection instrument but also as an intervention. Part of the purpose of the workshop was to enable the participants to experience the use of the Bohm-Isaacs model in a research setting and determine whether it could be useful in addressing the conflict between their personal and organisational values. However, there was also a secondary purpose to use the workshop as an intervention and observe thereafter whether the respondents who attended the event would change their initial responses. Given that the questionnaire was administered prior to the intervention and the interviews were conducted immediately after the intervention, I decided to carry out a comparative analysis of the questionnaire and interview responses to the research questions that guided the study.

**Do Higher Education Professionals in the research site experience any conflict between their personal and organisational values?**

A comparative analysis of the responses revealed only slight changes in the responses. In the questionnaire, respondents 3M2, 8M5 and 11M7 responded “Yes” to the question but in the interview they modified their responses to “Partially”. They were not aware that I may carry out a comparative analysis of their responses, so I do not think that they were conscious of the shift in their positions. However, given that these same respondents attended the workshop and were also positive in their appraisal of the Bohm-Isaacs model, I assume that the model and the intervention achieved the effect of moderating entrenched positions. It is now left to determine whether the usefulness of the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue would be further enhanced if applied proactively, as the participants suggested.

**How do Higher Education Professionals in the research site experience the conflict between their personal and organisational values?**

The general response to this question was that Higher Education Professionals in the research experienced the conflict between their personal and organisational values in a procedural rather than substantive manner. Overall, there was no difference in the interview response following the application of the Bohm-Isaacs model. However, two of the respondents whose experience of the conflict could be considered as substantive attended the Workshop and accepted to be interviewed. A major shift was noticed in the response of

one of them which marked a change from experiencing the conflict in a substantive manner to experiencing it in a procedural manner.

**How do Higher Education Professionals in the research site attempt to resolve the conflict between their personal and organisational values?**

The answer to this question in the questionnaire was that only one participant made any active attempt to address the conflict between the personal and organisational values. Therefore, I asked two key questions during the interview to determine whether there was any change in the personal values of the respondents, following the application of the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue and how the respondents would address the conflict going forward. None of the respondents acknowledged any change in personal values during the interview but all of them without exception explained that given the knowledge gained through the use of the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue, they would actively make an effort in future to address the conflict between their personal and organisational values. Overall, there was adequate shift in participants' responses to the interview questions compared to the questionnaire responses which can, largely, be attributed to the intervention. In the next section of this chapter, the terms of research participants will be reproduced to demonstrate that they found the Bohm Isaacs model of dialogue useful in addressing the conflict between their personal and organisational values.

### **The Bohm-Isaacs Model and proactive management of conflict**

All the interview respondents reported that they considered the Bohm-Isaacs model useful for addressing the conflict between personal and organisational values and only two of them had previous experience of the Bohm-Isaacs model before their participation in the research.

“I was first introduced to the Bohm-Isaacs during one of the Executive courses.....; but until I actually witnessed the application of the model in this research, I did not realise how useful it could be. Yes, I consider it useful.”

[8M5]

Another participant, who was encountering the model for the first time during the research, described it as follows:

“A sound and robust platform, moderated by a skilled facilitator that can contribute to establishing personal value threshold and addressing value conflict especially the conflict between personal and organisational values.”

[3M2]

Most of the other responses agreed with the foregoing but I will reproduce only two additional responses that I consider striking before moving on to analyse the participants' opinions on the changes that could be made to the implementation of the model:

“I consider the model valid. All conflict resolution is contingent on the parties dialoguing and ready to move away from their entrenched positions to consider what the other party or parties have to offer. Through skilful discussion that does not label other values as “opposing”, “right” or “wrong”, listening becomes active and thinking processes assume visibility, with synergetic understanding as the perceived outcome.”

[2M1]

Another respondent explained further:

“My appreciation of the model is that it is a partial model that is adaptable to situations, it is a soft model. That is the strength of the model.”

[11M7]

The conclusion reached, following the analysis of the data, is that Higher Education Professionals working for the development institution considered the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue as useful in the proactive management of the conflict between their personal and organisational values.

### **Suggested areas of improvement**

However, the data also revealed areas of improvement as suggested by the research participants. Of the seven participants interviewed, 5 of them opined that the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue would be more useful for conflict management in the context of the research site if a few improvements were made. A coding of the data revealed themes that can be categorised into two main groups: (i) cultural suitability; and (ii) timing of application.

### **Cultural suitability**

Two of the five participants opined that certain approaches used by Burson (2002), especially the emphasis on simply asking questions to create collective mindedness were not suitable for the culture of the research site. They believed that an opportunity should be given for people to actively defend their positions. One of them was of the view that implementing the model as suggested by Burson (2002) required a high level of sophistication and intellectual restraint that might be lacking in most African settings:

“The idea of speaking to the container is a good one. But my opinion is that restricting the discussion to questions, questions and questions is too sophisticated for our context. You have to master how to couch your ideas in the form of questions. You have to know how to catch the nuances of ideas formulated in a question. It appears complex. Why don't you let the people talk?”

[5F2]

However, a suggestion by a second respondent seems to contradict the above suggestion. The second respondent suggested that it would have been better if a little more anonymity had been built into the model:

“For a sensitive topic like the one you are treating, I would have liked more privacy.”

[10F4]

The same participant, then, commended the Facilitator of the workshop for suggesting a more discrete approach than Burson (2002) by allowing the participants use their computer to respond to questions during the workshop instead of verbalising their thought as done in Burson (2002).

### **Timing**

Burson (2002) applied the Bohm-Isaacs method of dialogue retroactively as a conflict resolution model. Three of the five respondents who commented on the application of this model agreed that the model would be more useful in addressing the conflict between personal and organisational values, if applied proactively:

“I think the model should be used proactively – during the on boarding or orientation period. Value identification and alignment would be less stressful if they are done proactively.”

[3M2]

Two other respondents did not quite specify the time that would be most suited for the use of the Bohm-Isaacs model but expressed the view that it could be used periodically in workshops without waiting for an escalation of conflict as was the case in Burson (2002). By and large, while the participants were conscious of the reason why I requested them to comment on the usefulness of the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue and may have embellished their responses to impress me, they were not aware that I would carry out a comparative analysis of their responses before and after the intervention. That is why I placed great score on the comparative analysis, because I do not think that they were conscious that I was looking for a shift in their positions. However, given that these same

respondents attended the workshop and were also positive in their appraisal of the Bohm-Isaacs model, I assume that the model and the intervention achieved the effect of moderating entrenched positions. It is now left to determine whether the usefulness of the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue would be further enhanced if applied proactively, as the participants suggested.

### **Chapter summary**

In this chapter, I presented and analysed the data obtained from the three sources of data used in this study. The data were presented in a way as to answer the research questions asked. The data confirmed that a conflict exists between the personal and organisational values of Higher Education professionals in the African Development institution where the study is based. The data also revealed that the bulk of the conflict was not substantive but procedural, which means that it can be managed by appropriate values alignment measures. It was also revealed that, due to the lack of culture of defining personal values threshold and working out ways of aligning personal and organisational values, most of those who acknowledged the existence of conflict preferred to consciously avoid addressing it. Finally, the study participants agreed that the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue could be useful for the proactive management of the conflict between the personal and organisational values of Higher Education professionals in the African development institution under study although it needs to be adapted to the local context. The next chapter of this thesis will discuss the impact of these findings on professional practice and associated knowledge base.

## **Chapter 6: Impact of the research on practice and associated knowledge base**

This chapter seeks to discuss the impact of the findings of this research on professional practice and the associated knowledge base. I will link the discussion with my leadership in my professional setting and engage with issues of equity in higher education as they relate to managing the conflict between the personal and organisational values of the Higher Education Professionals that work in the research site.

Consistent with the idea of questioning realities and calling for change where necessary, this chapter will highlight areas where change might be needed in the professional practice and management of the conflict of values of higher education professionals in the research site.

### **The need for a shift of emphasis from the mainstream Higher Education funding paradigm**

One of the participants in my study created a link between how respondents perceive the conflict between their personal and organisational values and how they perceive the mainstream ideology or higher education funding arrangement. The participant's contribution is repeated:

“My opinion is that the tension develops between personal values and organisational values when the issue is approached from the lens of ideology. ...”

[7M4]

In the light of the above response, I thought that it would be interesting to discuss the neoliberal ideology or paradigm which scholars like Gunetilleke et al. (2011), Wangenge-Ouma (2008), Fagge (2014) and Willet (2009) consider as the mainstream paradigm that underpins the activities of higher education development practitioners. I will, therefore compare the mainstream paradigm with the outcome of my research and discuss areas where, in my opinion changes might be needed.

Gunetilleke et al. (2011) described the ideology or paradigm that guides the activities of multilateral development institutions as neoliberal and capitalist. Most other scholars such

as Wangenge-Ouma (2008), Fagge (2014) and Willet (2009) seem to agree with Gunetilleke et al. (2011) as they adopt a concept that traces the commercialisation of higher education and the related market values to capitalism, profit motive, wealth accumulation and greed. Indeed, Gunetilleke et al. (2011, p. 50) consider capitalism and the profit driven concept of market values as “the dominant development paradigm”. Some of the participants in my study agree with this perception of commercialisation and market values as materialistic, profit oriented, driven by greed and selfishness (Willet, 2009). Participant [8M5], for example, described “commercialisation and the market values that go with it as capitalist and neo-liberal”.

However, the data from my research also revealed that the capitalist neo-liberal ideology is not the only paradigm that prevailed among Higher Education Professionals who work for the African development institution under study. Participants [8M5] and [9M6] consistently called for a return to the state sponsored welfare arrangement that existed when they were students and when Government exclusively funded the higher education sector. Participant [2M1] advocated a balance between market values and the gender/rights based approach to funding by calling for the provision of “subsidised access” to women and the underprivileged. Another participant [11M7] also articulated what I consider as a value-based approach. He emphasised the need to balance access to higher education with the need for sustainability because

“access can only be possible if the higher education system is sustained and for it to be sustained, Government needs help.”

Finally, when the Higher Education Professionals had an opportunity, during the workshop, to compare their personal values with the organisational values, they all agreed that the difference was not

“substantive but at the level of procedure” [Workshop Facilitator]

Therefore, the outcome of my research did not indicate a unanimous endorsement or rejection of what is widely regarded as the mainstream higher education development paradigm. It rather broadened the discussion of market values to incorporate other development paradigms that can be combined in appropriate measures to arrive at what I consider as a value-based approach. To paraphrase Roccas et al. (2002), a value-based approach means an approach that empowers the Higher Education Professional to strike a balance between the various contending values and arrive at a decision that is fit for purpose taking into account the higher education setting in which they work.

Therefore, in my opinion, effort to align the personal values of staff members to the organisational values should incorporate all the higher education development paradigms that have been mentioned in this research – the welfare based approach, the gender and rights based approach and the value-based approach – and encourage Higher Education professionals working for the institution to balance the various approaches with the mainstream paradigm in the process of decision-making. By so doing, the possibility of values conflict will be reduced.

### **The need for a change of narrative**

Similarly, writing on the changes in higher education funding arrangements in Kenya, Wangenge-Ouma (2008, p. 216) described development institutions as the “purveyors of the neo-liberal economic logic.” This narrative is repeated by Fagge (2014) while commenting on the challenges of funding the higher education sector in Nigeria. Given the outcome of the workshop that was incorporated in my study where the participants concluded that their personal values agreed in substance with the organisational values, I think that the labelling of development institutions as “purveyors of the neo-liberal economic logic” belongs to a narrative of the past. The new narrative should incorporate values mentioned by my research participants such as sustainability, good governance, quality assurance, role differentiation and subsidised access. If all these positive values are incorporated in the values conflict narrative, scholars would perceive the various values as an assemblage (Rizvi & Lingard, 2011). They would therefore not approach their subject in terms of preferring one value over another but in terms of aligning one value with another through the

exchange of views and self-introspection (Branson, 2005). This requires communication and education not only within the research site but also towards other stakeholders (Branson, 2007). It is hoped that this thesis will help to trigger or deepen the conversation towards articulating the new narrative.

### **The need for change of Procedure or approach**

I intend to discuss the need for change in corporate procedure together with one of the themes which emerged from this research, that is, “Role Differentiation”. The theme was mentioned in the negative sense to show that leadership in the research site concentrated predominantly on fulfilling corporate goals to the detriment of aligning personal values with the organisational values through socioemotional activities. I have decided to discuss this theme in much more detail to emphasise the need for leadership to pay attention to the positive aspects of role differentiation especially as it relates to the change in how organisational tasks are carried out.

While discussing role differentiation, Prince (1984) categorised leadership roles into two sub-segments: the task specialist role and the socio-emotional specialist role. The task specialist role tends towards the achievement of corporate activities and goals while the socioemotional role covers other social activities within the organisation which reduce tension, strengthen interpersonal interaction and prevent staff members from working in silos. Every group needs interdependent and coordinated activities from the two spheres of leadership to attain corporate goals. If an institution pays too much attention to the task specialist role or the achievement of corporate goals to the detriment of personal values or goals, a tension invariably arises which has to be addressed by appropriate values alignment measures. Going by Prince’s (1984) interpretation of role differentiation, the pattern of procedural conflict in this research – where there seems to be some agreement on the goals but value disagreement on the procedures for achieving those goals - reveals the need to strengthen the socio-emotional leadership role in the research site and thereby strengthen open dialogue and communication among Higher Education Professionals.

Fortunately, a new leadership has taken over in the project site which has instituted a monthly meeting between Senior Management and staff; and a weekly tea or brown bag

lunch session at the level of communities of practice. The aim of creating these socio-emotional contacts is to discuss issues that concern staff members and the institution and create a better mutual understanding at inter-unit and inter personal levels. It is hoped that this will help to foster better communication within and between groups of practice.

This research study will be submitted to the Library and the Human Capital department of the research site. It is hoped that the recommendation made to strengthen the socio-emotional specialist role will resonate with the Authorities of the research site and strengthen their resolve to deepen the measures initiated to address gaps in communication and reconcile possible areas of conflict between personal and organisational values which may impede the achievement of institutional goals.

### **Change of Procedure in Policy dialogue**

In chapter 2 of this thesis, it was specified that part of the duties of higher Education professionals who work for the African development institution under study is to provide advisory services to African countries on issues relating to Higher Education policies. They carry out this duty through a series of dialogues, known as policy dialogues, with the authorities of member countries. Given that Multilateral Development institutions are supranational organisations which enjoy diplomatic privileges, staff members of these organisations often avoid direct involvement in the internal processes of the countries they deal with and dialogue only with government authorities. My opinion is that this procedure needs to be reviewed.

Some of the participants in my research traced the conflict between their personal and organisational values to what Participant [3M2] described as “policy somersault”, a euphemism for policies that are formulated without the political will to implement them. This phenomenon of “policy somersault” would be checked if all the stakeholders in the Higher Education sector were involved upstream in the policy dialogue (Sharrock, 2010). If all the stakeholders are involved in the policy formulation process, they would hold the Government to account and avoid a situation where politicians, who represent the Government during negotiations, make commitments to the donors that they will ensure good governance and

subsidised access for the underprivileged and women but fail to implement the conditionalities after fund disbursement by the donors.

This study is recommending a policy dialogue process that incorporates the representatives of the private sector and civil society who might have adequate societal influence to hold the government to account, if it reneges on its commitments after obtaining a higher education development grant.

### **The need for culture shift at the individual and organisational levels**

The need for culture shift in this context is based on a response given by one of the research participants in answer to the question relating to how he addresses the conflict between his personal and organizational values. Participant [8M5] indicated that “We don’t have that culture [of values alignment] here...” This response confirms the views of Cobbah (1987) who suggested that, generally, there is a lack of the culture of values alignment in Africa because the traditional cultures lay emphasis on collectivism, conflict avoidance and high power distance. Therefore, ideally, individuals think first of the collective before self. This systematic lack of values alignment calls for a culture shift.

The culture that needs to shift, in this context, is the culture of lack of values alignment. My proposition is that this culture shift needs to be carried out not only at the societal level but also at the organisational and personal levels.

### **Culture shift at the individual level**

At the individual level, the institution needs to create avenues to empower its Higher Education Professionals to move away from the culture of docile adherence to organisational values to the culture of defining their personal values threshold and aligning these personal values with the organisational values. One pathway to this shift might be to adopt a values alignment model that emulates Branson’s (2007) inside out self-reflection approach to values alignment. According to Branson (2007), individuals react to realities including situations of conflict in ways that are conditioned by their life experiences and culture. Given that culture and experience also influence people’s self-concept, Branson suggested that for people to fully understand their values and how they conflict with other

values, the alignment process should pass through the various components of self: self-concept, self-esteem, motives, values, beliefs and behaviours.

As suggested by Branson (2005), adopting a model that incorporates the theory of inside out self-reflection requires more than simply requesting that the Higher Education Professionals in the research site learn the culture of values alignment. It would require a complex process of active listening, exposure to a wide range of preferred value options and a self-reflection to negate the values developed over time and voluntarily adopt the preferred ones.

Zupan (2012) concurs with Branson when he stated that any good values management model requires a deep knowledge and understanding of values, the alignment of values with action and the use of values alignment as proactive value management measure. Once there is a change of culture at the personal level, it becomes much easier to create avenues that can lead to the alignment of personal values with the organisational values.

### **Culture shift at the organisational level**

The systematic lack of culture of values alignment underscores the need to improve channels of communication and interaction within the organisation. Given that Edoho (2001) classifies Africa as one of the regions with very high power distance, it would be unrealistic to expect a spontaneous top down and bottom up communication unless the authorities of the research site actively encourage it. An idea that comes to mind, which can encourage the free exchange of ideas, is to build communities of practice, similar to what was envisaged by Wenger (1998), with a common engagement, a joint enterprise and a shared repertoire of experience.

Related to this is an idea raised by De Dreu and Beersma (2005) which suggested that conflict management strategies should not only focus on performance and institutional effectiveness but also incorporate “soft” outcomes such as job satisfaction and individual health and wellbeing. This implies the need for a deliberate culture of values alignment at the corporate level, which is not unduly tilted in favour of the organisational values but also incorporates those values that may be precious to staff members. One of the participants in

my research, Participant [3M2], suggested that incorporating the practice of value identification and alignment into the on-boarding or orientation programme normally organised for new staff members will institutionalise values management within the organisation. Burson (2002) suggested that it could be repeated at periodic intervals in all units of the institution. The key objective should be to create in staff members' psyches the idea that they are engaged in a joint enterprise and can freely exchange ideas, share experiences which will empower them to take informed decisions when faced with an assemblage of values (Rizvi & Lingard, 2011).

Similarly, consistent with the high context nature of the African culture, the authorities of the research site may have left the definition of its organisational values broad and open to conjecture. A high context culture, according to Hall (1976), means a culture where many things are left unsaid in the belief that a few words can communicate a complex message effectively, while a low context culture is a culture that requires a much more explicit communication. Therefore, as specified by Participant [6F3], the research site clearly supports the commercialisation of higher education but many details are "implied" or left to conjecture. It is hoped that the outcome of this study which indicates a wide variance in the perceptions of organisational values will encourage the institution to more clearly articulate and communicate its values as they relate to the commercialisation of higher education. Doing so will enable the Higher Education Professionals to have a shared understanding, align the various values in conflict and work towards the same goals.

### **Culture shift at the societal level**

One of the research participants traced the source of his values conflict to what he referred to as "policy somersault". I will reproduce the participant's words in detail in order to articulate the need for the change of culture in the wider society:

"We need to discourage policy somersault whereby politicians mount the soapbox to declare that higher education is tuition free whereas in reality the universities charge non-tuition fees amounting sometimes to more than US\$10, 000."

[3M2]

This participant seems to be suggesting that one way of addressing values inconsistency is by ensuring policy discipline. The above participant's opinion agrees with the findings of Atuahene & Owusu-Ansah (2013) who stated that policy inconsistency creates distrust between policy makers and consumers of higher education and leads to clashes of values. Therefore, given that Higher Education Professionals who work for the research site hold what is referred to as policy dialogue with authorities of its member countries, the issue of policy and value inconsistency needs to be included in the policy dialogue.

Thus far, this chapter has called for multidimensional changes: (i) a change of emphasis in the articulation of the higher education funding paradigm from a neoliberal to an eclectic perspective, (ii) a change of narrative in the perception of development institutions from the smugglers of capitalist norms into higher education development policies to those who genuinely care for access to higher education but also want to ensure quality and the sustainability of the system, (iii) a change of procedure in organisational activities and policy dialogues; and (iv) a culture shift – personal, institutional and societal – with regard to values alignment. As suggested by Zupan (2012), reconciling all these dimensions of value change will require a values management model that goes beyond simply exhorting the staff members to align their values with the organisational values. My proposition is that the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue can address these complexities if applied proactively.

### **The need to lay greater emphasis on “Soft” values management strategies**

All the participants who attended the workshop considered the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue as a useful way of managing the conflict between their personal and organisational values. According to Participant [11M7], one of the reasons for the overwhelming endorsement of the model is because it is a “soft” model. From the context, I understood the word “soft” in two ways: First, I understood “soft” to imply flexibility – the same way, I think, Fris & Lazaridou (2006) intended when they recommended that the Quantum perspective be used as a complement to the Newtonian approach in conflict management. The second sense of the word “soft” that I could get from the context was the sense in which De Dreu & Beersma (2005) intended it, meaning that it does not only concentrate on those values that relate to corporate performance and productivity but also incorporates subtle personal values that promote staff members' wellbeing and job satisfaction.

As earlier stated in Chapter 2, the Bohm-Isaacs model rejects the traditional method of conflict resolution where the best advocated value or idea triumphs at the expense of others. It encourages the adoption of problem posing, a process where people in conflict suspend their argumentative desire and restrict themselves to asking questions which seek to encourage collective mindedness, explore meaning, deepen self-reflection and broaden their experiences.

When an opportunity is created for members of an organisation to explain the assumptions underpinning their individual convictions and the group dynamics, they learn to freely express and clarify their own values and consider divergence of values not as a threat but “an opportunity to dig deeper and seek consensus or “creative third ways” which were not visible before. (Isaacs, 1999, pp. 242, 243). This assertion was confirmed by an earlier cited opinion by one of the study participants which is repeated below:

“I consider the model valid. All conflict resolution is contingent on the parties dialoguing and ready to move away from their entrenched positions to consider what the other party or parties have to offer. Through skilful discussion that does not label other values as “opposing”, “right” or “wrong”, listening becomes active and thinking processes assume visibility, with synergetic understanding as the perceived outcome.”

[2M1]

In Chapter 2 of this study, I stated and would like to repeat here for emphasis, that the Bohm-Isaacs model incorporates features that bear resemblance to an emerging trend in conflict management, which is the Quantum perspective as interpreted by Fris. & Lazaridou (2006). It is holistic, as it focuses on relationships and integration. It is indeterminate as it values uncertainty and ambiguity and requires trust and faith. It is emergent and self-organising because each part is defined by relationships with other parts; the whole is greater than the sum of its parts and patterns and order emerge spontaneously. If the Bohm-Isaacs model is well applied, it normally results in the acceptance of divergence, which means that it is inclusive, synergistic and both the individual and the organisation

mutually define one another in shared space and experience. Moreover, the Bohm-Isaacs model creates room for innovation by encouraging creativity, thinking outside the box, exploring the unknown and the possible and factoring in values.

The impact of this overwhelming approval of the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue by research participants is that, in addition to the regular seminar that is conducted in the research site exhorting staff members to align their values to the organizational values, adopting a “soft” instrument or a way of working such as the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue can help to address the complexities of values aligning in a way that is both beneficial to the organisation and its staff members.

### **Chapter Summary**

Basically, this chapter recalled some of the findings of this study and called for multidimensional changes: (i) a change of emphasis in the articulation of the higher education funding paradigm from a neoliberal to an eclectic perspective, (ii) a change of narrative in how development institutions are perceived from the purveyors of neo-liberal norms to institutions that genuinely care for access to higher education but also seeks to ensure quality and the sustainability of the system, (iii) a change of procedure in organisational activities and policy dialogues; and (iv) a culture shift – personal, institutional and societal – with regard to values alignment. Reconciling all these dimensions of value change will require a values management model that goes beyond simply exhorting the staff members to align their values with the organisational values. Therefore, applying an instrument or a way of working such as the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue can address these complexities, if applied proactively.

## **Conclusion**

In a thesis on equity, efficiency and sustainability in higher education in sub-Saharan Africa, Sutherland (2003) lamented the absence of empirical case studies with which to test theoretical propositions on values. That knowledge gap still remains in Africa and the objective of my thesis was to help to bridge the gap by studying whether a conflict exists between the personal and organizational values of higher education professionals working for an African development institution. The unique point of my thesis therefore was to explore the subject from the viewpoint of a Higher Education Professional based in Africa. This study was inspired by my personal experience of conflict as a staff member of a development institution in Africa, followed by an episode in the research site, where a Higher Education professional openly disagreed with some of his organisational values and also by an existing study, Gunetilleke et al. (2011), which suggested the existence of a conflict between the personal and organisational values of staff members of development institutions. In the previous chapters, I discussed the findings of this study, comparing them with the existing literature especially the index study, Gunetilleke et al. (2011), and exploring their impact on professional practice. This concluding chapter will summarise the outcomes of the study, make recommendations for further studies and for practice and specify the limitations of the study.

### **The aim and findings of the research – a recapitulation**

The aim of this research was to explore how Higher Education Professionals in an African Development institution experience and deal with the conflict between their personal and organisational values and whether the professionals consider the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue as useful in the proactive management of this conflict (Burson, 2002). To achieve this aim, I formulated three research questions:

- (i) How do higher education professionals working for an African development organisation experience the conflict, if any, between their personal values and organisational values as they relate to the commercialisation of higher education?
- (ii) How do they attempt to address the conflict?

- (iii) How do they perceive the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue as a way of managing the conflict?

This research was partly inspired by an earlier study, Gunetilleke et al. (2011), which suggested the existence of conflict between the personal and organisational values of development practitioners and the need to reconcile both sets of values. Therefore, in addition to the three research questions, I opted to start by answering the overarching question that foregrounded the entire research, which is, whether a conflict exists between the personal and organisational values of Higher Education Professionals that work for the African development institution under study.

### **Outcomes**

As explained in the previous chapter, the findings of my research confirmed that a conflict exists between the personal and organisational values of Higher Education professionals in the African Development institution where the study is based. The data also revealed that the bulk of the conflict was not substantive but procedural, which suggests that it can be managed by appropriate values alignment measures. It was also revealed that most of those who acknowledged the existence of conflict preferred to consciously avoid addressing it. Finally, the study participants agreed that the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue would be useful as a proactive way of managing the conflict between the personal and organisational values of Higher Education professionals in the African development institution under study.

I will now recall each of the research questions and summarise the answers based on the analysis of the data that emerged from the study.

### **Do Higher Education professionals working for the African development institution under study experience any conflict between their personal and organisational values?**

The majority (7 out of 11) of my research participants acknowledged that they experienced some form of conflict between their personal and organisational values. This outcome is consistent with available literature on the subject. Writing within the context of higher education commercialisation, Sharrock (2010), Eastman (2007) and Bok (2003) recognized

the existence of conflict between personal and organisational values and suggested that the conflict can be resolved through upstream consultation of all the stakeholders in the higher education sector and reconciling the values of the various stakeholders. The result is also consistent with the findings of Gunetilleke et al. (2011) who stated that a conflict exists between the personal and organisational values of professionals that work for development institutions and recommended the adoption of appropriate measures to reconcile the conflict.

However, a close comparison of the outcome of this research and the findings of Gunetilleke et al. (2011) reveals a number of differences with regard to participants' response on whether a conflict exists between the personal and organisational values of professionals who work for development institutions. While all 19 research participants in Gunetilleke et al. (2011) claimed to have experienced conflict between their personal and organisational values, only 7 of the 11 Higher Education professionals who participated in my research claimed to have experienced any form of conflict between their personal and organisational values. However, the difference between these two studies goes beyond the comparison of percentages. The outcome of my study reveals some form of complexity or plurality of opinion that does not exist in Gunetilleke et al. (2011). Unlike in Gunetilleke et al. (2011) where all the respondents perceived value conflict in a uniform manner and unanimously acknowledged the existence of conflict between their personal and organisational values, the response of my research participants was disaggregated. Some respondents stated that they do not experience any value conflict, others acknowledged the existence of conflict while others stated that they experience it only partially.

As indicated in Chapter 6, the disaggregated nature of the response from research participants is a shift away from what Gunetilleke et al. (2011) consider as the mainstream paradigm and could therefore lead, in the research site, to a shift in the articulation of higher education funding paradigm from the ideology based approach to an eclectic approach.

**Question 1: How do higher education professionals working for an African development organisation experience the conflict, if any, between their personal values and organisational values as they relate to the commercialisation of higher education?**

The answer to the above question will be discussed in two segments: (i) the result from the inductive analysis of data; and (ii) the result from the deductive analysis of data.

**Result from the inductive analysis of data**

An inductive analysis of the data from my study yielded a number of themes which were presented in a dialectical manner as follows: Core academic values versus market values; Equity versus sustainability; Quality assurance versus profit motive; and Good Governance versus role differentiation. This outcome is inconsistent with the findings of Gunetilleke et al. (2011), which focused mainly on the conflict between the personal values of spirituality and morality and the professional values which they interpreted to be characterised by greed and unbridled consumption. Gunetilleke et al.'s (2011) narrative resonates with those of Fagge (2014) and Willet (2009). Following Gunetilleke et al.'s (2011, p. 50) description of capitalism as “the mainstream development paradigm”, this narrative can also be described as the mainstream development narrative. The term “narrative” is used in the conventional, Merriam Webster Dictionary, sense of “representation of an event or story”. In the context of this study, it means the way in which the conflict between the personal and organisational values with regard to the commercialisation of higher education is represented in the existing literature.

Although some participants in my research subscribed to the mainstream narrative, most of the respondents expressed views that were broader and farther reaching. That is why they asked difficult questions and generated themes relating to issues of sustainability, good governance, quality assurance, role differentiation and subsidised access which are hardly mentioned or discussed in the mainstream narrative. A change of narrative is therefore needed within and outside the African institution under study, with regard to the discussion of the conflict between personal and organisational values with regard to the commercialisation of higher education. As explained in Chapter 6, the change in narrative should shift the discussion on values conflict with regard to the commercialisation of higher

education away from the fixation on profit versus access to the other themes that emerged from the research such as Core academic values versus consumerism; Equity versus sustainability; Quality assurance versus profit motive; and Good Governance versus role differentiation. The need for change of narrative also emerged following the deductive analysis of data.

### **Result from the deductive analysis of data**

Deductive analysis means the analysis of data based on the theory that guided the formulation of the research question. Question 1 of this thesis was formulated based on Gay's (1981) classification which categorised the conflict of values into three groups: substantive conflict, procedural conflict and interpersonal conflict. As explained in the previous chapter, substantive conflict means that the personal values or personal goals of staff members do not agree with the values or goals of the organisation. Procedural conflict means that the personal values of staff members of an organisation disagree with the course of action taken by the organisation as it strives to attain its objectives. Interpersonal conflict means that the beliefs, attitudes, and values of the different groups and individuals cannot be aligned one with another.

From the result of the deductive analysis of data, a majority of the respondents experienced the conflict between their personal and organisational values at the procedural level. Out of the seven participants that experienced conflict, only two of them experienced it in a substantive manner. The remaining five participants described their experience in a way that revealed that they only experienced it in a procedural manner. This position is summarised in the words of one of the workshop participants and the Facilitator who summed up the workshop as follows:

“The devil is not in the concept itself, [but] ....in the process.”

[5F2]

“I have read out your perception of your personal and organisational values. There is very little difference between the two sets of values. This suggests that the conflict might not be substantive but at the level of procedure.”

[Facilitator]

With regard to the need for change of narrative, the new narrative should incorporate the distinction made between substantive and procedural value conflict. Zupan (2012, p. 160) suggested that professionals “experience procedural conflicts more frequently than substantive situations.” If that is the case, as confirmed by my study, then that narrative needs to be amplified in such a way that Higher Education Professionals within and outside the research site will realise that the conflict they experience between their personal and organisational values might be due to a matter of procedure and can be addressed by the adoption of appropriate values alignment measures.

**Question 2: How do higher education professionals working for an African development organisation address the conflict between their personal values and organisational values as they relate to the commercialisation of higher education?**

The answer to this question was also multidimensional: only one of the seven participants who acknowledged the existence of conflict made any attempt to address the conflict. Another participant expressed the opinion that the circumstances of his job were flexible enough to allow him take decisions as he wished. Others were of the opinion that they were not in a position to make a difference.

Therefore, the majority of the respondents resorted to conflict avoidance based on the belief that their opinion would not make any difference. However, one response stood out from the data obtained: Participant [8M5] indicated that “We don’t have that culture [of values alignment] here...” This acknowledgement of the lack of culture of values alignment is consistent with the views of Cobbah (1987) who believes that African cultures lay emphasis on collectivism, conflict avoidance and high power distance, which means that, ideally, individuals think first of the collective before self. This systematic lack of values alignment calls for a culture shift.

**Question 3: How do Higher Education Professionals working for the African development institution under study perceive the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue as a way of managing the conflict?**

To answer this question, a workshop was incorporated in the study to enable participants experience the use of the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue in a research created atmosphere that mimics a real life environment. All the participants who attended the workshop considered the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue as a useful way of managing the conflict between their personal and organisational values. According to Participant [11M7], one of the reasons for the overwhelming endorsement of the model is that it is a “soft” model, meaning that it does not only concentrate on those values that relate to corporate performance and productivity but also incorporates subtle personal values that promote staff members’ wellbeing and job satisfaction (De Dreu & Beersma, 2005).

**The timing**

Despite the overwhelming endorsement of the merits of the Bohm-Isaacs model of conflict management, the research participants also recommended areas of the model that needed to be changed, namely the timing of its usage and the content of the container. I will repeat the earlier cited words of a research participant to indicate how the change needs to proceed:

“The idea of speaking to the container is a good one. But my opinion is that restricting the discussion to questions, questions and questions is too sophisticated for our context.”

[5F2]

“I think the model should be used proactively – during the on boarding or orientation period. Value identification and alignment would be less stressful if they are done proactively.”

[3M2]

The combined effect of these two quotations is that the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue would be better if applied proactively and if those using the model are allowed the freedom to throw any value including their personal values into the “container”.

## **Significance**

This study is significant in the sense that it marks a departure from what Gunetilleke et al. (2011) consider as the mainstream approach to the study of conflict between personal and organisational values and therefore deepens the understanding of the phenomenon of the conflict between personal and organisational values, especially at the research site: The outcome of my research revealed that, unlike in Gunetilleke et al. (2011) where participants approached the subject of values conflict purely from a neoliberal perspective, my research participants adopted multiple approaches including the Marxist approach, the gender and rights based approach, and the pragmatic or value-based approach. Given the adoption of multiple approaches by my research participants, I recommend a change of emphasis in the articulation of the higher education funding paradigm from a neoliberal to an eclectic perspective. Unlike other literature (Gunetilleke et al., 2011; Wangenge-Ouma, 2008), which describe development institutions as the purveyors of neo-liberal market values, the data from my research revealed that within the development institution where this study was based, there is a general concern for equity, access but also for quality and sustainability.

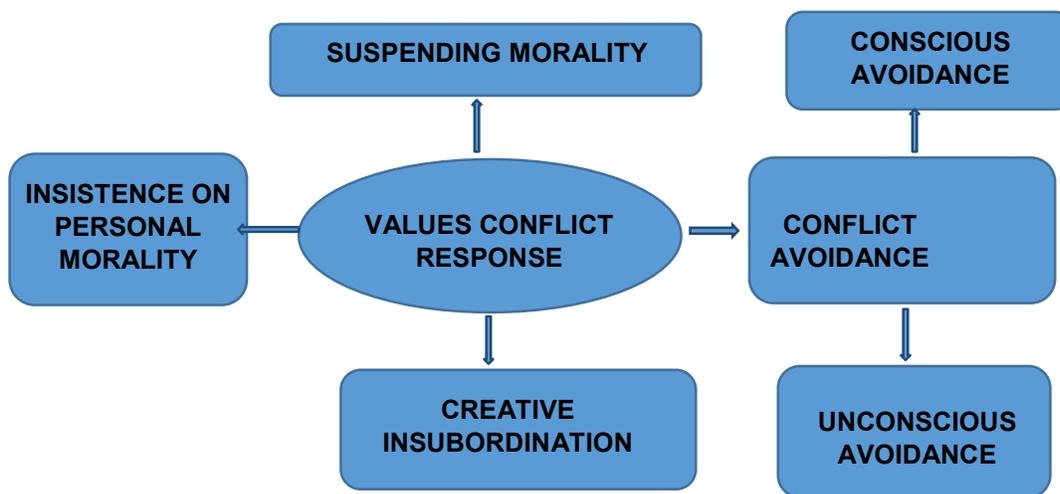
On the basis of that outcome, I call for a change of narrative in how development institutions are perceived. The narrative should change from considering development institutions as purveyors of neo-liberal norms to institutions that genuinely care for access to higher education but also seeks to ensure quality and the sustainability of the system. My research revealed that the conflict between personal and organisational values of the Higher Education Professionals that work for the research site was more procedural than substantive. I therefore advocate a change of procedure in organisational activities and policy dialogues. Given that the data from my research revealed that the Higher Education Professionals in the research site do not have a culture of values definition and alignment, I recommend a culture shift – personal, institutional and societal – with regard to values alignment. Finally, the outcome of my research suggested that reconciling all these dimensions of value change will require a values management model that goes beyond simply exhorting the staff members to align their values with the organisational values.

Therefore, I conclude that applying an instrument or a way of working such as the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue can address these complexities if used proactively.

Another significance of the study is that it amplifies an opinion that already exists in literature but which needs to be emphasised. One of my research participants [7M4] traced the source of conflict between personal and organisational values in the research site to conflict in ideologies. While discussing the issue of values in higher education, especially with regard to funding, Sutherland (2003) suggested that the debate on higher education values in Africa are structured less by the needs and specificities of the sector but more by the wider ideological debate between the structuralists and the neo-liberals. The structuralists argue in favour of equity, access and massification and the tacit social contract that the Government has with the people to exclusively fund higher education. They presume that Government has adequate resources to fund equity, access and massification and maintain the quality, which is not the case in most African countries. The neo-liberalists, on their part, argue that by introducing market forces, policy-makers will address resource constraints and open up the system to competition, thereby ensuring quality, good governance, efficiency and sustainability. The outcome of this thesis is that there is a third way of going beyond these ideological arguments and bringing all the values into “a container”, (Burson, 2002) from where Higher Education professionals can, by self-introspection, work out an assemblage or a mixture that would suit the specificities of each situation (Rizvi & Lingard, 2011). The professional’s ability to work out a balance between the competing values will mark the beginning of the effort towards values management and alignment.

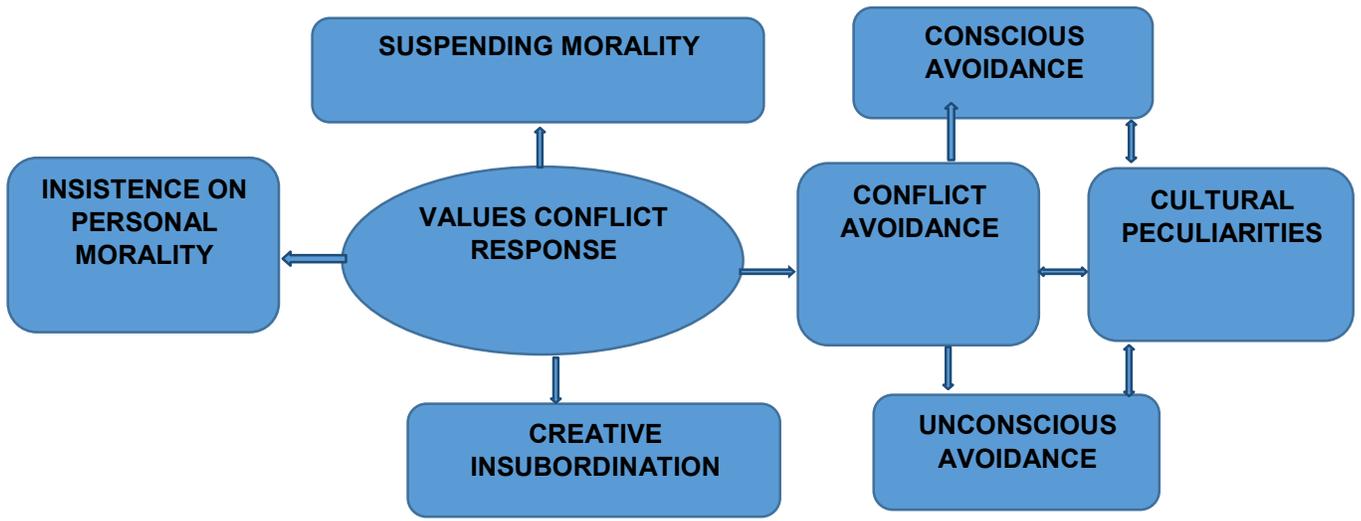
Another outcome of this research is a better understanding of how culture affects values conflict response in Africa. The majority of research participants avoided addressing the conflict between their personal and organisational values because they believed that they could not make any difference. One respondent traced the total avoidance of conflict to the lack of culture of values alignment. That opinion is consistent with the views expressed by Cobbah (1987) who believes that African cultures emphasizes, high power distance, collectivism and conflict avoidance, which means that people within the culture will not, ideally, think in terms of addressing conflicts between their personal and organisational values. They would live with the conflict believing that the organization is too big to

challenge and their opinion may not make a difference. That explains why the previous chapter emphasized the need to strengthen the culture of values alignment in African settings. Consistent with that suggestion, my proposition is to slightly modify Roche's (1997) classification of responses to conflict of values. Roche (1997) classified people's responses to conflict of values into four categories: (i) avoidance of the conflict; (ii) suspending morality; (iii) creative insubordination; or (iv) insistence on personal. Conflict avoidance was sub-categorised into conscious avoidance and unconscious avoidance. In chapter 2 of this thesis, Roche's (1997) conflict response classification was captured graphically as follows:



**Figure 5: Roche's (1997) values conflict response framework**

To underscore the African specificity, I would suggest that the sub-category of conscious avoidance be further broken into two groups: those who consciously avoid conflict for career security and those who, in line with cultural norms, believe that challenging an authority figure like an employer might be interpreted as a sign of ill breeding (Edoho, 2001). Given the important role that culture played in my research participants' response to conflict of values, I would like to propose a modified version of Roche's classification, which I think would best fit the realities of the research site:



**Figure 6: Roche's (1997) values conflict response framework incorporating cultural peculiarities**

The difference between Figure 6 above and Figure 5, which illustrates Roche's (1997) values response framework, is that the former has amplified the role of cultural peculiarities in the unconscious avoidance of conflict while the latter did not incorporate the element of culture.

Another outcome of this study is the endorsement of the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue by all the research participants as a useful way of managing the conflict between personal and organizational values. That subject had been discussed at length in the previous chapter and will not be repeated in this conclusion. The issue that needs to be emphasized in this conclusion is the proposition by one of the research participants [3M2] that the model would be more suitable to the realities of the research site if applied proactively. This does not call for a modification of the model. It only calls for a change at the point of its application. Instead of waiting for the manifestation of conflict before applying the model, this study recommends that an interaction tailored to fit the model prescribed by Burson (2002) be incorporated in the on boarding programme organised for all new Higher Education professional on assumption of duty. Normally during the on boarding period, members of Senior Management, including the President of the institution are invited to welcome new

staff members and address them on the institutions values, expectations and operational modalities. It is recommended that this meeting could serve as an opportunity to discuss issues relating to personal and organisational values and iron out the need for communication and values alignment from the personal and organisational perspectives. This action can thereafter be reinforced through periodic meeting of professionals that belong to the same communities of practice, as suggested by Wenger (1998).

In the introduction to this thesis, I compared the writings of Naidoo (2010) and Brown & Carasso (2013) from the United Kingdom on neo-liberalism and the commercialization of higher education with those of Wangenge-Ouma (2008) from Africa, Sharma (2005) from Asia and Gregorutti (2011).from Latin America. They all accepted the reality that the global knowledge economy is driven by the neo-liberal framework and that there are some merits in the commercialization of certain aspects of higher education. However, they also agreed that unbridled competition and adoption of market forces can exacerbate the problems of equity, quality assurance and creating a level playing field for the developing economies to operate on equal footing with the advanced economies. This points to the fact that, while the generalizability of this research might be limited to the specificities of the development institution where it is based, the findings might also apply to higher education development practitioners in settings other than Africa.

## **Recommendations**

There are two main recommendations to be made: (i) relating to professional practice and (ii) relating to future studies.

### ***Recommendation relating to professional practice***

#### ***Role differentiation***

Role differentiation was one of the themes that emerged in the course of this study and the theme was discussed in a context which revealed lack of communication within and between the various units of the institution. Therefore, my recommendation with regard to professional practice is the strengthening of role differentiation within the institution where this research was carried out. According to Prince (1984) leadership roles can be

categorized into two sub-segments: the task specialist role and the socio-emotional specialist role. The task specialist role focuses on the achievement of corporate activities and goals while the socioemotional role covers other social activities within the organisation which reduce tension, strengthen interpersonal interaction and prevent staff members from working in compartments. Every group needs interdependent and coordinated activities from the two spheres of leadership to ensure values alignment and the attainment of corporate goals. If an institution pays too much attention to the task specialist role or the achievement of corporate goals to the detriment of personal values or goals, a tension invariably arises which has to be addressed by appropriate values alignment measures. My recommendation therefore is to strengthen the socio-emotional leadership role in the research site and by so doing strengthen open dialogue and communication among Higher Education Professionals and increase avenues that would encourage the alignment of values within the institution.

***Recommendation for further studies***

One of the outcomes of this research is that research participants found the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue to be useful in the management of the conflict between their personal and organisational values. However, a suggestion was made that it would be better if the model were applied proactively instead of being introduced after the onset of conflict. The proactive application of that model was outside the scope of this study and it would be interesting to have a study that tests the effectiveness of proactive application of the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue. I therefore recommend further studies, to determine whether there is any merit in the proactive application of the Bohm-Isaacs model in the research site as a means of addressing any conflict of values within the organisation.

It was also noticed in the course of the research that not much had been written on values in higher education from the African perspective. Most of the studies that I discovered and cited were focused on ideological arguments on issues like access, massification and equity and not much has been written on the values dilemma that higher education administrators in Africa encounter daily in decision-making. There is, therefore, room for more studies on values in higher education as they relate to African cultural realities such as early marriage and girl child education.

### **Limitations of the study**

I had already discussed some of the limitations of this study in the introduction of this thesis but I think that I need to re-emphasise them in this conclusion in line with Lincoln & Guba's (1985) suggestion to disclose any possibility of bias.

This is a case study research which, as Stake (1994) suggests, analyses and interprets data through a lens that is influenced by personal experiences, meanings and values. While Guba & Lincoln (1994) believe that interpreting data from personal viewpoints does not necessarily violate the doctrine of objectivity as every research is guided by the researcher's worldview, they also emphasised the need to acknowledge the possibility of researcher bias. Therefore, I must acknowledge that this study might suffer from the lack of objectivity that is characteristic of qualitative studies. However, to ensure objectivity in the outcome of the study, I adopted several sources of data collection to ensure the triangulation of findings. I also disclosed my positionality as an insider researcher, including my personal experience of conflict and explained that the subjectivity of my training and experience means that I am more likely to interpret my findings from the post-modernist lens, which believes that higher education need not be boxed into a particular economic pattern or objective but should celebrate 'reflexivity' 'uncertainty' and 'change'. (Nind & Todd, 2014).

Another limitation of the study related to the sample size. As Miles & Huberman (1994, p. 15) suggest, a small sample which in this study is 11 participants "may or may not be a reasonable sample of the larger universe". Therefore, the findings of this research might not be generalisable. I believe that the outcome of this study would have been further strengthened if I had more studies in the field within the African context with which to compare my findings. However, I hope that the study will help to strengthen the alignment of personal and organisational values and create an environment for proactive management of values conflict in the institution where the research was conducted.

Finally, this research has helped to deepen the knowledge of Higher Education professionals in the research site with regard to the creation of an environment for proactive management of values conflict. Hopefully, it will help to encourage the adoption of the

quantum approach to conflict management in the institution where the research is based, particularly the use of the Bohm-Isaacs model of conflict management.

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### Participant Information Sheet

#### 1. Research Project Title:

Managing the personal and organizational values of higher education professionals in an African development institution

#### (iv) Version number and date

Version No. 3 Date: 20 February 2015

#### 3. Invitation

You are being invited to participate in the above-mentioned research study. Before you decide whether to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and feel free to ask us if you would like more information or if there is anything that you do not understand. Please also feel free to discuss this with your friends and relatives if you wish. We would like to stress that you do not have to accept this invitation and should only agree to take part if you want to.

Thank you for reading this.

#### 4. Purpose

This research study is carried out in partial fulfilment of the thesis part of the Professional Doctorate in Education that I am undertaking at the University of Liverpool.

The purpose of this project is to explore how higher education professionals in an African development institution experience the conflict, if any, between their personal values and the values of their organisation and how they perceive the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue as a potential way of managing the conflict. The findings of the study will potentially create an environment in the organization for proactive conflict management.

Burson (2002) coined the term “Bohm-Isaacs Model” to describe a discussion facilitation model which combines the Bohm (1985) conflict resolution theory with that of Isaacs (1999). The model rejects the traditional model of conflict resolution in which the best advocated idea or value triumphs at the expense of others. It advocates the idea that a process of problem posing, where people deliberately suspend the urge to argue and only ask questions in order to explore meaning and invite collective mindedness is a better way of resolving conflicts than seeking to win advantage in a zero sum game

**5. Why you have been chosen to take part**

You have been invited to take part in the study because you are a higher education professional; you work for this African development institution as a full time staff member or an external consultant and you take value-based professional decisions. Moreover you are deemed to have considerable knowledge of the higher education setting in Africa and of the organisation under study and can express an opinion that will count in a small inquiry like this with a total number of ten participants. The first 10/12 participants who will agree to take part in the study will be recruited

**6. Do I have to take part?**

No. Your participation is totally voluntary and even if you begin participating, you are free to withdraw at any time without explanation or penalty. If you choose not to participate, no data related to you or your work will be used or reported in the research study.

**7. What will happen if I take part?**

If you choose to take part, some of the data you generate through participation in the research activities will be used to compile an anonymous report/analysis and shared with my supervisor at the University of Liverpool.

The research will adopt a case study approach. The student researcher will be solely responsible for the collection of data. You will be requested to take part in the three (3) stages of the study. In the first stage, you will be requested to complete an online anonymous semi-structured questionnaire made up of both closed and open ended questions. This will take only 30 minutes of your time. In the second stage of the study, you will be requested to participate in a face-to-face workshop discussion. The discussion will be carried out to test the usefulness of the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue in addressing the conflicts, if any, between personal and institutional values. This will take place as one main session of 1 hour and a half in total. It should be emphasised that, for ethical reasons, the data you generate through your participation in stage 1 of the project will be anonymous and it will not be disclosed during the discussion in Stage 2. The discussions will be based on the theoretical propositions that guided the formulation of research questions and the aim of the discussion will be to enable you experience the use of the Bohm-Isaacs model in real life and be able to give your perspectives on whether the model would be useful as a proactive way of addressing the conflict between your personal values and organizational values (during the interview in stage 3). In the third and final stage of the study, you will be requested to take part in a one-to-one face-to-face semi-structured interview with the researcher to give your perception of how useful the model of dialogue tested in stage two could be in addressing the conflict between your personal values and the values of your organisation. This will take only 30 minutes of your time.

The workshop and the one-to-one interview will be audio recorded if you agree to do so. Specifically, the data being collected for this analysis include:

- (ii) Online Anonymous Questionnaire data on how you experience the conflict, if any, between your personal values and organisational values.
- d) My own notes and observations made at the workshop on values alignment using the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue. The workshop will be audio recorded if participants agree to do so. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, I will arrange for the workshop to take place in a seminar room in our place of work during the week end when there will be no disturbance.

## Managing the personal and organisational values of Higher Education Professionals

6. Data from the interview to obtain your perspectives on how useful the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue could be as a potential means of managing values conflict. The interview will also be audio recorded if participants agree to do so. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, I will arrange for the interview to take place on a week end of your choice in a seminar room in our place of work where we will not be disturbed.

All data will be gathered prior to 30 July 2015, after which time participation in the study will end and no further data will be collected.

### 8. **Expenses and/or payments**

No payment or reimbursement is envisaged for your participation in the research. However, tea and brown bag lunch will be provided during the workshop session.

### 9. **Are there any risks in taking part?**

It is not anticipated that you will experience any risks, harm or expenses from participation in this study. However, personal and organizational value-conflict is a sensitive topic to discuss and share, especially among co-workers. Should you experience any discomfort as a result of your participation, please inform the student researcher or his supervisor immediately (contact information below). Arrangements will be made with the institution's Psychologists to stand by during the workshop and interviews to attend to you if you feel any discomfort. You can also withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences

### 10. **Are there any benefits in taking part?**

The main benefit of participation in this study is the possibility that the findings will help to create an environment in the organization for proactive conflict management. Participants can look forward to exploring new ways of managing the conflict of values.

### 11. **What if I am unhappy or if there is a problem?**

If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, please feel free to let me know by contacting Sunday Udoh, Student Researcher | [sunday.udoh@online.liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:sunday.udoh@online.liverpool.ac.uk) | +225 77306763 and I will try to help. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint which you feel you cannot come to me with, then you should contact my supervisor: Dr. Lucilla Crosta, Research Supervisor | [lucilla.crosta@online.liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:lucilla.crosta@online.liverpool.ac.uk) | +393335958731 or the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee via 001-612-312-1210 or [liverpooethics@ohcampus.com](mailto:liverpooethics@ohcampus.com). When contacting the chair, please provide details of the name or description of the study (so that it can be identified), the student researcher involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make.

### 12. **Will my participation be kept confidential?**

The researcher will not disclose to any third party that you participated in this study. My role as Chief Conference Analyst in the institution is separated from the one as research student at the University of Liverpool. Any data you generate will be kept anonymous and the anonymous data will be shared only with the my supervisor at the University of Liverpool. The analysed data will be given to you to confirm that you are happy with the level of anonymity. Anonymous data generated from participants in this study will be stored for five years in the researcher's secured personal computer and locked file cabinet. Participants will have to meet

one another during the workshop. However, I will personally appeal to the participants to ensure confidentiality and given that the institution has a culture of research, it is believed that the participants will also appreciate the need for confidentiality. ~~The workshop report will also be circulated to the participants to ensure that they are happy with the level of anonymity in reporting.~~

**13. What will happen to the results of the study?**

Anonymous results will be compiled and reported within the University of Liverpool to fulfil the partial requirements for the award of an Ed.D degree. Participants' data will be made unidentifiable, which means that not only are names removed, but potentially identifying characteristics and demographic information will also be stripped from any shared data. Moreover further anonymity of the data will be granted with the use of codes like letters of the alphabet during the analysis of questionnaire and workshop data, reported observations and interview data analysis process

**14. What if I stop taking part?**

You may withdraw anytime without explanation. Results up to the period of withdrawal may be used, if you are happy for this to be done. Otherwise you may request that they are destroyed and no further use will be made of them. However, given that the results will be anonymised, your contributions may only be withdrawn prior to anonymity.

**15. Do I have to give my consent immediately and how do I give it?**

No. You do not have to give your consent immediately. You are encouraged to take as much as 7 days to consider whether you would like to participate in the study. Consent can be formally given by agreeing on the consent form provided in electronic version together with this information sheet. Giving your consent there indicates to me your agreement to participate also in the other phases of the research.

**16. Who can I contact if I have further questions?**

**My contact details are:**

Sunday Udoh, Student Researcher | sunday.udoh@online.liverpool.ac.uk| +225 77306763

**The Contact details of my supervisor are:**

Dr. Lucilla Crosta, Research Supervisor | lucilla.crosta@online.liverpool.ac.uk|+393335958731

**The contact details of the** Chair of the Research Ethics Committee are: 001-612-312-1210 or liverpoolethics@ohecampus.com

Please keep/print a copy of the Participant Information Sheet for your reference. Please contact me, my supervisor and/or the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Liverpool with any question or concern you may have.

Researcher: Sunday Udoh    Date 20 February 2015    Signature: Sunday Udoh



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**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

**Title of Research Project:**

Managing the personal and organizational values of higher education professionals in an African development institution

**Researcher:** Sunday Jackson UDOH

**Consent Statement:**

The student researcher will personally conduct the research and oversee all activities that constitute part of the research. The research process will also be monitored by the student supervisor in 4 monthly Student Progress Panel meetings.

I understand that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained and it will not be possible to identify me in any publications

**Please  
initial  
box**

1. The information you have submitted will be published as a report; please indicate whether you would like to receive a copy.

Managing the personal and organisational values of Higher Education Professionals

6. I
2. I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet dated 9 February 2015 for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my rights being affected. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.
4. I understand that, under the Data Protection Act, I can at any time ask for access to the information I provide and I can also request the destruction of that information if I wish.
5. I agree to take part in the above study.

understand that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained and it will not be possible to identify me in any publications

7. I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research and understand that any such use of identifiable data would be reviewed and approved by a research ethics committee.
8. I understand and agree that my participation will be audio recorded and I am aware of and consent to the use of these recordings for the following purpose: as data from oral interview and workshop to explore your perception about the Bohm-Isaacs model of conflict resolution
9. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.
10. I understand and agree that once I submit my data it will become anonymised and I will therefore no longer be able to withdraw my data.

_____	_____	_____
Participant Name	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____
Researcher	Date	Signature

**The contact details of the Student Researcher are:**

Sunday Udoh, Student Researcher | sunday.udoh@online.liverpool.ac.uk| +225 77306763

**The Contact details of my supervisor are:**

Dr. Lucilla Crosta, Research Supervisor | lucilla.crosta@online.liverpool.ac.uk|+393335958731

## **Questionnaire**

### **Research Project Title:**

Managing the personal and organizational values of higher education professionals in an African development institution

**Student Researcher:** Sunday Jackson UDOH

### **Introductory Statement**

My name is Sunday Udoh and I am carrying out a research project in partial fulfilment of the conditions for the award of an EdD degree of the University of Liverpool. The aim of the research is to explore how higher education professionals working for an African development organization experience the conflict, if any, between their personal values and the values of their organization. To limit the scope of the study, only the values conflict that relate to the commercialization of higher education will be discussed. You have been selected for this study because you are a higher education professional, you work for an African development institution and take value-based professional decisions.

I am therefore requesting that you complete this questionnaire which seeks to explore your perceptions and experiences on managing the personal and organizational values of higher education professionals in an African development institution. Please consider that there is no right or wrong answer in the questionnaire but only your own information and opinion is required.

I would like to recall that an information sheet and consent form had been sent to you and you had indicated your willingness to participate in the research. However, I will request that you take a few minutes to re-read those documents, accept the consent form provided in electronic version here below and then confirm that you are still interested to take part in this research which will also involve your participation in a workshop and an individual interview. I will assume that you are still interested if you return a completed version of this questionnaire.

I thank you in advance for your time and contribution to knowledge through your participation in the study.

Sunday Udoh

**Consent Statement**

The student researcher will personally conduct the research and oversee all activities that constitute part of the research. The research process will also be monitored by the student supervisor in 4 monthly Student Progress Panel meetings.

I understand that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained and it will not be possible to identify me in any publications

**Please initial box**

- 11. The information you have submitted will be published as a report; please indicate whether you would like to receive a copy.
  
- 12. I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet dated 9 February 2015 for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
  
- 13. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my rights being affected. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.
  
- 14. I understand that, under the Data Protection Act, I can at any time ask for access to the information I provide and I can also request the destruction of that information if I wish.
  
- 15. I agree to take part in the above study.
  
- 16. I understand that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained and it will not be possible to identify me in any publications
  
- 17. I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research and understand that any such use of identifiable data would be reviewed and approved by a research ethics committee.

18. I understand and agree that my participation will be audio recorded and I am aware of and consent to the use of these recordings for the following purpose: as data from oral interview and workshop to explore your perception about the Bohm-Isaacs model of conflict resolution

19. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.

20. I understand and agree that once I submit my data it will become anonymised and I will therefore no longer be able to withdraw my data.

**Please answer all the questions provided below by marking or writing the answers you consider appropriate**

(v) What is the highest level of schooling you have completed?

- i. Bachelor Degree
- ii. Post-Graduate Degree
- iii. Others (please, specify)

(vi) What is your current rank in the institution?

- i. Professional
- ii. Managerial
- iii. Senior Management

(vii) For how long have you been working for an African development Institution

- (iii) 1 – 5 years
- (iv) 5 – 10 years
- (v) 10 – 15 years
- (vi) Over 15 years

(viii) How often do you take value based professional decisions?

- (iv) very often
- (v) often
- (vi) rarely
- (vii) Not at all

(ix) What is your definition of personal values?

6. What are your personal values with regard to the commercialization of Higher Education?

7. What are the values of your organisation with regard to the commercialization of Higher Education?
8. What is your definition of values conflict?
9. Do you experience any conflict between your personal values and the values of your organization?
  - e) If yes, please describe how you experience the conflict (You can tell a story to back up your answer or just provide an example)
11. If not, please move to question n. 14
12. Have you made any attempts to resolve the conflict?
13. If yes, please, describe the attempts made and if it was successful or not
14. If No, why have you not made any attempt to resolve the conflict?
15. Do you have any other comments with regard to the conflict between your personal values and the values of your organization in the area of commercialization of Higher Education?
  - (d) Have you ever heard about the Bohm-Isaacs model of conflict resolution?

17. If so, what do you think about it?

Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire, your contribution is very much appreciated. I will contact you soon for the second stage of the research (the workshop) and thereafter for the one-to-one interview.

**APPENDIX IV**

**INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

**Title of Research Project:**

Managing the personal and organizational values of higher education professionals in an African development institution

**Researcher:** Sunday Jackson UDOH

**Introductory Statement**

Thank you for accepting my request for this interview. May I please audio record the interview?

My name is Sunday Udoh and I am carrying out a research project in partial fulfillment of the conditions for the award of an EdD degree of the University of Liverpool. The aim of the research is to explore how higher education professionals working for an African development organization experience the conflict, if any, between their personal values and the values of their organization. To limit the scope of the study, only the values that relate to the commercialization of higher education will be discussed. For this interview, I am interested in having your perspective on the usefulness of the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue used during the workshop in addressing the conflict between your personal values and the values of the organization. Please, consider this interview as a discussion with no correct or wrong answers.

Before we start, I would like to recall that an information sheet and consent form had been sent to you and you had indicated your willingness to participate in the research by returning the consent form. However, I will still give you a few minutes to re-read those documents and confirm that you are still interested in the interview. A verbal response is acceptable since the interview is audio recorded.

Thank you.

Sunday Udoh

- (x) What is your definition of values?
- (xi) What role do values play in your personal life?
- (xii) What role do values play in your professional life?
- (xiii) How do values change over time? Please explain by giving some examples

Managing the personal and organisational values of Higher Education Professionals

- (xiv) How have your personal values changed with time? Please explain by giving some examples
- (xv) What is your definition of values conflicts?
- (xvi) Have you experienced any conflicts in this institution between your personal values and the values of the organization? Please explain by giving some examples
- (xvii) How did you try to manage /address the conflict?
- (xviii) When was the first time you knew about the Bohm-Isaacs model of dialogue and conflict resolution?
- (xix) Please, give me your general impression about that model of discussion?
- (xx) Do you consider the model helpful in addressing the conflict between your personal values and the values of the organization?
- (xxi) Please, justify your answer.
- (xxii) Are there areas of the model you would like to improve on? Areas you feel are not suited to the organizational culture in Africa or to professionals working in Africa?
- (xxiii) You participated in all the three stages of this research; could you give me your sincere impression of the study?

Thank you.

**ETHICAL APPROVAL**

Dear Sunday

I am pleased to inform you that the EdD. Virtual Programme Research Ethics Committee (VPREC) has approved your application for ethical approval for your study. Details and conditions of the approval can be found below.

Sub-Committee: EdD. Virtual Programme Research Ethics Committee (VPREC)

Review type: Expedited

PI:

School: Lifelong Learning

Title:

First Reviewer: Prof. Morag A. Gray

Second Reviewer: Dr. Baaska Anderson

Other members of the

Committee Dr. Marco Ferreira

Date of Approval: 20<sup>th</sup> March 2015

The application was APPROVED subject to the following conditions:

Conditions

		M: All serious adverse events must be reported to the VPREC within 24 hours of their occurrence, via the EdD Thesis Primary
1	Mandatory	Supervisor.

## Managing the personal and organisational values of Higher Education Professionals

This approval applies for the duration of the research. If it is proposed to extend the duration of the study as specified in the application form, the Sub-Committee should be notified. If it is proposed to make an amendment to the research, you should notify the Sub-Committee by following the Notice of Amendment procedure outlined at <http://www.liv.ac.uk/media/livacuk/researchethics/notice%20of%20amendment.doc>. Where your research includes elements that are not conducted in the UK, approval to proceed is further conditional upon a thorough risk assessment of the site and local permission to carry out the research, including, where such a body exists, local research ethics committee approval. No documentation of local permission is required (a) if the researcher will simply be asking organizations to distribute research invitations on the researcher's behalf, or (b) if the researcher is using only public means to identify/contact participants. When medical, educational, or business records are analysed or used to identify potential research participants, the site needs to explicitly approve access to data for research purposes (even if the researcher normally has access to that data to perform his or her job).

Please note that the approval to proceed depends also on research proposal approval.

Kind regards,

Morag Gray

Chair, EdD. VPREC