SUMMARY

Due to the intricate relationships which exist between the project team participants and the special co-operation required to achieve success, recent researches in project management have mainly emphasized on the behavioural and organisational aspects.

One area that requires further research is the area on interface conflicts. Fear of conflicts and the inability to handle resulting conflicts are major reasons why many organisations are still avoiding changeover to a project management organisational structure.

Project management built on the matrix organisational structure introduces many kinds of management interfaces to the organisation. The interfaces created will inevitably generate organisational and interpersonal conflicts.

Many studies have been carried out on these interface conflicts but they are mainly from the "eyes" of the project managers. Success in project management is like a three legged stool: it is dependent on project manager, line manager and senior management. If any of these three legs fails, then even delicate balancing may not prevent the stool from toppling down. As such, understanding of the interface management through merely the viewpoint of project managers is insufficient.
It is attempted in this dissertation, through a study of ABC Corporation, to identify the conflict parameters that are perceived by the line managers. Such conflict parameters identified are used to compare with those identified in the authoritative studies carried out by Wilemon (1973), and Thamhain and Wilemon (1975). One of the objectives of this dissertation is to attempt to make use of the findings so as to enable senior management to combine the viewpoints of both project and line managers to develop proactive steps to avoid the detrimental aspects of conflict and to capitalise upon its beneficial aspects. The findings from this dissertation are used also to form part of an Organisation Development recommendation to ABC Corporation.

A Questionnaire (Appendix I) was used as the principal data collection instrument with the twenty managers of the functional departments of ABC Corporation, representing the views of the line managers. The development of the Questionnaire relied principally on the pilot studies put forward by David Wilemon and Hans J. Thamhain. It was designed to measure the values on the two conflict parameters as perceived by the line managers: the types and intensity of the potential conflict determinants.

The associated problems were discussed in separate meetings with the three project managers and the five executive directors together with the General Manager of ABC
Corporation who represent the views of the project managers and senior management respectively.

The findings on the interface between the Project Managers, line managers and senior management through the study of ABC Corporation can be summarised as below:

i. The sources of interface conflict as perceived by the project managers are accepted to be the same by the line managers.

ii. The seven areas where conflict will occur are being viewed differently by the line managers if compared with the project managers' views in the Thamhain and Wilemon's study (1975) and.

iii. It was discovered that the roots of the unusual dysfunctional conflicts existing in ABC Corporation in fact lie with the senior management.

Based on the above findings, long range and short range strategies are recommended to the senior management of ABC Corporation and such recommendations are to be adopted as part of the Organisation Development Program to be carried out by ABC Corporation.