

Demographic Variables, Reactions to Conflict and It's Management

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to examine the influence of demographic variables (position, gender, marital status, education and age) on reactions to conflict and it's resolution. Data was collected from 653 Malaysian employees representing 39 organizations varying in size and business turnover. The results suggest that while the demographic variables do not make a difference in self's reaction to conflict and it's resolution, they interact to influence the perception of respondents on how their colleagues react to them in case of work related conflicts. The results are explained in the cultural context of Malaysia.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini cuba meneroka pengaruh variabel-variabel demografi (jawatan, jantina, status perkahwinan, pelajaran dan umur) ke atas reaksi kepada konflik and penyelesaiannya. Data telah diperolehi dari 653 pekerja Malaysia yang mewakili 39 organisasi yang berbeza dari segi saiz dan pusingganti perniagaan. Walaupun hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa variabel-variabel demografi ini tidak berbeza dalam reaksi diri terhadap konflik dan penyelesaiannya, mereka berinteraksi untuk mempengaruhi persepsi respondens ke atas bagaimana reaksi sahabat mereka dalam kes konflik yang berkaitan dengan tugas. Hasil kajian ini diterangkan dalam kontek budaya di Malaysia.

INTRODUCTION

Bulk of the research on organizational conflict has focused it's attention on organizational reasons. More recently attention has been drawn to the possibility that organizational conflict may infact, be arising out of interpersonal conflict (Blake and Mouton 1984). A number of interpersonal factors leading to organizational conflict have been identified. For example, Johnson and Rule (1986) hypothesized that most interpersonal conflicts arise out of faulty attribution errors concerning the causes behind others behaviour. In an empirical demonstration of faulty attribution, Baron (1988) had his subjects negotiate with an accomplice who used the bargaining tactic "my hands are

ties". The results showed that subjects reacted more negatively when they learned that accomplice misrepresented the cause of his behaviour. Yet in other study, Baron (1990) found that negative feedback directed in considerate and timely manner added sincerity and was preferred.

Additionally, there is a growing body of evidence to suggest that individuals with certain personality predispositions are likely to experience more conflict with other members in the organization. Mills, Robey and Smith (1985) found that those on introvert end of introversion - extroversion dimension preferred avoidance and collaboration. Other studies have found that need for control (Schutz 1985), need for affiliation (Jones and Melcher 1982) and open mindedness, considerateness and outgoingness (Greenhalgh, Neslin and Gilkey 1985) significantly affect the preferences for various outcomes in conflict situations.

While a large body of knowledge is getting accumulated on the effect of personality predispositions on organizational conflict, little or no attempt has been made to study the effect of demographic variables as they determine the reactions to conflict and its management. There is some evidence to suggest that gender may influence conflict resolution strategies. While men push for immediate results, women seek changes in future behaviour (Labour Letter 1987). In another study, Baron (1989) found the main effect of sex, reflecting the fact that females reported lower frequencies of conflict with subordinates than did males. In the same study, Baron found that conflict with peer was handled more through accommodation. However, in case of conflict with superiors, though accommodation was a common mode, women tended to be more accommodative than men.

Conflict is a fact of life. Situations either present themselves as conflict situations or become so because of individual differences in biographic profiles which influence judgement, perception, action and reaction. As Hellriegel et al. (1989) suggested "events in external environments strongly influence the way people behave; yet people always bring something of themselves to the situation". Managers concerned with conflict resolution would like to understand why some people get in conflict more often than others, so that they could manage it more effectively. This study therefore, examines the effect of demographic variables on reactions to work related conflict with colleagues and its management.

A conflict is a win - lose strategy with energies directed to each other in an atmosphere of victory and defeat. Conflict may be perceived or actual. When two individuals disagree about issues, actions, or goals or when joint outcomes become important, there are interpersonal conflicts. They may develop out of mutual task dependence, task related asymmetries, conflicting performance criteria, dependence on common resources, communication obstacles and ambiguity of goals as well as organizational differentiation (Scott 1992). Sometimes they may be associated with goals to be served

rather than means to that goals. As individuals get more committed to their goals, they become more competitive in seeking to undermine rivals activities. One survey reported that managers spend an estimated 20% of their time dealing with conflicts (Thomas and Schmidt 1976). Most conflicts are personalized and judgemental and take a short run view of the issues. Energies devoted to manage conflicts interfere with organizational goal attainment and their resolution is associated with greater effectiveness of performance.

METHODOLOGY

QUESTIONNAIRE

The data for this study was collected through a questionnaire. Before the questionnaire was finalized, extensive discussions were held with employees (N =37) in small groups from 5 Penang based organizations. These discussions were held to understand various reactions and solutions to conflict situations. The groups were posed with the problem of what do they usually do if they have work related conflict with colleagues. Similarly, they were also asked to reflect on how do they or how have they solved their work related conflicts with the colleagues.

Based on these discussions and the review of the literature, a tentative set of 14 statements dealing with reactions to conflict and another set of 14 statements dealing with conflict resolution strategies were developed. These statements were given to a group of 18 employees representing various levels for a second look on the contents and flow. Based on their feedback 12 statements on reaction to conflict and 11 on conflict resolution strategies were chosen. These are presented in Appendices 1 and 2 respectively.

Having finalized the statements, 2 colleagues were requested to translate them in local language (Bahasa Malaysia). Their agreed version in Bahasa Malaysia was given to 2 other colleagues to be translated back in English. The two English versions were compared and with minor adjustments, statements were accepted for the study

SAMPLE

Data was collected on a random sample of 653 employees representing 39 organizations in the neighbourhood of Penang. They represented a mix of marketing, manufacturing and service organizations in private sector employing fifteen to seven thousand employees and having a sales turnover of 70 thousands to 7 million Ringgit Malaysia.

The respondents were asked to chose any three statements for what do they themselves do and any three statements for what they think their colleagues do in case of work related conflict. In both cases they were given the same statements (Appendix 1) but in different order and with minor changes in the wordings. In addition, they were also asked to chose any three statements representing what they generally do to resolve work related conflict (Appendix 2).

Information relating to their position, gender, marital status, education and age was also sought from them.

RESULTS

The scope of the study required a large data base. Hence data was collected from 653 employees varying in demographic characteristics as shown in Table 1. The distribution of sample by demographic characteristics in Table 1 shows sufficient number of cases in each cell.

TABLE 1. Demographic characteristics of sample

Characteristics	N	%
1. Position		
Manager (MNG)	285	43.6
Supervisor (SUP)	104	15.9
Clerk (CLK)	264	40.5
2. Gender		
Male (MAL)	345	52.8
Female (FML)	308	47.2
3. Marital Status		
Married (MRD)	363	55.6
Single (SIN)	290	44.4
4. Education		
Degree (DEG)	231	35.4
Non-degree (NDG)	422	64.6
5. Age		
≤25	137	20.9
26 - 35	344	52.8
≥36	172	26.3

Given the nature of the data, Spearman's rank differences correlation method (ρ) was found to be most expedient to answer research questions as the data seemed to satisfy most of its requirements (Guildord 1965). Frequencies for each of the statements by cells were converted to ranks and ρ formula was applied. Tables 2,3 and 4 present the ranks and ρ coefficient values for statements what do you do, what do they do, and how conflict is resolved respectively.¹

In terms of "what do you do when you have a work related conflict with your colleagues" all ρ coefficients are significant (Table 2). This suggests that when it comes to highlighting one's own reactions to conflict, none of the demographic factors seem to make a difference. There is a very high degree of consistency of ranks across columns in Table 2. All the respondents irrespective of their demographic differences, indicate that in case of work related conflict they "insist on procedure, rules and regulation" as the top most reaction and "giving timely feedback" as the least important of all the reactions.

The results are not very different when it comes to the respondents perception of the reactions of their colleagues. Once again all the ρ coefficients are significant indicating similarity of preferences irrespective of the demographic differences (Table 3). The only insignificant ρ coefficient is for the age factor. Those of 25 years and below when compared to those of 36 years and above do not seem to agree on their ranking though both groups give top rank to "insistence on procedures, rules, and regulations". The results also show that when it comes to resolving work related conflict, the respondents invariably "approach the colleague directly and try to sort out the problem" as the top most strategy. This is followed by "seeking the help of supervisors and other colleagues" respectively. These strategies are independent of the demographic differences in the sample as all ρ coefficients are significant (Table 4).

Since almost all the demographic variables were found to show no differences in the rank patterns singly, subsequent analysis was done to see if they interact with each other to account for differences in ranks assigned to statements. This analysis was limited to taking two variables at a time.² The results in Table 5 indicate the following.

1. There is a complete agreement in the ranking of statements on what you do in work related conflict with your colleagues. The only exception is male supervisors when compared to male clerks show insignificant ranking, though in both cases the top rank still goes to the same statement (i.e. "insist on procedures, rules and regulations")
2. There is no difference in the ranking of statements concerning the strategies to resolve conflict no matter how the demographic variables are combined. All coefficient values are significant.

TABLE 2. Ranks and Rho Coefficient Values (What Do You Do)

<i>a</i> Statements	Position			Gender		Marital Status			Education			Age
	MNG	SUP	CLK	MAL	FML	MRD	SIN	DEG	NDG	≤25	26-35	36≥
1	8	10	10	10	8	7	9.5	7	10	8	8	9.5
2	9	7.5	9	9	9	8	9.5	9.5	8	10	10	5
3	11	5	8	8	10	11	8	9.5	9	9	10	7
4	4	4	3	4	3	4	4	4	3.5	4	4	4
5	7	11	6	7	6.5	9	6	8	7	6	7	9.5
6	10	9.5	11	11	11	10	11	11	11	11	10	11
7	2	2	4.5	2	4	2	3	2	3.5	5	3	2
8	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	2	2	3
9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
10	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
11	5	7.5	7	6	6.5	5	7	6	5.5	7	5	6
12	6	9.5	4.5	5	5	6	5	5	5.5	3	6	8
		730**	.896**		.949**		.886**		.942**		.930**	.722**
			.692*									.823**

a Numbers represent the sequence of statement in appendix 1

*P<0.5 **P<0.1

TABLE 3. Ranks and Rho Coefficient Values (What Do They Do)

<i>a</i> Statements	Position			Gender		Marital Status			Education			Age
	MNG	SUP	CLK	MAL	FML	MRD	SIN	DEG	NDG	≤25	26-35	36≥
1	5	9	4.5	6.5	3	8	2	6	3	7	5	5.5
2	7.5	6	9	6.5	9	6.5	9	8.5	8	8	10	2
3	6	5	4.5	8	1	5	5	5	6.5	10	4	7
4	9	11	7	9	10	9	10	10	9	9	8	9.5
5	10	7.5	10	11	8	10	8	8.5	10	4	9	11
6	12	10	12	12	11	12	12	12	11	12	11	12
7	2	2	6	2	6	3	3	3	2	2	2	5.5
8	3	3	2	3	4.5	2	6	1	6.5	5.5	3	3
9	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
10	11	12	11	10	12	11	11	11	12	11	12	9.5
11	4	4	8	5	4.5	6.5	4	4	5	5.5	7	4
12	7.5	7	3	4	7	4	7	7	4	3	6	8
<p style="text-align: center;"> .878** .783** .611* .725** .793** .687* .494 </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> .630* .608* </p>												

a Numbers represent the sequence of statement in appendix 1

*P<0.5 **P<0.1

TABLE 4. Ranks and Rho Coefficient Values (Strategies to Resolve Conflict)

<i>a</i> Statements	Position			Gender			Marital Status			Education			Age
	MNG	SUP	CLK	MAL	FML	MRD	SIN	DEG	NDG	≤25	26-35	36≥	
1	8	7	8	8	7.5	8	7	8	7.5	8.5	7	8	
2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	3	
4	7	9.5	7	7	7.5	7	8	7	7.5	6	8	7	
5	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	2	
6	5	6	6	5	6	6	6	6	6	8.5	6	5	
7	6	5	5	6	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	
8	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	
9	11	8	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	9	
10	9.5	11	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	7	10	10	
11	9.5	9.5	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	9	11	
	.906**	.991**		.988**		.981**		.997**		.888**		.861**	
		.906**										.945**	

a Numbers represent the sequence of statement in appendix 2

**p<0.1

TABLE 5. Values of Rho Coefficients by Combinations of Demographic Variables

Combinations	You do	They do	Resolve
MNG-MAL/MNG-FML	.891**	.258	.906**
SUP-MAL/SUP-FML	.760**	.379	.909**
CLK-MAL/CLK-FML	.791**	.477	.929**
MNG-MRD/MNG-SIN	.907**	.723**	.934**
SUP-MRD/SUP-SIN	.800**	.124	NF
CLK-MRD/CLK-SIN	.783**	.833**	.925**
MNG-DEG/MNG-NDG	.814**	.447	.959**
SUP-DEG/SUP-NDG	.625**	.218	.909**
CLK-DEG/CLK-NDG	.661*	.583*	NF
MNG- ≤ 25 /MNG-26-35	.870**	.706*	.965**
MNG- ≤ 25 /MNG-36 \geq	.881**	.506	.895**
MNG-26-35/MNG-36 \geq	.949**	.627*	.934**
SUP- ≤ 25 /SUP-26-35	NF	NF	NF
SUP- ≤ 25 /SUP-36 \geq	NF	NF	NF
SUP-26-35/SUP-36 \geq	NF	.556	.750**
CLK- ≤ 25 /CLK-26-35	.900**	.311	.845**
CLK- ≤ 25 /CLK-36 \geq	.562*	.419	.886**
CLK-26-35/CLK-36 \geq	.562*	.613*	.904**
MAL-MNG/MAL-SUP	.755**	.608*	.870**
MAL-MNG/MAL-CLK	.748**	.678*	.972**
MAL-SUP/MAL-CLK	.511	.426	.906**
FML-MNG/FML-SUP	.741*	.557	.977**
FML-MNG/FML-CLK	.868**	.557	.893**
FML-SUP/FML-CLK	.798*	.541	.936**
MAL-SIN/MAL-MRD	.919**	.708*	.918**
FML-SIN/FML-MRD	.823**	.830**	.961**
MAL-DEG/MAL-NDG	.910**	.727*	.936**
FML-DEG/FML-NDG	.895**	.585*	.952**

(continued)

TABLE 5 (continued)

Combinations	You do	They do	Resolve
MAL- \leq 25/MAL-26-35	.854**	.666*	.897**
MAL- \leq 25/MAL-36 \geq	.643*	.565*	.911**
MAL-26-35/MAL-36 \geq	.868**	.776*	.979**
FML- \leq 25/FML-26-35	.865**	.519	.834**
FML- \leq 25/FML-36 \geq	.751*	.223	.893**
FML-26-35/FML-36 \geq	.736*	.533	.893**
MRD-MNG/MRD-SUP	.830**	.895**	.829**
MRD-MNG/MRD-CLK	.905**	.791**	.945**
MRD-SUP/MRD-CLK	.804**	.650*	.840**
SIN-MNG/SIN-SUP	.713*	.548	NF
SIN-MNG/SIN-CLK	.879**	.715*	.952**
SIN-SUP/SIN-CLK	.825**	.398	NF
MRD-MAL/MRD-FML	.874**	.709*	.918**
SIN-MAL/SIN-FML	.942**	.525	.925**
MRD-DEG/MRD-NDG	.895**	.840**	.961**
SIN-DEG/SIN-NDG	.924**	.583*	.940**
MRD- \leq 25/MRD-26-35	NF	.632*	NF
MRD- \leq 25/MRD-36 \geq	NF	.298	NF
MRD-26-35/MRD-36 \geq	.779**	.638*	.952**
SIN- \leq 25/SIN-26-35	.888**	.517	.902**
SUP- \leq 25/SUP-36 \geq	.968**	.339	NF
SUP-26-35/SUP-36 \geq	.837**	.421	NF
DEG-MNG/DEG-SUP	.763**	.267	.900**
DEG-MNG/DEG-CLK	.769**	.234	NF
DEG-SUP/DEG-CLK	.571*	.646*	NF
NDG-MNG/NDG-SUP	.884**	.370	.947**
NDG-MNG/NDG-CLK	.729*	.737*	.975**
NDG-SUP/NDG-CLK	.627*	.234	.900**
DEG-MAL/DEG-FML	.910**	.430	.945**
NDG-MAL/NDG-FML	.902**	.559	.935**

(continued)

TABLE 5 (continued)

Combinations	You do	They do	Resolve
DEG-MRD/DEG-SIN	.851**	.664*	.931**
NDG-MRD/NDG-SIN	.895**	.774*	.943**
DEG-≤25/DEG-26-35	.924**	NF	.711*
DEG-≤25/DEG-36≥	.895**	NF	.913**
DEG-26-35/DEG-36≥	.902**	.349	.815**
NDG-≤25/NDG-26-35	.858**	.506	.825**
NDG-≤25/NDG-36≥	.692*	.494	.865**
NDG-26-35/NDG-36≥	.833**	.500	.975**
≤25-MNG/≤25-SUP	NF	NF	NF
≤25-MNG/≤25-CLK	.809**	-.431	.904**
≤25-SUP/≤25-CLK	NF	NF	NF
26-35-MNG/26-35-SUP	.618*	-.800**	.936**
26-35-MNG/26-35-CLK	.888**	-.601*	.976**
26-35-SUP/26-35-CLK	.608*	.645*	.895**
36≥-MNG/36≥-SUP	.854**	-.174	.859**
36≥-MNG/36≥-CLK	.709*	-.350	.931**
36≥-SUP/36≥-CLK	.842**	.791**	.809**
≤25-MAL/≤25-FML	.818**	.250	.859**
26-35-MAL/26-35-FML	.898**	.804**	.939**
36≥-MAL/36≥-FML	.811**	.538*	.906**
≤25-MRD/≤25-SIN	NF	.260	NF
26-35-MRD/26-35-SIN	.821**	.720*	.965**
36≥-MRD/36≥-SIN	.629*	.638*	NF
≤25-DEG/≤25-NDG	.933**	NF	.954**
26-35-DEG/26-35-NDG	.861**	.416	.713*
36≥-DEG/36≥-NDG	.818**	.435	.931**

Notes

MNG = Manager	SUP = Supervisor	CLK = Clerks
MAL = Male	FML = Female	
MRD = Married	SIN = Single	
DEG = Degree	NDG = Non-degree	

*P < .05; **P < .01; NF = Zero frequencie

3. Analysis of the ranking of statements on respondents perception of how their colleagues react to them in work related conflicts revealed the following
 - a. When position was held constant, gender revealed variations in rankings. Additionally, married supervisors as compared to unmarried supervisors, managers and supervisors with university managers and clerks as compared to their counterparts in the age degrees as compared to those without degree and ≤ 25 years old managers and clerks as compared to their counterparts in the age range of $36 \geq$ showed differences in ranking.
 - b. When gender was held constant, all females in different positions and male supervisors vs male clerks showed insignificant rho coefficients signifying differences in ranks. Female respondents of varying age also reported differences in ranks. Rest of the interactions showed significant rho coefficients.
 - c. While controlling for marital status, single managers, supervisors and clerks, single male vs single female, married of the ages ≤ 25 and $36 \geq$ and all single respondents in varying age categories revealed insignificant rho values.
 - d. Controlling for education, supervisors and clerks with degree, managers and clerks without university degree and single vs married with or without degree showed significant rho coefficients.
 - e. Finally, when age was controlled, there were significant associations in the rankings of managers, supervisors and clerks in the age category 26-35 and supervisors and clerks in the age group of $36 \geq$. Male and female in the age category of 26-35 and married and single in the age category 26-35 and $36 \geq$ showed significant association in the rankings of statements

It is noteworthy to point out that in majority of the comparisons the same statement (i.e. "they have less respect for my decision") by and large received the top rank, irrespective of whether rho coefficients were significant or not.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that while the ranking of statements for both reactions of self to conflict and resolution strategies are same, there are some variations in the ranking of their perceptions of how colleagues react to work related conflict. These variations, emerged only when the interaction effects of demographic variables were examined. The communality of ranking the statements dealing with "what do you do" when you have a work related conflict with colleagues, is significant. Irrespective of demographic factors either singly or in interaction with each other, by and large respondents have

ranked "insistence on procedures, rules and regulations" as the top most reaction. Structurally this seems to be a favoured reaction as it finds an easy excuse in following the bureaucracy. In a formal social structure which is governed by rules and regulations, responsibilities and accountabilities the relationships between people are defined independent of personal characteristics.

While conflict may be taken personally, bureaucracy comes handy to justify personal reactions to conflict. This seems to be particularly true for Malaysian situation where disagreements are seldom discussed frankly because of importance placed on group loyalty, cohesiveness and "loss of face" (Gill 1992).

The results dealing with strategies to resolve conflict are equally important. Once again, irrespective of demographic variations either singly or jointly all the coefficients have been found to be significant indicating consistency in rankings on statements. The top rank goes to the strategy of "directly approaching the colleague and trying to sort out the problem". Those affected by conflict may resolve it by igniting more conflict (Thomas 1979) or blocking further communication. Grudges against others and "loss of face" may lead to anger or negative attitude towards individuals responsible for these outcomes. Once again, consistent with the focus on harmony and concept of shame (i.e. "what will others say"), the urge to patch up issues in a direct way seems relevant. However, if this does not work because attitudes are hardened, involving a third party in the form of supervisor or another colleague are the next most preferred strategy. Any third party is an "interested party" involved in the pragmatic concern to engineer social stability and consensus as parties in conflict are committed to apparently irreconcilable position (Webb 1986). In Malaysian context, the involvement of intermediaries helps in not only avoiding losing face but also to strengthen relationships among people (Asma Abdullah 1992). Communal feelings supersede the incentive to prolong conflict which may lead to endangering communal harmony.

The area where demographic characteristics seem to account maximally in differences in ranking is their perception of what their colleagues do in case of work related conflicts. Here the effect of demographic variables emerges only when they are allowed to interact with each other. By and large single respondents of 25 years or less rank "do not accept my suggestions" and "highlight my deficiencies", 26-35 age group rank "avoid follow up on pending matters" and those 36 years and above rank "delay decisions" and "reject work related requests" as dominant reactions of their colleagues. Similarly, respondents without degree and 25 or less years rank "provide inadequate information" and "believe in hear say", 26-35 age group rank "do not accept our suggestions" and "reject work related requests" and those 36 years or more rank "retaliate than cooperate" and "delay in work related decisions" as major reactions of their colleagues.

Of all the demographic variables, the gender of respondents in interaction with position, age, and education seems to make differences in the ranking of the statements. The combined results of these interactions indicate that male rank “colleagues believing in hearsay” and female rank “reject our work related requests” and “highlight our deficiencies” as most preferred reactions of their colleagues.

If organizational conflicts are rooted in individual disagreements which in turn might be influenced by demographic characteristics, it is necessary to design structures of relationship independent of innately aggressive predispositions of individuals. Interpersonal conflicts are serious problems. They deeply affect a person’s emotions. There is a need to protect one’s self image and self esteem from damage by others. The interpersonal and demographic factors contribute to conflict may be pessimistic as they add several potential causes to those already existing. Yet identifying demographic causes of conflict has practical benefits as they can be adjusted more readily than structural properties that contribute to conflict.

The fact that demographic variables contribute to conflict helps in understanding the complexities of today’s employees. It provides a micro perspective of the profile factors and facilitates conflict resolution strategies. Better still, an understanding of the demographic variables contributing to conflict can be of tremendous help in diffusing conflict before it takes a toll on the overall health of the organization.

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Appendix 1 Statement Measuring Reactions to Conflict

“What do you (they) do when you (they) have a work related conflict with you colleagues (you)”³.

1. When asked I give inadequate information to them
2. I do not accept their suggestions
3. I do not give them timely feedback.
4. I have less respect for their decisions.
5. I retaliate than cooperate with them.
6. I believe in hearsay about them.
7. I contest their decisions.
8. I highlight their deficiencies.
9. I insist on procedure, rules and regulations.
10. I reject their work related requests.
11. I delay decisions on their work related matters.

- 12. I avoid follow-up on pending matters relating to them.
- 13. Any other (specify).....

Appendix 2
Statement On Conflict Resolution Strategies

“What do you do to resolve work related conflict with you colleagues”.

- 1. Do nothing about it.
- 2. Directly approach the colleague and try to sort out the problem.
- 3. Seek the help of another colleague.
- 4. Seek the help of a common friend out side the work.
- 5. I retaliate than cooperate with them.
- 6. Seek the help of supervisor.
- 7. Just sit by my self and think about the problem.
- 8. Look for opportunities where I could “accidently” meet the colleague and talk about it.
- 9. Involve family members.
- 10. Ask for transfer.
- 11. Look for another job.
- 12. Any other (specify)

NOTES

- 1. In all three cases the respondents had the choice to indicate any other reaction/strategy as well. However except in two cases none of the respondents opted for this alternative. They are not included in the analysis.
- 2. Analysis with three or more variables revealed zero frequencies for many statements and hence was not pursued.
- 3. In case of question “what your colleagues do to you” the language was modified from “I” to “they”.

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