

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT: A STUDY AMONG BANK EMPLOYEES IN PENANG

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ABSTRACT

Conflict that occurs in an organization cannot be distinguished but can be prevented. The right tool to prevent conflict is by managing the conflict effectively. Effective conflict management will put a stop to conflict from spreading widely in an organization. Therefore, given such importance of conflict management; organizations must discover ways to effectively manage employees' conflict which will result in their employees' attitudes and behaviors to be excellent in order to deliver maximum work quality for the team and towards organization's success. This research discusses the styles in handling conflicts among employees in banks located in Penang, Malaysia and organizational commitment factor that influenced them in selecting appropriate styles. It was conducted to achieve two main objectives: (a) to investigate the styles employees use in handling conflicts, and (b) to examine the relationship between the styles used by the employees in handling conflicts and organizational commitment. The study was conducted using data from 65 respondents from the banks in Penang. The total sample is determined by stratified proportionate sampling framework. This study has employed Rahim's Organizational Conflict Inventory – II (Rahim & Magner, 1995) to identify styles in handling conflicts. By combining dual dimensions i.e. concern of self and concern of others, this instrument has introduced five styles in handling conflict namely avoiding, dominating, obliging, compromising and integrating. The result of factor analysis reveals that the styles used by employees in this study are integrating, compromising and dominating. The results demonstrated that employees are more committed towards the organization through the use of integrating style in resolving conflict. On the other hand, employees perceived dominating and avoiding styles as lowering the sense of organizational commitment.

Keywords: Conflict management styles, organizational commitment, bank employees.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the current business environment employees in the banking sector face multitude challenges and obstacles in their daily jobs. These threats offer unique challenges for the management to manage their organizations well. The challenges that take place in banking organization will affect the employees in one way or another. As such, employees might be faced with conflict due to challenges such as differing needs, beliefs, values and goals among group members in the organization.

Conflict leads to stress and anxiety which often produce negative behaviors among the employees (Nizam, 2011). Conflict occurs when there is a struggle or contest between employees with differing needs, beliefs, values, and goals (Alger, 1996). Coser (1967) states that conflict is a struggle over values and it's due to limited status, power, and resources. The goal of an individual is to neutralize, injure or eliminate their opponent. Conflict influences employees' behaviors and attitudes. Employees normally respond towards conflict negatively. In a study done by Hocker and Wilmot (1985) which analyzed employees to respond to the word "conflict" and the results are disagreement, tension, anger, competition, threat, pain and hopelessness. Obviously, employees equate conflict with negative sentiment.

A number of cases have been highlighted in the local newspaper regarding issues of conflict such as a bank employer in one of the leading banks in Malaysia was reported to have retracted their annual two-month bonus and caused about more than 1000 angry employees staging picket against their employer (Bernama, 09 October 2007). In addition, there was another case reported by Bernama (15 December 2012) where the conflict was sparked because the employer failed to give employees the right of freedom to voice their opinion and the employees were harassed, discriminated, and abused. Lower level employees were also deprived of employment security and right for better living. Such scenarios indicate that conflicts will harm employees' commitment towards the organization.

Employees cannot be committed to the organization whenever conflict exists (Nair, 2008). Conflict that occurs among team members might reduce mutual understanding and thus hinder the commitment of employees to complete their tasks. It also causes employees to be short tempered, distrustful and resentful. This will result in negative consequences on group members' commitment towards the organization, hence increasing the intention to leave the organization. For this reason, conflict must be managed effectively to enhance organizational commitment towards the organization. One of the ways to overcome conflict is by seeking support and cooperation among the team members. According to Ayoko, (2007), group members that engaged in cooperative relations are able to solve problems that occur in the organization. In addition, group members tend to work more

efficiently, form a strong relationship and instill more confidence among them. As a result, this will lead to excellent commitment among team members towards the organization and reduce the intention to leave the organization.

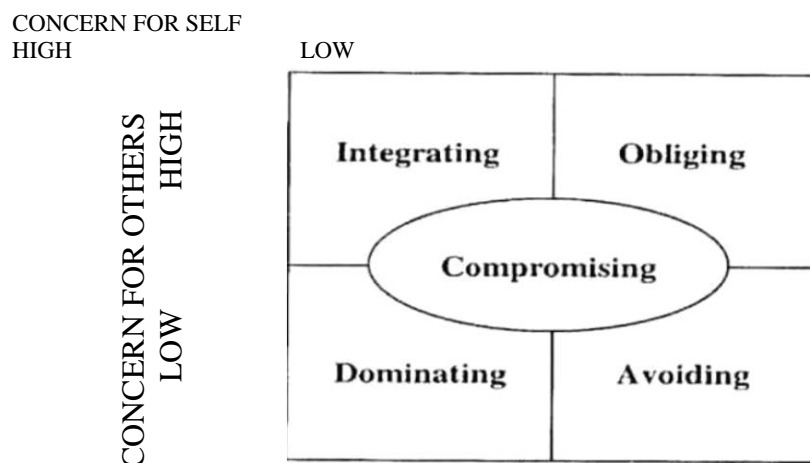
Organizational commitment has been defined as the strength of an employee's involvement in an organization (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982) and a psychological link between an employee and organization that he or she is unlikely to voluntarily leave the organization (Mayer & Allen, 1991). There are three components in organizational commitment that is derived from Mayer and Allen 1991 organizational commitment model (Herscovitch and Meyer, 2002). The three components are affective, normative and continuance. According to Mayer and Allen (1991), affective commitment (AC), refers to the employees' emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization based on positive feelings or emotion towards the organization. The Mayer and Allen (1991) model also states that normative commitment (NC) is defined as employee's feeling of responsibility to stay with the organization wherein it is based on the employee's having internalized with the values and goals of the organization and continuance commitment (CC) refers to an awareness of the costs linked with leaving the organization.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conflict Management Styles

There are five types of conflict management styles such as integrating, obliging, compromising, dominating and avoiding styles (Rahim and Magner, 1995). Rahim and Bonoma (1979) differentiated the styles of managing conflict on two basic dimensions specifically concern for self and concern for others. The first dimension (concern for self) elaborates the degree (high or low) to which a person attempts to satisfy his or her own concern while the second dimension (concern for others) explains the degree (high or low) to which a person attempts to satisfy the concern of others. Combination of these two dimensions results in five specific styles of handling conflict, as shown in Figure 1 (Rahim and Bonoma, 1979).

Figure 1
The dual concern model of the styles of handling conflict



2.1.2 Integrating style

This style is linked with problem solving and involves openness, sharing information, searching for alternatives and examination of differences to reach an effective solution acceptable to both parties (Rahim, 2002). Moreover, integration style concerns with collaboration between parties to reach an acceptable solution (Rahim & Magner, 1995). This style refers to the ability of manager to work with his or her employee to find a solution that fully satisfies the concerns of both. In integrating style, each party will learn and explore the conflict from his as well as other's insight. The conflict resolution via this style will meet both parties' objective.

2.1.3 Obliging style

Obliging style is linked with low concern for self and high concern for others and associates while attempting to play down the differences and emphasizing the commonalities to satisfy the concern of the party. An obliging person neglects his or her own concern to satisfy the concern of the other party. In this style, managers might take the form of selfless generosity or charity, obeying another person's needs and prefer to yield another's point of view.

2.1.4 Compromising style

This style intermediates between concern for self and others. It involves 'give and take' situation where both parties give up something to make a mutually acceptable decision. Compromising style also refers to splitting the difference, exchanging concessions or seeking a quick middle-ground position (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

2.1.5 Dominating style

Dominating style involves high concern for self and low concern for the other party involved in the conflict. It has been described as a win-lose situation (Rahim & Magner, 1995). Thomas & Kilmann (1974) portrayed dominating style as a competing style. A dominating employee always sticks to his arguments that he is correct and always tries to win.

2.1.6 Avoiding style

Avoiding style involves low concern for self and others which is associated with withdrawal or sidestepping the actual situation. An avoiding person fails to satisfy his own concern as well as other party's concern. The avoiding style is suitable when an employee wants to reduce tensions, stalling for more time, or when he is in a lower position of authority.

2.2 Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is defined as the beliefs and feelings shaped internally that enriches and employees wish to stay with an organization and to accept its goals and values (Porter, Crampton and Smit, 1976). Meyer and Allen (1991) present three approaches and define the three dimensional constructs as affective, continuance and normative commitment:

2.2.1 Affective Commitment

Affective commitment refers to the employee's emotional attachment, identification and involvement in the organization based on good feelings on the organization. Furthermore, it is theorized that employees with low affective commitment will prefer to leave the organization, while employees with a high affective commitment will stay for longer periods, as they trust to the organization and its mission.

2.2.2 Continuous Commitment

Continuance commitment is employee commitment to stay longer in the organization due to high cost of leaving. The antecedents of this commitment include age, tenure, desire to leave and job satisfaction. Age and tenure can be the purpose of continuance commitment, mainly because of their roles as replacement measures of investment in the organization. Tenure has close relationship with workers, retirement costs, career investments and skills unique to the organization.

2.2.3 Normative Commitment

Normative commitment is described as an employee's feelings to stay with the organization where it imposes on the employee the values and goals of the organization. The primary backgrounds of normative commitment are worker commitment including affective commitment and commitment behaviors, organizational dependability and participatory management. Workers commitment tends to provide normative signs that will develop normative commitment meanwhile organizational dependability and participatory management are expected to inspire feelings of moral responsibility to respond to the organization.

2.3 Conflict Management Styles and Organizational Commitment

Conflict is common in any organization. The risk of workplace conflict is its' effect on employees' morale, organizational commitment and productivity. Disagreements among a diverse workforce that leads to conflict are problematic especially when different generations, gender or level of workers use their own styles to solve the conflict. It is believed that well managed conflict among workers will enhance them to be committed to their organization and remain in the organization while unresolved conflict among workers will boost their intention to quit from the organization. Ahmad and Marinah (2013) stated that the integrating style of conflict management plays a major role in enhancing commitment towards the organization. In their study, Nik and Sharmin (2002) found that there was minimum conflict, where the integrating style was used in the organization. Integrating style is said to be the most appropriate style to enhance commitment among employees because this style focuses on problem solving in a collaborative fashion. Employees that use this style face conflict directly and try to find new and creative solutions to the problems by focusing on their own needs as well as the need of others (Havenga and Visagie, 2006).

Inon et. al. (2003) in their study among Malaysian employers and Indonesian domestic workers discovered that both parties tended to use integrating style in dealing with conflict. By using this method, both sides will be more committed in managing conflict in organizations. Conflict resolution by using integrating approach is likely to be settled compared to other approaches since both parties are committed to the solution and satisfied that they are treated fairly (Suhaili et. al. 2004). In addition, commitment among employees can be strengthened by using integrating style because it would able to increase understanding between employees (Nizam, 2011). As mentioned by Green and Marks (2001) integrating style gives team members a better understanding of the others in the team.

Dobkin and Pace (2006) state that compromising style can boost commitment among employees as it encourages the employees to work together to manage conflict among them. Compromising style is defined by the employee is willing to give in on some demands in return for concession from the other. According to this technique, both parties are working with full cooperation with each other and they are not selfish in negotiation and making concession. If one party achieved its goals the other party will concede in order to achieve the goals together. According to Green and Marks (2001), compromising style gives team members a

better understanding of the others in the team and as a result it enhances commitment among employees towards the organization.

Organizational conflict researchers generally assert that employees who choose integrating, compromising, and obliging styles tend to foster cordial dyadic relationships among employees (Rahim & Buntzman, 1989; Burke, 1970; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Likert & Likert, 1976). These styles are related to an effective conflict management. Several studies on the integrating, compromising, and obliging styles of handling conflict show consistent results in commitment among employees (Korabik, Baril, & Watson, 1993; Tutzauer & Roloff, 1988; Wall & Galanes, 1986; Vigil-King, 2000). Likewise, other studies recorded that employees uses dominating and avoiding is linked to negative effect on organizational commitment (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoeck, & Rosenthal, 1964; Likert, 1967).

Disagreement among employees will cause conflict at workplace. Conflicts will inspire employees to be less committed and looking for any opportunities to quit from the organization. If opportunities are unavailable, they might emotionally withdraw from the organization. Thus, conflict management and organizational commitment are important in assessing employees' overall contribution en route to achieve organizational outcomes. Organizations that applied effective conflict management styles results a very positive impact on commitment among employees in organization. It is also logical that better conflict management will enhance the employees to be more committed with the organization, so, we can safely construct the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis:

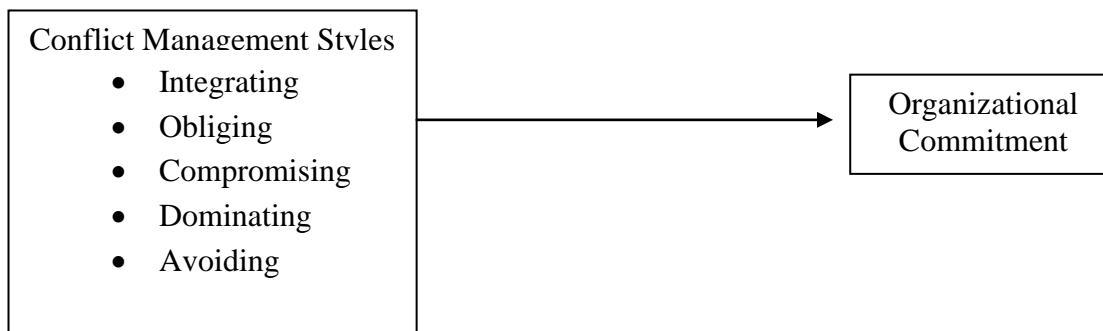
The hypotheses generated are:

H1: Integrating, obliging, and compromising styles has positive effect on organizational commitment

Employees with higher integrating have higher value-effort commitment in organization (DeCoitis and Summers, 1987). Organizational conflict researchers (e.g. Rahim and Buntzman, 1989; Burke, 1970; Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967; Likert & Likert, 1976) generally assert that employees who exhibits integrating, compromising, and obliging styles are more prone to foster a cordial dyadic relationships among superiors and subordinates. Several studies on the integrating, compromising, and obliging styles of handling conflict show consistent results in commitment with other employees (Korabik, Baril, & Watson, 1993; Tutzauer & Roloff, 1988; Wall & Galanes, 1986; Vigil-King, 2000).

Theoretical Framework:

Based on the literature review, the studied variables encompass Conflict Management Styles, and Organizational Commitment. The theoretical framework is presented below. Conservation of resources The Dual Concern Model (Rahim and Bonoma, 1979), and Mayer and Allen (1991) theory are utilized in developing the research framework.



3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sampling Design

The sample for this study comprises of employees working in commercial banks in Penang, Malaysia. This sample was selected for two reasons: (1) this represents the group of people who are more aware of the kind of conflict styles among employees and normally hinge more on the non-traditional organizational-based kind of relationship to sustain their commitment in the organization, and (2) the sector is among the more dominant sectors in Malaysia that contribute significantly to the Gross Domestic Product and labor employment.

The banks that met the above criteria were selected from the list of banks gathered from the Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM). Stratified random sampling was used in selecting the samples from the large database. The researcher first indicated sampling frame and followed by stratification of samples. Once the stratified samples have been determined, random sampling procedure was employed to identify the respondents. Data subjects were obtained through survey questionnaire.

3.2 Research Instrument

All data used in the study consist of responses to questionnaire items.

3.2.1 Conflict Management Styles

Conflict management styles were measured by using the Form C of ROCI-II (Rahim, 1983). This multi-item instrument contains 28 items uses a 5-point Likert scale to assess employee's style of handling conflict. The ROCI-II was designed to measure 5 dimensions or styles of resolving conflict. 7 items for measuring integrating style, 6 items each for measuring obligating style and avoiding styles, 4 items for measuring compromising style and 5 items for measuring dominating style.

3.2.2 Organizational Commitment

The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), developed by Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979), is widely used and is supported by extensive psychometric data (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Mowday, Steers, and Porter, 1979). This study used the shorter 9-item version of the OCQ. Responses were made on a 5-point Likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree). Sample items include "I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization".

3.3 Data Analysis Techniques

Reliability and factor analysis was used to check the consistency and dimensionality of the scale items. Multiple regression analysis is performed to check the criterion-related validity of the scale items. Pearson Inter-correlation was used to measure the relationships among conflict handling styles and organizational commitment. It allowed a straight forward interpretation of the hypothesized relationships.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Sample Characteristics

From the total of 70 responses received, only data from 66 respondents were usable. By ethnic group, 52% of the respondents were Indian, 26% were Chinese, and 21% were Malay, while other races made up the rest. By gender, 53% were male and 47% were female. In terms of age, the highest proportion of respondents fell into those above 41 years old. They accounted for 39% of the total number of respondents. This was followed by the 21-30 years age group (34%), while respondents on 31-40 years age group accounted for the remaining.

4.2 Validating the Scales

The standardized Cronbach Alpha and the inter-item correlation for each subscale are provided in Table 1. The internal consistency reliability coefficients for all the scales were satisfactory (Nunnally, 1978). All the Conflict Management Styles scale has good internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient reported greater than .78. The inter-item correlations for the five scales ranged between .29 and .88.

Table 1: Summary of Scale Items and Measure of Scale Reliabilities

Scales	Inter-item Correlation	Cronbach Alpha
Conflict Management Styles		
Integrating	0.64 to 0.76	0.91
Obliging	0.62 to 0.83	0.89
Compromising	0.46 to 0.58	0.78
Dominating	0.64 to 0.84	0.91
Avoiding	0.74 to 0.88	0.93
Commitment among employees	0.29 to 0.64	0.86

Since this study is a part of a preliminary analysis, the first 28 data received were factor-analyzed. This was done to test the earlier statement that the underlying set of data contained 5 distinct dimensions or factors. These initial factors were derived through the Maximum Likelihood analysis and the terminal solution was reached through Varimax Rotation and Kaiser Normalization using the SPSS computer package. The analysis extracted five factors. The selection of a factor and an item was guided by the criteria: Eigenvalue > 1.0 and Scree Plot and factor loading >0.4, respectively. Based on these criteria, the first five factors were selected. The results are presented in Table 2. The order of items was altered to show the clustering of items more clearly. The factor loading of >0.4 are underlined to indicate the items finally selected to represent the five subscales.

Table 2: Factor Structure Matrix for Varimax Rotated Factor Solution

Item No.	Conflict Styles/Item	Factor				
		1(IN)	2(OB)	3(CO)	4(DO)	5(AV)
1. Integrating (IN)						
1.	My superior tries to investigate an issue with me to find a solution acceptable to us.	<u>.75</u>	.26	.16	-.18	-.18
6.	My superior collaborates with me to come up with decisions acceptable to us.	<u>.75</u>	.19	.20	-.27	-.04
3.	My superior tries to work with me to find solutions to a problem which satisfy our expectations.	<u>.74</u>	.20	.18	-.13	-.14
7.	My superior tries to work with me for a proper understanding of a problem.	<u>.74</u>	.20	.31	-.16	-.10
4.	My superior exchanges accurate information with me to solve a problem together.	<u>.74</u>	.19	.25	-.27	-.13
2.	My superior tries to integrate his/her ideas with those of mine to come up with a decision jointly.	<u>.74</u>	.20	.37	-.20	-.70
5.	My superior tries to bring all our concerns out in the open so that the issues can be resolved in the best possible way.	<u>.60</u>	.15	.28	-.19	-.10
2. Obliging Style (OB)						
9.	My superior usually accommodates the wishes of mine.	.27	<u>.90</u>	.07	-.10	.17
10.	My superior gives in to the wishes of mine.	.19	<u>.82</u>	.14	.009	.11
8.	My superior generally tries to satisfy the needs of mine.	<u>.42</u>	<u>.74</u>	.18	.13	.03
13.	My superior tries to satisfy the expectations of mine.	.25	<u>.66</u>	.08	-.07	.18
11.	My superior usually allows concessions to me.	.12	<u>.62</u>	.18	-.12	-.16
12.	My superior often goes along with the suggestions of mine.	.29	<u>.61</u>	.13	-.04	.13
3. Compromising						
15.	My superior usually proposes a middle ground for breaking deadlocks.	.33	.07	<u>.60</u>	.12	-.03
14.	My superior tries to find a middle course to resolve an impasse.	.23	.11	.37	.13	.13
16.	My superior negotiates with me so that a compromise can be reached.	.37	.16	<u>.76</u>	.005	.005
17.	My superior uses "give and take" so that a compromise can be made.	.37	.24	<u>.65</u>	.05	.03
4. Dominating						
19.	My superior uses his/her authority to make a decision in his/her favor.	-.26	-.14	-.12	<u>.89</u>	.19
18.	My superior uses his/her influence to get his/her ideas accepted.	-.21	-.22	-.06	<u>.87</u>	.09
20.	My superior uses his/her expertise to make a decision in his/her favor.	-.12	-.05	.23	<u>.85</u>	.29
21.	My superior generally firm in pursuing his/her side of the issue.	-.18	-.03	.19	<u>.79</u>	.12
22.	My superior sometimes uses his/her power to win a competitive situation of a problem.	-.21	.08	.06	<u>.66</u>	.12
5. Avoiding						
27.	My superior tries to keep his/her disagreement to himself/herself in order to avoid hard feelings.	-.09	.13	.12	.02	<u>.69</u>
26.	My superior avoids an encounter with me.	-.17	-.008	-.10	.16	<u>.55</u>
25.	My superior tries to stay away from disagreement	-.05	-.11	.07	.13	<u>.62</u>
28.	My superior tries to avoid unpleasant exchanges with me.	-.06	.03	.08	.05	<u>.74</u>
23.	My superior attempts to avoid being "put on the spot" and try to keep our conflict to himself/herself.	.10	.12	.01	.12	<u>.47</u>
24.	My superior usually avoids open discussion of his/her differences with me.	-.15	.14	-.14	.18	<u>.54</u>
	Eigenvalues	7.3	5.0	3.7	2.1	1.6
	% of variance explained	26.2	17.7	13.1	7.6	5.8

Three of the factors extracted which represented integrating; dominating and avoiding conflict managing styles contained all items as earlier included in the scale. Factor which represented obliging style contained 4 items as against 6 items earlier included in the scale. Item “My superior generally tries to satisfy the needs of mine” was found to be poorly correlated with the rest of the obliging styles items. It also loaded more on the integrating style. This item is dropped from the scale. A deep examination of the responses to this item indicated that respondents tend to overstate their intention (mean score of 4.0) to have a good commitment among subordinates. The reason for this could be that most individuals wished for harmony at work and would make an effort to maintain a good working relationship with their colleagues despite difference between them. Item “My superior usually allows concessions to me” of obliging style item failed to meet the selection criteria and was thus dropped from the scale. Factor which represented compromising style contained 3 items as against 4 items earlier included in the scale. Item “My superior tries to find a middle course to resolve an impasse” was found to be poorly correlated with the rest of the compromising style items and not be suitable for inclusion here.

A multiple regression analysis was run to test the direct relationship between superior conflict handling styles and organizational commitment. The result indicates that significant relationship exists and together the independent variables explained about 43.7% of the variation on commitment among employees. The relations between the five styles and “theoretically-related” dependent variable further reinforce the criterion related validity of the conflict handling scale. The result of analysis is shown on Table 3. The results showed that only integrating style has direct positive effect on organization commitment (Beta = .41; $p < .0001$). Also, it is noted that dominating style has direct but negative effect on organization commitment (Beta = $-.31$, $p < .0001$).

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis: Conflict Style and Commitment among Employees
Dependent variable: Commitment among Employees

Predicted variables	b	Standard Error	Beta	T value
Integrating	2.40	.63	.41	3.95**
Obliging	-.11	.66	-.03	-.20
Compromising	.90	.57	.15	1.50
Dominating	-1.56	.43	-.31	-3.83**
Avoiding	-.44	.65	-.04	-.70

F = 10.92

Significance F < 0.0001

R (adjusted) = .437

Intercept: a = 13.42

* $p < .10$

** $p < .0001$

4.3 Testing of Hypothesis

The hypothesis states that integrating, obliging and compromising styles have direct and positive effect on the employees’ commitment towards organization but only integrating style is significant in its impact on organizational commitment. The correlation analysis in Table 3 provided good support for this hypothesis. The integrating, obliging, and compromising styles of managing conflict showed positive relationships and highly correlated with employees’ commitment towards organization. These three correlations were significant above .01.

In the relationship of conflict managing styles to employees’ commitment towards organization, integrating style ranked highest among other styles with value of $r = .62$, $p < .01$. This was followed by compromising style and obliging style which had coefficients of correlation of .33, $p < .01$ and .29, $p < .01$ respectively. The ranking of inter correlation was similar to the study of Rahim and Buntzman (1989) conducted on respondents with post graduate working experience. It was expected that integrating, compromising and obliging style represents a high level of inner acceptance between employees’ relationships. As Rahim and Buntzman (1989) had discovered, the integrating, compromising, and obliging style of handling conflict tends to foster a more committed, cooperative and prolonged relationships among employees in organization.

There are literatures on organizational conflict that proves integrating, compromising, and obliging styles are positively associated with employees’ commitment towards organization. Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) indicate that an integrating, compromising, and obliging styles dealing with inter-group conflict was used to a significantly greater degree in higher performing organizations than lower performing organizations. In general, a integrating, compromising, and obliging styles are positively related to the effective management of conflict that lead to commitment among employees, while forcing (dominating) and withdrawing (avoiding) were related to the ineffective management of conflict that lead to refusal among employees (Burke, 1970).

The findings are similar to Likert and Likert (1976) where the results provide evidence to suggest that an organization encourages participation and problem solving (integrating) behaviors attains a higher level of commitment among employees. In addition, Rahim and Buntzman (1989) suggested that the integrating (problem solving), compromising and obliging styles of handling conflict is positively correlated with employees’ commitment towards organization. Several studies on the integrating, compromising, and obliging styles of managing conflict show consistent results. These styles result in high joint benefit for the parties, better decisions, and greater commitment among employees. (Korabik, Baril, and Watson, 1993; Tutzauer and Roloff, 1988; Wall and Galanes, 1986). Vigil-King (2000) study shows employees that use more integrating conflict management styles are likely to have higher commitment among them than employees using less integrating styles.

The high degree of inter correlations among the integrating, compromising and obliging served to temper the previous discussions and tended to suggest that while integrating style emerged as the dominant explanatory of conflict handling style, its effective utilization might be tied to some extent, to the employee's exercise of a combination of other style such as compromising and obliging style.

In another hand, dominating and avoiding styles have negative effect on employees' commitment towards organization. Both the dominating and avoiding styles showed relatively negative but significant correlation with value of $r = -.50$, $p < .01$ and $r = -.24$, $p < .01$ respectively with employees' commitment. In the dominating style, employees' response tends to be dependent on the normative acceptance of the position and prerogatives of the organization at large including its leadership. The present result coincided with the conclusion made by Rahim (1986) and Burke (1970) that dominating and avoiding styles are less effective means of employees' commitment.

Previous researchers supported this correlation by stating that dominating style which is derived from control over negative or punishing outcomes for others does not appear to be a suitable style for dealing with employees (Van de Vliert, Euwema, and Huismans, 1995). It is negatively related with concern for the other party which will usually not improve the relationship among employees. The scholars believed that dominating is ineffective and can lead to conflict of social interaction.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Overall, it could be concluded that the findings had achieved the objectives of this study. Of the five conflict management styles, only three were found to correlate significantly as well as significantly predict the variation in organizational commitment which are integrating, obliging and compromising styles. The conflict management of bank employees is partially connected to organizational commitment. Bank employees with higher integrating have higher value-effort commitment and retention commitment in organizational commitment. Bank employees with higher compromising are of higher value-effort commitment in organizational commitment. Bank employees with higher compromising are of higher value-effort commitment in organizational commitment. To maintain and ensure the professionalism and quality of conflict management by the employees, it is recommended that the employees' interpersonal skill and knowledge must be continuously developed in managing conflict. It can be implemented by improving employees' understanding on the strength and weaknesses of those five styles of managing conflict and work towards the appropriate use depending on situation.

Apart of that, employee's perception on conflict should also be improved as the findings showed that some of the respondents agreed that conflict is bad and should not be ignored. Conflict also could be better managed by improving employee awareness in accepting and appreciating the diversity of individuals within their organization.

Conflict is unavoidable in every organization. Therefore, it is proposed that the relevant banking industry plan programs of conflict management for the members of the organization. The members can manage conflict well, timely and effectively when it happens. Besides, conflict helps the advance of the quality of the organization. If the organization is too stable without competition among members, the development of the organization will be limited. As a result, the banking industry is advised to recognise conflict in good time to increase positive competition among members.

The findings from this study should be viewed cautiously due to several methodological limitations. As with all types of data collection techniques, the self administered questionnaire too has its share of shortcomings. One of the problems facing cross-sectional survey investigators is that of social desirability. Respondents tend to succumb to social desirability for example; they tend to respond very favorably to certain items although in reality this is not the case. As such, scores for certain variables tend to be inflated and as such, are prone to errors. Consequently, the researcher may not be measuring the actual or true score which ultimately affects the findings of statistical tests.

Although this study did not incorporate all possible work related variables in the survey instrument, it nevertheless provides an empirical glimpse of the conflict management styles and organizational commitment among bank employees in Penang. The findings provide encouraging empirical illumination that most organizational behavior theoretical framework have important applications for bank employees in Malaysia. For a broader and deeper understanding of the conflict management styles and organizational commitment among bank employees Malaysia, more research is warranted. Longitudinal and experimental studies need to be conducted to provide stronger causal evidence of how a set of work related variables can affect the variation in conflict management styles and organizational commitment.

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