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A Pilot Study on Job Satisfaction and Conflict Resolution of Female Employees Working for Female Employers

Keanan B. (Keanan Breanne) Jacobson
Western Washington University

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A pilot study on job satisfaction and conflict resolution of female employees working for female employers.

Submitted by
Keanan B. Jacobson

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Advisor: Dr. Anna Eblen

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HONORS THESIS

Justification

Whether in business, volunteering, family life, personal friendships or daily interactions, employers view individuals who manage conflict successfully as competent communicators and capable leaders. "Indeed, those who are unable to manage conflict effectively may have trouble reaching organizational goals (Mathur & Sayeed, 1983; Nicotera, 1995), maintaining positive relationships and cohesiveness (Canary, Cupach & Messman, 1995; Coser, 1956), and solving problems (Hall, 1986). Individuals who have difficulty handling conflict are also more likely to be dissatisfied with their jobs (Infante & Gorden, 1985a, 1985b, 1991; Infante, Anderson, Martin, Herington, & Kim, 1993). Thus, it is imperative that researchers determine how competent various styles of conflict management are perceived to be" (Gross & Guerrero, 2000, p.200). Unresolved conflict within the workplace is among the primary reasons why employees are unsatisfied with their jobs. Therefore, this study seeks to explore the relationship between female employers' and employees' conflict management styles and employees' satisfaction with conflict resolution in the workplace.

Empirically, I will examine employee's satisfaction with conflict resolution within the workplace. I hypothesize that employees who perceive their supervisors using an integrating conflict management style will have the highest levels of job satisfaction. This is based on previous literature that states that persons who use the integrating conflict management style show the most concern for self and others. I expect to find that the employees will be most satisfied if their supervisors successfully meet both their needs and their subordinates' needs.

2

Definitions

"Conflict is 'the interaction of interdependent people who perceive opposition of goals, aims, and values, and who see the other party as potentially interfering with the realization of these goals (Putnam &Poole, 1987, p.552)'" (Ting-Toomey, Oetzel, Yee-Jung. 2001, p.1). For the purpose of this study, conflict management style refers to broad tendencies in how one responds to conflict in different situations, and it gives an overall picture of a person's orientation toward conflict. People have a preferred or predominant conflict management style, but it is possible to alter conflict styles in regards to a specific situation or person. Conflict management styles have been defined in a number of ways; however, I have used a five-style model based on two different dimensions. I adapted Johnston's conflict management inventory for my study (Johnston, 1986). In this model, he refers to the different conflict styles as withdrawing, forcing, smoothing, compromising and confronting. Because the majority of published literature refers to these styles with different names, I refer to the styles with the most commonly used terminology, wherein: withdrawing is avoiding, forcing is dominating, smoothing is obliging, compromising remains compromising, and confronting is integrating.

This inventory classifies conflict management styles based on two dimensions: concern for self and concern for others. A concern for self shows the degree to which people try to satisfy their own interests. A concern for others shows the degree to which people try to satisfy the interests of others. Each of the styles shows a high or low tendency in both dimensions. The styles are: avoiding (low self and other),

obliging (low self and high other), dominating (high self and low other), compromising (moderate on both self and other), and integrating (high self and other).

Cai and Fink (2002) explain each of the conflict management styles. They describe the integrating style as willingness to exchange information openly, address differences constructively, and to exert a strong effort to make the final decision mutually agreeable. The individuals who typically use the integrating style value their own goals and relationships. They view conflicts as problems to be solved and seek a solution that achieves both their own goals and the goals of the other person. By finding solutions that satisfy all parties, they maintain the relationship. Of the five styles, conflict literature recommends the integrating style because it is most likely to yield win-win solutions (Currall, S., Friedman, R., Green, B., Tidd, S., & Tsai, J. 2000). Also, high concern for others is most likely to occur when one expects a long-term relationship with the other party (Pruitt, & Carnevale, 1993).

If the concern for self and other is moderate, the participant demonstrates a compromising conflict style. This style allows individuals to "make a deal" where both parties can reach a middle ground.

The obliging style is a non-confrontational style that emphasizes preserving the relationship rather than pursuing a self-concerned outcome. People who oblige downplay the differences between the two parties and avoid conflict in order to maintain harmony. They believe that conflict will destroy a relationship and cause harm to others. Thus they will give up their own interests in order to maintain the relationship.

The dominating style exemplifies someone who does anything in order to get what they want. They strongly value their goals, and they do not care how others perceive them. People who dominate view conflict as one person wins and one person loses. They fight to win and see losing as weakness, failure and powerlessness. People who dominate tend to overpower, attack, and intimidate others in order to win in the conflict.

The last conflict style is avoiding. This style shows little concern for self or for others. It occurs because either the benefit in pursuing the conflict is small or because the other party in the conflict is unlikely to yield appropriately. The person withdrawing may hope that, if left alone, the conflict will somehow go away (Pruitt & Rubin, 1986).

Most people show a combination of conflict styles that vary with the situation and with whom they engage in conflict. There are major correlations between certain conflict styles. More specifically, significant correlations among three pairs of styles exist: compromising and obliging; integrating and compromising; and avoiding and obliging. These correlations mean that during conflict one may show (a) high frequencies in the use of both the compromising and obliging styles; (b) high frequencies in the integrative and compromising styles; and (c) high frequencies in both the avoiding and obliging styles (Munduate, Ganaza, Peiro, Euwema, 1999).

For this study, I have adapted Johnston's Reaching Out inventory (Johnston, 1986), which explains the different styles of conflict resolution. This instrument, in the form of a parable quiz, defines each style of conflict management. My independent variable is the conflict resolution style. The dependent variable is the

employees' level of job satisfaction. In an attempt to maintain consistent working definitions of satisfaction between this study and the study that the inventory originated from, I referred to Brayfield for his definition of satisfaction. He states,

> A careful survey of the literature reveals that attempts to identify and estimate job satisfaction have preceded precise definition. Employee satisfaction and morale are often equated but seldom defined... 'Such definitions as have been offered are of little help to the psychologist in the construction of items designed to measure morale. Thus it was (is) necessary to proceed on the basis of subjective judgment' (Hull & Kulstad, 1942, p. 350). As a working approach for this study it was assumed that job satisfaction could be inferred from the individual's attitude toward his work (Brayfield, 1951, p. 307).

For the purpose of this study, Brayfield's Job Satisfaction Index determined satisfaction (Brayfield & Rothe, 1951). The examined behaviors were the verbal messages used by the employer to resolve conflict and the employee's overall feeling of satisfaction in the work place. This was a pilot study that involves the staff of a non-profit organization, which had an entirely female staff that focuses on issues of sexual assault and domestic violence. Using Johnston's instrument, I measured the employee's conflict management style, as well as the employees' perception of their employer's conflict management style. I determined the participants' level of job satisfaction using Brayfield's instrument.

Research Approach

Quantitative and qualitative approaches were used in my study. The survey provided both self- and other-report to discuss the conflict resolution styles and the levels of the employees' satisfaction. Benefits and limitations existed in all of my research approaches. The benefit of doing self-report was that the subject knows themselves better than anyone else. However, the Hawthorne effect and the Social

6

desirability effect may have caused severe limitations to self-report. When completing surveys, people tend to respond in a way that makes them appear better than they really are, or how they think society would want them to respond as a "good person." In order to avoid the Hawthorne and social desirability effects, I also used other-report. Conflict resolution style and job satisfaction instruments measured the different types of conflict management styles and the employees' level of job satisfaction. The benefit of this inventory was that it provided easy evaluation and interpretation of the quantitative results. However, the Johnston Model stereotyped and did not allow for individual discrepancies. To combat the narrow definition resulting from Johnston's model, I added open-ended questions where the participants can expand on their opinions. I combined this quantitative information from the indexes with the open-ended written questions to triangulate the data and interpret the final results.

Literature Review

Women in the Workforce

Higher numbers of women continue to enter the workforce and fill managerial positions (Valentine & Godkin, 2000). It is a relatively new standard to have so many women in the workplace, and they have only recently begun to join the ranks of managers in large numbers (Crampton & Mishra, 1999). By 1995, women made up about 63% of the total work force. However, only six percent of women are classified as middle level managers (Crampton & Mishra, 1999). Yet, with this

female addition to the workforce the position of 'manager' continues to be defined in masculine terms (Wheeless & Berryman-Fink, 1985).

Women in Management

Since the idea of women as managers is so new, information on successful female managers is valuable. Originally, people compared female management to male management. Because of this comparison, female leaders have modeled their leadership styles after successful male mangers (Crampton & Mishra, 1999, p. 92). The female managerial role-model did not exist. Old theories assumed that in order for females to succeed, women must behave like men. This theory stems from the assumption that women and men are the same. Consequently, when women did not fit the male-based theories of successful management and communication, they were regarded as deficient and negatively evaluated (Broadbridge, 1999).

The negative evaluation shows that men and masculine traits have a higher perceived value than women and feminine traits (Crampton & Mishra, 1999). These demands create a paradox for women. It is unnatural for most women to try to behave like men. Though most women have a combination of stereotypical male and female characteristics, trying to communicate as the opposite gender is a difficult task and usually unsuccessful. Employees rate competent masculine-behaving women lower than women taking feminine roles (Valentine & Godkin, 2000). Deborah Tannen states, "If [women] talk in ways expected of women, they'll be liked but seen as less competent and less confident than they are. If they talk like men, they may be seen as more able, but also viewed as too aggressive and therefore not liked" (Asher, 2001, p.22).

In addition to meeting failure from the aforementioned options, females trying to

act like males may find a disharmony within themselves.

> The 'Catch-22' is that when a woman tries strategies of gender-reversal and
> adopts the so-called male characteristics, she might find that she faces another set
> of problems – alienation and hostility – because becoming one of the boys is
> harder than it looks...To get along, the new-age woman manager might find that
> she has to act one way on the outside, while being driven by a very much different
> psyche on the inside (Merrick, 2002, p.96).

Not only are women forced into this painful dichotomy, but they also "do not

have equal opportunities to men in the managerial hierarchy owing to organizational

culture and policies which uphold male characteristics/values as the accepted norm

for managerial behavior. When female behavior is compared against such norms

(Gulati and Ledwith, 1987, Gutek and Larwood, 1987) it is consequently perceived as

inadequate (Brown, 1979) or devalued (Marshall, 1991; Calas and Smircich 1993)"

(Broadbridge, 1999, p.135). Since women cannot succeed by trying to take on male

characteristics, they struggle to find a way to lead and communicate successfully

which allows them to embrace their natural styles in managing conflict.

Gender studies have shown that women and men act differently in a number of

aspects. These differences are not incompatible, but they are valid. Because men

created and led the structures that make up our current society, women struggle to

find a place for themselves in the workforce, just as organizations struggle to find

value in the benefits that women bring to work.

The idea of management is changing. According to studies on organizations

(Fagenson, 1993; Nichols, 1996), women bring different approaches to the workplace

than do men. What women bring to the workforce (caring, empathy, etc.) is gaining

9

more value in the traditionally patriarchical workforce. Employees who have worked

with or for a female manager reported more positive attitudes toward female

managers. In accordance with previous research, women employees like working

under women (Crino, 1981; Matteson, 1976; Peters, 1974; and Terberg, 1977) and

have more positive attitudes toward women as managers (Wheeless and Berryman-

Fink, 1985). "While corporate America may be changing to flatter hierarchies,

participative management, and greater communication needs, more companies need

to value the qualities that make a good leader and develop them in both men and

women" (Crampton & Mishra, 1999, p. 93).

> Morgan W. McCall Jr., in *Psychology Today*, writes that the masculine-trait manager is now perceived to be cold and arrogant, so-called traditional male values...McCall said some top-level managers were fired because of a lack of sensitivity and of caring for their employees...A case study based on stereotypical traits defined by gender would, in these situations, place some feminine characteristics higher in the hierarchy of positive attributes than some male characteristics.... Some researchers believe male and female characteristics are 'blending' as more women move into management" (Merrick, 2002, p.108).

Women find new ways to transform their leadership style in order to include

personal characteristics such as charisma, personal contacts, and interpersonal skills.

"As organizational structures are flattening and requiring more participative

management, some suggest that many women have a natural style that will enable

them to more successfully lead and manage within these new corporate

environments" (Crampton & Mishra, 1999, p.92). This ideal gender conflict

management style is yet to be determined.

Women and men do express different conflict communication styles (Gilbert

1990).

> Anecdotal evidence (Tannen, 1990) demonstrates that women perceive
> avoiding and obliging conflict styles as appropriate for maintaining relationships.
> Differences in conflict styles between genders are often because of gender-role
> socialization processes of individuals. In the U.S., females are stereotypically
> socialized to be interdependent or connected with others resulting in integrating
> and avoiding conflict management styles, whereas males are stereotypically
> socialized to be independent or separate from others resulting in dominating
> conflict management styles (Ting-Toomey, Oetzel & Yee-Jung, 2001, p.89).

"Research has indicated that women's world is viewed through relationships

instead of rules" (Valentine, 2001, p.71). Generally women were better able to

empathize with the other's perspective, while men used confrontational behavior

more so than women. The researchers concluded that "females and males use some

of the same but also some different techniques. Their different orientation reflects

different perspectives on conflict" (Valentine, 2001, p.71). Also, women may see

conflict as threatening the sense of community that motivates many women to join

feminist organizations (Riger, 1994). Because the communication differences exist,

we need gender-neutral criteria to evaluate successful conflict management for both

women and men. A trend in the literature supports the need for information on what

conflict management styles succeed for female managers.

Do women display female ways of resolving conflict and still keep their

employees satisfied by running an agency successfully? From the statistics, it can be

concluded that women are supervising other women in increasing numbers (Merrick,

2002). Will the truest forms of female management and conflict resolution be

exemplified in female dominant organizations?

In summary, one of the major functions of a supervisor is the management of conflict, both among subordinates and between the supervisor and the subordinate. There is little research about how satisfied women are working for women employers, and there is even less research about how women feel about their female supervisors' ability to handle conflict on the job. Research is sparse about women in women-dominated organizations (Valentine, 2001). This study is an attempt to close these gaps in the literature, to show how women in female-dominated organizations perceive their superiors' ability to manage conflict and how satisfied they are with their jobs.

Methodology

Instruments

In order to clearly measure the participants' style of conflict management and level of job satisfaction, I used two published indexes: the Conflict Management Style Inventory from Johnston and the Job Satisfaction Inventory from Brayfield and Rothe. The job satisfaction index originally had an odd-even product moment reliability of 0.77 which was corrected by the Spearman-Brown formula to 0.87. The evidence for the scale's validity is based upon the nature of the items, the method used to develop the scale, and its ability to differentiate between groups.

Sample and Sampling Method

An anonymous survey exemplifies one of the best mediums for this sample because it guarantees anonymity and allows the subjects to express their true feelings.

The participants must have complete anonymity due to the sensitive nature of the topic.

Because of my volunteer work at this non-profit agency, I chose to do a convenience sample of the staff. I found that the dynamics and conflict management styles interesting because of the entirely female staff. I used an anonymous survey to gather my data. The benefits were that the questionnaire was easy to distribute, and the data were easy to evaluate and record. Lack of room for personal expression was one drawback to this survey. The components of this survey included the following: three areas for the participant to add further comments that will allow for more qualitative data; (two sections added to questionnaires that state "comments" and one page with three open-ended questions) (Please see Appendix A). Another drawback of the survey was a low response rate. I tried to combat this by explaining the importance of this study in the letter to the participant.

I placed a letter to the participant and a survey in each employee's box at the front desk of the agency. Ninety-one questions made up the survey, three of which were open-ended. The survey contained four sections: job satisfaction, self-conflict style, supervisor conflict style, and open-ended questions. There were two areas that left room for comments. The job satisfaction survey had 18 questions. The participants were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement in a Likert scale format (1= Strongly Agree; 5= Strongly Disagree). The same survey was used for the participants' perception of their supervisors' conflict management style and their own conflict management style. This survey was made up of 35 questions with room at the bottom for further comments. The participant

used a 5-point Likert scale for the following three sections as well (1= Very typical of

the way I/she act(s) in conflict; 5= Never typical of the way I/she act(s) in conflict.)

The survey took approximately 20 minutes to complete. Once the participants

completed the survey, they put it in a locked box at the front desk for their

convenience. A week later I collected them.

The data gathered from this survey provided information about the relationship

between employers' and employees' conflict management styles and employees'

satisfaction in the workplace. The conflict management style inventory allowed me

to discover the participants' conflict management style and their perception of their

supervisor's conflict management style. The job satisfaction inventory allowed me to

rate employees' level of job satisfaction. The results showed me a possible

relationship between the participants' conflict management style and their level of job

satisfaction, and if there is a relationship between the participants' level of

satisfaction and their perception of their supervisor's conflict management style.

Validity

Several validity issues impacted this study. The main threats to internal validity

were: a.) threats caused by how the research is conducted, b.) threats from the

researcher, and c.) threats from the participants. The threat of how the research was

conducted relates to the history of this agency. Every few years the staff of the non-

profit agency must complete a morale survey. These constant surveys may have

desensitized the participants, thus making the results of this study inaccurate. In

order to avoid this, I had the management team of the non-profit agency review the survey to prevent strong similarities between the morale survey and this survey.

My analysis of the data and how I chose to create the survey may unintentionally threaten the validity of this research project. My personal biases and expectancies may have influenced the types of inventories used or how I interpreted the data. The positive experience I have had as a volunteer and intern in the agency may have unintentionally influenced the study. Possibly, the survey may have been organized in a way that led the participants to answer the questions in a certain way. To avoid these threats, I carefully organized and conducted the survey and data analysis as objectively as possible. Also, my senior thesis advisor, professors, peers, and the Bureau of Faculty Research reviewed all of my work.

My final concern about the internal validity came from the participants. The participation of supervisors and subordinates was completely voluntary and many chose not to participate, the representativeness of the obtained data is unknown. There is a likelihood that the majority of those who responded have worked with me in my volunteering and felt a stronger personal responsibility to support my research. Also, there is a possibility that the participants did not completely trust the level of anonymity in this study and they did not answer truthfully. The participants may have changed their responses to be what they expect others will want to hear. To avoid this, I tried to be as clear and adamant as possible about the importance of honest responses in both the letter of consent and the directions. The letter of consent clearly reassured the participants that I took every measure to ensure their complete anonymity.

Other validity threats from the participants are the Hawthorne and Social Desirability effects, or the fact that people change how they act, or incorrectly report how they act when they know they are being studied. Again, I attempted to avoid this by asking the participants to respond as honestly as possible and by keeping the survey anonymous so there was no threat of others perceiving them negatively.

There was one main external validity concern. Because I employed a convenience sample, my study was very small. There were only 30 participants who received the survey and only 25% were expected to return the completed survey. It would not be valid to generalize my findings from this study to all employees, volunteers and employers in all non-profit organizations, or even in all sexual assault and domestic violence programs in Washington State. In order for this study to have external validity, it will have to be repeated a number of times with different populations, resulting in the same conclusions. Despite the challenges to validity in such a pilot study, future research will determine overall external validity.

Ethical Concerns

The anonymity and the sensitive nature of these topics were the two main ethical concerns that arose from this study. It was imperative that the information gathered was accurate and honest. However, this information could be harmful to the reputation and potentially to the employment of the participants if their honest responses were to be linked with their identity. In order to prevent any undue harm to the participant, the participants returned the completed surveys to a locked box, monitored by the front desk staff member, and I was the only person to witness the

anonymous results of the survey. After I gathered the data and entered the results, I destroyed the original surveys in order to avoid any identifying features, such as distinct handwriting.

Due to the sensitive and personal nature of the information being collected, I asked for the Executive Director and Management Teams' permission to implement the study. Also, I clearly stated in the cover letter to the participants that they were under no obligation to complete the survey. This letter to the participant also explained the purpose of the study, how the information would be used, possible harm caused, and how to contact the researcher and supervisor. Simply completing the survey and returning it to the locked box substituted for a signed consent form. All participants have access to the completed study.

Results

Of the 30 surveys distributed, 12 were returned, a 40% return rate. All 12 had completed the job satisfaction portion of the survey, though only 8 completed the conflict management style inventory portions (2/3 of the 40% returned).

The first section of the survey measured job satisfaction with a range of 18-90 points. The higher the score, the more satisfied the participant was with her job. I divided the range into five categories. The ranges of each category are: Very Satisfied (77-90), Satisfied (62-76), Moderate (48-61), Unsatisfied (33-47), and Very Unsatisfied (18-32). The responses to the job satisfaction inventory place all of the participants in the Satisfied to Very Satisfied categories (65-84 points) (see table 1.) Four out of the 12 respondents ranked Very Satisfied. The remaining 8 respondents

rated Satisfied. The most unsatisfied participant scored a 65 out of 90, while the most

satisfied scored an 84. The mean score was 73.5. The median score was 73.5, and

the mode scores were 69 and 74.

Table 1 Distribution of Job Satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction	
Highest	84
	82
	81
	78
	74
	74
	73
	69
	69
	67
	66
Lowest	65

The eight surveys with completed conflict management style inventories showed

a variety of results. Employees most frequently perceived the conflict management

style of the supervisors as integrating. Interestingly, the most frequently self-reported

conflict management style of employees was obliging. The majority of participants

felt as though they valued harmony more than their supervisors did. All eight

respondents showed the same first or second choice of conflict management styles as

their supervisor's top two most predominant styles. For example, one participant

displayed obliging most frequently and integrating second most frequently, while

they perceived their supervisor to display the integrating and compromising styles

most frequently. Every participant shared either their first or second most frequent

conflict management style with one of their employers top two most frequent conflict management styles. This may account for the overall high level of job satisfaction. As suggested in previous research, subordinates are less likely to withdraw from conflict with female supervisors than from conflict with male superiors and were more likely to use a confrontational approach with females than with males (Monroe, DiSalvo, Lewis, & Borzi, p.13). Similarly, this survey showed that the least used conflict management style showed from this survey for both supervisors and employees was avoiding. Even with such high levels of job satisfaction, not one survey showed the exact same conflict management style between supervisor and subordinate. Overall, the participants reported integrating as the most frequently reported conflict management style for both supervisor and subordinate.

Of the 12 completed surveys, 7 responded to the open-ended questions. Those who responded showed a variety of levels of job satisfaction. Those who replied to the open-ended questions were a fairly representative sample of those who responded to the survey of job satisfaction. Two Very Satisfied participants responded and the remaining 5 are Satisfied with their jobs. The responses to the open ended questions varied. The participant with the lowest job satisfaction score who responded to the open ended questions had the least favorable things to say about how conflict was dealt with in the agency. She felt threatened and worried that if she voiced her opinion that she would be fired or laid off. The second most unsatisfied participant to respond to the open ended questions stated that there was a tension between the direct services programs and the agency administration. Interestingly, both of these participants ranked Satisfied on the Job Satisfaction Index. These examples suggest

that either there is not a correlation between job satisfaction and conflict management as previous research suggests, that other aspects that effect job satisfaction out weighed these examples' negative perceptions of how their supervisors managed conflict and they still ranked Satisfied on the job satisfaction inventory.

Aside from these two comments, respondents reported that conflict was dealt with by the agency and by their supervisors as positive and fair. Participants stated that there was "a lot of open communication." Many felt that their supervisors did a great job handling conflict directly with the person involved, or was willing to discuss other options and come to a reasonable compromise. Many of the open ended responses mentioned their supervisor's interest in what the employee wanted, which relates to the high frequency of the integrating style that was reported in the conflict management sections of the survey. The general response to these open-ended questions supports the fact that those who responded to the survey feel satisfied, if not very satisfied with their work and how conflict is handled between supervisor and subordinate.

Conclusion

Overall, this study provided more information on the relationship between employers' and employees' conflict management styles and employees' satisfaction with conflict resolution in the workplace. There appears to be a connection between the level of employee satisfaction and the employee's perception of their supervisor's conflict management style. Overall job satisfaction is influenced by a number of aspects as well as how conflict is managed in the workforce. Job satisfaction is

affected by the physical environment of the job, co-worker's attitudes, compensation, family life and a number of other aspects. Because of the number of different variables that contribute to the employee's level of job satisfaction and because of the preliminary nature of the current study, I cannot conclude that conflict management is the main indicator of job satisfaction. However, this study shows all of the participants satisfied with their jobs, and they all practice the integrating or obliging conflict management style. The similarities in conflict style could partially be responsible for the high level of job satisfaction reported by these participants.

Many of these findings are in accordance with previous literature. The women in this study did show the obliging and integrating styles that are considered to be more desirable for and among women, as research suggested. Also, it appears from the results of the job satisfaction inventory that women do enjoy working under women in regards to successful conflict management.

Research on conflict management and job satisfaction should continue because of its strong connection to job retention and productivity. More specific research should be continued for women in particular. Hopefully, with this continued research and the increase of women in the workforce, the ideals of successful management and conflict resolution will equally embrace women and men's natural styles. The more information we discover on these topics, the more likely it will be that we can create a better and more positive working environment for women working under women.

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APPENDIX A

April 29, 2002

Dear participant:

I am contacting you in regards to a special research survey of employees and volunteers at Whatcom Crisis Services. The goal of this study is to further understand how different forms of conflict management affect employees in the workplace. This project is approved by Kathleen Marshall, Executive Director of Whatcom Crisis Services. The questionnaire should only take about 20 minutes to complete.

If you choose to participate, you may refuse to answer particular questions or terminate your participation at any time without penalty. Your participation is completely voluntary. **All of your responses will remain entirely anonymous and confidential.** Under no circumstances will you be identified to fellow employees, volunteers, supervisors or anyone else. This study will use only averages, not individual, scores. Once the results have been analyzed and the data generalized, the surveys will be destroyed. Due to the potentially sensitive nature of the topic, we ask that you do not discuss your answers with other employees or volunteers.

The study will focus on understanding your perceptions of how conflict is "dealt with" in the workplace. I'd like you to reflect on your experiences and respond to the questions as honestly as possible. Once the study is completed, you may be curious as to other's experiences and feelings on the issue. The agency will receive a copy of the general results, so that both you and your co-workers can benefit from your participation.

If you would like a summary of the results, please contact me at the end of June by leaving a note in my WCS box. If you have any questions about the survey, or need clarification, feel free to contact me. I appreciate your time and cooperation in helping me complete my study. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Keanan Jacobson   Anna Eblen, Ph.D.
Investigator   Faculty Advisor, Chair
Department of Communication   Department of Communication
(360) 527-8442   (360) 650-3890

(OVER)

Using the following scale, indicate how you typically feel about each statement.

Strongly Agree = 1
Agree = 2
Undecided = 3
Disagree = 4
Strongly Disagree = 5

_____ 1.My job is like a hobby to me.

_____ 2.My job is usually interesting enough to keep me from getting bored.

_____ 3.It seems that my friends are more interested in their jobs.

_____ 4.I consider my job rather unpleasant.

_____ 5.I enjoy my work more than my leisure time.

_____ 6.I am often bored with my job.

_____ 7.I feel fairly well satisfied with my present job.

_____ 8.Most of the time I have to force myself to go to work.

_____ 9.I am satisfied with my job for the time being.

_____ 10.I feel that my job is no more interesting than others I could get.

_____ 11.I definitely dislike my work.

_____ 12.I feel that I am happier in my work than most other people.

_____ 13.Most days I am enthusiastic about my work.

_____ 14.Each day of work seems like it will never end.

_____ 15.I like my job better than the average worker does.

_____ 16.My job is pretty uninteresting.

_____ 17.I find real enjoyment in my work.

_____ 18.I am disappointed that I ever took this job.

The proverbs listed below can be thought of as descriptions of some of the different strategies for resolving conflicts. Proverbs state traditional wisdom, and these proverbs reflect traditional wisdom for resolving conflicts. Read each of these proverbs carefully. Using the following scale, indicate how typical each proverb is of your supervisor's actions in a conflict.

5= Very typical of the way s/he acts in a conflict
4= Frequently typical of the way s/he acts in a conflict
3=Sometimes typical of the way s/he acts in a conflict
2=Seldom typical of the way s/he acts in a conflict
1=Never typical of the way s/he acts in a conflict

_____ 1.It is easier to refrain than to retreat from a quarrel.

_____ 2.If you can't make a person think as you do, make him or her do as you think.

_____ 3.Soft words win hard hearts.

_____ 4.You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours.

_____ 5.Come now and let us reason together.

_____ 6.When two quarrel, the person who keeps silent first is the most praiseworthy.

_____ 7.Might overcomes right.

_____ 8.Smooth words make smooth ways.

_____ 9.Better half a loaf than no bread at all.

_____ 10.Truth lies in knowledge, not in majority opinion.

_____ 11.He who fights and runs away lives to fight another day.

_____ 12.He hath conquered well that hath made his enemies flee.

_____ 13.Kill your enemies with kindness.

_____ 14.A fair exchange brings no quarrel.

_____ 15.No person has the final answer, but every person has a piece to contribute.

_____ 16.Stay away from people who disagree with you. (OVER)

_____ 17.Fields are won by those who believe in winning.

_____ 18.Kind words are worth much and cost little.

_____ 19.Tit for tat is fair play.

_____ 20.Only the person who is willing to give up his or her monopoly on truth can ever

profit from the truths that others hold.

_____ 21.Avoid quarrelsome people as they will only make your life miserable.

_____ 22.A person who will not flee will make others flee.

_____ 23.Soft words insure harmony.

_____ 24.One gift for another makes good friends.

_____ 25.Bring your conflicts into the open and face them directly; only then will the

best solution be discovered.

_____ 26.The best way of handling conflicts is to avoid them

_____ 27.Put your foot down where you mean to stand.

_____ 28.Gentleness will triumph over anger.

_____ 29.Getting part of what you want is better than not getting anything at all.

_____ 30.Frankness, honesty, and trust will move mountains.

_____ 31.There is nothing so important you have to fight for it.

_____ 32.There are two kinds of people in the world, the winners and the losers.

_____ 33.When one hits you with a stone, hit him or her with a piece of cotton.

_____ 34.When both give in halfway, a fair settlement is achieved.

_____ 35.By digging and digging, the truth is discovered.

Further Comments: _____

_____

_____

The proverbs listed below can be thought of as descriptions of some of the different strategies for resolving conflicts. Proverbs state traditional wisdom, and these proverbs reflect traditional wisdom for resolving conflicts. Read each of these proverbs carefully. Using the following scale, indicate how typical each proverb is of YOUR actions in a conflict.

5= Very typical of the way I act in a conflict
4= Frequently typical of the way I act in a conflict
3=Sometimes typical of the way I act in a conflict
2=Seldom typical of the way I act in a conflict
1=Never typical of the way I act in a conflict

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_____ 33.When one hits you with a stone, hit him or her with a piece of cotton.

_____ 34.When both give in halfway, a fair settlement is achieved.

_____ 35.By digging and digging, the truth is discovered.

Further Comments: _____

_____

_____

1. How is conflict resolved between you and your supervisor?

2. Would you be happier if your supervisor changed the way that s/he resolved conflict? Explain.

3. How does the agency as a whole deal with conflict?

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