

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CONFLICT
HANDLING STYLES AT PRE-CONTRACT STAGE OF
BUILDING CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS IN
SRI LANKA**

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(179157X)

Master of Science in Construction Law and Dispute Resolution

Department of Building Economics

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Thesis/Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
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Declaration

I declare that this is my own work, and this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a Degree or Diploma in any other University or institute of higher learning and to the best of my knowledge and believe it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where the acknowledgement is made in the text.

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.....

G.H.S.P. De Silva

.....

Date

The above candidate has carried out research for master's Dissertation under my supervision.

.....

Prof. (Mrs) Yasangika Sandanayake

.....

Date

Dissertation Supervisor

Abstract

Sri Lankan construction projects suffer from frequent conflicts between the design team professionals during the pre-contract stage of the projects as it claims a high diversity of multidisciplinary involvement. These different conflicts result in both positive and negative influence on the project. To handle these different types of conflicts, professionals use different styles during the pre-contract stage of building construction projects in Sri Lanka. Hence, the aim of this study was set to investigate the conflict-handling styles that can be used to minimize the conflicts during the pre-contract stage of building construction projects in Sri Lanka.

Study on the existence of different types of conflicts and their handling styles were derived through a quantitative approach using a questionnaire survey designed incorporating Rahim's Organisational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) distributed among 42 number of professionals (Engineers, Project Managers, Architects, Quantity Surveyors, Cost Managers and Adjudicators) engaged in Sri Lankan building construction projects during the pre-contract stage. Collected data were coded and analysed incorporating descriptive statistics with mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage counts through Likert Scale analysis. The scope of the study was limited to the pre-contract stage of building construction projects.

According to research findings, it was revealed that task conflicts occur very often and process conflicts occur often during pre-contract stage. Further, relationship conflicts and status conflicts found to be rare during the pre-contract stage between the design team professionals. The findings also indicated that to handle these four types of conflicts with their supervisors, peers and subordinates, the majority of professionals use the integrating style and obliging style, and they use competing, avoiding and compromising styles as final options to handle conflicts with their supervisors, peers and subordinates, respectively.

The study finally revealed the different styles that the professional use to handle different types of conflicts with their supervisors, peers and subordinates during the pre-contract stage of building construction projects in Sri Lanka. The study would be helpful for the industry practitioners engaged in the pre-contract stage of building construction projects to identify their personnel style of handling conflicts and the outcome of using each style for different conflict types with their supervisors, peers and subordinates.

Keywords: Conflict-handling Styles; Conflicts with Peers; Conflicts with Subordinates; Conflicts with Supervisor, Construction Industry; Pre-contract Stage, Types of Conflicts.

Dedication

To the person who wanted to see, who I am today, Late Mr. D.C. De Silva!

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Special thanks go to all the industry practitioners who gave me immense support and corporation to complete a successful data collection by sharing their valuable knowledge and experiences with me.

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List of Abbreviations

AV	–	avoiding
CO	–	compromising
DO	–	dominating
IN	–	integrating
n	–	No. of respondents
OB	–	obliging
ROCI-II	–	Rahim's Organizational Conflict Inventory – II
SD	–	Standard Deviation
w.a.	–	weighted average

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