

## *Chapter 5*

### **CONCLUSION**

This chapter summarises the findings of the study. It also highlights its implications and makes a recommendation for further research.

#### **5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

According to Covey, the practice of "effective habits" is very important for a balanced life. Without effective habits, we may find ourselves in conflict. However, few studies have been done on his effective habits and related issues. The objectives of this study were to identify the effective habits that consulting engineers lack as well as the effective habits that they have and the extent to which they practise them. The influence of demographic variables on the practice of these habits by consulting engineers was also examined. Data were collected by survey questionnaire from 175 consulting engineers working in the Klang Valley.

The Seven Habits identified by Covey and investigated in the study are:-

- \* Habit 1: Be Proactive
- \* Habit 2: Begin With The End in Mind
- \* Habit 3: Put First Things First

- \* Habit 4: Think Win-Win
- \* Habit 5: Seek First To Understand, Then To Be Understood
- \* Habit 6: Synergize; and
- \* Habit 7: Sharpen The Saw (or Renewal)

The study found that consulting engineers do not lack any of the seven "effective habits". They also have a "good " practice of these "habits", with Habit 7, the best practised, followed by Habit 4. Habit 1 is the least practised. However, consulting engineers do not have a "very good" practice of these habits and therefore should, if Covey is to be believed, strive to improve on the practice of the seven habits.

With regard to the relationship between the practice of effective habits and demographic variables, only four variables (income, sex, education level and race) were found to be significant predictors. Other variables (age, marital status, professional engineer and engineering discipline) were not found to be significant predictors.

"Income" was a significant predictor for Habit 1 and Habit 2, and "sex" is a significant predictor for Habit 3 and Habit 7. Habit 4 and Habit 5 were significantly predicted by "education level" and "race", whereas Habit 6 was significantly predicted by "education level" only. On the practice of Combined Habits, the variables "sex", "education level" and "race" were found to be significant predictors. All the

relationships were positive except for "sex" whereby; where sex was a significant predictor variable, male engineers registered a significantly higher level of habits than female engineers did. This was confirmed by the results of t-test where the mean score of male engineers was higher than that of female engineers.

This study also found that the practice of combined effective habits was dependent on the variables "sex", "age", "race", "marital status" and "education level". In comparing the difference in the means of intra-groups of each independent variable of the respondents, it was found that "education level", "age", "race" and "sex" showed a significant difference in the means of combined effective habits. All the differences were significant at the level of 0.05.

## **5.2 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The results of this study have several implications. Only the principal ones are discussed below.

First, the study shows that consulting engineers do not really lack Covey's "effective habits". On the other hand, consulting engineers do not have a very good practice of these effective habits. The habit that is most lacking in practice is Habit 1. If Covey is right, then employers should pay attention to this when selecting whom to employ. Furthermore, current employees should be trained to develop this habit.

Also, management training centres ought to tailor their training programmes specifically to cater for this habit.

Second, this study shows that several demographic variables have a significant influence on the practice of effective habits by consulting engineers. Although the findings are not comprehensive, they highlight the importance of placing of consulting engineers with the right demographic background in the appropriate job situation. For example, if the job requires effective communication skills (Habit 5), then, management should pick someone based on education level and race. On the other hand, if the job requires high synergy with others, then management should pick someone based on education level only. The study also reveals that whether a person is a "professional engineer" or not, does not have any significant effect on the practice of the effective habits.

Third, this study highlights the importance of Covey's effective habits to consulting engineers and demonstrates that useful and significant results can be obtained through an empirical study of them. Thus, further research on these habits in relation to other engineering professionals and other professional employees ought to be conducted.

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

This study was confined only to consulting engineers in the ACEM and BEM listings for the Klang Valley. It would be useful if further research is done which

extends the sampling frame to cover other parts of the country, so that more comprehensive generalizations can be made. It would also be useful if research is done on contracting engineers, so that comparisons between them and consulting engineers may be made. Likewise, further research on entrepreneurs and other professional employees, such as lawyers, doctors and accountants, can also be done so that cross-comparisons between them and consulting engineers can be made.