

## Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Conflict Management Style in Banking Sector of Pakistan

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### ABSTRACT

*The attempt of this research is to look at the impact of emotional intelligence on conflict management style in Pakistan's banking sector. For this, data is collected from 260 bank managers based on purposive sampling method. This research focuses on public and private banks in Hyderabad city of Pakistan. On the one hand, emotional intelligence is measured by emotional intelligence instrument established by (Schutte et al., 1998). On the other hand, Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II established by Rahim, 1983 is applied to measure Conflict management style. In this study, different techniques such as descriptive statistic, regression and Pearson correlation are applied for the purpose of data analysis. Outcome displays that emotional intelligence strongly and positively correlates and has significant impact on integrating style. While emotional intelligence is moderate but positively correlated and has significant impact on obligating style. Result also finds that emotional intelligence is positive but weakly correlated with compromising management style and dominating management style in conflict resolution. The result of this research demonstrates that the emotional intelligence is moderate but negatively correlates and significant impact on avoiding style.*

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Conflict Management Styles, Banking sector, District Hyderabad, Pakistan.

### INTRODUCTION

Humans are most important valuable resource of all organizations including banks, insurance, education (Seraji, Otouee, Deldar, & Khah, 2013). According to (A. Chaudhry, Sajjad, & Khan, 2011) conflicts are bound to happen each time individuals interact since all individuals hold diverse values, goals, norms that even change from time to time. Conflicts are inevitable and encompass organizational life (T. B. Chaudhry, Shami, & Ahmed, 2008) Conflicts have positive and negative effect (Khanaki, Hassanzadeh, & Technology, 2010). When conflict is managed positively it encourages organization to adopt changes but if conflict is negatively managed or not managed well it creates serious issues for organizational survival (Gull, Zaidi, & Management, 2012).

To handle conflicts effectively, people use groups of behavior or modeled responses through various communication tactics. Conflict management styles depend upon appraisal, perceiving, understanding and utilization of emotions (Aliasgari & Farzadnia, 2012). Emotional intelligence is a kind of learned ability used to develop relationship and enhance team performance (Naseer,

Chishti, Rahman, & Jumani, 2011). Individual with high emotional intelligence prefer better conflict management styles and will have the preference for strong commitment for the organization (Khan Imran, 2013). Emotional intelligence improves organizational functions, enhances team decision making, installs trust and honesty, creates eagerness, and cooperation in others to achieve organizational goal (Lee Chung On, 2009).

Organization with emotionally intelligent employees develop amicable conditions and environment where all team members put their effort to solve the problem (Heris & Heris, 2011). The concept of emotional intelligence is quite broad which is driven from the theory called; social intelligence (Henderson, 2010). (Aslan, Ozata, Mete, & Journal, 2008), states that emotional intelligence involves different factors that triggers how an individual person feels, controls mood, is motivated, manages desire, and strive in intense conditions leads to success. Emotional intelligence offers unique way to be smart” and predicts 80% success of individual’ life, whereas remaining 20% by IQ (Morrison, 2008).

Moreover, a significant focus is also given to the importance and application of conflict management in academia and nonacademic organizations (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Contemporary business challenges necessitate a style to resolve conflicts. Previous researches have shown that managers spend 20% of their time in resolving conflict (Thomas & Schmidt, 1976). Previous studies have stated an obvious gap existing in terms of unleashing newer ways of handling conflict with different style (Chaudhry et al, 2008). This research examines conflict management style as a useful tool to increases organizational productivity in current complex business environment (Heris and Heris, 2011).

A lot of research is done on the importance of conflict management style in organizations having team structure (Gull et al., 2012), but only few studies explored the same antecedents (Singh and Antony, 2006; Somech et al., 2009). Thus, the researcher is more keen to study the emotional intelligence’ relationship with conflict management styles. Some research is conducted in some other fields related to this issue, but this research focuses on identifying emotional intelligence contribution, the contributions and its resulting effect on conflict management styles in specifically in Pakistani banking sector.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES**

(Troth, 2009) has defined conflict as something that involves disagreement or disagreeable fact that arises due to issues related to power, position, gain scarce resource and perceive contradictory goals or due to interference of others in achieving one’ set goals. It is two-way communication process expressed in dispute, mismatch or simply difference of views within and among different teams (Rahim & Magner, 1995). According to the model proposed by (Darling & Fogliasso, 1999) conflict management was classified into 3 basic stages namely; preliminary, resolution and conflict maintenance and he suggested that conflict is a crucial part of organization and it is considered as normal part of the work. Moreover, (Rahim, Psenicka, Polychroniou, &

Zhao, 2002) in his study identified how to manage the organizational conflicts based on interference and diagnosis. Scholars have evaluated conflict on several levels and dimensions such as; individual conflict, interpersonal conflict, intra-group conflict, and inter group conflict (Chaudhry et al., 2011).

### ***Integrating Style***

In this style, teams are highly concerned with self and others to seeking and achieving mutual benefit. Integrating style facilitates team to show openness, share important information, and understand underlying differences of each other in order to achieve proper and effective solution that is suitable to concerned parties (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967). Individuals with this style manage conflicts directly and solve conflicts in collaborative manner (Lee, 2008). Leung et al., (2005) found that managers with integration style were strong predictor to increase the level of satisfaction of team members. Among team members, integrating style enhances cooperation, improves decision making quality and satisfaction (Liu, Fu, & Liu, 2009).

### ***Obligating Style***

In this style, teams are less concerned with self and have high concerns for other individual or party. In obligating style, each party sacrifices one's need to please other party, shows corporation and express harmony, accept decision passively and use conceding words and behavior (Whetton and Cameron, 2008). Obligating style is accommodating behavior used to enhance social desirability, flexibility and adoptability to manage conflicts in collectivistic organizations (Lee, 2008).

### ***Compromising Style***

In this style, teams show intermediate concern for self and others. Compromising style involves give and take behavior, where each party attempts partial satisfaction while giving up something to make other party agree to mutual decisions (Whetton and Cameron, 2008 p. 372). This style is useful where teams' goal is mutually exclusive; teams are equal in power and teams face deadlocks in negotiation (Liu et al., 2009). To manage relationship conflicts, compromising style was found to be positive with team cohesiveness and organizational performance (George et al., 2013). Organizations prefer this style to deal strategic issues, but frequent use leads to dysfunctionality.

### ***Dominating Style***

In this style, teams show high concerns for self and low concern for others in which one party enjoys at the cost of other party, express arrogant behavior (Gull et., 2012). Dominating style depends upon position and power and positive relationship with task conflicts is often found as stated by Seraji et al, (2013). Individual with dominating style display aggression, perseverance and negatively affects team performance (Lee Chung On, 2009).

### ***Avoiding Style***

In this style, each team shows low concern for ones' and for others where each party ignores a solution for problem (Hotepo, Asokere, Abdul-Azeez, Ajemunigbohun, & journal, 2010).

Avoiding style encourages individuals to withdrawal, buck-pass and sidestep from conflict situation (Whetton and Cameron, 2008). Avoiding style makes worst and negatively affects both intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts (Liu et al., 2009). People use avoiding style when they perceive that conflict is evil, not important and it's a past painful memory (George et al., 2013).

## **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

Emotional intelligence is one of the popular topics in application of psychology and management (Seraji et al. 2013). (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000) state that emotional Intelligence is individual's kind of attributes to perceive, appraise, recognize and control their emotions and of the others. As mentioned above, emotional intelligence roots from social intelligence as observed by (Ghemrawi et al., 2013). Emotional intelligence is not innate ability; it is learned ability that contains interpersonal and intrapersonal skills and ability (Mayer et al., 2000). Interpersonal skill is the capability of the individual to recognize others' emotions, comprehend, sustain, and use the relationships with other. Further, an intrapersonal skill is an ability to identify self-motivation (Gardner, 1983).

There are two recognized model of emotional intelligence: Ability Model and trait Model. According to ability model, emotional intelligence is an individual ability that is improved after learning and experience (Mayer et al., 2000). (Bar-On, Tranel, Denburg, & Bechara, 2003), trait model suggests that emotional intelligence is kind of individual trait that increases performance and enriches healthy life. Emotional intelligence is considered to be important for those who have leading positions that differentiates higher from average leaders. Emotional intelligence used as a tool to improve participation of individual in decision making and important predictor at workplace (Troth, 2010). Emotional intelligence facilitates employees to increase their efficiency at work under; stress, pressure conditions and get ready for organizational change. (Bahadori, 2012) suggests that emotional intelligence; improves productivity of employee, develops creativity and sense of continuous accomplishments.

## **RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

- H1:** Emotional intelligence positively increases and significantly impacts integrating style.
- H2:** Emotional intelligence positively increases and significantly impacts obligating style
- H3:** Emotional intelligence positively increases and has a significantly impact on the compromising style.
- H4:** Emotional intelligence positively increases and significantly impacts dominating style.
- H5:** Emotional intelligence negatively related and significantly impacts avoiding style.

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

### **SAMPLE**

This study is descriptive and quantitative. This study is based on primary data and field work. Delivery and collection questionnaires are used to collect data. 260 managers are selected from different banks based on convenient sampling method.

## **INSTRUMENT**

### ***Emotional Intelligence***

Emotional intelligence can be measured with the help of proposed instrument by Schutte et al. (1998). It is of 33 items built on 5 points Likert scale. Coefficient alpha of these scores for this research sample denotes to .860 (Cronbach, 1951).

### ***Conflict Management Style***

Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II questionnaire is used to measure conflict management styles that contain 28 items built on 5 points Likert scale (Rahim, 1983). Coefficient alpha of these scores for this study sample is .820 (Cronbach, 1951). Data is analyzed through descriptive, Pearson correlation, regression Analysis.

## **RESULT**

The current study's aim is to evaluate emotional intelligence's impact on different style in conflict management. The results are presented below. Table-1 shows the descriptive statistics and Co-efficient alpha reliabilities for the scales used in this present research. The reliabilities score of all instruments above .70 shows that instruments are significantly highly reliable for research use. The mean value ranges from 136.80 of emotional intelligence to 91.16 for Conflict Management Style.

Table-2: illustrated the Correlation matrix of all variables in study. In the study, some variables are positive, and one negative significantly correlated. Emotional intelligence is positively and significantly related with integrating style ( $r=.797$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), Obligating style ( $r=.540$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), Compromising Style ( $r=.450$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), Dominating Style ( $r=.126$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). While, Emotional Intelligence is significantly and negatively related with Avoiding Style ( $r=-.260$ ,  $p<0.001$ ).

Table- 3: shows result of regression analysis in order to evaluate the emotional intelligence' impact on Integrating Style. The  $R^2$  value .634 indicates that emotional intelligence brought 63.4 percent difference in integrating style.  $\beta$  value of .797 indicates that emotional intelligence is strong predictor of integrating style in conflict resolution. In table-3 p value is .000 which is less than significant value  $p.005$ , so null hypothesis got rejected whereas alternate hypothesis is accepted that the emotional intelligence has positively strong correlation and has significant impact on integrating style.

Table- 4 shows the result of regression analysis in order to evaluate emotional intelligence's impact on obligating style. The value of  $R^2$  .329 indicates that emotional intelligence brought 32.9 percent difference in obligating style.  $\beta$  value of .574 indicates that emotional intelligence is moderate predictor of obligating style in conflict resolution. In table-4, p value is .000 which is less than significant value p .005, so null hypothesis got rejected whereas alternate hypothesis is accepted that the emotional intelligence is moderately correlated and has significant impact on obligating style.

Table- 5 displays regression analysis results showing emotional intelligence's impact on compromising style. Its  $R^2$  value .208 indicates that emotional intelligence brought 20.8 percent difference in compromising style.  $\beta$  value of .450 indicates that emotional intelligence is strongly but weaker predictor in compromising style of conflict resolution. In table-5 p-value is .000 which is less than significant value p .005, so null hypothesis got rejected whereas alternate hypothesis is accepted that there exists a positive but weak correlation of emotional intelligence and has significant impact on compromising style.

Table-6 shows the result of regression analysis in order to evaluate emotional intelligence's impact on dominating style. Its  $R^2$  value .160 indicates that emotional intelligence carried 16 percent difference in dominating style.  $\beta$  value of .126 shows that emotional intelligence is strongly but weaker predictor in dominating style of conflict resolution. In table-6, p value is .000 which is less than significant value p .005, so null hypothesis got rejected whereas alternate hypothesis is accepted that the emotional intelligence is positive but in weak correlation and has significant impact on dominating style.

Table- 7 shows the result of regression analysis in order to evaluate emotional intelligence's impact on avoiding style. Its  $R^2$  is .42 which indicates that emotional intelligence carried 42 percent difference in avoiding style.  $\beta$  value of -.206 indicates that emotional intelligence is negatively but weaker predictor in avoiding style in conflict resolution. In table-7, p value is .000 which is less than significant value p .005, so null hypothesis got rejected whereas alternate hypothesis is accepted that the emotional intelligence is negatively correlated and has a significant impact on avoiding style.

**Table 1:** Descriptive Statistics (N=260)

Variable	No. of items					
		Mean	.D	ini	axi	lpha
Emotional Intelligence	33	36.80	.302	30	43	86
Integrating Style	07	0.20	.943	7	2	82
Obligating Style	06	6.30	.106	5	0	84
Compromising Style	04	3.80	.750	3	5	84
Dominating Style	06	5.40	.202	4	7	82
Avoiding Style	06					



.35      .593      7      2      80

**Table 2:** Correlation matrix of all variables (N=260)

Scale						
		I	II	V		I
I	Emotional Intelligence					
	Integrating Style	797				
II	Obligating Style	574	589			
V	Compromising Style	450	138	.005		
I	Dominating Style	126	303	306	.802	
I	Avoiding Style	.206	.331	.498	162	.277

p<.001, p<.005

**Table 3:** Regression Analysis for Emotional Intelligence and Integrating Style (N=260)

Dependent variables	Independent variable	B		T		F	
		R <sup>2</sup>					
Integrating Style	(Constant)	634	633	33.917	11.191	.000	7.8000
	Emotional intelligence			.469	21.162	.000	

**Table 4:** Regression Analysis for Emotional Intelligence and Obligating Style (N=260)

Dependent variables	Independent variable	B		T		F	
		R <sup>2</sup>					
Obligating Style	(Constant)	329	326	47.517	7.238	.000	6.5000
	Emotional intelligence			.540	11.248	.000	

**Table 5:** Regression Analysis for Emotional Intelligence and Compromising Style (N=260)

Dependent variables	Independent variable	R			T		F	
		R <sub>2</sub>						
Compromising Style					Sig		Sig	
	(Constant)	203	200	.022	.535	000	.14	000
	Emotional intelligence			164 450	.096	000		

**Table 6:** Regression Analysis for Emotional Intelligence and Dominating Style (N=260)

Dependent variables	Independent variable	R	R <sub>2</sub>	T			F	
Dominating Style					Sig		Sig	
	(Constant)	0.16	0.12	9.895	.156	000	.142	000
	Emotional intelligence			029	126	.035	000	

**Table 7:** Regression Analysis for Emotional Intelligence and Avoiding Style (N=260)

Dependent variables	Independent variable	R	R <sub>2</sub>	B	B	T	F	
Avoiding Style						T	Sig	Sig
	(Constant)			22.9		5.70		
		.042	.039	.50		8	.000	1.45
	Emotional intelligence			-.206				.001
				.099		3.38	.001	
						4		

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The sole interest of this research is to examine the relationship of emotional intelligence with different conflict management styles. First hypothesis predicts that emotional intelligence holds a positive impact on integrating style. Hence this hypothesis proves that emotional intelligence has significant and positive effect on integrating style. Past studies also found strong relation of emotional intelligence with integrating style. This research shows that its result agrees with previous study finding which suggests that emotional intelligence facilitate



managers to use integrating style to manage conflicts. The managers who work in stress may develop emotions like anxiety, fear, anger and tiredness which affects physical and mental growth (Yu and Lu, 2006). From the perspective of organization, it reduces team cohesiveness and negatively affects team performance. Current studies found that emotional intelligence is a strong predictor of integrating style of conflict. Heris and Heris (2011) found positive relationship between emotional intelligence and integrating style in physical education experts of Tehran University. Morrison (2008) also found that individuals who are emotionally intelligent prefer integrating style to manage interpersonal conflicts.

Second hypothesis prediction displays emotional intelligence's positive impact on obligating style. In this hypothesis, it is proved that there exists a significant positive emotional intelligence' effect on obligating style. Whereas previous studies evidence also show strong relation of emotional intelligence with obligating style. This result of the research is in line with some past researches that suggested that emotional intelligent managers cooperate and scarifies wishes and desire to achieve predetermine goal of organizations. From perspective of manager, it helps to coordinate resource and reduce interpersonal conflict. Khan (2013) found that manager with high degree of emotional intelligence prefer obligating style to resolve relations conflicts and enhance organizational productivity. Another study was conducted by Aliasgari and Farzadnia found that teacher with attributes of emotional intelligence choose obligating style to work effectively between teams.

Third hypothesis predication shows emotional intelligence' moderate and positive impact on compromising style. Result of this research is in conformity to some previous studies that suggested that emotionally intelligent person understands and facilitates other individuals in team to compromise over some issues, showing willingness and desire to achieve organizational goal. From the perspective of organization, it reduces fear, stress and encourages manager to develop friendly environment and people express their opinions and share creative solution (Yu et al., 2006; Abas et al.,2010). A research led by Ellis, (2010) on private and public university revealed that most of emotional intelligent students prefer to use compromising style to resolve conflicts. Seraji et al. (2013) conducted study in Labor and Social Affair Organization of Qom Iran, established that emotional intelligence positively and significantly increases, and it has a linear relationship with compromising style

Fourth hypothesis predication is that the emotional intelligence has a positive but weak effect on dominating style. Prediction is proved and shows that emotional intelligence has a significant but weak positive effect on dominating style. Result of this research is similar to some previous research suggesting that individuals having higher emotional intelligence possess social skills that helps to develop relationship, do not prefer to impose wills on others, encourages each individual to give suggestion and participate in decision making. (Henderson, 2006; Pooya et al., 2013; Sharma & Sehrawat, 2014). From the perspectives of management, dominating style decreases work motivation, job satisfaction, increases employee turnover and occupational stresses (Yu and Lu, 2006). Abas et al. (2010) led research in different Malaysian universities, stated that individual with lower level of emotional intelligence usually used dominating style in conflict management. Another research conducted by Sharma & Sehrawat, 2014 in Indian context found that emotional

intelligence had considerably and negatively correlation with dominating style in conflict management.

Fifth hypothesis predication displays that emotional intelligence has positive but weak effect on avoiding style. This hypothesis proves that emotional intelligence holds significant but negative effect on avoiding style. This result of the study is similar to some previous research that submitted that emotionally intelligent persons were not indifferent for other party concern and willingly participate or act in conflict management. From the perspective of team performance, avoiding style forces other party to withdraw physically and psychologically from conflict and abdicating all responsibility on other party (Sharma & Sehrawat, 2014). Heris and Heris, 2011 led a research in physical education department and established that emotionally intelligent experts did not prefer the avoiding style in conflict resolution. While another study conducted by Abas et al.,2010 in different Universities of Malaysia, found that individual with lower level of emotional intelligence usually preferred to manage conflict by simply avoiding it. The current research only examines the link between emotional intelligence and conflict management style in banking sector of Pakistan as this plays an important role to existing knowledge in the subject of organizational behavior and provides framework for contemporary organizations to improve organizational and employee performance.

## **LIMITATION**

The study is limited by cost and time. This study is also limited by using convenient sampling. Another limitation of this study is cross sectional design. This study uses one-dimension measure of emotional intelligence. Current research should be viewed as a first step and would be extended to use different dimensions of emotional intelligence.

## **FUTURE RESEARCH**

This research reveals hands-on implementations of emotional intelligence on different style of conflict management. For future, it is suggested to explore the effect of emotional intelligence and conflict management styles on different variables of organizational behavior in different industries of Pakistan. To advance this study, it is also suggested to conduct longitudinal study rather than cross sectional study. This study might also replicate on other population like education, health, and insurance. It also suggested that some other sampling methods like stratified sampling method may be used. Another suggestion for future research in this area is to conduct comparative study between public and private organization.

## **PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS**

Current research provides an empirical analysis of the impact of emotional intelligence on different style of conflict management. The results of this research emphasize the significance of emotional intelligence in team structure. Current results suggest that organizations should provide training program to facilitate manager to use different styles in conflict resolution. This research has practical implication for preparing effective teams. This study suggested that managers should

be trained to understand and manage ones' and others' emotions. The outcome of this effort is expected to be beneficial in organizational performance. This study suggested that high emotional intelligent manager uses different styles to create friendly atmosphere where each member engages in creative solution and creates win-win environment situations. Organizations should train their employees side by side for emotional intelligence skills as well as technical skills to work with each other and increases team performance in various conflict situations.

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