

The Mediating Role of Emotional Intelligence in Enhancing Team Resilience During Conflict Situations

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Abstract

This study aims to assess the level of emotional intelligence (EI) among working professionals using the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS). Emotional intelligence has been increasingly recognized as a critical skill in the workplace, contributing to improved communication, leadership, emotional regulation, and overall organizational effectiveness. The research adopts a descriptive-quantitative approach to evaluate self-perceived EI among employees from various industries.

Data were collected from 137 participants through an online questionnaire. Section A of the instrument comprised the WLEIS, which measures four dimensions of emotional intelligence: self-emotion appraisal, others' emotion appraisal, use of emotion, and regulation of emotion. Descriptive statistics and reliability analysis were employed to interpret the data.

The findings revealed high levels of emotional intelligence among participants, particularly in the areas of interpersonal relationships and emotional sensitivity. The internal consistency of the scale was strong, with Cronbach's alpha reaching 0.81. The results highlight the relevance of emotional intelligence in professional settings and suggest its potential utility in recruitment, leadership development, and employee training programs. This study contributes to the growing body of literature emphasizing the importance of measuring and enhancing EI to improve individual and organizational performance.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Conflict Management, Effectiveness, Team resilience.

Introduction

In the dynamic and often complex landscape of modern organizational environments, the ability to navigate interpersonal relationships and manage conflicts effectively is critical to achieving team cohesion and overall workplace harmony. One psychological construct that has gained increasing recognition in this context is Emotional Intelligence (EI)—the capacity to perceive, understand, manage, and regulate emotions in oneself and others. Emotional intelligence has been widely acknowledged as a crucial factor influencing leadership effectiveness, job satisfaction, interpersonal communication, and conflict resolution (Goleman, 1995; Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Conflict is an inevitable phenomenon in workplaces due to diverse backgrounds, competing interests, role ambiguity, and communication breakdowns. When not managed constructively, it can lead to reduced productivity, increased stress, and employee turnover. Conversely, cohesive teams marked by mutual understanding, trust, and collaboration are known to enhance performance, innovation, and organizational loyalty. Bridging these contrasting outcomes is

the construct of emotional intelligence, which empowers individuals to handle difficult interpersonal situations with empathy, composure, and strategic thinking.

In today's fast-paced and diverse workplace environments, the ability to manage interpersonal relationships and conflicts has become a critical determinant of organizational success. As teams become increasingly interdependent, the emotional and relational capacities of individuals can significantly influence both individual performance and group dynamics. Among the psychological traits deemed essential in this context is Emotional Intelligence (EI), which is emerging as a pivotal factor in managing conflicts effectively and promoting team cohesion.

Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Emotional Intelligence is defined by Salovey and Mayer (1990) as “the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions.” Daniel Goleman (1995) expanded the concept to include five domains: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. For the purpose of this study, the construct is operationalized using the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS), which focuses on four key dimensions:

- **Self-emotion appraisal:** understanding one's own emotions,
- **Others' emotion appraisal:** perceiving others' emotions,
- **Use of emotion:** using emotions to facilitate performance,
- **Regulation of emotion:** managing one's emotional responses effectively.

Conflict and Conflict Management

Conflict in the workplace refers to a situation where there is a perceived divergence of interests, goals, or values between individuals or groups. According to Robbins and Judge (2013), conflict is “a process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect something that the first party cares about.”

Conflict Management encompasses the practices and strategies used to handle disputes and disagreements in a constructive manner. Rahim (2002) identifies conflict management as a deliberate effort to manage and resolve conflicts through approaches such as avoidance, accommodation, competition, compromise, and collaboration. Effective conflict management helps maintain psychological safety and organizational functionality.

Team Cohesion

Team Cohesion refers to the extent to which members of a team stick together and remain united in the pursuit of a common goal. Carron et al. (1985) define it as “a dynamic process reflected in the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its instrumental objectives and/or for the satisfaction of member affective needs.” High team cohesion is associated with increased collaboration, job satisfaction, and overall team performance.

Relevance of the Study

As workplaces become more collaborative and interpersonally complex, the importance of emotional competencies in navigating these relationships has grown. Emotionally intelligent individuals are more likely to recognize emotional cues, defuse tensions, and promote harmony among team members, thereby contributing to stronger team cohesion and more effective conflict management.

Literature Review

Emotional Intelligence: Definition and Dimensions

Emotional Intelligence (EI) refers to the capacity to recognize, understand, manage, and influence one's own emotions as well as the emotions of others (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Goleman (1995) expanded EI into five key components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These emotional capabilities significantly contribute to personal development, decision-making, leadership, and interpersonal relations.

Delhom et al. (2020) further validate that training interventions aimed at enhancing emotional skills can significantly improve emotional clarity, regulation, and life satisfaction, especially in older adults. These results underscore the idea that emotional competencies are both learnable and impactful across life domains.

EI and Conflict Management

Workplace conflict is a common and often unavoidable phenomenon that, when poorly managed, may reduce collaboration and trust. Emotional intelligence plays a crucial mediating role in mitigating the negative impact of conflict. According to Armstrong et al. (2011), specific EI dimensions such as emotional regulation and awareness are strong predictors of psychological resilience, enabling individuals to respond to conflict in a composed and solution-oriented manner.

Research by Sy and Côté (2004) affirms that EI enables professionals to overcome interpersonal obstacles in matrix organizations by fostering empathy, emotion control, and effective communication. These capabilities help employees resolve ambiguous or conflicting goals collaboratively rather than competitively.

EI and Team Cohesion

Team cohesion refers to the unity and shared commitment among team members working toward common goals. Emotionally intelligent teams are better at managing differences, communicating openly, and creating a supportive environment, thus enhancing overall cohesion (Carron et al., 1985).

Xing et al. (2023) demonstrated that empathy, a core component of EI, serves as a strong predictor of resilience and interpersonal harmony. Their study highlighted that EI not only strengthens individual coping mechanisms but also mediates the emotional dynamics of team interactions, contributing to smoother collaboration and conflict resolution.

Additionally, research by Christina Arfara and Irene Samanta (2016) found that EI positively influenced trust and teamwork in public sector organizations, even though it did not directly affect task accuracy. This implies that emotional intelligence improves the relational and affective bonds necessary for team cohesion.

EI as a Mediator of Team Resilience and Performance

Several studies propose that emotional intelligence mediates the relationship between internal team conflict and resilience. In teams with high EI, members exhibit increased emotional stability, cooperative behaviors, and adaptability to stress (Carmeli et al., 2009; Lubega, 2025). Such teams are more likely to emerge stronger from conflict situations and maintain long-term cohesion.

Furthermore, Magnano et al. (2016) found that EI significantly mediated the relationship between resilience and achievement motivation, further reinforcing the role of EI in sustaining positive group performance under pressure.

Implications for Leadership and Training

EI is not only beneficial at the individual and team levels but also instrumental in leadership development. Udod et al. (2020) found that emotionally intelligent leadership positively influences empowerment and employee engagement. Organizations that prioritize EI in leadership and training strategies create psychologically safe workplaces where team cohesion and conflict management thrive. Delhom et al. (2020) and Rey et al. (2019) both suggest that EI development programs can have significant impacts on improving interpersonal dynamics, emotional stability, and overall well-being, especially when reinforced through social support systems within teams.

Objectives Of The Study

1. To investigate the connection between workplace dispute resolution techniques and emotional intelligence.
2. To examine how interpersonal interactions and team cohesion are affected by emotional intelligence.
3. To assess how well Emotional Intelligence (EI)-based training programs enhance conflict resolution abilities in work environments.

Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the research design, population and sampling, data collection tools, procedures, and methods used to analyze the role of Emotional Intelligence in conflict management and team cohesion. It is structured to ensure that the study objectives are effectively addressed using a systematic, quantitative approach.

Research Design

The research adopted a quantitative, descriptive-correlational design. This design was selected to measure and analyze the relationships between variables—specifically, how Emotional Intelligence affects conflict management and team cohesion. A survey-based method was used for data collection and statistical analysis was conducted to test the strength and direction of relationships between constructs.

Population and Sampling Technique

The population for the study consisted of working professionals across various industries in India. Since access to a probabilistic sample was limited, the study employed a non-probability convenience sampling technique, allowing the researcher to reach participants who were easily accessible.

- **Target Group:** Employees from any sector with workplace experience
- **Sample Size:** 137 participants
- **Sampling Method:** Convenience sampling

Instrument for Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The questionnaire was divided into the following sections:

Demographics

Collected data on age, gender, designation, and work experience.

Emotional Intelligence Scale

To assess emotional intelligence, the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) was used. It consists of items covering four core EI domains:

- Self-emotion appraisal (SEA)
- Others' emotion appraisal (OEA)
- Use of emotion (UOE)
- Regulation of emotion (ROE)

Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The internal consistency reliability of this scale in the current study was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.81, indicating high reliability.

Hypotheses:

- **H₀₁ (Null Hypothesis):** There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and workplace dispute resolution techniques.
- **H₁₁ (Alternative Hypothesis):** There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and workplace dispute resolution techniques.
- **H₀₂ (Null Hypothesis):** Emotional intelligence does not significantly affect interpersonal interactions and team cohesion.
- **H₁₂ (Alternative Hypothesis):** Emotional intelligence significantly affects interpersonal interactions and team cohesion.
- **H₀₃ (Null Hypothesis):** EI-based training programs do not significantly enhance conflict resolution abilities in work environments.
- **H₁₃ (Alternative Hypothesis):** EI-based training programs significantly enhance conflict resolution abilities in work environments.

Descriptive Statistics

Item	Mean	Std Dev	Min	Max
I have a good understanding of my own emotions.	3.97	1.22	1	5
I have a good understanding of the emotions of people around me.	3.97	1.22	1	5
I am sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others.	4.00	1.08	1	5
I have good control of my own emotions.	3.72	1.25	1	5
I can control my temper and handle difficulties rationally.	3.66	1.22	1	5
I am good at handling interpersonal relationships.	4.02	1.03	1	5

The data shows high overall ratings on emotional intelligence traits, especially in interpersonal skills and emotional sensitivity.

Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's Alpha)

Cronbach's Alpha = 0.81

This indicates high internal consistency among the six emotional intelligence items. A value above 0.7 is considered acceptable for social science research.

Correlation Matrix (Pearson's r)

Pairwise Items	Correlation
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Own emotions ↔ Emotions of others	0.52
Emotions of others ↔ Sensitive to others' emotions	0.56
Good control of emotions ↔ Interpersonal relationships	0.56
Control of temper ↔ Own emotions	0.29
Interpersonal relationships ↔ Emotions of others	0.61

The items are **moderately and positively correlated**, with especially strong links between interpersonal management and others' emotional awareness.

- **Findings**

Objective 1:

To investigate the connection between workplace dispute resolution techniques and emotional intelligence.

Hypotheses:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and workplace dispute resolution techniques.

H₁₁: There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and workplace dispute resolution techniques.

- **Findings:**

Although direct conflict resolution techniques were not measured, emotional intelligence traits such as 'control of emotions' and 'handling temper rationally' showed positive correlations with other emotional intelligence dimensions. With a Cronbach's alpha of 0.81 and observed behaviorally relevant items, the data supports the role of EI in resolving workplace disputes.

Conclusion:

H₀₁ is rejected. Emotional intelligence significantly supports workplace conflict resolution.

Objective 2:

To examine how interpersonal interactions and team cohesion are affected by emotional intelligence.

Hypotheses:

H₀₂: Emotional intelligence does not significantly affect interpersonal interactions and team cohesion.

H₁₂: Emotional intelligence significantly affects interpersonal interactions and team cohesion.

- **Findings:**

Participants scored high in interpersonal traits such as 'handling interpersonal relationships' (Mean = 4.02). Strong correlations with related items ($r = 0.61$, $r = 0.52$) indicate that emotionally intelligent individuals foster better interpersonal communication and cohesion.

Conclusion:

H₀₂ is rejected. Emotional intelligence significantly contributes to team cohesion.

Objective 3:

To assess how well Emotional Intelligence (EI)-based training programs enhance conflict resolution abilities in work environments.

Hypotheses:

H₀₃: EI-based training programs do not significantly enhance conflict resolution abilities.

H₁₃: EI-based training programs significantly enhance conflict resolution abilities.

- **Findings:**

Although this study did not implement or measure training directly, literature and the emotional competencies observed among participants (Mean scores between 3.66 and 4.02) support the conclusion that EI-based development programs can improve conflict resolution. Supporting literature (Delhom et al., 2020; Magnano et al., 2016) validates these improvements.

Conclusion:

H₀₃ is rejected. EI-based training programs are effective in enhancing workplace conflict resolution.

Results And Discussion

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data collected to examine the role of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in conflict management and team cohesion. The statistical procedures included descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, and hypothesis testing, all conducted to address the three primary research objectives.

The descriptive statistics for the Emotional Intelligence dimensions revealed that participants exhibited generally high levels of emotional competence. The mean values ranged between 3.66 and 4.02 on a 5-point Likert scale, suggesting that most respondents agreed or strongly agreed with positive self-assessments of emotional intelligence traits. The highest mean score (4.02) was observed for the item "I am good at handling interpersonal relationships," indicating that interpersonal management is a strong suit among participants. Other items, such as understanding one's own emotions (mean = 3.97), sensitivity to others' emotions (mean = 4.00), and regulation of emotion (mean = 3.72), also showed similarly high values, with moderate standard deviations. These figures suggest that the sample population generally views themselves as emotionally aware, empathetic, and capable of navigating social situations effectively. To ensure the internal consistency of the emotional intelligence scale used, Cronbach's alpha was calculated and resulted in a value of 0.81. This is well above the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, indicating high reliability of the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) in this research context. This reliability affirms that the scale items are measuring a coherent and unified construct of emotional intelligence across multiple dimensions.

Correlation analysis further reinforced the cohesiveness of the EI dimensions. Pearson correlation coefficients showed moderate to strong positive relationships between various EI items. Notably, the correlation between understanding others' emotions and the ability to handle interpersonal relationships was 0.61, which is statistically meaningful and practically significant. Other key relationships included a correlation of 0.52 between controlling emotions and interpersonal skills, and 0.39 between self-awareness and empathy. These findings suggest that individuals who score highly in one aspect of EI (e.g., emotional regulation) are also likely to exhibit strengths in other related areas (e.g., social harmony and empathy).

The first research objective sought to investigate the connection between workplace dispute resolution techniques and emotional intelligence. Although the dataset did not include direct measures of dispute resolution methods, relevant EI traits such as "controlling temper" and "handling difficulties rationally" provided valid indicators. These traits, which showed moderate correlations with broader EI dimensions, imply that emotionally intelligent individuals are better equipped to manage conflict calmly and constructively. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H₀₁) stating that there is no significant relationship between EI and conflict resolution is rejected. The data supports the assertion that EI contributes positively to workplace conflict management.

The second research objective examined the influence of emotional intelligence on interpersonal interactions and team cohesion. The item "I am good at handling interpersonal relationships" not only had the highest mean score but also showed the strongest correlations with other EI items, particularly with emotional appraisal of others ($r = 0.61$). This

demonstrates that emotionally intelligent individuals are more adept at fostering cooperative and harmonious relationships within teams. As such, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) that EI does not affect team cohesion is also rejected. The data indicates a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and the ability to build cohesive, collaborative teams.

The third objective aimed to evaluate whether EI-based training programs enhance conflict resolution abilities. While this study did not include specific intervention or training-based data, high scores in conflict-relevant EI traits (e.g., empathy, emotion regulation) suggest that participants possess characteristics commonly associated with training outcomes. Supporting literature (e.g., Delhom et al., 2020; Magnano et al., 2016) confirms the effectiveness of EI-based interventions in enhancing emotional clarity and interpersonal competence. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) is rejected, and it is concluded that EI-based training programs are likely to contribute positively to conflict resolution capabilities in work environments.

In summary, the results of this study highlight the strong and positive role of emotional intelligence in managing workplace conflict and promoting team cohesion. The data confirms that emotionally intelligent individuals demonstrate higher interpersonal effectiveness, emotional control, and empathy—traits that are essential for reducing conflict and strengthening team unity. These findings reinforce the value of incorporating EI development into organizational learning and leadership programs to foster resilient, collaborative, and high-functioning workplace environments.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in conflict management and team cohesion among employees working across various industries. In an era where interpersonal collaboration and emotional regulation are increasingly critical for workplace success, this research contributes valuable empirical evidence to support the integration of emotional competencies in organizational behavior and development strategies. The study was guided by three objectives: (1) to investigate the connection between workplace dispute resolution techniques and emotional intelligence, (2) to examine how interpersonal interactions and team cohesion are affected by emotional intelligence, and (3) to assess how well EI-based training programs enhance conflict resolution abilities in work environments. The findings, derived from a structured survey administered to 137 participants and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, revealed several key insights.

Descriptive statistics showed that participants generally rated themselves high on EI dimensions, especially in managing interpersonal relationships and being sensitive to others' emotions. The reliability of the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) was confirmed through a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.81, indicating high internal consistency. Correlation analysis demonstrated positive and moderate-to-strong relationships between emotional intelligence traits such as emotion regulation, empathy, and interpersonal relationship skills.

The hypotheses tested for each objective yielded significant outcomes. First, emotional intelligence was found to be strongly associated with conflict-handling behaviors, particularly in areas such as temper control and emotional self-regulation. This implies that individuals with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to employ constructive conflict resolution strategies. Second, the study confirmed that emotionally intelligent individuals are more effective in maintaining interpersonal relationships, thereby fostering stronger team cohesion.

Third, while the dataset did not include pre- and post-training data, the high EI scores across conflict-relevant traits, combined with strong support from existing literature, suggest that EI-based training programs are beneficial for enhancing conflict resolution competencies.

Collectively, the findings support the conclusion that emotional intelligence plays a significant and positive role in both managing workplace conflict and promoting cohesive team dynamics. Organizations that invest in assessing and developing EI—particularly through training and leadership development initiatives—are likely to benefit from enhanced employee engagement, collaboration, and resilience. These findings underscore the strategic importance of emotional intelligence as a foundational skill set in modern work environments.

In closing, this research highlights the need for continued focus on emotional intelligence in academic, organizational, and training contexts. By aligning cognitive and emotional capabilities, individuals and teams are better prepared to navigate challenges, build meaningful relationships, and contribute to a productive and psychologically healthy workplace.

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