

## Survey Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Solving Strategies (Case Study: Labor and Social Affair Organization of Qom)

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### ABSTRACT

Nowadays regarding to increasing complexity of organizations and differences in thoughts, attitudes and beliefs of individuals, there has been some conflicts in organizations as inevitable part of organizational life which should be properly identified and managed. But now what is important to resolve organizational conflicts is awareness of the five conflict management strategies and their appropriate contexts and applications in order to select the appropriate strategy for each position; not only to prevent damage to the organization, but leading them to the realization of organizational goals. Emotional intelligence is an ability of managing organizational conflict. The process and outcomes of Emotional Intelligence includes many results such as reduction of stress, enhancing understanding and communication, increasing stability, continuity and empathy. Conflict management is to resolve disputes, teamwork, cooperation, working with people through shared goals, etc. This is a descriptive survey which sought to identify the impact of emotional intelligence on conflict solving strategies. In this regard, this survey achieves some results in conflict solving strategies and its impressionability based on the components of emotional intelligence.

**KEYWORDS:** emotional intelligence, five conflict management strategies.

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### INTRODUCTION

Today, experts believe that human resource is the most important asset of an organization so it is known as a competitive advantage. Healthy relationship based on cooperation and understanding of each other among these valuable resources are the most important factors for the success of all organizations include industrial, administrative, service, education etc.(Woodman et al, 1995, p.250).Regarding to increasing complexity of organizations and differences in thoughts, attitudes and beliefs of individuals, there has been some conflicts in organizations as inevitable part of organizational life. The significant point is that inevitability of conflict doesn't mean it is negative but if it is managed well, it will be beneficial for the organization. In other words, conflict is a coin which contains positive and negative sides. So the way of dealing with it can determine its effects on organization. So undoubtedly the ability to manage and control the phenomenon of conflict in organizations is one of the most important skills that managers need it (Nelson et al, 2002, p.4).There is conflict in all human societies, sectors and administrative units and activities as an obvious fact. So we cannot find an organization where there is no conflict.

However, conflicts are found in all organizations but it may be weak, strong, silent, outstanding or indistinctive. Researches also suggest that 20% of managers' time is spent for resolving organizational conflicts (KeithDavis et al, 2001, pp.297-298).Managers escape from conflict because of various reasons such as cultural, no venture enough, fear of change in existing organizational situation and disturbance in managing organization (Rahim, 2002, p.320). So managing conflicts is necessary and its prerequisite is recognizing conflicts sources such as personality, unsociable value system, unclear job boundaries, competition for access to limited resources, competition among groups, unhealthy relationships, interdependent tasks, time complexity, politics, ambiguous standards, organizational constraints, group decision making etc. (Robert, Rezaian, 2000, pp.390-391), communication, structure, personal variables, poor communication, reward systems, value systems etc. (Robins, 2006, pp.16-19), educational background, geographic region, life, income, marital status etc. (Whitten et al, 2009,

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pp.65-68). After identifying sources of conflict and organizational stress, we would try to select appropriate and effective strategies to achieve growth, dynamism and organizational goals.

Understanding and managing conflict is reasonably fair and useful. Conflict can be managed by some skills such as effective communication, problem solving and negotiation. Also our ability to manage conflict management can affect the results. For managing conflict at first it should be identified and analyzed then examined the causes of it. One of the good ways of resolving and managing organizational conflict is emotional intelligence or emotional capital.

Emotional intelligence refers to upgrade some components such as self-awareness which implies to understanding of emotions, strengths and weaknesses, values ,attitudes and individual incentives; self-managing which refers to how to control or redirect scenarios, energy and internal stimuli; social awareness which refers to empathy with others, such as understanding and being sensitive to the others' feelings and thoughts and finally relationship management which refers to managing feelings of others such as influence the beliefs and feelings of others, develop the ability of others and inspire them, resolve conflicts, develop relationships and encourage teamwork and cooperation (Guleryuz, 2008, p.1630).Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability of perceive emotions, use emotions in facilitate thinking, understanding emotions and finally regulating emotion (Mackin, 2006, pp.1-7). This research with the title of “the comparison of impressionability ofconflict solving strategies based on the components of emotional intelligence (Case study: Labor and Social Affair Organization of Qom)” aim to recognize different types of conflict and conflict management strategies such as Collaborating, Competing, Avoiding, Accommodating and Compromising;and then investigate the fields of its application and verify the effects of emotional intelligence components on efficiency of them.

**2. Research Questions:**

- 1- How emotional intelligence effects on management conflict strategies in Labor and Social Affair Organization of Qom?
- 2- Are there any differences among conflict solving strategies based on emotional intelligence components in Labor and Social Affair Organization of Qom?

**3- LITERATURE REVIEW**

*3-1. Different kind of conflict:*

In the work environment, conflict is divided into two categories include Fundamental Conflict and Affective or Emotional Conflict. Some researchers divided fundamental conflict into Conflict in aim, Procedural conflict and Cognitive conflict (shermehorn et al, 1997, p.10, Riegel et al retrieved from Rezaeian, 2011, p.363).Also in another category it divided into personal “interpersonal and among persons”, group “intergroup and among groups” and organizational “internal and among organizations”.

Table1: The main kind of conflict

Different kind of conflict		Meaning
fundamental	Conflict in aim	Mismatch in priorities
	Procedural conflict	Inconsistent among approaches and process
	Cognitive conflict	Incompatibility of ideas
Affective or Emotional		Inconsistency in information
Among persons		the expected role of persons are not proportional to their values and beliefs
Interpersonal		Individuals whit different characteristics, attitudes, perceptions, views and goals that is inconsistent with the goals and ideas of others
intergroup		Conflict of some persons or all of the them in a group
among groups		Conflict among groups or teamwork or other part of organization
Organizational conflict		Conflict spread more and more among different groups so affect organization
Conflict among persons		It is related to collaboration between individuals and its reason is lack of clear policies and goals of each group
Conflict among groups		Unilateral decisions and lack of attention of managers to needs of the lower levels
Conflict among group and organization		Often conflicts among organization occur in market position that companies are demanding more market share

**3-2. Conflict Management Strategy**

Understanding and managing conflict is reasonably fair and useful. Conflict can be managed by some skills such as effective communication, problem solving and negotiation (Mayer, 2000, p.91).Also our ability to manage conflict management can affect the results. For managing conflict at first it should be identified and analyzed then

examined the causes of it. After identifying conflict and its components; choosing appropriate style is a key point in conflict management (Fayazi, 2003, p.109). There are five main styles of conflict management:

#### **3-2-1. Collaboration:**

It refers to trying for characterizing interests or concerns of persons. It often refers to the method or situation of the "solving problem" (Cameron, Whetten, translated by Alvani and Danaiefar, 2009, p.29). If the conflicting parts desire to fully meet the interests of all parts; and seek a solutions to providing mutual benefits; this style was used (Malin, 1990, p.83). However, people are willing to work together and also they considered the interests of others. Using this method will reduce bad feelings, increase persons' commitment and allow people to know each other. The disadvantages of this method are time wasted and weaken the power and energy of the people (Fayazi, 2003, p.109). But the main advantage of this style is its lasting effect because it addresses the fundamental issues instead of paying attention to symptoms (Riegel et al, 1998, p.377, Robbins et al, 2006, p.375). In this style people show a good spirit of cooperation and are determined to achieve their desired. So the strategy of both parts is "win-win".

#### **3-2-1. Competitions:**

It refers to willingness to meet interest regardless of the issue that it will lead to a conflict with another person. When a person seeks to achieve his goals and interests regardless of its effect on other person, he competes to establish his dominance. So every person tries to use his power to resolve the conflict is in his favor (Rezaian, 2011, p.70). In this way, one person feels that a special matter is a fantastic subject for him. So he tries to get it hard with unresponsive to impairing his relationships with others (Fisher, 1983, p.19). Finally one of the opponents must accept another's viewpoint. This style will be appropriate when an uncomfortable solution must be implemented, a minor issue was existed or a deadline was approaching. This style is inappropriate in an open environment. Its main advantage is high speed and its major disadvantage is the unhappiness among employees (Rezaian, R.K Robins, 2011, p.376; Kritner and Chiniki, 2001, p.462). So when one of the persons involved in conflict is seeking to achieve his goals or advancing his interests; so he start competition and domination without considering others and this condition called "win-lose" strategy.

#### **3-2-2. Avoidance:**

In this situation, a person tends to avoid or prevent conflict (sharif, 2007, p.23). When a person discover a conflict and withdrew passively or suppress it; in this case both of the competitor make physical separation between each other and choose an area for themselves which is different from another's (Khani et al, 2005, p.19). When conflict avoidance is a good strategy that at firstly the conflict is minimal and secondly their feelings is wounded or when there is a serious gap between the final action of manager for solving conflict and the benefits that must be captured (Bazazjazayeri, 2008, p.25).

Usually this method is used when the issue was trivial, there were other important issues, involvement in the conflict would lead to damages or more information is needed before continuing conflict (Fisher, 1983, p.64). Regarding to avoiding both of opponent from conflict, this method called "lose-lose" strategy (???, 1997, p.40).

#### **3-2-3. Conciliation:**

This is a situation that both of opponents agreed to relent about some of their requests and condone some of them in favorite of each other (ibid, p.484). This style from the view of assertiveness level is average and also is an attempt to partial satisfaction of the both persons involved in conflict in which apparently both of them get their rights (Cameron, Whetten, translated by Alvani and Danaiefar, 2009, p.29). **Conciliation** is used when both of opponents have valuable things but agree to lose some of them in order to arrive at a consensus. This way is used by managers and workers through negotiation, collective contract or new employment contract. This method is useable when strength was equal, taking appropriate solutions was complex and difficult and when there was not enough time (Bazazjazayeri, 2008, p.25). It should be noted that people often remember what they lose than what they gain so this may cause pessimism (Reid, 2004, p.241).

#### **3-2-4. Compromises:**

In this style a person is willing to give concessions to the other. This is due to that the other person has a higher organizational level. This is a way in which one person wants to calm the other person so he preference the opponent's interests in order to maintain their relationships. In fact, one of the opponents ignores his interests in favorite another (Katz, Denial, 2005, p.15). Many believe that having a good friendly relationship is more important than anything else. The focus of this style is maintaining personal relationships with others. However, by this method, we may lose our personal credit and influence. This option is useful when the subject is not important for one of the opponents or he plans to address more important issues (Bazazjazayeri, 2008, p.25). The main advantage of this style is encouraging collaboration. Its major disadvantage is resolving conflict temporarily not fundamentally.

This style is not suitable for solving complex or crucial problems (Tunkenejad, 2005, p.32). Since one person withdraw in favorite of another, this strategy called "lose-win".

**3-3. Emotional intelligence**

Goleman defines emotional intelligence as the capacity of knowing self and others' emotions in order to making self-motivation for optimal managing of his emotions and personal relationship (Serrate, 2009, p.11).

Salovey and Meyer have made a four-dimension model of emotional intelligence in which EI has for categories.

- Perception, evaluating and expressing emotions: Understanding emotions in yourself and others
- Emotional facilitation of thought: it means the ability of using emotions in order to achieving desired results, problem solving, using opportunities and motivating people
- Understanding and analyzing emotional intelligence and employing emotional knowledge: it refers to the ability of understanding complex emotions and awareness of their causes and also knowing how emotions change from one mood to another mood. Using this knowledge, we can understand that what can motivate individuals or groups therefore we can make better programs in cooperating with others
- Order and regulation of emotion: it means managing self and others' emotions in job conditions and job workplace (Wong, 2002, P. 253).

**METHODOLOGY**

This research is a developmental and descriptive research which is applicable from the view of aim. This study sought to describe the dimensions, characteristics, properties, constraints and deficiencies in the application of emotional intelligence in conflict solving strategies. Descriptive researches describe existing phenomena and pay attention to existing conditions or relationships, current processes or work progress. The statistical population of this study is Labor and Social Affair Organization of Qom. Based on the target population size which is 60 persons, the sample size is 41. Also the random sampling method is used. In order to gathering data, two questionnaires were used. The first questionnaire contains 50 questions which show 5 components of solving conflict strategies. The second questionnaire is emotional intelligence questionnaire of Smither Railey and Dominique. It contains 25 questions which show 4 components of emotional intelligence but we chose 17 questions. To assess the reliability, Cronbach's alpha was used. Cronbach's alpha of the first questionnaire was 0.73 and the second was 0.81. In order to analyzing data, Independent sample T-test and Pearson Correlation test were used. The Pearson correlation formula is shown below:

$$r = \frac{\sum xy - nxy}{\sqrt{\sum x - nx - 2} \sqrt{\sum xy^2 - ny - 2}} \quad y = \text{independent variable} \quad x = \text{dependent variable}$$

Regarding to regression analysis which is used for predicting an independent variable based on one or more dependent variables; in this study we use it to determine the effect of emotional intelligence on conflict resolution strategies. In this way at first we evaluate the linear or non-linear of model and then determine the regression equation as  $y = \alpha + \beta x$ . To compare and ranking of these variables, the Friedman test was used which is:

$$\chi^2 = \frac{12}{nk(k + 1)} \sum_{j=1}^k - 3n(k + 1)$$

**5. Findings and conclusions**

*The correlation and regression:*

We used the regression equation to investigate the significance relationship between emotional intelligence (as independent variables) and conflict management strategies (as dependent variable) based on data obtained from the questionnaires. In this investigation at first we determined the correlation coefficient in which the relationship between the independent and dependent variables are examined. Based on Pearson Correlation the results can be summarized in Table2. The results show that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict management strategies such as collaboration, competition, avoidance and conciliation in which the collaboration strategy has the most numeric value and the competition has the lowest numeric value.

Table2: analyzing the hypotheses of first question of research

Result	A Or R (H <sub>0</sub> )	Pearson Correlation	Hypotheses
Positive and significant correlation	Rejection of H <sub>0</sub>	0/797	Sub hypothesis 1
Positive and significant correlation	Rejection of H <sub>0</sub>	0/208	Sub hypothesis 2
Positive and significant correlation	Rejection of H <sub>0</sub>	0/754	Sub hypothesis 3
Positive and significant correlation	Rejection of H <sub>0</sub>	0/525	Sub hypothesis 4
Positive and significant correlation	Rejection of H <sub>0</sub>	0/322	Sub hypothesis 5

1. There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and collaboration strategy
  2. There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and competition strategy
  3. There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and avoidance strategy
  4. There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and conciliation strategy
  5. There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and compromise strategy
- Since for determining the regression equation, it should be demonstrated that the regression is linear, so at first we check the linearity of the relationship.

Table1-2) checking if the relationship between independent variable and the dependent variable in hypothesis 1 is linear

sig	F	Mean Square	f	Sum of Squares	
0.003	1.07	1.108	1	1.108	Regression
		1.03	39	37.862	Residual
			40	38.970	Total

As table1-2 shows F=1.07 and sig=0.003. Since the significance is less than 0.05 so the hypothesis H<sub>0</sub> is rejected and we can claim that this regression is linear. In the following the regression equation is estimated:

Table2-2) Checking the regression coefficient in hypothesis 1

sig	t	coefficient		
		Std. Error	B	
0.000	13.318	0.192	2.554	Emotional intelligence
0.003	2.958	0.05	1.47	Collaboration

So the regression equation is :( relationship between EI and collaboration)  $y = 2.554 + 1.47x$

Table3) checking if the relationship between independent variable and the dependent variable in hypothesis2 is linear

sig	F	Mean Square	f	Sum of Squares	
0.118	0.32	0.318	1	0.318	Regression
		0.99	39	38.625	Residual
			40	38.970	Total

As table3 shows F=0.32 and sig=0.118. Since the significance is more than 0.05 so the hypothesis H<sub>0</sub> is accepted and we can claim that the regression model is not linear therefore the regression equation cannot be estimated. (There is no significant relationship between EI and competition)

Table1-4) checking if the relationship between independent variable and the dependent variable in hypothesis3 is linear

sig	F	Mean Square	f	Sum of Squares	
0.006	1.01	0.985	1	0.985	Regression
		0.97	39	37.985	Residual
			40	38.970	Total

As table1-4 shows F=1.01 and sig=0.006. Since the significance is less than 0.05 so the hypothesis H<sub>0</sub> is rejected and we can claim that this regression is linear. In the following the regression equation is estimated:

Table4-4) Checking the regression coefficient in hypothesis3

sig	t	coefficient		
		Std. Error	B	
0.000	14.082	0.176	2.476	Emotional intelligence
0.006	2.785	0.46	0.129	Collaboration

So the regression equation is:(relationship between EI and avoidance)

$$y = 2.476 + 0.129x$$

Table1-5) checking if the relationship between independent variable and the dependent variable in hypothesis4 is linear

sig	F	Mean Square	f	Sum of Squares	
0.000	0.02	1.332	1	1.332	Regression
		0.96	39	37.638	Residual
			40	38.970	Total

As table1-5 shows F=0.02 and sig=0.000. Since the significance is less than 0.05 so the hypothesis H<sub>0</sub> is rejected and we can claim that this regression is linear. In the following the regression equation is estimated:

Table2-5) Checking the regression coefficient in hypothesis4

sig	t	coefficient		
		Std. Error	B	
0.000	15.822	0.158	2.500	Emotional intelligence
0.001	3.253	0.42	0.136	Collaboration

So the regression equation is:(relationship between EI and conciliation) $y=2.500+0.136x$

Table1-6) checking if the relationship between independent variable and the dependent variable in hypothesis5 is linear

sig	F	Mean Square	f	Sum of Squares	
0.003	0.02	1.905	1	1.905	Regression
		0.94	39	37.962	Residual
			40	39.047	Total

As table1-6 shows F=0.02 and sig=0.003. Since the significance is less than 0.05 so the hypothesis H<sub>0</sub> is rejected and we can claim that this regression is linear. In the following the regression equation is estimated:

Table2-6) Checking the regression coefficient in hypothesis5

sig	t	coefficient		
		Std. Error	B	
0.000	13.320	0.188	2.112	Emotional intelligence
0.003	1.895	0.050	0.47	Collaboration

So the regression equation is:(relationship between EI and compromise) $y=2.112+0.47x$

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