

Association between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Conflict Management Styles (CMS) in RMGs, Bangladesh: An Exploratory Study

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Abstract-*Many industrial enterprises today are teetering on the edge of disaster. Excessive downsizing has created employees who find themselves overworked, underappreciated and constantly seesawing between exhaustion and fear. Competition in the workplace is fierce and many new recruits feel a need to turn to aggressive tactics to get ahead of their peers or risk falling behind. Business leaders are beginning to realize that such negative emotions among their employees are not healthy for the organization and its prospects for success. Many are seeking ways to turn negative emotions into positive productive behaviour. Therefore, the present study is initiated on association between emotional intelligence (EI) and conflict management styles (CMS) in industrial enterprises. Random and purposive sampling techniques are used for drawing samples for this study. The questionnaire is designed by the researchers a seven point Likert type summated rating scales from strongly disagree (-3) to strongly agree (+3) are adopted to identify the EI and CMS variables. In the present study, we, therefore, used Cronbach's alpha scale as a measure of reliability. Its value is estimated to be 0.900. Operational hypotheses are formulated, result shows that the EI has a significant impact on CMS. In addition EI and CMS are highly correlated.*

Key words: *Emotional Intelligence (EI); Conflict Management Styles (CMS) and Industrial Enterprises.*

1.0 Background and Significance

Emotional intelligence (EI) has rapidly become a popular concept (Sjöberg, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c), especially following successful books by Goleman (Goleman, 1995, 1998). Researchers and practitioners, such as Bar-On, market self-report instruments that purportedly measure EI (Bar-On, 2000) but little published research supports this claim. Claims to the effect that EI is much more important than traditional intelligence have not been supported; on the contrary traditional intelligence remains a major dimension in the prediction of work achievement (Austin, Deary, Whiteman, Fowkes, Pedersen, Rabbitt, Bent, & McInnes, 2002 ; Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). This does not preclude that EI could add an important piece of information. McCrae argued that self-report EI has not been established as distinguished from the dimensions of the five-factor model (McCrae, 2000). In spite of such critical remarks, EI flourishes in the test market and is probably seen as the biggest innovation of personality measurement of the 1990's.

The origins of the term EI date back to 1990s, when Peter Salovey, from the University of Yale, and John Mayer, from the University of New Hampshire, published an article entitled "Emotional Intelligence" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990) and this created great interest in the idea. Salovey & Mayer are the real coniners of the term, which they define as the ability to accurately perceive, evaluate and express

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emotions: the ability to have access to and/or generate feelings which make thinking easier; the ability to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and the ability to manage emotions by promoting emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Their contributions can be regarded as a starting point from which a great number of studies on EI have been developed and it is also important to acknowledge the United State of America (USA) as the most advanced country in this line of research.

EI is the ability to recognize and manage emotions (yours and others). EI is increasingly relevant to organizational and personal development as it has huge impact when considering work place issues and environments and can be defined as a set of skills encompassing empathy, self-awareness, motivation, self-control and adeptness in relationships.

There are obvious reasons why the introduction of EI has raised great hopes. Most people have probably experienced, in their own lives, the severe problems that may arise in human interactions of various kinds. Manipulation and deception constitute one example of the “dark side” of human transactions, other common problems have more to do with the sheer lack of understanding of how others feel and react. It is a common mistake to assume that others’ opinions and attitudes are more like one’s own than they (Baumeister, 1998). Managers often face grave difficulties having their roots in lack of social skills. Policy making in society runs into severe difficulties when people’s concerns and worries are overlooked.

Conflict is a certainly in organization and may sometimes be highly desirable for all parties. Although it may be possible to prevent many conflicts, others will need to be managed so that conflicts between co-workers, supervisors and subordinates, two or more departments, the organization and external groups (such as

major customers, unions, and government agencies) can be resolved. Employers must handle conflict in a way that protects employees’ rights. In addition to discipline issues, conflict on the job may arise for a host of reasons; sexual harassment; equal opportunity complaints; or disputes over promotions, pay, or admission to training programs. Some organizations have designed procedures for handling these conflicts.

From the organization point of view, conflict among the individuals or groups can create several positive or negative outcomes which depend on level of conflict. That is the organization believes that when conflict arises among the employees that leads to considerable positive effect to the organization like competition. There are different views of conflict; the organization uses conflict management techniques. Conflict may also affect profitability and survival of the organization. In the competitive world, every organization is trying to achieve its competitive advantage. Therefore organization should use its resources effectively in order to achieve its objectives. One of the most important resources is the human. This human resource may be affected by several factors. These factors also affect the performance of the employees. Conflict is an important aspect in determining employees’ performance. So, the organizations wish to maintain proper level of conflict. For this, they are using conflict management technique like stimulation or resolving techniques. Now-a-days one of the technique is EI, so in this paper researcher is trying to associate EI and CMS in retail industrial enterprises.

2.0 Research Questions

In the competitive world, competition among employees is at the higher level. Workload, promotion and employee behaviour also induce conflict among employees. There is no need conflict leads to negative impact to the

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organization. Conflict may be result in either negative or positive. Employers and employees wish to have conflict with positive impact. Such as employee performance, satisfaction, etc. because conflict is a vital part in achieving organizational objectives through highly performing employees.

Two questions would be explored in this research:

1. Is there a relationship between EI and CMS?
2. Does EI impact on CMS in industrial enterprises?

3.0 Review of Related Literatures

The literature review describes emotional intelligence, conflict and conflict management styles.

3.1 Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Salovey & Mayer (1990) defined EI as “the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action”. Theoretical perspectives and empirical studies on what abilities comprise EI differ somewhat, although one of the most widely reported models includes four dimensions (Salovey, Mayer & Caruso, 2002): (1) Perceive one's own and others' emotions and accurately express one's own emotions; (2) Facilitate thought and problem solving through use of emotion; (3) Understand the causes of emotion and relationships between emotional experiences; (4) Manage one's own and others' emotions. This is an “ability model”, but other perspectives (e.g., Goleman, 1998) reflect “mixed models”; combining abilities with a broad range of personality traits. Both the ability and the mixed models have strengths and limitations (Caruso, Mayer & Salovey, 2002; Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2000).

Empirical and theoretical evidence suggest that EI is relevant for a number of aspects of

individual and organizational life (e.g., effective leadership, productivity/performance, satisfaction with life, health and well-being; see Van Roy & Viswesvaran, 2004, and the respective references for a synthesis). Studies also have shown that EI of service providers' predicts customer satisfaction (Kernbach & Schutte, 2005) and that EI is associated to salesperson's customer orientation (Rozell, Pettijohn & Parker, 2004).

3.2 Conflict

Conflict is endemic to all social life. It is an inevitable part of living because it is related to situations of scarce resources, division of functions, power relations and role-differentiation. Because of its ubiquity and pervasive nature, the concept has acquired a multitude of meanings and connotations presenting us with nothing short of a semantic jungle. Like other terms, conflict generates considerable ambivalence and leaves many scholars and administrators quite uncertain about (1) its meaning and relevance and (2) how best to cope with it.

Conflict refers to more than just overt behaviour. Concentrating only upon its behavioural manifestation is an extremely limiting exercise. The three-dimensional conception of conflict emphasizes the need to consider the situation in which parties (individuals, groups or organizations) come to possess incompatible goals, their structure of interaction and the nature of their goals. We have to consider emotional (e.g. distrust) and cognitive (e.g. stereotyping) orientations that accompany a conflict situation as well as the range of action undertaken by any party in a situation of conflict.

Conflict is a natural, everyday phenomenon in all private and working spheres. It is an unavoidable component of human activity (Brahnam, Margavio, Hignite, Barrier, Chin, 2005) that may be viewed as a situation in which the concerns of two or more individuals appear to be incompatible (Darling

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& Fogliasso, 1999), and which tends to occur when individuals or groups perceive that others are preventing them from attaining their goals (Antonioni, 1998). More broadly, conflict is an interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance within or between social entities (i.e., individual, group, organization, etc.) (Rahim, 2002). Within organizations conflicts are inevitable, and arise in case of disagreements over workloads, problems in communication, individual differences in needs, wants, goals, values, opinions, preferences or behaviors, as well as in case of disputes between employees/unions and employers. Explicitly, as human beings interact in organizations, differing values and situations create tension (Darling & Walker, 2001).

In the 1930s and 1940s, conflict was viewed as an undesirable phenomenon. However, that *traditional viewpoint* of conflict gave way to the *behavioral viewpoint* of the 1960s in which conflict was seen as an inevitable fact of organizational life to be recognized and addressed (Jones & White, 198), and to the contemporary *interactionist viewpoint*, in which conflict is viewed as potentially useful to energize a company, point out problems and unify a group (Banner, 1995, 31). Conflict is today not considered to be a bad thing anymore. Opposite to the “conflict avoidance” perspective of traditionalists, the “conflict management” perspective of interactionists recognizes that while conflict does have associated costs, it can also bring great benefits. Properly managed, it can be a creative force for the business and the individual, because if we regard differences of opinion as valuable sources of cross-fertilization, they begin to enrich our experience (Bagshaw, 1998). In other words, conflict presents exciting possibilities about the future (if managed in a positive, constructive fashion), because difficult

situations and relationships are said to be the ones that make people grow.

Organizations are living systems consisting of interacting units performing a task in a mutually dependent manner within a structure of scarce resources. It seems commonplace to suggest that conflicts would be present in such a setting. The parties in an organization may have a conflict about the distribution of resources, or they may have a more fundamental conflict about the very structure of their organization and the basic nature of their interaction (Aubert, 1963). Once the parties are in a situation of goal incompatibility, their conflict develops in a dynamic fashion, initiating valuable and much-needed constructive changes or leading to escalating strategies and destructive consequences (Deutsch, 1969). As there is nothing pre-determined about its course or development, it seems erroneous to view conflict from a negative perspective only-destructive or dysfunctional. It is true that conflict may be uncomfortable, it may even be a source of problems, but it is absolutely necessary if change is to occur, if organizations are to survive and adapt. Organizational change and innovation does not just happen, it requires a stimulant. That stimulant is conflict.

Finally, even successful management these days depends heavily on an ability to handle conflict effectively, as Mintzberg (1975) observed over 30 years ago, when he said that every manager must spend a good part of his time responding to high-pressure disturbances and called that managerial role *the disturbance handler*, and McShulskis (1996) reaffirmed with his finding that executives spend 18 percent of their time resolving employee personality clashes, while ten years before the time spent on employee mediation was half that amount. Thus, the foremost managerial task nowadays became to create a climate

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where conflict is managed and not avoided (Bagshaw, 1998), and to permit conflict to serve a productive function (Phillips & Cheston, 1979). In other words, contemporary managers are called upon to resolve differences in priorities and preferences, and use conflict in a way that benefits their organizations (Friedman, Tidd, Currall, Tsai, 2000).

3.3 Conflict Management Styles

The mostly acknowledged and utilized framework of styles of resolving interpersonal conflict is the one developed by Thomas (1974) and Rahim and Bonoma (1979, cited in Rahim, 1983), following the work of Blake and Mouton from 1964, precisely their managerial grid. That framework accounts for five styles of handling conflict (Moberg, 2001): avoiding, competing (dominating), accommodating (obliging), collaborating (integrating), and compromising, determined by two dimension. Rahim and Bonoma (1979 in Rahim, 1983) labeled those two dimensions “concern for self” (It is the concern for one’s own wellbeing and fulfilment of one’s own concerns and needs, when individuals are oriented toward satisfying their own needs no matter the consequences for the party) and “concern for others” (It is the concern for other people wellbeing and their concerns and needs when individuals neglect their own concern for satisfying their needs in order to satisfy the needs of the other party), whereas Thomas (1974 in Brahnam et al., 2005) labeled them “assertiveness” (it is behaviour intended to satisfy one’ own concerns) and “cooperativeness” (It is behaviour intended to satisfy another’s concerns).

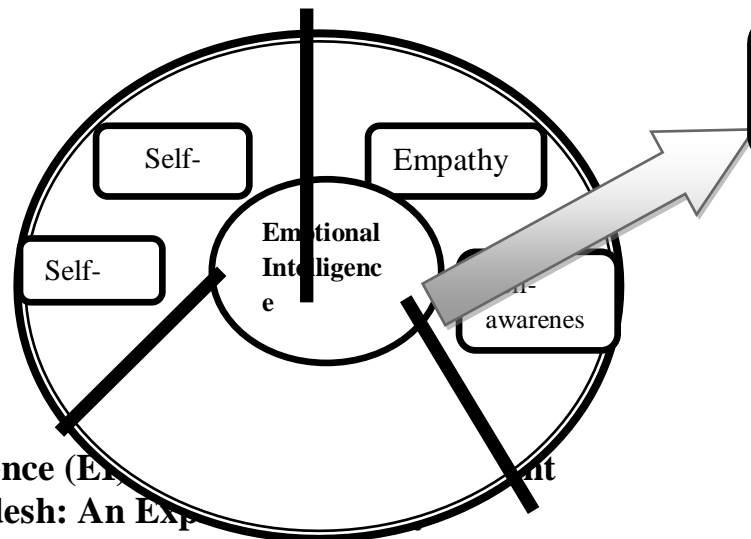
Among the five styles for the resolution of conflict described, literature appears to favour the use of collaborative style and points out that collaborative management strategies generate higher quality decisions than

distributive strategies (Thomas, 1977; Filley, 1978; Bettenhausen, 1991; Lovelace, Shapiro, Weingart, 2001); Brahnam, Margavio, Hignite, Barrier, Chin, 2005). As Brahnam et al. (2005) highlight, since there is typically less emphasis in modern business on competitive negotiation and more on interorganizational relationships, it is not surprising to find that the most valued conflict management strategy in business is collaboration, i.e. the win-win style of managing conflict. Namely, collaborating is the only conflict management style that considers the interests of both parties and focuses on mutual gains, and it is therefore argued that this style produces superior outcomes with more open exchange of information and a higher level of satisfaction through exploring the conflict issues more comprehensively (Van Slyke, 1999 in Goodwin, 2002, 383).

Hence, now-a-days EI is a tool for handling the conflict. Based on the previous studies we can say that there are some studies but there is no detailed and comprehensive study in respect of EI. Hence, the researchers have identified the research gap to conduct the study effectively.

4.0 Research Model

Based upon related literatures, the research model is shown association between EI and CMS in industrial enterprises.



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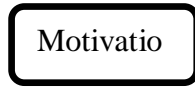
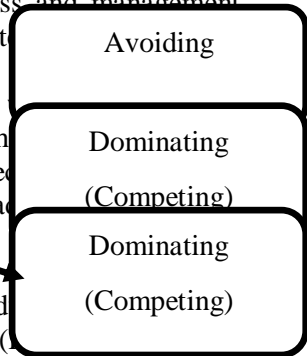


Figure-1: Research Model

As this paper is a business and management research, it has a character and interpretivist and deductive approach as approach. Combining the approaches in same perfectly possible and a research.

7.2 Sampling Strategy

The sample for this study Manufacturing Garments (Bangladesh. A purposively and randomly sampling techniques were used to select the industries. Initially researchers identified fifty RMGs in Chittagong then, decided to distribute questionnaires among chief executive officer (CEO)/manager from each RMGs. Hence ultimate sample is fifty CEO/ manager.



5.0 Objectives

The main purpose of the study is to identify the association between EI and CMS in industrial enterprises of Bangladesh. In order to materialize this objective, the following specific objectives have been considered.

- To identify the variables of EI and CMS in industrial enterprises in Bangladesh;
- To identify the impact of EI on CMS in industrial enterprises in Bangladesh; and
- To suggest some measures in order to solve the conflict in industrial enterprises of Bangladesh.

6.0 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are taken for the study

- EI and CMS are significantly correlated.
- EI has great impact on CMS.

7.0 Research Design and Methods

This section describes research approach, sampling strategy, data sources, instrumentation, reliability and validity and statistical tools used.

7.1 Research Approach

7.3 Data Sources

Given the nature of the present study, it was required to collect data from the primary and secondary sources. During data collection, the authors were always careful of the objectives and hypotheses of the study. Primary data were collected through the questionnaire. Secondary data were collected from research studies, books, journals, newspapers and ongoing academic working papers. The collected data may be processed and analyzed in order to make the study useful to the practitioners, researchers, planners, policy makers and academicians.

7.4 Instrumentation

The questionnaire was administrated to CEO/ managers from each RMGs which is in Bangladesh. A seven points Likert type summated rating scales from strongly disagree (-3) to strongly agree (+3) were adopted to measure the variables.

7.5 Reliability and Validity

Reliability was established with an overall Cronbach's alpha of 0.845. If we compare our reliability value with the standard value alpha

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of 0.7 advocated by Cronbach (1951), a more accurate recommendation (Nunnally & Bernstein's, 1994) or with the standard value of 0.6 as recommended by Bagozzi & Yi's (1988). Researchers find that the scales used by us are highly reliable for data analysis. Validation procedures involved initial consultation of the questionnaires. The experts also judged the face and content validity of the questionnaires as adequate. Hence, researchers satisfied content and construct validity.

to examine the relationship between ED and HRD.

$$CMS = f(SA, SR, M, E, SSS) \dots\dots\dots \text{Model}$$

$$C = \beta_0 + \beta_1(SA) + \beta_2(SR) + \beta_3(M) + \beta_4(E) + \beta_5(SSS) + e$$

Where $\beta_0, \beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4, \beta_5$ are the regression co-efficient
 C = Conflict Management Styles
 SA = Self Awareness
 SR = Self Regulation

Variables	EI	SA	SR	M	E	SSS
CMS	0.859** (0.000)	0.805** (0.000)	0.724** (0.000)	.656** (0.000)	0.606** (0.000)	0.589** (0.000)
EI		0.894** (0.000)	0.899** (0.000)	0.789** (0.000)	0.725** (0.000)	0.652** (0.000)
SA			0.614** (0.000)	0.652** (0.000)	0.587** (0.000)	0.548** (0.001)
SR				0.587** (0.002)	0.547** (0.004)	0.487** (0.000)
M					0.498** (0.004)	0.465** (0.000)
E						0.475** (0.000)

7.6 Statistical Tools Used

In the present study, we analysed the collected data by inferential statistics (i.e., correlation and regression). For the study, entire analysis is done by personal computer. A well known statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) 13.0 version was used in order to analyze the data.

M = Motivation
 E = Empathy
 SSS = Social Skills of Supervisor to Subordinates
 e = error term

To test how well the model fit the data and findings, correlation (r), R, R² (Coefficient of determination), variance, analysis of variance (ANOVA) and the t statistic are used. Correlation analysis is performed to find out the pair wise relationship between variables; SA SR, M, E, SSS and CMS. Hence, the results are summarised in table-1.

8.0 Analyses of Findings

The analyses of findings have been discussed under the following heads.

8.1 Relationship between EI and Conflict

EI considered as independent variables and CMS are considered dependent variables as well for further analyses. From these, correlations analysis was carried out to find out the relationship among the variables. Further the following; model was formulated

Table-1: Correlations Matrix for ED and HRD

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

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Models	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig
	β	Std.Effor	Beta		
1 Constant	-.368	.219		-1.680	0.097
SA	.796	.143	.617	5.244	0.000
SR	.649	.133	.511	4.154	0.002
M	.505	.130	.421	3.741	0.001
E	.456	.128	.321	2.457	0.001
SSS	.357	.124	.305	1.478	0.001

Table-1 shows that the correlation values between the variables. EI and CMS are positively correlated with the value of 0.859 which is highly significant at 1 percent level of

0.000) and an examination of the model summary in conjunction with ANOVA indicates that the model explains the most possible combination of predictor variables

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²
1	0.847	0.758	0.577

significance. In addition, SA, SR, M, E and SSS are also positively correlated with CMS. Hence hypothesis one is accepted.

that could contribute to the relationship with the dependent variable.

Table -3: Coefficients for predictors of CMS

Source: Survey data

8.2 EI and Its impact on CMS

Further a multiple regression analysis is performed to identify the predictors of CMS as conceptualized in the model. A enter wise variable selection is used in the regression analysis and table-2 provides the summary measure of the model.

Table-2: Predictors of Conflict - Model summary

a. Predictors: (Constant), SA; SR; M; E and SSS

The EI (SA, SR, M, E and SSS) in the above model revealed the ability to predict CMS ($R^2 = 0.758$). In this model value of R^2 denotes that 75.8 percent of the observed variability in HRD can be explained by the different in activities of EI namely SA, SR, M, E and CMS. The remaining 24.2 percent is not explained which means that the rest 24.2 percent of the variation in CMS is related to other variables which are not depicted in the model. This variance is highly significant as indicated by the F value ($F=55.431$ and $P =$

In the above model, t value for SA is highly significant at 1 percent level. It indicates that with increasing level of SA, CMS will be increased 5.244 levels. Similarly, SR, M, E and SSS are also highly significant at 1 percent level which clarifies that with the increasing a unit of characteristics of INS, AD, SMS and GMS, C will be increased 4.154, 3.741, 2.457 and 1.478 respectively. Therefore, hypothesis two is also accepted.

9.0 Concluding Remarks

The association between EI and CMS could be valuable for improving workplace relations and productivity. Namely, there are practical implications for understanding how individuals, depending on their demographic and work characteristics, handle conflicts. A better understanding of the contribution of individual differences to conflict management

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has implications for managing human resources in organizational contexts, especially for their recruitment and selection, training and development, as well as motivating and rewarding. More to it, findings of this research could aid practitioners in fitting together the individual differences of their employees with CMS they use, as well as to anticipate conflict handling behavior of their employees depending on their gender, age, educational level, field of work, hierarchical level or family status. Finally, this research induces that both academics and practitioners should give more attention to identifying potentially positive effects on organizational behavior and effectiveness deriving from behavioral differences associated with diverse workforce.

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