Original Article

An investigation of the relationship of emotional intelligence with organizational conflicts of Birjand executive agencies' financial staffs with an emphasis on interpersonal conflicts

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Abstract

Introduction: The purpose of the study is investigation of the relationship of emotional intelligence components with interpersonal conflicts on Birjand executive agencies' financial staffs.

Materials and Methods: The population of this descriptive study consisted of 178 financial staffs of Birjand executive agencies financial that 118 were considered as samples base on Morgan table. Research tools were questionnaires of emotional intelligence and interpersonal conflicts. SPSS software and Pearson correlation coefficient and Friedman ranking were used for data analysis.

Results: The results of the research showed that in ranking the components of emotional intelligence, management and emotional control is less important over the cognitive and emotional expression, the focused excitement on the identification, understanding and realization of outer emotions among the Birjand executive agencies' financial staffs. Among the interpersonal conflicts factors, conflict with boss is more important over the conflict with subordinate and conflict with peers. There is a meaningful and positive relationship among the emotional intelligence factors in staffs. Also, there is a meaningful and positive relationship among the factors of interpersonal conflicts. There is also a meaningful relationship among the components of emotional intelligence with the factors of interpersonal conflict in staffs.

Conclusion: The results showed that there is relationship between organizational and interpersonal conflicts among staffs.

Keywords: Conflict, Emotional intelligence, Interpersonal, Organization

Introduction

People differ in talents, interests, abilities, and other personal characteristics. Knowing about the personality differences of the people of an organization can help the managers of departments and organizations in solving many problems. Once they accept that people differ in innate and acquired abilities, they will not seek to

expect the same behavior from all employees. People know that they need a balance between rational and emotional dimensions, and they seek to provide an environment where employees can enjoy more mental health. Because by having a healthy relationship, people feel valued, accepted, understood, supported, trusted, and essential, which provides mental health and increases the efficiency and usefulness of people. In such an environment, conflict control becomes possible in its constructive form (1). Therefore, considering the above topics, we can understand the importance of emotional intelligence in controlling organizational conflicts. Therefore, in this research, we will examine the issue as closely as possible among the executive bodies of Birjand city to use and adequately manage this conflict. We have tried to help in the direction of growth, improving the level of awareness and performance of managers and financial employees of the executive bodies of Birjand city as much as possible. For this purpose, in order to explain the issue, we must first pay attention to the definitions of emotional intelligence and conflict.

In general, two main approaches can be mentioned in the definition of emotional intelligence:

1- An original and non-combined approach (ability approach) defines emotional intelligence as intelligence that includes emotion.

2- Conventional and mixed approaches (mixed approach) combine emotional intelligence with other skills and characteristics such as mental well-being, motivation, and the ability to establish relationships and emphasize a combination of them (2).

The term emotional intelligence was first registered by Salovey and Mayer (3) as a form of emotional intelligence. This model is an approach based on intelligence and ability. The essential component of emotional intelligence is the ability to evaluate and correctly express emotions. This part includes the ability to recognize emotions in a person and determine his feelings. This issue also includes the ability to express and express one's feelings and define feelings (4).

Emotional intelligence has been proposed by Bar-On as follows: a set of skills, talents, and cognitive abilities that increase a person's capacity to deal with environmental pressures and demands. He considers non-cognitive intelligence an essential factor in determining people's abilities to achieve success in life and is directly related to emotional health (5). According to Goleman's theory (6), emotional intelligence includes internal and external elements. Internal elements include the level of self-image, sense of independence, self-actualization, and assertiveness. Its external elements include interpersonal relationships, ease in empathy, and a sense of responsibility. Also, emotional intelligence includes one's capacity to accept facts, flexibility, the ability to solve emotional problems, and the ability to deal with stress and impulses (7).

On the other hand, conflict can be considered an inseparable part of human life. A cursory and superficial review of historical events, important current events, and cultural products that show past realities of social life shows how conflict is one of the most important and forms the most prominent aspects of life. Therefore, if some people believe that conflict is a topic that has occupied the human mind a lot, they have not made an absurd claim (8). A kind of conflict of behavior between organizational groups is defined (9). A conflict is an apparent conflict between two interdependent parties from which incompatible goals, concepts, values, or beliefs can be understood. Conflict occurs when two or more values, goals, or beliefs naturally contradict each other, and no agreement has been reached yet. Finally, conflict is a social situation in which two or more people either do not agree on fundamental issues related to the organization or show some basic hostility towards each other (10).

Today, they have defined different types of conflict. Such as the institutionalized conflict that arises from the nature and goals of the organization and is a challenge, the emerging conflict that originates from the formal and informal interactions of employees in daily activities, and the personality conflict that can be defined as a lack of agreement or personal satisfaction. People defined each other (11). Conflict has other forms, such as interpersonal conflict, which begins when one person finds

another person's behavior annoying, irritating, or troublesome in any way (12).

Also, in another classification, the types of conflict can be divided into intrapersonal conflict, interpersonal conflict, intragroup conflict, intergroup conflict, intraorganizational conflict, inter-organizational conflict, intracultural conflict, and intercultural conflict (13). In this regard, various researches have been carried out, some of which are mentioned below:

In research, Akhundlotfali (14), titled the study of the effect of emotional intelligence on conflict and conflict management style of nurses at Razi Psychiatric Hospital in Tehran, concluded that emotional intelligence training had a positive and meaningful effect on the conflict management style of nurses. Therefore, it was suggested that emotional intelligence training should be included in the in-service training programs for nurses. Feizi et al. (15), in research titled the relationship between managers' emotional intelligence and their conflict management strategies in Iran University of Medical Sciences, concluded that there is no relationship between managers' emotional intelligence with control strategy, solution-oriented strategy, and non-confrontation strategy, respectively. The relationship has a positive relationship and a negative relationship. Managers' emotional intelligence is not statistically related to their characteristics (age, gender, service history, and level of education). However, age has a negative relationship with a control strategy. There is a positive relationship between service history and control strategy. There is no relationship between non-confrontation strategy and solution orientation strategy with any of the individual characteristics of managers. According to the results of this research, managers' emotional intelligence can be an essential factor in identifying conflicts and adopting a suitable strategy for conflict management in the organization.Taghizadeh et al. (16), in research titled investigating the relationship between emotional intelligence and job stress in managers and employees of teaching hospitals, showed a significant difference in the level of emotional intelligence and job stress in both sexes as well as an inverse relationship. Furthermore, a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and job stress has been observed. The

components of emotional intelligence, especially self-awareness, and self-motivated empathy, have played a significant role in predicting job stress.

In research entitled conflict management and emotional intelligence, it was shown that the determining factors of the relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict management strategy are as follows: communication and interpersonal relationships, concern for oneself, concern for others, transformation and interpretation, and reinterpretation of the situation. This study shows that as long as at least two of these factors are present simultaneously, they can be prevented or resolved very soon after the formation of the conflict. High emotional intelligence of employees, concern, attention of employees towards others, and customer's concern for others (17). Kelly (18) researched identifying emotional intelligence in the professional nursing practice. The purpose of this research is to use a mental framework. It was emotional intelligence. For this purpose, all areas and competencies of emotional intelligence of the main events were identified. Generally, social awareness was the most prominent area in these events. In a research titled using emotional intelligence in the organizational environment, Kilduff (19) showed that high emotional intelligence of people is likely to be full of several strategic behaviors in organizations, including focusing on recognizing the feelings of others, expressing emotions to gain personality, and controlling the flow of communication. In addition, they benefit from emotions in dealing with their interests. Emotional intelligence is a group of non-cognitive abilities and skills, which increases a person's ability to succeed in dealing with pressures and environmental conditions, and in this way, it is a factor that seems to be related to the job stress of managers and employees. Furthermore, it is one of the ways of confronting and resisting conflict. Therefore, it is a variable of emotional intelligence (20). Our primary goal in this research is whether there is a significant relationship between the factors of emotional intelligence and interpersonal conflict among the financial employees of the executive bodies of Birjand city. Therefore, the present study has been conducted on the need to pay more attention to emotional intelligence as an important

component of improving organizational conflict and the performance of financial employees of the executive bodies of Birjand city.

Materials and Methods

The research method is a descriptive survey and practical in terms of purpose, and its results can be used in organizations, companies, and financial institutions. The purpose of applied research is to test theoretical concepts in real situations and to solve concrete problems, and in terms of the relationship between variables, it is of the correlation type. The statistical population includes 178 financial employees of the executive agencies of Birjand city. Based on stratified sampling, 20 of the 50 executive agencies with the most financial employees were selected, and 118 questionnaires were distributed among the employees of those centers. The number of samples was selected according to Morgan's table. Therefore, it can be said that the sampling method in this research is purposive sampling.

Research instrument

In order to collect data in this project, two library and field methods have been used. In this way, in order to collect the background and theoretical foundations of the project, including the description of emotional intelligence and organizational (interpersonal) conflicts in this research and modeling the problem from the library method by referring to books, theses, publications, The library and review of theoretical topics related to the subject have been used.

A) Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire: This questionnaire belongs to Palmer et al. (21) and is a self-report tool used to measure emotional intelligence in the workplace. The working method of this questionnaire is that it evaluates people's perceptions of the way they feel, think and act in the work environment, and from the beginning, in this way, emotional information is the basis of action. This tool is derived from analysis of macro factor analysis, which includes

six measures of emotional intelligence. Five factors of this tool have a variance of 58%, and hence they can be considered in the main framework of this questionnaire. These factors include recognizing and expressing emotions within oneself, emotions aimed at recognizing, understanding, and understanding external emotions, emotion management, and emotional control. This questionnaire consists of 31 questions. Also, the interpersonal organizational conflict questionnaire that was used in Hessam Eshraghi's thesis contains nine questions that include three scales (conflict with the boss, superiors and He is the same row).

Questionnaires were prepared based on a five-point Likert scale. Also, SPSS software was used to analyze the statistical data in this research.

Results

The descriptive information of the respondents to the questionnaire of this research, in terms of gender, level of education, age, and work experience, shows that 55.56% of the financial employees of the executive bodies of the city are women and 44.44% of them are men. In addition, 17.53% of the financial employees of the city's executive bodies are under 25 years old, 57.73% are between 25-35 years old, 21.65% are between 36-45 years old, and 3.09% are between 46-55 years old. Furthermore, 8.16% of the employees have educational qualifications below a diploma, 41.20% have diplomas, 55.1% have bachelor's degrees, 16.33% have master's degrees or higher, and 64.65% of employees have less than 15 years of service and 35.35% of employees over 16 years of service experience. In order to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and interpersonal conflicts among financial employees of the executive agencies of Birjand city, we have scored the questions of emotional intelligence and interpersonal conflicts of employees so that they become a quantitative variable. Therefore, Pearson's correlation coefficient test was used for their relationship.

Table 1. Pearson correlation coefficient between emotional intelligence and interpersonal conflicts of employees

Statistical test	Total emotional intelligence	Interpersonal conflicts
Pearson correlation	1	0.000
Significant level	0	0.003
Numbers	117	117

Table 2. The relationship between interpersonal conflict factors (bosses, supervisors, co-workers) of employees

Type of conflict	Correlation coefficient	Conflict with boss	Conflict with subordinate	Conflict with peers	Total conflict
Conflict with boss	Pearson correlation	1	0	0	0
	Significant level	0	0	0	0
	Numbers	118	118	118	118
Conflict with subordinate	Pearson correlation	0	1	0	0
	Significant level	0	0	0	0
	Numbers	118	118	118	118
Conflict with peers	Pearson correlation	0	0	1	0
	Significant level	0	0	0	0
	Numbers	118	118	118	118

The results of the correlation coefficient test show that there is a significant and positive relationship between emotional intelligence and interpersonal conflicts among employees.

The results of the above correlation test show that there is a significant relationship between the factors of interpersonal conflict in employees.

Table 3. Relationship between emotional intelligence factors of employees

Emotional factors	Correlation coefficient	Cognition and emotional expression	The emotion focused on cognition	Understanding and perception of outer emotions	Management and emotional control	Total emotional intelligence
Cognition and emotional expression	Pearson correlation	1	0	0	0	0
	Significant level	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Numbers	118	118	118	117	117
The emotion focused on cognition	Pearson correlation	0	1	0	0	0
	Significant level	0	0	0	0.001	0.000
	Numbers	118	118	118	117	117
Understanding and perception of outer emotions	Pearson correlation	0	0	1	0	0
	Significant level	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Numbers	117	118	118	117	117
Management and emotional control	Pearson correlation	0	0	0	1	0
	Significant level	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Numbers	117	117	117	117	117

The results of the above correlation test show that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence factors in employees.

As can be seen, the test results show a significant relationship between the components of emotional intelligence and interpersonal conflict factors in employees. The test results show that emotional management and control are less important than emotional recognition and expression. Emotion is aimed at recognizing, understanding and understanding external emotions among the financial employees of the executive bodies of the city.

The results of the above test show that there is a significant difference between the ranking of interpersonal conflict factors in financial

employees of the executive agencies of Birjand city and based on the ranking of interpersonal conflict factors, conflict with the boss is more important than conflict with subordinates and conflict with peers.

Table 4. Relationship between emotional intelligence factors and interpersonal conflict factors of employees

Emotional factors	Correlation coefficient	Conflict with the boss	Conflict with subordinate	Conflict with peers	Total interpersonal conflict
Cognition and emotional expression	Pearson correlation	0	0	0	0
	Significant level	0.000	0.000	0.075	0.080
	Numbers	118	118	118	118
The emotion focused on cognition	Pearson correlation	0	0	0	0
	Significant level	0.000	0.021	0.000	0.000
	Numbers	118	118	118	118
Understanding and perception of outer emotions	Pearson correlation	0	0	0	0
	Significant level	0.000	0.000	0.045	0.097
	Numbers	118	118	118	118
Management and emotional control	Pearson correlation	0	0	0	0
	Significant level	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Numbers	118	118	118	118
Total emotional intelligence	Pearson correlation	0	0	0	0
	Significant level	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.003
	Numbers	118	118	118	117

Table 5. Mean and standard deviation of emotional factors of employees

Emotional factors	Number	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Cognition and emotional expression	117	3	0	1	4
The emotion focused on cognition	117	3	0	1	5
Understanding and perception of outer emotions	117	3	0	1	4
Emotional control and management	117	2	0	1	3

Table 6. Friedman's test and statistical test for ranking emotional factors of employees

Emotional factors	Average of rates	Test	
Cognition and emotional expression	2	Friedman coefficient	27
The emotion focused on cognition	2	Degree of freedom	3
Understanding and perception of outer emotions	2	Significant level	0
Emotional control and management	117	Number	117

Table 7. Mean and standard deviation of interpersonal conflict factors of employees

Interpersonal conflict factors	Number	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Conflict with boss	118	2	0	1	4
Conflict with subordinate	118	2	0	1	4
Conflict with peers	118	2	0	1	4

Table 8. Friedman's test and statistical test for ranking employees

Interpersonal conflict factors	Average of rates	Test	N=118
Conflict with boss	1	Friedman coefficient	0
Conflict with subordinate	2.03	Degree of freedom	2
Conflict with peers	2.05	Significant level	0

Discussion

More than ever, companies and individuals are looking for a competitive advantage. They know they need a balance between rational and emotional dimensions to control and manage organizational conflicts effectively. Emotions affect everything we do, and especially in the organizational environment, emotions and emotions leading to friendship and intimacy between people will affect the level of organizational productivity and conflict. Emotional intelligence shapes interpersonal relationships, and organizational performance will also be influenced by interpersonal relationships (22).

In the past, employees were told to leave their emotions and feelings outside the organization and present themselves in the work environment. However, the organization has been involved with emotional categories through interaction with others (23). Interpersonal conflict is one of the main factors that cause the waste of human talent, which leads to the group and organizational conflict. Based on this, paying attention to the role and importance of interpersonal conflict in increasing or decreasing the efficiency of the organization, we investigated its relationship with emotional intelligence in the executive bodies of Birjand city. According to what has been said, it can be said that in the environments where humans are active, emotional capabilities, people's understanding of their own and others' emotions, and their abilities in communication and managing and controlling emotions are essential factors that should be considered. Therefore, in this research, we sought to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and interpersonal organizational conflicts in the executive bodies of Birjand city. Quantitative results have been analyzed by Pearson's correlation coefficient test and Friedman's rank test. A significance level of 0.05 has been considered in this research. Examining the results

showed that there is a positive and meaningful relationship between the variables. Also, the analysis results showed that emotional management and control are less important than recognizing emotional expressions. Emotion is aimed at recognizing, understanding and understanding external emotions among the financial employees of the executive bodies of Birjand city. Furthermore, there is a significant difference between the ranking of interpersonal conflict factors among the financial employees of the executive bodies of Birjand city. Based on the ranking of the factors of interpersonal conflict, the boss's conflict is more important than the conflict with subordinates and the conflict with subordinates.

Therefore, in comparison with similar research, it can be said that in examining the relationship between all the components of the conflict, there is a direct and meaningful relationship between individuals. The results of this research are in line with the research of Eshraghi et al. (25), Fayazi (26), and Haji et al. (27) are also consistent, which show that there is a significant relationship between the components of interpersonal conflict in the organization, most of the conflicts occur when the parties have different behaviors and values. When the power of people's differences is high, it will be much more challenging to reduce the conflict, while if the power is evenly distributed, the amount of conflict will be reduced. However, it can be said that the origin of most conflicts is the difference in humans' emotional intelligence levels.

Therefore, it is expected that as the conflict with the boss increases, the conflict with the subordinates or subordinates increases and vice versa. Therefore, there is a positive and significant relationship between employees' emotional intelligence components. The results of this research are consistent with the results of the research conducted by Rezaian (28). People in any position where they interact with others, if they want to have a proper performance and

optimal productivity and achieve their goals in the shadow of cooperation with others, it is necessary to have some unique features that Goleman collects in addition to technical and professional ability is called emotional intelligence, be equipped. Because these abilities make a person alert, calm, respectful, considerate, supportive, responsive, and explanatory when facing others or situations, according to Goleman, in order to overcome these challenges, these components must be cultivated. Employees have a significant relationship between emotional intelligence components and interpersonal conflict factors. However, since no research with this title was observed for direct comparison, there was a significant relationship between some conflict management strategies and emotional intelligence in some studies. On the other hand, in some others, the relationship was not observed or was different. Therefore, these different results can be found for different reasons. Firstly, this research was conducted in environments with different organizational atmospheres and in cities with different cultures. Perhaps one of the most important reasons is the fear of employees from conflicts in the organization due to the authoritarian environment of organizations and their managers (6). Among employees, emotional management and control are less important than other components of emotional intelligence, which is the opposite of the research results of Shirkhani et al. (1), which showed that understanding external emotions is more important is consistency. Also, conflict with the boss among employees has a higher priority than other components, which is inconsistent with the research results of Shirkhani et al. (1) and Eshraghi (24), and Gardner (29).

According to the above, suggestions are announced to resolve the conflict of employees as follows:

They were using the suggestions system because in this way, by creating opportunities for employees to express their opinions in their executive bodies and creating a sense of participation in work, many factors that secretly cause interpersonal conflict can be determined. Furthermore, it may reveal that the management is unaware of it and thinks of a solution for it when there is an interpersonal conflict.

Holding recreational camps on different occasions so that communication between employees is strengthened and conflicts between them are reduced.

Presenting a clear and favorable picture of the future career of employees so that they can take steps by creating enough motivation and stimulation to move in the direction of the centers' goals. Correctly understanding the emotions of others and recognizing their emotions helps to understand why the other party reacts in a certain way and what is his feeling? In addition, in this way, you can get more information about emotions, their causes, and functions. Furthermore, holding training courses improves employees' abilities because, in this way, employees' sense of responsibility, creativity, and mastery at work can be strengthened. Also, special training programs should be implemented so that with timely recognition and correct handling of organizational conflicts, the correct control, and management of conflicts is possible. Finally, the conflict between people in the organization is inevitable, so managers can use conflict as an opportunity for transformation because disagreements if dealt with wisely, can be valuable and effective for the organization.

Conclusion
In this research, the component of conflict with superiors among employees has a higher priority than other components.

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