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Studying the relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict management strategies in staff managers of Tehran Sepah bank

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ABSTRACT

By appearing information age and the promotion of interpersonal relationships and the manifest of strategic organizational, the emotional intelligence hypothesis have had a remarkable growth and became one of the popular organizational major. Emotional intelligence is a comprehensive expression including extensive collection of skills and personal specifications which is above certain scope of previous knowledge like technical or professional skills. The influence of emotional intelligence on conflict management strategies of Sepah bank managers has been assessed in current paper. The results of applying Spearman test show there are positive and meaningful correlations between emotional intelligence with conflict management strategies and its dimensions apart from avoidance strategy in which the relation was negative. Also the results of applying Friedman test illustrate that among dimensions of conflict management strategies, "avoidance strategy", "solution-based strategy" and "control strategy" were chosen as the most important ones. By using Chi Square test the relationship between managers' demographic characteristics and conflict management strategies was surveyed in which there was positive and meaningful correlation between their age, gender and educational level with conflict management strategies. Finally Binomial test shows that all variables apart from solution-based strategy were placed in favorable levels.

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Introduction

One of the issues which customer-oriented organizations especially Banks are facing, is conflict and disagreement. Organizational activities require the interaction between people and organization groups. In organizations, different people are occupied to their activities and tasks. Requisite of doing the activities is bilateral and multilateral communication among employee which may lead to conflict. So one of the most major and inevitable problems in Banks is conflict among employees and groups (Getzels et al, 1968).

It is necessary to mention not only conflict does not lead to disorder and fell apart in relations, but also non-effective conflict management will result to unfavorable outcomes (Getzels et al, 1968). One of the most important factors on managers' ability to solve conflict affectively is having emotional intelligence. Against what imaged at past time – IQ is only factor on people success- nowadays emotional intelligence is another factor in it (Goleman, 1999).

Sepah Bank as a customer-oriented one involves some conflicts. If Sepah Bank wants to remain its retention and effectiveness, conflict is a unavoidable factor. In current paper we are trying to survey the relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict management strategies.

So the main question of the research can be defined as:

Is there any relationship between Emotional Intelligence and conflict management strategies in staff managers of Tehran Sepah Bank?

Literature review

Emotional Intelligence

In recent decade, various researches were done about the role of emotions in work places (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005).

Nowadays, lots of researchers believe emotions plays important roles in enhancing people understanding of their motivation to do some works (George and Brief, 1996). Surveying the influence of emotions and feelings in workplaces leads to increasing managers understanding about employees' behavior, changes and their performance and stress. Overall, emotional intelligence as a new tool can be affected on employees' performance (Wiess and Cropanzano, 1996).

Emotional intelligence was considered at the first time by Mayer and Salovey at 1990 (Mayer and Salovey, 1997). In recent years attending to lots of interests, many definitions have been presented about emotional intelligence (Jordan et al, 2003). Emotional intelligence can be defined as high ability of understanding (Goleman, 1998), measuring and accurate explaining of emotions (Druskat and Wolf, 2001), utilizing emotion for decision making (Chernis and Adler, 2000), emotion understanding and emotional knowledge (Ciarrochi et al, 2000; Dulewicz and Higgs, 2000) and emotion regulation to increase mental and emotional growth (Mayer et al, 2001).

The emotional intelligence is a modern approach about predicting the success factors in life containing work activities and efficient opposition against stressful factors as the mental disorders resource. Much characteristic significance such as empathy, self-propensity, optimism, social skills, stress controlling, self-awareness and emotions managing, lead to success in different fields of life. Emotional intelligence shows the social and personality emotional dimensions which are often considered and appeared in daily activities (Khanifar et al, 2012). Emotional intelligence contains the abilities to perceive, measure and express emotion accurately and adaptively, understand emotions and emotional knowledge and make utilize

of the knowledge by accessing or generating feelings to facilitate thought, whilst reflectively regulating emotions (Tarasuik et al, 2009).

Conflict management

If cooperation and social proper behaviors were placed in one side of organizational behaviors, so the other side belongs to conflict. Conflict has lots of meanings and is always applied from inner anxiety due competitive needs and desires to war (Baron and Greenberg, 1990).

Putnam and Wilson (1982) have considered five strategies for conflict management:

a) Avoidance strategy: includes compromise and agreement approaches.

b) Solution-based strategy: includes reconciliation and cooperation approaches.

c) Control strategy: is the same competitive approach.

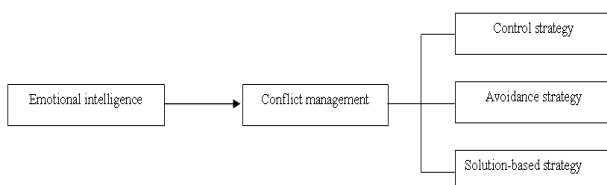
The conflict is like a coin which has two sides; positive and negative ones (Robbins, 1998).

All of problems which lead to competition and conflict have caused that attract the idea of many managers and employees and sometimes leads to their thought concern. There are three different ways to deal with conflict based on management theories. Traditionally, the conflict leads to destroy of group and sometimes organization. Basically, the conflict is harmful and shortage of fit communications and trust among employees lead to establishment of conflict and disagreement among them, or the managers under do against employees needs and desires and members of organizations, Based on perspective of human communications, the conflict leads to normal result and inevitable which is created in group and it can be had creative, positive and about group performance (Asgari et al, 2012).

Conflict management style has been and goes on to be measured by a variety of classifications. First of all Follett (1940) conceptualized the first five-style classification of behavioral conflict-handling strategies in the 1920's. He reported findings of methods employees typically apply when dealing with conflict: domination, compromise, integration, avoidance and suppression. Another one of the first conceptual schemes for ranking conflict revolved around a simple dichotomy containing either cooperation or competition (Deutsch, 1949). Deutsch defined conflict as incompatible interaction between minimum two people where one is interfering, obstructing or in other ways making the behavior of another less effective. He argued that the dynamics and outcomes of conflict depend on whether the conflict is handled cooperatively or competitively (Copley, 2008).

Conceptual framework of research

The chart below shows the influence of emotional intelligence on conflict management strategies. In this model, emotional intelligence is considered as independent variable and conflict management strategies and its dimensions includes control strategy, avoidance strategy and solution-based strategy are dependent variables.



Conceptual framework of research

1. Emotional intelligence has positive and meaningful influence on conflict management strategies.

1.1. Emotional intelligence has positive and meaningful influence on control strategy.

1.2. Emotional intelligence has positive and meaningful influence on avoidance strategy.

1.3. Emotional intelligence has positive and meaningful influence on solution-based strategy.

Methodology

Samples for this research were chosen from managers in different levels: 82 managers of Southern Sepah Bank (an Iranian Bank) and whereas this number seems to be inadequate, the sampling was done through an integral counting method. The present paper is considered as a descriptive survey if to view from data gathering aspect and as an applied research if to investigate the goals of the research. For gathering the data library method (to refer to books, articles, libraries, etc...) and fieldworks (questionnaire) were applied. Two questionnaires were designed: 33 questions for emotional intelligence and 30 ones for conflict management strategies and then distributed within the samples. For analyzing the data SPSS 19 was utilized. The management experts were being asked to evaluate the validity of questionnaires. For this mean, the questionnaires were given to some professors and experts in management, and after their modifications were being used and they confirmed it, the questionnaires were given to the participants. For assessing questionnaire validity we asked for experts' opinions and to determine the questionnaires' reliability, the 'Cronbach Alpha technique' was used. For this purpose, 35 people were chosen by random from the samples and the questionnaires were given to them. The 'Cronbach Alpha' values for emotional intelligence and conflict management strategies were calculated 0.81 and 0.78. As the reliability results calculated more than reasonable threshold (0.7), reliability of questionnaires was confirmed.

Data analyzing

Kolmogorov-Smirnov test

This test was applied to survey normality of statistical society. The results are shown in tables 1:

Table 1 shows that the sig amount for both variables are less than standard error (0.05), so normality of statistical society was rejected. Therefore to survey hypotheses, some non parametric tests were utilized.

Table 1: The results of applying Kolmogorov-Smirnov test

Variables	Statistics	Sig	Results
Emotional intelligence	2.316	0.000	Abnormal
Conflict management	3.458	0.000	Abnormal

Table 2: The results of applying Spearman test

Relation	Spearman R	Sig	Results
EI with conflict management	0.870	0.023	Positive and meaningful correlation
EI with control	0.858	0.035	Positive and meaningful correlation
EI with avoidance	-0.458	0.021	Negative and meaningful correlation
EI with solution-based	0.800	0.024	Positive and meaningful correlation

Spearman test

First of all to survey the relationship between emotional intelligence and with conflict management and its indices, Spearman test was applied. The results are shown in table 2: Table 2 shows that there are positive and meaningful correlations between emotional intelligence with conflict management strategies and its indices.

Friedman test

To rank emotional intelligence dimensions Friedman test was utilized.

As table 3 shows “avoidance strategy” was selected as the most important one and “solution-based strategy” and “control strategy” were posed in second and third places.

Table 3: The results of applying Friedman test

Variables	Mean Rank	Final rank
Control	3.31	3
Avoidance	2.12	1
Solution-based	2.49	2

Chi Square test

To survey the relationship between managers’ demographic characteristics and conflict management strategies, Chi Square test was used

Table 5 shows there is positive and meaningful relationship between age, gender and educational level with conflict management strategies.

Table 5: The results of applying Chi Square test

Demographic characteristics	Sig	Standard error	Results
Age	0.033	0.05	Positive and meaningful correlation
Gender	0.119	0.05	Positive and meaningful correlation
Educational level	0.021	0.05	Positive and meaningful correlation
Work experience	0.019	0.05	No relationship

Table 5: The results of applying Binomial test

Variables	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Sig	Results
Emotional intelligence	0.83	0.5	0.000	Favorable level
Conflict management strategies	0.73		0.000	Favorable level
Control strategy	0.68		0.000	Favorable level
Avoidance strategy	0.62		0.000	Favorable level
Solution-based strategy	0.35		0.000	Unfavorable level

Binomial test

To survey the variables levels Binomial test was applied. Table 5 shows the results of applying Binomial test:

Table 5 shows the sig amount for all variables are less than standard error (0.05), so all of them were placed in high levels.

Conclusion and discussion

The purpose of writing the current paper is to study the effect of managers’ emotional intelligence on conflict management strategies. The study was done in a society

includes 82 managers of Sepah Bank in Iran. For gathering data, a question in 2 parts (to measure emotional intelligence and conflict management strategies) was designed.

The results of applying Spearman test show there are positive and meaningful correlations between emotional intelligence with conflict management strategies and its dimensions apart from avoidance strategy in which the relation was negative. The results are consistent to Rahim (2002) research and contradict to Afzalur & Patricia (2003) one (Afzalur & Patricia, 2003; Rahim).

Also the results of applying Friedman test illustrate that among dimensions of conflict management strategies, “avoidance strategy”, “solution-based strategy” and “control strategy” were chosen as the most important ones.

By using Chi Square test the relationship between managers’ demographic characteristics and conflict management strategies was surveyed in which there was positive and meaningful correlation between their age, gender and educational level with conflict management strategies.

Finally Binomial test shows that all variables apart from solution-based strategy were placed in favorable levels.

Attending to results, managers are advised to employee people who have high levels of emotional intelligence. It enables them to manage conflict in organization and help them to avoid contacts in results of conflict. Utilizing emotional intelligence tests are so useful to managers for selecting emotional ones.

Also re-applying retired employees and who are high educated can be facilitate applying conflict management strategies in organizations.

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