Can Emotional Intelligence Mediate the Relationship Between Conflict and Conflict Management Style Among Students?

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Abstract

Emotional intelligence (EI) acts as a mediator between conflict and conflict management by influencing how individuals perceive, process, and respond to emotions in conflict situations. The aim of this study was to examine the role of EI in managing the relationship between Conflict and Conflict Management Style (CMS) among postgraduate students of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM). Data was gathered from 80 respondents, but only 42 of them responded to the questionnaire. Standardized scales were used to measure key concepts, and the data was analyzed using descriptive analyses, correlation coefficients, and mean ranking to test the data-model fit. The findings indicate that there may not be a statistically significant relationship between Conflict and CMS (Conflict Management Styles) at the conventional significance level of 0.05. However, the relationship between conflict, emotional intelligence (EI), and conflict management style (CMS) while conflict and emotional intelligence together have a significant impact on CMS, the direct effect of conflict on CMS is not statistically significant when accounting for the influence of emotional intelligence. Thus, this research concludes the importance of emotional intelligence in conflict resolution and suggests that developing emotional intelligence skills may be valuable for improving conflict management strategies for students.

Keywords: Conflict, conflict management, emotional intelligence

■ 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Classical management theorists like Henri Fayol, Frederick Taylor, and Max Weber did indeed view conflict in organizations as something to be avoided or minimized. Their perspectives were rooted in the early 20th century and were influenced by the need for efficiency in organizations. There has been a shift in scholarly research from primarily focusing on the adverse effects of conflict to examining its functional use within organizations. This shift reflects a growing recognition that conflict can have both positive and negative consequences, depending on how it is managed and channeled (Pooya, Barfoei, Kargozar, & Maleki, 2013). The distinction between functional and dysfunctional conflict underscores the importance of effective conflict management within organizations. When conflict is managed in a way that encourages healthy debate, respectful communication, and resolution of issues, it is more likely to be functional and contribute positively to the organization. However, when conflict is allowed to fester or is mishandled, it can quickly become dysfunctional and have serious negative consequences (Pooya, Barfoei, Kargozar, & Maleki, 2013).

According to Wall and Callister (1995) & Rahim (1983), conflict is defined as a process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party. This definition highlights that conflicts arise when individuals or groups within an organization believe that their interests are not aligned or are being hindered by others. Indeed, conflicts can occur at various levels within an organization, it can arise between individuals, teams, departments, or even at higher organizational levels (Deutsch, 1990). Conflict can have negative consequences for the parties involved. It can lead to the disturbance of individuals or teams, resulting in negative emotions. These negative emotions can, in turn, lead to reduced job satisfaction, as mentioned with reference to Derr (1977). Conflict can also lead to reduced motivation and performance, as noted with respect to Bergmann and Volkema (1989).

Conflicts are a common part of educational institutions as well, including postgraduate programs; they can have both positive and negative effects. The complexity of educational institutions and the prevalence of social interactions within them make conflicts almost inevitable. One significant source of conflict among postgraduate students is the supervisor-student relationship, which can be quite like workplace dynamics. Mastering conflict resolution skills in

the context of this supervisor-student relationship can indeed be valuable not only for academic success but also for navigating similar conflicts in other aspects of life or work. The ability to resolve disputes effectively is a transferable skill that can benefit individuals in various situations. Your reference to Bao, Zhu, Hu, & Cui (2016) citing Gardner & Lambert (1993) and Volkema & Bergmann (1995) highlights a noteworthy point. It suggests that despite having a college education, many adults may not be adept at dealing with interpersonal conflicts in the workplace. This underscores the importance of teaching conflict resolution skills or/and Conflict management styles (CMSs), both in educational institutions and as a part of ongoing professional development, to better prepare individuals for the challenges they may encounter in their careers and personal lives.

Conflict management styles (CMSs) refer to the distinct approaches or strategies that individuals tend to use when they find themselves in a conflict situation. These styles encompass a range of behaviors and communication techniques that people employ to address and resolve conflicts. Moberg (2001) defines CMSs as "specific behavioral patterns that individuals prefer to employ when dealing with conflict." Overall, how individuals address conflict is a complex interplay of their personality, upbringing, and cultural background (Ungerleider, 2008). Understanding these factors can be valuable in both interpersonal relationships and conflict resolution efforts.

Blake and Mouton's (1964) Managerial Grid, Thomas's (1976) Conflict Resolution Styles, and Rahim's (1983) Organizational Conflict Styles are indeed three prominent models that propose different dimensions for understanding interpersonal conflicts. These models emphasize varying degrees of concern for self and concern for others as fundamental components in conflict resolution and management. Furthermore, Rahim's model of organizational conflict styles categorizes conflict-handling behaviors into five distinct styles. These styles are based on a combination of the two key dimensions: concern for self and concern for others. Understanding these different styles can be helpful in improving one's emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence (EI) is indeed a topic of great interest in the field of organizational conflict management. Researchers have been exploring how an individual's emotional intelligence can significantly impact the way conflicts are managed within an organization (Pooya et al., 2013). Emotional intelligence (EI) is a concept that has been defined and described in various ways by different researchers and scholars. Goleman (1998) defines emotional Intelligence (EI) as "the ability to monitor one's own and other's emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions". While Gignac (2010) defines it as "The ability to purposely adapt, shape, and select environments through the use of emotionally relevant processes."

Emotional intelligence (EI) indeed plays a crucial role in conflict resolution and handling, as constructive solutions for conflict may require compromises that are based on the ability to recognize and regulate emotions (Schlaerth et al., 2013). Emotional intelligence can be a valuable skill in the workplace for managing and potentially reducing interpersonal conflicts by helping individuals regulate their emotions, understand others' emotions, communicate effectively, and find constructive solutions to disputes (Mulki, Jaramillo, Goad, & Pesquera, 2015). Furthermore, Schutte, Malouff, Simunek, McKenley, and Hollander (2002) show that emotionally intelligent individuals are better able to handle threats to their positive attitude in negative situations, which can also be important in work-related conflict situations. Schlaerth et al., (2013) suggest that individuals with high emotional intelligence can manage conflict more constructively. Along the same lines, Jordan and Troth (2004) show that individuals with high emotional intelligence (EI) are often better equipped to handle and resolve conflicts more productively than those with lower EI. Thus, this paper is looking into how emotional intelligence can be applied to conflict management among students. The research has the potential to contribute to the development of effective conflict resolution strategies in educational institutions.

■ **2.0 METHODOLOGY**

This study applies a quantitative research approach using self-administered questionnaires to measure conflict, emotional intelligence (EI), and conflict management strategies (CMS) among postgraduate students at Perdana School of Science, Technology, and Innovation, University of Technology Malaysia Kuala Lumpur. This is a common methodology used in social sciences to gather data and analyze relationships between variables. The online questionnaires are designed to gather information on demographic characteristics, perceptions of conflict, emotional intelligence, and conflict management styles from respondents. The Likert scale responses help to analyze and quantify these aspects. These questionnaires are useful for research or assessment purposes, particularly in understanding how individuals perceive and manage conflicts in various settings. Google Form was used, a link designated to the questionnaire form was distributed among the respondents via emails and Whatsapp application. Accessible through the web browser on any computer or smart devices, respondents may complete the questionnaire at a time of their liking. Data analysis performed by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 24. All the results were presented in the table and graph. Variables were expressed as frequencies and percentages. Pearson's correlation analysis was used to examine between two (2) variables Conflict and Conflict Management Style, Conflict and Emotional Intelligence, Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Management Style. From the analysis, researchers can see the relationship between the explanatory and response variables between Conflict, Conflict Management Style and Emotional Intelligence.

■ **3.0 RESULTS**

3.1 Profile of Participants

The following statistics provide an overview of the demographic and academic characteristics of the survey respondents and their level of participation in the study as follow:

Table 1 Demographic information of the sample

Demography	Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	21	50.0
	Female	21	50.0
Age	23-30	4	9.5
	31-40	27	64.3
	41-50	10	23.8
	51-60	1	2.4
Nationality	Malaysian	33	78.6
	Others	9	21.4
Education Candidacy	Doctoral degree	19	45.2
	Master's degree	23	54.8
Mode of study	Full-time	18	42.9
	Part-time	24	57.1
Current Semester	1	5	11.9
	2	8	19.0
	3	5	11.9
	4	12	28.6
	5	6	14.3
	6	4	9.5
	7	1	2.4
	8	1	2.4

Table 1 indicated that out of the 80 respondents, only 42 people managed to respond to the questionnaire, and this resulted in a response rate of 53%. The responses were evenly distributed between males and females. Most respondents fell into the age group of 31 to 40 years old, accounting for 64.3% of the total responses. A significant portion of the respondents, 54.8%, held master's degrees. Most respondents, 57.1%, identified themselves as part-time students. Additionally, 28.6% of the respondents were in their fourth semester of their studies.

3.2 Source of Conflicts

Sources of conflict were measured using descriptive statistics, and the results displayed in the following table:

Table 2 Descriptive Statistic of Conflicts

Variable	*N*	Mean	Std. Deviation
Supervisor's Availability	42	2.0333	0.73904
Involvement in Important Decisions	42	2.0952	0.67389
Dubious Advice	42	2.2381	0.76897
Mediating Between Supervisors	42	2.2024	0.8044
Interpersonal Relationship	42	1.9643	0.84024
Interaction	42	2.3869	0.47883

On a scale of 0.00 to 4.00, where 0.00 represents no conflict, and 4.00 represents the maximum possible conflict, the scores in Table 2 indicate that conflicts exist in these areas, but they are not extremely high. The mean score of 2.38 suggests that, on average, students experience a moderate level of conflict in their interactions with each other. Similarly, the mean score of 2.23 indicates a moderate level of conflict related to students receiving or providing dubious advice. And a mean score of 2.20, there is also a moderate level of conflict related to students mediating between supervisors. Overall, based on the maximum score of 4.00, it appears that there are conflicts among students in these areas, but they are not extremely intense.

A comparison of mean scores between male and female students was done to determine who is facing more conflict at the university level. The results were highlighted in the following table:

Table 3 Descriptive Statistic of Conflicts by Gender

	Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Male	Supervisor's Availability	21	1.00	3.00	1.8190	0.71247	0.508
	Involvement in Important Decisions	21	1.00	3.25	1.9524	0.62058	0.385
	Dubious Advice	21	1.00	3.25	1.9524	0.65009	0.423
	Mediating Between Supervisors	21	1.00	4.00	2.0714	0.79507	0.632
	Interpersonal Relationship	21	1.00	4.50	1.7500	0.94207	0.887
	Interaction	21	1.75	3.25	2.3929	0.45806	0.210
	Valid N (listwise)	21					
Female	Supervisor's Availability	21	1.00	4.00	2.2476	0.71807	0.516
	Involvement in Important Decisions	21	1.00	3.75	2.2381	0.70921	0.503
	Dubious Advice	21	1.00	2.50	2.5238	0.78623	0.618
	Mediating Between Supervisors	21	1.00	3.5	2.3333	0.81138	0.658
	Interpersonal Relationship	21	1.50	3.00	2.1786	0.68703	0.463
	Interaction	21	1.00	3.25	2.3810	0.51002	0.260
	Valid N (listwise)	21					

The above descriptive statistics provide insights into how male and female students differ in their experiences and perceptions related to conflicts and various aspects of their academic or professional environments. Based on the above table 3 female students tend to score higher on various measures related to conflicts compared to male students. The findings showed that the females scored higher mean in supervisor availability, involvement in an important decision, receiving or providing dubious advice, mediating between supervisors, interpersonal relationships, and interactions with each other.

3.3 Level of Emotional Intelligence Among the Students

Level of emotional intelligence was measured using descriptive statistics, it is important to note that the Genos EI inventory aims to assess emotional intelligence (EI) by measuring various aspects of emotional awareness and management. The process of transforming raw scores into percentile scores makes it easier to interpret an individual's performance relative to others. While the Genos EI inventory's short version provides a broad overview of an individual's emotional intelligence, it may lack depth in explaining specific scores for each of these subscales. this is because EI is a complex and multifaceted construct, and no single assessment can provide a complete picture of an individual's emotional intelligence. The Emotional Intelligence (EI) model is categorized into several subscales or components: Emotional Self-Awareness, Emotional Expression, Emotional Awareness of Others, Emotional Reasoning, Emotional Self-Management, Emotional Management of Others, and Emotional Self-Control. These components represent different aspects of emotional intelligence and are often used to assess and develop an individual's ability to recognize, understand, manage, and use emotions effectively in various personal and social contexts. The results displayed in the following table:

Table 4 Descriptive Statistic of Emotional Intelligence Subscales

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emotional Self-Awareness	42	7.5952	1.23089
Emotional Expression	42	7.381	1.44749
Emotional Awareness of Others	42	8.119	1.40039
Emotional Reasoning	42	8.0476	1.56099
Emotional Self-Management	42	7.4286	1.25218
Emotional Management of Others	42	6.9048	1.41092
Emotional Self-Control	42	7.5476	1.95314
Valid N (listwise)	42		

Table 4 indicates that emotional intelligence exists in the above indicated categories, and they are high in all and

extremely high in Emotional Awareness of Others and Emotional Reasoning (8.11 & 8.04 respectively). A comparison of mean scores between male and female students was done to determine who is scoring higher in their Emotional Intelligence. The results were highlighted in the following table:

Table 5 Descriptive Statistic of Emotional Intelligence by Gender

	Variable	*N*	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Male	Emotional Self-Awareness	21	6	10	7.8571	1.09101	1.202
	Emotional Expression	21	5	10	7.7143	1.58390	2.514
	Emotional Awareness of Others	21	6	10	8.6667	1.31656	1.733
	Emotional Reasoning	21	5	10	8.8571	1.35898	1.847
	Emotional Self-Management	21	6	10	7.9524	1.05675	1.117
	Emotional Management of Others	21	5	10	7.6190	1.50357	2.262
	Emotional Self-Control	21	2	10	7.8571	1.54077	2.373
Female	Emotional Self-Awareness	21	4	10	7.3333	1.39044	1.933
	Emotional Expression	21	6	10	7.9048	1.46768	2.155
	Emotional Awareness of Others	21	4	10	7.4762	1.95737	3.834
	Emotional Reasoning	21	4	10	7.7143	1.52757	2.335
	Emotional Self-Management	21	4	10	6.9524	1.42984	2.045
	Emotional Management of Others	21	4	10	7.2381	1.49053	2.222
	Emotional Self-Control	21	2	9	7.2381	1.94953	3.799

The findings in the above table 5 showed that males scored higher mean scores in all aspects of Emotional Intelligence (EI) compared to female students, it would be an interesting and potentially noteworthy finding. It's essential to approach such findings with a critical perspective and consider the broader context of research on EI and gender differences. While differences may be observed in certain studies, it's important to recognize that there is substantial individual variation within each gender, and no single study can provide a definitive answer on this complex topic. Replication of findings in different settings and with diverse populations is often necessary to draw more robust conclusions about gender differences in EI.

3.4 Conflict Management Style (CMS)

Conflict Management Style were measured using descriptive statistics, and the results are displayed in the following table:

Table 6 Score of Conflict Management Style

Variable	*N*	Mean	Std. Deviation
Collaborating	42	12.3571	2.10483
Competing	42	10.4286	1.8629
Avoiding	42	10.9048	1.98543
Accommodating	42	10.9286	1.38622
Compromising	42	11.3095	1.8411

The results indicate that most students tend to score high in various conflict management styles, with a preference for collaborating, compromising, accommodating, and avoiding in that order. These results can provide valuable insights for educators, counselors, or anyone working with these students, as they can tailor their conflict resolution strategies and training to align with the students' preferences and strengths in conflict management.

A comparison of mean scores between male and female students was done to determine who is using better Conflict Management Style at the university level. The results are highlighted in the following table:

Table 7 Descriptive Statistic of Conflict Management Style by Gender

	Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Male	Collaborating	21	7	15	12.9048	1.97423	3.890
	Competing	21	8	14	10.3333	1.65328	2.733
	Avoiding	21	6	15	10.7143	2.39046	5.714
	Accommodating	21	9	14	11.3333	1.42595	2.033
	Compromising	21	9	15	11.2381	1.84132	3.390
	Collaborating	21	7	15	12.9048	1.97423	3.890
	Competing	21	8	14	10.3333	1.65328	2.733
Female	Collaborating	21	8	15	11.8095	2.13568	4.562
	Competing	21	7	15	10.5238	2.00852	4.032
	Avoiding	21	8	15	11.0952	1.51433	2.290
	Accommodating	21	8	13	10.5238	1.24976	1.562
	Compromising	21	7	15	11.3810	1.88351	3.548
	Collaborating	21	8	15	11.8095	2.13568	4.562
	Competing	21	7	15	10.5238	2.00852	4.032

It's interesting to note the results as in the above Table 7 that both male and female students seem to have a diverse range of conflict management styles, but collaborating is their preferred approach. This suggests that they value finding mutually beneficial solutions and open communication when dealing with conflicts.

3.5 *The Relationship Between Conflict, Emotional Intelligence & Conflict Management Style*

A regression is first run to predict Conflict Management Style (CMS) from Conflict. The detail results are as follow:

The total effect of conflict on conflict management style is denoted by c.
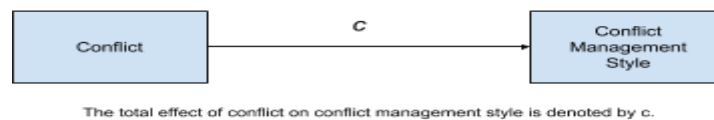
Figure 1: Conflict Management Style (CMS) from Conflict.

The above figure shows that there is a study conducted to measure the correlation between conflict and conflict management style and the results are detailed in the following tables.

Table 8 Regression Results of Correlation Between Conflict and Conflict Management Style

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.175[a]	.031	.006	6.13862

a. Predictors: (Constant), ConflictScore

ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	47.479	1	47.479	1.260	.268[a]
	Residual	1507.306	40	37.683		
	Total	1554.786	41			

a. Predictors: (Constant), ConflictScore
b. Dependent Variable: ConflictManagementStyleScore

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	59.798	3.575		16.728	.000	52.573	67.023
	ConflictScore	-.078	.070	-.175	-1.122	.268	-.220	.063

a. Dependent Variable: ConflictManagementStyleScore

R-squared (R^2) is a measure of the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable (CMS) that is explained by the independent variable(s) (Conflict). A value of 0.031 suggests that only a very small amount of the variance in CMS can be explained by Conflict. This indicates a weak or small relationship between Conflict and CMS. The unstandardized regression coefficient (c) for the prediction of CMS from Conflict is -0.078. This coefficient represents the change in the dependent variable (CMS) for a one-unit change in the independent variable (Conflict). In this case, a one-unit increase in Conflict is associated with a decrease of 0.078 units in CMS. In conclusion, the result indicates that the coefficient (-0.078) is statistically not significant with a t-statistic of -1.122 and a p-value of 0.268. Typically, researchers use a significance level (alpha) of 0.05, which means that if $p < 0.05$, the result is considered statistically significant. In this case, the p-value is greater than 0.05 (p = 0.268), which suggests that the relationship between Conflict and CMS may not be statistically significant at the conventional significance level of 0.05.

A regression analysis was also conducted to predict Conflict Management Style (CMS) from emotional intelligence and conflict. The detail results are as follow:
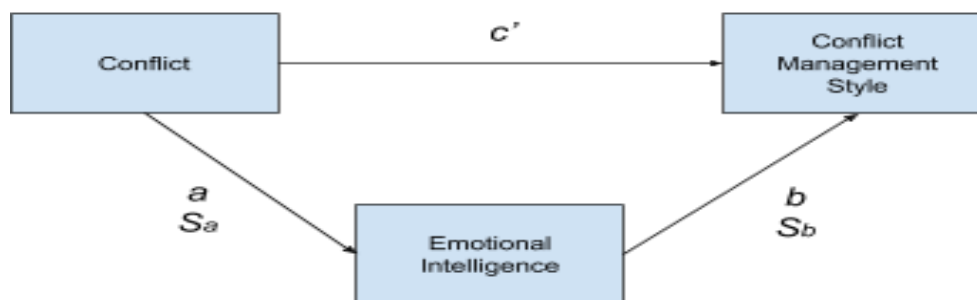
Figure 1: Conflict Management Style (CMS) from Emotional Intelligence and Conflict.

The above figure shows that there is a study conducted to measure the correlation between conflict, emotional intelligence and conflict management style and the results are detailed in the following tables.

Table 9 Regression Results of Emotional Intelligence and Conflict

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.449[a]	.202	.182	6.00593

a. Predictors: (Constant), ConflictScore

ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	365.153	1	365.153	10.123	.003[a]
	Residual	1442.847	40	36.071		
	Total	1808.000	41			

a. Predictors: (Constant), ConflictScore
b. Dependent Variable: EmotionalIntelligenceScore

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	59.730	3.498		17.078	.000	52.662	66.799
	ConflictScore	-.218	.068	-.449	-3.182	.003	-.356	-.079

a. Dependent Variable: EmotionalIntelligenceScore

The above Table 9 shows that there is a statistically significant negative correlation between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Conflict. However, the strength of this correlation is relatively weak, as indicated by the R-squared value of 0.202. The unstandardized path coefficient of -0.218 represents the slope of the regression line between EI and Conflict. It indicates the change in the Conflict variable for a one-unit change in the EI variable. In this case, a one-unit increase in EI is associated with a decrease of -0.218 units in Conflict. The p-value is associated with the t-statistic and indicates the probability of observing such a significant result by chance. In this case, with p = 0.003, it is very unlikely that the observed relationship

between EI and Conflict is due to random chance. This strengthens the evidence that there is a significant negative correlation between EI and Conflict.

The outcome detail of Conflict Management Style (CMS) from emotional intelligence and conflict are in the following:

Table 10 Regression Results of Emotional Intelligence, Conflict, and Conflict Management Style

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.647ᵃ	.418	.388	4.81680

a. Predictors: (Constant), EmotionalIntelligenceScore, ConflictScore

ANOVAᵇ

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	649.925	2	324.963	14.006	.000ᵃ
	Residual	904.860	39	23.202		
	Total	1554.786	41			

a. Predictors: (Constant), EmotionalIntelligenceScore, ConflictScore
b. Dependent Variable: ConflictManagementStyleScore

Coefficientsᵃ

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	21.202	8.077		2.625	.012	4.864	37.539
	ConflictScore	.062	.061	.138	1.012	.318	-.062	.186
	EmotionalIntelligence Score	.646	.127	.697	5.096	.000	.390	.903

a. Dependent Variable: ConflictManagementStyleScore

The above Table 10 indicates that Conflict and EI together have a significant impact on CMS (path b), but the direct effect of Conflict on CMS, after accounting for the influence of EI (path c'), is not statistically significant. Most of the relationship between Conflict and CMS is mediated by Emotional Intelligence. The correlation results are summarized in the following figure:
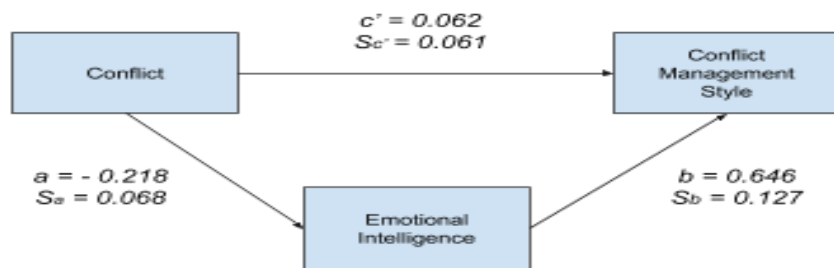
Figure 3: The correlations between Conflict Management Style (CMS), Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Conflict (C)

Table 11 Descriptive Statistic the Relationship between Emotional Intelligence, Conflict, and Conflict Management Style

Input:		Test statistic:	Std. Error:	p-value:
a	-0.218	Sobel test: -2.7121535	0.05192479	0.00668476
b	0.646	Aroian test: -2.67540307	0.05263805	0.00746395
s_a	0.068	Goodman test: -2.75046122	0.05120159	0.00595114
s_b	0.127	Reset all	Calculate	

The above figure 3 and table (10 & 11) indicated that unstandardized coefficient for path b is 0.646. The t-value associated with this coefficient is 5.096. The p-value for path b is less than 0.01 ($p < 0.01$). This indicates that there is a statistically

significant relationship between the independent variables (Conflict and EI) and the dependent variable (CMS) when considering path b. The coefficient of 0.646 suggests that for each unit increase in Conflict and EI, CMS is expected to increase by approximately 0.646 units. Path c' represents the direct or remaining effect of Conflict on CMS when the mediating variable EI has been included in the analysis. In this case, the p-value of 0.318 is greater than the typical significance level of 0.05, indicating that the direct effect of Conflict on CMS when controlling for EI is not statistically significant. This suggests that most of the relationship between Conflict and CMS is mediated through EI.

■ 4.0 FINDING AND RESULT

The aim of this study was to examine the role of EI as mediator between Conflict and CMS among postgraduate students of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM). The results indicated that the students at UTM demonstrate high level of frequency in expressing EI behaviors. among the identified conflicts, interpersonal relationships are perceived as the least conflict, while interaction is perceived as the highest conflict by the students. This suggests that students in the study consider interpersonal conflicts to be less significant compared to conflicts related to interaction. The result of this study also aligns with existing literature regarding the relationship between high Emotional Intelligence (EI) and positive conflict management strategies. Emotional Intelligence is indeed often associated with more effective ways of handling conflicts and interpersonal relationships. The students with high EI scores prefer to use a "collaborating style" when managing disagreements with their supervisors, followed by "compromising and collaborating."

In the statistical analysis, it was found that there may not be a statistically significant relationship between Conflict and CMS (Conflict Management Styles) at the conventional significance level of 0.05. The analysis found a p-value greater than 0.05 when examining the relationship between Conflict and CMS. This suggests that, based on the data and statistical methods used, there isn't enough evidence to conclude that there is a statistically significant relationship between these two variables at the 0.05 significance level. However, it's important to note that a lack of statistical significance does not necessarily mean there is no relationship; it simply means that the evidence from the data is not strong enough to support a significant relationship with the chosen level of confidence.

It was also found that the relationship between conflict, emotional intelligence (EI), and conflict management style (CMS) while conflict and emotional intelligence together have a significant impact on CMS, the direct effect of conflict on CMS is not statistically significant when accounting for the influence of emotional intelligence. Instead, most of the relationship between conflict and CMS is mediated by emotional intelligence. Indeed, emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in how individuals manage conflict. It may help individuals navigate conflicts more effectively, and when considering the influence of emotional intelligence, the direct impact of conflict-on-conflict management strategies becomes less significant. This suggests that emotional intelligence may act as a mediator in the relationship between conflict and how individuals choose to manage that conflict. Thus, this research concludes the importance of emotional intelligence in conflict resolution and suggests that developing emotional intelligence skills may be valuable for improving conflict management strategies.

Acknowledgement

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