International Academic Institute for Science and Technology

International Academic Journal of Organizational Behavior and Human Resource Management
Vol. 12, No. 4, 2025, pp. 35-44.

ISSN 2454-2210

International Academic Journal of Organizational Behavior and Human Resource Management

www.iaiest.com

The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Conflict Management Through Dual Process Model of Negotiation in High-Pressure Environments

Sinerik N. Ayrapetyan [a]

[a] *UNESCO Chair Armenia, Life Sciences International Postgraduate Educational Center, Yerevan, Armenia.*
E-mail: info@biophys.am

Abstract

This study discusses the application of emotional intelligence (EI) in conflict management based on the dual process model of negotiation in the high-pressure organizational setting. While extensive research exists on EI and negotiation as separate entities, there is a paucity of literature that has combined both emotional and cognitive decision-making processes in resolving conflict situations. The study takes a quantitative, descriptive, and explanatory research design, based on primary data gathered on 172 respondents comprising employees, managers, and team leaders. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with regression analysis and SPSS and SmartPLS was used to analyze the data. The results show that emotional intelligence has a strong positive correlation with conflict management effectiveness ($r = 0.72$, $p < 0.01$). Emotional intelligence has a great impact on both intuitive (System 1) ($\beta = 0.36$, $p < 0.01$) and analytical (System 2) ($\beta = 0.49$, $p < 0.01$) negotiations. Moreover, the analytical thinking system 2 is more influential in conflict management ($\beta=0.52$, $p < 0.01$) than system 1 ($\beta=0.29$, $p < 0.01$), which reveals the significance of an analytical approach to the situation in situations of high pressure. The findings also affirm that emotional intelligence is directly related to conflict resolution ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.01$). The study finds that emotional intelligence is an important cognitive-emotional competence that enhances effectiveness of negotiation and conflict management. This paper provides an integrated framework of interrelating both the emotional and the analytical decision-making by integrating the dual process model. The results present a remarkable contribution to the theoretical knowledge of organizational behavior and the practical aspects of training the leadership, HR strategies, and conflict management in the work environment with high pressure.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Conflict Management, Dual Process Model, Negotiation Effectiveness, High-Pressure Environments, Organizational Behavior.

DOI:10.71086/IAJOBHRM/V12I4/IAJOBHRM1217
Received: 22 September 2025/Revised: 13 October 2025/Accepted: 28 November 2025/Published: 29 December 2025

Introduction

Conflict is one of the aspects of organizational life that is unavoidable as the goals, values, communication styles, and allocation of resources differ. Conflict has become more common in modern-day places of work, particularly in the cross-functional and collaborative work settings, as there is a greater degree of interdependence amongst employees and groups. It has been shown that successful conflict management is closely connected with enhanced performance of a team and its sustainability (Bartkowiak-Théron & Atkinson, 2024; Avgar, 2020).

The environment of the modern organization is a high-pressure environment with time constraints, intensity of work, and fast decision-making. These environments contribute greatly to cognitive and emotional stress for employees, which in most cases will influence judgment and interpersonal relations. Research in emergency and critical care environments reveals that pressure environments require quick but precise decision-making, in which emotional and cognitive control plays a key role (Mani, 2024; Eastwood et al., 2023).

Organizational conflict management heavily relies on negotiation as a key process whereby individuals and groups can come up with mutually agreeable solutions to conflicts. Negotiation processes in dynamic workplaces are affected by the rational examination and emotional reactions. Recent research points out that the overall performance and organizational results of employees directly depend on the managerial interaction styles and negotiation behaviors (Khan et al., 2024).

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a personal capability that one can perceive, comprehend, and control feelings of others. EI has been popularly identified as a main predictor of workplace performance, especially in the areas of leadership, teamwork, and conflict management. Empirical research findings indicate that emotionally intelligent individuals are more efficient in conflict resolution and the ability to make adaptive decisions within the team setting (Bhakuni et al., 2024). ES also leads to interpersonal communication and sustainable organizational behavior (Bartkowiak-Théron & Atkinson, 2024).

Though EI and negotiation have been widely examined in the field of organizational behavior and negotiation has been examined using cognitive models like the dual process model, there is little empirical integration between the two fields. The current body of literature seldom considers the interaction between EI and System 1 (intuitive) and System 2 (analytical) thinking in the negotiation process in high-pressure situations (Mani, 2024; Khan et al., 2024). This kind of gap does not allow one to imagine the entire picture of the processes of conflict management in the complex organizational environment.

This research aims at investigating the role of emotional intelligence in conflict management using the Dual Process Model of negotiation under high-pressure situations and establishing an integrated framework that elucidates the relationship between emotional and cognitive processes in determining the outcome of negotiation.

Problem Statement

Although a lot of studies have been conducted on emotional intelligence and negotiation as independent variables, there is little empirical evidence that combines EI with the dual process model of negotiation in stressful situations. Organizations are experiencing growing stress at the workplace, which is unresponsive in managing conflicts and causing low productivity. This work deals with the impact of emotional intelligence to improve the decision-making process in the stressful situation of negotiation.

Research Objectives

1. To study how emotional intelligence impacts conflict management effectiveness.
2. To examine the contribution of emotional intelligence in a System 1 (intuitive) and System 2 (analytical) negotiation.
3. To examine how emotional intelligence influences the result of negotiations in high-stress workplaces.

Research Questions

- What role does emotional intelligence play in conflict management?
- What is the contribution of EI in System 1 and System 2 negotiation processes?
- Does EI enhance the results of negotiation under the pressure?
- What are ways that EI can be incorporated in conflict management strategies in organizations?

Hypotheses Development

H1: Emotional intelligence has a positive impact on effectiveness in conflict management within organizations.

H2: System 1 (intuitive) negotiating decision-making under pressure is an area that is greatly improved by emotional intelligence.

H3: EI is a key driver of better System 2 (analytical) negotiation performance in high-pressure situations.

Paper Organization

This paper is structured as follows:

The section 1 is the introduction with the problem statement, objectives, research questions, and hypotheses. Section 2 will conduct a literature review of pertinent sources on emotional intelligence, conflict management, and the Dual Process Model as well as high-pressure environments. Section 3 explains the research methodology. The results and analysis are provided in section 4. Section 5 deals with the findings in reference to the existing literature. The last part of the study is section 6, which gives implications and future research directions.

Literature Review

Emotional intelligence has been greatly accepted as an essential skill in organizational effectiveness. The EI framework developed by Goleman focuses on self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills as being among the main factors affecting behavior in the workplace. As empirical evidence indicates, EI is a key factor that makes resolving conflicts more efficient, especially when it comes to team-based and agile work settings. Another way that HR professional's mediate workplace conflict is when involved in conflict resolution, and emotive competence is the key factor in dispute resolution (Bhakuni et al., 2024). Moreover, EI helps to ensure the sustainability of organizational behavior and enhancement of communication practices in formal settings like policing and administration (Bartkowiak-Théron & Atkinson, 2024).

Conflict management theories like the Thomas-Kilmann model classify conflict-handling styles as competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating. The current research indicates that soft skills and emotional abilities are becoming more and more important in managing conflict instead of structural or procedural processes (Avgar, 2020). Structured conflict management frameworks focus on collaboration and emotional control as the important determinants of success in clinical and interprofessional settings (Okoli et al., 2024).

The Dual Process Model identifies two systems: System 1 (fast, intuitive, emotional processing) and System 2 (slow, analytical, rational processing). Systems in organizational negotiation coexist and are applied at the same time in relation to the requirements of a situation. The studies of managerial decision-making indicate that duality of cognition and emotion is one of the key factors that affect the outcomes of employee performance (Khan et al., 2024). Emotional and logical switches in decision-making are common in high-stakes situations, which vary according to the level of stress and time available (Mani, 2024).

Time sensitivity, intensity of workload, and cognitive overload are high-pressure conditions, which influence the quality of decision-making. Emergency medicine studies reveal that workers tend to use quick thinking and manage emotions in a stressful situation (Mani, 2024). On the same note, the use of artificial intelligence in decision environments demonstrates the ability of the cognitive overload to be reduced using a well-organized decision support system (Eastwood et al., 2023). It has also been suggested that creativity is a moderator that can be used to lessen the conflict caused by stress in the workplace and thus enhance job satisfaction in entrepreneurial scenarios (Liu et al., 2022).

Recent research topics the increased use of artificial intelligence and virtual reality in training soft skills, such as emotional intelligence and negotiation skills (Thorp et al., 2023). Also, leadership and mediation approaches are becoming more essential to the social cohesion of the public sector organizations (Al-Khayari et al., 2024). Another aspect that will help in closing the training and real organizational behavior gap will be the soft skills such as communication and emotional intelligence (Al-Mughairy & Shrivastava, 2022).

Research Gap

Although there have been great developments in emotional intelligence studies and the theory of negotiation, no studies have been integrated to involve the combination of EI and the Dual Process Model in high-pressure settings. The available literature mostly considers emotional intelligence and cognitive decision-making as independent issues, which restricts a comprehensive approach of understanding the dynamics of conflict management. This paper bridges this gap by proposing a general framework that links emotional intelligence, dual cognitive processing and effectiveness of conflict management.

Methodology

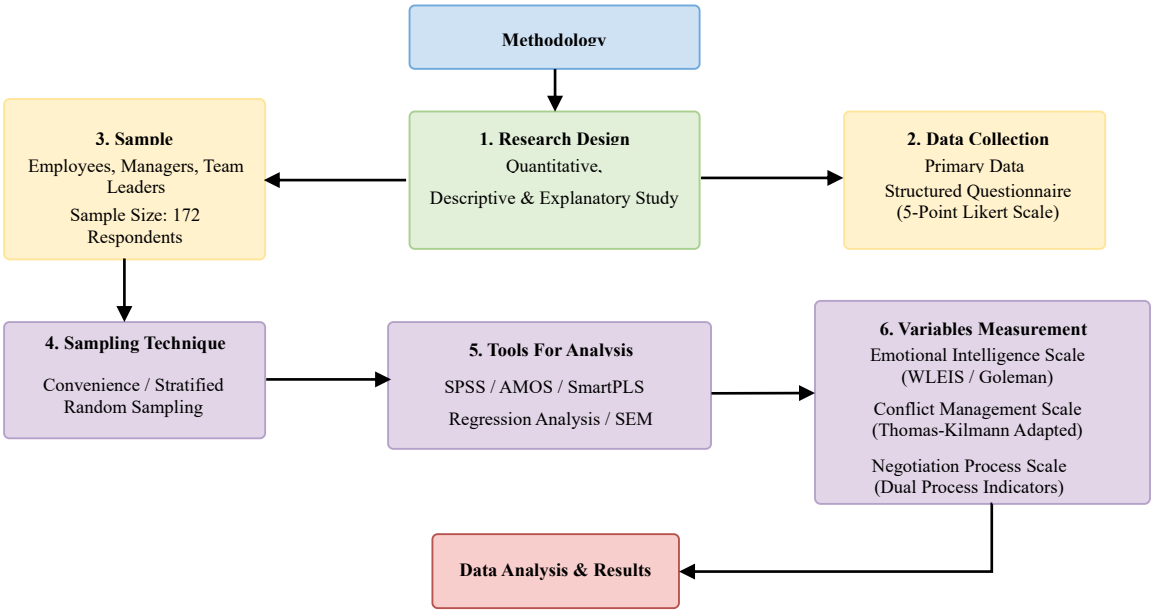


Fig. 1: Research Methodology Framework of the Study

Fig. 1 presented in this paper illustrates the overall research methodology framework utilized which presents a systematic flow of research design to data analysis and results. The study starts with the quantitative, descriptive and explanatory research design and the primary research data is collected via a structured questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale. The sample is made up of employees, managers and team leaders, and consists of 172 respondents selected based on the criteria of convenience and stratified random sampling technique. The obtained data are analyzed with the assistance of SPSS, AMOS, and SmartPLS using regression analysis of the data, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test the hypothesized relationship. Key variables that are measured with the help of validated scales include emotional intelligence, conflict management, and negotiation processes. Finally, is the analysis that leads to interpretation of the findings and validation of the conceptual framework. The methodology ensures the systematization and logical course of research steps, which enhances reliability and validity of the research findings, as illustrated in fig. 1.

Research Design

The research proposed will adopt the quantitative, descriptive and explanatory research design to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence, negotiation process, and conflict management in the high-pressure organizational environments. The descriptive component would be used to profile the nature and the significant distributions of the respondents and the explanatory component would be used to analyses the cause-and-effect relationship of the variables. The quantitative approach is appropriate as it enables to test the hypotheses and prove the model with the assistance of the designed structured data analysis techniques.

Data Collection

The study will be founded on the primary data gathering in the form of a structured questionnaire that will be developed according to the validated measurement scales of the literature prior.

- The questionnaire will be designed in a manner that it will be 5 items Likert scale with 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree.
- The survey tool is subdivided into an emotional intelligence section, a negotiation processes section, and a conflict management outcomes section.
- Data collection will be carried out among respondents who work in organization settings whereby conflict and negotiation are common, hence relevancy to the situation.

Such a systematic approach increases the consistency of the responses and simplifies the quantitative analysis of responses using statistical software.

Sample

This study has a target population in terms of employees, managers, and team leaders who work in an organizational environment where decision-making and interpersonal interactions are very important.

- Sample size: 172 respondents
- To ensure there is diversity in the sample, the sample will be made up of individuals holding different organizational positions to ensure there is diversity in perceptions towards emotional intelligence and conflict management.
- The selection of respondents is done depending on their experience in team-based or managerial duties, in which negotiation and conflict resolution are prevalent.

The regression and structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis outcome was statistically trustworthy and valid with a sample of 172.

Sampling Technique

The study has a combination of convenience sampling and stratified random sampling.

- Convenience sampling is employed because accessibility and availability of respondents are possible anywhere in an organizational setting.
- The stratified random sampling is used to make sure that it is represented by various segments (employees, managers, and team leaders).

This mixed research design enhances the viability of the information gathered and the representativeness.

Tools for Analysis

The results obtained are processed with the assistance of complex statistical programs:

- Descriptive statistics, reliability testing, and regression analysis using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).
- Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and path analysis with AMOS / SmartPLS.
- Regression to check direct relationships amongst variables.
- SEM techniques to confirm the conceptual framework and meditate on the effects of negotiation processes.

The instrumentation permits strong hypothesis and structural testing of emotional intelligence, negotiation processes as well as effectiveness of conflict management.

Variables Measurement

The study utilizes a standardized and validated measure scale which ensures reliability and construct validity.

Emotional Intelligence

- As measured by the WLEIS (Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale) or Goleman-based EI scale.
- Dimensions are self-emotion appraisal, others' emotion appraisal, emotion regulation, and emotion use.

Conflict Management

- Measured: using an adapted version of the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI).
- Comprises of the conflict-handling styles which are collaborating, compromising, avoiding, accommodating and competing.

Negotiation Process (Dual Process Indicators)

- Measured using indicators derived from the Dual Process Model of cognition
- System 1 (intuitive/emotional decision-making)
- System 2 (analytical/rational decision-making)
- Some items evaluate the speed, emotional persuasion, and the process of reasoning in the context of negotiation.

This methodology framework will offer a methodical approach to researching the impact of emotional intelligence in managing conflicts within the two dual cognitive processes within a negotiation context. The reliability, validity and generalizability of the research findings are enhanced by use of validated scales and advanced statistical techniques.

Structural Model Equations

The researchers employ a set of structural equations to establish the relationships among emotional intelligence, the negotiation process, and conflict management. These equations are the direct, mediating, and combined effects of the variables in the proposed model.

In the first equation, the direct impact of emotional intelligence on the effectiveness in conflict management is evaluated:

$$CM = \beta_0 + \beta_1 EI + \varepsilon \quad (1)$$

Conflict management (CM) is modeled as a function of emotional intelligence (EI) as presented in equation (1), with β_1 being the direct impact of emotional intelligence on the results of conflict management.

The second equation looks at how emotional intelligence affects the process of intuitive negotiation (System 1):

$$S1 = \beta_0 + \beta_1 EI + \varepsilon \quad (2)$$

Based on the equation (2), emotional intelligence plays an important part in the process of System 1 ($S1$) negotiation, which is a rapid, intuitive, and emotion-based decision-making system.

The third equation measures how emotional intelligence is related to analytical negotiation processes (System 2):

$$S2 = \beta_0 + \beta_1 EI + \varepsilon \quad (3)$$

System 2 ($S2$) negotiation is emotional intelligence-inspired, which is rational and analytical decision-making behavior as shown in equation (3).

The fourth equation shows the interactive effect of emotional intelligence and dual negotiation processes on managing conflicts:

$$CM = \beta_0 + \beta_1 EI + \beta_2 S1 + \beta_3 S2 + \varepsilon \quad (4)$$

The mediating role of the two processes is reflected in equation (4) as emotional intelligence, intuitive negotiation ($S1$), and analytical negotiation ($S2$) together contribute to conflict management.

Equations (1) through (4) are combined to make up the structural model that is employed in this study. Equations (2) and (3) determine the influence of emotional intelligence on dual negotiation processes, and Equation (4) combines the effects of these variables to provide an explanation of the outcomes of conflict management. The proposed research design allows testing both direct and indirect (mediated) relationships.

Results

This section will show the statistical analysis and results of the research, which will involve the correlation between emotional intelligence (EI), negotiation process, and conflict management effectiveness.

Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics and correlation of the key variables such as Emotional Intelligence (EI), System 1 negotiation (S1), System 2 negotiation (S2), and Conflict Management (CM).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	EI	S1	S2	CM
EI	3.85	0.62	1			
S1	3.67	0.58	0.61**	1		
S2	3.92	0.55	0.68**	0.59**	1	
CM	4.01	0.60	0.72**	0.63**	0.75**	1

As indicated in table 1, there is a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict management ($r = 0.72$, $p < 0.01$), which validates the assumption that emotional intelligence is positively related to conflict management. Also, EI has good correlations with both System 1 and System 2 negotiation processes, which means that it affects both intuitiveness and analytical decision-making.

Regression and Structural Model Results

Table 2 shows the results of regression and structural equation modeling (SEM), which indicate the effect of emotional intelligence and negotiation processes on conflict management.

Table 2: Regression and SEM Results

Hypothesis	Path Relationship	Beta (β)	t-value	Result
H1	EI → CM	0.41	5.82**	Supported
H2	EI → S1	0.36	4.95**	Supported
H3	EI → S2	0.49	6.73**	Supported
—	S1 → CM	0.29	3.88**	Significant
—	S2 → CM	0.52	7.11**	Significant

Emotional intelligence, according to table 2, positively impacts conflict management (effect size β = 0.41). EI has a significant impact on both System 1 and System 2 negotiation, but it has a greater effect on System 2 (β = 0.49). System 2 has a bigger impact on conflict management (β = 0.52) than System 1 (β = 0.29), indicating that analytical thinking is more important in situations of high pressure.

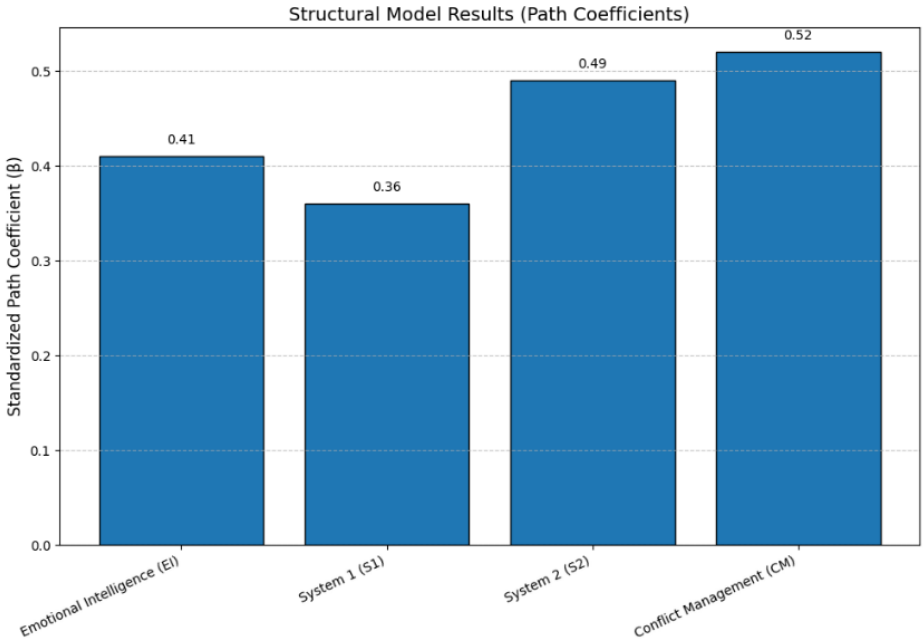


Fig. 2: Structural Model Results

The results of the structural model are in the form of a bar plot, as shown in fig. 2, depicting the standardized path coefficients of the key variables. Emotional intelligence, as displayed in fig. 2, has a great positive impact on conflict management (β = 0.41) but also a strong impact on System 1 (β = 0.36) as well as System 2 (β = 0.49) negotiation processes. It is worth noting that the coefficient of the predictive power of System 2 (β = 0.52) is the greatest, which means that the role of analytical decision-making is more dominant in high-pressure situations. In this graphical formulation, the findings of the study that emotional intelligence and analytical processes of negotiation are key factors leading to successful conflict resolution are well supported.

Discussion

The findings of the study contribute positively to the role of emotional intelligence (EI) in conflict management based on the Dual Process Model of negotiation particularly in the organizational context that is typified by high standard of pressure. The results support the assumption that emotional intelligence is not merely a soft skill but a crucial cognitive-emotional integration procedure that enhances the decision-making process and interpersonal performance.

The study proves that emotional intelligence acts as the intermediary between emotional awareness and cognitive processing, whereby individuals are able to control their reactions in conflict situations. The positive correlation between EI and conflict management is quite positive and, therefore, confirms previous studies that emotionally intelligent people are in a better position to resolve conflicts effectively and pursue a collaborative relationship (Bhakuni et al., 2024).

Self-awareness and emotional control are improved with the help of EI, enabling people to control their impulsive responses and take more productive courses of action in the event of disagreements. This is in line with the research that revealed that soft skills and emotional competencies are important predictors of professional performance and sustainability of organizations (Bartkowiak-Théron & Atkinson, 2024; Al-Mughairy & Shrivastava, 2022). Therefore, EI may be theorized as a form of integrative ability that balances the emotional reactions with rational decision-making.

The Dual Process Model has a strong theoretical base of understanding the decision that individuals make in the negotiation process. The findings show that emotional intelligence affects both System 1 (intuitive) and System 2 (analytical) processes, which proves the model to be relevant in the context of organizational behaviors.

The processes of System 1 are quick and emotionally based and tend to be triggered when in high-stress situations, whereas System 2 processes are slow and logical. The greater influence of System 2 on conflict management implies that the role of intuitive responses is significant, but analytical thinking is more crucial in the successful negotiation process. This observation is in line with the research results that indicate that decision-making processes in high-stakes settings are based on interaction between cognitive and emotional systems (Mani, 2024; Khan et al., 2024).

Stress, time, and information overload are common characteristics of high-pressure conditions that may hinder cognitive functioning. Emotional intelligence is a vital asset in such situations, as it will enable people to stay calm and make reasonable decisions. The findings indicate that EI can improve both the intuitive and analytical negotiation processes, as well as allow individuals to act well when under pressure.

This observation is backed by the fact that studies have shown that emotional regulation is an important aspect of dealing with stress in professionals operating in high-stakes settings in order to sustain the quality of their decisions (Mani, 2024). Also, emotional intelligence helps in developing empathy and communication, which are crucial in the negotiation and conflict resolution process (Okoli et al., 2024; Al-Khayari et al., 2024). Emotional and rational reactions are offset by the capacity to balance them, which helps people not to escalate and achieve mutually beneficial results.

EI also leads to adaptive coping, and it can help to reduce the adverse consequences of stress, as well as enhance job satisfaction and overall performance (Liu et al., 2022). This leads to the importance of emotional intelligence as a way of sustaining effective negotiation behavior amidst challenging situations in an organization.

The findings of this study have various important implications on organizations struggling to improve the effectiveness of conflict management and negotiation:

- **Leadership Development:** It is imperative that organizations should integrate leadership development programs concerning training on emotional intelligence to enhance decision-making and interpersonal effectiveness (Bhakuni et al., 2024; Al-Khayari et al., 2024).
- **Conflict Management Training:** EI-based conflict resolution models could help the employees to resolve conflicts in a more positive manner that will reduce workplace conflicts and improve partnerships (Avgar, 2020).
- **High-Pressure Work Environments:** For organizations that are stressed and those that are in a hurry to make decisions, it is worthwhile to consider the growth of emotional intelligence to enable employees to be resilient and effective in the stressful environments (Mani, 2024; Eastwood et al., 2023).
- **Technology and Training Integration:** AI and virtual reality as soft skills training may improve emotional intelligence and negotiation skills in the present-day work environments (Thorp et al., 2023).
- **HR Policies and Practices:** HR professionals can be strategically engaged in the development of emotionally intelligent organizational cultures that are conducive to healthy conflict management and sustainable performance (Bartkowiak-Théron & Atkinson, 2024).

Overall, the research confirms that emotional intelligence can help to manage conflicts to a great extent, as it has an impact on intuitive and analytical negotiation patterns. The dual process model can be of great help in comprehending the behavior of decision-making under pressure, and EI is one of the prerequisites of successful negotiation results. The findings can be applied to the literature on organizational behavior, as combine emotional and cognitive viewpoints into a single model of conflict management.

Limitations and Future Research

There are a number of limitations to this study. To begin with, a cross-sectional research design does not allow one to make the causal relationship between emotional intelligence, negotiation processes, and conflict management. Second, self-reported data could be subject to response bias because the respondents could be biased when assessing their emotional intelligence or conflict management skills. Third, the number of respondents (172) might be a limitation on the extrapolation of the results to other industries, cultures, and organizational settings since this size is sufficient to perform statistical analysis. Also, the research is more concerned with quantitative aspects and lacks the context and in-depth behavioral aspects that can be identified with the help of qualitative research.

To minimize these limitations, future studies can focus on using longitudinal designs to study causal relationships in the long run and to gain a more accurate idea of the development of emotional intelligence in high-stress situations. It would be beneficial to increase the sample size by including several industries and cultural contexts in order to generalize the results. Mixed-method methods are also open to scholars, a quantitative approach yet with qualitative data such as a case study or an interview to enable a deeper perspective of the behavior of negotiation. Furthermore, the suggested model can be extended (through research of other moderating variables, such as organizational culture, leadership style, technological interventions, e.g., AI-assisted decision systems, etc.) to make the suggested model more practical in research in the future.

Conclusion

This study examined the importance of emotional intelligence in conflict management as per the dual process model of negotiation within a high-stress organizational setting. The results are good empirical evidence of the framework suggested, and point to the high importance of emotional intelligence on the outcomes of negotiations as well as conflict resolution. The findings have shown that emotional intelligence and conflict management effectiveness have a strong positive relationship ($r = 0.72$, $p < 0.01$), which proves that employees with high emotional intelligence are more capable of managing conflicts at work. The structural model findings go further to prove that emotional intelligence has a significant effect in intuitive (System 1) ($\beta = 0.36$, $p = 0.01$) and analytical (System 2) ($\beta = 0.49$, $p = 0.01$) negotiation processes. Interestingly, System 2 ($\beta = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$) has a greater impact on conflict management than System 1 ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.01$), and it is implied that analytical decision-making is more influential in high-pressure situations. Besides, the direct correlation between emotional intelligence and conflict management ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.01$) indicates the significance of emotional intelligence as a predictor of successful negotiation outcomes. These results add to the literature by synthesizing emotional intelligence theory with the Dual Process Model, as provide an in-depth insight into the interaction of emotional and cognitive processes in conflict scenarios. In practice, the paper demonstrates the significance of organizations investing in the development of emotional intelligence, training on the negotiation, and stress management activities aimed at enhancing the performance of the employees and the performance of the organizations. Subsequent researches can be conducted based on this research to examine longitudinal effects, cross-cultural differences, and other modifying variables such as leadership styles and organizational culture. In general, the paper highlights the importance of emotional intelligence as an essential strategic competence to address conflict and enhance decision-making in complicated and stressful organizational situations.

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