



Correlational Effect Of Emotional Intelligence On Conflict Resolution Ability Of Senior Secondary Students

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ABSTRACT

Modern education is multidimensional and it provides a broader cultural dimension in educational institution. Present globalized system of education opens up a vast horizon of human relation scenarios with multiple role changes. This study involves an exploration of conflict resolution as an indispensable social skill that is boosted by inherent emotional intelligence. Standardized Tests of Emotional intelligence and Conflict resolution are conducted over Senior Secondary students irrespective of Genders to collect data from a sample of 100 students in the from rural and urban areas in the district of North 24 Parganas, West Bengal, India. Correlation and inferential statistics were used to analyze data. The result shows a significant correlation between Emotional intelligence and Conflict resolution ability of Senior Secondary students along with a positive effect of Emotional Intelligence on Conflict resolution ability. This finding testifies importance of Emotional Intelligence for Conflict Resolution.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Conflict resolution, Social skills, Attunement, Empathy, Limbic system

Introduction:

21st century educational scenario is marked by the use of multidisciplinary actions and interaction of students, teachers and between students and teachers and other social agencies and personalities. Today's students are not just students in an institution; they are friends, leaders, social workers, organizers, fund-raisers, collaborators, agitators and retaliators too. Different roles of students in an institution and in society contribute holistically to develop a versatile personality in future. Balanced development of personality leads to future success. Holistic development of students in adolescence needs social skills to maintain multiple relationships at institutional, social and societal level. Efficiency in showing social skills needs adequate use of emotional intelligence for resolving conflicts arising at different interactions in multiple situations. A marked difference is obvious between past educational scenario and current educational scenario. Past educational scenario was characterized by development of academic potential in learners and focus was given in self-development with non-scholastic abilities with games, sports and work education with handworks and occupational training. Purpose was to make students educated, self-dependent and self-made individuals. Present scenario develops a global outlook to make a collective personality that is much above the ideal of self-development in a narrow and limited sense of the term but self-development in a global, interactive and a cosmopolitan sense. It works as a constant challenge for present adolescent students in the process of acculturation. According to Dr. Ambedkar, the functional process of Change is 'to educate, to agitate and to organize.' This functional process is relevant and active in recent educational scenario where students are constantly metamorphosing relations for individual and collective well-being. In this process, insightful thinking and application of passive thinking results in withdrawal from elements of conflicts that does everything but resolving a conflict. Application of social skill is the need of the hour to resolve conflicts with adequate emotional intelligence that has a significant potential to perpetuate relationship at different levels of human affairs for collective benefits of students in this new-generation for their institutional, social and future professional development.

Theoretical Background:

Emotion:

As stated by Mangal (2014), the word 'emotion' is derived from the Latin word, 'emovere' that means 'to stir up' or 'to excite'. Thus, 'emotion' is an 'agitated state of our mind and body'. Thus, it is a psychological trait of all individuals to experience a surge of it controllably or uncontrollably. Excess of emotional surge of 'Joy' and 'Sorrow', two primary Emotions often affects general intelligence as this upsurge blocks use of logical thinking. A profound analysis of 'Emotion' can be derived from the study of articles by Charles G Morris (1979): "Emotion is an affective experience that involves diffuse physiological changes and can be expressed overtly in characteristic behavioural pattern." This definition of emotion leads us to extraction of several features of Emotion and these are highlighted by Mangal (2014) also:

- Emotions are present in all living organism.
- Emotions are essential in all ages and genders.
- Level of emotions vary from person to person.
- Emotions are roused abruptly but go down slowly.
- One sort of emotion can arouse other related emotions.
- Emotion can be affective as one's excitation can make others emotional.
- A negative correlation is seen between emotional surge and intelligence.

Emotions are roused as a result of an interaction of neurochemicals through neurotransmitters. As stated in the webpage of Queensland Brain Institute, "Neurotransmitters are body's chemical messengers; it transmits messages between neurons or from neurons to muscles. There are neurochemicals like dopamine "is involved in many functions, including motor control, reward and reinforcement, and motivation"; serotonin controls mood, anxiety and depression, GABA (Gamma Amino-Butyric Acid) is an inhibitory transmitter like Glycine found in spinal cord. Acetylcholine plays a major role in maintaining cognitive function in brain; Glutamate is an excitatory transmitter for a variety of psychological functions such as fear, mood, pleasure, and joy.' The limbic system is a part of brain that is responsible for behavioural traits and emotional responses. The following image shows respective parts in the limbic system:

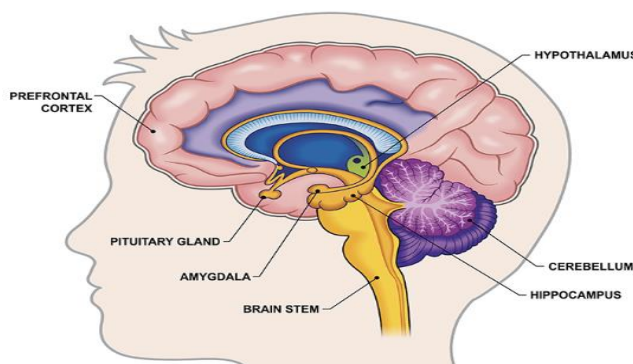


Figure 1 Limbic System, Source Queensland Brain Institute, Australia

The part of brain that is responsible for an upsurge of emotion is called 'Amygdala' that looks like an almond and a part of limbic system located in medial temporal lobe and anterior to processing center of memory, Hippocampus. Amygdala is the main center of processing emotion (AbuHasan et al., 2023) and it plays a key-role in psychopathological behavior.

Emotional Intelligence:

Emotional Intelligence shows an individual's control over emotional surge and use of emotion for a healthy relationship and productive transaction of different affairs. The term Emotional intelligence is measured with an emotional quotient. This was introduced by two professors of American Universities Dr. John Mayer and Dr. Peter Salovey in 1990 and this process was popularized by another American Psychologist Daniel Goleman in 1995. According to Mayer and Salovey (1990), "Emotional Intelligence may be defined as the capacity to reason with emotion in four areas: to perceive emotions, to integrate it in thought, to understand it and to manage it." Emotional Intelligence is a two-way process; first to control one's emotions and next, to be involved in other's emotion for better 'attunement' in relationship, perceive similar feelings for others to show 'empathy'. The word 'empathy' originates from Greek 'empathia' that means 'feeling into' as it was used first by 'theoreticians of aesthetics for the ability to perceive subjective experience of others.' The word 'empathy' was used first by E.B. Titchener in 1920, an American Psychologist who wanted to mean 'a physical imitation of distress of others evoking same feelings in in oneself. (Goleman, 2013). He also differentiated 'empathy' from 'sympathy' that denotes 'showing general plight without actually feeling it.' Empathy with others creates an 'attunement' or 'understanding in relationship' to strengthen bondage with others (Goleman, 2013). Recognizing and understanding of others feels, sentiments and to manage one's own

emotions and feeling by maintaining a balance with others is an intelligent way to manage emotions for a productive outcome of relationship and managing conflicts.

Conflict:

The word 'conflict' literally denotes 'contradiction' or 'a state of disagreement' (Dictionary.com). This state of conflict is the source of contentions on different issues. This Conflict takes the shape of aggressive movement or results in a long term enmity if not resolved earlier.

Causes of conflicts:

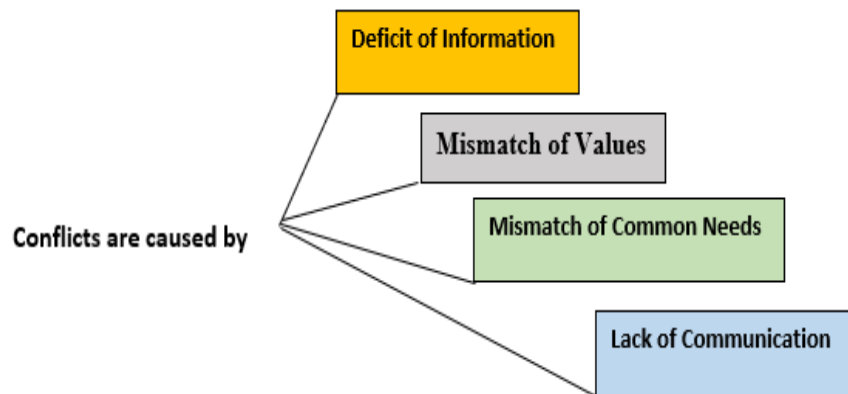


Figure: 2 A Diagram on Causes of Conflicts

Conflict may be caused by deficit of information. Lack of information creates a gap that lead to misunderstanding or lack of understanding and it creates conflict between the individuals involved.

Conflicts may be caused by a mismatch of values. Conflicting individuals may believe in different values because of orientation in different cultures. This disparity results in behavioural conflicts.

Conflicts may also be caused by lack of communication that results in relationship conflict. This conflict occurs in decision making process when both respondents do not meet frequently to discover the nature of their projects.

Conflict of interest is caused by a mismatch of common needs between individuals. Two conflicting individuals may disagree on the need for a specific object. It is difficult to come to a workable establishment of the need and settle a dispute.

Effects of conflicts:

According to Frier (2024), effects of persistent conflict may lead to a decrease in productivity, issues in communication, tension and stress, violent outburst, and permanent impairment of relationship. Conflicting individual face autonomic distancing from each other for lack of resolution of persistent conflicts.

Benefits of conflicts:

Despite elaborating on different negative aspects of conflicts and different insignificant to daring consequences of Conflicts, it is remarkable that Conflicts help us diagnose an issue and the cause of the issue. It is a belief that nothing exists without blemishes. But, it is important to detect the blemishes. As an aftermath of identification of blemishes from conflicts, identification of problems, choosing intermediary and taking measures for resolution become easier.

Conflict resolution:

Conflict resolution is the final positive outcome of a persistent conflict. When the conflicting parties seek for a cordial solution to a problem that affects both ends of dispute and both are ready to accept an impartial solution to a problem thorough justification, a resolution of a conflict occurs. It is natural that a conflict will occur in course of action but preference should be given to early resolution of conflicts and restore normalcy in a course of action. Persistent 'conflict' keeps both ends at a distance while 'conflict resolution' keeps both ends at a negotiable range.

Benefits of conflict-resolution:

Conflict-resolution is important for well-being of individuals at both ends of dispute. This ensures a healthy relationship between individuals in an institution, organization or any other professional workplace. As discussed in an informative webpage of 'Intuit' (2024), "Conflict resolution is essential in order to build strong working relationships that are based on mutual respect and trust." Resolution of Conflict leads to creation of 'a positive work environment' that is grounded on 'communication and trust.'

Principles of conflict resolution:

- i. Listening to the main cause of a dispute and views, reactions of both ends are needed. Subjects of dispute may be teachers, students, management or policy makers while the object of dispute may be the actions, policies, rule or behavior of the subjects. The subjects of dispute or an intermediary should be clear about the issue for a resolution ahead.
- ii. Mere understanding of a conflict does not suffice. It is important to communicate for building a strong bond that creates a feeling of trust in both subjects of dispute. This step 'encourages inclusion' for groups in dispute and prevents further escalation.
- iii. Refraining from blaming each other and maintaining a calm state of mind is a hygienic way of resolving conflicts. Blaming each other makes process lengthy and spoils all efforts for making a resolution.
- iv. Collaboration is an important principle of conflict resolution. Mere communication cannot help in completing the process of resolution unless the individuals making disputes work together hand in hand, use social skills to settle an issue and take measures against conflicts and ensure non-occurrence of the issue.

Strategies of conflict-resolution:

- i. Negotiation: Negotiation is most harmless and peaceful way of resolving conflicts. This needs reasonable justification of individual stand and a cordial address to the opposing group to accept proposal.
- ii. The second step is to take assistance of intermediary, such as, an experienced co-worker or colleague who stands between the conflicting groups and individuals to justify a stand for resolving an issue.
- iii. Third strategy is to take resort to an arbitrator or a third-party resolution-maker impersonating as a 'judge' to decide on the point of discord after listening to both parties.
- iv. If above steps do not work, the remaining one is to opt for a litigation where dispute is to be settle in real court in from of a Judge by hearing both parties and a penal action may also be expected for a genuine offence caused by any individual or group.

Literature review on Conflict Resolution in respect of Emotional Intelligence on educational perspectives:

Different views of researchers, entrepreneurs and academicians are available on need for and effects of emotional intelligence on the process of conflict-resolution. Emotional intelligence is taken as an important initiator for applying a social skill for settling a dispute. Efforts should be made to make the process of resolution amicable and harmless and not to extend it to the extreme. According to Gaur (2023), conflicts may arise from different issues in any field of human affairs but empathy and effective communication are needed to resolve disputes. Thus, a need for conflict resolution with the help of emotional intelligence mechanism is suggested by him. The findings of Aseery et al. (2023) is worth mentioning in this context. They find emotional intelligence of female nursing personnel has a significant effect on conflict management and timely resolution of issues. Pandey et al. (2015) observed high Emotional Intelligence test-scorers adopt varied conflict-resolution styles while low scorers are not only poor in devising resolution strategies but also tend to avoid conflicts in all possible ways. Jordan & Troth (2002) found "high emotional intelligence preferred to seek collaborative solutions when confronted with conflict." Awasthi & Yadav (2016) found a positive correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Conflict resolution ability and this result implies that Emotional Intelligence has a significant effect of Conflict resolution. Despite finding a relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Conflict resolution ability, the study of this relationship among Senior Secondary students is rare and a regional study on this topic is not available. Therefore, a region based and level-specific research gap exists on this topic that this paper seeks to fill in.

Objectives of the study:

- i. To find correlation between emotional intelligence and conflict-resolution ability of Senior Secondary students.
- ii. To find the effect of emotional intelligence on conflict-resolution ability of Senior Secondary students.

Hypotheses:

- i. Significant correlation exists between emotional intelligence and conflict-resolution ability of Senior Secondary students.
- ii. There is significant effect of emotional intelligence on conflict-resolution ability of Senior Secondary students.

Population and sample:

Population for this study was Senior Secondary students of school affiliated to West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education (WBCHSE) in the vicinity of Kolkata, West Bengal. Random Sampling method was adopted to choose 100 Senior-Secondary students irrespective of Gender from two schools; one urban and another rural in the district of North 24 Parganas, West Bengal, India.

Methodology:

Descriptive statistics was adopted to recognize the nature of data collected by applying Emotional Intelligence test SEIS by Dr. Sarabjit Kaur and Conflict-resolution ability test developed at East Carolina University, calculating Means, Standard Deviation. Standardization of the tools was done by using test-retest method. Inferential statistics with t-tests and correlation statistic will be adopted to test hypotheses. Overall, quantitative research design was used for this study.

Variables:

Dependent variable for this study was Conflict-resolution (CR) ability and Independent variable was Emotional Intelligence (EI).

Research Design:

Correlation statistic determines how the variables are related; high and low levels of Emotional Intelligence scores have been categorized and conflict-resolution ability test has been conducted for both the groups separately. T-test has been used to analyze significant difference in Mean scores to test hypothesis.

Tools for the study: For this study, two research tools were administered:

1. Sevenfold Emotional Intelligence Scale (SEIS) by Dr. Sarabjit Kaur (2016)
2. Conflict management and Resolution questionnaire (2020) developed at the East Carolina University (U.S.A.)

Standardization of SEIS by Dr. Sarabjit Kaur: This test consists of 63 statements with a response scheme in 5 point-Likert-scale. It was applied on 800 samples and it has reliability coefficient of 0.91 at 0.01 level of significance. It was a pre-standardized tool from National Psychological Corporation (Agra, U.P., India).

Standardization of Conflict Management and Resolution Questionnaire: This test consists of a set of 15 questions and it was standardized by testing reliability through test-retest method for a pilot sample of 20 students at the interval of one week. Reliability coefficient of the questionnaire is 0.78.

Data analysis and Interpretation:

Two sets data have been collected by conducting test of EI (Emotional Intelligence) and CR (Conflict Resolution) and those are posted in MS-Excel for analysis. Output of analysis is presented in form of tables and graph below and interpreted. The following table shows the Means of the scores in Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Resolution Ability i.e. 226.88 and 43.84 along with Medians and Modes to show the central tendency of both scores. Descriptive Statistic is the primary analysis of the data as follows:

Table 1 Descriptive Statistic

<i>EI</i>		<i>CR</i>	
Mean	226.88	Mean	43.84
Median	229.5	Median	43
Mode	234	Mode	43
Standard Deviation	21.34	Standard Deviation	8.53
Kurtosis	0.42	Kurtosis	-0.74
Skewness	-0.31	Skewness	-0.08
Count	100	Count	100
Confidence Level (95.0%)	4.23	Confidence Level (95.0%)	1.69

Descriptive Statistic is the primary analysis of the data and it is followed by Correlation analysis of both sets of scores of EI and CR. Correlation coefficient Emotional Intelligence and Conflict resolution is 0.61 and it ranges to 1 and both variables are seen positively correlated.

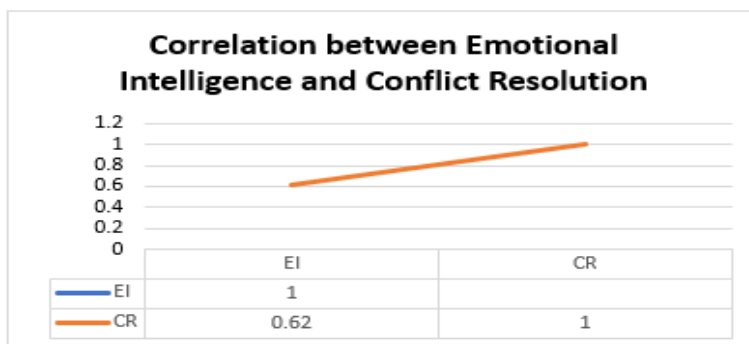


Figure: 3 Linear Correlation Graph

Analysis is done to find difference between the Mean scores of High Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Resolution Ability and Low Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Resolution Ability. For this purpose, two levels of Emotional Intelligence are made i.e. High and Low. The average score is not considered for the study. The scores greater than Average are considered ‘High’ and less than Average are considered ‘Low’. The following table shows a significant difference between the Means, 49.32 and 38.36 respectively since t-value 8.35 is greater than t-critical value at 0.05 level of significance. This analysis testifies to making an inference that Senior Secondary students having High Emotional Intelligence are better in Conflict Resolution but those with Low Emotional Intelligence have low Conflict Resolution ability. A significant difference in Conflict Resolution between two levels of EI is observed in this analysis.

Table 2 Output of t-test

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable Levels	N	Mean	t-value	Level of Sig. (α)	df	p	t-critical value
CR	HEI	50	49.32	*8.35	0.05	98	0.00	1.66
CR	LEI	50	38.36					

***Significant at 0.05 level**

The following column-graph shows difference between Means of Conflict Resolution Ability in respect of High and Low Emotional Intelligence that is a strong indicator that Conflict Resolution ability varies with the levels of Emotional Intelligence.

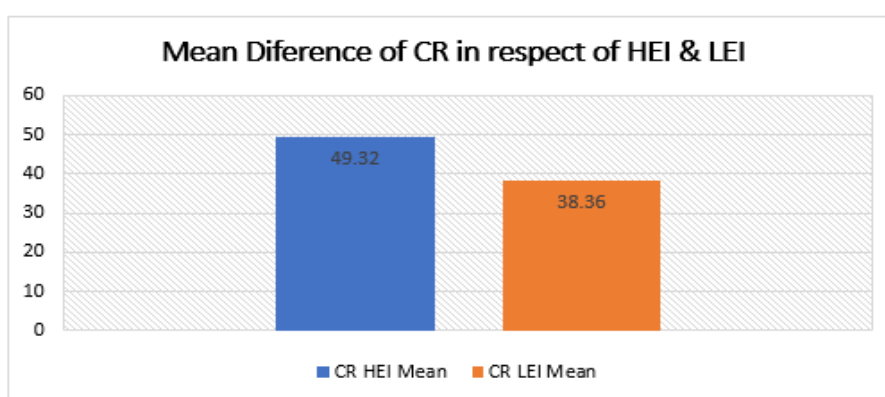


Figure: 4 Column Graph for Mean Difference

Abbreviations: CR – Conflict Resolution, HEI – High Emotional Intelligence, LEI- Low Emotional Intelligence

Discussion:

Emotional Intelligence, as a psychological determiner poses, as an influencer to Conflict Resolution ability for the adolescent students at Senior Secondary Level. There are different psychological factors to be responsible for individual and interactional effects on Conflict resolution. This study shows a quantitative analysis of

correlation between EI and CR. A positive correlation is observed that implies the higher the level of EI the better is CR. Second, difference in the means of CR in respect of HEI and LEI proves the second hypothesis that a significant difference exists in CR in respect of HEI and LEI.

Conclusion:

The study involves a major skill of 21st century students with a vision of their multifaceted roles and plurality in decision-making process. It is hard to find nowadays an individual deciding on one's own for future prospects in life. In this age of multimodalities in relationship and collaborative task designing and making resolution, importance of Conflict management and resolution is prioritized since conflicts are certain to arise in social, institutional and professional sectors. An insight into success in conflict-resolution, application of Emotional Intelligence is undoubtedly an important factor. This study proves two research hypotheses based on correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Conflict resolution and on difference in Conflict Resolution ability in respect of High Emotional Intelligence and Low Emotional Intelligence. Acceptance of both of the research-hypothesis establishes the truth behind the success in Conflict Resolution and establishes the importance of Emotional Intelligence in Conflict Resolution.

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