Emotional Intelligence as a Predictor of Intrapersonal Conflict: A Study on the Telecommunication Sector of Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to reveal telecom workers' emotional intelligence and intrapersonal conflict propensity in Bangladesh. It also attempts to correlate them to understand their overall conflict nature. The study employs a range of quantitative methods to reach the research objectives following the stratified random sampling procedure and has selected forty employees as samples to carry out the survey within the four telecommunication companies in Bangladesh. 'Mind Tools', one of the most well-known digital platforms in the world, is used to prepare a structured questionnaire. Additionally, the intrapersonal questionnaire was adopted to investigate Managing Conflict in the Organization, following a book by Rahim (2002). The questionnaire was developed using Goleman's (1995) framework about five elements of Emotional Intelligence. Each questionnaire includes a 5 point-Likert scale with a total of 22 items. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were applied to collect and analyze the data. The study utilized version SPSS 16 and MS Excel software to analyze and present data and showed that people with high Emotional Intelligence (EI) have greater control over intrapersonal conflict, mental health, and leadership skills. However, it revealed no causal relationships among the factors of interpersonal conflict. Such findings are likely attributable to general Intelligence and specific personality traits rather than Emotional Intelligence. The effect of EI on managing conflict, leadership, and managerial performance is insignificant when ability and personality are controlled. The general intelligence correlates very closely with leadership. The study recommends that EI is an essential and mandatory element to survive in any sector, and everyone should acquire it. It helps people control and manage their intrapersonal conflicts to balance their personal and professional lives and make a healthier work environment.

1. Introduction

Most of the time, our emotions and feelings about particular situations influence our thinking. Our internal feelings, desires, and aversions influence our perception, not external

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stimuli. As a result, emotions and sentiments play a critical role in human decision-making. Emotions are also regarded as adaptive in that they are purposeful and meaningful for an individual and represent an evaluative engagement with the environment that aids in preparing certain behaviours. (Scheve & Slaby, 2018). For example, the Latin emovere, which means to 'move out' or 'agitate' is used to characterize an experience's emotional upheavals that are triggered by other events or things. Ekman (1992) argues that emotions prompt us to react to urgent facts without devoting too much time to deciding whether or not to respond.

Many studies show that those who can control their own emotions can read others' emotions as well. They also address them successfully and have an advantage in many aspects of life; they are happier, more productive and better able to adopt mental attitudes that promote productivity, focus, and thinking (*From Emotional Literacy to Emotional Intelligence*, 2022). Therefore, it can be said that those who can identify, recognize and understand emotion are more successful in day-to-day life. In this regard, Mayer and Salovey (1990) emphasize the importance of emotion in their research study, and later Daniel Goleman popularized the theme, Emotional Intelligence. It is a collection of skills that allows a person to have conscious control over one's own and other's emotions. It is an innate potential of an individual to know or understand the feelings of oneself and others. It is often defined as comprehending, managing, regulating, recognizing or handling emotion. With a high emotional IQ, people can distinguish between different sentiments, appropriately identify them, and adjust the intensity of their feelings according to the circumstances in which they find themselves (Emotional Intelligence, 2022).

Salovey and Mayer claim (1990) that 'Emotional Intelligence' is the ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to distinguish between them, and to utilize this information to drive one's thinking and actions. This was the initial definition of EI, which was amended in 1997 to incorporate a broader definition as the ability to sense and express emotion, absorb emotion in thought, understand and reason with emotion, and manage emotion in oneself and others (Dhani & Sharma, 2016). Goleman (1995) describes EI as the capacity for self-motivation, which includes self-control, ardor, and tenacity. According to him, Emotional intelligence refers to our ability to recognize our own and others' feelings, to motivate

ourselves, and to manage emotions in ourselves and our relationships effectively (Goleman, 1998).

Emotional Intelligence was popularized by Goleman (1995-2003) and articulated as a theory of work performance by him. According to Goleman, Emotional Intelligence is divided into five categories, such as follows:

1. *Knowing one's emotion*: People who improve their knowledge of their moods and feelings are better life navigators. They are capable of making sound decisions and setting reasonable goals.

2. *Managing one's emotions***:** People who cope with negative or uncomfortable emotions can soothe themselves when necessary. They can overcome anxiety, depression, and irritation. They demonstrate stress toughness.

3. *Motivating others***:** Self-efficacy-capable people have emotional self-control and use it to achieve specific predetermined goals. The ability to control impulsiveness is at the root of all accomplishments.

4. *Recognizing others' emotions:* People who can recognize other people's emotions based on situational and expressive signals have information that can be exploited to achieve desired outcomes. Empathetic qualities

include the ability to identify and share another's feelings.

5. *Handling relationships:* People with this ability can work with and through others to accomplish their goals. Over time, the ability to manage relationships consistently will lead to leadership chances for the person who possesses it.

EI mainly acts as a rallying point, encouraging people to support potentially beneficial (but seldom validated) therapies that target vastly different emotional, cognitive, and behavioural skills (Zeidner et al. 2004). An evaluation and assessment tool based on the Bar-On model (1997) was initially intended to measure and evaluate various elements of this construct. In this paradigm, it is a set of emotional and social competencies, skills, and facilitators that impact how we view ourselves, understand and relate to other people, and deal with the challenges of daily life (Bar-On, 2006). Muchinsky (2000) claims that emotions have many differences, which cover from pleasurable experiments of our existence, which are positive experiences, to the negative ones that are most noxious. An individual's job-related behaviour is reflected by affective or emotional experiments in the workplace that generate cognition (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Brief and Weiss (2002) propose that firms can impact

one's feelings, thoughts and actions if one has low Emotional Intelligence. Christopher Schlaegal (2016) says that cultural values and emotional Intelligence are central determinants of intrapersonal conflict-handling styles.

Little is known about how cultural values impact individuals' reasons behind their intrapersonal conflict. The results of structural equation modelling and mediation analysis show that uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation influence preferences for the conflict-handling styles of compromising, obliging, and integrating through Emotional Intelligence. They point out that more emotionally intelligent people seem less attached to intrapersonal conflict.

Reviewing the previous relevant literature, we found a significant gap in exploring EI as a prediction of intrapersonal conflict, particularly in the telecommunication sector of Bangladesh. Thus, this study has touched upon the issues which have remained unexplored. This research aims to answer the question: Does EI perform as a predictor of IC? To explore the central research question, we have developed the following specific research objectives:

i. To find out how workers perform their routine tasks properly.
ii. To unearth how workers with low EI perform their daily focus and

iii. To reveal the impact of EI on workers' job performance and level of satisfaction.

2. Methodology of the Study:
2.1 Methods, Techniques and Sampling Procedure:
The study utilizes the quantitative method to reveal the central research question and study-specific objective. We have used descriptive and inferential statistics such as number, percentage and correlation tests to analyze and present the collected data. This study shows the associations between the employee's intrapersonal conflict and Emotional Intelligence. In this case, employees' intrapersonal conflict has been considered as dependent variable and emotional intelligence as independent variable. There are four telecommunication companies in Bangladesh such as Banglalink, Grameen Phone, Robi, and Teletalk. The study selected 40 employees from those four companies using stratified random sampling.

We collected data mainly from primary sources and interviewed the sample respondents following face-to-face conversations to assemble the preliminary data. We provided them with the questionnaire and requested them to participate in the survey. In addition, we collected secondary data from various secondary sources such as published articles, journals, relevant books, etc.

2.2 Questionnaire Design:

Two questionnaires were prepared and used in data gathering for this investigation. One dealt with intrapersonal conflict, while the other dealt with Emotional Intelligence. The intrapersonal questionnaire was developed with help from the book by Rahim (2002) named Managing Conflict in Organization (third edition). The emotional intelligence questionnaire was developed by Mind Tools, one of the world's most popular digital, on-demand career and management learning solutions. They made this questionnaire based on a psychologist.

The study employed Goleman's (1995) framework of the five elements of emotional intelligence. Each questionnaire included a 5-point Likert scale having 22 questions. It consisted of 5 dimensions, for instance: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly Agree.

Following an explanation of the study's goal, respondents were asked to read the instructions carefully and replied to the item appropriately. They were instructed to give the best a tick mark (√) as per their opinions. It took around 15 minutes to complete the response from each respondent. The collected data were presented and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results of the correlation test were presented by using the SPSS 16 version. In addition, frequency and percentages were shown to analyze the response using MS Excel

3. Data Analysis and Findings
Intrapersonal Conflict and Emotional Intelligence
**Figure 1: Liking towards tasks performed.**
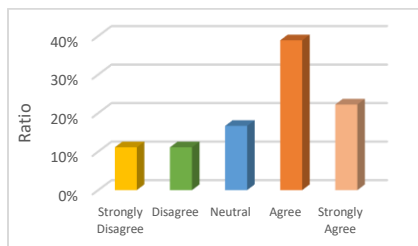
(Source: Field Data, 2023)

Among the 7 questions, the first one was a rating: I like the tasks I performed relative to the other tasks that are performed in my organization. Figure 1 indicates that respondents mostly like the tasks they perform relative to the other tasks in the organization.

Figure 2: Balance between employees' needs and the organization's needs.

At the outset, we drew total employees from the four different telecom companies. In the second stage, 10 employees were chosen from each telecommunication company. In this process, we selected 40 respondents for conducting the research.
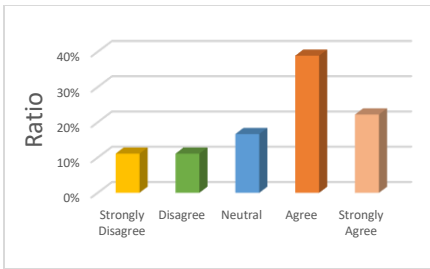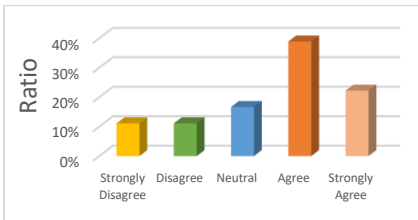
(Source: Field Data, 2023)

The second question was, Is there a good match between my needs and the needs of the organization. Figure 2 shows that maximum employees agreed to the point that there is a good balance between their needs and organizational needs.
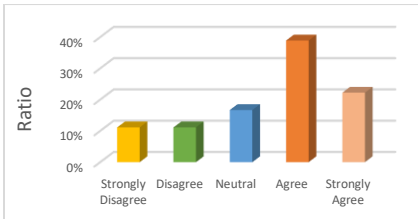
Figure 3: Liking the current job

The third question was, If I accept a job in another company, I would like to do the tasks that I'm doing now. Figure 3 shows that, very few employees were interested in doing the same tasks in another company. That means they are enjoying their current responsibilities.
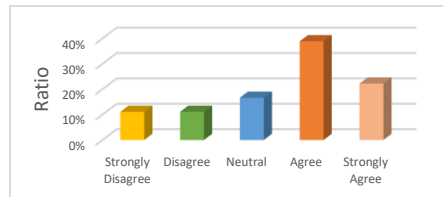

(Source: Field Data, 2023)

Figure 4: Challenging job

(Source: Field Data, 2023)

The fourth question was, My job is challenging. Figure 4 shows that a challenging job was one of the motivational factors for employees. More than 68% of employees thought their job was challenging and there was a huge scope for self-growth.

Figure 5: Match between the tasks performed

(Source: Field Data, 2023)

The fifth question was, There is a good match between the tasks that I performed and my initial task preference when I took this job. Figure 5 indicates the respondents mostly thought that there was a pretty good match between the tasks they were performing and their initial task preference when they took the job.

Figure 6: Interest in work
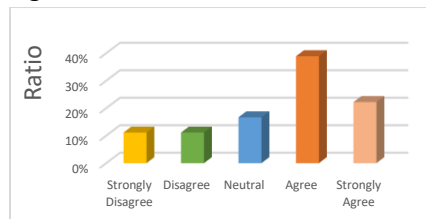
(Source: Field Data, 2023)

The sixth question was, I engage in work that is of little interest to me. Figure 6 shows that, 57% of the respondents had interest in their work, and 11% of them didn't have

that much interest in their work. Thus the maximum number of samples responded negatively, demonstrating that most employees were interested in their work.

Figure 7: Use of utility
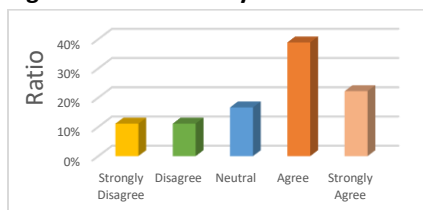
(Source: Field Data, 2023)

The last question was, My skills are fully utilized in my job. Figure 7 illustrates that the respondents mostly thought that their skills were being appropriately used at their workplace, which was very effective in avoiding intrapersonal conflict.

3.1 The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Intrapersonal Conflict

Table 1: Correlation between Interpersonal Conflict and Emotional Intelligence

A	B	A	B
Emotional Intelligence	Intrapersonal Conflict	Emotional Intelligence	Intrapersonal Conflict
34.4	4.14	36.8	3.28
36.6	3.85	37.2	3.28
36	4	35.2	3.85
35.6	4	34	2.85
35.4	3.86	37.4	3.28
36.4	3.57	35	3
35.4	3.14	36.6	4.14
36.6	3.42	35.2	4.42
36.4	4.14	35.4	3.86
36.7	3.45	37.4	3.28
35.5	3.15	35.4	3.14
37.5	3.30	35.4	3.86
36.7	3.45	35.8	4.11
35.4	3.14	34	2.85
34.4	4.14	Correlation	-0.204
34	2.85		

Table 2: The Relation Analysis Results of the Correlations Test

		IntCon	EmoInt
IntCon	Pearson Correlation	1	-.204
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.785
	N	40	40
EmoInt	Pearson Correlation	-.204	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.785	
	N	40	40

(Source: Field Data, 2023)

This table shows a negative correlation between intrapersonal conflict and Emotional Intelligence. That means highly emotional intelligent people have less tendency to have intrapersonal conflict. The Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Intrapersonal Conflict was found -0.204, which meant both variables are negatively correlated. The strength of this negative correlation is 10%, but the relationship is insignificant as p (0.785)> 0.05; p value is more than 0.05 signifying that there is more than 1 in 10 probability that an outcome occurred by chance, and hence the result is statistically insignificant.

4. Discussion

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a very commonly used term in business. It is also known as Emotional Leadership (EL), Emotional Quotient (EQ) and Emotional Intelligence Quotient (EIQ). The study reveals that Emotional Intelligence is the capability of an individual to be aware of, control and express one's emotions and to handle

interpersonal relationships empathetically.

The study's findings are supported by Goleman (1995) that Emotional Intelligence is the ability to sense, understand, value and effectively apply the power of emotions as a source of human energy, information, trust, creativity and influence. The study argues that Emotional Intelligence must somehow combine two of the three states of mental cognition and affect Intelligence and Emotion. It also points out that EI can perceive, control and evaluate emotions of one's own and of others. Bradberry et al. (2009) find similar outcomes, stating that Emotional Intelligence is the ability to detect and understand emotions in oneself and others and control one's behaviour and relationships using this understanding. Emotional Intelligence can be learned and strengthened, but on the other hand, this ability cannot be captured, created, or absorbed; it is an innate human trait.

The study argues that many instruments and tests exist to determine emotional Intelligence, but they differ according to the content, approaches, and people for every test. Workers perform their routine tasks correctly and feel motivated towards their work. Most employees like their work more than the organization's other activities. If a worker has high Emotional Intelligence, s/he is more likely to express his/her feelings in a healthier way, understand the emotions and conditions of others who work with him or help the organization create a better work-friendly environment and make good communication with everyone and all these automatically enhance the performance. One study (Ciarrochi et al, 2006) points out that the concept of Emotional Intelligence may be understood by 'Emotion' and that Emotion facilitates intelligence. However, our study pinpoints that if a worker has low Emotional Intelligence, s/he cannot express his/her feelings or emotions adequately, and s/he may remain confused and unable to understand conditions and feelings, which may create a huge communication gap between him/her and fellow workers and the overall working environment. Nelson & Low (2011) show that Emotional Intelligence is the most important influencing variable in personal achievement, career success, leadership and life success. Emotional Intelligence is not being so brilliant or intellectual, it is having the ability to understand one's own feelings and control emotions according to the situation and have the empathy to evaluate others' emotions. As a result, it helps one to make proper decisions and take necessary steps in the right moment

and have a good impact on others. Emotional Intelligence helps us to think more practically and makes us do the proper work at the appropriate time. One of the major findings of the study is that some people are confused between general Intelligence and Emotional Intelligence. It is unlikely every time that if any person has good general Intelligence, s/he will have good Emotional Intelligence. General Intelligence is all about basic knowledge and ideas of life, work, situations, and academically related issues that are not entirely related to one's emotions.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study aims to find out how Emotional Intelligence works as a significant factor in interpersonal conflict. This research employs a range of descriptive methods to collect and analyze the data. The outcome of the study points out that the employees surveyed are primarily emotionally intelligent, as the value of the correlation test between the variables is -0.204. They are aware of the feelings of people around them and of their feelings too. They are experts in monitoring, managing and controlling emotions. There are fewer possibilities of destructive conflict due to high Emotional Intelligence among employees. The results of correlation analysis reveal that there is a negative relationship between

Emotional Intelligence and Intrapersonal Conflict. So, it proves that high emotionally intelligent people have less intrapersonal conflict than low emotionally intelligent people. The Intrapersonal Conflict questionnaire had questions such as, I engage in work that is of little interest to me. However, a few respondents said that their works seemed interesting, but a significant number of respondents agreed with the questions. That is not a good indicator for preventing intrapersonal conflict in the workplace. The study recommends addressing the following issues which have been gathered from the study respondents:

- **Lack of required capability:** When an employee lacks the required qualification, it creates dissatisfaction with the job, and gradually s/he loses interest in his/her work. However, proper training and development sessions can remove these obstacles and make employees confident.

- **Fewer challenges in the Job:** Monotonous work bores employees, so they can lose interest anytime. Organizations should give challenging and diversified responsibilities to employees.

- **Efforts are not appreciated:** Hard work and efforts should be

appreciated to make employees more productive and satisfied.

▪ **Unfriendly workplace:** The working environment can be toxic for many reasons—for example, poisonous coworkers, dominant supervisor, lousy relationship with the boss, etc. Companies should work on these factors to prevent/ resolve conflict.

▪ **Personal problems**: Balancing personal and professional life is very critical now-a-days. For this reason, many employees get frustrated because they cannot differentiate their problems from work problems and as a result, it affects their performance.

Organizations should arrange counselling, training and meditation sessions for their employees' betterment.

Declaration of Interests: We, the authors of this research manuscript, declare that we have no financial interest. We have provided written consent to publish the research manuscript in this journal.

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