



Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Conflict Management Behavior of Home Economics Students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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Abstract: The current study was designed to explore the influence of emotional intelligence on the conflict management behavior of home economics students. The objectives of the study were to explore the association of emotional intelligence with conflict management behavior (Aggression/Negotiation) among the students enrolled in BS Home Economics: To find out the association of elements of emotional intelligence with conflict management Behavior (Aggression/Negotiation) of the students enrolled in BS Home Economics. The study was descriptive and quantitative in nature, similar to survey research. We used stratified random sampling to choose a sample of 252 girls' institutions in Peshawar and Swat based on enrollment numbers. We obtained primary data using a questionnaire. We performed regression analysis to identify the relationships between variables. The results revealed significant positive association between emotional intelligence and conflict management behaviour, accounting for about 16% of the difference in prediction. The regression coefficients showed significant results ($b = 0.403$, $p < .001$). Self-awareness, empathy, and relationship management were all significant predictors of conflict management behaviour (CMB), but self-control and self-motivation were not. We concluded that emotional intelligence is a major predictor of students' conflict management behavior. As a result, institutions should focus on students' emotional intelligence, with a particular emphasis on self-awareness, relationship management, and empathy, besides their academic development, to help students deal with conflict-related situations.

Keywords: Conflict Management Behaviour, Emotional Intelligence, Home Economics, Students.

1. Introduction

The conflict management behavior of an individual has become a popular construct that is constantly attracting the attention of researchers and authors in order to identify its links with different variables, such as behavioral improvement. In everyday life, it can be commonly observed that the life of almost every person is full of disorders and changes. People are continuously striving for identifying different ways which may enable them to deal with their problems more wisely. Turbulence in external environmental factors due to globalization continuously affects the ways of living and behaviors of people, especially females, as they are an integral part of this society. Home economics is one of the disciplines in academia that provides an opportunity for female students to enhance their knowledge

regarding different home affairs. They are taught various subjects to make them aware of and capable of dealing with different situations, which is helpful for their personal, academic, and professional lives. During conflict resolution, people frequently exhibit two types of behaviour: aggressive and negotiation (Masum and Khan, 2014). The younger generation appears to be more focused in winning debates, and as a result, they are unable to deal with conflict situations effectively, negatively impacting their personal and social connections (Pandey, Sajjanapu, & Sangwan, 2015). People exhibit more aggressive behaviour while dealing with conflict and are unable to maintain positive connections with the rest of their social circle (Daly, Ann Lee, Soutar, and Rasmi, 2010). Further, those who prefer healthy negotiation can tackle situations that might lead to conflict (Stolarski, Postek, & Smieja, 2011). Focusing on the skills enhancement of students regarding conflict management can be more fruitful for bringing improvement in their academic performance (Moeller & Kwantes, 2015).

The ability of an individual to deal with different sorts of problems, resolve conflicts, and adapt themselves according to situations is referred to as the emotional quotient of an individual (Stolarski et al., 2011). Jaeger and Eagan (2007) define an emotional quotient as the ability to comprehend one's own and others' feelings, as well as the appropriate regulation of emotions to promote peace and harmony. Furthermore, emotional intelligence enhances one's ability to adapt to one's surroundings and successfully satisfy external environmental demands (Bar-On, 2006). Emotional intelligence plays an important role in personal, academic, and professional settings. It often grows over time, strengthening intellectual talents and knowledge. Bar-On (2000) argued that an individual's emotional intelligence grows with time.

Pakistani families rely more on emotional bonding with each other and believe in long-lasting relationships because of their customs, religion, traditions, and other societal norms. Dincyurek and Civelek (2008) stated that strong emotional attachment of people with each other enabled every individual student to build their capabilities of emotional intelligence to discourage conflicts. According to Davis and Humphrey (2012), the development of emotional intelligence capabilities increases the adaptability of an individual student towards external environmental factors by managing their conflicts. The authors found Goleman's (1995) five elements of self-awareness, mood management, self-motivation, empathy, and relationship management more effective for students to handle different inter- and intra-stressful situations that may lead to conflict. Masum and Khan (2014) mentioned that the assertion of positive behavioral aspects initiates frequent communication among students and teachers which helps in developing social skills for improving the emotional intelligence of students by increasing their efficiency in academics.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The segment of women is often found to be more vulnerable to different conflicts. Students of BS Home economics are at that stage of their age in which their different behaviors are built through situations they experience which are mainly responsible for their good or poor academic performance. They are commonly observed to be involved in different arguments with their teachers and also with other classmates, which give way to different conflicting situations. Conflicts among students and teachers affect their learning capabilities which also leads them to more stressful situations. Therefore, it was very necessary to conduct a study that helps in identifying different elements of emotional intelligence that contribute more to decreasing the aggression factor in students' behavior and avoiding or managing conflicts. From this perspective, this study aims to explore the "Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Conflict Management Behaviour (Aggression/Negotiation) of BS Home Economics Students".

1.2 Objectives of the Study

- i. To explore the association between Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Management Behavior (Aggression/Negotiation) of the students enrolled in BS Home Economics.

- ii. To find out the association of Elements of Emotional Intelligence with Conflict Management Behavior (Aggression/Negotiation) of the students enrolled in BS HomeEconomics.

1.3 Research Hypotheses

H₁: There is no significant association between Emotional Intelligence on Conflict Management Behavior (Aggressive/Negotiation) among the Students enrolled in BS Home Economics.

H₂: There is no significant association of Elements of Emotional Intelligence with Conflict Management Behavior (Aggressive/Negotiation) of the Students enrolled in BS Home Economics.

1.4 Significance of the Study

As emotional intelligence reflects the cognitive behavior of an individual, therefore, by studying the emotional intelligence capabilities it would become easier to identify the conflict management behavior of students and to improve their performance. With the help of this study, students will be more aware to strengthen their emotional intelligence capabilities for managing their aggressive behavior at the time of avoiding or resolving conflict. Further, this study will also help teachers to identify the current state of conflict management behavior among students and also their emotional intelligence capabilities to take important initiatives for improving their different capabilities which help them to properly handle conflicting situations. Moreover, with the help of this study, the authorities concerned will also be helped to focus more on those aspects and course contents that can further minimize students' aggression during conflict management and improve their academic performance.

2. Related Literature

Goleman (1995) claimed that IQ can only be directly linked to 20 percent of the success of a person. This argument invites other scholars and academics to examine and diagnose other factors contributing to a person's success by an additional 80 percent. Publishing Goleman's first book resulted in a new field of research not just in education but also in business, interpersonal relationships, professional development, leadership, commercial and organizational psychology, and so forth. Some groups are attracted to understanding how the student's EQ (emotional intelligence) could help him or her enhances academic performance and learning. Low and Nelson (2006) argued that Emotional Quotient seemsto be essential to the overall well-being and success of a student. They said that learners with emotional intelligence abilities could manage complicated and challenging instructional knowledge faster. While academics can pursue their life effectively, they can focus on learning and educational achievements.

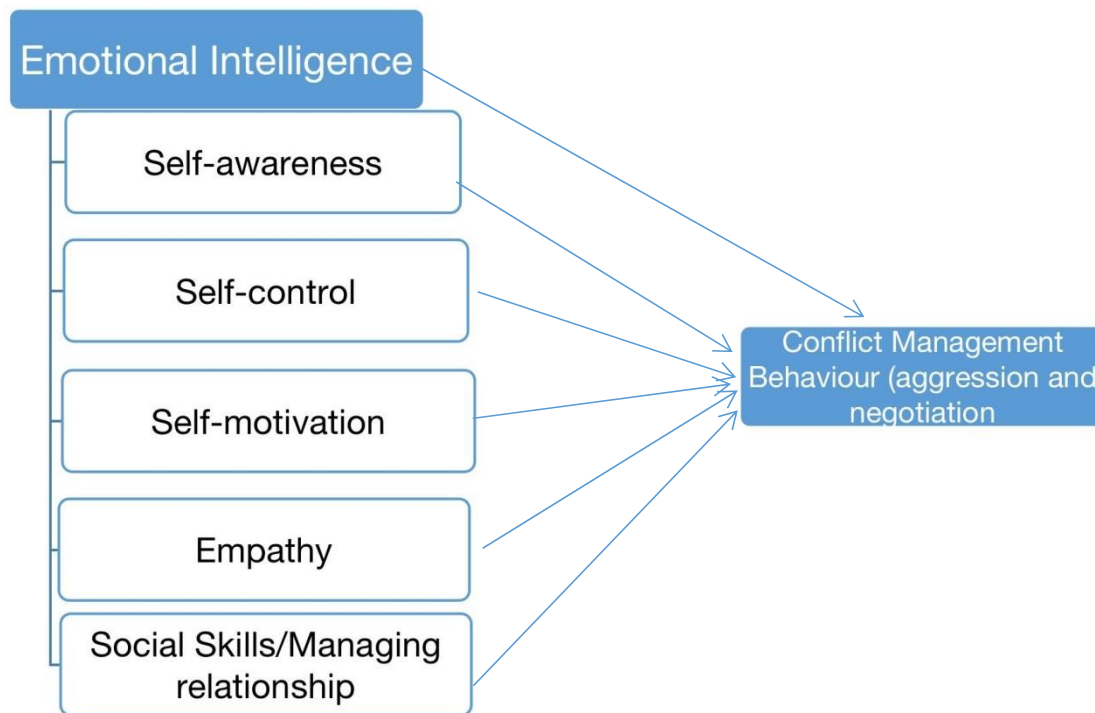


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

2.1 Emotional Intelligence

EI (Emotional Intelligence) has been described by Stone-McCown, Jensen, Freedman, and Rideout (1998) as the ability to reason, achieve success, regulate emotions, communicate effectively, make intelligent life choices, deal with issues, and work with others in a way that earns friends and success. Elias (2003) also pinpointed that these skills enable a person to understand and regulate emotion, gain self-control, defined objectives, develop the ability to empathize, resolve conflicts, and develop leadership qualities and effective team involvement. Model Bar-On (2000) is an EI feature model. It measures emotional intelligence through five composites: interpersonal competencies, intra-personal competencies, stress management, resilience, and overall perspective. Inter-personal abilities include relationship management with others. Intra-personal abilities highlight individuals' emphasis and participation and even their capacity to handle and execute autonomous plans. Stress-management capabilities include the capacity of an individual to stay positive, use beneficial coping strategies, and create powerful assistance mechanisms. Adaptability skills include flexibility, strong problem-solving abilities, and the ability to redefine problems and choices include General Mood is an optimistic and resilient metric. "Emotionally smart people are usually hopeful, versatile, genuine, and effective in fixing issues and dealing with stress without leaving power" (Bar-On, 2006).

Goleman's EI model (1995, 1998) is a skill model, at first increasingly broad yet centered around EI skills that enable an individual to pick up workplace achievement. According to Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002), Emotional work-related intelligence has appeared to motivate everyone to fix, interact, coordinate and look to find impartial approaches to create arrangements that benefit all sides of a conflict.

2.2 Elements of Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

2.2.1 Self Awareness

Self-awareness is the ability of a person to identify his/her emotions (Pool,1997).

2.2.2 Mood Management or self-control

It refers to the ability of an individual to control his/her feelings and emotions while facing certain situations to maximize their positive outcomes. Mood management or self-control is the capability of an individual that how best he or she can manage his or her emotions which is directly linked with self-regulation (Bellack, 1999).

2.2.3 Self Motivation

Self-motivation is related to combining all the feelings to create a road map for the performance of personal goals by minimizing the different issues related to the lack of self-confidence, resistance towards something, and impulsiveness.

2.2.4 Empathy

Empathy is the most crucial part of emotional intelligence as it is related to the identification of others' emotions and feelings and then converting them to verbal and nonverbal cues.

2.2.5 Managing Relationships

The management of the relationship with people refers to the handling ability of an individual that how efficiently he or she maintains his or her relationship with others while interacting with them, the way of negotiation, and also the ability to resolve conflicts.

2.3 Conflict Management

Conflict is an element of human nature shown in all personal interactions or organizations and public bodies. "It occurs among household members, friends, peers, and even between superiors and subordinates. Conflict is certain as long as there is a human element present "(Suppiah & Rose, 2006). According to Rose et al. (2007); cited from Boohar, (2001) people who had never faced conflict in the work environment are "living in a dream world, blind to their surroundings or confined to solitary confinement." With the lack of a comprehensive definition, there are multiple definitions available for conflict management. These definitions vary depending on the understanding of conflict by the scholars; either they saw it as a system, a challenge, or a social contact. "The phase that starts when one group sees that the other has disappointed or is about to frustrate some of its concerns" (Thomas, 1976). Wall and Callister's (1995) definition of conflict is "a phase in which one side perceives that its concerns are hostile or adversely impacted by another group."

2.4 Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Management Behavior

The association between EI and conflict management behavior was inspected by different studies. Ivshin (2001) found no significant association between EI and conflict management behavior. It was discovered that there have been no critical contrasts between men and women and their age, level of education, legal status and type of job, and any conflict style and EQ (emotional Quotient). A statistically significant association between integrating styles of conflict management and emotional intelligence was found, although there was no significant difference found among men and women in the collaborative style of conflict management and total EQ (Malek, 2000)

Rahim et al (2002) conducted a seven-nation study investigating the linkages among the five components of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-control, self-motivation empathy, and managing relationships with conflict management strategies; problem-solving and negotiation. They concluded that self-control empathy and managing relationships are closely correlated with negotiation. Motivation is closely associated with empathy and social skills, and in addition, motivation is positively associated with a problem-solving approach and negatively associated with negotiating approach. Goleman, (1998) stated that emotionally intelligent people would be best able to discuss and resolve their conflicts with group

members. Frank (1999) stated that there are at least three major constituencies within a college or university (academics, teachers, and students) that may conflict as groups or have internal-group clashes which need to be resolved or managed.

Other similar study has found that key factors influence the use of emotional intelligence and conflict resolution techniques. Bar-on and Parker (2000) revealed that women had higher levels of emotional awareness, empathy, interpersonal connections, and social activity than males. Brenner and Salovey (1997) maintained this viewpoint, saying that women are better than males at controlling negative emotions because they employ emotion-regulatory mechanisms that grow with age and differ by gender.

2.5 Emotional Intelligence and Aggression

Aggression is one of the young people's notable and fairly common problems, which can have many negative effects on them (Rusby, Forrester, Biglan, & Metzler, 2005). Aggressive behavior is strongly linked to emotion and decides the behavior, character, and dignity of one. It describes a person's totality. Empathy is connected with emotional intelligence. Evidence from studies shows conducted by Ciarrochi, Chan, and Caputi (2000) that emotional intelligence and aggression are significantly correlated. The emotional intelligence of adolescents affects the level of interpersonal adolescent relationships. Lower levels of adolescent IE lead to abuse of drugs by adolescents, weak relationships, higher levels of aggression, and serious fights, Brackett, Mayer & Warner, 2004. According to Qualter, Gardner, and Whiteley (2007), emotional intelligence plays a key role in every realm of life. A high level of EI has been related to a variety of life gains and good outcomes. Gains include high life satisfaction, well-being, enhanced academic performance, and improved capacity to deal with change. As stated by Grewal and Salovey (2005), Low levels of EI have been associated with some types of mental illness, such as depression, aggressive behavior, bipolar disorder, and problems in processing emotional information. Calvete and Orue (2010) assessed that at the personal and social level, aggression could be harmful as the difficulties experienced by aggressive individuals in perceiving situations resulting from situations of violence or isolation. Because Pakistan has a low rate of literacy and poverty, emotional maladjustment issues are considered less important, leading to more violent confrontations of interpretation (Mehmood, Qasim, & Azam 2013).

2.6 Emotional Intelligence and Negotiation

Allen and Land (1999) argued that to live emotionally independently, one of the developmental tasks of the learners is to know, explore and cope with several emotional responses. Moreover, Zimmer-Gembeck (2002) stated that at this point, severe conflict management problems may reduce the cognitive and social capacity of learners, and information acquired during conflicts may have consequences for new interactions. Students in college who believe in their capacity to handle negative emotions seem to be generally qualified in conflict management (Creasey & Hesson-McInnis, 2001). Findings of a study conducted by Greasy and Ladd (2004) have shown that students with a secure attachment are socially more inclined than those that are insecure to express conflict management attitudes and behavior or issue-solving skills. According to Creasey and Ladd (2005), secured learners have already learned to control adverse emotions efficiently by themselves and to deal fully with negative mood regulation, which results in good psychological adjustments.

Anderson and Thompson (2004) argued that negotiation is one of the most common methods of concluding agreements in situations of conflict. These authors also quote Putnam as defining "negotiation as a form of conflict management described as a method to find a suitable resolution by exchanged suggestions and counterproposals." The findings imply that someone with high emotional intelligence may end up making more compromises among the negotiating parties in order to ignore stress and maintain positive feelings. By using skills such as effective communication, problem-solving, and negotiation, conflict can be managed.

3. Research Methodology

The study was descriptive and quantitative in nature. The researcher conducts an extensive review of previous literature regarding the different elements of emotional intelligence and its linkages with the Conflict Management Behaviour of the students. Further, the survey method was used for primary data collection through a questionnaire which was adopted from the secondary data to further identify the association between emotional intelligence and conflict management behavior of the students (of BS Home Economics).

3.1 Population of the Study

The targeted population for the present study was the students enrolled in BS Home Economics programs in different colleges of Peshawar and Swat. The researcher has collected information regarding the total population for this study by personally contacting the concerned academic departments of selected colleges through which it was identified that seven hundred and thirty-three was the total population of this study. Further, a sample size was drawn from the total population.

3.2 Sample Size

The researcher used a stratified random sampling technique for this study because of the variation in the number of enrolments in the selected colleges. Proportionate stratification was used to identify the accurate and precise sample size. Cochran's formula for proportional allocation was used and the total sample size was 252.

Cochran's formula for proportional allocation is:

$$n_i = n \left(\frac{N_i}{N} \right), \text{ for } i = 1, 2, 3 \quad (1)$$

Where N_i is the population size of the i th stratum, n_i is the i th stratum size and N is the size of the population.

To determine n the researcher used Cochran's formula that is:

$$n = \frac{z^2 pq}{e^2} \quad (2)$$

Where e is the desired level of precision i.e. margin of error, p is the estimated proportion of the population, and q is $1 - p$. the z value is found in the z table.

When the population is less than or equal to 1000, we use modified Cochran's formula for sample size. As our population size is less than 1000 therefore the researcher used:

$$n(\text{modified}) = \frac{n}{1 + \frac{n-1}{N}} \quad (3)$$

Where n was obtained from equation (2)

According to equation (2) our required sample size is:

$$n = \frac{((1.96)^2(0.5)(0.5))}{(0.05)^2} = \frac{(3.8416)(0.25)}{0.0025} = \frac{0.9604}{0.0025} = 384$$

According to equation (3) our modified sample size is:

$$n(\text{modified}) = \frac{384}{1 + \frac{384 - 1}{733}} = \frac{384}{1 + \frac{383}{733}} = \frac{384}{1 + 0.5225} = \frac{384}{1.5225} = 252$$

According to equation (1) formula for a stratified random sample is:

Sample size of the strata = (stratum size / population size) * sample size (modified)

From the above figures and calculations through pre-defined formulas, the identified sample size was 252.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments and Procedure

A single questionnaire was designed by the researcher which included: five components/elements to the measurement of Goleman's Emotional Intelligence, the items were adopted from the EQ Index developed by Rahim et al. (2002) of 22 items. In order to measure the conflict management behavior, the items were added from a 21 items Conflict Management Questionnaire developed by Erickson, Soukup, Noonan, and Mc-Guru (2016).

All the antecedents were answered through a five-point Likert scale. For the collection of data, the researcher personally distributed the designed questionnaires among the potential respondents whose views were considered for the conclusion and recommendations.

4. Results

First, the researcher modeled each factor of emotional intelligence with conflict management behavior, and then the researcher combined all sub-factors by adding them up and then compared it with the conflict management behavior of the students using regression analysis.

4.1 Testing of Research Hypotheses

Research Hypothesis 1: There is no significant association between Emotional Intelligence on Conflict Management Behaviour (Aggressive/Negotiation) of the Students enrolled in BS Home Economics.

Table 1: Regression analysis of Emotional Intelligence for predicting Conflict Management Behaviour (n=252).

Predictor variables	B	Standard error	b	AdJ(R square)	F
Constant	15.372	2.238			
Emotional Int.	0.250	0.036	0.403***	0.159	48.584***

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

SA = self awareness, SC = self control, SM = self motivation, E = empathy, MR = managing relationship, EI = emotional intelligence, SAP= student's academic performance.

In table 1, when added emotional intelligence (EI) sub-factors/elements were and then modeled with conflict management behavior, about 16% of the variation in conflict management behavior (CMB) was explained by the model (adjusted $R\ square = 0.159$, $F = 48.584$, $p < .001$). The regression coefficients were significant with ($b = 0.403$, $p < .001$). Therefore, the assumed null hypothesis is rejected.

Research Hypothesis 2: There is no significant association of Elements of Emotional Intelligence with Conflict Management Behavior (Aggressive/Negotiation) among the Students enrolled in BS Home Economics.

Table 2: Regression Analysis for Elements of Emotional Intelligence predicting Conflict Management Behaviour (n=252)

Predictor variables	B	Standard error	b	AdJ(R square)	F
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Constant	14.227	2.319			
Self Awareness	0.498	0.149	0.200**		
Self Control	0.159	0.096	0.100	0.172	11.4***
Self Motivation	0.070	0.110	0.40		
Empathy	0.267	0.103	0.161*		
Managing Relat.	0.427	0.124	0.209**		

Note. * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

In table 2 taken together, SA (self awareness), SC (self control), SM (self motivation), E (empathy), and MR (managing relationship); only self awareness, empathy, and managing relationships were significant in predicting conflict management behavior (CMB). Adjusted *R square*, the coefficient of determination, was about 17% of the variation in producing conflict management behavior explained by the model (F = 11.4, p<.01). When other risk factors were held constant, the result showed that self-awareness was a predictor of conflict management behavior (b= 0.200, p<.01), empathy was a predictor of conflict management behavior (b=0.161, p<0.05) and managing relationships was a predictor of conflict management behavior (b= 0.209, p<0.01) but SC (self control) and SM (self motivation) were found insignificant predictors of conflict management behavior. Thus the null hypothesis is not accepted.

4.2 Discussion

The relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict management behavior of the students was planned to investigate in the present study at the college level. The study found that there is a positive and strong relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict management behavior, taken together; self-awareness (SA), self-control (SC), self-motivation (SM), empathy (E), and managing relationship (MR); only Self Awareness, Empathy, and Managing Relationships were significant in predicting conflict management behavior (CMB). The result showed that Self Awareness was a predictor of Conflict Management Behaviour (b= 0.200, p<.01), Empathy was a predictor of Conflict Management Behaviour (b=0.161, p<0.05) and Managing Relationships was a predictor of Conflict Management Behaviour (b= 0.209, p<0.01) but Self Control and Self Motivation were found insignificant predictors of Conflict Management Behaviour.

The study findings conform with the findings of earlier studies available in the literature. A study conducted by Rahim et al. (2002) investigated the linkages among the five components of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-control, self-motivation empathy, and managing relationships with conflict management strategies; problem- solving and negotiation. They found that self-control empathy, and managing relationships are closely correlated with negotiation. Motivation is closely associated with empathy and social skills and, in addition, motivation is positively associated with a problem-solving approach and negatively associated with negotiating approach. A statistically significant association between integrating styles of conflict management and emotional intelligence was found, although there were no significant differences found among men and women in the collaborative style of conflict

management and total EQ (Malek, 2000)

5. Conclusion

It is concluded from the foregoing discussion of the present study that emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of conflict management behavior of students. Therefore, the institutions should focus on the aspect of the emotional intelligence of the students which will result in good academic performance the students, as well as the students, will be able to easily handle conflict involving situations. Regression analysis proved that emotional intelligence is an important determinant of conflict management behavior. There is a positive significant association between emotional intelligence and conflict management behavior that accounts for 16% of the variation in conflict management behavior explained by the model (adjusted $R^2=0.159$, $F = 48.584$, $p<.001$). The regression coefficients were significant with ($b= 0.403$, $p<.001$).

5.1 Recommendations

In light of the data analysis, the following recommendations are made:

1. Based on the results, it may be possible to present several suggestions to institution administrators. Institutions administrators should make significant efforts to improve students' emotional abilities, with special emphasis on self-awareness, managing relationships, and empathy aspect.
2. In the curriculum, the course content of emotional and social learning should be added to enable the learners to develop emotional and social capabilities that will assist them to become productive and useful residents of Pakistan.
3. Emotionally intelligent Students can efficiently handle interpersonal conflicts by negotiating and finding innovative alternatives for all individuals engaged. Therefore, attention should be given to their emotional development along with their academic development.
4. Institutions should arrange periodic lectures, seminars, and student engagement programs on the development of emotional intelligence abilities that will enhance their understanding and enable them to perform better in academics and social life.

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