

Leveraging Emotional Intelligence Competencies In Managing Interpersonal Conflicts: Evidence From Higher Learning Institutions

Ruth E. Ufomba, Department of Management, Abia State University, Uturu, Nigeria
Francis E. Monyei, Department of Industrial Psychology and People Management, University of Johannesburg, South Africa
Wilfred I. Ukpere, Department of Industrial Psychology and People Management, University of Johannesburg, South Africa

Abstract: When a workforce lacks the competencies in emotional intelligence, there will certainly be a hostile environment within the company. Investigating the connection between emotional intelligence skills and how higher education institutions handle interpersonal conflict is the goal of this study. To perform the study, a descriptive survey method was employed. Using the Yamane formula, a sample size of 400 was selected from the population's 13,570 workforces. Data was collected using a well-structured questionnaire that was created utilising the five-point Likert scale technique. Regression analysis, or Ordinary Least Squares, was used to display and evaluate the data that was gathered using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Employee collaboration was strongly and significantly correlated with social awareness, while employee avoidance was positively and significantly correlated with self-awareness, according to the data analysis results. This leads to the conclusion that interpersonal conflict management in higher learning institutions is positively and significantly impacted by emotional intelligence attributes. Given the results, it is advised that employees at these higher learning institutions improve their emotional intelligence skills, such as social awareness and self-awareness, since these skills are positively and significantly correlated with cooperation and the avoidance of interpersonal conflict.

Key words: Emotional intelligence, Self-awareness, Employee avoidance, Social-awareness, Employee collaboration.

Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI) is an important aspect of conflict management especially as it relates to interpersonal relationships in the workplace context. The effect of recognizing, understanding, and regulating emotions influences how individuals navigate conflicts; therefore, the ability to harness these concepts becomes a prime competency in fostering a peaceful work environment (Coronado-Maldonado & Benítez-Márquez, 2023). Due to the increasing diversity of higher learning institutions and the attendant administrative and academic pressures, the role of EI in conflict resolution has become more pronounced globally (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004). Emotional intelligence indeed achieved global acclaim as an essential skill in conflict management. Universities in developed countries such as the US have included EI training in programmes of leadership and professional development to enhance student and faculty relations (Boyatzis, 2008). Studies show that people with higher EI experience better management of stress, improved communications, and mediation of conflicts at lower stakes (Schutte et al., 2001). In Europe, several institutions have adopted different strategies to foster EI amongst undergraduates and academics. For instance, schools in the United Kingdom have acknowledged that emphasis on social and emotional learning (SEL) enhances leadership capacity and contributes to effective conflict management within higher education institutions (Matthews, Zeidner, & Roberts, 2012). In Australia, EI competencies were associated with better work and/or educational interactions, thereby reducing misunderstandings and enhancing collaboration (Clarke, 2006). Emotional intelligence, which also encompasses self-awareness and social awareness, is the capacity to identify one's own feelings and comprehend those of others. This leads to improved decision-making and stronger interpersonal interactions (Goleman, 1995). Self-awareness helps individuals regulate their emotions, while social awareness allows them to respond empathetically to others, enhancing

teamwork and communication (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). While conflict management involves balancing employee avoidance and employee collaboration to maintain workplace harmony and productivity. It is claimed that avoidance may temporarily de-escalate conflicts, but collaboration fosters open dialogue and problem-solving, leading to long-term resolution and improved team cohesion (De Dreu & Van Vianen, 2001; Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). Recognizing the role of EI in conflict management across regions places it in non-institutional settings, that is, workplace and governance set-ups. Asian countries, with Japan and China as examples, emphasize emotional control and collective harmony in conflict resolution (Wong & Law, 2002). Such cultural considerations are comparable to some of the global best practices which see EI as a skill that needs to be developed by leaders, academics, and undergraduates alike (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001). In Africa, there is an increasing effort to include EI in leadership development and conflict resolution. Research conducted in South Africa found individuals with better EI abilities to exhibit commitment in dispute resolution, thus creating more effective interpersonal relations, talent management and organizational effectiveness (Monyei & Ukpere, 2024). EI training is being introduced as a possible way to reduce conflict and encourage collaborative learning in both professional and academic settings in Ghana and Kenya (Opuni & Agyemang, 2020; Nelson & Low, 2011). The fact that students and staff at West African colleges come from diverse cultural backgrounds is perhaps the most challenging component of the situation, with issues relating to administrative complexity, culture, and the environment of student-staff relations. A number of universities in Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, and others are faced with such problems originating from academic pressures and administrative decisions, as well as misunderstandings that may arise between people (Adeyemi & Ademilua, 2012). Prolonged disputes due to lack of a structured conflict resolution framework that incorporates EI competencies in the institutions of higher learning have, thus, significantly undermined workplace harmony and academic excellence (Egwunyenga, 2008). Studies in Nigeria have shown that undergraduates and academics with high degrees of emotional intelligence had superior skills in listening, empathy, and constructive conversation (Salami, 2010). Nonetheless, most West African universities do not have formal EI training programmes, making it imperative to investigate ways of leveraging these competencies for conflict resolution (Ogunyemi, 2015; Ajayi & Buhari, 2014). The ability to handle interpersonal problems at work is particularly important. Ufomba and Udensi (2024) add that understanding and managing one's own emotions as well as those of coworkers is essential to developing an effective interpersonal conflict management system. It does not appear that most academics in higher education have a better grasp of how emotionally intelligent people may resolve interpersonal conflicts. This is a common situation amongst higher learning institutions found within emerging states as a result of the administrator's failure to provide resources leading to the development, and effective implementation of training programmes that enhances emotional intelligence amongst their workforces. The fallouts from such ineptitude includes paranoia, absenteeism, occupational stress, workforce turnover, and poor commitment of academics to the learning institutions. Thus, this study becomes pertinent as it investigates the effect of leveraging emotional intelligence competencies in handling conflicts in interpersonal relations of academics at selected institutions of higher learning in an emerging nation.

Review of Related Literature

The Emotional Intelligence Theory By Salovey And Mayer (1990)

The foundation of this study is Salovey and Mayer's (1990) idea of emotional intelligence. Those who can recognise, comprehend, and control their emotions are thought to be more empathetic when interacting with others, particularly when there is conflict, the theory states. Salovey and Mayer (1990) established the Emotional Intelligence (EI) Theory, which Daniel Goleman (1995) popularised. It states that persons with high EI are more likely to be able to control their emotions and make rational, positive decisions. It is predicated on the idea that emotions influence behaviour in general, interpersonal relationships, and decision-making. Emotions are dynamic, unlike intelligence quotients that are relatively stable, they are not fixed and can be improved through training, experience, or awareness (Mayer et al., 2000). EI theory basically purports that individuals need to be self-aware to manage and maintain relationships with others effectively. Generally, high

EI can identify their emotional triggers, understand emotional events, and modulate their responses. In linking the propositions of the emotional intelligence theory to this current study's hypotheses, it is posited that to effectively leverage the competencies of EI and manage interpersonal conflicts, as a pre-requisite, organisational leaders must be equipped with EI competencies through training and practices of mindfulness. This implies that by the application of EI in conflict management, emotionally intelligent individuals would favour a more constructive, empathetic, and joint resolution process encouraging and allowing conflicting parties to share a common vision which enhances a positive workplace environment. EI is more potent than traditional IQ but does not hold any significance as far as professional and personal success is concerned (Monyei & Ukpere, 2024; Goleman, 1995). This theory further indicates that individuals with high EI remain stable under duress, ability to view matters from various angles, and exercise emotional regulation to diffuse conflicts. Leaders with high EI can motivate, inspire, and manage interpersonal conflict in a more effective manner (Goleman, 1995; Boyatzis, 2008 & Wong & Law, 2002). It is noted that organizations and individuals alike can enrich EI competences through education, coaching, and mindfulness practices. Individuals with this capability can combine empathy and active listening in the disputes resolution process for stronger relations.

Emotional Intelligence

Ciarrochi et al. (2006) and Goleman (2000a) state that once emotions are felt, they can be understood, and managing will depend upon this understanding of emotions. Emotional intelligence gives important insight into what happened and how people interact with one another. It also helps process concrete situations with reference to some emotional data in order to work toward better decisions. Employees with high emotional intelligence might better foster collaboration, manage workplace stress, resolve interpersonal problems in the workplace, address grievances, and learn from past interpersonal mistakes in competitive settings (Arora, 2017). According to Etele, Nwadinobi, Akuezilo, Ezebube, Monyei, and Ukpere (2024) and Bar-On (2006), emotional intelligence is a subset of artificial intelligence since, unlike technology, it emphasises understanding human emotions and those of others. Moreover, Meyer et al. (2011), Khokhar and Kush (2009), and Salim and Nasir (2010) describe emotional intelligence as the ability to understand and regulate one's emotions when interacting with others. Likewise, Raad (2005) characterises it as the ability to understand, interpret, and utilise emotional data. The ability to recognise one's own emotions and gain knowledge from watching the situations and the people involved is, in essence, emotional intelligence. Emotionally intelligent individuals can restrain their emotions, identify and express their feelings, and channel their emotions to facilitate proper actions (Kahtani, 2013). For further understanding and practicum of emotional intelligence by all humans, it is fundamental in successfully traversing the challenges thrown by interpersonal relations of colleagues (Kahtani, 2013). For most workplaces, people often rate emotional intelligence greater than intelligence quotient (IQ) (Dulewicz & Higgs, 2000). IQ is utilized to assess analytical intelligence. The measurement of IQ is by means of psychological tests encompassing various tasks administered by qualified psychologists on individuals. A high IQ does not guarantee life success or workplace achievement. IQ is appraised through logical reasoning, creativity, problem-solving, and acquisition of knowledge. In contrast, thankfully, EI can be enhanced through training and developing skill set, but IQ remains a constant. Thus, emotionally competent persons are poised to excel in both personal and professional contexts. Succinctly put, emotional intelligence training creates worth. For institutions of higher learning, academics with good emotional intelligence are pivotal. Emotion drives people, so those with great emotional intelligence are highly motivated. These are not just people who are motivated by money, rather, they have a conscious desire to achieve their goals. Arora (2017) further states that the desire to succeed is determined by other variables, for personality attributes, they are self-control, diligence, and interpersonal skills. A work environment with emotionally intelligent top employees is adaptive, flexible, and team-oriented (Monyei & Ukpere, 2024; Goleman, 1998). In the dispositions of Goleman (2005), Howell (2020), and Bradberry and Greaves (2009), emotional intelligence consists of five basic traits: self-awareness, self-management, empathy, social awareness, and self-motivation. Therefore, an individual cannot achieve any goal, without specific these emotional traits regardless their possessed qualifications (Arora, 2017).

Self-Awareness

Awareness connotes the knowledge of what is happening in the environment or outside oneself, and self-awareness represents the knowledge of been aware of one's experiences (Jeffery 2017). The state of consciously being aware is what self-awareness itself entails. It is a capacity that allows a person to accurately observe conditions of themselves such as emotions, and be aware of those observations while as they occur (Bradberry & Greaves 2009). The term self-awareness refers to the capacity to identify and comprehend one's own feelings, values, and strengths and flaws. The foundation of emotional intelligence, this ability allows an individual to properly regulate their behaviour. Introspection, emotional regulation, and the ability to accept criticism are all traits of self-aware employees (Boyatzis & McKee, 2013). Such abilities can improve decision-making by allowing an individual to weigh their choices against personal biases and emotional influences (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005), facilitate the constructive management of stress through the recognition of emotional triggers (Caruso & Salovey, 2004), and improve leadership by generating positive emotional atmosphere (Goleman, 2000b). Self-awareness is being in touch with one's awareness regarding the strengths and weaknesses and opportunities of going ahead for development in both personal and professional context. George (2000), Klenke (2007), and Diggins (2007) advocate that high levels of self-awareness aids in conscious identification of strengths and weaknesses, emotions, and their impact on others, thereby aiding in solving these problems through emotional awareness. Self-awareness influences an organization's performance, while indirectly building cooperation and trust among team members, while it helps in conflict resolution, as outlined by Lenaghan et al. (2007). Although, the findings by Jordan and Troth (2011) reported a negative correlation between self-awareness and conflict management.

Social Awareness

Goleman (2006) assert that awareness is the concern for others' emotions which is vital in any relations by it inter-personal and professional (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Therefore, since teamwork, leadership, and conflict have elements of emotions, social awareness becomes essential as it improves interrelations through empathy. Jordan and Troth (2004), and Ely and Thomas (2008) assert that social awareness includes the ability to empathize with the feelings, perspectives, opinions, and problems of other individuals. Social awareness does contain understanding the needs of people but goes further to include caring for them. It also assumes that individuals know how others feel without having to feel it with them. Gardner (2009) discusses empathy as being able to understand the emotions of others without having to partake or experience it with them. Social awareness means the ability to understand social circumstances affecting people's behaviour and actions. With good social awareness, workforces quickly adjust to their surroundings, engage in constructive dialogue with colleagues, and deal with disputes when they arise. Being able to recognise and comprehend the feelings, needs, and worries of others is one of the most crucial components of emotional intelligence, which is known as social awareness. It finally enables a person to demonstrate empathy towards others and recognize social cues and dynamics. This ability will help individuals in leadership positions, teamwork, and resolution of conflict, where they would otherwise have very different responses to the feelings and opinions of others. Empathy is the core of what matters in social awareness because it connects people emotionally with one other and helps people develop better relationships. Actively listening and observing nonverbal signals often help a socially aware individual understand the unexpressed feelings. This might be the reason why such individuals are much more interested in environments within organizations, which help them make better decisions and communicate and respond better (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Generally, social awareness is more than just individuals in respect to themselves and others: it is also about organizations and cultures where it helps an individual form or appreciate the working dynamics of different social and professional environments (Boyatzis, Goleman, & Rhee, 2000). Social awareness can be developed through deliberate efforts such as encouraging active listening, accepting and welcoming feedback, and being mindfully aware of socializing. As they build their social awareness, individuals become more skilled in managing relationships, conflict resolution, and the creation of inclusive and supportive environments. It is an important skillset to possess in any diverse and multicultural

environment, where sensitivity to cultural diversity is a norm and can facilitate cooperation and empathy (Goleman, 2006). Hence, social awareness is, therefore, the ability by which individuals improve their emotional intelligence and thus develop skills in handling interpersonal and professional complexities.

The Significance of Emotionally Intelligent Workforce in Institutions of Higher Learning

Monyei and Ukpere (2024), and Tripathy (2018) claims that there are several reasons for hiring a person with emotional intelligence and dedication to the workplace. A talent recruited to the workplace with emotionally intelligent capability, increases the commitment and productivity of the workplace. Highly intelligent employees are likely to be more productive, and it makes a huge difference to the individual as well the organization. Thus, it makes those organizations that are very productive for longer sustenance. More so, it uplifts the communication in the workplace. This means that it is easier for emotionally intelligent staff to receive directives, perform tasks, and communicate feedback than their counterparts with low EI. They are more inclined to express their opinions and, of course, to hear what others have to say. Furthermore, it is proposed that an emotionally intelligent employee can enhance trust within the organisation and use it to professionally and personally regulate emotions in a way that promotes the achievement of organisational goals. Employees with strong emotional intelligence are more likely to be able to control their emotions when under stress at work (Monyei, Olokede & Ukpere, 2024). It is considered a key talent to comprehend one's own feelings as well as those of others (Vakola, 2004). This provides a chance to manage the interpersonal relations within a workspace. Moreover, we find that even in such organisations with employees that possess high emotional intelligence, stress is reduced along with managing interpersonal conflict and enhancing morale in the workplace. Additionally, as the emotional recognition of all the staff members towards one another increases, the company culture grows much stronger. Emotional intelligence also has numerous effects on job satisfaction, such as improving emotional well-being, enhanced self-esteem, and prosocial bonding while decreasing negative or hostile emotions. Accordingly, emotionally savvy people are aware of their advantages and disadvantages. In any workspace, they can accept criticism and utilise it to improve (Kandell, 2022; Yasir, 2019).

Interpersonal Conflict

Any kind of disagreement between two people, whether it be personal, professional, emotional, or physical, is considered interpersonal conflict. Interpersonal conflict is defined as a conflict between people (Hocker & Wilmot, 2018). Since it depends on the individuals involved, such as coworkers, managers and employees, or CEOs and their workforce, this particular kind of conflict occurs frequently in organisations (Laura, 2022). To run a smooth organization, managers need to pay immediate attention to issues causing conflict, especially interpersonal ones. With interpersonal conflict rising in the organization, the management should know-how to keep the issue in check effectively and on time. An effective process of managing conflict allows an organization to create a good environment for work by resolving conflict. Basically, the management can also contribute in making policies and procedures that will find acceptance among employees. Interpersonal conflicts arise when one or more people disagree or clash in their interests over something. These disagreements may arise mainly due to different goals, values, viewpoints, or access to resources. An unresolved conflict may arise at the workplace, at home, in school, in personal relationships, or in professional relationships (Michelle and Naveed, 2022). People that are frustrated, stressed, angry, or do not communicate are more likely to have interpersonal disputes (Michelle and Naveed, 2022). Interpersonal conflict and emotional intelligence are strongly correlated, according to the findings (Yasir, 2019). Pseudo-conflict, fact conflict, value conflict, policy disagreement, and ego conflict are the six categories of interpersonal disputes listed by Evert (2013), Hocker and Wilmot (2018), and Michelle and Naveed (2022). Disagreements based on miscommunications or divergent viewpoints are known as pseudo conflicts. Stated otherwise, it is the interpretation of what was said against what the speaker intended (Michelle and Naveed, 2022). This happens when an individual interprets the words, actions, or behavior of another individual in a manner that does not forward the original intention (Evert, 2013). Fact conflict occurs when conflict is based on the parties disagreeing over the facts of something between them or among them. Fact conflict can be suspended while a solution

is found; indeed, interpersonal conflict in this instance depends on factual information that can be verified; resolving the conflict is a matter of checking the facts (Evert, 2013). Value conflict emerges when people have strongly opposing values and beliefs concerning something. Such things are, generally speaking, very sensitive issues for people, such as education, religious beliefs, etc. Therefore, one possible way to manage this type of conflict is to listen to the other party in the interest of attempting to understand their view point even if there is disagreement (Michelle and Naveed, 2022). Accepting the common ground between the two is the best route to take, then allowing for disagreement (Evert, 2013). Policy conflict arises when individuals disagree over which sort of policy, rule, or procedure should be applied to deal with a certain problem. There are a number of considerations for why one believes that a certain strategic action would be best. The definition of policy conflict is argued by issues concerning a divergence of opinion on a given plan of action (Hocker & Wilmot, 2018). Ego conflict pertains to any kind of disagreement taken too personally; the ego becomes involved. People may stubbornly refuse to put down their pride, letting arguments drag on indefinitely (Michelle and Naveed, 2022). Interpersonal conflicts can, generally, be put into categories. Such conflicts, however, would be the most challenging for employers to address, as they come extremely close to the realm of an individual's pride and dignity, as indicated by Raeeem (2023). However, a meta-conflict is arguing about the personal issues. Such issues will properly initiate an argument and, if not handled correctly, the following conflict situations. Hocker and Wilmot (2018) view meta-conflict as conflict about the process of communication during the actual conflict.

Managing Interpersonal Conflict in the Workplace

According to Rahim (2003), Swetha (2022) and Williams (1992), there are five styles for managing conflict in organizations. They are: Avoidance, Competition, Accommodation, Compromise, and Collaboration. Swetha (2022) assert that avoidance is the decision making between two equally undesirable options. While for competing, according to Schulze et al., (2013) it is emphasising one's position without taking the other person's point of view into consideration. Sischka et al., (2021), and Thomas (2008) competing style of managing interpersonal conflicts inspires one to stand for their ideas and interests and ensure they are taken seriously. This style of conflict management also encourages self-defence (Zhenzhong, 2007). Accommodation is posited as an attitude or feelings of indifference to the issues at stake (Omoniyi, 2010). This method of conflict management requires acceptance of one another's perspectives by both parties. One or both parties' offer the other person whatever is needed (Greeff & Bruyne, 2000). This style helps in fostering collaboration and harmony while building mutual relationships (Maclean, 2022). Conversely, employee avoidance refers to behaviours where employees disengage from workplace interactions due to stress, conflict, dissatisfaction or paranoia (Monyei, Agbaeze & Isichei, 2020; Lips-Wiersma & Wright, 2012). This can manifest as conflict avoidance, where employees refrain from interactions to prevent confrontation, leading to unresolved workplace issues (De Dreu & Van Vianen, 2001). Job dissatisfaction results in withdrawal behaviours (Maslach & Leiter, 2008), and decreased team performance, as reduced communication and cooperation affect overall productivity (Robinson, O'Reilly, & Wang, 2013). For compromise it is the agreement or settlement of dispute that is reached by both parties (Katija et al, 2019 and Leyva, 1986). This approach to conflict resolution is used when the parties have almost equal, if not equal, ability to push issues farther, which will lead to confrontation. However, both agree to accept and agree to see how a settlement might be found. The majority of workplaces use this conflict resolution technique when both sides recognise that it may result in either party losing something important related to the issue that sparked the disagreement. Compromising usually brings along a good deal without the required effort to get both parties everything they want. Allowing a very quickly strategy towards conflict resolution, creating a sense of fairness and offering an opportunity to keep all parties in the mutually beneficial relationship. According to Barfield (2016), the ability of employees to cooperate towards shared objectives through shared accountability, teamwork, and efficient communication is known as employee collaboration. It also connotes working with people to achieve set goals which is deemed to be satisfying to all the parties involved.

Avoidance Style of Managing Conflict

This style of conflict management has to do with circumvention of issues, that is not allowing the individual to engage further to the point of not even acknowledging what issues could arise in the organization. This means putting the issue on hold to be treated or resolved some other time. Avoidance in an interpersonal relation is a significant source of stress, time grabbing, and unnecessary hassles when issues being resolved are lacking a consensus (Swatha, 2022). Suruchi et al. (2015) assert that in conflict resolution context, another widely accepted style is avoidance, wherein getting involved in the conflict is avoided or withdrawn from rather than confronting it directly. Such behaviours can be fruitful if involving in the conflict imposes unnecessary costs, during a period of high emotional turmoil, or the issue is trivial. By avoiding certain conflicts, individuals or groups provide some room for the tension to de-escalate and allow for a more constructive conversation at the later stage (Rahim, 2011). One significant benefit of avoidance is that it provides everyone with some time for contemplation. In this way, everyone involved can assess their position and emotion in a more humane sense. If adopted constantly, however, avoidance tends to leave issues unresolved until they surface later, usually with a vengeance. In organizational settings, for instance, managers who habitually avoid conflict may contribute to a culture of unaddressed grievances that ultimately affect the working dynamics of a team and its productivity levels (Thomas, 2008). So when one engages in avoidance, it may also lead others to perceive this action as an uninterested, even at times unwillingness to deal with issues, thus eroding the relationship and trust (Wilmot & Hocker, 2018). Not all impairments placed in its path are fatal, and sometimes, these are even possible to manage. Where it serves the purpose in keeping the conflict from an overly aggressive counterpart, or deferring the conflict allows one proper time for better preparedness and resolution, avoidance becomes a much-appreciated approach. Avoidance, too, can serve purposes of harmony in cultures that stress indirect communication and social cohesion (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Thus, avoidance is not a generalized method but is, nevertheless, a valid method in the appropriate context.

Employee Collaboration

Collaboration is an integrated approach to conflict management, which differs from the avoidance and competitive approaches in focusing on finding solutions to problems by understanding each other's view and working towards finding a common solution by all parties involved. Collaboration aims to meet the concerns of all parties by encouraging open communication, active listening, and collaborative decision-making, in contrast to avoidance or competitiveness. The following are benefits of collaboration: improved productivity through enhanced efficiency and creativity (Edmondson, 1999), creativity and problem-solving through a robust range of encouraged ideas (Paulus & Nijstad, 2003), and improve-team cohesion which increases the strength of trust and unity (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). Understandably, at this point, the parties make decisions that will benefit them, and ideally be targeting achieving a position that truly satisfies everyone. In organizational environments, it makes teamwork better besides developing a high morale environment, where different perspectives are held in high esteem and integrated into decision making (Rahim, 2011; Thomas, 2008). Interpersonal collaborations also cultivate respect and understanding through which more meaningful and long-lasting solutions can be achieved (Wilmot & Hocker, 2018). Collaboration requires a considerable amount of time and effort, which might not be appropriate in circumstances where decisions should be made without delay. Rather, it will depend on all parties engaging in dialogue and working together towards common objectives. Should one party refuse to cooperate, the whole exercise becomes ineffective. However, proper application of collaboration can generate creative solutions, enhanced relationships and can establish a culture of positive conflict resolution, both professionally and personally (Ting-Toomey, 1999). From the studies by Onyemaechi and Ikpeazu (2020), Bimba (2020), and Sajed and Mehdi (2011) collaboration style of conflict management was found to have significant positive correlation with emotional intelligence.

Empirical Insight

A study on interpersonal relationships and emotional intelligence was carried out by Onyemaechi and Ikpeazu (2020) in a few Imo State service companies. The study aimed to identify the nature of the relationship between self-awareness and empathy for coworkers, as well as the relationship between social competency and improved teamwork within an organisation. The objectives were achieved by using the survey research design. The Taro Yamane formula was used to calculate the study's sample size, which came out to be 118 of the 167 employees selected from the several deposit money banks to comprise the population. Descriptive statistics and the Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient were used to evaluate the data. The findings show that social skills are positively and significantly connected with enhanced teamwork within the organisation, and that self-awareness is positively and significantly connected with empathy for coworkers.

In the United States, Rahim (2003) studied conflict resolution techniques and emotional intelligence models. This study investigated how supervisors' emotional differentiation—self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills—relates to how their subordinates use problem-solving and negotiation to settle disputes. In this study, 1,395 people made up the sample. MBA students from seven different countries were given a questionnaire to complete in order to gather the data. The structural equations model for each country was used to test hypotheses and ensure internal consistency reliability, and psychometric qualities were evaluated and improved through the use of exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. The results indicate that self-awareness is positively correlated with social skills, empathy, and self-regulation; self-regulation is positively correlated with social skills and empathy; and motivation is positively correlated with social skills and empathy. These elements have a positive correlation with the problem-solving technique and a negative correlation with the bargaining strategy.

Bimba (2020) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and integrating conflict resolution techniques in Sri Lanka and the influence of the need for attachment. A survey of 388 undergraduate students from ten state universities in Sri Lanka served as the basis for the investigations. The research employed trustworthy and suitable instruments for academic work, including the Wong and Law EI scale for measuring emotional intelligence, the UM-S for measuring affect, and Rahim's Organisational Conflict Inventory-II for measuring conflict resolution techniques like the integrating style. Modified multiple regression analysis (hierarchical multiple regression) was used to evaluate the degree of interaction and moderating influence of nAff between the nexus of EI and integrated conflict resolution strategies. The findings suggest that an integrated approach to conflict resolution is preferred by emotionally intelligent people. The hierarchical multiple regression analysis's findings demonstrated that nAff significantly influenced the relationship between integrating styles and EI. This suggests that emotionally mature people with a high demand for affiliation would favour the integrating style. Higher EI would choose the more effective strategy for settling disputes amicably.

Sajed and Mehdi (2011) looked at the connection between conflict resolution techniques and emotional intelligence among Tehran University physical education specialists. The study illustrates the dispute resolution and emotional intelligence strategies used by University of Tehran physical education specialists. A Robbins conflict management approach questionnaire and a shrink emotional intelligence questionnaire were used to collect data. The findings show that dominating conflict management style and emotional intelligence are strongly positively correlated ($P < 0.01$, $R = 0.404$). Additionally, there was a significant positive association ($P < 0.01$, $R = 0.417$) between conflict management restraint approach and emotional intelligence. Furthermore, a significant association was found between the collaborative approach to conflict management and emotional intelligence ($P < 0.01$, $R = 0.333$). There was a substantial positive correlation between emotional intelligence and the ability to resolve conflicts (compromise style) ($P < 0.10$, $R = 0.411$). Emotional intelligence and the type of conflict management tolerance did not significantly correlate.

Methods

Using a 5-point Likert-type scale in a series of data collection questionnaires, a survey study design was employed to gather participant answers on the allegations. Grades range from severely disagree (SD) at 1, disagree (D) at 2, agree (A) at 4, and strongly agree (SA) at 5. The study's sample consisted of academic and non-academic personnel from state and federally owned universities located in Nigeria's South-East geopolitical zone. The research population was selected using the convenience sampling approach. Taro Yamane's sampling size formula was thus applied to the investigation. Out of 13,570 people in the population, 400 was determined by the computations and used as the study's sample size.

Measures

This study assessed its validity through construct and content validation. As Drost (2011) claims that content validity examines whether an instrument measures what it is intended to measure by encompassing all relevant facets of the construct being measured. On the other hand, construct validity evaluates how well a measure conforms to a theoretical idea (Nikolopoulou, 2022). In order to ensure that the survey items were properly organised to produce the necessary data for the study, academics and industry specialists conducted the content validation of this study. Construct validity was also validated for this study, which used the measuring tool to match the theoretical construct's attributes to the answer and the degree to which it demonstrated a relationship with the constructs. According to the study's hypotheses, the survey data was gathered using inferential statistics (regression analysis of the Ordinary Least Squares tools) in the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). This is the most suitable since it evaluates the level of correlation between the independent and dependent variables.

Results

Table 1: Respondents responses on items addressing self-awareness

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	U	Total	Mean
1	In the workplace, one of the things that makes my life worthwhile is being aware of my actions.	179	131	14	06	30	360	4.17
2	I always maintain my discipline and am well-informed.	201	142	08	02	07	360	4.27
3	I am able to adapt to the ever-changing work environment and trends.	98	186	21	13	42	360	3.79
4	I now recognise my strengths and weaknesses more clearly.	107	195	19	03	36	360	3.93
5	I am now more aware of my motivation in every circumstance.	183	154	04	01	18	360	4.34
	Total	768	808	66	25	133	1800	20.5
	Average Total	154	162	13	5	26	360	4.1
	Percent	43	45	4	1	7	100	-

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

The responses of the employees regarding self-awareness were displayed in Table 1. On the statement regarding self-awareness in relation to emotional intelligence, the average mean score was 4.1. This means that, on average, 154 respondents (43%) strongly agreed, 162 respondents (45%) agreed, 13 respondents (4%) strongly disagreed, 5 respondents (1%) disagreed, and 27 respondents (8%) were undecided.

Table 2: Respondents responses on elements addressing avoidance

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	U	Total	Mean
1	I prefer to stay silent rather than to express my true feelings in a conflict.	99	224	09	04	24	360	4.03
2	I often distract myself to avoid thinking about problems.	86	194	23	11	46	360	3.73
3	I avoid conversations that might lead to disagreement.	104	166	31	10	49	360	3.74
4	I walk away from tasks or responsibilities that feel overwhelming	101	133	43	17	66	360	3.52
5	I avoid situations that make me feel uncomfortable.	134	172	13	02	39	360	4.00
	Total	524	889	119	44	224	1800	19.0
	Average Total	105	178	24	8	45	360	3.8
	Percent	29	49	7	2	13	100	-

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 2 presented the employees' avoidance-related responses. On the statement regarding avoidance in relation to emotional intelligence, the average mean score was 3.8. This means that, on average, 105 respondents (29%) strongly agreed, 178 respondents (49%) agreed, 24 respondents (7%) strongly disagreed, 8 respondents (2% disagreed), and 45 respondents (13%) were undecided.

Table 3: Respondents responses on queries regarding social-awareness

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	U	Total	Mean
1	I have the ability to accurately understand the emotions of my colleagues.	76	134	52	23	75	360	3.22
2	I am empathetic about the emotions of my team members.	82	161	34	17	66	360	3.43
3	I make decisions that takes other's feelings into consideration.	97	173	19	13	58	360	3.27
4	I can easily tell my colleagues when I feel they have treated me unfairly.	178	96	13	04	69	360	3.86
5	I easily compromise in conflict situations by changing my ideas to reach agreement	103	149	20	07	81	360	3.52
	Total	536	713	138	44	349	1800	17.3
	Average Total	107	143	28	9	70	360	3.5
	Percent	30	40	8	3	19	100	-

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 3 presented the employees' answers about social awareness. The average mean score for the statement about social awareness and emotional intelligence was 3.5. The table revealed that, on average, 107 (30%) respondents strongly agreed, 143 (40%) respondents agreed, 28 (8%) respondents strongly disagreed, 9 (3%), and 70 (19%) respondents were undecided.

Table 4: Respondents responses to collaboration statements

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	U	Total	Mean
1	My colleagues and I are always committed to the decisions made.	117	182	19	05	37	360	3.93
2	I have the ability to control my behaviour and that of others.	96	134	61	27	42	360	3.60
3	I comfortably work with my colleagues to find solution to situations.	105	191	22	09	33	360	3.90
4	There is trust and respect when resolving problems among my colleagues and me.	126	188	13	03	30	360	4.07
5	My team members and I share ideas and information that actually satisfies everyone.	98	174	33	21	34	360	3.76
	Total	542	869	148	65	176	1800	19.2
	Average Total	108	174	30	13	35	360	3.8
	Percentage	30	48	8	4	10	100	-

Source: Field Survey 2025.

Regarding teamwork, the employees' answers were displayed in Table 4. With an average mean score of 3.8, the table showed that, on average, 108 (30%) respondents strongly agreed, 174 (48%) respondents agreed, 30 (8%) respondents strongly disagreed, 13 (4%), and 35 (10%) respondents were undecided, respectively, on the statement regarding collaboration in relation to emotional intelligence.

Hypotheses Testing

Test of the Relationship between Self-Awareness and Employee Avoidance

Hypothesis One

H₀ Self-awareness has no relationship with employee avoidance.

H_a Self-awareness relates with employee avoidance.

Table 5 - Ordinary Least Squares (Regression Analysis) Result on Self Awareness and Employee Avoidance

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.702	0.060		28.385	0.000
Self-awareness	0.815	0.020	0.910	41.419	0.000
R ²		82.7%			
– Adjusted R		82.7%			
F-Statistics		1715.560			

Dependent Variable: Employee avoidance.

Predictor: Self-awareness.

Self-awareness has a significant positive regression coefficient of 0.815, according to the first hypothesis. Employee avoidance and self-awareness are positively and significantly correlated, according to the theory. According to R-squared, which quantifies the proportion of the total

variation in the dependent variable that can be accounted for by the independent factors, employee avoidance at five selected universities was found to be 82.7% explained by self-awareness variance. In contrast, the adjusted R examines how the limited degree of freedom affects the independent variable. With an overall significance of 5%, the F-statistic (1715.560) indicates that the entire model is significant. These findings demonstrated that self-awareness and employee avoidance have a favourable and substantial association. Therefore, the alternative theory is approved.

Test of the Relationship between Social Awareness and Employee Collaboration

Hypothesis Two

H₀ Social awareness has no relationship with employee collaboration.

H_a Social awareness relates with employee collaboration.

Table 6 - Ordinary Least Squares (Regression Analysis) Result on Social Awareness and Employee Collaboration

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.677	0.066		25.552	0.000
Social awareness	0.816	0.022	0.892	37.356	0.000
R ²		79.6%			
Adjusted R		79.5%			
F-Statistics		1395.495			

Dependent Variable: Employee collaboration.

Predictor: Social-awareness.

The result for the second hypothesis indicated that social awareness is significant and favourable, with a regression coefficient of (0.816). Therefore, it implies that social consciousness and employee collaboration in the selected universities have a positive and significant relationship. Social awareness by itself accounted for 79.6% of the variation in employee collaboration among the five chosen colleges, according to the R-square, which measures the percentage of the dependent variable's variance that can be explained by the independent factors. Conversely, adjusted R defines the impact of a loss in degrees of freedom due to an independent variable. The model's overall relevance is demonstrated by the F-statistic (1395.495), which is significant at the 5% level. The results indicate a positive and significant relationship between social awareness and employee collaboration, as indicated by the 5% level of significance (Sig <.05). As a result, the alternative hypothesis—that there is a positive and significant association between social awareness and employee collaboration—is accepted.

Discussion of the Results

The findings presented under hypothesis one indicate that self-awareness has a significant and positive correlation with employee avoidance in the institutes of higher learning. It implies that where agreements have failed to materialize in conflict situations the mindfulness of one's behaviours becomes necessary in handling or addressing issues, as the ability to identify when avoidance is necessary de-escalates the possibility of troublesome encounters. This results contradicts those of Jordan and Troth (2011) that found self-awareness to be negatively associated with conflict management. However, it does support Rahim's (2003) conclusion that self-awareness is positively correlated with social skills, empathy, and self-regulation—all of which seem to be positively correlated with a problem-solving strategy. Despite having a negative relationship with bargaining tactics. The results of Lenaghan et al. (2007), which showed that self-awareness had beneficial effects on conflict management, are likewise consistent with this. Zhang et al. (2015) highlight that self-awareness correlates with conflict management styles, where individuals with high EI often choose

avoidance as a short-term strategy to de-escalate tensions before engaging in constructive dialogue. Emphasizing that competences in understanding the correlation between self-awareness and avoidance behaviour is essential for managers and HR professionals. While avoidance can prevent unnecessary emotional conflicts, excessive reliance on this strategy may result in communication breakdowns, unresolved grievances, and decreased productivity (Goleman, et al., 2013). Therefore, organizations should encourage emotional intelligence training that helps employees balance self-awareness with constructive conflict resolution techniques. The result of hypothesis two revealed that social awareness positively and significantly relates to employee collaboration. This implies that understanding the emotions and feelings of others, both as individuals and in a group situation, leads to effective decision-making, quality communication, and building strong relationships (through building trust and respect in conflict resolution). Ability to work well with a diverse workforce helps with the effectiveness of work teams and individuals across cultures. Employees with high social awareness are skilled at interpreting verbal and nonverbal cues, which helps them adjust their communication style to suit different workplace dynamics (Monyei & Ukpere, 2024; Goleman, et al, 2013). Understanding others' feelings guarantees that they react correctly in social situations, avoiding misunderstandings and poor communication (Daus & Ashkanasy, 2005; Côté, 2014). By understanding different perspectives, disputes can be mediated fairly, ensuring that team collaboration remains effective and goal-oriented (Boyatzis, 2008). This results is consistent with that of Sajed and Mehdi (2011), who discovered a significant and favourable association between emotional intelligence and the collaborative style of conflict management ($P < 0.01$, $R = 0.333$). The results are also in line with those of Onyemaechi and Ikpeazu (2020), who found a positive and substantial correlation between improved teamwork within the organisation and social skill. This result also confirmed the conclusion made by Bimba (2020), according to which emotional intelligence is a factor that increases the likelihood that a more cooperative and fruitful conflict resolution strategy would be chosen.

Conclusion

The capability of EI features to manage interpersonal conflicts in the institutes of higher learning goes a long way in creating and sustaining a harmonious work environment, as it improves academics' collaboration efforts, and enhances institutional effectiveness. Given the multiplicity of cultures, societies, and values that present diverse orientations to individuals, an EI-based approach to conflict management would most likely promote effective channels of communication and understanding between conflicting parties. This current study highlights that workforces with emotional intelligence are better equipped in identifying and constructively solving interpersonal conflicts. Through training on emotional intelligence, initiatives on leadership development and conflict resolution workshops, such higher learning institutions will create an environment where conflict is addressed without confrontations through dialogue, empathy, and negotiation. In contemporary times, global best practices demands that insights into emotional intelligence reinforces the necessity for these institutions to incorporate EI-based modes into policy making, educational administrations and operations. Ultimately, emotional intelligence as a primary competency in conflict resolution would enhance interpersonal relationships within the university system while also creating a lot more significant academic productivity, mental health, and improve the reputation of the institutions.

Policy Implication

It is advised that the development and maintenance of self-awareness is a prerequisite for academics in higher learning institutes, owing to the positive and significant correlates between it and avoidance. For this reason, university staff needs to be taught how to tolerate certain situations or issues happening in the workplace especially situations that tends to truncate the integrity, and goals of the workplace. This can be taught through avenues of staff development such as trainings, workshops, and seminars. Regardless, the management of higher learning institutions should create these avenues and opportunities as it enables their workforce to become acquainted with emotional intelligence, particularly how to exhibit the self-awareness capacity in the workplace, since this helps to circumvent ill-fated avoidance by staff in the workplace. Management should encourage training, workshops, and seminars as an avenue for staff development towards enhanced emotional intelligence. Furthermore, workforces in the institutions of higher learning need to foster and

maintain social awareness, as this has a positive bearing on their ability to interact and collaborate with colleagues. By developing the social awareness competence, it creates a priority for their mental health and emotional well-being, they can relate, connect and collaborate effectively with colleagues. This will also be evident in appreciating helpfulness, or observing behaviours of colleagues that appear to be contrary to set goals. Management of higher learning institutes should facilitate such relationships amongst staff even beyond work. As such informal relationships will be beneficial to the workforce's productivity, inter-personal relationships thereby creating a socially aware workforce through improved colleague interaction and the nurturing of a work environment devoid of rancour and acrimony.

Avenues for Further Research

It is suggested that future research should have specific EI competences such as social awareness as an independent variable. Also probe the interaction between EI and leadership effectiveness of other sectors such as civil services. Doing so will expand the horizon on EI, and the need to adopt it as strategy rather than conceiving it as mere competence.

REFERENCES

- Adeyemi, T. O., and Ademilua, S. O. (2012). Conflict management strategies and administrative effectiveness in Nigerian universities. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 2(3), 105-115.
- Ajayi, S. A., and Buhari, L. O. (2014). Methods of conflict resolution in African traditional society. *An International Multidisciplinary Journal*, 8(2), 138-157.
- Arora, B. (2017). Importance of emotional intelligence in the workplace. *International Journal of Engineering and Applied Sciences*, 4(4), 43-45.
- Barfield, A. (2016). Collaboration. *ELT Journal* 70(2), 222-224.
- Bar-On, R. (2006). The Bar-On Model of Emotional-Social Intelligence Skills Development Training, Program and Student Achievement and Retention. Unpublished raw data Texas A and M university-Kingsvill.
- Bimba, D (2020). Impact of need for Affiliation on the relationship between Emotional intelligence and integrating style of conflict resolution. 17TH International Conference on Business Management (ICBM 2020).
- Boyatzis, R. E., Goleman, D., & Rhee, K. (2000). "Clustering competence in emotional intelligence: Insights from the Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI)." In R. Bar-On & J. D. A. Parker (Eds.), *the handbook of emotional intelligence* (pp. 343-362). Jossey-Bass.
- Boyatzis, R. E. (2008). Competencies in the 21st century. *Journal of Management Development*, 27(1), 5-12.
- Boyatzis, R. E., & McKee, A. (2013). *Resonant leadership: Renewing yourself and connecting with others through mindfulness, hope, and compassion*. Harvard Business Press.
- Bradberry, T. and Greaves, J. (2009). *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*. Talent Smart.
- Caruso, D. R., & Salovey, P. (2004). *The emotionally intelligent manager*. Wiley.
- Cherniss, C., and Goleman, D. (2001). *The emotionally intelligent workplace*. Jossey-Bass.
- Ciarrochi, J., Forgas, J. P. and Mayer, J.D. (2006). *Emotional intelligence in everyday life: Scientific Inquiry*. (2nd Ed.). Psychology Press.
- Clarke, N. (2006). Developing emotional intelligence through workplace learning. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 17(1), 21-39.
- Coplan, A. (2011). *Understanding Empathy: Its Features and Effects*. Oxford University Press.
- Coronado-Maldonado, I., and Benítez-Márquez, M. D. (2023). Emotional intelligence, leadership, and work teams: A hybrid literature review [Review of Emotional intelligence, leadership, and work teams: A hybrid literature review]. *Heliyon*, 9(10).

- Côté, S. (2014). Emotional intelligence in organizations. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 1(1), 459-488.
- Daus, C. S., and Ashkanasy, N. M. (2005). The case for the ability-based model of emotional intelligence in organizational behavior. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26(4), 453-466
- De Dreu, C. K., & Van Vianen, A. E. (2001). Managing relationship conflict and the effectiveness of organizational teams. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 22(3), 309-328.
- Diggings, C. (2004). Emotional intelligence: The key to effective performance. *Journal of Human Resource Management*, 12(1), 33-35.
- Drost, E., A. (2011). Validity and reliability in social science research. *Education Research and Perspectives*, 38 (1), 105-124.
- Dulewicz, V. and Higgs, M. (2000). Emotional intelligence- A review and evaluation study. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 15(4), 341-272.
- Edmondson, A. C. (1999). Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44(2), 350-383.
- Egwunyenga, E. J. (2008). Essential elements of university administration in Nigeria. *Educational Research and Review*, 3(2), 66-71.
- Ely, R. J., & Thomas, D. A. (2001). Cultural diversity at work: The effects of diversity perspectives on work group processes and outcomes. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 46(2), 229-273.
- Etele, V.A., Nwadinobi, V.N., Akuezailo, J.A., Ezebube, N.C., Monyei, F.E. & Ukpere, W.I. (2024). Relationship between artificial intelligence and the performance of academic staff at a selected institution of higher learning in Nigeria. *The Seybold Report*, 19(10), 397-414.
- Evert, V. V. (2013). *Complex Interpersonal Conflict Behaviour: Theoretical Frontiers*. Psychology press.
- Gardner, H. (2009). *Multiple Intelligences: What the Research Say Edutopia*. Basic Books Press.
- George, J.M. (2000). Emotions and leadership: The role of emotional intelligence. *Journal of Human relations*, 53(8), 1027-1055.
- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. Bantam Books.
- Goleman, D. (1998). The emotional intelligence of leaders. In *Leader to Leader*, 10, 20.
- Goleman, D. (2000a). *Emotional Intelligence: Perspectives on a Theory of Performance*. Jossey-Bass.
- Goleman, D. (2000b). Leadership that gets results. *Harvard Business Review*, 78(2), 78-90.
- Goleman, D. (2006). *Social intelligence: The new science of human relationships*. Bantam.
- Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R. E., and McKee, A. (2002). The emotional reality of teams. In *Journal of Organizational Excellence* 21 (2).
- Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R., and McKee, A. (2013). *Primal leadership: Unleashing the power of emotional intelligence*. Harvard Business Press.
- Greeff, A. P. and Bruyne, T. (2000). Conflict management style and marital satisfaction. *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy*, 26(4), 321-334.
- Hocker, J. L. and Wilmot, W.W. (2018). *Interpersonal Conflict*. McGraw-Hill Education, 1(3).
- Howell, D. (2020). Main theories of emotional and social intelligence. *Journal of Business Ball*, 4(1), 95-100.
- Hsieh, C.M, Wang, T., Fan Pao. C and Huang, C.I. (2014). A study of the emotional intelligence and interpersonal relationships of college students in Southern Taiwan. *Universal Journal of Management*, 2(8), 133-138.
- Jeffrey, S. (2017). A comprehensive guide to developing self-awareness. *American Journal of Social Psychology*. 5(3), 74-97.

- Jordan, P. and Troth, A. (2011). Emotional intelligence and leader member exchange: the relationship with employee turnover intentions and job satisfaction, leadership and organizational development. *Journal of Management*, 32(4), 260-280.
- Jordan, P. J., & Troth, A. C. (2004). Managing emotions during team problem solving: Emotional intelligence and conflict resolution. *Human Performance*, 17(2), 195-218.
- Kahtani, A.A. (2013). Employee emotional intelligence and employee performance in the higher education institution in Saudi Arabia: A proposed theoretical framework. *International Journal of Business and Social Science* 4(9), 15.
- Khokhar, C.P. and Kush, T. (2009). Emotional intelligence and work performance among executives. *Europe Journal of Psychology*, 6(3), 11.
- Klenke, k. (2007). Authentic leadership: Toward an expanded theory of self-influence processes in organizations. *International Journal of Studies*, 3(1), 68-97.
- Kozlowski, S. W., & Ilgen, D. R. (2006). Enhancing the effectiveness of work groups and teams. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 7(3), 77-124.
- Laura, W. (2022). Conflict management. Assessed from www.powerbypressbooks.com
- Lenaghan, J. A., Buds, R. and Eisner, A. B. (2007). An examination of the role of emotional intelligence in work and family conflict. *Journal of Management*, 19(1), 76-94.
- Lips-Wiersma, M., & Wright, S. (2012). Measuring the meaning of meaningful work: Development and validation of the Comprehensive Meaningful Work Scale (CMWS). *Group & Organization Management*, 37(5), 655-685.
- Maclean, M. (2022). Conflict and Accommodation. *A Cultural History of Sport in the Age of Industry*, 119-141.
- Maslach, C., & Leiter, M. P. (2008). Early predictors of job burnout and engagement. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93(3), 498-512.
- Matthews, G., Zeidner, M., and Roberts, R. D. (2012). Emotional intelligence: A promise unfulfilled? *Japanese Psychological Research*, 54(2), 105-127.
- Mayer, J. D., Caruso, D. R., and Salovey, P. (2000). Emotional intelligence meets traditional standards for an intelligence. *Intelligence*, 27(4), 267-298.
- Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., and Caruso, D. R. (2004). Emotional intelligence: Theory, findings, and implications. *Psychological Inquiry*, 15(3), 197-215.
- Meyer, J.D., Salovey, P., Caruso, L. C. (2011). *Emotional Intelligence*. Cambridge university press.
- Michelle and Naveed (2022). Interpersonal conflicts: types, examples & resolution strategies. Retrieved from <https://www.choosingtherapy.com/interpersonal-conflicts/>.
- Monyei, E. F., Agbaeze, K. E., & Isichei, E. E. (2020). Organisational paranoia and employees' commitment: Mediating effect of human resources policies. *Int. J. Sci. Technol. Res*, 9, 2277-8616.
- Monyei, F.E., Olokede, B.A., and Ukpere, W.I. (2024). Safety intervention strategy and organizational safety performance. *Migration Letters*, 21(8), 988-1004.
- Monyei, F.E. & Ukpere, W.I. (2024). Talent management and workforce commitment, a telecom sector perspective. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(8), 156-166. Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v30i8.7188.
- Murray, D.W., Rosanbalm, K., and Christopoulos, C. (2016). *Self-Regulation and Toxic Stress: Seven Key Principles of Self-Regulation in Context*. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Nelson, D., and Low, G. (2011). *Emotional intelligence: Achieving academic and career excellence*. Prentice Hall.
- Neubauer, A.C. and Freucenthaler, H.H. (2005). Model of emotional intelligence. *Emotional Intelligence: An International Handbook*, 31-50.

- Nikolopoulou, K. (2022). What is content validity? | Definition & examples. Retrieved from <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/content-validity/>
- Ogunyemi, B. (2015). Exploring emotional intelligence in conflict management among university students in Nigeria. *African Journal of Education and Developmental Studies*, 12(4), 89-103.
- Omoniyi, T. (2010). Introducing: Change, accommodation and conflict. *The Sociology of Language and Religion: Change, Conflict and Accommodation*, 1-13.
- Onyemaechi U. and Ikpeazu N. (2020). Emotional intelligence and interpersonal relations in service industries in Nigeria. *International Journal of Research and Scientific Innovation (IJRSI)*, 7(4), 3-15.
- Opuni, F. F., and Agyemang, C. B. (2020). Emotional intelligence and workplace conflict resolution in Ghana. *African Journal of Business Management*, 14(6), 187-199.
- Paulus, P. B., & Nijstad, B. A. (2003). *Group creativity: Innovation through collaboration*. Oxford University Press.
- Petrides, K. V and Furnham, A. (2006). The role of trait emotional intelligence in a gender specific model of organizational variables. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 36 (2), 52-69.
- Raad, B.D. (2005). The trait-coverage of emotional intelligence: Personality and individual differences. *Journal of Management*, 38(2), 673–687.
- Rahim, M. A. (2011). *Managing conflict in organizations*. Transaction Publishers.
- Robinson, S. L., O'Reilly, J., & Wang, W. (2013). Invisible at work: An integrated model of workplace ostracism. *Journal of Management*, 39(1), 203-231.
- Sajed, P. H. and Mehdi, B. H. (2011). Relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict management. *World Applied Sciences Journal* 15 (11), 1619-1622.
- Salami, S. O. (2010). Emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and academic performance among university students. *Studies in Higher Education*, 35(2), 197-206.
- Salim, N. and Nasir, L. (2010). Relationship between employees and managers on emotional intelligence to job satisfaction and performance. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 68(3), 461-473.
- Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 9(3), 185-211.
- Schulze, A. Seuffert, V. Feist, G. and Gorma, M. (2013). Conflicts, cooperation, and competition in the field of science and technology. *Handbook of the Psychology of Science*, 303-330.
- Schutte, N. S., Malouff, J. M., Simunek, M., McKenley, J., and Hollander, S. (2001). Characteristic emotional intelligence and interpersonal relations. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 141(4), 523-536.
- Scott, S. (2019). Motivation and productivity in the workplace. *International Journal of Management*, 1(4), 50-56.
- Shandru M. S. and Saravanakumar, A. (2022). Emotional intelligences influence on confrontation resolving skills of principals at school administration. *International Conference on Emerging Challenges in Physical Education*, 2(3), 250-312.
- Shkanasy, N. M., & Daus, C. S. (2005). Rumors of the death of emotional intelligence in organizational behavior are vastly exaggerated. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26(4), 441-452.
- Sischka, P.E., Schmidt, A.F., and Steffgen, G. (2021). The effect of competition and passive avoidant leadership style on the occurrence of workplace bullying. *Personal Review*, 50(2), 535-559.
- Sujuan, M. (2015). Emotional intelligence, conflict management styles, and innovation performance: An empirical study of Chinese employees. *International Journal of Conflict Management* 26(4), 40-57.

- Suruchi, P., Spoorth, I. S. and Garima, S. (2015). Study on effect of emotional intelligence on conflict resolution style. *Indian Journal of Science and Technology* 8(6), 71.
- Thomas, K. W. (2008). Conflict and conflict management. In *The handbook of industrial and organizational psychology*, 889-935.
- Thomas, K.W. (2008). Thomas-kilmann conflict mode. TKI Profile and Interpretive Report, 1(11).
- Ting-Toomey, S. (1999). *Communicating across cultures*. Guilford Press.
- Tripathy, M. (2018). *Emotional Intelligence: An overview*. Mauritius: Lambert Academic Press.
- Ufomba, R.E. and Udensi, C.E. (2024). Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Management in Selected Universities in South-East, Nigeria. *International Journal of Management Sciences*, 12(2), 150-16.
- Vakola, M., Tsaousis, I. and Nikolaou, I. (2004). The role of emotional intelligence and personality variables on attitudes toward organizational change. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 19(2), 88-110.
- Wilmot, W., & Hocker, J. (2018). *Interpersonal conflict* (10th Ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- Wong, C. S., and Law, K. S. (2002). The effects of leader and follower emotional intelligence on performance and attitude. *Leadership Quarterly*, 13(3), 243-274.
- Yasir, T. (2019). The relationship of team leader's emotional intelligence (EI) with indirect intervention of five conflict-handling styles on interpersonal conflict in Pakistan). *International Journal of Information Systems and Change Management* 11(34), 211-227.
- Zhang, Y., Cao, L., & Tjosvold, D. (2015). Linking transformational leadership and team performance: A conflict management approach. *Journal of Business Research*, 68(4), 906-914.
- Zhenzhong, M. (2007). Competing or accommodating? An empirical test of Chinese conflict management styles. *Contemporary Management Research*, 3(1), 3-3.
- Zimmermann, B. J. (1996). A social cognitive view of self-regulated academic learning. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 81(3), 329-339.