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Relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict management styles in staffs at the Bank of Sepah, Tehran, 2014

Ali Mohebbi[1],*, Reza Arab[2]

[1]Department of Education, University Police, Tehran, Iran

2Department of Management, Saveh Branch, Islamic Azad University, Saveh, Iran

*E-mail address: Mohebbiarr@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The aim of the present research was to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict management styles in staffs at the Bank of Sepah, Tehran. The research methodology is descriptive and falls under correlative forms. The statistical population consisted of all Sepah staffs in the city of Tehran, where based on the latest statistics and information, the number of 2000 staffs participated. Using cluster sampling method, the number of 322 people was selected as the sample. In order to measure variables used in the research, two questionnaires, i.e. Robins' Staffs Conflict Management Styles (2001) and Schering's Emotional Intelligence (1996) were applied. The validity of both questionnaires was confirmed by experts and, based on Cronbach's alpha the reliability of the scales was found to be 0/89 for the staffs conflicts and 0/86 for emotional intelligence. To analyze data, descriptive and inferential (Pearson correlation coefficient, single t test and independent t Test) statistical methods were used. Research findings revealed that there was a negative and reverse relation between emotional intelligence with avoidance style and control style. However, a significant and positive relation was found between emotional intelligence and managerial compromise. Single t sample results also suggested that various conflicts styles and emotional intelligence enjoyed relatively good status.

Keywords: Sepah bank; emotional intelligence; conflicts management style

1. INTRODUCTION

In the complicated and dynamic world, organizations are heavily dependent on work force and human capitals, more than resources and facilities at their disposal, to continue their activities, increase performance, promote competence and develop roles and duties. Of managers' salient roles in organizations is to lay the ground for a useful and constructive interaction between various working groups and to create a healthy and enthusiastic environment for offering services and developing and actualization of talents and personal and collective talents of staffs.

With preparing a work environment, successful mangers strive to get staffs feel ownership and honor while serving organizational goals and contribute to daily progress of the organizations. Successful managers are those who, via creativity and proper leadership, prohibit the creation of tension and conflicts as well as destructive engagements, which have no result but to waste the ability and forces of the staffs and waste the vitality and cheerfulness in the work environment and thus contribute to the efficacy and efficiency of the organization while creating healthy and constructive competitions resulting in the actualization of teams and systemization of their work styles (Farid, 2005).

In today world, conflict is a subject which has obsessed the human thought more than anything else and this issue exists in all organizations in different forms like conflict between the superior and the inferior, employer and employee, conflict between colleagues and even conflicts inside person himself. Conflicts appear due to various factors between people and groups. Perceptual, personality, doctrinal and political differences n then one hand, and various inferences with regards to personal, organizational and societal goals on the other hand, bring about various conflicts in collective environments. Having said this, conflicts in many of then organizations manifests as a serious issue and could be either constructive or destructive. Conflicts could affect organizations' performance; create conditions in which organizations lose their own resources insofar as they end up in dissolution (Mozafari et al, 2013).

The subject who has drawn the attention of researchers and scholars in the last decade in the Management Literature is the subject of emotional or affective intelligence. This subject deals with role of managers' emotions and feelings in managing work with others; it also strives to elaborate and interpret the position of emotions and affection in managers as well as their efficacy. A series of published reports based on relevant researches with the title of emotional or affective intelligence have brought about hopeful conclusion regarding relationship between managers' emotional intelligence and managers' success. Some of these researches have stated that managers who have exposed better performance and their managerial; behavior result in the commitment of staffs a d increase of their job satisfaction, enjoy such traits as self-control, self-regulation, self-management and control of emotions, as well as their own emotions within then work environment (Khaef Elahi and Doostar, 2003).

On this basis, on the one hand, staffs need to identify conflicts characters, causes of conflicts formation, sources of cognition and generally, conflicts management strategies and on the other hand, they have to acquire skills necessary for constructively solve conflicts. One of the most important skills which is today focused attention is emotional intelligence which is concerned with peoples' adaptability and success in life situations. It possesses large scope ranging from abilities related with cognition and explains the application of emotion; this

issue suggests that emotional intelligence is more important than general IQ in daily performance (Ansari et al, 2010).

Currently, bank of Sepah with 80 years of experience (more than three quarters of a century), serving as one of the most significant financial and economic entities of the country, has managed to contribute effectively with the fulfillment of economic and macro level goals by attracting wandering capital in the society and directing it towards generating economic activities. Internationally speaking, by creating banking units in such countries as Germany, Italy and France, as well as the international Sepah bank in England, this bank enjoys a valuable position in offering banking services. Of the most important activities of the bank of Sepah within then international arena, one can refer to services such as opening of deposit accounts, conduct of currency exchange bills, opening document-based credits, communication of document credit, coverage of document credit, confirmation of document credit, and issuance of currency related sanctions.

The above was a brief history of this old Iranian bank; however, in its time period when the speed of development cycle across the world requires the ever increasing presence of banks, there is naturally the need for an effective and dynamic banking system more than ever before, as the nation's economic capacity across the world is skyrocketing. Competition between banks is becoming tighter and state banks and a large number of private banks and credit institutions are making efforts to acquire a larger portion of the market. Thus, they are pursuing to adopt better methods and styles for offering various services so that they can attract more customers and increase their own profitability. However, they are mainly ignorant of an element that could result in their success as a privilege among their competitors.

Human forces and job satisfaction is the same missing circle which are necessary for the materialization of goals and progress of banks. In fact, it is sympathetic and motivated staffs that cause the prosperity of banks and moreover, result in banks' failure. Thus, attention to staffs for developing capable, interest in work and dynamic and moral staffs could mark the success of each bank (Nazari, 2011). An exploration of emotional intelligence was seriously started with the scientific work of Bar-On in the early 1980s. Later, these researches were published in 1983 by Gardner and Wesler in the book "Multiple Intelligence". Thereafter, the discussion of emotional intelligence in 1985 was examined by Wayne Payne, a PhD student majoring in Art, at one of the American Universities during his own thesis. After Payne, Sawaf conducted researches in this area in 1989 and founded an institution in the area of Trainings related with Emotional Intelligence.

In this institution, Cooper and Sawaf started a global research in this area. In the end, the first plan related with emotional intelligence, being credible statistically and measurement criteria, was offered by four experts, namely Cooper, Sawaf, Orioli and Trocki. In 1990, investigating previous researches, Meyer and Salovey found out that some people are more capable in understanding themselves, their own senses and those of others. With Dipaolo, they presented the first emotional intelligence Test (Quoted by Mirkamali et al, 2007).

Emotions account for a large part of our lives. Direct and indirect presence of emotions could be seen in reasoning and rationality. Ignorance of emotions, lack of their management and negligence in stating them could entail hefty costs for man. Modern researches have revealed that loss of emotional intelligence can lead to destructive impacts in personal and social areas and vice versa, acquisition and enhancement of which lay the ground for larger successes. Training of emotional intelligence could pave the ground for the personal and

social transcendence in various areas (Mir Darbakvandi, 2011). Emotional intelligence refers to a set of capacities, capacities and, for Bar-On (2000), asset of non-cognitive skills which increase person's abilities in successfully dealing with necessities and environmental pressures and result in adaptable and human friendly behaviors on the person's part. Antonacopoulou & Gabriel (2001) considers emotional intelligence as a major source of motivation, information, personal power, innovation, creativity and influence which plays a determining role in developing the organization, because this kind of intelligence results in the person's loyalty and belonging of the organizations, better adaptability with organizational changes, technical progress and human relations as well as rational decision making processes.

Conflict appears once the individual thinks the opposite party is opposed to him or he intends to hinder him to reach the goal required. Such trends as continued changes in the way work is done, more diversity of staffs' combination and more teamwork, have caused conflict in the modern world to be inevitable (Callanan et al, 2006). One of the most significant factors that can result in the removal of conflicts favorably is selection of effective and efficient styles in solving these conflicts (Keshtkaran et al, 2004). Conflict management is comprised of activities which are done in the direction of using the existing conflicts for movement and creating dynamism and creativity within organizations. These innovations are applied for creating the morale of innovation and developing fuller ways (Hadaddi et al, 2011). Usinf such skills as effective communications, problem solution and negotiations, conflict can be managed. Prior to everything, in order to handle conflicts, they should be identified and analyzed and the causes are explored. The key point after diagnosis of problems and its causes is to choose an appropriate style (Jahanian & Shayeste, 2013).

In a research titled "Determining correlation of emotional intelligence with conflict management strategies among Ghazvin Training hospitals' managers" in 2007, Vatankhah et al, (2008) fund out that there was a statistically inverse correlation between managers' emotional intelligence and non-coping styles strat5geies in managing conflicts. In fact, managers' emotional intelligence can be said to a major factor in identification of conflicts and adoption of appropriate solutions for conflicts management within then organization. In a research with the title of "Role of librarians' emotional intelligence in adopting conflicts management strategies", Ansari et al, (2010) concluded that the adoption of solution-oriented strategies in staffs with higher emotional intelligence was significantly higher than that of staffs with lower emotional intelligence.

In a research with the title of "Relationship of managers' emotional intelligence with their conflicts management strategies at the Iranian Medical Sciences University", Shahbahrami (2010) concluded that managers with higher emotional intelligence will deal with removing conflicts with more success and preparations compared to others in organizations. In a research with the heading of "relationship of emotional intelligence with managers' conflicts management styles at high school level, district 1, Shiraz in the academic year of 2010-2011", Mazare'ea (2011) found out that there was a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and managers' conflicts management styles. Sharifi and Islamyie (2012), in a research with the heading of "examination of relationship between emotional intelligence and universities' chancellors' conflicts management styles" concluded that there was a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and managers' conflicts management styles at Islamic Azad Universities, district 10, such that 8/2% of the conflict management variations can be explained through emotional intelligence. Steve (2004) reached conclusions in his own researches and stated that there is a

positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence components and organizational profitability, customer's satisfaction and staffs. Yu et al, (2006) examined the relationship between staffs' conflicts management styles and managers' emotional intelligence on 227 students majoring in Administrative Management in China, wherein a positive and statistically significant relationship was found between managers' emotional intelligence and synergy styles or compromises.

Smith et al (2008) conducted a research with the title of examining emotional intelligence, conflicts communication pattern and life satisfaction and conclude that the most satisfied couples are those who were not avoiding discussing problems and had higher emotional intelligence. Satisfied couples, compared to unsatisfied couples, would understand that their emotional intelligence and that of their spouses were the same. Those with higher emotional intelligence did have more appropriate predictions compared to their spouses'; consent with regards to satisfaction with communications. Thus, according to the material mentioned the main question of the questionnaire is formulated as: Is there a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and conflicts management style among Sepah Bank staffs?

2. METHODOLOGY

The research methodology is descriptive and falls under correlative forms. The statistical population consisted of all Sepah staffs in the city of Tehran, where based on the latest statistics and information, the number of 2000 staffs participated. Using cluster sampling method, the number of 322 people was selected as the sample. In order to measure variables used in the research, two questionnaires, i.e. Robins' Staffs Conflict Management Styles (2001) and Schering's Emotional Intelligence (1996) were applied.

Research tools

The first tool used in this research was the Schering's Emotional intelligence Inventory (1996). This scale has 34 items and is filled in based on five choice Likert scale. It has 5 subscales which includes self-motivation, self-awareness. Self-control, social skills and social consciousness. Validity and reliability of this inventory in Iran was for the first time confirmed by Abdi (2007). In his research, the inventory's reliability was 0/81. Also, in this research, in order to determine staffs' conflicts management styles, the OCCI Inventory, translated version by Moghimi (1993) was applied which, in line with improving the communication of concepts, several statements were edited. Putnam and Wilson (1982) designed this tool based on three strategies,. Strategy of lack of coping, including avoidance and compromise manners; strategy of solution orientedness, synergy manners and compromise and the strategy of control, i.e. competitive manners (Sung, 2004). In this tool, respondents are required to answer 30 questions about their own reactions against a conflict situation based on a Likert Scale (1 = never, 2 = rarely; 3 = sometimes, 4 = most often and 5 = always) (quoted by Pirzade and Alavi, 2010).

3. FINDINGS

Table 1. Correlation between emotional intelligence and compromise style in Sepah Bank, Tehran

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Correlation type	Correlation rate	R squared $(R)^2$	Sig.
Emotional intelligence	Compromise	Pearson	0/496	0/24	0/001

As observed in Table (1), there is a positive and significant relationship between two variables of emotional intelligence and compromise style among Sepah Bank staffs in the city of Tehran. This relationship is significant at Cronbach's alpha rate of 0/01. Emotional intelligence correlation coefficient with compromise style is (r=0/496). In other words, staffs with higher emotional intelligence make use of compromise styles more. Also, the estimated determination coefficient suggests that variable emotional intelligence explains 0/24 of the variance of compromise style.

Table 2. Correlation between emotional intelligence and avoidance style (non-confrontation) among Sepah staffs, Tehran.

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Correlation type	Correlation rate	R squared $(R)^2$	Sig.
emotional intelligence	avoidance style (non-confrontation)	Pearson	-0/324	0/10	0/001

As observed in Table (2), there is an inverse and negative relationship between two variables of emotional intelligence and avoidance style (non-confrontation) among Sepah Staffs in the city of Tehran, where this relationship was significant at the 0/01 rate. Correlation coefficient of emotional intelligence with compromise style was (r=-0/324). In other words, staffs with higher emotional intelligence, make use of avoidance style (non-confrontation) styles less. Also, the estimated determination coefficient indicates that variable emotional intelligence explains 10% of the variance of avoidance style (non-confrontation) style.

Table 3. Correlation between emotional intelligence and control style (competition) among Sepah bank staffs, Tehran.

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Correlation type	Correlation rate	R squared $(R)^2$	Sig.
emotional intelligence	Control style (competition)	Pearson	-0/379	0/13	0/001

As observed in Table (3), there is an inverse and negative relationship between two variables of emotional intelligence and Control style (competition) among Sepah Staffs in the city of Tehran, where this relationship was significant at the 0/01 rate. Correlation coefficient of emotional intelligence with Control style (competition) was (r=-0/379). In other words, staffs with higher emotional intelligence, make use of Control style (competition) styles less. Also, the estimated determination coefficient indicates that variable emotional intelligence explains 10% of the variance of Control style (competition) style.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Research findings revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between two variables of emotional intelligence and compromise style among Sepah Bank staffs in the city of Tehran. This relationship is significant at Cronbach's alpha rate of 0/01. Emotional intelligence correlation coefficient with compromise style is (r = 0/496). In other words, staffs with higher emotional intelligence make use of compromise styles more. Findings of this research are in concert with previous findings. Results of this research are corresponding to those of Ansari et al (2010) who found out in a research that the adoption of solution oriented strategy among staffs with higher emotional intelligence was significantly greater more than staffs with lower emotional intelligence. Also, the findings conformed to those of Feizi et al (2011) who showed in a research that there was a positive relationship and a negative relationship between emotional intelligence of managers with strategies of control, that of solution orientedness and that of non-confrontation.

In fact, it can be stated that staffs with higher emotional intelligence are more inclined to use compromise based conflicts management styles, because they are more adaptable in assessing and regulating their own special emotions compared to staffs with lower emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence can create a favorably conducive working setting and affect job satisfaction of staffs, effective management and organizational progress, because higher emotional intelligence can increase performance, and add to strategic understanding and reduce staffs' problems (Schlechter, 2008).

Research also suggested that there is an inverse and negative relationship between two variables of emotional intelligence and avoidance style (non-confrontation) among Sepah Staffs in the city of Tehran, where this relationship was significant at the 0/01 rate.

Correlation coefficient of emotional intelligence with compromise style was (r = -0/324). In other words, staffs with higher emotional intelligence, make use of avoidance style (non-confrontation) styles less.

The findings also indicated correspondence with findings by Vatankhah et al (2008) who found out there is a statistically significant and inverse relationship between managers' emotional intelligence and strategy of non-confrontation in managing conflict management. The Also, the findings conformed to those of Feizi et al (2011) who showed in a research that there was a positive relationship and a negative relationship between emotional intelligence of managers with strategies of control, that of solution orientedness and that of non-confrontation.

In the end, there is an inverse and negative relationship between two variables of emotional intelligence and Control style (competition) among Sepah Staffs in the city of Tehran, where this relationship was significant at the 0/01 rate. Correlation coefficient of emotional intelligence with Control style (competition) was (r = -0/379). In other words, staffs with higher emotional intelligence, make use of Control style (competition) styles less. The Also, the findings conformed to those of Feizi et al (2011) who showed in a research that there was a positive relationship and a negative relationship between emotional intelligence of managers with strategies of control, that of solution orientedness and that of non-confrontation.

In this regard, it can be stated that emotional intelligence in staffs leads them to have the highest possible rate of performance. This means that they strive harder, become present at the working place regularly, and attempt for making goals and decision of the organization practical. For a person to reach a higher level of performance, he/she should decide to do the work (motivation), manage to do the work (ability) and has at his/her disposal all the appropriate means for the conduct of the work (setting). Lack of which will hurt the performance. Thus, managers should make sure that the three conditions mentioned have to be met.

Staffs' lower emotional intelligence could jeopardize staffs' performance, because it causes man to resort to other means such as using emotions (e.g. angriness, crying, etc.) instead of direct involvement with problems while dealing with issues, and for this, he/she will learn whenever he/she is faced with a problem, he/she can solve them with these means. As a consequence, he/she will not be able to confront the problems. Therefore, we can conclude that the more staffs apply these styles, the less they use competitive or control styles for managing conflicts. One can argue that higher emotional intelligence leads staffs to have more interaction and not to prioritize their wants over others'.

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