AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF MANAGERS AND CONFLICT** MANAGEMENT WITH MEDIATING ROLE OF POLITICAL **INTELLIGENCE (CASE STUDY: BANDAR ABBAS OIL REFINING COMPANY)**

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ABSTRACT

KEY WORDS

political intelligence,

emotional intelligence,

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Background: The present study objective is to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence of managers and conflict management with mediating role of political intelligence. Methods: The population of the study is managers of Bandar Abbas Oil Refining Company (108 managers) and after data collection through standard questionnaire, they were analyzed. The reliability of questionnaire was confirmed by Cronbach's alpha coefficient and its content and face validities were confirmed by utilizing the views of professors and experts in the field. Also, model and hypotheses were analyzed and fit-evaluated using AMOS structural equations software. Results: The results show that emotional intelligence of managers accompanied with political intelligence has positive effect on conflict management. Finally, the mediating role of political intelligence is confirmed in the relation between emotional intelligence and conflict management.

INTRODUCTION

Among issues challenging an organization is the problem of conflict and lack of agreements. Organizational activities require interaction among people and groups of organization. In organizations, various people are occupied with their tasks and activities in different ranks. Bilateral or multilateral relations of people with each other are necessary to carry out these activities, but it also can make the ground for conflict. Therefore, one of the main and the most inevitable issues in organizations is conflict among people and groups available among them [1]. In organizational life, conflict is in relation with power and politics. Conflict might be created among people and groups and it often commence with political behavior. Conflict will be created especially when members of a group think their attempts to achieve their goals are being neutralized by another group [2].

One of the most important factors indicating ability of manager to solve conflict effectively is his emotional intelligence. Contrary to what was thought in past and cognitional intelligence was the only help to success, nowadays, emotional intelligence is a factor determining people's success in life and career [3]. The people with high emotional intelligence experience less emotional disorders due to their ability to interpret efficiently and organize emotional states of themselves and others [4]. What is called emotional intelligence is in fact the main source of energy, power, wish and desire of human and it activates the most internal values and goals of a person. Through emotional development, a person learns to confirm emotions of him and others; value them; and respond to them appropriately. He also understands at any moment during a day that emotions prepare profitable and vital information for him. This reaction is from heart that sparks creative genius and intuition. In addition, it makes the person honest with himself; makes confidant relations; clarifies important decisions; prepares an internal compass for life and career; and guides the person in unexpected events and successful solutions [5]. Researches show that conflict resolution in organizations need to create a peaceful environment, reduce discrimination and make justice, cooperative learning, violence prevention and critical thinking. Managers who have such a high emotional intelligence are able to create such environments. A manager with high emotional intelligence can get more information about the conflict, and therefore, can identify conflict faster and more accurately. He is also able to make useful guidance with empathy and confidence, thereby provide an environment where staffs can have more mental health. Because by having healthy relation, people feel acceptance, support, value, confidence and more importance. Therefore, their mental health will be prepared and their efficiency and effectiveness will be increased. In such environment, effective management of conflict is possible. Furthermore, another factor to resolve the conflict in addition to preventing mentality intervention in organizational communications and accepting opinions of others is the manager having communication skills [6]. If a manager can be a good speaker and a good transmitter, a good listener and a good receiver, he can provide participation of individuals inside and outside the organization through attracting comprehensive trust. As a result, success of organization to achieve its goals is guaranteed. Political behaviors in modern organizations are inevitable and cannot be removed. But, through applying political intelligence, their effects can be minimized. According to many theorists, political skill has an important role in predicting effectiveness of managers. They know structure of political skill as the best suited and potentially the most useful predictor of effect of manager at the workplace

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where he is handling its political liability. Political skill is essential in many organizations as an important feature for competence and career success. Although organizations have not known political skills accurately and have not seen it so, they have selected and promoted people in accordance with this feature. According to Spenser and Spenser, managers with more developed political skill are known as more effective managers. Studies have shown that emotional intelligence has an important impact on social adjustment [7], as the emotional intelligence training is effective on social adjustment and development of communication skills [8]. Moreover, capability of emotional intelligence can develop personal function through solving conflicts and confronting with mental pressures and facilitating communication with others [9]. As political intelligence can help achieving flexibility and decreasing conflicts during the process of change, therefore, the present study reviews the relationship between emotional intelligence, political intelligence and conflict management.

RESEARCH'S LITRATURE

Political skills (political intelligence)

Political skill is a separate form of social skill that aims to achieve success and goals in both individual and organizational levels. This skill can happen out of territory of organization, but its purpose is penetration and organizational success [10]. Three decades ago, Pfeffer (1987) was the first person who used the term "political skill" in organizations. Pherri et al (1999) did an independent, parallel and shared work with the research conducted by Mintzberg (1983)[11]. Mintzberg introduced political skill as the required competence for job success and stated political skill as: The ability to effectively understand others at work and apply this knowledge to influence others to move in paths that promote personal or organizational objectives. In this regard, Kelli Ford has recently defined political skill as: The ability to effectively understand others at work and apply this knowledge to influence others to act in such a way that promotes organizational and/ or individual goals. Although this skill is not urgent for career, it is promoted for function and survival in today's complex and dynamic organizations [12].

Political skill of managers has 4 dimensions:

1-Social consciousness, 2- Interpersonal penetration skill, 3- Networking skills, 4- Obvious Honesty skills **Social consciousness (acuity):** refers to the ability of people for thorough understanding of social situations including their own behaviors and others' behaviors [13]. People with social acuity are able to interpret others' manners, comprehend social situations and apply creativity in their relations with others. This form of political skill will effect on ability of staffs for evaluation of the best time and method to start change [12]. Such people are keen observers of their social environment, and comprehend not only complexities surrounding them, but also motivations of their own and others [11].

Interpersonal penetration skill: refers to ability of people with political skill to influence on those who do interact with them [13]. They know the ability to negotiate in others as an inherent feature of political skills [14]. They are humble and convincing that conceptually is similar to the term 'flexibility' used by Pfeffer (1992) which is an ability of people's adaptability [12]. These people use a keen convincing style to influence on others [15].

Networking skill: as one of the dimensions of political dimension refers to the fact that political people are skilled in making communication, friendship and alliances. This ability creates 'social capital' that facilitates people with more resources in order to achieve their objectives [13]. People who have a high political skill identify those who have profitable resources or communications and create social networks [15]. Consequently, they will have social capital and social support [13]. Moreover, skillful political people are able to effectively manage conflicts and negotiations that enhance the probability of making strong communication between them and others [11].

Obvious Honesty skills: refers to having validity, honesty and persistency. People having obvious honesty attract more trust and support of colleagues when challenging penetration attempts [16]. Among the four dimensions of political skill, obvious honesty pays attention to successful penetration potential in the best way [15]. Through having self- confidence and personal safety, it attracts others and induces them relief. People who have skill politically not only know accurately what to do in various social situations, but also know how to do them to conceal any self- service motivation and their works are interpreted as original and honest [18] [12].

Emotional intelligence

Among the new achievements with the origins of psychology that has been recently proposed in the field of management is the topic of emotional intelligence. During the last decades, the concept of emotional intelligence has been introduced increasingly in theoretical background and psychological researches as a structure that is related with various human behaviors in various environments. The term' emotional intelligence' was proposed by Daniel Goleman in 1995 and provoked many discussions [19]. In Salvvy's point of view, emotional intelligence includes controlling feelings and emotions the person himself and others, arranging them and using the information based on emotion to guide thinking and action. A more complete definition of emotional intelligence in Salvvy's idea is: the ability of comprehension, evaluation, correct expression of emotions, the ability to access and generate emotions to facilitate cognitive activities, the ability to understand the feelings and use of language related to emotions, the ability to regulate emotions of oneself and others to achieve growth, good mood and effective social communication [20].

Emotional intelligence includes ability of awareness of the emotions and using them to improve the quality of personal and social life. According to Peter Salvvy and John Mayer, emotional intelligence is a type of



emotional processing that includes correct evaluation of feeling in oneself and others. Dr. Daniel Goleman knows emotional intelligence as abilities to help a person keep his motives; endure in the face of difficulties and frustration and controls himself and be relaxed in critical condition and challenges ;and empathize with others and be hopeful [21]. Mayer et al concluded that emotional intelligence has four important components. First, emotional intelligence includes the ability of evaluation of emotions both verbally and non-verbally. For instance, people who have emotional intelligence are more skillful in accurate recognition of emotional states appearing on the faces of people. This ability is considered as an important issue for occupations in which evaluating clients and customers' emotions is vital in order to have an effective communication with them. Second, emotional intelligence also has the power of adapting affects with cognitive processes and training. Therefore, people having such intelligence have more flexibility when planning for making more creative solutions and guiding attentions and motivations (for example distracting emotions from less important issues to more important priorities). Third, emotional intelligence includes the ability of understanding emotions and arguing about them. A person who has higher level of emotional intelligence has a higher capability of understanding. For example, they understand how these emotions go through one person to another. Finally, emotional intelligence includes the ability of organizing and managing emotion in the person himself and in others [4].

In Siberia Schering's idea (1986), emotional intelligence includes components such as empathy, self-regulations, self-awareness and social skills or relations management. Schering called ability to see things from others' perspective as empathy; optimal use of emotions and motivation to achieve goals as self-motivation; managing emotions as self-regulation; being aware of emotions as self-awareness; and ability to manage relationships with oneself and others as relationship management. People who have high social skills or, in the other word, relationship management can easily guide intellectual and behavioral path of others to the direction that they want [22].

Conflict

If collaboration and good social behaviors are at one end of a continuum that describes how individuals and groups work together in the organization, on the other end, there is absolutely conflict. This term has various meanings and has been used to refer to events ranging from internal anxieties due to competitive needs and demands (internal conflict) to inter- country violence (war) [23]. In organizational behavior domain, conflict mainly refers to cases in which units or people in an organization work against each other instead of working with each other. Webster dictionary defines conflict as (a fight and disagreement of the opposing forces and conflict between of instinct or the ethics and religious and moral idealsO [24]. Robins believes that conflict is a process in which the first person attempts intentionally to prevent the failure of the second person to achieve his interests and goals [2].

According to a comprehensive and accepted definition, conflict is a process through which a group understands that another group has carried out some actions or is carrying out that has negative influences on its demands [25]. In the other term, it seems that key elements of conflict include:

Conflicting interests between individuals or groups; 2) identification of such conflicts among interests; 3) a belief in the principle that each party will neutralize interests of the other (or already has), 4) actions that actually bring such effects.

Despite various definitions about conflict, some subjects underlie all forms of them. First, both parties must comprehend conflict. Second, presence or absence of conflict depends on the perception of people and if none of parties are aware of conflict, there is a general agreement that conflict does not exist [26].

The first level: potential disagreements: in conflict process, the first level is presence of conditions that provide the ground for conflict. The conditions must not necessarily end up with conflict, but presence of at least one of them is required for creation of conflict.

The second level: the conflict indication: if the mentioned conditions in the first level make frustration, in the second level, the ground for activation of disagreements is provided. These conditions lead to conflict just when some groups are exposed to the phenomenon of conflict.

The third level: intention or purpose: intention or purpose of doing an action means a gap between thought and feeling of a person on one hand, and his obvious behavior, on the other hand. Here, intention or purpose means decision to do an action in a determined manner.

The fourth level: behavior: the level of behavior includes indication of disagreement, action and reaction that involved and opposite parties show. Each of involved parties (that is opposite of the other) try to carry out some obvious actions in this level.

The fifth level: results: these results can be either constructive, meaning that conflict has led to improved performance of group, or destructive that will destroy the function of group [27].

Structural strategies for conflict management

Emphasis on the main purposes: the main purposes are common goals which are considered by conflicting sectors. They are more important than personal or the part that conflict is based on it.

Conflict reduction: another solution to minimize undesirable conflict is reduction of differences that makes the conflict at the first place.

Improvement of communication and perception: communication is vital for effective conflict management. Communication can vary from accumulation between employees who rarely see each other to the formal processes in which differences are identified and discussed.

Reduction of duties dependence: conflict increases with the level of dependence. Therefore, minimizing undesirable conflict might include reduction of level of dependence between sections.

Increasing resources: one obvious way to reduce conflict that has occurred due to lack of resources is increasing the available resources.



Clarity and transparency of rules and procedures: some conflicts are made due to ambiguous rules of decision making for rare resources allocations. As a result, these conflicts can always be minimized by making rules and strategies [26].

Malek [28] has reviewed the correlation between emotional intelligence with conflict management strategies and has concluded that emotional intelligence has a positive and significant relation with solution-oriented strategy. About using emotional intelligence in predicting the use of conflict management among nurses, Jordan and Troth [29] showed that there is a relation between emotional intelligence and using solution- oriented strategy and co-operation. Steve Larngon [30] has concluded in his studies that there is a positive and significant relation between emotional intelligence with profitability of organization, satisfaction of customers and staffs. In a review of the relation between emotional intelligence with conflict management strategies of managers, Keramati et al [31] showed that there is a positive and significant relation between emotional intelligence with solution- oriented strategies. This finding means that by increasing emotional intelligence, using solution- oriented strategies increases rather than control strategy and lack of confrontation. Casey and Casey [32] showed in their studies that increased self-esteem and emotional self-awareness component can strengthen the skills of conflict management. Finding of a field study, Taboli [33], shows that emotional intelligence is effective on political skill of managers and vice versa. But emotional intelligence has more effect on political skill, on one hand, and emotional intelligence and political skill of managers are effective on job satisfaction of staffs, on the other.

Research's hypotheses

According to what has been stated, the following hypotheses are represented:

Hypothesis 1- emotional intelligence of managers is effective on conflict management

Hypothesis 2- emotional intelligence of managers is effective on their political intelligence

Hypothesis 3- political intelligence is effective on conflict management of managers

Hypothesis 4- political intelligence plays a mediating role between emotional intelligence and their conflict management.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Population of this study is 148 managers of Bandar Abbas Oil Refining Company among which 108 in various ranks were selected according to Morgan's table.

Evaluation tools and statistical techniques:

The data related to political skill are collected by using the translation of Ferris's political skills inventory [34], including 40 questions in the form of 5- item Likert scale. The data about conflict management are gathered by Robins' conflict management questionnaire [35] including 30 questions. In order to evaluate the level of emotional intelligence in managers, Wong's Emotional Intelligence Scale [36] with 40 questions is used. One of the strongest and most appropriate methods of analysis in behavioral science and social science is multivariate analysis. Because nature of such subjects is multivariate and cannot be analyzed by bi-variable methods (that each time an independent variable is considered with a dependent variable). Multivariate analysis refers to a series of analysis methods that their main feature is simultaneous analysis of K of independent variables and N of the dependent variable. Analysis of covariance structures or causal modeling or structural equation modeling is one of the main analysis methods of complicated structural analysis. Therefore, as in the present study, there are some independent variables that their effect on dependent variable must be reviewed, using structural equations model seems urgent. The findings:

Table 1: correlation coefficients of variables

		Political intelligence	Conflict management
Emotional	Correlation value	0.45	0.35
intelligence	Significance number	0.02	0.000
_	Correlation value	0.22	1
Conflict management	Significance number	0.01	0.000

As it is clear in [table 1], according to the level of significance (0/000 and 0/02), being lower than significance level (0/02, 0/00<0/05), presence of a sort of significant relation between factors is confirmed. There is a linear relation between emotional intelligence and both factors of conflict management and political intelligence. Also, there is a direct linear relation between political intelligence with conflict management.

As [table 2] shows, findings are indicative of fitness of RMSEA index. The value of RMSEA equals to 0/078. The permitted value is 0/08. According to LISERL output, the calculated value of χ 2 equals to 1058, 97 that rather than freedom degree of 485, it is less than 3 and as P-value is not significant, so it indicates



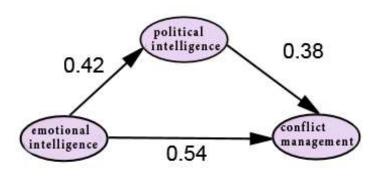
the appropriate fit of chi-square. GFI, AGFI, NFI indexes are 0, 91,0,93,0,95 respectively, that show a completely high fit.

Table 2: fit indexes of model

NFI	AGFI	GFI	p- value	RMSEA	²/dfχ	df
0.95	0.93	0.91	0.107	0.074	2.28	485
More than 0,9	More than 0,9	More than 0,9	More than 0,5	Less than0,05	Less than	more than zero

Hypotheses testing

In order to review all the hypotheses of this study, first, we calculate path coefficient. Analysis of the regression methods development and in fact, the use of multivariate regression is in relation to the formulation of clear causal models. Its objective is to achieve quantitative estimates of causal relationships between a set of structures [37]. In path analysis, the relations between variables flow in a direction and are considered distinct paths.



The results of hypotheses being accepted or denied are shown in [table 3].

Table 3: examining the hypotheses being accepted or denied

	Effect value			Significance of	ı/deny
Hypotheses	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect	direct effect	Confirm/deny
Emotional intelligence is effective on political intelligence of managers	0.42	I	0.42	5.46	confirm
political intelligence is effective on conflict management of managers	0.38	-	0.38	3.92	confirm
Emotional intelligence is effective on conflict management of managers	0.54	0.42*0.38	0.69	3.21	confirm



The results of this test show that the variables of political intelligence, emotional intelligence effect on their conflict management. On the other side, the variable of political intelligence plays the mediating role of emotional intelligence and conflict management.

CONCLUSION

Conflict is a natural and inevitable result of human communication. One of the most important factors for effective and constructive conflict management among people is the conflict management style that people apply to solve the conflict. Having knowledge and skill of conflict management seems urgent. Conflict management, in fact, means applying correct methods to solve the conflict when facing with it. Political intelligence is one of the criteria of success of managers in an organization through which influences can be made for appropriate changes. Political intelligence is about working honestly in order to get common goals and advantages, not in order to get personal advantages. Political intelligence clarifies a clear social agility in organizational setting that manages the effect of behavior on work. Political intelligence includes distinguished social skills about behavior that specifically emphasizes on the effect on working behavior. Political intelligence is active management of reactions against change and power and influence leverages [38].

People who have a high level of political intelligence know who they must effect on to earn more benefits in changes. In addition, they know the best time and method to make people accept the changes [39]. One of the most important factors determining the manager's ability in effective solving of conflict is having emotional intelligence. Nowadays, emotional intelligence is one of the determining factors of people's success at work and in life [3]. The results of the present study showed that there is a direct and significant relation between emotional intelligence with conflict management by managers. It means that the higher emotional intelligence of managers is, the more successful they are in conflict management. Furthermore, political intelligence plays a mediating role between emotional intelligence and conflict management and increases the effect of emotional intelligence on conflict management. Results of the present study are also confirmed by other studies. Keramati et al [31] showed a positive and significant relation between emotional intelligent and conflict management strategies. Malek [28], Jordan and Troth [29] and Steve Larengon [30] showed the correlation between emotional intelligence with conflict management strategies.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest

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None

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