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Buffering Role of Transformational Leadership and Emotional Intelligence in the Relationship between Team Conflicts and Team Performance

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Abstract: Conflicts in organizations, regardless of their nature, have been reported to have deleterious impacts on performance, however, recent trends reveal researchers' interest in examining the factors that may help in curbing conflicts' negative effects on performance. To significantly contribute to the ongoing debate in the literature and provide novel insights on this important issue, this study investigates the buffering role of transformational leadership and emotional Intelligence in reducing the jeopardizing effect of team conflicts on team Performance. A study among 254 project-based employees of a private consulting organization supported our assumptions that the negative association between team conflict – categorized as task, relationship and process conflict – and team performance has been significantly reduced at higher levels of transformational leadership behavior and the exhibition of higher levels of emotional intelligence than at lower levels. The results of this study imply that transformational leadership behavior has the capacity to weaken the unwarranted effects of different forms of conflicts rising in the workplace that may have negative implications for team performance. Similarly, the group-level display of higher emotional intelligence has an equally significant role to play in dampening the negative consequences of numerous conflicts on team outcomes.

Keywords: Team Conflicts; Relationship Conflicts; Task Conflicts; Process Conflicts; Team Performance; Transformational leadership; Emotional intelligence.

Introduction

Conflict is inevitable among humans thus it is unavoidable in organization. However, contrary to the general belief where it is perceived negative it may be classified as functional and dysfunctional conflicts. There is consensus among researchers that regardless of the nature of the conflict such as work-life conflict, role conflict or team conflicts, the implications for performance are undesirable (Huo & Jiang, 2023). Therefore, recently researchers are considering investigating factors that may help in impeding the downsides of organizational conflicts (Espinoza, O'Neill, & Donia, 2023).

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The conflict in general has been divided into three categories, first one is cognitive or substantive which is known as task conflicts. The second one is affective or emotional which is also known as relationship conflicts and the third is called process conflicts. Empirical research shows that different types of conflicts can occur at the same time (Tekleab, Quigley, & Tesluk, 2009). Similarly, previous research investigating the connection between relationship and task conflict reveals a clear positive relationship between these two constructs, which implies that one conflict form will replace the other.

Furthermore, the conflict may be detrimental or beneficial to a team working and it marginally depends on the type of conflict (Jehn & Bendersky, 2003). In general, previous research has reported that the relationship and process conflict have negative results on the effectiveness of the team. However, both (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003)'s in their meta-analyses, and (Jehn & Mannix, 2001)'s in a study agreed that all types of conflicts have a negative impact on team performance.

This study contributes to the literature by examining the dual effects of task conflicts along with the detrimental effects of relationship conflicts as no previous study has investigated the process conflicts consequences in the team context. Moreover, following the call by Lee, Avgar, Park, and Choi (2019) to study the important role of leadership that how can leadership affect the relationship of team conflicts and their outcomes, this study hypothesize the moderating effects of team conflicts on the work-related outcomes. The gap this study aims to fill brings significant innovation in the conflict literature (Bibeiro, Gomes, Oliveira & Semedo, 2023). On the one hand, it explicates by providing empirical evidence that the basic types of conflicts i.e. task, process, and relationships significantly play a role in hindering team performance, on the other hand, it provides the solution in terms of theoretically identifying and empirically testing boundary conditions i.e. transformational leadership and emotional intelligence that may mitigate the conditions. This novel insight would enable policymakers and implementers to consider the development of any sort of conflict in team formation and furthermore, cautiously monitor conflict to curtail the impact in groups.

Literature Review

Conflict has been defined in many ways in the literature such as Wall Jr and Callister (1995) referred the conflicts as "a process in which one party observes that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party". The conflicts may be observed in an organization at many levels, such as inter-team conflict, interpersonal conflict, and intra-team conflict. This study is specifically focusing on the intra-team conflicts which impact team performance. This study is specifically focusing on intra-team conflicts such as task, relationship, and process conflict that become a reason to curtail team performance.

Furthermore, Jehn, (1992) refers to the intra-team conflicts as "a conflict that occurs within a team". Whereas, in general conflicts are divided into two categories, first, a cognitive or substantive conflict, which is known as task conflicts, and second, an affective or emotional, which is known as relationship conflicts. Moreover, it is observed that there

is always a task conflict among the team members, which later on leads to relationship conflicts which always have negative consequences for the team performance.

Jehn (1995)'s contribution to the literature on conflicts made a significant impact on this field of research. According to his study, there are two types of conflicts which are task versus relationship conflicts. He further argued that task conflict occurs "when there are disagreements among group members about the content of the task being performed" whereas relationship conflict exists "when there are interpersonal incompatibilities among group members". For the reason, these people seem to have various preferences at job and so do job definitions. These various task insights, in turn, lead to an increased level of work conflict in team members. There is a third type of conflict which is known as process conflict. This conflict is defined as "conflict about how task accomplishment should proceed in the work unit, who's responsible for what and how things should be delegated". Though the process conflicts vary in terms of growth and outcomes from other forms of conflict and have a major effect on team performance based on its strong association between relationships and task conflicts, the researchers neglected to include process conflicts in their models and this made it difficult to differentiate process conflict from other types of conflict (Behfar, Mannix, Peterson, & Trochim, 2011).

Relationship Conflicts, Task Conflicts, and Process Conflicts among Teams

Since Jehn 's fundamental work (1995, 1997), the study has attempted to see whether there can be a co-occurrence of various forms of conflicts (Shaw et al., 2011). Most of this research stream has focused on the relationship and the task conflict, resultantly the relationship between processes and other kinds of conflict have received little attention. Previous research examining the relationship and task conflict concluded that conflict in tasks may lead to conflicts in relations. According to attribution theory, conflict may generate interaction through a process of difference. The principle of attribution indicates the significance of people's perception of reacting to the behavior. Furthermore, task conflict could lead to relationship conflicts between the individual and group members, particularly, when work disagreements are misunderstood or misattributed as a personal offense. Previous studies explored the factors that could affect this cycle of misallocation and it was revealed that in such cases the relationship between task and relationship disputes has been attenuated or intensified (Kotlyar & Karakowsky, 2006; Rispens, 2012).

Furthermore, a few researchers are of the view that the potential for task conflict decreases as the confidence of the team members increases. Empirical research supports this argument that the positive relationship between tasks and relationship conflict weakens under high levels of confidence among senior management team members. Yang and Mossholder (2004) maintained that the connection between partnership and career could be influenced by emotions. Rispens (2012) examined the effect of conflict transformation of task problem and observed that task conflict is less likely to turn into relationship conflict when team members consider it to be necessary to deal with task conflict. As task conflict increases in complexity, the team members had fewer negative feelings due to task conflicts, which reduced the likelihood that the task conflict may turn into a relationship conflict. Conflict resolution also has been affected by leadership. Previous research

examining the role of leadership in the transfer of task conflict into a relationship conflict found that when team members display transactional leadership behavior, a positive relationship-conflict correlation is weaker than when transitioning behavior (Kotlyar & Karakowsky, 2006). Lastly, relational integration can also influence the process of transformation of the task conflict into relationship conflict, that may be described as the degree to which team members participate in the interaction with one another in a collective community.

Seven different models were tested for rivalry, showing how these two forms of conflict are interlinked with one another, to explain the relationship between task and relationship conflict (K. Choi & Cho, 2011). The results showed that the relationship conflict has increased the team member task conflict expectations and a negative community influences that relationship, which is not the same as the conventional belief that task conflict causes relationship conflict. Nevertheless, according to previous studies, the findings also showed that the conflict of tasks has expanded the relationships only at low levels of team confidence. Besides, several studies have examined the impact on team efficiency on the coexistence of different types of conflicts, particularly tasks and relationships. According to this research stream, task conflict has a positive impact on team success even when there are low levels of team conflicts.

In sum, the conflict literature identified three principal types of team conflicts and revealed that these types of conflict are closely related. As demonstrated by the above research, the majority of studies have been conducted on the task and relationship conflicts. Relatively limited research has been conducted on the process conflicts because in general, researchers believe that process conflicts are the part of task conflicts, a detailed categorization of each type of conflict is explained.

Outcomes of Team Conflicts

Conflict scholars have long acknowledged that it is dependent on the type of conflict whether the conflict benefits or is harmful to teamwork. De Dreu and Weingart (2003) argued that there are often positive team performance links with task conflicts. Evidences suggest that there is a negative impact of relationship and process conflicts on team efficiency. However, the meta-analysis carried out showed, unexpectedly, that conflict biases teams working irrespective of their styles. However, a recent meta-analysis of conflict findings in the intragroup shows that conflict with tasks had a less negative effect on team effectiveness than conflict with relations (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Meanwhile, given that the findings of meta-analyses are based on a correlation analysis, which is why the direction and/or strength of links between the different types of conflicts cannot certainly be verified. We argue that the observation that a task conflict may not have a negative association with team performance may further be empirically tested as there is enough substance for such an association. Hence, we hypothesize:

H1: Team conflicts are negatively and significantly related to team performance.

Task Conflicts and Team Performance

Task conflict is referred to as instances when a team which is built for completing a set of specific tasks, faces halts and inability to move forward towards the execution of the tasks because they have different opinions about that specific task, such as capital allocations, resources use and task arrangement. While performing the organization tasks, new information and ideas are generated which can potentially lead towards task conflicts. Normally task conflict improves the individual's performance as well as the team's performance and helps to achieve the targeted team performance. Task conflict helps team members to identify different opinions and views about that task and through fruitful discussion, they can make a deeper understanding of the Project objectives (Amason, 1996). According to De Dreu and Weingart (2003), task conflicts are the conflicts that occur during the distribution of procedures, resources, judgment, policies, and interpretation of facts. However, based on the aforementioned points it can be assumed that there exists a positive relationship between task performance and team creativity. Different scholars have used the contingency approach to understand that under which conditions task conflict undermine or enhance the team performances, including team creativity. Different scholars have used the contingency approach to understand under which conditions task conflict undermines or enhances team performance, including team creativity (Shaw et al., 2011) leaving the gap for future research to explore how task conflict may influence team performance in normal situations.

Past research has frequently suggested that task conflict can benefit team performance as it "can facilitate innovation and decision making by the superior group". As such, the literature findings contained in the task conflict have a positive impact on team success (Amason, 1996), team consistency and understanding decision-making (Pelled, Eisenhardt, & Xin, 1999), dedication to decision-making processes, emotional tolerance (Amason, 1996).

According to Jehn (1995), previous research has however also shown that extremely high job conflicts can be counterproductive and lead to negative team performance. This is because large-scale task conflicts can cause stress, resistance, and suspicion. According to Farh, Lee, and Farh (2010) team working only profits from a moderate degree of task conflict. For example, (Jehn & Mannix, 2001) concluded that moderate task conflicts had a positive impact on team creativity, the sharing of knowledge, and the resolution of joint problems. Similarly, the relationship between task conflict and creativity by inverted in U shapes. Regarding team success, Jehn (1995) focused on how both individual and group performance in routine work is positively connected to a moderate degree of task conflict. A curvilinear correlation existed between task conflict and team success, but this association only occurs at low interaction rates (Shaw et al., 2011).

While several studies found that a task conflict has a positive impact on team effectiveness, there is also evidence that the task conflict has a negative relationship to team success. While task conflict is potentially useful, this research stream indicates that it can lead to stress and anxiety, which ultimately affects the functions of team members. Many studies have shown that task conflict has an adverse relationship to team productivity, such as team success (J. N. Choi & Sy, 2010), behavior management, and achievement of

goals. Li and Hambrick (2005) stated, that there is a negative relationship between task conflicts and team performance, while some of the team members wish to stay in that group to continue their work with the project.

Various studies show mediation between task conflict and team success in other variables. In particular, it has shown that higher task conflicts lead to low interdependency-low autonomy, damaging team performance. In order to understand the conflicting findings in the task relationship conflict-outcome, scholars recently started looking at the consequences of the task conflict from an immediate perspective. This viewpoint indicates that it depends upon external contextual variables whether the task conflict has a positive or negative impact on team performance. Scholars find different contingencies as moderating variables in the conflict team relationship, for example, the structure of team personality, the psychological safety environment, and the capacity to control team emotional interaction. Jehn (1995) demonstrated that teams benefit from task disagreements when standards facilitate open disagreement communication. Farh et al. (2010) have shown that a team's life cycle moderated the curvilinear link between task conflicts and team innovation so that in later stages the two structures had a more positive curvilinear relationship than at early stages.

Overall, previous research showed mixed results from team success associations of task conflicts. While some believe that task conflict has a positive impact on team success, others have shown that task conflict reduces team effectiveness. To explain these contradictory results in the literature, recent studies argued that the consequences of task conflicts depending upon the context. Within task conflicts are considered as negative elements so building on this argument we can say that;

H1 (a): Task conflict is negatively and significantly related to team performance.

Conflict and Team Performance

There is agreement among researchers that disagreements impact team effectiveness negatively. De Dreu and Weingart (2003) argued that conflicting relationships generate friction and mistrust between team members, which have a negative effect on team activities. The negative relationships of conflict and team success, consistency of result and emotional acceptance, interpersonal integration and actions at the group level of OCB have repeatedly been shown to support this claim. Past studies show a negative relationship between the conflicts and individual outcomes, for example, the satisfaction of participants (Jehn, 1995; Behfar et al., 2011), the purpose of remaining with the team, and self-governance and trust, as well as other team members.

Including the direct consequences of relationship conflicts, some studies have also found an indirect correlation of relationship conflicts with different results. For example, Langfred (2007) research showed that the position of confidence between the conflict and autonomy has been intermediary. In other words, a relationship conflict resulted in lower rates of trust, undermining the autonomy of individuals. In particular, the conflict in relation resulted in the creation of teams with low autonomy and low tasks, which was negatively linked to team success. Knight et al. (1999) found that organizational-content

behavior, which influenced strategic consensus, acted as an intermediate variable. The results show that conflict-related relationships have reduced the affective and psychological commitment of team members.

Though some prior research studies found that relationship conflicts and team success had a largely negative correlation, the results of numerous studies also suggest that the impact of relationship conflicts can be controlled (mitigated or aggravated) when moderators are introduced. For example, the moderating impacts of self-esteem and task interdependency on the connection between relationship conflict and team success were explored. The authors found that in high self-esteem teams the beneficial impact of relationship conflict on absenteeism is greater than in low-esteem teams, but only if the role is interdependent to a high degree. Tekleab et al. (2009) found that when the conflict management team was low rather than strengthening the negative association between the conflicted relationship and team coherence was greater. Rispens (2012) investigated how the relationship between the actions of the groups and the tension between relationships and detrimental actions of the workforce is related. The results showed a significant association between conflict relationships and group activity in fairly close teams was weaker. However, the findings showed that in fairly far-reaching teams the beneficial effect of the partnership dispute on counter-productive behavior.

In summary, there has been an effect on team success of relation conflict directly and indirectly, and, as shown in this study, this has been predominantly negative. However, previous research has also shown that when possible moderators were present, the negative effects of relationships were weaker (or stronger) in teamwork.

H1 (b): Relationship conflict is negatively and significantly related to team performance.

Process Conflict and Team Performance

Process conflict means opposition, contradictions, and disagreement to process arrangement between the project plan and project implementation. It can arise in the task arrangement, sometimes it occurs by one of the project's stakeholders (team members) and sometimes it occurs due to several parties involved as a stakeholder in the project. Process conflict is connected with the status, responsibilities, and resources of a project such as process planning, integration, schedule, and resource allocation. Jehn (1995) concluded in his study that process conflict decreases the teamwork among project members which directly affects the project performance. It also leads to a reduction in the team members' cooperation with one another for completion of the task. Moreover, it can be said that process conflict not only affects the project performance, but it also affects individual performance as well.

Different conflicts have different effects on the performance of a team. The relation between conflict and performance of a project is ambiguous because there are some conflicts which have a dual relationship with performance of a project, in some situation, it shows a positive relationship while sometimes it shows negative. Relationship conflict has a negative relationship with decision making, which has a direct relationship with project performance. If we look deeply, then there are three aspects, the first aspect is due to rela-

relationship conflict team members don't share their real views for the enhancement of work. The second aspect is that relationship conflict leads to anger, interpersonal tensions and negative emotions for team members thus results in a decrease in project performance. The third aspect, mutual understanding, and teamwork will be decreased due to relationship conflict which will directly affect the project performance (Amason, 1996). However, we can say that relationship conflict has a direct relationship with team performance. If there will be relationship conflict among team members then it will decrease the team performance which will automatically decrease the project performance.

Past research finds and it was expected to hinder the productivity of the team by creating 'sighted inequity and process losses' (Behfar et al., 2011). Empirical data supported this opinion, which revealed that process conflict harmed team performance, coordination. Besides, meta-analysis findings (De Wit, Greer, & Jehn, 2012) also indicate that the contradictions between process and outcomes such as team success, team viability, and emerging states are negative. Jehn and Mannix (2001) study examined the impact of time on relationships of process conflict with team success and found that high-level teams have shown lower rates of process conflict during the initial phase of team growth, while at the later stages of their interaction they had higher levels of process conflict. Goncalo, Polman, and Maslach (2010) likewise argued that the effects of the conflict process can be changed. However, Goncalo, Flynn, and Kim (2010) have shown, in contrast to Jehn and Mannix (2001), that the process conflicts have a positive effect on team success at the beginning of the team project, and that the process conflicts have impaired team performance at later stages. Recent research also found that disagreements in processes have negatively impacted the evolving positive conditions and that this relationship has been moderated by successful resolution. There will be a negative correlation between process conflict and developing countries.

H1 (c): Process conflict is negatively and significantly related to team performance.

The Moderating Role of Transformational leadership

Whilst leadership has been a subject of academic research for many decades, empirical work in the context of organizational management is still inadequate (Mehmood, Hamstra, & Guzman, 2022; Noghani, 2021). The theory of full-range leadership is among the most commonly known theories of management and includes transactional styles, transformational styles, and laissez-faire. We are focusing on transformative management; as earlier researchers have shown its high importance for the organizations that are focused on the project (Imran, Nawaz, Siddiqui, & Kashif, 2019). In literature, there seems to be a general agreement on four elements of transformation leadership: individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, idealized impact, and inspiring motivation. The idealized effect is behavior that stirs strong emotions of followers and affinity with the leader. An inspiring motivation is demonstrated when a leader provides an appealing and inspiring vision to their subordinates and assigns them perplexing assignments to increase their expectations. Intellectual stimulation is conduct that increases awareness and promotes innovative and/or creative alternatives to problems. The individualized

consideration comprises coaching, encouragement, and upholding supporters. Transformational leadership can moderate the adverse linkage between job performance and work conflict. According to the JD-R model, when the employees have a stronger understanding of the causes for stressors, the negative effect of these job stressors reduces. [Li and Hambrick \(2005\)](#) mentioned that when transformational leadership is acquired by the managers, they are more willing to communicate with their supporters, and therefore are more likely to identify the potential significance of less tenacious rivals who might less probably convince organizing peers that a task dispute must be resolved. Rather than spending a lot of time with peers on finding a solution, they probably prefer an easy path and let the conflict task escalate. This tendency can lead to an unfavorable working environment, which decreases job performance.

[Jackson and Joshi \(2004\)](#) suggested that group leaders should work with team members to improve their team performance, they influence their follower's conduct, social learning, and attitudes. Leadership has a major role in achieving the organizational goals through effective teamwork, he mentioned two styles of working with their team members i.e. transactional and transformational leadership. This researcher focused on transformational leadership, not transactional leadership. In this study, the researcher tried to find out the buffering role of transformational leadership. The transformational leaders focus on their group members needs and try to motivate them to deliver their best in exchange they will be given rewards and transforming group members behaviors, attitudes and their belief.

Vision is an interpretation of the idealized picture of the future, centered on community and organizational values. The purpose of the motivated group or company is to communicate optimistic and motivating messages. In general, vision and motivation are essential to leadership transformation. It is partially because the leaders of self-assurance, motivation, and knowledge of team members' emotional needs derive from positive behaviors. As conflict is an integral part of an outcome-driven community-based process, the [Kotlyar and Karakowsky \(2006\)](#) argued that leaders of transformation, interacting with and promoting vision adoption across a range of behaviors, do no more than encourage followers to pursue this vision. The ongoing debate indicates that the dynamics of the team are affected by the dream of the team members in the face of conflict and the consequences. If team leaders will understand the reasons for conflicts, then through transformational leader they can reduce the detrimental impact of team conflicts on team performance.

H2: Transformational leadership buffers the relationship between team conflicts and team performance; if the transformational leadership will be high than there will be a less negative relationship between team conflicts and team performance.

The Moderating Role of Team Emotional Intelligence

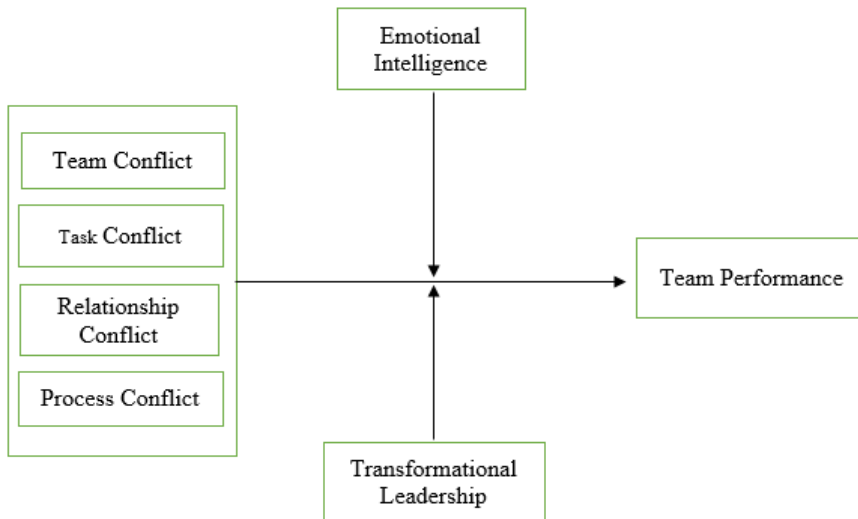
The associations proposed above may be moderated by emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is described as "the capacity for self-monitoring, to differentiate between and to use this knowledge to direct one's thinking and behavior". According to [Goleman](#)

(1998), "emotional intelligence is the capacity to coordinate one's feelings and others, inspire one's own emotions, and to control our relationships well inside one's own emotions." That is to say, people with emotional intelligence know one's feelings and handle them effectively. These people can also sense and appreciate the feelings of others.

The investigation argues that depending on participants know their various views of conflict will affect the effect of conflict views (Rispen, 2012). If group members are well known with variations in their views of conflict, they should explore these variations to reach a consensus on the conflict in the community (Rispen, 2012). However, once participants are conscious of their experiences of conflict, they can encounter more anxiety and uncertainty, contributing to effect to more adverse effects. This study argues that emotional team intelligence can be a way to encourage team members to understand the differences in their experiences of conflict. This may also play a moderating role in team conflict and team success ties.

H3: Emotional intelligence buffer the relationship between team conflicts and team performance; if the transformational leadership will be high than there will be a less negative relationship between team conflicts and team performance.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework



Method

Sample and Procedure

The study was conducted in a private consultant organization (APEX Consulting Pakistan) of Pakistan working in a diverse field i.e. monitoring and evaluation (M & E), me-

dia monitoring and analysis, research, infrastructure, and human resource management. I have decided to choose this organization because they have many running projects in which they can't digest the conflicts among their teams. Data is collected from 254 employees of the same project; they were contacted through the researcher's contact and 450 employees were approached through their email addresses, with a response rate of 63.5% 254 employees responded. A simple random sampling technique followed for the collection of data. In this study, the researcher has used the critical realist approach. Figure 1 shows the research framework, team conflict is an independent variable, team performance is our dependent variable while the emotional intelligence and transformational leadership are our moderating variables.

Measures

Team Conflicts

Conflict is the main determinant that affects workgroup dynamics. Conflicts are categorized and the researcher assessed conflict between the teams through conflicts of tasks, relationships, and process conflicts.

Task Conflict

When two members of the group are unable to work on a task due to differing behaviors, needs, and attitudes are known as task conflict ([Jehn, 1995](#)). The predictor task conflict was assessed through 5 items from the task conflict scale. Employees were asked to report their task conflict from five Likert scales 1 to 5 (1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree) to what extent their team faced task conflict. An example of statements used is "My team tended to disagree over alternatives". The internal reliability is in an acceptable range of 0.775.

Relationship Conflict

When a conflict arises due to negative emotions interactions or personality clashes between group members than such conflict is known as a relationship conflict ([Jehn, 1995](#)). The predictor relationship conflict was assessed through 5 items from the task conflict scale. Employees were asked to report their relationship conflict from five Likert scales 1 to 5 (1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree) to what extent their team faced relationship conflict. An example of statements used is "My team members confronted/oppose each other on personal matters". The internal reliability is in an acceptable range of 0.793.

Process Conflict

When the conflict arose among the members due to contradictions, disagreement, and opposition for the process of a project plan and their implementation than such conflict is known as process conflict ([Jehn, 1995](#)). The predictor process conflict was assessed through 3 items from the process conflict scale developed by [Wakefield, Leidner, and](#)

[Garrison \(2008\)](#). Employees were asked to report their process conflict from five Likert scales 1 to 5 (1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree) to what extent their team faced process conflict. An example of statements used is "Team members disagree about who should do what.". The internal reliability is in an acceptable range of 0.771.

Emotional Intelligence

It is the ability to understand the situation and manage your emotions according to situations and surrounding group members, how you perceive and respond to that situation is known as emotional intelligence. The moderator's emotional intelligence was assessed through 4 items from the emotional intelligence scale developed by [Wilderom, Hur, Wiersma, den Berg, and Lee \(2015\)](#). Employees were asked to report their emotional intelligence on five Likert scales 1 to 5 (1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree) to what extent their team members have emotional intelligence. An example of statement used is "Employees in this group feel a sense of belonging". The internal reliability is in the round-off acceptable range of 0.706.

Transformational Leadership

When team leaders work according to team needs, they work with their teams and identify their needs, they create a vision to change followers through their inspiration and executing that change within team members, such leadership is known as transformational leadership. The moderator transformational leadership was assessed through 5 items from transformational leadership developed by [Gong, Huang, and Farh \(2009\)](#). Employees were asked to report their transformational leadership from five Likert scales 1 to 5 (1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree) to what extent their supervisor has transformational leadership. An example of statements used is "My supervisor acts in ways that build my respect". The internal reliability is in an acceptable range of 0.820.

Team Performance

Team performance is measured through a team's outcomes i.e. reliability, functionality and quality of outputs that are produced with achieving the customer's expectations, time, and cost objectives. The moderator team performance was assessed through 5 items from team performance. Employees were asked to report their team performance from five Likert scales 1 to 5 (1 for very bad to 5 for very high) to what extent their team has team performance. An example of statements used is "Please evaluate team performance in terms of the amount of work the team produced". The internal reliability is in an acceptable range of 0.773.

Data Analysis

In this study, three demographics are used which are genders, qualifications, and experience. We found 254 respondents for this study, in male respondents were 169 with a

percentage of 66.5, and 85 respondents were female with a percentage of 33.5. Among the respondents, 114 respondents were Bachelor qualified with a total percentage of 44.9, 116 respondents were Master qualified with a total percentage of 45.7, 22 respondents were MS/MPhil qualified with a total percentage of 8.7, and 2 respondents were PhD. qualified with a total percentage of 0.8. Experience of the respondents was categorized into four sections, respondent having the experience from one to five years were 59 with the percentage of 23.2, having experience from six to ten years were 96 with the percentage of 37.8, having experience from 11 to 15 years are 79 with the percentage of 31.1 and having experience of 16 years and above were 20 with the percentage of 7.9. The demographics table is not included in the analysis.

Table 1 shows the descriptives, correlation, and reliabilities analysis. Descriptive statistics give us a summary of standardized values for a variable that is used in this study. Table 1 tells us about the sample size, minimum and maximum values for each variable, mean, standard deviation, and Cronbach's alpha values.

Table 1
Descriptive, correlations and reliabilities

	Mean	SD	TC	RC	PC	TMC	TL	EI	TP
TC	3.620	0.750	-0.770						
RC	3.500	0.820	.590**	-0.790					
PC	3.750	0.790	.527**	.586**	-0.770				
TMC	3.620	0.660	.829**	.866**	.835**	-0.790			
TL	3.660	0.830	.557**	.495**	.465**	.598**	-0.820		
EI	3.660	0.710	.583**	.412**	.362**	.533**	.520**	-0.70	
TP	2.290	0.740	-.583**	-.537**	-.557**	-.662**	-.640**	-.508**	-0.770

Note: ** Correlation significant at 0.01, * Correlation significant at 0.05, N=254, Cronbach's values are presented in parenthesis.
TC= Task conflict, RC=Relationship conflict, TL=Transformational leadership, PC=Process conflict, EI= Emotional Intelligence

H1: Team conflicts are negatively and significantly related to team performance.

Table 1 shows that team conflict is negatively and significantly related to team performance ($R = -0.662$, $t = -14.003$, $p < .001$), based on these results H1 is proved. We can say that team conflicts reduce 66.2 % team performance, while P values show the significance level of t statistics which is enough to accept this hypothesis.

H1 (a): Task conflict is negatively and significantly related to team performance.

Table 1 shows that task conflict is negatively and significantly related to team performance ($R = -0.583$, $t = -11.392$, $p < .001$), based on these results H1 (a) is proved. We can say that task conflict reduces 58.3 % team performance, while P values show the significance level of t statistics which is enough to accept this hypothesis.

H1 (b): Relationship conflict is negatively and significantly related to team performance.

Table 1 shows that relationship conflict is negatively and significantly related team performance ($R = -0.537$, $t = -10.105$, $p < .001$), on the basis of these result H1 (b) is proved. We can say that relationship conflict reduces 53.7 % team performance, while P values show

the significance level of t statistics which is enough to accept this hypothesis.

H1 (c): Process conflict is negatively and significantly related to team performance.

Table 1 shows that process conflict is negatively and significantly related to team performance ($R = -0.557$, $t = -10.645$, $p < .001$), based on these result H1 (c) is proved. We can say that process conflict reduces 55.7 % team performance, while P values show the significance level of t statistics which is enough to accept this hypothesis.

H2: Transformational leadership buffers the relationship between team conflicts and team performance; if the transformational leadership will be high than there will be a less negative relationship between team conflicts and team performance.

To test the second hypothesis that team performance is a function of different factors and more specifically whether transformational leadership moderates the relationship between team conflict and team performance, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted through Preacher and Hayes. These variables accounted for a significant amount of variance in team performance, $R^2 = .49$, $F(3,250) = 134.274$, $p < .000$. To remove the biasness, the variables have been centered and the interaction term has been created. Next, the interaction term between team conflict and emotional intelligence was added to the regression model, which accounted for a significant proportion of the variance in team performance, $\Delta R^2 = .016$, $\Delta F(1, 250)$, $p = .000$, $\beta = .1499$, $t(3.963)$, $p < .000$, indicating that there is potentially significant moderation between them on team performance.

Table 2
Regression results for the moderating relationships

	Team Performance	
	β	ΔR^2
TC	-.7966**	
RC	-.7642**	.49**
PC	-.1499**	
EI	-.2255**	
TL	-.8620**	
TCxEI	.1616**	.0164**
RCxEI	.1761**	.0225**
PCxEI	.1351**	.0144**
TLxTC	.1499**	.0166**
TLxRC	.1673**	.0215**
TLxPC	0.076	0.0045

** $p < .01$

The above table also showed the conditional effect of a moderator on all three levels. At all three-level moderating variables are statistically significant with p-value .000 by increasing Transformational leadership the effect of team conflicts on team performance decrease. If we look into the figure 2 then we can observe transformational leadership buffering the relationship between team conflicts and team performance.

H3: Emotional intelligence buffer the relationship between team conflicts and team performance; if the transformational leadership will be high than there will be a less negative relationship between team conflicts and team performance.

Figure 2
The Moderating effect of Transformational Leadership

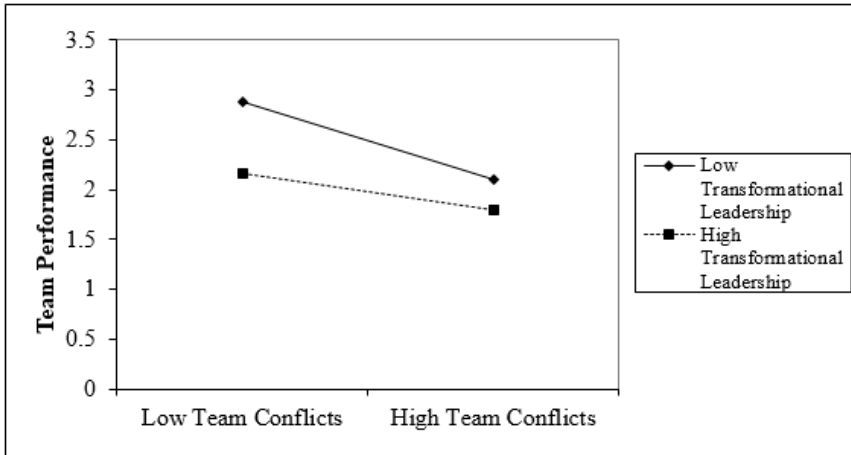
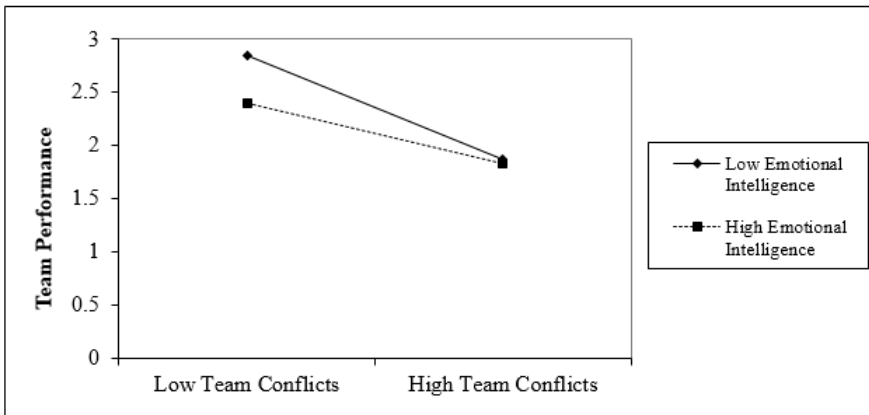


Figure 3
The Moderating Effect of Emotional Intelligence



Hypothesis 3 proposed a buffering role of emotional intelligence such that the relationship of (TMC) and (TP) is weaker with higher EI than lower. These variables accounted for a significant amount of variance in team performance, $R^2 = .496$, $F(3,250)$, $p < .000$. To avoid potentially problematic high multicollinearity with the interaction term, the variables were centered and an interaction term between them was created. Next, the interaction term between team conflict and transformational leadership was added to the regression model, which accounted for a significant proportion of the variance in team performance, $\Delta R^2 = .016$, $\Delta F(1, 250)$, $p = .000$, $\beta = .1616$, $t(3.567)$, $p < .000$, indicating that there is potentially significant moderation between them on team performance. Also, the

conditional effect of emotional effect is significantly accepted with p-value .000. The result indicated that the negative relationship between team conflict and team performance weakens through emotional intelligence.

If we look into the figure 3 then we can observe emotional intelligence buffering the relationship between team conflicts and team performance.

Discussion

The growing research studies on team conflicts showing negative results with some of them showed an increase in performance due to task conflicts and inter-groups conflicts, same in this study H1 showed negative relationship between team conflicts and team performance (Shaw et al., 2011; Jehn & Bendersky, 2003; Rispens, 2012) if there will be conflicts among team members than the team performance will be decreased because everyone will argue with another member rather than focusing on their performance. Further, we can see from H 1(a) that task conflict has more relationship with team performance than relationship conflict and process conflict so we can say that task conflict has a negative impact on team performance, it showed that when team members will argue other tasks that are assigned by the team leader than their team performance will be decreased, they should focus on their assigned task rather than their teammate. H1 (b) showed the negative relationship of relationship conflict with team conflict which has less impact as compared to task and process conflicts, so we can say that if the team members will have some personal issues than they will not be able to focus on their team performance due to which it will be decreased. H1 (c) showed the negative relationship of process with team performance (Behfar et al., 2011), it means that if team members will challenge the organizational procedures or hierarchical than their performance will be decreased or maybe it leads to relationship and task performance as well. H2 was one of the main hypothesis of this study in which the buffering role transformational leadership was analyzed between team conflicts and team performance, the result indicated that through transformational leadership the team leader tries to reduce the tension between team members so the negative relationship between team conflict and team performance is reduced. H3 was one of the main hypothesis of this study in which the buffering role emotional intelligence was analyzed between team conflicts and team performance, the result indicated that through emotional intelligence the team leader tries to reduce the tension between team members so the negative relationship between team conflict and team performance is reduced.

Practical Implications

The results obtained have very important implications for practitioners. These findings support the argument that conflict can have a clear negative effect on performance, therefore, managers should assimilate to this potential. If task conflict and relationship are not resolved in time than it will lead towards process conflict. In simple, we can say that task conflict leads to relationship conflicts which further leads to process conflicts. So first and foremost organizations should use the democratic leadership style during the

planning stage so realistic the project should be established, if there will be realistic organization goals then there will be no conflicts among different stakeholders. The further organization should have proper grievance policies to resolve the project related conflicts timely so it does not affect the performance. The organization should create a healthy organizational environment that encourages cooperative behaviors. Organizations should conduct some training and awareness activities that how a small misunderstanding create a big problem for the organization through resulting in conflicts.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study is not without limitations and warrants attention for further research studies. First, the cross-sectional study design is used so in the future it is highly recommended to investigate the relationship team conflicts and team performance through longitudinal study so we can analyze the long term affect.

Secondly, only middle-level and front line managers were involved in this study although these managers face all these conflicts if we critically analyze the situation the main task conflicts occur among frontline manager and process conflicts occur on a higher level of management so it is recommended that in future different levels of management should be considered for conducting studies related to project conflicts. So in the future, we can add top-level management as well. In this study only one the organization was targeted, further researchers can include diverse organizations to find out the consistency in results.

In this study, only two moderators are investigated so further it is highly recommended to investigate the mediation and moderated mediation models in the context of team conflicts. We should also include the moderation of Hofstede's Culture dimensions that how cultural values play an important role to understand the diversity among teams.

Conclusion

The current results are clearly indicating that the negative effect of conflicts on performance may be mitigated through the intervention on the part of the employer i.e. transformational leadership behavior weakens the impact. These novel understandings can provide sufficient help during the team formation process. Furthermore, an individual's personality difference can also be used as a tool to manage the downsides of conflicts. Findings suggest that at a higher level of emotional intelligence, the severity of conflicts' influence on performance is reduced. There can be other situations identified inside an organization that may provide a buffering effect, currently, it is safe to argue that leadership and personal individual strengths i.e. emotional intelligence clearly provide an edge.

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