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### **Emotional Intelligence and Workplace Conflict Resolution: The Case of Secondary Education Teachers in Greece**

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## Emotional Intelligence and Workplace Conflict Resolution: The Case of Secondary Education Teachers in Greece

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<b>Article Info</b>	<b>Abstract</b>
<p><i>Article History</i></p> <p>Received: 26 April 2020</p> <p>Accepted: 04 September 2020</p> <hr/> <p><i>Keywords</i></p> <p>Emotional intelligence Workplace conflict Conflict resolution Conflict handling styles Secondary education</p>	<p>The aim of this paper is to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict resolution among secondary education teachers in Greece. The research sample consists of 130 high schools' teachers in Greece. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, concerning teachers' working environment, their behavior during workplace conflicts as well as their emotional intelligence and were analyzed using descriptive and inductive statistics. The statistical analyses have revealed that the main reason for workplace conflicts in secondary schools is the existence of informal groups. In addition, emotional intelligence seem to have a direct relationship with conflict resolution styles, while a negative relationship between emotional intelligence and the frequency of involvement in workplace conflicts is observed. Furthermore, it was found that holding a position of responsibility does not play a significant role in conflict resolution style adoption. The research results show that the solution-oriented method is the most popular amongst the other conflict resolution styles. Last, it was found that the average score of emotional intelligence among the respondents was high.</p>

### Introduction

Schools of the 21st Century are never only considered as “autonomous organizations”, but also as professional environments that provide support to students’ and teachers’ learning communities for high performance and excellence. The interpersonal conflict shows the refusal of acquiescence that occurs in the interaction system between people (Karimova, 2015). Thus, these conflicts are inevitable, especially when this dynamic process takes place between people, who are experiencing negative emotional reactions (Barki & Hartwick, 2004). Based on previous studies, emotions and emotional intelligence (EI) affect both the workplace and organizational settings respectively (Ashkanasy & Dorris, 2017; Hopkins & Yonker, 2015; Riforgiate & Komarova, 2017), regulating workplace relationships (Mayer, Salovey, & Casuso, 2008), job performance (Dulewicz, et al., 2005; Hun Han et al., 2019; Nikolaou & Tsaousis, 2002; O’Boyle et al., 2011; Pekaa et al., 2017; Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004); self-efficacy (Kostić-Bobanović, 2020; Rastegar & Memarpour, 2009; Salami, 2007) and job satisfaction (Anari, 2012; Extremera, Mérida-López et al., 2018; Huang, 2016; Miao et al., 2017; Platsidou, 2010; Sy et al., 2006; Zapantis et al., 2017). It is obvious that negative emotions and conflicts adversely affect professionals, especially in school contexts (Blankstein, 2004; Dufour et al., 2008).

Considering that conflicts are emotional events, contemporary studies focus on the role of EI in conflict resolution (Chan et al., 2014; Hopkins & Yonker, 2015; Zhang et al., 2015), while such a focus is highly observed in studies that have been carried out in Greece (Nikolaou & Tsaousis, 2002; Platsidou, 2010; Rahim, et al., 2002). While most of the studies examined conflicts between teachers and principals, teachers and students or teachers and parents, only a few researchers investigate conflicts between teachers. The present study attempts to bridge this research gap by focusing on conflicts between teachers in school environment. Thus, the aim of this research is to examine EI amongst teachers and its contribution in conflict resolution.

### Literature Review

#### Conflicts and Conflict Management

There are plenty of definitions concerning the term conflict. Conflict can be defined as “*a process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party*” (Wall & Callister,

1995, p. 517). Another definition highlights the term conflict as “*an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce rewards, and interference from the other party in achieving their goals*” (Hocker & Wilmot, 1985, p. 23). According to De Dreu and Gelfand (2008, p. 6), conflict is “*a process that begins when an individual or group perceives differences and opposition between itself and another individual or group about interests and resources, beliefs, values, or practices that matter to them*”. It is also true that different levels of conflict may appear in a workplace and they can cause many different problems.

Wall and Callister (1995) found that the main causes of workplace conflicts come from personal factors, interpersonal factors, and various issues that might lead to conflict situations with negative consequences for both parties. Based on the abovementioned factors, three types of conflicts are defined: relationship, task, and process conflict (Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Jehn & Bendersky, 2003). Relational conflicts are defined as “*the perception of interpersonal incompatibility among the group members*” (Langfred, 2007, p. 885-900) and are related to individuals’ incompatibilities which have affective components. Task conflict is defined as “*a disagreement among group members about decisions, opinions etc.*” (Langfred, 2007, p. 885-900) and is appeared when there is a difference in opinions and process conflict is related to disagreement between persons on how the task should be achieved (Hopkins & Yonker, 2015). Process conflict is defined as “*the awareness of controversies about aspects of how task accomplishment will proceed*” (Jehn & Mannix, 2001, p. 239). More specifically, interpersonal conflict is defined as “*a dynamic process that occurs between interdependent parties as they experience negative emotional reactions to perceived disagreements and interference with the attainment of their goals*” (Barki & Hartwick, 2004, p. 234). On the one hand, some researchers (De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008) argue that various forms of interactions, such as bullying, mobbing and horizontal violence with negative outcomes for both conflictive parties have different and opposing interests as well as different and opposing beliefs and values. On the other hand, conflicts may lead to innovation (Jehn, 1997).

At this point it is important to note that the choice between different conflict management styles (Rahim, 1983; Rahim, 2002) depends on the level of conflict and the various situations that must be managed effectively. Based on the above, it can be concluded that when individuals are facing more conflict, they demonstrate a dominating or avoiding style (Tjosvold et al., 2006). Otherwise, they adopt integrating, accommodating or collaborating conflict handling styles (Friedman et al., 2000).

In the past two decades, some studies found that the majority of teachers showed a preference for the avoiding and compromising styles of conflict management in school environment (McMullen, 1994; Fields, 1996). Another research indicated that a majority of teachers prefer conflict styles that place the needs of relationships above their own, while variables such as gender, overseas experience, and teaching area have an impact on conflict management styles (Mahon, 2009). Conflict management in schools depends on school norms in order to confront and resolve conflicts, clear resolution procedures and the school members’ skills (Johnson & Johnson, 2006). It is obvious that the study of the conflicts and their resolution in school is a complex and multidimensional issue (Montes et al., 2012), especially because many teachers have fear, negative outcomes and views of conflict (Dyson, 2000; Scherer, 1992).

### **Emotions and Emotional Intelligence (EI)**

Cliffe (2011) highlighted the importance of describing the term emotions in order to understand emotional intelligence. Emotions are defined as “*organized responses, crossing the boundaries of many psychological subsystems, including the physiological, cognitive, motivational, and experiential systems*” (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 186) and are recognized as “*one of three or four fundamental classes of mental operations*” (Mayer et al., 2011, p. 530). Hopkins and Yonker (2015) referred that emotions can influence decisions, as well as human relationships and social interactions.

Emotions have the role of mediators of the behavior’s cognitive process that is demonstrated in a conflict (Desivilya & Yagil, 2005). Thus, conflict management and resolution include rational and emotional processes with the latter having a priority and more important role (Betancourt, 2004). There is evidence indicating that people with an excessive dependence on emotions have a difficulty in handling effectively a conflict (Jehn, 1997) while the strong negative emotions reduce the capacity to manage and resolve a conflict and increase the competitive behaviors (Bell & Song, 2005). In any case, incorrect or unsuitable emotions or actions might have a negative impact on the effectiveness of conflict management (Hopkins & Yonker, 2015).

In the last few decades, EI has become an important and popular scientific subject (Drigas & Papoutsi, 2018), which has gained numerous definitions and many models. Studies on emotions highlighted the meaning of EI, which is defined as the *“capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships”* (Goleman, 1998, p. 317). Salovey and Mayer (1990, p. 189) identified EI as *“the ability to monitor one’s own and other feelings and emotions, discriminate among them and use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions”*. Bar-On (2005, p. 20) in his research defines EI as *“a multi-factorial array of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that influence one’s ability to recognize, understand and manage emotions, to relate with others, to adapt to change and solve problems of a personal and interpersonal nature, and to efficiently cope with daily demands, challenges and pressures”*. Based on a previous study, emotional intelligence is defined as *“the ability to reason validly with emotions and with emotion-related information and to use emotions to enhance thought”* (Mayer et al., 2016, p. 295). In the same study, Mayer et al. (2016) had also made a revision of the four-branch model of emotional intelligence of 1997, which contains four major components: (a) Managing emotions, (b) Understanding emotions, (c) Facilitating thought using emotion and (d) Perceiving emotion. According to a previous definition, EI is the ability to identify, understand, and use emotions positively to manage anxiety, communicate well, empathize, overcome issues, solve problems, and manage conflicts (Drigas & Papoutsi, 2018, p. 4). Another definition describes EI as a *“psychological resource composed of a set of abilities concerned with the processing of emotion-relevant information”* (Extremera et al., 2018, p. 3). One more comprehensive definition describes emotional intelligence as *“individuals’ ability to understand and control his/her own emotions”* (Lee et al., 2019, p. 67).

On the one hand, Martinez (1997) illuminates the role of non-cognitive competencies, skills and abilities as the individual’s capacities that have a positive contribution on contextual conditions and transactions. In addition, Salovey and Mayer addressed that EI is related to the way in which each individual thinks and behaves (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Emotional intelligence also determines *“how effectively we understand and express ourselves, understand others and relate with them, and cope with daily demands, challenges and pressures”* (Bar-On, 2005, p. 3).

It is supported that EI has a strong correlation with job performance (Anari, 2012; Dulewicz et al., 2005; Mohamad & Jais, 2016; Nguyen et al., 2019; Pekaa et al., 2017; Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004; Wong & Law, 2002) and especially with classroom performance (Kaur et al., 2019; Sue-Chan & Latham, 2004), teacher effectiveness (Kaur et al., 2019; Ramana, 2013; Salami, 2007; Soanes & Sungoh, 2019) and principals’ performance (Williams, 2008). Iordanoglou (2007) in her research among 332 primary education teachers in Greece found that EI has a positive effect on teachers’ performance and a strong positive effect on job commitment and satisfaction. Baçoğul & Özgür (2016) in their study highlighted that enhancing EI skills can positively contribute to deal with the emotional demands that nurses have to face. There is also evidence that EI is considerably related not only with individuals’ (Shipley et al., 2010) but also with team performance (Lopes et al., 2005; Jordan & Troth, 2004). Moreover, many researchers revealed that age and gender plays a significant role in EI formation (Anari, 2012; Arani, 2003; Bryant & Malone, 2015; Chan, 2004).

EI is found to have a direct relationship with conflict management and resolution. Individuals who have high levels of EI present fewer conflicts and more effective conflict management (Lopes et al., 2005). EI is also related to leadership effectiveness (Kerr et al., 2006), especially in higher education (Parrish, 2013) and particularly with positive relations with others (Law et al., 2004; Lopes et al., 2003), and in discerning the emotional climate in an organization (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002). Individuals with higher levels of EI are more likely to collaborate with others in conflict management (Jordan & Troth, 2004). It is obvious that emotional intelligence is a determinant factor in group-level task and relationship conflict. However, EI is less correlated with higher levels of task and relationship conflicts (Ayoko & Callan, 2010; Yang & Mossholder, 2004).

### **Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Management**

Many studies have dealt with the relationship between EI and conflict management styles (Baçoğul & Özgür, 2016; Morrison, 2008; Sharma, 2012) while few of them referred among teachers (Gnawali, 2016; Ramana, 2013). Ramana (2013) noted that teachers with high EI know and manage their emotions and also are self-motivated. Wong and Law (2002) developed and validated a 16 item EI Scale, known as WLEIS, which is composed of four distinct dimensions and is based on Salovey and Mayer’s (1990) and Mayer and Salovey’s (1997) conceptualization:

1. Appraisal and expression of emotion in the self (self-emotional appraisal [SEA]). This dimension is related to the individuals’ ability to understand and express their emotions naturally. Moreover, this

ability makes individuals more capable in sensing and acknowledging their emotions well before most individuals.

2. Appraisal and recognition of emotion in others (others' emotional appraisal [OEA]). This dimension is related to the individuals' ability to perceive and understand the emotions of other individuals. Those people who are high in this ability will be much more sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others as well as they have mind-reading ability.
3. Regulation of emotion in the self (regulation of emotion [ROE]). This dimension is related to the individuals' ability to regulate their emotions that makes them stronger and able to rapidly recover from psychological distress.
4. Use of emotion to facilitate performance (use of emotion [UOE]). This dimension is related to the individuals' ability to make use of their emotions by directing them towards constructive activities and personal performance.

The two researchers concluded that their scale shows good convergence with some of the past EI measures such as the Trait Meta-Mood and the EQ-I scale. As the developed EI measure is relatively simple, it may be beneficial for future leadership and management research (Wong & Law, 2002, p. 268). On the other hand, Brew and Cairns (2004) in their research used Putnam and Wilson's (1982) validated three-factor inventory of conflict management styles, the Organizational Conflict Communication Instrument (OCCI). It was chosen in this research as it is a validated and reliable scale which is based on the well-known scale of Blake and Mouton (1964). Brew and Cairns' questionnaire used a modified version of the OCCI measuring individuals' behavioral preferences to conflict according to the three-factor conflict styles:

1. Control
2. Solution-orientation
3. Non-confrontation

The two researchers described *"the first two conflict styles as assertive, direct styles, and the third as a withdrawal/avoidance style"* (Brew & Cairns, 2004, p. 36).

## Research Methodology

The aim of this research is to examine the contribution of emotional intelligence in workplace conflict resolution, examining the case of secondary schools' teachers in Greece. The data collection was carried out using a structured questionnaire during the period between 1 June 2019 and 20 July 2019. The questions were closed type and the WLEIS was used to measure respondents' EI. A 5-point Likert-type scale was adopted, ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree). The questionnaire was created using Google Forms which made it accessible in electronic form and was delivered to randomly selected teachers' emails. Finally, a total of 130 questionnaires were analyzed.

The questionnaire was divided into three main parts, corresponding in substance to the considerations presented in the theoretical part of this study. The first part of the questionnaire contains questions about conflicts in the working environment. In the second part of the questionnaire, questions related to employees' behavior during a conflict and the third part posed questions about measuring emotional intelligence. Emotional Intelligence (EI) was measured using the Wong & Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) (Wong & Law, 2002), which is consistent with Mayer and Salovey's definition of EI (Mayer & Salovey, 1997), assessed the four dimensions of EI: (a) Self-Emotions Appraisal (SEA), (b) Others' Emotion Appraisal (OEA), (c) Use of Emotion (UOE), and (d) Regulation of Emotion (ROE). The modified version of the Organizational Communication Conflict Instrument proposed by Brew and Cairns (2004) was used for behavior and conflict management measurement. Furthermore, the collected data were statistically analyzed using both descriptive statistics and inductive statistics, including factor analysis and analysis of variance. Spearman's correlation coefficient and Pearson's chi-square test were used to investigate the existence of statistically significant correlations.

## Results and Discussion

### Reliability Analysis

Initially, the questionnaire was tested for its reliability. The three sections of the questionnaire were tested separately for their validity using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The test results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha Values for the Sections of the Questionnaire

Questionnaire's section	Cronbach's alpha
Conflicts in the workplace	0.807
Behavior during the conflict	0.863
Emotional Intelligence	0.832

According to the results of Table 1, Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.807 to 0.863 and indicated the satisfactory level of construct validity and internal consistency of the used questionnaire (Taber, 2018). These results also confirm that the questionnaire is properly designed and can produce valid results.

### Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

The sample's demographic characteristics are presented in Table 2. More specifically, as far as respondent's gender is concerned, 49.2% of them were males, while 50.8% were females. Moreover, in the age distribution, it appears that the majority of the respondents belonged to the 18-54 age range (89.2%), followed by the 55-64 age range (10.8%). The respondents were also well educated with approximately 98.5% holding either a bachelor's or a master's degree and the 1.5% of the teachers had a PhD degree. Finally, 25.4% of the respondents held positions of responsibility (e.g. school managers).

Table 2. Sample Demographic Characteristics

Variable Name	Values	% Percent
Gender	Male	49.2
	Female	50.8
Age	18-34	24.6
	35-44	40.0
	45-54	24.6
	55-64	10.8
Educational level	Bachelor's degree	69.3
	Master's degree	29.2
	Ph.D. degree	1.5
Position	With responsibility	25.4
	Without responsibility	74.6

### Workplace Conflict Sources

The correlation between the variables concerning the existence of informal groups, unclear boundaries of tasks, lack of communication, and personal disputes with the frequency of workplace conflicts was analyzed using Spearman's correlation coefficient (see Table 3).

Table 3. Spearman Correlation Coefficient Values for Workplace Conflicts Sources

		Spearman's rho	p-value
Frequency of workplace conflicts	Informal groups	0.403	0.000
	Unclear boundaries of tasks	-0.017	0.861
	Lack of communication	0.207	0.035
	Personal disputes	0.218	0.026

Based on the results of Table 3, it is concluded that the frequency of workplace conflicts in secondary schools is positively correlated, at a statistically significant level, with the examined variables except from the variable "unclear boundaries of tasks". Moreover, it appears that the existence of informal groups is the highest correlated variable with the frequency of workplace conflicts. This result is consistent with the research findings of Crothers et al. (2009) as well. Also, as stated by Nebgen (1978), the lack of communication is another factor that is correlated with the frequency of workplace conflicts. Apart from the abovementioned factors that have to do with the occurrence of workplace conflicts, the intention to engage in a conflict could also be affected by certain personal characteristics (see Table 4).

Table 4. Spearman's Correlation Coefficient and Pearson's Chi-square Values for Workplace Conflict Sources

		Coefficient's value	p-value	Coefficient
Frequency of involvement in workplace conflicts	Age	0.608	0.000	Spearman's rho
	Educational level	0.012	0.261	
	Gender	8.402	0.040	Pearson's chi- square
	Position	3.788	0.285	

Therefore, based on Spearman's correlation coefficient test, a significant correlation between the involvement in workplace conflicts and age is recorded. This result confirms that personal factors are among the sources of workplace conflicts (Wall & Callister, 1995). This correlation shows that the frequency of conflicts is greater as the age of the person who involves in them increases. The possible cause of this phenomenon is probably related to the fact that there is a positive correlation between labor exhaustion and age (Tsitmideli et al., 2016; Drosos et al., 2017) and involvement in conflicts (Shimizutani et al., 2008). The above results show that holding a position of responsibility does not play a statistically significant role in workplace conflicts involvement. On the contrary, the frequency of involvement in workplace conflicts appears to be affected at a statistically significant level by gender.

### Emotional Intelligence Analysis

Wong and Law (2002) questionnaire was also used to analyze the EI level of the participants in the survey. Overall, respondents' EI is high, since the average score of it is 65.38 when the limits based on the above data are between 16 and 80. Based on the results of this analysis as depicted in the diagram below, the highest value accounts for self-emotions appraisal (SEA), while the lowest one accounts for regulation of emotions (ROE). Thus, during a conflict, it is most likely that emphasis is placed on understanding the involved persons' feelings, while it is less likely to emphasize in constructs such as keeping calm, controlling emotions, and quickening anger (see Figure 1).

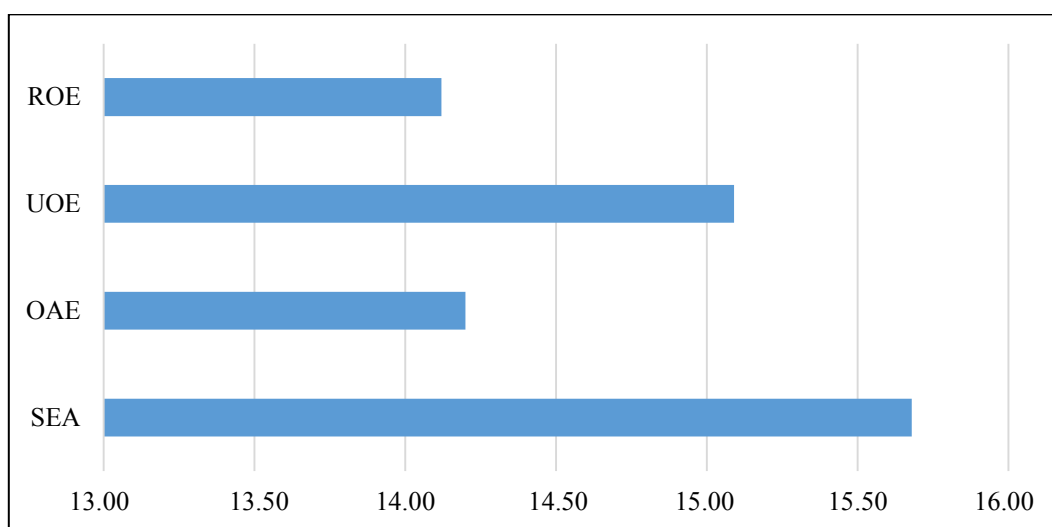


Figure 1. Aspects Values of Emotional Intelligence

Based on the results of the existing literature, EI seems to be correlated with a person's demographic characteristics (Arani, 2003; Chan, 2004). Thus, Kruskal-Wallis test was carried out to examine the existence of such a correlation in the current study. According to the results of Table 5, two correlations were found between respondents' demographic characteristics and the dimensions of EI. More specifically, the first one is the correlation between UOE and the position of responsibility ( $p=0.013<0.05$ ), while the second one is the correlation between ROE and gender ( $p=0.007<0.05$ ). In addition, teachers holding a position of responsibility have more developed traits in motivating and encouraging themselves, which confirms the fact that they are capable of defining high goals to achieve on their own. Also, men are at a statistically significantly level more able to control their feelings than women, in order to regain their composure as well as to use more logical thinking in solving problems that may arise.

Table 5. Results of Kruskal-Wallis Test (p-values) for Examining the Influence of Demographic Characteristics in the Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence

Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence	Position	Gender	Age	Education
Self-emotions appraisal (SEA)	0.256	0.392	0.494	0.324
Others-emotions appraisal (OEA)	0.488	0.935	0.888	0.112
Use of emotions (UOE)	0.013	0.386	0.555	0.239
Regulation of emotions (ROE)	0.525	0.007	0.366	0.201

### Conflict Resolution Methods

The next part of the questionnaire is aimed at investigating the behavior of the persons involved in a conflict. As mentioned in the section of methodology, this part of the questionnaire is based on the modified version of the Organizational Communication Conflict Instrument (OCCI), which was developed by Putman and Wilson and was later modified by Brew and Cairns (2004). Based on the methodology proposed by Brew and Cairns (2004), the 18 questions included of the questionnaire were analyzed using principal components analysis, a multivariable statistical method that is used to study and analyze a set of variables in order to find a new set of variables (Stewart, 1981) by the identification of groups with strong correlations between all the variables within the each one of these groups (Cappelleri et al., 2014). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy reported a value of 0.860, which is considered as an indication that the data are suitable for principal components analysis. In addition, Bartlett's test of sphericity showed statistical significance, suggesting that the data are adequate for principal components analysis. According to the results in Table 6, the variables were categorized into the following three components based on the conflict management styles:

1. Solution-orientation (F1),
2. Control (F2) and,
3. Non-confrontation (F3).

Table 6. Component's Loadings

	Components		
	Comp 1	Comp 2	Comp 3
Argue your case until the other person understands your position		0.533	
Argue strongly for your point of view		0.718	
Speak loud and clearly when trying to get the other person to accept your position		0.596	
Insist that your opinion be accepted during a conflict		0.821	
Suggest working together to create solutions	0.801		
Look for areas of agreement	0.635		
Exchange accurate information with the other party to solve the problem together	0.812		
Suggest a solution that combines both people's viewpoints	0.536		
Compromise with the other person	-0.518		
Give up some of your ideas if the other person gives up some of their ideas	0.591		
Stay away from disagreeable situations			0.522
Don't emphasize the importance of a disagreement			0.719
Withdraw from potential arguments			0.645
Ignore disagreements when they arise			0.590
Avoid topics that can be sources of disputes			0.801
Be silent rather than argue			0.732
Keep quiet about your views to avoid disagreements			0.819

The examination between the relationship of conflicts resolution styles and the holding of a position of responsibility is examined using Kruskal-Wallis test. From the results of the following table, it appears that both teachers who hold a position of responsibility and those who do not, have almost identical mean rank values concerning the methods of dealing with conflicts. This results is in contrast to what Mahon (2009) states. Moreover, the most preferred style for workplace conflict management is the solution-oriented method, which is confirmed by the results of Mahon (2009), who indicated teachers' preferences about conflict resolution styles. This solution-oriented style can reduce conflicts as shown by Friedman et al (2006).



Table 7. Kruskal-Wallis Test Results (p-values) for the Variables “Conflict Resolution Methods” and “Position”

	Mean ranks		Kruskal-Wallis p-value
	Responsibility position	No responsibility position	
Solution-oriented	3.42	3.30	0.592
Control	2.10	2.26	0.312
Non-confrontational	2.12	2.49	0.401

### The Contribution of Emotional Intelligence in Conflict Resolution

As already mentioned, EI can positively contribute to conflict resolution. This conclusion is verified by analyzing the variables “respondents’ frequency of involvement in workplace conflicts” and “EI’s scores” by using the One- Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test (see Table 8).

Table 8. ANOVA Test Results for the Relation between Emotional Intelligence and the Respondents’ Frequency of Involvement in Workplace Conflicts

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between Groups	227.816	2	113.908	2.677	0.013
Within Groups	5404.253	127	42.553		
Between Groups	5632.069	129			

More specifically, the differences among group means of the sample are statistically significant ( $p=0.013$ ). In other words, when the score of EI increases, the frequency of workplace conflicts is decreased. The scores of EI are illustrated in the following means plot. This result is consistent with the findings of other studies (Lopes et al., 2005).

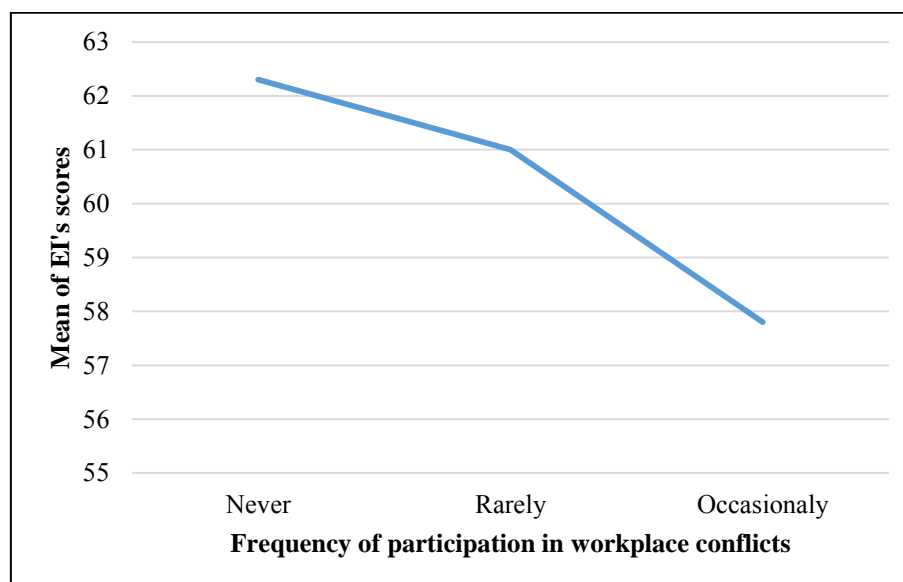


Figure 2. Relationship between Emotional Intelligence's Scores and the Frequency of Involvement in Workplace Conflicts

In order to further examine the contribution of EI to conflict resolution, the existence of statistically significant correlations between its scores and the scores of conflict resolution methods will be examined. Figure 3 was obtained using Pearson's correlation coefficient. Based on this figure, it is obvious that OAE dimension is correlated with control and solution-oriented methods. Also, SEA is correlated with solution-oriented and non-confrontational methods, while ROE is correlated with non-confrontational methods. Last, the highest and the only one moderate correlation is revealed between OAE and solution-oriented methods for conflict resolution ( $r = 0.361$ ), confirming the results from other studies that higher levels of EI are correlated with collaborative methods for conflict management (Jordan & Troth, 2004).

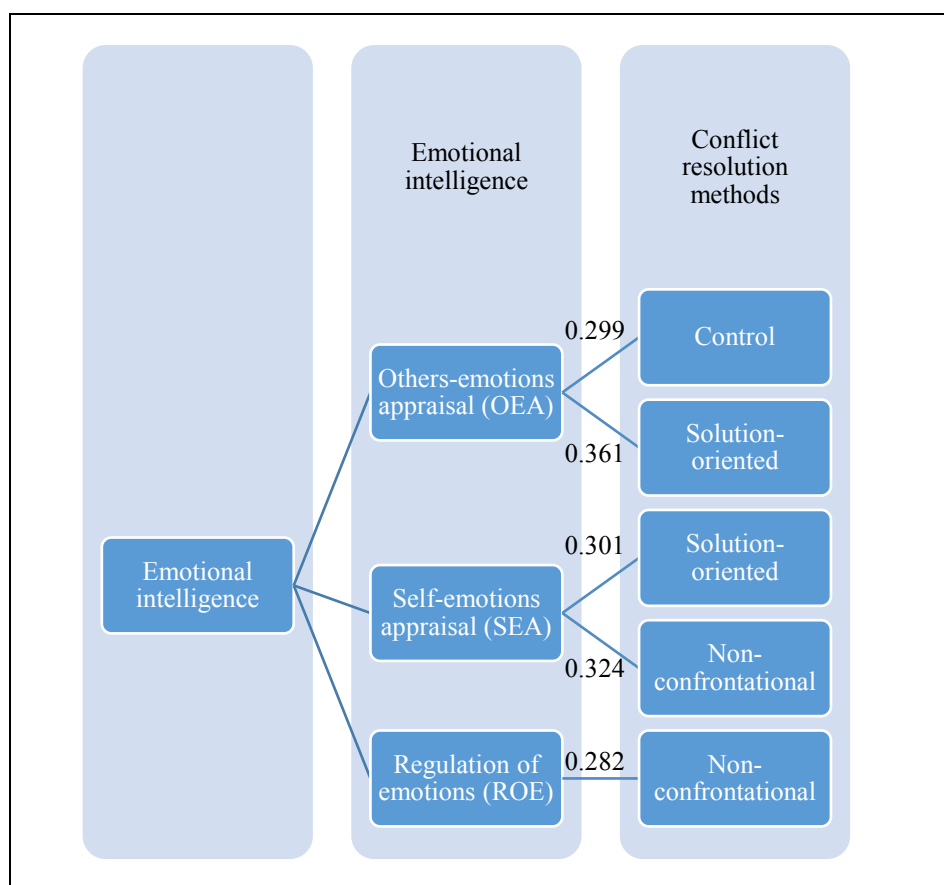


Figure 3. Emotional Intelligence Dimensions and Workplace Conflict Resolution Methods

## Conclusions

Workplace conflicts burst frequently and have negative or positive, effects. The research results show that EI offers opportunities for conflict resolution. This conclusion is in line with the results of Valente & Lourenço (2020) who confirmed that EI teachers have greater commitment levels for conflict resolution.

According to the analysis of EI of the examined teachers, the average value obtained was equal to 65.38 when the limits based on the above data are between 16 and 80. Concerning the different styles conflict management that were emerged and examined, it was initially found that holding a position of responsibility does not play an important role in adopting one of them. Additionally, the solution-oriented style is the most popular amongst the others. The research results confirmed that EI has a direct relationship with conflict resolution (Lopes et al., 2005), and a negative relationship with the involvement in workplace conflicts was observed. Finally, the results showed statistically significant correlations between EI factors and conflict resolution styles. The method of obtaining control is correlated at statistically significant level with the dimension of others' feeling, the method of finding a solution by assessing the self-feeling and the emotion of others, and the method of conflict avoidance by estimating the self-emotion and the regulation of emotion.

Taking everything into account, it is concluded that EI plays a significant role in conflict management and as Schlaerth et al. (2013, p. 128) stated "*constructive solutions may require compromise, which requires an ability to recognize and regulate emotions*". In any case, studying conflicts and their resolution in educational contexts still remains a complex and multidimensional issue. Future research should examine this relationship to other educational levels and whether these results affect teachers' performance.

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