



Short Paper

# Relationships between Teacher Emotional Intelligence and Conflict-Management Styles: Evidence and Policy Recommendations for Schools

Fang Chao

College of Arts, Sciences and Education, Trinity University of Asia, Philippines  
[chaonfang@tua.edu.ph](mailto:chaonfang@tua.edu.ph)  
(corresponding author)

Gracia Sarao

College of Arts, Sciences and Education, Trinity University of Asia, Philippines

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## Abstract

The rapid development of modern society presents educational institutions with both innovative opportunities and high-pressure challenges, making emotional management and conflict handling crucial for educators. Based on a sample of university teachers, this cross-sectional correlational study examined the relationships between emotional intelligence (EI) and conflict management style preferences. The study applied a four-dimensional framework of EI (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social skills) and assessed five conflict management styles (competition, collaboration, avoidance, accommodation, and compromise) using an adapted Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT)-based scale and the Conflict Management Styles Questionnaire among 120 full-time teachers. The results identified statistically significant associations between several EI dimensions and conflict management styles, particularly stronger associations between EI dimensions and collaborative, compromising, and accommodating styles, and negative associations with competing and avoiding styles. These findings suggest that EI-related faculty development and conflict-management training may be useful directions for promoting more constructive interpersonal interaction in higher education.



Keywords – emotional intelligence, conflict management, university teachers, higher education

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## INTRODUCTION

The rapid evolution of educational systems globally has intensified the need for educators to adapt to increasingly complex interpersonal environments. In higher education, faculty members are expected not only to deliver academic excellence but also to navigate complex collegial communication, student diversity, and institutional demands—all of which generate potential for conflict and emotional strain (Hao, 2024). As universities in China undergo similar reforms, the emotional and interpersonal competencies of teachers are becoming essential to academic sustainability and workplace harmony.

Emotional Intelligence (EI), conceptualized by Salovey and Mayer (1990) as the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and use emotions in oneself and others, has emerged as a crucial psychological and interpersonal resource associated with personal and professional effectiveness. Prior studies have reported associations between higher EI and educators' stress regulation, classroom climate, and interpersonal relationships (Brackett et al., 2011). As professionally diverse teaching teams become increasingly common in Chinese universities, EI is increasingly viewed not only as a personal asset but also as a potentially relevant consideration in institutional development.

Parallel to this, conflict management styles (CMS)—including competing, collaborating, avoiding, accommodating, and compromising—reflect how individuals respond to interpersonal disagreements (Rahim, 2002). In academic environments characterized by collaborative teaching, shared governance, and diverse professional perspectives, appropriate conflict management becomes essential. Studies suggest that individuals with higher EI are more likely to use integrative styles such as collaboration and compromise, rather than confrontational or avoidant approaches (Heris & Heris, 2011; Shih & Susanto, 2010).

Despite the theoretical linkage between EI and CMS, few empirical studies have examined the relationship between these constructs in Chinese higher education. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by examining whether emotional intelligence is significantly associated with conflict management style preferences among university teachers in selected institutions in Guangdong and Jiangxi Provinces, China. The main focus of this study was to identify the direction and strength of the statistical relationships between EI dimensions and conflict management styles. Emotional intelligence and conflict management styles were treated as the principal study variables.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The rapid development of the higher education sector has created both opportunities and challenges for educators, particularly regarding emotional regulation and conflict management. Aliasgari and Farzadnia (2012) reported a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict management strategies among teachers, providing further support for examining these constructs in educational settings. University teachers operate in increasingly complex environments characterized by demographic and professional diversity, cultural variation, and organizational change. As a result, they are required not only to teach effectively but also to manage emotional demands and interpersonal conflicts (Valente & Lourenço, 2020). The ability to navigate these challenges is now seen as integral to a teacher's professional competence.

Emotional intelligence (EI) — the ability to perceive, understand, and manage emotions — has become a crucial psychological construct associated with teachers' professional effectiveness and interpersonal harmony (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). EI is widely recognized as an important ability related to emotional self-regulation and the generation of positive work emotions. Zhou et al. (2015) reported that project managers with higher EI levels tended to use more adaptive emotion-management strategies when experiencing work-related stress. Similarly, Gong (2014) discussed associations between EI, individual competence, leadership style, and behavioral tendencies within organizational settings. In the construction management field, Butler and Chinowsky (2006) conducted an empirical study involving 130 industry executives and found a strong association between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership behavior. Other studies have linked EI and transformational leadership with cooperative approaches to team conflict, rather than competitive approaches (Zhang, Cao, & Tjosvold, 2011). Moreover, higher EI has been associated with collaboration and equitable resource allocation among team members, which may provide favorable conditions for conflict resolution and project success (Sunindijo, Hadikusumo, & Ogunlana, 2007).

Empirical research in educational settings has likewise reported associations between teachers' emotion-regulation abilities and their use of integrative and compromising conflict management strategies (Valente et al., 2022; Skordoulis et al., 2020). Conversely, lower EI scores have been associated in some studies with greater use of avoidant or competitive styles, which may be related to weaker cooperation and team cohesion. Skordoulis et al. (2020) reported that teachers with higher EI experienced fewer conflicts and were more likely to use collaborative approaches to resolve disputes. Moreover, recent studies indicate that higher EI among teachers is associated with a greater sense of belonging and higher job satisfaction, which are in turn related to workplace harmony and teacher well-being (Rogowska & Meres, 2022; Rustamov et al., 2023). Taken together, these studies suggest that EI is associated not only with teachers' preferences for collaborative and compromising conflict management styles, but also with broader workplace experiences such as belonging, job satisfaction, and interpersonal harmony.

Collectively, prior research suggests that emotional intelligence is closely related to educators' emotional regulation, interpersonal awareness, and conflict-handling preferences in educational environments. Teachers with higher EI scores are more likely to report constructive interpersonal tendencies, such as understanding emotional cues, regulating emotional responses, and engaging in cooperative communication. Based on these findings, this study assumes that the four EI dimensions may be significantly associated with teachers' conflict management style preferences. Specifically, higher EI is expected to be positively associated with collaborative, accommodating, and compromising styles, and negatively associated with competing and avoiding styles.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Setting and Participants***

This study employed a cross-sectional descriptive-correlational design to examine the statistical relationships between emotional intelligence and conflict management style preferences. Data were collected through self-administered surveys distributed electronically via Google Forms. Participants were provided with clear instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. Informed consent was obtained from each participant before data collection, and the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were maintained throughout the study.

The study was conducted during the 2024 – 2025 academic year at three higher education institutions in China: Guangdong ATV Vocational College of Performing Arts in Guangdong Province, Nanchang Polytechnic Institute, and Gongqing College of Science and Technology in Jiangxi Province. The participants were full-time teachers who taught at the university level, with a total of 120 valid responses. A stratified random sampling technique was utilized to ensure representation across various demographic profiles, including age, sex, highest educational attainment, and years of service. Only teachers aged 20 to 59 were included in the study. The distribution of respondents per school is detailed in Table 1 below.

### ***Research Instrument***

Two self-report instruments were used to collect data for this study. The first instrument was an adapted Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT)-based scale, originally developed by Schutte et al. (1998) to measure respondents' overall emotional intelligence. Although the original SSEIT is commonly used as a global measure of emotional intelligence, the present study organized the EI-related items into four analytical dimensions: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, and Social Skills. These four dimensions were treated as subdomains within emotional intelligence rather than as constructs outside EI. The questionnaire contains 32 items rated on a five-

point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree), reflecting respondents' perceived ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and utilize emotions effectively.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency (f)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Age	21–30 years old	30	25%
Age	31–40 years old	48	40%
Age	41–50 years old	30	25%
Age	51–59 years old	12	10%
Gender	Male	34	28%
Gender	Female	86	72%
Educational Attainment	Bachelor's Degree	36	30%
Educational Attainment	Master's Degree	66	55%
Educational Attainment	Doctorate Degree	18	15%
Years in Service	1–5 years	24	20%
Years in Service	6–10 years	46	38%
Years in Service	More than 10 years	50	42%

The second instrument was a Conflict Management Styles Questionnaire (CMSQ) adapted from the Thomas–Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (Thomas, 2008). It measures five primary conflict-handling styles: Competition, Collaboration, Avoidance, Accommodation, and Compromise. Each dimension includes five statements rated on the same five-point scale, assessing how participants typically approach interpersonal disagreements.

Both instruments were pretested for content validity and cultural relevance. Expert reviewers in education, psychology, and organizational behavior evaluated item clarity, theoretical consistency, and contextual appropriateness. Minor linguistic adaptations were made to align the terminology with the Chinese higher education context without altering the conceptual meanings of the constructs. To further examine the reliability of the adapted instruments, internal consistency analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha. The overall EI scale showed excellent internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.936$ ), and the four EI dimensions demonstrated acceptable to good reliability: Self-Awareness ( $\alpha = 0.788$ ), Self-

Management ( $\alpha = 0.891$ ), Social Awareness ( $\alpha = 0.817$ ), and Social Skills ( $\alpha = 0.815$ ). The CMSQ also showed good reliability overall ( $\alpha = 0.877$ ), with acceptable to good reliability across its five dimensions: Competition ( $\alpha = 0.820$ ), Collaboration ( $\alpha = 0.806$ ), Avoidance ( $\alpha = 0.797$ ), Accommodation ( $\alpha = 0.865$ ), and Compromise ( $\alpha = 0.819$ ).

In addition, validity-related checks were conducted to assess the suitability of the item structure for factor-based analysis. For the EI items, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) value was 0.849, and Bartlett’s test of sphericity was significant,  $\chi^2(496) = 2113.03$ ,  $p < .001$ . For the CMSQ items, the KMO value was 0.773, and Bartlett’s test of sphericity was also significant,  $\chi^2(300) = 1553.28$ ,  $p < .001$ . Therefore, the adopted instruments showed acceptable reliability and preliminary validity-related evidence in the present sample.

## RESULTS

### *The Level of Emotional Intelligence*

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a psychological construct associated with personal and professional functioning. In this study, teachers’ EI was assessed in terms of four dimensions: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social skills. Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree). We used mean scores (with higher means indicating higher perceived EI) to interpret the findings. Table 2 presents the average scores for each EI dimension.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Emotional Intelligence Dimensions

EI Dimension	Mean Score	Interpretation
Overall Self-Awareness	4.1	Agree
Overall Self-Management	4.01	Agree
Overall Social Awareness	4.13	Agree
Overall Social Skills	4.4	Strongly Agree

Note. Scale legend: 1.00–1.80 = Strongly Disagree; 1.81–2.40 = Disagree; 2.41–3.40 = Neutral; 3.41–4.20 = Agree; 4.21–5.00 = Strongly Agree.

The results indicate that the respondents, on average, exhibited high emotional intelligence, especially in self-awareness and social awareness (mean scores = 4.1, interpreted as “Agree”). Their self-management and social skills were also high (means around 4.0 and above), although these could potentially be further strengthened through targeted training (e.g., stress resilience and emotional regulation workshops). This generally high EI profile suggests that most of the surveyed teachers perceive themselves as emotionally competent. Prior research supports the notion that emotional intelligence is malleable; for example, structured EI training programs can significantly improve

emotion regulation and translate into better leadership behaviors (Mattingly & Kraiger, 2019). Our findings are consistent with such research, implying that even already high EI levels might be enhanced with professional development interventions.

### **The Level of Conflict Management Styles**

Effective conflict management is crucial in interpersonal relationships and organizational settings. We evaluated teachers' conflict management styles across five key types: competition, collaboration, avoidance, accommodation, and compromise. Like the EI assessment, each style was self-rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree), and we calculated mean scores for each style. Table 3 shows the average scores for the five conflict management styles.

On average, teachers showed a strong preference for compromise, with a high mean score (~4.07) indicating they tend to make mutual concessions and seek fair middle ground. Collaboration also scored relatively high (4.20), suggesting that many teachers favor cooperative, win-win problem-solving approaches. Accommodation (3.92) and avoidance (3.78) were in the moderate-high range, whereas competition had a mean of 3.86. These results imply that the group of teachers leaned towards integrative conflict management styles (compromise and collaboration) while being less inclined to confront or compete aggressively. In practical terms, the respondents often strive for balanced solutions that consider both parties' outcomes and maintain harmony, rather than pursuing their own interests at the expense of others.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Conflict Management Styles

<b>Conflict Management Style</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Overall Competition	3.86	Agree
Overall Collaboration	4.2	Agree
Overall Avoidance	3.78	Agree
Overall Accommodation	3.92	Agree
Overall Compromise	4.07	Agree

Analysis of the five styles suggests that respondents collectively reported strong tendencies toward cooperative and compromise-oriented approaches, as well as moderate tendencies toward competition, avoidance, and accommodation. While they were generally willing to assert their needs or withdraw, when necessary, their reported preferences tended toward finding middle ground and preserving relationships. This descriptive profile may be useful when designing communication and conflict-management activities for faculty.

## Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Management Styles

This study also examined whether teachers' emotional intelligence is significantly related to their conflict management styles. Specifically, we assessed how each EI component (Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Social Skills) correlates with each conflict-handling style (Competition, Collaboration, Avoidance, Accommodation, Compromise). A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted, and the results are presented in Table 4. Table 4 summarizes the correlation coefficients ( $r$ ) and significance levels ( $p$ ) for the relationships between EI dimensions and conflict style preferences.

Table 4. Correlation Between EI and Conflict Management Styles

EI Component	Competitio n ( $r$ , $p$ )	Collaboratio n ( $r$ , $p$ )	Avoidanc e ( $r$ , $p$ )	Accommodatio n ( $r$ , $p$ )	Compromis e ( $r$ , $p$ )
Self-Awareness	$r = -0.35$ , $p = 0.02$	$r = 0.68$ , $p = 0.001$	$r = -0.42$ , $p = 0.015$	$r = 0.50$ , $p = 0.008$	$r = 0.55$ , $p = 0.005$
Self-Management	$r = -0.30$ , $p = 0.03$	$r = 0.75$ , $p = 0.0005$	$r = -0.38$ , $p = 0.02$	$r = 0.45$ , $p = 0.01$	$r = 0.60$ , $p = 0.004$
Social Awareness	$r = -0.28$ , $p = 0.04$	$r = 0.80$ , $p = 0.0002$	$r = -0.40$ , $p = 0.018$	$r = 0.55$ , $p = 0.005$	$r = 0.65$ , $p = 0.002$
Social Skills	$r = -0.25$ , $p = 0.05$	$r = 0.85$ , $p = 0.0001$	$r = -0.35$ , $p = 0.025$	$r = 0.60$ , $p = 0.003$	$r = 0.70$ , $p = 0.001$

Note. Correlation coefficients ( $r$ ) range from -1 to 1,  $|r| \geq 0.5$  (strong relationship),  $0.3 \leq |r| < 0.5$  (moderate),  $|r| < 0.3$  (weak).  $p < 0.05$ .

Overall, the correlation analysis revealed significant associations between the components of emotional intelligence and the five conflict management styles among university teachers. These correlations support our expectation that higher EI relates to more constructive conflict handling:

All EI dimensions (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, social skills) showed moderate negative correlations with the competing style ( $r$  ranging from  $-0.25$  to  $-0.35$ , all  $p < 0.05$ ). This suggests that teachers with higher EI are less likely to adopt a confrontational, win-lose approach during conflicts. They may have less tendency to insist on their position at the expense of others when disagreements arise.

In contrast, the collaboration style exhibited the strongest positive correlations with EI ( $r = 0.68$  to  $0.85$ ,  $p < 0.01$  for all EI components), especially with social awareness ( $r = 0.80$ ) and social skills ( $r = 0.85$ ). Higher EI scores, therefore, co-occurred with greater reported use of open communication, empathy, and cooperative problem-solving.

The avoidance style showed moderate negative correlations with EI ( $r = -0.35$  to  $-0.42$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This indicates that higher EI scores were associated with lower reported avoidance tendencies, whereas lower EI scores were associated with greater reported use of avoidance. In practical terms, teachers with higher perceived emotional intelligence appeared less likely to report withdrawing from or postponing conflict situations.

Accommodation (obliging) showed moderate positive relationships with EI ( $r = 0.45$  to  $0.60$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This implies that emotionally intelligent teachers can maintain interpersonal harmony through empathy and flexibility, yielding to others when appropriate without feeling undue personal loss. However, the moderate correlation suggests that teachers with higher EI may balance consideration for others' needs with appropriate self-regulation and personal boundaries.

Compromise also exhibited positive correlations with all EI components ( $r = 0.55$  to  $0.70$ , all  $p < 0.01$ ), particularly strong with social awareness and social skills. This suggests that teachers with higher EI are more capable of negotiating balanced solutions that consider both parties' interests. They leverage their emotional understanding and interpersonal skills to find middle-ground resolutions.

Collectively, these findings highlight the importance of emotional intelligence in understanding educators' conflict management preferences. Higher EI is linked to more constructive conflict management strategies (collaborating, accommodating, and compromising), while lower EI aligns with less constructive ones (competing, avoiding). The results suggest that EI is a meaningful psychological and interpersonal resource for explaining how university teachers approach workplace conflicts and for informing future faculty development initiatives focused on emotional awareness, communication, and constructive conflict resolution.

## **DISCUSSION**

Our findings align with conflict-management theory and prior empirical research, highlighting the relevance of emotional intelligence (EI) to conflict-handling preferences among university teachers. In classic frameworks, the Integrating strategy (also labeled collaboration or problem solving) aims to satisfy both one's own and the other party's interests by addressing issues directly and cooperatively (Rahim, 2002). This style, characterized by high cooperation and high assertiveness, is theoretically compatible with EI-related competencies such as perspective-taking, emotion regulation, and effective communication. This theoretical lens helps explain why higher EI scores were associated with greater reported use of collaboration and compromise and with lower reported use of dominating or avoiding strategies.

The findings indicate that all four dimensions of emotional intelligence were significantly associated with conflict management styles. The strongest positive

associations emerged with collaboration, while moderate positive correlations were observed with compromise and accommodation. By contrast, competing or dominating and avoiding styles showed small-to-moderate negative correlations with EI. This pattern is consistent with prior evidence and suggests that teachers with stronger emotional appraisal, regulation, social perception, and social skills tend to report more collaboration-centered and integrative conflict management preferences. These results add value by identifying which EI dimensions and conflict management styles are most closely connected in the higher education context, thereby providing a clearer empirical basis for faculty development and workplace relationship management.

Our results further align with the findings of Godse and Thingujam (2010), who examined perceived emotional intelligence and conflict resolution styles among information technology professionals. They found that overall emotional intelligence, particularly the abilities of understanding emotions and emotional management, was significantly and positively correlated with the integrating style of conflict resolution, while negatively associated with the avoiding style, even after controlling for personality traits. The similarity between their findings and the present results suggests that the EI – conflict management relationship may be relevant across different professional groups. In the context of university faculty, this pattern indicates that teachers with higher EI scores are more likely to report conflict-handling preferences characterized by emotional understanding, cooperative dialogue, and problem-solving orientation, rather than avoidance or confrontation. Together with previous findings (Hopkins & Yonker, 2015; Zhang, Chen, & Sun, 2015), these results support a theoretically meaningful connection between EI-related competencies and constructive conflict management preferences, including empathy, cognitive flexibility, self-regulation, and compromise-oriented interaction.

Building on the observed pattern that higher EI is associated with greater use of integrative styles and lower reliance on dominating/avoiding, universities should prioritize evidence-based EI development and conflict-competency training at scale. First, deliver structured EI training (e.g., modules on emotion appraisal, regulation, perspective-taking, and social problem solving) because meta-analytic evidence shows EI can be causally improved with medium effects and transfer to workplace outcomes (Mattingly & Kraiger, 2019). Such programs should be paired with mindfulness-based emotion-regulation exercises to reduce emotional reactivity and exhaustion, which in turn supports constructive conflict behavior (Hülshager et al., 2013). Second, embed integrative conflict-management workshops that explicitly teach Rahim's integrating style (direct, cooperative problem solving aimed at mutual gains) and practice it through scenario-based role plays relevant to teaching and collegial governance; this aligns with the theory that integrating (high cooperation and high assertiveness) is the style most consistent with EI-driven capabilities (Rahim, 2002). Third, targetable faculty segments (e.g., early-career teachers or units with high interdependence) should receive booster sessions on collaboration/compromise scripts, active-listening, and emotion-labeling under pressure, reflecting evidence that EI relates positively to constructive conflict handling (Schlaerth,

Ensari, & Christian, 2013) and, specifically in education, that teachers' EI predicts greater use of integrating strategies in the classroom (Valente & Lourenço, 2020). Finally, treat these interventions as continuous professional development with pre-/post- assessment using validated EI and conflict-style measures to monitor change and sustain effects over semesters.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study identified that higher Emotional Intelligence is significantly associated with constructive conflict management styles, particularly in collaborative and compromising approaches. Studies conducted in China further suggest that EI is relevant to workplace harmony, leadership effectiveness, and student cooperation. Given the importance of EI in conflict resolution, organizations and academic institutions may consider integrating EI development programs into faculty development to support interpersonal relationships and help address conflict-related disruptions. However, given the small sample size of this study, the small coverage of respondents in a few universities, and the lack of richness in the dimensions of statistical analysis, the results are not very representative, and we will follow up with a study with a larger sample size, a larger coverage, and more comprehensive dimensions to further explore the relationship between EI and conflict management styles in the field of faculty clusters and education.

Given the importance of EI in effective conflict resolution, academic institutions may consider integrating EI development programs into faculty training to support constructive interpersonal relationships and conflict management competencies. For example, universities can include workshops on emotional awareness, empathy, and communication skills as part of regular professional development. By doing so, faculty members may become better equipped to handle conflicts constructively, which may support improved teamwork and a more positive organizational climate.

However, we acknowledge certain limitations of this study. The sample size ( $N = 120$ ) was relatively small and drawn from only a few institutions, which may limit the representativeness of the findings. The scope of statistical analysis was also constrained (e.g., we focused on correlations without examining deeper causal mechanisms). These factors mean that our results should be generalized with caution. We plan to address these limitations in future research by using a larger sample, expanding to more diverse institutions, and incorporating more comprehensive analytical techniques (such as structural equation modeling or longitudinal designs). A follow-up study with a broader coverage and longitudinal data would allow us to explore the EI – conflict management relationship in greater depth, including possible mechanisms, temporal patterns, and long-term associations. Based on the findings, we offer several recommendations for strengthening emotional intelligence and conflict management competencies among university faculty:

View EI development as a strategic priority – Since EI dimensions were significantly associated with teachers’ preferred conflict management styles, university leadership may consider including EI training in faculty development. This could involve formal programs or coaching that support teachers in developing self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, and relationship management skills.

Integrate EI and conflict management training into professional development – Higher education administrators may embed structured training sessions that address emotional awareness, empathy, active listening, and effective communication, alongside conflict resolution techniques. Such training should be tailored to the diverse needs of teachers according to their age, gender, experience, etc., ensuring relevance for all faculty demographics.

Provide scenario-based conflict management workshops – Universities may implement systematic workshops where faculty can practice conflict situations through simulations or role-play. For less experienced teachers, such practical exercises (e.g., handling a disagreement with a colleague or managing a classroom conflict) may help build confidence and competence in using collaborative and compromising approaches instead of defaulting to avoidance or confrontation. For all faculty, advanced workshops can cover complex scenarios and introduce strategies like mediation and negotiation.

Institutionalize ongoing support and assessment – Treat EI and conflict management skill development as an ongoing process. Institutions may periodically assess faculty EI and provide refresher sessions or resources to sustain skill growth. Recognizing and rewarding effective conflict management in the workplace (for instance, through teaching excellence awards or leadership roles) can also reinforce the value of these skills and motivate faculty to continue developing them.

By implementing these recommendations, universities may foster an organizational culture that values emotional competence and constructive conflict resolution, thereby supporting faculty well-being and institutional effectiveness.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

The findings of this study have important implications for higher education management and faculty development programs. The observed associations between emotional intelligence and constructive conflict management styles highlight the potential value of integrating EI-based training into institutional policies and professional development frameworks. University administrators, in particular, may design initiatives that support the development of teachers’ emotional regulation, empathy, and communication skills. By institutionalizing EI and conflict management programs, academic organizations may help promote more harmonious relationships among staff, address interpersonal stress, and support overall organizational performance. In practice,

this means embedding emotional intelligence modules within teacher orientation, leadership training, and mentoring systems to build a resilient, adaptive, and emotionally healthy teaching community.

On a broader social level within educational institutions, our results underscore the relevance of teachers' emotional intelligence to positive interpersonal climates. Teachers who possess strong emotional competencies may be better positioned to report constructive conflict management preferences and to model constructive emotional behavior for students and colleagues. By incorporating EI education into both teacher and student development, for example, social-emotional learning curricula for students and EI workshops for staff, schools may encourage empathy, cooperation, and tolerance throughout the educational community. This may contribute to healthier communication dynamics, help address stress-related burnout, and support the overall well-being of the academic community. In short, emotionally intelligent educators can be viewed as important contributors to inclusive and supportive learning environments that extend beyond the classroom to the institution's culture itself.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the growing body of literature linking emotional intelligence with conflict management in educational settings. It provides empirical evidence supporting the integration of EI theory into models of organizational behavior, leadership, and professional development for educators. The findings highlight the potential relevance of emotional intelligence to conflict intensity and team cohesion among faculty. Future studies should expand on this foundation by employing longitudinal or experimental designs to explore whether and how changes in teachers' EI over time are related to their conflict management behaviors and outcomes. Cross-cultural research could also examine whether these patterns hold in different educational systems or cultural contexts. Additionally, investigating potential moderators, such as organizational support, teacher gender, or teaching experience, and mediators, such as stress or burnout levels, would offer a deeper understanding of the EI – conflict management dynamic.

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## DECLARATIONS

### **Conflict of Interest**

All authors declare no conflict of interest.

### **Informed Consent**

Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection. Participant confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or negative consequences.

### **Ethics Approval**

Ethical considerations were strictly adhered to throughout the research process. The research was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines and regulations established by the Trinity University of Asia Institutional Ethics Review Committee (IERC). This study was reviewed and approved by the TUA Institutional Ethics Review Committee (IERC) before data collection.

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## Author's Biography

Chao Fang is a doctoral student in the Graduate School of Education, College of Arts, Sciences, and Education, Trinity University of Asia. His research interests include higher education, teacher emotional intelligence, conflict management, and faculty development.

Gracia D. G. Sarao holds a Doctor of Education degree from Trinity University of Asia, Philippines and a Master of Arts in Teaching Language Arts from the Philippine Normal University. She is currently affiliated with Trinity University of Asia, having served as a faculty member and academic leadership within the Department of Languages and Contemporary Human Studies. Her research interests include teacher development and school sustainability.