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# The Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy in the Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Conflict Management

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### ABSTRACT

The study's objective is to ascertain the mediating role of self-efficacy in the effect of emotional intelligence on conflict management. The research data were collected by a convenience sampling method from 188 blue-collar workers of a textile enterprise operating in Çankırı Province in a cross-sectional research design. In addition to questions about demographic characteristics, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and conflict management scales were utilised to obtain the data. The data were analysed using SPSS and AMOS software packages, and the Process Macro plug-in developed by Hayes (2013) was used for mediation testing. The findings indicated that emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on conflict management, and self-efficacy played a mediating role in this effect. Furthermore, it was determined that emotional intelligence exerts a positive and significant effect on self-efficacy, and that self-efficacy, in turn, has a positive and significant effect on conflict management. The results of the analysis reveal that improving the emotional intelligence skills of employees in organisations can have positive effects in the work environment by both increasing their self-efficacy levels and enabling them to be more effective in direct conflict management. It is aimed that this study will contribute to business management, human resources and organisational behaviour literature.

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In organisations, conflict arises when people with different goals, thoughts, value judgments and characters cannot get along with each other. To prevent this negative situation, it is an important necessity to have managers with sufficient knowledge and experience in conflict management in organisations. Effective and efficient management of the conflict management process by organisational management will prevent negative situations that may occur in the

organisation. Effective conflict management varies depending on the individual competencies and emotional capacities of employees (Rahim, 2002). This topic is both theoretically important and practically relevant, as organizations continue to seek effective strategies to foster positive work environments and reduce interpersonal friction. In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in understanding how individual psychological capacities affect interpersonal dynamics and workplace outcomes. Among these capacities, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and conflict management styles have received particular attention due to their pivotal role in shaping organizational behaviour and enhancing employee performance. Understanding how emotional intelligence and self-efficacy influence the way individuals manage conflicts can provide actionable insights for HR practitioners, organizational psychologists, and leaders aiming to improve team dynamics and individual adaptability. The significance of the present study lies in its integrative approach to examining the interrelationships between these constructs, which have often been studied in isolation.

Today, the concept of emotional intelligence is increasingly being accepted as a crucial and effective element in organisations. The studies on emotional intelligence have started to be followed by organisations. Three important issues in the concept of emotional intelligence are emotional awareness, the ability to use emotions and the ability to apply emotions to the work to be done (Tuğrul, 1999). Emotional intelligence is considered an important factor that contributes to the effective management of conflicts with the ability to recognise, understand and manage individuals' emotions (Mayer et al., 2016). Emotional intelligence enables individuals to evaluate social situations more accurately and contributes to the development of constructive responses, especially in conflict resolution (Schlaerth et al., 2013). In the business environment, it is argued that individuals with high levels of emotional intelligence can manage conflicts more effectively because they can communicate constructively by controlling their emotions and better understand the other party's point of view through empathy (Chen et al., 2019; Jordan & Troth, 2004; Schlaerth et al., 2013).

Self-efficacy is a cognitive mechanism that expresses individuals' beliefs that they can successfully fulfil a certain task or situation (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy belief is an important issue that increases the success of individuals in achieving the goals they set (Latifian, 2001). When evaluated in terms of conflict management, it is seen that individuals with high self-efficacy take more initiative in the process of resolving conflicts and use problem-solving strategies more effectively, while individuals with low self-efficacy tend to avoid conflicts or exhibit a passive attitude and have difficulty in producing effective solutions (Field, 2001; Hull et al., 2021; Mamak & Erol, 2023; Salami, 2010). Despite the extant literature providing empirical support for the individual effects of emotional intelligence or self-efficacy on workplace behaviour, there is a paucity of literature that explicates their interconnected roles, especially in the context of conflict management. Thus, this study contributes to the extant literature by adopting a mediated model, where self-efficacy is tested as a mediating mechanism between emotional intelligence and conflict management.

Studies in the literature show that emotional intelligence helps individuals to adopt more constructive and rational strategies in conflict management (Animasahun, 2008; Chen et al., 2019; Schlegel et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2015). However, it is important to identify the mechanisms underlying this relationship. In this context, in this study, the concept of self-efficacy is considered an important variable in understanding the relationship between

emotional intelligence and conflict management. By Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, self-efficacy is defined as individuals' beliefs regarding their capabilities to complete a specific task or situation. Individuals with high levels of self-efficacy are more effective in coping with stressful and complex situations and have better problem-solving skills. Accordingly, it is predicted that self-efficacy will play a mediating role in the relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict management.

As demonstrated in the extant literature, emotional intelligence has been shown to have a positive impact on conflict management. Studies have examined the relationship between emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and conflict management. These studies have generally investigated the variables independently or in dyadic relationships, often without testing mediation models in organizational settings. In this context, self-efficacy, defined as a belief in one's ability to produce solutions in conflict situations (Bandura, 1997), is a factor worthy of investigation as a mediating variable. Thus, both emotional intelligence and self-efficacy were examined together as cognitive-emotional determinants of conflict management. Based on Affective Events Theory, Broaden-and-Build Theory, and Social Cognitive Theory, this study aims to contribute both theoretically and empirically to the field of organizational behaviour by examining the mediating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict management. In addition, the study was conducted on blue-collar employees in a textile company, which is one of the important production centres of Turkey, and aimed to explain the effects of individuals' emotional and cognitive resources on conflict management in a stressful, fast-paced and mostly low-control working environment specific to this sector. In this respect, the study is original in the sectoral context and contributes to the cultural gaps in the literature through a developing country sample.

## Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

### **Emotional Intelligence**

Studies on the place and importance of emotional intelligence in organisations are increasing today. Today, the increasing prevalence of individual-oriented approaches has revealed the issue of addressing the concept of emotional intelligence in organisations. Emotional intelligence is defined as the process of perceiving, controlling and making sense of one's own emotions and the emotions of the people around them and developing strategies that will positively affect one's own life (Goleman & Cherniss, 2024). Acar (2002) defined emotional intelligence as the ability to recognise, understand and use emotions effectively to cope with oneself and others. Sparrow and Amanda (2006) defined emotional intelligence as the process by which people integrate their emotions, thoughts and activities. Salovey and Mayer (1990) define emotional intelligence as the ability to observe one's own and others' emotions, to distinguish between these emotions and to use the information obtained at this point in one's thoughts and activities. While defining the concept of emotional intelligence, five important issues were emphasised (Salovey & Mayer, 1990): 1) To be aware of their feelings, 2) Coping with one's emotions, 3) To be self-motivated, 4) Being able to understand the feelings of others, and 5) It is the ability to be in control of one's relationship with one's environment.

## **Conflict Management**

Conflict is a situation that arises due to differences in goals, objectives, ideas, perceptions and preferences between individuals or groups and causes stress, unrest, arguments and problems that cause one of the parties to lose or fail. The main reason for the emergence of conflict is the differences between people. The fact that organisational employees come from different cultures, different environments and have different qualities, thoughts and perceptions is the most important reason for conflict in organisations (Koçak & Aktaş, 2019). Conflict management refers to the process of resolving and controlling disagreements that arise within the organization (Rahim, 2002).

Organisational management should implement an effective conflict management process to address conflicts that may arise due to differences among employees in organisations. Instead of suppressing and eliminating conflicts in organisations, it is important to manage the conflict situation by aligning with the goals and objectives of the organisation. Conflict management in organisations is the process of controlling the conflicts that may arise between employees within the organisation and eliminating the unrest between the parties in a way that will benefit the organisation (Hampton et al., 1982). With effective conflict management in organisations, the harmful consequences of conflicts can be minimised.

## **Self-Efficacy**

Efficacy is the characteristic that gives people the power to perform a certain job activity. Efficacy is a set of characteristics necessary for people to do a job (Salami, 2010). People who can do the work assigned by a certain organisation are efficacy people. The concept of self-efficacy was developed by Bandura and represents a fundamental aspect of Bandura's social-cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997). The concept of self-efficacy, developed by Bandura, emerged from the social learning theory, which suggests that individuals should have confidence in their competence (Özerkan, 2007). Self-efficacy is an important indicator of the extent to which people have the necessary capabilities to perform the necessary activities in a certain field (Chan, 2004).

The level of self-efficacy of employees in organisations varies according to the working environment, conditions, types and difficulty levels of the work to be done. Self-efficacy is an important belief that affects the success of organisational employees (Hennessy & Lent, 2008). People with high self-efficacy beliefs set goals for themselves regarding the situations they may encounter and achieve success through these goals. These people plan and implement activities that will increase their success by taking into account their competencies and individual goals (Özerkan, 2007). On the other hand, people with low self-efficacy beliefs, even if they have the necessary competencies for the work they will do, are inadequate against the negativities that may occur in the work they will do because they do not believe in the competencies they have, and therefore they fail (Afifah et al., 2024).

## **Correlations Between Variables and Hypothesis**

According to Affective Events Theory, events in the workplace trigger an individual's emotional responses, and these emotional responses, in turn, influence their behaviour (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Emotional intelligence enables an individual to recognize, regulate, and appropriately direct their emotional responses to these events. In this context, individuals with

high emotional intelligence respond more constructively to events that generate negative emotions, such as conflict. Studies in the literature have revealed that individuals with high levels of emotional intelligence adopt more collaborative solutions to conflicts (Animasahun, 2008; Chen et al., 2019; Schlegel et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2015). In the study conducted by Schlaerth et al. (2013), it was concluded that individuals with high levels of emotional intelligence can get along with other people more easily and cooperate more effectively. People with high levels of emotional intelligence can control their emotions more easily, solve problems more effectively, and experience lower levels of conflict. Jordan and Troth (2004) stated in their study that the emotional intelligence levels of individuals are important in conflict management behaviours. People with high levels of emotional intelligence can control their emotions better and understand their co-workers' emotions better. Thus, they behave more cooperatively in work environments and avoid conflict. Chen et al. (2019) stated in their study that employees with high levels of emotional intelligence will be more integrative and conciliatory in the organisations they work in. This situation leads to lower levels of conflict in organisations and higher levels of individual job performance. According to the study results, people with high emotional intelligence can better understand other people's emotions and perspectives and thus cope more easily with conflict situations they may experience. Based on the Affective Events Theory and related literature, the first research hypothesis was formulated as follows.

**H1:** Emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on conflict management.

According to Social Cognitive Theory, individuals' beliefs about their ability to accomplish certain tasks, i.e., their self-efficacy perceptions, are influenced by both environmental and internal factors. In particular, individuals who manage their emotions effectively have higher self-efficacy (Bandura, 2012). Hull et al. (2021) concluded that individuals with high emotional intelligence also exhibit self-efficacy, flexibility, and efficiency in problem-solving, as well as greater commitment to their work and motivation. Salami (2010) discussed the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy in his study. The study concluded that individuals with high self-efficacy and high emotional intelligence tend to be more moderate, constructive, and successful in their organisations. People with high self-efficacy and emotional intelligence will have higher levels of happiness and motivation. Thus, these people will experience less conflict with others in their organisations and will be more successful. In his study, Field (2001) stated that people with high self-efficacy are happy individuals with high emotional intelligence and emphasized the importance of these people in increasing success in organizations. Based on Social Cognitive Theory and related literature, the second research hypothesis was formulated as follows.

**H2:** Emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy refers to individuals' beliefs that they can cope with certain situations. Social Cognitive Theory suggests that these beliefs directly influence an individual's behaviour (Bandura, 1997). Latifian (2001) concluded in his study that self-efficacy is an issue that raises the motivation level of individuals, increases their performance and positively affects their work habits. People with high self-efficacy work in cooperation with other people in their

organisations and experience less conflict. Torabi (2004) focused on the leadership style and conflict management style of organisational managers in his study. If managers have a high level of self-efficacy and carry out the management process with the right leadership model, conflict situations in the organisation will be at a minimum level. Baharestan (2004) concluded in his study that managers with high self-efficacy will have high management performance in the organisation, and thus there will be no conflict situations in that organisation, and the level of success in the work done will be higher. Hennessy and Lent (2008) concluded that self-efficacy has a positive effect on conflict management. In the study by Mamak and Erol (2023), statistically significant relationships were found between self-efficacy and conflict management styles. In light of these findings, it is hypothesised that a positive relationship exists between self-efficacy and conflict management. This is because when employees have high confidence in their ability to perform a specific task, they are more effective in resolving conflicts. The third hypothesis is hereby formulated as follows:

**H3:** Self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect on conflict management.

Emotional intelligence encompasses an individual's ability to recognize, understand, and regulate both their own emotions and the emotions of others (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). This capacity enables the development of adaptive behaviours in interpersonal relationships, contributing to more effective and healthy responses in times of conflict (Schlaerth et al., 2013). In the study conducted by Schutte et al. (2001), it was observed that participants who demonstrated higher levels of emotional intelligence also exhibited higher scores in the domains of empathy with another person in social contexts. In addition, it was found that employees with higher emotional intelligence scores exhibited more cooperative reactions to their partners. Although emotional intelligence and conflict management have been studied independently in organizational behaviour research (Animasahun, 2008; Chen et al., 2019; Schlegel et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2015), the mechanism through which self-efficacy mediates this relationship remains underexplored. While previous studies have separately linked emotional intelligence to self-efficacy (e.g., Field, 2001; Hull et al., 2021; Salami, 2010) and self-efficacy to conflict management (e.g., Baharestan, 2004; Hennessy & Lent, 2008; Mamak & Erol, 2023; Torabi, 2004), the integrated, mediating role of self-efficacy within this triadic relationship has yet to be empirically validated. This study aims to address this gap by proposing and testing a mediation model in which emotional intelligence enhances self-efficacy, which in turn facilitates more constructive conflict management behaviours. By empirically establishing this pathway, this study not only contributes a novel conceptual integration to the literature but also offers practical insights for organizations seeking to improve interpersonal dynamics through the development of both emotional and cognitive personal resources. The impact of emotional intelligence on conflict management can occur directly, as well as through cognitive and motivational factors. In this context, self-efficacy refers to individuals' beliefs about their ability to successfully complete a specific task or situation (Bandura, 1997). According to Social Cognitive Theory, individuals' behaviour is influenced not only by environmental factors but also by their perception of competence. Individuals with high emotional intelligence develop coping skills in stressful situations by managing their emotions more effectively, which in turn increases their self-efficacy (Rastegar & Memarpour, 2009). Individuals with high self-

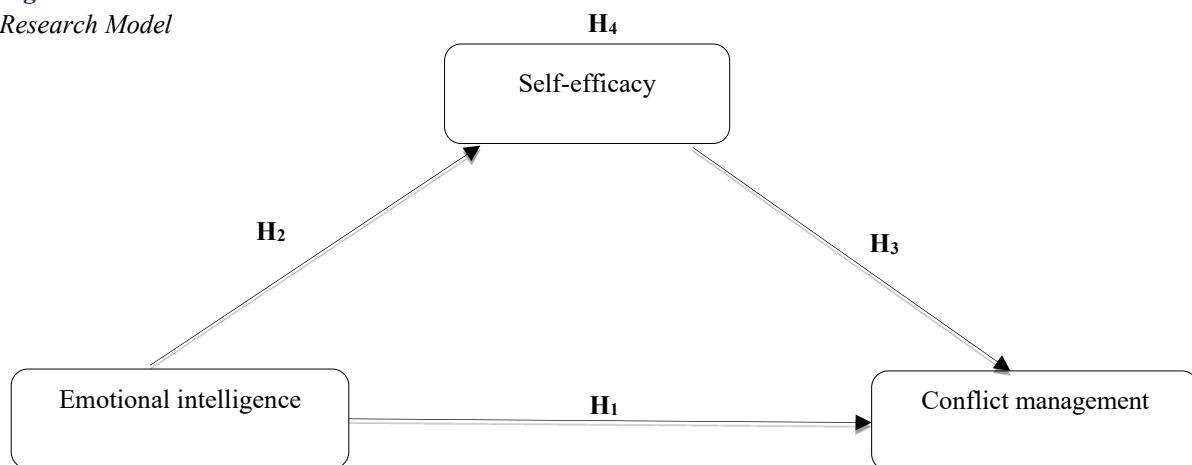


efficacy, on the other hand, develop more effective conflict resolution strategies because they perceive challenging situations, such as conflict, as controllable. Another theory supporting this relationship is Fredrickson's (2001) Broaden-and-Build Theory. According to this theory, positive emotions expand individuals' cognitive resources and enable them to build psychological resilience. Emotional intelligence facilitates the generation of positive emotions, paving the way for increased self-efficacy. This, in turn, enables individuals to develop more constructive, collaborative, and rational solutions in conflict situations. Based on the Broaden-and-Build Theory and Social Cognitive Theory, it is assumed that individuals with high emotional intelligence will manage conflicts more constructively and effectively through their self-efficacy.

**H4:** Self-efficacy plays a mediating role in the effect of emotional intelligence on conflict management.

The research model in Figure 1 shows the relationships between emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, conflict management and the related hypotheses.

**Figure 1**  
Research Model



## Method

In this quantitative research design, a cross-sectional research design was employed, with the focus being on the collection and analysis of data at a specific point in time. To achieve the research objective, a survey study was conducted with 188 employees, and the data were analyzed using IBM SPSS 23 and the SPSS Process V4.2 plug-in. To ascertain the compatibility of the data obtained with the model defined, Confirmatory Factor Analysis was performed in the AMOS program, and factor loads and reliability values were calculated. Following the determination of the model fit, regression analysis and the Hayes Test for Mediation Effect were employed to test the hypotheses established within the scope of the research model.

## **Population and Sample**

The population of the study consists of the employees of a textile enterprise operating in Çankırı Province. The study was conducted using a convenience sampling method, which was selected by taking into account field access, production shifts, and companies' permission procedures. The data for the study were collected from 188 volunteers in January 2025. Ethics committee approval was first obtained for the study before data collection.

When the demographic information of the participants is analysed, it is seen that 54.7% of them are female (103 people) and 45.2% are male (85 people). In terms of marital status, 66.5% were married and 33.5% were single. It is seen that 10.6% of the participants are between the ages of 18-25, 36.2% between the ages of 26-33, 34.6% between the ages of 34- 41, 15.4% between the ages of 42-49, and 3.2% between the ages of 50 and above. In terms of educational background, 4.8% have primary education, 59% have high school, 25% have an associate's degree, 6.4% have a bachelor's degree, and 4.8% have a master's degree. When we look at the length of service in their organisations, 13.3% of the employees have been working for less than five years, 29.8% for 6-10 years, 39.9% for 11-15 years, 13.8% for 16-20 years, and 3.2% for 21 years or more.

## **Data Collection Tool**

The emotional intelligence scale, self-efficacy scale and conflict management scale were used to collect the study data. Each item in the scales was scored on a five-point Likert scale.

The emotional intelligence scale was developed by Chan (2004) and adapted into Turkish by Elitok (2019). The scale consists of four dimensions and 12 statements. Originally, the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients for the scale were .75. "I know the reasons why my emotions change" and "I hope that good things will happen" are some of the statements in the scale.

The conflict management scale was developed by Rahim (1983) and translated into Turkish by Kozan and İter (1994). The scale consists of five dimensions and 28 statements. Initially, the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients for the dimensions of the scale ranged from .72 to .75. "I try to influence my colleagues to accept my ideas," and "I try to avoid negative interactions with my colleagues" are sample statements in the scale.

The self-efficacy scale was developed in Germany in 1981 by Jerusalem and Schwarzer. In 1992, the scale was reduced to 10 items by authors. Originally, the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients for scale were .84. It was adapted into Turkish by Erci (2005). "If I make an effort, I will succeed in solving difficult problems" and "I think I can overcome sudden events" can be shown as examples in the scale.

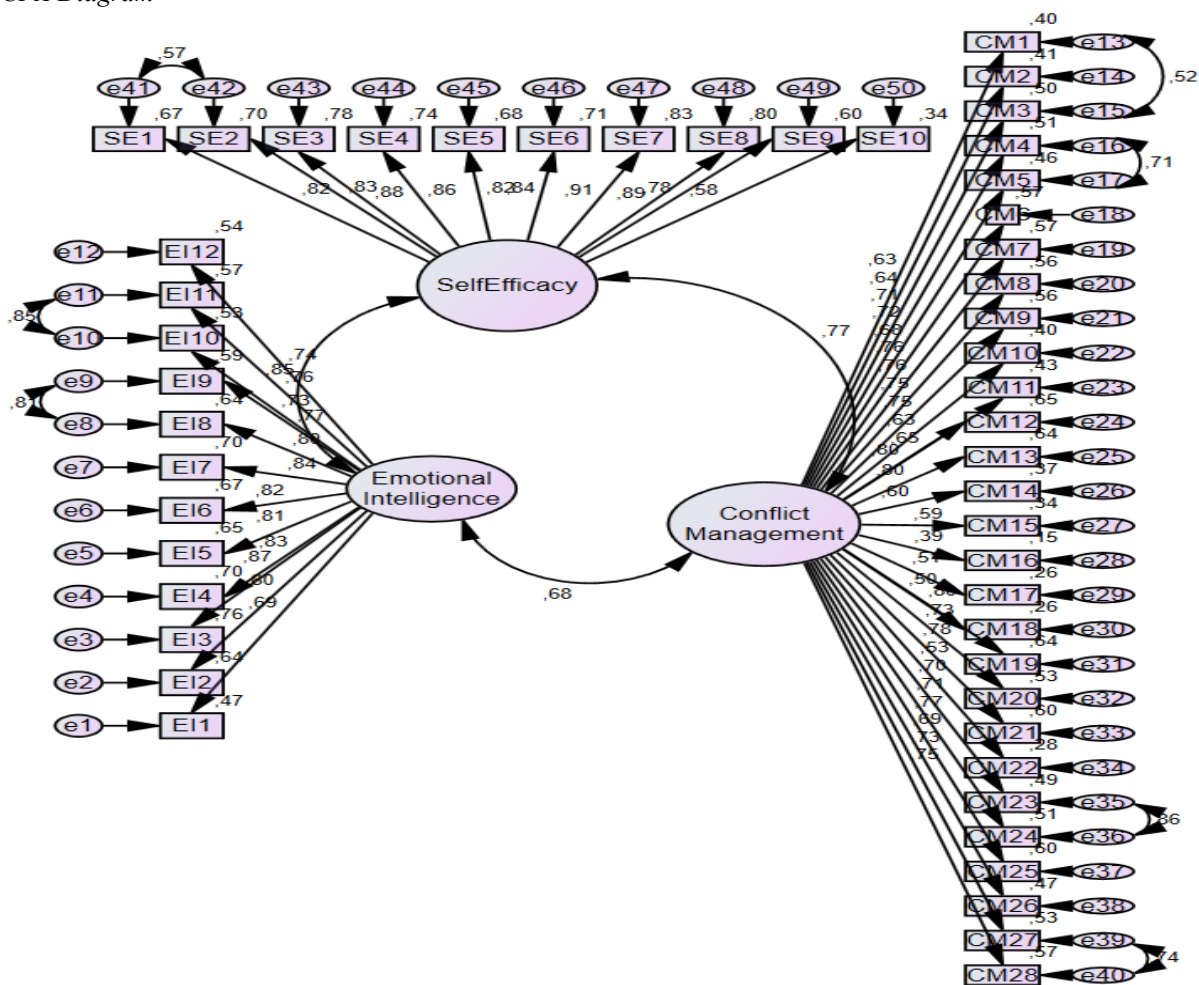
## **Results**

In this part of the study, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value, Composite Reliability Coefficients (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) results, descriptive statistics, and total, direct, and indirect effect values of the scales are presented. The KMO value was calculated to determine whether the sample size was sufficient for factor analysis. If the KMO value, which can vary between 0 and 1, is 0.5 or above, it means that the sample size is sufficient for factor analysis (Tabachnick et al., 2007). The KMO sampling adequacy values for the three measurement tools utilised in the study were found to be .88 for



the emotional intelligence scale, .91 for the conflict management scale, and .92 for the self-efficacy scale, respectively. The KMO values obtained are indicative of the appropriateness of the sample size for the analysis. CFA was conducted in order to ascertain the statistical validity of the scales. In CFA, a single statistical significance test is inadequate for determining whether a model obtained from the data is confirmed or not. A variety of fit indices are employed to evaluate the model's fit (Hooper et al., 2008). As illustrated in Figure 2, the results of the CFA analysis are presented.

**Figure 2**  
CFA Diagram



Internal consistency reliability and convergent validity were then tested. For internal consistency reliability, Cronbach's alpha and CR were analysed. AVE values were used to determine convergent validity. Reliability and composite reliability coefficients are expected to be  $\geq .70$  and average variance explained is expected to be  $\geq .50$  (Hair & Alamer, 2022). CFA, AVE, CR, and Cronbach's alpha values can also be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
*Validity and Reliability Values*

Fit Measure	Emotional Intelligence	Self-Efficacy	Conflict Management
CFI	.98	.98	.97
GFI	.93	.94	.88
AGFI	.86	.87	.82
IFI	.98	.98	.97
NFI	.96	.97	.93
RFI	.94	.94	.91
RMSEA	.07	.08	.05
TLI	.97	.97	.96
$\chi^2/df$	2.11	2.20	1.52
Cronbach Alpha	.95	.95	.95
Composite Reliability	.95	.96	.90
AVE	.66	.71	.57

CFA was conducted to ascertain the validity of the emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and conflict management scales. The results of the CFA analysis indicated that the factor loadings exceeded 0.40, and the model fit indices attained satisfactory and acceptable levels. The Cronbach's alpha values and CR coefficients of the variables were found to be greater than .7, and it was understood that the model had internal consistency reliability. In addition, AVE values were found to be greater than .5, and convergent validity was ensured. The analysis results revealed that the scales exhibited both reliability and validity.

The HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio) criteria suggested by Henseler et al. (2015) were used to determine discriminant validity. In the event of the HTMT value being below .85, discriminant validity is indicated (Henseler et al., 2015). HTMT values are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
*Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio Values*

	1	2	3
Emotional Intelligence			
Self-Efficacy	.82		
Conflict Management	.65	.73	

When the values are examined, it is seen that the HTMT values are below the threshold value and discriminant validity is achieved. The standard deviation, mean, skewness, and kurtosis values of the variables in the study are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
*Descriptive Statistics*

	N	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Emotional Intelligence	188	4.18	.62	-.60	1.65
Self-Efficacy	188	4.13	.63	-.53	1.86
Conflict Management	188	4.22	.59	-.59	1.42

Whether the scales meet the assumption of normal distribution was determined by skewness and kurtosis values. It was observed that the skewness and kurtosis values of the scales were within the range of  $\pm 2$ . According to these results, it is possible to say that all scales used in the research meet the normality assumption (Kline, 2016). When the descriptive statistics values of the variables were analysed, the mean values of the variables were between 4.13 and 4.22.

SPSS Process Macro plug-in developed by Hayes (2013) was used to test the research hypotheses. Model 4 was used to test the mediating role, and the number of samples was taken

at 5000 within the scope of resampling. The level of confidence assigned to all confidence intervals in the output is 95 per cent. The results obtained from the analysis conducted through SPSS Process Macro Model 4 are presented in [Table 4](#).

**Table 4**  
*Mediation Test and Bootstrap Confidence Interval Values*

Self-efficacy						
Prediction Variable	Effect	Std. Err.	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI
Emotional intelligence	.76	.04	17.76	.000	.67	.84
Conflict Management						
Prediction Variable	Effect	Std. Err.	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI
Self-efficacy	.71	.08	8.31	.000	.54	.88
Total effect of emotional intelligence on conflict management						
Effect	Std. Err.	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI	
.62	.05	10.76	.000	.51	.74	
Direct effect of emotional intelligence on conflict management						
Effect	Std. Err.	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI	
.08	.08	1.06	.288	-.07	.24	
Indirect effect(s) of emotional intelligence on conflict management						
	Effect	Std. Err.	BootLLCI	BootULCI		
Self-efficacy	.54	.07	.40	.69		

In [Table 4](#), it is seen that the independent variable, emotional intelligence, has a significant effect on the dependent variable conflict management ( $\beta = .62$ ; CI [.51; .74]). Emotional intelligence has a significant effect on the mediating variable self-efficacy ( $\beta = .76$ ; CI [.67; .84]). It was concluded that the mediating variable self-efficacy had a significant effect on the dependent variable conflict management ( $\beta = .71$ ; CI [.54; .88]). Based on the results obtained, hypotheses H<sub>1</sub>, H<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>3</sub> were accepted. The indirect effect of emotional intelligence on conflict management through self-efficacy was found to be statistically significant ( $\beta = .54$ ; CI [.40; .69]) as it did not contain zero within the specified confidence intervals. Thus, hypothesis H<sub>4</sub> was also accepted. In addition, with the introduction of the mediator variable self-efficacy into the model, the relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict management became insignificant ( $\beta = .08$ ; CI [-.07; .24]), and it was determined that self-efficacy played a full mediating role in this relationship.

## Discussion

The study set out to test the mediating role of self-efficacy by examining the relationships between emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and conflict management. Following the conduction of cross-sectional and quantitative research in a textile company in Çankırı, all four hypotheses developed as a result were accepted. The findings provide significant theoretical and practical implications regarding the role of individual psychological resources in conflict management.

The findings related to the first hypothesis of the study showed that emotional intelligence has a significant and positive effect on conflict management. This result is consistent with Affective Events Theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). According to this theory, emotional events experienced in the workplace shape individuals' behaviour, and emotional intelligence plays a critical role in managing these events. Individuals with high emotional intelligence are able to develop constructive solutions by responding more calmly to negative emotional stimuli, such as conflict. With this result, it can be said that emotional intelligence improves conflict management skills. In addition, conflict management models developed by Rahim (2002) show that individuals with high emotional intelligence use conciliatory and collaborative strategies more frequently. Research findings support previous studies and show that emotional intelligence directly affects conflict management (Animasahun, 2008; Chen et al., 2019; Jordan & Troth, 2004; Schlaerth et al., 2013; Schlegel et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2015).

The second hypothesis of the study suggested that individuals with high emotional intelligence would have higher self-efficacy perceptions. Research findings support this hypothesis. Other studies in the literature have found that individuals with high emotional intelligence have higher self-efficacy perceptions in the work environment (Field, 2001; Hull et al., 2021; Salami, 2010). In this direction, the findings of the study are in line with other studies in the literature and support the positive relationship between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy. These results are consistent with Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory. According to this theory, individuals shape their environment and behaviour through their own cognitive and emotional states. In accordance with the theory, emotional intelligence positively predicts self-efficacy. According to the theory and the findings obtained, it can be said that emotional intelligence facilitates analysis of the decision environment, fostering the development of personal confidence and the ability to employ rational emotional expressions in order to influence others in the resolution of problems and the making of sound decisions, thereby enhancing self-efficacy.

The third hypothesis of the study suggests that individuals with high self-efficacy can manage conflicts more effectively. The findings show that self-efficacy has a significant and positive effect on conflict management. This result indicates that an individual's perception of his or her competence is an important factor in determining the way he or she resolves workplace conflicts. This finding is consistent with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. Bandura (1997) suggests that individuals' beliefs that they can successfully manage a task or situation affect their problem-solving and crisis management skills. There are also studies supporting the effect of self-efficacy on conflict management (Baharestan, 2004; Hennessy & Lent, 2008; Mamak & Erol, 2023; Rastegar & Memarpour, 2009; Torabi, 2004). The findings obtained in the study are consistent with these studies, emphasising the positive effect of self-efficacy on conflict management. In conclusion, the findings of this study demonstrate that self-efficacy is a significant determinant of conflict management at both cognitive and behavioural levels, shaping how individuals approach conflict situations. This finding may shed light on practices aimed at strengthening individual psychological resources in conflict management training.

The study revealed that self-efficacy is a statistically significant mediator variable in the effect of emotional intelligence on conflict management. This finding is consistent with Broaden-and-Build Theory (Fredrickson, 2001). According to this theory, positive emotions

enhance individuals' psychological resources. Emotional intelligence, being the source of these positive emotions, strengthens an individual's sense of self-efficacy. Strengthened self-efficacy, in turn, increases an individual's capacity to manage conflict constructively. Furthermore, this result is consistent with Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986). According to the theory, self-efficacy is a fundamental determinant of an individual's behaviour. Schutte et al. (2001) suggested that emotional intelligence has an indirect effect on conflict management by increasing individuals' problem-solving skills and social adaptation capacities. Emotional intelligence positively impacts conflict management by strengthening an individual's self-efficacy in stressful and conflictual situations. It can be suggested that implementing training programs to enhance emotional intelligence and self-efficacy levels among employees in the work environment can contribute to improved conflict management skills.

The findings of the study demonstrate the central role of individual psychological resources (emotional intelligence and self-efficacy) in conflict management. Moreover, this study addresses a theoretical lacuna in the extant literature by proposing a mediation model and providing original data from a developing country and sectoral context. This finding carries significant ramifications for practitioners seeking to fortify psychological resources in domains such as human resources practices, employee support systems, and leadership development.

## **Conclusion**

In this study, the mediating role of self-efficacy in the effect of emotional intelligence on conflict management was examined. All hypotheses tested within the scope of the quantitative research conducted in line with the data obtained from blue-collar employees working in the textile sector in Çankırı province were accepted. The findings show that emotional intelligence directly affects conflict management positively; at the same time, self-efficacy plays a mediating role in this relationship. Conflict situations in organisations are acceptable up to a certain level, but if they are experienced in advanced dimensions, they will cause a decrease in efficiency and effectiveness in the activities of organisations. High levels of emotional intelligence among organisational employees will also reduce the conflicts that may occur in organisations. Employees with high emotional intelligence will be more cautious about the problems that may arise in organisations and will work more harmoniously with other employees. Emotional intelligence increases the self-efficacy levels of organisational employees and contributes to their more constructive and effective management of conflicts that may occur in organisations. At this point, organisational management needs to implement positive and healthy practices based on understanding and managing the emotions of employees in conflict situations that may arise. The results of the study offer important implications regarding how individuals' emotional and cognitive competencies shape their conflict resolution skills.

## **Theoretical Contributions**

This study fills an important gap by examining emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and conflict management variables, which are often treated separately in the literature, within the framework of a holistic model. Although the direct relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict management has been widely investigated in the existing literature, there is a gap in the literature on how this relationship works indirectly through a cognitive construct such as self-

efficacy. This study is expected to make a contribution to the literature by including the self-efficacy variable in the relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict management. This study explains how an affective variable, such as emotional intelligence, can affect conflict resolution processes through self-efficacy, a cognitive resource. The theoretical framework of the study is Affective Events Theory, Broaden-and-Build Theory and Social Cognitive Theory. In this respect, the study provides a theoretical framework that explains the causal relationships between the relevant variables. The model developed within theoretical approaches helps to better understand how individuals use their emotional and cognitive resources in conflict resolution. In this context, it was concluded that emotional intelligence components such as emotional awareness, empathy, and self-control contribute to the development of more effective strategies in conflict management. Individuals with high self-efficacy were found to be able to use their conflict skills more functionally. Furthermore, this study is one of the rare studies in Turkey that focuses on blue-collar workers. The management of emotional and cognitive resources becomes even more critical in production lines and blue-collar worker groups, where conflict frequently occurs. In this context, this study makes a significant contribution to the organizational behaviour literature in terms of sectoral diversity and contextual specificity.

### **Practical Contributions**

This study provides practitioners with concrete data on how individuals working in labour-intensive sectors use their emotional and cognitive resources in conflict management. Considering the frequency of conflicts between employees and the difficulties of resolution processes, especially in businesses operating in the manufacturing sector with high blue-collar employment, the importance of this research for practitioners becomes even more evident. The findings of the study lay the groundwork for more effective conflict management approaches in workplace environments by revealing that employers should adopt strategies to improve their employees' emotional intelligence and self-efficacy levels. The findings obtained guide businesses to develop policies and practices to improve their employees' emotional intelligence and self-efficacy levels. Thus, it will be possible to prevent, reduce and constructively manage organisational conflicts. The study reveals that managers should adopt leadership approaches to develop not only their employees' technical skills but also their emotional and cognitive resources. This is an important factor that will contribute to organisational success. The study offers the following practical implications for practitioners such as human resource managers, production supervisors, and business strategists: Emotional intelligence training programs should be designed not only for managers but also for blue-collar workers, focusing on skills such as communication, empathy, and anger management. Assessing individuals' emotional awareness and self-efficacy, not just technical competencies, during recruitment and promotion processes can positively impact the organizational climate. Interventions that strengthen self-efficacy (e.g., coaching, feedback mechanisms, micro-success experiences) can enable employees to participate more actively and confidently in conflict resolution.

### **Limitations and Implications for Future Research**

The study is limited to blue-collar workers in Çankırı province and in the textile sector; therefore, the results are limited in terms of generalizability. Quantitative research method was used, and in-depth access to the feelings, thoughts, and experiences of the participants could



not be achieved. The fact that the data was collected in a single survey can be considered a potential limitation that may lead to methodological problems such as social desirability bias. Generalizability of the study findings can be ensured by conducting similar studies in different sectors and geographical regions. By using mixed or qualitative research designs, the individual experiences of employees on emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and conflict management can be accessed in more depth. In future studies, variables such as organisational commitment, job satisfaction, and leadership style can be included in the model, the scope of the study can be expanded, and the relationships can be analysed more holistically. More comprehensive analyses can be performed by including possible mediating or moderating variables other than self-efficacy (e.g., psychological resilience, organizational support, leader-member exchange) in the model.

## Declarations

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## Ethics Approval

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