

# Contribution of Emotional Intelligence in Conflict Resolution and Enhancing Team Cohesion in Elite Pakistani Handball Players

Muhammad Saeed<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Saeed Javed<sup>2</sup>, Bilal Ahmad Qureshi<sup>3</sup>, Ammar Murtaza<sup>4</sup>,  
Saba Arshad<sup>5</sup>, Amt Ul Basit<sup>6</sup>, Maheen Hashim Khan Burki<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1,4,6</sup>M. Phil Scholar, Department of Physical Education & Sports Sciences, Government  
College University Faisalabad, Pakistan

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Department of Physical Education & Sports Sciences, Government  
College University Faisalabad, Pakistan

<sup>3,5</sup>Lecturer, Department of Sports Science, University of Sargodha, Pakistan

<sup>7</sup>Lecturer, Department of Physical Education and Sports Sciences, University of Education  
Lower Mall Campus Lahore, Pakistan

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## Abstract

The purpose of the research was to examine the contribution of emotional intelligence in conflict resolution and enhancing team cohesion among elite Pakistani handball players. The study utilized a quantitative research approach. Pakistani elite male handball players were the population of the study. A sample of 108 players was selected using a simple random sampling technique. An adapted and self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data using a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was pilot tested using 30 players to establish reliability and validity.

Pearson's correlation analysis and linear regression analysis were used to determine results. SPSS V-26 was used to edit the survey-collected data. The results of the study indicated that

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<sup>1</sup>Corresponding Author [saeedphyeduu@gmail.com](mailto:saeedphyeduu@gmail.com)

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<sup>2</sup>Second Author

<sup>3</sup>Third Author

<sup>4</sup>Fourth Author

<sup>5</sup>Fifth Author

<sup>6</sup>Sixth Author

<sup>7</sup>Seventh Author

the statistical analysis of the data was significant at a p-value of 0.05. Findings revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and both conflict resolution and team cohesion. Linear regression analysis also supported the fact that emotional intelligence is a powerful predictor of effective conflict resolution among elite handball players. The results demonstrated that players with greater emotional intelligence were more effective at dealing with conflicts within the teams and enhanced team cohesion in a high-performance sporting environment.

### **Keywords**

Emotional Intelligence, Conflict Resolution, Team Cohesion, Elite Handball Players.

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### **Introduction**

Sport is the term used to describe competitive and engaging activities that one can perform individually or together to enhance an individual's mental and physical capabilities (Sakar, 2022). Sport is a part of human culture; it can be traced throughout geographical barriers and customs differences that exist across all timelines since the childhood of ancient civilizations to the present day. Sports have been important in the development of communities, unifying them and also enhancing their physical health. Engaging in sports helps them to challenge themselves, accomplish set challenges, and work towards excellence, on and off the field (Mujeeb et al., 2024).

Handball is among the most played sports in the entire world (Saeed et al., 2025). Millions of fans worldwide follow this exciting game due to its top scoring, teamwork, and speed. In order to achieve a new level in such a popular sport, an individual must have some physical, technical, tactical, and psychic capabilities (Kocaeksi & Gazioglu, 2014).

Feeling was an inherent special component of the competitive experience (Lazarus, 2000; Hanin, 2012). Emotion may be viewed as complex interaction of subjective and objective factors mediated by neural-hormonal systems which may (a) cause affective experiences of arousal feeling, pleasure/displeasure; (b) produce cognitive process of relevant perception effects, appraisal, labelling processes; (c) instigate widespread physiological adjustments response to the arousing conditions; (d) lead to behaving that in most cases, but not all, is expression of; goal directed and adaptive (Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981).

The term emotional intelligence was understood to mean the ability to perceive and show emotion, integrate emotion into thought, comprehend and reason with emotion, and manage

emotion in the self and other people (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Within the emotional intelligence tradition, there is research on individual differences in terms of how individuals identify, comprehend, express, govern, and utilize their feelings and the feelings of other people (Mayer & Salovey, 2000).

It was quite certain that competitive sport is an effective context. First, athletes experience a constant exposure to different forms of stressors and emotional demand both within and outside competition, which is attributed to their sporting performance (Meyer & Fletcher, 2007). Second, the relationship and interaction are a cause of athletic performance, and this is largely a phenomenon to do with emotions (Friesen et al., 2012). Athletes must learn the emotions of the other members (e.g., teammates, coaching staff, opponents, club officials, family, fans, and administrators of the sport). Players should be able to interact and collaborate to achieve their optimum potential.

It is easy to define conflict as a clash of interests. Behavior was a cause of conflict. It is a basic element of human life. Conflict occurs whenever there is interaction. Conflict translates to displayed of antagonism, hostility, negative attitudes, rivalry, and aggression (Thakore, 2013). Sports conflicts can thus be defined as any kind of conflict that occurs as a result of engaging in sports. These conflicts may arise with the members of the same chief or may arise with the members of two different chiefs. It may be among coaches and members of the coaching team or the coaches of two coaching teams (Okeke, 2020).

Conflict resolution may be defined as the styles as well as processes that are used to aid the amicable process of resolving conflicts and hostilities. It can be confused with disagreement resolution and both procedures include arbitration and action (Okafor & Ajayi, 2024). Inclusion of peaceful measures of resistance put forward by conflicting parties can be used to reflect on the concept of conflict resolution as well. Nicholson (1992) points out that a conflict is said to be resolved when there is a synchronization of the inconsistency in the desires and actions of parties. It can also take place between two organizing bodies of an activity of a particular sport or even amongst members of a certain organizing body. Conflict resolution is the process of decreasing, death, or resolving every form and type of conflict (Okeke, 2020).

Team cohesion known as a description of all forces that make members stay in a group (Sheryl, & Bruce, 2005). Cohesion is the extent and propensity of team members to bind together and stay in unity, solidarity, and pulling together when an aim to accomplish something is achieved. According to research studies, highly successful teams tend to be very cohesive teams (Carron, 1982). There was no doubt that the highly cohesive team will work with a high probability of

doing more than a team whose members demonstrate discontent, conflict, and disruption (McGrath, 1984). As such, both task cohesion and social cohesion should matter to a coach and the team. The reason was based on the fact that there will be an improvement in task and social cohesion, which will eventually result in success. One factor that comes along with task cohesion is success; hence, the greater the success, the greater the cohesion (Nateri et al., 2020). Being able to be aware of and to manage emotions is also believed to enable functional, not dysfunctional, conflict resolution and thus lead to improved team performance (Borisoff & Victor, 1998). Despite the established role of functional conflict in the increase of performance, there is still a lack of empirical evidence on the role of emotional intelligence and its contribution to the acquisition of better results during the process of resolving a conflict (Jordan & Troth, 2021).

Moreover, very few works on emotional intelligence and team performance correlations were conducted (Jordan & Troth, 2002). The issue of emotional intelligence in sports can be explained by the inability of players to effectively control their emotions and the feelings of others, which impedes the successful resolution of conflicts and causes a breakdown in team dynamics, which subsequently interferes with performance and cooperation (Sheryl & Bruce, 2005; Jordan & Troth, 2021). To further examine these relations this research sought to empirically identify the impact emotional intelligence has on the effective individual and team problem-solving outcomes. This paper aimed to fill the gap by exploring the connection between the concepts of emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, and team cohesion, and provide valuable insight into the role of such factors in strengthening the performance and success of handball teams in Pakistan.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The following objectives of the study are derived from the literature:

- i. To assess the level of emotional intelligence among elite Pakistani handball players.
- ii. To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict resolution in elite Pakistani handball players.
- iii. To find out the association between emotional intelligence and team cohesion in elite Pakistani handball players.
- iv. To determine the effect of emotional intelligence on conflict resolution in elite Pakistani handball players.

### Research Questions

The following research questions are formulated from the existing literature:

**RQ 1:** What is the level of emotional intelligence among elite Pakistani handball players?

**RQ 2:** What is the relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict resolution in elite Pakistani handball players?

**RQ 3:** What is the association between emotional intelligence and team cohesion in elite Pakistani handball players?

**RQ 4:** What is the effect of emotional intelligence on conflict resolution in elite Pakistani handball players?

### Research Hypotheses

To accomplish the research questions, the following research hypotheses are formulated:

**Ha1:** There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict resolution in elite Pakistani handball players

**Ha2:** There is a significant association between emotional intelligence and team cohesion in elite Pakistani handball players

**Ha3:** There is a significant effect of emotional intelligence on conflict resolution in elite Pakistani handball players

### Literature Review

Man is born into an interwoven network of relationships. Throughout his existence in the world, he associates with the rest of humanity by establishing contact or involvement in one way or the other of several types of human activities. Some of the most frequent human activities are sports. Since the very earliest times of human civilization, man, in one way or another, took part in some physical activities that have been connected with sports (Okeke, 2020).

Ever since the start of human history, sports have been among the most significant factors driving human beings towards sustainable growth in both recreational activities and physical fitness. Besides the physical gains, sports also played a role in social growth with the values of discipline, perseverance, and sportsmanship instilled (Mujeeb et al., 2024). Sporting activities vary; some of the most popular sports in the contemporary world include football, basketball, handball, and rugby. Countries and individuals representing various regions of the world have profited millions of dollars through the organization or involvement in some form of other sporting activities or specifically speaking in the order. Sportsmen and women make up the

greatest number of popular celebrities today around the world. Despite the fun, entertainment, monetary gains, as well as other values that are brought about by sports, sometimes conflicts of different types put the survival of sports in jeopardy (Okeke, 2020).

Emotional intelligence proved effective in identifying the feelings and emotions of the individual to regulate the emotions in actual relationships appropriately. The emotionally expressive types of intelligence present their emotions to act as buttons; they control their relationships, decisions, and programs on which the unwanted realities and conflicts cannot be overlooked (Naeiji & Mehrizi, 2014). More capable of quantifying the emotional experience of others, which demonstrates an appreciation of and empathy with others, respond more positively to the social environment, and offer an appropriate social support system to themselves (Lam & O'Higgins, 2012).

Mayer et al., (2008) have described emotional intelligence to be an emotional information processing that entails an accurate processing of the emotions and feelings in the person and others appropriately, accurate expression of feelings, and an adaptive regulation of feelings so that the quality of life can be improved.

In the pattern given by Mayer et al., (2007), which will be used as a guideline to measure emotional intelligence whereby four scopes of emotional intelligence abilities have been proposed as follows: perceiving and understanding self-motions: The degree of awareness of self emotions and the extent to which verbal and non-verbal expression of such emotions has been suggested to vary in different individuals. Those who are more accurate in expressing their emotions would be better understood by others and would be better in their social life. Their ability to perceive and understand the emotions of others was found to be better (Mayer et al. 2000).

It was not in doubt that the environment of competitive sport is an emotional one. To begin with athletes regularly encounter stress factors and emotional issues both within and outside the field associated with athletic performance. Second, performance in athletics is an outcome of relationships and interactions, and relationships and interactions depend highly upon emotions. The athletes must consider the emotions of other members (Kopp & Jekauc, 2018). Existing literature suggested that emotional intelligence was linked to both emotions and physiological reactions to stress and is linked to effective use of psychological skills and also effective sports performance (Nateri et al., 2020). Emotion regulation was a fundamentally interpersonal and social process and ought to include interaction between the individuals and the environment. Nonetheless, the place of emotional intelligence in group behavior has not

been well researched. Therefore, what requires further investigation is the integration of the person (individual athlete experiences) and group (team-based experiences and processes) centered approaches to emotions (Kopp & Jekauc, 2018).

Various research has been conducted to determine the disparity between the emotional intelligence of athletes and non-athletes (Costarelli & Stamou, 2009). These studies reported that athletes exhibit higher EI as compared to non-athletes in terms of assertiveness, awareness of their feelings, rating other people, and managing their feelings.

Studies that are specifically conducted on athletes have investigated the links between emotional intelligence and other sport variables that involve sports experience and exhibited positive relationships between emotional intelligence and sports performance (Saies et al., 2014; Arribas-Galarraga et al., 2017; Vaughan et al., 2019). From the sports point of view, differences have also been checked over the type of sports (individual or team sports), and differences with emotional intelligence have also been analyzed (Kajbafnezhad et al., 2011; Ghaderi & Ghasemi, 2012). Although these studies did not reveal significant differences based on the kind of sports (individual sports vs. team sports), one further study (CastroSanchez et al., 2018) reported significant differences in emotional management based on the kind of sport (individual or team sports).

Players of team contact sports demonstrated assessed emotional management at a higher level than athletes playing individual contact sports. According to Castro-Sanchez et al. (2018), emotional intelligence levels in team games are more common, compared to individual games. This could be brought about by the psychological needs of individual and team sports being different (Laborde et al., 2016).

A person with high emotional intelligence actively recognizes their anger, can relate to feeling annoyed, and processes these emotions with the goal of prompting constructive action (Kopp & Jekauc, 2018). Conversely, someone with low emotional intelligence might be unaware of their feelings or their origins and might be overwhelmed by anger, spending time dwelling on the injustice that may have initially caused it. All these emotional skills impact how people work in teams and, more specifically, how they handle conflict (Jordan & Troth, 2021).

Conflict in the sports world is not absent, especially in sports associations. Schulz (2011) says that combats between big players and coaches are ordinary but do not have as much press coverage. There is also a lot of conflict and power struggles that have been observed in both professional and community sports clubs. The sport is a very emotional area, governed by



strong-willed, focused individuals with sports enthusiasm, who do not usually sacrifice or tolerate different opinions. It is, therefore, intrinsically such a battleground.

Well-controlled conflicts may bring mutual gains, lead to understanding, tolerance, learning, and effectiveness. This has been evidenced by evidence of the recent events in the global sport industry that revealed the performance of the players could be affected as a consequence of an unmanaged conflict by the players involved replacement or administration of the sport industry (Okafor & Ajayi, 2024). It was not enough to be aware of the presence of conflict and the possibility of violence because it can lead to adverse consequences. As a conflict mitigation, management, and conflict prevention strategy, it may be useful to focus on the various stages of conflict development and understand how they can be avoided (Schulz, 2011).

Sport conflict is not driven only in developing countries; it pervades every situation in which there are societies, in which more than one individual is involved. Sometimes sports conflicts were not only about individuals, but also about national politics and economic interests. Bertoli (2017) listed several conflicts caused by nationalists in the sports arena, including the football war between El Salvador and Honduras (1969), the Egyptian-Algerian dispute during the World Cup (2009), the Serbian-Albanian drone conflict (2014), and the Euro riots between England and Russia (2016).

The current state of Muslim women was reported by Sfeir (1985) with consideration of the clash of tradition and modernization. Omoruan & Eboh (2016) noticed the incessant struggle that Physical Education Teachers and other subject Teachers had over the administration of sports in schools within the Nigerian educational system. Novak Djokovic was deported in Australia in 2022 and barred from playing the 10th Australian Open after receiving a vaccination exemption to participate, and then was barred after being threatened with deportation. Other dissenting factors, such as human rights, social injustice, transgender issues, and substance abuse, have remained prevalent in the world of sports. Although these situations of conflict are common, official literature lacks scientific research in this area. The prevention of these conflicts might be done under the condition that major stakeholders are conversant with the early warning signs. Furthermore, the empirical study of conflict resolution models implementation may yield useful results, creating a theoretical framework that could be used to conduct qualitative or quantitative conflict resolution studies in a sports business environment (Okafor & Ajayi, 2024).

In other nations of the world, the study of the role of sports in solving conflicts and creating peace was increasingly more important to policymakers, sports organizations, sports



associations, international organizations, and funding agencies, yet research results in this area are not so conclusive and decisive (Khan & Jamil, 2020). This was done because in some countries, in some situations, sports promote tolerance and harmony, but in some other countries, in some other situations, they breed conflict (Giulianotti, 2010). The issue of the reconciling or conflict-creating role of sports activities was a controversial and debatable one. The potential of sports in solving issues was not fully grasped. Thus, within the above-mentioned outlook, the current research study was envisaged to examine how sports could help to solve some of the conflicts at hand (Giulianotti, 2011).

Emotional intelligence was believed to be linked to conflict resolution strategies. To support this idea, highly emotionally and socially skilled people are those who can manage their emotions quite well, understand empathically different people, communicate effectively, solve problems, and have effective conflict confrontations (Siskos et al., 2012).

There was rising research on team performance as the industry has moved to teamwork instead of individual work. The research in the area of team effectiveness has revealed that there exists a significant relationship between team cohesion on team processes and performances (Evans and Dion, 2012). According to Carron and Brawley (2000), team cohesion emerged as the greatest consideration regarding the best performance of a group. Team cohesion enables quicker, higher agreement and compliance with corporate objectives, and typically easier functioning of the team, and satisfaction with the team (Tekleab et al., 2009).

Scholars were also attracted by team cohesion. According to sports psychologists, the achievement of success is directly proportional to the common goal behind which a team strives. Carron (1982) defines cohesion as a dynamic process that shows the direction of a team to remain compassionate and adherent to one another to achieve the objectives of the group.

Specifically, high cohesion between team members leading to better communication and therefore the increased engagement in the activity as it takes a team to come together, the team performance in the context is usually enhanced, thus the effect of team cohesion on the performance by a team is the core element and contribution of this research (Black et al., 2019).

### **Research Methodology**

The research methodology is based on the following parameters:

## Research Design

This study used a quantitative research approach to examine the contribution of emotional intelligence in conflict resolution and enhancing team cohesion in elite Pakistani handball players. The survey research design was utilized in the research.

## Population

The population of this study consisted of elite male national handball players.

## Sampling and Sample Size

This study employed a simple random sampling method among elite male handball players in Pakistan, ensuring equitable representation while minimizing potential selection bias. The number of (n-108) players was picked randomly to represent the elite players in the population. This approach enabled a representative and impartial sample, thereby reinforcing the reliability of the results pertaining to performance, training, or psychological characteristics of the players under study.

## Construction of Tool

An adaptation of the Questionnaire based on the “Nine Layer Pyramid Model for Emotional Intelligence”. In addition, two self-administered questionnaires were used by the researcher, “Conflict Resolution” and “Team Cohesion”, within the sample population. First, determined the content validity of the questionnaires with the help of professionals in the field of sports sciences. To further ensure the accuracy and relevance of the tools, the construct validity was determined by SPSS V-26.

## Validity and Reliability

To ensure the construct validity of the research instruments, the researcher did a pilot study by administering a survey to 30 players. A pilot testing was essential in assessing the clarity, consistency, and effectiveness of the tools before using them on the full sample.

**Table 3.1 KMO and Bartlett’s Test of Conflict Resolution**

Variables	Test		Adequacy
Conflict Resolution	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.891
	Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	184.260
		Df	45

		Sig.	.000
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By proving the suitability of the information for factor analysis on conflict resolution, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value was an impressive 0.891, which indicated good quality sampling adequacy. Further Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was highly significant (Chi-Square = 184.260,  $df = 45$ ,  $p < .001$ ), which implies that inter-item correlations were strong enough to extract the valid factors as shown in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.2 Component Matrix of Conflict Resolution**

Items	Factor Loading
I raise my concerns openly and respectfully when conflicts arise within the team.	.775
I avoid using aggressive behavior when resolving conflicts between the teams.	.718
I do not interrupt players whenever they are trying to clear their point of view.	.892
In conflict resolution, I value organizational interests instead of individual differences.	.480
I concentrate on problem-solving instead of blaming others when conflicts arise in the team.	.846
I try to know how my teammates feel in a conflict situation.	.805
Conflicts lead to a better understanding after they are solved.	.824
In my opinion, conflict resolution enhances cohesion in a team.	.798
Coaches help players in conflict resolution.	.661
I ensure that conflict resolutions are in line with the team's long-term goals.	.571

The component matrix revealed that the whole items of conflict resolution loaded well onto the same factor, with the value of .480 to .892. Such a distribution of factor loadings specified that every item had a good contribution to the construct, which supported the structural validity of the questionnaire, as shown in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.3 Reliability Scores of Conflict Resolution**

Variables	No of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Conflict Resolution	10	.909

The scale exhibits an excellent value of internal consistency with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.909, which is an indication of a high level of reliability in conflict resolution as displayed in Table 3.3. This high alpha score demonstrated that the items were very consistent and good in measuring the same central concept and produced reliable findings in the target construct.

**Table 3.4 KMO and Bartlett's Test of Team Cohesion**

Variables	Test		Adequacy
Team Cohesion	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.843
	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	150.594
		Df	28
		Sig.	.000

The KMO value of 0.843 revealed an excellent sampling adequacy on team cohesion, which provided a good fit to factor analysis. Also, the Bartlett Test of Sphericity was highly significant (Chi-Square = 150.594, df = 28,  $p < .001$ ) and indeed the inter-item correlations were suitable to extract meaningful factors as depicted in Table 3.4.

**Table 3.5 Component Matrix of Team Cohesion**

Items	Factor Loading
My teammates give their best output in every game.	.807
My teammates are willing to sacrifice personal recognition for team success.	.749
All players set clear and common goals as a team.	.773
My teammates push me to improve my performance.	.857
During tough situations in the competition, players motivate each other to stay focused.	.853
Disagreements rarely harm our team spirit.	.811
Opinion of everyone is respected in team discussions.	.699
We resolve interpersonal issues quickly and respectfully.	.621

The team cohesion component matrix demonstrated reliable factor loading with a highest point at 0.857 and lowest was 0.621, as shown in Table 3.5. These findings showed that each item was highly related to the fundamental construct to the extent that the scale had structural validity.

**Table 3.6 Reliability Scores of Team Cohesion**

Variables	No of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Team Cohesion	10	.849

The team cohesion scale reliability test results yielded a Cronbach's Alpha value of .849, indicating a high level of internal consistency of the items as shown in Table 3.5. This value indicates the reliability of the instrument to be stable and reliable, and no item was irrelevant in measuring the overall team cohesion.

### **Procedure of Data Collection**

The researcher selected the National Handball Championship as the best place to carry out the data collection because the researcher's background was as a handball player at the national level of the country, where he had direct access to elite handball players. In order to have an inclusive and convenient process, the survey was distributed in the form of a hard copy to match the needs of the individuals. Before the collection of data, the researcher involved the players in a clear and transparent conversation on the purpose of the research, focusing on the extreme confidentiality of their answers and maintaining ethical principles in conducting the research. After the surveys had been completed, the participants were genuinely thanked for their time and valued contribution.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

The demographic data of the participants were presented and arranged using descriptive statistics, providing a clear picture of the fundamental peculiarities of the participants of the study. The researcher used inferential statistics such as Pearson's correlation analysis and linear regression analysis. Before the analysis, the data was effectively edited and cleaned up based on a statistical software platform, namely SPSS V-26.

### **Results**

The results of the current study were examined with the use of various statistical techniques.

#### **Results of Correlation Coefficients**

The study explored the relationships of emotional intelligence with conflict resolution and team cohesion in elite Pakistani handball players. The following section demonstrates the outcome of the statistical tests conducted to determine these relationships. In this section, Pearson correlation was used to analyze the data.

**Table 4.1 Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Resolution**

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	p-value
Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Resolution	.774**	0.000

The results showed a strong positive correlation between emotional intelligence and conflict resolution in elite Pakistani handball players ( $r = .774$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that players who have a greater understanding and ability in emotion regulation are better able to solve interpersonal problems in team contexts, as displayed in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.2 Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Team Cohesion**

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	p-value
Emotional Intelligence and Team Cohesion	.709**	0.000

Emotional intelligence was significantly correlated with team cohesion in elite Pakistani handball players ( $r = .774$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), as shown in Table 4.2. Higher emotional intelligence allowed the players to better identify and control their own emotions along with those of their team members, leading to better interpersonal relationships and the feeling of stronger cohesion within the team. This implied that emotional intelligence was crucial to the promotion of effective communications, support, and general unity in high performance sports environment.

### Results of Linear Regression Analysis

The results of linear regression analysis on the influence of emotional intelligence on conflict resolution in elite Pakistani handball players is presented in this section.

**Table 4.3 Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.774 <sup>a</sup>	.599	.595	4.605	2.090

Regression analysis showed that emotional intelligence explained about 59.9 % of the variance in the conflict resolution of the elite Pakistani handball players given that ( $R^2$ ) was 0.599. This positive correlation ( $R = 0.774$ ) indicates that the higher the score of the emotional intelligence of players, the more they succeed in managing the conflict as shown in Table 4.3. Adjusted R-squared (0.595) indicated that the model was indeed reliable, and the Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.090 showed that there was no indication of significant problems with autocorrelation of residuals.

**Table 4.4 ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3352.501	1	3352.501	158.069	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	2248.166	106	21.209		
	Total	5600.667	107			

The results of ANOVA demonstrated the statistical significance of the regression model between emotional intelligence and conflict resolution. Values ( $F = 158.069$  and  $p = .000$ ), ( $df$  1,106), which suggested that emotional intelligence played a significant role in explaining the variations in conflict resolution skills among the elite Pakistani handball players. This finding affirmed that the model was not only valid but also very effective in capturing a significant relationship between the variables.

**Table 4.5 Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	5.083	1.919		2.649	.000		
Emotional Intelligence	.693	.055	.774	12.573	.000	1.000	1.000
a. Dependent Variable: Conflict Resolution							

The results of coefficient analysis revealed that emotional intelligence ( $\beta = .774$ ,  $t = 12.573$ ,  $p = .001$ ) was positively and significantly influencing conflict resolution among elite Pakistani handball players. Besides, the statistics of collinearity (Tolerance=1.000, VIF=1.000) indicated no multicollinearity, which supported the validity of the predictor variable in the model.

### Discussions of Findings

Based on the study, the findings indicated that there was a significant correlation between emotional intelligence and conflict resolution. A study supported that emotional intelligence, which plays a significant role in conflict resolution, is directly related to team performance (Jordan & Troth, 2021). Those emotional intelligence contributions translated to being more competent in translating and resolving conflicts both in-game and in other interactions of the team. The relationship between the capacity of dealing with one's own emotions and performance in problem-solving should be explained by the fact that teams with higher levels



of emotional intelligence, specifically, with the capacity of managing own emotionality, might be more attentive to hearing different opinions and finding better solutions without worrying that someone might be mistaken (Jordan & Troth, 2002). The reason was that emotionally intelligent players were in touch with their feelings and could understand the feelings of others well, which helped them resolve conflicts.

Another study suggested a strong and positive relationship between a high level of emotional intelligence and the ability to manage conflict effectively in sports (Kumari, 2015). Emotional intelligent athletes were more likely to keep their calm in a stressful situation, asked more questions, and were more responsive (Aouani et al., 2024). Such abilities eliminated conflicts and misunderstandings at an early stage and did not push small incidents into major ones. In team games such as handball this skill was crucial in maintaining the team together, and performing as a team.

The aforementioned findings, combined, suggest that emotional intelligence helps to effectively resolve conflicts in sports by simplifying the creation of empathy, emotional control, and positive social interaction (Jordan & Troth, 2021). emotional intelligence, however, does not necessarily ensure optimal performance, but its ability to lessen team conflict, enhance communication, and increase decision effectiveness within teams provides potentially significant avenues through which athletes and coaches could use emotional skills to improve interpersonal and performance results in competitive sports (Aouani et al., 2024). Altogether, the results indicated that teams where emotional intelligence was higher were more effective in conflict resolution and establishing equilibrium within a group. This understanding can assist coaches and trainers in assisting their players in developing emotional skills that may enhance the behavior of the players and their team performance. It was demonstrated that emotional intelligence can play a significant role in establishing a favorable team climate.

Pearson's correlation findings provided that there was a significant and positive relationship between emotional intelligence and team cohesion. The study supported that the relationship between emotional intelligence and team cohesion was positive and significant, leading to better performance in sports (Black et al., 2019). A study conducted by Besharat et al., (2006) confirms that emotional intelligence is positively related to team success, and EI can only predict team success when it is measured in team sport. So, the group size affects the emotional intelligence and cohesion. Highly emotionally intelligent players were more inclined to connect well with their teammates and create a stronger bond with them. The reason is that they could learn emotions more easily, regulate their responses, and better support others.

Emotionally intelligent teams played together more harmoniously and had fewer misunderstandings. Study demonstrated a significant correlation between emotional intelligence and team cohesion, where players played better together, communicated better, solved problems better, and generated a more pleasant team climate (Naeiji & Mehrizi, 2014). The findings indicated that there was a significant effect of emotional intelligence on conflict resolution among elite handball players. The players with stronger emotional intelligence proved to be more adept at dealing with interpersonal differences and resolving them amicably in case of conflicts within the teams (Jordan & Troth, 2021). They knew more about their feelings and were more capable of guessing what other people felt, so they were able to react to challenging circumstances rationally and without panic.

Another research affirmed that emotionally intelligent players would thrive on conflict resolution and cohesion in a team setting, which forms the basic foundation of success in team team-based sports environment. One of the reviews observed that athletes who embrace high levels of EI tend to be effective communicators and conflict resolvers in addition to facilitating team cohesion, which fosters favorable and mutual working conditions that promote general performance (Aouani et al., 2024).

Handball demands rapid decisions and pressure as well as difficulties in teamwork among elite players. Emotional intelligence players had higher chances of maintaining control, listening to others and not allowing emotions to lead to arguing. This allowed minimizing tension in the team and maintaining the relationships so that players could concentrate on the performance and collaboration.

## **Conclusion**

To sum up, the study has clearly shown that emotional intelligence resulted in strong and statistically significant effects on conflict solving and team cohesion in elite male handball players. Athletes who possessed a greater degree of emotional intelligence were more adept at being aware of in controlling their feelings and also the feelings of their teammates. This emotional intelligence helped them to better manage interpersonal disagreements, relationships, and make a better working team. The results also pointed out the significance of emotional intelligence in fostering team cohesiveness, trust, and cooperation, which are core determinants that directly affect the overall performance of a team participating in highly competitive, stern sports such as handball. These findings indicate that emotional intelligence was not an individual asset alone but a shared benefit to team success. Therefore, coaches,

trainers, and sport psychologists need to propose the aspect of emotional intelligence training in sports development programs to enhance social skills, optimize conflict resolution tactics, and improve the dynamics of the entire team. In this way, teams will improve communication, decrease tension, and enhance performance on and off the court.

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