

# Passion, Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Management in Athletes: A Correlational Study

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## ABSTRACT

The emerging athletes often faced significant pressure to maintain optimum levels of mental skills, which affected their performance. The study aimed to find out the difference between state- and national-level athletes in passion, emotional intelligence, and conflict management. The research was conducted on 184 university athletes, aged 18–25, from diverse sporting disciplines, including state- and national-level athletes. The Passion Scale, Sports Emotional Intelligence Test, and Thomas–Kilman Conflict Mode Instrument were utilised as measurement tools. The mean, standard deviation, and t-value were computed. The results of the study indicated that there were significant relationships between certain components of passion, emotional intelligence, and conflict management styles. The findings also revealed significant differences between state- and national-level athletes in obsessive passion, passion criteria, compromising conflict management style, and emotional intelligence. National-level athletes were found to have higher emotional intelligence, obsessive passion, and passion criteria, whereas state-level athletes reported higher use of the compromising style of conflict management.

**Keywords:** Harmonious passion, Obsessive passion, Emotional intelligence, Conflict management, Passion criteria

## INTRODUCTION

In sports, passion refers to a deep emotional attachment and motivational drive toward athletic participation. The sport has become a part of an athlete's identity. Vallerand et al. (2003) defined passion as “a strong inclination toward an activity that individuals like, find important, and in which they invest time and energy.” There are two types of passion, i.e., obsessive and harmonious. Obsessive passion refers to a controlled internalisation of an activity in one's identity that creates an internal pressure to engage in the activity that the person likes. Harmonious passion refers to an autonomous internalisation that leads individuals to choose to engage in the activity that they like. Harmonious passion promotes healthy adaptation, whereas obsessive passion thwarts it by causing negative affect and rigid persistence. Another important variable of this research is Emotional intelligence. It is the ability to perceive emotions, integrate emotions to facilitate thought, understand emotions, and regulate emotions to promote personal growth (Salovey and Mayer, 1997). The capacity for recognising our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships (Goleman, 1998). Wdad Alanay et al. (2026) found the impact of emotional intelligence on conflict resolution techniques among Saudi Arabian nurse managers. Conflict management refers to the process through which individuals recognise, address, and resolve disagreements constructively and effectively. One of the most widely accepted theoretical frameworks explaining conflict-handling behaviour is the model developed by Kenneth Thomas and Ralph H. Kilman, commonly known as the Thomas–Kilman Conflict Mode Model. According to Thomas and Kilman (1974), individuals respond to conflict based on two fundamental dimensions: assertiveness, which reflects the degree to which a person attempts to satisfy their own concerns, and cooperativeness, which reflects the degree to which a person attempts to satisfy the concerns of others. The

intersection of these two dimensions produces five distinct conflict management styles: competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating. Competing is a style that is both assertive and uncooperative, focused on gaining advantage or control. In this approach, a person prioritises their own goals over others, often using whatever influence or authority they have to succeed. It can involve standing up for one's rights, strongly defending a belief, or simply aiming to win, even if it comes at the other person's expense. Collaborating is a style that combines both assertiveness and cooperation. In this approach, a person works together with others to find a solution that satisfies everyone's needs. It goes beyond just solving the surface problem—it involves understanding each person's underlying concerns and trying to address them fully. Collaboration may include openly discussing differences, learning from each other's perspectives, resolving conflicts over resources, or finding creative solutions to interpersonal issues so that both sides feel heard and satisfied. Compromising is a balanced approach that falls in the middle of both assertiveness and cooperation. In this style, the goal is to find a quick and acceptable solution where both sides give up something and gain something. It's not about fully winning or fully giving in, but about meeting halfway. Compared to other styles, it involves more give-and-take than competing, but less self-sacrifice than accommodating. It also deals with the issue more directly than avoiding, though not as deeply as collaborating. In practice, compromising often means splitting the difference, making mutual concessions, or settling on a middle-ground solution that both parties can accept. Avoiding is a style that is both unassertive and uncooperative. In this approach, a person neither pursues their own concerns nor tries to address the concerns of others. Instead, the conflict is left unresolved. This can involve sidestepping the issue, delaying the discussion until a more suitable time, or completely withdrawing from a situation that feels uncomfortable or threatening. Accommodating is a style that is unassertive but highly cooperative, essentially the opposite of competing. In this approach, a person puts aside their own needs and priorities to meet the needs of someone else. It often involves a degree of self-sacrifice. Accommodating can look like being generous, going along with someone else's wishes even when you might disagree, or giving in to another person's point of view to maintain harmony.

### **Need of the Study**

Athletic performance was enhanced not only by physical abilities but also by key psychological factors that contribute to motivation, interpersonal relationships, and resilience. This study aimed to explore the connections between different types of passion harmonious versus obsessive emotional intelligence (EI), and effective conflict management strategies among national-level and state-level athletes.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Study Design**

This study adopted a survey method.

### **Setting:**

Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, Punjab.

### **Hypothesis**

**H1:** There was a significant positive relationship between passion, emotional intelligence and conflict management among athletes.

**H0:** There was no significant positive relationship between passion, emotional intelligence and conflict management among athletes.

### **Ethical Clearance**

The study was approved by the institutional Ethics Committee (Number 3953/HG, Dated: 18/06/2025) of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, Punjab.

## Procedure

The study was conducted on 184 state-level and national-level athletes (92 National athletes and 92 state-level athletes). The coaches were notified of the study and received agreement for their athletes to participate. Athletes were told that participation in the study was completely optional and that they could drop out at any time.

They had been provided with a consent form first, through which their voluntary participation was attained. After the consent form was ascertained, the participant was administered to 3 scales. The data obtained was then analysed to find the passion in relation to emotional intelligence and conflict management.

## Measures

The passion scale (2003)

To assess the two types of passion, Vallerand et al. developed the Passion Scale, which includes items assessing HP, OP as well as some criterion items used to examine whether or not people were passionate about a given activity.

Sports Emotional Intelligence Test (2002)

It consists of 15 items, developed by Dr. C.D. Agashe and Dr. R.D. Helode assesses emotional intelligence in sports contexts.

Thomas Kilman Conflict Mode Instrument (1974)

Developed by Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann. The instrument contains 30 paired questions, requiring respondents to select the option that most accurately reflects their behaviour in conflict scenarios. It identifies five ways to handle conflicts based on these answers: competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating.

## Statistical Analysis

In this study SPSS 21 system was used to apply statistical techniques. The following techniques were applied to interpret the data.

Mean

Standard Deviation

T- Test

Pearson Correlation

## RESULT AND ANALYSIS

**TABLE 4.1- Descriptive statistics for state-level and national-level athletes on the variables of passion, emotional intelligence and conflict management**

Variables	State			National level			t. Ratio	Significance
	N	Mean	S. D	N	Mean	S. D		
Harmonious passion	92	11.61	65.50	92	5.94	.83	.831	Non-Significant
Obsessive passion	92	4.16	1.06	92	4.47	.82	-2.221	Significant
Passion criteria	92	5.19	1.35	92	6.32	.81	-6.844	Significant
Avoiding	92	5.65	1.62	92	6.05	1.38	-1.805	Non-Significant
Collaborating	92	5.58	1.63	92	5.79	1.74	-.828	Non-Significant
Compromising	92	6.21	1.58	92	4.93	1.97	4.86	Significant
Accommodating	92	6.79	1.71	92	7.28	1.73	-1.91	Non-Significant

Competing	92	5.76	1.83	92	6.00	1.97	-.852	Non-Significant
Emotional intelligence	92	148.75	50.85	92	201.90	23.45	-9.104	Significant

**Table 4.1** shows, there were no significant differences between state and national level athletes with regard to harmonious passion,  $t(182) = 0.83, p > .05$ . Moreover, there were no significant differences in avoiding,  $t(182) = -1.81, p > .05$ ; collaborating,  $t(182) = -0.83, p > .05$ ; accommodating,  $t(182) = -1.91, p > .05$ ; and competing styles of conflict management,  $t(182) = -0.85, p > .05$ . There were significant differences in obsessive passion,  $t(182) = -2.22, p < .05$ , and passion criteria,  $t(182) = -6.84, p < .05$ , because national level athletes were more passionate about their sport and they used a larger number of criteria when choosing what they will do after practice. The results showed that there is a significant difference in the compromising style of conflict management,  $t(182) = 4.86, p < .05$ , since state-level athletes use more compromising techniques than national-level athletes. Furthermore, a highly significant difference was revealed in emotional intelligence,  $t(182) = -9.10, p < .05$ .

**TABLE 4.2- Correlation of passion, emotional intelligence and conflict management on state-level athletes**

		Harm o n i o u s P a s s i o n	Obsessive P a s s i o n	P a s s i o n C r i t e r i a	A v o i d i n g	C o l l a b o r a t i n g	C o m p r o m i s i n g	A c c o m m o d a t i n g	C o m p e t i n g	S p o r t s E m o t i o n a l I n t e l l i g e n c e
Harmonious P a s s i o n	Pearson C o r r e l a t i o n	1								
	Sig. (2-tailed)									
	N	92								
Obsessive P a s s i o n	Pearson C o r r e l a t i o n	0.143	1							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.173								
	N	92	92							
P a s s i o n C r i t e r i a	Pearson C o r r e l a t i o n	0.154	.422**	1						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.142	0							
	N	92	92	92						
A v o i d i n g	Pearson C o r r e l a t i o n	0.024	-0.018	0.074	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.822	0.867	0.482						
	N	92	92	92	92					
C o l l a b o r a t i n g	Pearson C o r r e l a t i o n	0.155	-0.052	-0.009	-0.054	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.141	0.626	0.931	0.606					
	N	92	92	92	92	92				
C o m p r o m i s i n g	Pearson C o r r e l a t i o n	0.051	0.027	-0.049	-.214*	-0.177	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.627	0.799	0.641	0.041	0.091				
	N	92	92	92	92	92	92			
A c c o m m o d a t i n g	Pearson C o r r e l a t i o n	-0.172	0.04	-0.044	-.383**	-.479**	-0.048	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.102	0.707	0.68	0	0	0.65			
	N	92	92	92	92	92	92	92		

Competing	Pearson Correlation	-0.044	-0.003	0.019	-.294**	-.242*	-.498**	-0.096	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.68	0.975	0.861	0.004	0.02	0	0.362		
	N	92	92	92	92	92	92	92	92	
Sports Emotional intelligence	Pearson Correlation	-0.003	-0.062	.224*	.284**	0.008	-0.203	-0.082	-0.007	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.977	0.554	0.032	0.006	0.943	0.052	0.44	0.949	
	N	92	92	92	92	92	92	92	92	92
** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).										
* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).										
a. Athletes = State Level										

**Table 4.2** showed that obsessive passion was positively and significantly correlated with passion criteria ( $r = .422, p < .01$ ). This suggested that athletes who exhibited higher levels of obsessive passion also tend to strongly identify with and invest in their sport activities. Harmonious passion did not show any significant relationship with obsessive passion, passion criteria, conflict management styles, or emotional intelligence, indicating that harmonious passion functions independently in this sample.

With regard to conflict management styles, several significant interrelationships were observed. Avoiding style was negatively correlated with compromising ( $r = -.214, p < .05$ ), accommodating ( $r = -.383, p < .01$ ), and competing styles ( $r = -.294, p < .01$ ), suggesting that athletes who prefer avoidance were less likely to adopt compromising, accommodating, or competing approaches in conflict situations. Avoiding style was also positively correlated with emotional intelligence ( $r = .284, p < .01$ ), indicating that athletes with higher emotional intelligence may be more likely to withdraw or strategically avoid conflict. Collaborating style showed significant negative correlations with accommodating ( $r = -.479, p < .01$ ) and competing styles ( $r = -.242, p < .05$ ), implying that athletes who adopted a collaborative approach are less inclined toward accommodating others excessively or engaging in competitive conflict behaviour. Compromising style demonstrated a significant negative relationship with competing style ( $r = -.498, p < .01$ ), reflecting a strong inverse association between these two approaches.

This indicates that athletes who favour compromise were considerably less likely to use a competing strategy. Similarly, accommodating style was negatively related to avoiding ( $r = -.383, p < .01$ ) and collaborating ( $r = -.479, p < .01$ ), further demonstrating the distinct nature of these conflict resolution strategies. In relation to emotional intelligence significant positive correlation was found with passion criteria ( $r = .224, p < .05$ ), suggesting that athletes who strongly value and identify with their passion may also possess higher emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence was not significantly related to harmonious passion, obsessive passion, collaborating, accommodating, or competing styles. Emotional intelligence was significant and positively correlated ( $r = .284, p < .01$ ) with avoiding conflict management style, which means state-level athletes who were high in emotional intelligence were most likely to use the avoiding conflict management style. Overall, the findings indicated that while harmonious passion did not significantly relate to other variables in this study, obsessive passion is moderately associated with passion criteria. Conflict management styles were significantly interrelated, particularly competing and compromising styles, which demonstrated a strong negative association. Emotional intelligence is significantly related to avoiding conflict management style.

**TABLE 4.3- Correlation of passion, emotional intelligence and conflict management on national level athletes**

		Harmo nious Passion	Obsessi ve Passion	Passion Criteria	Avoidi ng	Collabo rating	Compromi sing	Accommod ating	Competing	Sports Emotional Intelligence
Harmoni ous Passion	Pearson Correlation	1								
	Sig. (2-tailed)									

	N	92								
Obsessive Passion	Pearson Correlation	.363**	1							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0								
	N	92	92							
Passion Criteria	Pearson Correlation	.368**	0.199	1						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0.057							
	N	92	92	92						
Avoiding	Pearson Correlation	-0.022	-0.047	0.138	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.836	0.656	0.189						
	N	92	92	92	92					
Collaborating	Pearson Correlation	.231*	0.031	0.125	0.027	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.027	0.767	0.233	0.795					
	N	92	92	92	92	92				
Compromising	Pearson Correlation	-0.151	-.219*	-0.107	-.337**	-.253*	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.152	0.036	0.31	0.001	0.015				
	N	92	92	92	92	92	92			
Accommodating	Pearson Correlation	0.074	0.202	-.210*	-.312**	-.419**	-0.11	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.484	0.054	0.045	0.002	0	0.296			
	N	92	92	92	92	92	92	92		
Competing	Pearson Correlation	-0.129	0.019	0.111	-0.117	-.297**	-.407**	-.224*	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.22	0.855	0.292	0.268	0.004	0	0.031		
	N	92	92	92	92	92	92	92	92	
Sports Emotional Intelligence	Pearson Correlation	.271**	0.067	-0.038	-.221*	.276**	0.043	0.08	-0.204	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.009	0.526	0.716	0.034	0.008	0.683	0.45	0.051	
	N	92	92	92	92	92	92	92	92	92
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).										
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).										
a. Athletes = National Level										

**Table 4.3** showed several significant associations. Harmonious passion showed a significant positive correlation with obsessive passion ( $r = .363, p < .01$ ) and passion criteria ( $r = .368, p < .01$ ), indicating that athletes who experienced harmonious passion also tend to display elements of obsessive passion and strongly endorse passion criteria. Additionally, harmonious passion was positively correlated with collaborating conflict style ( $r = .231, p < .05$ ) and emotional intelligence ( $r = .271, p < .01$ ), suggesting that athletes with harmonious passion were more likely to engage in cooperative conflict resolution and possess higher emotional intelligence. No significant relationships were found between harmonious passion and avoiding, compromising, accommodating, or competing styles.

Obsessive passion demonstrated a significant negative correlation with compromising style ( $r = -.219, p < .05$ ), indicated that athletes with higher obsessive passion were less likely to adopt a compromising approach during conflicts. However, obsessive passion did not show significant associations with emotional intelligence or most other conflict management styles.

Passion criteria did not show strong significant relationships with most variables, except for a small negative correlation with accommodating style ( $r = -.210, p < .05$ ), suggested that athletes who strongly identify with their passion were slightly less likely to yield or accommodate others during conflict situations.

Regarding conflict management styles, the avoiding style showed significant negative correlations with compromising ( $r = -.337, p < .01$ ) and accommodating ( $r = -.312, p < .01$ ). This indicates that athletes who prefer avoiding conflicts were less likely to compromise or accommodate and may exhibit lower emotional intelligence. Collaborating style was negatively related to compromising ( $r = -.253, p < .05$ ) and competing styles ( $r = -.297, p < .01$ ) but positively related to accommodating style ( $r = .419, p < .01$ ) and emotional intelligence ( $r = .276, p < .01$ ). This suggests that collaborative athletes may also showed cooperative tendencies and higher emotional intelligence.

Compromising style showed a strong negative relationship with competing style ( $r = -.407, p < .01$ ), reflecting that athletes who prefer compromise were less likely to adopt a competitive or dominating conflict approach. Similarly, competing style was negatively associated with accommodating ( $r = -.224, p < .05$ ) and collaborating styles, reinforcing the conceptual distinction between assertive and cooperative conflict strategies.

Emotional intelligence showed negative correlation with avoiding conflict management style ( $r = -.221, p < .05$ ). Those who had higher emotional intelligence were less likely to use avoiding and more likely to adopt collaborating style.

**TABLE 4.4 - Correlation of passion, emotional intelligence and conflict management on both state and national level athletes**

		Harmonious Passion	Obsessive Passion	Passion Criteria	Avoiding	Collaborating	Compromising	Accommodating	Competing	Sports Emotional Intelligence
Harmonious Passion	Pearson Correlation	1								
	Sig. (2-tailed)									
	N	184								
Obsessive Passion	Pearson Correlation	0.104	1							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.159								
	N	184	184							
Passion Criteria	Pearson Correlation	0.092	.380**	1						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.214	0							
	N	184	184	184						
Avoiding	Pearson Correlation	0.01	-0.007	0.144	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.897	0.923	0.052						
	N	184	184	184	184					
Collaborating	Pearson Correlation	0.104	-0.004	0.065	-0.007	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.16	0.96	0.38	0.923					
	N	184	184	184	184	184				
Compromising	Pearson Correlation	0.05	-0.14	-.212**	-.299**	-.227**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.504	0.058	0.004	0	0.002				
	N	184	184	184	184	184	184			
	Pearson Correlation	-0.127	0.13	-0.028	-.324**	-.434**	-0.124	1		

Accommodating	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.085	0.078	0.71	0	0	0.093			
	N	184	184	184	184	184	184	184		
Competing	Pearson Correlation	-0.035	0.017	0.076	-.197**	-.267**	-.439**	-.152*	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.641	0.819	0.308	0.007	0	0	0.039		
	N	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	
Sports Emotional Intelligence	Pearson Correlation	-0.036	0.068	.376**	.186*	0.108	-.269**	0.056	-0.02	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.632	0.357	0	0.012	0.145	0	0.454	0.787	
	N	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184
** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).										
* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).										

**Table 4.2** showed multiple significant correlations. Harmonious passion exhibited no significant correlation with obsessive passion, passion criteria, conflict management styles, or emotional intelligence within the total sample. This suggests that harmonious passion functions independently of the other study variables when both state and national athletes are aggregated.

Obsessive passion showed positive correlation with passion criteria ( $r = .380, p < .01$ ), signifying that athletes possessing elevated obsessive passion were inclined to report enhanced passion-related identity and engagement. Nevertheless, obsessive passion did not exhibit significant correlations with emotional intelligence or conflict management styles.

The passion criteria showed negative correlations with the compromising style ( $r = -.212, p < .01$ ) and positive correlations with emotional intelligence ( $r = .376, p < .01$ ). This indicated that athletes with a strong identification with their passion were likely to exhibit lower levels of compromise in conflicts while displaying greater emotional intelligence.

The avoiding style was negatively correlated with the compromising ( $r = -.299, p < .01$ ), accommodating ( $r = -.324, p < .01$ ), and competing styles ( $r = -.197, p < .01$ ), but it was positively correlated with emotional intelligence ( $r = .186, p < .05$ ). This suggested that athletes who favoured conflict avoidance were less inclined to engage in alternative active conflict resolution strategies, although they may exhibit marginally elevated emotional intelligence.

The collaborating style was found to have strong negative relationships with the compromising style ( $r = -.227, p < .01$ ), accommodating style ( $r = -.434, p < .01$ ), and competing style ( $r = -.267, p < .01$ ). These results imply that the collaborating style was different from the other types of conflict resolution strategies, especially compromising and competing styles.

The compromising style was negatively correlated with the competing style ( $r = -.439, p < .01$ ) and had a significant negative correlation with emotional intelligence ( $r = -.269, p < .01$ ). These results indicate that those who favor compromise were unlikely to engage in competition and may possess low emotional intelligence.

Accommodating style was negatively related to avoiding ( $r = -.324, p < .01$ ), collaborating ( $r = -.434, p < .01$ ), and competing styles ( $r = -.152, p < .05$ ), reinforcing the structural distinctions among conflict resolution strategies.

Emotional intelligence showed a positive correlation with passion criteria ( $r = .376, p < .01$ ) and a positive association with avoiding style ( $r = .186, p < .05$ ), while it showed a negative relationship with compromising style ( $r = -.269, p < .01$ ).

## DISCUSSION

The present study examined the relationship between passion (harmonious and obsessive), emotional intelligence, and conflict management styles among state-level and national-level athletes. SPSS Version 21 was used to analyse the data through the Independent Samples t-test and Pearson Correlation Coefficient.

The results showed the significant differences in obsessive passion and passion criteria ( $p < .05$ ), revealed that national-level players were tended to be more rigid, intense and posses uncontrollable urge to engage in their activity in comparison to state-level players. In support of my result, Konter et.al (2020) found that higher soccer level players who were elite professionals scored higher in obsessive passion. Furthermore, national level players had a strong inclination love and high valuation on their sports than state level players. This result has confirmed that national-level players invest significantly more time and energy in their sports than state-level players.

A significant difference was also observed in the compromising style of conflict management ( $p < .05$ ), with state-level athletes reporting higher use of compromising strategies compared to national-level athletes.

Significant difference was found in emotional intelligence ( $p < .05$ ), where national-level athletes demonstrated higher emotional intelligence than state-level athletes. This indicates that national-level athletes were more capable of recognizing, understanding, and managing their emotions during sports situations. Their higher emotional intelligence may stem from greater exposure to competitive pressure, better training, and more experience in dealing with success, failure, and team interactions, which in turn helped them to perform better and maintain psychological stability. In support of the results of this research, Gul Mohammad et al. (2015), revealed that national-level players showed higher emotional intelligence as compared to state level.

The correlation analysis revealed several important findings. In the total sample (table no 4.4) significant positive relationship was observed between obsessive passion and passion criteria. This suggested that athletes with higher obsessive passion tended to strongly internalize sport into their identity and felt a compulsion to engaged in it. The moderate positive correlation supported the theoretical view that obsessive passion results from controlled internalisation and was associated with rigid persistence.

Among national-level athletes, harmonious passion was positively associated with collaborating conflict style and emotional intelligence. This indicated that harmonious passion was linked with adaptive functioning, psychological well-being, and flexible engagement, particularly at higher levels of performance. The dualistic model of passion (Vallerand, (2010)) has provided theoretical background for the association between harmonious passion and collaborative conflict management. Harmonious passion helps individuals develop a stronger sense of inner control, so disagreements are less likely to feel like threats to their self-worth. This allows them to focus on addressing the real issues and repairing relationships, often responding to conflict in constructive and thoughtful ways. Harmonious passion is associated with pro-social behaviour, which means individuals with this passion are more likely to support others and focus on mutual benefits in a conflicting situation

Among national-level athletes (table no.4.3) harmonious passion was positively related to emotional intelligence, suggesting that athletes who meaningfully integrated sport into their lives demonstrated better emotional awareness and regulation. The present result is consistent with the findings of A. Suri (2026) in the study titled "Passion with Compassion and Emotional Intelligence." The study, indicated that individuals with higher levels of passion tended to demonstrate better emotional understanding and regulation, which contributes to improved interpersonal functioning and performance.

State-level athletes with high emotional intelligence tend to prefer avoiding conflict management, whereas national-level athletes with high emotional intelligence were less likely to use it. Singh, Karanbir; Kapur, Sonia (2015) researched indian boxers, in which it was revealed that boxers who had high emotional intelligence were less likely to use avoidance. Another important finding of the present study indicates that national-level athletes who were high in emotional intelligence were more likely to prefer collaborating style. Wdad Alanazy, Sharifah Khalid S Alzamil(2026) conducted research on nurses who have moderate emotional intelligence were more likely to prefer collaborating style. Overall, the results indicated that national-level athletes demonstrated higher

levels of obsessive passion, stronger passion criteria, and significantly greater emotional intelligence compared to state-level athletes.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of this research is to study the correlation between passion, emotional intelligence and conflict management among state-level and national-level athletes.

The results revealed that obsessive passion and passion criteria were found to be higher among national-level athletes. National-level athletes tend to demonstrate relatively higher levels of emotional intelligence and more effective conflict management strategies compared to state-level athletes.

State-level athletes reported higher use of the compromising style compared to national-level athletes.

National-level athletes tend to show higher obsessive passion and emotional intelligence, while both groups share similar levels of harmonious passion and most conflict management styles.

## Limitations

- The study cannot be generalised to all sports as there were more athletes from football, handball, volleyball, hockey, basketball and kabaddi.
- The participants included only state-level and national-level athletes, which limits the generalisation of the findings to other populations such as recreational athletes, international athletes, or non-athletes.
- The participants were selected from a limited geographical area, the findings may not be generalisable to athletes from different countries, competitive systems, or cultural backgrounds.
- The study did not compare passion, emotional intelligence and conflict management on the basis of gender.

## Future Implication

- Future researchers can expand this area by studying these variables among different sports categories, age groups, and international athletes
- The findings of the study suggest that psychological factors such as passion, emotional intelligence, and conflict management play an important role in athletes' performance. Therefore, sports organisations and coaches can develop psychological training programs to improve emotional intelligence and effective conflict management among athletes.

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