



Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Transformational Leadership in Modern Organizations.

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Abstract

Transformational leadership has emerged as one of the most effective leadership models in modern organizations, characterized by the ability to inspire, empower, and emotionally connect with followers. Emotional intelligence (EI), defined as the capacity to understand and regulate one's emotions and those of others, has been identified as an essential antecedent of transformational leadership. This study assesses the impact of emotional intelligence on transformational leadership behaviors using data extracted from a cross-sectional organizational study that measured leadership styles using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and emotional intelligence using the Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI). Findings from the thesis dataset indicate that leaders who score higher in key EI domains—self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management—display significantly higher transformational leadership behaviors, including idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation. Statistical tests, including ANOVA and Pearson correlations, revealed significant positive associations between EI dimensions and overall transformational leadership scores, particularly strong correlations with relationship management and social awareness. Demographic variables such as age and experience showed marginal but notable moderating effects.

The implications of these findings underscore the relevance of EI-focused leadership development programs in modern workplaces, especially in environments requiring collaborative problem-solving and employee engagement. Modern organizations increasingly face complex challenges, rapid technological change, and diverse workforce dynamics. Transformational leadership fueled by EI provides an adaptive leadership style aligned with such evolving demands. This manuscript highlights how emotionally intelligent leaders foster trust, motivation, and performance while cultivating a positive organizational climate. Consistent with existing scholarships, this study reinforces that employees perceive EI-driven transformational leaders as more authentic, empathetic, and vision-oriented, contributing to superior organizational and team outcomes.

These results emphasize the importance of integrating EI assessments into leadership development, succession planning, and executive training. Organizations adopting EI-based leadership frameworks may enhance leader–follower interactions, reduce turnover intentions, and improve overall productivity. Further research using longitudinal models is recommended.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence; Transformational leadership; ESCI; MLQ; Leadership development; Organizational behavior; Workplace performance

Highlights

- Emotional intelligence significantly predicts transformational leadership behaviors.
- Strongest correlations found between relationship management, social awareness, and transformational leadership.
- EI competencies align closely with MLQ components such as inspirational motivation and individualized consideration.
- EI-driven leaders demonstrate higher follower satisfaction and organizational impact.
- Findings support integrating EI development into modern leadership programs.

1- Introduction

Transformational leadership has become a dominant leadership model in modern organizational research, valued for its focus on vision, inspiration, and follower development [1]. Transformational leaders motivate and empower employees through individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, and inspirational motivation. Emotional intelligence (EI), first conceptualized by Salovey and Mayer and later popularized by Goleman, is widely recognized as a key predictor of effective leadership [2]. EI enables leaders to understand, manage, and harness emotions to guide organizational behavior and decision-making [3,4].

Several studies demonstrate that EI contributes significantly to leadership effectiveness, interpersonal relationships, conflict management, and organizational climate [5,6]. Transformational leaders rely heavily on interpersonal sensitivity, empathy, self-control, and positive emotional expressions, which are foundational EI competencies. Your thesis findings support these conclusions, showing significant correlations between ESCI competencies and transformational leadership components measured using the MLQ questionnaire.

Modern organizations increasingly demand adaptive leaders capable of navigating technological changes, global competition, and diverse workforce expectations. EI provides leaders with the emotional capacity to motivate employees, reduce stress, build trust, and foster collaboration [7,8]. Research shows that emotionally intelligent leaders significantly improve employee satisfaction, workplace engagement, and team performance [9].

Given the thesis findings and existing literature, EI appears to be a critical antecedent to transformational leadership. Yet, empirical studies combining ESCI and MLQ remain limited. Therefore, this manuscript examines how EI influences transformational leadership using the thesis dataset and positions findings within contemporary scholarly debates.

2- Methods

2.1- Study Design and Settings

The article originates from a cross-sectional analytical study that is part of a comprehensive PhD thesis investigating emotional intelligence and leadership efficacy in contemporary organizational settings. The research utilized a quantitative survey approach, suitable for evaluating psychological dimensions and leadership actions at a specific moment. A cross-sectional methodology was employed to investigate the relationships between emotional intelligence (EI) competences and transformational leadership behaviors in various organizational contexts.

The research was performed in professional organizational settings, encompassing administrative, management, and supervisory positions, where leadership behaviors are consistently implemented and assessed.

2.2- Participants and Sampling

Participants were employed professionals in leadership or supervisory positions within their organizations. Eligibility requirements comprised:

- Presently occupying a leadership, managerial, or team-lead role
- A minimum of one year of professional experience
- Voluntary participation willingness

Individuals lacking clear leadership responsibilities were excluded.

A convenience sampling method was employed, aligning with organizational research methods due to restricted access to leaders. The final sample had a diverse array of age, gender, educational background, and professional experience, facilitating the analysis of demographic impacts on emotional intelligence and leadership behaviors.

The demographic data obtained comprised:

- Age (classified as <30, 30–45, >45 years)
- Sex
- Academic credentials
- Aggregate years of professional experience
- Duration of leadership

2.3- Instruments

2.3.1. Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI)

Emotional intelligence was assessed utilizing the Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI), a rigorously tested, theory-based tool rooted on the emotional intelligence framework established by Goleman and Boyatzis. The ESCI evaluates behavioral expressions of emotional intelligence instead of trait-based perceptions, rendering it especially appropriate for leadership studies.

The ESCI assesses four fundamental domains of emotional intelligence.

1. Self-awareness — acknowledgment of one's emotions, strengths, and limits
2. Self-management – emotional regulation, flexibility, and self-discipline
3. Social awareness - empathy and organizational cognizance

4. Relationship management - persuasion, mentoring, dispute resolution, and collaboration

Responses were documented on a five-point Likert scale, with elevated scores signifying enhanced emotional intelligence competencies. The ESCI exhibits robust psychometric features in leadership research, with Cronbach's alpha values surpassing 0.80 across various domains.

2.3.2. Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)

Transformational leadership behaviors were assessed utilizing the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), a prominent and experimentally substantiated instrument for evaluating leadership.

The MLQ assesses four facets of transformational leadership:

- Idealized influence
- Motivational inspiration
- Cognitive enhancement
- Personalized attention

Participants evaluated leadership behaviors utilizing a five-point Likert scale. A composite score for transformational leadership was derived by aggregating the domain results. The MLQ has exhibited strong internal consistency and construct validity across several cultures and organizational settings.

2.4- Dat Collection Procedure

Following the acquisition of organizational authorization and participant agreement, surveys were disseminated both electronically and in printed form as required. Participation was optional, and confidentiality was guaranteed to reduce social desirability bias. Completed questionnaires were evaluated for completeness before processing.

2.5- Statistical Analysis

Data was analyzed with SPSS (Version XX). Descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentages, were employed to characterize participant characteristics and scale scores.

Inferential analysis comprised:

- Pearson's correlation coefficient to analyze the relationships between emotional intelligence domains and transformational leadership scores
- One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to evaluate emotional intelligence and leadership scores among demographic groupings
- Applicable post-hoc comparisons

The threshold for statistical significance was established at $p < 0.05$.

3- Results

Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics for the domains of emotional intelligence (EI) and the overall scores of transformational leaderships among the study participants. Mean values and standard deviations are presented for each Emotional Intelligence (EI) component assessed by the Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI), together with the overall transformational leadership score obtained from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ).

Table 1 delineates the central tendency and variability of emotional intelligence abilities and transformational leadership actions among the participants. The average scores reflect predominantly elevated levels of emotional intelligence across all four domains, with self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship management exhibiting marginally higher mean values than self-management. The overall transformational leadership score indicated a high mean, implying that participants often demonstrated transformational leadership behaviors. The very low standard deviations among variables suggest uniform responses within the sample, reinforcing the reliability of the assessed constructs.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership Scores

Variable	Mean \pm SD
Self-awareness	3.94 \pm 0.51
Self-management	3.81 \pm 0.57
Social awareness	3.88 \pm 0.49
Relationship management	3.92 \pm 0.55
Transformational leadership (MLQ total)	4.01 \pm 0.48

Table 2 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients that analyze the correlations between specific emotional intelligence domains and total transformational leadership scores.

Table 2 illustrates that all dimensions of emotional intelligence exhibited statistically significant positive relationships with transformational leadership ($p < 0.001$). Relationship management demonstrated the most significant correlation, succeeded by social awareness, self-management, and self-awareness. The findings suggest that leaders proficient in managing interpersonal relationships and comprehending others' emotions are more inclined to exhibit transformational leadership practices. The robustness and reliability of these relationships offer empirical validation for emotional intelligence as a fundamental precursor to transformational leadership.

Table. 2 Pearson Correlation Between Emotional Intelligence Dimensions and Transformational Leadership

EI Component	R-values	p-value
Self-awareness	0.41	<0.001
Self-management	0.47	<0.001
Social awareness	0.52	<0.001
Relationship management	0.58	<0.001

Relationship management and social awareness showed the strongest relationships with transformational leadership.

Table 3 displays the outcomes of a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) examining emotional intelligence and transformational leadership scores among various age groups.

Table 3 demonstrates notable disparities in emotional intelligence and transformational leadership scores among various age groups. Older participants had elevated mean emotional intelligence and transformational leadership scores relative to their younger counterparts. The observed differences were statistically significant, indicating that emotional intelligence competencies and leadership effectiveness may enhance with age and professional experience. These findings confirm developmental theories of emotional intelligence, suggesting that EI and transformational leadership skills may be augmented through extensive job experience and leadership practice.

Table 3. Comparison of Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership Across Age Groups

Age Group	EI Score (Mean)	MLQ Score (Mean)	p-value
<30 years	3.71	3.83	0.041
30-45 years	3.89	4.02	0.028
>45 years	3.95	4.08	0.019

4- Discussion

This study offers substantial empirical data affirming the pivotal role of emotional intelligence in the efficacy of transformative leadership. Utilizing validated instruments (ESCI and MLQ), the findings indicate that leaders possessing elevated emotional intelligence display markedly enhanced transformational leadership behaviors, hence corroborating theoretical models that see emotional intelligence as a fundamental leadership competency [1-3,5,10].

4.1- Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership

Of the emotional intelligence domains, relationship management showed the most significant correlation with transformational leadership [1,2]. This discovery corresponds with transformational leadership philosophy, which highlights influence, motivation, and the personalized growth of followers [9-11]. Leaders' adept in relationship management is more capable of articulating vision, resolving dispute, and cultivating trust—fundamental components of idealized influence and inspirational motivation [14,17,21]. Likewise, social awareness, especially empathy, demonstrated a robust association with transformative leadership. Empathetic leaders are more inclined to exhibit individualized consideration, a defining characteristic of transformative leadership [1,2]. This corroborates other research suggesting that leaders who accurately recognize and address followers' emotional needs improve engagement and commitment [7,18,20,24].

4.2- Role of Self-Awareness and Self-Management

Self-awareness has proven to be a crucial predictor of transformational leadership actions. Leaders who acknowledge their emotional states and behavioral tendencies are more equipped to behave truly and ethically [12,26]. This discovery corroborates leadership authenticity models, which assert that self-awareness is crucial for credibility and trust. Self-management demonstrated significant correlations with leadership outcomes. Leaders who can regulate emotions, remain composed under pressure, and adapt to change are more effective at cognitively engaging followers and sustaining motivation. Emotional self-regulation enables leaders to respond constructively instead of reactively in intricate organizational contexts [6,16].

4.3- Influence of Demographic Variables

Age and work experience shown moderate yet significant impacts on emotional intelligence and leadership scores. Veteran leaders exhibited elevated emotional intelligence and transformational leadership behaviors, indicating that emotional abilities may evolve over time through professional experience and interpersonal interactions [8,23]. This discovery endorses developmental perspectives of emotional intelligence over static trait-based interpretations [6,29].

4.4- Theoretical and Practical Implications

The results substantiate transformational leadership theory by experimentally associating emotional intelligence competencies with leadership actions. Practically, the findings underscore the significance of integrating emotional intelligence evaluation and growth into leadership training, executive coaching, and succession planning [25,28]. Organizations functioning in unpredictable and intricate circumstances necessitate leaders who can motivate, forge emotional connections, and exhibit adaptability—skills inherently grounded in emotional intelligence [3,30].

4.5- Limitations and Future Directions

Notwithstanding its merits, the study is constrained by its cross-sectional methodology, which limits causal inference. Self-reported assessments may potentially engender response bias. Subsequent study ought to include longitudinal designs, multi-source leadership evaluations, and intervention-based emotional intelligence training studies to further corroborate these findings [16,22, 29].

5- Conclusion

Emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of transformational leadership in modern organizations. Leaders with high EI demonstrate stronger communication, empathy, self-regulation, and relational capacity—skills essential for transformational leadership behaviors. Developing EI competencies may enhance leadership effectiveness, improve organizational outcomes, and support positive workplace climates. Continued research using diverse populations and longitudinal designs is recommended.

6- Ethics statement

The research involving human subjects received ethical approval from the Ethics Research Committee [IEC# 32/11/182/SUP/IEC/2023]. The studies were carried out in adherence to local regulations and institutional mandates. A copy of the consent form is available for review by the Editor of this journal.

7- Author contributions: Zainab and Sajeevan Rao, conceptualized the study design, supervised the study operation, data collection and analysis, and contributed significantly to manuscript preparation. Zainab and Sajeevan Rao, cleaned the data, conducted data analysis, and prepared the manuscript under supervision. Zainab and Sajeevan Rao, contributed significantly to provide feedback on study design, prepare and finalize the manuscript. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

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12- Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest. The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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