



The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Transformational Leadership among School Heads in District Peshawar

¹Sana Naseer

²Rabia Saeed*

³Aliya Haneef

¹⁻³Department of Business Administration, Psychology Program, Iqra National University Peshawar, Pakistan

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Corresponding Authors*:

Rabia Saeed

kwrabiasaeed7@gmail.com

Abstract

The present research aimed to examine the impact of Emotional Intelligence on Transformational Leadership among school heads (N=200). The sample comprised school heads from Peshawar, including both government and private schools. There were 100 male and 100 female school heads recruited into the present study. Data were collected through the Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Scale (SSEIT), developed by Dr. Nicola Schutte and her colleagues in 1998, and The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) in 1995, by Bass and Avolio. The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of Emotional Intelligence on Transformational Leadership among school heads. Data analysis involved the use of descriptive statistics and correlation techniques to examine relationships among the study variables. Results revealed a weak positive correlation between EI and transformational leadership ($r = 0.121$, $p = 0.091$), which was not statistically significant. These findings suggest that emotional intelligence, as measured by the SSEIT, does not have a meaningful association with transformational leadership traits measured by the MLQ in this sample. Further research is recommended to explore potential moderating or mediating factors in this relationship.

Key Words. Emotional Intelligence, Transformational Leadership, Personality Traits, Cognitive Capacity.



Introduction

Within leadership research, emotional intelligence is recognized as a significant predictor of effective leadership and organizational performance. It has been widely examined in relation to various workplace outcomes across different organizational contexts. Leaders who possess strong emotional intelligence are often seen as essential contributors to organizational success. As such, it is important for leaders to be attuned to how employees feel about their work environment, respond to concerns promptly, and manage their own emotions in a constructive manner (Suleman et al, 2021). Research indicates that those in leadership positions who are skilled in understanding and managing their emotions often perform more effectively than those who lack such abilities. Effective leadership is essential for organizational success, as it supports sound decision-making and reinforces strong, well-rounded management practices.

Modern organizations increasingly recognize the value of primal leadership, which emphasizes the development of leaders who build strong emotional connections to help individuals succeed. Studies indicate that focusing on the emotional aspects of work and learning environments, along with improving emotional intelligence (EI) skills, contributes to creating more supportive, productive, and healthier workplaces.

Previous studies have established that emotional intelligence is essential for successful leadership, greatly impacting both decision-making processes and the overall achievement of an organization. Research by Jones and Abraham (2009) indicates that people who possess high emotional intelligence demonstrate a strong dedication to their organizations and utilize positive emotions to improve their decision-making skills. It is evident that while some leaders excel, others do not, and researchers attribute this variance to emotional and social competencies, essentially linking it to emotional intelligence. Previous studies highlight emotional intelligence as a critical skill for leaders within well-regarded organizations (Brown, 2014). This study seeks to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership styles among school administrators.

Bass and Riggio (2006) highlight that successful transformational leaders possess a range of skills, with social and emotional intelligence playing a key role. Transformational leadership is defined by qualities such as creating a compelling vision, inspiring followers, and fostering a positive organizational climate (Zineldin, 2017). These leaders motivate their teams by modeling the behaviors they expect, encouraging individuals to reach their highest potential, stimulating innovative thinking through challenging questions, and providing personalized guidance and support (Givens, 2008). Emotional intelligence encompasses the capacities to identify and regulate one's own emotions as well as to understand and influence the emotions of others. Individuals with high emotional intelligence tend to approach delicate situations calmly, demonstrate empathy, and fete how emotions affect thoughts and behaviors (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Salovey & Grewal, 2005). Successfully navigating social interactions with awareness and skill is pivotal for achievement in both personal life and the workplace, a concept often referred to as social intelligence by psychologists (Njoroge & Yazdanifard, 2014).

The factors influencing team performance have been widely discussed in leadership research. Leadership within teams significantly shapes group dynamics, norms, and behaviors (Dionne et al., 2004). Many consider effective leadership to be the key driver of team success in organizations. Research on team leadership often examines both



transactional and transformational styles, with transformational leadership receiving the most attention in recent studies (Schaubroeck, Lam, & Cha, 2007). Transformational leadership involves a leader's capacity to motivate and uplift others by promoting strong values and ethical standards, thereby encouraging a strong dedication to the team's goals (Korejan & Shahbazi, 2016). As a result, leaders delegate responsibilities to team members, empowering them to take initiative and lead change (Oreg & Berson, 2011).

This study aims to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership among school heads, an area that holds critical importance in shaping school culture, staff performance, and student outcomes. The present study aims to identify the particular elements of emotional intelligence that significantly correlate with transformational leadership among school heads. It also seeks to explore how school heads with higher emotional intelligence exhibit transformational leadership behaviors in their professional roles. Additionally, the study examines the perceived benefits and challenges of emotional intelligence in relation to transformational leadership within the school context. Based on these aims, it is hypothesized that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership among school heads. However, the null hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership. Despite extensive global research on emotional intelligence and leadership, limited empirical evidence exists within the educational context of Pakistan. This study addresses the gap by examining the link between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership among school heads in Peshawar.

Methods

Sample

This study employed a stratified sampling technique to select participants. The sample included 200 school leaders identified as transformational leaders, evenly divided between 100 males and 100 females. Participants ranged in age from 25 to 55 years. Data collection took place at the participants' respective schools, following approval from the relevant authorities.

Instruments

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

Bass and Avolio created The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), in 1994, with a shorter Spanish version adapted by Lopez-Zafra in 1995, serves as a tool to assess how employees perceive their supervisors' leadership styles. In this research, the Transformational Leadership (TFL) aspect (with internal reliability of $\alpha = 0.96$ and external reliability of $\alpha = 0.98$) consists of 13 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This measure evaluates four key competencies: (a) idealized influence, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) intellectual stimulation, (d) individual consideration.

Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale (SSEIT)

This scale was developed by Dr. Nicola Schutte and her colleagues in 1998 is designed to evaluate emotional intelligence. It comprises 33 items that participants respond to on a scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Within the current investigation, the SSEIT exhibited strong reliability, along with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.90, and item-specific alphas ranging from 0.74 to 0.79. It's important to note that items 5, 28, and 33 use a reverse scoring technique, meaning that "Strongly disagree" is scored as 5 and "Strongly



agree" as 1. The Schutte Scale breaks down emotional intelligence into four key dimensions. These are: self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, motivation, and social skills.

Procedure

Prior to engaging in the research, individuals are required to provide their consent after being fully informed. The consent document outlines the goals of the study, the expected duration of involvement, and emphasizes that participation is entirely voluntary. Additionally, participants are informed that they can withdraw from the study at any point if they wish. All data collected for this research will remain confidential and anonymous. In any resulting publications or reports, participants will not be recognized by their names or any other identifying details.

Results

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Age	200	1.00	5.00	2.7050	1.05525	1.114
Gender	200	1.00	2.00	1.5350	.50003	.250
SES	200	1.00	3.00	2.2750	.59256	.351
Edu	200	1.00	5.00	2.1150	.72415	.524
Valid N (listwise)	200					

In the above table age variable, which is assigned values from 1 to 5, has an average of 2.71 and a standard deviation of 1.06, suggesting a moderate variation in age among participants. For gender, coded as 1 for males and 2 for females, the average is 1.54, indicating a slight predominance of female participants. SES, which ranges from 1 to 3, has an average score of 2.28, pointing to the fact that the majority of participants are situated within the middle socioeconomic category. Education levels, ranging from 1 to 5, yield an average of 2.12, reflecting generally low to moderate educational levels among the group. The observed standard deviations and variances demonstrate an acceptable degree of variability for all variables, and every one of the 200 cases was deemed valid for inclusion in the analysis.

Table 2: Correlations

	SSEIT	MLQ
SSEIT	1	.121
		.091
MLQ	.121	1
	.091	

The correlation matrix illustrates how scores on the Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) relate to those on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). The Pearson correlation coefficient recorded between the SSEIT and MLQ is 0.121, which reflects a weak positive association. Nonetheless, the significance level ($p = 0.091$) exceeds the standard cutoff of 0.05, indicating that this relationship has small but statistically positive association. Consequently, it can be concluded that emotional intelligence, as evaluated by the SSEIT, does not have a meaningful connection to the leadership traits measured by the MLQ in this group of 200 participants.

Discussion

Consistent with previous meta-analytic findings ($\rho = 0.11$), the results of this study indicate a small but statistically insignificant positive association between school leaders'



emotional intelligence and their transformational leadership behaviors (Harms & Crede, 2010). While emotional intelligence contributes to effective leadership particularly in areas such as articulating a clear vision and motivating others its overall impact appears to be limited in strength and is not the primary determinant (Leban & Zulauf, 2004). Therefore, to foster transformational leadership in school administrators, leadership development programs should combine emotional intelligence training with a wider range of cognitive and organizational skills.

The relationship between SSEIT scores (which assess emotional intelligence) and transformational leadership traits based on the MLQ was found to be $r = 0.121$, with a p -value of 0.091 . This indicates a slight positive correlation; however, it does not achieve statistical significance ($p > .05$). Consequently, we cannot assert that emotional intelligence, as evaluated by the SSEIT, has a substantial link to transformational leadership within our sample of 200 participants. There are two possible interpretations of this finding: it could be that no significant relationship exists within this group, or that factors such as a small sample size or limitations in measurement may have obscured the detection of a more nuanced connection. The findings of this study align with previous meta-analyses indicating that the link between emotional intelligence (EI) and transformational leadership tends to be relatively weak, and at times not statistically significant, especially when other factors are taken into account (Hsu, Newman & Badura, 2022). Furthermore, the lack of significant findings serves as a warning against exaggerating the real-world importance of this connection.

Conclusion

The current research revealed a slight positive correlation between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership behaviors, though the relationship was not statistically significant, suggesting it may not apply to the larger population. This finding aligns with previous studies reporting similarly weak associations that often lose significance when considering contextual and methodological factors. Using a quantitative approach with data from 200 participants, descriptive statistics and correlation analysis showed that leaders with higher emotional intelligence do not necessarily exhibit the typical characteristics of transformational leadership.

Limitations and Suggestions

This study has several limitations affecting its generalizability. Since the research was conducted only in Peshawar, the findings may not apply to other regions or contexts, nor reflect changes over time. School administrators and policymakers could consider providing EI training to enhance school heads' transformational leadership skills. Leadership programs might integrate EI components to develop self-awareness, empathy, and motivation. Additionally, EI quotient could be considered alongside academic and professional qualifications when hiring school heads. A longitudinal study could further evaluate the impact of EI on transformational leadership over time.

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