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F B M

Insights

FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT
UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA, CAWANGAN KEDAH



eISSN 2716-599X



e-ISSN 2716-599X

VOLUME 11
2025

FBM INSIGHTS

Faculty of Business and Management

Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Kedah

e-ISSN 2716-599X

The editorial board would like to express their heartfelt appreciation for the contributions made by the authors, co-authors and all who were involved in the publication of this bulletin.

Published by : Faculty of Business and Management,
Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Kedah

Published date : 24 April 2025

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THE SYNERGY OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP: UNLOCKING LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

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ABSTRACT

Leadership effectiveness is increasingly influenced by emotional intelligence (EI), which enables leaders to navigate interpersonal dynamics and drive organizational success. This study investigates the role of EI in enhancing transformational leadership, addressing the problem of traditional leadership assessments overly relying on cognitive and technical competencies. The study aims to explore how EI competencies such as self-awareness, empathy, and adaptability impact leadership behaviors and organizational outcomes. Findings indicate that EI mediates transformational leadership effectiveness, fostering strong leader-member relationships and improving employee performance. The study's implications highlight the need for EI-focused training and its integration into leadership development programs, which enhances workplace effectiveness.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence (EI), Transformational Leadership, Leadership Effectiveness, Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Relationships

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, interpersonal skills have become an important factor that defines leadership effectiveness (Goleman, 1998). Earlier roles of leaders predominantly focused on managing and coordinating all organizational activities. Warm leadership theories are normally founded on cognitive intelligence and technical competencies. However, the increasingly stressed importance of emotional intelligence (EI) as one of the pillars of effective leadership has influenced the ways and means of the organizational assessment of leaders (Preeti, 2024). Emotional intelligence is a construct that comprises the ability to experience, understand, appraise, and regulate emotions (Mayer et al., 2002). These dimensions translate into a leader's management of emotions in a workplace context.

Kim and Maubourgne (1992) described leadership as the ability to mobilize enough support from the people that are required for organizational objectives. Management of human resources is one of the four managerial functions distinguished, which addresses the direction of people and organizations towards the accomplishment of organizational objectives. Pandey and Rathore (2015) define leadership as the process of getting the members of a group, organization, or company to move in specific directions during a risky or uncertain situation.

Emotional intelligence acts as a mediator in the relationship between transformational leadership and unit-level performance. Leaders with high EI can develop strong leader-member exchange (LMX) relationships, which in turn drive follower performance and job performance (Waglay et al., 2020). This paper identifies the key emotional intelligence competencies that influence transformational leadership effectiveness and examines the role of these competencies on organizational performance.

Table 1.1 Components of Emotional Intelligence

Component	Description
Self-Awareness	Recognizing one's own emotions and their impact on thoughts and behavior.
Self-Regulation	Managing one's emotions and impulses, fostering self-control.
Social Awareness	Understanding the emotions and needs of others, including empathy.
Relationship Management	Building and maintaining healthy relationships through effective communication and conflict resolution.

Source: (Preeti, 2024)

Table 1.1 highlights four key components of emotional intelligence: Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation, Social Awareness, and Relationship Management. These elements collectively enhance personal and interpersonal effectiveness by fostering emotional understanding, self-control, empathy, and effective communication.

STYLES OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership is categorized into three styles: transformational, transactional, and charismatic. Transformational leadership comprises four components. The four need categories are intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence. Transactional leadership revolves around the business's performance within a systematic reward and punishment framework. Heroism in leadership characteristics puts emphasis on the qualities of the leader and the influence they possess, as expressed by charismatic leadership.

ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

EI is thus central to transformational leadership behavior. EI increases one's capacity of displaying transformational leadership, with the resulting improvement in organizational performance (Mir & Abbasi, 2012). These competencies allow the person to reflect when they are angry and to be able to solve interpersonal and intrapersonal conflicts. With emotions, it is possible for leaders to cushion the effects of a negative event, control attention, and bring about changes that would promote positivity and moods.

Bass (1990) pointed out that transformational leaders must develop many forms of intelligence, such as social and emotional intelligence, to motivate employees and nurture relationships. Avolio and Bass (1997) conducted a study using the sampling tool, Management Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), to ascertain that transformational leadership had a better positive impact and popularity than transactional leadership. These leaders exhibited traits like internal locus of control, self-confidence, and self-acceptance. Additionally, the research highlights a strong link between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence, with weaker associations with social and cognitive intelligence.

Table 1.2 Emotional Intelligence Competencies used in Transformational Leadership

Emotional Intelligence Competencies Used by Transformational Leaders (Identified through review of literature)		Advantages of EI Competencies to Transformational Leaders
Competency	Competency Components	
Empathy	Self-management Understanding emotional cues Understanding emotions of self and others	
Building Bonds	Relationship Building Understanding Complex Relationship Social Skills Positive Relationships	Increased Leadership Effectiveness and Performance
Adaptability	Being Flexible Emotional Learning	
Developing Others	Inspire Influence Intellectual Stimulation Motivation	

Source: (Pandey and Rathore, 2015)

Table 1.2 outlines key emotional intelligence (EI) competencies integral to transformational leadership, detailing their components and the advantages they confer in enhancing leadership effectiveness and performance. Mills (2009) used a survey to undertake an exploratory analysis of the link between EI and leadership success. The results of the research showed that leadership competencies, which focus on emotional intelligence, for instance, developing others and adaptability—do foster leadership. Employees’ evaluation of such leaders was higher, and these leaders received more managerial support. Building bonds is another competency because transformational leaders can establish a good rapport with their followers; thus, this ability to exercise idealized influence effectively will lead to better acceptance.

The competency of adaptability entitles the follower to be receptive to change and encourages other followers to do the same by changing their thinking just enough to meet the demands of a situation and to be flexible enough to meet the intentions set for the group. These competencies are crucial for the transformational leaders, as EI leaders consider followers’ development by enhancing their learning and performance, as well as closing the gap between each follower’s self-interest and organizational objectives.

CONCLUSION

This paper provides valuable theoretical and practical insights into the relationship between EI and the impact of transformational leadership. This paper was able to establish emotive intelligence, self-regulation, social awareness, and relationship management as components for demonstrating transformational leadership behaviors that enhance organizational performance (Mayer et al., 2002). In detail, there is a positive LMX and increased performance among the employees, and the leaders promote their job satisfaction (Waglay et al., 2020). Similarly, skills like empathy help leaders manage relations and conflict in the workplace as well as engage followers for the achievement of organizational objectives (Mills,

2009).

Moreover, further research into the moderating relationship that EI has within other leadership types, such as transactional and charismatic, could offer the foundation for an enhanced understanding of all the various ways in which it influences leadership. Therefore, the present study finds that emotional intelligence is a fundamental aspect of transformational leadership, promoting positive organizational results through improved interpersonal and intrapersonal communication. If scholars and practitioners continue to expand the study of EI and its impact on leadership and avoid the flaws identified here, they can refine perceptions of the abilities that EI influences across progressive organizational environments.

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