

Role of Emotional Intelligence in Developing Transformational Leadership in Higher Education Sector of Pakistan

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Abstract: This study is based on the investigation of the relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership of academic leaders in higher educational sector of Pakistan. The purpose of this study is to validate the significance of emotional intelligence in shaping transformational leadership behavior among academic leaders that ultimately leads to enhanced performance of educational institutes. A structured questionnaire has been used to collect data from 345 faculty members having doctorate degree in top performing universities of Pakistan. A number of statistical techniques including correlation analysis, linear and multiple regressions were applied for the purpose of data analysis. The findings of the study provide evidence that emotional intelligence is at the core of transformational leadership behavior. The results also confirm that all the elements of emotional intelligence are significantly related to transformational leadership. This study suggests that emotionally intelligent leaders are better able to exhibit transformational leadership. This study has implications for policy makers and leadership of educational institutes to identify how effective leadership can be shaped up to improve research productivity and enhance performance to achieve a reputable place in international research arena.

Key words: Pakistan • Emotional Intelligence • Transformational Leadership • Higher Education Sector

INTRODUCTION

The concept of leadership has gained considerable attention of academicians and practitioners and has been the object of conjecture and research for past many decades. Leadership is at the core of the success of any organization as it is the capacity to influence the subordinates and to keep their energies focused to achieve the pre-determined goals. Researchers worldwide have attempted to classify leadership styles on the basis of characteristics of the leaders to identify the most appropriate leadership style that can obtain best results in any circumstances. Burns was the first to differentiate between ordinary and extra ordinary leadership behaviors named as transactional and transformational leadership respectively [1]. Transactional leadership refers to the traditional concept of leadership simply based on a give and take relationship, in which the subordinates are compensated for their work. In transformational leadership the role of leader is more

dynamic and inspirational, in which, leader inspires their followers, stimulates their intellectual competencies, gives them power to be creative, make them believe that the followers are the part of greater outcome and guides them all the way to the newer levels of achievements. Transformational leadership portrays all the characteristics of an exceptional leader hence, it is considered to be the best among the diverse leadership styles [2]. It provides with a vision, gives concept of leadership by example, motivating the workforce, keeping their spirits and aspirations alive, providing objective consultation and guidance whenever required and leading them to the place that they haven't dreamt of. This distinctiveness of transformational leadership has made it the dominating subject of leadership research in the last decade [3]. The organizations where transformational leadership style prevails are proved to be more innovative, dynamic and victorious [4, 5]. These organizations possess a highly committed and devoted human resource and are being benchmarked by

their peers in the field. Transformational leadership has proved its significance in a variety of organizations including commercial corporations, state owned enterprises, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions and even in smaller organizations.

The theoretical and empirical significance of transformational leadership has intrigued researchers to identify variables that can effectively develop transformational leadership behaviors. Among these variables, emotional intelligence holds substantial importance. Emotional intelligence is a type of social intelligence and has a significant role in determining behaviors as compared to other forms of intelligence [6]. Emotional intelligence refers to the ability of an individual to be well aware of emotions of own self and people around him/her, to recognize the meanings behind emotional cues and to manage these emotions. As, emotional intelligence significantly affect the behavior of an individual and the ability to deal with others, it is therefore suggested that the investigation of the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership behavior in higher education sector of Pakistan can be of substantial importance. The relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership is also of particular interest as both of these are emotionally driven concepts [7]. Literature provides evidence of a strong association between Emotional intelligence (EI) and transformational leadership (TL) and it is also proposed in some studies that EI is a strong predictor of TL. The extensive research in leadership in past few decades has provided evidence of a significant impact of emotional intelligence and its constructs on transformational leadership and indicated its vital importance particularly in the field of management [8, 9]. The relationship between EI and TL has previously been studied in developed countries and particularly in manufacturing, retailing and energy sectors [10-13]. However, the relationship has not yet been examined particularly in education sector and there is lack of such investigation especially in south Asian countries so far. Therefore, current study would be of significant interest for those who are interested in observing dynamics of academia, because this study is aimed to investigate the relationship between EI and TL in higher educational sector of Pakistan.

Literature Review: Transformational leadership has been the most widely discussed topic in the field of organizational leadership for past two decades [14]. The concept of leadership has its roots in Maslow's

theory of motivation [15] and Kohlberg's stages of moral development [16]. Though these theories provided basis for transformational leadership, the concept was formally developed by [1], who described transformational leaders as role models who lead their followers to higher levels of morality. Subsequently four aspects of transformational leadership were formally recognized by social researchers; "idealized influence" implies that leaders possess captivating traits hence they are more likely to have an effect on their subordinates [18]. Leaders appear to be the role models for them defining goals and enlightening their vision [18]. The second aspect is "individualized consideration" which entails that leaders value their subordinates and provide individual attention and guidance to their followers. The third aspect is "inspirational motivation" implying that the leaders are aware of the power of expectation so they motivate their followers to keep them focused on the goals. The fourth aspect is "intellectual stimulation" which implies that the leaders give confidence to their followers to asks questions leading them to become more innovative, creative and coherent [17]. Bass contended that the transformational leadership has more power to influence the surroundings as compared to transactional leadership [14]. Research in later years provided evidence that charismatic personality of transformational leaders has the power to change the organizational culture over time [19]. Transformational leadership (TL) style is better than transactional leadership because the scope of TL is much wider as it brings moral and cultural betterment in the organization along with goal achievement [2]. A vast body of research exists on the effect of transformational leadership on various organizational outcomes in various sectors like educational institutes, commercial enterprises and even in military organization [20, 21, 22]. Researchers provided evidence of a strong impact of TL on employee outcomes like innovation, motivation and performance and organizational outcomes [23, 24].

Lord and Brown proposed a model based on the connection between leaders' traits and follower's inner development [25]. The theory proposed that the leaders' followers tend to change themselves as depicted by the leaders or in other words leaders have an effect on inner psychometric process of the followers. This cognitive process is called "self-concept" which forms mindset of a person and it ultimately is depicted in his actions and attitude [26]. The point here is that when the leaders are well aware of the thoughts of the subordinates it becomes much easier for leaders to act accordingly and influence the subordinates to a greater extent. To have a better

understanding of the employee mental processes, it is essential for a leader to be aware of the emotions of his own and his subordinates as a person's attitude towards other people is particularly influenced by his emotions [27, 28]. Emotional intelligence appears to be an antecedent for effective transformational leadership. Emotional intelligence refers to the ability of an individual to be aware of his own emotions and the people around him [29]. Primarily, emotional intelligence was restrained to the field of psychology; however, researchers in later years provided evidence of effectiveness of EI in the field of management sciences [8, 30, 31]. The theories on emotional intelligence can be categorized into two groups i.e. first group is Goleman Richard and second is Salovey Mayer [32]. According to Goleman, emotional intelligence refers to the ability of acquiring five practical skills namely self-realization, inspiration, self-organization, empathy and proficiency in maintaining social link. Salovey Mayer proposed an ability based model of Emotional Intelligence comprising of three elements [29]. The first element is recognition of emotions in own self and others and expression of these emotions which may be verbal or non-verbal. Second element is the regulation of emotions, while the third element refers to the use of these emotions to solve forthcoming issues. After the development of the concept of EI, many research studies provided evidence of the significant effect of emotional intelligence on performance of individuals. Empirical researchers suggested that EI has a major contribution in the success of a leader [33]. Researchers concluded that differentiating factor between top performers and average performers is emotional intelligence. The findings of this research suggested that EI is a major contributor in the success of a person, specifically those working on any leadership position. A study on 358 managers from different countries also provided same kind of results. The study concluded that top managers were ranked high on EI scale whereas the ranking decreased as the scale of the managers decreased [34]. The results are not only valid for managers or leaders but workers possessing higher amount of EI also perform better than their peers working on same position.

As the concept of emotional intelligence developed, many empirical studies found evidence of a positive relationship between EI and transformational leadership [35, 36]. Emotional Intelligence has five elements that are recognized in the existing literature to affect TL. First is "self regulation" which refers to competence of an individual to regulate his emotions in unsteady circumstances [6, 8]. A leader having a capability of

self regulation is in a better position to deal with his subordinates and manage in uncertain conditions. The second aspect is "motivation" which refers to the ability of leaders to be optimistic irrespective of all the hindrances. Emotionally intelligent leaders are self motivated and inspire their followers to accomplish their objectives. Third aspect is empathy which indicates the capability of a person to be aware of others' emotions expressed verbally or non-verbally [6, 33]. Thus, empathy is considered to strongly affect transformational leadership. Fourth element is "social skills" which represents the capability of an individual to resolve any disputes or controversial issues happening in the work place to avoid prevalence of negative emotions [33]. Social skills develop the ability of problem solving in a leader and strongly affect transformational leadership behavior. The fifth aspect is "self awareness" which refers to the capability of an individual to be well aware of his emotions, the reasons behind these emotions and their impact on others. Self awareness enables a leader to inspire, guide and give individual consideration to his followers. Literature provides evidence that all these elements of Emotional Intelligence are coherent with that of TL [37]. Sayeed and Shanker conducted a study in India to examine the relationship between aspects of EI and transformational leadership styles [38]. The study concluded that elements of emotional intelligence have a strong positive relationship with TL dimensions suggesting that EI has a major role in organizing transformation. Mandell Pherwani provided evidence of a strong positive relationship between EI and TL suggesting that persons having higher EI scores are more able to become transformational leaders [10] thus validating the findings of [6, 39]. In the light of the previous literature, following relationships are hypothesized:

H1: Emotional intelligence has significant impact on Transformational leadership among academic leaders in higher educational sector of Pakistan.

H2: All the elements of emotional intelligence (self awareness, self regulation, motivation, social skills and empathy) have significant impact on Transformational leadership of educational leaders.

Regression Models: To test the main proposition of the study i.e. the effect of emotional intelligence (EI) on transformational leadership (TL), following model is estimated.

$$TL = \beta_0 + \beta_1 EI \tag{I}$$

To examine the effects of all the dimensions of emotional intelligence on Transformational leadership (TL), the model estimated is:

$$TL = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SA + \beta_2 SR + \beta_3 M + \beta_4 E + \beta_5 SS \tag{II}$$

Whereas

SA = Self awareness,

SR = Self regulation,

M = Motivation,

E = Empathy

SS = Social skills

Research Design: The type of investigation carried out in the present research was correlational. The study setting was non-contrived environment with minimum interference of the researcher. In this research the unit of analysis is individual. The target population was the doctoral degree holder faculty members of top twenty universities of the Country on the basis of their performance ranked by Higher Education Commission of Pakistan in 2010. These 20 universities include 19 public sector universities and only 1 private sector university. The sample included 10 universities from Punjab province, 4 universities from Sindh, 2 universities from KPK and 4 universities from Islamabad. Study utilized simple random sampling technique to select 400 respondents from target universities. A list of all possible respondents was assembled through the websites of the target universities and 20 respondents from each university were selected randomly.

MLQ was used to measure transformational leadership; however it was modified according to current scenario. The scale was incorporated by Avolio Bass [40] and has been used in number of researches and found to be highly reliable [41, 42]. For measurement of emotional intelligence, number of scales are being constructed by Goleman, Salovey Mayer, however they are either too extensive or overlook some

dimensions. The scale incorporated by Rahim, Psenicka, Polychroniou, Zhao has shown high reliability and validity [43]. The scale considers all five elements of emotional intelligence and reliability of the scale for measurement of each element of EI is above acceptance level in this study. The Cronbach alpha is 0.72 for self awareness and self regulation, 0.77 for motivation, 0.79 for empathy and 0.84 for social skills. Hence, the current study is using this scale for measurement of EI. A structured questionnaire comprising of 42 items relating to TL, EI and its different dimensions was prepared and distributed to the target respondents. Majority of the questionnaires were delivered and collected personally while some of the questionnaires were sent through mail. The respondents were given a brief introduction of the concept and significance of the research. A total of 360 questionnaires were received so the response rate was 90%. Among these the analyzable questionnaires were 345 depicting a useable response rate of 86.25%.

For detailed and accurate data analysis software like SPSS 16 and AMOS 16 were used. The normality of the data was checked by applying one sample K-S test (Kolmogorov-Smirnov). The observations showing ± 3 standard deviation from the mean were considered as outlier. After that CFA (confirmatory factor analysis) was done to check the factor loading. Correlation analysis was performed to examine the strength among the variables of the study. Classic and multiple regressions were used to examine the impact of the independent variable i.e. emotional intelligence and its dimensions on the dependent variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Testing the Validity and Reliability: Confirmatory factor analysis is a standard tool being used in management sciences to find out the validity of the scale employed [44]. The results of the CFA model are shown in the table below. The statistics depict that the model used is appropriate for study.

	CMIN	DF	CMIN/DF	GFI	NFI	CFIR	MSEA
CFA Model	2848.974	774	3.681	0.698	0.707	0.765	0.088

Statisticians suggest that CMIN/DF (chi-square/degree of freedom) ratio should be less than 5 for a good model fit [48]. The CMIN/DF ratio is 3.68 in this study so the model can be regarded fit for research. The value of Goodness of fit index (GFI) is 0.70, which demonstrates

that the appropriateness of model in context to another. The value of NFI (Normative fit index) is 0.707, signifying model fitness. CFI value is 0.76 confirming the collective fitness of the whole model [47]. The value of Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) should not be

greater than 1 in order to consider the observations for the data analysis. In this model, the value of RMSEA is 0.088. Thus, it can be suggested that all the indicators of CFA confirm that the model used is fit for the study. The value of factor loading analysis of every item used in the current study is above the cutoff point of 0.40. The analysis confirm that the items used in each scale show a satisfactory value of factor leading and thus retained in their relevant scale for further analysis. Cronbach Alpha is applied to test the reliability of the scale using SPSS 16. The result indicated that the Alpha values of all the scales used in the study are well above the general acceptable level of 0.50 [45]. Cronbach Alpha

for the complete scale is 0.95 confirming the reliability of the scale used in the present study.

Correlation Analysis: Pearson’s correlation analysis was used to check the strength of all the sub-variables of emotional intelligence used in the study with transformational leadership. The table illustrates means, Standard Deviation and correlations of all the sub-variables of EI and TL. The results confirm a strong and positive correlation among all variables of the study. The results also indicate that the respondents i.e. faculty members in universities have higher level of motivation and minimum level of social skills.

Table

	Transformational Leadership	Self Awareness	Self Regulation	Motivation	Empathy	Social Skill
Transformational Leadership	1.000					
Self Awareness	.703*	1.000				
Self Regulation	.518*	.511*	1.000			
Motivation	.602*	.508*	.401*	1.000		
Empathy	.640*	.570*	.573*	.543*	1.000	
Social Skill	.629*	.598*	.427*	.458*	.513*	1.000

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Regression Results: Linear regression and multiple regressions were used to find out the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Transformational leadership. The results of the first model estimated to test the effect of emotional intelligence on transformational leadership are shown in Table 1:

The results of the regression analysis confirm that the model is a good fit. The model indicates that the value of F-statistics is 539.38 which is highly significant (p-value=0.000). Adjusted R square of the model is 61% which shows that considerable variance in transformational leadership can be explained by emotional intelligence. Regression coefficient is also depicting highly favorable results. The co-efficient of Emotional intelligence is positive and shows a value of 0.73 which is highly significant (p-value < .01). The results suggest that one unit change in the value of EI results in a variance of 0.73 in the value of TL. Hence, the findings of the study suggest that there exists a positive and highly significant relationship between EI and TL lending strong support for first hypothesis. The results of this study are

in line with previous researches in this field finding a significant relationship between EI and TL [6, 11, 38, 46]. The results of the study provide evidence that emotional intelligence can arouse leadership qualities in an individual specifically the academics in universities of Pakistan possessing emotional intelligence are better able to exhibit transformational leadership quality.

The results of the multiple regressions used to estimate the effect of five dimensions of EI on transformational leadership are shown in the Table 2:

The results of the Regression model show that the F-test Coefficient is 115.29 which is highly significant (p-value<0.01) confirming the fitness of model. The value of Durban Watson is 1.58 and the value of tolerance index for all the variables is from 0.55 to 0.65, suggesting that the problem of multicollinearity does not exist. The Adjusted R² is 62 % suggesting that the constructs of EI explain a significant variance in transformational leadership. The results of the regression co-efficients also reveal that all the dimensions of emotional intelligence are positively and significantly

Table 1: Estimates of the Model

Independent Variable	Dependent variable	p-value	R ²	f-value	S.E	B	Result
Emotional Intelligence	Transformational leadership	0.000	0.61	539.383	0.31	0.73	Accepted

Table 2: Multiple Linear Regression Models showing the effect of Dimensions of EI on TL]

Model	Hypothesis	Independent Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient		Sig.	Decision
			B	Std. Error		
--		(Constant)	1.739	0.177	0.000	--
	H _{2a}	Self Awareness	0.199	0.031	0.000	Accepted
	H _{2b}	Self Regulation	0.047	0.029	0.100	Accepted
	H _{2c}	Motivation	0.202	0.031	0.000	Accepted
	H _{2d}	Empathy	0.165	0.036	0.000	Accepted
	H _{2e}	Social Skill	0.119	0.030	0.000	Accepted

F-statistics 115.29 (P-value 0.000)

Durbin-Watson 1.58

Adjusted R²= .62

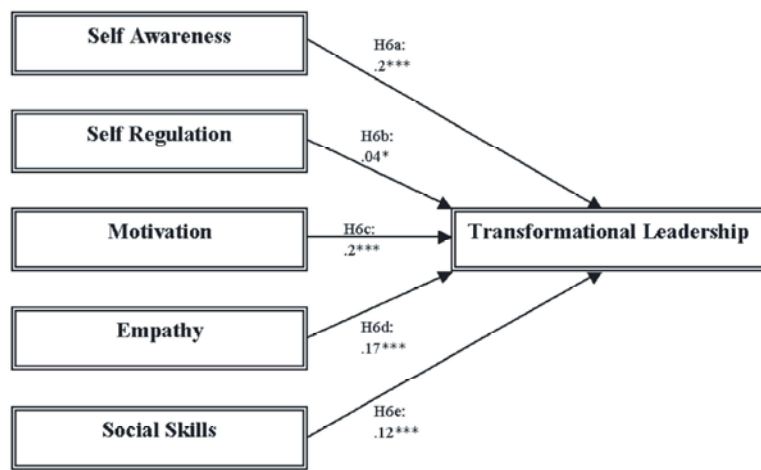


Fig. 1: Effects of dimensions of EI on Transformational leadership

related to transformational leadership. Among independent variables, the value of regression co-efficient for Self regulation is 0.04 which is significant at 10% significance level showing a weak relationship with transformational leadership. The results indicate that all other dimensions of Emotional intelligence have a positive and significant relationship with transformational leadership. However, self awareness and motivation appear to be the strongest predictors of TL and each of them can explain 20 % of variation in transformational leadership. The findings of the study provide strong evidence in support of second hypothesis of the study.

CONCLUSION

This study is based on investigation of the relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership in higher educational sector of Pakistan. Higher educational institutes are the backbone of any society because all the qualified, skilled and competent human resource is provided by this sector.

Unfortunately no Pakistani university is included in the list of top 400 universities of the world. The study is an effort to provide an insight that how the quality of Pakistani universities can be improved. The study is the first of its kind to reveal the impact of EI and its dimensions on transformational leadership in higher educational sector of Pakistan. The findings of the research provided evidence of a strong relationship between EI and TL. The study also contributed the existing literature by examining the impact of all dimensions of emotional intelligence i.e. self awareness, self regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills on transformational leadership. The findings of this study suggest that emotional intelligence specifically self awareness and motivation play a pivotal role in developing transformational leadership in higher education sector of Pakistan. The leaders in educational institutes who are well aware of their feelings and the impact of their emotions on other people can better display transformational leadership. The study recommends that the management in educational

institutes must focus on emotional intelligence for improving transformational leadership qualities among academic leaders. The institutions should conduct workshops and training sessions to promote emotional intelligence of the academic leaders. Emotional intelligence can help educational leaders to identify needs of teaching staff and provide solution for those needs which may result in higher productivity of the knowledge workers. The study also recommends that educational leaders can achieve better results by developing a better understanding of their emotions and motivating their subordinates. University professors should consider their followers as valuable individuals instead of considering them just a part of the group. A leadership style incorporating transformational aspects and embracing emotional intelligence can bring organizational change and achieve desired outcomes. Despite of its significance, the study has certain limitations. Firstly, the study selected top 20 universities to investigate the relationship between EI and TL, including greater number of institutes in the research process could reveal more generalizable results. Secondly, the study focused on higher educational sector of Pakistan. The scope of the research could be widened by including more sectors in the analysis. The study has opened new arenas for future research in this field in Pakistan. Researchers in future may benefit by investigating this relationship in other sectors of Pakistan. Inclusion of other variables like employee performance, turnover and conflict management in the model of EI and TL can be of significant importance. A more comprehensive model of transformational leadership can be built by incorporating its antecedents and its outcomes.

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