

Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership: Finding Gender Differences

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Abstract: This study attempts to examine the impact of emotional intelligence on transformational leadership style and the gender disparity in the hotel industry of Pakistan. A sample of 238 managers was purposively selected. Data were analyzed using SPSS 16.0. The techniques like descriptive statistics, correlations, regression and independent sample t-test were used. The results revealed significantly positive impact of emotional intelligence along with its facets on transformational leadership, except facet of appraisal and expression of emotions. Although no significant differences were found between male and female managers on emotional intelligence, yet female managers were found to have more transformational leadership style.

Key words: Emotional Intelligence • Transformational Leadership Style • Hotel Industry • Gender • Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

The global scenario compels organizations to embrace the change to maintain and sustain their competitive edge in the complex business environment. This situation calls for accommodative, successful and customer focused leaders who persistently develop systems, processes and share a profit maximizing vision [1]. Emotional intelligence is believed to be an essential factor required for successful leadership as well as a new resource for leadership development [2]. Emotional intelligence is found to be important for individuals holding leading positions as it differentiates between outstanding leaders and average leaders [3].

Practitioners and academicians have started to explore, accept, and indeed promote emotional intelligence for efficient working of organizations. Beniss believes that it is not IQ but emotional intelligence that is essential to be an effective leader [4]. Emotional intelligence is defined as a blend of intrinsic emotional understanding and the ability to manage emotions which jointly show the way to long term happiness and continued existence [5].

Contemporary business challenges necessitate a leadership style which is essentially different from the

earlier prescriptions. It is evident from the earlier studies that a clear gap exists in terms of a comprehensive framework unleashing newer ways of leadership styles in today's unpredictable and unstable environments. This study examines the transformational leaders as change agents in the organizations, who display positive vision and ideas and influence their followers to accept and welcome them [6].

A great deal of literature exhibits usefulness of transformational leadership in the organization [7], but one rarely finds studies exploring the antecedents of the same [8,9]. There are researches investigating the difference of gender in transformational leadership and emotional intelligence. Studies also exhibit presence of gender differentiation in leadership style and emotional intelligence scores. The literature related to leadership styles suggests that females have more relationship oriented, independent, and transformational style of leadership than that of males [10, 11]. However, not much empirical research is found regarding gender disparity in emotional intelligence. Regarding gender and emotional intelligence, there are mixed results. For instance, few studies claim significant presence of gender effect while exhibiting emotional intelligence [12, 13, 14] whereas,

Goleman [15] did not find any gender disparity in emotional intelligence.

The studies on gender differences in leadership style and emotional intelligence have been inconclusive as well as limited [16, 17]. The contemporary academic philosophy about leadership also focuses on its emotional side ignoring the role of gender differences. The current study examines relationships among emotional intelligence, its facets and transformational leadership. It also investigates the extent to which male and female vary in exhibiting their emotional intelligence as well as transformational leadership behavior.

Objectives of the Study: The main purpose of this study was to examine the impact of emotional intelligence and its facets on transformational leadership style. The study further aimed at finding the gender disparity in emotional intelligence and transformational leadership style.

However, the specific objectives are as follows:

1. To examine the impact of emotional intelligence on transformational leadership style.
2. To explore the impact of facets of emotional intelligence on transformational leadership style.
3. To analyze gender differences among emotional intelligence scores and transformational leadership style of managers.

Organization of the Study: The study comprises five sections. The first section introduces the research topic and states the objectives; the second reviews the existing literature; Part three depicts the research methodology followed by the fourth part as findings. Lastly, discussion, conclusion, limitations, practical implications and future research recommendations are discussed in the fifth section.

Literature Review

Transformational Leadership: Recent studies in the field of leadership pay considerable attention to transformational leadership. Researchers have used transformational leadership and charismatic leadership interchangeably but they are different where charisma is one of the features of transformational leadership [18]. Transformational leadership is described as leader's capability to persuade others in order to achieve organizational goals [19].

Transformational leaders modify behavior of their followers to attain the organizational interests [20] and

motivate them to change and develop. Successful transformational leaders manage to get performance from their followers that exceed expectations [21]. Sufficient evidence is available about the impact of transformational leadership on different factors related to the organization like strategic planning [22], efficacy beliefs [23], trust [24], sales performance [25] and levels of cohesiveness [26]. Transformational leadership is found to have a strong association with positive organizational outcomes. Researchers tried to find the factors predicting transformational leadership behaviors [27]. The literature suggests that emotional intelligence potentially affects transformational leadership [28, 29].

Emotional Intelligence: Emotional intelligence is the competence to generate positive results that concern self and others. It is the capability to examine feelings and sentiments of others and self for differentiating among them and giving them a direction [30]. Therefore, one can say that emotional intelligence contains a wide range of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. Interpersonal skill is the capacity to recognize the emotions of others, understand, sustain and expand relationships with others. Conversely, intrapersonal skills consist of the skill to recognize self motivation [31].

Emotional intelligence has two models: the ability model uses emotions for solving problems [32] and the trait model uses traits of personality for explaining emotional intelligence [33]. Past literature recognizes the ability model for understanding emotions of self and others [34]. In an organizational perspective, emotional intelligence is considered to be an important predictor of skillful leaders [35, 36]. Emotionally intelligent people can manipulate behaviors of others to make them productive [37, 38]. They can further affect management decision making [39] and job satisfaction [40].

Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership:

Although a theoretical framework exists, limited empirical research is available investigating association between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership style. Emotional Intelligence has been considered as a crucial trait of successful leaders [41]. Wong and Law [42] analyze that emotionally intelligent leaders are capable to control their own emotion while interacting with others.

The complexity in the modern day organizations requires the leaders to be analytic in irrational conditions [43]. This sort of belief emphasize on the emotional side of leadership [44, 45]. Goleman *et al.* [35] discovered that

successful leaders display more emotional intelligence, they express and perceive emotions by incorporating them into thought, understand and control emotions of others and themselves [46, 47]. Leaders should be insightful towards situations as well as eagerly adjust their own activities in an appropriate way [48].

The literature shows that leaders who are emotionally intelligent reflect high commitment and happiness with their organization [49] and have superior performance within organization [2], get benefit of using positive emotions to envisage chief perfections in workplace operations [50].

Behavioral scientists [4, 35] propose that where emotional intelligence is significant factor leading to employee success within organization. It is even more essential as employees are promoted to leadership positions. Thus, it is a significant factor for successful organizational leadership in 21st century.

The literature suggests that emotionally intelligent leaders take help of positive emotions by using them appropriately to predict key improvements in organizational performance by instilling a keenness, faith, and support in other employees. They also improve their decision making styles through emotions [50].

Palmer *et al.* [51] and Barling, Slater and Kelloway [29] have given realistic rationalization of the association among emotional intelligence and efficient leadership. Positive connection among emotional intelligence and transformational leadership was found by few researches [52, 53]. However, Weinberger's [54] revealed insignificant relationship between these two variables.

The emphasis on the capability of a leader to deal with difficult personal and social problems is foundation of emotional intelligence making emotions important in organizations [55]. This drove attention of the researchers and the attempts were made to relate emotional intelligence with leadership [35, 40, 56] revealing it as one of the essential elements for efficient leadership [57].

Examination of emotional intelligence and transformational leadership is relatively novel in current context. Thus, the current study would examine the important aspects of these essential variables.

Emotional Intelligence and Gender: Not much literature is found on gender disparity in emotional intelligence. Women were found to manage emotions better than men [17, 13].

There are a lot of studies that found women to be more emotional intelligent as compared to men [14, 58, 59, 60, 61]. Another study by Chu [12] found males were more

emotional intelligent than females. However, Goleman [15] found no gender disparity in emotional intelligence.

Transformational Leadership and Gender: Debate regarding whether men or women are successful leaders depends upon specific circumstances and on individuals. Leadership studies have commonly showed that female and male leaders do not vary when they are compared in terms of levels of people-oriented or task-oriented leadership. One barrier while investigating gender and leadership is the conventional association of leadership with men [62]. Another barrier was that females face inconsistent societal and organizational expectations [63].

Martell and DeSmet [64] studied that leadership capabilities of females are assessed differently than males with relatively lower leader behaviors for females. A number of studies claim gender disparities as well as similarities in manager's perception of leadership.

Oshagbemi and Gill [65] found leadership style of male and female managers to be similar. Cooper [66] examined that females manage their subordinates by rewards while male managers punish their employees to get work done at workplaces. Gardiner and Tiggermann [67] found that within an industry gender ratio and gender both influence leadership style along with stress and mental health.

Phillips [68] suggested that men take their businesses as their family in which they take care of their employees just like their family members. Grant [69] claimed few behavioral differences among the two genders. Peters and Kabacoff [70] suggested differences among men and women as managers at high level posts as compare to individuals in lower level management.

Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt [71] concluded that female managers make more use of contingent reward as compare to their male counterparts and this leads to organizational effectiveness. In some cases leadership behavior of both genders were found to be equally effective [72].

A meta analysis of 162 studies showed that within formal organizational setting women did not differ from men in leadership style [73]. Eagly and Karau [74] in another meta analysis analyzed 58 studies related to leaders emergence in groups, observed that male are likely to come forward as leaders when compared with women.

Hypotheses: Based on the literature reviewed and objectives of the current study following hypotheses are formulated.

H₁: Emotional intelligence has a positive and significant impact on transformational leadership style.

H_{1a}: Appraisal and expression of emotions has a positive and significant impact on Transformational leadership style.

H_{1b}: Regulation of emotions has a positive and significant impact on transformational leadership style.

H_{1c}: Utilization of emotions has a positive and significant impact on transformational leadership style.

H₂: There will be significant difference in emotional intelligence scores of male and female managers.

H₃: There will be significant difference in transformational leadership styles of male and female managers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sample: A sample of 238 managers from the hotel industry in Pakistan was purposively selected for the study. Information about demographic was also obtained. A total of 120 of managers were male and 118 were female. Respondents were guaranteed that the use of information would be for the research purpose only. Sample size was decided in the research design stage. Sekaran [87] suggested that a sample size greater than 50 and less than 500 is sufficient for the statistical analysis. Another recommended formula for the selection of sample size is $104 + n$ [86], where n refers to number of independent variables. On the basis of these recommendations a sample size of 300 was selected, out of which 238 were found to be completed in all aspects and were considered sufficient for the statistical analyses.

Instruments

Emotional Intelligence: The concept of emotional intelligence was measured by using an instrument developed by Schutte *et al.* [75]. It consisted of 33 items. It was anchored on a five point likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the score for the present study sample was 0.93.

Transformational Leadership Style (MLQ-5X): The transformational leadership, sub scale of leadership questionnaire MLQ-5 was used to measure transformational leadership style. It was developed by

Bass and Avolio [76] and consisted of 20 items that was rated on five point likert scale ranging from (1) Never to (5) Always. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the score for the present study sample was .92.

Gender: The socio-demographic variable of gender was measured as the biological sex of a person.

RESULTS

The study was aimed at finding the impact of Emotional Intelligence and its facets on Transformational Leadership. The study had another objective to find gender difference among emotional intelligence scores and transformational leadership style. The results are presented below.

Table 1 illustrates the correlation matrix of study variables. From the results it is observed that the overall emotional intelligence ($r = 0.66, p < .01$) and the facets of emotional intelligence i.e. appraisal and expression of emotions ($r = 0.58, p < .01$), regulation of emotions ($r = 0.67, p < .01$) and utilization of emotions ($r = 0.62, p < .01$) correlated significantly and positively with transformational leadership style. Coefficient alpha reliabilities for the scales used in the present study are also reported in table 1. The reliabilities of all the scales exceeded 0.70 as recommended by Nunnally (1978). Cronbach's alpha of 0.92 for emotional intelligence and 0.95 for transformational leadership, were considerably high to be used for the research.

The impacts of emotional intelligence and its facets on transformational leadership style were examined in Table 2. The value of R² shows 44% variation in transformational leadership style due to emotional intelligence and its facets. Beta values of 0.36, 0.29 and 0.32 ($p < 0.05$) showed that emotional intelligence, regulation of emotions and utilization of emotions were significantly related with transformational leadership style, whereas, beta value of 0.17 ($p > 0.05$) showed that appraisal and expression of emotions had no impact on transformational leadership style.

The mean totals of transformational leadership and emotional intelligence of men and women managers within hotel industry were compared using independent samples t-tests. The transformational leadership style scores of male and female managers were found to be significantly different. The mean total of transformational leadership style score of females was 3.68 and that of males was 3.48. However, the emotional intelligence and its facets scores of men and women managers did not differ significantly.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics, Reliability and Correlation Matrix of all Variables (N=238)

	Scales	Mean	S.D	I	II	III	IV	V
I	Transformational leadership	3.6	0.71	(0.92)				
II	Emotional intelligence	3.5	0.71	0.66*	(0.95)			
III	Appraisal and expression of emotions	3.6	0.78	0.58*	0.94*	(0.91)		
IV	Regulation of emotions	3.6	0.80	0.67*	0.93*	0.82*	(0.89)	
V	Utilization of emotions	3.3	0.76	0.62*	0.89*	0.73*	0.76*	(0.85)

p<.01, (Parenthesis Shows Alpha Reliability Values of Variables)

Table 2: Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting transformational leadership (N = 238)

Variables	Transformational leadership			
	β	R^2	ΔR^2	F
MODEL 1		0.44*	0.43*	55.13*
Emotional intelligence	0.36*			
Appraisal and expression of emotions	0.17			
Regulation of emotions	0.29*			
Utilization of emotions	0.32*			

**p*< 0.001

Table 3: Independent Sample t-test evaluating Mean transformational leadership and emotional intelligence Scores for Male and Female Managers (N = 238)

		Mean	N	Mean Difference	Standard Error Difference	t
Transformational leadership	Male	3.48	160	0.199	0.091	2.18*
	Female	3.68	78			
Emotional intelligence	Male	3.47	160	0.097	0.102	0.94
	Female	3.57	78			
Appraisal and expression of Emotions	Male	3.56	160	0.053	0.109	0.48
	Female	3.61	78			
Regulation of Emotions	Male	3.55	160	0.044	0.112	0.39
	Female	3.59	78			
Utilization of Emotions	Male	3.24	160	0.178	0.107	1.67
	Female	3.42	78			

p<0.05

DISCUSSION

Current study examines whether more emotionally intelligent people are supposed to exhibit transformational leadership style. Understanding the importance of emotional intelligence is essential for organizations in determining transformational leadership styles, specifically in current dynamic environment where managers are under pressure to convert themselves as leaders and more precisely transformational leaders.

First hypothesis predicted a positive and significant impact of emotional intelligence on transformational leadership style. This hypothesis was substantiated as emotional intelligence had a significant and positive impact on transformational leadership style. This finding of current study is in line with previous research studies [77, 13, 53]. However, this finding was not supported in the study of Brown, Bryant and Reilly [78].

Past empirical literature exhibits associations between of emotional intelligence and transformational leadership style. Transformational leaders recognize their emotions and feelings and express them to others; while solving problems they employ emotional knowledge; they understand emotions of their followers and manage and control positive and negative emotions effectively [52]. Emotional intelligence is an intangible asset that is the ability to manage one's own and others' emotions. Transformational Leaders display themselves as a role model by achieving confidence, respect and trust of their followers [79, 80]. Studies [81] have suggested studying emotions and leadership styles. Leaders can support their followers in times of crisis and challenges by playing with their psychological and emotional part [82].

The sub hypotheses of first hypothesis anticipated a positive and significant impact of facets of Emotional Intelligence i.e. appraisal and expression of emotions,

regulation of emotions and utilization of emotions on transformational leadership styles. Significant and positive effects were found in the relationship between “regulation of emotions and transformational leadership” and in the relationship between “utilization of emotions and transformational leadership”. Thus, second and third (i.e. H1b, H1c) sub hypotheses were substantiated. However, the first sub hypothesis (H1a) was rejected as there was no significant relationship between “appraisal and expression of emotions and transformational leadership”.

Second hypothesis anticipated that there will be significant difference in emotional intelligence scores of male and female managers. This hypothesis was not substantiated as the researchers found no significant difference in the emotional intelligence scores of male and female managers. It shows that females and males are same in terms of emotional intelligence. This finding is in line with Goleman's [15], who found no difference in men and women managers with respect to emotional intelligence score. Others found contradictory results [13, 17, 83].

The current study was conducted on the employees of hotel industry where their primary responsibility is to make guests feel comfortable and make them feel at home. All the employees whether male or female have to behave politely and in caring manner with guests to retain them. They make an effort to encourage and attract their respective guests to come and stay in their hotel every time they visit that same place. Here, the employees have no choice, other than to stay emotionally intelligent while dealing and tackling all the situations. They try to keep complete control over their emotions at work.

Third hypothesis anticipated that there will be significant difference in transformational leadership style of male and female managers. This hypothesis was also validated as significant difference in the transformational leadership scores of men and women was found. The results recommend females to be better transformational leaders as compared to males. These results are supported by other researchers too. Dugan *et al.* [10] found females exhibiting higher level of competence leadership than males [10]. Females also display democratic and relational leadership styles more often than males [84].

In hotel industry employees are advised to establish an environment of positive relationship with guests to make them feel comfortable, relax, happy, satisfied, safe and secure. Therefore, in these ground females are superior; showing greater transformational leadership style than their male counterparts.

Limitations: The most obvious limitation of current research is that it is limited by the cost and time. Another limitation is the cross sectional design of the study. Convenient sampling is another limitation of this study. This study used one-dimensional measure of transformational leadership. Present study should be viewed as a first step for future research that would be extended to employ different facets of transformational leadership. In future, demographic variables other than gender, may also be employed to examine the differences among different groups.

Future Research: The above mentioned issues serve as suggestions for future research. The findings of this study have practical implementations of emotional intelligence on transformational leadership perceptions. There are several other characteristics of Human Resource Management in different industries of Pakistan where emotional intelligence application might be equally beneficial. In future it is recommended that the emotional intelligence may be examined in other populations with respect to gender differences. In future, the best way to analyze these relationships would obviously be to conduct a longitudinal research design instead of cross sectional. This study may be replicated on other populations as this study was conducted on employees of hotel industry in Pakistan.

The role of other leadership styles for example transactional and laissez-faire may also be employed for investigation in future. Other demographical variables such as qualification, experience, age, rank in relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership may also be tested in future. Since the present study used convenient sampling, limiting the generalizability of the findings, it is suggested that some other type of sampling technique may be used in future studies.

Practical Implications: This study provides an empirical analysis of the relationship among emotional intelligence, gender and transformational leadership. The findings of this study stress the importance of transformational leadership within organizations. This study suggests that training program emphasizing this particular leadership style i.e. transformational leadership style is advisable. This study has direct implication for preparing the future leaders. The leaders should be trained about understanding and managing their emotions and that of others. This effort is expected to result in employees'

satisfaction at workplaces. Emotional intelligence has a direct effect on job satisfaction of employees [40]; as people who manage their emotions will be able to perform effectively and consequently derive job satisfaction [85].

Trainings are required to be conducted in order to get employees recognize with emotional intelligence and its use. It will be beneficial not only for employees but for the organizations as well. Actually it would create a win-win situation for both entities. Therefore, recognizing emotional intelligence is the first step that further requires encouragement to promote and improve this construct, by doing so, in long run; an individual's success would become synonymous with his/her organization's success.

Performance of both the employees and organizations may be enhanced if organizations take into account emotional intelligence tests at the time of employee selection to recruit right person at right job. At the time of recruitment and selection, score of emotional intelligence can be used as a powerful tool in hiring future transformational leaders.

CONCLUSION

The current research significantly contributes to the present literature in the field of emotional intelligence and transformational leadership and gender differences. It has been established that emotional intelligence and transformational leadership are significantly related. Moreover, the facets of emotional intelligence are essential correlates of transformational leadership. Results reveal a significant disparity in transformational leadership styles of both male and female managers in Pakistani hotel industry while there was no significant difference among the emotional intelligence scores of male and female managers.

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