

Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership Effectiveness: An Empirical Study of Faculty Members in Private HEIs

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ABSTRACT

The present study examines the impact of emotional intelligence on transformational leadership effectiveness as perceived by faculty members working under academic leaders in Private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the National Capital Region (NCR), India. A descriptive research design was adopted, and primary data were collected from 380 faculty members selected through stratified random sampling using a structured Likert-scale questionnaire. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to examine the proposed relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership effectiveness. The findings revealed a statistically significant positive impact of emotional intelligence on transformational leadership effectiveness ($\chi^2 = 43.062$, $df = 9$, $p < 0.001$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The results indicate that emotionally intelligent leaders are perceived to be more effective in motivating employees, fostering commitment, aligning individual and organizational goals, and creating a positive work environment. The study concludes that emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of transformational leadership effectiveness and highlights its importance in enhancing leadership effectiveness in private higher education institutions.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Transformational Leadership Effectiveness, Faculty Perception, Private Higher Education Institutions.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary research, emotional intelligence is widely acknowledged as a multidimensional construct that significantly influences leadership effectiveness, employee engagement, interpersonal relationships, conflict resolution, organizational performance and decision-making. As a result, EI has become an important area of investigation across disciplines such as management, organizational psychology, education and healthcare, particularly in studies exploring transformational leadership and organizational effectiveness.

Leadership plays a pivotal role in the successful management of organizational change, as implementing change often requires the establishment of new systems and the institutionalization of revised practices. The leadership style and behavior of managers significantly influence employees' awareness, attitudes, and readiness to embrace change. Employees' responses to organizational transformation whether they choose to support or resist change initiatives are largely shaped by the leader's approach, communication, and ability to model adaptive and sustainable behaviors. Consequently, effective leadership is essential for fostering acceptance of change and ensuring the successful implementation of organizational transformation (Farazja & Khademi, 2010).

In the present dynamic business environment, organizations must enhance their understanding of external factors and develop the capability to implement significant organizational changes to ensure continued survival and growth. Within this context, the role of leaders who can envision future directions, identify emerging environmental demands and facilitate effective transformation has become increasingly important. Such leaders are recognized as transformational leaders, as they inspire employees, promote a sense of fairness and shared understanding and contribute to improving the quality of work life within the organization. Quality of work life refers to organizational practices and cultural improvements that enhance employee satisfaction, preserve human dignity and support individual growth and development in the workplace.

Transformational leadership refers to a leadership process in which leaders inspire and motivate their followers to prioritize collective objectives over individual interests by employing key behavioral dimensions such as charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration (Bass, 1985). Through these approaches, transformational leaders encourage higher levels of commitment, personal growth and performance among their followers.

Transformational leadership is a multifaceted and evolving process through which leaders shape and influence the values, beliefs, attitudes and aspirations of their followers. Such leaders guide organizations toward future-oriented goals by identifying changing environmental demands and implementing appropriate strategies to facilitate organizational transformation. They encourage employees to recognize new possibilities, develop a commitment to change, strengthen organizational culture and utilize available resources more effectively to achieve sustainable outcomes.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Masi & Cooke (2000) found that leaders' transformational behaviors foster empowering cultural norms, elevate subordinate motivation, strengthen commitment to quality, and enhance overall productivity. Empowering cultural norms of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) encourage constructive and achievement-focused actions among members.

Barbuto & Burbach (2006) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and transformational leadership (TL) among 80 elected community leaders and 388 of their direct-report staff in the United States. The study found that leaders' EI was significantly associated with both self-rated and rater-rated perceptions of transformational leadership. Additionally, the findings supported the predictive value of EI in leadership research, highlighting its importance as an antecedent factor in leadership effectiveness.

Downey et al. (2006) investigated the relationship between leadership, emotional intelligence (EI), and intuition in a sample of 176 female managers. The study found that managers who exhibited transformational leadership behaviors demonstrated higher levels of emotional intelligence and intuition compared to those showing lower levels of transformational leadership behaviors.

Clarke (2010) conducted a study with 67 UK project managers to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and transformational leadership. The findings revealed that EI was significantly associated with the transformational leadership components of idealized influence and individualized consideration.

Fatima et al. (2011) investigated the impact of emotional intelligence (EI) on transformational leadership style and examined gender differences within the hotel industry in Pakistan, using a sample of 238 managers. The study aimed to assess the overall effect of EI on transformational leadership, explore the influence of specific EI dimensions, and analyze gender-based differences in EI and transformational leadership among managers. The findings indicated that both overall EI and its dimensions appraisal and expression of emotions, regulation of emotions, and utilization of emotions were significantly and positively correlated with transformational leadership style.

Mwangi et al. (2011) examined the impact of emotional intelligence (EI) on transformational leadership across four public universities in Kenya, using a stratified random sampling method to select the participants. The findings indicated that emotional intelligence plays a significant role in transformational leadership.

Alegre & Levit (2014) concluded that leadership effectiveness is directly associated with transformational leadership behaviors and indirectly shaped by individual characteristics such as intelligence and conscientiousness. When ability and personality variables were controlled for, emotional intelligence did not demonstrate a significant influence.

Mo & Shi (2017) contended that trust in one's supervisor plays a crucial role in enhancing employee job performance. In contrast, when trust is absent, employees tend to fear communication with their leaders and hesitate to express genuine emotion which foster negative feelings and contributes to an unhealthy and pessimistic organizational climate.

Appelbaum et al. (2018) identified a relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership, emphasizing key competencies such as self-awareness and emotional regulation. The study suggests that organizations can strengthen their recruitment and leadership development practices by integrating emotional intelligence assessments and targeted training to promote transformational leadership capabilities.

Elfiendri et al. (2021) explained that a transformational leader's capacity to promote innovation, encourage individual growth, and guide organizational change is strongly influenced by emotional intelligence, which comprises self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills. Earlier research has demonstrated that leaders with higher emotional intelligence are more capable of managing emotions, resolving conflicts, and building strong interpersonal relationships, all of which are essential for effective leadership.

Lee et al. (2022) investigated how leaders' emotional intelligence, along with transformational and transactional leadership styles, influences employees' job performance. The study also examined the roles of organizational commitment and trust as key psychological mechanisms. Using SEM, the findings highlighted the complex interrelationships among leadership attributes, employee attitudes, and performance outcomes.

Esteves et al. (2024) investigated the relationship between entrepreneurs' emotional intelligence and transformational leadership, emphasizing the roles of emotional appraisal and emotional regulation. The study also identified variations in emotional intelligence across gender and generational groups, indicating that higher levels of emotional intelligence are associated with stronger transformational leadership among entrepreneurs, shaped by these demographic factors.

Bui et al. (2025) aimed to examine the moderating role of emotional intelligence (EI) in the relationship between transformational leadership (TL), employee behaviors specifically innovative work behavior (IWB) and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and employee performance (EP). The findings indicate that transformational leadership plays a significant role in promoting IWB and OCB, as well as in enhancing employee performance. Moreover, employees with higher levels of EI were found to amplify the positive effects of transformational leadership on both innovative work behavior and performance. The study suggests that managers should prioritize the development of employees' emotional intelligence alongside the application of transformational leadership practices to effectively influence employee behavior and improve performance.

Objective of the Study

To examine the impact of emotional intelligence on transformational leadership effectiveness among faculty members.

Research Design: The present study adopted a descriptive research design to investigate the influence of emotional intelligence on transformational leadership effectiveness.

Population: The population for the present study consisted of faculty members employed in Private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) situated in the National Capital Region (NCR).

Method Of Sampling: The present study adopted a stratified random sampling technique to select respondents from the target population.

Sample Size: The sample included 380 faculty members employed in Private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) situated in the National Capital Region (NCR). .

Research Instrument: In this study, primary data has been acquired through the use of a questionnaire. A structured questionnaire was employed for data collection, with responses to the questions rated using a Likert Scale aligned with the study objectives.

HYPOTHESIS

H₀₁: There is no significant impact of **Emotional Intelligence** on **Transformational Leadership Effectiveness** as perceived by faculty members (followers) working under academic leaders in private HEIs.

Analysis of Response of Followers Related to Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Transformational Leadership Effectiveness

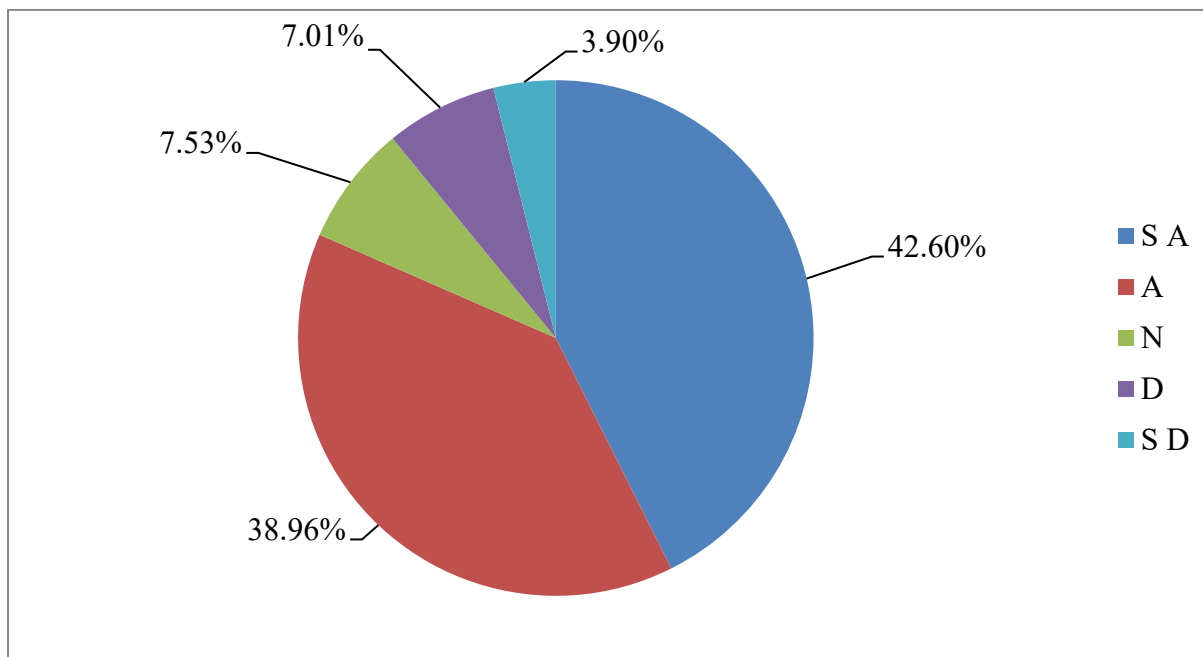


Figure 1: Response to the question “My leader understands employee needs and positively influences team performance”

Analysis: The analysis reveals that majority of respondents believe their leaders effectively understand employee needs and contribute positively to team performance. Specifically, 42.60% of participants strongly agreed and 38.96% agreed, yielding a combined positive response of 81.56%. This indicates that employees generally perceive their leaders as empathetic, attentive to employee concerns and capable of leveraging this understanding to improve overall team performance. Conversely, 7.53% of respondents expressed a neutral opinion, additionally, 7.01% disagreed and 3.90% strongly disagreed, representing a total of 10.91% of the responses, suggesting that only a small proportion of employees believe their leaders are less effective in understanding employee needs or fostering improved team performance.

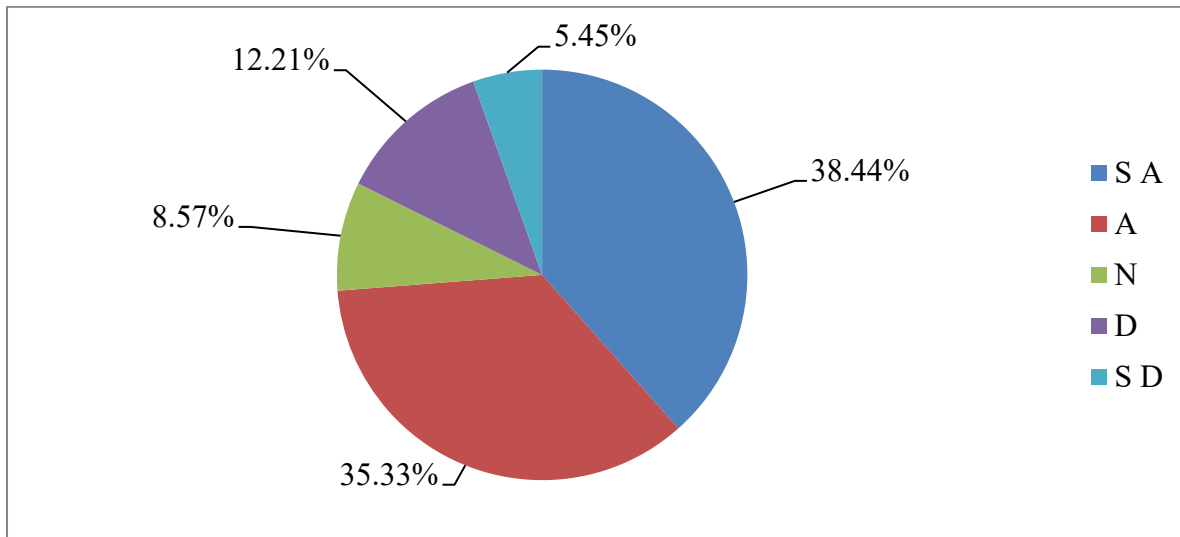


Figure 2: Response to the question “Our team consistently achieves organizational goals under my leader’s guidance”

Analysis: The responses demonstrate that the majority of respondents have a favorable opinion of their leader’s effectiveness in directing the team toward organizational success. Specifically, 38.44% of respondents strongly agreed and 35.33% agreed, resulting in a combined positive response of 73.77%. This indicates that most employees perceive their leaders as providing the guidance, encouragement and support necessary for the team to achieve organizational objectives consistently. Meanwhile, 8.57% of respondents remained neutral whereas 12.21% disagreed and 5.45% strongly disagreed, together comprising 17.66% of the responses suggesting that a noticeable proportion of employees believe their leaders could improve their ability to consistently lead teams toward achieving organizational goals.

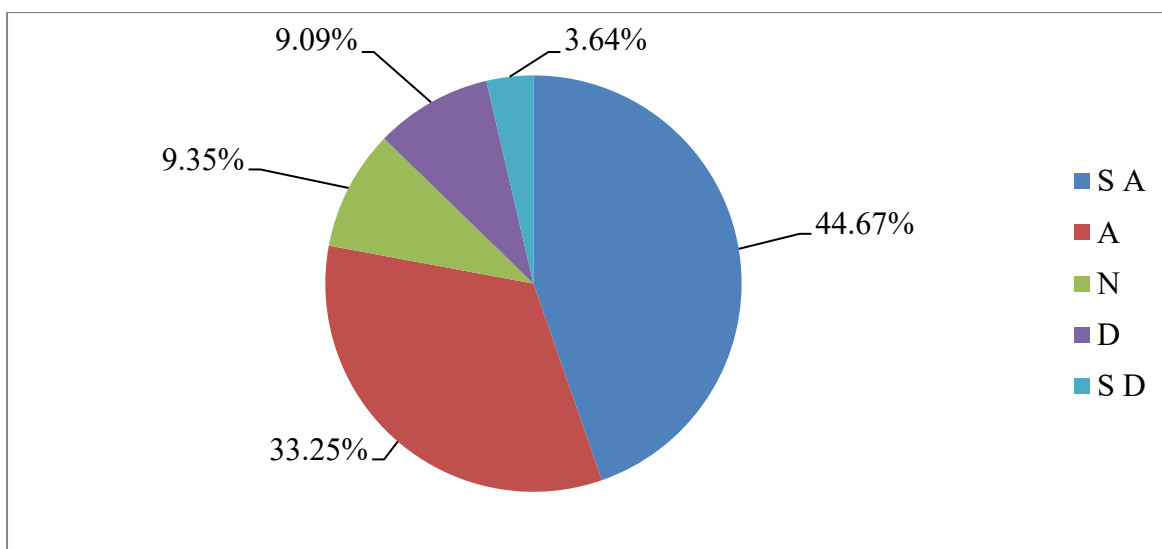


Figure 3: Response to the question “Employees show high commitment and engagement due to my leader’s behavior”

Analysis: The responses indicate a predominantly positive perception of the role of leadership behavior in fostering employee commitment and engagement. A total of 44.67% of respondents strongly agreed, while 33.25% agreed, producing an overall positive response of 77.92%. This suggests that employees believe their leaders’ behavior encourages greater commitment and active participation in organizational activities. At the same time, 9.35% of respondents expressed a neutral opinion, conversely, 9.09% disagreed and 3.64% strongly disagreed, together representing 12.73% of the responses, indicating that only a limited

proportion of employees feel their leaders are less successful in promoting employee commitment and engagement.

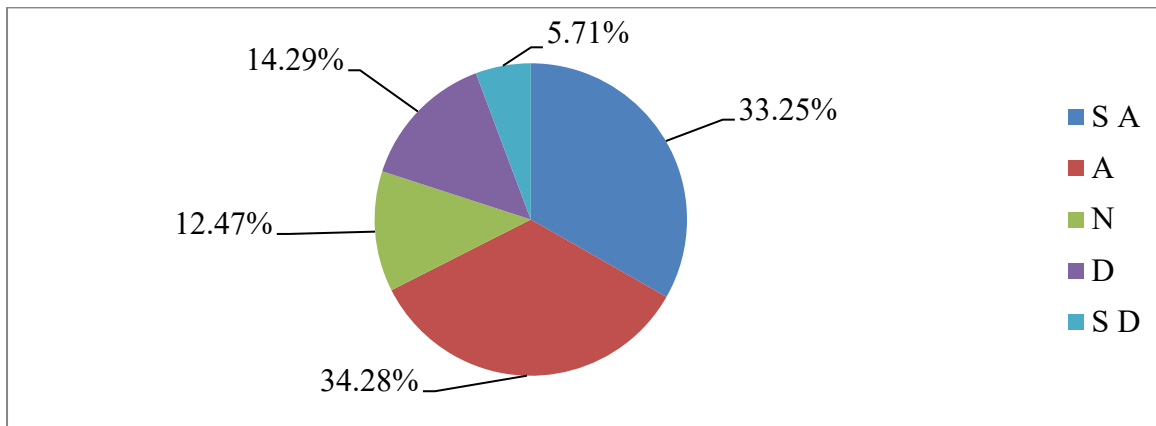


Figure 4: Response to the question “My leader encourages employees to perform beyond expectations”

Analysis: The responses indicate that a majority of respondents perceive their leader as motivating employees to exceed their expected levels of performance. 33.25% of respondents strongly agreed, while 34.28% agreed, resulting in a combined positive response of 67.53%. This suggests that most employees believe their leaders inspire them to achieve higher standards. Such leadership behavior reflects transformational qualities that promote motivation and continuous improvement among employees. However, 12.47% of respondents expressed a neutral opinion whereas 14.29% disagreed and 5.71% strongly disagreed, together accounting for 20.00% of the responses, suggesting that a notable proportion of employees do not perceive their leaders as consistently motivating them to perform beyond expectations.

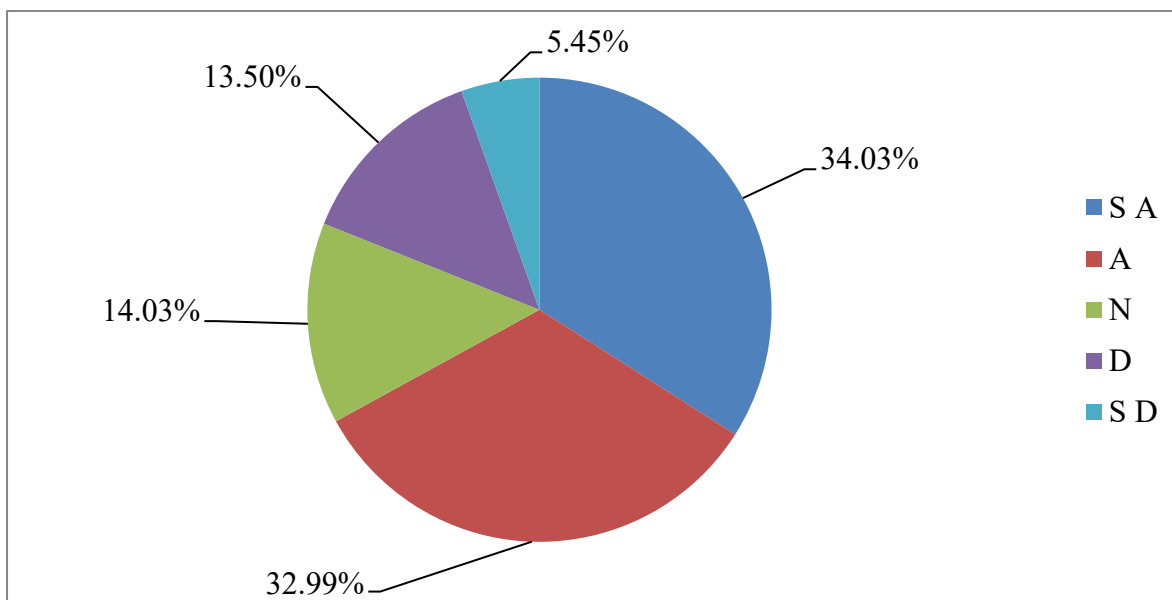


Figure 5: Response to the question “My leader inspires employees by aligning organizational goals with individual aspirations”

Analysis: The responses reveal that a majority of respondents view their leaders as successful in linking employees’ personal ambitions with the broader objectives of the organization. Specifically, 34.03% of respondents strongly agreed and 32.99% agreed, resulting in a combined positive response of 67.02%. This suggests that most employees perceive their leaders as creating a shared sense of purpose by aligning individual development with organizational success. At the same time, 14.03% of respondents expressed a neutral opinion and 13.50% disagreed and 5.45% strongly disagreed, together representing 18.95% of the

responses, indicating that a notable proportion of employees believe their leaders are less effective in integrating individual aspirations with organizational goals.

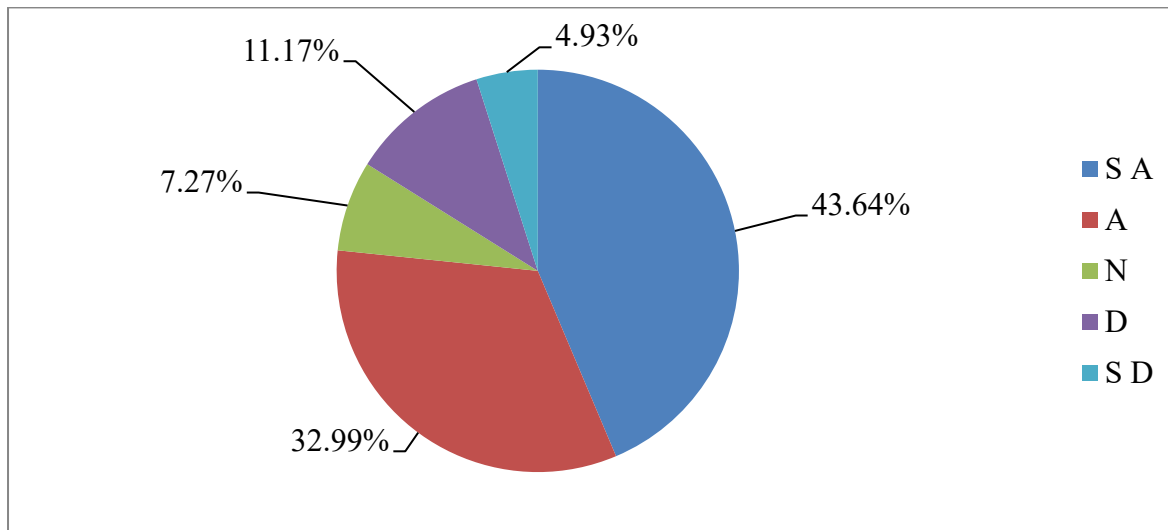


Figure 6: Response to the question “My leader contributes to a positive and emotionally supportive work environment”

Analysis: The responses demonstrate that a large majority of respondents believe their leaders foster a healthy and supportive workplace culture. Specifically, 43.64% of respondents strongly agreed and 32.99% agreed, resulting in a combined positive response of 76.63%. This indicates that most employees perceive their leaders as promoting an environment built on trust, respect, empathy, and emotional support, thereby enhancing employee well-being, teamwork, and overall organizational performance. These findings reflect key characteristics of transformational leadership, which emphasize employee development, mutual respect, and positive interpersonal relationships. At the same time, 7.27% of respondents expressed a neutral opinion, suggesting uncertainty or varied experiences regarding the level of emotional support provided by their leaders. Conversely, 11.17% disagreed and 4.93% strongly disagreed, together accounting for 16.10% of the responses, indicating that a relatively small proportion of employees feel their leaders are less effective in creating a positive and emotionally supportive work environment.

Hypothesis Testing

Ho4: There is no significant impact of **emotional intelligence** on **transformational leadership effectiveness** as perceived by faculty members (followers) working under academic leaders in private HEIs.

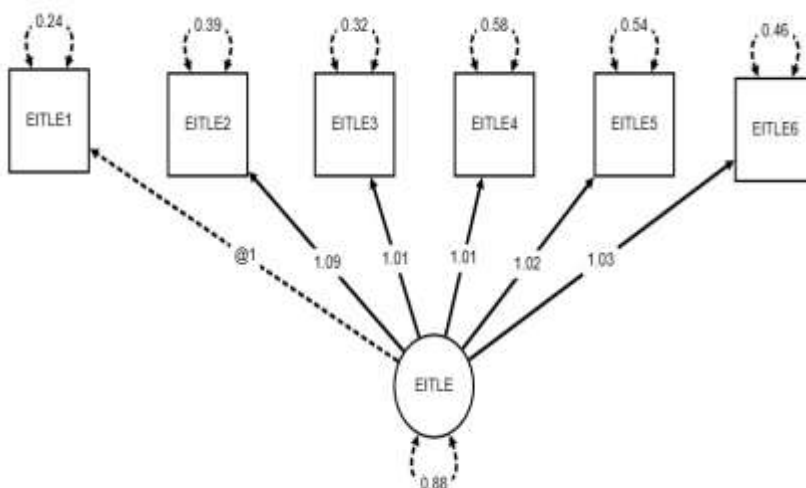


Figure 7: Figure showing the factor loading and residuals values of variables for impact of emotional intelligence on transformational leadership effectiveness as perceived by the followers

Analysis: The positive factor loadings obtained for all six observed indicators indicate that emotional intelligence plays a vital role in enhancing transformational leadership effectiveness as perceived by followers in private higher education institutions.

The factor loading estimates further show that Organizational Goal Achievement (EITLE2) exhibits the highest loading (1.09), implying that faculty members consider the ability of emotionally intelligent leaders to achieve organizational objectives as the strongest indicator of transformational leadership effectiveness. This is followed by Goal and Aspiration Alignment (EITLE5) with a factor loading of 1.03, highlighting the importance of leaders who successfully integrate institutional goals with employees' individual aspirations. Enhanced Employee Performance (EITLE4) and Positive Supportive Work Environment (EITLE6) each demonstrate factor loadings of 1.02, whereas Employee Commitment and Engagement (EITLE3) record a loading of 1.01. Understanding Employee Needs (EITLE1) functions as the reference indicator, with its loading constrained to 1.00 for model identification. The uniformly positive factor loadings confirm that each observed indicator makes a meaningful contribution to the latent construct, thereby establishing the reliability and construct validity of the SEM measurement model for assessing transformational leadership effectiveness from the followers' perspective.

The residual variances associated with the observed indicators range from 0.24 to 0.58, indicating that the latent construct explains a substantial proportion of the variance in the measured variables. The latent construct reports a variance estimate of 0.88, reflecting adequate variability in followers' perceptions of emotionally intelligent leadership. The SEM findings indicate that emotionally intelligent leaders are perceived by faculty members as more effective in understanding employee needs, achieving organizational goals, strengthening employee commitment, enhancing work performance, aligning individual and organizational aspirations and fostering a supportive work environment.

Table 1: Table showing test statistics value and p-value for testing hypothesis

Model Test User Model:

Test Statistic	43.062
Degree of Freedom	9
P- Value	0.000

Result: The SEM results indicate that the proposed model provides a statistically significant fit, with a Chi-square (χ^2) test statistic of 43.062, 9 degrees of freedom, and a p-value of 0.000. Since the obtained p-value is less than the prescribed significance level of 0.05, H_{04} is rejected. This finding confirms that emotional intelligence has a statistically significant positive impact on transformational leadership effectiveness as perceived by followers.

FINDINGS

- **Understanding Employee Needs:** The findings reveal that 81.56% respondents believed their leaders understand employee needs and positively influence team performance. However, 7.53% remained neutral, while 10.91% having negative perceptions.
- **Organizational Goal Achievement:** The findings indicate that 73.77% believed their teams consistently achieve organizational goals under their leader's guidance. In contrast, 8.57% remained neutral, whereas 17.66% representing with unfavorable perceptions.

- Employee Commitment and Engagement: The findings show that 77.92% believed their leader's behavior promotes high employee commitment and engagement. Meanwhile, 9.35% remained neutral, while 12.73% having negative perceptions.
- Enhanced Employee Performance: The findings reveal that 67.53% believed their leader encourages employees to perform beyond expected levels. However, 12.47% expressed a neutral opinion, whereas 20.00% constituting with unfavorable perceptions.
- Goal and Aspiration Alignment: The findings indicate that 67.02% believed their leader inspires employees by aligning organizational goals with individual aspirations. Conversely, 14.03% remained neutral, while 18.95% having negative perceptions.
- Positive Supportive Work Environment: The findings demonstrate that 76.63% believed their leader contributes to a positive and emotionally supportive work environment. 7.27% remained neutral, whereas 16.10% of respondents having unfavorable perceptions.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that emotional intelligence serves as a crucial factor influencing transformational leadership effectiveness among academic leaders in private HEIs across NCR. Responses from followers establish a robust consent that emotionally intelligent leaders are more skillful of considerate employee needs, achieving organizational goals, raising employee commitment and engagement, motivating employees to beat expected performance standards, support individual aspirations with institutional objectives and develop a positive and best work environment. Furthermore, the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) results validated these relationships through positive factor loadings for all observed indicators, validity of EI as a significant predictor of transformational leadership effectiveness. The study also concludes that followers share mostly consistent perceptions regarding positive influence of EI on transformational leadership effectiveness.

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