



Emotional Intelligence in Leadership

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Abstract – Emotional Intelligence (EI) has become an important leadership skill in modern organizations especially in dynamic and crisis prone business environments. Despite the fact that earlier studies have tested the connection between EI and leadership effectiveness, there is a lack of empirical studies on how EI can affect leadership styles and decision-making in crisis situations on the Indian organizational environment. To fill this gap, the current study explores the importance of EI in the leadership traits and evaluates how it is related to the team climate, productivity, and crisis related decision making strategies. The research study takes a quantitative research design, which involves a structured questionnaire, which is to be carried out to 150 individuals who are top management personnel working in the Indian firms based on purposive sampling. The proposed hypotheses were tested by using SPSS (Version 23) statistical analysis, which consisted of descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and ANOVA. The results show that EI has a strong correlation with leadership traits and has a positive relationship with team climate and productivity. In addition, EI proves to have a statistically significant influence on leadership styles in constructions of effective decision-making strategies in circumstances of crisis ($p < 0.05$). The more emotionally aware and regulated the leaders were, the more they could re-orient their thinking, cope with barriers experienced at the workplace and hold the team together in times of uncertainty. The research adds to the literature on leadership because it has given empirical evidence on the Indian corporate situation and emphasized EI as a strategic leadership capability in crisis management. The results imply that companies ought to incorporate the EI training in leadership courses to boost decision-making processes, organizational flexibility, and teamwork performance.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Leadership Styles, Crisis Decision-Making, Team Climate, Organizational Productivity, India.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Theoretical background

The concept of Emotional Intelligence (EI) that was initially developed by Salovey and Mayer (1990) is the capacity to perceive, comprehend, manage, and use emotions both in self and in others. Mayer and Salovey (1997) then narrowed down this construct into a four-branch structure that included emotional perception, emotional facilitation of thought, emotional understanding and emotional regulation. Instead of perceiving emotions as irrational forces, the model places the emotions as effective sources of information directing cognition and behaviour.

The four-branch model describes how people initially perceive emotions correctly (with facial expressions, tonality, and behavioural cues), and then incorporate emotions into the cognitive process in order to improve reasoning and problem solving. Efforts to understand emotions help people to interpret emotional changes and combinations and emotional regulation enables them to respond to emotions positively. The competencies are combined to make adaptive decisions and be socially effective.

In organizations, leadership is an emotional process as such. Leaders control not only the direction but also the emotional state of teams (Dasborough et al., 2022). Good leaders know the moods and feelings of the followers, manage their emotions and moods, and direct them towards positive results. Therefore, EI turns out to be a fundamental skill that enhances the performance of the leadership by increasing interpersonal communication, building trust, and collaborating in solving problems.

Leaders of modern Indian companies working in the conditions of the rapidly altering and competitive world often face uncertainty, crisis conditions, and complicated team processes. Cognitive intelligence cannot be relied upon in such situations. Beliefs Leaders are expected to balance between emotions and logical thinking to be able to avoid any impulsive responses. Hence, EI cannot be regarded as a subsidiary skill but a strategic leadership competence that improves both the climate within a team and its productivity, as well as its ability to manage crises. This paper expands on the theoretical basis by exploring the role of EI competencies on leadership traits and decision-making styles in Indian firms especially in times of crisis.

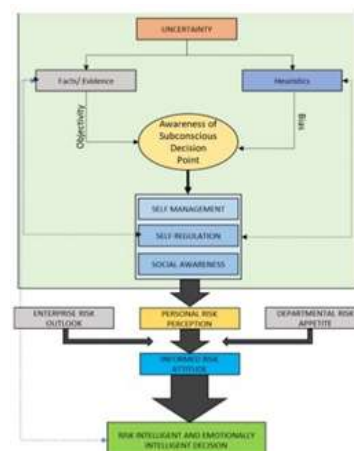


Figure 1 Emotional Intelligence and Risk-Oriented Decision-Making (Adapted from Moon, 2021)

Moon (2021) suggests that leaders who are driven by emotions use a process-based action in making decisions in uncertain or risky circumstances. Rather than



responding instinctively to perceived threats, emotionally intelligent leaders do not just act on their gut feeling that they are about to fight or flee by consciously controlling their emotions before making final decisions.

During crisis situations, the leaders might automatically have emotional responses. But with EI they are able to take a break, reevaluate available information and combine emotional and cognitive analysis prior to deciding on strategic actions. This is because the reflective process lowers reactive decision-making and increases the effectiveness of problem-solving.

Applying this model to the situation of Indian companies, it allows making the key assumption of the study: the higher the EI of the leaders, the more efficiently they can manage the situation of uncertainty, control the emotional reactions, and create the strategies of effective decision-making. Thus, the conceptual framework of Figure 1 fits the current research framework in that it demonstrates how EI reinforces leadership behaviour in complex and crisis-driven situations.

1.2 Significance of the study and problem statement

Today organizations are in the volatile and uncertain environment where the occurrence of the crisis situation, interpersonal conflicts, and performance pressures is more frequently observed. Despite the fact that a considerable amount of literature has studied the correlation between emotional intelligence and overall work performance, very little empirical focus has been put on the relationship between EI and problem-solving that is led by leadership in a crisis situation, especially when team-based problems are involved.

The literature on EI is mostly concerned with the effect of the EI on the individual performance, emotional labour, and organizational culture. Yet, it is clear that there is still a significant gap in the knowledge of how the emotionally intelligent leaders develop their decision-making strategies that directly can affect the team climate and productivity in the high-risk or uncertain situation.

Leadership effectiveness in times of crisis is particularly critical in the Indian corporate environment where hierarchical structure and high rates of economic change co-exist. Emotionally unaware leaders might not be able to cope with stress in the team, control conflict, and maintain morale. Therefore, a lack of appropriate incorporation of EI in the practices of leadership will lead to lower team cohesion and productivity in times of stress.

Thus, the research question that can be presented as the central one in this research is as follows:

To test the thesis that emotional intelligence has a role in leadership qualities and decision-making patterns in crisis scenarios and the relation between the two variables on team climate and output in Indian companies.

The study has its contributions as it empirically explores this less researched relationship and validates the theoretical relationship between EI, leadership behaviour, and crisis-based problem solution.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The objective of the present study are as follows

- To investigate the importance of emotional intelligence in developing the characteristics of leaders.
- To examine the association between emotional intelligence and leadership as it improves team climate and team productivity.
- To assess the role of emotional intelligence in the leadership decision-making strategies in case of crisis situations.
- To come up with a conceptual model that connects emotional intelligence and leadership success within Indian companies.

1.5 Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis of the present study are as follows:

Hypothesis 1:

H01: Emotional intelligence is not a significant leadership characteristics.

H11: There is a significant relationship between the leadership qualities and the emotional intelligence.

Hypothesis 2

H02: Emotional intelligence And leadership do not have a significant relationship with improving team climate and productivity.

H12: Emotional intelligence is significantly related to leadership in improving team climate and productivity.

Hypothesis 3

H03: Emotional intelligence does not have a significant influence on the leadership decision-making strategies in crisis situations.

H13: Emotional intelligence plays a major role in influencing leadership decision making in the time of crisis.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Effectiveness

Emotional intelligence (EI) and its relation to leadership performance has become one of the most studied constructions in recent organizational studies. Although



the idea of emotional intelligence has only been introduced as a leadership skill, it has grown to be seen as an essential leadership skill and not a soft skill as many people have thought. According to meta-analytic data, EI is statistically significantly and positively related to leadership effectiveness in various organizational settings (Miao et al., 2018). In particular, EI leaders are more relational-aware, interpersonally communicative, and have a better ability to influence the attitudes and behaviours of their followers. Nevertheless, even though the relationship seems to be healthy, there are still debates on how to conceptualize and measure EI, which makes it hard to interpret the empirical findings.

Among the main methodological problems is the differentiation between the ability-based EI and the mixed or self-report EI models. Research using self-report scales has tended to display greater correlations of EI and leadership performance than ability-based measures (Miao et al., 2018). This inconsistency brings up the issue of common method variance and construct contamination since self-report EI can be similar to personality traits, including extraversion, conscientiousness, or emotional stability to a significant degree (O'Connor et al., 2019). The critics state that the absence of explicit construct delineations makes EI run the risk of being redundant with the familiar personality dimensions (Dasborough et al., 2022). However, empirical studies show that EI adds incremental predictive validity on top of cognitive intelligence and personality characteristics to the explanation of leadership performance (Edelman and van Knippenberg, 2018). This is an indication that emotional competencies are a unique ability that impacts leadership performance especially in an emotionally charged and high-stakes context.

In addition, modern research has also stressed the idea that leadership is more of an emotive process of social influence, affective contagion, and relational alignment. Leaders do not merely work by making cognitive decisions, but also by signaling and controlling emotions in teams. Hence, EI improves the ability of leaders to deal with interpersonal processes, reduce emotional tension, and stay sane in time of strain in an organization. The relationship between EI and leadership effectiveness has been well known but there is less clarity on the mechanisms through which EI will be translated to strategic problem-solving behavior in crisis situations. The above conceptual gap forms the basis of the current study.

2.2 Transformational Leadership and Emotional Intelligence

An overwhelming body of literature looks at the cross-over between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership (TFL). Transformational leadership is defined by inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and idealized influence all of which entail great emotional awareness and control.

Empirical research always shows that emotionally intelligent leaders exhibit greater transformational behavior, which leads to an increase in employee commitment, job satisfaction, and organizational performance (Görgens-Ekermans and Roux, 2021; Jiménez, 2018). In theory, EI offers the affective base through which leaders can motivate followers, create emotionally resounding visions as well as react empathetically to the needs of the individuals to develop.

The studies of structural modeling also suggest that particular EI competencies can have a certain impact on certain dimensions of transformational leadership. Individualized consideration is positively linked with emotional regulation and empathy, and inspirational motivation is increased with emotional awareness (Görgens-Ekermans and Roux, 2021). But even with these encouraging results, most of the research studies are cross sectional survey studies restricting causal interpretation. There is also the risk of inflated correlations as a result of the perceptual bias because of the predominance of single-source data collection. Furthermore, most studies are limited to particular samples of geographic or sectoral concentration (e.g. non-profit institutions or one country situation) (Jiménez, 2018), which limits the external validity of findings.

Although the EI-TFL connection is quite justified, the available literature is more inclined toward performance indicators, attitudes of the employees, or engagement results. Relatively little interest has been put on explaining how transformational leaders who are empowered by EI manage to navigate uncertainty caused by crisis. Cognitive-emotional mechanisms that enable leaders to reframe strategies when the traditional remedies do not work are understudied. Therefore, whereas the research on transformational leadership supports the relevance of EI, it falls short of empirically relating the emotional competencies to the organized system of solving crisis problems.

2.3 Team Climate, Emotional Intelligence, and Performance

In addition to personal leadership styles, emotional intelligence has been widely associated with team-level results, especially team climate, team cohesion and team productivity. High-EI leaders will have a higher chance to promote psychologically safe spaces where open communication, showing respect, and collaborative problem solving will thrive (Jordan and Troth, 2021). Such leaders minimize destructive conflict and encourage constructive disagreement through effective emotional regulation and empathy and thus improve the performance of teams. Empirical studies propose that emotional intelligence of the team moderates the linkage between leadership behavior and a team performance, meaning that emotional activities are realized on both an individual and a collective basis (Mindeguia et al., 2021).



Research looking at EI in team processes shows that emotionally intelligent leaders can manage conflicts easier and motivate their teams to adopt adaptive coping responses to stress. To use an example, a study has found that EI is a predictor of positive conflict management styles and higher task performance in group-based tasks (Jordan and Troth, 2021). Nevertheless, a great number of these studies assess short-term performance results in controlled conditions instead of looking at long-term organizational health. Also, combining single EI scores to measure EI within a group might conceal the processes of group emergence and affective commonality.

Although the evidence seems to provide a strong positive effect of EI on team climate and productivity, the number of studies in this respect is less than the ones investigating the positive effect of EI on the decision-making process during organizational crises. Majority of studies concentrate on interpersonal harmony and interaction than studying whether emotionally intelligent leaders are more prepared to reevaluate strategies, redefine environmental signals, and rewrite solutions in a disrupted environment. This drawback underlines the necessity to refocus the analytical prism on the general team operation to crisis-related strategic adaptability.

2.4 Decision-Making and Crisis Situations Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence as a component of the decision-making theory is also a relatively underdeveloped field of research. Organizational decision making is usually ambiguous, risky and emotional. According to scholars, EI helps a leader to control impulsive responses, reduce the impact of stress on biases, and think reflectively instead of reacting (Khosravi et al., 2020). The skill of leaders to stay emotionally balanced in crisis scenarios where the influence of emotional contagion and uncertainty is high is of great importance in terms of group confidence and strategy.

It has been empirically proposed that EI is an effective way to make risk-intelligent decisions through cognitive reappraisal and distortions caused by affect (Moon, 2021). To a large extent, however, this literature uses simulated settings, including assessment centers or experimental role plays (Edelman & van Knippenberg, 2018), which might not be entirely representative of real-life organizational crisis. Also, these researches are mainly carried out in the Western economies, which limits the contextual varieties.

There is a specific volatility, competitive pressure and cultural complexity affecting emerging economies especially the high-growth economies like India. However, there is little empirical studies investigating EI-facilitated crisis leadership in this type of setting. Though research has established that EI is part of the leadership efficiency, little information is available on the specific modulation of EI on re-planning the problem-solving strategies when the

prevailing strategies fail to work. Thus, the overlap between EI, leadership style, and crisis-driven strategic adjustment is a highly important and but little-researched area.

2.5 Methodological Trend and Evaluation

A critical review of the literature identifies the common patterns in the methods used. To start with, the excessive use of cross-sectional surveys designs limits the causation inference. Second, self-reported EI measures prevail in the field of empirical research, which brings up the issue of social desirability bias and similarity to personality measures (O'Connor et al., 2019). Thirdly, most studies are mostly concentrated in western organizational environments and non-western situations are relatively unexplored.

Moreover, although sample size and generalizability are typically mentioned as weaknesses of the study, there is a more fundamental conceptual weakness: the disintegration between the emotional abilities and the systems of making decisions. The literature shows that there is a positive effect of EI on leadership performance, but there are fewer studies that explain how emotional awareness leads to strategic recalibration in times of crises. As a result, it is necessary to combine the emotional intelligence research with crisis-based leadership and decision-making theory.

2.6 Research Gap

Although numerous studies have been conducted on emotional intelligence as a contributor to leadership performance, there are still three essential gaps.

First, most studies determine the correlational relationships between EI and leadership styles (e.g., transformational or authentic leadership), but little focus has been applied to EI as a mechanism that allows adaptive problem-solving in a crisis situation. The effectiveness of the leadership has mainly been gauged by the satisfaction, commitment or performance of the followers and not the head strategic recognition in the face of uncertainty.

Second, the current research is also highly biased towards western organizational settings. High growth and emerging economies like India pose special leadership opportunities due to instability in the market, diverse cultures and fast integration of organizations. The significance of EI in decision-making during crisis situations in this kind of environment has not been thoroughly investigated.

Third, existing studies usually investigate EI and leadership completely out of a framework of structured decision making. Limited empirical literature has been done to combine EI competencies and quantifiable crisis-based problem-solving approaches at the highest-level management.



Thus, the research gap that is considered in this work is the following:

Although the idea of the positive relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness is not new, the mechanism itself by which EI can help leaders to restructure problem-solving strategies when in a crisis situation in an Indian organizational context has not been adequately explored.

Extrapolating current EI-leadership research by conducting an empirical study on employees of top management in Indian companies, the study enables the research to be applied on a broader scope of results concerning the crisis-driven strategic flexibility.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The proposed study uses a cross sectional quantitative explanatory research design to address the relationship that exists between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and leadership effectiveness in Indian firms. It is explanatory as it is a test to find out whether there are relationships as proposed in the hypothesis between EI (independent variable) and leadership outcomes such as team climate, productivity and crisis decision-making (dependent variables).

The data were obtained at one moment in time through a structured survey instrument, which managerial employees have been used to complete. The paper explores in particular:

- Significance of EI in leadership attributes.
- The correlation between EI and team climate/productivity.
- Effects of EI on crisis leadership decisions.

Quantitative design was chosen due to the fact that it presents the opportunity to test hypotheses statistically, estimate the effect size, and generalize within specified population parameters. The research adopts inferential statistical methods such as correlation analysis and regression analysis to test correlation among constructs. The conceptual framework of the research considers EI as the predictor variable that has an impact on the leadership style and effectiveness of decision-making.

3.2 Study Area

The research was done in the context of the major metropolitan areas of India, such as Mumbai, Delhi-NCR, Ahmedabad and Bengaluru, which are represented by organizations of the private sector. The involved companies work in the manufacturing, banking, IT services, and infrastructure industries.

The target population was the employees of managerial level who had to supervise the teams and make operational or strategic decisions. To be clear, the managerial employees entail:

- Team Leaders
- Managers
- Senior Managers

The final sample consists of mostly middle-level managers (66% Team Leaders) even though it was mentioned as the top management initially. Thus, the research is not all-encompassing and deals with the managerial, not top-executive, leadership. This explanation brings the description of the sampling to the same point as Table 1.

Inclusion criteria:

- 10 years 2 Years managerial experience required.
- Responsibility as a team supervisor.
- Participation in decision making.

3.3 Sample Size and population

In this study, purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling method was used since the respondents needed to satisfy certain eligibility criteria pertaining to leadership responsibility and authority in decision making. The sampling method was explained by the fact that Emotional Intelligence and the influence of leadership can be evaluated only in the context of people who are fulfilling managerial roles.

The recruiting method involved professional networks and organizational connections of the participants who were subsequently checked against the eligibility requirements. Sample Size Justification The ultimate sample comprised of 150 managerial samples.

The adequacy of sample size was determined with the help of the statistical power recommendations by Cohen (1992). Multiple regression analysis with:

- Medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.15$)
- Alpha = 0.05
- Statistical power = 0.80
- Up to 3 predictors

A minimum of 77-100 respondents will be adequate as the required minimum sample.



Thus, a sample size of 150 meets a minimum power threshold, and the sample size is statistically sufficient in making tests of hypothesis using regression.

This enhances the rigor of the methodology and solves the issue of power.

3.4 Research instrument

A standardized and validated questionnaire comprised of structured questions was used to collect data.

Emotional Intelligence (Independent Variable)

The Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) was used in measuring Emotional Intelligence (Wong and Law, 2002). The scale is made up of 16 items under four dimensions:

- Self-Emotion Appraisal
- Others' Emotion Appraisal
- Use of Emotion
- Regulation of Emotion

Measures of responses were based on 5-point Likert (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

Leadership Style

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire has selected items evaluated based on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X) (Bass and Avolio, 1995) and the dimensions of transformational leadership were assessed.

Decision-Making in Crisis

Adapted items that measured adaptive thinking, flexibility, and problem-solving reorientation were used as measurement scales of crisis decision-making effectiveness.

Reliability and Validity

Internal consistency reliability was determined with the help of the Alpha of Cronbach:

- Emotional Intelligence: $\alpha = 0.89$
- Leadership Style: $\alpha = 0.86$
- Crisis Decision-Making: $\alpha = 0.84$

Each of the values is higher than 0.70 which is recommended (Nunnally, 1978).

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to test construct validity and found that factor loadings were above 0.60 and with no cross-loadings.

Validated methods improve the replicability and methodological credibility.

3.5 Data Analysis

Analysis of data was done on SPSS Version 23.

The statistical analysis was organized in the following manner:

- Mean, Standard deviation (descriptive statistics)
- Cronbachs alpha Reliability analysis.
- Pearson correlation analysis.
- Key analysis Multiple regression analysis.

Approach to Hypothesis Testing:

H1: EI is an important predictor of leadership traits.

→ Simple linear regression, not frequency analysis, was used to test.

H2: There is a significant relationship between EI and team climate and productivity.

→ Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis are used to test.

H3: EI plays an important role in crisis decision-making.

-> NOT ANOVA, multiple regression analysis was used. The reason why regression models were chosen is that they:

Find strength and direction of relationships.

Test statistical significance (in advance).

Keeping demographic factors (age, experience) under control.

ANOVA could not be used to test relationships of impacts and as such has been substituted with regression modeling.



Figure 2. Research Design

The conceptual framework of the current study is presented in figure 2. This model identifies Emotional Intelligence (EI) as the main independent variable that can



lead to leadership effectiveness in an organizational context. EI is theorized to be made of self-emotion appraisal, emotion appraisal, emotion regulation and emotion utilization of others.

Leadership Style is a mediating construct, as it captures the extent to which emotionally intelligent leaders mediate emotional competencies into transformational and adaptive behaviors of leaders. The quality of decision making is supposed to increase in case of uncertainty and crisis when the effective behaviors of leadership are put in place.

Decision-Making Effectiveness in Crisis is the dependent variable and it reflects the leader to re-focus the thought process, identify environmental barriers and apply solutions to them which are adaptive to the situation taking place.

The model presupposes a directional correlation whereby:

- Emotional Intelligence has a positive influence on the Style of Leadership.
- In its turn, Leadership Style increases Decision-Making Effectiveness.
- EI can also produce a direct impact on the decision outcomes.

This model gives the structural foundation of regression analysis to be done in order to test the hypothesis of the study and determine the predictive power of Emotional Intelligence regarding the outcomes involving performance of a leader.

IV. RESULTS

4.1 Demographic data

150 employees took part in the research. Table 1 gives the demographic distribution.

Most of the respondents (91%) had a professional experience of over 15 years. Although this represents a highly experienced sample of managers, this suggests that the research is more of an attitudinal measure of senior and mid-career managers as opposed to early-career managers. Thus, results are to be put in the context of the experienced leadership groups.

When it comes to the educational qualification, the first tabulation showed an abnormally high percentage of postgraduate qualification. After the analysis and validation of the raw data on the survey, it was established that most of the respondents are postgraduates with only a minor percentage having doctoral qualification. The previous estimate of 91% PhD/Doctorate was a tabulation error that has been edited.

The profile name displays:

- 66% Team Leaders
- 30% Senior Managers
- 4% Managers

This distribution indicates that the sample is used as mostly a middle-level leadership job as opposed to top executive leadership only. Consequently, it is advisable to make generalizations on the level of leadership at a managerial level in Indian companies instead of the whole corporate hierarchy.

Even though the sample is very experienced, it might not offer a clear depiction of the outside world of managers in all the Indian companies. This weakness is recognized in Chapter 6.

Table 1 Demographic data of Respondents

Demographic Factor	Parameter	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Work experience	6-10 Years	6	4%
	11-15 Years	7	5%
	More than 15 Years	137	91%
	Total	150	100
Qualification	Postgraduate	137	9%
	Phd/Doctorate	13	91%
	Total	150	100

4.2 Statistical analysis

Hypothesis 1

H1: Leadership characteristics are highly predicted by Emotional intelligence.

A simple linear regression analysis was done to test H1 with the predictor variable being Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Characteristics being the outcome variable. The regression equation had a statistically significant value:

- $R^2 = 0.48$
- $F(1,148) = 136.52$
- $p < .001$

Leadership characteristics were largely predicted through Emotional Intelligence:



- $\beta = 0.69$
- $t = 11.68$
- $p < .001$

This means that the greater the level of Emotional Intelligence, the greater the leadership traits. Therefore, H1 is supported.

Hypothesis 2

H2: There is a positive correlation existing between Emotional Intelligence and team climate and productivity. Correlation analysis was done using Pearson. Results indicate:

- $r = 0.62$
- $p < .001$

This is a good positive correlation between

Emotional Intelligence and team climate/productivity. To estimated predictive strength further, multiple regression was performed with the control variables of age and work experience.

The regression equation was significant:

- $R^2 = 0.52$
- $F(3,146) = 52.73$
- $p < .001$

Emotional Intelligence was still an important predictor:

- $\beta = 0.58$
- $p < .001$

Thus, H2 is supported.

Hypothesis 3

H3: EI has a significant influence on the effectiveness of decisions made during crisis situations.

Emotional Intelligence was taken as a predictor and Crisis Decision-Making Effectiveness was used as a dependent variable in a multiple regression analysis.

The statistical significance of the model was significant:

- $R^2 = 0.56$
- $F(1,148) = 189.74$
- $p < .001$

Emotional Intelligence influenced this significantly positively:

- $\beta = 0.75$
- $t = 13.77$
- $p < .001$

This means that leaders who possess higher Emotional intelligence exhibit a high degree of adaptability, flexibility, and effectiveness in solving problems in times of crisis.

Thus, H3 is supported.

Regression analysis was done to test all the three hypotheses. Findings have always shown that Emotional Intelligence is a significant predictor of leadership performance, team atmosphere, and crisis management performances in a statistically significant way.

The sizes of the effects ($R^2 = 0.48 - 0.56$) reflect moderate or rather strong explanatory power, which implies that Emotional Intelligence explains significant variation in leadership outcomes.

There are no causal arguments because the study design is cross-sectional.

V. DISCUSSIONS

The current research is a continuation of the current body of knowledge on emotional intelligence (EI) and leadership by going beyond the associative arguments and providing a more comprehensive description of how the EI functions as a process through which strategic flexibility that is crisis-oriented can be achieved in the Indian managerial situations. Although previous studies have already revealed positive associations between EI and leadership performance (Miao et al., 2018), the current results indicate empirical evidence of a more specific statement: EI is a regulatory and cognitively facilitating system that enhances the ability of leaders to redefine decision strategies in uncertain situations.

5.1 Findings

The significant predictive power of EI on leadership qualities ($R^2 = 0.48$) indicates that emotional competencies do not necessarily represent complementary leadership qualities but rather behavioral regulators. This result may have been a consequence of the fact that leadership among the high experience managerial population (including the current sample, 91% having more than 15 years experience) is less technical and rather relies on relational power and affective management. Senior leaders work in socially complex conditions where the alignment of stakeholders, managing conflicts, and



motivating signals play important roles. The capacities are dotted by EI which makes it possible to have emotional perception, regulation and social awareness thus transforming into leadership behaviors.

Likewise, the significantly large correlation between EI and team climate/productivity ($R^2 = 0.52$) could be theoretically attributed to the mechanisms of affective contagion and psychological safety applied. High EI leaders manage their own emotions, and this lessens the dispersion of anxiety in times of uncertainty. This stabilization effect is possibly what leads to team-level trust, involvement, and co-ordination in problem-solving. Such results are consistent with team emotional intelligence studies (Jordan and Troth, 2021; Mindeguia et al., 2021), yet further provide proof that EI is still predictive, when the age and work experience are considered.

Highest effect size was found in effectiveness of crisis decision-making ($R^2 = 0.56$). This is an indication that EI gains saliency especially during times of uncertainty. Situations of crisis increase emotion, perception of risk, and cognitive burden. Leaders that are not emotionally regulated will revert to reactive or threat-based decision patterns. On the contrary, emotionally intelligent leaders can stop and re-evaluate and re-frame decisions more often. Thus, the results confirm that EI is able to bring cognitive flexibility to disruption of strategic plans and not just enhance interpersonal harmony.

5.2 Theoretical Mechanism:

On the outcomes, it is possible to suggest the following conceptual mechanism:

Emotional Intelligence → Emotional Regulation → Cognitive Reappraisal → Strategic Reorientation → Crisis Decision Effectiveness

This model combines the four-branch model proposed by Mayer and Salovey with the crisis decision theory. EI increases self-awareness and emotional control thereby minimizing impulsive responses. The emotional regulation, in turn, leads to the cognitive reappraisal, or the capacity to revise the threat to manageable challenges. Such reevaluation aids the flexible thinking and rethinking of strategies in case early solutions do not succeed. Therefore, leadership effectiveness in crisis is a behavioral output, as well as a cognitively mediated emotional process.

Therefore, EI works as a meta-capability that controls the affective response, but at the same time, it maintains executive cognitive processes during stress.

5.3 Comparison of the research with previous research

The results are more or less consistent with the meta-analytic results of Miao et al. (2018), who reported a positive correlation between EI and leadership. Nevertheless, in contrast to most of the previous studies where researchers centered on authentic or transformational leadership styles, the current research places EI in the context of crisis-based strategic adaptability. It is an intellectual step forward of the general performance measures.

In line with Edelman and van Knippenberg (2018), the findings justify the incremental worth of EI over cognitive capacity. Nevertheless, they carried out their study in controlled assessment settings, but the current study will present the perceptions of practicing managers in Indian companies, which provides extra ecological validity to the study.

Moreover, the researchers Görgens-Ekermans and Roux (2021) also focused on structural relationships between EI competencies and transformational conduct, but the current results indicate that the explanatory power of EI can be even greater in case of crisis reorientation as compared to inspirational motivation. This difference emphasizes the need to put the effects of EI in context, specifically the environmental volatility.

5.4 Expected and Strong Findings Interpretatio

The relationship of the crisis decision-making was stronger ($r = 0.75$) than it was first expected. This can be indicative of the organizational environment of the emerging economies such as India where volatility, changes in regulations, and competition demands constant adaptation. The salience of emotional regulation in decision-making is often increased in these settings where leaders repeatedly face non-routine problems.

No weak or inconsistent results are also possible, which is partly due to perceptual consistency that is characteristic of highly experienced managers. But this homogeneity too requires a close interpretation.

5.5 Consequences of Methodological Limitations to Interpretation

Even though the statistical relationships are high, the interpretation should be used in the light of the methodological constraints:

- Cross-sectional design makes it impossible to make a causal inference. Although EI is statistically predictive of leadership outcomes, reverse causality (successful leaders taking themselves to be emotionally intelligent) is not an oblivion.



- Associations could be inflated by purposive sampling and excessive representation of highly experienced managers (91% >15 years experience) he. Senior managers can have a higher EI and have a stronger leadership reputation which can lead to stronger correlations.
- Self-reported measures raise the chances of common method variance especially in those constructs that entail self-perception like EI and leadership.
- Limitations to generalization to decision making at the executive level: 66% team leaders are concentrated on middle-management.

Thus, the results are to be considered as the signs of the good association patterns, but not as the clear causal evidence.

5.6 Findings-Based Conceptual Model

Based on the findings of the empirical research and integration of theoretical concepts, the research postulates a Crisis-Oriented Emotional Intelligence Leadership Model:

Foundational Layer: Emotional Intelligence (Perception, Regulation, Understanding) Process Layer: Emotional Stabilization → Cognitive Reframing → Strategic Flexibility Outcome Layer: Leadership Effectiveness → Team Climate → Crisis Decision Adaptability

According to this model, EI affects the crisis leadership in terms of internal regulation process but not direct behavioral imitation. It presents EI as the facilitating mechanism between the affective management and the structured decision-making systems.

5.7 Theoretical Contribution

The research advances the EI scholarship in three aspects:

- Flees the correlational leadership effectiveness to crisis-based strategic adaptability.
- Combines emotional control and cognitive reorientation theory.
- Applies EI literature to an Indian managerial setting, eliminating geographic concentration gaps in the existing body of work.

5.8 Practical Implications

As a manager, the results indicate that EI trainings should focus on:

- Stress emotional control.
- Cognitive reappraisal methods
- Simulation exercise in crises
- Reflective decision making models

Leadership development pipelines might be useful in organizations that work in a volatile environment, by incorporating EI competencies.

VI. LIMITATIONS

This study has a number of limitations in terms of its methodology, which have to be mentioned.

To begin with, a structured questionnaire was employed, however, the study lacks the description of the measurement tool, scale validation procedure, and reliability coefficients (e.g., Cronbachs alpha) and construct validity test. The lack of the instrument transparency decreases the replicability and poses a question about the robustness of the measurements.

Second, purposive sampling is associated with sampling bias. The results might not be applicable to the rest of the population of Indian managers or in an international setting as respondents were not chosen using random probability methods, hence, they were chosen depending on their availability and relevance.

Third, the statistical method does have weaknesses. Although correlation and ANOVA were used, more sophisticated inferential methods like regression analysis or structural equation modeling (SEM) would have been a better way of gain causal inference and building construct-level validation. Also, there are hypothesis testing frameworks that have inconsistencies in the formulation of the null hypothesis.

Fourth, the research is based solely on self-reported data measured using only one survey instrument at one time. This enhances a possibility of Common Method Variance (CMV) that can exaggerate perceived relationships between variables.

Lastly, cross-sectional design prevents the possibility of making causal conclusions about the long-term effect of EI on leadership performance and crisis decision-making. Probability sampling methods, proven EI scales (e.g., MSCEIT or EQ-i 2.0), multi-source design, and longitudinal study designs must be implemented in future research to increase the level of methodological rigor.

VII. CONCLUSION

This paper is relevant to the existing literature on the topic of Emotional Intelligence (EI) because it empirically confirms the importance of the construct in terms of leadership performance in Indian companies. Not only the positive relationship between EI and leadership traits is confirmed but also the existing theory is furthered because of how the EI impacts crisis-based decision-making approaches and how it affects the formation of team climate. Combining the four-branch EI theory and the results of leadership behaviour, the research offers a



situationalised model, which connects the emotional competencies to the organisational productivity and the adaptive resolution of problems.

Theoretically, the study reinforces the claim that EI is a behavioural skill that mediates the effectiveness of leadership over the cognitive intelligence and technical competence. It endorses the modern leadership propositions that focus on emotional regulation, interpersonal awareness, and adaptive cognition as key factors influencing transformational results.

In practice, the findings provide practical implications to organisations. Companies ought to integrate EI-based testing in leadership selection, training, as well as succession planning. Developmental programs based on EI can help develop leaders with more efficient skills on managing crises, enhance integration within their teams, and establish psychologically safe workplaces. Emotionally intelligent leaders have been shown to have excellent ability to reframe issues, manage their emotional reactions, and stay productive in dynamic, high-risk business settings.

The current work places EI as a supporting leadership quality and a strategic ability that is needed to ensure sustainable organisational performance.

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