



The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Shaping Leadership Styles Across Various Professional Contexts: A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

Effective leadership is a key factor in organizational success, and emotional intelligence plays a vital role in shaping a leader's leadership style. This study systematically reviews the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership styles by analyzing 15 academic journals. The findings indicate that leaders with high emotional intelligence tend to adopt a transformational leadership style, which emphasizes inspiration, motivation, and the development of team members. Additionally, emotional intelligence also influences other leadership styles, such as transactional, democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire, each having varying impacts on leadership effectiveness and organizational well-being. These findings highlight the importance of incorporating emotional intelligence development into leadership training programs to foster a more harmonious and productive work environment.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a complex and multidimensional process in which a leader plays a role in influencing, managing relationships, and driving change to achieve common goals within a dynamic environment. Leadership is not solely centered on the individual as a leader, but also encompasses interactions with followers, the organization, and the broader society (Luedi, 2022). Every organization, no matter how small, requires effective leadership, as leadership is considered the primary force in driving change and achieving success (Djafri et al., 2022). Therefore, leadership is not merely a position or title, but a set of characteristics that enables someone to become a role model and have influence within an activity (Yunianto, 2018).

The psychological approach suggests that leadership is not only an innate talent, but also a skill that can be developed through experience and learning (Susanti, 2019). Leadership effectiveness greatly depends on the model or leadership style applied, which reflects a combination of philosophy, skills, traits, and strategies in guiding followers (Kamal et al., 2019). Generally, leadership styles are categorized into several types, including transactional, transformational, democratic, authoritarian, charismatic, and bureaucratic (Abdullahi, 2020). Each of these leadership styles has distinct characteristics and impacts on both individual and organizational performance. Leaders who adopt a transformational leadership style tend to be more visionary, inspiring, and focused on team member development, whereas transactional leadership focuses more on systems of rewards and punishments. Democratic leaders are more inclusive in decision-making, while authoritarian leaders are more control-oriented and directive (Hanafi, 2018).

In leadership dynamics, emotional intelligence becomes a key factor in determining a leader's effectiveness (Welch, 2024). Emotional intelligence was initially associated with the concept of Intelligence Quotient (IQ) and social intelligence, referring to the ability to monitor one's own emotions and those of others. This concept was later further developed by Daniel Goleman into four main components which include self-awareness as the ability to recognize emotions and understand their impact on feelings and decision-making, self-management as the ability to control emotions and restrain disruptive impulses, social awareness as the ability to sense others' emotions, understand their perspectives and show genuine concern for their issues, and relationship management as the ability to resolve conflicts and handle complex social situations effectively (Thapa & Parimoo, 2022).

Several studies have shown that emotional intelligence significantly influences a person's leadership style. Leaders with high emotional intelligence tend to adopt transformational leadership, which focuses on inspiration, motivation, and the development of their team members (Lee et al., 2022). With strong emotional intelligence, leaders can build trust, enhance employee engagement, and promote organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), which in turn increases productivity and job satisfaction (Santa et al., 2023).

On the other hand, transactional leadership, which involves giving rewards and punishments based on behaviors that affect organizational goals,

also requires a high level of emotional intelligence to be applied effectively. Transactional leaders with strong emotional intelligence are able to understand employees' motivations and adjust their approach to giving rewards or corrections according to the employees' emotional states (Milhem et al., 2024). Conversely, transactional leaders with low emotional intelligence tend to be rigid in applying rules and are less considerate of the emotional impact of their leadership style, which can lead to increased job stress and decreased employee motivation (Moon, 2021).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotional intelligence also plays a role in autocratic and laissez-faire leadership, although its impact may differ. Autocratic leaders with high emotional intelligence are better at maintaining effective communication with subordinates, despite exercising strict control over decision-making (Miller, 2023). They can manage their own emotions and understand how their decisions affect the team, thus reducing resistance from subordinates. Meanwhile, laissez-faire leaders with high emotional intelligence are more adaptable to the needs of their teams, ensuring that even though they grant autonomy to subordinates, they still provide necessary guidance and support.

From the explanations above, it is evident that emotional intelligence is not merely an additional factor in leadership, but a key element that determines how a leader interacts with their team and how they confront organizational challenges. In various leadership styles—whether transformational, transactional, democratic, autocratic, or laissez-faire—emotional intelligence plays a role in determining a leader's effectiveness in carrying out their duties. Therefore, developing emotional intelligence should be an integral part of leadership training, enabling leaders to better manage their own emotions, understand others' needs, and create a more harmonious and productive work environment. With strong emotional intelligence, a leader can not only achieve better results for the organization but also enhance the well-being and job satisfaction of all team members.

METHODOLOGY

The stages of conducting a systematic review consist of three phases: the planning phase, which includes formulating research questions, setting eligibility criteria, and developing a methodology protocol to ensure a structured study; the conducting phase, which involves identifying, selecting studies, performing critical appraisal, data extraction, and synthesis; and lastly, the reporting phase, which focuses on interpreting and writing the results of the review (Wibowo & Putri, 2021). In this study, the journals used were selected based on previous research discussing the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership styles in various professional contexts. The journals included in this review are publications from 2015 to 2024, considering that recent studies are generally more relevant and valid compared to older studies, which may have been updated or contradicted by newer findings.

Search Procedure

The systematic review process began with formulating the research question using the SPIDER method (Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, Design, Evaluation, Research Type). The main research question in this systematic review is: *“How does emotional intelligence contribute to shaping leadership styles among leaders within organizations?”* Subsequently, relevant keywords were identified to align with the research topic. The search was conducted using a systematic search protocol that combined various terms such as *“Emotional Intelligence,” “EQ,” “Emotional Quotient,” “Affective Intelligence,” “Leadership Style,”* and *“Leadership Effectiveness.”* These keywords were used to search academic literature through credible databases, including Scopus, Google Scholar, and Rayyan.

After the search phase, all identified journals were downloaded and then checked for duplication using Rayyan, to avoid including the same article more than once. Articles that were not relevant to the research focus were eliminated based on their titles and abstracts. Subsequently, the remaining articles were analyzed thoroughly to ensure they met the predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. After the selection process, only 15 journals met the criteria and were relevant in discussing the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership styles within quantitative research, out of a total of 247 journals initially found. The selection process of these journals is illustrated in the PRISMA diagram in Figure 1, to provide a systematic overview of the steps taken in study selection.

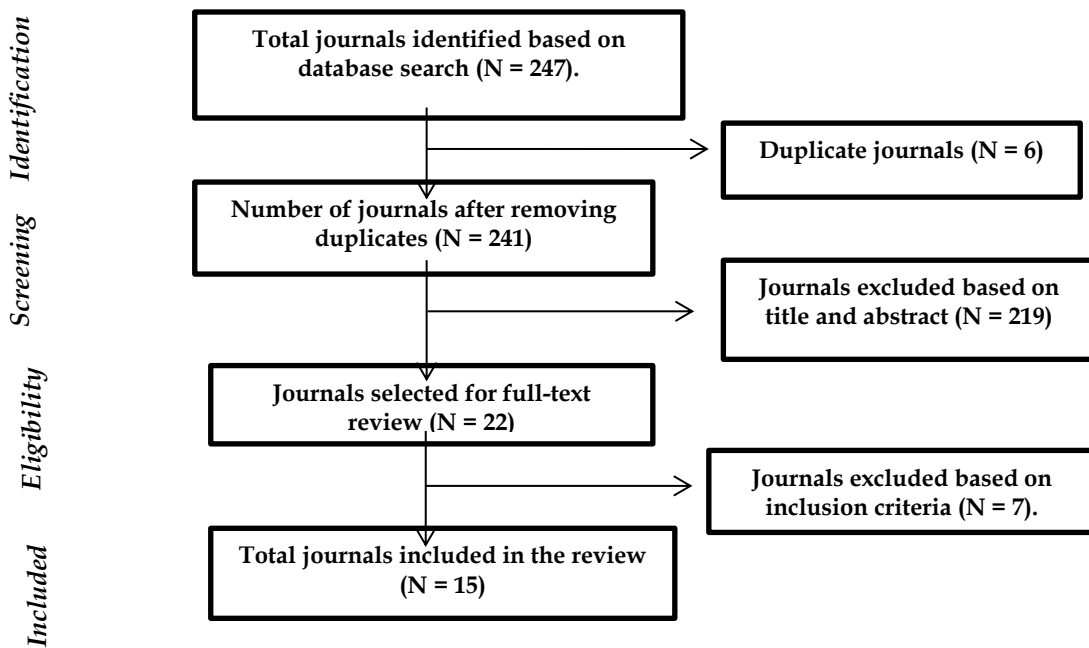


Figure 1. Flow Diagram of the Article Selection Process for the Systematic Literature Review stages

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Leadership style is a behavioral pattern that a leader consistently uses to influence, guide, and direct their team members (Udovita, 2020). This style is influenced by the leader's personality, experience, as well as the surrounding social and cultural environment. Leadership itself refers to an individual's ability to be a role model and a driving force in collective activities (Yunianto, 2018). Psychologically, leadership style is formed through the interaction of internal factors such as intelligence and thinking patterns, and external factors such as upbringing and social environment (Barsandji et al., 2023). Therefore, each person's leadership style can differ depending on their personality and life background (Rahayu & Agustina, 2022). This style can also change according to the situation and values that are considered effective within an organization (Susanti, 2019).

According to Kamal et al. (2019), leadership style is the method or behavior pattern used by leaders to influence others in order to achieve collective goals. This style is formed from a combination of philosophy, attitude, traits, and skills possessed by the leader. Some of the known leadership styles include transactional, transformational, democratic, authoritarian, charismatic, and bureaucratic (Abdullahi, 2020). Transformational leadership style has become one of the most commonly used approaches in organizations today. Leaders with this style are typically capable of inspiring and motivating their team, as well as building strong emotional connections. They use stories, humor, and visualization to inspire enthusiasm, rather than forcing or punishing (Baig et al., 2021). The effectiveness of transformational leadership can also be explained through the Pygmalion effect theory. This theory states that high expectations from leaders can enhance motivation and performance of team members, especially when accompanied by trust and real support. In contrast, laissez-faire leadership style (which involves minimal direction and involvement) often reduces work morale and team satisfaction (Baig et al., 2021).

In the ever-changing work environment, a new approach has emerged: flexible leadership. This style emphasizes the leader's ability to adapt their approach and strategies based on the needs of the team and the situation at hand. Flexible leaders typically have good self-awareness, clear communication skills, and are quick to make decisions that align with the conditions (Rachmad & Yoesoep, 2022). To support leadership effectiveness, emotional intelligence is necessary. Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and express emotions, both one's own and those of others. Individuals with high emotional intelligence tend to be sensitive to social situations, able to maintain self-control, and exhibit a strong sense of optimism and empathy (Serrat, 2017).

According to Goleman, emotional intelligence consists of five important components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. All of these aspects are crucial in the process of leading and interacting with others (Zhafari et al., 2020). People with good emotional intelligence are also capable of understanding the meaning of the emotions they feel and managing

them positively, which aids in personal growth and social relationships (Dewi & Tenaya, 2017).

Therefore, leaders who are able to develop their emotional intelligence will be more effective leaders. The right leadership style, when supported by high emotional intelligence, becomes the key to creating a healthy and productive work environment (Arkadius et al., 2023).

Table 1. Research Result on Systematic Literature Review: Emotional Intelligence in Shaping Leadership Styles Across Various Professional Contexts

No	Author(s)	Subjects	Emotional Intelligence Aspects	Leadership Style
1	Asmamaw & Semela (2023)	210 academic leaders in higher education institutes in Ethiopia	Self-awareness, emotion regulation, empathy, and social skills	Transformational, transactional, laissez-faire leadership
2	Pulido et al. (2024)	63 work teams from various sectors in Spain	Emotional awareness and regulation of self and others	Transformational leadership
3	Doan et al. (2024)	632 managers of companies in Central Northern Vietnam	Emotional perception, emotional use, emotional understanding, and emotional regulation	Transformational leadership
4	Aakansha et al. (2022)	131 senior managers in IT companies in the NCR region, India	Emotion assessment, emotional expression, emotion regulation, and emotional utilization	Transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership
5	Sshaaban (2018)	33,546 managers in the military industry in Egypt	Emotional attention, emotional clarity, and emotional repair	Transformational and transactional leadership
6	Potter et al. (2018)	Project managers in the industry of New Zealand and England	Self-awareness, emotional regulation, social awareness, and relationship management	Transformational leadership

7	Frixou et al. (2020)	1,093 permanent and contract nurses in state hospitals across Cyprus	Self-assessment, assessing others' emotions, emotion regulation, and emotional utilization	Transformational leadership
8	Apore & Asamoah (2019)	80 unit nursing leaders	Emotion assessment, emotion regulation, and emotional use	Transformational leadership
9	Dartey & Mekpor (2017)	234 banking employees in Ghana assessing their leaders	Emotionally aware managers, open to feedback, and self-confident in their duties	Transformational and transactional leadership
10	Yıldızbas (2017)	80 student teachers in a private university pedagogy program	Optimism or mood regulation, emotional utilization, emotion assessment, and emotional expression	Democratic and autocratic leadership
11	Tyczkowski et al. (2015)	77 nurse managers working in 6 major healthcare systems in the Midwest	Self-motivation, frustration tolerance, emotional control, stress management, empathy, and hope	Transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership
12	Rinfret et al. (2020)	171 employees	Managers recognize and evaluate emotional intelligence and leadership during organizational change	Transformational leadership
13	Görgens-Ekermans et al. (2021)	85 leader-follower pairs in higher education and financial services	Self-awareness, emotion management, social awareness, and relationship management	Transformational leadership
14	Lee et al. (2022)	348 real estate agents in Kaohsiung city	Identifying others' emotions, using emotions, and	Transformational and transactional leadership

			managing one's own emotions	
15	Hajnicl & Vučenović (2020)	177 mid- and lower-level leaders across 16 organizations	Ability to understand and recognize others' emotions, express and label emotions well, and regulate and manage emotions	Transformational leadership

Table 1 shows that emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in shaping the leadership style applied by a leader. The studies summarized in the table indicate that various aspects of emotional intelligence, such as self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and social skills, are strongly correlated with specific leadership styles, including transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, democratic, and autocratic. Leaders with high emotional intelligence tend to be more effective in applying transformational leadership styles. Research indicates that self-awareness and the ability to manage emotions enable leaders to build more harmonious working relationships, inspire, and enhance team motivation. Transformational leaders with high emotional intelligence are also better able to increase employee engagement, build trust, and create a work environment conducive to both individual and organizational growth (Asmamaw & Semela, 2023; Pulido et al., 2024; Doan et al., 2024).

In addition to transformational leadership, emotional intelligence also plays an important role in transactional leadership. Studies show that transactional leaders with high emotional intelligence are more flexible in managing their subordinates' motivation, adjusting the reward and punishment system based on employees' emotional conditions, thereby creating a more balanced and productive work environment. Thus, emotional intelligence allows transactional leaders to maintain managerial effectiveness without neglecting employees' emotional well-being. In contrast, leaders with low emotional intelligence tend to apply transactional leadership rigidly, focusing primarily on the reward and punishment system without considering employees' emotional aspects, which can reduce emotional engagement and lower intrinsic motivation within the team (Shaaban, 2018; Dartey & Mekpor, 2017; Lee et al., 2022).

In the context of democratic leadership, leaders with high emotional intelligence tend to be more optimistic, capable of expressing emotions well, and have a deeper understanding of others' feelings. This ability allows them to actively involve team members in decision-making processes, increasing a sense of ownership and responsibility within the organization. Meanwhile, in autocratic leadership, emotional intelligence still plays a role, albeit with a different approach. Autocratic leaders with high emotional intelligence are better able to maintain effective communication with subordinates, reduce potential

conflicts, and ensure that decisions made are more readily accepted by the team (Yıldızbas, 2017).

Furthermore, emotional intelligence also affects the effectiveness of laissez-faire leadership. Although this leadership style provides greater freedom to team members, leaders with high emotional intelligence still play an important role in providing the necessary guidance and support. This allows for a balance between individual freedom and collective responsibility, ensuring the continued effectiveness of the organization (Aakash et al., 2022; Tyczkowski et al., 2015).

Overall, the findings in the table support the idea that emotional intelligence is not merely a supplementary factor in leadership, but a fundamental element that determines a leader's effectiveness. High emotional intelligence enables leaders to be more adaptive in managing their personal emotions and understanding the emotional dynamics within their team. This not only impacts leadership effectiveness but also contributes to increased productivity, job satisfaction, and the overall well-being of organizational members. Therefore, the development of emotional intelligence should be an integral part of leadership training to cultivate competent, responsive leaders capable of creating a harmonious work environment oriented toward achieving collective goals.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Emotional intelligence is a crucial element in leadership effectiveness. Leadership is not merely about holding a position; rather, it reflects an individual's ability to influence, guide, and direct a team toward the achievement of shared goals. The leadership style adopted by a leader is significantly influenced by their level of emotional intelligence. Leaders with high emotional intelligence tend to be more adaptive, communicative, and capable of creating a positive and productive work environment. Therefore, a leader's success in navigating organizational dynamics greatly depends on their ability to understand and manage emotions—both their own and those of others.

Considering the vital role of emotional intelligence in shaping effective leadership styles, the development of this aspect should be a priority across various professional contexts. In organizational and corporate settings, leadership training should not only focus on technical skills but also incorporate emotional intelligence development, including self-awareness, empathy, emotional regulation, and interpersonal skills. Leaders with strong emotional intelligence are more likely to foster a healthy work culture, enhance employee loyalty, and boost team productivity and performance. In the field of education, educators and institutional leaders must recognize emotional intelligence as a foundational element in creating a positive learning environment. Emotionally attuned teachers and education staff are better able to build supportive relationships with students and foster inclusive classroom settings. Therefore, emotional intelligence training should be an integral part of professional development in the education sector.

In the public sector and government leadership, emotional intelligence plays a key role in building public trust, maintaining social stability, and resolving conflicts constructively. Leadership development programs for civil servants and public officials should thus include emotional intelligence as a core competency.

In social and healthcare services, such as hospitals or rehabilitation centers, emotional intelligence is essential for managing crises, handling high work pressure, and interacting with emotionally vulnerable individuals. Emotionally competent leaders can maintain team performance and deliver empathetic and professional care.

In general, the development of emotional intelligence should be carried out systematically through training, psychological supervision, and self-reflection. Organizations across various sectors need to create environments that support emotional growth through open communication, appreciation of diversity, and attention to mental health. By doing so, leadership grounded in emotional intelligence will contribute to the sustainable achievement of goals and promote collective well-being.

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FURTHER STUDY

This study still has limitations so that further research is still needed on the topic “The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Shaping Leadership Styles Across Various Professional Contexts: A Systematic Review”.

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