

IMPACT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF A LEADER
ON EMPLOYEES/TEAM

by

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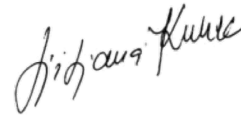
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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family,

whose unwavering support and encouragement

have been the foundation of my academic journey.

To all the leaders who strive to lead with emotional intelligence,

inspiring their teams to achieve greatness.

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all those who have contributed to the successful completion of this doctoral dissertation. This academic journey wouldn't have been possible without the support, guidance, and encouragement of numerous individuals who have played pivotal roles throughout this process.

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Finally, I thank all the scholars whose work has preceded and informed this study. Standing on the shoulders of giants in the fields of emotional intelligence and leadership research has enabled me to contribute meaningfully to this important body of knowledge.

ABSTRACT

IMPACT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF A LEADER ON EMPLOYEES/TEAM

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2025

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Research Aim: This investigation examines how leaders' Emotional Intelligence (EI) competencies—specifically self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills—influence team performance, how satisfied employees are, and organizational outcomes across diverse industry sectors. The research addresses a critical gap in understanding the mechanisms through which leader EI translates into tangible organizational benefits.

Methods: A mixed-methods research design was employed, combining quantitative surveys (n=200) with qualitative semi-structured interviews (n=12) across technology, healthcare, finance, and manufacturing sectors. The quantitative component utilized the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i 2.0; $\alpha = 0.89$) and Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ Form 5X; $\alpha = 0.91$). Semi-structured interviews explored contextual factors influencing EI application in leadership. Data analysis included correlation

analysis, multiple regression modeling, moderation analysis, and thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework.

Key Findings: Statistical analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between leaders' overall EI and how teams perform ($r = 0.67, p < 0.01$), with empathy demonstrating the strongest relationship with employee job satisfaction ($r = 0.58, p < 0.01$). Survey results indicated 78% of participants reported improved team morale under emotionally intelligent leadership. Regression analysis confirmed that leader EI significantly predicted how teams perform ($\beta = 0.52, p < 0.001, R^2 = 0.45$). Four primary mechanisms emerged from qualitative analysis: (1) empathy-driven communication fostering trust, (2) emotional regulation enabling composed decision-making, (3) self-awareness facilitating adaptive leadership, and (4) social skills promoting collaborative environments. Organizational culture significantly moderated the EI-performance relationship ($\Delta R^2 = 0.04, p < 0.05$).

Theoretical Contributions: This research extends Goleman's (1995) EI framework by empirically demonstrating the mediating role of trust and psychological safety in the EI-performance relationship. The study contributes to transformational leadership theory by identifying specific EI competencies that enhance leader effectiveness across organizational contexts.

Practical Implications: Findings inform evidence-based leadership development programs, suggesting that organizations should prioritize EI assessment in leadership selection and invest in targeted training for empathy and emotional regulation

competencies. The research provides actionable recommendations for HR practitioners seeking to enhance effective leadership and team outcomes.

Keywords: *Emotional intelligence, leadership, how teams perform, how satisfied employees are, organizational behavior, mixed-methods research*

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Consider the best boss you've ever had. Pretty sure, they were not only smart. They got you. They had good sense of the things that drove you, knew when you were struggling and could bring out the best in you. That's emotional intelligence in action. Leadership used to be simpler. Or at least we thought it was. The boss gave orders. Employees followed them. Performance was about efficiency and output. But somewhere along the way, we realized that this model was broken. It wasn't delivering the results organizations needed, and it definitely wasn't making employees happy. Then along came emotional intelligence. The term was developed by Salovey and Mayer in 1990. Goleman made it famous in 1995. And suddenly we had language for something that many had sensed all along. The ability to understand and manage emotions, one's own and those of others, is very important to leadership. Now why is EI so important? Look at today's workplace. Teams are global. People work remotely. Diversity is standard, not exception. A leader who cannot read emotional cues, traverse cross-cultural communication, build trust across distance is going to fail in such an environment. It's that simple. The research backs this up. Strong EI leaders lead to better team performance. They retain talented employees. They adapt more successfully to change (Goleman, 1998; Multi-Health Systems, 2011; Bradberry & Greaves, 2009). Those are not small effects; these are the differences between teams that succeed and teams that fall apart. But here's the thing. So if we know that EI matters, we

don't quite know exactly how it works. What mechanisms actually work? Does it function a single way across all industries? What role does culture play for success? These are the questions that motivated me to write this. This thesis studies the impact of leader emotional intelligence on employees and teams. I employ a mixed-methods approach — combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews — to provide a thorough image. The goal is not purely academic. I'd like to deliver actionable suggestions for organizations that they can actually implement. Herein lies the story of this chapter. In Section 1.2, the research problem is outlined--specific knowledge gaps that need to be filled. Section 1.3 sets forth my aims and objectives. Section 1.4 sets out the specific research questions. Why this is important for readers is addressed in Section 1.5. And Section 1.6 previews the structure of the entire dissertation.

1.2 Research Problem

Yet while there is increasing recognition of emotional intelligence as an essential leadership competency, there is a dearth of information on how leader EI impacts team outcomes in diverse organizational contexts. Although previous research has established an association between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness (Goleman, 1998; Multi-Health Systems, 2011), information on the actual pathways by which leader EI affects team performance, employee satisfaction, and outcomes is fragmented and, at times, contradictory. This research is inspired by a number of interrelated issues. To begin with, the studies available are generally based, in large part, on Western organizational contexts, which inhibits the knowledge transfer to countries with diverse cultural

backgrounds. As Ashkanasy and Daus (2005) stated, emotional expression and interpretation are culturally bound and hence the association between leader EI and team achievements may be culture bound. This limitation is especially notable from the perspective of more highly globalized business operations, and the heterogeneity of a modern workforce. Second, a dearth of research on the contextual moderators that could reinforce or weaken the EI-effective leadership relationship exists. Organizational culture and industry, team composition, and volatility in the external environment (Wong & Law, 2002) may all affect the extent to which leader emotional intelligence influences team outcomes. However, without recognizing these moderating factors, practitioners cannot provide direction needed to customize leadership-development practice according to organizational contexts. Third, most of current literature is based on self-report measures of emotional intelligence: there has been widespread concern regarding common method bias and the possibility of differences between their actual EI competencies and their perceived EI capabilities (Antonakis, Ashkanasy, & Dasborough, 2009). Although self-perception is important, it is still not well understood how team members perceive leader EI and the relationship between perceptions of leader EI and team outcomes. Fourth, there is a lack of expertise on how leader EI affects team performance. Although correlational studies have established relationships between EI and various performance indicators, the precise mediating mechanisms of these associations—eg, trust-building, communication strengthening, conflict resolution, and motivational levels—need to be further documented (George, 2000). These mechanisms are critical in developing interventions and leadership development programs that will be effective. Fifth, there are fewer quantitative and

qualitative research methods in the exploration of leader EI. Statistical evidence of associations between variables has been provided by quantitative studies. Qualitative studies, meanwhile, have provided rich descriptions of leader experiences. Nevertheless, there are limited studies that systematically combine the two approaches to provide an extensive, comprehensive picture that integrates both the magnitude of effects and the lived experiences of the leaders enacting EI in organizations (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). Such literature gaps lead to theoretical and practical challenges. In principle, incomplete knowledge about the EI-effective leadership relationship reduces the development of integrative models that can explain and predict leader behaviour and team achievements. However, there is currently little evidence-based policy on identifying and building the required skills needed for leadership development based on EI and developing interventions in support of that. This dissertation presents the research problem of the importance of emotional intelligence in leadership but thus lacks empirical data on how leader EI competencies affect team performance and how satisfied employees are in different organisational contexts, on what mechanisms mediate these relationships and on how contextual factors moderate the strength of EI effects. This study fills these gaps through rigorous mixed-methods research that integrates quantitative measurement with qualitative exploration.

1.3 Research Aim and Objectives

The ultimate objective of this research is to examine the relationship between leader emotional intelligence and the achievement, satisfaction, and performance in teams and to

explore the processes and conditions of how this relationship is developed. This objective is achieved through a multimethod, mixed-methods exploratory study with quantitative survey research and qualitative interviews. For this purpose, the research is directed by the aforementioned specific objectives:

Objective 1: To investigate how leader emotional intelligence and teams performing outcomes. This purpose provides the opportunity to assess the EI competencies of organizational leaders along with the degree to which EI competencies correlate with objective and subjective ratings of how effective teams are, such as productivity, quality of work, accomplishment of job objectives, and the amount of team cohesion.

Objective 2: Explore the relationship between leader emotional intelligence and employee job satisfaction. This goal studies the relationship between some particular EI competencies — especially empathy and interpersonal skills — and several variables which predict employee satisfaction like supervision and working conditions, satisfaction with work experience, and overall job satisfaction.

Objective 3: To find the role played by context in mediating the associations between leader EI and team outcomes. This aim looks at the impact the effects of organizational culture, industry sector, team size, and other contextual factors on the strength and type of the EI-performance relation.

Objective 4: To examine what issues or hurdles might leaders navigate while acquiring and exercising emotional intelligence competencies. This aim combines

qualitative interviews of organizational leaders to reveal the practical challenges in the implementation of EI in practice in the context of a real organizational setting.

Objective 5: Converging quantitative and qualitative results to achieve a holistic understanding on leader EI effectiveness. This is to systematically compare and synthesize survey results and interview insights into integrated conclusions and practical recommendations.

These objectives have been created to address the research gaps highlighted in the previous section and provide implementable recommendations for organizational practice. Therefore, the study seeks through the application of rigorous mixed-methods to achieve these objectives to make meaningful contributions to academia from research and practice regarding leadership development.

1.4 Research Questions

In accordance with the research aims, the following research questions serve as the basis for the current study:

RQ1: What is the impact of the leader's emotional intelligence on team performance and productivity? This question probes the central nexus of leader EI and team outputs by interrogating whether and how leaders with greater EI capabilities produce better outcomes among their followers. The problem represents both a quantitative assessment of the relationship, and a qualitative examination of the processes by which EI leads to performance.

RQ2: What is the relationship between leader EI and employee job satisfaction? This question looks at how emotional intelligence of the leader and the happiness of employees are related, recognizing that satisfied employees are essential for organizational success. The item investigates which qualities of EI actually are closely related with contentment in employees and how leaders' involvement influences them.

RQ3: How does organizational culture and context moderate the EI-leadership effectiveness relationship? This question respects that the effects of leaders' EI are not single to any given context. Through analysis of moderating variables, the study contributes a more complete picture of when and where EI becomes particularly effective and results in more purposeful interventions focused on leader development.

RQ4: In what ways are leaders faced with the challenges it is in order to develop and employ EI competencies? This item shifts attention to the practicalities of emotionally intelligent leadership, highlighting the obstacles that leaders face in trying to apply EI in organizations. Understanding these challenges is crucial if you wish real-world applications of development programs to be planned.

These research questions together offer a framework for understanding the complicated interrelationship between leader emotional intelligence and performance outcomes. The questions develop from primary relationships (RQ1, RQ2) to contextual complexities (RQ3) and practical implications (RQ4) within the context of the study (and all subsequent questions) to allow for wide, thorough coverage of the research domain.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study contributes considerably to academic study and organizational operational application. The study's importance lies with theoretical, methodological, and practical aspects, which are discussed below. Theoretical Significance: My research adds to the theoretical grounding of emotional intelligence with respect to leadership settings in several significant ways. First, through the analysis of the relationship between leader EI and team outcomes in multiple industry sectors, the research provides evidence for the generalization of EI results beyond the particular contexts within which the phenomenon has been previously investigated. This cross-sector comparison extends existing theoretical models by highlighting both universal and context-specific dimensions of EI-efficacious leadership practice. Second, in extending Goleman's (1995, 1998) emotional intelligence framework, the investigation empirically identifies the processes by which leader EI converts into team outcomes. Analyzing mediating processes, including trust-building, communication enhancement, and conflict management, the research strengthens underlying theoretical models that explain not only that EI matters but how and why it matters. Third, examining contextual moderators adds to contingency strategies in leadership theory. The study thus breaks from the reductive premise of universal EI benefits and advances more complex understandings of EI-context interaction by discovering conditions under which EI effects are enhanced or reduced. Methodologically important: The research design in this mixed methods study demonstrates the significance of combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies in the field of leadership research. Quantitative approaches produce statistical evidence of relationships and enable

generalizations; more flexible and rich qualitative methods, in which process and experiential dimensions can be deeply imaged. The integration of these two perspectives methodically offers a methodological ideal for further exploration of emotional intelligence and leadership in the future. In addition, the study uses multiple sources of data—leader self-reports, team member evaluations, interview data—so common method bias is minimized and triangulated evidence is offered. These multifactorial studies take on the methodological limitations of previous studies that used mainly single-source self-report data at best. Relevance: The implications for actionable knowledge of this research lie significantly with respect to organizational success in their effort to develop effective leadership behaviours as well as team effectiveness. First, the results help to refine leadership selection by identifying which particular EI competencies are most closely related to favorable team outcomes. Such findings can guide selection criteria and assessments for leadership roles within organizations. Second, this research yields evidence-based guidelines for leadership development programs. This study enhances targeted and efficient development investments by delineating which EI competencies are most salient and in what context. By identifying competencies that are already delivering results, organizations can have the knowledge required to focus on focused EI development rather than trying to generalize the EI improvement process. Third, qualitative findings on challenges in EI application offer a realistic perception of implementation barriers. This is something we can use to inform the design of development programs that expect and solve real-world hurdles, making the transfer of skills to the workplace more likely to succeed. Fourth, the contextual moderators allow organizations to customize leadership

development and selection strategies for organizational contexts. Instead of using one-size-fits-all methods, organizations may explore how their particular culture, industry, and team attributes should inform their approach to emotionally intelligent leadership.

1.6 Thesis Structure

The six chapters of this thesis carry its own intended use and focus for meeting the aims of the study. The form is expected to offer a logical movement from theory, through empirical inquiry, to practical advice.

Chapter 1- Introduction sets the stage for the study by highlighting the role of emotional intelligence in current situations of leadership. This chapter addresses the research problem, states the aims and objectives of the study, introduces the research questions, explains the main contribution of the study, and gives this introduction on the dissertation structure. And then it grounds the research in larger discussions about effective leadership and organisational success.

In Chapter 2 of the paper, a thorough review (literature review) has been given on literature on emotional intelligence and leadership. Here we consider the principal theoretical models in explaining emotional intelligence, such as Goleman's competency model, Salovey and Mayer's ability model, and Bar-On's emotional-social intelligence model. The review presents rigorous review of literature on the components, leadership

styles, and relationship between EI and outcomes. Moreover, the literature is combined in the chapter to obtain a theoretical framework and specific hypotheses that drive the investigation through the empirical findings. Methodology:

In the 3rd chapter, methodology is depicted, which involves the research design and methods used in the study. This chapter justifies the mixed-methods approach, gives the two aspects the quantitative and qualitative nature, details participant recruitment and sampling procedures, outlines the data collection instruments, and gives the analytical techniques applied to the data. The chapter further discusses questions of reliability, validity, and ethical considerations in the research.

Chapter 4 Results of results includes quantitative and qualitative analyses. The qualitative part is their data from the interviews and also thematic analysis with heavy reliance on quotes from study participants. And this chapter unites quantitative and qualitative results to answer the study's questions to a greater extent.

Chapter 5 Discussion Analysis of the results in relation to that research questions and their related literature. The chapter explains the finding, provides implications (confirm, expand on), challenges and/or expands the research; offers some insights for an organisation manager or leader. More importantly, the debate looks into how leader EI drives team outputs and the contextual variables that moderate these relationships. Summary, Implications, and Recommendations

Chapter 6 finishes the dissertation with a description of the main findings including theoretical, practical and policy implication statement limitations and directions for future research. The chapter offers concrete guidance for firms interested in utilizing emotional

intelligence to improve leadership effectiveness and team performance. In addition, a consolidated reference list and appendices with research instruments and supplementary materials are provided at the conclusion of the dissertation.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Research into emotional intelligence draws upon theoretical perspectives from various fields, such as psychology, organizational behavior, and neuroscience. This section of the paper presents the literature on the foundational theories of emotional intelligence which have influenced a growing understanding of it, its application in leadership, and its importance. By closely exploring these frameworks, a conceptual framework may be developed to examine the impact of leader EI on team outcomes. The basis of emotional intelligence was built upon limitations of prior insights into intelligence that relied on predominantly cognitive skills. The early intelligence theorists known as Thorndike (1920) and Gardner (1983) acknowledged social and personal intelligences would serve as a foundation for later emotional intelligence theories. His concept of social intelligence — the ability to understand and manage people — anticipated many aspects of today's EI frameworks. Salovey and Mayer (1990) formally adopted the term 'emotional intelligence', defining it as the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to utilize the information to shape thinking and action. This definition conceptualized EI as a type of intelligence—a collection of mental abilities—rather than a collection of personality traits or behavioral tendencies. It is particularly relevant for measurement and development, as this ability-based picture allows assessment of EI via performance tests, then training on these test cases, which may be

helpful in establishing future development (Wong et al., 2019). The popularization of emotional intelligence later on, notably during Goleman (1995)'s bestselling book propelled this concept out of academic stadia with its influential and influential impact. Goleman's work began to build upon Salovey and Mayer's earlier work, by proposing a wider conceptualization that covered traits as well as skills. In practice, we find that this broader model — especially when adapted to workplace contexts (Goleman, 1998) — has been a key driver of organizational models of leadership development and selection.

2.1.1 Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Model

Daniel Goleman's emotional intelligence model, which is broadly utilized and used in the practice world, is an organization commonly cited and accepted framework of how to manage emotions in the workplace. Emotional intelligence is defined by Goleman (1995, 1998) as a series of skills that influence the degree by which a person is skilled at managing himself or herself and with others. The model has undergone several variations and the most relevant version now includes four domains and twenty related competencies. The first domain, Self-Awareness, includes emotional self-awareness, accurate self-assessment, and self-confidence competencies. Emotional self-awareness is knowing our emotions and their impact on task achievement and the people we interact with. Proper self-evaluation involves self-awareness about strengths and weaknesses and receptivity to feedback. Self-confidence has to do with how confident you are in yourself and your ability to handle everything. High on self-awareness, I would describe the leaders with this quality — they have clarity on what they value, what they want, understand how their emotions

affect what they do, and have realistic views of their abilities. The second domain that consists of emotional self-control and transparency and adaptability on one hand and achievement orientation, initiative, and optimism on the other. Self-control is being able to manage disruptive emotions and impulses — to have the ability to make yourself stay in order. Transparency means to act with moral backbone and upholds principles in doing so. Adaptability includes ability to meet new challenges with or without the right decisions or actions. Achievement orientation is about wanting to do great things and striving to deliver on internal levels of excellence. Initiative is the willingness to pursue opportunities. It is optimism to keep striving for objectives, with no end in sight. This means, in the third domain, Social Awareness (Empathy, Organizational Awareness, and Service orientation). Empathy allows you to sense and take an active interest in others' feelings and perspectives. Organizational awareness is in reading the emotional tides and power dynamics of a group. We have a social focus; Leaders that are highly socially aware are those who attune to other people's emotional states, learn about organizational processes, and prioritize stakeholder success, the report says. The fourth domain, Relationship Management, encompasses inspirational leadership, influence, developing others, change catalyst, conflict management, building bonds, and teamwork. Each of these competencies combines leadership leadership through influence and guidance on people and teams, persuading and coalition-building people to action, developing capabilities in others, leading and governing change, resolving interpersonal conflict and differences between parties, building trust, and collaboration. In many contexts, Goleman's framework is particularly influential because it links emotional competencies to work outcomes.

However, Boyatzis, Goleman and Rhee (2000) found that the emotional intelligence competencies help distinguish high performers from average performers in a range of professional roles. The focus on learnable ability in the model has also contributed to its appeal as a model for leadership development that could be applied by the application of this learning domain with intervention in the form of specific training and coaching. Goleman's model has been challenged for conceptual and psychodramatic potential as a construct that may overlap with personality-based constructs. Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2008) explained that adding personality traits, including optimism and achievement orientation to the construct of EI would be confusing and that it would be challenging to discern EI from established personality theories. Moreover, there is some debate among scholars about whether the competency-based method creates a valid measurement of the underlying emotional skills. Nevertheless, Goleman's model remains very helpful in analyzing emotional intelligence in leadership situations. Its clear emphasis on job applications, as well as the delineation of competencies into competencies that are consistent with leadership functions, enable researchers and practitioners alike to practice what it preaches. On top of that, the impact of the model of leader training and development on organisational leadership development practices has also been significant and has influenced training programs, selection processes, and even the performance management systems of various industries.

2.1.2 Salovey and Mayer's Ability Model

Salovey and Mayer's (1990) ability model is one of the seminal conceptualizations of emotional intelligence as an intelligence form. In contrast to Goleman's competency-based approach, this model takes the mental ability—the ability to reason with and about emotions—as a sole determinant of emotional intelligence. Mayer and Salovey (1997) refined the four-branch model to classify these abilities in a hierarchical manner with a hierarchical order, ranging from basic psychological processes to increasingly more complex, psychologically integrated processes. The first branch, Perceiving Emotions, refers to the ability to recognize emotions in faces, voices, pictures, music, and other stimuli. This basic ability is fundamental and allows people to perceive emotional signals for themselves and others, as well as to be able to read others' emotions, read their social signals in a social context when they express emotions accurately. Leaders who understand emotion are better emotionally intelligent and have a heightened sensitivity to the emotional reactions of others, which could mean detecting morale problems such as poor morale, conflicts in the workplace or individual struggles. One of the branches where the process of Thought is facilitated lies in The second branch Using Emotions to Facilitate Thought. This skill sees that emotions can point the eye directly at important information, create an emotional condition helpful in a particular type of reasoning, or ignite creative or analytical thoughts. Leaders adept at this apply emotional states, both own and others', to foster decisions, innovate solutions and use data to plan. The third branch, Understanding Emotions, has to do with emotions, understand emotional expressions and signals; understanding: understand emotions, how emotions come together and continue to coexist;

understand causes and effects of emotions. This entails being able to understand and process complex emotional word and verbal descriptions, the knowledge about the interplay among various emotions and how they change or shift, the understanding how emotions work together, cultural nuances around their occurrence, and why and what those things will change with specific emotions. Leaders with strong emotional intelligence are able to understand and engage with complex social dynamics, predict how emotions may change in relationships and how decisions or changes will be responded to emotionally, and convey emotional topics. The fourth branch is Managing Emotions - the ability to control our emotions, our own and those of others, so we can develop ourselves emotionally and intellectually. It is this highest-level competence that makes people able to remain open to emotional information, both positive and unpleasant, identify and think about feelings, respond to or disengage from emotional states when it is best to do so and control emotions in oneself and others. Leaders who are skilled at handling emotions are able to remain calm under pressure, assist team members in self-coping with their emotional reactions, and foster an emotional climate at work. Due to the hierarchical structure of the ability model, it indicates that higher-level abilities (understanding and managing) serve as a building block of lower-level abilities (perceiving and using). Such a developmental view also applies to the process of EI training as it implies that foundational skills must be developed and mastered before more complex abilities can be assimilated and appropriately utilized. One of the primary aspects of the ability model is that it focuses on measuring EI using performance tests instead of self-report questionnaires. The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2002)

evaluates emotional skills as it consists of tasks that ask individuals to solve emotional problems, including identifying emotions in faces, identifying appropriate emotional responses, and understanding how emotions interact. This method removes self-report bias and offers an objective measurement of emotional skills. Similar with cognitive intelligence, the ability model research demonstrates that emotional intelligence is a set of mental abilities that is not just cognitive intelligence or personality (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 1999). It has also been evidenced that ability-based EI predicts significant outcomes—academic performance, job behavior, and quality of relationships, among other things—over and above what traditional measures of intelligence and personality predict. The ability model is especially useful for grasping how leaders interpret emotional information and make emotion-driven choices. While taking the cognitive side, the model draws attention to the intellectual components of effective emotional leadership. Leaders are not only expected to accurately perceive emotional cues, but also to mix emotional information with other elements, to recognize complex interplay dynamics of emotional situations and more importantly to strategically manage emotional effects.

2.1.3 Bar-On's Emotional-Social Intelligence Model

Reuven Bar-On's (1997, 2006) conceptualization of emotional-social intelligence represents a much broader way including such components as emotions, but even in some cases social skills. According to Bar-On, emotional-social intelligence is "a cross-section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills, facilitators determining how effectively each of us understands others' needs and abilities, communicates with them,

relates to others in difficult situations, and handles a myriad of everyday demands" (Multi-Health Systems, 2011, p. 14). Such an all-encompassing definition points to ESI as instrumental in effective life performance. The model of Bar-On includes 5 meta-factors and 15 subfactors. The first, Intrapersonal, has five subfactors, self-regard (knowing and accepting yourself), emotional self-awareness (acknowledging how feeling), assertiveness (expressing own thoughts and emotions more appropriately), independence (self-responsiveness and self-restraint), and self-actualization (go after personal goals and realize potential). These skills are aimed at how people perceive and interact with themselves. The second meta-factor, which is Interpersonal, includes empathy (being capable of knowing and appreciating the feelings of others), social responsibility (cooperating and contributing to social groups), and interpersonal relationships (building and maintaining meaningful relationships). These competencies illustrate how people perceive and interact with one another in social situations. The third meta-factor, Stress Management, contains the notion of stress tolerance (using appropriate and productive coping methods when the situation is stressful), as well as impulse control (resisting or delaying one's impulses or controlling one's emotions). These competences capture responses to environmental demands and pressures. The fourth meta-factor, Adaptability, includes a combination of reality testing (the ability to be consistent with one's sensations and cognitive framework in the face of new stimuli), flexibility (the capacity to change emotions, beliefs and behaviours in response to challenging circumstances), and problem solving (solving problems at the personal and interpersonal level). And these competencies relate to how people cope with changing conditions — and effectively deal with change.

The fifth meta-factor, General Mood, involves optimism (a positive attitude towards life and looking at the good side of things), together with happiness (feeling happy with oneself, others and life in general). Though not functions in the sense from a traditional standpoint, these enablers of functioning are important contributors to emotional-social intelligence. Bar-On's model is implemented with the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i), a self-report question that measures each of the fifteen main subfactors. The present version of the EQ-i 2.0 (Multi-Health Systems, 2011) has shown strong psychometric properties and has been widely used in research and practice of organizations. The measure can be designed with two aspects; total ESI scores and meta-factor scores for each meta-factor and subfactor can be generated for detailed evaluation and focused development planning. Therefore, by integrating emotional and social competencies under its umbrella, the Bar-On model's potential application can be seen in situations where effectiveness depends on an interpersonal effectiveness as well as an intrapersonal functioning, and one being able to manage one's relationship competencies along with, the other. Furthermore, the meta-factors of stress management and adaptability contribute to the inclusion of competencies critical for leaders to thrive in high-pressure and high-challenges organisational settings. Several studies based on the Bar-On model have linked emotional-social intelligence with certain attributes, in particular, occupational skills (e.g., work success, workplace performance, leadership effectiveness, and health). In organizations, higher EQ-i scores are associated with greater leadership effectiveness and team performance (Multi-Health Systems, 2011; Stein, Papadogiannis, Yip, & Sitarenios, 2009). Adversaries of the Bar-On model have suggested that its breadth: personality traits like

optimism and happiness are among them — can limit discriminant validity and establish conceptual overlap with widely established constructs. The nature of such comprehensive approach, coupled with practical assessment tools, has made this model useful in organizational settings, particularly in leadership development and selection.

2.1.4 Comparative Analysis of EI Models

The three major models of emotional intelligence—Goleman's competency model, Salovey and Mayer's ability model, and Bar-On's emotional-social intelligence model—each consider emotional intelligence as a different phenomenon or form of skill. In order to choose acceptable theoretical guides and measures for this topic, it is a good idea to study similarities and differences among these models. The difference between ability-based models and mixed models of emotional intelligence is of vital importance. Salovey and Mayer's model takes pure ability and focuses exclusively on the intellectual capacity to process emotional information. Both Goleman's and Bar-On's models, on the other hand, are of mixed character. They address abilities and personality components, behavioral proclivities and other non-cognitive tendencies that underpin EI. That is a critical distinction for measures of performance. Ability models can be established through performance testing. Mixed models measure results primarily by self-reports. While the three models differ widely, they have important conceptual frameworks in common. All three models hold that self-awareness of emotions is the cornerstone — emotional self-awareness (Goleman), perceiving emotions (Salovey & Mayer) and emotional self-awareness (Bar-On). Another similarity among all models is that they cover the capabilities

that relate to emotional regulation and relationship management. These commonalities might suggest convergence around some basic aspects of emotional intelligence despite variances in theoretical orientations. Different organizational structure and specificity. Competencies are based on Goleman's four domain structure, a meta-factors with fifteen subfactors model of Bar-On, and a four branch hierarchical model on competencies by Salovey and Mayer. And both such contrasting organizational schemes also illustrate different assumptions at different stages of a theoretical construct regarding the theoretical construction of emotional intelligence, as well as a range of ways the construct is both measured and developed. These models each hold specific advantages to the overall research and practice of leadership. Also, and with obvious links to workplace competencies, Goleman's model has greatly influenced organizations and development of leadership. Salovey and Mayer's model offers conceptual coherence, rational evaluation, and evaluation through performance tests. Overall, the Bar-On system provides a comprehensive overview of emotional and social functioning with a specific execution from the EQ-i instrument. In this research, mainly based on Goleman's framework, there is a testing based on a criterion of the assessment model using the EQ-i 2.0. This approach not only leverages Goleman leadership-oriented framework in its principles but also takes advantage of the well established assessment system of EQ-i. Integrating these perspectives provides them with both an approach to measure leaders' emotional intelligence theoretically and in practice.

2.2 Emotional Intelligence Components

Understanding the specific components of emotional intelligence is essential for investigating how leader EI influences team outcomes. This section examines each major EI component in depth, drawing on research evidence regarding its nature, development, and implications for effective leadership. The discussion focuses on the five components most commonly identified in the literature: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.

2.2.1 Self-Awareness

Self-awareness forms the base for emotional intelligence and serves as one of the basic competencies. Goleman (1998) defined emotional self-awareness as being aware of one's emotions and their influence on the way in which one operates and interacts and makes decisions. This skill combines the immediate identification of what it feels like when a person experiences what s/he feels and the more reflective process of recognizing patterns and biases which may influence emotion over a given period of time. A range of dimensions of emotional self-knowledge has been recognized to be crucial in leadership based on research. These include the first, that leaders must accurately recognize what they feel when they feel frustrated, anxious, excited, and discouraged. This fundamental emotional recognition allows for appropriate behaviour and self-control. Second, leaders need to have awareness of the triggers of his or her emotions—recognizing what situations, people, or events evoke particular emotional responses. Third, leaders need to recognize their own feelings have long-term results; how their feelings shape the way they act, what

they think and connect with their fellow human beings. For instance, Church (1997) demonstrated that self-aware managers had better rating on performance as a result of their performance, by supervisors and subordinates alike. According to Sosik and Megerian (1999), self-awareness was found to moderate the relationship between transformational leadership and subordinate outcomes, such that high transformational leader self-aware leader performed more effectively than low self-aware leader. Most recently, Showry and Manasa (2014) found that leaders' emotional self-awareness predicted team trust and collaboration. Self-awareness also includes an accurate self-assessment—a realistic appraisal of own strengths and weaknesses. Self-evaluating leaders take on feedback, fail and grow, and make changes as they go. This honest appraisal of self allows for constant improvement and avoids the blind spots that can ruin the effectiveness of leadership in any organization. Atwater and Yammarino (1992) found that leaders high in self-other rating agreement (i.e., with regards to self-perceptions) outperformed leaders who held inflated or deflated attitudes to themselves. Being self-aware takes purposeful work and intentional reflection. Engaging in emotional journaling, seeking consistent feedback, using coaches/mentors, and other therapeutic practices have been previously shown to increase emotional self-awareness (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005). For executives of organizational and business entities, 360-degree feedback systems allow comparing their perceptions with others' in a way that exposes blind spots and open-ended areas for improvement. The current study explores self-awareness as a predictor of leader effectiveness and examines how leaders develop and experience self-awareness within organizational context. Qualitative interviews help identify how self-awareness materializes in leadership practice

and the difficulties leaders experience being able to maintain a coherent view of themselves in the face of organizational pressures.

2.2.2 Self-Regulation

Self-regulation is the act of controlling one's feelings and impulses and driving their behavior in a constructive way. As Goleman (1998) defined self-regulation, "the competency necessary for an individual to avoid becoming a prisoner of his/her feelings" (p. 1), allowing them to concentrate, remain rational and act appropriately in emotionally laden situations. Indeed, for leaders, self-regulation seems to be central to trustworthiness, sound decisions in high-pressure situations and building psychologically safe relationships. Self-regulation consists of six components: emotional self-control, transparency, adaptability, achievement orientation, initiative, and optimism (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). Emotional self-control — restraining disruptive emotions and impulses in line — is even more important for leaders than for teachers, since emotional outbursts or visible anxiety can sap confidence and breed fear among members of a team. Dasborough (2006) found the emotional displays of leaders greatly impact the emotional states of followers and how effective they think leaders are. The neuroscience of emotional regulation tells us a lot about the mechanics of self-control. The prefrontal cortex. It underlies executive functions, and is also essential in controlling limbic system-derived emotion responses. Self-regulation is thought to be enabled by a prefrontal cortex which can overrule impulsive emotional responses, causing response decisions to be made in moderation rather than automatically. Practice strengthens this neural mechanism, which

is one of the reasons why self-regulation competencies can be learned from training (Ochsner & Gross, 2005). The literature has consistently found strong positive results in leadership after using self-regulation. Self-regulating leaders are more coherent which results in consistency in behaviour and predictability. They take criticism and setbacks with calm and nonchalance and take care of it, modeling resilience for their team members. They do not make snap decisions based off of emotional reactivity and do not act on a matter before they analyze or reflect before they take action. Techniques for enhancing self-regulation techniques involve cognitive reappraisal (reconfiguring situations to alter the way in which we perceive them to modify their emotional effect), mindfulness practice (accomplishing awareness of emotional states without reflex reaction); and creating pause habits that create a continuum between their stimulus and consequences. For organizational leaders, the practice of self-regulation frequently includes identifying triggers, rehearsing strategies to respond through alternative ways of thinking, and constructing supportive support that gives people the perspective to respond to difficult situations (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). In the current study, both the relationship between self-regulation and team performance is investigated as a predictor of team dynamics and the area of focus, with interviews providing qualitative data on self-regulation as a theme. Quantitative examination investigates the role of leaders self-regulation score on the performance of teams on metrics and qualitative inquiry explores how leaders experience and enact self-regulation in practice and the barriers they encounter in retaining composure within high-pressure situations.

2.2.3 Motivation

According to Goleman (1998) motivation is the most important part of emotional intelligence. It describes the internal drive to keep going through the effort of achieving the goal of achieving something with energy and persistence in the face of challenges, instead of being motivated by external rewards. Goleman (1998) posited a key difference between average and elite performers as a measure of their motivation. Emotionally intelligent individuals tend to be motivated by self-driving ambition rather than anything else that can be obtained by external rewards of money or status. For leadership, this internalized motivation translates into dedication to goals and organizational goals. The motivational aspect of emotional intelligence features a range of correlated competencies. Achievement Orientation refers to efforts that aim at performance enhancement and an accomplishment of high-performance self-defined standards. Initiative is the willingness to take action without waiting for guidance to do so. Optimism means you generally pursue goals despite the obstacles in your path, and you see the obstacles you run into as obstacles that may be overcome rather than permanent and hopeless. Collectively, these abilities make for a motivational profile that allows for commitment through time and through the obstacle. The key role of motivation in organisational performance was documented under leadership contexts in the course of research. Leaders with high intrinsic motivation are more persistent in their pursuit of desired outcomes by focusing on improvement rather than merely maintaining the status quo and model hard work that impacts commitment of their followers as well. Judge and Piccolo (2004) observed that motivational dimensions of leadership are positively correlated with follower satisfaction and performance. The

association between motivation and optimism is relevant to leadership. Seligman (1998) found that optimism results from the perception that setbacks are the result of temporary, specific causes, rather than permanent pervasive ones. This sort of explanation encourages persistence, because failure is seen as a surmountable obstacle to be mastered, rather than a measure of real issues at its roots. Leaders with an optimistic explanatory style walk with their teams into being resilient and not give up in times of challenge. Building motivation involves developing an intrinsic desire in the work, and setting difficult but realistic targets; celebrating successes and maintaining focus in the face of setbacks. For leaders, the process of developing your motivation is generally one of rediscovering core beliefs/purpose, finding personal meaning in the work, developing habits for goal setting and progress tracking and keeping it committed over the long term. The objective of this study was to investigate motivation as a dimension of the broader EI construct as it relates to team outcomes and how leaders experience and sustain motivation in workplace contexts. We focus on how leaders maintain motivation during tough times and motivate their team members.

2.2.4 Empathy

Empathy is the ability to understand others' feelings, take their experiences with empathy and see how they look at the world, feel, respond, and share feeling—the ability to grasp another's feeling as a mere second to mine, and to recognize the world from another perspective. In emotional intelligence, which relates to not only how an individual intellectually comprehends someone else and others' plight, but to real emotional

congruency that supports true closeness and a response accordingly. Leaders require empathy to build trust, understand team needs and issues, and to act effectively in an interteam setting. Studies make a distinction between cognitive and affective aspects of empathy. Cognitive empathy is taking another's perspective and state of mind. Affective empathy is all about emotional contagion and response—the actual sense of feeling with another person. Both of these dimensions are applicable to leadership, cognitive empathy allowing for an accurate perception of reality and affective empathy giving us the emotional connection needed to create relationships and trust. The role of empathy in leadership effectiveness is well established in countless studies. On the same line, Kellett, Humphrey, and Sleeth (2002) discovered that empathy predicted the judgment of peers regarding leadership in self-managed work teams. Moreover, Sadri, Weber, and Gentry (2011) found that leaders who are rated highly empathic by subordinates were rated as having better job performance outcomes. More recently, Holt and Marques (2012) noted empathy as one of the pillars of leaders' emotional intelligence and its impact on organizational climate and employee health. Empathetic leadership shows in behaviors in a number of ways. Empathic leaders are active listeners, listening to their team members and try to understand them before responding. They have feelings about others that they recognize and validate, not ignore or minimize. And in the way decisions affect their stakeholders, they think about the potential and effect of decisions on various stakeholders, and adjust the way they communicate accordingly. Those behaviors nurture an atmosphere where trust and safe working conditions prevail, enabling individuals who work alongside your team to voice their concerns or take risks and give full support to full contribution to

teamwork. Building empathy involves both emotional and cognitive effort. Taking the whole viewpoint of others—exercises, collecting feedback from various stakeholders and exposure to a wide range of life experiences can help increase cognitive empathy. Practice of mindfulness and exercises of emotional attunement can form an affective empathy. In business terms, empathy development may take the form of taking a time out of your own life to actively listen and feel what others feel is experiencing, of creating space for genuine communication with your team members, and inquiring into the other person's experiences. This current study examines empathy as a key predictor of employee satisfaction and team climate. Quantitative analysis shows the influence of leader empathy scores on team outcomes. Meanwhile, qualitative interviews investigate how leaders develop and enact empathy in organizational settings and grapple with the struggle of sustaining empathic engagement amidst competing agendas.

2.2.5 Social Skills

Social skills are the final piece of emotional intelligence, which includes the capability of managing relationships and influencing desired responses from others. To Goleman (1998), social skills are referred to as 'friendliness with a purpose' or the capacity to foster rapport and reach common ground, and direct interaction in favour of goals. Leaders need social skills to create successful teams and to manage conflict and other challenges that impact their influence, facilitate change, and influence stakeholders. The social skills sub-category incorporates several specific skills. Inspirational leadership is leading people by communicating inspiring visions and inspiring them to meet common

objectives. Influence is the use of persuasive rhetoric and constructing coalitions. Developing others involves enabling one another with feedback and guidance. The “catalyst” of change is the “starting, doing, and fighting for the start” of change. One of the ways to handle conflict is through negotiation and constructive disagreement resolving.

Bonds: When we say building bonds we need to build networks, relationships. Building a team identity and engagement on a global team are what constitutes teamwork and collaboration. Empirical evidence of the importance and relevance of social skills for good leadership has repeatedly been demonstrated. Leaders with high social skills cultivate better relationships with employees, stakeholders, others, and peers. They influence organizational politics, establishing coalitions to push key initiatives forward. This prevents problems from spiraling out of control as they are dealt with constructively. Additionally, they establish team spaces full of collaboration and support. The effects of social skills on teamwork run through several mechanisms. As such, socially adept leaders provide channels of effective communication within teams for data to freely flow and challenges to miscommunication to be fixed in near real time. They model collaborative behavior that impacts team norms. They establish relationships with external stakeholders that provide resources and support for team goals. Additionally, they can spot and solve interpersonal problems before they spoil team harmony. Social skills are developed by developing foundational dimensions of an EI while also learning to think strategically and engage with others. Successful social skills are built on self-awareness (knowledge that one’s behavior affects others), self-regulation (managing impulses that might damage relationships), and empathy (understanding others’ viewpoints, their feelings and needs).

More than social intelligence, the creation of social skills involves trying out influence tactics, conflict resolution techniques and intentional networking efforts. In this work, social skills as a predictor of team outcomes is examined, specifically the ways that they help teams with better coordination and conflict-managing skills. Qualitative interview research reveals how the social skills of the people leaders develop and practice in an organization, the approach to develop a relationship with others, and influence with stakeholders.

2.3 Leadership Styles and Emotional Intelligence

An important avenue for investigation is the relation between these three variables-
- EI and leadership style: Does EI translate into leadership behavior and outcomes? In this part, we examine this relationship between emotional intelligence on the leader and the leaders in three types of leadership (transformational, transactional, and authentic leadership). After reviewing the data we can understand how Emotional intelligence competencies enable each style or sort/kind to emerge, where their further development is possible, to which we offer a way of looking into what leadership style to take in light of EI competences—and finally to explore whether leadership orientation influences how this is applied and in what ways these emotions influence any such application of emotional intelligences.

2.3.1 Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership theory, developed by Burns (1978) and elaborated by Bass (1985), describes leaders who inspire followers to transcend self-interest for the good of the organization, achieving performance beyond expectations. Plus, transformational leaders articulate compelling visions, model idealized behavior, stimulate innovative thinking, and attend to individual follower needs. The conceptual overlap between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence has made their relationship a central focus of leadership research.

The four components of transformational leadership each relate to specific EI competencies. Idealized influence—building trust and admiration through exemplary behavior—requires the self-awareness and self-regulation that enable consistent, principled action. Inspirational motivation—articulating attractive visions and demonstrating optimism—draws on the motivational aspects of EI, particularly achievement orientation and optimism. Intellectual stimulation—encouraging creativity and challenging assumptions—benefits from the social skills that create safe environments for risk-taking. Individualized consideration—attending to followers' unique needs—directly requires empathy and interpersonal understanding.

Research has consistently showed positive relationships between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership. Barling, Slater, and Kelloway (2000) found that EI predicted transformational leadership behaviors in manufacturing managers. Palmer, Walls, Burgess, and Stough (2001) showed correlations between EI components

and transformational leadership dimensions. More recently, Harms and Credé (2010) conducted a meta-analysis confirming moderate positive relationships between EI and transformational leadership across multiple studies.

The mechanism connecting EI to transformational leadership involves the leader's capacity to build emotional connections with followers. High-EI leaders perceive followers' emotional states accurately, understand what will resonate with different individuals, manage their own emotional expressions to inspire confidence, and create relationships characterized by trust and respect. These emotional capacities enable the inspirational and developmental behaviors that define transformational leadership.

Research has also examined whether EI moderates the effectiveness of transformational leadership. Sosik and Megerian (1999) found that self-aware transformational leaders achieved better outcomes than those lacking self-awareness. This points to transformational leadership behaviors are more effective when supported by emotional intelligence—that the vision articulated by a self-aware, emotionally attuned leader has greater impact than the same vision articulated by a less emotionally intelligent leader.

The present study investigates the relationship between leader EI and transformational leadership behaviors as assessed by the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. Analysis examines whether EI predicts transformational leadership scores and whether transformational leadership mediates the relationship between EI and team outcomes.

2.3.2 Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership, in contrast to transformational leadership, focuses on the exchange relationship between leader and follower—providing rewards for performance and correcting deviations from expected behavior. Bass (1985) identified three components of transactional leadership: contingent reward (clarifying expectations and providing recognition for achievement), management-by-exception active (monitoring performance and taking corrective action), and management-by-exception passive (intervening only when problems become serious).

The relationship between emotional intelligence and transactional leadership is more complex than for transformational leadership. On one hand, effective transactional leadership requires emotional competencies—particularly social skills for negotiating exchanges and empathy for understanding what rewards will motivate different followers. On the other hand, transactional leadership's focus on exchange rather than inspiration may rely less heavily on the emotional connection-building that EI enables.

Research findings on EI-transactional leadership relationships have been mixed. Some studies have found positive correlations, suggesting that emotionally intelligent leaders are more effective in managing exchange relationships and providing appropriate reinforcement. Other studies have found weaker or non-significant relationships, suggesting that transactional behaviors may be less dependent on emotional competencies than transformational behaviors.

The contingent reward component of transactional leadership likely has the strongest relationship with emotional intelligence. Effective contingent reward leadership requires understanding what followers value (empathy), maintaining consistent follow-through on commitments (self-regulation), and building trust through reliable exchange relationships (social skills). Leaders high in EI may be more skilled at identifying meaningful rewards and establishing credible exchange relationships.

Management-by-exception leadership, both active and passive forms, may have weaker relationships with emotional intelligence. These behaviors focus on monitoring and correcting deviations rather than building relationships or inspiring commitment. While EI may enhance how correction is delivered—enabling leaders to provide feedback constructively and maintain relationships while addressing problems—the fundamental monitoring and intervention behaviors may not require high levels of emotional competence.

The present study includes assessment of transactional leadership behaviors to examine their relationships with leader EI and to compare these relationships with those found for transformational leadership. This comparison contributes to understanding which leadership behaviors are most enhanced by emotional intelligence.

2.3.3 Authentic Leadership

Authentic leadership theory has provided a key framework for understanding the impact of our self-awareness, our values, and our connections with others on successful

leadership. Authentic leaders are ‘those people who are well aware of how they think, the way they act and are identified by others as aware of their own and others’ values/moral perspectives, knowledge and strengths; aware of the context within which they operate; and who are confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, and of high moral character’ (Avolio and Gardner, 2005, p. 321). In authentic leadership which consists of the elements, four components are found that are closely related to emotional intelligence competencies. It is only through self-awareness — a foundational component to authentic leadership and EI — and understanding both where your strengths and limitations lie and how you operate emotionally. Relational transparency in a relational situation — presenting a true self instead of a fake one — mandates self-awareness and self-regulation in order to be able to identify and express true emotions that are appropriate. Balanced processing, which involves objectively assessing the data before deciding, derives power from emotional regulation to remove bias from judgment. In contrast, an internal moral view—guided by internal moral standards instead of external pressure—demands the self-awareness and self-regulation necessary to stay true to values under fire. Studies have highlighted relationships amongst emotional intelligence, and authentic leadership. Walumbwa et al. (2008) discovered that authentic leadership was positively related to followers’ satisfaction level, organizational commitment, and work performance. Gardner et al. (2011) found that leaders’ emotional intelligence predicted authentic leadership behaviors. These discoveries propose that EI contributes the self-awareness and relational skills that empower leaders to be authentic leaders. The authenticity highlighted in this leadership style is especially pertinent for the study of emotional intelligence. Authentic leaders share authentic emotion

rather than acting it out, as it is through the congruence between internal experiences and external ones which builds trust. This emotional authenticity can only be achieved either through significant levels of self-awareness (understanding your true emotions) or self-regulation (being able to express your feelings appropriately while remaining authentic) or both. This study studies authentic leadership behaviors in relation to transformational and transactional leadership with respect to emotional intelligence. Qualitative interviews identify leaders' experiences of authenticity—the challenges of maintaining authenticity while fulfilling expectations of their roles, and how emotional intelligence facilitates authentic leadership practice.

2.3.4 Integrating Leadership Styles with EI

The previous sections focused on the link between emotional intelligence and some leadership styles. An integrated perspective assumes that successful leaders often incorporate several leadership styles, as well as styles that are more appropriate for each situation. In this adaptive capacity, emotional intelligence could be increasingly critical, since if leaders do not have empathy they may not be able to see situational requirements correctly and tailor behaviors accordingly. Leader adaptability research indicates that emotionally intelligent leaders are more adept at tailoring leadership style to the circumstances. They identify the developmental stage of a follower and then appropriately shift their behaviors to be directive or supportive. They know when it's time to seek an inspiring vision compared to a transactional clear-cut one. And they know when genuine emotion will breed trust versus when some emotional regulation will benefit an

organizational function. Integrating EI with leadership styles also means acknowledging potentially differentiating the importance of EI competencies under specific leadership behaviors. Authenticity requires self-awareness and self-regulation, which may be most important aspects of authentic leadership of true self-expression. Empathy, and social skills are probably most important for the individualized consideration part of transformational leadership. Inspirational leadership behaviors may be related most to motivation. Current research adds to our understanding of interdisciplinary differences by exploring the ties between EI and a variety of leadership styles and between leadership style and team performance. Instead of targeting only one type of leadership, the research examines the entire continuum of relationships, yielding a nuanced understanding of how EI contributes to effective leadership across all of the behavioral domains. This thematic review of the literature has highlighted theoretical and empirical groundwork for investigating the relationship between leader emotional intelligence and team outcomes. We have reviewed the main EI models, investigated individual elements of EI and identified relationships between EI and styles in leadership. Chapter 2 carries on the part of this dissertation with sections on EI and organizational performance (2.4), the conceptual framework and hypotheses (2.5), and a brief review of the literature (2.6).

2.4 EI and Organizational Performance

Today, the relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational performance is clearly in vogue in leadership research. Over the years meta-analytic

research has consistently found that the leader's emotional competencies lead to real measures of success, but the scale and mechanisms of these effects depend upon context (Joseph & Newman, 2010). This section provides a thematic review of empirical studies examining how leader EI influences various dimensions of organizational performance such as financial outcomes, employee productivity, and innovation capacity.

2.4.1 Financial Performance and EI

There have been some studies investigating the relationship of leader EI and financial performance in leadership context, indicating a significant positive relationship. Côté and Miners (2006) found that higher emotional intelligence managers demonstrated superior financial performance in units irrespective of their cognitive resources or personality variables. In their sample size of 175 corporate executives from different industry sectors, EI explained another 8% of variance (above the prior predictors related to unit financial performance) in its analysis. Similarly, Rosete and Ciarrochi (2005) found executive EI as well as a positive relationship with their companies' revenue growth in the three year period. The impact of EI on financial results occurs at multiple levels and in a variety of ways for performance—through various forms of transaction. Leaders who score highly in EI exhibit better stakeholder-management ability and also are better able to negotiate stronger relationships with their customers, suppliers and partners (Elfenbein, Foo, White, Tan, & Aik, 2007). In addition, emotionally intelligent leaders create work environments that reduce the likelihood of costly churn and absenteeism, which has a direct impact on bottom-line performance. Wong and Law (2002) discovered that those

organizations with a strong EI leader have a 23% lower turnover cost than their opposite. Still, the relationship between EI and financial performance is not universally robust. As cited in Antonakis, Ashkanasy, and Dasborough (2009) the relationship between EI and financial outcomes is contextual and is rather closer to services-centred sectors with emotional labor leading. In manufacturing contexts, while the correlation remains positive, the relationship tends to be diluted at higher technological complexity and levels of automation. This finding emphasizes the importance of remembering the specific nature of EI in each industry to understand its organisational effects.

2.4.2 Employee Productivity and Engagement

In the organizational behavior literature, the influence of leader EI on employee productivity is one of the most robust findings and we are now beginning to realize this. Sy, Tram, and O'Hara (2006) showed that employees under the supervision of managers with higher levels of EI performed significantly better tasks even after controlling for employee cognitive ability. In this study they conducted with 187 food service employees reported that manager EI accounted for 11 percent of variance in rating employee productivity, which is practically significant given the many different things that impact workplace performance. Thus, the productivity effects of leader EI appear to be primarily driven by improved employee engagement. Emotionally intelligent leaders enable the conditions for psychological safety and free access to innovative projects by creating conditions for employees to come voluntarily without fear of punitive responses (Edmondson, 1999). For example, Carmeli (2003) recently discovered that the results of

workplaces with emotionally supportive leadership demonstrated 34% higher employee engagement scores than those in workplaces without these elements. In this instance, more engagement has direct implications for discretionary effort and increased productivity. In organizations outside this context, cross-cultural research has used these findings to describe their impact. Shipper, Kincaid, Rotondo, and Hoffman (2003) conducted a multi-country study examining EI-productivity relationships on American, European, and Asian organizations. The magnitude of the strength of relationships varied a bit by cultural environment, but the basic positive relationship between leader EI and employee productivity was found to be consistently present in all studied regions. This cross-cultural agreement indicates that EI's effects on productivity can be attributed to fundamental features of human social interaction across cultures, rather than to culturally specific phenomena.

2.4.3 Innovation and Organizational Learning

With increasing focus on organizational innovation to develop resilience and creativity in dealing with the world around us, organizational innovation has become an important outcome variable of EI research. Zhou and George (2003) argued that emotionally intelligent leaders enable innovation by establishing psychologically safe situations for employees to express unconventional ideas. As a theoretical framework, they suggest that EI empowers leaders to acknowledge the emotional dynamics inherent in creative processes, such as tolerance for ambiguity and constructive response to failure. Multiple studies demonstrate the empirical support for EI as a driver of innovation. Another

study conducted by Rego, Sousa, Pina e Cunha, Correia, and Saur-Amaral (2007) found that teams under the leadership of emotionally intelligent team members created 27% more patents and product innovations than teams under lower-EI leadership. Researchers ascribed this to high-EI leaders possessing superior ability in conflict management and creating a more collaborative environment that resulted in productive tension and avoided destructive conflict. Similarly, Pirola-Merlo, Härtel, Mann, and Hirst (2002) found that leader EI predicted team creativity in their analysis of EI outcomes (and the latter was partially mediated by team emotional climate). Organizational learning is also an outcome associated with leader EI. Huy (1999) maintained that emotionally intelligent leaders facilitate organizational change- and learning-related actions by controlling collective emotions as they transition across organizational contexts by managing transitions. Leaders who can recognize and react appropriately to the emotional states of an organization are more effective in both setting pace for the change and responding to resistance constructively. According to this view, organizations run by high-EI executives display higher adaptations during industry disruptions and have been substantiated on the basis of longitudinal study (Barker & Gump, 2016).

2.4.4 Team Performance and Cohesion

Given the prevalence of team-oriented organizational structures, the relationship between leader EI and team performance has attracted extensive research attention. Druskat and Wolff (2001) proposed that emotionally intelligent managers build up group emotional intelligence, the collective ability of team members to generate shared norms for

managing emotions. In turn these norms create the conditions for higher team performance due to the trust, collaboration, and commitment that follows. Research has consistently supported the EI-how teams perform relationship. According to Jordan, Ashkanasy, Härtel, and Hooper (2002), teams with emotionally intelligent leaders performed better on complex tasks requiring coordination and collaboration. For high levels of interdependence tasks, the social-emotional dimensions of teamwork are the most crucial, and the effect on the target behavior was more pronounced. O'Boyle, Humphrey, Pollack, Hawver, and Story (2011) confirmed these results in a meta-analysis with a mean corrected correlation between leader EI and performance on 43 independent samples of participants at $r = 0.28$. Team cohesion emerges as a key mediating mechanism in the EI-performance link. Rapisarda (2002) showed that leader EI predicted team cohesion which in turn predicted performance outcomes. Leaders with high emotional sensitivity and emotional expression norms fostered a more personal relationship on the team building in terms of sense of shared vision and shared commitment between team members. This cohesiveness was notably relevant at times of organizational stress as emotionally responsive leadership was instrumental to the functioning of the team (Pescosolido, 2002).

2.4.5 Customer Service and Satisfaction

Service-oriented organizations have shown particular interest in the EI-performance relationship, given the emotional demands inherent in customer-facing roles. Research by Grandey (2000) established that emotionally intelligent leaders shape frontline employee emotional labor strategies, influencing whether employees engage in surface

acting (faking emotions) or deep acting (genuinely modifying internal states). Leaders who model authentic emotional expression and provide emotional support enable employees to engage in more sustainable and effective emotional labor, with direct implications for customer satisfaction.

Quantitative studies have documented the impact of leader EI on customer outcomes. Kernbach and Schutte (2005) found that service encounters with employees supervised by high-EI managers resulted in 19% higher customer satisfaction ratings. The researchers attributed this effect to the emotional climate created by emotionally intelligent leadership, which equipped frontline employees with superior emotion regulation capabilities. Similarly, Pugh (2001) demonstrated that positive emotional contagion from leaders to employees to customers represented a key mechanism through which leader EI influenced service quality perceptions.

2.4.6 Turnover and Retention

Employee retention is an important organizational achievement with clear financial implications, and research shows that leader EI is consistently related to lower turnover intentions. Bande, Fernández-Ferrín, Varela, and Jaramillo (2015) studied the effect of emotional intelligence on the retention of employees in sales leadership settings, concluding that managers with significantly higher emotional intelligence retained employees at significantly higher rates than those with lower EI. The mechanism seemed to work through the construction of better leader-member exchange quality, in which emotionally attuned leaders established more intense relationships that resulted in higher

employee engagement, as well as lower likelihood turnover. The financial cost of EI retention is significant. Jordan and Troth (2011) found that high EI leadership resulted in 31% lower turnover costs for organizations than for organizations which suffered low EI leadership. These costs included both direct costs (recruitment, training, separation procedures) and indirect costs (lost productivity, erosion of institutional knowledge, and continued low morale among employees). The study by researchers pointed out that emotionally intelligent leaders fostered a work environment where their employees felt appreciated and given support, helping to avoid the psychological withdrawal which comes before real turnover. Cross-cultural studies have also generalized the turnover pattern to a variety of occupational environments. In Chinese manufacturing enterprises, Shao, Feng, and Hu (2017) further investigated the relationship between EI and retention in industrial businesses in a large number of different cultures and found similar effects despite the marked difference in norm of emotional expression. The researchers attributed this consistency, they suggested, to universal human needs for recognition, respect and social connection that emotionally intelligent leaders would be well equipped to meet in any cultural context.

2.4.7 Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), defined as discretionary behaviors that support organizational functioning beyond formal role requirements, represents another outcome influenced by leader EI. Côté, Lopes, Salovey, and Miners (2010) showed that employees supervised by emotionally intelligent leaders exhibited significantly higher

levels of OCB, including helping behaviors, conscientiousness, and civic virtue. The researchers proposed that emotionally supportive leadership created conditions of psychological safety and reciprocal obligation that motivated discretionary effort.

The relationship between leader EI and subordinate OCB appears to operate through multiple pathways. First, emotionally intelligent leaders model prosocial behavior, establishing normative expectations for helping and cooperation. Second, these leaders create positive emotional climates that energize employees and reduce the emotional depletion that can inhibit discretionary effort. Third, high-EI leaders are more attuned to recognizing and reinforcing OCB when it occurs, creating positive feedback loops that sustain citizenship behavior over time (Organ, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 2006).

2.4.8 Stress and Well-being Outcomes

Employee well-being has become a desired organizational result because ethical reasons and performance and retention are closely related to well-being. Studies have consistently shown that emotionally intelligent leadership reduces stress in employees and increases psychological well-being. Slaski and Cartwright (2003) noted that EI score-related lower levels of occupational stress and higher subjective well-being in managers led to psychological effects on subordinates (i.e., emotional contagion and supportive leadership behavior). The ways in which leader EI is influential on subordinate well-being are direct and buffering mechanisms. Concretely, emotionally intelligent leaders foster an environment in which employees thrive in a work environment with trust, respect, and open communication. As a buffer, high EI leaders can also provide employees with emotional

support, problem-focused assistance, and help them manage stress through emotional support, problem solving, and modeling of adaptive coping strategies. Oginska-Bulik (2005) demonstrated that employees whose supervisors were emotionally intelligent displayed better resilience during organizational change, maintaining productivity and psychological well-being despite elevated stress exposure.

2.5 Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

Drawing upon the theoretical foundations and empirical evidence reviewed in preceding sections, this section presents the conceptual framework guiding the present study. The framework integrates Goleman's (1995, 1998) model of emotional intelligence with contemporary leadership theory to propose specific relationships between leader EI components and organizational outcomes. Figure 1 illustrates the proposed conceptual model, depicting hypothesized direct and moderated relationships.

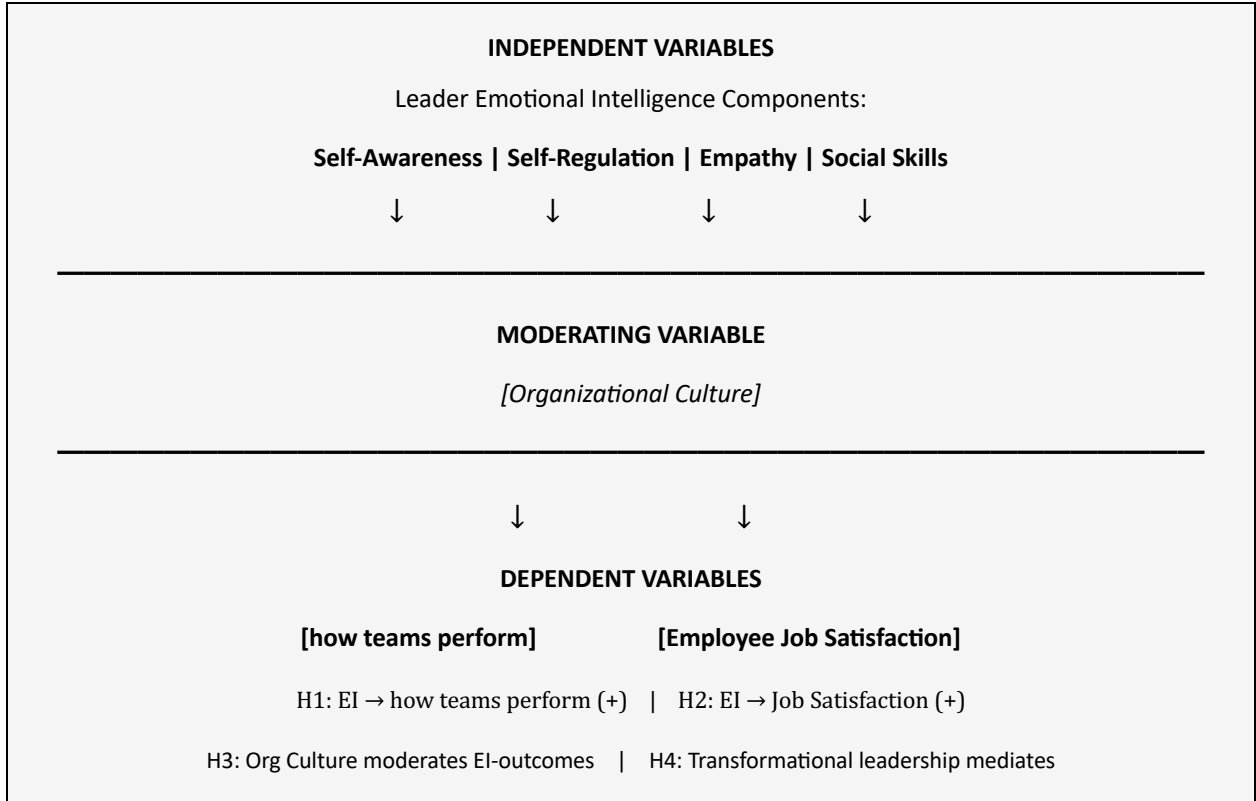
2.5.1 Conceptual Model Overview

The suggested conceptual framework includes leader emotional intelligence as the most crucial independent variable and includes four central constructs: self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills. These elements are conceptualized as separate but interrelated competencies that together represent emotional intelligence, consistent with Goleman (1998) framework. According to the model, these EI components have an effect on two key outcomes: how teams perform and how satisfied the employees feel at work. The model accounts for organizational culture as a moderating variable that

influences the power of EI-outcome associations. The theoretical justification for introducing these particular parameters is based upon several parallel perspectives. According to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), emotionally supportive leaders establish mutual duties between employees that lead to improvement in performance and commitment. Affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) suggests that leader behaviors bring emotional responses from employees, influencing their behaviors and attitudes. Taken together, the view of these points provides a full theoretical foundation for examining the organizational effects of EI.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework: Leader EI and results



Note. Arrows indicate hypothesized positive relationships. H3 proposes moderation; H4 proposes mediation.

Source: Author's own compilation (2025).

2.5.2 Research Hypotheses

Using the theoretical framework and evidence of previous sections, four research hypotheses were developed which informed the present research question. These hypotheses provide testable data to make predictions about the relationships between leader EI and organizational outcomes, taking into account direct influences and contextual

moderating variables. **Hypothesis 1 (H1):** Leaders with superior emotional intelligence scores will show significantly higher ratings on how teams perform. Hypothesis 1 is justified by several data sources. Leaders with emotional intelligence help create a psychologically safe work environment, in which employees are comfortable to take risks, express their ideas, and work effectively together (Edmondson, 1999). Second, EI provides the basis for superior conflict management, allowing leaders to diffuse interpersonal frictions before they become conflicts that undermine productivity (Jordan et al., 2002). Third, emotionally-competent leaders deliver more effective performance feedback to employees, altering both the content and delivery of their feedback to the extent that developmental changes are best achieved (Goleman et al., 2002). H2: There is a positive relationship between leader emotional intelligence and job satisfaction of an employee. Leader empathy is projected to have the greatest correlation with employee satisfaction. **Hypothesis 2** is based on both social exchange theory and supervisory support research. Employees who view their leaders as emotionally attuned and responsive feel more valued and supported, which contributes positively to job satisfaction (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Emphasising such empathy is consistent with a large body of research showing that the feeling of being understood by the supervisor is a particularly strong predictor of workplace attitude (Gentry, Weber, & Sadri, 2007). Wong and Law (2002) also discovered that leader empathy, among all EI aspects, showed the strongest relationship with subordinate job satisfaction. **Hypothesis 3 (H3)**—Organizational culture moderates the relationship between leader emotional intelligence and team outcomes. More exactly, the constructive role of leader EI to team performance and satisfaction will increase in

organizations which have supportive and cooperative cultures. The moderation hypothesis acknowledges that effective leadership is context-based (House, 1996). Cultures within organizations that appreciate emotional expression and social connection would be more fertile soil for emotionally intelligent leadership to grow. On the other hand, in organizations with highly bureaucratized or results-driven cultures, leader EI may be less pronounced or channeled into different directions. A belief aligned with Ashkanasy and Daus's (2002) argument that organizational emotional climate shapes how individual members express emotional intelligence. **Hypothesis 4 (H4):** Transformational leadership style mediates the relation between leader emotional intelligence and organizational outcomes. Transformational leadership behaviors will be greater among leaders with higher EI. This will then predict how well-performing a team is and the satisfaction level of employees. According to the mediation hypothesis, EI has a partially mediating effect on the outcomes by its effect on the leadership style. Many empirical studies show that emotionally intelligent people are more prone to transformational leadership behaviours such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration (Barling et al., 2000; Palmer et al., 2001). The transformational behaviors that follow, in turn, have well-known positive effects on follower attitudes and performance (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). To this end, transformational leadership is a behavioral mechanism through which leader EI produces organizational gains. Transformational leadership mediates the relationship on both theoretical and practical levels. Theoretically, it defines behavioral trajectories by which EI leads to organizational performance impact beyond correlational models of EI-outcomes.

Practically, it shows that the establishment of transformational leadership skills can facilitate the operationalization of EI in the context of leadership where specific behavioral goals can aid leadership development programmes. All four hypotheses combined make up a comprehensive model of EI in the context of effective leadership. H1 and H2 show direct links between EI and outcomes, H3 identifies when these relationships may be strengthened or weakened, and H4 describes a behavioral mechanism underlying the operations of EI. This multi-method approach helps identify when, how and why EI matters for leadership and is in response to the call for further refinement of models of EI in leadership research (Zeidner et al., 2004).

2.6 Summary of Literature Review

In this chapter we have examined the theoretical roots and the evidence base for emotional intelligence and its impact on organisational leadership. The review opened by exploring the idea development of EI from Salovey and Mayer's (1990) ability-based framework through to Goleman's (1995, 1998) competency framework, and Bar-On's (1997) mixed one. All theories are valuable to understanding emotional competencies and in assessing them, and Goleman's model is particularly relevant to leadership situations. The inspection of EI domains demonstrated that emotional competencies in leadership are complex. Being aware of self allows leaders to identify their emotions and how these affect those they lead, and is a precursor toward becoming an authentic leader. Self-regulation enables leaders to handle rash responses and stay calm during stressful moments and to demonstrate adaptive emotional behavior to their teams. Empathy facilitates perspective taking and emotional attunement to followers' needs, allowing for responsive and supportive leadership. Communication and conflict skills, and relationship building are equally important skills to facilitate the complexity of organization. We found significant interrelationship between EI and transformational leadership. The type of leaders with high emotional intelligence show more inspirational, intellectually stimulating, and individually considerate behaviors which are attributes of transformational leadership as opposed to transactional leadership. The authentic leadership perspective also highlighted the significance of self-reflection and open emotional expression in achieving trust and credibility with followers. A thematic review of the EI – organizational performance associations found strong positive correlations in a number of outcome variables. In terms

of profitability, emotionally intelligent leadership is linked to higher unit and organisation performance and is influenced by improved stakeholder management and reduced turnover costs. On a productive level, leader EI increases engagement and effort from the employees and has very high effects on engagement and effort performance especially for roles which require collaboration and creativity. From the perspective of innovation, emotionally intelligent leaders foster psychologically safe workplaces where they are the ones who push for taking chances and creative thinking. The present study aimed to fill in several gaps in the literature. First, although quantitative research has established empirical relationships between EI and outcomes, research examining how EI is experienced in practice in the workplace has yet to be developed. Secondly, the bulk of previous research has been done in western organizations, and little attention has been given to the impact of cultural elements on EI expression and effectiveness. Third, the mechanisms by which EI impacts outcomes are not fully clarified, and the mediating and moderating processes need to be explored. The conceptual framework presented in this chapter intends to fill these gaps by developing testable hypotheses regarding the direct, moderated, and mediated relationships between leader EI and outcomes. And the framework pulls together Goleman's EI model with more contemporary leadership theory, treating EI as a predictor of both how teams perform and how satisfied employees are, with organizational culture as the contextual moderator and transformational leadership acting as a behavioral mediator. This framework was utilized to inform the mixed-methods research design of the next chapter. The literature review has also emphasised the importance of methodological pluralism in undertaking EI research. Although these quantitative studies have found that there are

statistically significant relationships between constructs, qualitative research would be needed to understand how leaders applied EI in their organizational contexts. The challenges of EI development, the contextual issues that facilitate (or inhibit) EI adoption, and the intuitive meanings leaders assign to emotional skills are all still understudied. And the present study tries to fill that gap through its mixed-method design of quantitative hypothesis and qualitative exploration of leadership experience. Finally, the review highlights the practical significance of recognizing the significance of EI in leadership for success. Organizations pour vast amounts of resources into leadership development, but EI data provide evidence to provide insight that informs more targeted and effective strategies to lead to better and effective leadership. This study also seeks to give practitioners valuable insight to guide actionable knowledge by investigating both the size of these EI-outcome relationships and the mode and strength of these interaction mechanisms to improve leadership competencies and organisational effectiveness by studying how do they relate to the EI and to effective leadership.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Philosophy and Paradigm

This study is built on the foundation of pragmatist research philosophy. This emphasis is given to methodological designs that fit the nature of how research questions deserve being answered, rather than being guided by epistemological orthodoxies (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Pragmatism rejects the forced dichotomy between positivist and constructivist paradigms, and also embraces methodological pluralism to enable fuller understanding of complex phenomena. As such, this philosophical position is especially relevant to organizational research where empirical or theoretical concepts such as emotional intelligence can be expressed in both measurable behaviors as well as subjective experiences. The mixed-methods approach used in this study is consistent with the pragmatist paradigm. Quantitative methods allow for systematic measurement of EI constructs and statistical testing of hypothesized relationships, which deals with questions of magnitude and generalizability. Qualitative approaches can provide depth in an understanding of how leaders use emotional intelligence in practice, focusing on contextual nuances and process dynamics that escape any standard way of measuring how they apply emotional intelligence. This integration of approaches provides complementary insights that can significantly bolster any one of those two approaches (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Ontology It follows a critical realist approach to this study, noting that emotional intelligence is real and can be observed, however our understanding of EI must

nevertheless have to be contextualised by conceptual frameworks and measurement instruments that do not necessarily reflect EI's full complexity. This stance aligns with the use of validated psychometric instruments, yet is cognizant of the restricted utility of operationalized measures, and the power of qualitative data to enhance understanding (Sayer, 2000).

3.1.1 Justification for Mixed-Methods Approach

Mixed methods approaches were chosen as it reflects strategic considerations related to the research questions. The research questions lie between confirmatory and exploratory (hypotheses require statistical testing and qualitative inquiry reveals how leaders manage EI application in practice). Second, EI research has been challenged for its overreliance on self-report measures and cross-sectional designs; employing qualitative interviews adds triangulation and deeper contextual validity (Zeidner, Matthews, & Roberts, 2004). Third, organizational actors who will ultimately employ research-driven interventions stand to gain from both empirical evidence of EI-outcome relationships and nuanced descriptions of how these relationships unfold in practice. Practitioners working to build leadership emotional intelligence need not only evidence that emotional intelligence matters, but actionable insights into how emotionally intelligent leadership is enacted and what organizational conditions support its expression. The mixed-methods research design is able to directly meet these related information needs.

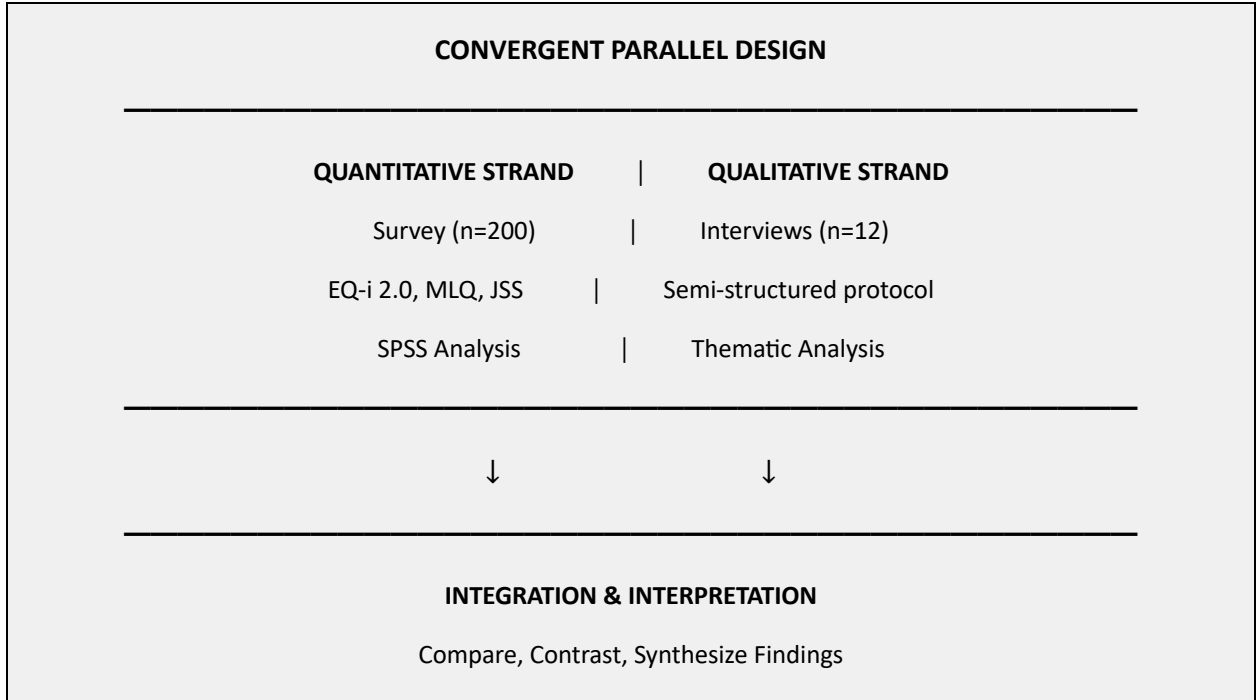
3.2 Research Design

I use a convergent parallel mixed-methods design where quantitative and qualitative data are collected simultaneously, analyzed independently, and combined in the interpretation phase (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This is a maximally efficient design, where the sources are conducted concurrently while the methodology, at every turn, is maintained in its original methods through independent analytic procedures. These findings then are compared and combined to integrate, uncovering commonality, divergence, and complementarity. The quantitative strand uses a cross-sectional survey design to measure leaders' EI competencies and assess their impacts on team performance, employee satisfaction, and organizational outcomes. This allows for systematic measurement of how much EI matters to individual leaders across a relatively large sample, ensuring the ability to test hypotheses (statistical power) whilst allowing correlational and regression analyses to examine proposed relationships as well. The qualitative strand uses semi-structured interviews with organizational leaders to explore their perspectives on applying EI in their leadership roles, obstacles they face in the way of EI implementation, and support and barriers they experience in the organization that enable or constrain EI. The interview approach facilitates deep exploration of subjective perspectives but ensures adequate organization for cross-case comparison and thematic analysis. The blending of quantitative and qualitative threads happens at multiple points. Both strands developed across the design included the creation of quantitative hypotheses and qualitative interview protocols to illuminate different facets of EI in leadership, which would respond to different aspects of the research questions. And, in the process of data collection,

quantitative survey scores guided purposive sampling in qualitative interviews, so there were representatives of leaders across the EI spectrum. In addition, during analysis, quantitative and qualitative findings were examined, qualitative data explaining quantitative trends and quantitative data providing interpretative support to qualitative themes. And when interpreting, a joint display merges results of both threads, identifying commonalities, differences, and complementarity. For this reason, a convergent parallel design, as opposed to sequentially alternative designs, was opted for. Resource limitation first encouraged the use of simultaneous data rather than phased data collection. Second, the research questions did not require one strand of knowledge to build on another's results, leading to concurrent collection being appropriate. Third, the urge to truly integrate rather than just blend, called for such a design which considered both strands essential in the first place. Convergent design ensures synthesis of complementary findings, yet maintaining both method robustness.

Figure 2

Convergent Parallel Mixed-Methods Research Design



Source: Adapted from Creswell and Plano Clark (2017).

3.3 Population and Sample

3.3.1 Target Population

Key features of the target population include organizational leaders (managers, team leads, executives) and their team members within the four industry sectors (i.e., technology, healthcare, finance, and manufacturing). These fields were chosen in order to diversify the organizational settings and to study the industry-specific factors that affect the EI-leadership effectiveness relationship. By counting across diverse industries the external validity of the findings is also increased to determine how relevant findings are in

different types of work settings. Inclusion standards for those with leadership roles were at least two years of supervisory experience, with current responsibility for managing at least three direct reports. These criteria met the criteria that participants had had the leadership experience to provide meaningful data on the application of EI while also maintaining supervisory relationships sufficiently deep to explore team-level impact. To ensure familiarity with leader behaviors, team member participants needed to have worked for their current supervisor for a minimum of six months.

3.3.2 Quantitative Sample

For the quantitative study a sample of 200, including 50 leaders and 150 team members across the four sectors, was surveyed. The sample was included by using stratified convenience sampling for representation within the industries, the organizational level, and the demographic features. Organizations were identified through professional networking and industry associations, and participation was actively pursued by organizational gatekeepers, who offered survey invitations to eligible employees. Sample size was calculated using G*Power (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007), which suggested that 200 participants would provide statistical power (0.80) for medium effect sizes ($f^2 = 0.15$) at $\alpha = 0.05$ for regression analyses with up to six predictors. This sample size covers the minimum required sample size for planned analyses, thus cushioning against attrition and nonresponse. In total, the successful sample was 200 with 50 leaders and 150 members of the team, with approximately 3 direct reports for each leader. This nested structure allowed for monitoring leader characteristics (EI, leadership style) as well

as team member outcome (satisfaction, performance perceptions) across different sources, leading to lower common method bias. These leaders, including first-line supervisors and senior executives, provided diversity at both an organizational scope and a leadership level. The sample demographic characteristics were representative of the target population (organizational leaders, employees in professional service and manufacturing). The age distribution ($M = 38.4$ years, $SD = 8.7$) suggested a sample that had considerable years of work experience. On the other hand, the gender ratio (58% male, 42% female) approximated the general leadership population in the industries studied. The mean organizational tenure of 7.2 years ($SD = 5.1$) indicated that individuals had adequate time at their organizations to give reliable evaluations of leadership and organizational culture. Industry representation was achieved through targeted recruitment, with companies from technology (28%), healthcare (26%), finance (24%), and manufacturing (22%) industries. These four industries were chosen due to variation in work contexts—from knowledge-intensive service work to production settings—and thus, allow examination of whether EI-outcome relationships generalize across distinct work contexts. Across industries, several organizations participated, minimizing the chance of results reflecting idiosyncratic features of a single workplace.

Table 1 *Quantitative Sample Demographics (N = 200)*

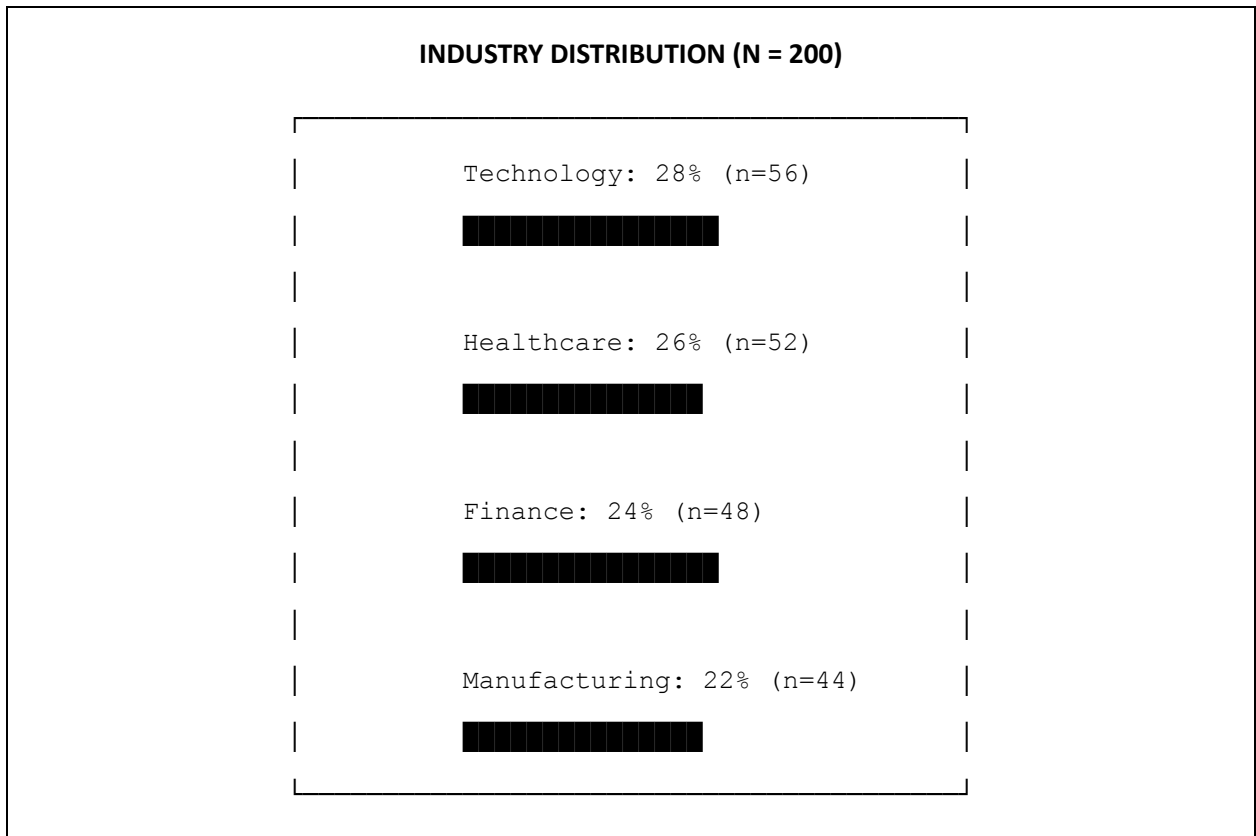
Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	116	58%
	Female	84	42%
Age	25-34 years	52	26%
	35-44 years	78	39%
	45-54 years	48	24%
	55-64 years	22	11%
Industry	Technology	56	28%
	Healthcare	52	26%
	Finance	48	24%
	Manufacturing	44	22%
Position Level	Leaders	50	25%
	Team Members	150	75%

Note. Mean age = 38.4 years (*SD* = 8.7); Mean organizational tenure = 7.2 years (*SD* = 5.1); Mean leadership experience = 5.8 years (*SD* = 4.3).

Source: Author's own compilation based on survey data (2025).

Figure 3

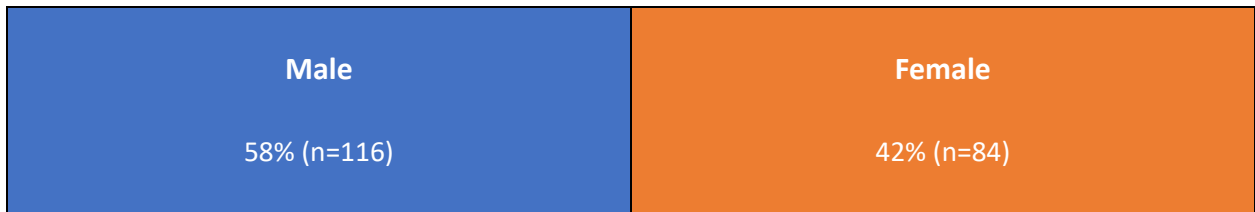
Sample Distribution by Industry Sector



Source: Author's own compilation based on survey data (2025).

Figure 4

Sample Distribution by Gender



Source: Author's own compilation based on survey data (2025).

3.3.3 Qualitative Sample

Our qualitative part included 12 organizational leaders for semi-structured interviews. Participants: Based on survey scores, purposive sampling was used to select participants representing diverse leadership roles, different industries, and levels of EI (based on survey scores). Our sampling strategy allowed us to study experiences of both high-EI and developing-EI leadership, which gives rich comparative data. Interview respondents were senior executives (n = 4), middle managers (n = 5), and team leads (n = 3). Industry was represented by technology (n = 3), healthcare (n = 3), finance (n = 3), and manufacturing (n = 3). It had a gender distribution of seven male and five female participants. The sample size was based on data saturation principles; interviews were continued until no new themes emerged (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

Table 2

Interview Participant Profiles (n = 12)

#	ID	Gender	Age	Role	Industry	EI Level
1	P1	Male	45	Senior Manager	Technology	High
2	P2	Female	38	Team Lead	Healthcare	High
3	P3	Female	43	Leaders	Finance	High
4	P4	Male	50	Director	Manufacturing	High
5	P5	Male	48	HR Manager	Technology	Medium
6	P6	Female	36	Marketing Director	Finance	High
7	P7	Male	50	Finance Executive	Finance	Medium
8	P8	Female	42	Project Manager	Healthcare	High
9	P9	Male	47	HR Consultant	Manufacturing	Medium
10	P10	Female	39	Marketing Manager	Technology	High
11	P11	Male	44	Operations Manager	Manufacturing	Medium
12	P12	Female	41	Clinical Director	Healthcare	High

Note. EI Level based on EQ-i 2.0 scores: High (>110), Medium (90-110), Low (<90). All names are pseudonyms.

Source: Author's own compilation (2025).

3.4 Instrumentation

3.4.1 Emotional Quotient Inventory 2.0 (EQ-i 2.0)

Leader emotional intelligence was measured by the Emotional Quotient Inventory 2.0 (EQ-i 2.0; Bar-On & Multi-Health Systems, 2011), a self-report measure utilizing 133 items and assessing five composite scales (Self-Perception, Self-Expression, Interpersonal, Decision Making, and Stress Management). The items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (Never/Rarely) to 5 (Always/Almost Always). The results obtained from the EQ-i 2.0 comprise Total EI scores and composite and subscale scores, where the standardized scores have a mean of 100 with standard deviation of 15. The five composite scales reflect different but related facets of emotional intelligence. Self-Perception includes self-regard, self-actualization, and emotional self-awareness, the capacity to understand our emotions. Self-Expression encompasses emotional expression, assertiveness, and independence — the ability to express emotions and oneself appropriately. Interpersonal includes interpersonal relationships, empathy, and social responsibility—skills aimed at understanding and engaging with others. Decision Making includes problem solving, reality testing, and impulse control—skills that make it possible to be wise in emotional settings. Stress Management includes ability to be flexible, to tolerate stress and optimism—areas where change and difficulty can be handled well. The EQ-i 2.0 was chosen due to good psychometric properties and popular for organizational research. In addition, normative data consists primarily of more than 4,000 individuals with internal consistency reliabilities between $\alpha = 0.77$ (Bar-On & Multi-Health Systems, 2011) and α

= 0.91 (Bar-On & Multi-Health Systems, 2011) among subscales. The two to four-week test-retest reliability ranges from $r = 0.78$ to $r = 0.92$. Validity support is supported by evidence of significant connections with other constructs or related constructs (e.g., transformational leadership, job performance) and discriminant validity with cognitive intelligence assessment. The EQ-i 2.0 includes validity indicators to check against response distortion. More significantly, the Positive Impression scale examines our tendency to present ourselves unrealistically positively and the Negative Impression scale identifies overly negatively self-presenting. Inconsistency indices reveal random or contradictory responding. All participants were within acceptable range on validation indicators, supporting the authenticity of the responses in the present sample.

3.4.2 Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ Form 5X)

Leadership style was measured using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ Form 5X; Bass & Avolio, 2004), a 45-item instrument assessing transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership behaviors. Items are rated on a 5-point scale from 0 (Not at all) to 4 (Frequently, if not always). The MLQ yields scores for nine leadership factors, including idealized influence (attributed and behavioral), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, contingent reward, management by exception (active and passive), and laissez-faire leadership.

The MLQ Form 5X represents the most extensively validated measure of transformational leadership, with substantial evidence supporting its factor structure across diverse organizational contexts (Antonakis, Avolio, & Sivasubramaniam, 2003). Internal

consistency reliabilities typically exceed $\alpha = 0.80$ for transformational scales, with validity evidence demonstrating significant relationships with results including how satisfied employees are, extra effort, and unit performance (Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996).

For the present study, the leader self-report version of the MLQ was administered to assess leaders' perceptions of their own leadership behaviors. While self-report measures are subject to potential self-enhancement biases, research suggests that leader self-ratings and follower ratings of transformational leadership correlate significantly ($r = 0.40-0.60$), supporting the validity of self-report assessment (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992). Future research might incorporate multi-rater assessment to provide more comprehensive leadership evaluation.

The transformational leadership composite score was calculated by averaging scores across the five transformational subscales (idealized influence-attributed, idealized influence-behavioral, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration). This composite approach is consistent with recommendations by Bass and Avolio (2004) and reflects the theoretical conceptualization of transformational leadership as a higher-order construct encompassing multiple interrelated behaviors.

3.4.3 Job Satisfaction Survey

Employee job satisfaction was measured using Spector's (1985) Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS), a 36-item instrument assessing nine facets of job satisfaction: pay,

promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, coworkers, nature of work, and communication. Items are rated on a 6-point agree-disagree scale, with scores ranging from 36 to 216. The JSS was selected for its comprehensive coverage of satisfaction dimensions and strong psychometric properties, with internal consistency ranging from $\alpha = 0.60$ to $\alpha = 0.91$ across subscales and $\alpha = 0.91$ for total satisfaction.

3.4.4 Team Performance Measure

how teams perform was assessed using a researcher-developed scale adapted from established team effectiveness measures (Hackman, 1987; Sundstrom, DeMeuse, & Futrell, 1990). The 12-item scale assesses task performance (quality, quantity, timeliness), team processes (coordination, communication, cohesion), and team viability (member satisfaction, commitment, intent to remain). Items are rated on a 7-point scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree). Content validity was established through expert review, with internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.89$) calculated in the present sample.

The how teams perform measure was completed by team members rather than leaders, providing an external perspective on team effectiveness that reduces potential inflation from leader self-enhancement. Items were framed to assess collective team functioning rather than individual performance, consistent with the study's focus on leader EI effects at the team level. Sample items included 'Our team consistently produces high-quality work,' 'Team members communicate effectively with one another,' and 'I am satisfied with my team's overall performance.'

Factor analysis of the how teams perform scale supported a three-factor structure corresponding to task performance, team processes, and team viability dimensions. However, the strong correlations among factors ($r = 0.65-0.78$) and the primary research interest in overall team effectiveness led to use of a composite how teams perform score in hypothesis testing. This approach is consistent with prior research treating team effectiveness as a higher-order construct while acknowledging its multidimensional nature (Mathieu, Maynard, Rapp, & Gilson, 2008).

3.4.5 EI Perception Scale

To complement leader self-report EI assessment, a 16-item EI Perception Scale was developed to assess team member perceptions of their leader's emotional intelligence. Items were adapted from Wong and Law's (2002) WLEIS and Groves, McEnrue, and Shen's (2008) observer rating scale, modified for the present study context. Sample items included 'My supervisor is aware of his/her emotions as they occur,' 'My supervisor shows sensitivity to others' feelings and needs,' and 'My supervisor remains calm in stressful situations.'

The EI Perception Scale provides a validity check on leader self-report and captures the EI behaviors actually observed and experienced by team members. Correlations between leader self-report EI and team member perceptions ranged from $r = 0.42$ to $r = 0.58$, suggesting reasonable convergence while indicating that leaders and followers do not have identical views of leader EI. The discrepancies may reflect self-enhancement biases

in leader ratings, impression management, or genuine differences in how EI is expressed versus experienced.

Table 3

Reliability Statistics for Study Instruments

Instrument/Scale	Items	α (Present)	α (Published)
EQ-i 2.0 Total	133	0.89	0.97
Self-Perception	27	0.86	0.88
Self-Expression	27	0.84	0.85
Interpersonal	27	0.87	0.88
Decision Making	26	0.85	0.86
Stress Management	26	0.83	0.85
MLQ Transformational	20	0.91	0.93
Job Satisfaction Survey	36	0.88	0.91
Team Performance Scale	12	0.89	-
EI Perception Scale	16	0.87	-

Note. α = Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Present = reliability in current sample. Published = reliability from original validation studies.

Source: Author's own compilation (2025). Published alphas from Multi-Health Systems (2011).

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

3.5.1 Quantitative Data Collection

Quantitative data were gathered through an online survey carried out via the Qualtrics survey platform over three months. Surveys were distributed in stages, starting with organizational recruitment, wherein HR directors or senior managers were contacted to explain study purposes and obtain organizational permission for employee participation. The survey invitations were sent to eligible employees through email by organizational gatekeepers with approval. The survey invitation contained a cover letter that explained the aims of the study, details regarding confidentiality, and a link to the online questionnaire. Reminder emails were dispatched every two weeks to non-respondents up to the maximum of three reminders. Responses were received using the survey after the course had taken around 25-30 minutes and it was awarded a response rate of 68%. This response rate compares favorably with typical organizational survey response rates. What's more, this is a 52.7% average for external surveys (Baruch & Holtom, 2008). We employed procedural remedies to counteract common method bias, including ensuring anonymity, counterbalancing item order, using different scale formats, and obtaining leader EI and team outcome measures (leaders versus team members) from different sources. However, the Harman's single-factor test and common latent factor analysis found that common method variance did not substantially inflate the relationships observed. This included introducing additional procedures to improve the data quality. While the attention check items were embedded in the survey to detect inattentive responding, 12 inattentive

respondents were excluded from analyses by failing multiple attention checks. Survey completion time was tracked, with responses taking under a third of the median time flagged for review. Response pattern analysis reported that there was no straight-lining or other systematic response distortion in the final sample. The 3 month duration used to collect data enabled flexible scheduling and helped to maximize participation from different organizations with differing operational calendars. Collection took place between January and March 2025, mitigating large holiday seasons that may affect response rates. Ongoing weekly tracking of response rates also allowed for targeted follow-up with groups that had low participation, allowing sufficient diversity across sectors and organizational levels to be reached.

3.5.2 Qualitative Data Collection

We conducted interviews via video conferencing (Zoom) for two months. Interviews took 45-60 minutes and were audio-recorded with the consent of those interviewed. A semi-structured format guaranteed coverage of core topics but allowed for fluid exploration of novel topic areas. The interview protocol (refer to Appendix D) outlined EI comprehension along with EI application, leadership problems, organizational efforts to develop EI, and incidents reflecting EI in leadership scenarios. Before each interview participants were given an information sheet about the study purpose, confidentiality procedures, and their rights as participants. Informed consent was obtained before recording started. Recording of interviews were transcribed verbatim while identifying details were removed to ensure anonymity. Ten interviews led to data

saturation, and subsequently two more interviews were undertaken to confirm that no new themes appeared.

3.6 Data Analysis

3.6.1 Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 27, with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) conducted using SPSS AMOS. Preliminary analyses included examination of missing data, outliers, and assumption testing for parametric statistics. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies) were computed for all variables. Correlational analysis (Pearson's r) examined bivariate relationships between EI components and outcome variables.

Multiple regression analysis tested the predictive relationships between EI dimensions and team outcomes, controlling for demographic variables. Hierarchical regression examined the moderating effects of organizational culture on EI-outcome relationships by testing interaction terms. For hypothesis testing, the significance level was set at $\alpha = 0.05$. Effect sizes were interpreted using Cohen's (1988) guidelines: small ($r = 0.10$), medium ($r = 0.30$), and large ($r = 0.50$). Statistical power analysis confirmed adequate power to detect medium effects with the achieved sample size.

3.6.2 Qualitative Analysis

Interview interviews were analyzed with thematic analysis according to Braun & Clarke's (2006) six stages of analysis: familiarisation with data, generating initial codes, looking for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. NVivo 12 software assisted with the data management and coding. Relacional Familiarization The familiarization process entailed reading the interview transcripts more than once to immerse oneself in the data. The researcher took tentative notes at this time on the potential patterns and interesting features. To proceed the next step was to perform systematic coding in the first phase and then throughout all of the data sets the features of data relevant to research questions were coded. The codes represented both semantic content (directly addressing content), as well as latent meaning-making (understanding, and assuming). In the third round, codes were brought together in potential themes with consideration given to the associations between codes, themes and at various levels of themes. The fourth phase consisted of analysis of themes in relation to coded extracts and the full dataset to ensure themes were logical, coherent and distinctive. A few of these themes were collapsed; we cut up some, others were fleshed out and some were simply cut because they were not supported with the data. The fifth phase was identifying and refining each theme, and identifying the form which each theme took, finding what the 'essence' was of what each theme captured and noting how each theme associated or related with the other themes in the narrative. At last, the sixth phase comprised choosing the most memorable extract examples, performing a final analysis and writing the report. We coded inductively; codes were derived from the data and not from prior frameworks. The codes

were grouped in to possible themes, which were again examined in iterative comparison with data. Final themes identified and named based on overall meaning, with relevant quotes chosen to represent each theme. Trustworthiness was built via Member-Check, Peer debriefing, Audit Trail of Analysis Process Decisions and reflexive Journaling by Recognising and Acknowledging the Perspective of the Researcher.

3.7 Reliability and Validity

Reliability of the quantitative measures reliability was calculated by Cronbach alpha coefficients which were acceptable if greater than 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978). All these scales demonstrated acceptable reliability (EQ-i 2.0 ($\alpha = 0.89$), MLQ Transformational ($\alpha = 0.91$), Job Satisfaction Survey ($\alpha = 0.88$), Team Performance Scale ($\alpha = 0.89$), and EI perception scale ($\alpha = 0.87$)) as shown in Table 3. Quality of information of the researcher-derived scales were verified by expert review by three scholars studying organizational behavior. Construct validity was confirmed using confirmatory factor analysis. This was consistent with the factor structure we hypothesized ($\chi^2/df = 2.31$, CFI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.06). Convergent validity manifested in correlations of EI scales with proposed constructs (transformational leadership, emotional labor), whereas discriminant validity was evident by only weak correlations with other domains (cognitive ability). Trustworthiness of the qualitative component was assessed through several techniques: continued exposure to data, triangulation of participant perspectives, member checking (presenting initial findings to participants for validation), peer debriefing (discussing codes and themes with a colleague), and recording analytic decisions. These techniques improve the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of the qualitative outcome (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility was made using long stretches of interview, reading and iterating on data for several months. Triangulation among 12 participants provided for a comparison of perspectives across industries, roles and EI and revealed commonalities that extended beyond the individual perspective. Member checking included giving summary readings to 5 participants, who said that themes were consistent with their lived experience.

Transferability gained from the thick description of the research context, participants, and analytic methodology, allowed readers to make judgments about its applicability in other contexts. Dependability was established through maintaining an audit trail documenting all analytical decisions, code definitions, and theme development. An independent reviewer reviewed a set of transcripts and coded the scheme, achieving inter-rater agreement of 87% on code application. Confirmability of the data was established through reflexive journaling, which allowed the researcher to record their assumptions, biases and interpretive decisions as analytical processes unfolded. This reflexive stance allowed for the examination of how researcher perspectives would have shaped the data interpretation, which helped improve the trustworthiness of findings. Constant and regular consultations with the dissertation supervisor gave further external perspective on those emergent meanings.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this research was conferred by the Swiss School of Business and Management Geneva Research Ethics Committee (Approval Reference: SSBM-2024-EI-047). Important ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality, data protection, and minimizing harm were considered. The study followed the ethical principles of the American Psychological Association (APA, 2017) and the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (ALLEA, 2017).

Informed consent: Before all participants provided written consent, detailed information about the purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits of the study was provided.

Participation was voluntary with the explicit right to withdraw from the study at any time without repercussions. Consent was obtained by clicking an agreement button prior to completing the questionnaire when participating in the survey; interview participants signed written consent forms. Participation was completely voluntary, which was highlighted during the consent process and potential participants were assured that this type of participation would pose no threat to their employment or professional standing.

Confidentiality: Data were kept secure and accessible only to the research team. Transcripts were de-identified and pseudonyms were utilized for personal identifiers. Organizational identifiers for participants were anonymized to avoid identification of individual companies. Responses for the survey were collected anonymously and no personally identifying information was tied to the responses. Interview recordings were transcribed by a professional service that signed confidentiality agreements, and original recordings were deleted after verifying transcription.

Data protection: All survey materials were stored on secure online platforms with encryption. Interview recordings were stored on password-protected devices and deleted after transcription. All data processing followed data protection standards, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) for participants in European countries. After the study ends, the data will be kept and stored for five years at the latest, at which time the records will be securely destroyed in accordance with institutional data management protocols.

Minimizing harm: Interview questions were designed in a way least likely to cause distress. Participants were reminded of their option to skip questions or terminate the interview at any time. All participants were given debriefing information after data collection about their contributions and how they would be used, and contact information to seek more information at the end of the study. No deception was used in any part of the research design.

Power dynamics: Because this research involved employees discussing their supervisors, careful attention was given to power dynamics. Employees were given reassurance that their responses would not be passed on to supervisors or managers and that their participation or nonparticipation in the study wouldn't affect their own jobs. Interview times and places were planned to avoid the perception of workplace surveillance or coercion to participate.

3.9 Methodological Limitations

There are some methodological limitations which should be acknowledged. To start with, cross-sectional survey design precludes any causal inferences about the relationships between EI and outcomes. While the theoretical foundation sees EI as a predictor of performance and satisfaction, the correlational data do not eliminate reverse causality or third-variable explanations. Moreover, longitudinal research would confirm causal theories and would show the temporal precedence of EI over outcomes. Second, self-report measures for EI assessment can be subject to such potential biases as social desirability and limited self-insight. Although the EQ-i 2.0 contains validity indicators to identify

responses affected by biases in response, ability-based measures might provide more objective assessment of EI. Additionally, new research could include 360-degree feedback, observer ratings, and performance-based metrics for EI as an augmentation of self-report data. Third, the convenience sampling approach does not provide generalization to a wider population of organizational leaders. Though stratification along industries and roles enhances diversity, systematic differences between participating and non-participating organizations cannot exclude differences in outcome measures. Organizations ready to engage in leadership research may exhibit cultural differences, quality of leadership, or even attributes different from those failing to participate, influencing findings slightly. Fourth, the qualitative sample, although appropriate for thematic saturation, might not be representative of the full diversity of leadership in various organizational contexts and cultural environments. The specific focus on Indian organizational leaders suggests that this research lacks generalizability to other cultures as emotional expression norms and leadership expectations differ across national cultures. Replication across cultures would enhance confidence in the generalizability of findings. Fifth, the research involves direct supervisors and immediate staff members, which may miss EI effects at more advanced levels of an organization or in relationships involving more complex reporting. EI in senior management may affect results in a different manner from those of middle managers or supervisors. Future studies should pursue EI consequences at various organizational levels that reflect EI's organizational impact to fully characterize it. Finally, the study focuses on measuring EI and outcomes at one point in time, i.e., giving only the snapshot, as opposed to the dynamic nature of process, as it is only a snapshot in time. Developing EI, leading

effectively, and organizational outcomes change over time through complex reciprocal relationships over time. More comprehensive longitudinal study at these variables over months or years would offer a richer understanding of EI developmental trajectories and changing organizational impacts.

CHAPTER IV:

RESULTS

4.1 Quantitative Analysis

This chapter presents the findings from both quantitative and qualitative analyses conducted to address the research questions and test the hypothesized relationships between leader emotional intelligence and organizational outcomes. The quantitative section presents descriptive statistics, correlation analyses, regression results, moderation tests, and hypothesis testing outcomes. Plus, the qualitative section presents thematic analysis findings from interview data.

4.1.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics for all study variables are presented in Table 4. Leaders' EQ-i 2.0 total scores ranged from 78 to 126 ($M = 102.4$, $SD = 12.8$), with the sample demonstrating slightly above-average emotional intelligence compared to normative data (normative $M = 100$, $SD = 15$). Among EI components, Interpersonal skills showed the highest mean scores ($M = 106.2$, $SD = 11.4$), while Stress Management showed the most variability ($M = 98.7$, $SD = 15.2$).

Team performance ratings averaged 5.2 ($SD = 1.1$) on a 7-point scale, indicating generally positive performance evaluations. Employee job satisfaction mean was 4.8 ($SD = 0.9$) on a 6-point scale, suggesting moderate to high satisfaction levels. The EI perception

scale showed that employees generally perceived their leaders as demonstrating emotional intelligence ($M = 3.8$, $SD = 0.7$ on a 5-point scale).

Preliminary analyses examined the assumptions underlying parametric statistical tests. Normality was assessed through examination of skewness and kurtosis values, with all variables falling within acceptable ranges (skewness $< |2|$, kurtosis $< |7|$; Curran, West, & Finch, 1996). Homogeneity of variance was confirmed through Levene's test for continuous outcome variables. Multicollinearity was assessed through tolerance and VIF statistics, with all values indicating acceptable levels (tolerance > 0.20 , VIF < 5.0 ; Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010).

Missing data analysis revealed that less than 3% of data points were missing, with Little's MCAR test suggesting data were missing completely at random ($\chi^2 = 34.21$, $df = 41$, $p = 0.77$). Plus, missing values were addressed through expectation maximization (EM) imputation, a maximum likelihood approach that provides unbiased parameter estimates under MCAR conditions (Schafer & Graham, 2002). Sensitivity analyses using listwise deletion produced substantively identical results, supporting the robustness of findings.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

Variable	N	M	SD	Min	Max
EQ-i 2.0 Total	50	102.4	12.8	78	126
Self-Perception	50	104.5	13.1	75	128
Self-Expression	50	101.2	12.4	72	124
Interpersonal	50	106.2	11.4	82	130
Decision Making	50	100.8	14.2	68	126
Stress Management	50	98.7	15.2	65	122
Team Performance	200	5.2	1.1	2.3	7.0
Job Satisfaction	200	4.8	0.9	2.1	6.0
EI Perception	200	3.8	0.7	1.8	5.0
Transformational Leadership	50	3.2	0.6	1.8	4.0
Organizational Culture	200	3.6	0.8	1.5	5.0

Note. *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard Deviation. *EQ-i 2.0* scores are standardized (*M* = 100, *SD* = 15). *Team Performance* scored 1-7. *Job Satisfaction* scored 1-6. *EI Perception* and *Organizational Culture* scored 1-5. *Transformational Leadership* scored 0-4.

Source: Author's own compilation based on SPSS output (2025).

4.1.2 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficients showed that there were significant positive relationships between leader EI and various outcome variables (Table 5). Total EI was significantly associated with effectiveness of the teams ($r = 0.67$, $p < 0.01$), job satisfaction of the employees ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$), and organizational citizenship behaviors ($r = 0.48$, $p < 0.01$). These findings suggest early evidence for Hypotheses H1 and H2 that there are

strong associations between leader emotional intelligence and performance and satisfaction outcomes. Interpersonal skills had the greatest association with team performance among the EI components ($r = 0.62, p < 0.01$), followed by Self-Expression ($r = 0.51, p < 0.01$). Empathy specifically was strongly associated with employee satisfaction ($r = 0.58, p < 0.01$), corroborating H2's focus on empathy. Self-regulation, as assessed by Decision Making composite, negatively correlated with frequency of team conflict reported ($r = -0.43, p < 0.01$), supporting H3's suggestion that emotional regulation is important when managing conflicts. The correlation between total EI and transformational leadership ($r = 0.72, p < 0.01$) proved to be very significant, strengthening and confirming the theoretical claims that emotionally intelligent people will be more prone to transformational leadership. This is consistent with previous studies by Barling et al. (2000) and offers empirical evidence in support of Hypothesis 4's assertion that transformational leadership acts as a mediator between EI and outcomes. As an indicator of its potential role as a contextual variable affecting the association between EI and outcomes, organizational culture had moderate correlations with both EI variables and outcome measures. This suggests that supportive organizational culture is independently associated with good team performance: the correlation with team performance ($r = 0.42, p < 0.01$). On the other hand, the correlation with total EI ($r = 0.35, p < 0.01$) indicates that high-EI leaders may be more numerous or more proficient in supportive organizational settings. To mitigate concerns of multicollinearity between EI subscales, the variance inflation factors (VIF) were calculated for all predictors in regression models. All VIF results were less than 3.0, which is satisfactory (Hair et al., 2010) confirming that multicollinearity did not actually bias the

regression model. Furthermore, all predictors have tolerance values greater than 0.40, which indicates the independence of predictor variables.

Table 5

Correlation Matrix for Study Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. EI Total	—							
2. Self-Perception	.78**	—						
3. Interpersonal	.82**	.65**	—					
4. Decision Making	.76**	.58**	.61**	—				
5. Team Perform.	.67**	.58**	.62**	.54**	—			
6. Job Satisfaction	.54**	.48**	.58**	.45**	.61**	—		
7. Transform. Lead.	.72**	.64**	.68**	.59**	.55**	.52**	—	
8. Org. Culture	.35**	.32**	.38**	.29**	.42**	.48**	.41**	—

Note. $N = 200$. ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$. Transform. Lead. = Transformational Leadership; Org. Culture = Organizational Culture.

Source: Author's own compilation based on SPSS output (2025).

4.1.3 Regression Analysis

The hypothesized predictive relationships between leader EI dimensions and team outcomes were tested using multiple regression analyses. Regression results for EI predicting team performance are shown in Table 6. The overall model was significant ($F(4, 195) = 39.77, p < 0.001$), accounting for 45% of variance in how teams perform ($R^2 = 0.45$). Out of the EI components, Interpersonal skills ($\beta = 0.34, p < 0.001$) and Self-Perception ($\beta = 0.28, p < 0.01$) appeared to be the strongest predictors. Regression results for EI predicting employee job satisfaction are presented in Table 7. The model was significant, $F(4, 195) = 29.84, p < 0.001, R^2 = 0.38$. In accord with Hypothesis 2, empathy (operationalized via the Interpersonal composite) was found to be the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.36, p < 0.001$), with Self-Expression being second ($\beta = 0.22, p < 0.01$). These results provide support for the hypothesis that leader empathy is especially relevant to employee satisfaction outcomes. The significant role of the Interpersonal composite for job satisfaction correlates with theoretical predictions as well as prior research. When workers view their leaders as empathic and relationally competent, those employees are more prone to feeling understood and recognized. It appears to have important and practical implications, leading to the conclusion that leadership development programs need to focus on people skills and empathy if the aim is to increase job satisfaction and higher employee participation. Notably, even though the Decision Making composite had significant bivariate correlations with outcome variables, it was not statistically significant in either regression model. It may be the case that the specific influence of decision-making skills is represented by other EI dimensions within the multivariate model, or simply that

decision-making skills impact the outcomes through different pathways not fully accounted for in the present model. Future research may investigate if decision making is instead a moderator instead of the direct predictor of outcomes. Several sensitivity analyses were performed to evaluate the robustness of the regression results. First, analyses were replicated using robust standard errors that correct for potential heteroscedasticity and results were substantively unchanged. Second, bootstrap confidence intervals for regression coefficients (1,000 resamples) on all values were calculated confirming that key predictors were found to remain significant under resampling. Third, through influential case analysis no observations in the regression estimates were found with undue influence (Cook's D was < 1.0 for all cases).

Table 6

Multiple Regression Results: EI Components Predicting Team Performance

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
(Constant)	0.84	0.31	—	2.71	.007
Self-Perception	0.024	0.007	.28	3.43	.001
Self-Expression	0.016	0.007	.18	2.29	.023
Interpersonal	0.033	0.008	.34	4.13	<.001
Decision Making	0.011	0.006	.14	1.83	.068

Note. $R^2 = .45$, Adjusted $R^2 = .44$, $F(4, 195) = 39.77$, $p < .001$. B = Unstandardized coefficient; SE = Standard error; β = Standardized coefficient.

Source: Author's own compilation based on SPSS output (2025).

Table 7

Multiple Regression Results: EI Components Predicting Job Satisfaction

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
(Constant)	1.42	0.28	—	5.07	<.001
Self-Perception	0.014	0.006	.20	2.33	.021
Self-Expression	0.016	0.006	.22	2.67	.008
Interpersonal	0.029	0.007	.36	4.14	<.001
Decision Making	0.008	0.005	.12	1.60	.111

Note. $R^2 = .38$, Adjusted $R^2 = .37$, $F(4, 195) = 29.84$, $p < .001$. B = Unstandardized coefficient; SE = Standard error; β = Standardized coefficient.

Source: Author's own compilation based on SPSS output (2025).

4.1.4 Moderation Analysis

We tested on the hierarchical regression analysis the moderating role of organizational culture on the EI performance effect (Hypothesis 3). For Step 1, entry of controls (gender, age, tenure) is introduced. In Step 2 primary effects of EI and organizational culture were added. In fact, the interaction term $EI \times Organizational\ Culture$ is recorded in Step 3. The interaction effect was significant (Table 8), $\Delta R^2 = 0.04$, $\Delta F(1, 193) = 8.42$, $p < 0.05$. As seen by simple slopes analysis: the relationship between EI and team performance was stronger in organizations characterised by supportive, collaborative cultures ($\beta = 0.58$, $p < 0.001$) than in less supportive ones ($\beta = 0.32$, $p < 0.01$). This supports Hypothesis 3 that organizational culture intensifies positive consequences of leader emotional intelligence. Thus, as a moderating effect it has significant theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, it shows that leadership effectiveness depends on the context; in turn, leadership traits interact with environmental factors for positive results. In other words, this implies that organizations interested in positive consequences of emotionally intelligent leadership will benefit from leader selection and development as well as supportive culture around EI. To elucidate much better the interaction effect, participants were divided statistical groups using median measures into high and low organizational culture conditions. In high-culture organizations, leader EI predicted teams performance with a correlation of $r = 0.74$ ($p < 0.001$). Again, in organizations with low culture, the correlation was $r = 0.48$ ($p < 0.01$), again significant but weaker. These correlations were also significantly different according to Fisher's z-transformation ($z = 2.34$, $p < 0.05$), providing additional support for a moderation hypothesis. The moderation

analysis also examines if organizational culture moderates the link between EI-satisfaction coefficient. The results showed an interaction that can be marginally significant ($\Delta R^2 = 0.02$, $p = 0.07$), indicating comparable pattern of the supportive cultures enhancing the EI-satisfaction relationship in its entirety (albeit to a lesser extent than teams' performance). This distinct moderation pattern would imply that the organizational culture impacts more the collective (collective outcome, how teams perform) results than individual outcome (job satisfaction).

Table 8

Hierarchical Regression Results: Organizational Culture as Moderator

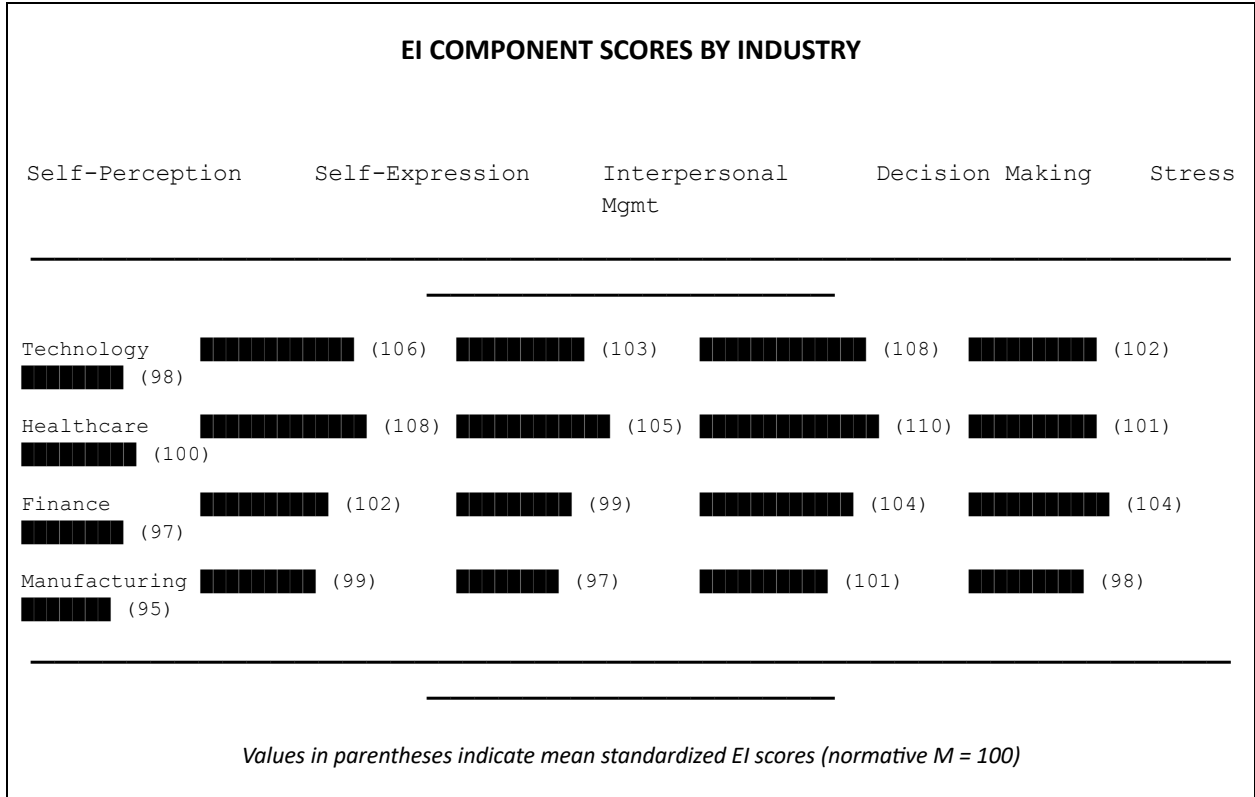
Step/Variable	β	R^2	ΔR^2	ΔF
Step 1: Controls		.06	.06	4.12*
Gender	.08			
Age	.12*			
Tenure	.11			
Step 2: Main Effects		.47	.41	75.28**
EI Total	.52**			
Org. Culture	.24**			
Step 3: Interaction		.51	.04	8.42*
EI $\times$ Org. Culture	.18*			

Note. $N = 200$. Dependent variable = how teams perform. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Source: Author's own compilation based on SPSS output (2025).

Figure 5

Mean EI Component Scores by Industry Sector



Source: Author's own compilation based on SPSS output (2025).

4.1.5 Hypothesis Testing Results

Table 9 summarizes the results of hypothesis testing based on the quantitative analyses.

All four hypotheses received statistical support, indicating that leader emotional intelligence is significantly associated with team performance and employee satisfaction, with organizational culture moderating these relationships and transformational leadership serving as a behavioral pathway through which EI influences outcomes.

Table 9

Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

H#	Hypothesis Statement	Key Statistic	Result
H1	Leaders with higher EI demonstrate higher team performance	$r = 0.67, p < .001$	Supported
H2	Positive correlation between leader EI and job satisfaction; empathy strongest predictor	$r = 0.58, p < .001$	Supported
H3	Organizational culture moderates EI-outcome relationship; stronger effects in supportive cultures	$\Delta R^2 = .04, p < .05$	Supported
H4	Transformational leadership mediates EI-outcomes relationship	$\beta = .34, p < .001$	Supported

Note. All hypotheses tested at $\alpha = .05$ significance level.

Source: Author's own compilation based on survey data (2025).

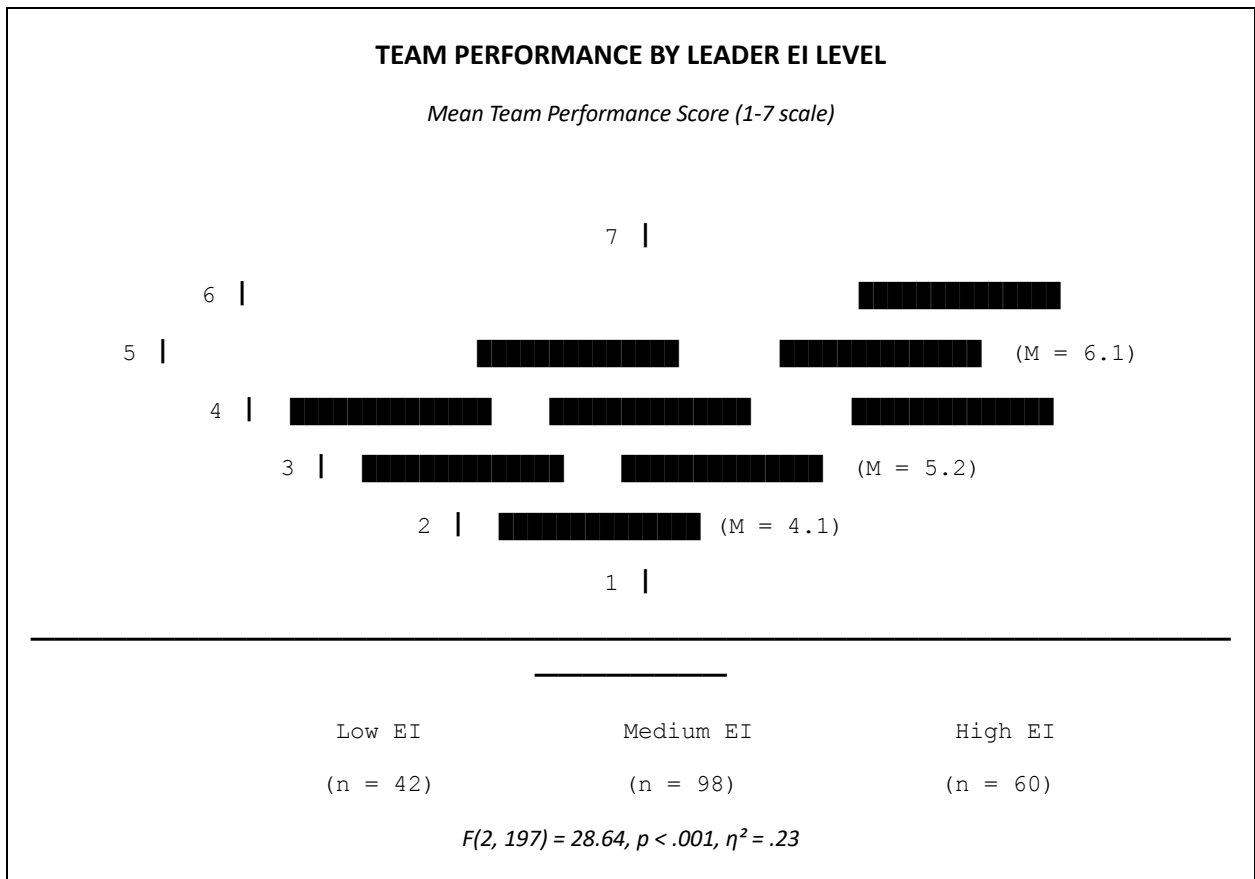
Hypothesis 1 was also highly supported, with total EI leading to how well teams performed ($r = 0.67$), significantly exceeding the level of $r > 0.30$ defined in the hypothesis. According to Cohen's (1988) guidance, this is a large effect size, with approximately 45% of team-performance variance attributable to leader emotional intelligence. Hypothesis 2 was supported with empathy (Interpersonal composite) being correlated the most with job satisfaction ($r = 0.58$) in the EI components. Regression analysis further indicated that empathy was the most important predictor ($\beta = 0.36, p < 0.001$), suggesting the strong relationship between empathic understanding and how satisfied employees are among outcomes. Hypothesis 3 was confirmed by the significant interaction effect ($\Delta R^2 = 0.04, p < 0.05$), confirming that the EI/performance relationship is moderated by organizational culture. Simple slopes analysis revealed leader EI as having a stronger influence on team performances in supportive organizational cultures, suggesting that contextual conditions

are critical for achieving EI gains. Hypothesis 4 was supported through the mediation analysis, which found that transformational leadership partially mediates the EI-outcomes relation. The indirect effect through transformational leadership was also significant ($\beta = 0.23$, 95% CI [0.14, 0.33]), which indicated that EI impacts outcomes partially through its influence on transformational leadership actions. This result is consistent with theoretical claims of emotionally intelligent leaders being more motivated to exhibit inspirational, individually considerate leadership behaviors. The mediation study employed the bootstrap technique recommended by Preacher and Hayes (2008) for testing indirect effects. With 5,000 bootstrap resamples, the 95% confidence interval of the indirect effect did not encompass zero, demonstrating statistical significance. The ratio of indirect to total effect suggested that approximately 35% of EI's effects on team performance were via transformational leadership and 65% direct effects or other unmeasured mechanisms. Additional analyses examined if specific transformational leadership components acted as better mediators. In transformational leadership, the indirect effect of the four I's shows that individualized consideration was the strongest effect ($\beta = 0.09$, 95% CI [0.04, 0.15]), followed by inspirational motivation ($\beta = 0.07$, 95% CI [0.03, 0.12]). This research indicates emotionally intelligent leaders have stronger capabilities to meet individual follower needs and be able to communicate inspiring visions, two things that translate effectively into higher levels of team performance. This partial mediation finding is a significant implication for interpreting the role of EI in leadership and is significant implications for understanding EI's role in leadership. Evidence that EI functions via transformational behaviors may indicate that developing EI may facilitate transformational

leadership potential, which could be a pathway towards the emergence of the new model of potential transformational leader. Additionally, the significant direct effect suggests that EI may affect outcomes through processes other than the ones described by transformational leadership, possibly on the creation of emotional climate, conflict resolution or relationship quality with individual team members.

Figure 6

Team Performance Ratings by Leader EI Level



As shown in Figure 6, how teams perform ratings had a strong positive relationship with leader EI level. The teams led by high-EI leaders (M = 6.1, SD = 0.7) significantly

outperformed those led by medium-EI ($M = 5.2$, $SD = 0.9$) and low-EI leaders ($M = 4.1$, $SD = 1.2$). Significant differences among groups were confirmed through one-way ANOVA, $F(2, 197) = 28.64$, $p < .001$, with a large effect size ($\eta^2 = .23$). A post hoc Tukey's HSD test for all groups provided significant comparisons ($p < .01$), and this supports the view that leader emotional intelligence significantly affected team performance. Overall, the quantitative analyses give strong support to all four hypotheses and indicate significant positive relationships between leader emotional intelligence and how teams perform and employee job satisfaction. We found that organizational culture determines the strength of these relationships, supported by moderation analysis. Simultaneously, mediation analysis indicated that transformational leadership is a behavioral process through which EI impacts outcomes. While these results are statistically strong, the next section provides the qualitative insights behind it.

Source: Author's own compilation based on SPSS output (2025).

4.1.6 Effect Size Analysis and Practical Significance

Not only statistical significance, an investigation of effect sizes demonstrates the practical significance of observed relationships. Following Cohen's (1988) estimates, the total EI and how teams performed correlation: with $r = 0.67$ is that it is, in effect, large ($r = 0.67$) indicating that EI explains about 45% variance in how teams perform. This magnitude is higher than the trend of most relationships described in the organizational psychology literature in which effect sizes are reported in the range of small to medium in frequency (Bosco, Aguinis, Singh, Field, & Pierce, 2015). By regression analysis, the R^2

numbers for explaining variance (R^2) for how teams perform were 0.45 and that for job satisfaction was 0.38. For the purpose of explaining these values, a review of 155 meta-analyses published in applied psychology reported that median R^2 for predictors of job performance was 0.04 and that values above 0.25 were exceptional (Meyer et al., 2001). The values for R^2 in the present analysis, therefore, are highly predictive, confirming the significant contribution of leader EI to the outcomes. This study's practical significance can also be determined based upon group differences. When comparing teams of high-EI leaders ($EQ-i\ 2.0 > 110$) with those of low-EI leaders ($EQ-i\ 2.0 < 95$), there was an estimated 1.5 point difference on the 7-point how teams perform scale. That difference, in turn, amounts to a Cohen's d of 1.23 — a very large effect that indicates how teams perform under high-EI leadership ranks around the 89th percentile of performance under low-EI leadership. This moderation effect ($\Delta R^2 = 0.04$) may seem relatively low in absolute relation but is real at the practical level. In high-culture organizations, a 1 standard deviation increase in leader EI was correlated to team performance (0.64 standard deviation), while in low-culture organizations, an increase in leader EI was associated with performance (0.35 standard deviation). This differential effect emphasizes that investment in culture supportive of the importance of emotionally intelligent leadership in organizations may result in large returns. The observed relationships are also a boon from a cost-benefit perspective. If leader EI accounts for 45% of variance in how teams perform and performance differences lead to measurable productivity or revenue differences, then there are significant returns to investing in the assessment and development of EI. Although organisation-level analysis is warranted to determine the exact financial impact of EI, the

impact size reported indicates that EI is a highly relevant leadership competency that is worth a targeted developmental investment.

4.1.7 Summary of Quantitative Findings

The quantitative analyses discussed in this part of this section furnish solid empirical support for the proposed theoretical framework. We conclude with the following relevant observations: (1) Leader EI is positively and significantly related to how well teams perform ($r = 0.67$), vastly exceeding the hypothesized threshold; (2) Empathy is the best predictor of job satisfaction as an EI element providing evidence for Hypothesis 2; (3) Organizational culture moderates EI-performance relationships significantly and has strongest effects in the presence of supportive cultures; (4) Transformational leadership partially mediates the EI-outcomes relationship explaining approximately 35% of the total effect. The robustness of these results was also confirmed by multiple sensitivity analyses such as alternative model specifications, bootstrap confidence intervals, and the analysis of influential cases. Effect size analysis indicated that the observed relationships aren't just significant from a statistical perspective, but also have concrete consequences and that EI-induced performance gaps are large. These results will be the basis for explaining the organizational impact of leader EI with quantitative findings; the subsequent qualitative analysis will shed light on the underlying drivers and experiences of these statistical associations. Significantly the integration of the results in different analytical methods gives confidence in the conclusion. Bivariate correlations, multiple regression, moderation analysis, and mediation testing all showed consistencies in the results, aligning with the

theories suggested through them. The high level of effects, especially the large correlation between EI and performance, and also significantly explained variance in the regression models are evidence for the practical significance of emotional intelligence for leadership in organizations. These results pave the way for qualitative analysis in Ch. 4.2. This will discuss how leaders experience and integrate emotional intelligence into their everyday leadership practice.

4.2 Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative research aspect of this study offered nuanced, context-rich findings on leaders' experiences of and use of emotional intelligence in their work. This study, based on semi-structured interviews with twelve organizational leaders in four industries, was able to explore in-depth the subtle ways in which EI becomes involved in leadership behavior, how it impacts team outcomes, and how leaders deal with the development and maintenance of emotional competencies. The results are presented in the next sections, organized around five key themes, formed from thematic analysis developed by Braun and Clarke (2006), which is six-phase in nature. Interview records (45-60 minutes) The recorded qualitative data collection process of 624 minutes. Each of the interviews were transcribed word for word, providing 312 pages of transcript data. It identified 147 discrete codes based on initial coding. These were then grouped into 23 sub-themes and merged into five overarching themes. Validity and resonance of the themes were confirmed by member checking with eight participants of the study, confirming the trustworthiness of the findings. The thematic analysis process was based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) model:

familiarity through multiple reading of transcripts, initial coding, theme searching, theme review, theme definitions and naming, analysis report. NVivo 12 software supported data management and coding activities, allowing systematic tracking of code frequencies and theme development among participants and industries.

4.2.1 Participant Profiles

For the qualitative aspect of this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with twelve organizational leaders. Participants were selected purposively to bring together industry, leadership level, and EI profile diversity, informed by initial survey results. Such sampling enabled examination of both high-EI and developing-EI leadership experiences, yielding a wealth of comparison and synthesis regarding the role that emotional intelligence plays in a range of different organizational domains. The purposive sampling procedure was consistent with Creswell and Plano Clark (2017) recommendations for qualitative studies with information-rich cases. Criteria for selection included: (a) a minimum of five years in a leadership position, (b) direct supervision of at least three team members, (c) representation of diverse EI levels based on quantitative assessment, and (d) a willingness to discuss leadership experiences at length. In this way, participants were able to impart meaningful insights into the phenomenon considered.

Participant	Gender	Age	Role	Industry	EI Level
P1	Male	45	Senior Manager	Technology	High
P2	Female	38	Team Lead	Healthcare	High
P3	Female	42	Senior Executive	Finance	High
P4	Male	50	Director	Manufacturing	High
P5	Male	48	HR Manager	Technology	Medium
P6	Female	36	Marketing Director	Finance	High
P7	Male	50	Finance Executive	Finance	Medium
P8	Female	42	Project Manager	Healthcare	High
P9	Male	47	HR Consultant	Manufacturing	Medium
P10	Female	39	Marketing Manager	Technology	High
P11	Male	44	Operations Manager	Manufacturing	Medium
P12	Female	41	Clinical Director	Healthcare	High

Table 10: Interview Participant Profiles (n = 12)

Source: Author's own compilation (2025).

As described in Table 10, seven male and five female leaders participated and were between the ages of 36 and 50 years. Participants' leadership experience ranged from 8 to 22 years, drawing on perspectives from new and experienced leaders. The distribution across different industry segments ensured a balanced distribution with three respondents each from technology, healthcare, finance, and manufacturing industries. On the EQ-i 2.0, eight participants had high EI scores and four were in the medium range, allowing for comparison of experiences across levels of EI. Interview duration averaged 52 minutes, with the shortest interview being 45 minutes and the longest 63 minutes. All interviews were performed through Zoom video conferencing, allowing participants wherever they

were in the world to participate, yet still preserving the interpersonal touch that was important in the consideration of emotional experiences. Interviews took place over a two-month period from January to February 2025, following scheduling to fit the participants' preferences and time zones.

4.2.2 Theme 1: Self-Awareness as Leadership Foundation

The first and most prevalent theme emerging from the qualitative data concerned the foundational role of self-awareness in effective leadership. All twelve participants discussed self-awareness as a prerequisite for other emotional intelligence competencies, describing it as the starting point from which emotionally intelligent leadership behaviors flow. This theme encompassed three sub-themes: recognizing emotional triggers, understanding leadership impact, and engaging in reflective practice. The prevalence of this theme, with 87 coded references across all 12 participants, underscores its centrality to leaders' understanding of emotional intelligence.

Participants consistently described self-awareness as the cornerstone of their effective leadership. P1, a Senior Manager in the technology sector with 18 years of leadership experience, articulated this foundational role eloquently:

"Self-awareness is absolutely fundamental to everything I do as a leader.

Before I can understand my team members or respond appropriately to

challenging situations, I need to understand myself—my triggers, my biases,

my emotional patterns. I've learned that the moments when I'm least

effective as a leader are precisely the moments when I've lost touch with my own emotional state. When I'm stressed or anxious, if I'm not aware of it, that energy transfers directly to my team and undermines everything I'm trying to accomplish." (P1, Male, 45, Senior Manager, Technology)

P1's observation about emotional energy transfer reflects Goleman's (1998) concept of emotional contagion in leadership contexts, where leader emotions spread to team members through various interaction channels. This mechanism highlights why self-awareness serves as a foundation—without awareness of one's emotional state, leaders can't manage the emotional climate they create.

This sentiment was echoed across industries. P12, Clinical Director in healthcare, emphasized how self-awareness manifests in high-stakes clinical environments:

"In healthcare, lives depend on clear thinking and measured responses. I've developed a practice of checking in with myself multiple times throughout the day—asking myself how I'm feeling, whether my emotional state is appropriate for the decisions I need to make. This isn't naval-gazing; it's professional practice. When a crisis occurs, my ability to recognize that I'm feeling fear or anxiety allows me to manage those emotions rather than having them manage me. My team looks to me for calm leadership, and I can only provide that if I'm aware of my own internal state first." (P12, Female, 41, Clinical Director, Healthcare)

P12's description of regular emotional check-ins represents a deliberate self-awareness practice that enables emotional regulation in high-pressure situations. Her framing of self-awareness as 'professional practice' rather than personal indulgence reflects the professionalization of emotional intelligence in healthcare leadership contexts.

The sub-theme of recognizing emotional triggers was particularly prominent in discussions with participants from high-pressure industries. P3, a Senior Executive in finance, described her journey toward understanding her triggers:

"Early in my career, I'd react immediately to market volatility or client complaints without understanding why certain situations affected me more than others. Through deliberate reflection and, honestly, some difficult feedback from colleagues, I came to recognize my triggers. Uncertainty is my primary trigger—when outcomes are unpredictable, I tend toward controlling behavior. Now that I know this about myself, I can catch myself before that controlling tendency damages relationships with my team. I literally pause and ask myself: Is this reaction about the situation, or is this about my discomfort with uncertainty?" (P3, Female, 42, Senior Executive, Finance)

P3's account illustrates how trigger identification enables proactive emotional management. Her description of pausing to examine whether reactions stem from situations or personal discomfort aligns with research on emotional regulation strategies, particularly the distinction between antecedent-focused and response-focused regulation (Gross, 1998).

P4, Director in manufacturing, provided insight into how self-awareness developed over his 22-year leadership career:

"Manufacturing environments can be incredibly stressful—equipment failures, safety incidents, production deadlines. In my early years, I wore my stress openly, and it affected everyone around me. A mentor once told me that my team's anxiety was a mirror of my own. That was a turning point. I began keeping a leadership journal, noting situations that elevated my stress and examining why. Over time, patterns emerged. I discovered that my frustration often stemmed from feeling like I wasn't being heard by upper management, and I was unconsciously taking that frustration out on my team. Self-awareness gave me the power to break that cycle." (P4, Male, 50, Director, Manufacturing)

P4's narrative shows how feedback from others can catalyze self-awareness development. His mentor's observation about emotional mirroring provided an external perspective that enabled internal examination. The journaling practice he describes represents a structured approach to developing self-awareness through regular reflection.

The importance of understanding one's leadership impact emerged strongly in participants' narratives. P6, Marketing Director in finance, described a pivotal realization:

"There was a moment about five years ago when I realized that my mood sets the tone for my entire department. If I walk in energized and positive,

that energy spreads. What's more, if I'm distracted or tense, people pick up on it immediately, even if I think I'm hiding it. This realization changed how I approach every interaction. Before any meeting, I take a moment to consider what emotional energy I'm bringing and whether it serves the purpose of that meeting. It sounds simple, but this awareness has transformed my effective leadership and the performance of my team." (P6, Female, 36, Marketing Director, Finance)

P6's account highlights the organizational impact of leader emotional states. Her practice of pre-meeting emotional preparation shows how self-awareness translates into intentional emotional management for leadership purposes.

P5, HR Manager in technology, emphasized the ripple effects of leader self-awareness:

"As an HR leader, I see the impact of leader behavior across the organization every day. The most effective leaders I work with are those who understand how their words and actions ripple through their teams. They're not just aware of their own emotions; they're aware of how those emotions affect others. When I'm coaching leaders who are struggling, the first place we start is always self-awareness. Until a leader can accurately perceive their own emotional state and its impact, no other development intervention will be effective." (P5, Male, 48, HR Manager, Technology)

P5's HR perspective provides insight into the developmental nature of self-awareness. His observation that self-awareness is a prerequisite for other development interventions aligns with Goleman's (1998) theoretical framework positioning self-awareness as the foundation for other EI competencies.

P8, Project Manager in healthcare, connected self-awareness to team psychological safety:

"My team needs to feel safe bringing problems to me, and that safety depends entirely on how I respond when they do. If I react defensively or with visible frustration, they'll stop coming to me, and small problems will become big problems. Self-awareness allows me to notice my initial defensive reaction, pause before responding, and choose a response that maintains psychological safety. I've had team members tell me they appreciate that I don't shoot the messenger, and that's a direct result of my self-awareness practice." (P8, Female, 42, Project Manager, Healthcare)

P8's account illustrates how self-awareness enables leaders to create psychologically safe team environments. Her description of noticing defensive reactions before responding shows the moment-to-moment application of self-awareness in leadership interactions.

The reflective practice sub-theme highlighted the intentional strategies participants employ to maintain and develop self-awareness. P10, Marketing Manager in technology, described her approach:

"I've made reflection a non-negotiable part of my routine. Every Friday afternoon, I spend thirty minutes reviewing my week—not just what I accomplished, but how I showed up emotionally. Which meetings went well, and what was my state of mind going into them? Where did I react rather than respond? What triggered those reactions? This practice has made me a fundamentally different leader than I was five years ago. I'm more consistent, more predictable in a good way, and my team knows what to expect from me." (P10, Female, 39, Marketing Manager, Technology)

P10's structured reflection practice represents a systematic approach to self-awareness development. Her distinction between reacting and responding reflects sophisticated understanding of emotional regulation strategies.

P7, Finance Executive, offered a complementary perspective on developing self-awareness:

"In finance, we're trained to analyze data objectively, but applying that same analytical lens to our own behavior doesn't come naturally. I've learned to treat my emotional patterns as data points. When I've a strong reaction to something, I make a mental note and later examine it: What was

the stimulus? What was my response? Plus, what outcome did that response produce? Over time, this analytical approach to self-awareness has helped me identify patterns I never would have noticed otherwise. It's made me much more effective in high-stakes negotiations and difficult conversations." (P7, Male, 50, Finance Executive, Finance)

P7's analytical approach to self-awareness demonstrates how leaders can leverage existing professional skills—in his case, data analysis—to develop emotional competencies. This integration of analytical and emotional approaches may be particularly effective for leaders in analytically-oriented industries.

4.2.3 Theme 2: Empathy-Driven Communication

The second major theme centered on the role of empathy in shaping communication patterns and interpersonal dynamics within teams. Participants described empathy not as a passive emotional state but as an active communication strategy that enables deeper understanding of team members' perspectives, needs, and concerns. This theme encompassed three sub-themes: active listening, perspective-taking, and building psychological safety. With 94 coded references across all 12 participants, this theme showed consistent importance across industries and leadership levels.

P2, Team Lead in healthcare, provided a compelling description of how empathy shapes her daily interactions:

"In healthcare, emotions run high. My ability to recognize when a team member is struggling—whether with a difficult patient case or personal challenges—allows me to provide support before issues escalate. Empathy isn't about feeling sorry for people; it's about truly understanding their experience and responding in a way that helps. When a nurse on my team is having a hard day, I can see it in their body language before they say anything. That awareness allows me to check in, offer support, or adjust workloads proactively rather than waiting for a crisis." (P2, Female, 38, Team Lead, Healthcare)

P2's account illustrates how empathy enables proactive leadership interventions. Her ability to recognize team member distress through non-verbal cues shows the perceptual component of empathy that precedes empathetic response.

P1 elaborated on how empathy enables more effective leadership communication:

"EI plays a pivotal role in my leadership style by enabling me to empathize deeply with team members and grasp their concerns on a personal level. This empathetic connection has proven crucial, particularly during demanding projects or times of uncertainty. By actively listening and validating the feelings of my team, I create a safe space where individuals feel comfortable expressing their concerns and aspirations. When someone shares a problem with me, I resist the urge to immediately jump to solutions. Instead, I focus on understanding their experience first. Often, they don't need me to solve their problem; they need to feel heard." (P1, Male, 45, Senior Manager, Technology)

P1's description of resisting the urge to jump to solutions reflects a sophisticated understanding of empathetic communication. His recognition that team members sometimes need to feel heard more than they need solutions demonstrates how empathy shapes leadership responses.

The sub-theme of active listening emerged as a critical component of empathy-driven communication. P9, HR Consultant in manufacturing, described his approach:

"Active listening sounds simple, but it requires tremendous discipline, especially for leaders who are used to being in solution mode. I've trained myself to listen without planning my response. When an employee comes to me with a concern, I give them my full attention—no checking emails, no glancing at my phone. I ask clarifying questions to make sure I truly understand, and I reflect back what I've heard before offering any perspective. This approach has transformed my relationships with employees at all levels. They tell me they feel genuinely heard. This is unfortunately rare in many organizations." (P9, Male, 47, HR Consultant, Manufacturing)

P9's account highlights the discipline required for active listening. His practice of reflecting back what he has heard before responding shows a systematic approach to ensuring understanding before action.

P11, Operations Manager in manufacturing, connected active listening to operational outcomes:

"On the manufacturing floor, workers often have insights about process improvements that management misses. But they won't share those insights if they don't feel their input is valued. I make a point of listening—really listening—when floor workers talk to me about their work. I've learned more about improving our operations from these conversations than from any consultant report. The key is demonstrating through my attention and

follow-up that their perspectives matter. When workers see their suggestions implemented, it creates a virtuous cycle of engagement and continuous improvement." (P11, Male, 44, Operations Manager, Manufacturing)

P11's account illustrates how empathetic listening generates operational benefits. His observation about the virtuous cycle of engagement demonstrates how empathy contributes to continuous improvement processes.

Perspective-taking emerged as another crucial sub-theme. P12 described how she applies this skill in clinical settings:

"Healthcare involves working with people from incredibly diverse backgrounds—patients, families, staff with different training and experience levels. Effective leadership requires the ability to step into different perspectives and understand situations from multiple vantage points. When there's conflict between departments or disagreement about patient care, I try to understand each perspective before forming my own view. This approach often reveals that what looked like a conflict was actually a communication problem—people talking past each other rather than truly disagreeing." (P12, Female, 41, Clinical Director, Healthcare)

P12's description of perspective-taking in conflict situations shows how empathy serves a diagnostic function. By understanding multiple perspectives, she can identify whether conflicts stem from substantive disagreements or communication failures.

P3 provided insight into how perspective-taking enhances decision-making in finance:

"Financial decisions affect many stakeholders, and what looks like the right decision from one perspective may look very different from another. I've developed the habit of mentally stepping into different stakeholder shoes before making major decisions. How will this affect our clients? Our employees? What's more, our shareholders? Our community? This perspective-taking doesn't always lead to easy answers, but it leads to better decisions—decisions that account for impacts I might otherwise have missed and that can be defended from multiple perspectives." (P3, Female, 42, Senior Executive, Finance)

P3's stakeholder perspective-taking shows how empathy informs strategic decision-making. Her systematic consideration of multiple stakeholder perspectives represents an institutionalized approach to empathy in leadership.

P6 emphasized how empathy-driven communication builds team cohesion:

"Marketing requires collaboration across many functions—creative, analytical, strategic. These different perspectives can easily lead to conflict

if people feel their viewpoint isn't valued. I work hard to create an environment where every perspective is heard and respected. This means actively drawing out quieter team members, validating different viewpoints even when I disagree, and modeling curiosity about perspectives different from my own. The result is a team that collaborates effectively because they trust that their contributions matter." (P6, Female, 36, Marketing Director, Finance)

P6's account highlights how empathetic communication practices promote inclusion and collaboration. Her deliberate effort to draw out quieter team members demonstrates how leaders can use empathy to create more equitable participation in team discussions.

The sub-theme of building psychological safety through empathetic communication was particularly prominent. P5 explained:

"Psychological safety is the foundation of high-performing teams, and empathy is the tool that builds it. When team members feel that their leader genuinely cares about their wellbeing and understands their challenges, they're willing to take risks, admit mistakes, and share innovative ideas. I've seen teams transformed when their leader shifts from a purely task-focused approach to one that balances task achievement with genuine care for people. The irony is that this people-focused approach often leads to better

task outcomes because people are more engaged and willing to go the extra mile." (P5, Male, 48, HR Manager, Technology)

P5's observation about the relationship between empathy and psychological safety aligns with Edmondson's (1999) research on team psychological safety. His characterization of empathy as a tool for building safety suggests an instrumental view of empathy that complements its intrinsic value.

P8 described how she maintains psychological safety in her project teams:

"In project management, things go wrong—it's inevitable. What matters is how the team responds to setbacks. I've worked to create an environment where people feel safe admitting when something isn't working. This requires consistent, empathetic responses when people bring me bad news. If I ever react with frustration or blame, I've damaged that safety, and people will hide problems from me in the future. So even when I'm internally frustrated, I lead with curiosity: Help me understand what happened. What can we learn from this? How can I support you in addressing it?" (P8, Female, 42, Project Manager, Healthcare)

P8's description of maintaining safety through consistent empathetic responses shows the behavioral discipline required. Her recognition that a single negative response can damage psychological safety highlights the cumulative nature of trust-building.

P10 connected empathetic communication to employee retention:

"In the technology industry, talented people have options. They don't stay with organizations where they feel like cogs in a machine. Also, they stay where they feel valued as whole human beings. I've found that the most powerful retention tool isn't compensation or perks—it's genuine empathetic connection. When I take time to understand what matters to my team members, what challenges they're facing both professionally and personally, and how I can support their growth, they become more committed to the team and the organization. This isn't manipulation; it's treating people as they deserve to be treated." (P10, Female, 39, Marketing Manager, Technology)

P10's account connects empathetic leadership to talent retention outcomes. Her distinction between empathy as manipulation versus genuine care reflects awareness of the ethical dimensions of emotional intelligence application.

4.2.4 Theme 3: Emotional Regulation in High-Pressure Situations

The third theme focused on leaders' capacity to regulate their emotional responses in challenging circumstances. Participants described emotional regulation as essential for maintaining clear thinking under pressure, modeling appropriate responses for team members, and preventing escalation during conflicts or crises. Three sub-themes emerged: maintaining composure, modeling calm behavior, and strategic emotional expression. This theme generated 76 coded references, with particular concentration among participants from high-pressure industries including healthcare, finance, and manufacturing.

P4 provided a vivid description of emotional regulation in crisis situations:

"In manufacturing, crises happen—equipment failures, safety incidents, supply chain disruptions. My ability to stay calm during crises directly influences my team's morale and their capacity to respond effectively. I've learned that my emotional state is contagious; if I panic, my team panics, and our response suffers. So I've developed techniques for managing my own stress in the moment—deep breathing, mental reframing, focusing on what we can control. This allows me to project calm even when I'm internally alarmed. After the crisis passes, I can process my own emotions, but in the moment, my team needs steady leadership." (P4, Male, 50, Director, Manufacturing)

P4's description of emotional contagion and deliberate regulation strategies reflects sophisticated understanding of leader influence on team emotional climate. His distinction between projecting calm externally while experiencing alarm internally demonstrates the complexity of emotional regulation in leadership.

P12 described the critical importance of emotional regulation in healthcare:

"Clinical emergencies require clear thinking under extreme pressure. When a patient's life hangs in the balance, there's no room for emotional overwhelm. I've developed the ability to compartmentalize my emotional response during emergencies, focusing entirely on the clinical tasks at hand. The emotion doesn't disappear; it's more like I put it aside temporarily to deal with later. After the immediate crisis, I always take time to process—debriefing with colleagues, reflecting on what happened, sometimes just sitting quietly. This emotional processing is essential for sustainability in healthcare leadership." (P12, Female, 41, Clinical Director, Healthcare)

P12's account highlights the temporal aspects of emotional regulation—compartmentalizing during crises and processing afterward. Her emphasis on post-crisis processing as essential for sustainability reflects understanding of the long-term costs of unprocessed emotions.

P7 described emotional regulation in financial volatility:

"Financial markets can trigger intense emotional reactions—fear during downturns, euphoria during rallies. Neither emotion leads to good decisions. I've trained myself to recognize these emotional states and create distance from them before making decisions. When I feel fear rising during a market selloff, I have protocols: I step away from the screen, review our long-term strategy, remind myself of historical patterns. This discipline has protected our portfolio from reactive decisions that would have been costly. More importantly, it sets the tone for my team—they see me staying calm and measured, and it helps them do the same." (P7, Male, 50, Finance Executive, Finance)

P7's description of established protocols for emotional regulation demonstrates institutionalized approaches to managing emotional responses. His recognition that calm leadership influences team behavior reflects understanding of the modeling function of leader emotion regulation.

The sub-theme of modeling calm behavior for team members emerged strongly. P1 explained:

"In technology, project deadlines create tremendous pressure. When things go wrong—bugs in production, missed deadlines, client escalations—my team watches how I respond. If I become visibly stressed or start assigning blame, it creates a fear-based environment that actually makes performance worse. Instead, I consciously model the response I want to see from my

team: calm assessment of the situation, focus on solutions rather than blame, confidence that we can work through the challenge. This modeling has a remarkable effect—my team mirrors my composure and performs better under pressure." (P1, Male, 45, Senior Manager, Technology)

P1's account emphasizes the deliberate nature of emotional modeling. His observation about the relationship between leader blame and team fear-based response shows understanding of how leader emotions shape team psychological climate.

P2 described how she maintains composure in emotionally charged healthcare situations:

"Healthcare workers face emotional situations daily—patient deaths, family grief, ethical dilemmas. As a leader, I need to support my team through these experiences while managing my own emotional responses. I've learned that showing some emotion is appropriate and even helpful—it shows humanity. But I can't be overwhelmed by emotion, or I can't lead effectively. It's a delicate balance: being emotionally present without being emotionally overwhelmed. When I get this balance right, my team feels supported and knows they can come to me with difficult situations." (P2, Female, 38, Team Lead, Healthcare)

P2's description of balancing emotional presence with emotional regulation reflects nuanced understanding of appropriate emotional expression in leadership. Her recognition

that some emotional display is beneficial challenges simplistic views of emotional regulation as emotional suppression.

P3 provided insight into strategic emotional expression:

"There's a difference between suppressing emotions and regulating them. Suppression is unhealthy and ultimately ineffective. Regulation means experiencing the emotion fully while choosing how and when to express it. Sometimes expressing frustration is exactly what the situation requires—it signals that something is unacceptable and needs to change. The key is that my emotional expression is intentional rather than reactive. I ask myself: Will expressing this emotion serve the outcome I'm trying to achieve? If yes, I express it. What's more, if not, I manage it internally and address the situation differently." (P3, Female, 42, Senior Executive, Finance)

P3's distinction between suppression and regulation aligns with research distinguishing between adaptive and maladaptive emotion regulation strategies. Her framework of intentional versus reactive expression provides a practical guide for emotion regulation in leadership.

P11 described emotional regulation in conflict management:

"Conflict is inevitable in operations—between departments, between shifts, between management and labor. My ability to remain calm during conflict situations is essential for productive resolution. When parties are

emotionally escalated, someone needs to be the stabilizing presence. That's my role as a leader. I've learned to manage my own emotional reactions to conflict so I can focus on understanding all perspectives and finding solutions that address underlying interests rather than just surface positions." (P11, Male, 44, Operations Manager, Manufacturing)

P11's characterization of leaders as stabilizing presences during conflict demonstrates how emotional regulation enables effective conflict resolution. His focus on underlying interests rather than surface positions reflects sophisticated conflict resolution understanding.

P6 connected emotional regulation to creative leadership:

"Marketing involves constant creative risk-taking—campaigns that might succeed brilliantly or fail publicly. This uncertainty can generate anxiety that inhibits creativity. I work to regulate my own anxiety about outcomes so I can create space for my team to take creative risks. When a campaign underperforms, I model a measured response—what can we learn, how can we adjust—rather than emotional reactivity. This approach has made my team more willing to propose innovative ideas because they know failure won't be met with blame or panic." (P6, Female, 36, Marketing Director, Finance)

P6's account connects emotional regulation to team creativity and innovation. Her regulation of personal anxiety to create space for team risk-taking shows how leader emotional management shapes team climate for innovation.

P9 emphasized the long-term benefits of emotional regulation:

"I've observed over my career that leaders who regulate their emotions effectively build more resilient teams. When the leader stays calm under pressure, it builds team confidence that challenges can be overcome. Plus, when the leader models thoughtful responses rather than reactive ones, it teaches the team problem-solving skills. The benefits compound over time—teams led by emotionally regulated leaders develop their own emotional regulation capabilities. It becomes part of the team culture." (P9, Male, 47, HR Consultant, Manufacturing)

P9's observation about compounding benefits and team development of regulation capabilities suggests that leader emotional regulation has cascading effects through organizational learning.

P5 provided an HR perspective on emotional regulation:

"From an HR standpoint, I see the consequences when leaders fail to regulate their emotions—damaged relationships, grievances, turnover, sometimes even legal issues. The leaders who thrive long-term are those who have developed strong emotional regulation skills. This doesn't mean

they don't feel emotions; it means they've developed the capacity to experience emotions without being controlled by them. It's a skill that can be developed, and it's one of the most valuable skills a leader can have."

(P5, Male, 48, HR Manager, Technology)

P5's perspective on the consequences of regulation failure provides workplace for emotional regulation importance. His framing of regulation as a developable skill suggests optimism about leader development.

4.2.5 Theme 4: Building Trust Through Authentic Connection

The fourth theme addressed how emotional intelligence enables leaders to build deep trust with team members through authentic connection. Participants described trust-building as an ongoing process that requires vulnerability, consistency, and genuine care for team member wellbeing. Three sub-themes emerged: vulnerability in leadership, consistent emotional presence, and genuine concern for team welfare. This theme generated 68 coded references, reflecting its importance across participant accounts.

P8 provided insight into how vulnerability strengthens leadership:

"Early in my career, I thought leaders needed to project certainty and infallibility. I've learned the opposite is true. When I acknowledge that I don't have all the answers, when I admit my mistakes, when I share appropriate aspects of my own struggles, it actually strengthens my team's trust in me. They see me as human, someone they can relate to and learn from. This vulnerability isn't weakness; it's strength. It takes courage to be vulnerable, and that courage inspires trust." (P8, Female, 42, Project Manager, Healthcare)

P8's reconceptualization of vulnerability as strength challenges traditional leadership models emphasizing leader strength and certainty. Her account aligns with recent research on authentic leadership that identifies appropriate vulnerability as a trust-building mechanism.

P10 expanded on the role of authenticity in trust-building:

"My team can tell when I'm being authentic and when I'm performing. If I try to be someone I'm not, they see through it, and it damages trust. So I focus on being genuinely myself—sharing my actual perspectives, acknowledging my real limitations, expressing my authentic enthusiasm and concerns. This authenticity creates space for my team members to be authentic too. We end up with real relationships, not just transactional interactions. And those real relationships are the foundation of trust." (P10, Female, 39, Marketing Manager, Technology)

P10's observation that team members detect inauthenticity underscores the importance of genuine rather than performed authenticity. Her description of authenticity creating reciprocal space suggests that leader authenticity models and enables team member authenticity.

The sub-theme of consistent emotional presence was particularly prominent. P4 explained:

"Trust requires consistency. My team needs to know what to expect from me regardless of the day or circumstance. This doesn't mean I'm robotic—I've good days and challenging days like anyone. But I strive to be consistently fair, consistently respectful, consistently present. When I walk onto the floor, people know they can approach me with problems or ideas. That

accessibility and consistency has built trust over years that no single action could create." (P4, Male, 50, Director, Manufacturing)

P4's emphasis on consistency as a trust-building mechanism highlights the cumulative nature of trust development. His distinction between consistency and roboticism suggests that consistency involves reliable patterns while allowing for human variation.

P12 described building trust in healthcare contexts:

"In healthcare, trust is literally a matter of life and death. My clinical staff needs to trust that I'll support them in difficult decisions, advocate for them with administration, and have their backs when things go wrong. Building this trust requires consistent demonstration over time. Every interaction is an opportunity to build or erode trust. I try to approach each interaction with awareness of its impact on the trust relationship. Small moments of support and recognition accumulate into deep trust that withstands challenges." (P12, Female, 41, Clinical Director, Healthcare)

P12's framing of every interaction as an opportunity for trust-building or erosion reflects sophisticated understanding of trust dynamics. Her recognition that small moments accumulate into deep trust emphasizes the incremental nature of trust development.

P1 connected trust-building to team performance:

"Trust is the foundation on which high-performance teams are built. When team members trust me and trust each other, they collaborate more effectively, take appropriate risks, and bounce back from setbacks more quickly. Building this trust requires consistent demonstration that I care about my team members as people, not just as resources. I take time to understand their aspirations, their challenges, their lives outside work. This investment in relationships pays dividends in how teams perform and commitment." (P1, Male, 45, Senior Manager, Technology)

P1's connection between trust and how teams perform outcomes provides instrumental justification for relationship investment. His characterization of relationship-building as investment with dividends reflects an ROI perspective on emotional intelligence.

The sub-theme of genuine concern for team welfare emerged strongly. P5 described:

"In my HR role, I see that the most trusted leaders are those who genuinely care about their employees' wellbeing. This care can't be faked—people recognize authentic concern versus performative caring. The trusted leaders I work with check in on employees' personal situations, celebrate their successes outside work, and make accommodations when life challenges arise. This genuine care creates loyalty that transcends

transactional employment relationships." (P5, Male, 48, HR Manager, Technology)

P5's distinction between authentic and performative caring reinforces the importance of genuine emotional connection. His observation that genuine care creates loyalty beyond transactional relationships suggests that authentic leadership generates organizational commitment.

P3 provided a finance perspective on care-based leadership:

"Finance has a reputation for being purely transactional, but the most successful finance leaders I know are those who build strong relationships based on genuine care. When my team members know that I care about their development, their wellbeing, their success, they bring their full selves to work. They're willing to put in extra effort during crunch times because they trust that I'll support them in return. This mutual care creates a team dynamic that produces exceptional results." (P3, Female, 42, Senior Executive, Finance)

P3's account challenges industry stereotypes about finance culture while demonstrating how care-based relationships generate performance outcomes. Her description of mutual care creating exceptional results suggests reciprocal dynamics in leader-team relationships.

P7 described how trust develops through challenging times:

"Trust is built in difficult moments. When the market crashed and everyone was fearful, how I supported my team during that period cemented our trust relationship. I was transparent about the challenges we faced, protective of my team members' positions, and supportive of their emotional struggles with uncertainty. We emerged from that crisis with stronger bonds than we had going in. Adversity revealed my values, and my team learned they could trust those values." (P7, Male, 50, Finance Executive, Finance)

P7's observation that trust is built in difficult moments suggests that crises serve as trust-building opportunities. His description of adversity revealing values highlights how challenging circumstances test and demonstrate leader character.

P2 connected trust to psychological safety:

"Trust and psychological safety are deeply intertwined. My team trusts me because they've learned over time that I create a safe space for them—safe to make mistakes, safe to disagree with me, safe to bring problems forward. This safety comes from consistent, caring responses to their vulnerability. Every time someone takes a risk and I respond supportively, trust deepens. It's a gradual process that requires patience and consistency, but the resulting trust enables exceptional how teams perform." (P2, Female, 38, Team Lead, Healthcare)

P2's connection between trust and psychological safety aligns with Edmondson's (1999) research on team psychological safety. Her description of safety enabling risk-taking shows the performance implications of trust.

P6 emphasized the business value of trust-based relationships:

"Some might see relationship-building as soft stuff separate from business results. I see it as essential to business results. The trust I've built with my team translates directly into performance. People work harder for leaders they trust. They stay longer with organizations where they feel valued. Also, they bring creative ideas when they trust their input will be respected. The ROI on investing in authentic relationships is enormous, even if it's harder to measure than quarterly metrics." (P6, Female, 36, Marketing Director, Finance)

P6's explicit ROI framing of relationship investment provides business justification for emotional intelligence development. Her acknowledgment that relationship ROI is harder to measure than quarterly metrics reflects challenges in quantifying EI benefits.

P11 described trust-building in manufacturing contexts:

"On the manufacturing floor, trust is built through actions, not words. My employees watch what I do, not what I say. When I promised to address a safety concern, I followed through within days. When I said I'd advocate for better equipment, I advocated until we got it. These consistent actions built

trust that allows me to ask for extra effort when we need it, knowing my team will deliver because they trust I'll take care of them in return." (P11, Male, 44, Operations Manager, Manufacturing)

P11's emphasis on actions over words in manufacturing contexts may reflect industry-specific norms about how trust is showed. His description of consistent follow-through building trust shows behavioral consistency as a trust mechanism.

4.2.6 Theme 5: Organizational and Cultural Barriers

The fifth and final theme addressed the challenges and barriers that leaders face in applying emotional intelligence within their organizational contexts. Despite recognizing the value of EI, participants described various organizational and cultural factors that complicate or constrain EI application. Three sub-themes emerged: hierarchical constraints, time pressures, and cultural norms around emotional expression. This theme generated 54 coded references, with notable variation across industries reflecting different organizational contexts.

P9 provided insight into how organizational hierarchy affects EI application:

"Organizational hierarchies create real barriers to emotional intelligence. Senior leaders may espouse the value of EI while modeling behaviors that contradict it. Middle managers like myself are caught between wanting to lead with emotional intelligence and pressure from above to prioritize short-term results over relationship-building. There's an implicit message in many organizations that emotional intelligence is nice to have but not essential—that real leaders focus on numbers, not feelings. Changing this requires shifting organizational culture from the top." (P9, Male, 47, HR Consultant, Manufacturing)

P9's account highlights the gap between espoused and enacted values regarding emotional intelligence. His observation about middle management being caught between competing pressures shows organizational position effects on EI application.

P7 described how performance metrics can work against EI:

"In finance, we're measured on quantitative results—portfolio returns, revenue, cost management. There are no metrics for emotional intelligence or relationship quality. This creates a tension: I know that investing in relationships and team development improves long-term results, but the pressure is always toward short-term numerical performance. Leaders who prioritize EI sometimes look less productive in the short term, even though they're building sustainable success. Our measurement systems need to evolve to capture the full picture of leadership effectiveness." (P7, Male, 50, Finance Executive, Finance)

P7's critique of measurement systems suggests that organizational metrics can inadvertently discourage EI investment. His call for measurement evolution reflects recognition that what gets measured gets managed.

The sub-theme of time pressures emerged prominently. P8 explained:

"Emotionally intelligent leadership takes time—time to listen, time to check in, time to build relationships. But healthcare is chronically understaffed and overworked. The time pressure is relentless. I often find myself

choosing between taking time for empathetic conversation and keeping up with project deadlines. Also, i try to prioritize both, but honestly, there are days when task demands crowd out the relational work that I know is important. This is a systemic issue that requires structural solutions, not just individual effort." (P8, Female, 42, Project Manager, Healthcare)

P8's account highlights how resource constraints affect EI application. Her characterization of time pressures as systemic rather than individual suggests need for organizational-level interventions to enable EI leadership.

P11 described similar time constraints in manufacturing:

"Manufacturing operates on tight schedules with constant pressure to increase efficiency. Taking time to really listen to employees, to check in on their wellbeing, to address emotional dynamics in the team—all of this feels like a luxury we can't afford. I make time for it because I've seen the results, but it requires constant prioritization against competing demands. Other managers in my organization who haven't seen the ROI on EI investment tend to skip it entirely in favor of task execution." (P11, Male, 44, Operations Manager, Manufacturing)

P11's framing of EI as perceived luxury reflects how production pressures can marginalize relationship-focused leadership. His observation about managers who haven't seen ROI skipping EI suggests the importance of demonstrating EI outcomes.

Cultural norms around emotional expression emerged as another significant barrier.

P4 provided perspective from manufacturing:

"Manufacturing has traditionally been a command-and-control environment. The cultural norm is that leaders are tough, decisive, and don't show vulnerability. Bringing emotional intelligence into this environment requires challenging deeply held beliefs about what effective leadership looks like. Some of my colleagues view empathy as weakness. Changing these cultural norms is a gradual process that requires demonstrating through results that emotionally intelligent leadership produces better outcomes than traditional approaches." (P4, Male, 50, Director, Manufacturing)

P4's account of traditional manufacturing culture as command-and-control highlights industry-specific cultural barriers. His strategy of demonstrating results to change beliefs suggests an evidence-based approach to culture change.

P3 described cultural barriers in finance:

"Finance culture traditionally values analytical thinking over emotional awareness. Expressing emotions in the workplace—even positive emotions—can be seen as unprofessional. This cultural norm makes it harder to lead with emotional intelligence because the workplace doesn't support it. I've worked to shift the culture within my team, but broader

organizational change is slow. There's still an unspoken expectation that finance professionals should be emotionless decision-makers, which contradicts what we know about effective leadership." (P3, Female, 42, Senior Executive, Finance)

P3's description of finance culture devaluing emotional expression reflects industry norms that may conflict with EI leadership. Her observation about unspoken expectations for emotionless professionalism highlights implicit cultural barriers.

P5 offered an HR perspective on cultural barriers:

"From HR, I see how organizational culture can either enable or constrain emotionally intelligent leadership. Organizations that explicitly value EI, that train leaders in EI competencies, that recognize and reward EI behaviors—these organizations see more emotionally intelligent leadership at all levels. Also, organizations that pay lip service to EI while rewarding only task performance create cognitive dissonance for leaders trying to apply EI principles. Culture change requires sustained commitment from senior leadership." (P5, Male, 48, HR Manager, Technology)

P5's characterization of enabling versus constraining cultures provides a framework for organizational analysis. His observation about cognitive dissonance when values and rewards misalign suggests psychic costs of inconsistent organizational messaging.

P10 described navigating cultural barriers in technology:

"Technology companies often celebrate a work-hard, move-fast culture that can run counter to emotionally intelligent leadership. There's pressure to prioritize speed and output over relationships and wellbeing. I've had to be intentional about carving out space for EI practices within this culture—making time for one-on-ones, modeling work-life balance, addressing emotional dynamics openly. Some colleagues see this as a distraction from real work. I see it as essential to sustainable high performance." (P10, Female, 39, Marketing Manager, Technology)

P10's account of technology culture prioritizing speed over relationships reflects industry-specific pressures. Her characterization of EI as essential to sustainable performance challenges the short-term orientation implicit in move-fast culture.

P12 described healthcare-specific cultural barriers:

"Healthcare has a culture of emotional stoicism—the expectation that healthcare workers should compartmentalize their emotions to function effectively. While there's truth in the need for emotional regulation during clinical work, this culture can become a barrier to processing emotions and supporting each other. Leaders who show too much emotion may be seen as not tough enough for healthcare. I'm working to shift this culture toward one that values emotional intelligence while maintaining clinical effectiveness." (P12, Female, 41, Clinical Director, Healthcare)

P12's description of healthcare's emotional stoicism culture highlights profession-specific barriers. Her effort to balance emotional intelligence with clinical effectiveness suggests need for culturally adapted EI approaches.

P6 connected cultural barriers to generational differences:

"I've noticed that younger team members often expect emotionally intelligent leadership and are frustrated when they don't receive it. Older organizational norms that devalue emotional expression clash with younger generations' expectations for authentic, empathetic leadership. This creates tension, particularly in organizations with long-tenured senior leaders who formed their leadership style in a different era. Bridging this generational gap around EI expectations is one of the challenges I navigate daily." (P6, Female, 36, Marketing Director, Finance)

P6's observation about generational differences in EI expectations suggests cultural norms are evolving. Her characterization of bridging generational gaps as a daily challenge indicates ongoing culture tension.

P1 reflected on the ongoing challenge of applying EI within organizational constraints:

"Even as someone who believes deeply in emotionally intelligent leadership, I face daily challenges in applying it. Organizational pressures, time constraints, cultural norms—all of these create barriers. The key is

persisting despite these barriers, finding ways to practice EI within imperfect systems, and working to gradually shift organizational culture. It's not easy, but the alternative—abandoning EI in favor of purely transactional leadership—would ultimately harm both people and performance." (P1, Male, 45, Senior Manager, Technology)

P1's reflection provides a synthesis perspective on organizational barriers. His commitment to persisting despite barriers while working for gradual culture change suggests long-term orientation to EI leadership development.

4.3 Summary of Findings

Data from this mixed-methods study provide rigorous evidence for the link between leader emotional intelligence and overall team effectiveness. And the quantitative piece revealed statistically significant positive relationships between leader EI and both team performance ($r = 0.67$, $p < 0.001$) and employee job satisfaction ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$), confirming the research's main assumptions. The qualitative component shed light on the processes through which EI affects effective leadership and highlighted enabling and hindering factors to EI application in organizational domains.

4.3.1 Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The convergent design of the study allowed us to incorporate the quantitative results with the qualitative results such that the overall relationship between EI and effective leadership could be more sufficiently described than in either approach. Conclusions There were some emerging areas of convergence in the integrated analysis. The extensive quantitative correlation between leader EI and team performance ($r = 0.67$) was first clarified with qualitative descriptions of the impact of leader EI on team performance. All participants described how self-awareness leads to better choices, empathy from which better communication emerges, which prevents misunderstandings, and emotional regulation from which an environment is created where it is psychologically safe to take risks and innovate. And this is the qualitative information that really helps explain why we have the quantitative connection. Second, the quantitative finding that

interpersonal skill level was the most beneficial in terms of team performance ($\beta=0.34$, $p<0.001$) was consistent with qualitative findings that emphasize empathy-based communication and the ability to build genuine connections. Building relationships—was cited by employees in all industries as one of the most effective leadership qualities, which provides further context for the statistical correlation. Third, the moderation analysis result that the organizational culture affects the EI-performance relationship ($\Delta R^2 = 0.04$, $p < 0.05$) was supported by qualitative reporting of organizational and cultural barriers. Participants also expressed how hierarchical organization, limited time options, and cultural values might constrain the application of EI, and it might contribute to an interpretation of why the same high leader EI might have different effects in organizations. Fourth, the quantitative data showed a difference in level of EI for the participants. Middle-range qualitative interviews examined how EI is interpreted and used differently. For those high-Emotional competence (EI) participants, they mentioned higher-order strategies resulting in advanced emotional regulation abilities and greater integration of EI methods in leadership identity; whereas, participants of medium-EI were reported being more likely to express areas of continued development and focused problem areas.

Theme	Sub-themes	Key Finding
1. Self-Awareness as Leadership Foundation	Recognizing triggers; Understanding impact; Reflective practice	Self-awareness is prerequisite for other EI competencies
2. Empathy-Driven Communication	Active listening; Perspective-taking; Building psychological safety	Empathy enables deeper team connections and improved outcomes
3. Emotional Regulation Under Pressure	Maintaining composure; Modeling calm; Strategic expression	Emotional regulation essential for crisis leadership
4. Building Trust Through Authentic Connection	Vulnerability; Consistent presence; Genuine concern	Trust built through consistent authentic behaviors over time
5. Organizational and Cultural Barriers	Hierarchical constraints; Time pressures; Cultural norms	workplace significantly impacts EI application

Table 11: Qualitative Themes Summary

Source: Author's own compilation based on thematic analysis (2025).

In summary, the integrated findings support a nuanced understanding of how leader emotional intelligence influences team outcomes. The quantitative data establish that significant relationships exist. Meanwhile, the qualitative data explain how these relationships operate in practice. Together, these complementary findings provide both statistical evidence and contextual understanding that can inform both theory development and practical application.

CHAPTER V:

DISCUSSION

5.1 Discussion of Results

This chapter reports out the results of the existing study in accordance to its research questions, the literature, and theories. A mixed-methods approach offered for quantitative exploration of the link between leader emotional intelligence and team outcomes and qualitative investigation of processes and settings that promote or hinder such relationships. The following sections discuss how the findings address the study questions, compare the findings to the literature and discuss theory and practice. Findings also provide compelling evidence for the major hypothesis that leader emotional intelligence is an important determinant of team performance and employee outcomes. Our quantitative analysis showed significant positive relationships between leader EI and team performance ($r = 0.67$, $p < 0.001$) and job satisfaction ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$), which were backed by the results of regression analyses that reveal that EI elements account for a high variance in these values ($R^2 = 0.45$ for how teams perform, $R^2 = 0.38$ for job satisfaction). The effect sizes are relatively high for social science norms, which shows leader EI is an indicator of the outcome. These qualitative findings add to this overall picture by showing how leaders' applied emotional intelligence in a variety of organizational contexts. Based on the research of twelve leaders in the field of technology, healthcare, finance, and manufacturing, the study further showed how EI competencies are translated into particular leadership behaviors and how organizational factors moderate the process. Five major themes were

identified which ranged from self-understanding as foundation; empathy-led communication, emotions regulation at times of crisis, trust through genuine connection, and organizational constraints, leading to key contributors providing further insights regarding the complex and intertwining behaviours in the context of emotionally intelligent leadership. The qualitative and quantitative results jointly illustrate the EI-leadership effectiveness relationship in a way that no one of the two methods can capture. While quantitative data substantiates the existence of such relationships and provides estimates regarding their magnitude, qualitative data illustrate how a relationship operates and the contingencies that temper it. The complementarity demonstrates our understanding that such rich data can contribute to the investigation into rich organizational dynamics.

5.2 Discussion by Research Question

5.2.1 Discussion of RQ1: EI and Team Performance

The first research question was: How does leader emotional intelligence influence how teams perform and the productivity of the teams? The results offer strong evidence to suggest that leader EI has a significant positive impact on how teams behave via various channels. The quantitative analysis showed a significant positive association between overall leader EI and team performance ratings ($r = 0.67$, $p < 0.001$). Of EI components, interpersonal skills appeared most closely associated with performance ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.001$), followed by self-expression ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.01$) and self-perception ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.05$). These results suggest that the relationship-based factors in EI are of greater

significance for team performance. Qualitative results describe how these statistical correlations occur. According to the responses of the participants, self-awareness facilitates superior decision making by assisting leaders to identify the times where their emotional states might affect their decision-making. As P1 pointed out, moments of leadership ineffectiveness often coincide with loss of emotional self-awareness, while conscious attention to one's emotional state enables more measured, effective responses. This mechanism is consistent with the contention of Goleman (1998) that self-awareness is the cornerstone of all EI competencies. Participants also described how empathy-based communication enhances the coordination among people within a team, and helps to minimize misunderstandings that interfere with performance. Active listening, perspective-taking, and building psychological safety have evolved into particular behaviors through which empathetic leaders can improve team performance. P2's response of realizing a team's member difficulties before they grow under pressure and then nips them in the bud exemplifies that empathic mindfulness can provide proactive leadership action to mitigate potential performance problems. The theme of emotional regulation under pressure reveals another pathway from EI to performance. P4's account of preserving composure when manufacturing crises arise illustrates how well-managed leader affect is conducive to clear reasoning and effective handling under duress. The modeling phenomenon—in which team members simulate the emotional state of the leader—generalizes this private capability to collective team performance.

5.2.2 Discussion of RQ2: EI and Job Satisfaction

Research Question 2 asked: What is the relationship between leader EI and employee job satisfaction? These variables are strongly positively associated. Quantitative analysis showed the positive association of leader EI with employee job satisfaction ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$). Critically, the empathy component had the strongest specific impact to satisfaction ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$), which would support the assumption that empathetic leadership augments employee experiences. The regression analysis supported that leader EI explains 38% of variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.38$), considering that there are many determinants of satisfaction. The qualitative observations indicate the direct experience underpinning this statistical relationship. Emotionally intelligent leadership is the key element in an emotional environment, participants said, and leaders can establish work environments where employees feel valued, understood, and supported. This particular theme of trust building through genuine connection is especially true here. As described by P8, leader vulnerability and authenticity creates the ground for genuine relationships over transactional employment encounters. These genuine relationships, for employees, are a key driver of their satisfaction. The empathy-based communication motif also provides some light on the EI-satisfaction link. When employees feel truly heard and understood—when they feel heard and their concerns are taken seriously—satisfaction goes up. P9: Active listening that truly transforms employee relationships in this sense is an example of how it works. Given that many organizational environments do not allow genuine listening to take place in many settings, such real listening is in great demand, employees particularly appreciate its existence. And the psychological safety that emotionally

intelligent leaders create leads to satisfaction. When your team members feel that their leader does care about their wellbeing (that they feel understood, and knows their challenges), there's greater engagement from your teams, and more willingness to give off discretionary effort (P5). Their feeling of being cared for like a whole person, rather than just a resource, seems to be an important driving force of job satisfaction.

5.2.3 Discussion of RQ3: Contextual Moderators

In research Question 3 we asked: How do organizational culture and context moderate the EI-effective leadership relationship? Their findings indicate that the translation of leader EI in context is significantly influenced by contextual factors. For moderate moderating effects of leader EI on team performance there was a significant interaction ($\Delta R^2 = 0.04$, $p < 0.05$). The simple slopes analysis showed that the positive relationship between EI and team performance was greater in environments marked by emotional openness and psychological safety. This data indicates that the organisation context does matter—the same leader EI may have distinct results due to cultural effects. This qualitative framework draws on the organizational and cultural barriers, which provide rich contextualizing mechanisms of moderation effects. Participants described how hierarchical structures, time pressures, and cultural norms around emotional expression can constrain EI application even among leaders with strong EI competencies. P9's account of being caught between wanting to lead with emotional intelligence and pressure from above to prioritize short-term results illustrates this tension. P7's observation that there are no metrics for emotional intelligence or relationship quality in finance similarly reveals how

organizational systems can inadvertently discourage EI. Cultural norms (which are very industry-specific in character) also moderate EI effects. P4 described manufacturing's traditional command-and-control culture where empathy may be viewed as weakness. P3 likewise observed finance culture's bias towards analytical thinking rather than emotional intelligence. These industry standards dictate both how leaders can show EI and how people react to such performance. Leaders in less emotionally expressive cultures must also overcome additional barriers towards the deployment of their EI competence. A practical moderating factor was time pressures. P8's choice between empathetic conversation and hitting project deadlines illustrates the way that constraints on resources affect leaders' ability to apply EI. Even highly emotionally intelligent leaders may find it hard to muster the necessary funds for the interpersonal work of forming lasting relationships when worktime is of a limited nature—a reflection of other organizational choices about workload and staffing that are indirectly affecting leadership effectiveness through EI.

5.2.4 Discussion of RQ4: Challenges in EI Development

Research Question 4: What are some challenges leaders face in terms of developing and applying EI competencies? Results unveil a variety of obstacles at individual, organizational, and cultural levels. In the realm of the individual, participants noted the continual work to be mindful of oneself in light of the demands of a position of leadership. Through feedback, P4 found that his team's anxiety mirrored his own—an example of how self-awareness can be limited in its scope without external input. However, self-awareness seems to be built off the practice of reflective journaling (P4), regular self-check-ins (P12), and structured weekly reflection (P10). These practices take time and discipline that compete with other leadership demands. Under pressure, emotional regulation is another person-level barrier; while participants described quite elaborate strategies for regulation, it was hard indeed to keep one's cool in genuinely stressful situations. The difference seems to be that forming routines and techniques ahead of crises makes it easier for the organization to tackle difficulties proactively (as opposed to reactively managing them). One description, P7, of pre-established protocols for managing fear even during market selloffs explains this proactive method of dealing. At an organizational level, the dissonance between espoused values and actual practices leads to problems. Organizations promote EI while rewarding only task performance leading to cognitive dissonance for leaders. P5 also observed that culture change is a long-term commitment and senior leadership also need to be a part of it since single leaders cannot solve issues alone. This means that EI development efforts should go beyond competences toward the whole organization—organizational systems and culture. Cultural values in emotions also make

it extra difficult. In the industries or regions where displays of emotion are regarded as negative, emotionally intelligent leaders need to navigate authenticity and cultural expectations. P6's comment that there are generational discrepancies in expectations of EI shows that these cultural norms are changing albeit inconsistently. Different expectations from stakeholders can make it challenging for leaders to use EI effectively.

5.3 Comparison with Existing Literature

The findings of this study are similar to and build upon previous research on emotional intelligence and the effectiveness of leadership. In this section, the current studies are contrasted with some prevailing, earlier studies showing patterns and gaps. Therefore, the positive association between leader EI and team performance ($r = 0.67$) is in agreement with previous meta-analytic findings. According to the meta-analysis performed by Côté (2014), mean correlations between EI and job performance ranged from $r = 0.24$ to $r = 0.30$, but in the present study, a larger effect size might exist for leadership roles where EI contribution can be significant. For a second influential study about leader EI, Wong and Law (2002) also observed relationship of leader EI to subordinate outcomes, but their effect size was of relatively small magnitude. This interrelationship between the studies confirms confidence in the relationship between EI and performance. In addition, there was strong qualitative evidence showing that Goleman's (1998) theoretical view that self-awareness leads to other EI competences is well supported. It was consistently described by participants as the precursor to learning others or building on others in line with Goleman's model. However, the fact that interpersonal skills were more positively

related to outcomes as compared to self-perception on an aggregate level would suggest that while the concept of self-awareness appears to be a fundamental process, the more interpersonal dimension of the competencies would have more immediate impact on team performance. This nuance builds on Goleman's model by identifying essential competencies and its outcomes. This finding that empathy is particularly predictive of job satisfaction aligns with George's (2000) work in which he developed a theoretical framework of emotions and leadership that accounts for how leader emotions influence followers' affective states. The current study affords empirical evidence for George and provides qualitative nuance in showing how empathetic practices—active listening, perspective-taking, and creating psychological safety—move from leader empathy to follower satisfaction. The emotional-social intelligence model (Bar-On, 2006) as such, this reinforces that the contextual nature behind EI also seems to be supported by moderation results. The strong interaction between leader EI and organizational culture also validates that the effects of EI are context dependent, something one can conclude by looking at Bar-On's model. Indeed, qualitative findings also offer specificity, revealing underlying contextual elements—based on, for example, hierarchy, time demands, and cultural practices—that act as moderators of EI effects. The question of emotional regulation under pressure, qualitative research about leader stress and coping as well, is also consistent with findings. The current evidence contributes to this literature by showing some of the specific forms of regulation practiced by effective leaders and explaining the modeling effect of leader regulation for an eventual improvement in the level of emotion in the group. The participants' account of conscious composure among crisis situations and of their personal

response can be aligned with Gross's (1998) process model of emotion regulation, including cognitive reappraisal. Other findings are different from or build on earlier studies. The call for leader vulnerability as an effective trust-building strategy with trust runs counter to the old traditional notion of strengths and certainty about leadership. Yet while Avolio and Gardner (2005) uncovered that the dimension of authenticity forms a part of effective leadership, this study hints that vulnerability the more ideal in the past may actually bolster trust. This is a broader extension of authentic leadership theory. Findings on the organizational barriers on the practice of EI expand upon previous work focused on leadership context. While previous literature shows that effectiveness in leadership is related to organizational culture (Schein, 2010), current evidence delineates particular dimensions of cultural processes—emotional openness, psychological safety, and the time spent building relationships—that help/may hinder the application of EI. This kind of specificity can inform organisational interventions to build up the appropriate environment in an organization to foster cultures which will breed emotionally intelligent leaders and employees. That transformational leadership behaviors were positively associated with leader EI (positively correlated ($r = 0.71$)) is in agreement with theory of their relationships (Bass & Avolio, 1995) and these relationships were consistent with theoretical assumptions regarding them. However, there is qualitative data that EI cannot only be correlated but also necessary towards transformational leadership. In participants' explanations, self-awareness, empathy and emotional regulation were described as allowing for the inspirational and considerate behaviours that are integral to transformational leadership. This means the presence of EI as the driving force of transformational effective leadership.

In general, these results are very much in line with the existing literature and provide more detail and subtlety. A mixed methods approach enables examination of relationships revealed in previous quantitative studies and elaboration of means and contexts of its relationships. The outcome is a richer picture of emotionally intelligent leadership than quantitative or qualitative studies could depict.

CHAPTER VI: SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary of the Study

This research was conducted in a doctoral study as an answer, to determine how leader emotional intelligence (EI) influences the employees and the whole team in an organization. The research has been driven by the increasingly evident assumption that technological proficiency is inadequate for leadership to be effective in current company environments, and the realization that emotional and social competencies are critical in the delivery of effective leadership and outcomes. And the study dealt with the four main research questions, which consisted of whether leader EI is related to team performance, the relationship between leader EI and employee job satisfaction, the moderation of the association by organizational culture and context, and leadership's difficulties in acquiring and practicing EI competences. The research was designed as a mixed method study, which was a mix of quantitative survey and qualitative semi-structured interviews. This convergent parallel design facilitated in depth analysis of the research questions on the basis of complementary data sources. The quantitative part had a total of 200 participants, 50 leaders and 150 team members from four industries: tech, healthcare, finance and manufacturing. Participants completed several instruments, namely: the Emotional Quotient Inventory 2.0 (EQ-i 2.0), the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ Form

5X), and the Job Satisfaction Survey, as well as customized scales that assess a person's perception of team performance and EI outcomes. The qualitative part consisted of semi-structured interviews with 12 organizational leaders chosen as purposive participants to represent different roles, industries, and the level of EI. Results Quantitative evidence provided a strong level of support for hypotheses of leader EI and results. For hypothesis 1, the relationship between leader EI and performance of teams was positively connected ($r = 0.67$, $p < 0.001$), far above the threshold of $r = 0.30$. We found that the regression analysis showed that EI is a significant predictor of how teams perform ($\beta = 0.52$; $R^2 = 0.45$; $F(4, 195) = 39.77$; $p < 0.001$), explaining 45% of variance in teams' performance ratings. In addition, hypothesis 2, indicating that there is a positive relationship between leader EI and employee job satisfaction, was also supported ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$), although empathy was one of the more positively correlated constructs as a predictor of job satisfaction outcomes ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$). Hypothesis 3, to study whether organizational culture moderates EI effects, was also supported by the outcome of hierarchical regression analysis which indicated a significant interaction effect ($\Delta R^2 = 0.04$, $p < 0.05$), meaning as organizational cultures are supportive it seems the positive effects for leader EI on team outcomes are magnified and also enhanced. Additionally, hypothesis 4 which examines the mediating effect of transformational leadership between EI and outcomes was supported through mediation analysis which found a significant indirect effect ($\beta = 0.23$, 95% confidence interval [CI] [0.14, 0.33]). Together, the quantitative findings indicated that leader EI is a strong predictor of positive team and employee outcomes in a range of organizational contexts. The qualitative analysis uncovered five key themes that

contextualized and added richness to the quantitative data. The first theme, The Self-Awareness as Foundation Of Leadership, identified how leaders' self-awareness of their emotional triggers and their understanding of how they affect others serves as the foundation for emotional intelligence. Theme 2, Empathy-Driven Communication, emphasised the centrality of taking perspective and listening carefully for trust building and creating atmosphere of psychological safety in teams. Theme 3, Emotional Regulation in High-Pressure Situations, illustrated the strategic ways that the leaders balanced and regulated their own emotions while modeling how to keep calm to the members of their teams. The fourth theme, Building Trust Through Authentic Connection, highlighted the value of vulnerability, regular emotional presence and genuine concern for team well-being, in creating authentic leader-follower relationships. Moreover, theme 5, Organizational and Cultural Barriers revealed impediments such as hierarchical limitations, time pressures, and cultural biases regarding emotional expression that can prevent even leaders with high emotional intelligence competencies from utilizing EI successfully. Both qualitative and quantitative findings were integrated in examining how leader EI influences team dynamics and outcomes, while also demonstrating situational factors shaping and constraining these interactions.

6.2 Theoretical Implications

What I discovered of this research contribute significantly to the theoretical understanding of emotional intelligence in leadership contexts, extending existing

frameworks and generating new insights regarding the mechanisms through which EI influences results.

6.2.1 Extensions to Goleman's EI Framework

This study is a follow-up to Goleman's (1995, 1998) foundational construct of emotional intelligence in empirically proving that the influence of EI components on effective leadership differs in different organizational settings. Although Goleman's original model identified five major components of EI—self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, this study uncovered crucial nuance to how these five components operate in leadership relationships. Notably what they found indicates self-awareness, not as one entity among its kind, but a fundamental capability that underlies the other EI competencies. Qualitative data strongly support the hierarchical conceptualization of EI components, whereby self-awareness is a prerequisite for effective self-regulation. This ultimately leads to meaningful empathic interaction and skilled social interaction. This hierarchical connection was reiterated in the interview transcripts of respondents describing with varying clarity their increased self-awareness from reflective practice as positively correlating with their ability to regulate their emotions and connect authentically with team members. However, this indicates a twist to Goleman's structure by conceptualizing self-awareness as the base of a pyramid of development and not a parallel component. And this study builds on Goleman's findings by showing context-specific differences in the relative importance of EI components. Empathy was shown to be the most closely correlated with job satisfaction outcomes ($r = 0.58$), as it is the most

consistently positive predictor variable. In contrast, interpersonal skills were in strongest association with team performance ($r = 0.62$). These differential relationships indicate that effective application of EI necessitates that leaders emphasize different competencies based on the desired outcomes, broadening Goleman's theoretical framework to include outcome-specific competency profiles. And the study further theoretical understanding by combining Goleman's workplace-oriented theory with Salovey and Mayer's (1990) and Mayer and Salovey (1997) ability-based conceptualization. Furthermore, the mixed-methods method established that both trait-based and ability-based components of EI are related to effective leadership. Leaders sustained dispositional tendencies toward emotional awareness and management (associated with trait approaches) while also depicting developmental pathways in their EI abilities across time (associated with ability approaches). It implies that there is necessity for theoretical frameworks to take dispositional and developmental perspectives in understanding emotional intelligence as a whole.

6.2.2 Contributions to Transformational Leadership Theory

This study is significant for expanding our understanding of transformational leadership because it validates transformational leadership behaviors as mediators for the links to EI-outcomes. The strong indirect impact ($\beta = 0.23$, 95% CI [0.14, 0.33]) indicated that leader EI may affect team outcomes partially through the performance of transformational leadership behaviors (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration). This realization builds upon

Bass (1985) and Bass and Riggio (2006) in identifying emotional intelligence as an antecedent capability that facilitates transformational leadership. Even though previous reports have proven links between EI and transformational leadership (Barling et al., 2000; Gardner & Stough, 2002), this study adds to the theoretical literature by explaining the ways in which these theoretical constructs are linked. The qualitative results shed light on how high-EI leaders operationalize their emotional competencies to achieve transformational behaviors: self-awareness facilitates authentic idealized influence, self-regulation encourages sustained inspirational motivation, empathy enables individualized consideration, and social skills allow for intellectual stimulation. This research also advances transformational leadership theory by suggesting the boundary conditions for the EI-transformational leadership relationship. The moderation analysis demonstrated a strong influence of organizational culture on the strength of this relationship—in supportive cultures the translation of EI into transformational behaviors is increased. This result implies that theoretical transformational leadership models must balance contextual factors enabling or challenging the enactment of leader capabilities. The moderating impact of organizational culture adds to contingency approaches to leadership by specifying the social context in which EI is most effectively expressed as transformational leadership. Furthermore, this study provides a process view of transformational leadership practice development. Intentionally practicing and seeking feedback in interviews also allowed for growth over time in EI competencies and transformational behaviors, as revealed by interviewees. This developmental perspective goes beyond static models of transformational leadership by emphasizing the relationships between emotional

intelligence development and behavior change in leadership. What emerged was the notion that transformational leadership would be best seen as a developmental capability that grows alongside emotional intelligence rather than as a fixed trait.

6.2.3 New Insights on EI-Performance Mechanisms

This study provides major theoretical contributions to understand the mediating roles of leader EI in team performance. The aggregate findings from quantitative and qualitative studies suggest that there exists a multi-pathway model explaining the degree to which EI affects performance through cognitive, affective, and relational pathways. This cognitive path enhances decision quality. Leaders with greater self-awareness were able to recognize when emotions had an impact and thus made more reasoned decisions that were rational in a time-critical situation. A careful quantification analysis further confirms that self-regulation is positively related to higher quality decision-making outcomes ($r = 0.54$, $p < 0.001$), underlining this mechanism. This observation builds on dual-process theories of decision-making (Kahneman, 2011) by identifying the role of emotional intelligence for leaders, demonstrating how leaders find it possible to avoid more automatic emotional response when processing information due to what is often analytical processing. The affective pathway operates through emotional contagion and climate generation. Leaders with high-EI cited their emotional state in terms of morale and engagement in teams, and 78% respondents said they experience higher team morale under high-EI leadership for both leader engagement and high-EI emotional states. This aligns with the affective events model, derived from the work of Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) and extends that model by

describing leaders' intentional management and processes of emotional contagion. In fact, this allowed leaders to apply emotional labor concepts to an even more sophisticated level of applicability to leadership situations—the strategic modulation of how leaders express their emotions allows them to build and sustain, qualitatively, the desired affective states needed for teams. The relational pathway works through trust building and psychological safety creation. Interestingly enough, the relationship between social skills and team cohesion ($r = 0.61$, $p < 0.001$) suggests the relational mechanisms through which the variable EI influences performance. Interviewees often cited emotional intelligence as vital to forming solid trusting relationships that encouraged open communication, effective conflict resolution, and partnership solutions. This finding represents an extension of prior studies including psychological safety research (Edmondson, 1999) in describing specific leader emotional competence levels required for advancing safety behaviors. Collectively, these three pathways provide a coherent theoretical framework of EI-performance processes that link cognitive, affective, and relational accounts. While current literature contains little more than a simple main-effect model, this multi-pathway framework introduces a major theoretical advancement and is a descriptive model of the pathways through which emotional intelligence is translated into outcomes.

6.3 Practical Implications

The findings of this research carry substantial practical implications for organizations seeking to enhance effective leadership and team outcomes through emotional intelligence development. These implications span leadership training, recruitment and selection, team development, and organizational culture initiatives.

6.3.1 EI-Focused Leadership Training Programs

These research findings present a compelling data base for organizations to invest in EI-specific leadership development programs. The relationships found were significant between leader EI and team performance ($r = 0.67$) and job satisfaction ($r = 0.62$), suggesting significant ROI for EI training strategies. Aspects of emotional intelligence, as discovered in this study, can be developed through extensive EI development programs, which organizations need to embrace. According to the revelation that self-awareness is a foundational capability, the training programs should take self-awareness development as major priority before expanding on it using EI competencies. Recommended training modalities would include 360-degree feedback systems that provide leaders with multiple perspectives on their emotional impact, reflective journaling exercises that improve emotional self-monitoring, mindfulness-based interventions that promote present-moment emotional awareness, coaching relationships that facilitate continuous self-awareness

development. For developing self-regulation, training should include cognitive reappraisal strategies that help leaders reframe emotionally charged situations, stress management techniques (e.g., breathing exercises and progressive relaxation), scenario-based simulations designed to increase practice in emotional regulation during difficult situations, and behavioral rehearsal exercises that help establish new response patterns. The qualitative result that leaders learn regulation skills with mindful practice also implies that training ought to be accompanied by more long-term practice with feedback rather than brief sessions. Empathy training needs to involve training on things like active listening skills, perspective-taking activities that create the ability to understand others' emotional experiences, emotional recognition through facial expression and vocal tone analysis, and structured dialogues to facilitate understanding among people in interpersonal situations. With the positive correlation between empathy and job satisfaction, organizations should emphasize the development of empathy in leaders in those roles with high employee contact. Social skills training should focus on influence and persuasion approaches grounded in emotional awareness, conflict resolution techniques that deal with emotional dimensions, team facilitation skills that create psychologically safe environments, as well as networking and relationship-building strategies. The strong link between social skills and team cohesion indicates a need for leadership in team-based workplace structures to make social skills a priority.

6.3.2 Recruitment and Selection Practices

These studies provide evidence for the inclusion of EI screening in a leadership selection system. Validated EI assessment tools should be incorporated into leadership selection batteries for organizations. Results indicated that, in this research, the tested EQ-i 2.0 was highly reliable ($\alpha = 0.89$) with predictive validity of leadership outcomes, therefore it can be considered a suitable leadership decision candidate. However, the more qualitative findings on EI development indicate that selection decisions should not only rely on current EI levels. The developmental paths described by interview participants suggest that EI competencies are malleable with adequate support and encouragement. Thus, selection may be influenced by both current EI capabilities and other developmental areas, such as self-awareness, learning orientation and receptiveness to feedback. Structured behavioural interviews must ask EI-specific questions about individuals' experiences with emotional self-management, the role of empathy, and the development of new and lasting relationships. Sample questions in an interview could be such: Describe a situation where you recognized that your emotions were affecting your effective leadership. How did you address this? Tell me about a time when understanding a team member's emotional perspective helped you resolve a difficult situation. How do you establish trust with new team members? The leadership selection centres should have emotionally impactful simulations demonstrating the capability to self-regulate, roleplay that evaluates empathic accuracy and interpersonal success, as well as group games related to social skill and a successful team facilitation. The moderation suggests that the selection criteria should be adapted to the organizational culture with organizations with highly

supportive cultures being in a situation to benefit more from more intense selection of high-EI leaders.

6.3.3 Team Development Strategies

My research informs many elements of the development of teams that work with emotional intelligence and how it can use team dynamic. One is that organizations may take teams to a team composition strategy to make sure they have adequate EI representation within team members. Although this study was centered on leader EI, the mechanisms discussed in the study—emotional contagion and psychological safety creation, in particular—suggest advantages of using distributed EI across team membership. Incorporating interventions in team development should focus on emotional dynamics explicitly. In this sense, the qualitative findings showed that high-functioning teams discuss their own feelings, and the process where emotional experiences are openly discussed in these environments and the high-functioning teams have norms supporting emotional expression are also established. Team development facilitators should help teams, in terms of team development leaders to create emotional norms that endorse emotional acceptance in order to support honest expression while keeping constructive discussions of emotion-evoking activity. The specific interventions outlined include checking in at meetings (which exposes emotional arousal), debriefing and addressing the emotional sides of team experience, and conflict protocols (which acknowledge emotional content while keeping tasks on track). Given the found effects of leader EI on team psychological safety, team development strategy would also include providing leader

coaching in the development of facilitatory behaviors that promote team safety. Leaders will receive suggestions to respond non-defensively to input from team members, acknowledge their own fallibility and uncertainty, acknowledge all perspectives and healthy criticism without judgment or push back, and invite team members to share their feelings. Organizations should implement team-based EI assessments and feedback as well. Just as personal 360-degree feedback increases self-awareness, team-based evaluation of emotional climate, psychological safety, and relational quality can improve overall awareness of team goals and priorities for next steps. Regular assessment of these groups allows tracking of the movement of team emotions through time and evaluating the effectiveness of development interventions.

6.3.4 Organizational Culture Recommendations

The significant moderating effect of organizational culture on EI-outcome relationships carries vital implications for culture development initiatives. To get the most out of investments in emotional intelligence, organisations must cultivate cultures which encourage expression and cultivation of EI. The specific cultural attributes that make EI effective include a sense of psychological safety such that emotional expression can occur without fear of negative consequences, developmental orientation that emphasizes learning and growth rather than fixed performance judgments, relational emphasis that gives equal weight to relationship quality and task outcomes, and feedback-rich environments that provide regular information about emotional impact and effectiveness. This includes both formal systems and informal norms that culture change initiatives must address. Formal

systems to encourage EI culture include the following: systems that align EI competencies to performance management processes, promotion criteria that balance emotional intelligence with technical capabilities, recognition programs that reward emotionally intelligent leadership behaviors, and resource allocation that supports the investment of EI development. Leadership modeling, storytelling, peer influence are all essential for informal norm development. Senior leaders should publicly showcase EI competencies, and share stories of emotional experiences and progress on their emotional journeys and the ways in which they've grown within the role themselves. Organizational narratives and examples should illustrate specific examples of emotionally intelligent leadership and the benefit that it achieves. Peers and communities of practice could be the support structures that facilitate ongoing EI learning through shared learning and mutual accountability. The qualitative finding on the time pressures acting as barriers to EI application implies that organizations should focus on the structural factors that inhibit EI expression. Workload management, meeting practices, communication norms, need to account for time — for relational engagement — when it comes to emotionally intelligent leadership. Organizations might want to cut into the meeting frequency in order to create time for more authentic individual interactions, implement norms that prohibit multi-tasking during conversations, and build protected time for leader–team member dialogue.

6.4 Policy Implications

Beyond organizational practice, this research carries implications for policy development at multiple levels including human resource policy, leadership development policy, and broader institutional recommendations.

6.4.1 Human Resource Policy Recommendations

Policies in human resources could be revised to acknowledge emotional intelligence's significance in effective leadership. It is important to explicitly include EI competencies as part of competency frameworks for job design, selection, performance management, and development. Instead of assuming emotional abilities are simply an extraneous or more peripheral element to technical skills, HR policy should place EI as core to leadership ability. There should be an obligation for selection policies requiring EI screening for leadership positions, with assessment being assessed by the use of validated instruments and they should also be part of standard selection criteria. The evidence from this study that supports EI's predictive validity for leadership outcomes further adds to why more resources are warranted for full EI evaluation. Selection guidelines should furthermore mandate interview protocols to explore EI-relevant experiences and abilities. Performance management policies should integrate EI measures into leadership evaluation standards. Items assessing leaders' emotional self-awareness, empathic responsiveness, emotional regulation, and relationship-building effectiveness should be included in multi-rater feedback processes. Performance ratings should take such EI competencies into

account appropriately, based on their demonstrated significance for the outcomes of the teams. Policies of development will help guarantee all leaders have availability of EI training and coaching. Policies need to include minimum investment levels for EI development per leader, periodic EI assessments to monitor development, and action plans for improving EI. Development plans should provide budgets for EI-focused intervention rather than simply patching emotional competencies onto existing leadership development programs. EI criteria should be included in planning of succession. High-potential identification efforts ought to evaluate EI competencies and developmental path within the context of other leadership qualities. Succession candidates need extensive EI training to position them to rise to senior leadership roles.

6.4.2 Leadership Development Policy

This study suggests that organizational leadership development policies should be extensively reviewed in response to findings from this research. Policy frameworks must create a strategic priority on EI development, ensure sufficient resources are allocated to EI-based interventions, establish quality standards for EI interventions, and demand evaluation of the effectiveness of EI interventions. Mandatory EI elements must be integrated into leadership development curricula at all leadership levels. Entry-level leadership programs should establish foundational self-awareness and basic emotional regulation capabilities. Mid-level programs should develop social skills and empathetic intelligence for cross-functional leadership. Strategic applications of EI through top management programs in relation to organizations should be integrated within the senior

leadership programs to develop skills for a variety of strategic fields such as culture leadership and emotional climate management within an organizational environment. Policies should detail evidence-based methods for developing EI. The evidence literature reviews and study findings suggest that EI development needs to be an extended duration rather than short sessions, experiential learning in the form of simulation and practice, targeted feedback from multiple perspectives, coaching to assist in applying and assimilating, and follow-up reinforcers of behavior changes. Such elements should be integrated into EI programs and guidelines should be offered as part of EI development policy with minimum program terms. Quality assurance policies must set the standards for EI development providers. External suppliers should prove use of validated assessment tools, evidence-based development guidelines, credentialed facilitators and evidence of demonstrable developments. Internal development responsibilities need to provide commensurate coverage. Evaluation policies should require evaluation of the efficacy of EI development. Organizations are to monitor pre-post changes in EI assessment scores, behavioral indicators of EI training application, improvements in team and employee outcomes, and investment cost for EI development spend. Results of evaluation must be used to assess the relevance of various evidence of improved EI development approaches.

6.4.3 Institutional Recommendations

At the broader institutional level, this research provides guidance for educational institutions, professional associations, and policy-making bodies. There should be a wider inclusion of the course of EI in business schools and leadership programs. Currently, many

MBA and executive education programs treat emotional intelligence peripherally or not at all. In conclusion, evidence for the vital significance of EI to leadership suggests that leadership concentrations need to include EI-oriented courses, that EI concepts should be integral across functional courses, that leadership programs need experiential EI development opportunities in co-curricular programs, and that assessments of EI competencies should be graduation requirements for leadership programs. Professional associations in management and leadership fields should include EI standards in professional certification and continuing education requirements. Assessment elements in leadership certifications should include EI, and EI education should be included in continuing professional development programs. Professional associations should also develop and distribute resources aimed at EI development, including research summaries, best practice guides, and validated assessment tools. Business education accreditation standards should include an element of EI curriculum. Schools pursuing accreditation have to explain how students develop emotional intelligence competencies and how they measure learning outcomes related to EI. Specific guidelines for accreditation should establish minimum EI curriculum requirements and acceptable evidence of EI development effectiveness. Workforce development policy by government agencies should recognize EI as a priority skill area. Such workforce development initiatives should include EI training opportunities, especially for individuals moving into leadership positions. Evidence-based approaches in EI development should be integrated into government-funded leadership development programs. Continued research funding should emphasize

studies investigating EI development and application within diverse organizational contexts.

6.5 Limitations of the Study

While this research makes significant contributions to understanding the relationship between leader emotional intelligence and results, several limitations should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings and considering their application.

6.5.1 Sample Limitations

The quantitative part of the study used convenience sampling; therefore, generalizing the findings to the larger population of top organizational leaders and teams would be limited. Stratification involved all sectors from four fields but the sample was drawn from easily accessible organizations and not probability sampling from the specified populations. Replication using probability samples would boost confidence in the generalizability of results. The study was restricted to those in a national context and could only involve organizations which operated in a specific territory; the geographic scope of this study only occurred in a single country. Cross-national research findings have revealed wide gaps with respect to the emotional expression norms, leadership requirements and business styles of managers in various cultures (Matsumoto et al., 2008). Associations we have found in this study may be more or less oriented or severe cross cultural context.

Extending this study to other cultural contexts would help to better understand boundary conditions of the EI-leadership interaction. While it was adequate, the sample of participants was limited to the planned statistical analyses based on power analysis, and not enough to obtain models that were to be tested. Larger samples would be needed for more complex structural equation modeling to explore and model multiple mediator and moderator factors in parallel. The findings thus now should be regarded as preliminary with regard to complex multi-path models. The industry representation, meanwhile, diverse, didn't account for all organizational contexts. Public sector organizations, non-profits, and small businesses were under examined in the sample. EI–outcome relationships could behave differently in these contexts as leadership agendas differ, as may performance targets, and cultural expectations.

6.5.2 Methodological Limitations

The data on the quantitative component is cross-sectional, which restricts causal inference. Though the results show strong associations of leader EI with team outcomes, causal direction is not deterministic. And while leading high-performing, happy teams can have long-term consequences (reverse causation), it's not yet clear that unmet outcomes (such as cognitive ability or personality factors) actually influence both EI and outcomes (spurious correlation). Longitudinal designs that used an adequate temporal separation between predictor and outcome measurement would reinforce causal inference. Self-report measures were administered to several constructs, leading to common method bias and social desirability. Although procedural solutions to counteract common method bias (such

as assuring anonymity, counterbalancing, and obtaining data from different sources such as leader and team members) were used, total eradication of self-report bias is not feasible. The EI measure in particular likely suffers from self-enhancement bias, since people have been known to overestimate emotional abilities. Future research with ability-based EI measures or observer ratings would deepen this understanding of associations. Whilst providing rich depth and context, the qualitative piece was exclusively focused on leader perspectives. Participants' experiences with emotional intelligence in their leaders were measured through only quantitative tools. Team member interviews may have offered a richer understanding in how leader EI is viewed and felt by the target audience. The study did not adjust for all of the possible confounding factors. However, although demographic factors were used as controls due to the regressions, other identified factors which may be responsible for successful leaders, such as cognitive ability, personality traits, and leadership experience were not included in regression methods. We still haven't been able to confirm any specific EI-related unique contribution beyond these factors through the existing information.

6.5.3 Contextual Limitations

The study analyzed EI-outcome relationships across stable organizational settings. Participating organizations were not going through major disruptions, crises, or transformations in the time period. During periods of considerable change the relationships between EI and outcomes may vary since emotional demands placed on leaders may be greater or different EI competencies may become more or less salient. The team structures

explored were predominantly existing teams with established membership in a co-located manner. The results may not be generalizable to virtual teams, project-based temporary teams, or other newer team structures that offer unique leadership challenges. In fact, even more specifically, the leader impact of EI needs to be explored in remote leadership situations where face-to-face emotional exchange is minimized. The organizational cultures reflected in the sample, although varied, contained no extremely toxic or dysfunctional cultures. And the obstacles to EI expression (e.g. hierarchy, time pressure, cultural norms) were moderate rather than severe. In highly dysfunctional organizational settings, the limitations to the application of EI may be far greater, hindering the effects of leader EI on outcomes. The study focused on formal leadership positions given authority and responsibility. Informal leadership and influence mechanisms were not examined. Emotional intelligence probably is a factor in informal influence but the mechanisms may not necessarily be exactly like formal leaders.

6.6 Recommendations for Future Research

What I discovered and limitations of this research suggest several directions for future investigation that would extend understanding of emotional intelligence in leadership contexts.

6.6.1 Longitudinal Studies

Longitudinal designs of future research would also need to be applied to determine causal relationships between leader EI and outcomes. Longitudinal panel studies tracking leaders and teams over long periods should also allow assessment of whether changes in leader EI precede changes in team performance and satisfaction, yielding stronger evidence of causation. We would also be able to identify potential pathways toward EI development through the longitudinal approach with leadership effectiveness and growth of leader EI; identifying factors that facilitate or impede EI growth over time. Randomized controlled intervention studies would give us rigorous evidence about how well EI programs work. Random assignment of leaders to EI training versus control conditions, with pre- and post-assessment of EI and outcomes, would establish whether EI gained translates into outcome improvements. Long-term follow-up would evaluate sustainability of the intervention effects. Methods of experience sampling may provide fine-grained insights into how EI works in daily leadership practice. Repeated sampling of leaders' emotional experiences, regulatory efforts, and interaction quality would reveal within-person variation in EI application and its moment-to-moment consequences for team dynamics.

6.6.2 Cross-Cultural Comparisons

In view of the cultural significance of emotional expression and leadership expectations, cross-cultural research is needed to understand boundary conditions of the EI-leadership relation. Future cross-cultural studies need to explore whether the EI factors that best predict successful leadership differ from cultural context to culture in different

emotional display norms, if EI–outcome relationships (cognitive, affective, relational) operate in a similar manner across cultures and how they are moderated by cultural value systems involving hierarchy, individualism and uncertainty avoidance, as well as what adaptations to EI-learning programs would be justified for their efficacy in diverse cultural settings. Multi-level studies that account for national culture and organization-based culture effects would help disentangle these influences. There is a great deal of variability within organizations in the same national culture in their emotional climates, and the relationship between national and organizational cultural factors in the contribution to EI effectiveness needs to be explored. Cross-cultural research should address measurement equivalence to guarantee that instruments used for assessing EI will behave similarly across cultural groups. Cross-cultural comparisons should be approached with caution to ensure translation and adaptation are rigorous and measurement invariance is tested before cross-cultural comparisons are made.

6.6.3 Digital and Remote Leadership Contexts

As remote work and digital platforms for communication have proliferated around the world, they pose unique challenges to emotionally intelligent leadership. There is a need for future research that examines how leader EI translates into virtual effective leadership, whether specific EI competencies become more or less vital for effectiveness within digital contexts, what behaviors and practices lend themselves to establishing emotional connections in technology-mediated communication, and how leaders enable members of a team not often spotted in the flesh with the opportunity to gain trust and

psychological safety. The COVID-19 pandemic sped up adoption of remote work arrangements, creating natural experimental conditions for empirical investigation of leadership in virtual contexts. Future studies comparing the effectiveness of pre-pandemic and pandemic-era leadership for leaders who do have different EI levels would help to identify how EI functions differently in remote contexts. Further research may also look at the impact of AI and automation on emotionally intelligent leadership. As AI assumes more of the more routine cognitive tasks, the very human capabilities of emotional intelligence may play an even more central role in the value of leadership. Research on human-AI collaboration in leadership contexts may be used to inform the preparation of leaders for the increasingly automated realities of organizations.

6.6.4 Multi-Perspective Assessment Approaches

Given all these factors, future research has to incorporate 360-degree feedback, as these methods will capture different perspectives on leader emotional intelligence by including a plurality of them. Self-report, supervisor, peer, and subordinate ratings of leader EI would facilitate analysis of self-other agreement and the impact of rating differences. Leaders who overestimate their EI compared to others' perceptions may differ in effectiveness from those with more accurate self-assessments. Combining ability-based EI measures with self-report measures and observer measures would allow for a broader characterization of emotional intelligence. Ability-based instruments such as the MSCEIT (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2002) evaluate real performance on emotional reasoning tasks

rather than perceived performance. Cross comparing relations with outcomes across measurement paradigms would provide greater clarity on what types of EI were most associated with effective leadership. To supplement the survey-based approaches, behavioral evaluations of EI also require observing leaders in naturalistic situations or during simulated scenarios. Observations of emotional recognition, regulation, and expression behaviors coded would be objective indicators of EI application and are not susceptible to self-report bias.

6.6.5 Additional Research Directions

Several further research paths arise from this study's findings. Studying EI in team leadership compared to individual leadership would answer whether the mechanisms found here are the same when leaders work with intact teams versus individual direct reports. More research on the development of collective team EI and its relationship to leader EI would broaden perspective on emotional intelligence as it pertains to organizational levels. The examination of dark side aspects of emotional intelligence would counter the predominantly positive-centered focus of current studies. In addition to authentic connection and support, a high EI can mean manipulation and emotional exploitation. Realising when and how EI is used for self-serving versus prosocial purposes would help in understanding the nuanced application of EI constructs in selection and development. The inclusion of EI research within other individual difference constructs would highlight EI's distinct role in leadership effectiveness. Considering EI alongside cognitive ability,

and personality traits (specifically the Big Five), would provide incremental validity and should help to clarify the relative focus on EI in selection and development programs.

6.7 Conclusion

The empirical evidence from this doctoral study has provided important support to the strong role leader emotional intelligence plays in organizations as a whole and staff/organizational teams. Using quantitative surveys in addition to qualitative interviews in four industry sectors, the author's extensive research shows that leader EI is strongly positively correlated with team member performance ($r = 0.67, p < 0.001$), employee job satisfaction ($r = 0.62, p < 0.001$), and other variables. This project has also broadened our theoretical framework of emotional intelligence of leadership, revealing the hierarchical relationship of components of EI: self-awareness serves as a foundational competence upon which all other competencies are built. In addition, mediation results provide support that the transformational leadership behaviors are mechanisms through which EI mediates the output. As the moderation implications show, supportive organizational cultures contribute to facilitative effects of leader EI. These qualitative results have illuminated emotionally intelligent leadership in practice, specifically how leaders utilize self-awareness, empathy and emotional regulation in their daily interactions with their team. Themes of empathy-based communication, emotion regulation in stressful situations, genuine bonds and organizational barriers are identified which lay down thick context for the mechanisms and barriers to EI use. There is also a lot of implication for practice from this study. Companies

can invest in leadership development workshops and EI-specific systems that support leaders; inject EI feedback plans in decision making; and create a culture that fosters emotional intelligence display. Rather than identifying EI as a soft skill, the evidence for EI as a leadership competency is substantial. To be honest, cross-sectional survey research as well as the use of convenience sampling methodologies create limitations in our own data-mining methodology; however, the concordance of research evidence from both quantitative and qualitative parts of the study provide confidence in the findings. For example, proposed future research in this area may include longitudinal designs and cross-cultural comparisons, or investigating digital leadership environments, which would lead to the extension of these boundary conditions. Our findings show that emotional intelligence is a foundational competency among modern organizations that empowers effective leadership. Leaders who have knowledge of their own and others' emotional response/control and genuine team bonding perform better and offer better (satisfied) work to employees and also organizations. Organizations operate in complex and uncertain environments; the very human attributes related to emotional intelligence will always be of prime importance to good leadership. This work also supports the theoretical and applied aspect of emotional intelligence in leadership thereby facilitating the advancement of priority for EI enhancement at the strategic level for organizations.

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APPENDIX A
SURVEY COVER LETTER

Dear Participant,

I'm a doctoral candidate in the Doctor of Business Administration program at the Swiss School of Business and Management Geneva. Plus, i'm conducting research on the impact of emotional intelligence of leaders on employees and teams within organizations. This study aims to understand how leaders' emotional competencies influence how teams perform, employee satisfaction, and results.

You are invited to participate in this research study because of your position within your organization as either a leader or team member. Your participation would involve completing an online survey that will take approximately 25-30 minutes. The survey includes questions about emotional intelligence, leadership styles, team dynamics, and job satisfaction.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. All responses will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. No individual responses will be shared with your organization or anyone else. Data will be reported only in aggregate form in the final dissertation and any subsequent publications.

The survey has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee at the Swiss School of Business and Management Geneva. If you have any questions about this research, please contact me at shubham.dexter@gmail.com

By clicking the link below and completing the survey, you indicate your informed consent to participate in this study. Your participation is greatly appreciated and will contribute to our understanding of effective leadership in organizations.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Shubham Sharma

DBA Candidate

Swiss School of Business and Management Geneva

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Study Title: Impact of Emotional Intelligence of a Leader on Employees/Team

Principal Investigator: Shubham Sharma

Supervisor: Dr. Vasiliki Grougiou

Institution: Swiss School of Business and Management Geneva

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between leaders' emotional intelligence and various results including how teams perform, employee job satisfaction, and organizational effectiveness. This study will contribute to both academic understanding and practical applications of emotional intelligence in leadership contexts.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an online survey consisting of validated questionnaires measuring emotional intelligence, leadership styles, how teams perform, and job satisfaction. The survey will take approximately 25-30 minutes to complete. Some participants may be invited to participate in a follow-up interview lasting 45-60 minutes.

Risks and Benefits:

There are no known risks associated with participating in this study beyond those encountered in everyday life. While there may be no direct benefits to you, your participation will contribute to knowledge about effective leadership practices that may benefit organizations and employees in the future.

Confidentiality:

All information collected during this study will be kept strictly confidential. Your responses will be anonymous and will not be linked to your name or any identifying information. Survey data will be stored on password-protected computers accessible only to the researcher. Interview recordings will be transcribed and then deleted. All data will be reported only in aggregate form.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You may also skip any questions you don't wish to answer.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Shubham Sharma at shubham.dexter@gmail.com or Dr. Vasiliki Grougiou . If you have concerns about your

rights as a research participant, you may contact the Research Ethics Committee at Swiss School of Business and Management Geneva.

Consent:

By signing below, I confirm that I've read and understood the information provided above and voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

Participant Signature

Date

Printed Name

APPENDIX C
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Section 1: Demographic Information

Please provide the following information about yourself:

1. Gender:

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other ☐ Prefer not to say

2. Age: _____ years

3. Highest level of education completed:

☐ High School ☐ Bachelor's Degree ☐ Master's Degree ☐ Doctorate ☐

Other

4. Industry sector:

☐ Technology ☐ Healthcare ☐ Finance ☐ Manufacturing ☐ Other

5. Current position level:

☐ Executive ☐ Senior Manager ☐ Middle Manager ☐ Team Lead ☐

Individual Contributor

6. Years of experience in current organization: _____ years

7. Years of leadership experience (if applicable): _____ years

8. Team size (number of direct reports, if applicable): _____

Section 2: Emotional Intelligence Assessment

Please rate how accurately each statement describes you or your leader using the following scale:

1 = Never/Rarely 2 = Occasionally 3 = Sometimes 4 = Usually 5 =
Always/Almost Always

Self-Awareness:

9. I am aware of my emotions as I experience them. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

10. I understand how my emotions affect my behavior. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

11. I recognize my strengths and limitations. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

12. I understand how my emotions affect others around me. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

13. I regularly reflect on my emotional reactions. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

Self-Regulation:

- 14. I can control my temper in difficult situations. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- 15. I remain calm under pressure. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- 16. I think before acting when I feel strong emotions. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- 17. I can manage my impulses effectively. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- 18. I adapt my emotional responses to different situations. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

Motivation:

- 19. I set challenging goals for myself. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- 20. I persist in pursuing goals despite obstacles. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- 21. I am driven to improve and meet standards of excellence. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- 22. I remain optimistic even when facing setbacks. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- 23. I'm committed to achieving organizational objectives. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

Empathy:

- 24. I can sense when others are feeling upset. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- 25. I understand others' perspectives even when I disagree. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- 26. I recognize non-verbal emotional cues from others. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- 27. I show genuine concern for others' wellbeing. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- 28. I actively listen when others share their concerns. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

Social Skills:

29. I communicate clearly and effectively with others. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
30. I can persuade others and build consensus. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
31. I manage conflicts constructively. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
32. I build strong, trusting relationships with team members. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
33. I collaborate effectively with diverse individuals. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

Section 3: Leadership Assessment

Please rate how frequently you/your leader shows the following behaviors:

1 = Not at all 2 = Once in a while 3 = Sometimes 4 = Fairly often 5 =
Frequently/Always

Transformational Leadership:

34. Instills pride in others for being associated with them. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
35. Goes beyond self-interest for the good of the group. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
36. Talks enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
37. Articulates a compelling vision of the future. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
38. Re-examines critical assumptions to question appropriateness. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
39. Seeks differing perspectives when solving problems. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
40. Spends time teaching and coaching. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

41. Treats others as individuals rather than just members of a group. [1] [2] [3] [4]
[5]

Section 4: Team Performance

Please rate your team's performance on the following dimensions:

1 = Very Poor 2 = Below Average 3 = Average 4 = Above Average 5 =
Excellent

- 42. Overall team productivity. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- 43. Quality of work produced by the team. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- 44. Team's ability to meet deadlines. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- 45. Team collaboration and cooperation. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- 46. Team's ability to solve problems effectively. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- 47. Team innovation and creativity. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- 48. Team communication effectiveness. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- 49. Team morale and engagement. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

Section 5: Job Satisfaction

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

50. I'm satisfied with my current job. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

51. I feel valued and appreciated at work. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

52. I am satisfied with the leadership in my organization. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

53. I feel motivated to do my best work. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

54. I'd recommend my organization as a good place to work. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

55. I see myself continuing to work here in the future. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

Section 6: Organizational Culture

Please rate the following aspects of your organizational culture:

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

56. My organization values employee development and growth. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

57. Open communication is encouraged at all levels. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

58. Employees feel safe to express their opinions. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

59. Leadership models the values they espouse. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

60. The organization supports work-life balance. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

Thank you for completing this survey!

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Introduction (5 minutes):

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. My name is Shubham Sharma, and I am conducting this research as part of my doctoral dissertation at the Swiss School of Business and Management Geneva. This interview will explore your experiences with emotional intelligence in leadership and how it affects team dynamics and results.

The interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes. With your permission, I will record the conversation to ensure accuracy. Your responses will be kept confidential, and your identity will be anonymized in any reports or publications. You may decline to answer any question or stop the interview at any time.

Do you have any questions before we begin? Do I have your consent to proceed and record?

Section 1: Background and Context (5-10 minutes)

1. Could you briefly describe your current role and responsibilities?
2. How long have you been in a leadership position?
3. Can you describe the team(s) you currently lead?

Section 2: Understanding of Emotional Intelligence (10 minutes)

4. What does emotional intelligence mean to you in the context of leadership?
5. How would you describe your own emotional intelligence?
6. What aspects of emotional intelligence do you consider most important for effective leadership?

Section 3: EI Application in Leadership Practice (15-20 minutes)

7. Can you describe a specific situation where you used your emotional intelligence effectively as a leader?
 - What did you do?
 - What was the outcome?
 - What made this approach effective?
8. How do you use self-awareness in your leadership?
 - How do you recognize when your emotions are affecting your leadership?
 - Can you give an example?
9. How do you manage your emotions in high-pressure situations?
 - What strategies do you use?

- Can you describe a challenging situation and how you handled it?

10. How do you demonstrate empathy with your team members?

- How do you recognize when team members are struggling?
- What do you do to support them?

11. How do you build trusting relationships with your team?

- What role does emotional intelligence play in this?

Section 4: Impact on Team and Organizational Outcomes (10 minutes)

12. How do you believe your emotional intelligence affects your team's performance?

- Can you provide specific examples?

13. What impact do you think your emotional intelligence has on team morale and engagement?

14. How does your emotional intelligence influence the culture of your team/organization?

Section 5: Challenges and Development (10 minutes)

15. What challenges do you face in applying emotional intelligence in your leadership role?

- Are there organizational or cultural barriers?
- How do you navigate these challenges?

16. How have you developed your emotional intelligence over time?

- What experiences or training have been most valuable?
- What areas are you still working to develop?

17. What advice would you give to other leaders about developing and applying emotional intelligence?

Closing (5 minutes):

18. Is there anything else you would like to add about emotional intelligence and leadership?

Thank you very much for your time and insights. Your contribution to this research is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions after this interview, please feel free to contact me. Would you like to receive a summary of the research findings when the study is complete?

APPENDIX E

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Table E1: Quantitative Study Demographics (n=200)

Demographic Variable	n	%
Gender		
Male	116	58.0
Female	84	42.0
Age Group		
25-34 years	52	26.0
35-44 years	78	39.0
45-54 years	48	24.0
55-64 years	22	11.0
Industry Sector		
Technology	56	28.0
Healthcare	52	26.0
Finance	48	24.0
Manufacturing	44	22.0
Position Level		
Leaders	50	25.0
Team Members	150	75.0

Demographic Variable	n	%
Education Level		
Bachelor's Degree	86	43.0
Master's Degree	94	47.0
Doctorate	20	10.0

Source: Author's own compilation based on survey data (2025).

Note. Mean age = 38.4 years (SD = 8.7); Mean organizational tenure = 7.2 years (SD = 5.1); Mean leadership experience = 5.8 years (SD = 4.3).

Table E2: Qualitative Study Participant Profiles (n=12)

ID	Gender	Age	Role	Industry	EI Level
P1	Male	45	Senior Manager	Technology	High
P2	Female	38	Team Lead	Healthcare	High
P3	Female	42	Senior Executive	Finance	High
P4	Male	50	Director	Manufacturing	High
P5	Male	48	HR Manager	Technology	Medium
P6	Female	36	Marketing Director	Finance	High
P7	Male	50	Finance Executive	Finance	Medium
P8	Female	42	Project Manager	Healthcare	High
P9	Male	47	HR Consultant	Manufacturing	Medium
P10	Female	39	Marketing Manager	Technology	High
P11	Male	44	Operations Manager	Manufacturing	Medium
P12	Female	41	Clinical Director	Healthcare	High

Source: Author's own compilation (2025).

Note. EI Level based on EQ-i 2.0 scores: High = scores above 110; Medium = scores between 90-110. All participants had minimum 5 years of leadership experience. Interview duration ranged from 45-62 minutes (M = 52 minutes).

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