



Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Effectiveness – Are Women Leaders Better

Ms. Aparna Kulkarni¹, Prof. Ritesh Tondase², Prof. Pradnya Bhambure³, Prof. Manasi Joshi⁴

¹Research Scholar, Symbiosis Institute of Business Management, Pune, Maharashtra, India.

^{2,3,4}Assistant Professor, Prin. N.G. Naralkar Institute of Career Development and Research, Pune, Maharashtra, India.

Email ID: abkul917@gmail.com¹, ritesh.tondase@gmail.com², psbhambure@gmail.com³, email.manasi@gmail.com⁴

Abstract

Emotional intelligence plays a vital role in the formation women's leadership characteristics. Women leaders displaying high emotional intelligence excel in managing their own and others' emotions, resulting in team unity, better communication, and conflict resolution. Moreover, emotional intelligence enhances women leaders' ability to adjust their leadership approaches to various contexts and individuals, thus augmenting their overall efficacy. The success of leadership effectiveness ultimately relies on the collaboration between emotional intelligence and leadership competencies which enables women to exploit on their strengths in mentorship, motivation, and collaboration. This research emphasis on women in executive positions in Indian corporate sector. The study involves a qualitative approach, applying thematic analysis. Data collection involved interviews with twelve women executives who have acquired senior leadership roles in Indian corporations. The analytical process enabled the identification of patterns and themes within the gathered data relating to emotional intelligence. The emergent themes incorporate self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, motivation, and social skills. These components discover the impact of women leadership on subordinates, focusing how their unique leadership style improves transparency in communication, employee participation, team cohesion, inclusiveness, and trustworthiness within the workforce. The exclusive approach of women leaders contributes for developing positive organizational characteristics. Finally, the study concludes that women leaders achieve a competitive advantage in organizational leadership effectiveness. Their discriminating emotional awareness enables them to empathize with team members, nurture healthy relationships, and foster inclusive work environments.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, women's leadership, leadership effectiveness, qualitative study, thematic analysis, Indian Organizations, Women leaders, organizational effectiveness

1. Introduction

Women leaders tend to have effective organizational leadership, as they persuade higher emotional intelligence (Condren et al., 2006; Hsu et al., 2022). Leadership effectiveness is enhanced with high emotional intelligence (Kanesan & Fauzan, 2019). The cultivation of emotional intelligence (EI) can significantly enhance the capacity of women in leadership roles to communicate their objectives and expectations effectively. This EI encompasses articulate expression and the critical skill of active listening, distinguishing these leaders. Emotional

intelligence fosters a distinct management of emotions which enables effective conflict resolution and discovering mutually beneficial outcomes. Furthermore, women leaders with high EI develop positive work environments that emphasizes diversity by recognizing the value of diverse views and perceptions. The ability to adapt leadership approaches in response to specific contexts and individual needs results in more successful leadership outcomes (Hsu et al., 2022). By leveraging their emotional intelligence, women leaders can build stronger, more cohesive



teams through a nuanced understanding of team members' emotional requirements. They are appropriate to provide meaningful guidance and support, fostering their team members' professional growth and development (Condren et al., 2006). Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in their leadership effectiveness, in the context of Indian women leaders in higher corporate positions. The ability to navigate cultural nuances, manage diverse teams, and balance traditional expectations with modern leadership approaches is to be enhanced by strong emotional intelligence skills. This study proposes to find out the components of the emotional intelligence of women leaders that make them more effective in the organization.

2. Literature Review

Emotions and emotional intelligence have emerged as crucial factors in effective leadership, with studies demonstrating that leaders' ability to recognize, understand, and manage their own and others' emotions can significantly impact their success (Coronado-Maldonado & Benítez-Márquez, 2023; Alon & Higgins, 2005; George, 2000). Emotional intelligence encompasses five primary components such as empathy, motivation, social skills, self-awareness, and self-regulation. Empathy is the emotion that helps to understand and relate to other's feelings, which plays a significant role in women's leadership, as it fosters trust, cooperation, and a supportive work environment (Bar-On, 2007). Motivation encompasses the internal drive to achieve goals and maintain persistence, a key trait for leaders to inspire and influence others (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Social skills, which include managing relationships, communicating effectively, and influencing others, are vital for building team cohesion and organizational success (Goleman, 1998). Self-awareness involves recognizing and understanding one's emotions, and maintain emotional balance in challenging situations, whereas Self-regulation involves controlling emotional responses and making them appropriate for the situation. These components are essential in leadership roles and require equanimity and determination (Goleman, 1995). These

components of emotional intelligence provide a framework to understand how the emotional intelligence of women leaders has an impact on their leadership style, specifically in complex organizational and social environments. These dimensions can provide valuable insights into emotional awareness, interpersonal competence, and empathy, leading to women's leadership, which frequently collaborated as a transformational leadership style. (Eagly & Carli, 2003). There are five components of Emotional Intelligence distinguished by Goleman (1998) - Empathy, which is portrayed as Social awareness; motivation; Social Skills, which are portrayed as relationship management; self-regulation; and self-awareness, which are important in building effective leadership in the organization. The research specifies that emotional intelligence is key to success in one's personal and professional life. Ruderman et al. (2001) have discovered the links between the components of emotional intelligence and their specific association with leadership effectiveness. RQ1: Emotional intelligence of women leaders enhances leadership effectiveness. [1-5]

3. Research Methodology

The study proposes a qualitative approach with thematic analysis as it helps bring valuable themes for the study and helps to draw meaningful themes from the collected data. Twelve interviews were conducted for the proposed study. The participants are female executives in executive positions in small, medium, or large-scale I.T.-related organizations. The data were collected with one-to-one interviews with women executives through an online platform. NVivo software has been utilized to conduct data analysis. The collected data is then transcribed into Word and utilized for data analysis.

4. Data Analysis and Result

A six-phase qualitative data analysis process has been carried out for the thematic analysis. This process helps to identify important aspects and perspectives of the thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2014, 2022). However, the process is not linear and sequential due to the descriptive data. Some steps must be repeated to

discover the substantial themes from the collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Byrne, 2022). Phase 1: Familiarization with the data Phase one involves data familiarization, which involves deep reading and identifying appropriate information from the selected data set. The researcher repeatedly went through the audio and video transcripts of the interviews. Further, the audio and videos have been converted into a readable format. All the twelve scripts were given unique IDs, which were further used for data analysis. Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes After going through the scripts recursively, initial coding was carried out based on the data related to the research question.

These codes are generated according to their significance and frequency in the dataset. The coding was based on the data iterations and their relevance to the data set. Phase 3: Generating Themes After generation of preliminary codes, the data underwent through a systematic classification process, establishing predominant themes and their equivalent subthemes. Numerous themes have been generated based on the significance of the data and their reappearance in the data set. The frequent codes have been converted into themes and sub-themes accordingly. Figure 1 shows the initial themes and subthemes derived from the data set. [6-10]

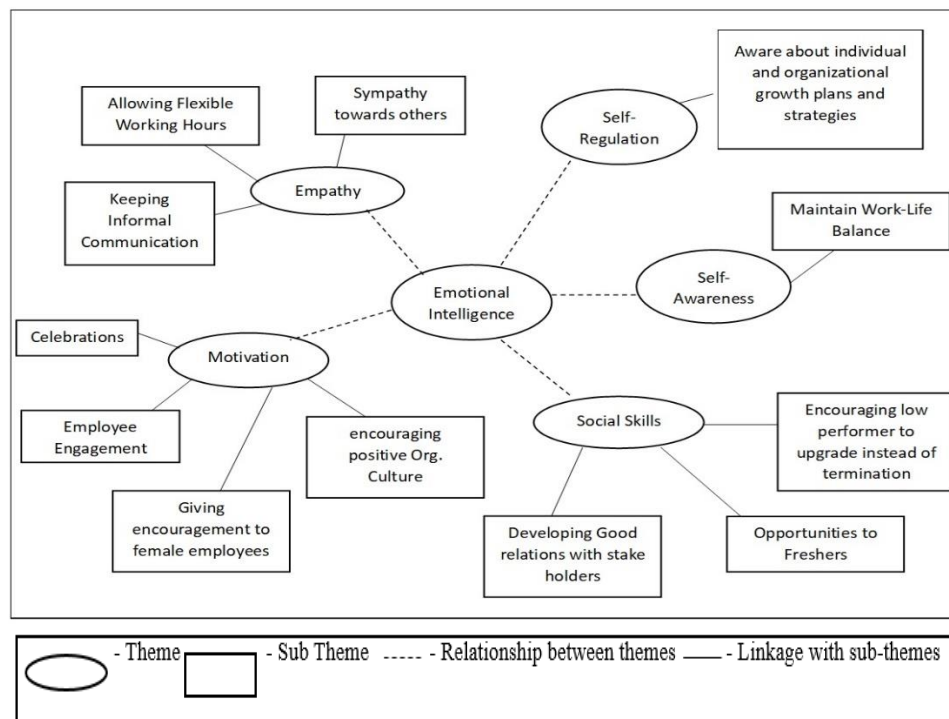


Figure 1 Initial Themes Generated from The Data Recursion

Phase 4: Reviewing Potential Themes Further, the study went a recursive review of themes generated in the initial phase. These themes were again observed to check whether they were significant according to the research question. After the recursive reviews, the five themes of empathy, motivation, social skills, self-awareness, and self-regulation were finalized, and they

were found to be the most suitable for the research question. Phase 5: Defining and Naming the Themes As shown in Figure 2, the following themes and subthemes have been finalized, which shows that emotional intelligence has a good impact Learning of on leadership effectiveness in the case of women leaders.



5. Empathy

Women leaders show an empathetic nature through their behavior toward subordinates. They display flexibility and inclusiveness and are generous in organizational decisions.

5.1 Sympathy Towards Others

Women leaders try to be kind and generous towards their employees. Further, they mentioned that they try not to terminate any employee because of bad performance. Instead, they try to give them another opportunity to improve their performance. However, if this decision does not work, they will have to make a hard decision.

5.2 1.2 Allowing Flexible working hours

The respondents focused on providing part-time facilities or flexible working hours. After COVID-19, many organizations have started working from the facility for employees, which was a good alternative for better productivity. Most respondents agreed they want to focus on final productivity instead of rigidity in the timings. Ultimately, they allow their employees to take flexible working hours or work from the facility as necessary.

5.3 Maintaining Informal Communication with Employee

The respondents are proactive in developing informal communication and bonding with their employees. They believe that these informal relationships help understand employees' mindsets and develop a bridge between the organization and their families. The respondents added that they focus on activities involving employees and their families in the organizational culture.

6. Motivation

Motivation is an important aspect of organizational effectiveness. However, women leaders successfully develop motivation through their emotional intelligence among employees. These activities help employees to feel connected to the organization.

6.1 Celebrations

Respondents shared that the celebration of various festivals and employee birthdays fosters the development of positivity in the organization. Further,

they also mentioned that such activities help develop an informal relationship and strong bond between the employees and the organization.

6.2 Employee Engagement Activities

Respondents agreed that they focused on nurturing employee engagement. They used to practice employee engagement activities like offering good benefits and welfare programs, team engagement activities, keeping transparent communication about organizational activities and decisions, offering health benefits, providing recreational activities and facilities for employees, and unique benefits for female employees.

6.3 Encouragement of Female Employees

Some respondents agreed they are inclined to recruit female employees as they found them more reliable. They always focus on balancing the female number in the teams. Further, they also emphasize providing opportunities for female employees to grow in their careers.

6.4 Encouraging Positive Organizational Culture

The respondents showed positive responses to maintaining a healthy organizational culture. They insist on adopting a culture where everyone seeks equal learning and growth opportunities. Also, they try to keep transparency and a playful atmosphere in the organization. [11-14]

7. Social Skills

Social skills are mainly related to how the leader connects with the followers. Women tend to have better social skills. They try to be open and genuine to make subordinates comfortable.

7.1 Developing Good Organizational Relations with Stakeholders

The respondents developed good relations with their employees and other stakeholders with their inclusive nature and open communication. They ensure the stakeholders are well-informed about every decision and policy related to the organization.

7.2 Opportunities to Fresher's

The respondents expressed their compassion for freshers who want to build their careers in the industry. They insist on recruiting freshers as they are always



ready to acquire new knowledge and skills and tend to work harder.

8. Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is one of the critical aspects of emotional intelligence, which shows how the leader is well-prepared and aware of himself or herself. Self-awareness is about knowing the strengths and limits while deciding on career progression.

8.1 Maintaining Work-Life Balance

The respondents agreed that they try to take time to rejuvenate from their routine work. They try to take regular time for health and mindfulness. Further, they said that they do not hesitate to take help from others to maintain their work-life balance. Also, they insisted on 'Do not try to be 'Superwoman' and know your strengths and limitations and plan your career accordingly.

9. Self-Regulation

Self-regulation is about how one wants to progress or achieve goals in one's career as well as in one's life. Life decisions related to family and relatives should go hand in hand with career decisions. Hence, a leader must develop a future growth plan from an individual and organizational point of view.

9.1 Aware of Self and Organizational Development Plans

The respondents agreed that they plan their individual and organizational goals simultaneously where they want to reach in the future. They are very much aware of this and prepared for it. Hence, they are ready to make full efforts to achieve their goals shortly. Phase 6: Producing a Report The last phase of qualitative analysis is preparing a report based on the analysis. The current article is the complete proof report of the analysis and conclusions.

Conclusion and Discussion

Emotional intelligence is considered one of the significant characteristics of a leader who exerts an appropriate influence on their subordinates. Research indicates that the components of emotional intelligence, such as empathy, motivation, social skills, self-awareness, and self-regulation, play a crucial role in developing significant effectiveness in the

leadership careers of the above women leaders. Employees demonstrate higher satisfaction and increased connection with the organization. These women leaders succeed in fostering an open, inclusive, and transparent atmosphere in the workplace. They also establish effective formal and informal communication with employees. They emphasize that employees require empathy and motivation to grow and develop. Moreover, they emphasize that numerous employee engagement activities enhance employee productivity and connection with the organization. Therefore, the emotional intelligence of women leaders upraises organizational effectiveness to a higher level, ultimately helps the organization to retain the human capital.

References

- [1]. Alon, I., & Higgins, J. M. (2005). Global leadership success through emotional and cultural intelligences. *Business Horizons*, 48(6), 501-512
- [2]. Bar-On, R. (2007). The Bar-On model of emotional intelligence: A valid, robust and applicable EI model. *Organisations and People*
- [3]. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2014). What can "thematic analysis" offer health and wellbeing archers? *International journal of qualitative studies on health and wellbeing*, 26152
- [4]. Braun, V., Clarke, V., & Hayfield, N. (2022). 'A starting point for your journey, not a map': Nikki Hayfield in conversation with Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke about thematic analysis. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 19(2), 424-445
- [5]. Condren, T., Martin, B. N., & Hutchinson, S. (2006). What Does Emotional Intelligence and Gender Have to Do with Leadership Effectiveness: ... Or Does It? *Advancing Women in Leadership Journal*
- [6]. Coronado-Maldonado, I., & Benítez-Márquez, M. D. (2023). Emotional intelligence, leadership, and work teams: A hybrid literature review. *Heliyon*



- [7]. Eagly, A. H., & Carli, L. L. (2003). The female leadership advantage: An evaluation of the evidence. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 14(6), 807-834. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2003.09.004>
- [8]. George, J. M. (2000). Emotions and leadership: The role of emotional intelligence. *Human relations*, 53(8), 1027-1055
- [9]. Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. Bantam Books.
- [10]. Goleman, D. (1998). The emotional intelligence of leaders. *Leader to leader*, 1998(10), 20-26
- [11]. Hsu, N., Newman, D. A., & Badura, K. L. (2022). Emotional intelligence and transformational leadership: meta-analysis and explanatory model of female leadership advantage. *Journal of Intelligence*, 10(4), 104
- [12]. Kanesan, P., & Fauzan, N. (2019). Models of emotional intelligence: A review. *e-BANGI Journal*, 16(7)
- [13]. Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, cognition and personality*, 9(3), 185-211
- [14]. Ruderman, M. N., Hannum, K., Leslie, J. B., & Steed, J. L. (2001). Making the connection leadership skills and emotional intelligence