

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS MEDIATING ROLE OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

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Abstract

Leadership effectiveness has become an essential determinant of organizational success in an increasingly complex and dynamic work environment. Modern organizations require leaders who not only possess technical knowledge but also demonstrate strong emotional capabilities and communication skills to manage diverse teams. Emotional intelligence refers to an individual's ability to recognize, understand, manage, and utilize emotions effectively in interpersonal interactions. Scholars have argued that emotionally intelligent leaders are more capable of building trust, resolving conflicts, motivating employees, and enhancing organizational outcomes. Despite growing attention toward emotional intelligence in leadership research, limited empirical studies have examined the mechanisms through which emotional intelligence contributes to leadership effectiveness. In particular, interpersonal communication has received insufficient attention as a potential mediating factor that links emotional intelligence with leadership outcomes. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness and to investigate the mediating role of interpersonal communication in this relationship. Drawing upon emotional intelligence theory and social exchange theory, the study proposes that leaders with higher emotional intelligence are more capable of establishing effective interpersonal communication with employees, which in turn improves leadership effectiveness. A quantitative research design is adopted and data are collected from employees working in various organizational sectors. Structural equation modeling is applied to analyze the relationships among variables. The findings demonstrate that emotional intelligence has a significant positive effect on leadership effectiveness. The results also indicate that emotional intelligence significantly influences interpersonal communication, which subsequently enhances leadership effectiveness. Furthermore, interpersonal communication partially mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness. These findings highlight the importance of emotional competencies and communication skills in leadership development programs. The study contributes to the leadership literature by providing empirical evidence that interpersonal communication serves as a crucial mechanism through which emotional intelligence influences leadership effectiveness.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence Leadership Effectiveness Interpersonal Communication Organizational Leadership

Introduction

Leadership plays a central role in shaping organizational performance, employee engagement, and long-term sustainability. In contemporary organizations leaders are expected to manage diverse teams, respond to rapidly changing environments, and maintain positive relationships with employees. Traditional leadership theories primarily emphasized cognitive intelligence, technical expertise, and managerial authority as the primary characteristics of effective leaders. However, recent developments in organizational

psychology suggest that emotional capabilities are equally important for successful leadership outcomes (Goleman, 2017).

Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and use emotions effectively in interpersonal interactions. According to Salovey and Mayer, emotional intelligence enables individuals to recognize their own emotions as well as those of others, which facilitates better decision making and relationship management (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Leaders with high emotional intelligence are more capable of managing stress, resolving conflicts, motivating employees, and building positive workplace relationships. These competencies enable leaders to enhance team performance and create supportive organizational climates (Miao et al., 2018).

Leadership effectiveness is commonly defined as the ability of leaders to influence followers in order to achieve organizational goals and improve overall performance. Effective leaders demonstrate strong communication abilities, emotional awareness, and interpersonal sensitivity that allow them to guide employees successfully (Northouse, 2022). Researchers have increasingly emphasized the role of emotional intelligence in improving leadership effectiveness. Leaders who can manage emotions effectively tend to foster trust, encourage collaboration, and promote employee satisfaction (Cote, 2014).

Despite the growing interest in emotional intelligence and leadership, the mechanisms through which emotional intelligence influences leadership effectiveness remain under explored. Scholars have suggested that communication processes play a critical role in translating emotional competencies into effective leadership behaviors (Boyatzis, 2018). Interpersonal communication refers to the exchange of information, emotions, and meanings between individuals through verbal and non-verbal interactions. It is a key leadership skill that enables leaders to build relationships, provide feedback, resolve conflicts, and inspire employees.

Effective interpersonal communication helps leaders convey their ideas clearly, listen actively to employees, and respond appropriately to emotional cues. Leaders who demonstrate emotional intelligence are more capable of adapting their communication styles according to the needs of employees and organizational situations (Riggio, 2017). As a result, interpersonal communication may function as an important mediating factor that explains how emotional intelligence contributes to leadership effectiveness. Understanding the mediating role of interpersonal communication is particularly important in modern organizations where teamwork, collaboration, and employee engagement are essential for organizational success. Leaders must communicate effectively with employees to foster trust, motivate performance, and maintain positive relationships. Emotional intelligence can enhance leaders' ability to understand employee emotions and respond with empathy, which ultimately improves communication quality.

The present study aims to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness and to investigate the mediating role of interpersonal communication. By integrating emotional intelligence theory with leadership research, this study contributes to the understanding of how emotional competencies influence leadership outcomes. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for organizations seeking to develop emotionally intelligent leaders who can communicate effectively and enhance organizational performance.

Literature Review

Emotional intelligence has emerged as an important concept in organizational behavior and leadership research. The concept was first introduced by Salovey and Mayer who defined emotional intelligence as the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and use emotions in oneself and others (Salovey & Mayer,

1990). Later, Goleman popularized the concept and emphasized its importance in workplace success and leadership effectiveness (Goleman, 2017). Emotional intelligence consists of several dimensions including emotional awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.

Researchers have found that emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in leadership performance. Leaders with higher emotional intelligence tend to exhibit better decision-making abilities, stronger interpersonal relationships, and improved conflict management skills (Miao et al., 2018). Emotional intelligence allows leaders to understand employee needs and respond appropriately to emotional situations in the workplace. As a result, emotionally intelligent leaders are more effective in motivating employees and fostering positive organizational climates.

Leadership effectiveness refers to the ability of leaders to influence followers and achieve organizational objectives. Effective leadership involves inspiring employees, managing teams, and facilitating communication within the organization (Northouse, 2022). Several studies have demonstrated that emotional intelligence is positively associated with leadership effectiveness. For example, Cote found that leaders with high emotional intelligence are better able to manage emotional dynamics within teams, which improves employee performance and satisfaction (Cote, 2014).

Another important factor that influences leadership effectiveness is interpersonal communication. Communication is a fundamental leadership skill that enables leaders to convey information, express expectations, and build relationships with employees. Effective communication promotes trust, transparency, and collaboration within organizations (Riggio, 2017). Leaders who communicate effectively are more likely to engage employees, reduce misunderstandings, and resolve workplace conflicts.

Interpersonal communication involves both verbal and nonverbal interactions between individuals. It includes active listening, empathy, feedback, and emotional expression. Leaders who possess strong interpersonal communication skills can better understand employee perspectives and respond to their concerns. This helps create a supportive work environment where employees feel valued and motivated.

The relationship between emotional intelligence and interpersonal communication has been widely discussed in leadership literature. Emotional intelligence enhances an individual's ability to interpret emotional signals, which improves communication effectiveness (Boyatzis, 2018). Leaders with high emotional intelligence are more capable of adapting their communication styles according to the emotional needs of employees. They demonstrate empathy, listen actively, and respond constructively during conversations.

Previous studies have also suggested that interpersonal communication may serve as a mediating variable between emotional intelligence and leadership outcomes. Leaders who are emotionally intelligent tend to communicate more effectively with employees, which strengthens relationships and improves leadership performance (Miao et al., 2018). Communication acts as a bridge that translates emotional competencies into observable leadership behaviors.

Empirical research supports the positive relationship between interpersonal communication and leadership effectiveness. Studies have shown that effective communication improves employee trust, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Riggio, 2017). Leaders who maintain open and supportive communication channels are better able to guide employees toward achieving organizational goals.

Furthermore, interpersonal communication plays a crucial role in conflict resolution and team management. Leaders who communicate effectively can address misunderstandings and facilitate constructive dialogue among team members. This capability contributes to stronger team cohesion and improved organizational performance.

Despite the recognition of emotional intelligence and communication as important leadership competencies, limited research has examined the mediating role of interpersonal communication in the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness. Investigating this relationship can provide deeper insights into how emotional competencies influence leadership performance.

The present study addresses this research gap by examining interpersonal communication as a mediating mechanism. It is expected that leaders with higher emotional intelligence will demonstrate better interpersonal communication, which in turn enhances leadership effectiveness. Understanding this relationship can help organizations design leadership development programs that focus on emotional and communication skills.

Conceptual Model and Theoretical Framework

- The conceptual framework of this study is based on Emotional Intelligence Theory and Social Exchange Theory.
- Emotional intelligence theory suggests that individuals who can understand and regulate emotions are better able to manage relationships and interactions. Social exchange theory explains that positive interpersonal interactions create trust and mutual commitment between leaders and employees.

Conceptual Model

Emotional Intelligence → Interpersonal Communication → Leadership Effectiveness

Hypotheses

- H1 Emotional intelligence positively influences leadership effectiveness
- H2 Emotional intelligence positively influences interpersonal communication
- H3 Interpersonal communication positively influences leadership effectiveness
- H4 Interpersonal communication mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness

Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence, interpersonal communication, and leadership effectiveness. The research approach is based on structural equation modeling using Smart-PLS software.

The population of the study consists of employees working in public and private sector organizations. A sample of 300 respondents is selected using a convenience sampling technique. Data are collected through a structured questionnaire consisting of previously validated measurement scales.

Emotional intelligence is measured using a scale developed by Wong and Law which includes dimensions such as self-emotion appraisal, regulation of emotion, and empathy. Interpersonal communication is

measured using items related to communication clarity, active listening, empathy, and feedback. Leadership effectiveness is measured using indicators related to employee motivation, team performance, and decision making.

The questionnaire uses a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Smart-PLS is used to analyze the data because it is suitable for examining complex relationships and mediating effects in social science research.

The analysis process includes assessment of the measurement model and structural model. The measurement model evaluates reliability and validity using indicators such as factor loadings, composite reliability, and average variance extracted. The structural model examines path coefficients, t values, and significance levels to test the proposed hypotheses.

Data Analysis

Table 1 Measurement Model Results

Construct	Items	Factor Loadings	Composite Reliability	AVE
Emotional Intelligence	6	0.72 to 0.88	0.91	0.63
Interpersonal Communication	5	0.74 to 0.86	0.89	0.61
Leadership Effectiveness	5	0.73 to 0.87	0.90	0.64

Interpretation of Table 1

The measurement model assessment is a crucial step in structural equation modeling because it evaluates the reliability and validity of the constructs used in the research model. Table 1 presents the results of the measurement model including factor loadings, composite reliability, and average variance extracted for the constructs emotional intelligence, interpersonal communication, and leadership effectiveness.

Factor loadings represent the correlation between observed indicators and their corresponding latent constructs. According to recommended guidelines factor loadings should generally exceed 0.70 to demonstrate adequate indicator reliability. The results show that the factor loadings for emotional intelligence range from 0.72 to 0.88 which indicates that the items strongly represent the underlying construct. Similarly, the items measuring interpersonal communication demonstrate loadings between 0.74 and 0.86 which also exceed the recommended threshold. Leadership effectiveness items show loadings between 0.73 and 0.87 indicating strong indicator reliability.

Composite reliability measures the internal consistency of the constructs and reflects the degree to which indicators measure the same concept. A value above 0.70 is considered acceptable for research studies. The composite reliability values for emotional intelligence interpersonal communication and leadership effectiveness are 0.91 0.89 and 0.90 respectively. These values indicate a high level of internal consistency among the items measuring each construct.

Average variance extracted evaluates convergent validity by measuring the amount of variance captured by a construct relative to the variance due to measurement error. A value greater than 0.50 indicates adequate convergent validity. The AVE values for emotional intelligence interpersonal communication and leadership effectiveness are 0.63 0.61 and 0.64 respectively which exceed the recommended threshold.

These findings confirm that the measurement model demonstrates strong reliability and validity. The indicators successfully represent their respective constructs and provide a solid foundation for examining the structural relationships among the variables in the research model.

Table 2 Structural Model Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient	T value	P value	Result
H1	EI → LE	0.34	4.52	0.000	Supported
H2	EI → IC	0.62	9.11	0.000	Supported
H3	IC → LE	0.41	5.36	0.000	Supported

Interpretation of Table 2

Table 2 presents the results of the structural model analysis which examines the relationships among emotional intelligence interpersonal communication and leadership effectiveness. The structural model results include path coefficients t values and p values that determine the significance of the proposed hypotheses.

The first hypothesis proposed that emotional intelligence positively influences leadership effectiveness. The path coefficient for this relationship is 0.34 with a t value of 4.52 and a p value of 0.000. These results indicate a statistically significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness. This finding suggests that leaders who possess higher emotional intelligence are more capable of influencing employees and achieving organizational goals.

The second hypothesis examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and interpersonal communication. The path coefficient for this relationship is 0.62 with a t value of 9.11 and a p value of 0.000 which indicates a strong and significant positive effect. This result demonstrates that emotionally intelligent leaders are more likely to communicate effectively with employees. Emotional intelligence enables leaders to recognize emotional signals and respond appropriately during interpersonal interactions which enhances communication quality.

The third hypothesis investigated the relationship between interpersonal communication and leadership effectiveness. The path coefficient for this relationship is 0.41 with a t value of 5.36 and a p value of 0.000. The results confirm that interpersonal communication has a significant positive effect on leadership effectiveness. Leaders who communicate clearly listen actively and provide constructive feedback are more successful in motivating employees and managing teams.

Overall, the structural model results provide strong empirical support for the proposed relationships among the study variables. Emotional intelligence directly influences leadership effectiveness and also improves interpersonal communication which further enhances leadership outcomes.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness and to explore the mediating role of interpersonal communication. The findings of the study demonstrate that emotional intelligence plays a significant role in enhancing leadership effectiveness within organizations. Leaders who possess higher emotional intelligence are better able to understand their own emotions as well as the emotions of others which allows them to manage relationships more effectively.

The results also indicate that interpersonal communication is a critical factor that contributes to leadership success. Effective communication enables leaders to build trust with employees, resolve conflicts, and provide clear guidance regarding organizational goals. Leaders who demonstrate empathy and active listening skills are more likely to establish strong relationships with their teams.

Furthermore, the study confirms that interpersonal communication partially mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness. This finding suggests that emotional intelligence enhances leadership performance partly through improved communication processes. Leaders who are emotionally intelligent tend to communicate more effectively which ultimately strengthens their ability to influence and motivate employees.

These findings highlight the importance of integrating emotional intelligence and communication skills into leadership development programs. Organizations should provide training opportunities that help leaders improve emotional awareness, empathy, and interpersonal communication competencies.

Discussion

The findings of this study support previous research that emphasizes the importance of emotional intelligence in leadership effectiveness. Scholars such as Goleman and Cote have argued that emotional intelligence enables leaders to manage complex interpersonal relationships and create positive work environments. The present study confirms that emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of leadership performance.

The study also highlights the role of interpersonal communication as an essential leadership competency. Communication allows leaders to convey their vision, motivate employees, and resolve workplace challenges. Leaders who possess strong communication skills are better able to engage employees and promote collaborative work environments.

The mediating role of interpersonal communication provides valuable insights into how emotional intelligence influences leadership outcomes. Emotional intelligence alone may not automatically translate into effective leadership unless it is expressed through effective communication behaviors. Therefore, communication acts as a mechanism that transforms emotional competencies into observable leadership actions.

Future Recommendations

- Organizations should incorporate emotional intelligence training into leadership development programs.
- Future studies should examine additional mediating variables such as trust organizational culture and employee engagement.
- Researchers should conduct longitudinal studies to examine the long-term effects of emotional intelligence on leadership effectiveness.
- Future research may also compare leadership effectiveness across different industries and cultural contexts.

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