

# Linking Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership to Job Performance in a Conflict-Stricken Environment

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## Abstract

Studies on Emotional Intelligence are abundant, but further investigations are needed to predict how people perform in the workplace and how leadership links the overall relationship. Each organization needs specific types of emotionally intelligent individuals and transformational leaders to accomplish its goals. This study attempts to link emotional intelligence and transformational leadership to job performance. A total of 408 questionnaires were collected from managers in selected organizations in Yemen. The study concludes that an individual's success in the workplace depends on emotional intelligence and transformational leadership behaviors and becomes more prevalent in a conflict-stricken environment. Results from this study help individuals improve their job performance in particular, and their life in general.

**Keywords:** emotional intelligence, transformational leadership, job performance

## 1. Introduction

Organizations face an increasing number of individuals coming from different backgrounds and diverse perspectives. This mixture of assets enhances competitiveness and creates challenges within an organization. Since organizations need individuals with high competency levels and the desire for high performance, Emotional Intelligence becomes crucial in producing outstanding performance (Antonakis, Ashkanasy, and Dasborough, 2009).

Studies on Emotional Intelligence (EI) are abundant, but further investigations are needed to predict how people perform in the workplace and how leadership links the overall relationship. Each organization needs specific types of emotionally intelligent individuals and

transformational leaders to accomplish its goals (Goleman, 2004). The capabilities to identify and examine this style of leadership are vital. Effective leadership requires experience, performance, and technical skills; however, those skills are no longer critical elements. EI, which is an antecedent to high performance, has received attention by researchers to whether an organization has such effective leadership (Kerr et al., 2006). The issue becomes more prevalent in a conflict-stricken environment.

Inspiring and motivating others in the workplace or real life, thinking positively, and the capability to monitor and manage emotions are the vital elements that define high performing individuals. Additionally, individuals need to act in an ever-changing environment due to globalization (Niekerk et al., 2001) effectively. As leadership behavior is a crucial factor, dynamic organizations look for individuals that accomplish their tasks as organizations face immense challenges on downsizing and re-structuring (Ormsley, 2011). Similarly, transformational leadership links positively with EI because the enhancement of individual EI enhances the implementation of Transformational Leadership (TL) (Moshavi, 2005; Hayashi and Ewert, 2006; Barbuto and Burbach, 2006; Nath, 2013) and eventually leads to higher workplace performance (Mafini, 2015).

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance**

Studies on performance have highlighted that EI is the key to Job Performance (JP). EI affects the workplace (Scott-Halsell, Shumate and Blum, 2007) and that the level of EI individuals enjoy affects their performance (Higgs, 2004). The more personal feelings are expressed and identified, the more positive emotions individuals have that can facilitate performance (Küpers and Weibler, 2006; Kiyani et al., 2013). EI of leaders/managers also impacts the JP of followers (Wong and Law, 2002; Kiyani et al., 2013). Individuals perform better when they have high EI as it helps them to have innovative ideas (Ganji, 2011, Welikala, D, & Dayarathna, N 2015). Moreover, through the role of communication facilities cooperation within an organization, EI increases job performance and innovativeness (Shahhosseini et al., 2012).

As EI elaborates on how individuals think and behave in the workplace, it affects job performance. Individuals can build solid interpersonal relationships because their awareness of his or her emotions as well as others is enhanced (Mayer and Salovey, 1997). As such, capabilities are improved as their way of thinking and behaving is recognized, eventually improving performance. Individuals who are high in emotional awareness also are trusting others more in the workplace (Matthews, Roberts, and Zeidner, 2004; Shih and Susanto, 2010).

EI effects dynamically on overall JP. Studies have shown that EI relates positively with EI and JP (Goleman, 1998; Mayer et al., 2000; Wong and Law, 2002; Law et al., 2004; Shih and Susanto, 2010). Although studies have validated the effects of EI on individual (Wong and Law, 2002) and team performance, they did not validate any mediation as an antecedent to one's high-performance behavior (Druskat and Wolff, 2001; Jordan et al., 2002; Jordan and Troth, 2004). Therefore, the authors hypothesize that:

H<sub>1</sub>: EI positively related to JP

## 2.2 Transformational Leadership and Job Performance

Transformational leaders are those who attempt to produce a set of constructive outcomes in an organization. With this in mind, a study conducted to test the relationship between Transformational Leadership and Job Performance validated the Transformational Leadership Job Performance relationship (Baharlou, 2015). Transformational leaders always bear in mind positive outcomes, irrespective of challenges, to improve organizational performance (Wang, Courtright, and Colbert, 2011; Gundersen, Hellesøy and Raeder, 2012). They also capitalize on their enthusiasm, EI and a bunch of personal traits to promote and advance follower morals in the workplace to realize better performance (Skakon et al., 2010).

Previous studies have found that Transformational Leadership links positively to Job Performance. However, there are concerns about how to maintain this positivity in the fiercely competitive business environment. Some argue that despite many problematic finances and technical matters, human resources are the organizational backbone as they represent the capabilities necessary to manage and utilize other resources (Baharlou, 2015). Transformational leaders assist followers through the creation of healthy environments where followers can ask questions, the promotion of challenging jobs that encourage education, innovation, and problem-solving; and encouraging motivation and stimulation (Jha, 2014). Therefore, the authors hypothesize that:

H<sub>2</sub>: TL is relates positively to JP.

## 2.3 Transformational Leadership (TL) and Emotional Intelligence (EI)

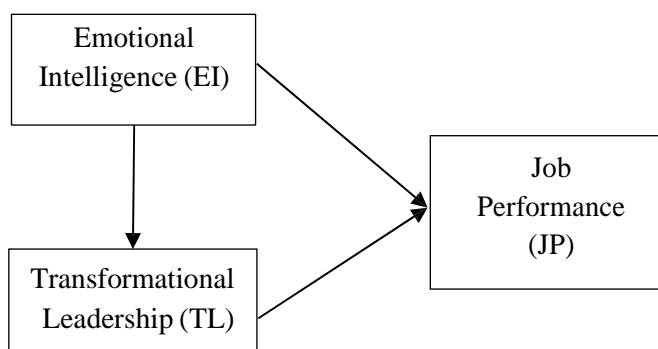
EI has links with TL. The literature on TL shows that EI is an essential element as it emotionally influences followers in the workplace, particularly in their feelings towards their leaders, who can manage emotions (Bass, 1985; Conger and Kanungo, 1988; Irshad and Hashmi, 2014). TL influences the achievement of an organization's vision and mission (Gelaidan, 2011). Significant changes might materialize in an organization, depending on the leadership style that is adopted (Ahmad et al., 2007). EI improves TL; thus, TL and EI have dynamic effects on JP. A leader who possesses a high level of EI behave like transformational leaders, while one with low level is likely to act like a transactional leader.

Achieving high performance is increasingly vital for organizations. Organizations need those who can work in challenging environments, adopt diversity, be competitive and cohesive or otherwise fail to be globalized (Victor et al., 2006). Organizations also need leaders who can recognize these requirements and who understand personal and social behaviors (Rosen and Digh, 2001). Besides, organizations must look into ways to create leaders who can manage stressful situations, and this may not be possible without paying attention to business literacy, which includes all social skills, and the link between leadership and EI (Rosen and Digh, 2001). Therefore, further investigations are needed to examine the relationship between EI and effective leadership, particularly TL (Daus and Ashkanasy, 2005; Harms and Credé, 2010).

Although there is a positive link between EI and TL, it is challenging for leaders to execute. Consequently, disagreements may occur and in such a case, the process of TL may be paused (Lindebaum and Cartwright, 2010; Mahadi, 2011). Therefore, the authors hypothesize that:

H<sub>3</sub>: TL relates positively to EI.

In this study, EI and TL act as the independent variables, while the JP acts as the dependent variable. It states that the rational linkage between three variables is how EI with TL can work together to have an impact on job performance.



**Figure 1: Proposed Theoretical Framework**

### 3. Methodology and Results

The authors used Emotional Competence Inventory 2.0 (ECI-2.0) by Daniel Goleman’s model for the Emotional Intelligence items. ECI-2.0 measures Emotional Intelligence of individuals using eighteen competencies arrayed into four components including self- and social-awareness, and self- and relationship-management (Goleman, 1998; Goleman, 2000). For TL items, the authors used the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Bass and Avolio, 1997). Meanwhile, JP construct includes items from the Individual Work Performance short questionnaire which measure job performance at the individual level.

The study utilizes a survey to collect the data. This type of methodology helped in collecting the all-comprehensive answers within a targeted time. The convenience sample technique was utilized to opt for a sample of public and private organizations in Yemen. Sample organizations were chosen based on “Probability Sampling or representing sampling and non-probability Sampling or Judgmental sampling” in this study (Table 1).

Table 1 Target Population per organization type

Type of organization	Number of respondents
Government	355
Private	45
Government & Private	8
Total	408

The respondents consisted of 293 males and 115 females, aged 22 to 31 years old (221), 32 to 41 years old (168), 42 to 51 years old (17), and above 52 years old (2) participants. A total of 300 participants said they were hired based on their qualifications, while 108 said there were not. The length of tenure varied. For instance, 242 participants said that the duration of their tenure was 2-3 years or less, while 115 participants' tenure was 4-6 years, and 15 participants had working experience greater than six years. Of the 408 participants, 258 participants said that the job assigned to them did not fit their specialization, and 150 participants said that the job fits their specialization.

### 3.1 Reliability Tests

The authors used the Cronbach's alpha coefficient to determine the internal consistency and reliability of the research constructs. Only those valid and reliable constructs were included to finalize survey items. Upon completion of data collection, the authors used Cronbach's alpha test to confirm response reliability before presenting descriptive, causal, and correlational analyses.

### 3.2 Overall Reliability

The researchers conducted survey reliability before checking the relationships between different variables. The Cronbach Alpha, Guttman's split half, and Spearman-Brown coefficients were used to validate reliability. Reliability in the Cronbach Alpha was 0.912 for Emotional Intelligence (Table 2), 0.867 for Transformational Leadership (Table 3), and 0.831 for Job Performance (Table 4). The reliability of Cronbach's Alpha was very high, confirming that survey reliability was very high.

Table 2 - Reliability Statistics of the Emotional and Social Competence Inventory (ESCI)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.912	.916	68

Table 3 - Reliability Statistics for Transformational Leadership

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.867	.871	16

Table 4 - Reliability Statistics of Job Performance

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.831	.843	27

### 3.3 The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance

The result shows that overall EI relates positively with overall JP of Yemeni managers. Comparison of scores between EI and JP by correlating the two scores are well-documented showed a significant relationship between overall EI and overall JP. The relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance was analyzed by concentrating on the complete sample. The relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance was determined using Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance scores based on individual rating as this is the core of the study, by focusing on Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance (refer to Tables 5 and 6 below).

Table 5 - Descriptive Statistics for JP and EI

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Job Performance	3.2726	.41331	408
Emotional Intelligence	3.4374	.36336	408

Table 6 - Correlations between JP and EI

		Job Performance	Emotional Intelligence
Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	<b><u>0.660**</u></b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	408	408
Emotional Intelligence	Pearson Correlation	<b><u>0.660**</u></b>	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	408	408

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A test on Bivariate correlations for JP and EI show the variables are significantly correlated. Job Performance relates positively with Emotional Intelligence ( $p < 0.01$ ,  $r = 0.660$ ). The main effect regression analysis predicts that EI is positively related to JP. To acquire more accurate results, a Linear regression analysis tests the link between EI and JP (Table 7-9).

Table 7 - Regression Analysis for the main effect of Emotional Intelligence on Job Performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig.	F Change
1	<b>.660<sup>a</sup></b>	.436	.435	.31079	.436	313.780	1	406	.000	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Emotional Intelligence

b. Dependent Variable: Job Performance

Table 8 - ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	30.308	1	30.308	313.780	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	39.216	406	.097		
	Total	69.525	407			

a. Dependent Variable: Job Performance

Table 9 - Job Performance Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part order
(Constant)	.691	.147		4.715	.000			
Emotional Intelligence	.751	.042	<b>.660</b>	17.714	<b>.000</b>	.660	.660	.660

a. Dependent Variable: Job Performance

The regression results revealed that EI is a predictor of JP ( $p= 0.000$  less than  $0.05$ ,  $\beta = .660$ ). The values for  $R^2$  were  $0.436$ , which means that they explained  $43\%$  of the variance in JP. Therefore, Hypothesis (H1) was accepted because these results were significant.

### 3.4 Linking Transformational Leadership (TL) and Emotional Intelligence (EI)

The hypothesis states that there is a relationship between EI and TL. Such a relationship suggests that if an individual is Emotionally Intelligent, they are a Transformational Leader. The result shows that EI relates to TL because the interaction between the variables is significant (Tables 10-11).

Table 10 - Descriptive Statistics for EI and TL

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Emotional Intelligence	3.4374	.36336	408
Transformational Leadership	3.8272	.52026	408

Table 11 - Correlations between EI and TL

		Emotional Intelligence	Transformational Leadership
Emotional Intelligence	Pearson Correlation	1	<b>.649**</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	408	408
Transformational Leadership	Pearson Correlation	<b>.649**</b>	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	408	408

\*\* Significance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The bivariate correlations of Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership indicate significant correlation of the variables and that EI and TL are positively related ( $p < 0.01$ ,  $r = 0.649$ ). Accordingly, the Hypothesis (H3) was accepted.

### 3.5 Linking Transformational Leadership (TL) and Job Performance (JP)

The hypothesis states that there is a significant relationship between TL and JP. Such a relationship proposes that if an individual has abilities to be a transformational leader, they perform well. The study found that the link between TL and JP is significant (Tables 12-14).

Table 12 - Model Summary<sup>b</sup> of variance between Transformational Leadership and Job Performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.588 <sup>a</sup>	.345	.344	.33485

a. Predictors: (Constant), Transformational Leadership

b. Dependent Variable: Job Performance



Table 13 - ANOVA<sup>a</sup> for Transformational Leadership and Job Performance

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	24.003	1	24.003	214.075	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	45.522	406	.112		
Total	69.525	407			

a. Dependent Variable: Job Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Transformational Leadership

Table 14 - Coefficient<sup>a</sup> for Transformational Leadership and Job Performance

Model		Unstandardized		Standardized t	Sig.	Correlations		
		Coefficients				Beta	Zero-order	Partial
		B	Std. Error					
1	(Constant)	1.486	.123	12.060	.000			
1	Transformational Leadership	.467	.032	<b>.588</b>	14.631	.000	.588	.588 .588

a. Dependent Variable: Job Performance

As seen above, there is a relationship between TL and JP. The bivariate correlations indicated that both variables relate significantly to each other. Regression results revealed that Transformational Leadership is a predictor of Job Performance ( $p= 0.000$  less than  $0.05$ ,  $\beta = 0.588$ ). Thus, TL is positively related to JP. Therefore, Hypothesis (H7) is accepted.

#### 4.0 Conclusion

The results reveal the current state of EI and TL among Yemeni managers. Managers in Yemen struggle with severe and long-lasting tasks that need functional leadership capabilities. As discussed in emotional intelligence enhances Transformational Leadership capabilities. Currently, Yemeni managers lack Emotional Intelligence capabilities necessary to become effective Transformational Leaders. They would not be able to contribute immensely to the development of the country and also to getting organizations back to normal functioning due to the ongoing war. A high level of EI is a pre-requisite to strengthening leadership practices, workplace performance, and employee support of organizational goals, the lack of which are severe and problematic in Yemeni organizations.

This study is not without limitations. First, this study is not diverse in terms of organizations/industries. Future studies should consider comparing government and private

organizations. Researches should also look at a larger sample size to acquire more generalizable results. The data collection was constrained because the researchers were not able to gather data personally and had to resort to remote gathering using digital methods. Although the survey used in this study were previously utilized in different environments and countries, rephrasing and shortening the survey questions as well as explaining them in detail to potential participants are recommended for future studies.

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