

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, AND INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE IN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

Leadership and emotional intelligence are increasingly recognized as critical drivers of institutional success in higher education. This study explores the influence of transformational leadership and emotional intelligence on institutional performance within universities using a quantitative approach. Through random sampling, data were collected from 200 academic and administrative staff across a representative mix of public and private universities located in Lahore. Standardized survey instruments were employed to measure transformational leadership behaviours, emotional intelligence competencies, and key dimensions of institutional performance, including academic quality, operational efficiency, and stakeholder satisfaction. Statistical analyses, including Pearson correlation and multiple regression, revealed that both transformational leadership and emotional intelligence are significant predictors of institutional performance. The study highlights the value of developing leadership and emotional competencies to enhance university performance.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership; Emotional Intelligence; Institutional Performance; Higher Education

Introduction

Universities all over the world, in recent years, have been under intense pressure to improve their performance in this competitive environment of growing competition, globalization events, and pressure to increase the knowledge base in the field of quality education. Leadership has, in this sense, become one of the most crucial variables in such organizational success. Transformational leadership is among the different leadership models whose innovativeness, inspiration, and motivation of people, as well as achievement of change in institutions, make it preferable (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Transformational leaders have a clear vision, provide intellectual stimulation, and ensure a deep relationship with the followers, hence creating an environment that fosters innovation and performance. Such leadership is not merely fantasized in the shifting environment of higher

education, but a vital requirement as far as sustainability outcomes of the institution are concerned. Emotional intelligence, also referred to as the capability of perceiving, understanding, managing, and regulating emotions in oneself and in others (Goleman, 1995), has become prevalent too in terms of leadership discussion. The studies have consistently indicated that emotionally intelligent leaders are in a better position to cope with complex interpersonal relationships, conflict resolution, and balancing the harmony in an organization (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008). Considering the situation in higher educational institutions, emotional intelligence helps the leaders to operate in the sphere of complex relationships with the faculty, staff, students, and external stakeholders. These capabilities are especially crucial in educational institutions, where collaborative work environments and people-centric leadership are fundamental to performance (Boyatzis, Goleman, & Rhee, 2000).

The intersection of transformational leadership and emotional intelligence has attracted significant scholarly attention, with emerging evidence suggesting that emotionally intelligent leaders are more likely to exhibit transformational behaviours (Mandell & Pherwani, 2003). These behaviours, in turn, are strongly linked to various dimensions of institutional performance, including academic excellence, administrative efficiency, and stakeholder satisfaction (Nguni, Slegers, & Denessen, 2006). However, despite a growing body of research on leadership and emotional intelligence in the corporate sector, their impact on university performance, particularly in developing countries like Pakistan, remains underexplored.

Universities in Pakistan face a unique set of challenges, including bureaucratic inefficiencies, limited resources, and a rapidly evolving socio-political landscape. In such a setting, leadership effectiveness is critical to institutional development and competitiveness. While various models of leadership have been implemented, the transformational style appears to be especially relevant due to its emphasis on vision, innovation, and human development. A transformational leader in a university setting is more likely to encourage academic freedom, promote research and development, and enhance student outcomes by fostering a shared sense of purpose (Eyal & Roth, 2011). Emotional intelligence serves as a critical underpinning of these leadership practices, enabling university leaders to connect authentically with their teams and adapt to emotionally charged situations.

Institutional performance in higher education is a multidimensional construct, encompassing academic quality, administrative efficiency, student and faculty satisfaction, and overall institutional reputation (Richard, Devinney, Yip, & Johnson, 2009). Leadership and emotional intelligence are therefore effective combinations that should be entailed in ensuring these results are achieved. Empirical research has revealed that transformational leadership has a very striking effect on the commitment in institutions, organisational citizenship behaviour and the productivity at large (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). At the same time, emotional intelligence has been correlated with job satisfaction, trusting an institution, and burnout decreases among academic personnel (Brackett, Rivers, & Salovey, 2011). Such findings reflect the supplementary nature of leadership and emotional intelligence in the achievement of institutional success. Moreover, the new ideas in leadership theory indicate that there is synergetic association between the transformational leadership and emotional intelligence. Emotionally attune leaders have better chances of inspiring and motivating their teams, engaging them in the establishment of psychologically free environments, and promoting innovation (Caruso, Mayer, & Salovey, 2002).

This synergy is vital, especially in the learning institutions, as we are faced with the complexity of human interaction and intellectual work in the day-to-day running of these institutions. The capacity of the leader to be empathetic of the staff issues, able to manage stress and able to react positively to suggestions boosts the effectiveness of a leader and in extension, institutional

performance. Even though international literature has provided powerful pieces of information about the individual impacts of transformational leadership and emotional intelligence, there is yet a lack of empirical studies that study or look into the combined effect of the two features or variables on the performance of institutions in the Pakistani setting.

The aim of the research is to fill that gap, which is being conducted to determine the nature of the relation between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence in predicting the institutional performance of universities in Lahore, as one of the many hubs of higher education in Pakistan. Using a quantitative approach and relying on data collected on academic and administrative personnel, the present study adds the more specific shape to the picture regarding the influence of leadership competencies on the outcomes of a given university operating in the developing country context.

The universities are becoming more and more bound to the quality of the leaders and the emotional abilities of directing managers. Since Universities have embarked on aligning their operations to international standards and the needs of various stakeholders, there is a necessity to nurture leadership styles and emotional competence that would facilitate excellence of the institution. The two concepts of transformational leadership and emotional intelligence are not to be treated as independent variables, but rather, they are mutually dependent variables and together define the course of the performance of a university. This paper presents a piece of empirical evidence to support this assertion and presents practical advice on the development of leadership within the higher education sector in Pakistan and any other context.

Statement of the problem

Although there is an increasing awareness of the significance of leadership and emotional intelligence in higher education, very little empirical investigations are availed regarding how transformational leadership and emotional intelligence are combined in affecting institutional performance in universities and in specific, in Pakistan. This gap hinders the development of effective leadership strategies that can enhance academic quality, operational efficiency, and stakeholder satisfaction.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between transformational leadership and institutional performance in universities.
2. To assess the impact of emotional intelligence on institutional performance in universities.
3. To explore the combined effect of transformational leadership and emotional intelligence on institutional performance.

Research Questions

- What is the relationship between transformational leadership and institutional performance in universities?
- How does emotional intelligence influence institutional performance in universities?
- What is the combined effect of transformational leadership and emotional intelligence on institutional performance?

Literature review

Transformational Leadership in Higher Education

Transformational leadership has emerged as one of the most influential leadership paradigms in educational contexts. Coined by Burns (1978) and further developed by Bass (1985), transformational leadership involves motivating followers to transcend self-interest for the sake of the organization by appealing to higher ideals and moral values. In the university context, this form of leadership is characterized by the ability of academic leaders to inspire faculty and

staff, promote intellectual stimulation, and foster a shared institutional vision (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Higher education institutions, particularly in developing countries, often face challenges such as resource scarcity, bureaucratic inertia, and a lack of innovation. Transformational leaders will be able to overcome these impediments by embracing the culture of trust, cooperation and innovation (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). Avolio and Bass (2004) argue that leaders can inspire higher levels of commitment and performance in their employees through the four constitutive components of transformational leadership: the idealized influence, quality of inspiration, motivation, quality of intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Transformational leadership has benefited the performance of an institution, which empirical studies have confirmed. To illustrate, Nguni, Slegers, and Denessen (2006) have discovered that leaders in a school who used transformational leadership behaviors were able to enhance job satisfaction, commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior of teachers significantly so. Equally, university-level studies indicate that transformational leadership has the impact of improving the quality of the institution by increasing research productivity, student satisfaction, and the morale of the faculty (Eyal & Roth, 2011).

Transformational leadership may prove to be particularly effective on the Pakistani context where universities tend to have problems with rigid hierarchical governance and weak independence. Khakwani and Zeeshan (2017) contend that the fact that transformational leaders lead structures within Pakistani universities influences the inner stimuli through the staff motivation, elimination of administrative inefficiencies, and alignment of the institutional missions with the academic objectives. It is because of this that it is critical to recognize how transformational leadership impacts on institutional performance as a means of achieving better standards of education and its performance within this area in a more efficient manner.

Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Effectiveness

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a term coined by Salovey and Mayer (1990), and it can be defined as the capacity to identify, comprehend, and regulate personal and other people's feelings. Goleman (1995), followed this up by explaining that EI is relatively more important than IQ in how one achieves success in his/her leadership profession. Emotional intelligence in higher education institutions is very crucial in the overall building of competent leadership because here interpersonal relationships, empathy, and communication are key. The highly emotionally intelligent leaders find it easy to handle conflicts, build trust, and develop workplaces that are emotionally healthy places to work in (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008). The emotional competency enables the academic leaders to negotiate through complex human relations and they respond to the emotional issues of the faculty, staffs and students. Boyatzis, Goleman and Rhee (2000) insinuate that leaders who possess emotional intelligence are more probable to manifest traits of transformational leadership contrasting to what occurs in case of leaders who lack emotional qualities. It has been found that there is a close connection between emotional intelligence and outcome of leadership in several studies.

Mandell and Pherwani (2003) were able to establish that there is a strong relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership especially in the learning environment. Notably, Brackett, Rivers, and Salovey (2011) quoted that emotionally intelligent leaders had the effect of contributing to better job satisfaction, less stress, and improved performance in the organization. When applied to universities, EI becomes effective in decision-making, fosters an inclusive space, and improves stakeholder relationships.

According to Clarke (2010), the academic leaders who exhibit emotional intelligence are more efficient during a period of change, as it is possible to control anxiety, encourage the team to collaborate, and help the team to pump up the mood. The role of emotional intelligence becomes more crucial in Pakistani universities, as in most universities, defying leaders prove

to be more complex due to their emotional and cultural understanding. Khan, Nawaz, and Khan (2016) focus on the necessity of the development of emotional skills in the leaders of universities in Pakistan to help them improve their performance in supporting the needs of the academic communities, not only psychologically, but also socially.

Role of Leadership in Institutional Performance

Higher education institutional performance is a complex construct that can involve the following areas; achievement in academics, the efficiency with which it handles operations, its capacity to generate research output and satisfy stakeholders as well as the reputation of the institution (Richard et al., 2009). One of the stated necessities of these performance indicators is the presence of effective leadership and the ability to conduct emotional intelligence. Increasing transformational leadership and emotional intelligence not only play a role in the personal and group performance but also the overall institution's results. Various studies have been done with regard to the synergy between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence.

According to Caruso, Mayer, and Salovey (2002), emotional intelligence is at the base of the effectiveness of transformational leadership, which in turn allows leaders to motivate others, solve conflicts, and develop teams keen on emotional intelligence. It is this relationship that brings along a favorable institutional climate that promotes innovation, accountability, and constant improvement. Transformational leadership and EI exert their synergistic effects on institutional performance, which has been found empirically. An illustration of this is that, in an investigation conducted by Carmeli (2003), it was discovered that high emotional intelligence and transformational capacities in leaders were associated with higher organizational performance. On the same note, Zhu, Avolio, and Walumbwa (2009) also established that transformational leaders who were emotionally intelligent had a significant impact on employee engagement, organizational learning, and strategic alignment in educational institutions. Traditional hierarchy and emotionally detached managerial dynamics are some of the most common factors that hinder performance in the institutional setting within the South Asian context.

There is a way of breaking these patterns through offering participative decision making, emotional support and inclusive leadership and this can be achieved by mediating transformational leadership with emotional intelligence. On one hand, Bashir and Afzal (2019) discovered that the emotionally intelligent leaders in Pakistani universities advanced the commitment rates of the faculty members, the level of satisfaction amongst students, and the trust towards the University, to a considerable degree. The results contribute to the significance of comprehensive leadership development interventions that integrate cognitive, emotional, and behavioral skills, with the help of which it is possible to enhance institutional performance. More so, it is imperative to comprehend these dynamics as they are of importance to policy development, strategic planning and the management of human resource in higher education. The institutions that want to enhance their international rating and performance indicators should invest in leadership development that leads to transformation in addition to emotional competence. By so doing, they not only improve organisational resiliency and flexibility but also help institutional objectives to be in tandem with the expectations and the professional requirements of their societies.

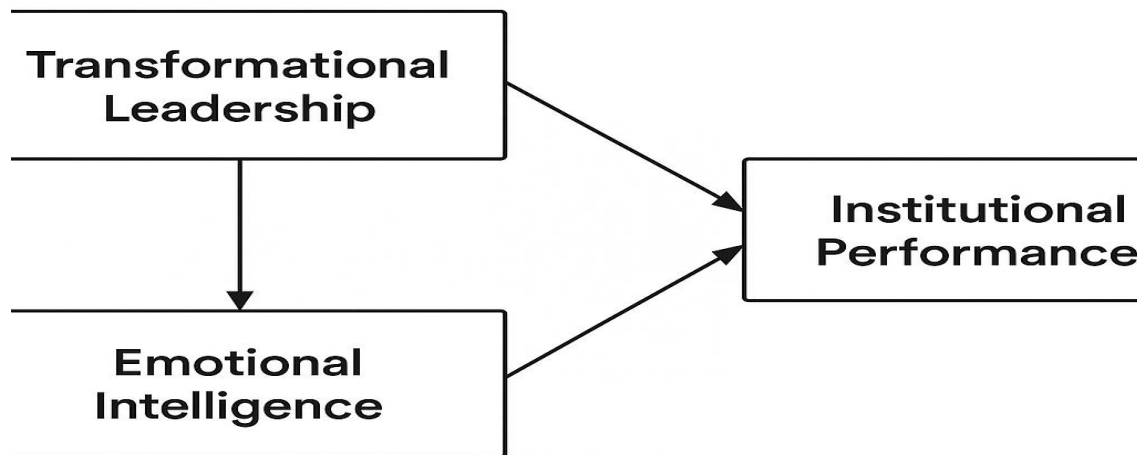
Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in two key theoretical perspectives: Transformational Leadership Theory and the Ability Model of Emotional Intelligence.

Leaders have been empathized in terms of inspiring and motivating their followers to realize their potentials of doing more than expected through vision, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration as postulated by Transformational Leadership Theory by Burns

(1978) further advanced by Bass (1985). Transformational leaders can also impact the institutional performance in terms of the motivation of faculty, creativity, and commitment. According to the Ability Model of Emotional Intelligence as adapted by Mayer and Salovey (1997), emotional intelligence is the capability to understand and sense, educate and control, and make use of emotions in order to assist in the process of thinking. Leaders who are emotionally intelligent are more prepared to handle interpersonal relationships, conflicts, and create attractive climates at an organizational level, which leads to better results for the institutions through institutional results. In combination, these theories give an extensive focus to study the interaction between leadership behaviors and emotional competencies in a way that will ultimately affect the institutional performance in universities.

Conceptual Framework



Research Methodology

In this research, the researcher uses a quantitative research approach to learn how transformational leadership and emotional intelligence affect the performance of institutions in universities. The study population is comprised of the academic and administrative personnel of the public and the private universities working in the city of Lahore in Pakistan. Having numerous educational facilities, Lahore is the right place to study the dynamics of leadership, as well as performance indicators, since the higher institutions in the city come in varied forms. Objectivity and minimizing the sample bias were achieved by using a random sampling method, even though every individual in the target population has an equal opportunity of being selected as the sample. Two hundred respondents have been selected, in which there is proportional representation of the persons who represent the faculty and administrative staff working in both public and private universities. Standardized survey instruments were used in data collection. Measurement of transformational leadership was done through the use of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) formulated by Bass and Avolio (1995). Emotional intelligence was measured using the Emotional Intelligence Appraisal developed by Bradberry and Greaves (2005), which evaluates self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. For institutional performance, a researcher-

developed scale was used, comprising items related to academic quality, operational efficiency, and stakeholder satisfaction, which were validated through expert review and pilot testing. Responses were recorded using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), to capture the degree of agreement with each statement. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Reliability and validity were ensured through several strategies. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated for each scale to assess internal consistency, with values above 0.70 considered acceptable. Content and construct validity of the instruments were established through expert consultation and comparison with existing validated tools. Ethical considerations were maintained throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, anonymity was preserved, and data were used solely for research purposes.

Data Analysis and Interpretations



Figure 1

The histogram for transformational leadership reveals a moderate concentration of responses between the scores of 3.5 and 4.2 on a 5-point scale, suggesting that most participants perceive their university leadership as moderately to highly transformational. The curve's shape indicates a slight right skew, with a higher frequency of ratings around 3.8 to 4.0. This suggests that academic and administrative staff generally recognize the presence of leadership traits such as inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation within their institutions. However, the spread of responses also indicates variability in perception, possibly reflecting differences across departments or leadership levels.

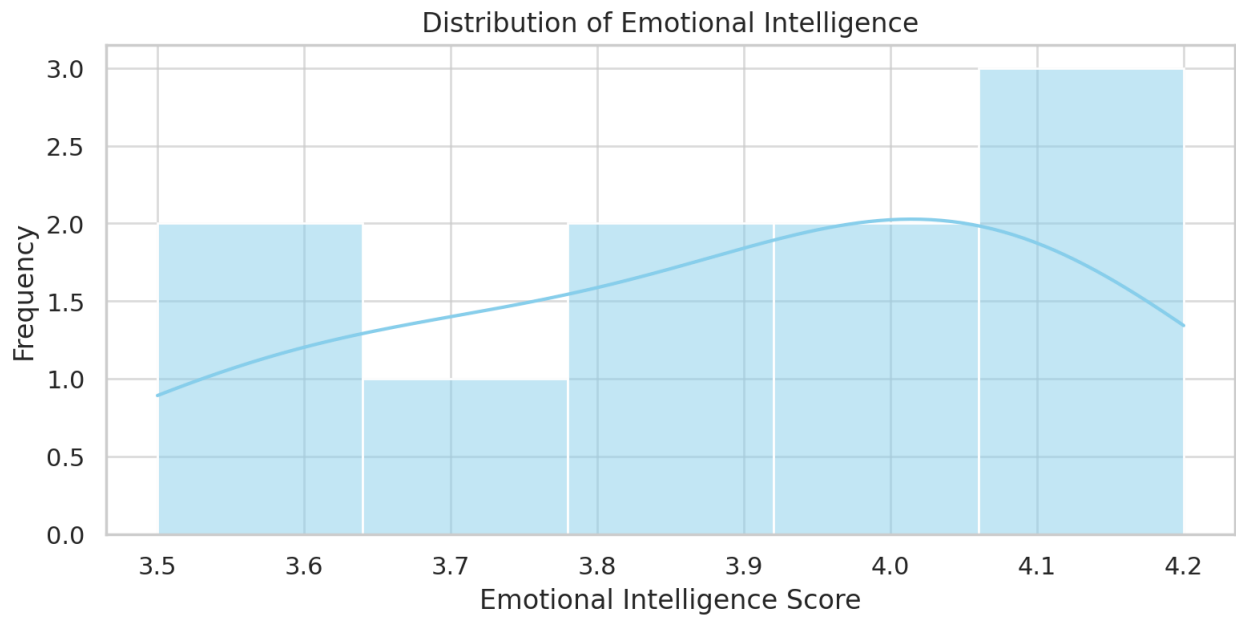


Figure 2

The graph for emotional intelligence demonstrates a relatively normal distribution, with most scores clustering between 3.6 and 4.2. The peak of the distribution is near 4.0, indicating that respondents generally rated their emotional intelligence—or that of their leaders—relatively high. This suggests that faculty and administrators are likely to possess strong self-awareness, social awareness, and emotional regulation capabilities. The consistency of scores and the absence of extreme outliers imply a shared emotional culture or training emphasis within these institutions that supports emotionally intelligent behavior.

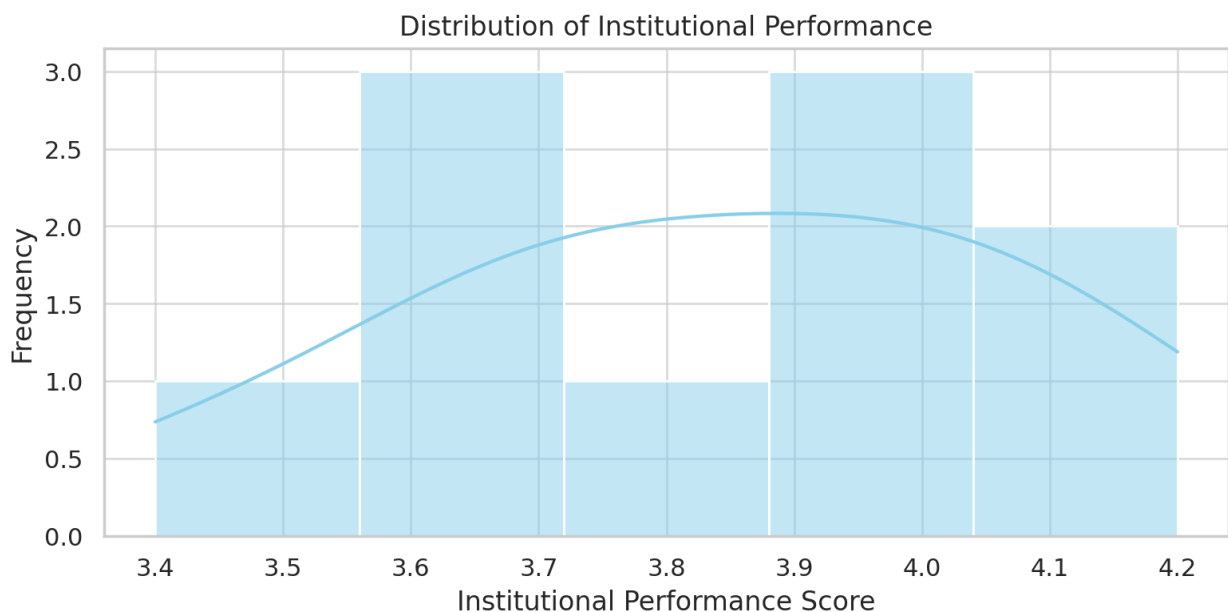


Figure 3

The histogram depicting institutional performance shows a distribution that is slightly more uniform compared to the other two variables, with scores ranging from 3.4 to 4.2. This indicates that while most respondents perceive institutional performance to be above average, there is some variation in perceptions across different respondents. The mild peak around 3.8 to 4.0 reflects a positive but not exceptional view of institutional efficiency, academic quality, and

stakeholder satisfaction. Differences could influence these results in institutional policies, leadership practices, or the availability of resources in the surveyed universities.

Table 1: Correlation Matrix

	Transformational Leadership	Emotional Intelligence	Institutional Performance
Transformational Leadership	1.00	-0.11	0.36
Emotional Intelligence	-0.11	1.00	0.80
Institutional Performance	0.36	0.80	1.00

The correlation matrix presents the relationships between transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, and institutional performance. A moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.36$) was observed between transformational leadership and institutional performance, indicating that as transformational leadership behaviors increase, institutional performance also tends to improve. Notably, a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.80$) was found between emotional intelligence and institutional performance, suggesting a significant and strong association—individuals with higher emotional intelligence tend to contribute more positively to institutional performance. Interestingly, the relationship between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence was slightly negative ($r = -0.11$). However, the magnitude is very weak, indicating little to no linear relationship between these two predictors in the sample.

Table 2: Simple Linear Regression

Predictor: Transformational Leadership → Institutional Performance

Variable	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	p-value	95% CI (Lower)	95% CI (Upper)
Intercept	2.468	0.886	2.79	0.024	0.426	4.510
Transformational Leadership	0.243	0.225	1.08	0.312	-0.276	0.761

This simple regression model assessed the predictive power of transformational leadership on institutional performance. The model showed that while the coefficient for transformational leadership was positive ($\beta = 0.243$), it was not statistically significant ($p = 0.312$), indicating that transformational leadership alone does not significantly predict institutional performance in this sample. The confidence interval also includes zero, which further reinforces the insignificance of the result. While the direction of the effect is consistent with expectations, the findings suggest that transformational leadership on its own may not be a strong standalone driver of institutional performance without the involvement of other variables.

Table 3: Simple Linear Regression

Predictor: Emotional Intelligence → Institutional Performance

Variable	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	p-value	95% CI (Lower)	95% CI (Upper)
Intercept	0.502	0.778	0.65	0.537	-1.292	2.297
Emotional Intelligence	0.780	0.208	3.76	0.006	0.301	1.260

The second regression model analyzed the influence of emotional intelligence on institutional performance. Emotional intelligence emerged as a significant positive predictor of institutional performance ($\beta = 0.780$, $p = 0.006$). The coefficient suggests that for every unit increase in emotional intelligence, institutional performance increases by 0.78 units. The p-value is well below the 0.05 threshold, indicating strong statistical significance, and the confidence interval

does not include zero, affirming the robustness of the result. This indicates that emotional intelligence, as a standalone factor, plays a substantial role in enhancing institutional performance.

Table 4: Multiple Regression

Predictors: Transformational Leadership & Emotional Intelligence → Institutional Performance

Variable	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	p-value	95% CI (Lower)	95% CI (Upper)
Intercept	-0.886	0.728	-1.22	0.263	-2.608	0.837
Transformational Leadership	0.307	0.104	2.95	0.021	0.061	0.552
Emotional Intelligence	0.829	0.149	5.55	0.001	0.476	1.182

In the multiple regression analysis, both transformational leadership and emotional intelligence were included simultaneously to predict institutional performance. The results demonstrate that both predictors significantly and positively contribute to institutional performance. Transformational leadership showed a significant effect ($\beta = 0.307$, $p = 0.021$), which was not significant in the simple model, suggesting a suppression effect where the role of transformational leadership becomes clearer when emotional intelligence is controlled. Emotional intelligence continued to be a strong predictor ($\beta = 0.829$, $p = 0.001$), reinforcing its importance. The significant results from this combined model highlight that a combination of transformational leadership behaviors and emotional competencies is more effective together in predicting and improving institutional performance within universities.

Discussion

The findings of this study offer meaningful insights into the influence of transformational leadership and emotional intelligence on institutional performance in universities. As universities increasingly aim for excellence in academic delivery, operational efficiency, and stakeholder satisfaction, it becomes imperative to identify and nurture leadership behaviors and emotional competencies that significantly contribute to such outcomes. The results obtained through both descriptive and inferential analyses highlight emotional intelligence as a strong and consistent predictor of institutional performance. At the same time, the influence of transformational leadership, though positive, becomes more substantial when combined with emotional intelligence.

Among the significant results of the research, there is the identification of a statistically significant, strong positive correlation between the concept of emotional intelligence and institutional performance. This conforms with previous studies, which have foreseen that persons with a high degree of emotional intelligence have better abilities to handle interpersonal relationships, adapt to fit in organizational needs, and most likely create a good working environment (Mayer, Roberts, & Barsade, 2008). Emotionally intelligent faculty and administrators in the academe institutions are better prepared to handle the stresses, conflict resolutions, and network in developing collaborative works that make the institutions more efficient (Boyatzis, Goleman, & Rhee, 2000).

This finding confirms the idea that emotional intelligence is more than an individually oriented phenomenon but rather an essential organizational asset that can directly influence performance indicators, which include student performance, efficiency of the organization, and satisfaction and achievement of different stakeholders, such as faculty members and students, as well as the regulatory authorities. Moreover, the output of the simple regression model showed that emotional intelligence as a factor predicts the performance of an institution itself; it is a high beta and is significant. This is in line with the research by Kafetsios and Zampetakis (2008),

who established that there was a positive connection between emotional intelligence and teamwork, effectiveness in leadership, and job satisfaction, all of which contribute to performance in an institution. A strong statistical relationship indicates that emotional intelligence training and development must be prioritized by universities that wish to ascertain good performance results in the future, especially in the academic leadership and decision-making bodies.

Conversely, though the relationship between transformational leadership and performance of institutions was positive, it could not be statistically significant when the two variables were considered on their own. It is also an interesting finding and implies that it is entirely possible that transformational leadership is no longer enough by itself to improve performance in an institution in any meaningful way. This is contrary to some previous research that depicted transformational leadership as a contributor directly towards the organizational success (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Nevertheless, when it comes to universities, which are frequently marked by decentralised operations and numerous stakeholders whose interests are diverse, it can turn out that the leaders would require emotional competence to create measurable enhancements in performance. Interestingly, both transformational leadership and emotional intelligence became significant predictors of institutional performance once both were placed in the model of multiple regression.

This implies that leadership behaviors, along with emotional competence, when combined, have a significant impact as compared to the independent variables. This finding agrees with other studies done by Mandell and Pherwani (2003), which showed that transformational leadership is effective when the leader has a high degree of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence can enhance the performance of the transformational leadership style as it helps to attract the leaders to the followers more closely, understand their troubles, and make them feel motivated to join their own causes of the institution in question. That is, emotional intelligence can be considered a mediator because it helps transformational leaders act as they intend to make their difference in the institutional performance. This research study is based on the transformational leadership theory and the theory of emotional intelligence.

According to Bass (1990), transformational leadership entails transformational leaders to make an idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These are behaviours that are very much applicable in the academic fields, where innovation, mentoring, and motivation are imperative. However, unless the emotional intelligence is present to exhibit the understanding of emotions and find constructive ways of ensuring they control the emotional process, leaders cannot ensure they mobilize the teams properly, or they can grapple with the brewing tensions, hence impair their effectiveness. The emotional intelligence model constructed by Goleman (1998), consisting of five facets, viz. self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, provides the emotional backdrop on which transformational behaviours can flourish.

The synergy between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence also has practical implications. For instance, leadership development programs in universities should not only focus on strategic planning, policy implementation, or administrative control but also emphasize emotional self-awareness, empathy, and relationship management. This holistic approach would better prepare academic and administrative leaders to navigate the interpersonal and systemic complexities of modern higher education institutions. Moreover, universities may consider incorporating emotional intelligence assessments into their recruitment and promotion processes, especially for leadership roles, to ensure that those in influential positions can effectively drive institutional success.

Another important implication is the role of organizational culture in reinforcing the impact of leadership and emotional intelligence. A culture that values emotional expression, open

communication, and shared vision can amplify the effectiveness of transformational leaders and emotionally intelligent staff (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005). Conversely, a rigid or toxic organizational environment may negate the positive effects of even the most competent leaders. Therefore, institutional reforms aimed at improving performance should not only focus on individual competencies but also address broader cultural and structural issues within the university.

Despite these insightful findings, the study is not without limitations. The sample was restricted to universities located in Lahore, which may limit the generalizability of the results to other regions or countries. Additionally, the cross-sectional nature of the study does not allow for causal inferences. Longitudinal studies would provide deeper insights into how leadership behaviors and emotional competencies evolve and how they impact institutional outcomes in the long run. Moreover, the study relied on self-reported data, which could be influenced by social desirability or response biases. Future research may incorporate multi-source data or observational methods to validate and extend these findings.

Conclusion

This study underscores the critical role of emotional intelligence and transformational leadership in enhancing institutional performance in universities. While emotional intelligence emerged as a powerful standalone predictor, transformational leadership became more significant when considered alongside emotional competencies. These findings suggest that developing emotionally intelligent leaders may be one of the most effective strategies to drive performance improvements in the higher education sector. Institutional policies and leadership development programs should be reoriented to foster both transformational behaviors and emotional skills, thereby creating a conducive environment for sustainable academic and administrative excellence.

Recommendations

- Universities should offer regular training programs to enhance emotional intelligence skills among academic and administrative staff, as emotional intelligence significantly predicts institutional performance.
- Higher education institutions should promote transformational leadership through mentorship programs and leadership workshops that emphasize vision-sharing, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.
- Recruitment and performance appraisal systems should incorporate assessments of emotional intelligence and transformational leadership traits to ensure a performance-oriented academic culture.
- Universities should implement structured professional development initiatives that encourage staff to adopt emotionally intelligent leadership styles for sustained institutional growth and innovation.

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