

## **Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Styles in College Teachers**

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The present study aimed to examine the relationship of emotional intelligence and leadership styles including transformational, transactional and laissez faire leadership style based on Full Range Leadership Theory (FRLT) in college teachers. Emotional Intelligence Scale (Wong & Law, 2002) and Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Bass & Avolio, 2000) were used to collect the information from the participants. Sample of the present study comprised of 100 teachers from different educational institutions. Data was collected through convenient sampling technique. Pearson correlation was applied to test the hypotheses. The findings indicate that emotional intelligence has significant positive correlation with transformational and transactional leadership styles, whereas emotional intelligence has significant negative correlation with laissez faire leadership styles. The findings are beneficial in understanding the role of emotional intelligence in leadership among college teachers.

*Keywords:* Emotional intelligence, transformational, transactional, laissez-faire leadership style, college teachers

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The Full Range Leadership Theory (FRLT) comprised of three leadership styles including transformational, transactional and laissez faire leadership style (Avolio & Bass, 2002). The FRLT is included into the category of The New Leadership Approaches (Parry & Bryman, 2006; Storey, 2004). The FRLT consists of two dimensions. The leadership dimension is active and effective, whereas the non-leadership dimension is passive and ineffective. Leadership dimension encompasses four elements of transformational leadership including idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration and two elements of transactional leadership including contingent reward and management by exception active. The non-leadership dimension consists of one element of transactional leadership including management by exception passive and laissez-faire leadership (Avolio & Bass, 2002). Leadership styles are related to emotional intelligence, which is investigated in some previous research (Gardner & Stough, 2002).

Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize one's own and other people's emotions, to discriminate between different feelings and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior (Coleman, 2008). There are three models of EI. The ability model, developed by Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2004), focuses on the individual's ability to process emotional information and use it to navigate social environment. The trait model as developed by Petrides, "encompasses behavioral dispositions and self-perceived abilities and is measured through self-report" (Petrides & Furnham, 2001). The final model, the mixed model is a combination of both ability and trait EI. It defines EI as an array of skills and characteristics that drive leadership performance, as proposed by Goleman (1998a). Studies have shown that people with high EI have greater mental health, exemplary job performance, and more potent leadership skills. For example, Goleman's (1998b) research indicated that EQ accounted for 67% of the abilities deemed necessary for superior performance in leaders, and mattered twice as much as technical expertise or IQ.

Transformational leadership style is the most superior in FRLT and all of its five attributes lie on the leadership dimension of the theory. Transformational leadership style comprised of five superior attributes including idealized influence attributed, idealized influence behavior, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass & Avolio, 2003). All five elements of transformational leadership style are active, according to underlying theory, and effective, according to the empirical research (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The theorist of FRLT illustrates that “leadership is as much emotional and subjective as rational and objective in effect” (Bass, 1999, p. 18). George (2000) illustrates that emotionally intelligent leadership is equally competent in understanding self and others’ feelings. Bass (2002) argues that extensive research evidence states the strong association between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership.

Hoffman and Frost (2006) discovered that transformational leaders comprised of multiple intelligences including emotional, cognitive and social intelligence. On the Full Range Leadership Theory, the transactional leadership style consists of three elements including contingent reward, management-by-exception active, and management-by-exception passive. The first two elements are active and effective, whereas the last element is passive and ineffective (Bass & Avolio, 2000). Transactional leadership involves motivating followers through reward based economic transactions and exchanges. Performance expectations are set by leaders and employees gain rewards in return to organizational goal attainment (Jung & Avolio, 1999).

The laissez faire leadership style is passive and ineffective according to underlying theory and research respectively (Bass & Riggio, 2006). In fact, laissez faire leaders do not lead the organization, rather they call the team to seize responsibilities. They neither give any guidance to their subordinates nor do they enforce compliance with any order or commitment from them (Shamir, Zakay, Brainin, & Popper, 2000). Laissez-faire leadership style is characterized as a ‘hand off’ mode of leadership in which no feedback and assistance is provided to subordinates (Northouse,

2004). Gardner and Stough (2002) found that laissez faire leadership style was negatively related to emotional intelligence which indicates that deficits in the emotional intelligence leaders with avoidance and absence of leadership. Due to the deficits in emotional intelligence, laissez faire leaders ignore responsibilities, are not present when required, fail to entertain the requests for support, and do not express their views on critical issues (Bass, 1998).

### **Rationale**

There are very few researches that are conducted on examining the association between emotional intelligence with leadership styles in Pakistani college teachers. In this regard present study is an attempt to identify the role of emotional intelligence in determining leadership styles of teachers. Such studies can help to identify predictive factors of leadership to formulate effective teaching. Poor emotional intelligence can lead to bad leadership styles and can further hamper educational institutes. The current study would be advantageous for focusing the effectiveness of emotional intelligence for determining leadership styles among teachers.

### **Hypotheses**

- H1. Emotional intelligence will be positively correlated with transformational leadership style.
- H2. Emotional intelligence will be positively correlated with transactional leadership style.
- H3. Emotional intelligence will be negatively correlated with laissez faire leadership style.

### **Method**

#### **Participants**

The present study was based on cross-sectional survey

research design. Sample of the present study comprised of 100 college teachers from different higher educational institutions of Punjab. Age range of the participants was 28 to 40 years ( $M = 35.27$ ,  $SD = 7.26$ ). Sample was collected through convenient sampling technique from different universities and degree awarding institutions. Minimum one year of full time job experience was the criteria for the inclusion of the participants in the sample. Data was collected during the working hours in order to increase the response rate. Instructions were provided to the participants regarding the nature, purpose and importance of the study. Written informed consent was obtained from the concerned authorities in the targeted institutions and the immediate participants of the study.

## Measures

**Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)** was used to collect the information regarding leadership styles of the participants. The questionnaire was developed by Bass and Avolio (2000). The scale comprised of 36 items which measures three leadership styles including transformational (20 items), transactional (12 items), and laissez faire leadership style (4 items) respectively. MLQ is based on five point Likert type response pattern. Past research in the indigenous context indicates that MLQ is a reliable and construct valid instrument to measure leadership styles in Pakistani organizations including educational institutions (Khan, 2010; Khan, 2009; Riaz, 2009).

**Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS)** was used to measure emotional intelligence among participants. The scale was developed by Wong and Law (2002). The scale consisted of 16 items. EIS is based on six point Likert type response pattern. Past research in the indigenous context indicates that EIS is a reliable and construct valid instrument to measure emotional intelligence (Akhtar, 2010).

## Procedure

The participants were personally approached in different higher educational institutions of the Province of the Punjab. The

permission for the data collection was sought from the heads of those colleges and from participants. With the help of staff the favorable attitude of the participants was gained. Informed consent was taken and confidentiality of their information was ensured. Demographics sheet and questionnaires were distributed to the participants and 15 to 20 minutes were given to each participant. After filling the scale the participants were thanked for their valuable cooperation. Finally, statistical analysis was applied on the collected data.

### Results

Table 1

*Mean, Standard Deviation, Alpha Reliability Coefficients and Zero-Order Correlation for All Study Variables (N = 100)*

Variables	M	SD	$\alpha$	1	2	3	4
1. Emotional intelligence	60.42	7.77	.81	-	.49**	.36**	-.40**
2. Transformational	79.33	8.21	.86		-	.31**	-.17*
3. Transactional	40.10	3.17	.71			-	.23**
4. Laissez faire	6.980	2.06	.80				-

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

Table 1 shows that all the scales used in the present study have high internal consistency and therefore are appropriate for use. Results of the Pearson correlation indicate that emotional intelligence has significant positive correlation with transformational and transactional leadership style, whereas significant negative correlation with laissez faire leadership style. Transformational leadership style has significant positive correlation with transactional leadership style, whereas significant negative correlation with laissez faire leadership style. Transactional leadership style has significant positive correlation with laissez faire leadership style.

## Discussion

The present study was conducted to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and three leadership styles including transformational, transactional, and laissez faire style based on the Full Range Leadership Theory of Avolio and Bass (2002). The findings indicate that all the hypotheses are supported in the present study.

The first hypothesis “emotional intelligence will be positively correlated with transformational leadership style” was supported in the present study. Transformational leadership style is considered as an ideal style of leadership according to underlying theory and research (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Researchers discovered that increased levels of emotional intelligence are clearly linked with the adaptation of transformational style in leadership (Barling, Slater, & Kelloway, 2000; Mandell & Pherwani, 2003; Palmer, Walls, Burgess, & Stough, 2001). The transformational leadership is based on the leaders’ ability to approach followers’ emotional states and leader-follower relationship is based on emotional ties (Humphrey, 2002; Bass & Avolio, 1994). They have a clear understanding of the emotions of the followers (Bass, Waldman, Avolio & Bebb, 1987) and use emotions while communicating vision (Lewis, 2000). Their performance expectations from followers are also based on emotional motivation (Bass, 1985).

The second hypothesis “emotional intelligence will be positively correlated with transactional leadership style” was supported in the present study. On the Full Range Leadership Theory, transactional leadership style stands in the middle of the leadership and the non-leadership dimension (Avolio & Bass, 2002). However, its two attributes are positive and it is considered better than laissez faire style which is the most ineffective style. Even in the Pakistani context, Riaz (2009) found that the decisions of the transactional leaders were more similar to that of transformational leaders.

The third hypothesis “emotional intelligence will be negatively correlated with laissez faire leadership style” was supported in the present study. Laissez faire leadership style is considered the most passive and ineffective style of leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Gardner and Stough (2002) discovered the salient characteristics of laissez faire leaders. They were incapable of recognizing and expressing their feelings and emotional states to others; recognize and realize others’ emotions; include emotions and knowledge based on emotions in the process of making decisions and solving problems; managing their own as well as the others’ positive and negative emotions; successfully controlling the intense emotional states at the work place. Yukl (1994) illustrates that the absence of emotional intelligence results in laissez faire leadership style.

### **Conclusion**

The present study aimed at investigating the association between emotional intelligence and leadership styles of Full Range Leadership Theory. All the hypotheses were in line with the past research. The findings indicated that emotional intelligence has significant positive correlation with transformational leadership style; emotional intelligence has significant positive correlation with transactional leadership style, and finally, emotional intelligence has significant negative correlation with laissez faire leadership style. The current findings support the underlying theoretical assumptions of FRLT indicating that transformational leadership style is the most effective and active style, whereas the laissez fair leadership style is the most ineffective and passive style of leadership (Avolio & Bass, 2002; Bass & Avolio, 2003).

### **Limitations**

The study also shares some limitations. First, self-report measures were used on which the college teachers provided the information about emotional intelligence and leadership style. Thus the method of data collection is vulnerable for common method variance. Thus, the information should be collected from multiple



sources in the future research in order to reduce the single source biasness. Secondly, overall three leadership styles were studied, it would be more appropriate to study the nine factors of FRLT in order to obtain a comprehensive picture. Beside all these limitations, the study is pretty insightful in understanding the role of emotional intelligence in leadership especially with respect to FRLT.

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