

A Systematic Literature Review on the Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership—A Critical Approach

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to fill the identified gap in the literature regarding a holistic approach to the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and transformational leadership (TL). In fact, this paper contributes to the annotation of the literature in this particular field through a selective bibliography, aiming to cover the main contributors to the development of this topic and explore their different views in order to critically approach the pros and cons, producing implications for academia and organizations. A leader who applies the transformational style is able to indirectly or directly influence the efficiency of employees through increased levels of emotional intelligence and developed cognitive skills. The purpose of this paper is to examine the correlation between EI and TL. A systematic literature review (SLR) was conducted for papers published from 2000 onwards (21st century). Published papers were selected from international scientific journals that have been indexed as Q1 or Q2 (best quartiles) in the SJR database fields of business, management, and accounting. For the initial screening, the Google Scholar database was used to access papers through the following keywords: emotional intelligence, transformational leadership, organizational behavior, management, and organizational development. Furthermore, SLR's PRISMA flow chart indicated the most suitable papers to be analyzed in the context of this paper. The research yielded 16 published studies confirming the positive relationship between EI and TL and 9 papers questioning it. These papers have been analyzed to open a discussion and draw conclusions. Research on the relationship between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence demonstrate a positive correlation in the majority, while there are some who question it.



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Keywords: emotional intelligence; transformational leadership; organizational behavior; management and organization development

1. Introduction

Numerous research studies have analyzed the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and various organizational factors. The main objective of these studies was to examine whether an organization can benefit from a leader with high EI. It is important to note that any evaluations of EI should be clearly marked as subjective. Several research studies (Rynes et al., 2002; Fatt, 2002; Voola et al., 2004; Abraham, 2004; Kunnanatt, 2004; Lopes et al., 2003; Sy & Côté, 2004; Sy et al., 2006; Tischler et al., 2002; Jordan et al., 2002; Kelly & Barsade, 2001; Welch, 2003) have shown that emotional intelligence (EI) can have a positive impact on the performance of an individual. Furthermore, the leadership style is identified as crucial to the success of an organization in the majority of relevant studies. Therefore, the authors focus on published studies that examine the relationship between

emotional intelligence and transformational leadership (TL). Although most research supports the positive correlation between EI and TL, including their individual components, it is important to note that some studies have challenged this relationship ([Harms & Credè, 2010](#); [Matthews et al., 2012](#)).

Nobel laureate Simon believed that logic is not defined by behavior and he supported the view that behavior is determined by non-rational elements that occupy the area of the rational ([Simon, 1945](#)). This American theoretician believed that the rational judgment of individuals is difficult due to their inability to define themselves in relation to the goals set by the organization of which they are a part. What is remarkable about Simon's words is his systematic effort to avoid using the word "emotion", even though he spoke about the leader's ability to direct employees to the right values and alluded to emotional self-control. In the late 20th century [Barley and Kunda \(1992\)](#) expressed a similar view, namely that a leader is able to develop relationships with direct reports and management is a method of exercising emotions that ultimately benefits the organization. Evidently, most of the recent literature underlines specific aspects of successful contemporary leaders, such as diversity, equity, and inclusivity, which are strongly related to emotional intelligence ([Waynick, 2023](#)).

This research may prove valuable for enhancing leadership in the workplace and be a driver for leaders to improve their performance and thus enhance the success of their business. Practically, this means that organizations should invest in training and development programs to enhance the (soft) skills of their leaders. Evidently, a customized approach is required to integrate the principles of transformational leadership depending on the culture and environment of each organization. Finally, continuous evaluation of leadership performance and provision of feedback is necessary to help leaders improve their EI skills and effectiveness.

2. Literature Review

In the context of this paper, it would be particularly ambitious to present the scientific dialogue regarding emotional intelligence (EI) and its influence on the business and organizational environment, especially at the leadership level. However, some points worthy of mention could not be omitted, as they raise the need to develop a critical approach regarding the relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership. [Petrides and Furnham \(2003\)](#) postulate that it is impossible to provide a universally accepted definition of emotional intelligence. Researchers generally agree that individuals differ in the way they process their own emotions (intrapersonal information) and the emotions of others (interpersonal information). Following this direction, [Taylor and Bagby \(2000\)](#) try to give a more specific concept to EI and define five basic elements of it:

- i. The ability to recognize and perceive our own emotions and the emotions of others.
- ii. The ability to understand and develop our own emotions and the emotions of others.
- iii. The ability to regulate our own emotions and the emotions of others.
- iv. The ability to use our emotions and the emotions of others to guide our thinking and behavior in various situations.
- v. The ability to communicate effectively with others using our emotions and understanding their emotions.

Furthermore, the Mayer–Salovey–Caruso (MSC) model presents EI as a cognitive ability, which consists of four basic skills ([Mayer et al., 2000](#)):

- i. Emotion recognition—the ability to recognize and distinguish various emotions through facial expressions, voice tone, and body movements.
- ii. Understanding emotions—the ability to understand the causes and consequences of emotions, as a cognitive processing of emotions to understand interpersonal relationships and strengthen self-awareness.

- iii. Managing emotions—the ability to manage emotions and adapt them to different situations and circumstances to solve a problem, given that emotions are not suppressed, but self-regulated.
- iv. Emotion assimilation—the ability of individuals to use their emotions to strengthen their cognitive system for decision-making and communication with others. This alternation encourages individuals to see things from different perspectives and to think creatively.

Based on the above, [Goleman et al. \(2002\)](#), in their attempt to include EI in the soft skills of a leader, state that EI operates in four dimensions where most of the virtues of modern leadership are found, namely the personal skills of “self-awareness” and “self-management” and the social skills of “relationship management” and “social awareness”. Thus, emotionally intelligent leaders use their positive characteristics (such as humor) whenever necessary as tools for dealing with difficult work situations. In this way, they always keep channels of communication open and create new ones, if necessary, with the members of the team, to maintain a productive and pleasant climate and also to strengthen their trust. Therefore, it can be concluded that modern leaders are not only limited to having cognitive intelligence but must also have the skill of handling themselves and their relationships with those around them.

From the relevant studies of [Bass \(1985\)](#) and [Burns \(1978\)](#), the concept of transformational leadership (TL) emerged. TL is nothing more than leaders’ intense interest in changing themselves and the members of the team, which stems from the development of new skills and perceptions that can come from any position in the organization. They do not simply try to adapt their behavior to the situation but seek transformation in a dynamic environment. In this leadership style, the leader seeks to develop members into leaders or to create a collectively leading team, by activating five factors that constitute transformational leadership:

- Idealized influence;
- Inspirational motivation;
- Intellectual stimulation;
- Individualized consideration.

Furthermore, [Bass \(1985\)](#) states that transformational leadership is more effective. Evidently, the five factors of transformational leadership require activated emotional intelligence characteristics, as described above. Therefore, the transformational leader is assumed to be emotionally intelligent and at the same time is considered to be more effective. Consequently, emotional intelligence is a factor in the effectiveness of the leader and must be cultivated within the context of businesses and organizations. In this direction, specific EI development programs have been established in businesses and organizations. The continuous improvement of EI for employees and managers is the goal, as it is now the determining factor for improving human resource performance. These emotional intelligence development programs consist of the following stages ([Kunananatt, 2004](#)):

- i. Mapping emotions: At this stage, the individual perceives and understands the way in which emotions influence their behavior and thinking. This early recognition of emotions prevents later emotional outbursts ([Gottman, 2011](#)).
- ii. Emotional pattern diagnosis: Scientific research has shown that the human mind knows the responses to various environmental stimuli. To achieve the interruption of an emotional pattern, great effort, and significant energy are needed. At this stage, practice improves the mental skill of recognizing emotions.

- iii. Conscious perception of emotions: This is the stage at which participants try to understand the impact of their emotions on others and themselves, as well as to make consciously rational and effective choices.
- iv. Emotional guidance: Participants are trained to express their emotions without being influenced to gain this energy and the motivation they need to make the right decisions.
- v. Establishing empathy: At this stage, individuals try to understand the needs and emotions of others to use them to their advantage. Listeners activate all their senses and in a calm mental state rephrase what they hear and focus on body language (Gottman, 2011).
- vi. Increasing influence: This is the last stage in which individuals are trained to use their emotional intelligence in a way that they can influence their environment.

Businesses and organizations that have adopted models for the development of the EI of their human resources have benefited to an extraordinary extent as they have experienced positive change among their team members in terms of their performance and behavior in the work environment, which also lasts over time. Contemporary management requires the integration of EI into leadership development and diversity strategies. According to Jada et al. (2014), EI acts as a bridge between diversity management and improved organizational outcomes, through their findings in which the following key points are highlighted:

- Leaders with high EI are better equipped to handle conflicts arising from cultural and personal differences.
- EI contributes to creating a positive organizational climate that supports collaboration and equity.
- The combination of diversity and EI drives better organizational performance by fostering innovation and adaptability.

Consequently, organizations should invest in EI training for leaders to enhance their ability to manage diverse teams, while by aligning diversity initiatives with emotionally intelligent leadership, companies can achieve strategic goals and improve overall performance (Jada et al., 2014).

3. Research Methodology

The research approach involves a systematic literature review, which ensures the possibility for the author to analyze in depth the articles related to the topic under study (Bos-Nehles et al., 2017), while the content and textual analysis techniques are applied during the stages of the review. Data were collected from official scientific bases. Initially, published articles were selected from academic journals that deal exclusively with the field of business, management, and accounting and have a ranking index (SJR-Scimago Journal Rank indicator) of Q1 or Q2 (best quartiles for all subject categories) in the Scimago database. The keywords used in the search were carefully selected by the authors in order to cover the very specific topic (relational context) under investigation, as described in the abstract and introduction section, and these are: emotional intelligence (EI), transformational leadership (TL), organizational behavior (OB), and management and organizational development (MOD).

The papers' identification followed specific inclusion criteria that concerned published papers from 2000 to 2022 since the interest in study fields has been continuously increasing during the last decades. Furthermore, selected papers were written in English and published in peer-reviewed journals with a high impact factor, thus contributing to the field (Bos-Nehles et al., 2017; P. M. Podsakoff et al., 2005), and more specifically to the relationship between EI and TL in the context of OB. Figure 1 depicts the flow path of the selection process for papers to be included in this review follows the preferred reporting

items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) statement (Page et al., 2021). The authors extracted from Google Scholar papers that matched inclusion criteria and keywords set as follows:

- Management and organizational development: 1930 items;
- Transformational leadership: 201 items;
- Emotional intelligence: 431 items;
- Organizational behavior: 154 items.

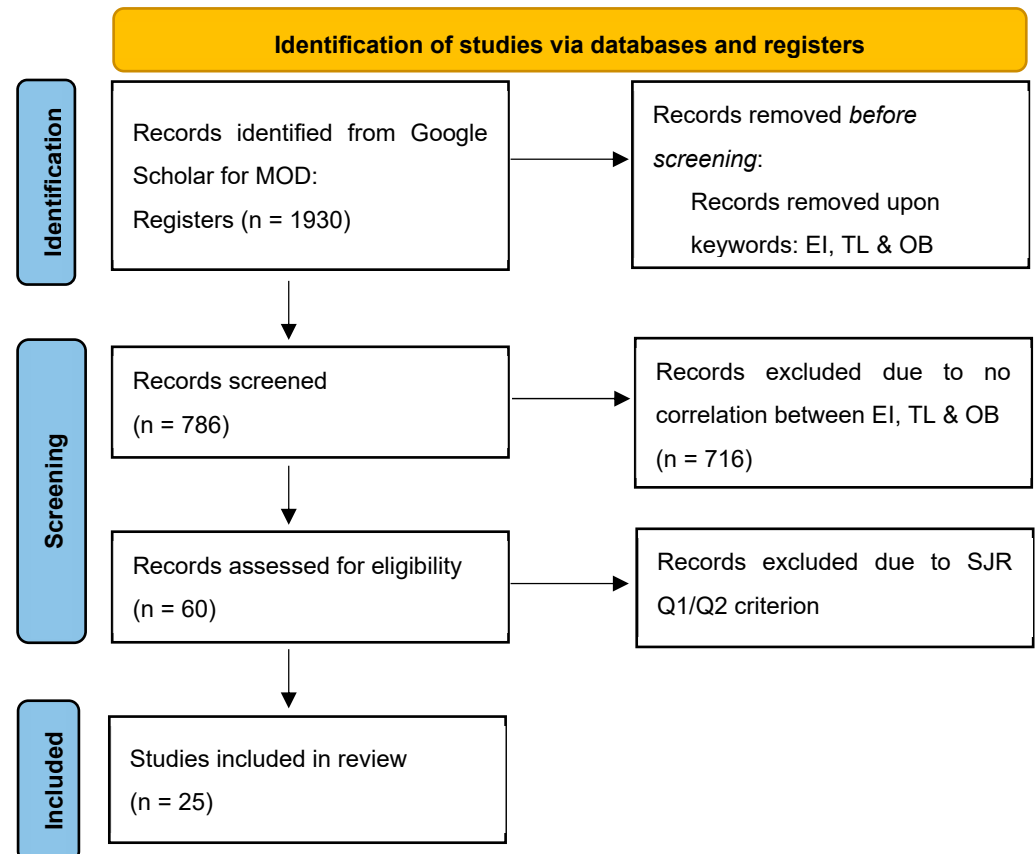


Figure 1. SLR's PRISMA flow chart visualizing the paper selection process. Source: Page et al. (2021), and Bos-Nehles et al. (2017) and processed by the authors.

The correlation between EI and TL in the context of OB is given in 60 papers, while the correlation between EI and TL in papers of Q1 and Q2 ranking under the SJR business, management, and accounting umbrella has been annotated by 25 items, of which 16 confirm a positive relationship between EI and transformational leadership and 9 question it.

4. Results

Several studies confirm the importance of the interaction between emotional intelligence and work (R. K. Cooper & Sawaf, 1997; Morris, 1999; Caruso & Wolfe, 2001; Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Day & Carroll, 2004; Lopes et al., 2006; Elfenbein et al., 2007) and how work success depends on the management of emotions. Indeed, the report by R. K. Cooper and Sawaf (1997) concludes, after relevant studies, that 93% of leaders' success is due to their trust, honesty, integrity, authenticity, and creativity, and only the remaining 7% on their cognitive skills. There are other related studies that confirm that emotional intelligence determines at least 60% of an employee's effectiveness, for example in a study that used a sample of 181 different jobs with administrative tasks, in which it emerged that emotional intelligence is responsible for 90% of work success (Bourantas, 2002). We can therefore

observe how emotional intelligence is a determining factor for the employee's leadership skills (Bradberry & Greaves, 2006). R. Cooper (1997) generally considers that people who have increased levels of emotional intelligence have significantly increased chances compared to the rest of the group members for a successful professional career. Also, they are able to exercise management more effectively than the others in the organization they belong to.

Leadership and emotional intelligence are two interrelated concepts for Goleman (2010) because leaders who can understand their own emotions initially and those of their subordinates afterward are more easily accepted in their work environment and positively affect the effectiveness of employees. The leader who applies the transformational style is able to indirectly or directly influence the efficiency of employees through the creation of a pleasant working climate or, respectively, through motivating them to take initiative (Zhou & George, 2003). In order to be effective, the leader must have increased levels of emotional intelligence and, at the same time, developed cognitive skills. A study by Elias et al. (2002) concluded that people who hold leadership positions and have developed their interpersonal relationships are also capable of effectively solving the problems that arise and have greater chances of exercising effective leadership. What characterizes these individuals is empathy, insight, sensitivity, and the skill of giving correct feedback (Bass, 1985).

4.1. The Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership

Researchers agree that transformational leaders are effective when they have developed the skill of self-regulation of their emotions, which is perfectly intertwined with the ability to influence other team members (Barling et al., 2000). Transformational leaders are able to fully understand their own emotions as well as those of their employees, as a result of which it is easier for them to achieve the emotional closeness they desire, to increase the levels of commitment and trust of the organization's employees, to be a source of inspiration, and also to be able to support and understand their team members (Sosik & Megerian, 1999; Naznin, 2013). In addition, people who adopt the transformational leadership model have developed the skill of insight and can identify employees who have development prospects, something essential for increasing the level of motivation of subordinates. Understanding the feelings of team members is indeed the basis of building strong bonds and inspiration (Barling et al., 2000; Carney & Harrigan, 2003). Therefore, transformational leaders who have developed their levels of emotional intelligence can communicate their vision and manage the emotions of their subordinates.

Another very important skill of transformational leaders is that of being willing to sacrifice, putting aside their own desires and focusing only on the needs of their team members. By thus prioritizing emotion management, these leaders are more likely to provide personalized care (Sosik & Megerian, 1999; Barling et al., 2000). If we made an overall account of what characteristics a leader must have to be transformational, we would say that they must have an increased level of empathy because this aspect of emotional intelligence determines whether or not they are able to express personalized interest to the other members of the group. Additionally, there are researchers who include work commitment and ethical behavior as fundamental factors of EI and transformational leadership (M. E. Brown & Treviño, 2006).

Leadership and emotional intelligence are two completely interrelated concepts and, according to the literature, they are the right combination for the desired effectiveness of executives and, by extension, the organization. If people have the required cognitive skills but their emotional intelligence is at a low level, they will never be able to become successful leaders because they do not possess the appropriate skills (Goleman, 1998).

Leaders' ability to manage their own emotions and those of others greatly increases the chances of their effectiveness (George, 2000).

There is general empirical research favoring, more or less, a positive interplay between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership over the past 35 years. More specifically:

- Seltzer and Bass (1990) found a not-so-positive interaction between productivity and transformational leadership.
- Keller (1995) found some aspects of EI to be associated with transformational leadership and positively affect team members' productivity.
- Bass (1997) concluded that transformational leaders are more effective in the workplace than transactional leaders because they perform better in financial matters.
- Bar-On (1997) similarly found greater effectiveness of transformational leaders in the workplace as they scored high EI scores.
- Barling et al. (2000), based on their research, concluded that EI is related to three aspects of transformational leadership (motivation, influence, and individualized interest) and additionally to one of transactional leadership (dependent reward). There was no correlation between active and passive leadership, nor with laissez-faire management.
- Mandell and Pherwani (2003) also found distinct score differences between men and women holding managerial positions, but this did not mean that gender played a role in their prediction.
- Using a sample of 24 project managers from various organizations in the USA, Leban and Zulauf (2004) concluded there is a positive relationship between EI with supervisor effectiveness and transformational behavior.
- M. E. Brown et al. (2005) found that transformational leadership is effective for the successful completion of the leader's vision but failed to confirm that there is any positive relationship between EI and transformational leadership and that it affects the desired outcome. The survey was conducted in the USA and used a sample of 161 supervisors and 2411 subordinates from technology companies.
- In the USA, a survey was conducted in which 80 elected officials were used as a sample and the positive effect on all aspects of emotional intelligence of transformational leadership was confirmed (Barbuto & Burbach, 2006).
- Gardner and Stough (2002), in their research on the link between leadership and EI in hierarchical senior managers of an organization, found a strong correlation between transformational leadership and all aspects that make up EI. They also confirmed the superiority in performance of transformational leadership behavior over transactional leadership. This is because transformational leaders were better able to manage their own emotions as well as those of the rest of the organization.
- Similarly, Barling et al. (2000), researching the forms of transformational and transactional leadership and their connection with EI, found higher levels of emotional intelligence in executives who practiced a transformational style of behavior than in transactional leaders. Transactional leaders are less effective because of the way they deal with organizational issues and because they adopt a strategy that has repetitive patterns that give subordinates the impression that the element of empathy is not present in their leader.
- Bratton et al. (2011) confirmed the research of Sosik and Megerian (1999) in which employees positively perceive their supervisors who have self-awareness in terms of their efficiency, self-management, and self-confidence. In other words, they confirmed the positive correlation between EI and the leaders' effective forms of behavior and the high levels of self-awareness of the leaders in order to respond to the wishes of subordinates. In addition, these leaders have highly developed interpersonal and

intrapersonal relationships and are able to implement an effective transformational leadership style (Bratton et al., 2011).

- Finally, Dartey-Baah and Mekpor (2017) investigated and identified the positive correlation between EI and transformational leadership style and also the negative relationship between EI and transactional leadership style using 234 bank employees as a sample.

Before moving forward with the SLR, it is worth mentioning that most of the published research in the field used methodologies based on models/tools such as Bass and Avolio's Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and Bar-On's Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i).

More specifically, the full-range leadership style, based on the full-range leadership theory (FRLT), extends from charismatic leaders to no leadership at all. the measurement tool used is the MLQ (developed in several versions: 5X, short, and reduced), which assesses a wide range of leadership styles including leaders who are quiet, those who provide followers with conditional benefits, and those who inspire their followers to take on leadership roles. The MLQ outlines the traits of a transformational leader and assists people in assessing their own and their coworkers' perceptions of themselves (Avolio et al., 1999; Avolio & Bass, 2004; Bass & Avolio, 1995, 1997, 2000).

Furthermore, a different model for emotional intelligence, the so-called emotional quotient (EQ), perceives emotional intelligence as a complex ability that includes five factors (self-awareness, social sensitivity, relationship management, self-management, and coping with emotions) that affect the individual's ability to deal effectively with the difficulties of the environment. This model was introduced by Bar-On, who later matched the emotional quotient with the intelligence quotient (IQ) of general intelligence, thus creating the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i), a list of 133 five-point Likert-scale self-assessment questions (items) (Bar-On, 1997). EQ-i was later improved by Stein and Book (2011) into EQ-I 2.0.

Further to the above models which are mainly invoked by the researchers of the field, SLR also highlighted others that significantly contribute to drawing conclusions, such as:

- Trait Meta-Mood Scale—TMMS, adopted from Salovey et al. (1995);
- Swinburne University International Intelligence Test—SUEIT, adopted from Palmer et al. (2001);
- SMS-EQ Profile quantitative tool, found in Duckett and Macfarlane (2003);
- Mayer Salovey Caruso Emotional Intelligence Ability Test—MSCEIT, found in Leban and Zulauf (2004), adopted from Mayer et al. (2002);
- Measure of Transformational Leadership Behavior, adopted from N. P. Podsakoff et al. (2003);
- Big Five Inventory, adopted from Goldberg (1999);
- Positive and Negative Affect Schedule—PA-NAS, adopted from Watson et al. (1988);
- Diagnostic Analysis of Nonverbal Accuracy—DANVA, adopted from Nowicki and Duke (2001);
- Wong–Law Emotional Intelligence Scale—WLEIS, adopted from Wong and Law (2002);
- Organizational Citizenship Behavior—OCB (Lee & Allen, 2002);
- Emotional and Social Competency Inventory—ESCI, adopted from Hay Group (2011);
- Emotional Intelligence (EI) measure scale, adopted from Goleman et al. (2002);
- EQ Index—EQI, adopted from Rahim et al. (2002);
- Emotional Intelligence (EI) framework, adopted from Goleman (2001);
- Transformational Leadership Questionnaire—TLQ (Public), adopted from Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe (2001);

- Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), widely used in selecting candidates for business administration graduate programs;
- Personality test (five factors), adopted from [Goldberg \(1999\)](#).

SLR in tabular form presents the most important research published in the 21st century and concludes the positive interaction between EI and TL, as well as the measurement tools and the sample used, are presented. Table 1 presents the academic discussion about the positive relationship between EI and TL, as identified in the SLR.

Table 1. SLR results identifying the scientific publications in which a positive relationship between EI and TL is confirmed.

<i>Methodology</i>	<i>Citation</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Findings</i>	<i>Journal</i>
MLQ (5X-Short), EQ-i (133 items)	Barling et al. (2000)	49 executives and 187 subordinates (data from multiple sources)	Positive correlation between EI and three factors of TL (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, personalized concern)	Leadership & Organization Development Journal
MLQ (45 items), TMMS (41 items)	Palmer et al. (2001)	43 participants (90% executives; one data source)	Positive correlation of TL three factors (personalized interest, idealized influence, inspirational motivation) with EI factors	Leadership & Organizational Development Journal
MLQ (5X Form; 45 items), SUEIT (65 items)	Gardner and Stough (2002)	110 executives (one data source)	Positive correlation of all TL factors (idealized influence as a trait and as a behavior, inspirational motivation, personalized interest, intellectual stimulation) with EI factors	Leadership & Organization Development Journal
MLQ (5X; 36 items), EQ-i (133 items)	Sivanathan and Cynthia Fekken (2002)	13 store managers (one source)	Strong association of EI and TL factors	Leadership & Organization Development Journal
SMS-EQ Profile Tool (13 dimensions)	Duckett and Macfarlane (2003)	13 store managers (one source)	Strong association of EI and TL factors	Leadership & Organization Development Journal
MLQ (5X; 45 items), EQ-i (133 items)	Mandell and Pherwani (2003)	32 managers (one data source)	Significant positive correlation between EI and TL	Journal of Business & Psychology
MLQ (5X), MSCEIT (components of experiential and strategic EI)	Leban and Zulauf (2004)	24 project managers and team members	EI positively contributes to the choice of TL style and final project performance	Leadership & Organization Development Journal
Transformational Leadership Behavior Measure (22 items), Big Five Inventory (5 items in 5-point Likert scale), PA-NAS (10 positive & 10 negative items), DANVA (24 items)	Rubin et al. (2005)	145 managers and 480 subordinates	Positive correlation of emotion recognition ability with TL	Academy of Management Journal
MLQ (5X-Short; 45 items), SUEIT (64 items), TMMS (30 items)	Downey et al. (2006)	176 female managers	Positive correlation of EI and TL, with emotional intelligence predicting transformational leadership	Leadership and Organization Development Journal
MLQ (12 items in 7-point Likert scale), EQI (19 items in 7-point Likert scale)	Polychroniou (2009)	267 managers	Positive correlation of EI factors and TL increasing efficiency	Team Performance Management
TLQ, WLEIS	Wang and Huang (2009)	51 managers and 252 employees	EI is built with TL	Social Behavior & Personality

Table 1. Cont.

Methodology	Citation	Sample	Findings	Journal
MLQ (Reduced Version; 22 items), TMMS (24 items)	Lopez-Zafra et al. (2012)	431 participants	EI predicts TL	The Psychological Record
MLQ (5X Short; 20 items), WLEIS (16 items), OCB (16-items)	Majeed et al. (2017)	220 participants	TL is positively correlated with EI. Also, EI has a significant effect as a mediating variable between TL and organizational citizenship behavior	Management & Marketing
ESCI (72 items), MLQ (5X; 45 items)	Chepng'eno and Ngui (2017)	52 managers and supervisors	EI factors have a strong positive correlation with TL (idealized influence as a trait and as a behavior, inspirational motivation, personalized interest)	International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Studies
EI measure scale (18 items in 5-point Likert scale), MLQ (Reduced Version; 31 items)	Dartey-Baah and Mekpor (2017)	234 bank executives	TL is positively correlated with EI	International Journal of Business
EQ-i 2.0, MLQ (5X)	Jiménez (2018)	89 managers (population: 180)	The factor of adaptability (flexibility) of EI was investigated, where a strong positive interaction was found with all the factors of TL (idealized influence as a trait and as a behavior, inspirational motivation, personalized interest, intellectual stimulation). Additionally, adaptability predicts TL	Foundations of Management

Critically summarizing the above results, leaders who possess and express emotional intelligence are also exponents of the transformational leadership model, which is a change leadership model with the aim of greater effectiveness of the members of an organization. Employees thirst for positive energy, motivation, and individual attention, which facilitate their participation in desired behaviors. It is also possible and logical that they will respect and emotionally bond with a transformational leader who rewards their efforts, is discreet, and is willing to help them improve their work performance so that the organization also benefits. Finally, managers who possess empathy are likely to recognize and show active interest in the needs of their subordinates, so as to respond emotionally to their changes on an individual level. Motivation may be a useful parameter in effectively dealing with the “conflict” between superiors and subordinates (at the stage of achieving goals) in order to achieve the best possible result as soon as possible, always to the benefit of the organization.

4.2. Challenging the Positive Relation Between Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership

What we observe in all the published research that concluded there is a positive interaction between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership is that self-regulation and self-awareness characterize people who practice transformational management (Küpers & Weibler, 2006). In addition, the common denominator of researchers in most cases is the finding that emotional intelligence is the basis of motivation, intellectual stimulation, and personalized interest (Gardner & Stough, 2002). There are, nevertheless, studies that question the positive correlation between these two concepts. The following

Table 2 presents the most important published articles that essentially indicate their disbelief in the methodology used.

Table 2. SLR results identifying the scientific publications in which a positive relationship between EI and TL is questioned.

<i>Methodology</i>	<i>Citation</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Findings</i>	<i>Journal</i>
A review of the published research claims concerning the relationship between TL and EI	Antonakis (2004)	57 published research articles	The empirical evidence status of the relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership after all the years of study remains weak and suffers from methodological problems.	Organizational Analysis
MLQ (5X; 45 items), EQ-i (133 items)	F. W. Brown et al. (2006)	161 managers/supervisors and 2411 employees	Emotional intelligence can be a useful concept for understanding leadership and social influence. However, no evidence was found that EI as measured by the EQ-i is of particular value in this investigation.	Leadership & Organization Development Journal
MLQ, EI framework	Küpers and Weibler (2006)	For analyzing the emotional quality of the MLQ, an interpretative method is used with MLQ as a reference point for the TL and EI framework.	The transformational leadership dimension of the MLQ covers some emotions but is far from a holistic approach to them. In particular, feelings concerning the factor of personalized interest are absent.	Leadership & Organization Development Journal
Leadership Style Questionnaire, Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire	Moss et al. (2006)	263 managers and subordinates (1st survey), 166 nurses and their supervisors (2nd survey)	Those who demonstrated high emotional intelligence did not appear to apply more of the transformational leadership style. The overall findings suggest that EI can enhance individuals' ability to adapt their leadership style appropriately, but only under certain contexts.	Journal of Individual Differences
TLQ-Public (32 items), WLEIS (16 items)	Lindebaum and Cartwright (2010)	55 managers, 110 subordinates, and 62 project managers	While data from the same source show a significant correlation, when the data from multiple sources are examined no statistically significant correlations are shown. When a strong methodological design is used no correlation between EI and transformational leadership emerges.	Journal of Management Studies
A meta-analysis of 62 published research articles on the relationship between EI and TL	Harms and Credè (2010)	62 surveys resulting in 7145 leading members	The results associating EI with transformational leadership do not appear to be as strong. Trait models of emotional intelligence show higher correlations with transformational leadership than skill models respectively. Despite the drawbacks of methodological differences, they do not rule out the important role of emotional intelligence in leadership effectiveness.	Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies
MLQ (20 items), WLEIS (four sub-dimensions in a five-point Likert scale), GMAT (intelligence evaluation), Personality evaluation scale (five factors in a five-point Likert scale)	Cavazotte et al. (2012)	134 middle managers and 325 subordinates	While emotional intelligence appears to interact significantly with transformational leadership, when considered separately from ability (GMAT) and personality the effect becomes statistically non-significant.	The Leadership Quarterly

Table 2. Cont.

Methodology	Citation	Sample	Findings	Journal
MLQ, MSCEIT	Føllesdal and Hagtvet (2013)	111 managers and 459 subordinates	Neither scores on the four factors measuring EI as a skill nor total EI from the MSCEIT predicted TL.	The Leadership Quarterly
A meta-analysis of research on the relationship between EI and TL	Kim and Kim (2017)	20 published research articles on empirical studies of EI and transformational leadership	Most studies provide empirical support for the relationship, with variations in identifying individual factors of EI and TL that further explain their relationship. At the same time, the remaining studies express skepticism without actually denying the relationship, but usually point out the problem with its measurement and emphasize the need for more valid and reliable tools to assess EI.	Human Resource Development Review

Undoubtedly, there are quite a few studies that support the positive correlation between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership, the existence of challenges suggests that this relationship is not so simple and may depend on other factors or conditions. What is essentially supported by researchers who question the positive correlation of emotional intelligence with transformational leadership is that the majority of research examining this correlation between these two factors is based on self-reported measurements and observations, which may be subjective and influenced by biases. Therefore, the positive correlation between the two concepts may be overestimated or may not be as strong as it appears in some research. Transformational leadership also requires a deep understanding of organizational structures, strategies, and operational needs, which may be independent of emotional intelligence. This raises the concern that emotional intelligence, although important, may not be sufficient to develop transformational leadership, which often requires complex and technical skills. Finally, while emotional intelligence is often associated with transformational leadership, it is not the only factor influencing leadership. The ability to recognize and manage emotions, as well as to understand the emotional needs of others, is not always sufficient to ensure successful leadership. Leadership, especially transformational leadership, may require additional skills such as strategic thinking, risk management, or resilience to crises, which do not necessarily depend on emotional intelligence.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

This paper tried to holistically approach the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and transformational leadership (TL) and explore the different views in order to critically analyze the influential factors and produce implications for academia and organizations towards practices that enhance leaders' soft skills in managing emotions. Cultivating the principles of transformational leadership, depending on the culture and environment of each organization, through training programs may support leaders in improving EI skills and effectiveness, as Jada et al. (2014) postulate in their practical implications on human resource management that promotes diversity and inclusion.

F. W. Brown et al. (2006) point out that for these mixed findings of the studies (especially when it comes to quantitative research), the determining factor is the sample size. Also, surveys based on data from the same source lack objectivity because they are vulnerable to biased practices, especially when the same measurement tool is also used (N. P. Podsakoff et al., 2003). These kinds of practices, when applied to investigate the

correlation between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership, usually result in data that tend to have higher values than studies that use multiple sources of information (Harms & Credè, 2010).

Although most researchers use the same method of measuring transformational leadership (MLQ), there is a division in the measurement of emotional intelligence, and it is observed that the way of measurement from research to research differs as far as the tool used is concerned. This is because EI, as a concept, takes many forms and is thus approached in various ways to measure it. Emotional intelligence traits are related to personality aspects and skills to cognitive abilities, respectively (Zeng & Miller, 2003). The authors elaborate on two different constructs since the distinction of emotional intelligence is something completely accepted in the scientific community (Petrides, 2011).

The conducted research observes that there is a mediating effect of transformational leadership in the relationship between EI (and its factors) and effectiveness. All studies confirm the literature, which points out that the higher the levels of emotional intelligence and its factors, the more likely the individual will be highly effective. As Waynick (2023) postulates, as the economy continues to expand and become global, EI-related issues will be of high importance for all industries, while apathetic organizations will find obstacles.

Future research is required, driven by the fact that most published studies are limited because the MLQ leadership questionnaire automatically creates a gap that the authors attempt to identify. This indicates future research methodologies that will propose different approaches such as those of authentic leadership and complexity leadership (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007; Walumbwa et al., 2008). Finally, another factor that affects the results and has been ignored by the studies so far is research timing (cross-sectional), as it is observed that the dynamic nature of EI in the workplace has not been taken into account, since longitudinal data are not included by the researchers. Thus, it is possible that behavioral changes caused by the time juncture are not presented. Emotions are a dynamic phenomenon and their evolution over time in the workplace cannot be left out of the equation. Last but not least, cultural differences should not be ignored when studying emotional and/or social aspects in the workplace, since different cultural contexts and dimensions influence emotional intelligence, as stated by Gunkel et al. (2014).

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