

# Examining the Intersections between Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Practices in Higher Education Institutions to Improve Institutional Success

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## Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to look into how emotional intelligence (EI) and leadership practices help to improve higher education institutions' success. The paper explored ways in which emotional intelligence can promote resilience and long-term success in educational settings by looking at how leaders with high EI contribute to institutional success. Furthermore, the paper emphasized how EI can be used to develop long-term leadership strategies that promote the welfare of faculty, students, and the higher education community at large. A crucial aspect of leadership practice is EI, which is the capacity of leaders to recognize how their behavior and feelings impact those around them within the institutions. This study's results show that emotional intelligence is a crucial and highly relevant prerequisite for academic leadership practice in higher education institutions.

Furthermore, the study determined that the emotional intelligence qualities most relevant to academic leadership were those linked to empathy, motivating and directing others, and appropriately handling oneself. Emotional intelligence becomes apparent as a crucial leadership competency, highlighting how crucial it is for leaders to comprehend and control both their own and others' emotions. Finally, there is a constant emphasis on the symbiotic relationship between leadership and a positive school culture, emphasizing the roles that leaders play in creating cooperative, trustworthy, and ever-improving learning environments. The researcher reviewed the existing literature based on the research questions. This study employs a systematic review approach by reviewing existing qualitative articles on intersections between emotional intelligence and leadership practices in higher education institutions to improve institutional success. Findings were obtained from the reviewed articles by forming themes to make a thorough analysis and draw conclusions.

**Keywords:** emotional intelligence, leadership, higher education, institutional success

## Introduction

The most intricate and unpredictable phenomenon in human existence continues to be human behavior. Leaders can better modify their actions and approaches to maximize results when they recognize the need to tailor their leadership styles to the unique requirements of various situations. The increasing demands on educational leaders necessitate that they have the skills and strategies needed to successfully navigate the complexities of the 21st-century educational landscape (Harris & Jones, 2020). Adaptive mechanisms are essential for displaying leadership in this changing environment. In educational leadership, adaptive mechanisms are the tactics, routines, and demeanors that leaders employ to adjust and react skilfully to various challenges in educational contexts (Spillane et al., 2022). By putting these procedures in place, leaders can react quickly to the needs and conditions that change within the institutions, eventually boosting organizational effectiveness (Leithwood et al., 2020). Emotional intelligence, or EI, is important in today's business world- and higher education institutions are not an exception. It supports

managers in fostering the growth, development, and success of their organizations. Measuring abilities, acknowledging and managing one's own and other's emotions, and directing one's own and other's behavior and actions are all considered aspects of emotional intelligence (Wamsler & Restoy, 2020). According to Iqbal et al. (2020), EI motivates workers to resolve conflict, influence others, create a cooperative culture, and promote psychological safety within teams. On a personal level, EI helps us manage our emotions, have conversations without hurting other people's feelings, and build stronger bonds with others (Ahangar, 2012). Conversely, socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable outcomes are produced by sustainable leadership (Woo & Kang, 2020). In order to achieve long-term advantages or outcomes, an organization, business, or service can be greatly impacted by emotional intelligence. In order to make decisions that are appropriate and sustainable, highly emotionally intelligent managers are able to predict the emotions or mental states of their customers and employees (Giao et al., 2020). The current study aims to investigate the possible relationship between leadership practices and EI in higher education institutions.

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The concept of EI is crucial in determining how well a school environment functions. The ability to recognize, understand, control, and utilize emotions in oneself and others in a positive and constructive way is known as EI. It helps teachers and students grow personally in the classroom, creating a supportive and productive learning environment (Thapar et al., 2019). The acknowledgment of this specific aspect of mental health is increasingly expanding as a critical factor influencing overall academic performance and social interactions in learning environments (Moreno, 2018). According to Novesar (2020), educational institutions that prioritize the development of emotional intelligence stand to benefit from improved communication, increased problem-solving skills, increased stress tolerance, and more compassionate and fruitful interactions between students and faculty.

## **Review of the Related Literature**

### ***Theoretical Framework***

According to Wu et al. (2020), a leader is more likely to instill in his followers a sensitivity to human emotions and a cognitive understanding of the world if he or she possesses a higher level of competence and credibility and is concerned about the needs and emotional welfare of his subordinates. The Social Learning Theory by Bandura (1971) and the Social Exchange Theory by Blau (1968) are the two theories that this argument is consistent with. According to these theories, a positive stimulus influences a positive attitude. This suggests that a positive stimulus from serving leaders encourages subordinates' EI to view their own and others' emotions more positively. In many different countries across the world, it has been demonstrated that emotional and social intelligence competencies predict effectiveness in leadership, management, and professional jobs. They can be thought of as social and EI at the behavioural level (SI). To put it another way, to effectively interact with others and lead, manage, or work with others, a person must be able to recognize and skilfully control his emotions in accordance with each individual or situation as well as others' emotional cues. In order to establish rapport with groups and societies, a person must be able to control their emotions and comprehend the thoughts, feelings, and aspirations of others (Goleman, 2011). Managing relationships, supporting others, persuasion, and desired responses are examples of social skills (Goleman, 2011). In addition to learning to give credit where credit is due, a manager with strong social skills can settle conflict among staff members, enhance communication to convey the right message in the right situation and develop listening abilities. A psychologically secure workplace is promoted by sustainable leaders and is based on open communication and information exchange between employers and employees (Iqbal, 2020). In order to achieve effective leadership, managers also promote knowledge dissemination through open communication within their organizations (Iqbal & Ahmad, 2021).

### ***Emotional Intelligence***

The ability to recognize emotions and reactions in others and use this understanding to make more informed decisions about various situations is known as emotional intelligence (Sistad, 2020). It encourages communication and understanding of one another's needs. EI is the capacity to accurately perceive and communicate emotions in order to facilitate and regulate emotions (Dhani, 2018). EI was first defined by Salovey and Mayer (1990) as a component of social intelligence that denotes the capacity to assess the feelings of both workers and employees. Numerous writers have updated their explanations of emotional intelligence and established a new area of study in this area (Drigas & Papoutsis, 2018). These include the capacity to precisely recognize, assess, and frame emotions in order to facilitate thought; to make sense of emotions and emotional cognition, and to control emotions in order to promote both intellectual and emotional growth. According to Goleman (2011), emotional intelligence is a prerequisite for sustainable leadership success.

He talks about the five aspects of emotional intelligence, which is in charge of enhancing managers' abilities within the framework of the organization. There are five essential components of emotional intelligence: i) self-awareness; ii) self-regulation; iii) motivation; iv) empathy; and v) social skills. For professionals and individuals to improve their capacity to achieve their sustainable business goals, these five EI components are essential.

### ***Sustainable Leadership***

In order to achieve sustainable results, sustainable leadership (SL) integrates social, economic, and environmental factors by embracing the triple bottom line concept (the People, the Planet, and Profits) (Woo & Kang, 2020). SL is a managerial viewpoint that promotes innovation and produces better, more long-lasting results. According to earlier research, sustainable leadership is essential for fostering systemic inventions, increasing customer value, and making appropriate decisions with a long-term perspective (Hargreaves & Fink, 2012). Additionally, SL is necessary to develop skilled employees and produce results that meet high standards (Hargreaves & Fink, 2012). The goal of sustainable leadership is to maintain throughout the course of a company's existence a balance between people, profits, and the environment. SL persuades the business to develop the social capital needed to weather the crisis (Avery, 2005). According to the natural resource-based view (NRBV) theory, using environmentally friendly resources is a must for enhancing the performance of sustainable organizations (Iqbal & Ahmad, 2021). Sustainable leadership is used as a resource in this research. According to this theory, sources of competitive advantages are capacities and resources that support sustainable financial activities (Iqbal & Ahmad, 2021). Businesses possessing distinctive qualities are able to respond to the concerns of various stakeholders about the environment by taking risky actions in reaction to external circumstances (Berrone et al., 2008).

### ***How Leader's Emotional Intelligence Affects Their Capacity to Apply Leadership Practices in Higher Education Institutions***

For higher education leaders to effectively apply EI, the leaders should have the ability to control their emotions, wants, and state of mind which is known as self-regulation (Goleman, 2004). Self-regulation includes traits like honesty, trustworthiness, ambiguity, comfort, and openness to change (Segon & Booth, 2015). A manager ought to be adaptable and dedicated to taking personal responsibility and maintaining control. A manager who practices self-regulation is better able to identify their core beliefs and priorities and knows when and where not to compromise. It is possible for managers to attain sustainable leadership through self-management. Conscientiousness, initiative, flexibility, and emotional self-control are the characteristics of self-regulation, according to McKeown and Bates (2013). As a result, effective human resources practices and the growth of organizations depend greatly on sustainable leadership (Fabio & Peiró, 2018). Leaders who prioritize sustainability keep an eye out for any changes in the outside world (Iqbal & Ahmad, 2021). Managers should view true sustainability as a crucial aspect of the organization's relationships when it comes to sustainable practices (Efthimiou, 2017). Furthermore, additional research indicates that self-regulation has a major impact on managers' capacity for sustainable leadership across a range of organizations, such as higher education institutions (Goleman, 2011). It is, therefore, imperative that if leaders are unable to be self-regulated, they are likely to make decisions that may affect others negatively and influence the performance of the organization.

### ***Essential Elements of Emotional Intelligence Associated with Effective, Long-Term Leadership in Higher Education Institutions***

In educational settings, EI plays a critical role. EI is the ability to identify, control, and evaluate emotions in oneself and others. It is the use of this understanding to effectively guide decisions and

behaviors. There is growing recognition of the significance of overall achievement and well-being, especially in educational settings (Tiwari, 2016). The success of higher education institutions depends on its personnel (Parrish, 2015). In higher education, the process of workforce development and training is crucial and a crucial element in these organizations' success (Pham, 2021). Fewer colleges provide training for administrative positions, and the majority of universities lack a formal procedure for identifying, choosing, and developing academic leaders (Wang & Frederick, 2018). Strong and long-term higher education institutions are linked to and dependent upon effective leadership (Watson et al., 2019). A vital component of institutional growth and advancement is employee development (Bryan et al., 2009). The unavoidable route to employee development is the expansion of postsecondary educational institutions (Pham, 2021). Researchers discovered that an employee's emotional intelligence influences and is influenced by their behavior (Hussein & Yesiltas, 2020).

Institutional productivity is severely impacted by low emotional intelligence (Drigas & Papaoutsi, 2019). Employee productivity is a gauge of their effectiveness and a factor that directly influences the bottom line of the company (Hanaysha, 2016). Unproductive employees often endanger the cohesion and financial health of the company. It's likely that tasks will slip through the cracks if workers are not performing their jobs or finishing their assignments (Hanaysha, 2016). Low productivity at work can be caused by leaders who don't provide guidance to encourage subordinates and maintain their productivity (Drigas & Papoutsis, 2019). The level of productivity the team can attain and the caliber of work produced can both be strongly impacted by emotional intelligence. Drigas and Papoutsis (2019) observed that an organization's leadership's emotional intelligence has a direct impact on overall productivity. Hanaysha (2016) confirmed that employee productivity is a critical factor in determining the profitability and success of an organization.

Low job satisfaction is a negative consequence of low emotional intelligence. A significant portion of academic institutions' workforce consists of faculty and administrative personnel. Job satisfaction has an effect on teaching, research, contribution, and event engagement in higher education (Khan et al., 2021). Employee job satisfaction and contentment have a significant impact on the quality of education offered and the accomplishment of organizational goals both inside and outside the organization (Khan et al., 2021). To keep workers engaged and dedicated to their company in the modern workplace, leaders need to establish solid working relationships with all staff members and colleagues (Salam, 2017). Academic personnel in higher education have a big influence on students' learning development and the quality of education they receive (Khan et al., 2021)—making academic staff members' job satisfaction essential to higher education institutions' success. Researchers have discovered a strong correlation between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction; job satisfaction and emotional intelligence are related (Anari, 2012). According to Salam (2017), an employee's experience can have a significant impact on their level of job satisfaction. Employee dissatisfaction can impact multiple aspects of their work and have a knock-on effect on other employees' performance. Employees with high emotional intelligence are able to handle stress at work and their colleagues' emotional behavior, according to Mayer and Salovey (1993). As a result, having high emotional intelligence can greatly increase job satisfaction.

#### ***Effects of Emotionally Intelligent Leadership Techniques on the Resilience and Success of Educational Institutions***

The concept of emotional intelligence, or EI, is crucial in determining the overall efficiency and usefulness of a school environment. The ability to recognize, understand, control, and utilize emotions in oneself and others in a positive and constructive way is known as EI. It helps teachers and students grow personally in the classroom, creating a supportive and productive learning environment (Luque González et al., 2022; Thapar et al., 2019).

The acknowledgment of this specific aspect of mental health is increasingly expanding as a critical factor influencing overall academic performance and social interactions in learning environments (Moreno, 2018). According to Novesar (2020), educational institutions that prioritize the development of emotional intelligence stand to benefit from improved communication, increased problem-solving skills, increased stress tolerance, and more compassionate and fruitful interactions between students and faculty. In the larger educational context, emotional intelligence can help create a positive and productive environment that is marked by increased positivity, support, and productivity. Academic achievement has been observed to rise, behavioral issues have been observed to decrease, and teacher-student rapport has been observed to improve in educational institutions that prioritize EI (Chis & Rusu, 2016). Incorporating inclusive strategies, like social-emotional learning (SEL) curricula, has the potential to foster emotional intelligence in the classroom, which will benefit students, teachers, and the larger school community.

Researchers Navas-Martínez et al. (2023) have conducted a study that reinforces the importance of environmental factors in shaping a child's upbringing and their potential influence on emotional intelligence. In a more particular setting, the researcher looks into and finds that kids who grow up with abusive parents not only face attachment difficulties and reduced resilience but also significantly lower emotional intelligence (Afridi & Ali, 2019). The present systematic review is limited in its ability to fully encompass the vast scope of the research. However, the analysis mentioned above makes clear that professionals constantly stress how important it is to develop emotional intelligence in children and young adults. This is a factor that deserves careful thought. Additionally, there is growing recognition of the importance of leadership abilities and EI in relation to academic success (Antonopoulou et al., 2021a, 2021b). These attributes define people with outstanding problem-solving skills, sensible stress-reduction techniques, highly developed interpersonal skills, and a strong will to stick with something when facing academic challenges. After closely examining the data, it becomes clear how complexly EI, leadership, and academic performance interact. The results show that high EI and strong leadership abilities positively influence group productivity, individual academic success, and the dynamics of a classroom environment. It has been observed that leaders with high EI foster an environment that is both productive and empathic, which enhances academic performance (Antonopoulou, 2020).

#### ***Obstacles of Emotional Intelligence and Leadership in Higher Education Institutions***

Higher education institutions now have additional obstacles to overcome in order to lower attrition and boost job satisfaction and organizational productivity (Tilden et al., 2012). According to Masango and Mpfu (2013), institutional or organizational survival, growth, and prosperity are all dependent on retention. According to Tilden et al. (2012), institutions suffer from high employee turnover, an increase in workload, and demands placed on current employees. Leaders have various responsibilities and interact with people on a daily basis. The leaders may experience emotional exhaustion as a result of some of these demanding duties (Finnigan et al., 2018). Managing irate and disgruntled students, parents, staff, and community members is a part of an educational leader's job description (Finnigan et al., 2018). According to Finnigan et al. (2018), leaders are constantly in the forefront and the spotlight, and their emotions can have a positive or negative impact on people around them. Since leaders must inspire and motivate their teams to accomplish common objectives, emotions are a critical component of leadership and people management (Kouzes & Posner, 2012).

According to Leithwood et al. (2020), if a leader's emotions are not positively managed, they have an impact on those around them and consequently affect performance. Strong relationships require effective communication, which can be hampered by a leader's emotions and affect team dynamics (Aldawsari, 2020). Uncontrolled emotions can harm an organization by getting in the

way of fostering employee trust (Hejase et al., 2017). According to Maulding et al. (2012), emotional intelligence is crucial and significant for educational leaders. They point out that a leader's resilience, ability to bounce back fast from setbacks, and potential for success as an educational leader are all closely correlated with their emotional intelligence. Educational administrators prioritize the demands and requirements of the school before their own emotional experience, according to Labby et al. (2012), when breaking down their interpersonal and intrapersonal skill sets—both facets of emotional intelligence.

### Research Questions

The following research questions guide this study:

1. How does a leader's emotional intelligence affect their capacity to apply leadership practices in higher education institutions?
2. Which essential elements of emotional intelligence are associated with effective, long-term leadership in higher education institutions?
3. What effects do emotionally intelligent leadership techniques have on the resilience and success of institutions?
4. What obstacles must emotional intelligence and leadership overcome in order for higher education institutions to integrate them?

### Methodology

In order to compile and evaluate the body of research on leadership paradigms in education, a systematic literature review approach is used in this study. The goal of the systematic literature review was to present a thorough summary of the essential characteristics and behaviors that set leaders apart from managers in educational environments. The researcher used qualitative literature articles from Google Scholar and the findings were drawn from the articles read and reviewed. The researcher consulted 17 articles from Google Scholar. The criteria used to choose these qualitative literature articles were by first analyzing the theoretical underpinnings of the body of existing literature: As part of the literature review, the researcher recorded the current state of knowledge regarding the subject and the methodologies employed in previous research. Furthermore, the researcher continued by assessing how much of the new study is exploratory and how much of the findings will add to the body of knowledge already available on the subject, which should help guide decision-making. Thereafter, themes were formed to obtain findings. Discussion followed and a conclusion was drawn from research findings. To search for the relevant articles, the researcher used the following criteria: First, the researcher used keywords such as Emotional intelligence, Leadership, Higher education, institutional success, and leadership practices. Most articles were searched on Google Scholar; the phrase-searching technique was also applied to limit the results to a desired record. The researcher mostly limited the literature to the range of five years old literature in most instances, except in some cases where the data is still relevant and useful to this paper was allowed. By employing these search criteria, the researcher was able to compile this research paper systematically and eventually obtain the necessary results.

### Results and Discussion

The analysis of data yielded significant findings, which are organized into the following themes to provide a comprehensive understanding of emotional intelligence (EI) in the context of leadership within higher education institutions.

#### Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Practices in Higher Education Institutions

For leaders in higher education to effectively apply emotional intelligence, they must possess self-regulation skills—control over their emotions, desires, and mental states. Self-regulation

includes qualities like honesty, adaptability, and openness to change, which are foundational for effective leadership (Segon & Booth, 2015). Managers who practice self-regulation can better align their actions with their core beliefs, establishing when and where compromises are necessary. This self-management fosters sustainable leadership, a quality essential for long-term success in higher education institutions. Characteristics like conscientiousness, initiative, and emotional self-control support leaders in making decisions that positively impact others, reducing negative influences on the institution's performance (McKeown & Bates, 2013). The research underscores the impact of self-regulation on managers' leadership capacity across various organizational settings, including higher education (Goleman, 2011). Sustainable leadership is also linked to effective human resource practices, as leaders prioritizing sustainability are vigilant of external changes, fostering healthier organizational relationships (Efthimiou, 2017; Iqbal & Ahmad, 2021). Thus, leaders lacking self-regulation risk making decisions that could adversely affect their institutions.

#### Emotional Intelligence on Long-term Leadership Practices in Higher Education Institutions

Emotional intelligence is critical in the long-term success of leadership within educational settings. EI enables leaders to recognize, control, and assess emotions, fostering effective and sustainable leadership. Research indicates that strong, enduring higher education institutions are rooted in leadership that promotes staff engagement, dedication, and solid workplace relationships. These institutions prioritize the well-being and development of their personnel, which is instrumental to overall institutional success (Parrish, 2015; Tiwari, 2016). Employee training and development are also crucial; however, the availability of formalized training and leadership identification programs remains limited in many universities (Wang & Frederick, 2018). Nevertheless, where these practices exist, they contribute significantly to employee growth and retention, which, in turn, enhances institutional performance (Bryan et al., 2009; Pham, 2021). The findings suggest that with effective leadership approaches grounded in EI, higher education institutions are better positioned to succeed in their academic and organizational objectives.

#### Emotional Intelligence and Institutional Success in Higher Education

Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in determining the efficiency and effectiveness of the educational environment. The results show that EI fosters personal growth for both teachers and students, supporting a positive and productive learning space (Luque et al., 2022; Thapar et al., 2019). Increasingly, mental health aspects like EI are recognized as key to academic performance and social dynamics within educational settings (Moreno, 2018). Institutions prioritizing EI development benefit from enhanced communication, problem-solving abilities, stress tolerance, and improved relationships among students and faculty (Novesar, 2020). Academic outcomes improve, behavioral issues reduce, and teacher-student rapport strengthens in EI-focused environments (Chis & Rusu, 2016). Incorporating social-emotional learning (SEL) into curricula can build EI within the classroom, contributing positively to the entire school community and boosting institutional success.

#### Obstacles to Emotional Intelligence in Higher Education Institutions

Higher education institutions often face high employee turnover, workload increases, and heightened demands on current employees, presenting significant challenges to leadership. Leaders bear various responsibilities and face daily interactions that can lead to emotional exhaustion (Finnigan et al., 2018). Educational leaders, constantly in the public eye, must handle complaints from students, parents, staff, and community members, which can be draining (Finnigan et al., 2018). Leaders'

emotional states affect those around them, with their role requiring them to motivate and inspire teams to achieve common goals (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). These demands underscore the importance of emotional intelligence as a tool for managing stress and maintaining a supportive environment amid the pressures of educational leadership.

### Conclusion

The results of the current study show how EI benefits SL. For managers to achieve sustainable leadership and guarantee long-term organizational performance, emotional intelligence is crucial. Workers are always drawn to leaders whom they can easily get along with and who are sustainable. It also demonstrates how an emotionally intelligent individual can make excellent decisions, sense the psychological well-being of their workforce, inspire their team members, concentrate on employee creativity, manage pressure, and constantly consider how their organizations will fare in the future. The study's emphasis on EI and how it affects managers' capacity for sustainable leadership may be helpful. It also encourages managers, scholars, professionals, practitioners, academicians, and education administrators to use EI competencies to develop sustainable leadership skills.

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