

Article

The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Leadership: Enhancing Team Collaboration and Decision-Making

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Abstract: The study explores the role of emotional intelligence (EI) in leadership and its impact on team collaboration and decision-making. Emotional intelligence is a critical factor in effective leadership, influencing how leaders understand and manage their emotions, as well as how they perceive and respond to the emotions of others. The research aims to identify how leaders with high emotional intelligence enhance teamwork, foster communication, and make informed decisions. The study employs a mixed-method approach, using surveys and interviews with leaders and team members across various industries. Findings suggest that leaders with strong EI contribute to a positive team environment, increase trust, and improve decision-making outcomes by fostering collaboration and reducing conflicts. The study highlights the importance of EI in leadership development programs and suggests that organizations should prioritize emotional intelligence training to enhance leadership effectiveness, improve team dynamics, and drive better business outcomes.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, leadership, team collaboration, decision-making, organizational development.

1. Background

Effective leadership is crucial for organizational success, and its impact is significantly influenced by the emotional intelligence (EI) of leaders. Emotional intelligence, which includes the ability to perceive, control, and evaluate emotions, has been increasingly recognized as a key factor in leadership effectiveness. Research by Goleman (1995) highlights that EI is not only critical for personal success but also for enhancing interpersonal relationships within teams and organizations. Leaders with high EI are better equipped to manage stress, communicate effectively, and motivate team members, which ultimately improves team performance and decision-making processes (Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

Several studies have shown that emotional intelligence influences leadership behaviors, particularly in areas such as team collaboration and decision-making. Leaders who exhibit high emotional awareness can navigate conflicts more effectively, fostering an environment where collaboration thrives (Caruso, 2013). Emotional intelligence allows leaders to understand and regulate their emotions, which in turn helps them to manage group dynamics and create a harmonious team environment. Research by Cherniss (2010) underscores the importance of EI in team-based leadership, suggesting that emotionally intelligent leaders are better at building trust and maintaining productive communication within teams.

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Despite the wealth of research on EI and leadership, there remains a gap in understanding how emotional intelligence specifically enhances decision-making and collaboration within diverse team settings. While previous studies have explored the relationship between EI and leadership effectiveness, limited research has directly examined its influence on decision-making processes and team dynamics within modern organizational contexts (Hughes et al., 2011). This research gap emphasizes the need for further exploration into the practical applications of EI in leadership, particularly regarding its influence on improving team collaboration and decision-making outcomes in today's fast-paced work environments.

The urgency of this research is heightened by the increasing complexity and diversity of global teams in the modern workplace. With globalization and technological advancements, leaders are now tasked with managing teams that are more diverse and dispersed than ever before. This makes effective collaboration and decision-making even more critical. As such, understanding the role of EI in enhancing these processes becomes essential for improving leadership practices and achieving organizational goals. This study seeks to fill this gap by focusing on how emotional intelligence contributes to leadership effectiveness, particularly in terms of fostering team collaboration and making better-informed decisions.

The primary objective of this study is to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness, with a specific focus on team collaboration and decision-making. By investigating the ways in which leaders with high emotional intelligence influence their teams, this research aims to provide practical insights into how emotional intelligence can be cultivated within leadership development programs. This study seeks to contribute to the existing literature by highlighting the importance of EI as a critical leadership competency in contemporary organizations and offering strategies for integrating EI into leadership practices (Mayer et al., 2004).

2. Theoretical Review

The concept of emotional intelligence (EI) has evolved significantly since its introduction by Salovey and Mayer (1990), and further popularized by Goleman (1995), who defined it as the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and influence emotions in oneself and others. EI is often broken down into several components, including self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These components collectively enhance leadership effectiveness by enabling leaders to navigate complex interpersonal dynamics, fostering team cohesion, and facilitating better

decision-making processes. According to Goleman (1998), leaders with high EI are more effective in managing emotions in high-pressure situations, thus enhancing both their leadership and team performance.

Research has shown that emotional intelligence is a key predictor of leadership effectiveness. For instance, Bar-On (1997) proposed a model of emotional-social intelligence, which suggests that EI contributes to effective leadership by improving leaders' interpersonal relationships and their ability to handle organizational stress. In the context of team collaboration, emotionally intelligent leaders are able to foster an atmosphere of trust and cooperation, which is essential for effective team performance. According to Druskat and Wolff (2001), emotionally intelligent leaders enhance team collaboration by creating an emotionally supportive environment, which encourages open communication, shared decision-making, and conflict resolution.

Several studies have examined the relationship between EI and decision-making. Emotional intelligence contributes to leadership by allowing leaders to process emotional information in a way that supports decision-making under uncertainty (Mayer et al., 2004). Emotional awareness enables leaders to assess not only their own emotions but also those of their team members, thereby improving the quality of decisions made in group settings. For example, leaders with high EI are better able to recognize the emotional cues of their team members, leading to more empathetic and informed decisions (Côté & Miners, 2006). Additionally, EI enables leaders to maintain emotional balance, preventing impulsive decisions based on short-term emotional reactions, thus promoting long-term strategic thinking (George, 2000).

The link between EI and organizational outcomes, such as team collaboration and decision-making, has been widely studied, but gaps remain in understanding how these two variables interact in specific organizational contexts. While previous research has demonstrated that EI influences leadership effectiveness, it is less clear how EI specifically enhances decision-making and collaboration in diverse team settings. This research aims to fill this gap by exploring the ways in which emotional intelligence contributes to the leadership process, especially in terms of fostering team collaboration and improving decision-making outcomes. By integrating the theories of EI and leadership, this study will provide valuable insights into how emotional intelligence can be cultivated and utilized to enhance leadership practices in contemporary organizational environments.

In addition to individual research on EI and leadership, studies by Wong and Law (2002) have emphasized the importance of EI in improving team dynamics. Their study demonstrated that leaders with higher emotional intelligence contribute to better team functioning, enhanced communication, and improved decision-making outcomes. Moreover, EI has been shown to directly affect the quality of relationships among team members, fostering a positive organizational culture where collaboration and trust are prioritized. This theoretical framework sets the foundation for the current research, which seeks to explore the impact of emotional intelligence on leadership effectiveness in organizational settings.

3. Research Methodology

This research adopts a quantitative research design to investigate the role of emotional intelligence (EI) in leadership effectiveness, specifically in enhancing team collaboration and decision-making. A quantitative approach is chosen because it allows for the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data, providing insights into the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership outcomes (Creswell, 2014). The study employs a correlational research design, which is suitable for exploring the strength and direction of relationships between variables without manipulating them (Field, 2013). This design allows for the examination of the effects of emotional intelligence on leadership behaviors, team collaboration, and decision-making processes.

The population for this study consists of leaders and team members from various organizations across different sectors, including private, public, and non-profit sectors. A stratified random sampling technique is used to ensure that participants are selected from a variety of industries, thus increasing the generalizability of the findings. The final sample includes 200 participants, comprising 100 leaders and 100 team members, with a balanced representation of gender, age, and organizational level. This sampling technique is chosen to obtain a diverse and representative sample while controlling for demographic factors that may influence emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Data is collected using two main instruments: the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS), developed by Schutte et al. (1998), to measure the emotional intelligence of leaders, and the Team Collaboration and Decision-Making Scale (TCDMS), which is adapted from existing instruments measuring team dynamics and decision-making in organizational settings (Druskat & Wolff, 2001). Both instruments are designed to

capture relevant dimensions of emotional intelligence and team processes, with questions tailored to reflect the specific organizational context of the participants. These instruments are validated through pre-testing with a small sample group to ensure content validity and reliability.

For data analysis, descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) are initially used to summarize the characteristics of the sample and to examine the distribution of emotional intelligence scores among leaders. Inferential statistics, including Pearson's correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis, are employed to test the relationships between emotional intelligence and leadership outcomes (team collaboration and decision-making). The use of regression analysis allows for the assessment of the predictive power of emotional intelligence on leadership effectiveness while controlling for other potential influencing factors such as age, experience, and organizational level (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

The research model is expressed as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1(X) + \epsilon$$

Where:

- Y represents the leadership effectiveness (measured by team collaboration and decision-making),
- X represents emotional intelligence (as measured by the Emotional Intelligence Scale),
- β_0 is the constant term,
- β_1 is the regression coefficient representing the impact of emotional intelligence on leadership effectiveness,
- ϵ represents the error term (Field, 2013).

The hypothesis of the study posits that leaders with higher emotional intelligence will demonstrate stronger leadership effectiveness, specifically in improving team collaboration and decision-making.

Data is processed using SPSS software (version 25), and the significance level is set at $p < 0.05$ for all statistical tests. The results of the statistical analyses are interpreted to understand the impact of emotional intelligence on leadership effectiveness in team collaboration and decision-making contexts.

4. Results and Discussion

Data Collection Process

Data collection for this study was conducted over a period of three months, from January to March 2024. The study took place in multiple organizations across various sectors, including private, public, and non-profit sectors, primarily located in urban regions. Participants were selected using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure a diverse and representative sample of both leaders and team members. The final sample consisted of 200 participants (100 leaders and 100 team members), with balanced representation across gender, age, and organizational levels. Each participant was asked to complete the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) and the Team Collaboration and Decision-Making Scale (TCDMS), after which the data was analyzed using SPSS software (version 25).

Results:

The analysis of the data revealed several significant findings regarding the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and leadership effectiveness, particularly in the context of team collaboration and decision-making.

Descriptive Statistics: Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation of the EI scores for the leaders. The results indicate that leaders on average exhibited high levels of emotional intelligence, with a mean score of 4.25 (SD = 0.60). The team members also reported positive perceptions of their leaders' emotional intelligence, with a mean score of 4.10 (SD = 0.58).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Emotional Intelligence Scores

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation
Leaders	4.25	0.60
Team Members	4.10	0.58

Pearson's Correlation Analysis: The Pearson correlation between EI and team collaboration was found to be significant ($r = 0.62, p < 0.01$), suggesting a moderate to strong positive relationship between the two variables. Similarly, EI and decision-making effectiveness were positively correlated ($r = 0.59, p < 0.01$), supporting the hypothesis that emotionally intelligent leaders foster better team collaboration and more effective decision-making. These results are consistent with previous studies, such as those by Goleman (1998) and Druskat & Wolff (2001), which found that EI contributes significantly to leadership effectiveness in team settings.

Table 2: Pearson's Correlation Between Emotional Intelligence, Team Collaboration, and Decision-Making

Variables	Team Collaboration	Decision-Making
Emotional Intelligence	0.62**	0.59**

Note: $p < 0.01$

Multiple Regression Analysis: To further explore the predictive power of EI on leadership effectiveness, multiple regression analysis was conducted with team collaboration and decision-making as the dependent variables. The results showed that EI explained 38% of the variance in team collaboration ($R^2 = 0.38$, $F = 49.2$, $p < 0.001$) and 34% of the variance in decision-making effectiveness ($R^2 = 0.34$, $F = 42.3$, $p < 0.001$). This finding highlights the significant impact of emotional intelligence on leadership outcomes, particularly in enhancing team dynamics and decision-making processes. The results corroborate the work of Côté & Miners (2006), who found that EI is a strong predictor of leadership effectiveness in both team collaboration and decision-making contexts.

Dependent Variable	R^2	F-value	p-value
Team Collaboration	0.38	49.2	< 0.001
Decision-Making	0.34	42.3	< 0.001

Discussion:

The findings from this study reinforce the significance of emotional intelligence in leadership effectiveness, particularly in relation to team collaboration and decision-making. The positive correlation between EI and both team collaboration ($r = 0.62$) and decision-making effectiveness ($r = 0.59$) aligns with the theoretical framework proposed by Goleman (1998), which emphasizes the role of EI in enhancing interpersonal relationships and decision-making capacity. These results suggest that leaders with higher EI are better equipped to foster a collaborative team environment and make decisions that take into account both emotional and rational aspects of a situation.

The regression analysis further supports the hypothesis that emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of leadership effectiveness. With R^2 values of 0.38 and 0.34 for team collaboration and decision-making, respectively, the data highlights the substantial impact of EI on these leadership outcomes. This finding is consistent with previous studies, such as those by Mayer et al. (2004) and Druskat & Wolff (2001), who demonstrated the importance of EI in leadership contexts.

These results also have practical implications for organizations. Training programs focused on developing emotional intelligence in leaders could be beneficial in improving team dynamics, enhancing communication, and promoting more effective decision-making. Moreover, leaders with high EI are likely to create a work environment that encourages trust, openness, and cooperation, all of which contribute to improved organizational performance.

However, it is important to note that while EI significantly impacts leadership effectiveness, other factors, such as experience, organizational culture, and leadership style, may also play a role. Future research could explore the interactions between EI and these other variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of effective leadership.

Implications

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the body of knowledge on emotional intelligence and leadership by providing empirical evidence of the relationship between EI, team collaboration, and decision-making. The findings support the assertion that EI is a crucial factor in leadership success, particularly in enhancing collaborative efforts and decision-making processes within teams.

From a practical standpoint, organizations can benefit from integrating EI development into their leadership training programs. Given that emotional intelligence is a skill that can be developed over time, it is essential for organizations to invest in training initiatives that focus on improving emotional awareness, empathy, and interpersonal skills. By doing so, organizations can foster stronger, more cohesive teams and improve overall decision-making processes.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, this study affirms the significant role of emotional intelligence (EI) in enhancing leadership effectiveness, specifically in terms of team collaboration and decision-making. The findings demonstrate that leaders with higher levels of EI foster more collaborative environments and make more effective decisions. Both the correlation and regression analyses revealed a strong positive relationship between EI and these leadership outcomes, with EI explaining a substantial portion of the variance in team collaboration and decision-making effectiveness. These results are consistent with previous literature on EI, such as Goleman (1998) and Côté & Miners (2006), and underscore the critical role of emotional intelligence in leadership success.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that organizations prioritize emotional intelligence development in their leadership training programs. Developing EI can lead to improved team dynamics, more effective decision-making, and ultimately, better organizational performance. As EI is a skill that can be cultivated over time, investing in EI training initiatives for leaders is a practical strategy for fostering a more resilient and high-performing workforce. Furthermore, leaders with high EI are likely to create a work culture that promotes trust, cooperation, and innovation, which are essential for organizational growth and success.

However, this study is not without limitations. The sample was limited to organizations within urban regions, which may affect the generalizability of the findings to rural or less-developed areas. Future research could explore the impact of EI on leadership effectiveness in different cultural contexts or industries, as well as the potential moderating effects of other leadership attributes such as experience or organizational culture. Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide further insight into how EI development over time influences long-term leadership effectiveness and organizational outcomes.

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