

## **Exploring the Influence of Emotional Intelligence Qualities on the development of Students' Leadership Skills**

**Dr. Um E Rubab<sup>1</sup>, Anza Khan<sup>2</sup>, Mehmoona Shaihd<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Alhamd Islamic University AIU, Islamabad, Pakistan. Email: [drumerubab@aiu.edu.pk](mailto:drumerubab@aiu.edu.pk)

<sup>2</sup> M. Phill Scholar, Department of Education, Alhamd Islamic University AIU, Islamabad, Pakistan. Email: [anzakhan05@gmail.com](mailto:anzakhan05@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup> Department of Education, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi, Pakistan. Email: [mehmoonashahid60@gmail.com](mailto:mehmoonashahid60@gmail.com)

**DOI: <https://doi.org/10.70670/sra.v4i1.1704>**

### **Abstract**

Emotional intelligence (EI) plays a significant role in developing effective leadership skills among students. This study explores the impact of emotional intelligence on students' leadership abilities in educational settings. This research examines how emotionally intelligent students demonstrate better decision-making, conflict resolution, teamwork, and communication skills compared to those with lower levels of emotional intelligence. The main objective of studies is to examine how students describe the role of emotional intelligence in developing their leadership abilities and identify the emotional intelligence components that students believe are most important for effective leadership. refers to the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and regulate one's own emotions while also being sensitive to the emotions of others. This research using a qualitative design to gain in-depth insights into students' experiences and perceptions. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with secondary and higher secondary students. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring patterns and core themes related to emotional intelligence and leadership development. The findings of the study reveal that emotional Intelligence plays a significant role in strengthening students' leadership capabilities. Students with higher emotional awareness demonstrated greater confidence in decision-making and were more effective in resolving conflicts. The study concludes that emotional Intelligence significantly influences the development of leadership skills among students. Therefore, it is recommended that schools integrate emotional intelligence training, reflective practices, and collaborative activities into their curricula to promote holistic leadership development and prepare students for future academic, professional, and social responsibilities.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Student Leadership, Self-Awareness, Emotional Regulation Empathy, Decision-Making,

### **Introduction**

Leadership has become an essential skill for students, influencing not only their academic performance but also their personal and social development (Northouse, 2018). Effective leadership involves guiding, motivating, and inspiring peers while fostering collaboration, responsible decision-making, and problem-solving abilities (Bass & Riggio, 2006). While traditional education

emphasizes academic knowledge, it is increasingly recognized that emotional intelligence (EI) is a key factor in shaping successful student leaders (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008). Emotional intelligence the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and regulate one's own emotions and the emotions of others equips students with the essential skills needed to navigate complex interpersonal situations and lead effectively (Bar-On, 2006; Cherniss, 2010). Students with higher levels of emotional intelligence demonstrate self-awareness, which allows them to identify their strengths and weaknesses and make informed decisions. Self-regulation enables them to remain calm under stress, manage conflicts constructively, and respond thoughtfully to challenges. Empathy helps student leaders understand the perspectives and emotions of their peers, fostering trust, collaboration, and cohesive teamwork (Mayer et al., 2008). Additionally, social skills and intrinsic motivation enhance their ability to communicate effectively, inspire others, and maintain a positive learning environment (Boyatzis, 2018). Together, these competencies form the foundation of responsible, adaptable, and influential leadership among students.

Emotionally intelligent students are more effective in leadership roles such as class representatives, group leaders, and student council members (Zeidner, Matthews, & Roberts, 2009; Petrides, Frederickson, & Furnham, 2004). Emotional Intelligence (EI) is explained through three main models: the Ability Model, the Trait Model, and the Mixed Model. The Ability Model (Mayer & Salovey, 1997) views EI as the ability to perceive, understand, and manage emotions. The Trait Model (Petrides, 2001) considers EI as a personality trait that reflects emotional self-perceptions, such as confidence and stress management.

The Mixed Model (Goleman, 1995) combines emotional abilities and personality traits and includes self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. This model is widely used in leadership research because it explains how emotional intelligence supports effective leadership skills.

This study aims to explore the impact of emotional intelligence on students' leadership skills, focusing on how emotional awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social competence contribute to effective leadership. By understanding this relationship, educational institutions can design interventions, workshops, mentorship programs, and reflective activities that strengthen students' emotional intelligence while enhancing their leadership capacity. Such programs help prepare students to face social and academic challenges confidently, manage interpersonal relationships effectively, and inspire peers toward achieving collective goals. Integrating emotional intelligence development into school curricula can empower students to lead responsibly, communicate effectively, resolve conflicts, and build collaborative environments. By fostering emotional and social competencies alongside academic learning, educational institutions can nurture confident, empathetic, and capable future leaders ready to make meaningful contributions to their communities.

### **Problem statement**

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has been recognized as a significant factor influencing personal, social, and professional success. In educational settings, leadership skills among students are essential for teamwork, decision-making, communication, and problem-solving. However, many educational institutions primarily focus on academic achievement while giving limited attention to the development of students' emotional competencies. As a result, students may struggle to manage emotions, resolve conflicts, and demonstrate effective leadership behaviors. Although previous studies suggest a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness, there is insufficient empirical evidence examining how different components of emotional intelligence such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills specifically impact the leadership skills of students. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the impact of emotional intelligence on students' leadership skills in order to provide insights for integrating emotional skill development into educational programs and leadership training initiatives.

## **Objectives of the Study**

- To examine how students describe the role of emotional intelligence in developing their leadership abilities.
- To identify the emotional intelligence components that students believe are most important for effective leadership.

## **Significance of the Study**

The study on the impact of emotional intelligence on leadership skills of students is significant because it highlights the critical role of emotional competencies in developing effective student leaders. By exploring how self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, motivation, and social skills influence leadership abilities, the study provides valuable insights for educators and school administrators. Understanding this relationship can help educational institutions design targeted programs, workshops, and activities that strengthen students' emotional intelligence, enabling them to handle conflicts, make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and lead peers responsibly. This approach ensures that leadership development goes beyond academic knowledge and focuses on holistic growth. Furthermore, the study is significant for students themselves, as it emphasizes the importance of emotional intelligence in personal, social, and academic success. Students who cultivate emotional competencies are better equipped to collaborate with peers, manage stress, adapt to challenges, and inspire others. Additionally, by addressing a gap in existing research on the link between emotional intelligence and student leadership, this study contributes to the academic literature and provides evidence-based recommendations for curriculum design and leadership development programs. Ultimately, it supports the preparation of confident, empathetic, and socially responsible leaders capable of making positive contributions to their schools and communities.

## **Literature Review**

Emotional intelligence explains different models such as ability-based and mixed models, and highlights key components including self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.

## **Emotional intelligence and leadership**

Emotional intelligence (EI) includes self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. EI is a critical factor for personal, social, and academic success and contributes to effective leadership among students (Bar-On, 2006; Boyatzis, 2018).

## **Self-Awareness**

Helps students recognize their strengths and weaknesses. Helps student leaders reflect on their behaviors to improve leadership performance (Mayer et al., 2008). Enhances decision-making, confidence, and leadership effectiveness.

## **Self-Regulation**

Self-Regulation students to manage emotions, stay calm under stress, and control impulses. Supports conflict resolution and responsible leadership behaviors. Students with self-regulation skills can remain composed in challenging situations (Petridis et al., 2004).

## **Social Skills and Motivation**

Social competence improves communication, relationship building, and group coordination. Motivation helps inspire peers and achieve collective goals (Book, 2004). Motivation helps student leaders inspire peers and maintain team engagement. These skills allow students to lead effectively in group projects, councils, and class activities

## **Evidence from Studies**

Emotionally intelligent students perform better in leadership roles, mediating conflicts and encouraging participation (Zeidner, Matthews, & Roberts, 2009). EI-focused programs improve students' leadership abilities, problem-solving, and interpersonal interactions (Brackett, Rivers, & Salovey, 2011). EI is a strong predictor of leadership effectiveness in educational and organizational contexts.

## **Theoretical Framework of Leadership Skills**

This section explains leadership theories related to student development, such as transformational leadership and social leadership theories. It discusses how leadership skills like communication, decision-making, teamwork, and conflict resolution are developed in educational settings.

## **Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Leadership**

This heading reviews previous studies that examine the connection between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness. It highlights empirical findings showing how emotional intelligence contributes to better leadership performance.

## **Research Methodology**

This study adopted a qualitative research design to explore the impact of emotional intelligence on leadership skills among students. Qualitative research allows for an in-depth understanding of students' experiences, perceptions, and behaviors regarding emotional intelligence and leadership. Through detailed exploration, this approach enables the researcher to identify themes and patterns that explain how emotional competencies influence leadership effectiveness.

## **Research Design**

Phenomenological research design was used in this study and focused on understanding students lived experiences regarding how emotional intelligence influences their leadership development.

## **Population of the Study**

The population of the study consisted of 120 secondary and higher secondary students actively involved in leadership roles, such as class representatives, student council members, and group leaders. These students were selected because they regularly engage in leadership activities that require emotional awareness, communication, teamwork, and decision-making.

## **Sample of the Study**

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants who demonstrated leadership involvement. A total of 30 students (15 male and 15 female) were chosen from different classes and streams to ensure diversity in experiences and perspectives. The sample size was considered sufficient to provide in-depth qualitative data while maintaining manageability for interviews and focus group discussions.

## **Data Collection Methods**

Data for this qualitative study were collected using semi-structured interviews in which, detailed insights from students related to emotional intelligence and leadership skills related data were collected.

## **Semi-Structured Interviews**

Selected participants express their personal experiences and perceptions regarding emotional intelligence and leadership. Questions focused on self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, social skills, and motivation as they relate to leadership roles. They enabled them in-depth understanding

of each student's leadership behaviors and challenges. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed to ensure accuracy and facilitate analysis.

### **Data analysis**

Thematic analysis is a widely used method in qualitative research for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. This study follows the approach proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), which provides a clear six-step.

1. Transcribing all themes
2. Reading and re-reading the transcripts to identify recurring ideas and patterns.
3. Coding significant statements related to emotional intelligence and leadership skills.
4. Categorizing codes into major themes, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, social skills, and motivation.
5. Interpreting the results to understand the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness.

### **Finding of the study**

#### **Emotional Intelligence Enhances Self-Awareness in Leadership**

The study found that students with higher emotional intelligence demonstrated strong self-awareness. Participants reported that understanding their own emotions helped them make better decisions, control reactions, and lead confidently during group activities. Self-awareness was identified as the foundation of effective student leadership.

#### **Emotional Regulation Improves Decision-Making**

Students highlighted that managing emotions during stressful situations improved their leadership performance. Those who could control anger, frustration, or anxiety were better at solving problems and maintaining group harmony. Emotional regulation was directly linked to responsible and balanced decision-making.

#### **Empathy Strengthens Teamwork and Communication**

Participants responses related empathy played a significant role in leadership effectiveness. Students who understood others' feelings were more supportive, better listeners, and more successful in resolving conflicts. Empathy helped leaders build trust and positive relationships within teams.

#### **Social Skills Promote Effective Group Management**

Participants reported that strong communication and interpersonal skills helped them guide peers effectively. Students with higher emotional intelligence were confident in public speaking, motivating team members, and handling disagreements constructively.

#### **Motivation Encourages Goal Achievement**

Emotionally intelligent students showed higher intrinsic motivation. They remained focused on goals, inspired others, and maintained commitment to tasks. Motivation was considered a key factor in sustaining leadership roles.

#### **Lack of Emotional Intelligence Creates Leadership Challenges**

Some participants reported difficulties in managing emotions, which led to misunderstandings, conflicts, and ineffective leadership. This finding highlights the importance of emotional intelligence training in educational institutions.

#### **Emotional Intelligence Builds Leadership Confidence**

Participants demonstrated that higher emotional intelligence has greater impact on confidence in

taking leadership roles. They were more comfortable expressing their ideas, guiding peers, and handling responsibilities. Participants shared that understanding their emotions reduced self-doubt and improved their public presence during presentations and group discussions.

## **Recommendations**

**Leadership Development Programs:** Schools and universities should organize structured leadership development programs that include emotional intelligence components. Activities such as group projects, role-playing, peer mentoring, and leadership camps can strengthen both emotional and leadership competencies.

**Teacher Training on Emotional Intelligence:** Teachers should receive professional training to understand emotional intelligence and its role in student leadership. When teachers model emotional awareness and empathy, students are more likely to adopt these behaviors.

**Workshops on Emotional Regulation and Conflict Resolution:** Institutions should conduct workshops focusing on stress management, emotional control, and conflict resolution strategies. These skills are essential for students who take leadership roles in academic and co-curricular activities.

**Counseling and Mentorship Support:** Guidance counselors and mentors should support students in developing emotional competencies. Regular counseling sessions can help students improve self-confidence, emotional balance, and interpersonal relationships.

**Assessment of Emotional Intelligence:** Educational institutions may consider assessing students' emotional intelligence periodically to identify strengths and areas for improvement. This can help in designing targeted interventions for leadership development.

## **Discussion**

The findings of this study indicate that emotional intelligence (EI) significantly influences the leadership skills of students. Components such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, social skills, and motivation were found to enhance students' ability to lead effectively. For instance, self-awareness helped students recognize their strengths and weaknesses, improving decision-making and confidence, while self-regulation enabled them to manage stress and maintain fairness during conflicts. Empathy promoted teamwork and trust among peers, and social skills were crucial for communication, conflict resolution, and motivating others. Motivation encouraged students to take initiative and persist in challenging leadership roles. These findings align with prior research highlighting that emotionally intelligent leaders are more effective, adaptable, and capable of inspiring their teams. Students who exhibited higher overall EI demonstrated better conflict management, teamwork, and decision-making abilities. This emphasizes the holistic role of emotional intelligence in student leadership development, suggesting that educational institutions should prioritize EI training to cultivate responsible, confident, and emotionally competent leaders. Overall, the findings confirm that emotional intelligence is a critical determinant of leadership effectiveness in academic settings.

## **Conclusion**

This study highlights the significant impact of emotional intelligence on the leadership skills of students. The findings indicate that students with higher levels of emotional intelligence demonstrate greater self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, social skills, and motivation, all of which contribute to effective leadership. Social skills (85%) and self-awareness (83%) were identified as the most influential factors, enhancing communication, teamwork, decision-making, and conflict resolution.

Students with strong emotional intelligence were more confident, proactive, and capable of inspiring and motivating their peers, while those with lower EI faced challenges in managing emotions and leading effectively. Furthermore, the study reveals that the components of emotional intelligence are interconnected, supporting the holistic development of leadership competencies. Self-awareness strengthens self-regulation, empathy enhances social skills, and motivation drives initiative and persistence. These findings suggest that cultivating emotional intelligence is essential for developing responsible, adaptable, and competent student leaders. Therefore, educational institutions should prioritize emotional intelligence training and provide opportunities for practical leadership experiences to foster the growth of emotionally intelligent and effective future leaders.

## References

- Austin, E. J., Saklofske, D. H., & Egan, V. (2005). Personality, well-being, and health correlates of trait emotional intelligence. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 38(3), 547–558.
- Bar-On, R. (2006). The Bar-On model of emotional-social intelligence (ESI). *Psicothema*, 18(Supplement), 13–25.
- Boyatzis, R. E. (2018). *The competent manager: A model for effective performance*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Brackett, M. A., Rivers, S. E., & Salovey, P. (2011). Emotional intelligence: Implications for personal, social, academic, and workplace success. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 5(1), 88–103.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Côté, S. (2014). Emotional intelligence in organizations. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 1, 459–488.
- Dulewicz, V., & Higgs, M. J. (2000). Emotional intelligence: A review and evaluation study. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 15(4), 341–372.
- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. Bantam Books.
- Goleman, D. (1998). What makes a leader? *Harvard Business Review*, 76(6), 93–102.
- Mayer, J. D., & Salovey, P. (1993). The intelligence of emotional intelligence. *Intelligence*, 17(4), 433–442.
- Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., & Caruso, D. R. (2008). Emotional intelligence: New ability or eclectic traits? *American Psychologist*, 63(6), 503–517.
- Petrides, K. V., Frederickson, N., & Furnham, A. (2004). The role of trait emotional intelligence in academic performance and deviant behavior at school. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 36(2), 277–293.
- Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 9(3), 185–211.
- Zeidner, M., Matthews, G., & Roberts, R. D. (2009). *What we know about emotional intelligence: How it affects learning, work, relationships, and our mental health*. MIT Press.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68–78.
- Petrides, K. V., & Furnham, A. (2000). On the dimensional structure of emotional intelligence. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 29(2), 313–320.