

Research Paper



Emotional intelligence's importance in women's leadership & managerial capabilities

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p>Article History:</p> <p>Received: 31 January 2025</p> <p>Revised: 15 April 2025</p> <p>Accepted: 25 April 2025</p> <p>Published: 11 June 2025</p> <p>Keywords:</p> <p>Leadership</p> <p>Emotional</p> <p>Intelligence</p> <p>Women's Leadership</p> <p>Managerial Skills</p>	<p>Women leaders who possess high emotional intelligence are better equipped to follow their intuition and make wise choices. Women's leadership is greatly aided by emotional intelligence (EI), which enables them to succeed in a variety of fields. Women are naturally good at understanding others, balancing their emotions, and creating inclusive settings. The present research aims to investigate the ways in which emotional intelligence enhances the leadership skills and position of women. This study aimed to investigate, through a review of the literature, how emotional intelligence (EI) affects women's leadership, as evidence indicates that EI plays a significant role in predicting effective leadership attributes. We also discovered that there is a societal belief that women are typically perceived as being more sensitive and understanding than men. We go over the definitions of EI and leadership and investigate the relationship between women, EI, and leadership.</p>



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1. INTRODUCTION

The field of leadership studies began to take off in the nineteenth century, according to Grint (2011), when writers like Carlyle (1872) started examining the qualities that made historical figures like Abraham Lincoln capable and successful leaders. The "Great Man Theory" and the Leadership Trait Approach, which recognized leadership as an innate ability, were the products of the research (Khan et

al.,2016). This study postulates that leaders possess innate personality features that account for their positions of authority. Mann (1959) identified six traits- intelligence, masculinity, dominance, adaptability, extraversion & conservatism that characterize effective leadership. Lord and his friends (1986) re-examined Mann's findings and concluded that intelligence, masculinity, and power were critical components of effective leadership. As they looked at what makes a good leader, these researchers underlined the importance of masculinity. These observations, however, go counter to the more expansive and "increasingly sophisticated"(Grint,2011) understanding of leadership that is prevalent today. Therefore, a good leader is defined by their behavior, authenticity, and the environment in which they operate, not merely by their personal qualities (Debele,2019). Furthermore, accomplished female leaders have shown that femininity can serve as a characteristic of successful leadership.

There has been a significant modification to the study on identifying good leadership. Researchers increasingly recognise that both men and women can acquire leadership abilities, as they are not inborn (Northouse,2010). Furthermore, it is no longer thought that masculinity is a quality that is positively associated with leadership on its own. Rather, according to Goleman (1998), EI is one of the essential requirements for effective leadership. This realization contradicts the trait approach since, to start, EI is a skill that can be developed. Second, gender stereotypes claim that women are more adept at interpersonal skills and empathy (Loeffler & Greitemeyer,2021), two critical components of emotional intelligence. As a result, society develops the assumption that women are more emotionally intelligent than men (Fernández-Berrocal,2012). Thus, the subject of whether EI influences and improves women's leadership competencies will be covered in the research review that follows.

2. RELATED WORK

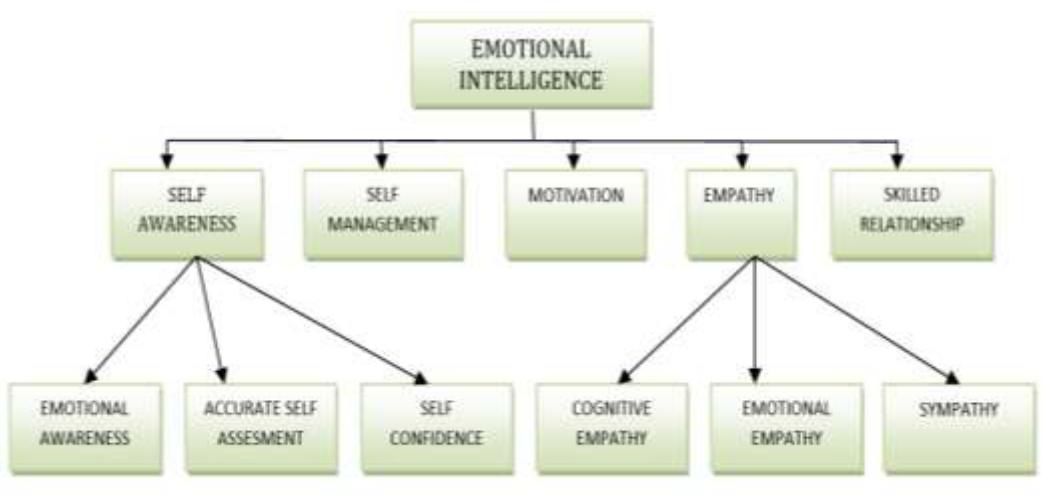
Describing Leadership and Emotional Intelligence Leadership

Studies have recognized the need for capable leaders and the risks associated with inept leadership, which is one of the key reasons why certain nations, like the US and the UK, have fared well during the COVID-19 pandemic while others have not [1]. Success and performance are determined by a leader's style, whether in business, politics, or daily life. Although the study of leadership has been around since the time of ancient thinkers like Aristotle and Plato [2], the field has advanced most in the last century. The skills method, which emphasizes skills and talents that can be learned and improved, superseded the trait approach, which in the 1960s concentrated on the attributes that leaders possessed [3]. The attribute approach held that a leader's innate traits and personality determined how effective they were as a leader [4]. The body of knowledge regarding leadership approaches has grown and matured over time. Researchers increasingly agree that a leader's personality and the dynamic they have with the group they lead are critical to good leadership [5].

According to [5], leadership is regarded as a collaborative process wherein an individual helps another individual or a group of individuals accomplish a shared objective. This leadership model's core components are the leader, influence, a shared objective, and a community of followers. Everyone has access to this leadership process, and everyone may acquire the skills needed to lead effectively. There are also additional leadership philosophies that seek to outline efficient procedures for leading. The theory of Authentic Leadership emerged from studies aimed at improving good leadership. It centers on the honesty and dependability of leaders through their authenticity [6]. The theory of Transformational Leadership pertains to the alterations that transpire throughout the leadership process, with the objective of attaining high standards by motivating subordinates to surpass preconceived notions of achievement [7]. These two methods focus on the relationship that exists between a leader and their followers, which is influenced by moral norms, self-awareness, listening as a coaching technique, inspiration and motivation, and transparency [8]. The goal of leadership is to help others reach their maximum potential as a group, and it is underpinned by a solid ethical basis. According to Bennis and Nanus, leaders are morally upright individuals [9].

Emotional Intelligence

Numerous leadership philosophies emphasize the need for emotional investment. Mayer and Caruso state that Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the ability to comprehend and make use of emotional information connected to social connections [10]. They further state that EI is the capability to both enhance and understand emotions. Conversely, Daniel Goleman focused on characterizing and elucidating the concept of EI and proposed that EI is determined by five components [Figure 1](#).



[Figure 1](#). Elements that Determine Emotional Intelligence

The first element is self-awareness. People with this attribute are able to identify their emotions and sentiments as well as the cause of them. Additionally, self-awareness improves our intuition, which consists of three emotional abilities [10], and speeds up our decision-making process [11]. Second, truthful self-evaluation guarantees that people are conscious of their inner resources and, consequently, their capacities, strengths, and shortcomings [12]. Lastly, a deep awareness and insight into one's strengths and weaknesses are necessary for emotional competence and self-confidence [12]. EI is also determined by self-management. Effective self-management is referred to as self-management. For instance, this can be a responsible and useful strategy for managing unsettling or terrifying feelings like failure anxiety.

Another crucial component of emotional intelligence is motivation, which is the third factor [13]. Goleman asserts that people with strong emotional intelligence are typically intensely driven by their own desires and goals. The fourth component is empathy, which is defined as the capacity to identify and comprehend the emotions that other people are experiencing. Three distinct types of empathy exist. Understanding how others see things is made possible by the first type of empathy, known as cognitive empathy. Emotional empathy is the second kind. It enables one to understand the emotions of others. The ability to alleviate another person's pain is implied by the third type of empathy, which is commonly referred to as sympathy [14]. When the four afore mentioned variables are combined, the domain of expert connections. Leaders can attain superior performance when they have mastered these elements and possess the emotional intelligence (EI) competencies to support the success of both individuals and groups.

The interaction with our quickly evolving understanding of the neurosciences and how they contribute to good leadership is another significant component of EI research. Researchers have attempted to elucidate the causes and processes of emotional intelligence (EI) in our brains. First, it is important to highlight that the human brain is always changing, including all the way into adulthood. "The brain's neuroplasticity shapes itself according to repeated experiences," according to Goleman's report. According to Pascale, neuroplasticity is the "ability of the brain to react, therefore its capacity to reorganize itself through new connections or by disconnecting certain neural paths" [15].

Furthermore, each of the several brain regions has a distinct purpose and constantly interacts with the others [15]. But according to Goleman, the brain regions supporting emotional intelligence development are the last to anatomically form. The limbic brain region is where it originated [15]. Experience and regular feedback teach and change this part of the brain that deals with emotions. For example, a particular behavior needs to be used and repeated in order to transform good intentions into habitual habits ongoing [16].

Women's Leadership

The obstacles and discrimination that women still encounter when pursuing leadership positions could be contributing factors to the under-representation of women in these positions. Scholars have identified an imperceptible barrier, sometimes referred to as the "glass ceiling," that impedes women from achieving positions of leadership [17]. Women consequently deal with barriers such as the distribution of responsibilities based on gender stereotypes, the lack of access to professional networks, or doubts about women's suitability for leadership roles [18].

"People do evaluate female leaders slightly more negatively than equivalent male leaders," claim Eagly and companions [19]. One explanation would be that women are more likely to have qualities in their personalities like selflessness, warmth, or kindness thought to be unrelated to successful leadership [20]. Conversely, men are seen as aggressive, competitive, and self-assured [21]. According to researchers, women frequently display a different leadership style. Women are more likely than men to choose a democratic or participative leadership style, as shown by the findings of Eagly and colleagues. Presenting in a democratic or participative manner is therefore seen as a feminine style of leadership, in contrast to the more authoritarian tendencies of men [22]. Effective leadership and organizational outcomes are thought to be effectively facilitated by participatory leadership [23].

Women are perceived to adopt a distinctive, more feminine leadership style [24]. Consequently, as noted by Eagly and colleagues, women who embrace stereotypically feminine leadership approaches tend to receive higher evaluations regarding their effectiveness as leaders. In contrast, those who exhibit a more masculine leadership style are often rated lower. Despite these perceptions, the number of female leaders remains significantly lower compared to their male counterparts [25]. Nonetheless, considering the four dimensions of economic participation, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment [26], the proportion of women in leadership roles is on the rise, moving toward greater gender parity.

For instance, the Nordic region leads the world in gender equality rankings and is seen as a pioneer in the advancement of equality between women and men. Even with their notable achievements, from 2017 to 2019 just 41.4% of parliamentarians in these nations were female [27]. In the nations that make up the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the average number of women serving on the boards of the largest listed companies was 25.5% in 2019 [28].

Keohane clarifies that it is "not true that all women in all positions of leadership behave in ways that are typically female" in spite of this fairly traditional divergence between feminine and masculine leadership style. But it becomes clear that increasing the number of women in leadership roles improves the pool of prospective competent candidates and can increase the group's viewpoints for more productive task design and decision-making. Furthermore, according to Dezsö and Ross, "the top management team benefits from informational and social diversity benefits when there is a representation of women in top management". Glass and colleagues go on to say that while gender diversity on boards promotes more ecologically responsible behavior, according to Foss and colleagues, having more women in management or leadership roles fosters innovative processes.

According to Lopez-Zafra et al., women are more likely to exhibit transformative leadership. As was previously said, transformational leadership aims for more goal completion than anticipated and concentrates on interactions between the leader and subordinates. According to Northouse, transformational leadership outlines four components of effective leadership: intellectual stimulation, individualized concern, inspiring motivation, and idealized influence. In light of these elements, as role models with a clear vision, leaders should inspire and motivate others, support and encourage innovation

in their followers, and pay attention to their subordinates. As a result, successful female leaders emotionally invest, assign work according to subordinates' strengths, and motivate [29].

The Relationship between Gender and Emotional Intelligence

The question of whether there is a relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and gender that is, whether women are more emotionally intelligent than men will be addressed in the section that follows. According to [30], Simon Baron Cohen outlines biological arguments that support women's greater emotional capabilities, contending that people either have an extreme female brain or an extreme male brain. Individuals with an extreme female brain are more likely to exhibit empathy, while men have an advantage when it comes to comprehending and creating complex systems. According to [31], women with an extreme female brain are therefore thought to have greater EI than men with an extreme male brain because of their empathy. Researchers have attempted to pinpoint socialization as a significant factor in women's propensity for having high EI. Sánchez-Núñez and colleagues assert that women are more likely to express their emotions more fully and have a greater capacity for empathizing with others [32]. This might have its roots in the early years, when girls are encouraged to talk about and consider their emotions.

Researchers suggested that "empathy is influenced by contextual factors and can be systematically biased by gender roles and stereotypical beliefs" [33] and have not discovered any gender differences in EI [34]. Consequently, a few gender psychologists, in the absence of additional variables, note that gender "does not have explanatory power," as noted by Fernández-Berrocal et al. Thus, while it is feasible to make generalizations that could characterize the EI of an ordinary woman, they must be contextualized, evaluated, and tailored to the needs of both men and women. Therefore, it is clear that men have comparable propensities to have EI, despite our socially and culturally based assumptions about women's emotions.

EI is not genetically determined, according to Daniel Goleman, who describes how, for example, women exhibit emotional empathy and social abilities more adeptly than men do. Conversely, men are more adept at overcoming negative feelings and projecting confidence and hope. According to Goleman, these distinctions are strong and weak characteristics, respectively, that may not apply to every person. As a result, a woman may be more self-assured than a male, whereas a man may be more empathetic. Moreover, Daniel Goleman shows that a person, independent of circumstances, can acquire emotional intelligence (EI) and related competencies. Irrespective of gender, one can focus on enhancing their emotional intelligence and aptitude and observes that "EI seems to be largely learnt, and it continues to develop as we go through life and we learn from our experiences, our competence in it can keep growing". In contrast to IQ, which changes little after our teen years. Ultimately, as Goleman put it, "neither is better; both have advantages"; both sexes are predisposed to EI, and gender doesn't always translate into greater empathy or self-assurance. In particular, men and women have equal opportunity to learn emotional intelligence and increase EI from practice.

Emotional Intelligence and Leadership

Conversely, unpleasant emotions can interfere with work, as the theory of Emotional Hijacking elucidates. A person's emotional intelligence may also drop as a result of these unfavorable feelings [35]. As a result, a skilled leader understands how to collaborate inside the group by raising satisfaction levels and providing emotional guidance and cooperative demeanor, as well as to manage unpleasant feelings to prevent emotional hijacking [36]. It is crucial to recognize the significance of the elements of EI self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and skilled relationships in effective leadership. Lastly, emotional intelligence in leaders could be further demonstrated by analyzing, for example, its correlation with organizational outcomes at the individual leader level or the team or working group levels.

The limbic system, the emotional center of the human brain, is highly relevant to emotional intelligence, according to a number of neuroscientific explanations for why EI is relevant in predicting effective leadership outcomes. One such explanation is the Open Loop theory, which describes the nature of the limbic system and shows how an individual's inner state is related to external sources. Mirroring is

the term used to describe this physiological change brought about by an outsider. Therefore, the open-loop limbic system illustrates how crucial emotional intelligence (EI) can be to a leader's capacity to manage both their own and others' emotions. As a benefit for which the leader takes on the emotional direction of the group, an individual's mood plays a critical role in determining his effectiveness because a positive mood enhances neural abilities, which allow leaders to effectively work towards goal accomplishment.

Does emotional intelligence have a bearing on successful leadership outcomes? "Great leaders work through the emotions," claims psychologist Daniel Goleman. According to John D. Mayer and David Caruso, "leaders who can use feelings will have advantages" when describing good leadership. Thus, effective leadership is strongly predicted by emotional intelligence. Making decisions involves both cognitive and emotional processes. According to Emmerling and Goleman, they encompass the emotional abilities of motivation, empathy, self-awareness, and affective self-regulation. These EI components are important for a group's organizational structure among other things. Furthermore, the ability to manage uncomfortable feelings and feel other people's emotions makes one more effective in situations like evaluations.

The aforementioned understandings can also be applied to a number of leadership theories, such as "Emotional intelligence contributes to a strong transformational leadership", where emotional involvement is seen as a critical component of competent and effective leadership. Motivational inspiration is one of the elements of transformational leadership that Walumbwa and associates list. These academics explained emotions, particularly the emotional appeal, as essential for inspiring and motivating subordinates in this motivational inspiration. They could reach greater heights than anticipated and maximize their potential.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research was undertaken with the primary aim of exploring how Emotional Intelligence (EI) influences women's leadership capabilities. To achieve this, a comprehensive review of existing literature was conducted. The first phase of the process involved a meticulous search across various online academic databases. Specific keywords were strategically employed during the search, including "leadership in women," "emotional intelligence among women," and "emotional intelligence and managerial skills," to ensure the retrieval of highly relevant studies and articles. The scope of the review was intentionally restricted to journal papers published in the English language that were freely accessible for download and review. This decision helped to maintain consistency in the language of the sources while also ensuring that the research material was easily obtainable and verifiable. The adopted review methodology emphasized the critical analysis and careful evaluation of a curated body of literature. The goal was not only to gather existing knowledge but also to identify gaps within the current research landscape and to establish a robust foundation for further investigation.

A significant portion of the study focused on elaborating the definitions of Emotional Intelligence and leadership. Special attention was given to exploring the intricate and often complex relationship between women's leadership roles and their emotional intelligence capabilities. The study delved into how EI contributes to enhancing leadership effectiveness among women, shaping their managerial skills, and supporting their advancement in organizational hierarchies. Additionally, the review considered research findings that highlight gender-based differences in Emotional Intelligence traits, comparing how EI characteristics manifest differently in men and women. By reviewing a diverse range of studies including theoretical discussions, editorial pieces, opinion-based essays, as well as empirical qualitative and quantitative research the study ensured a comprehensive understanding of the topic. To maintain a high standard of relevance, inclusion criteria were rigorously applied. Only those papers that explicitly mentioned emotional intelligence in their title, abstract, or list of keywords were selected for analysis. Furthermore, beyond initial selection, each publication's content was thoroughly examined to verify its alignment with the central research objective. Specifically, the focus was placed on determining whether

the studies contributed meaningful insights into the role of Emotional Intelligence in enhancing women's managerial effectiveness and leadership capacities.

Table 1. Key Aspects and Details: A Study Framework on Emotional Intelligence and Women's Leadership

Aspect	Details
Objective	Explore the impact of Emotional Intelligence (EI) on women's leadership.
Method	Comprehensive literature review using online databases.
Search Terms	Leadership in women, emotional intelligence among women, emotional intelligence and managerial skills.
Language and Access	English-language journal articles that were openly downloadable.
Review Approach	Analyze and evaluate existing literature to identify gaps and build a strong knowledge foundation.
Key Topics Explored	Definitions of Emotional Intelligence and leadership; relationship between women, EI, and leadership.
Comparison Aspect	Differences in EI traits between men and women.
Types of Studies Reviewed	Theoretical, editorial, opinion, qualitative, and quantitative studies.
Inclusion Criteria	Papers mentioning emotional intelligence in the title, abstract, or keywords.
Content Verification	Reviewed publication content to ensure relevance to the study's focus on EI in women's leadership.

Table 1 serves as a structured blueprint that highlights the scope, depth, and rigor of the review process, ensuring clarity and transparency for readers or evaluators. This table provides a comprehensive summary of the research design and methodology for a study exploring the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and women's leadership. Through this detailed and systematic review approach, the study aimed to offer a well-rounded perspective on the critical role of emotional intelligence in shaping women's leadership trajectories, and to highlight areas that warrant further scholarly exploration.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For a long time, it has been widely held that many women choose not to aim for the organization's top positions and remove themselves from consideration. Numerous studies have demonstrated the important impact unconscious bias plays in hiring and promotion decisions, which also contributes to the lower number of women in important roles. Masculinity was once thought to be a predictor of successful leadership. Even while there are more women in managerial roles than ever before, there is still a noticeable under-representation. Of course, there are a lot of reasons for the lack of women in top positions. There have been widespread cultural biases for generations. prejudices and assumptions about women gradually fade. But as today's accomplished female leaders show, femininity may also be regarded as a significant component. We talked about women's leadership, including their under-representation in positions of authority, female leadership styles, potential benefits from having a diverse range of genders in leadership roles, and the relationship with EI as well as the efficacy of leadership and the relationship between gender and EI. We now know that the requirements for (learning) emotional intelligence are the same for men and women.

Furthermore, we discovered that Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a crucial factor in determining effective leadership and a crucial component of the transformational leadership methodology. It follows that by growing and improving their EI, women have the same ability to become successful and effective leaders. Therefore, it is critical that everyone strive to raise their emotional intelligence (EI), irrespective of gender, socialisation, or other predispositions. Furthermore, despite the long-held prejudice that some

people in society believe women are too emotional or lack the "right stuff" to lead, women should strive to become more informed of their abilities by improving their social skills, empathy, and self-control.

Instead of striving to fit into a domineering or infamous authoritative male behaviour, women who have a propensity to express and comprehend emotions with a high EI or with a feminine leadership behaviour attribute should concentrate on these talents. It's clear that both men and women are capable of becoming effective leaders. According to Science of People (n.d.), the transformational leadership style, which is frequently employed by women, highlights how emotional engagement may inspire, encourage, and uplift subordinates by creating a sense of shared identity and vision. As a result, including women in leadership roles opens up new viewpoints on all facet of leadership.

Limitations & Recommendations

The difficulty of assessing gender, specific EI and leadership styles or competences is a major study limitation. As was previously mentioned, without any additional variable, gender in general cannot be used as a referenc Thus, according to Ruth Malloy, whom Goleman (2011) quotes, leaders in the top ten percent of "Gender differences in EI abilities wash out: The men are as good as the women, the women as good as the men, across the board," as demonstrated by company performance.

Furthermore, this paper's qualitative approach has a flaw in that it undervalues the question even if it makes use of prior research to comprehend the relationship between gender, leadership, and emotional intelligence. Because of this, it is suggested that more research be done on this subject, specifically a quantitative analysis on how emotional intelligence (EI) affects women's leadership abilities as well as their ability to assume positions of leadership. Evaluate the EI of women who aspire to be leaders and of women who occupy these positions in particular.In relation to the EI of their male counterparts, how do the outcomes compare? It would also be intriguing to look into if the importance of women's leadership and emotional intelligence differs depending on the type of professional setting.

Both male and female leaders can inspire and encourage groups of people to increase productivity and creativity with the use of emotional intelligence (EI). This is achieved through upholding strong moral standards as role models in order to strengthen the sense of group identification. To improve society, society must encourage more women to take up leadership roles, increased effectiveness and the percentage of women in leadership roles.

5. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper was to investigate the potential benefits of emotional intelligence (EI) for women's leadership competencies, given its significance as a determinant of effective leadership. But as this review of the evidence shows, women can develop leadership skills and emotional intelligence just like males can, and that People believe that women in leadership roles are just as effective as males. Because women were traditionally seen as more emotional and compassionate than men, leadership roles were long thought to be more appropriate for men. But given that emotional intelligence (EI) is regarded as a key factor in determining successful leadership, the topic of whether women really have an advantage over Men emerge in this regard. And hence, whether there, stereotypically known, empathetic and empathetic nature qualifies them for leadership positions.

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C : Conceptualization

I : Investigation

Vi : Visualization

M : Methodology

R : Resources

Su : Supervision

So : Software

D : Data Curation

P : Project administration

Va : Validation

O : Writing - Original Draft

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Ethical Approval

Since the article is based on data not derived from human or animal experimentation, the relevant ethical considerations do not apply.

Data Availability Statement

Since no new data were generated or examined for this investigation, data availability is not relevant to this paper.

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