CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the study findings, conclusions and discuss theoretical and practical implications of the study. In addition, limitations of the current study and possible future studies are discussed.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE FINDINGS

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness and between emotional intelligence and leadership styles. For testing each hypothesis, CFAs were run and structural models were tested. Overall, the proposed model showed a good fit in each relationship. Separate CFAs revealed that the measurement model had a reasonable fit in each relationship. In addition, separate SEMs showed that the model fit in each relationship were good, and the structural paths were all statistically significant, explaining large amounts of variance.

Hypothesis 1 predicted there would be a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness. This hypothesis was supported. Social awareness and relationship management clusters of emotional intelligence have positive effects on leadership effectiveness (.470 and .350 respectively). 57.5% variance in leadership effectiveness is explained by EI.

Hypothesis 2 predicted there would be a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership style. This hypothesis was supported. Social awareness and relationship management clusters of emotional intelligence have positive effects on Transformational Leadership style (.576 and .273 respectively). 60% variance in transformational leadership style is explained by EI.

Hypothesis 3 predicted there would be a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and transactional leadership style. This hypothesis was supported. Social awareness cluster of emotional intelligence has positive effects on Transactional Leadership style (.760). 68%
variance in Transactional leadership style is explained by EI. It means that subordinates saw
their supervisors, who were having high scores on social awareness cluster of emotional
intelligence, as expressing satisfaction and also providing assistance in exchange for their
efforts.

Hypothesis 4 predicted there would be a negative relationship between emotional intelligence
and passive avoidant leadership style. This hypothesis was supported. Relationship
management cluster of EI has negative effects on Passive Avoidant Leadership \((-0.690)\). 31%
variance in Passive Avoidant leadership style is explained by EI.

5.3 CONCLUSION

Organizations are continuously searching for strategies to strengthen leadership abilities.
According to the study results, a statistically significant relationship exists between EI and
leadership effectiveness among software supervisors. The high correlation between emotional
intelligence and leadership effectiveness indicate that higher level of emotional intelligence is
associated with higher leadership effectiveness. Supervisors having high EI will influence
their subordinates in putting extra efforts and these subordinates will perceive their
supervisors more effective and will be satisfied with them. Earlier researches [107] [127]
[112] [63] [108] [128] [109] [121] [123] have already supported role of EI in leadership
effectiveness.

According to the study results, a statistically significant relationship exists between EI and
transformational leadership style among software supervisors. Consequently, supervisors with
high EI scores and transformational leadership skills would be expected to positively
influence individuals, teams, and organizations that are experiencing significant
organizational change. Transformational leadership model expands the leader’s role from
simple leader–follower exchange agreements to inspiring and motivating followers to achieve
goals beyond their own expectations [92]. Transformational leaders have the ability to
stimulate other leaders, colleagues, and followers to embrace new organizational perspectives,
support the vision or mission of the organization, and achieve higher levels of performance
[93] [94] [91] [92].
Discussion

These findings are in line with prior research studies that have shown a positive relationship between EI and transformational leadership styles [15] [45] [131]. Transformational leaders enhance follower satisfaction and performance by demonstrating idealized leadership, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, or individualized consideration [91].

The findings of this study indicate that leaders EI is also impacting transactional leadership style. It means that subordinates saw their supervisors, who were having high scores on social awareness cluster of emotional intelligence, as expressing satisfaction and also providing assistance in exchange for their efforts. These findings are in line with some prior research studies that have shown a positive relationship between EI and transactional leadership styles [110] [120]. Transactional leadership may be effective in certain situations; however, it is less effective when the leader does not have oversight of the reward process. Transactional leaders may have a marginal effect on follower performance but are more effective when used in conjunction with transformational leadership behaviours [94] [92].

Although transactional leadership can be effective in certain environments, research has shown that transformational leadership positively influences extra effort, commitment, and job satisfaction [94]. Bass and Avolio [96] [207] assert that the two actually complement each other. According to Bass and Avolio, transactional behaviours have come to represent the managerial aspects of leadership [207]. Transactional leaders define, communicate, and reward the work [208]. These leaders organize the work and decrease job ambiguity. Bass and Avolio [207] maintain that while transformational leadership is needed to bring about change, the transactional aspect of leadership is also vital and cannot be ignored.

This study provides more accurate estimates of the relationships between EI and leadership effectiveness and leadership styles because in this study measurement error is corrected using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). SEM can take measurement error into account in order to provide more accurate estimates of the relationship between constructs [27]. The behavioural level of EI is most likely to relate to job performance and outcomes [25] [26]. This study used EI competencies as measured by “others observations”. The “others observations” are demonstrated behaviours of managers as seen by their subordinates. Thus, the study provides better understanding of relationship between EI and leadership effectiveness and leadership styles.
5.4 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Effective leaders use their EI to manage themselves and to effectively manage and direct others within the organization. The results of this study suggest that EI has a significant effect on leadership; therefore, higher levels of EI could help improve leadership performance and leadership effectiveness in the software industry. EI can be improved upon with training and development. Therefore, training programs within the organization could have a positive effect on leadership and leadership performance, hence driving the organization to organizational success. Many practitioners and scholars believe that emotional intelligence can be improved upon through development and training programs [209] [210] [211] [212]. Therefore, for leaders employed in the organization, organization can focus on creating or gearing training and development programs toward improving levels of existing leaders’ EI.

According to the findings of the study, EI also had a statistically significant relationship with transformational and transactional leadership styles. Consequently, organizational leaders may want to place an emphasis on developing comprehensive leadership development programs that include EI and full range leadership. This will allow team members to learn shared leadership skills, gain emotion-based skills to enhance and improve self learning, develop leaders as mentors & coaches, and assess and develop emotional competencies throughout the organization [211].

The results of this study could affect leadership effectiveness by providing software organizations with a transformational model of EI. The transformative learning of EI encourages employees to explore, identify, understand, learn, and apply the skills and behaviors essential for effective leadership. The transformative learning model includes an emotional learning process that integrates self-directed coaching, relationship-focused learning, and actively performing positive on job behaviours [213].

Organizations may also create an assessment tool that includes a measure of EI to increase the probability of successful person/job fit for the organization.

Research on emotional and social skills has demonstrated how an emotional and social skill framework both relates to and can play a role in the development of effective workplace leaders. Emotional and social skills can be targeted for assessment and development of leaders
and can be an important component of a leadership development program. Research evidences have suggested that emotional and social skills are both related to leader effectiveness and are able to be improved through training interventions [214]. A leader’s behavior can affect or socially influence feelings, behaviors and perceptions of their observers and their emotional skills can influence observer motivation and regulation of emotion [215]. Research findings so far indicate that attention to emotion-related aspects of working and learning environments, and a focus on bolstering the EI skills of individuals within these contexts, can contribute to more productive, supportive, and healthy professional and academic experiences [9].

The findings suggest a refined focus for training and development activities in software organizations. To develop the supervisors into effective leaders, software organizations could develop training, assessment and development, and coaching activities to help them develop and practice emotionally and socially intelligent behaviors. A special focus must be on developing competencies related to social awareness, and relationship management clusters.

5.5 LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

(1) Data was collected from software organizations from national capital region of India. Sample from different software hubs of India may be taken to further investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence, leadership effectiveness and leadership styles.

(2) The analysis also suffers from small sample size, which could be increased by collecting data from other software hubs of India.

(3) While collecting data for emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness and styles, responses from subordinates were collected. Further research may be conducted in which data is collected from peers and supervisors as well.

(4) It is also suggested that future research might use a longitudinal design. Further studies may use a research approach that allows emotional intelligence to be assessed first and leadership effectiveness and leadership styles to be assessed some time later.