

The effects of emotional intelligence on leadership effectiveness (A prospective case study of three industrial companies in Iraq)

Basim Mohammed Khalid Alsalminy¹, Dr. Amina Omrane²

¹*Ph.D.Candidate Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Management of Sfax (FSEGS), MODILS
Research Unit.University of Sfax, Tunisia.*

*E-mail: basimaaaalsalminy@gmail.com
<http://www.orcid.org/0009-0002-6006-2401>.*

²*Associate professor (HDR) in management science and entrepreneurship;
Researcher at ECSTRA research center, IHEC Carthage, Tunisia*

*E-mail: amina.omrane@yahoo.fr.
<http://www.orcid.org/0000-0001-9057-5307>.*

Abstract

The research aimed to determine the main effects of emotional intelligence on leadership principles related to three industrial companies. For this purpose, six leaders of three industrial companies were interviewed to unveil the role of their own emotional intelligence on their leadership. Results stressed the importance of emotional intelligence and its role in enhancing leadership, through three axes, namely, self-awareness and decision-making, empathy and managing relationships, as well as effective communication and conflict management. The responses of the interviewees indicated that self-awareness improves decision-making capacities of leaders; whereas their effective communication, conflict management and empathy help them to be good social leaders, to positively motivate their teams of work, as well as to play an appropriate leadership role.

Keywords: leadership, leadership styles, emotional intelligence, case study, industrial companies.

1. Introduction

Emotional intelligence has gained a lot of interest among experts and practitioners, as well as scholars in management science, essentially during the last recent years. Many previous studies have accordingly underlined that emotional intelligence plays an important role in fostering leadership abilities and enhancing effectiveness of managers, by upgrading their capacities, negotiation abilities, and verbal/written communication (Brown, 1995; Goleman, 1998); (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009). Emotional intelligence is considered one of the explanatory factors of success in performing numerous functions related for instance to decision-making, open communication, creativity and innovation. It also contributes to increase customer loyalty,

financial performance for entrepreneurs/managers, and productivity of workers (Goleman, 1995; Mac Cann et al., 2020).

On the other hand, the past fifty years have also witnessed increasingly research orientation in the field of leadership. In this perspective, the focus has been put on leadership as an essential pillar for the success of organizations. It has been otherwise proved that, without an effective leadership, it will be hard and difficult to maintain the profitability and the productivity of any organization which seeks to sustain its competitive advantages. Many researchers have emphasized their works on the relationship between leadership and many other organizational variables, to deduce that leadership plays an important role not only in fostering the creativity, emotions, and satisfaction of workers,

but also in formulating and applying the organization's strategy (Alzyoud et al., 2019). Researchers like (Armstrong & Taylor, 2017) ... have also demonstrated that leadership has a positive influence on the performance on each employee, as well as on the performance of a whole work team of work (Bariso, 2018). That is why, leaders are conveyed to communicate their organizations' vision and share it with all their employees, in order to build up their confidence, hope and optimism, as well as to work collectively with them on the achievement of a bright future for all of them (Kotsou et al., 2019).

The aim of this research is to explore the impacts of emotional intelligence on leadership. The current research is then an attempt to better understand to what extent emotional intelligence could affect

leadership effectiveness in a developing country, i.e. Irak . Indeed, indepth-analyzing the points of view and perceptions of leaders regarding emotional intelligence and its importance in fostering their leadership capabilities constitute the primary objective of this present research. For this purpose, the investigation will be guided by the following core research questions: How would leaders understand and explain their emotional intelligence? Then, to what extent emotional intelligence represents an important driver for leadership?

The paper is structured as follows: The theoretical framework is presented at the first step to in-depth understand the meanings of emotional intelligence as well as leadership throughout their historical and conceptual development. The relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership was also explored by underlining the important role played by emotional intelligence in developing leadership capabilities. At a second stage, the research design was detailed by referring to the research and the data analysis methods. Such a step was followed by a presentation and a discussion of attained results. Finally, theoretical and managerial implications, future research perspectives, as well as limitations of research were outlined in the last section of the research.

2. Conceptual framework

2.1. Emotional intelligence: Historical anchoring, scope, and main definitions

It is important to examine the brief history of how and where the concept of emotional intelligence emerged, how it has been developed over time, and what are its most common definitions, in order to understand how emotional intelligence leaders can affect business performance of leaders.

2.1.1. The historical development of emotional intelligence

The concept of emotional intelligence has evolved over time. Its development incurred into five main stages.

At the first stage (1900-1969), **intelligence and emotions have been considered as separate and narrow areas.**

Intelligence testing was developed, and during this time, modern psychological testing methods were developed. Emotions were studied as a subject of their own, separated from intelligence. There has been an ongoing debate about which comes first, the feelings or the physical reaction. The goal of psychologists was also to define social intelligence, but the concept of intelligence remained epistemological (Alzoubi and Aziz, 2021).

During the next period which lasted 19 years, starting from 1970 to 1989, pioneers of Emotional Intelligence such as Wayne Payne (1985) and Keith Beasley employed the term 'emotional quotient' and 'emotional intelligence' for the first time. By doing so, they emphasized the important role of emotions, not only in the everyday life, but also at the workplace (Dhani and Sharma, 2016). Furthermore, during this period, researchers began to become interested in how feelings and perceptions affect each other, through the concept of intelligence within the personality. Such a notion **was** used to refer to emotional stress during that time (Extremera Pacheco et al., 2019).

As a concept, emotional intelligence emerged especially during the period 1990-1993. It was Daniel Goleman (1995), a psychologist and

science journalist, who came up with the concept of emotional intelligence and popularized it in his reputed published book entitled "Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ". In this book, Goleman (1995; Cited in Guerra-Bustamante et al. 2019) underlined the numerous virtues of emotional intelligence and its important role in enhancing personal and professional success in the workplace.

From 1994 to 1997, Emotional Intelligence was extended and generalized as a concept. It was greatly studied, disseminated and applied in many other various fields (Guerra-Bustamante et al., 2019).

Finally, since 1998 to those last years, research on emotional intelligence has aimed to institutionalize it. Empirical evidence of its utmost importance continues until today. There has been a lot of efforts sustained towards the definition of this concept basically found on using new methods and testing. In this perspective, many scholarly research works have been conducted on emotional intelligence. One of the most recent examples that could be cited is the article entitled "A meta-analysis of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction with job resources, testing mediators" (Guerra-Bustamante et al., 2019).

2.1.2. Main definitions related to emotional intelligence

Sánchez-Álvarez et al. (2020) considered intelligence as a person's ability to act rationally and effectively in a given environment. Intelligence is often defined as an intellectual potential, by referring to something that one is born with, something that can be tested, measured, and assessed. However, later, other views have emerged, including Gardner's suggestion assuming that multiple different types of intelligence may exist (Guerra-Bustamante et al., 2019). Indeed, since 1983, Gardner outlined, in his book entitled "*Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*", that traditional psychological views of intelligence are very limited and outdated. He also added that individuals may have different types of

"intelligence", displayed through their attitudes and behaviors.

More recent, it appears that intelligence is becoming a multidimensional concept, that includes many forms of intelligence, such as spatial, verbal intelligence, social, and emotional intelligence. According to the Harvard psychologist Howard Gardner (2009), there are at least 9 multiple and different types of intelligence (Guerra-Bustamante et al., 2019). This same scholar proposed in the same vein the multiple intelligence theory (Gardner, 2008). In recent years, other views have also emerged to confirm Gardner's suggestion, and to add three other types of intelligence, comprising collaborative, financial intelligence, and creative intelligence.

Each of these abilities and types has unique characteristics and is used according to the roles and importance it has for persons. Emotional intelligence is a person's ability to understand and manage emotions on purpose. (Sánchez-Álvarez et al., 2020) The researchers who dealt with the term emotional intelligence showed a set of competencies that enable individuals to express their emotions and identify their behavior. Being aware of it and others, these competencies can also help one get a sense of self-awareness as they move through life. These concepts have been modified resulting in the definition of emotional intelligence as:

Emotional intelligence is the ability to understand, use, and manage emotions in a positive way to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathize with others, overcome challenges, and Defuse the dispute. Emotional intelligence helps you build stronger relationships, succeed in school and work, and achieve professional and personal goals. It can also help you communicate With feelings, turn intent into action, and make informed decisions about what matters most to you (Ahad et al., 2021, Prentice et al., 2020) has demonstrated that emotional intelligence includes the ability to engage in complex information processing about one's and others' feelings and ability Emotionally intelligent individuals pay attention to, use, understand and manage emotions, and these skills serve adaptive functions that are likely to benefit themselves and others.

The term “emotional intelligence” refers to something that has to do with the intersection of emotion and cognition, and emotional intelligence refers to the ability to recognize the meanings of emotional patterns and solve problems based on them. Those procedures to guide one's thinking and action (Mustafa et al., 2020)

Moroń and Biolik-Moroń (2021), as well as Omrane (2014, 2015, 2020) argued that emotional intelligence is a multidimensional competency that comprises four important aspects:

- Self-management, which means the ability to control impulsive feelings and behaviors, manage feelings in healthy ways, take initiative, follow through on commitments, and adapt to changing circumstances.
- Self-awareness, identifying feelings and how they affect thoughts and behaviors, ie identifying strengths, weaknesses and self-confidence.
- Social awareness, i.e. empathy: by understanding the feelings, needs, and fears of others, picking up on emotional cues, feeling socially comfortable, and recognizing the power dynamics of a group or organization.
- Relationship management, implying how to develop and maintain good relationships, communicate clearly, inspire and influence others, work well in a team, and manage conflict.

Finally, it would be important to note that the Gardner's theory has been criticized by both psychologists and academics. These criticisms advanced that the Gardner's definition of intelligence is too broad and that Gardner's theory suffers from a lack of empirical research support, even though the multiple intelligence theory is very popular among scholars and academia. It was also claimed that the different types of "intelligence" proposed by Gardner are simply represented by talents, personality traits, and abilities.

Overall, it remains commonly acknowledged that the multiple intelligence theory is so insightful as it allows us to think about the different kinds of our own mental strengths and abilities. It can also help to learn about our own preferences and recognize them. However, it should not be considered as a learning style.

2.1.3. Main virtues and effects of emotional intelligence on individual performance and organizational overall success

An abundant precedent literature pointed out the positive and meaningful impacts of emotional intelligence on overall performance of companies, as well as on personal development of individuals and groups.

For instance, according to Fteiha and Awwad (2020), emotional intelligence enables persons to cope with stressful scenarios and challenging situations, as well as to manager their stress, via active and passive problem-solving solutions (Lin and Chen, 2010).

Many researchers have also found that teams with high levels of emotional intelligence tend to have better communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution skills, resulting in a more effective teamwork. Indeed, emotionally intelligent persons are more reluctant to share knowledge and ideas with others. Their emotional intelligence has a positive effect on the level of mutual trust, cohesion, and cooperation between the team members (Arfara and Samanta, 2016; Suwandana, 2019).

On the other hand, numerous other scholars have underlined the vital role of emotional intelligence in attaining a better job performance and satisfaction, by reducing the employees' turnover rate. By doing so, such a skill supports workers to experience a good quality of life and well-being. For instance, in their investigation conducted through a collective case study, Emilia Takala Helo (2022) examined the role of emotional intelligence on employee Retention. Indeed, for this same researcher, it **is** challenging to keep great people committed, inspired, and devoted to a business. Higher personnel turnover results from more professional competitiveness, which raises both direct and indirect expenses. Retaining employees has financial repercussions, but it also has an impact on morale and business culture. Businesses may greatly benefit from optimizing retention rates through any viable technique, especially if they wish to reduce wasteful hiring expenses and boost productivity. More than any other component of work, leadership style has an

impact on staff retention. This group of case studies aims to provide a tool—the EQ training program—that helps in maximizing staff retention by raising leaders' emotional intelligence. A lack of emotional intelligence in their boss was cited by more than 80% of the 107 participants in the online survey, poll, and structured interviews as the primary reason they left their jobs. The most crucial emotional intelligence abilities were deemed to be feeling respected by the management, receiving an open reaction to fresh ideas, and being provided the time, chances, and resources for personal growth. A comprehensive health care plan, flexible work schedules, and the ability to work remotely were also observed to impact employee retention in addition to emotional intelligence in leaders. While companies gain from improved financial performance, work happiness, better cooperation, and stronger teams, leaders are regarded to have better interpersonal and stress management abilities and higher remuneration. Both parties benefit from emotional intelligence. Although the EQ training program was created with the requirements of the participating marketing executives in mind, the entire workplace may benefit from it. It is a three-month course that, in theory, begins a lifelong path toward developing emotional intelligence. It seeks to raise EQ levels throughout organizations, which will improve employee retention.

2.2. Leadership: Overview, key objectives, skills, and main styles in practice

It seems that there are several different definitions on what leadership is. In truth, various people have diverse interpretations of what it means to be a leader. For instance, in one society, someone in a higher position is seen as a leader, whereas in another, leaders are frequently found in the top three levels of management (top-level, middle-level, and lower-level management). But being a leader has nothing to do with a specific individual or a person who has more power. Sometimes, a person's leadership qualities or features include things like knowledge, behavior, skill, and emotion. A leader needs to have determination. Others characterize leadership as a social and relational communication process. Despite the fact that the term is defined in a variety of ways, it is

important to provide a precise definition of leadership so that others may understand how to become better leaders. A leader is someone who helps a person or group of people work well together to accomplish a goal.

2.2.1. Leadership: meanings and foundations

Leadership is the ability to influence others and direct their behavior toward achieving common goals. In another definition, it is the ability to treat human nature or influence human behavior to direct a group towards achieving common goals, in a way that guarantees their obedience and respect. From this, the leader is defined as a person who uses his abilities and strength to influence the behavior and directives of individuals around him to achieve their common goals. (Cortellazzo et al., 2019). There are three main terms directly related to leadership: power, influence, and authority. (Cafaro, 2021)

As for power: it is the potential ability to influence the behavior of others, as power is generally related to controlling over valuable or scarce resources. As for influence: it appears when a person exercises his power, consciously or unconsciously, to influence the behavior and attitudes of another person. Finally, power: it is the resulting power. or granted by the organization.

2.2.2. Leadership purposes

According to Nahavandi (2019), groups require leaders among them for the following main reasons:

- Order and concentration: Since humans have always been sociable animals, they have attempted to overcome difficulties in groups. Despite the fact that the group may have a same aim, each person will have diverse requirements and wants. This need calls for a leader who can develop a plan that considers individual needs while also ensuring that the group's goal is carried out.
- Achievement: Groups may sometimes do jobs more quickly and efficiently than individuals can. However, it requires a leader who directs the team and establishes goals.
- The goal of leaders is to give life a direction and a logical framework. Additionally,

circumstances that are hazy and imprecise could be given more weight.

- Being a romantic ideal: People frequently look up to a leader because they see them as someone who represents their own ideals and values.

In general, people are born with the ambition to be leaders. Humans need a leader to follow and be inspired by, even if they are not absolutely required for existence. As a result, leadership is desired at all levels.

2.2.3. Leaders' required skills.

There is no doubt that every leader must possess qualities or skills that help him influence the behavior of individuals and achieve his goals. In order for the leader to be able to understand the three sides of the leadership process, which are: the leader, the followers, and the situation, he must possess or acquire four skills in order to achieve the goals of individuals and raise the degree of their satisfaction. The skills are (Cortellazzo et al., 2019; Emmerling, 2021; Leadership Institute, 2021):

- Technical skills: the leader has the ability to master the work and to be glorified for it, to be able to use the information available to him, and to be able to analyze it accurately according to the methods, means, and capabilities available to him to accomplish the work, and what distinguishes these skills is that they are more specific and observable. The leader is quick, in addition to being easier to acquire than other skills.
- Human skills: It is related to a way in which a person can deal with people in order to gain their cooperation and loyalty to him and to work, and thus increase productivity and giving, in addition to the leader having the ability to identify the work requirements between the individual and the group.
- Organizational skills: It means the leader's ability to understand the organization he leads, understand the interrelationship between its parts and objectives, and understand the relationships between individuals. Therefore, the leader needs professional skills related to the field of work in order to be able to achieve the goal he seeks, in addition to the leader's commitment to work rules and ethics.

- Intellectual skills: which is that the leader is characterized by the ability to study, analyze and conclude, and is characterized by flexibility and the ability to communicate ideas others, as well as the ability to develop in a manner that suits the age and adapt to the requirements needed by each era and circumstance.

Therefore, the most important features and skills that a leader must have is the ability to influence, persuade and make a change, and to possess self-abilities that serve work goals. close to achieving the desired goal.

2.2.4. Leadership styles

The idea of leadership has been increasingly popular on the worldwide market throughout the years. The method or approach a leader uses to guide their team is referred to as their leadership style. Or to put it another way, leadership style is what leaders do (Joseph & Jean, 2015). The 1930s saw the first significant study on leadership style proposed and conducted by Kurt Lewin and his research team. After conducting an experiment where three groups of schoolchildren were assigned with autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leaders, psychologist Kurt Lewin (also known as the father of modern psychology) and his research team were successful in identifying and introducing three major styles of leadership in 1939. This further led to the deep study of three major leadership styles.

- Autocratic leadership style: The autocratic style of leadership is typically characterized by the boss-like behavior of the leader. The elements "autocratic" and "cratic," which denote rule and self, respectively, are combined to form the word autocratic. Thus, an autocratic leadership style is one in which one person has total authority over the members of a team. It also goes by the name of an authoritarian management style. Autocratic bosses typically don't pay attention to their subordinate team members (Kendra, 2019). Autocratic leaders have an initiating structure style of management, which means they focus mostly on upkeep of the entire system, including task planning, monitoring, and control. The leaders are also in charge of maintaining and administering rewards and penalties. This kind of leader is often referred to as a task-oriented leader

since they put a lot of emphasis on the work or organization's goal. Task-oriented leaders focus more on the task, timelines, cost, purchasing, etc. and seldom involve their subordinates in decision-making. (Makilouko, 2003)

- Democratic leadership style: Traditional leadership styles that promote democracy or mutual respect are known as democratic leadership styles. To put it another way, the democratic leadership style is frequently viewed as a participatory leadership style where the leader and subordinates work together to complete the task. According to Professor Schindler Gastil (1994), a democratic leadership style involves sharing responsibility among the group's members, giving them more power, and supporting the group's decision-making process. (Schindler, 2019).

- "Laissez-faire" leadership style: The "laissez-faire leadership style" is frequently referred to as a "hands-off" management approach where team members are given the freedom to make decisions. In other words, a laissez-faire leadership style is one in which the leader holds a nominal position while assigning all duties and obligations to their subordinates. Consequently, the delegative leadership style is often known as the laissez-faire leadership style (IISTE, 2015.) Since the employees are given authority power, it is up to them to identify issues, set objectives, and make choices. However, because the leader is not involved after responsibility is transferred, it is risky for the company to give such authority to the workers. Employees must possess a high level of expertise in a certain sector in order to assign such responsibility. Such a leadership style may be seen in a variety of businesses, including advertising agencies, insurance providers, product design firms, and more. (Herman, 2018).

- Transformational and transactional leadership style: James MacGregor Burns, an American historian and political scientist, initially articulated the idea of transformative and transactional leadership in 1978. Bernard Bass later expanded on this idea in 1985. J. M. Burns proposed transactional and transformative leadership strategies to complete the task. Bass broadened Burns' theoretical framework by focusing more on the demands of the followers than the leader. In his extension, he said that the transformational leadership style may be utilized

in such circumstances since it benefits the firm when the outcome is unfavorable. Additionally, Bass extended Robert J. House's work by arguing that, although being a crucial component, charisma alone is insufficient for transformative leadership. Additionally, emotional qualities like self-control, self-awareness, internal drive, and so on should be possessed by transformational leaders. Bass went on to say that transformational leadership inspires a single follower or a team of committed followers to go above and beyond. (Northouse, 2016).

- Charismatic leadership style: The sociologist Max Weber initially established and characterized the charismatic leadership style in 1947. Later, several academics went on to elaborate. In 1976, Robert J. House published a theory of charismatic leadership, which made a significant contribution as well. Before discussing charismatic leadership, it is important to define charisma. The Greek term for charisma, which refers to a powerful inspiring skill only possessed by those with the ability to perform amazing feats, signifies outstanding inspirational talent. Therefore, charismatic leaders have greater communication skills and interpersonal appeal, which aid in motivating and encouraging followers. Without charisma, no leader can adopt a charismatic leadership style. Thus, charismatic leadership refers to a type of leadership in which the leader uses charisma to inspire and encourage people to complete tasks or do them more effectively. (Lussier & Achula, 2013; Northouse, 2016).

- Servant leadership style: Robert J. Greenleaf (2005) was the first to introduce the idea of servant leadership, and his groundbreaking article "The Servant as Leader" was released in 1970. The finest leaders, according to Robert J. Greenleaf, are those that put service to others first and foremost in their leadership (Don, 2020). The traditional style of leadership that places a greater emphasis on service than self-interest is known as servant leadership. In servant leadership, leaders constantly inspire, relate to, and persuade their subordinates to realize their full potential. Servant leaders put more emphasis on the strength of their followers than on their weaknesses. Listening to followers rather than barking commands at them is one of the fundamental components of servant leadership. Additionally, servant leaders see the

long-term advantages and gains for both their followers and the company (Lussier & Achula, 2013).

- Contingent leadership style

- The Austrian psychologist Fred Edward Fiedler was the first to establish the contingency theory notion. A Contingency Model of Leadership Effectiveness is the title of an article written by Fred Edward Fiedler and published in 1964. According to the contingency theory, leadership conditions can alter based on many internal and external circumstances, and as circumstances change, so can leadership style. According to the contingency hypothesis, there isn't a single leadership approach that works the best for every business. The word contingent, according to the Oxford Dictionary, denotes dependence. Therefore, a contingent leadership style is one in which the leadership approach varies according to the circumstance. (Gary 2011, 286.) "Leadership style and situational favorableness are the two criteria that determine the contingent leadership," claims Fiedler's theory of contingency. The Fiedler LPC scale, also known as the Least Preferred Co-Worker scale, is used to assess a leader's leadership style. The first step is to describe the team member who is least liked, and the outcome reveals whether the leader is relationship- or task-oriented. In other words, a high LPC scale indicates a relationship-oriented leader, whereas a low LPC scale indicates a task-oriented leader. While task-oriented leaders typically excel at organizing teams and tasks to be completed, relationship-oriented leaders tend to be good at upholding relationships and resolving conflicts within the team. (EPM, 2018).

3. The influence of emotional intelligence on leadership effectiveness

As stated earlier, previous studies have widely pointed out the positive effects of Emotional Intelligence and its role in upgrading personal development, as well as professional performance at the workplace (Moon, 2021). In the same perspective, it was emphasized that persons with high emotional intelligence are better able to manage their relationships with others by effectively communicating and interacting with them. That is why, such individuals, which can

easily motivate others, inspire and guide them, are more likely to become good effective leaders.

3.1. The impact of emotional intelligence on leadership styles from the point of view of employees in Jordanian banks (Fatehi Bassam Al Thiabat, 2018)

The study of Fatehi (2018) aimed to determine the impact of emotional intelligence on the leadership style of employees in Jordanian banks and to identify the level of emotional intelligence and the prevailing leadership styles. The researcher designed a questionnaire to reveal the dimensions of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management) and the level of leadership styles. Some statistical techniques were used to test the study's hypotheses and answer its questions. The study reached a set of results, the most important of which are: that the arithmetic averages of emotional intelligence and leadership styles are medium, and the regression results showed that there is a statistically significant effect of emotional intelligence on leadership styles and that the most influential dimensions of emotional intelligence in leadership style are social awareness, and that leadership styles are most commonly used in banks. Jordanian reciprocal leadership style.

3.2. The role of emotional intelligence in improving the leadership effectiveness (Nawal Lazraq, 2020)

Through their case study undertaken on the economic sector and public administration in a camp, Nawal Lazraq (2020) aimed at exploring the effect of emotional intelligence on leadership effectiveness by examining the effect of the five dimensions of emotional intelligence (internal intelligence, social intelligence, adaptability, stress management, general mood) on leadership effectiveness. For this purpose, the descriptive analytical approach was used. In order to measure the emotional intelligence variable, the Bar-On and Parker (2000) model was adopted; whereas the Thomas W. Kent (2001) model was considered to assess the effectiveness of leadership behavior variable. After collecting the necessary data, the relationship between was statistically testing via the test Linear correlation and multiple regression

analysis. The results of the study indicated that there is a significant effect between emotional intelligence and the effectiveness of leadership for the economic sector and public administration.

3.3. The role of emotional intelligence in enhancing the administrative leadership in the higher education sector (Ansaed and Kemri, 2020)

The study conducted Ansaed and Kemri (2020) aimed to evaluate the role that emotional intelligence plays in improving the administrative leadership at the University of Hassiba Ben Bouali Chlef in Algeria. The study sample consisted of 103 individuals, depending on the comprehensive inventory method, and the dimensions of emotional intelligence were measured based on the Goleman (2001) model. The study found a statistically significant effect of emotional intelligence on the administrative leadership at the University of Chlef. Besides, findings showed that found that there were no statistically significant differences regarding the impact of the dimensions of emotional intelligence due to the two variables: years of experience, and administrative level.

3.4. The Importance of Emotional Intelligence for Finnish Female Leaders (Martta Kemppainen, 2020)

The research carried out by Martta Kemppainen (2020) sought to better understand the significance of emotional intelligence for female leaders from their perspective. Female leaders were questioned about their definition of emotional intelligence, to check whether they believed they were emotionally intelligent leaders, and which emotional intelligence domains they thought they excelled in and struggled with. They were also asked on their practiced emotional intelligence to oversee whether they have been placed in their convenient places of employment. It helped also to deduce what are the essential qualities that an emotionally intelligent leader needs to possess. Understanding their perspectives on emotional intelligence was the goal of the conducted interviews. Leadership theories, i.e. the female leadership, multicultural leadership theories were taken into account for the theoretical framework. The various components of emotional intelligence, i.e. Self-awareness, self-regulation,

motivation, empathy, and social skills are the components of emotional intelligence considered for the current study. The study was carried out using qualitative research methods. All of the responders were female Finnish leaders, and most of them had prior experience leading teams in the ICT industry. The interviews took place in the fall of 2020, either in-person or through Skype. Transcribing the interview transcripts allowed for the analysis of the results. The findings showed that each interviewed woman who responded believed that she was emotionally skilled, particularly in the area of empathy. Other findings indicated that, in formal settings, emotional intelligence is not as evident in their workplaces. All of the respondents agreed that emotional intelligence is a crucial component of leadership.

3.5. The importance of emotional intelligence for leadership capacities' development (Sara Åhman, 2021)

Studies conducted in social sciences are expanding daily and they are more and more dealing with prevalent subjects related to emotional intelligence and leadership. One of the topics that is frequently debated in the current day is emotional intelligence and its effect on leadership. In this perspective, the purpose of the work done by Åhman (2021) was to better understand how people in leadership roles see emotional intelligence and how crucial it is for effective leadership. As its theoretical foundation, the thesis draws on research on the history, development, and components of emotional intelligence as well as its relationships with leadership. For the purposes of this study, a qualitative methodology was used. To collect rich text data, semi-structured interviews with executives from various sectors were undertaken. These data were first coded, and thematic analysis was used to derive themes from them. The study's two research questions have each received an individual theme-based response. Significant findings of this study focus on elements like self-awareness, empathy, communication, relationship management, and others.

3.6. Emotional intelligence, as a leadership trait that affects the performance of institutions (Larras and Kirche, 2022)

Emotional intelligence is a core competency for leaders looking to improve and sustain the performance of their organizations. To do so, leaders have to developed their technical competencies as well as their emotional competencies. In this perspective, the study undertaken by Larras & Kirche (2022) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership and their impact on the performance of the foundation 'HENKEL' (located in Algeria). To do this, those researchers chose a qualitative approach based on a documents' analysis, a direct observation, and interviews with executives. Through the obtained results it was found that the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership positively affects the overall performance of the HENKEL Foundation.

3.7. Role of emotional intelligence on leader's decision-making (Erik Kovács, 2022)

Organizations are starting to place greater value on emotional intelligence in order to compete in the 21st century's fast-paced commercial environment. Emotional intelligence has the ability to significantly improve company leadership and decision-making, which are essential components of the corporate world. In order to further research in the area of emotionally intelligent decision-making and perhaps improve leaders' decision-making processes and decision quality, the purpose of this thesis is to examine the impact emotional intelligence has on leaders' decision-making. The thesis was commissioned by a Hungarian business that requested more autonomy. The results and analysis demonstrate that leaders use emotional intelligence to stay objective in decision-making, acquire important information during the process, convey conclusions in a professional manner, and think back on prior judgments to improve the quality of their current decisions. Additionally, the study supports the idea that leaders' decisions and decision-making processes are positively impacted by their emotional intelligence, and the thesis offers suggestions on how to improve decision-making for both leaders and businesses. The field of emotional intelligence in decision-making may be expanded as a result of this study

because there isn't much existing research on the subject.

4. Research methodology

4.1. An overview on the main previous research models on the association between emotional intelligence and leadership

Many research models have been proposed by scholars in order to emphasize the importance of emotional intelligence and its considerable contribution to the development of leadership aptitudes.

4.1.1. The Goleman Model (1998)

Goleman (1998) presented a model of emotional intelligence that depends on the personality traits and characteristics of the individual, including the capabilities and self and psychological motives of the individual, and he presented two books that had a great impact in spreading this concept in literary and scientific circles. Under the title (Working with Emotional Intelligence) issued in 1998, Goleman defined emotional intelligence as a set of emotional skills that an individual possesses and is required to succeed in professional interactions and in various life situations, and he defined in another place emotional intelligence as the ability to recognize Our feelings and the feelings of others and motivating ourselves and to effectively manage our emotions, emotions, and relationships with others (Drigas & Papoutsis, 2018)

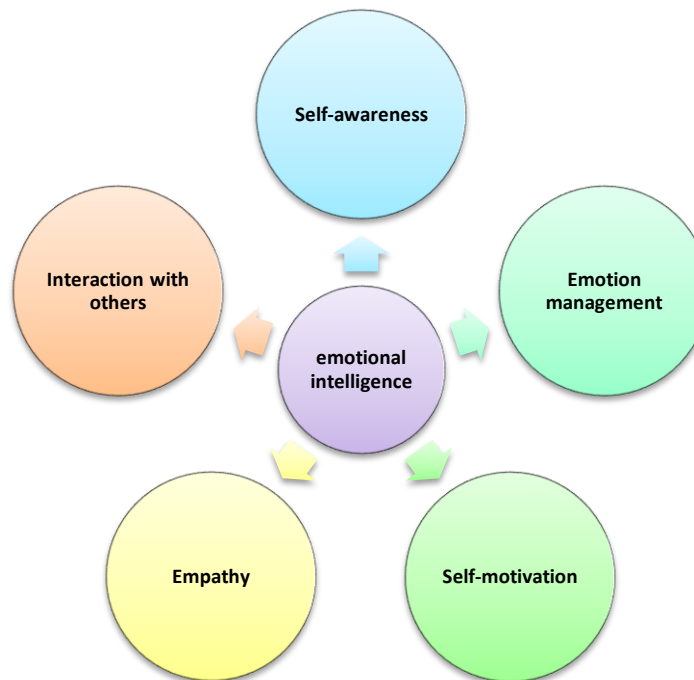
Accordingly, and as asserted by Kanasan & Fauzan (2019), Golman (2019) stressed that emotional intelligence encompasses five basic areas, which are listed as follows:

- Self-awareness: This refers to a person's knowledge and sense of his or her emotions and using them to reach appropriate decisions.
- Emotion management: It refers to the individual's ability to manage his actions, thoughts, and feelings in a compatible and flexible manner under different circumstances and situations.
- Self-motivation: It indicates that the individual depends on internal momentum to achieve his goals and ambitions.

- Empathy: It refers to the individual's ability to perceive what others feel and know their feelings.

- Interaction with others: It refers to the individual's ability to form relationships with others and interact with them effectively, manage them and build good social bonds with them.

Figure No. (1): The basic areas of emotional intelligence



Source: Kerr R., Garvin J., Heaton, N. & Boyle, E. (2006). Emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 27(4), 265-279. <https://manajemenrumahsakit.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/EI-leadershipeffectiveness.pdf>

4.1.2. The research model of Mayer and Salovey (1990)

Emotional intelligence is a set of abilities that explain the difference between individuals according to the non-cognitive aspects of intelligence, i.e. the level of perception and understanding of emotions. In this orientation, Mayer and Salovey (1990) defined emotional intelligence as the individual's ability *“to accurately perceive, evaluate and express emotions, as well as the ability to generate and access them when the thinking process is going,*

and the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge”. Then, for those scholars, emotional intelligence refers to the capacity of the person to monitor his own feelings and emotions and those of others. It is then expected that the individual uses this aptitude in directing his behavior and emotions by regulating them in a way that enhances the one's emotional and mental development (Drigas & Papoutsis, 2018). Thus, emotional intelligence includes four main capabilities or components, which are (as stated by Drigas & Papoutsis, 2018):

- The ability to be aware of emotions and express them accurately: It means the individual's ability to express emotions, whether through movements, facial features, voice, or signals.
- The ability to use emotions to facilitate the process of thinking: so that emotions are used to help increase focus or positively and improve thinking.

- The ability to understand and analyze emotions: It means the individual's ability to analyze emotions, name them, understand them and explain their meaning.
- The ability to manage emotions: It means the ability to organize and manage emotions, and it helps the individual to develop and improve his relationships with others.

4.1.3. The Bar-On Model (1997)

"Bar-On" focused his analysis of emotional intelligence on its effects and results and that it belongs to the field of mental capabilities and non-cognitive emotional abilities, and "Bar-On" defined emotional intelligence as an organization consisting of personal, emotional, and social skills and competencies that affect an individual's ability to successfully deal with environmental requirements, and pressures. He defined it as a set of non-cognitive abilities and skills that affect an individual's ability to adapt to environmental demands and stresses. (Drigas & Papoutsis, 2018)

Bar-On has identified the characteristics of emotional intelligence accordingly through a set of traits and abilities associated with emotional and social knowledge that affect our overall ability to effectively address the requirements of the environment, and Bar-On explained that emotional intelligence consists of five non-cognitive competencies or abilities. As it is sometimes called, it is (Drigas & Papoutsis, 2018 ; Lee & Ding, 2020):

- Non-self-cognitive competencies (internal personal components): It is a set of sub-non-cognitive competencies or a set of abilities that help the individual to deal with himself successfully, such as self-awareness, assertiveness, self-esteem, self-actualization, and independence.
- Competencies necessary for the relationship between people (components of the relationship between people): It is a set of social competencies that help the individual to establish successful relationships and have a positive impact on others, such as empathy, social responsibility, and the relationship between people.
- Competencies are necessary for adaptability (components of adaptability): a group of sub-cognitive competencies that help the individual to successfully adapt to the reality of life and the

requirements of the surrounding environment, such as problem-solving, reality awareness, and flexibility.

- Necessary competencies for the ability to manage and control stress (components of stress management): a group of sub-cognitive competencies or abilities that help the individual to manage stress, resist impulsivity and self-control, such as enduring stress and tension, and control impulsivity.
- General Mood: It is a group of sub-cognitive competencies or abilities that help the individual perceive his mood and change it positively, such as happiness and optimism.

Bar-On (1997) proposed the first measurement model of emotional intelligence that was designed to identify the non-cognitive competencies. He purposely used a self-report scale consisting of 360 items to verify whether the five non-cognitive competencies were well reflected through those indicators.

4.2. The pilot study (a sample of the leaders of three industrial companies in Iraq)

The methodology and procedures related to the current investigation carried out for a sample of six leaders of three industrial companies in Baghdad, will be presented in what follows.

4.2.1. Research Method

The present research revolves around the concept of emotional intelligence, which is one of the main concepts that social sciences have focused on. The use of a qualitative approach is then the most appropriate method for the stage of data collection.

The qualitative research method is recognized as the method that relies on obtaining data through open communication and conversation based on open questions. This method is not only about "what" people think, but also "why" they think so. (Al-Hanou, 2016). It draws on social science disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and anthropology. Therefore, it mainly focuses on in-depth investigations and further questioning of respondents, so that the interviewer/researcher understands their motivations and feelings. based on their answers. Understanding how respondents

make decisions can help the researcher draw conclusions related to his research. (Al-Hanou, 2016)

For the present study, respondents' perceptions and experiences form the core of the textual data were collected through indepth semi-structured interviews.

4.2.2. Sample, Population and Research procedures

The targeted sample of this research includes six leaders of industrial companies, operating in 16 departments.

For the research procedures, before starting the enquiry, an interview guide was prepared. It entailed semi-structured and open questions addressed to different individuals that had leadership positions in different industrial companies. Their selection for the interview was made through an appropriate sampling procedure. All of the respondents were interviewed in person and their answers were recorded and traduced into textual data, before being analyzed. The topics were then derived from the analysis that also represents the results of this research.

4.2.3. Data analysis' method

The thematic analysis technique was applied in this research to reach the results. In an objective analysis, data collected from interviewees are first logged into formatted text data, then used to create topics. A thematic analysis discovers, manages, investigates, and reports on recurring and unique patterns in data that is set systematically. The main goal of this analysis is to identify the commonalities in the data and infer meanings from it (Braun & Clarke 2012). As stated by those same authors Braun and Clarke (2012), "*A thematic analysis is a method of identifying, organizing, and providing insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set.*" The goal of such an analysis is to identify those patterns across the data set that appear to have important or unique characteristics (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). In this present study, Brown and Clark's pointed out that six steps are required for such an analysis' procedure, including: recognition of data, creation of initial symbols, search for topics, review of traits, identification of traits, and writing. All those

steps were taken into account and applied for the current research.

5. Results' presentation and discussion

5.1. The concept of emotional intelligence

The respondents' answers to the first research question were classified into two topics, as shown in what follows:

- Understanding and managing emotions: The three industry leaders (A, B, and C) who were interviewed defined the core of emotional intelligence as "understanding and managing the emotions of oneself and other team members." They also stressed their ability to control their emotions and their administrative staff, and manage them in a positive way. The following presentation of their answers illustrates their views regarding the concept of emotional intelligence: The interviewee 'A' revealed that emotional intelligence represents the ability to control and manage emotions in positive ways to achieve a goal"; whereas the leader 'B' indicated that emotional intelligence could be assimilated to "the ability to understand, perceive and use emotions that affect the team... It is the use of emotions in managing relationships in personal and social life. It guides "one's professionalism. The interviewee 'C' explained it by "the ability to connect with others, understand their emotions and put yourself in the shoes of others to see life from a different perspective"; while the leader 'D' argued that emotional intelligence is, for him, the ability to direct feelings in the right way, which helps in solving problems, being with others, and improving ones' communication skills. The respondent 'E' declared that emotional intelligence is, in his opinion, "the extent to which anyone is able to focus on the work he is doing regardless of his emotional state. Being very happy or very sad, you must both appear similar and should not affect what you want to achieve broadly or in a particular job at hand". Finally, the leader 'F' contended that emotional intelligence is "the ability to recognize and understand your feelings and how they affect the people around you and also integrate the awareness of the

feelings of others to manage the relationship more efficiently."

Thus, it appears that the responses of the interviewed leaders point out the importance of understanding and managing their own feelings and the feelings of others as the core of emotional intelligence. Terms such as "perceive feelings," "manage emotions," and "understand the feelings of others" were frequently found in the interview texts, which prompted us to include this topic into the results of the present study.

- Relationship management: Relationship management was also an important part of the answers of half of the interviewees, whenever they were asked about their understanding of emotional intelligence. Those latter expressed that emotional intelligence is the use of emotions in managing personal, social, and professional relationships. The set of obtained answers can be presented as follows:

'A' averred that "Emotional intelligence is the use of emotions in managing relationships in personal, social, and professional life"; while 'C' explained and added the importance of "awareness of the feelings of others in order to manage the relationships with them more efficiently". 'F' declared the following: *"I try to put himself in my workplace and at the same time, I make sure that we have a good relationship between managers and employees."*

Although the possibility of relationship management was not conveyed by all interviewees, the responses obtained by three of them could not be completely ignored. Those ones emphasized the use of emotional intelligence in managing relationships with teammates and subordinates.

5.2. Why is emotional intelligence important to leadership?

The answers to the second question of the research were categorized into three axes; The topics indicate why emotional intelligence is important to leadership. The three topics are self-awareness and decision-making, increased empathy and decision-making, and effective communication and conflict management.

- Self-awareness and decision making: the interviewed leaders explained that emotional intelligence brings them self-awareness and when they are emotionally intelligent, they can see situations more clearly and can understand the feelings of their team members. According to them, self-awareness helps them to make good and effective judgment related to their decision-making process.

- Verbatims from the responses of the interviewees regarding this topic are summarized below:

'A' stated: *"My team will follow what I do or what I do, so my work and self-awareness always play an important role in my team's outcome"*; while 'B' revealed: *"One of my co-workers was rude and arrogant toward his co-workers, and I casually asked him to He releases his feelings, and I discover that his love life has become complicated and that the accumulated tension was releasing, after sharing the truth with me, he finally behaved normally, in this incident, self-awareness helped me handle the situation in the right way, instead of facing the team member as a boss, I decided to approach of him as a friend,"*. 'E' felt that *"being self-aware, proactive, visionary, and being prepared for any setbacks is my strength as a leader, so I always keep my backups as well, and therefore, I believe working every day is my test as a leader, and I think it was important."* All the way from my inception days, self-awareness has played a vital role in cementing my role as a leader."

Consequently, it seems that respondents asserted that their awareness plays an important role in improving the decision-making process and the team outcomes. It helps them strengthen their leadership role.

- Increased Emotions and Relationship Management: Analysis of rich textual data indicated that leaders who feel more empathic are able to correctly understand their feelings, which helps them accurately assess the emotional state of their team members as well. This helps them build a connection, not only with their team members, but also with other co-workers and clients. Findings suggest that empathy is vital in managing relationships in the workplace. Empathy helps them put themselves in someone else's shoes and

thus push them towards making more comprehensive and purposeful decisions.

‘A’ replied: *“A good leader must win the heart and mind of his subordinates, so it is important to be empathetic being a leader,”*; whereas ‘B’ noted that *“empathy is said to be like a universal solvent, in solving any problem, if you have the ability to listen, and understand feelings of others, you become successful. This results in more productivity in the team to improve relationships between co-workers and clients”*. ‘C’ explained: *“I think it's really important to have empathy because empathy is just about feeling for others. I feel empathy for others, It helps me to understand their issues which helps me to take them into account when making my decision.”*. ‘D’ argued that: *“understanding the character of your co-worker and being able to criticize his or her flaws is a major responsibility of any leader. However, all people are not the same and all do not have the same strength and weakness. Thus, understanding their strengths, encouraging them and communicating well about their weaknesses and empathy is a must, this will increase the strength of the group as a whole and every member of the group will feel important as an integral part of the group”*. As noted by ‘E’, *“it is essential to be empathetic. Since it gives you a better understanding of how your team members are feeling, it makes you as a leader easier to deal with.”*

Thus, it appears that all the interviewed leaders agreed that empathy is an important trait for their leadership role. They saw empathy as helping them understand others and improve their communication skills, which ultimately leads to a better relationships’ management.

- **Effective Communication and Conflict Management:** the respondents were of the opinion that being emotionally intelligent helps them to be good social leaders. They also agreed that their emotional intelligence enable them to become good communicators. For them, an effective communication enhances the efficiency of teams at work and allows leaders uniting, motivating their partners and resolving any conflict with them. When asked about dealing with a conflict situation, the interviewees provided the following responses.

‘B’ pointed out that: *“Consultation and effective communication with a team member once a week, twice a month can be helpful to understand a team member’s problem and control this type of arrogant activity”* ; while ‘C’ explained that: *“Meet him personally and listen to his respective problems and causes of conflict... Find a solution to the conflict and motivate the person to act in a positive way,”*. Finally, ‘D’ added that *“At first it is my main priority.”*

It seems then that the four interviewed leaders highlighted the importance of emotional intelligence for effective communication with team members and also in conflict resolution. The emphasis was also placed on counseling and individual communication for conflict management.

The findings of the prospective study of this research illustrate the understanding of emotional intelligence from the point of view of leaders in three industries and also the idea of how emotional intelligence functions as an important trait in leadership positions. The search results are discussed in this section.

From all the respondents’ answers given above, we can deduce that the interviewed leaders’ understanding of emotional intelligence is likely to match commonly used definitions of emotional intelligence. Such a finding is in line with Serrat (2017) assumption, explaining emotional intelligence refers to *“the ability, competence, skill, or self-awareness to identify, evaluate, and manage feelings of oneself, others, and groups.”*. Interviewees portrayed also that emotional intelligence represents the ability to understand and manage their own emotions and those of others, as well as the capacity to manage relationships with their team.

Results of the present study indicate also that leaders, despite working in three industrial companies, have a similar understanding of emotional intelligence, as a personality trait related to emotional stability and conscientiousness noted to be extremely important regardless on the sector or position to which the individual belongs (Hjalmarsson & Dåderman 2020).

The second research question from this research delves into understanding the importance of emotional intelligence in leadership. The results are categorized into three axes, namely, self-awareness and decision-making, increased empathy and relationship management, and effective communication and conflict management. The responses of the interviewees indicated that self-awareness and decision-making are closely related to each other; while effective communication and conflict management share a strong connection. Findings supported also the existence of a meaningful link between increased empathy and relationship management.

Accordingly, emotional intelligence could be considered as an indicator of professional success as it provides a person with the ability to deal with the demands and stresses the importance of the environment. As stressed by Brown (2014), leaders who display a high level of emotional intelligence have often the ability to regulate the overall emotional intelligence of their team members. In this same orientation, Aloysius (2010) pointed out that emotional intelligence and its dimensions are significantly associated with effectiveness in leadership. It implies that the most successful leaders have a higher degree of emotional intelligence, as demonstrated by Saha et al (2023) who argued that the congruence between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness is fundamental for human resource management.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this research was to understand the perception of leaders of three industrial companies regarding emotional intelligence as well as to explore the importance of emotional intelligence and its main role for leadership. the research questions were formulated so as to lead us to achieve the goal of this research.

To reach the objectives of the current study, a qualitative research method was adopted and the perceptions and understanding of the emotional intelligence of six leaders working in the Sunni Endowment were considered. Similarly, the connection between emotional intelligence and leadership was examined on the basis of the

responses of the interviewees. Key findings supported that emotional intelligence is the ability to understand, manage and regulate feelings of self and others. It is important for leadership as it fosters individuals' self-awareness, decision-making, increased empathy, relationship management, effective communication, and conflict resolution.

Although the major studies on emotional intelligence were conducted and published in the 20th century, the number of researches on emotional intelligence carried out in the workplace is not very large. There is still a need for extensive investigations linking emotional intelligence to the workplace and leadership qualities. The impact of emotional intelligence and other related 'soft skills' on leadership needs also to be more explored in different contexts, and in relation to diverse professions and professions.

Finally, the current research aimed at examining the role of emotional intelligence and its effects on leadership roles. However, despite the efforts sustained to conduct this research in the best possible way, there may still some inconsistencies resulting from the lack of time and other resources that could have served as a suitable basis. Indeed, there is an abundant literature on the association between emotional intelligence and leadership. Other future investigations could hence consider other aspects of emotional intelligence and social/soft skills from one hand, and leadership from another hand, to broaden the horizon of research in this field.

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