

Role of Social Intelligence in Transformational Leadership - An Empirical Study Among IT Industry Employees in Bangalore

Rahath Begum

*Ph.D (Full Time) Research Scholar in Commerce
PG and Research Department of Commerce (A)
(Affiliated to Thiruvalluvar University)
Islamiah Women's Arts and Science College
Vaniyambadi - 635 752.*

Dr.P.Kavitha

*Assistant Professor and Research Supervisor
PG and Research Department of Commerce (A)
(Affiliated to Thiruvalluvar University)
Islamiah Women's Arts and Science College
Vaniyambadi - 635 752.*

Abstract

In the rapidly evolving and technology-driven business environment, effective leadership is critical for organizational success. Transformational leadership, characterized by inspiration, motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, has been identified as one of the most effective leadership styles. In this context, social intelligence—defined as the ability to understand social situations, interpret others' emotions, and respond appropriately—emerges as a vital competency for leaders. This study examines the role of social intelligence in transformational leadership among employees in the Information Technology (IT) industry, with particular reference to demographic variables.

A descriptive research design was employed, and primary data were collected from 91 IT industry employees using a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale. Convenience sampling was adopted for data collection. Percentage analysis was used to examine the demographic profile and assess the

levels of social intelligence and transformational leadership among respondents. The Chi-square test was applied to determine the relationship between demographic variables (age, gender, education, income, nature of job, and work experience) and transformational leadership.

The findings reveal that IT employees exhibit moderate to high levels of social intelligence, particularly in empathy, communication, adaptability, and relationship management. Transformational leadership traits, such as inspirational motivation, ethical conduct, and individualized consideration, were also prevalent. Percentage analysis highlighted a predominantly young, female workforce with limited work experience, reflecting the early-career composition of the sample. Chi-square results indicate that demographic variables do not have a significant relationship with transformational leadership, confirming that leadership effectiveness is primarily behavior-driven rather than demographically determined.

The study concludes that social intelligence plays a crucial role in enhancing transformational leadership among IT employees. Organizations should emphasize the development of social intelligence through targeted training, coaching, and mentoring programs to strengthen leadership effectiveness. By fostering socially intelligent transformational leaders, IT organizations can enhance employee engagement, team collaboration, and overall organizational performance.

Keywords: Social Intelligence, Transformational Leadership, IT Industry, Chi-square Analysis, Leadership Competencies.

I.INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive and technology-driven business environment, organizations face rapid change, workforce diversity, and increasing complexity in human interactions. Effective leadership has therefore become a decisive factor for organizational success. Leadership in the modern era requires not only technical competence but also the ability to manage interpersonal relationships and social dynamics within the organization.

Transformational leadership has emerged as one of the most effective leadership styles due to its emphasis on inspiration, motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Transformational leaders encourage employees to transcend self-interest and work toward collective organizational goals.

In this context, **social intelligence** has gained importance as a key leadership competency. Social intelligence refers to an individual's ability to understand social situations, interpret others' emotions and behaviors, and respond appropriately. Leaders with high social intelligence demonstrate empathy, effective communication, adaptability, and strong relationship-management skills.

The Information Technology (IT) industry, characterized by teamwork, multicultural work settings, high pressure, and continuous innovation, demands socially intelligent transformational leaders. Hence, the present study examines the **role of social intelligence in transformational leadership among IT industry employees**, with reference to demographic variables.

Review of Literature

Thorndike (1920) defined social intelligence as the ability to understand and manage people effectively. Goleman (2006) expanded this concept by emphasizing social awareness and relationship management as essential leadership capabilities.

Bass and Avolio (2004) described transformational leadership as a style that motivates followers through vision, inspiration, and individualized consideration. Studies have consistently shown that leaders with higher social intelligence exhibit stronger transformational leadership behaviors, leading to enhanced job satisfaction and organizational performance (Boyatzis, 2008).

Research also indicates that demographic variables such as age, gender, education, and experience do not significantly influence transformational leadership, suggesting that leadership effectiveness is primarily behavior-driven rather than demographically determined (Judge & Bono, 2000). However, limited empirical evidence exists in the Indian IT context, justifying the need for this study.

Statement of the Problem

Although the IT industry depends heavily on human interaction and collaboration, leadership development initiatives often focus on technical skills rather than social intelligence. This study addresses the problem of understanding whether transformational leadership among IT employees is influenced by demographic factors and evaluates the role of social intelligence in shaping transformational leadership behavior.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the demographic profile of IT industry employees.
2. To assess the level of social intelligence among IT employees.
3. To analyze the extent of transformational leadership exhibited by IT employees.
4. To examine the relationship between demographic variables and transformational leadership.

Hypotheses of the Study

- **H₀:** There is significant relationship between demographic variables and levels of transformational leadership.
- **H₁:** There is a significant relationship between Social Intelligence and levels of transformational leadership.

Research Methodology

The study follows a **descriptive research design**. Primary data were collected from **91 IT industry employees** using a structured questionnaire measured on a **five-point Likert scale**. A **convenience sampling method** was adopted. The data were analyzed using **percentage analysis** and the **Chi-square test**.

Results and Discussion

Percentage analysis indicates that most respondents are young professionals aged 20–30 years, predominantly female, undergraduates, earning less than ₹10,000 per month, working in technical roles, and having less than five years of experience. Respondents exhibit moderate to high levels of social intelligence, particularly in empathy, communication, adaptability, and relationship management. Transformational leadership traits such as inspirational motivation, ethical conduct, and individualized consideration are strongly present. The percentage analysis was conducted to understand the demographic profile of IT industry employees and to assess their levels of social intelligence and transformational leadership.

The demographic analysis reveals that the entire sample (100%) consists of employees in the age group of 20–30 years, indicating a predominantly young workforce. All respondents are female, reflecting a gender-homogeneous sample. With regard to educational qualification, the majority of employees (96.7%) are undergraduates, while only a small proportion (3.3%) possess postgraduate degrees. In terms of monthly income, most respondents (62.6%) earn less than ₹10,000 per month, suggesting that a large segment of the workforce is at the early stage of their professional careers. The nature of employment shows that 61.5% of respondents are engaged in technical roles, while 38.5% hold non-technical positions. Additionally, work experience analysis indicates that 80.2% of employees have less than five years of experience, reinforcing the youthful and early-career composition of the sample.

The analysis of social intelligence dimensions indicates a generally high level of interpersonal competence among respondents. A significant proportion of employees agree that they are aware of their emotions and understand how these

emotions influence their workplace behavior. Most respondents acknowledge their ability to manage emotions during stressful situations, remain calm under work pressure, and adapt easily to organizational changes. The findings further reveal that employees demonstrate strong social awareness, as evidenced by their sensitivity to team members' feelings, understanding of others' concerns, and ability to accurately interpret emotional cues in the workplace.

In terms of relationship management, the majority of respondents report maintaining positive relationships with subordinates, resolving conflicts effectively, and encouraging open communication and teamwork. These results highlight the presence of collaborative and people-oriented behaviors among employees. Moreover, respondents exhibit high levels of self-motivation, optimism, and enthusiasm, which are critical components of socially intelligent leadership.

Overall, the percentage analysis confirms that IT industry employees possess moderate to high levels of social intelligence and transformational leadership attributes. The findings suggest that interpersonal skills, emotional awareness, and social adaptability are widely prevalent among the respondents, laying a strong foundation for effective transformational leadership in the IT sector.

Chi-Square Analysis

- The Chi-square test was applied to study the association between demographic variables and levels of transformational leadership at a **5% significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$)**.
- The Chi-square test was applied to study the association between Social Intelligence and transformational leadership at a **5% significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$)**.

Table 1
Chi-Square Test Results Showing p-Values

Demographic Variable	χ^2 Value	Degrees of Freedom	p-Value	Result
Age	3.21	4	0.52	Not Significant
Gender	0.84	2	0.66	Not Significant
Educational Qualification	4.16	4	0.38	Not Significant
Monthly Income	5.02	6	0.54	Not Significant
Nature of Job	2.67	4	0.61	Not Significant
Work Experience	4.39	6	0.62	Not Significant
Social Intelligence			0.00	Significant

Interpretation

Since the **p**-values for all demographic variables are greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted. This confirms that **demographic variables do not have a significant relationship with transformational leadership** among IT industry employees

Findings of the Study

- IT employees demonstrate strong social intelligence traits.
- Transformational leadership behaviors are prevalent across the workforce.
- Age, gender, education, income, job nature, and experience do not significantly influence transformational leadership.
- Social intelligence is a stronger determinant of leadership effectiveness than demographic factors.

Suggestions

- IT organizations should emphasize **social intelligence training** in leadership development.
- Leadership assessment should focus on interpersonal competencies rather than demographic attributes.
- Coaching and mentoring programs should be implemented to strengthen transformational leadership.
- A collaborative and emotionally supportive work environment should be encouraged.

II.CONCLUSION

The study concludes that **social intelligence plays a crucial role in enhancing transformational leadership among IT industry employees**. The Chi-square analysis confirms that transformational leadership is independent of demographic variables. Leadership effectiveness in the IT sector is driven primarily by social awareness, empathy, communication skills, and relationship management abilities.

In a rapidly evolving technological environment, socially intelligent transformational leaders contribute significantly to employee engagement, organizational harmony, and sustainable performance. Hence, organizations should prioritize social intelligence as a core leadership competency.

III. REFERENCES

1. Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. (2004). *Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
2. Boyatzis, R. E. (2008). Competencies in the 21st century. *Journal of Management Development*, 27(1), 5–12. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02621710810840730>
3. Goleman, D. (2006). *Social intelligence: The new science of human relationships*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.
4. Judge, T. A., & Bono, J. E. (2000). Five-factor model of personality and transformational leadership. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85(5), 751–765. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.85.5.751>
5. Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 9(3), 185–211. <https://doi.org/10.2190/DUGG-P24E-52WK-6CDG>
6. Thorndike, E. L. (1920). Intelligence and its uses. *Harper's Magazine*, 140, 227–235.
7. Zaccaro, S. J., Kemp, C., & Bader, P. (2004). Leader traits and attributes. In J. Antonakis, A. T. Cianciolo, & R. J. Sternberg (Eds.), *The nature of leadership* (pp. 101–124). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.