

MEDIATING EFFECT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEES PERFORMANCE IN LEBANESE UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

The effectiveness of individual employee's performance depends on the leader/supervisor. Effective leader can enhance the individual employee performance through proper leadership style and retain high performance and talent employees within the company. The behavior of leader is very importance to improve job performance and retain skillful employees for longer period in the organization. This study aims to investigate the mediating effect emotional intelligent on the relationship between transformational leadership and employees' performance in Lebanese Universities. Three main variables consist in conceptual framework. They are independent variables (transformational leadership style), mediating variable (emotional intelligent) and dependent variable (employee performance). A sample of 400 respondents has been randomly selected from top four universities in Lebanon. Sample was selected by using simple random method and primary data was collected through structured questionnaires. Data analysis was conducted by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 23.0) and Smart-PLS 3.0. Results showed the significant contribution of 38.9 percent from transformational leadership and emotional intelligent on employees' performance. Emotional intelligent also played a significant role as a mediator in the relationship between transformational leadership and employees' performance. The outcomes of this study offered substantial empirical support to the research framework from a theoretical and managerial perspective.

Keywords: Employees Performance, Transformational Leadership, Emotional Intelligent.

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Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) stated that Covid-19 has had a significant impact on the world. Firms Concept and application of effective leadership seems to be an inevitable element of life in groups and a necessary prerequisite for coordinating the behavior of individuals, group members and organizations in the pursuit of common goals. Superb leaders have very different ways of directing a team, a division, or a company (Goleman, 2018). The emergence of the concept of leadership in different life domains has been prevalent in the recent years. This concept is actually seen as necessary and crucial for the effective operation and function of any organization. Fundamentally, leadership is characterized by its persuading power on human resources, organization's source of competitive advantage, and the achieved results. While trying to sway followers and harness more members in an organization with respect to their roles, leaders must work on improving employees' motivation levels due to that fact that engaging them in the work process ensures achieving desired goals (Batista-Taran et al., 2009).

Previous works of literature have focused on leadership styles and have examined employees' engagement at work and the consequences of such an involvement (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008; Kim, 2014; Park et al., 2013; Saks, 2006; Salanova et al., 2011; Salanova and Schaufeli, 2008; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Song et al., 2012; Xathopoulos et al., 2007). It has been found out that benefitting from available resources, social exchange theories, social cognitive theories, and leadership has been quite crucial and implicative. Within the plethora of researches and studies in relation to employee engagement and leadership styles in Western and Asian contexts, personal attributes perceived support, learning organizations, and transformational leadership have been considered significant in having a better citizenship behavior at the organization, proactive behavior, innovative mentality, and knowledgeable decisions. Regardless of these several studies on the relation between work engagement and other factors, little research has been conducted in relation to the potential correlation and association between leadership behaviors and organizational performance (Carasco-Saul et al., 2015).

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More recent studies have focused on the individual characteristics of leadership and leadership effectiveness. The emergence of transformational, transactional, and charismatic leadership styles combined can be more greatly defined as an interactional approach. Forsyth's (2017) interactional approach defines leadership as "*a reciprocal, transactional, and transformational process in which individuals are permitted to influence and motivate others to promote and achieve the attainment of group and individual goals*" (p. 216).

Leadership even through all the models and discussion depicted above, leaves one aspect unanswered, is it nature or nurture? Rapid changes in organizational success and commitment in this age of globalization require leaders to be adaptive, customer focused, fore thinking of systems and process improvement, effective workers, and at most, shares the efforts of the bottom line. To meet this challenge, one needs to understand why there are leaders that succeed at all levels of management and execution. Leaders need to idealize and mentor the behaviors and key elements of future leaders to lead effective outcomes. In the words of Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2019), Great leaders move us. They ignite our passion and inspire the best in us. When we try to explain why they are so effective, we speak of strategy, vision, or powerful ideas.

While examining the relations among leadership styles, employee emotional intelligence and work results have been always emphasized. This leadership concept has been the target of several previous researches (Xu and Thomas, 2011; Carasco-Saul et al., 2015). More elucidations on the scarcity of the findings in the correlation of the styles with the performance of employees have been noticed. Furthermore, leadership mostly has a dominant capacity over other work variables and has considerable, vulnerable modifications in relations to work outcomes and emotional intelligence of employees.

There's an evident lack of empirical and factual study that displays the factors which determine this performance. Moreover, since the leadership style and emotional intelligence followed are a main contributor in affecting the level of performance, this study aims to understand the manifestation of the leadership style and emotional intelligence followed in higher institutions in Lebanon. Hence, the key question is to what extent does the emotional intelligent mediates the relationship between leadership style especially transformational leadership style and employees' job performance in Lebanese higher institutions?

RQ1: Is there any relationship between transformational leadership style and employees' performance in Lebanese universities?

RQ2: Is there any relationship between emotional intelligence and employees' performance in Lebanese universities?

RQ: Does the relationship between transformational leadership style and employees' performance mediated by emotional intelligent?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employees' Performance

All the activities related to a particular job revolve around certain expectations of a worker and how they are executed and managed to achieve the organization's goals. It happens in several institutions where the employees' performance is assessed by personnel directors, annually or quarterly in order to recommend some changes, aiming at improving productivity and performance (Kelly Burkart, 2019). Several organizations nowadays put extensive efforts in guaranteeing and enhancing employees' competency, productivity, communication skills, commitment, cooperation, and professionalism (Kelly Burkart, 2019).

According to empirical literature on the relation between leadership styles and employees' performance, several authors have found out that autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles have direct results on employees' performance more directly.

Both the transformational and transactional leadership styles work in coordination in order to bring out motivated employees in the workplace. This notion goes hand-in-hand with Bass' theory (Yukl, 1998) which considers the transformational leadership styles as the best approach which can arouse or encourage employees to be prosperous and thriving at work. In the same light, David (2002) states that there are some important factors which affect the performance of employees at work, and motivation is a rudimentary factor. When employees have high motivation levels at work, the transformational leadership styles, if implemented, would affect their performance by epitomizing it (David, 2002). However, the transactional leaders highlight the notion that the leader should be able to recognize and identify the needs of their employees and how they should be better addressed to achieve the goals of the organization (David, 2002). Therefore, in order to motivate workers to do their duties more effectively, transactional leaders tend to emphasize the establishment of reward and punishment systems (Luthans, 2016). These systems constitute a motivation in themselves for the workers. Thus, motivation results from the act of encouraging leaders to fulfill the needs of their followers (Luthans, 2016).

Employee performance appears then to be affected by motivation and vice versa. The transactional leadership styles also have a direct impact on employee performance. This meets what Haryadi (2003) has asserted. The positive effect of this kind of styles on employees' performance takes place when the latter assess this style from a positive point of view, and can have negative implications when employees have tendencies to be dishonest, distrustful, and disloyal (Haryadi, 2003). Furthermore, Andarika (2004) and Ahn et al. (2005) confirm that transactional leadership styles have significant

impacts on the performance of employees and more positively. Through this, the subordinate groups will reciprocate by showing maximum work efforts.

Transformational Leadership Style

The transformational leadership style, according to Jyoti and Bhau (2015), is regarded as the process that motivates and encourages the followers in a positive sense as it appeals to better ideas and entrenched internal moral and ethical values to be sustained throughout the workplace. Besides, Puni et al. (2018) state that this leadership style recognizes the needs of the subordinates and finds ways to meet them within full involvement. On the other hand, Jyoti and Bhau (2015) contend that if a leader is described as being good, then there should be a marriage adoption between transactional and transformational leaderships, as they can both complement each other. Besides, Chan and Mak (2014) confirm that this leadership style pivots the personality and character of the leader as a key influence to affect and bring about positive changes. This happens by having a clear motivating vision and energizing goals and attitudes to improve the performance of employees. Similarly, Zwingmann et al. (2014) hinge on the main concept which underpins this theory through the belief that transformational leaders seek changes and modifications in values, ethics, thoughts, norms, traditions, and attitudes by affecting them to act in a way that goes beyond their threshold. This perspective is reinforced by Sun et al. (2014) who suggest that transformational leadership can be highly inspirational, and leaders can play an efficacious role in changing the attitudes and perspectives of their employees'' for the benefit of the whole organization.

Such authors state that their perspective revolves around aiding the subordinate groups throughout the process of change and motivating them to critically think of how their performance influences the entire organization (Sun et al., 2014). Furthermore, this is supported by Al Khajeh (2018) who insists on the fact that this form of leadership concentrates on establishing a generic value system for the employees in an organization and focuses on upgrading their morals, abilities, potentials, and inspirations. Al Khajeh (2018) also postulates that the transformational leaders act as mediocre or mediator in the process of developing an understanding of the inspirations, values, and interests.

In this regard, while trying to evaluate how leadership's impact on the well-being of employees within transformative or transactional leadership theoretical styles, Zwingmann et al. (2014) find that guaranteeing a positive environment leads to the development of a better attitude or work perception. On a similar basis, Wang et al. (2011) and Sofi & Devanadhen (2015) strongly argue that transformational leaders importantly impact the performance of workers by affecting their motivation, morale, and potentials. This relation between the transformational style and the employees' performance has been emphasized by Xu and Wang (2008) who note that it results from a developed performance, and what lie behind this are enhanced skills and capabilities, know-how and motivation for employees, and promoted organizational interests.

The leadership expert James MacGregor Burns was the first to introduce the transformational leadership style in 1978. According to Burns (1978), there are four key dimensions which govern the implementation of this theory, and they are: professional effect like confidence and trustworthiness, inspirational motivation, intellectual trigger, and individualized consideration. These dimensions play an effective role in allowing leaders to act as powerful role models in creating more productive individuals (Hay, 2000). Moreover, transformational leaders should have a high sense of intellectual motivation, as they should instill motivation and enthusiasm in the employees' spirits, and this eventually encourages them to be more concentrated on the collective well-being and the ultimate goals of the organization (Aydin, Sarier, and Uysal, 2013; Cho and Dansereau, 2010). For these reasons, the behaviors of transformational leaders are effective in bringing change to employee by making them more aware of the outcomes of their work activities, and this helps activate their higher order needs and expand their abilities beyond their self-interests (Bass and Avolio, 2000). Moreover, Avolio, Walumbwa and Weber (2009) state that transformational leadership helps employees to perform tasks in an organization in a manner which goes beyond the expectations, and this is achieved through the process of transcending self-interest for the whole goodness of the workplace. Thus, transformational leaders adopt a more socialized and emotionally intelligent character (McKee, 2014). They are also highly charismatic and know how to guard, trigger, and express their emotions (McKee, 2014).

Lastly, they have a clear vision in order to boost excitement, hopefulness, and inspiration among employees. Jin (2010) suggests that transformational leaders have a high potential in integrating values like empathy, affection, compassion, sensitivity, innovation, and socialization. Those leaders also include elements of shared decision-making process (Aldoory and Toth, 2014). Therefore, being able to re-invent the entire philosophy, mission statement, vision, system, and culture of organization is facilitated through transformational leadership (. Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnely and Konopaske, 2012).

Based on the above review, this study developed the following hypothesis:

H1: There is significant relationship between transformational leadership style and employees' performance.

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is being able to understand one's own feelings, how others are feeling and how those feelings can affect one another. It is the capacity to be in control of one's emotions and leverage that to produce meaningful relationships, enhance leadership skills and allow for deeper connections and understanding to take place. Generally, the four basic domains of emotional intelligence that is widely accepted include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. Learning, developing and exercising these domains will vary between each individual and the level of mastery they will adopt but those who master the skill should have greater potential as successful leaders. According to Mathew and Gupta (2015), emotionally intelligent leaders are thought to perform better in the workplace, be happier and more dedicated to their organization, take advantage of emotions and use them to foresee major improvements in organizational functioning, improve decision making, solve problems, instill a sense of enthusiasm, excitement, trust and cooperation in other employees through interpersonal relationships.

The concept of emotional intelligence stems from the theory and studies of Thorndike and Stein's (1937) conceptualization of *Social Intelligence*, which they defined initially as the ability to comprehend and manage people. Thorndike further described social intelligence as the ability to recognize one's own and others' internal states, motives, and behaviors, and to act toward them in the best possible manner based on that information. Because the authors hypothesized that social intelligence can be applied inward, social intelligence also includes the ability to understand and manage oneself. Gardner (1983) further conceptualized that EQ consists of adaptive skills, whereby an emotionally intelligent person has a deep awareness of his or her emotions and the ability to label and draw upon those emotions as a resource to guide behavior.

A more recent conceptualization of Thorndike and Stein's theory of social intelligence provided through the studies performed by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and Mayer and Salovey (1997) expressed EQ as the fundamental capacity to perceive emotions, assimilate emotion-related feelings, and understand the information of those emotions and manage them. To this point, research provided in the development and measurement of EQ had not been applied directly to leadership effectiveness and organizational performance, only that those individuals with high EQ were perceived and found to be able to manage the emotions of individuals and selves in a more constructive measure.

Research in the conceptualization of EQ undertaken by Goleman (1995), defined five major components of EQ, which included:

- Self-awareness – the ability to recognize and understand one's moods, emotions, and drives, as well as one's effect on others.
- Self-regulation – the ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods.
- Motivation – a passion to work for reasons that go beyond money or status and a propensity to pursue goals with energy and persistence.
- Empathy – the ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people and skill in treating people according to emotional reactions.
- Social-skill – proficiency in managing relationships and building networks, as well as an ability to find common ground and build rapport.

Additional research by Goleman (1998) clarified that an individual with EQ would exhibit the following descriptive sub-constructs or “hallmarks” for each of the five components of EQ:

- Self-awareness – self-confidence, realistic self-assessment, and a self-deprecating sense of humor.
- Self-regulation – trustworthiness and integrity, comfort with ambiguity, and openness to change.
- Motivation – strong drive for achievement, optimism – even in the face of failure, and organizational commitment.
- Empathy – expertise in building and retaining talent, cross-cultural sensitivity, and service to clients and customers.
- Social-skill – effectiveness in leading change, persuasiveness, and expertise in building and leading teams.

In short, emotional intelligence means understanding your own and other people’s emotional makeup well enough to move people in the direction of accomplishing goals.

Intelligence must meet several standard criteria before it can be considered scientifically legitimate. First, it should be capable of being operationalized as a set of abilities. Second, it should meet certain correlational criteria. The abilities defined by intelligence should be from a related set and be related to pre-existing intelligences, while also showing some unique variance. Third, the abilities of the intelligence should develop with age and experience (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2019).

Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (2019) argued that EQ does indeed describe actual abilities rather than preferred courses of behavior. To support EQ as an intelligence, two studies were performed to substantiate its psychometric claim. Study one (Mayer et al, 2019) included 503 adults with a mean of 23 years (range: 17 – 70). The participants were assessed using the Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS), which consists of 12 tasks, divided into four classes or branches of abilities including perceiving, assimilating, understanding, and managing emotions. The results indicated that emotional intelligence shows a pattern that is consistent with a new domain of intelligence. The authors concluded that emotional intelligence can be operationalized as sets of abilities.

The General Emotional Intelligence Factor can be divided into three subscales: Perception, Understanding, and Managing. Finally, EQ correlates moderately with a measure of verbal intelligence indicating that it is related but not the same. In their second study, Mayer et al (2019) dealt with establishing the third criterion of intelligence, in that intellectual capacities grow with age and experience from childhood to early adulthood. To determine if this actually occurred, 229 adolescents with a mean age of 13.4 (range 12 – 16), were administered several portions of the scale employed in the first study. For reasons of time and age appropriateness, only a subset of the scales administered to adults was administered to the adolescents. As predicted, the study showed that adults performed at higher ability levels than that of adolescents. In addition, emotional intelligence in adolescents revealed the same relationships as verbal intelligence and empathy in adults. Studies examining adolescents by Richardson (2017) and Richardson and Evans (2017) imply that the lack of emotional and social learning among adolescents may lead to future adult disciplinary and social problems. Specifically, Richardson (2017) stated that the lack of interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences may cause individuals to become self-centered and unable to empathize and relate to others and may eventually lead to violent behavior. These intelligences must be nurtured and strengthened at an early age in children’s social environments. Richardson further stated that people who lack social and emotional competence frequently cause discipline problems and are unsuccessful in their academic pursuits. As a framework for teaching social and emotional intelligence, the author cited a successful program based on three main theories: (a) cognitive behavior, (b) transactional analysis, and (c) responsible assertion to enable greater empathy and social-awareness in building adolescents’ success for the future.

Further, Richardson and Evans (2017) examined a successful program in developing social and emotional competence, *Connecting with Others*, which was developed to assist students with disabilities to function in inclusive classrooms. The authors research found that the skills outlined in each lesson were applicable for all students. The program for elementary grades (K to 2 and 3 to 5) includes the following skill areas: concept of self and others, problem solving and conflict resolution, sharing, socialization, communication, and empathy and caring. Programs developed for middle school grades (6 to 8) vary in the skill areas. Additionally, two new areas were added to the middle school program: group dynamics and time management. The eight skill areas for this age group included: awareness of self and others, communications, responsibility, self-advocacy and assertiveness, conflict resolution, cooperation and collaboration, love and caring, and time management and organization.

Three studies performed by Davies, Stankov, and Roberts (1998), explored whether EQ should be included within the traditional cognitive abilities by investigating the relationships among measures of emotional intelligence, traditional human cognitive abilities, and personality. The three studies included a total population of 530 participants. Study one (Davies, Stankov, & Roberts 1998) was designed to cover as broad a range of emotional intelligence measures as possible, and participants were required to rate the extent to which each emotion was present in each stimulus on a five-point rating scale. The results of this study point to limitations in the construct of EQ, particularly with respect to its measurement through self-report instruments. The authors concluded that the limitations imposed were based on self-reports that had not been scientifically validated. The majority of subjective measures did not appear to assess anything new; they tended to define factors that have been already well-established (and construct-valid) through personality inventories.

Study two (Davies, Stankov, & Roberts, 1998) employed the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). The authors stated that the use of a different set of cognitive ability measures in this design can establish a reasonably strong argument that based on the subjective measures (self-report instruments) used do not assess any new validated measures. As with the conclusions of study one, results of study two also suggested that the linkage between cognitive abilities and emotional intelligence was weak.

Because of the largely negative findings with self-report measures, the primary purpose of study three (Davies, Stankov, & Roberts, 1998) was to assess whether the Emotional Perception Factor defined in study one represented anything other than a combination of existing measures produced by using a self-reported response. The conclusions by the authors for study three indicated that replication of an emotional perception factor, as identified in study one, could not be achieved. Therefore, their findings claim that EQ is either a personality trait or a type of ability. Concluding that if it is either a personality or type of ability,

it cannot yet be measured in a dependable way. Stankov (2018) further argued why his research could not establish the existence of EQ for two reasons, both of which have to do with the measurement of the construct. First, questionnaire measures of EQ seem to be closely related to factors captured by existing personality questionnaires. Second, objective measures have employed consensual scoring procedures that seem to have poor reliability. Emotion perception may be the only aspect of emotional intelligence that has a chance of becoming an established trait in the future.

From the above discussion, these hypotheses were developed:

H2: There is significant relationship between emotional intelligent style and employees' performance.

H3: Emotional intelligent mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and employees' performance

The study focused on describing employees of Lebanese Universities as the characteristics of the population. According to Sekaran and Bougie, (2010) descriptive design is undertaken in order to describe the features of the concerned variable in a given circumstance. The survey method was adopted to achieve the aim of the study, since the study focused on the employee's performance of the employees. Furthermore, the survey research employed questionnaires to have responses from the respondents (Zikmund, 2003). The study used a self-report questionnaire method for all adapted items to measure independent variables (transformational leadership), mediating variable (emotional intelligent) and dependent variable (employee's performance).

The research adopted quantitative method as the aim is to determine the effect on each variable on another. It also allows results generalization to the entire population as a result of vast sample population (Malhotra, 2010; Gelo et al., 2008; McDaniel & Gates, 2007). The population comprises of all employees in Lebanese universities. This study selected four top universities in Lebanon, with 6,012 total employees. Therefore, according to Krijcie and Morgan sample determination table, for 6000 to 7000 population, the minimum of 374 samples were required. Nevertheless, the size of the sample was multiplied by two to minimize error in sampling and to take care of nonresponse rate issue (Hair, Wolfenbarger & Ortinall 2008). Hence, 400 was selected as the total number of questionnaires to administer.

The 400 questionnaires with self-addressed envelopes were distributed through post-mail to the employees in selected four Lebanese universities. To increase and achieve high response rates, series of follow-up were made through emails, SMS, several phone call reminders and self-visit to the respondents (Silva, Smith, & Barnmer, 2002; Traina, MacLean, Park, & Kahn, 2005; Sekaran, 2003; Dillman, 2000; Porter, 2004; Dillman et al., 2009). As suggested by De Leeuw, (2005) and Dillman et al., (2009) on response rate improvement to post-mail mode, an email was sent to some respondents through their associations as an appreciation to those that send back the questionnaire and as another reminder to those that did not send back their responses. For those could not reach by email, a self-visit was conducted to their respective representative in order to persuade them to fill in the questionnaire in their regular monthly or emergency meetings.

Although the sample of the study is 374 as suggested by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) the increase of the 400 sent out questionnaires was deliberately done to overcome the likelihood of not getting the required number of sample size because of the tendency of non-responses (Bartlett, Kotlik, & Higgins, 2001; Cochran, 1977). Thus, because of the efforts made, 330 questionnaires were returned out of 400 questionnaires that were distributed by postal delivery to the targeted respondents.

After the collection of sufficient data that matches the minimum sample size requirements, researcher coded, summarized and analysed the data with SPSS, structural equation modelling (PLS). Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed as a method of data analysis. Descriptive statistics was employed to explain the features of data quantitatively. It aims to summarize a sample rather than taking the whole population (Bichi, 2004). It gives a summary about the sample and the observation made. Therefore, PLS-SEM was employed in the data analysis. Below are details explanations on the instruments employed in analysing and interpreting the data collected for the main explanatory study. The PLS modelling is considered as the most appropriate method of data analysis in this study based on several reasons.

PLS path modelling is selected in this study because of the estimation the interactions between constructs or structural model and associations between indicators and their corresponding latent constructs or measurement model concurrently, even though it is similar to conventional regression technique (Chin, Marcolin, & Newsted, 2003; Duarte & Raposo, 2010; Gerlach, Kowalslu, & Wold, 1979; Lohmoeller, 1989. Additionally, the objective of the study is to predict the role of organizational factors in increasing academicians' commitment. In addition, the study has reflective constructs. Lastly, compared to other path modelling software, Smart PLS software was carefully chosen as a tool of data analysis for the reason that of its friendly graphical user interface that help users to create a moderating and mediating effect for path models with interaction effects (Temme, Kreis, & Hildebrandt, 2006, 2010).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Overall, a total of 400 sets of questionnaires were distributed to the targeted participants. Out of 400 distributed questionnaires, 330 were returned making the response rate of 82.5 percent. 13 of the 330 questionnaires were eliminated during data cleaning process and the remaining 317 sets of questionnaires were usable for further analysis. Data was screened and cleaned to ensure the accuracy of the data collected. This was done by analysing the original data collected against the source data file. Following Tabachnick and Fidell (2001), data cleaning in this study involved checking the accuracy of the data input, dealing with missing values, detecting and treating the outliers.

Table 1 summarised the demographic background of the respondents. As indicated in Table 1, 45.7 percent (N=145) of the respondents were male compared to female employees of 54.3 percent (N=172). The respondents were less than 30 years old (10.7%), 31 to 40 (40.4%), 41 to 50 (24.3%) and over 50 (24.6%). Most of Bachelor Degree (32.5%) and Master Degree (30.3%) holders. Majority of the respondents had the working experience between 7 to 10 years (42.9%) and more than 10 years (26.5%).

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	145	45.7
Female	172	54.3
Age (Years)		
Less than 30	34	10.7
30 to 40	128	40.4
41 to 50	77	24.3
>50	78	24.6
Education		
Certificate	14	4.4
Diploma	53	16.7
Bachelor Degree	103	32.5
Masters/PhD	96	30.3
Others	51	16.1
Working Experience (Years)		
Less than 3	29	9.1
3 to 6	68	21.5
7 to 10	136	42.9
More than 10	84	26.5

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Table 1.
Demographic
Background of
Respondents
(N = 317)

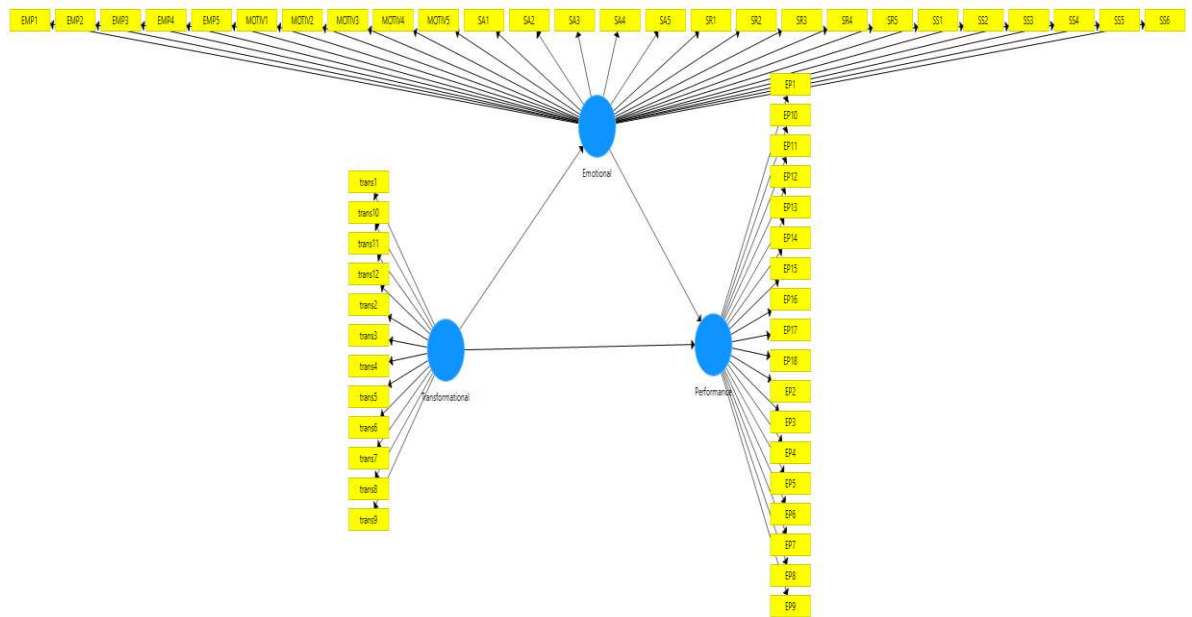
Assessment of a Measurement Model

To assess the measurement model, the following activities were undertaken in this study: examining internal consistency reliability, ascertaining indicator reliability and determining convergent and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2014). These activities were undertaken in order to identify the relationship between the observed variables and the underlying latent constructs (Hamid, Ishak & Yusof, 2015).

The first stage hierarchical construct model was first assessed as seen in Tables 2, Table 3 and Figure 1 and 2.

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient and composite reliability coefficient were used to measure the internal consistency reliability for this study. Using composite reliability coefficient to interpret internal consistency reliability is based on the rule of thumb that composite reliability coefficient should be at least 0.70 (Hair et al., 2010). Thus, as can be seen in Table 2, the Cronbach's Alpha values are between 0.874 and 0.953, while values of composite reliability are between 0.905 and 0.958. Thus, internal consistency reliability is not an issue for this study.

Figure 1.
Algorithm of
First-Stage
Hierarchical
Construct Model



The indicator reliability was assessed by examining the outer loadings of each constructs' measure (Hair et al., 2012). To ensure unidimensionality of a measurement model, items should be 0.50 or higher (Afthanorhan, 2013). Since most of the items in Figure 1 have relatively good loadings, 0.60 was taken as the minimum for the first stage model of this study; hence, all items shows good loadings greater than 0.60 and were retained in the model.

Convergent validity is the extent to which items truly represent the intended latent construct and correlate with other measures of the same latent construct (Hair et al., 2006). The convergent validity of this study was examined by the AVE of each latent construct, as suggested as suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981). The AVE of each latent construct should be at least 0.50 (Chin, 1998). The AVEs for this study as shown in Table 2 are all above 0.50, suggesting adequate convergent validity.

Table 2.
Loadings,
Average Variance
Extracted (AVE)
and Reliabilities
for First Stage
Hierarchical
Construct Model

Latent Construct & Indicators		Standardised Loading	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Performance			0.958	0.953	0.558
	EP1	0.704			
	EP10	0.694			
	EP11	0.750			
	EP12	0.782			
	EP13	0.778			
	EP14	0.790			
	EP15	0.735			
	EP16	0.714			
	EP17	0.657			
	EP18	0.820			
	EP2	0.650			
	EP3	0.749			
	EP4	0.740			
	EP5	0.817			
	EP6	0.803			
	EP7	0.816			
	EP8	0.728			
	EP9	0.689			

Transformational		0.905	0.874	0.613	Mediating Effect of Emotional Intelligence on the Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Employees Performance in Lebanese Universities
trans1	0.846				
trans10	0.747				
trans11	0.815				
trans12	0.685				
trans2	0.631				
trans3	0.660				
trans4	0.682				
trans5	0.653				
trans6	0.732				
trans7	0.740				
trans8	0.824				
trans9	0.793				
trans1	0.846				
Emotional Intelligent		0.964	0.960	0.508	
EMP1	0.73				
EMP2	0.72				
EMP3	0.732				
EMP4	0.749				
EMP5	0.761				
MOTIV1	0.544				
MOTIV2	0.7				
MOTIV3	0.735				
MOTIV4	0.657				
MOTIV5	0.758				
SA1	0.822				
SA2	0.817				
SA3	0.805				
SA4	0.716				
SA5	0.779				
SR1	0.571				
SR2	0.808				
SR3	0.662				
SR4	0.76				
SR5	0.614				
SS1	0.745				
SS2	0.706				
SS3	0.735				
SS4	0.527				
SS5	0.721				
SS6	0.521				

Similar to convergent validity, AVE was also used to determine the discriminant validity of this study (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Accordingly, based on Fornell and Larcker's (1981) suggestion, discriminant validity was evaluated with the use of the AVE with a score of 0.50 or more. Also the square root of the AVE should be greater. Thus, as seen in Table 2, the values of AVE for this study are between 0.543 and 0.613, indicating acceptable values. In Table 3, the correlations among the latent constructs are compared with the square root of AVE (in bold face). The AVEs are all greater than the correlations among latent constructs, indicating sufficient discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

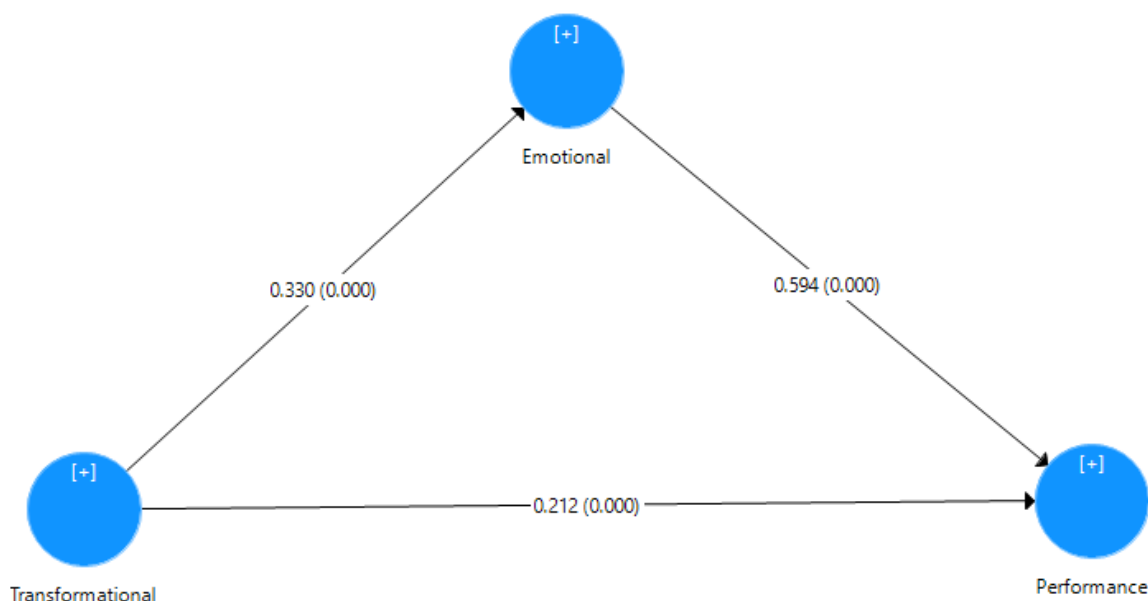
Table 3.

Latent Variable
Correlation
and Square
Roots of
Average Variance
Extracted

	Emotional	Performance	Transformational
Emotional	0.713		
Performance	0.664	0.749	
Transformational	0.33	0.408	0.737

Assessment of Significance of the Structural Model

The current study assessed the structural model. This study also applied bootstrapping method with 5000 bootstrap samples to assess the significance of the path coefficients (Hair et al., 2014; Hair et al., 2012; Hair et al., 2011; Henseler et al., 2009). Figure 2 and Table 4 therefore show the estimates for the full structural model.

Figure 2.
PLS Structural
Model

Assessment of Variance Explained in the Endogenous Latent Variables

As presented in the above Table 4, the research model explains 48.1 percent of the total variance in employee performance. This advocates that the sets of exogenous latent variables (i.e., transformational leadership styles and emotional intelligent) collectively explain 48.1 percent of the variance of the employee performance. Therefore, resulting from Falk and Miller's (1992) and Chin's (1998) the criteria, the endogenous latent variables showed acceptable levels of R-squared values, which were considered as substantial respectively.

Table 4.

Variance
Explained in
the Endogenous
Latent Variables

Latent Variables	Variance Explained (R ²)	Adjusted R ²
Employee Performance	0.389	0.385
Emotional intelligent	0.109	0.106

Hypotheses Testing

At the beginning, Hypothesis 1 to Hypothesis 2 predicted that leadership styles and emotional intelligent are positively related to employee performance. Result in Table 5 and Figure 2 revealed a significant positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance ($B = 0.212$, $t = 4.302$, $p < 0.01$), supporting Hypothesis H1. Similarly, Hypothesis 2 anticipated that emotional intelligent is positively associated to employee performance. As shown in Table 5 and Figure 2, result also showed the significant association between emotional intelligent and employee performance ($B=0.594$, $t = 15.000$, $p > 0.01$). These findings have successfully support H1 and H2.

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta	T	Sig.	Summary
H1	Emotional -> Performance	0.212	4.302	0.000	Supported
H2	Transformational -> Performance	0.594	15.000	0.000	Supported

Mediating Effect of Emotional Intelligence on the Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Employees Performance in Lebanese Universities

Mediation Effect of Emotional Intelligent

H3 posits the mediating effect of emotional intelligent on the relationship between transformational leadership style and employees' performance. According to Hair *et al.* (2018), "mediation occurs when a third mediator variable intervenes between two other related constructs" (p. 228). Precisely, a variation in the exogenous constructs reasons a variation in the mediator construct, which in turn, results in a variation in the endogenous construct in the PLS path model, referred as mediation effect. The current study used SmartPLS 3.2.6 (Ringle *et al.*, 2015) to assess the structural model together with the mediator variable via bootstrapping method which can be considered as slightly rigorous for assessing the mediation effects (Hair *et al.*, 2013). As showed in Figure 4.4, the mediating hypotheses were also tested, as per the guidelines of Hair *et al.* (2018).

Figure 3 showed that transformational leadership significantly predicted EI ($B = 0.330$, $p < 0.01$), fulfilling path 'a' (IV to MV). Transformational leadership also displayed a significant relationship with employees performance ($B = 0.212$, $p < 0.01$) in path 'c'. However, the present of EI in the model has decrease the relationship between Transformational leadership to EP ($B = 0.196$, $p < 0.01$). Hence, it can be concluded that EI has partially mediates the relationship between Transformational leadership and EP, supporting H3.

Table 5.
Structural Model Assessment

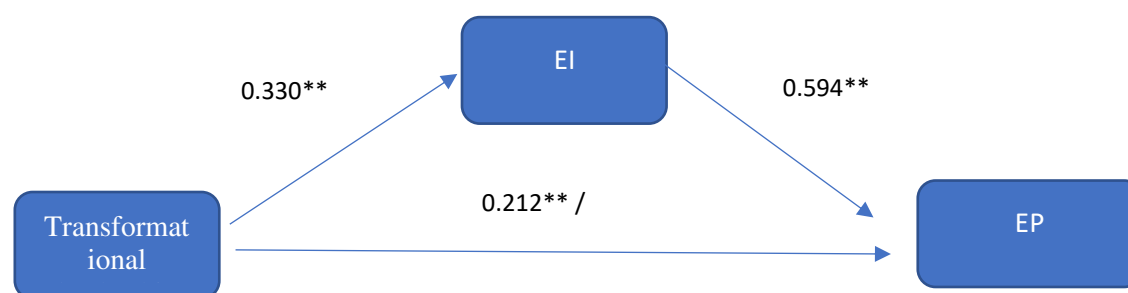


Figure 3.
Mediating effect of EI in the relationship between Transformational leadership and EP

CONCLUSION

The finding revealed that Transformational leadership styles significantly influence the employee's performance in Lebanese universities, parallel with the previous results (Peter (2018; Nadarasa, 2017; Shen et al. 2018; Zhou 2019). The two-leadership style studied were found to have significant influence on the employees' performance. Similarly, Judge and Piccolo (2019) found a significant relationship between this leadership style and the level of employees' performance and attitude toward the workplace. In other studies, the transformational leadershipstyle has been regarded as having a positive impact on different aspects of employees' performance and satisfaction levels. The same notion applies for transactional leadership, andso did laissez-faire leadership (David, 2017).

Transformational work in coordination in order tobring out motivated employees in the workplace. This notion goes hand-in-hand with Bass' theory (Yukl, 2017) which considers the transformational leadership styles as the best approachwhich can arouse or encourage employees to be prosperous and thriving at work. In the same light, David (2017) states that there are some important factors which affect the performance of employees at work, and motivation is a rudimentary factor. When employees have high motivation levels at work, the transformational leadership styles, if implemented, would affecttheir performance by epitomizing it (David, 2017).

The positive effect of this kind of styles on employees' performance takes place when the latter assess this style from a positive point of view, and can have negative implications when employees have tendencies to be dishonest, distrustful, and disloyal (Haryadi, 2003). Furthermore, Andarika (2004) and Ahn et al. (2005) confirm that transformational leadership styles have significant impacts on the performance of employees and more positively. Through this, the subordinate groups will reciprocate by showing maximum work efforts.

Emotional intelligence mediates the influence of transformational on employees' performance. In a sense, the indicators of transformational can improve employees' performance due to the presence of emotional intelligence. The direct effect of transformational on performance was 25.8 percent while the indirect effect of transformational on employees' performance through emotional intelligence was 0.7 percent. This means that the indirect effect of transformational is greater than the direct effect on employees' performance. In other words, emotional intelligence can mediate the effect of transformational leadership on employees' performance. This finding is consistent with Agustian (2021) who affirms that professional world possesses various issues and challenges every employee has to handle. Professional world requires not only intellectual competence, but also emotional competence or intelligence, which has appeared more crucial. If one can solve his emotional problems, his work result will increase.

The outcomes of this study offered substantial empirical support to the research framework from a theoretical perspective. Through this study, the relationship between the leadership styles, emotional intelligence and employees' performance was established. The findings of this study support the work by Agustian (2021) who reported that leadership styles and emotional intelligence have the significant effect on employees' performance. In addition, this study discovered that emotional intelligence had a mediating impact on the relationship between leadership styles and employee's performance.

Al Khajeh (2018) found that previous studies on leadership styles tended to focus on three domains of leadership styles. However, this study focused on five domains of leadership styles including democratic, autocratic, laissez-faire, transactional and transformational leadership styles. The findings validated the theoretical underpinning of employee's performance and the idea of employee's performance in organization was impacted by leadership styles and emotional intelligence (Narsir et al. (2020). The findings partially supported the hypothesis because of many distinct elements compared to previous research, such as the kind of population, decision-making process, a mix of respondents and factors, or perception of risk in a variety of settings (situational factors). Another contribution of this study was to explore leadership styles from a domestic viewpoint, which differed from previous studies that primarily involved employees in general and public organization before the pandemic and lockdown. This study's findings were based on the general participants, who included support staffs, managerial level employee, academics, and others.

This study also offers an opportunity to conduct future research on employees' performance from various dimensions (particular group of respondents) situations for comparison. This study focused on the universities' employees, which means that researchers may not be able to directly compare the findings if studies were conducted on different individuals and conditions.

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