

The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Transformational Leadership: Statistical Evidence from Saudi Arabia Using PLS-SEM Analysis

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Abstract: In this paper, the researcher studied transformational leadership, which is said to be the next big challenge for the organization in facing changing landscape of the macroenvironment. The present research aims to study and understand transformational leadership. The present research has theorized that emotional intelligence yielded from social support, employee engagement, learning orientation and customer orientation can play a significant role in enhancing the transformational leadership capability of the organization. The present research has employed the survey questionnaire as a tool for data collection based on the five-point Likert scale. The present research has collected data from private-sector firms in Saudi Arabia. The partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) has been used as a tool for data analysis. The result from the PLS-SEM analysis have shown that three out of four elements, i.e. employee engagement, learning orientation and social support, are necessary for enhancing emotional intelligence. The results are further consistent with the established theoretical assertions that emotional intelligence can have a significant positive effect on transformational leadership. The research is novel because the present research has theorized the work and organization-related factors such as social support, learning orientation and employee engagement in enhancing overall emotional intelligence directly and trans-formational leadership indirectly.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Learning Orientation, Emotional Intelligence, Transformational Leadership.

1 Introduction

The field of management and, more specifically, 'scientific management' significantly impact the very nature of the firm, its operation, cost, and overall efficiency [1]. The literature suggests that essential functions and operations of an organization, such as production, delivery of goods and services, and financial management, became highly effective and efficient [2]. Scientific management brought efficiency and effectiveness within the organization's different functions by dividing the tasks into smaller units [3]. Such an approach has become widely recognized worldwide and has made organizations highly modern, innovative, efficient, and effective [4]. However, technological change, globalization, competition, and digitalization require the organization to work more than simply divide the bigger task into smaller ones. The literature suggests that leadership and, more specifically, transformational leadership in the 21st century can be one key aspect that can help the organization to perform effectively and efficiently [3,5].

Leadership in the 21st century is one widely researched and studied concept in management science and has been defined extensively by various [6]. However, using the commonality between various scholars' conceptions of leadership, it can be described as a persuasion process in which a leader deliberately encourages a follower to achieve a common vision and goal. Many studies in the literature [7,8,9] referred to leadership as "A leader is one or more people who select, equips, trains, and influences one or more follower(s) who have diverse gifts, abilities, and skills and focuses the follower(s) to the organization's mission and objectives causing the follower(s) to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional, and physical energy in a concerted coordinated." The leadership creates culture through their own characteristics, vision, mission, and performance, as well as their understanding of how to help the business accomplish its goals. Thus, an effective leader possesses the power of persuasion, interpersonal skills, and communication. Thus, leaders inspire their followers or workers to attain goals due to the organization's strategic management exercise [10,11].

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The development of leadership as a dynamic capability of an organization has been a critical research problem for most researchers [12]. The debate that leadership is born or developed from experience is relevant and irrelevant in many ways [13]. Many researchers have theorized that elements like personality, cognitive capabilities, higher level of motivation, problem-solving and critical thinking abilities and expertise within the organization can become a significant source for leadership development [14]. However, all these elements are important predictors of leadership capabilities. Still, recently, many researchers, such as [15], have been focusing on emotional intelligence, and it is being hypothesized that it can significantly impact the leadership capabilities within the organization.

Emotional intelligence can be described as the ability of an individual (leader) to employ their emotion to direct their behaviour as the same the regulating their own and other person's emotions [16]. The literature suggests that emotional intelligence as an ability can be composed of four elements, including accuracy in understanding emotions, effective use of emotions, appropriate disposition of emotion at the right time, and motivating others using emotions as cues [17]. The relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership has also been complex and inconsistent within the literature, with a mix of positive and negative correlations, and a literature gap exists that calls for empirically testing the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership [5,9,12].

Also, various previous researchers have tested the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership [18]. However, emotional intelligence is a complex phenomenon in which various variables and factors can impact it and leadership indirectly. However, none of the previous researchers has attempted to devise a set of factors of emotional intelligence that are important in the organization context. Thus, present research deduced from the intensive review of the literature has theorized that social Support [19], customer Orientation, learning Orientation [20], and employee Engagement [21] can be important factors which can help to develop the emotional intelligence directly and leadership indirectly. Thus, the present research proposes that Social Support, Customer Orientation, Learning Orientation, and Employee Engagement can enhance employees' emotional intelligence directly, and it can lead to the development of effective and transformational leadership capabilities within a perspective leader.

2. Theoretical background, literature, and hypotheses.

2.1. Social Support:

Social support can be described as the “perception or experience that one is cared for, esteemed, and part of a mutually supportive social network, has beneficial effects on mental and physical health” [1]. Social support can come from various people to whom a person is connected in daily life, such as life partners, parents, friends, colleagues, supervisors, and other elements of society [12]. Social support can be classified into three main elements, i.e., informational, instrumental, and emotional support. The emotional element of social support can be described as an assurance to the individual, such as a colleague, friend, or sub-ordinate, that he/she is one of them by providing warmth and care [1,3,17]. Social support is correlated with physical and mental health benefits, which help the individual at every stage of life. The social supports also expedite the individual beliefs in their self and capabilities. Thus, it is instrumental in maintaining the individual and social fabric [22].

The previous literature suggests that social support and emotional intelligence are important organizational behavioural factors that directly impact job and organizational performance. The empirical evidence shows that a higher level of social support plays a critical role in enhancing higher emotional intelligence, which positively impacts the overall productivity of an organization [23,24]. Social support helps the employee cope with various behavioural and emotional issues, such as stress, pressure, and work-related burnout. The higher emotional intelligence developed from a continued higher level of social support will later ignite a need for an employee to transform themselves into leaders by taking on new challenges and motivating people to work towards achieving those challenges [25]. Thus, it can be concluded that social support through its emotional support aspect is an important predictor of emotional intelligence.

H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between social support and Emotional intelligence.

2.2. Customer orientation:

The concept of customer orientation is one of the powerful and widely used concepts in marketing. The concept of customer orientation is consistent with market orientation, defined as the focus of an organization and its employee to consistently focus on consumer needs and satisfaction. Customer orientation entails employees' skills and expertise to understand customer needs and devising the services that will satisfy them [26]. The employees, while working closely with customers, develop an ability of people management and relationship management, and a strong customer orientation positively contributes to overall customer satisfaction and resultant organizational productivity.

Further, it should be noted that a strong focus on customer needs and satisfaction also has emotional and leadership aspects. The organization and employees with strong customer orientation can also develop strong emotional intelligence [27]. Customer needs and wants in the era of digitalization, and competition has become highly personalized and niche. Therefore, understanding these highly personalized and niche needs of customers requires the employees to connect with customers emotionally. Thus, continued understanding of customer emotions, both positive and negative, will automatically build the ability within the employees to understand the other emotions and master the necessary skills which can calm and evoke emotion to help customers perceive the maximum satisfaction from products or services [28].

Further, it must also be noted that employees and organizations who are always particular about customer needs and wants to need to demonstrate leadership in the transformation of their business offering which matches with changing demand of customers [29].

H2: There is a positive and significant relationship between Customer orientation and emotional intelligence.

2.3. Learning orientation:

The concept of learning orientation is closely linked with the concept of organizational learning and knowledge management. The learning orientation reflects the organization's vision, mental models, and cultural facets of organizational learning, which empower employees to seek out skills, technologies, and understanding of the market that can become determining factors in enhancing the organization's performance.

More formally, learning orientation can be defined as a set of values of an organization that endows employees to learn things that significantly affect the organization in general. The literature suggests organizational learning and, more specifically, its cultural aspect of the learning orientation has a positive impact on the evolution of every organization in the era of globalization, digitalization, and competitive market landscape. The learning orientation further helps the organization in “Solving a problem, introducing a product, and reengineering a process all require seeing the world in a new light and acting accordingly. In the absence of learning, companies—and individuals—simply repeat old practices” [30]. Therefore, learning orientation as the cultural aspect of the organization affects employees’ emotional intelligence and develops additional leadership capabilities.

The development of emotional intelligence requires employees to develop certain abilities that help them to understand their emotion and their expression as well as others’ emotions [8,11,27]. Further, it should be noted in understanding the learning orientation in the context of emotional intelligence as a cultural factor rather than a specific time-barred activity such as training and development. The learning-orientated organization and employees, as part of the culture, are constantly pursuing knowledge, information, and skills, directly and in-directly affecting their emotional intelligence abilities [31].

The constant pursuit of knowledge, information, and skills develops an attitude and behavior of being emotionally intelligent in many ways, as such factors being embedded into personality make resilience in situations of anxiety and burnout [32]. Thus, the present research has developed the following hypothesis, which states that:

H3: There is a positive and significant relationship between learning orientation and emotional intelligence.

2.4. Employee engagement

Employee engagement refers to the level of psychological investment and connection that an individual has with their work and workplace. It encompasses a range of attitudes and behaviors, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and involvement in the workplace. Engaged employees are motivated and productive and exhibit positive behaviors, such as excellent customer service and increased creativity [33]. Research has shown that employee engagement positively relates to important outcomes, such as job performance, customer satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behavior. Engaged employees are also less likely to leave their jobs, leading to reduced turnover and increased stability for the organization. Furthermore, engaged employees are more likely to contribute to a positive work culture and provide constructive feedback to improve the workplace [34,35]. Organizations can foster employee engagement through various strategies, such as providing career growth and development opportunities, recognizing and rewarding employees, and creating a positive work environment. Leaders play a crucial role in fostering engagement by setting a positive tone, providing support and resources, and communicating openly and transparently with employees.

Emotional intelligence and employee engagement are two important concepts in organizational behavior and management. Individuals with high levels of emotional intelligence tend to be more engaged in their work. Leaders with high emotional intelligence can better understand their employees' emotional needs and create a supportive and motivating work environment [36]. They are also better able to handle conflicts and address stress in the workplace, which can contribute

to increased employee engagement. However, engaged employees are more likely to exhibit high levels of emotional intelligence. Engaged employees are more likely to be self-aware and able to communicate effectively with their coworkers, all of which are key components of emotional intelligence [37]. Engaged employees are also more likely to be resilient in the face of stress and change and to exhibit positive behaviors such as teamwork and leadership. Leaders can also play a critical role in fostering emotional intelligence and engagement by setting a positive tone, providing support and resources, and creating opportunities for employee input and involvement [38]. In conclusion, emotional intelligence and employee engagement are closely related and can positively impact each other.

H4: Employee Engagement has a positive and significant relationship with the emotional intelligence

2.5. Emotional intelligence:

The concept of emotional intelligence can be described as the ability of a person to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions, as well as the emotions of others to handle a variety of situations in the workplace and others [9,15,31,34]. The emotional intelligence concept was first conceived by Salovey and Mayer [39]. Since emotional intelligence's inception into the scientific literature, it has attracted a wide range of attention in organizational psychology and behavior [40]. The literatures have concluded that emotional intelligence is a strong predictor of success in various areas of life, including personal relationships, academic achievement, and workplace performance. One of the key areas of emotional intelligence research has been its relationship with leadership [4,21,29,35]. Emotional intelligence provided scholars with a renewed approach to investigate the various aspects of leadership and how it can help organizations navigate their leadership development path [41].

Emotional intelligence facilitates leaders to connect with their follower's emotion-ally and create a supportive, motivational, and collaborative work environment [42]. The results from the empirical literature have concluded that emotional intelligence has helped leaders in various aspects of organizational behavior. Emotional intelligence has helped leaders to successfully motivate their followers, increase satisfaction with the organization and job, increase the follower's engagement, and enhance their overall productivity [43]. Moreover, one of the important jobs of a leader is to handle workplace conflict effectively; emotional intelligence equips the leaders to handle conflicts within the organization and create a positive work environment which has a positive effect on the overall functioning of the team and organization. The theoretical literature also suggests that emotional intelligence and transformational leadership can bring many strategic benefits to organizations [43]. Further, the literature indicates that emotional intelligence can successfully enhance transformational leadership capabilities to achieve the significant organizational objective [44]. High levels of emotional intelligence are positively related to transformational leadership and can positively impact followers' job satisfaction, engagement, and performance [45]. However, limited research examines the relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership in non-Western cultures, suggesting that more cross-cultural studies are needed [46].

H5: Emotional intelligence has a positive and significant relationship with leadership.

2.6. Leadership

Leadership can be described as a manner of persuasion where a leader purposely inspires and motivates the follower to use the organizational resource to achieve the objectives, mission, and vision. A leader can employ various skills, but the most effective among all are interpersonal, communication, people management, and do-main or functional-specific skills and knowledge. The leader always attempts to in-spire and motivate the employees using emotional and interpersonal connections with the followers, such as teammates and subordinates. Leadership, from the theoretical aspects, has been a wide-ranging field of academic inquiry. Leadership research has resulted in various theories, and each theory is complementary. The factors addressed by the leadership theories include organizational situation, work setting, organizational culture, political and regulatory environment, information and communication channels, psychological and behavioral factors, and many others. Leadership theory can be divided into traditional leadership theories and contemporary leadership styles. The present research focused on transformational leadership as an outcome of emotional intelligence.

The transformational Leadership style is characterized by the development of a strong and effective leadership relationship between a leader and their teams, employees, and groups. The leader creates a shared vision and plan and motivates their teams, groups, and employees to execute these plans [47]. Transformational leadership is considered one of the most effective leadership styles, as it emphasizes the development of strong relationships and a shared sense of purpose. Transformational leaders create a vision, establish clear goals, and provide the support and guidance needed to help their followers achieve goals [48]. They also focus on empowering individuals, promoting creativity and innovation, and encouraging continuous learning and growth. One of the key elements of transformational leadership is the leader's ability to communicate their

vision and ideas compellingly, which inspires and motivates others. They also demonstrate empathy and a genuine interest in their followers' well-being and development, which helps build trust and strong relationships. Furthermore, transformational leaders lead by example, exhibiting the qualities and behaviors they expect from their followers [47].

2.7. Conceptual framework

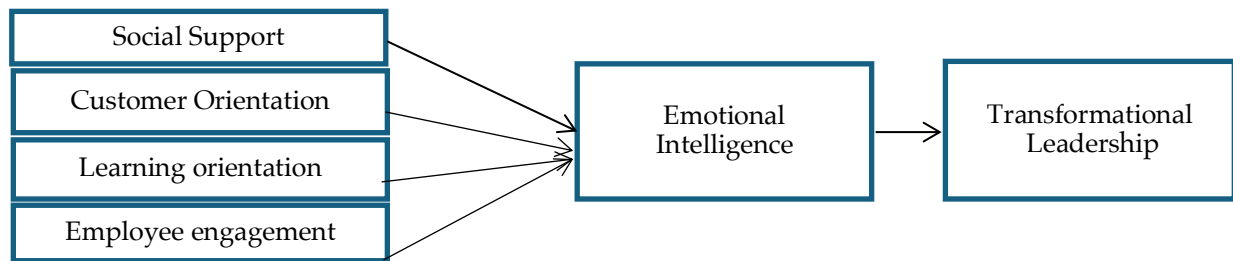


Fig. 1: conceptual framework

3. Method.

3.1. Research design:

The present research has proposed to employ the quantitative research design to test the hypothesis developed. To collect the data, the present research has employed a widely adopted tool of the survey questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of three different parts of demographic, experience regarding emotional intelligence and transformational leadership, and items on the construct of study as mentioned in the conceptual framework of the study mentioned in figure 1. The population frame of the present research is the managerial level (both top and middle level) who is leading or has the aspiration of leading their organization in the future. The present research has employed the partial least square structural equation modelling as a tool for data analysis [48,49].

3.2. Data collection and instrumentation.

Consistent with the aim and design of the present research, the current study has opted for the survey questionnaire as a tool for data collection. The survey questionnaire is divided into three different parts, which include the demographic information on a sample of study, information, and knowledge about both emotional intelligence and transformational leadership, and finally, the level of agreement with the item developed to measure the construct of the present study. The items designed to measure the constructs of the present research are adopted from past research, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Measure in Data Collection Instrument

No	Construct	No. of Items	References
1	Social Support	6	Kang, 2021
2	Customer orientation	9	Deshpandé et al., 1993
3	Learning orientation	9	Sinkula et al., 1997
4	Employee Engagement	8	Schaufeli et al., 2006
5	Emotional intelligence	13	Dulewicz and Higgs, 1999
6	Transformational leadership	7	Carless et al., 2000

In more statistical manner, the following figure (2) illustrated the table (1).

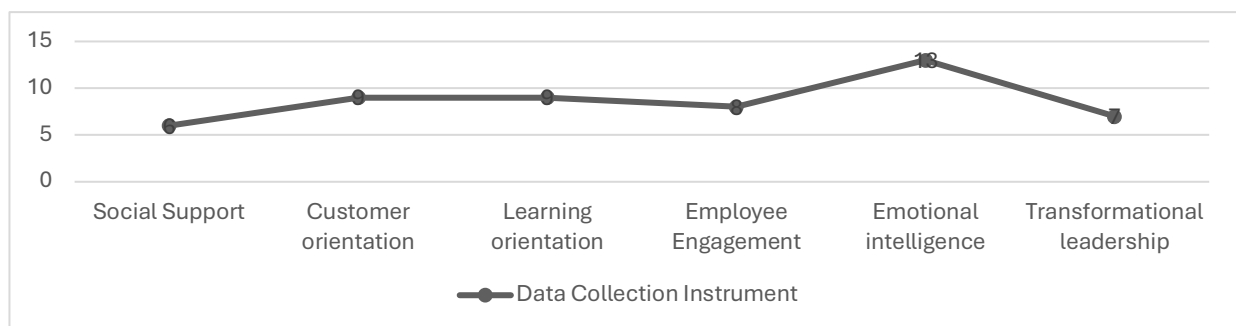


Fig. 2: Data Collection Instrument

3.3. Sampling and population:

The present research's empirical scope lies in the private firms within Saudi Arabia. The population frame of the present research is the managerial level staff having sub-ordinates to motivate and manage. It includes entry, middle, and top-level management. The present research has employed the non-probability and purposive sampling strategy. To calculate the sample size for the current study, the research used G*power software. The G*power is a sample determination technique often used in survey research. The G*power findings indicate that a sample size of 300 will be suitable for the present investigation.

3.4. Ethical Guidelines Followed

In conducting this research, we strictly adhered to the ethical guidelines established by the Supreme Council of Universities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, especially Majmaah University. First, we obtained approval from the University Council and the College Council before commencing the research, ensuring compliance with local and international ethical research standards. Second, to ensure the participants' comfort, we implemented several measures, including: (A) creating a supportive environment for interviews by allowing participants to choose their preferred time and location, providing breaks during long assessment sessions, and ensuring participants were able to skip questions they felt uncomfortable answering. (B) emotionally intelligent approaches were applied, such as maintaining an empathetic and non-judgmental atmosphere, and providing clear explanations of the purpose and mechanism of each assessment. (C) allowing participants to review their answers before submission, providing counselling services when needed, and providing contact information for questions, inquiries, or follow-up.

3.5. Data analysis

For the data analysis, the present research has proposed to employ both IBM-Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and Partial Least Square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) using the software package of SmartPLS 3.40 as a tool of data analysis. The IBM-SPSS will be used to undertake the demographic analysis. While PLS-SEM using SmartPLS 3.40 will be employed to undertake the measurement and structural model analysis. The measurement model analysis has been used to undertake the validity and reliability analysis of items and measure of construct of the present research. Further, structural model analysis has been employed to undertake the hypothesis assessment and determination of indirect effects between the antecedent [50].

3.6. Confidentiality and Anonymity Measures

We implemented robust data protection measures in accordance with the Saudi Personal Data Protection Law (PDPL):

- Assigning unique identification codes to participants instead of using names.
- Storing all personal data in databases accessible only to authorized researchers.
- Collecting only essential data, following the principle of data minimization.
- Storing consent forms separately from research data.
- Using data anonymization and aggregation techniques.
- Establishing secure protocols for data transfer and sharing.
- Establishing a data retention schedule with specific deletion schedules.
- Conducting regular security audits of stored data.
- Maintaining detailed records of all data access and use.

Finally, this study design adhered to ethical guidelines set forth by Supreme Council of Universities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. To limit the risk of harm, we ensured confidentiality by anonymizing participant data and using secure data storage methods. Additionally, we provided participants with a clear explanation of the study's purpose and their role, which helped alleviate any potential anxiety associated with participation."

Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement in the study. We provided a detailed consent form outlining the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and the voluntary nature of participation. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions and were assured of their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. All participants were informed of the consent form before data collection began.

4. Data Analysis

The present research aims to investigate the role of emotional intelligence in developing transformational leadership. The present

research has theorized that emotional intelligence is an important predictor of transformational leadership. Further, for yielding emotional intelligence, factors such as social support, learning orientation, customer orientation and employee engagement play an important role.

4.1. Demographics:

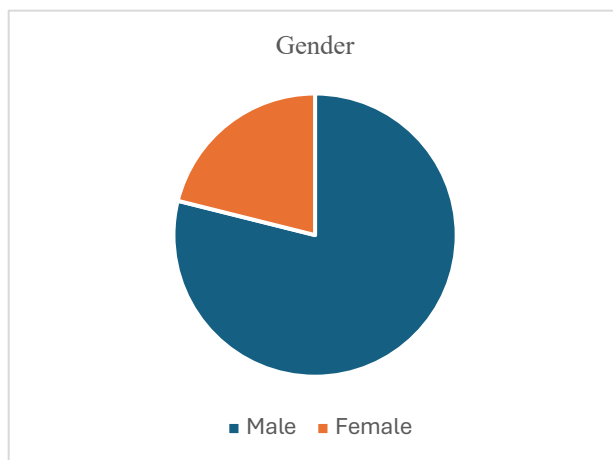
The present research has taken the sample from leaders and managers who will be assuming the role of leadership in their organizations. The demographic analysis, as shown in table 2, shows that, as for as gender is concerned, most of the sample in the present research study was male, i.e. 78.9%, while the remaining 21.1% were females. Most of the age for the sample under investigation was 26-35 (32.9%), followed by 18-25 (30.3%) and 35-45 (28.9%).

The data for firm size shows that the majority (57.9%) of samples were taken from large-scale firms. The samples from both small and medium and medium scales were 14.5%. The sample from small-scale size firms was equal, i.e. 13.2%. The result shows that most participants had a postgraduate degree (56.6%), followed by undergraduate (40.8%). Finally, the department to which most of the sample belongs are Marketing, Finance and operation (25% each).

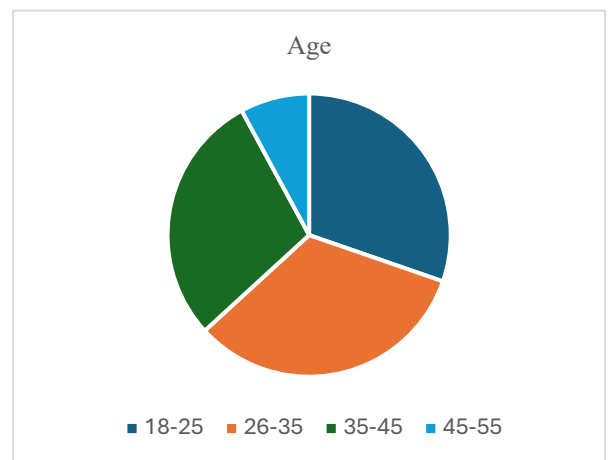
Table 2: Demographic Analysis

Gender	Male	78.9%
	Female	21.1%
Age	18-25	30.3%
	26-35	32.9%
	35-45	28.9%
	45-55	7.9%
Firm Size	Small Scale	13.2%
	Medium Scale	14.5%
	Small and Medium Scale	14.5%
	Large Scale	57.9%
Education	Post-Graduation	56.6%
	Under graduation	40.8%
	High School	2.6%
Department organization in	Marketing	25%
	Human Resource	18.4%
	Finance	25%
	Operation	25%
	Supply Chain	2.6%
	Facility Management	1.3%
	Customer care	1.3%
	Public Relations	1.3%

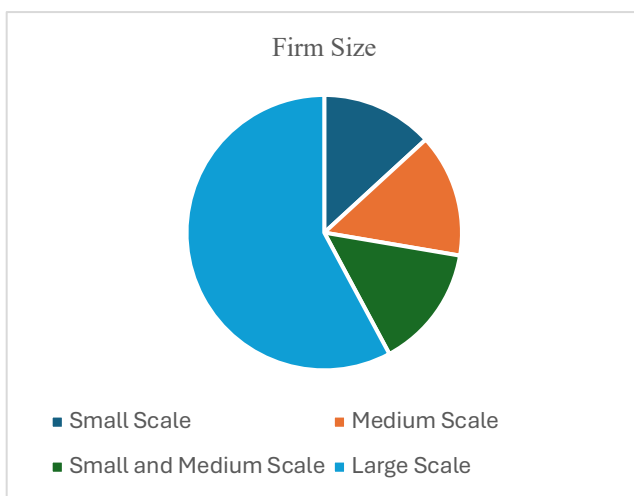
In more statistical manner, the following graphs (1,2,3,4,5) illustrated the table (2).



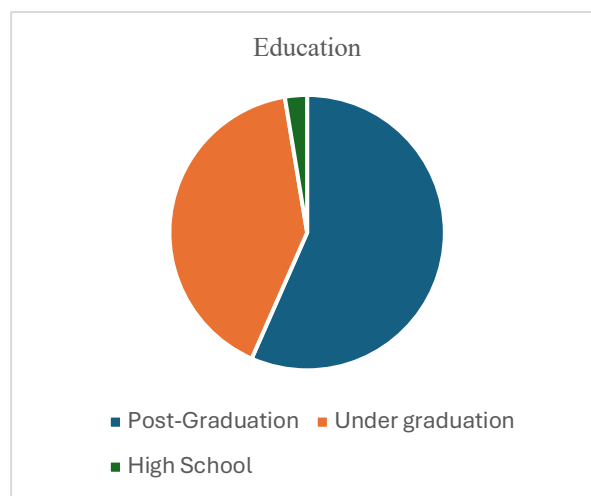
Graph (1): gender Analysis



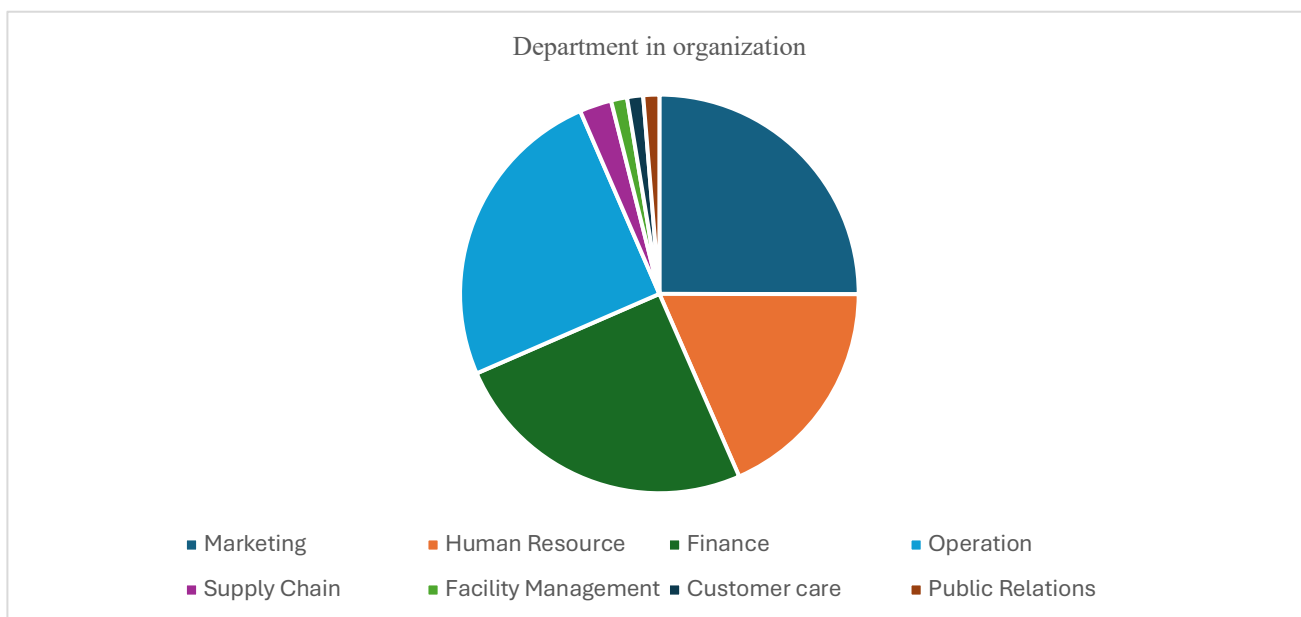
Graph (2): age Analysis



Graph (3): firm size Analysis



Graph (4): education Analysis



Graph (5): organization Analysis

4.2. Construct Validity and Reliability:

The present research has assessed the test of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability as a measure of construct reliability which refers to the internal consistency of items on their respective constructs (Peterson et al., 2020), and the average variance extracted has been assessed for the purpose of construct validity which refers to the ability of items and instruments to measure the intended concept. The literature suggests that to assume that the instrument has achieved construct reliability, each construct must report 0.70 on Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, while to assume that the instrument has achieved construct validity, each construct must report 0.50 on average variance extracted. The results, as shown in table 3, illustrate that each construct has achieved both validities based on the accepted value of average variance extracted and reliability based on the accepted value of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability.

Table 1: Construct Validity and Reliability

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Customer Orientation	0.933	0.948	0.751
Emotional Intelligence	0.855	0.887	0.498
Employee Engagement	0.922	0.936	0.649

Learning Orientation	0.781	0.834	0.511
Social Support	0.813	0.875	0.636
Transformational leadership	0.886	0.921	0.746

In more statistical manner, the following figure (3) illustrated the table (3).

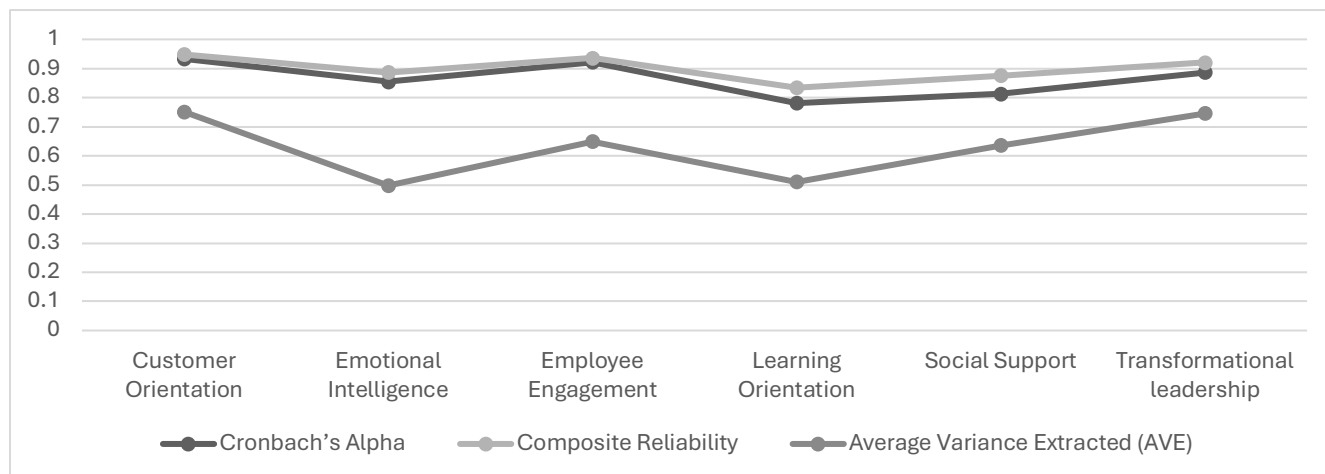


Fig. 3: Validity and Reliability

4.3. Discriminant Validity:

The present research has assessed discriminant validity with the help of the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT). The HTMT is a widely followed measure of discriminant validity. The literature shows that to successfully assume that each construct has achieved its discriminant validity using HTMT, its value must be 0.89 at maximum. The result of current research, as shown in table 4, shows that each construct is unique in its nature and measures its own phenomena based on HTMT value.

Table 2: Discriminant Validity

	Customer Orientation	Emotional Intelligence	Employee Engagement	Learning Orientation	Social Support
Customer Orientation					
Emotional Intelligence	0.664				
Employee Engagement	0.710	0.821			
Learning Orientation	0.733	0.611	0.570		
Social Support	0.202	0.302	0.152	0.362	
Transformational leadership	0.623	0.543	0.585	0.394	0.127

4.4. Indicator Reliability:

The present research has employed the measure of outer loading from PLS-SEM to assess the reliability of each item in the present research study. The literature suggests that each item in the research can be assumed to be reliable once the construct has achieved its construct reliability and validity using composite reliability, Cronbach alpha and AVE. The results, as shown in appendix 1, illustrate that the outer loading value of each item is a minimum of 0.70, and it can be considered that indicator reliability has been achieved.

4.5. Explanation of variance:

The explanation of variance refers to the assessment of the contribution of each independent variable to the variance of the dependent variable. The results shown in table 6 illustrate that Social Support, Employee Engagement, learning and customer orientation contribute to a 60 % variance in emotional intelligence. In contrast, emotional intelligence contributes to the 22% variance in transformational leadership.

Table 5: Explanation of Variance

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Emotional Intelligence	0.598	0.591
Transformational leadership	0.220	0.217

4.6. Model Fitness:

The model fitness refers to the measure of goodness of fit of regression and research model. In this study, we utilized SmartPLS 3.40 to evaluate the goodness of fit using the Square Root Mean residual (SRMR), a widely used statistical index. According to SmartPLS literature, a SRMR value between 0.08 to 0.10 indicates an appropriate level of goodness of fit. Our findings, as presented in table 7, indicate that the SRMR value for this study is 0.10, suggesting that we have achieved a good level of model fitness.

Table 6: Model Fitness

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.102	0.114

4.7. Measurement Model:

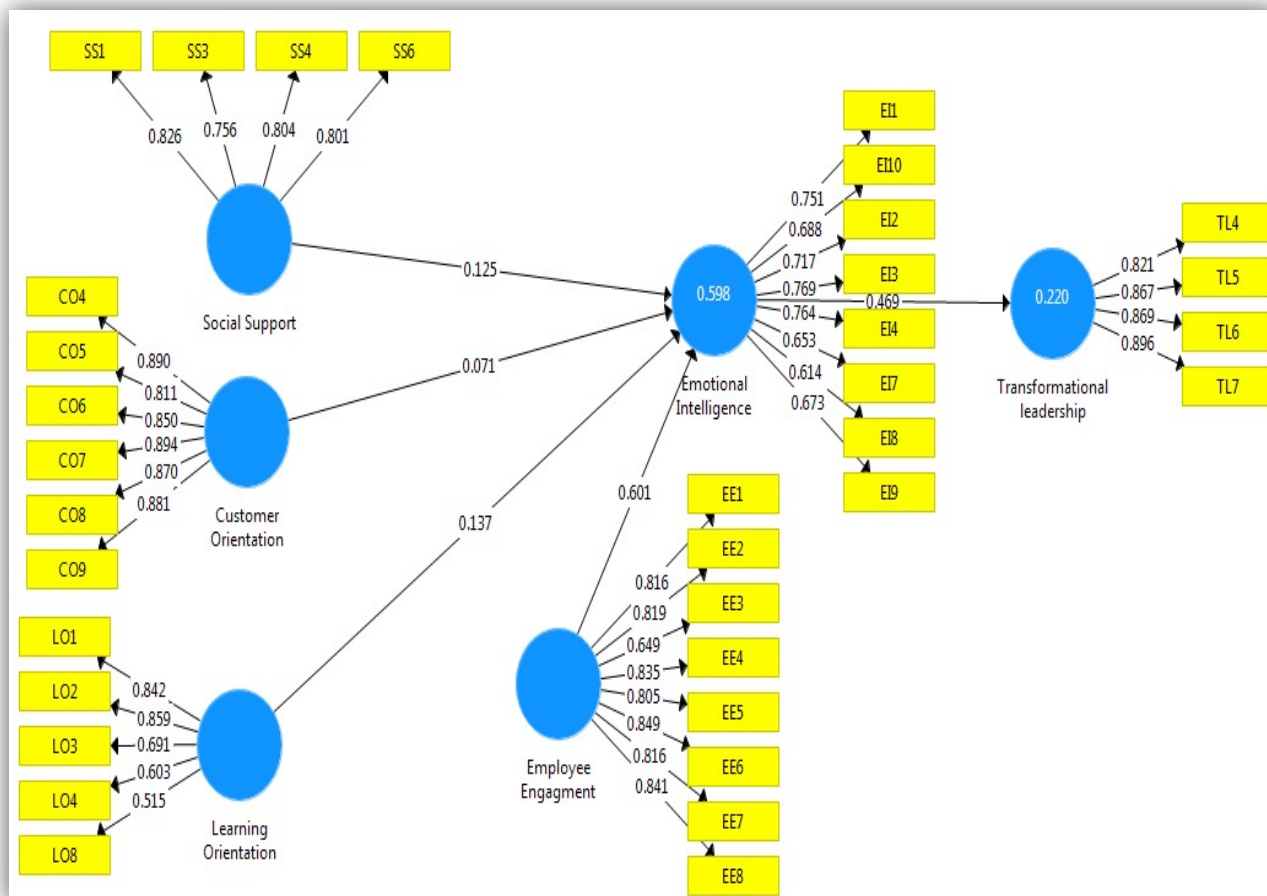


Fig. 4: Measurement Model

4.8. Structural Model:

Table 8 shows the results of the hypothesis analysis. The hypothesis testing has been calculated through the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS 3.40 by creating 5000 sub-sample of the original sample. The results show that all the hypothesis has been accepted based on P value of less than 0.05 except the hypothesis between Customer Orientation and Emotional Intelligence, which is rejected based on a P value of 0.338.

Table 7: Assessment of Structural Model

	Path Co-Efficient	T-Statistics	P Values	Decision
Customer Orientation -- Emotional Intelligence	0.071	0.957	0.338	Rejected
Emotional Intelligence -- Transformational leadership	0.469	8.234	0.000	Accepted

Employee Engagement -- Emotional Intelligence	0.601	8.784	0.000	Accepted
Learning Orientation -- Emotional Intelligence	0.137	2.112	0.035	Accepted
Social Support -- Emotional Intelligence	0.125	3.194	0.001	Accepted

In more statistical manner, the following figure (5) illustrated the table (7).

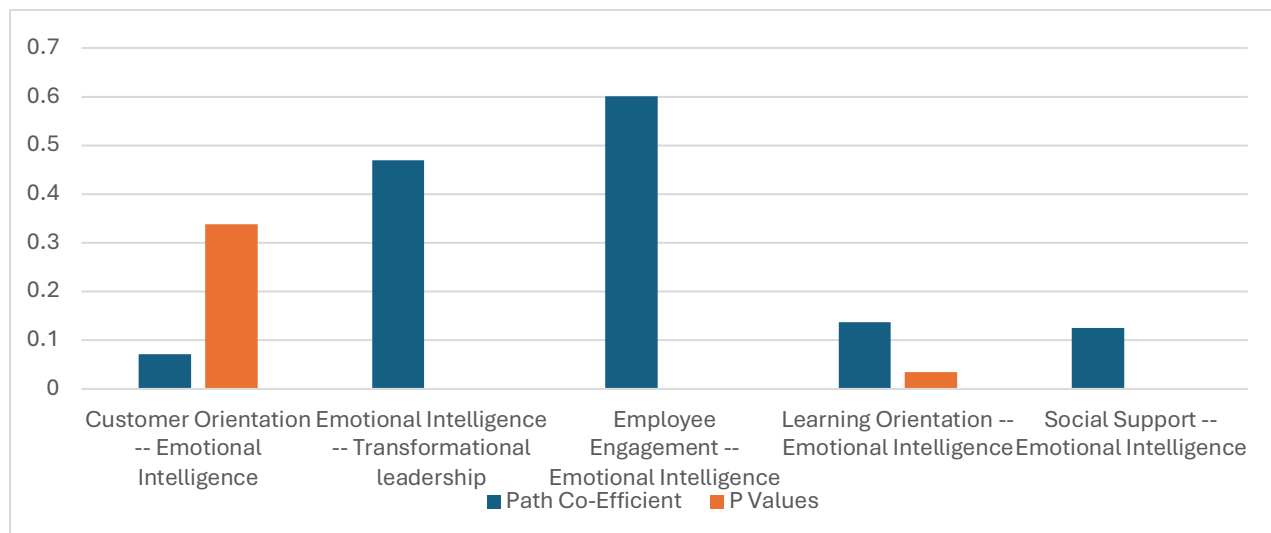


Fig. 5: Structural Model

5. Discussion:

The present research, from the insight of previous literature, hypothesizes that customer orientation positively impacts emotional intelligence. The hypothesis is developed based on the assertions that customer-oriented managers must develop the capability to understand and address customer needs emotionally and wants emotionally. Therefore, customer-oriented managers develop emotional intelligence from constantly communicating with customers and understanding and addressing their needs. The results of the present PLS-SEM analysis have presented the findings otherwise and rejected the hypothesis based upon the P value 0.338. The results can be justified based on the sampling limitation of the present research study, as only 1.2% of managers from customer care (who have direct contact with customers) participated (see table 2).

The present research, from the insight of previous literature, has also hypothesized that employee engagement will have a positive and direct effect on emotional intelligence. The hypothesis developed based on the assertion that engaged and involved employees always develop an emotional connection with the workplace and organization. Thus, employee's engagement with work and the organization will develop emotional intelligence. The hypothesis tested using PLS-SEM has been accepted as true based on a P value of 0.000. The results further suggest that organizations that keep the employee engaged in the important decision of the organization, work, and other minor and major aspects of functionality help them develop their employee intelligence ($\beta=0.601$) which in turn can help the organization develop transformational leadership capabilities.

The current research, further utilizing the conclusion and theorization made in the past literature, has tested the hypothesis that an essential factor of learning orientation is also a significant predictor of emotional intelligence. The hypothesis is developed based on the arguments that learning is an important behavioural element of human life. Learning makes people stronger emotionally and cognitively. Thus, employees who are active learners and are trying to seek more skills and knowledge through on-the-job and in-classroom training tend to be emotionally intelligent. The present research using statistical analysis of PLS-SEM tested the hypothesis, which has been accepted based on a P value of 0.000. The results further suggest that organizations should motivate employees to become active learners in their skills and knowledge regarding their own tasks and other tasks ($\beta=0.601$). The new skills and knowledge will make the employee more emotionally intelligent and, at last, develop transformational leadership capabilities.

Lastly, our research has also theorized the role of social support from peers, colleagues, family, organizations and managers. The present research has made an argument that social support from people around is an essential predictor of emotional intelligence. Social support equips employees with emotional skills. The result of PLS-SEM analysis has reported that social support is a significant predictor of emotional intelligence based upon a P value of 0.000. The results further suggest that social support is a necessary driver of building emotional intelligence among employees ($\beta=0.125$). Thus, organizations must be

flexible in extending social support to their employees as it enhances emotional intelligence and develops transformational capabilities.

Finally, present research using theoretical evidence presented in the existing literature has argued and developed a hypothesis that emotional intelligence yielded from social support, learning orientation, and customer engagement will positively and significantly impact transformational leadership (Alotaibi et al., 2020). Transformational leadership's basic task is to navigate through the world of uncertainty, challenges and hyper-competition by constantly preparing their organization to prepare and embrace the changes according to macro-environmental uncertainties. The hypothesis has been found significant based on the P value of 0.000. The path co-efficient ($\beta=0.469$), which is strong in the model, suggests that emotional intelligence is one key set of skills that transformational leadership must utilize in making changes and preparing the organization for future uncertainty.

6. Conclusion

The present research has described that leadership, specifically transformational leadership, is a managerial challenge that organizations must take and fulfil. The development of transformational leadership capability is vital for modern organizations as it helps them navigate some dire macro-environmental challenges such as remote work, new and disruptive technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning, and new skills and jobs emerging worldwide. Transformational leadership will help the organization prepare and undertake necessary changes in structure and culture to adopt macro-environmental trends such as artificial intelligence and machine learning. The present research study argues that given the complexity of current macro-environmental trends, a transformative leader must have the skill of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence equips the leader with the necessary behavioural set to understand, steer and adopt the path that should benefit the entire organization. The theoretical guidelines on the existence of a causal relationship between emotional intelligence have been widely present. To make a novel contribution to the literature, present research using the deductive method has developed a range of factors and drivers which help the organization to develop emotional intelligence resulting in transformational leadership.

The present research initially concluded that four important factors, i.e. social support, learning orientation, customer orientation and employee engagement, can significantly impact emotional intelligence. The literature is full of factors or attendants that may affect emotional intelligence development directly and transformational leadership indirectly. However, this research has been novel in the respect that four important workplace factors have been opted to study. The present research has been novel from another aspect of culture. Most of the leadership and emotional intelligence studies are based on the organizational culture of the west and east. A very smaller number of researchers have attempted to study the relationship between emotional intelligence and transformation leadership in the wider culture of the middle east and Saudi Arabia. It is pertinent to mention here that Saudi Arabia is undergoing major economic reforms in which the private sector is being given priority to economic activities. Thus, data from private-sector Saudi Arabian firms have attempted to fill the gap in the literature.

The results of the present research study suggested that three out of four factors are important, which include learning orientation, employee engagement and social support in developing emotional intelligence. These factors will help managers, leaders and aspiring leaders to become emotionally intelligent. Employee engagement will help to develop emotional intelligence through being emotionally connected with the organization, its people, place and culture. Learning is one key element that always enhances humans' cognitive and emotional skills. Thus, managers and leaders who are oriented towards learning will have higher scores in emotional intelligence. Finally, social support is concluded as an important factor in emotional intelligence. The network of support from colleagues, managers, co-workers, and supervisor plays an important role in the managers' and leader's resolve to work with high potential. Thus, socially supported managers and leaders will have the emotional intelligence to take the decision required to address the challenges the environment presents. Finally, the relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership has been tested. A high path coefficient suggests that emotional intelligence yielded from social support, learning orientation, and employee engagement is necessary for developing transformational leadership capabilities in Saudi Arabian private sector firms.

Research has great potential to enhance our understanding of both emotional intelligence (EI) and transformational leadership (TL). By exploring the relationship between these two constructs, Emotional intelligence is increasingly recognized as a critical factor in effective leadership, influencing how leaders interact with their teams, manage stress, and foster a positive organizational culture. Understanding how EI contributes to transformational leadership can provide insights into how leaders can inspire and motivate their followers, ultimately leading to improved organizational performance and employee satisfaction. This research has also contributed to the development of more effective leadership training programs that emphasize the importance of emotional competencies, and the potential benefits for participants and society. The results of this research have yielded numerous benefits for both study participants and the broader society as a whole: (A) Informed Leadership Practices: By pinpointing the specific elements of emotional intelligence that bolster transformational leadership, organizations can customize their leadership development programs. This approach can foster the growth of leaders who are not only more effective in their positions but also more sensitive to the emotional needs of their team members. (B) Enhanced Workplace

Environments: As leaders develop greater emotional intelligence, they are more likely to cultivate supportive and inclusive workplace environments. This shift can result in heightened employee engagement, reduced turnover rates, and improved overall job satisfaction. A positive organizational culture can further stimulate collaboration and innovation, ultimately benefiting the organization as a whole

In summary, the potential benefits of this research significantly outweigh any risks of harm. By enhancing our understanding of emotional intelligence and transformational leadership, the study aims to inform leadership practices that can lead to more effective and compassionate leadership, ultimately fostering better workplace environments and contributing positively to society.

The present research offers four different theoretical implications from its result. First, there have been empirically validated theoretical relationships between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership. However, all such empirical evidence has been collected from western culture and some eastern cultures, such as Japan, Malaysia, China and India. Very few researchers have focused on Saudi Arabia and the Middle east. Thus, empirical evidence from the private sector of firms in Saudi Arabia offers a theoretical implication that emotional intelligence is a necessary skill for Saudi Arabian leaders to develop their transformational leadership capabilities. Second, the present research offers theoretical implications by developing the work-related factors which can directly yield emotional intelligence and indirectly yield transformational leadership. These factor factors include social support, learning orientation and employee engagement. Third, the present research guides from the theoretical insight that both emotional intelligence and transformational leadership capability are important elements to navigate the changes which the macro environment around the organization is observing in Saudi Arabia. Thus, firms equipped with emotional intelligence and transformational leadership will successfully understand and implement changes consistent with the demands of the environment. Last, the present research stresses the importance of the work-related factor to be studied in research aimed at organizational behaviour and setting. The work-specific factor, such as, in our case, social support, employee engagement and learning orientation, help make the study more specific and engrossing in a practical setting.

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