

Emotional intelligence's influence on leadership practices in Bangladesh's banking sector.

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Faculty of Business, Economics and Law

Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where appropriate acknowledgment is made. I further declare that this thesis does not contain material that has been submitted, in whole or in part, for the award of any other degree or diploma at this or any other tertiary institution.

I confirm that artificial intelligence tools or generative artificial intelligence tools have not been used in the preparation of this thesis, except where explicitly stated and appropriately referenced, including the purpose of such use.

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Abstract

The study focuses on the effects of emotional intelligence (EI) on leadership behaviour in the banking sector in Bangladesh. EI refers to the capability to identify, comprehend, control and handle personal feelings and understand and respond appropriately to those of others. It discusses the critical EI competencies of banking managers, the effects of EI on the practices of team management, and its role in conflict management. Leadership concerns in the banking sector, which has a very high rate of technological changes and regulatory system variation, are unique to developing countries such as Bangladesh, where the financial sector faces issues like corruption and political influence. The ability of leaders to manage their feelings and those of other individuals is not only crucial in establishing a fruitful workplace but also in reducing problems in the organisation.

In this study, 10 banking managers in Bangladesh were interviewed online using the Zoom platform. The study used a qualitative approach to determine how leaders who possess high EI are better equipped to understand employees, encourage them, and maintain appropriate communication with them. The study revealed that EI leaders are better team managers, conflict resolvers and are able to adjust to the fast-evolving demands of the banking business. In particular, the study indicates that leaders with a high degree of EI are in a better position to deal with team behaviour, identify emotional issues in conflicts, and ensure effective communication in stressful contexts. The results indicate that EI not only increases the performance of the leader but also promotes the establishment of a favourable work environment and higher employee involvement rates.

There is a significant gap in the existing literature on EI and leadership in the context of the Bangladesh banking industry; therefore, this study brings new knowledge about the relationship between EI and leadership performance. It recommends that incorporating EI in leadership training programmes could have several positive effects in changing the performance of banking institutions to a more caring, resilient and flexible leadership style. This study demonstrates the need to carry out further research on the use of EI in leadership, particularly in emerging markets where there are specific socio-economic and cultural influences.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Background of the research

1.1.1. Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) has emerged as an issue of concern when it comes to successful leadership, especially in complex and high-stakes organisations like banks. The first conceptualisation of EI, which was presented by Salovey and Mayer (1990), is to perceive, understand, manage and regulate emotions in oneself and others. This idea was further elaborated by Goleman (1998), who said that EI consists of self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. The dimensions are critical in the decision-making processes, communication and conflict management that are central to effective leadership (Boyatzis, 2008).

One of the main controversies within EI literature is whether it is an ability, a personality trait, or a combination of the two and other possible factors. Sy et al. (2006) argued that EI is trainable and can be improved. The skill of managing emotions in the banking industry is essential where leaders have to address the complicated regulations of the financial industry, sustain customer relations, and manage employees in a pressure situation. Research conducted by Rosete and Ciarrochi (2005) established that managers with high EI in financial institutions performed better than managers with lower EI regarding employee engagement, organisational commitment and customer satisfaction.

Critical scholars are not convinced about its empirical validity and claim that EI widely overlaps with such traditional personality traits as conscientiousness and agreeableness (Antonakis et al., 2009). Others also note the absence of a measurement tool that is universally applicable and, hence, inconsistencies in research outcomes (Sharma & Singh, 2021). Regardless of these controversies, Sy et al. (2006) affirm that EI is associated with increased working performance and leadership capabilities, especially in sectors that are very dynamic in terms of interpersonal relationships.

1.1.2. Leadership

The concept of leadership has been widely researched and viewed in many fields, and the definitions of leadership have also changed with time. In the traditional leadership approach,

leadership was perceived as a hierarchical and authority-driven notion with power and control being the determinants of efficiency (Burns, 1978). But modern theories of leadership focus on influence, flexibility and emotional involvement with followers (Deshwal & Ali, 2020). Banking is an industry where innovations in technology occur very fast, creating a challenge that demands leaders have the ability to balance strategic decisions and their emotions (Salovey & Pizarro, 2003).

Various leadership styles have been analysed with respect to effectiveness, e.g., transactional, transformational, servant and situational leadership. As an illustration, employee motivation and performance have been closely associated with transformational leadership, a style that focuses on vision, inspiration and personal consideration (Bass, 1990). By contrast, transactional leadership, which emphasises formal work, rewards and punishments, is strongly related to efficiency in the short-term but is not considered to be conducive to long-term innovation (Muller & Turner, 2007). Transformational leadership is related to higher levels of employee commitment and financial institution innovation, as opposed to transactional leadership, which is considered to be more effective in crisis management (Sambol et al., 2022).

Another view is the role of servant leadership in the banking industry. Leaders who focus more on employee development and ethical issues engage in sustainable business operations and corporate social responsibility (Müller & Turner, 2010). Critics claim that servant leadership is unsuited to a high-stress financial environment where rapid decision-making is needed (Mekpor & Dartey-Baah, 2020). Banking leadership requires a blend of strategic vision, EI and responsiveness to shifting market conditions.

1.1.3. Intertwinement of EI and leadership

The connection between EI and leadership has also been well researched; the majority of studies have determined that EI is an essential factor in determining effective leadership. High-EI leaders have better self-awareness, relationship management skills and empathy, indicating that they are better at inspiring and influencing teams (Gardner et al., 2009). Studies by Cavazotte et al. (2003) indicate that emotionally intelligent leaders provide an excellent working environment, which reduces employee stress and enhances job satisfaction.

The degree to which EI has a direct effect on leadership is still a hot debate. According to some researchers, cognitive intelligence is more important than EI in leadership and decision-making, especially in data-driven sectors such as banking (Antonakis et al., 2009). The importance of cognitive intelligence was confirmed by an analysis by Rosete and Ciarrochi (2005) that identified a major variance in leadership performance as explained by cognitive intelligence across industries. However, EI also plays a critical role in relationship management and organisational politics (Goleman, 1998).

This aspect of cognitive intelligence may be further developed by comparing the leadership performance of the banking industry in different cultural settings. As an example, Western banking research has focused on individual autonomy and emotional self-regulation, whilst Asian banking research has focused on the need to have collective emotional awareness and harmony (Gardner et al., 2009). This implies that cultural and organisational factors also affect the influence of cognitive intelligence on leadership (Razzaq et al., 2016).

1.1.4. The banking industry in Bangladesh

Financial liberalisation, technological changes and regulatory reforms have seen the banking sector in Bangladesh grow and transform significantly in the past few decades (Islam et al., 2021). The sector is important to the economic development of the country, contributing to financial services, corporate financing and global trade. It is not devoid of such problems as governance issues, non-performing loans and talent retention (Robin et al., 2018).

Banking industries globally need to have a balance of EI and technical skills when it comes to leadership. The results of Farzana and Charoensukmongkol's (2024) study indicated that high-EI banking executives were better team managers, able to overcome market regulatory obstacles and build customer confidence. Bureaucratic processes of decision-making and hierarchical organisational structures tend to restrict the use of EI-motivated leadership practices (Farzana & Charoensukmongkol, 2024).

The other important side of the discussion is the significance of EI in the engagement of employees and the management of relationships with customers. Customer service stands out as a major point of difference between the banking institutions in Bangladesh; emotionally intelligent leaders are in a better position to develop a service-oriented culture (Hossain et al.,

2023). The conservative nature of the industry in prioritising financial measures over leadership development is a factor that is hindering the adoption of EI in corporate leadership training programmes (Oubrich et al., 2021). On the whole, the banking industry in Bangladesh is at a crossroad, and the intertwining of EI and leadership may help to transform challenges in the industry and provide a more sustainable development.

1.2. Research rationale

The rationale of this study is to address the gap in the literature by investigating the relationship between EI and leadership effectiveness in the banking industry in Bangladesh. Although much work has been done regarding leadership models and their organisational influence, little has been said concerning EI's contribution to leadership decision-making and organisational performance in the light of an emerging economy. Considering the regulatory environment, financial turmoil, and competitiveness of the banking sector in Bangladesh, strategic decision-making, conflict management and customer relationship management cannot be achieved without the presence of emotionally intelligent leadership (Robin et al., 2018). The high EI of leaders has been demonstrated to be more effective in other financial markets to manage workforce motivation, crisis management and ethical decision-making (e.g., Mekpor & Dartey-Baah, 2020). The empirical research on the correlation between EI and leadership effectiveness in the banking context in Bangladesh is very scarce.

This research aims to fill this gap by critically assessing the competencies of banking executives who possess varying self-reported EI competencies in overcoming organisational challenges and optimising employee engagement and customer satisfaction. Also, it will determine the presence of EI competencies in current leadership development programmes and ways in which they can be enhanced to meet industry requirements. The research will also address the implications of banking policies, leadership training programmes and future academic research by seeking to answer the research question about the role of EI in financial leadership.

1.3. Research purpose

1.3.1. Aim

The aim of the study is to evaluate the influences of EI on leadership practices in the banking industry in Bangladesh.

1.3.2. Specific objectives

- To identify the critical EI competencies of banking leaders.
- To determine how effective team management strategies are facilitated with EI, and are applied by banking leaders for creating a productive work culture.
- To evaluate the role of EI in fostering an effective conflict resolution environment by banking leaders within workplaces.

1.3.3. Research questions

Primary question:

What are the impacts of emotional intelligence (EI) on leadership practices in Bangladesh's banking industry?

Secondary questions:

- What are the critical EI competencies of successful banking leaders?
- How does EI of banking leaders assist them in managing a team?
- How does EI of banking leaders assist them in resolving conflicts in organisations?

1.4. Contribution of the study

The value of the research can be linked to the issue that the correlation between EI and leadership practices in the Bangladesh banking sector is poorly researched. The research is important since it examines the banking industry in Bangladesh, which is facing issues such as regulatory pressures, rapid technological creation and evolving customer demands (Karim et al., 2024).

The study can provide a practical sense of EI in leadership and particularly in a high-stakes environment when evaluating the leadership skills of banking managers who possess varying levels of EI. It shows how EI may be employed in better decision-making, communication, team management and conflict resolution, and gives an in-depth perspective of how the leadership of emotionally intelligent people can contribute to employee engagement, job satisfaction and performance.

As well, the study addresses the relevance of EI to present leadership development programmes and how the inclusion of EI training can be essential in achieving effective leadership in the banking industry. It facilitates a shift towards a more holistic view of leadership, which is combined with technical expertise, emotional and social intelligence.

Additionally, this research offers recommendations for enhancing leadership practices within the banking sector, particularly by integrating EI skills into leadership development. It also aims to lay the groundwork for future academic research and practical strategies for organisations seeking to cultivate emotionally intelligent leaders. Such leaders have the potential to foster positive organisational cultures, improve team effectiveness, and navigate the challenges of the modern banking environment.

1.5. Thesis outline

The thesis is designed to give a detailed review of EI in banking industry leadership activities in Bangladesh. Chapter One gives the background of the issue, the key definitions of EI and leadership, and the specifics of the banking sphere in Bangladesh. It also provides the justification, purpose and objectives of the research, and the contribution of the research.

Chapter Two is the literature review. It introduces various models of EI, including ability, trait and mixed models and evaluates the way they can be related to leadership performance. The most significant literature on the role of EI in managing teams, decision-making and conflict resolution taking place in the organisational environment, such as banking, is also covered in the review. It also presents some of the more applicable leadership theories and models.

Chapter Three presents the methodology of the research used in the study. It outlines the philosophical framework, data-gathering plan and interview protocol with which the association between EI and leadership was examined. Ethical issues that are presented in this chapter are in the collection of data from human participants and the subsequent use in analysis.

The results of the research provided in Chapter Four are based on the main EI skills of banking leaders, their approach to managing their own teams, and the way they strive to resolve conflict. The chapter presents the EI role that has played in leadership performance within the Bangladesh banking industry.

Chapter Five is a discussion of the findings and their relationship to the theoretical concepts that were discussed in the literature review. It provides an analysis of the role of EI in banking leadership, together with recommendations on future research and application to practice in the management of leadership training.

Chapter Six is the conclusion to the thesis. It focuses on the overall findings of the study on the impact of EI on leadership behaviour in the banking sector in Bangladesh. This chapter emphasises the theoretical and practical implications of the research on the development of leadership in the sector. It also reviews the limitations of the study and outlines future research directions, particularly in the practicability of EI in varying cultural and organisational environments.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

EI has arisen as an important construct in understanding leadership in the dynamic banking industry. EI focuses on how leaders can be aware of, comprehend and control their feelings and respond appropriately to those of other people (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). The use of EI in enhancing leadership efficacy is very important in the banking industry in Bangladesh, whereby the involvement of employees and customer satisfaction are paramount issues. The banking environment normally involves high-stress situations, and leadership needs to be able to manoeuvre around emotional complexities.

Empirical evidence of the influence of EI on organisational outcomes is provided by Karim et al. (2024), who investigated the correlation between EI and job satisfaction and work performance in employees of Bangladesh banks, finding that the highest EI correlates with job satisfaction and performance. This finding justifies the importance of EI as a key variable to foster a motivated workforce in Bangladesh banks. Moreover, the research by Giao et al. (2020) on the banking industry in Vietnam validated the hypothesis of the role of EI in decreasing turnover intentions among workers. The study demonstrated that perceived organisational support mediates such a relationship, which implies that leaders with a high level of EI may achieve positive results by creating a supportive atmosphere that boosts employee retention.

As such, an application of EI theories in leadership practice within the banking industry is crucial to enhance organisational outcomes. Leaders can not only foster job satisfaction and job performance by encouraging EI, but also decrease turnover intentions by the use of support relationships (Giao et al., 2020). This correlation between EI and job satisfaction, performance and turnover highlights the importance of investing in EI training among leaders in the banking institutions in Bangladesh, thereby facilitating the development of a resilient and engaged workforce.

2.2. Theoretical review of EI and leadership

In various organisational contexts, EI has a great influence on the performance of leadership. To date, scholars and researchers have idealised, promoted and advocated various models of EI, e.g., the trait model, the ability model, and the mixed model. These models point to various

theoretical implications of EI and how it is relevant in enhancing the effectiveness of leadership. Theoretical review of EI and leadership has also been established in this section by utilising the relevant bodies of literature.

2.2.1. Concepts and components of EI

The ability model of EI is a scientifically based and cognitively organised concept. It was first proposed by Salovey and Mayer in 1990. In contrast to other conceptualisations, which confound emotional characteristics with social skills, this model treats EI purely as a type of intelligence that is similar to logical intelligence, or even linguistic intelligence. It is concerned with the mental ability to interpret emotional data and use it to improve reasoning, decision-making, and communication with others (Makkar & Basu, 2019). This model also stands out due to its focus on quantifiable skills and not on self-conceptions, which makes EI a true cognitive form of intelligence, rather than a personality function.

The main characteristics of this model are four branches or hierarchy, which depict specific but interconnected capabilities. The first branch, perceiving emotions, is the accurate recognition and identification of feelings in others and oneself. This involves the interpretation of non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions, tone and body language, among other means. Emotional perception lies at the root of the more complicated emotional reasoning that is constructed (Liu & Maitlis, 2014). As an example, leaders in a workplace who are able to recognise tension or enthusiasm in their team correctly can adjust their communication and course of action.

The second branch of the Salovey and Mayer (1997) model is how emotion facilitates thought. This includes the utilisation of emotional input to give thinking precedence and direct problem-solving. Emotions have the power to impact our attention and thinking, such as when we feel slightly anxious; this may improve concentration on a task of high stakes. This model also claims that emotions are not irrational forces to be shunned, as they are valuable signals which can improve the functioning of the brain when regulated well.

The third branch, which is the understanding of emotions, means the ability to study emotions, identify their causes and effects, and to be aware of the interconnection of various emotional states. (Salovey & Mayer (1997) The element of EI enables one to decode complicated

emotional signals, e.g., knowing that frustration is possible if expectations are not met or learning that grief could consist of denial and anger stages (Law et al., 2004). This ability can be applied in professional life when trying to understand the interpersonal interactions at a deeper level and build emotional literacy to become a more effective leader.

The fourth and last branch of the model is the management of emotions, which is said to be the most advanced ability. It entails controlling emotions both in oneself and in others in a manner that encourages personal development and social order. This is not the repression of emotions, but it is the application of them for constructive purposes, say, relaxing oneself in times of conflict or assisting a colleague in calming down in times of stress. Emotional regulation is the key to good leadership, conflict management and teamwork (Klebe et al., 2024).

The ability model is empirical and testable. It does not rely on self-report as compared to other models, but it involves a performance-based test like the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) (Salovey et al., 2008). These tests involve the individual in solving their problems that are related to emotions, thereby attempting to quantify EI objectively as a collection of skills. This will increase the scientific validity and minimise the biases of self-perception (Karthikeyan & Lalwani, 2017).

However, the model has been subject to criticism. Sadri (2012) suggest that it is too much of a cognitive process, which leaves out significant personality-based and behavioural elements of EI. Critics indicate that the model overemphasises the role of context, temperament and personality in emotional functioning since it dissociates EI from other larger categories, e.g., empathy, assertiveness and stress tolerance (Kim & Kim, 2017). Also, it has been established that the activities of performance-based assessments are able to reflect a wide range of real-life emotional experiences (Sadri, 2012).

Though the ability model has been criticised, it is still one of the most prominent theoretical models in the study of EI. Its systematic, cognitive view has formed the basis of later models and interventions, especially in education and in organisations. The model has remained relevant in global leadership development, emotional skills training and psychological assessment by conceptualising EI as an independent type of intelligence that can be trained, developed and assessed.

A separate take on EI is represented by the trait model of EI developed by Petrides in 2001, who sees EI as a complex of self-perceived emotional capacities as an extension of the overall personality spectrum (Hur et al., 2011). This model contrasts with other conceptualisations in that it is focused on subjective emotional experiences and people perceiving and reporting their emotional competence, not on how they are functioning in tasks that are related to emotion. In this regard, the trait model of EI demonstrates personality-based emotional dispositions as opposed to objectively assessed cognitive skills (Sadri, 2012).

As per this model, trait EI integrates self-appraisals of emotional abilities of individuals across the domains of emotional self-awareness, emotional manifestation, stress management, compassion, assertiveness and social awareness. It can be estimated mostly using the self-report methods, including the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue), where respondents were requested to assess their emotional functioning in various situations (Petrides & Furnham, 2001). Such tests are oriented towards the perceived emotional effectiveness of an individual, which makes EI close to subjective experiences and personal insight.

Due to its focus on self-perception, trait EI has come to be considered context-sensitive. Participants can score differently based on their environment, cultural expectations, mood or even temporary self-image. An example is a person who feels emotionally competent with a well-known and supportive environment may also score themselves low in a high-stress, unfamiliar context (Hair, 2015). Such fluidity in the situation is viewed as a strength and a limitation of the model. On the one hand, it portrays the emotive reality of people who are going through various situations. Then, on the other hand, it casts questions on the permanence and soundness of these self-assessments in the long run.

The major strength of the trait model is that it considers the affective and behavioural aspects of EI that have been neglected by ability-based models. It takes into consideration the experience, perception and responses of individuals to emotional events, so it is of significant interest to areas of expertise like clinical psychology, counselling, human resources and education, where the interpretation of what it means to feel something and how people perceive themselves affects their responses (Goswami & Banerjee, 2023). As an example, trait EI would be useful in terms of leadership or workplace environment, where managers might think they are emotionally supportive or strong, and this particular aspect may affect morale and communications in the team.

In spite of this, there has been a lot of academic criticism of the trait model. One of the main issues is that it makes boundaries between EI and other more established personality traits, including extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism and conscientiousness. Others like Muller and Turner (2007) have posited that trait EI has an overlap with the Five-Factor model of personality dimensions, thus making it less distinctive as a psychological dimension (Petrides, 2010). In other words, critics fear that trait EI does not assess anything new, but simply reforms old personality traits in a new package (Geier, 2016).

Another criticism of the trait model is that it is not objective (Zawadzki et al., 2024). Trait EI is a completely self-reported measure and, therefore, is vulnerable to response bias, such as social desirability, in which participants can exaggerate their emotional abilities in order to put themselves in a positive perspective. Some people do not know themselves, and thus, they cannot properly assess their emotional abilities. Such problems undermine the validity and consistency of the model when applied to such a high-stakes context as a recruitment or a leadership test (Føllesdal & Hagtvet, 2013).

However, this model is helpful to many researchers, particularly in their interpretation of how people can operate emotionally in a real-world context. Contrary to the ability models, which look at what a person is capable of doing in an ideal testing condition, trait EI evaluates how a person thinks he or she generally behaves emotionally in his or her day-to-day life (Daus & Ashkanasy, 2005). This can be used in planning personal development programmes, e.g., resilience training, stress reduction workshops or emotional coaching based on the self-perceived strengths and weaknesses of an individual (Flores et al., 2018).

The mixed model of EI, which was largely developed by Goleman (1998), is a very elaborate model which incorporates both cognitive skills and personality traits in outlining EI. The mixed model considers EI not only as an ability to process emotional information but as a complex set of competencies, skills and traits that make a leader effective, build healthy relationships with people, and succeed in the workplace, unlike more specific models (Farzana & Charoensukmongkol, 2024). This method has gained a lot of popularity, especially in organisational behaviour, leadership development and human resource management.

The key dimensions of the model by Goleman (1998) are: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. All these have a distinct and complementary influence on the development of emotionally intelligent behaviour. Self-awareness is the potential to identify feelings, comprehend their influences and apply them to behaviour (Farnia & Nafukho, 2016). This is the basis of emotional competence since it helps leaders and professionals to control their reactions during times of stress. Self-regulation, in its turn, implies the capacity to manage or channel disruptive emotions and impulses, and enables one to make thoughtful and ethical decisions. It helps to achieve emotional stability in dynamic and highly stressful environments.

The motivation in the model provided by Goleman (1998) is associated not with incentives but with an inner desire to accomplish something, interest in working, and perseverance during hardships. The intrinsic level of motivation among emotionally intelligent people is very high and thus improves personal performance and morale in a team (Edelman & van Knippenberg, 2018). Another main component is empathy, the ability to perceive and experience the emotions of others, which is important to control relationships, overcome conflicting situations, and achieve trust in the team (Dulewicz & Higgs, 2000). Lastly, social skills are also a category of a broad scope of interpersonal-based competencies, such as effective communication, influence, leadership and conflict management. Such social skills enable emotionally intelligent people to have good relationships and become effective leaders.

Goleman's (1998) model of EI was a mixed model is probably relevant to its widespread use in the real-world context, where it seems more applicable and accessible to the general audience (Dulewicz et al., 2005). In comparison to more advanced and complicated models of EI, which are theoretical, the model by Goleman (1998) relates emotional intelligence to daily behaviour like leadership, teamwork and the way individuals communicate. It has been especially attractive to leaders and organisations interested in finding concrete and actionable ways of enhancing performance and relationships because of this direct connection with professional success, and its emphasis on such traits as self-awareness, self-regulation and social skills (Prati et al., 2003).

The mixed model has not been spared from criticism, though. Several scholars have opined that its wide and relatively imprecise definition runs the risk of confusing EI and general personality factors, including agreeableness, conscientiousness and extraversion. It is this

alleged conceptual blindness that renders it hard to differentiate where EI concludes and where conventional personality dimensions start (Drigas et al., 2023; Muchiri et al., 2012; Müller & Turner, 2010). One more issue mentioned by Boyatzis (2013) is the lack of a widely-accepted standardised measurement instrument. In contrast to the performance-based tests of the ability model (e.g., MSCEIT), the mixed model tends to be based on self-report questionnaires, including the Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI), which can add bias and subjectivity to tests (Salovey et al., 2008).

Additionally, the combination of ability and personality traits, though it provides a comprehensive view, is also hard to demonstrate empirically. Having both skill-based and dispositional qualities of EI under a single construct makes it difficult to determine EI in a consistent manner across various settings. The restrictions have resulted in a continued scholarly controversy about the scientific validity and theoretical strength of the mixed model (Dhani & Sharma, 2016).

However, its impact in practice is still significant. Emotionally intelligent leadership affects the way organisations consider talent management, team dynamics and executive coaching, as a result of the mixed model. It has helped change the wider culture of business to realise that emotional competence is just as important as technical expertise or cognitive ability (Dehghanan et al., 2021). More specifically, the model provided by Goleman (1998) appeals to leaders and managers since it introduces EI as a trainable behaviour, which creates opportunities for both professional development of employees, as well as organisational change.

The debate continues concerning the measurement of EI on different models. The instruments designed to assess EI must consider the differences in definition inherent in the different models, where self-assessment assessments can capture aspects of personality, while capacity-based tests can focus on cognitive skills (Alhamami, 2016).

2.2.2. Concepts and forms of leadership

The exploration of leadership has attracted considerable attention in organisational studies, reflecting its significant impact on organisational effectiveness. There are a number of major forms of leadership that can be connected to EI, i.e., transformational, transactional, servant,

situational, caring, health-oriented, charismatic and adaptive styles of leadership, which offer different frameworks that guide leaders in different contexts and stages of organisational dynamics.

Transformational leadership, introduced by Burns (1978) and subsequently expanded by Bass (1985), underlines a leader's ability to inspire and motivate followers to act for the good of the organisation. Transformational leadership has been described as having four key pillars, including idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration (Bass, 1990). These aspects are essential in the establishment of vision, motivation of the followers, fostering of innovations, and personal support. Consequently, transformational leaders will be in a better position to promote change and improve organisational performance by ensuring higher levels of employee engagement and satisfaction. This style is characterised by a strong vision and a focus on the promotion of innovation, creativity and growth (Nawaz & Khan, 2016). Transformational leaders strive to raise the morale and performance of employees through involvement and empowerment, thus promoting an environment in favour of change and development (McCleskey, 2014). The positive correlation between transformational leadership and organisational efficacy is well documented, with studies indicating that this leadership can significantly influence the satisfaction and retention of employees (Deshwal & Ali, 2020; Fitzgerald & Schutte, 2010; Muchiri et al., 2012).

On the contrary, transactional leadership, which is more focused on the management of tasks and on the regulation of performance, operates on a system of rewards and sanctions to achieve compliance (Bass, 1990; Nanjundeswaraswamy et al., 2024). This leadership style is anchored in the transactions between leaders and followers, in which the first group provides resources or praise in exchange for the efforts and compliance of the second group. Although transactional leadership is effective in maintaining the status quo and in the management of routine operations, it is unlikely to inspire employees, bringing a lower level of involvement than transformational leaders (Khan, 2024). Since transactional leadership mainly emphasises extrinsic motivation, its impact on organisational effectiveness tends to be limited when organisations face dynamic challenges that require adaptability and innovation.

The servant leadership style, conceptualised by Greenleaf (1970), presents an approach that gives priority to the needs of followers. The concept of servant leadership has been celebrated

due to the focus it puts on the key areas of empathy and the welfare of employees; it has received criticism over the fact that it may lead to a loss of authority and ineffective decision-making (Eva et al., 2019). Servant leaders are likely to be unable to make tough decisions or implement required change, particularly in situations that are stressful, by prioritising the needs of others. This leadership style is at times unclear about the distinctions between leadership and friendship, which poses a problem in terms of professional boundaries and responsibility (Peiris & Ulluwishewa, 2023). Furthermore, servant leadership can be considered to be overly idealistic, which can frustrate quick decision-making and the ability to stay assertive when operating in complex business environments in hierarchical or competitive organisational cultures.

The situational leadership theory, developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1969), claims that no single leadership style is superior; rather, effective leaders must adapt their styles based on the situational context and the level of maturity of their teams. This theory emphasises flexibility and the ability to pass between direction, coaching, support, and delegation based on the development and needs of followers (Bwalya, 2023). Situational leaders evaluate the skills of their followers and levels of trust to determine the most appropriate leadership approach, effectively adapting their style to adapt to the circumstances (Dehghanan et al., 2021). The research indicates that situational leadership can lead to an improvement in organisational performance, as it allows leaders to respond in a skilled way to changing environments and different team dynamics.

Situational leadership has parallels with the contingency theory that highlights that effective leadership is highly context-dependent (Fiedler, 2006). It means that no single style of leadership is the most suitable, as leadership success depends on the situational factors of the leadership style adopted by the leader, the character of the team, and the working environment. Although situational leadership is commended to be flexible, it is criticised on the grounds of inconsistency and ambiguity. The approach relies on the decision made by a leader can also result in a subjective decision-making process that can be confusing or inconsistent within the teams (Razzaq et al, 2016). Also, it runs the risk of simplifying complex situations unnecessarily and not paying attention to the underlying organisational processes that can influence leadership performance.

The caring leadership approach underlines the factors of empathy and compassion (Broome, 2024; Gabriel, 2015). The advocates of this style claim that it will help to build trust and increase the dedication of employees, and it can lead to an improved level of satisfaction in the workplace (Broome, 2024). Leaders with a caring style can foster innovative ideas and teamwork since they can provide an atmosphere where employees can feel appreciated and listened to. However, the criticisms indicate that excess attention to personal relationships could lead to forgetting the organisational goals, which may culminate in irresponsibility (Dunbar-Smalley, 2024). In this way, the caring leadership will create a culture of supporting others in the team; at the same time, it could jeopardise organisational performance unless substituted by a result-driven style.

On another point, health-oriented leadership puts effort to prioritise the physical, psychological and emotional well-being of followers). It focuses on the idea that employees' health is a vital resource of the organisation which affects employee engagement, performance and organisational sustainability (Oubrich et al., 2021). Health-oriented leaders consider both psychological and physical concerns, thus contributing to general productivity in the workplace. Furthermore, during crises, the effectiveness of health-oriented leadership can decrease, since leaders could fight to manage their stress and that of their followers, thus limiting their ability to lead effectively (Klebe et al., 2022). Therefore, although health-oriented leadership can create supportive environments, it is not without limitations, in particular during periods of instability.

The charismatic type of leadership is characterised by persons who motivate and inspire the workers, making them believe in their own vision and personal attractiveness (Geier, 2016). According to proponents, charismatic leaders can organise teams and provide them with a sense of urgency and purpose that results in high performance (Geier, 2016). Such cases, when change and innovation are on the agenda, are the only situations where charismatic leadership can be implemented. Charisma can also be misused, and overdependence on a charismatic leader may increase dependency, not allowing the organisation an opportunity to build resilience (Hoang et al., 2025). Without the supportive mechanisms of performances under the leader, the threat exists that the leader could fail to deliver the expected results or leave the organisation. Therefore, a more distributed leadership structure is needed.

The concept of adaptive leadership is a current topic of discussion in the environment of active changes in the corporate world. Such an approach can promote flexibility and add variety, and leaders need to change their approaches to reflect the dynamics of new challenges (Dunbar-Smalley, 2024). The supporters of this theory believe that adaptive leadership also facilitates resilience that can assist teams to overcome complexity and ambiguity. The question that still needs to be answered is whether, in the practical sense, adaptive leadership can be effective. This is another reason why critics think that, despite the dynamic nature of adaptability, the absence of a clear purpose may result in the uncertainty of followers, which prompts anxiety and confusion in them (Geier, 2016). The world today is complex and subject to constant changes, so leaders need to embrace adaptive leadership, which calls for flexibility, and capacity to balance. They also need to provide guidance as strong mentors as they adjust to these changes.

Although these theories of leadership have weaknesses and strengths, their guidelines can have a huge influence on the performance of the organisations, as regards to how managers exercise them under different work environments. The success of these principles usually depends on the situation and the environment under which they should be applied (Nawaz & Khan, 2016). The application of transformational leadership can be implemented in settings that need changes and innovation, but transactional leadership may also be employed to ensure that stability can be guaranteed in cases of normal functioning (Khan, 2024). In the meantime, servant leadership creates team dynamics and loyalty, which enhances commitment to the organisation. This strategy fosters a feeling of belonging and commitment, which has a positive effect on the overall motivation towards organisational objectives (Oubrich et al., 2021), and the flexibility required to address the dynamics of demands in organisations is the result of situational leadership (Bwalya, 2023). Transformational leadership encourages innovation, unlike transactional leadership, which ensures things are done in the correct manner. Other theories of leadership, such as situational and servant leadership, remain applicable since they offer an opportunity to view the performance of leadership on a complementary basis within a range of organisational settings, the task structure, or servant leadership, which emphasises the service and the community in the organisation. An appropriate and effective leadership approach to the contemporary corporate environment may involve the combination of aspects of various theories, thus maximising the organisational output and earning a long-term competitive edge in a more competitive environment.

2.2.3. Relevance of different EI models to leadership

EI is emerging as an important component of quality leadership that eventually defines the relationship within the workplace, decision-making and organisational performance (Kim & Kim, 2017). Interpersonal relations and emotional work are essential, particularly in a banking environment, and it is important for leaders to learn about the applicability of different leadership styles and their treatment of emotions at work (Bratton et al., 2011).

Leaders try to focus on providing individual attention and support to team members, which is closely related to EI (Cavazotte et al., 2012). Leaders with high EI can understand and respond better to the needs of people and have a greater likelihood of becoming more effective individuals. This process of relationship not only promotes a positive organisational culture, but also promotes the success of the leadership process overall, which promotes confidence and empathy in teams (Follesdal & Hagtvet, 2013). This paper shows the usefulness of EI in allowing managers to adapt their leadership style to fit their subordinates so that they gain power and improve productivity. Emotionally intuitive abilities may make or break the management in banking, where managers are regularly compelled to respond promptly to certain unpredictable changes in the economy or in technology.

EI is a critical component of the decision-making process. Managers with high EI have a better chance of knowing their own emotions and the emotions of their employees, and this has a positive impact on their decisions (McCleskey, 2014). Using the example of emotionally intelligent leaders who can overcome organisational conflicts better, Lobo (2023) has revealed that emotionally intelligent leaders are in a better position to overcome organisational conflicts, particularly when bank services are involved in a high-stakes environment. By being capable of recognising, decoding and managing their emotions and the emotions of other people, EI leaders can solve conflicts in organisations with greater efficiency (Athota et al., 2023). It is also a critical competency required when dealing with high-stakes scenarios such as banking services, and where tensions can potentially arise because of pressure, competition and the multi-relationships between the stakeholders. Self-awareness places emotionally intelligent leaders in a position of managing their emotions in stressful events; they are not easily affected by their emotions, which results in fewer conflicts.

As well, empathy allows leaders to view issues differently, in a way that fosters an open communication culture and respect (Sambol et al., 2022). With risk management in highly stressful financial situations that could be marked by disagreements concerning the ability to meet regulatory schemes or compliance, risk management and customer relationship management, leaders with high EI can alleviate stress levels by facilitating a positive discussion and ensuring that everyone feels heard and appreciated. They are thus able to mediate conflicts such that neither the relationships are damaged, nor the team weakened, and this ultimately enhances the performance of the organisation (Wen et al., 2019). Trust and teamwork can be used by leaders with EI to make the workplace resilient, and this is vital in a business environment like the banking industry that involves a lot of complexities and requirements.

Emotional contagion is the mechanism according to which the emotions of one person are passed on to another; that is, the mood of a leader/ employee in a banking setting can greatly affect the mood, behaviour, and performance of others and customers. Yusof et al. (2014) remark on the likelihood of influencing teams with the sentiments of leaders and increasing workplace morale and productivity. EI practitioners can benefit positively from this contagion that fosters a desirable emotional climate and incentivises the performance of workers. The study by Zawadzki et al. (2024) revealed the presence of the positive effects of EI on the performance of a public leader, which means that the best leaders can create a positive and sound organisational culture, even under stressful conditions, as they can understand and regulate their emotions.

The correlation between EI and transformational leadership also refers to the relevance of the ability model in contemporary leadership practice. Brown and Nwagbara (2021) report that transformational leaders tend to possess high EI and hence they can more easily inspire their followers, especially in hard times such as the Covid-19 pandemic. The economic environment is permanently transforming the banking world, and leaders must make sure that clarity of vision and emotional appeal do not fade among members of their organisation to guide them through the complexities. Follesdal and Hagtvvet (2013) also revised the discussion on EI and transformational leadership and established that EI is a key contributor to successful leadership. This implies that banks should consider the inclusion of EI training as among the foremost aspects in their leadership development programmes to support the recruitment and marshalling of teams.

In their study, Kinenge and Shindhe (2022) examined the relationship between EI and the leadership practices of entrepreneurs. The authors suggested that emotionally intelligent leaders have a high chance of implementing innovations and changes that are critical in changing their business. This concept particularly applies to banks because it is innovation that can keep them afloat (Nawaz et al., 2024). Leaders with EI will be in a position to create a culture of trust and transparency, which is critical in facilitating collaborative innovation. The relevance of EI can also be justified due to the incorporation of technology in models of leadership. Following the implementation of new technologies that introduce new opportunities into the banking business, Drigas et al. (2023) introduced a nine-layer EI model, which suggests that emotionally intelligent leadership can improve adaptation to changes through the combination of emotional knowledge and technological innovations. Thus, managers who can dynamically adapt their EI in response to technological changes can lead their organisations to sustained success.

Goleman (1998) applied the mixed model of EI in leadership practices, where EI is split into five sections, i.e., self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. The implied claim by Goleman that high-EI leaders can become aware of their emotions with the ability to control them is extensive in terms of the quality of leadership, since the demands of fast-paced banking environments must be fulfilled. Nawaz et al. (2024) claimed that EI helps managers implement change and encourages cross-border collaboration among small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs). Managers who have EI are better equipped to handle the turmoil in the banking industry, where the transformation is relentless due to the dynamics of the markets and changes in regulations, and they can lead their teams through changes (Müller & Turner, 2007).

Transformational leadership is said to be inspirational and motivational to followers through a shared vision and an intellectual atmosphere of stimulation (Den Hartog et al., 1997). Caring leadership is more empathetic and connected to followers as it is more concerned with interpersonal relations and the emotional support provided to followers (Peiris & Ulluwishewa, 2023). These leadership styles in relation to EI can be employed to promote the performance of leaders and ultimately, the performance of organisations. EI denotes the ability to observe, read, manage and guide emotions, personally and those of other people (Sfetcu, 2020). In order to substantiate that transformational leadership and EI are interdependent, successful transformational leaders have high EI, and this allows them to inspire and engage their

followers. High EI leaders will be successful in empathising with members of their team, and this will contribute to making them feel confident and loyal, which are key qualities in transformational leadership. As an illustration, Broome (2024) advised that nursing leaders who possess the characteristic of transformation possess the benefit of emotional awareness in making a decision that will affect their work groups, since emotional awareness allows for a conducive work environment.

Transformational leadership is based on the motivation and inspiration of people and is laden with benefits as regards EI. EI leaders are experts in determining the emotional drive of their followers, and this would boost motivation and job satisfaction (Solan, 2008). The passion of the members of the team assists in building emotional connection, which increases the transformation capacity of leaders. This statement is supported by Blaik Hourani et al. (2021), who presented the significance of emotional engagement of educational leadership, the possibility of a leader using emotional awareness within their transformative practices increases their stance in motivating and leading others. However, criticism is not exempt from the relationship between caring leadership and EI. Some critics state that the propensity to concentrate too much on emotional relationships can contribute to the erosion of aspects of task-based leadership that are important to the success of organisations (Vanderpal, 2014).

Furthermore, the caring type of leadership contains the quality of EI within it since it is sensitive to the emotional needs of followers. EI contributes to the ability of the caring leader to foster emotional support and demonstrate empathy, which are all-important factors that make relationships in the workplace easier (Cross & Travaglione, 2003). Qualitative research done by Clarke (2006) revealed that managers with good caring skills become more responsive to the emotional condition of their employees and create an environment that helps the team to integrate and work together. It means that the style of leadership involved in strengthening EI in a team is caring, which reinforces the interpersonal relationship between these elements of leadership.

However, the emphasis on EI can supersede other significant leadership skills demanded by the transformational and caring leadership approaches. As an example, some researchers are of the opinion that the same strategic thinking and mental abilities are equally applicable in successful leadership (Hannah et al., 2014). Another aspect that leaders of change should consider is moulding a vibrant vision when setting new targets. Leaders should also balance EI

and practical decision-making and objective guidance ability (Den Hartog et al., 1997). Moreover, using EI does not always guarantee the effectiveness of transformational leadership. One such case is that of Taliadorou and Pashiardis (2015), who observed that educational leaders who face conflict need to use emotional regulation, but sometimes they may unwittingly undermine such use of emotional regulation, as they have not thought about the adverse consequences.

EI development is also relevant in caring leadership. Leaders who care but are not competent may fail to connect emotionally with team members, which can create a disconnection between the leader and his followers (Lauer & Lauer, 2021). The relationship in the team is explained by means of EI as it is the basis for responding to the emotional messages of followers, which ultimately leads to a more productive environment. In this regard, Eva et al. (2019) reasoned that leaders who practise self-realisation will be able to augment their EI, and as such, become more receptive to the needs and motivations of their team. This means that there is an in-house correlation between the development of EI and the success of caring leadership.

Winton (2022) discussed how the emotional capabilities of leaders and followers play a major role in work satisfaction. In the banking industry, the relationship between leadership styles and the emotional capacities of subordinates can improve the satisfaction level of staff and reduce turnover rates, which is a significant consideration in a business where employees are the driving force. The effectiveness of leaders is also encouraged by EI since it helps the leader to manage his or her emotions, analyse the emotions of followers and respond to them in a sympathetic way, especially during organisational change (Smollan & Parry, 2011). Leaders with high EI are relied upon, and encourage open communication, so that resistance is minimised since they consider the employees' concerns. Conversely, managers who do not know anything about EI are at risk of being disengaged and developing covert resistance.

EI has emerged as a key competence for leaders in the banking sector. The various models of EI provide a model which improves the understanding of leadership in this industry. The capacity to identify, comprehend and control feelings can enhance interpersonal relationships and increase the decision-making process of banking institutions (Karthikeyan & Lalwani, 2017). However, mixed models have been criticised as being misleading, and thus, ability models are the best to understand how EI capabilities can help in improving leadership skills in the banking sector (Ayranci et al., 2012). The research carried out by Farnia and Nafukho

(2016) confirms the importance of EI in the process of human resource development, indicating that EI-based programmes can be effectively integrated with training and development programmes which aim to equip banking leaders with essential EI competencies.

2.3. Review of EI, leadership and team management

As indicated by Wen et al. (2019), high-level leaders are better placed to promote good performance in employees by increasing job satisfaction. In addition, such leaders promote teamwork amongst members, hence improving group effectiveness and reducing competition between team leaders and followers. Studies have shown that EI is relevant in organisational success because it enhances the alignment of individual and team goals with those of the entire organisation (Mrisho & Mseti, 2024; Murphy, 2014). The interrelationship between EI and leadership practices, therefore, gives insight into ways to shape environments that do not just encourage the morale of employees but encourage sustainable organisational development.

2.3.1. EI improving decision-making and problem-solving abilities of leaders

EI has played a key role in the performance of leaders, particularly in decision-making and problem-solving. High-EI leaders can observe, use, understand and respond to both personal and other feelings. This competence is a significant advantage in assisting them to navigate the challenging social context and make challenging decisions. Studies indicate that EI plays a crucial role in shaping more effective leadership performance through a capacity to solve organisational problems and make better decisions in complex situations. To illustrate, Coronado-Maldonado and Benitez-Marcquez (2023) investigated the direct relationship between EI leadership behaviours and team functions. They argued that leaders whose EI skills have been well-enhanced can create an environment that promotes free communication, and this subsequently results in a culture that is conducive to innovation and cooperative solutions to problems. Similarly, Gooty et al. (2010) analysed the interactions between leadership and the EI, establishing a clear connection between EI and the improvement of team management and the work culture.

Furthermore, Lobo's (2023) systematic literature review concluded that emotionally intelligent leaders are more effective managers when employing emotions as a strategic benefit and, accordingly, as a means of improving decision-making skills. These leaders are able not only to express their feelings properly but also to identify and interpret the emotions of other

individuals, and that is why they are particularly good at team management and conflict resolution. These are some of the most significant aspects of effective leadership and will be explored in later sections. In their study, Farnia and Nafukho (2016) examined the relationship between EI and transformational leadership and discovered that a leader with a high EI is more inspiring and motivating to subordinates. This transformation is not confined to decision-making, but also creates a more inclusive and holistic problem-solving process, which is improved by such transformations in organisational contexts.

However, even though EI is generally perceived as a positive characteristic in a leader, negative aspects have been associated with high EI. The problem with misuse of EI is that the effective decision-making process and proper resolution of the problem may not occur, which means that the use of EI should be linked to morality and responsibility. The issue of EI within the context of human resources development was also examined by Farnia and Nafukho (2016). They argued that EI development ought to be a priority in leadership training programmes of organisations to boost the general decision-making processes and problem-solving skills. In addition to this, Barbuto and Burbach (2006) indicated a clear imperative to connect EI with the key pillars of leadership training, which can enable leaders to navigate the demands of workplaces.

Boyatzis et al. (2013) also shared this opinion when investigating the impact of EI on leadership performance. Based on their results, high EI is associated with the most optimal leadership performance, and an emotionally intelligent leader can enhance confidence and loyalty in subordinates. Such confidence will improve the quality of the decision-making process and problem-solving because team members will be more eager to contribute to the discussion and become full participants in the process. Furthermore, Coronado-Maldonado and Benitez-Marcquez (2023) also described advancements in the development and measurement of EI. This empirical measure of EI review suggests that EI assessment tools must be dependable and valid to identify and cultivate high levels of EI in leaders.

2.3.2. Managing teams with EI – affecting team performance and productivity

Current studies have led researchers to the gradual conclusion that EI is one of the desired components of effective team management (Dulewicz et al., 2005; Flores et al., 2018). Some of the skills that are incorporated in the EI role include the ability to perceive emotions, the

ability to use emotions to shape thinking, the ability to comprehend emotions, and the ability to control emotions, which are important in the dynamics of a team. Prati et al. (2003) argued that high-EI leaders can create a more successful team performance since they are better placed to maintain good human relations and understand the feelings of people in a given team. However, the contention of the operationalisations and the models of EI remain in place. Daus and Ashkanasy (2005) justified the ability model of EI as it provides a good explanation of the influence of the emotional capabilities that impact organisational behaviour. Carmeli (2003) also stressed that the effectiveness of the team management executive is greatly affected by the emotional skills of the leader who shapes the interaction, conflict management and cooperation.

Regardless of these concerns, EI and team dynamics continue to have a positive and significant relationship. O'Boyle et al. (2011) conducted a meta-analysis that established that there is a significant relationship between EI and team understanding, and emphasised the importance of emotionally intelligent individuals in ensuring that a team is an enjoyable and productive unit. EI promotes communication and improves the ability to control and inspire others to stimulate a culture of trust and collaboration between team members. The focus of EI in the leadership development of Google has a direct positive impact on team management since the leaders can build positive relationships, overcome conflicts, and maintain a positive climate (Yuste, 2021). High EI leaders enhance communication, cooperation, and trust within the small groups, which results in enhanced cohesion and performance. Such emphasis on emotional attentiveness leads to the development of a situation in which the team members feel appreciated, which will increase their engagement, satisfaction, and team performance (Cherniss, 2000).

There is a danger that the potential of EI will be misconstrued or even swamped by other leadership qualities. Dulewicz and Higgs (2000) noted that although EI is significant, it must be balanced with cognitive intelligence and technical abilities so that one can control a team. This implies that the emphasis that has been placed on EI at the expense of other valuable skills that otherwise would ensure that the team is efficient as a whole, can lead to an individual neglecting other skill. Further, Ashkanasy and Daus (2005) felt that all the exaggerated claims regarding EI would be counterproductive to other leadership competencies that are vital in influencing the success of a team. It is an emotional atmosphere that changes the efficacy of a team concerning its commitments and reduced rolling (Wolff et al., 2002). The persuasive level of EI enables leaders to solve conflicts and misunderstandings, even prior to their emergence, which is needed to maintain the unity and spirit of a team.

Even though many organisations have embraced the importance of EI, empirical studies that place in perspective its importance in team management are still emerging. Lee et al. (2023) also discussed the difficulties in establishing a framework and the legitimacy of the measures of EI in the implemented practices. They put forward a proposal to recognise the situational condition in which EI practices might lead to more effective application in managerial practices. Even though EI is among the key elements of effective management in teams by refining the interpersonal aspect of management and the ability to provide a conducive working environment, there has been visible criticism of measurement and operational criteria regarding the value of EI in organisations (Klebe et al., 2022).

The EI concept has received considerable interest in the past in relation to its impact on the performance of a team and leadership. The ability of high-EI leaders to surmount emotional complications and establish environments that are appealing has the ability to increase productivity. Thor and Johnson (2011) established that the EI of the leader and the commitment of the employees are closely related, so that the EI of the leader who empathises with his/her team may create more motivated employees. Matthews et al. (2007) elaborated on this point, arguing that EI is the ability to detect, sense and manage the emotions of individuals and others. It is a valuable skill among leaders, and it will help them build trust and credibility among teams and increase cooperative activities.

Organisations like Google focus on the value of EI in their leadership structures. The project, Google Aristotle, which was concerned with establishing what made teams successful, established that one of the factors that achieved this was emotional security, which is an attribute instigated by the EI of leaders (Solan, 2008). This demonstrates that the researchers agreed that emotionally intelligent leaders create an environment where team members feel valued and listened to, which, in its turn, leads to performance and innovation. Thus, Cross and Travaglione (2003) made a direct connection between the EI of managers and economic prosperity in organisations in the process of expounding more on the role of EI in team dynamics. This helps to prove that high-EI executives boost the morale of the team in addition to promoting key performance measures. Similarly, Edelman and van Knippenberg (2018) based their assumptions on the premise that organisations that have leaders who possess EI are known to enjoy the benefits of effective communication and increased levels of motivation, and therefore are directly correlated with the benefits of better performance of organisations.

Critics are uncertain about the objectivity and quantification of EI, and suggest that some meanings are not empirically justified. As a case in point, Hopkins et al. (2007) did not support the excessive dependence of EI in leadership models; they stated that a more balanced model must also include cognitive intelligence and practical skills. This cynicism shows that there is still a debate in the literature regarding the actual impact of EI versus traditional leadership competition measures. Other than that, the negative attitude toward emphasis on EI might be due to cultural divergence, as some cultures might be more rational than others and may not make decisions based on emotions (Vanderpal, 2014). Such cultural settings can lead to different levels of emotionally intelligent leadership being effective or useful. Further, Hawkins and Dulewicz (2007) have articulated the anxieties on contextual concerns that render EI inapplicable under various organisational circumstances, and this would reflect that a special leadership development plan may not be applicable.

However, despite these counterarguments against EI, there is broad evidence to support the fact that the EI of leaders and team performance is positively correlated. This body of evidence was furthered by Thor (2012), who also analysed how EI enhances commitment in the workplace, particularly when jobs losses in the process improvement departments. The ability of leaders to get emotionally involved with members of the team is directly connected to the performance of the team. In this respect, Khalili (2012) investigated the implementation of EI training for managers, whereby the training process presupposes that such programmes yield long-term, substantial returns to individuals as well as to organisations. This observation is consistent with the study of Barczak et al. (2010), which elaborated on the relevance of collective EI in promoting innovativeness and overall productivity.

2.3.3. EI as a tool for conflict resolution

EI has a strong bearing on conflict resolution. Advocates of EI believe that the combination of EI with leadership and conflict management styles creates relationships that are healthier in the work environment (Cross & Travaglione, 2003; Hannah et al., 2014; Lauer & Lauer, 2021). Rahim et al. (2002) introduced a model that indicates the correlation between EI and different strategies of resolving conflicts in different cultural contexts. The results indicate that high EI leads to effective solutions to conflict, as persons who have high levels of emotional awareness can navigate through the turbulence of interpersonal conflicts and therefore can employ

collaborative and integrative styles. Prati et al. (2003) have reported results showing that the work of the leader with high EI leads to more successful results in the team and that these leaders are capable of managing conflicts because of their empathy and understanding. However, critics refer to the possible negative side and the misuse of emotional potential. Advocates of EI emphasise that it is necessary to increase the level of conflict management strategies in organisations (Ayalew & Ayenew, 2022).

It is hard to overestimate the transformative nature of EI in conflict resolution. It is not merely helpful in resolving conflicts once they arise, but it is also proactive in managing possible cases of conflict with good networks and relationship trust. The subject of EI is still an issue of discussion and criticism. Considering the broad scope of the assertions regarding its advantages, several researchers have called for a more discriminating approach. As an example, Murphy (2014) claimed that one should not blindly accept the alleged benefits of EI because the notion does not have a solid empirical background. It is feared that emotionally intelligent persons can manipulatively apply their emotional capabilities in specific situations. Bearing this opinion, Kilduff et al. (2010) argued that emotionally intelligent individuals can use their skills to be dishonest with others or escalate conflict instead of resolving it.

In practice, organisations like Johnson and Johnson have incorporated EI into their leadership development model, and changes in the practice of a more collaborative culture were observed through the introduction of conflict resolution training programmes. This is similar to the findings of Harms and Credé (2010), who hold that transformational leadership supported by EI leads to more engagement and contentment among employees, hence reducing the general level of conflict. On the other hand, there has been criticism of the inability to measure EI. Daus and Ashkanasy (2005) argued in favour of the ability model of EI when asserting that EI should be viewed as a set of skills, which are trainable and developable.

The second factor to be considered is that EI is closely linked with leadership styles as applied to conflict resolution. Barbuto and Burbach (2006) investigated the importance of EI in transformational leadership and found that successful leaders can, in most cases, utilise their EI intuitively in a manner that inspires and motivates their followers. This usually leads to more understanding and less aggression in conflict management, where leaders are sensitive not only to their own feelings but also to the feelings of the members of their team. On the other hand, EI can be regarded as a two-sided sword when it comes to resolving conflict at an organisational

level. Although it has a lot of potential in terms of improving productivity and interpersonal relationships, it is necessarily connected with ethical issues. Cherniss (2010) noted that organisations must also aim at addressing emotional competencies and incorporate ethical training to use EI constructively in an organisation. The emotional abilities would be abused without an ethical framework, which may destroy credibility and harmony in the workplace. In addition to this, Sadri (2012) also indicated that leaders with EI facilitate more effective communication and conflict management, which is required in order to optimise the dynamics of equipment and increase productivity.

Conflict resolution refers to the process of resolving a conflict or disagreement in a positive way to avoid worsening and encourage cooperation. It involves the leaders in identifying the emotional stimulant, the root cause of the underlying problems, and the leader is able to develop open communication in finding an acceptable solution to the problem (Shih & Susanto, 2010). EI is among the critical factors in effective conflict resolution in a workplace, as leaders employ empathy, active listening, and emotional control to direct conversations. The high EI leaders would be able to provide a secure atmosphere to share their concerns, which would eliminate tension and foster trust (Lobo, 2023). The process of conflict resolution is especially important in the highly strained sectors, such as the banking industry, where stress and change of pace can intensify conflicts. Unresolved conflicts may destroy teamwork, reduce morale and affect performance without proper management (Flores et al., 2018). As such, organisations must incorporate conflict management techniques in leadership development programmes, where leaders are provided with the expertise to manage conflicts efficiently to enable the organisation to have a peaceful and productive workplace.

2.4. Research gap

EI as a component of leadership has been largely researched, but its impact within the Bangladeshi banking industry has not been significantly explored. Most of the existing literature theorises EI from a Western perspective and neglects the issue that cultural peculiarities in Bangladesh can affect the manifestation and meaning of EI in banking leadership practices (Robin et al., 2018). Despite the fact that there are certain works which indicate the correlation between EI and successful leadership, some of them have not sufficiently addressed cultural peculiarities, such as collectivism and hierarchical relations, which are typical of Bangladeshi society (Afroz et al., 2017). Also, the available research is

more likely to explore the quantitative measure of EI without going into qualitative studies of leadership styles within different industries. This is vastly dissimilar because the application of EI principles may vary radically within an organisational culture and local settings. There is a need to apply contextualised leadership styles that relate EI to socio-economic factors in Bangladesh. Further, empirical research on how EI influences the decision-making process and commitment of employees involved in the specific case of the Bangladeshi banking industry is missing. The banking industry is a dynamic place, but there is a need to understand the interaction between EI and the practices of leadership to develop a more flexible and stronger working force. Consequently, the knowledge gaps should be filled in the framework of additional research to improve the theoretical framework and practical application of EI in a culturally sensitive manner. To close the gaps, it is necessary to develop a conceptual framework that indicates the incorporation of EI into leadership theories, in addition to balancing the cultural and organisational realities of the Bangladeshi banking industry. On this basis, the following conceptual framework displays the proposed relationships between EI, leadership practices and critical employee outcomes, which provides a strong basis for the proposed empirical research (see Figure 1).

2.5. Conceptual framework

Figure 1. Conceptual framework underpinning the relationship between EI and leadership effectiveness



The conceptual framework indicates that EI significantly increases the effectiveness of leadership, allowing leaders strengthen their EI abilities, i.e., perceiving emotions, using emotions to drive thinking, understanding and managing emotions. Leaders with the ability to recognise and identify their own and others' emotions, harness their own emotions to improve cognitive processes like decision-making and problem-solving, analyse their own and others'

emotional information, and regulate their own emotions have the capacity to affect others' behaviour and action in organisational and industry contexts (Drigas et al., 2023; Føllesdal & Hagtvet, 2013; Peiris & Ulluwishewa, 2023). These abilities of leaders can help improve decision-making processes, team management and conflict resolution by promoting trust and collaboration among team members. This leads to increased employee involvement in workplaces, which is closely correlated to organisational performance. In addition, EI implications extend beyond individual leaders to industry practices and organisational environments (Lauer & Lauer, 2021). Organisations that embrace the application of EI when developing leadership develop a training culture that helps leaders increase their skills, which consequently develops a flexible workforce that can easily adapt to change. Given the high rate of change in industries brought about by technology and uncertainty in the market, leaders who are high in EI tend to navigate the changes more comfortably and influence their subordinates through levels of uncertainty, and bolster their morale. Moreover, the introduction of EI into leadership practices also influences the overall organisational performance measures that result in improved productivity, retention rates and employee satisfaction (O'Boyle et al., 2011). It is likely that businesses that invest in the development of leaders who have high EI will discover that the organisational culture evolves into an accommodating and helpful environment that attracts the top talents and decreases turnover.

2.6. Chapter summary

The relationship between EI and leadership impact has attracted considerable academic attention, and it has been discovered that high-EI leaders have an increased likelihood of creating favourable work environments and improving teamwork EI skills, such as applying emotions to thinking, as well as perceiving and controlling emotions. These are critical in decision-making, team management and conflict resolution, which also impacts organisational performance. The models of EI ability theorise this by pointing to the importance of the abilities of individuals in processing the EI of themselves and others, and that emotionally intelligent leaders are well placed to inspire and motivate their teams. In addition, the correlation of EI, leadership effectiveness and employee engagement portrays the need for emotional competencies to offer significant relationships between leaders and their subordinates.

Although the value of EI in leadership has been well established, there have continued to be debates as to the validity and use of the various models. The ability model is the viewpoint

advanced by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and provides a more cognitive and performance-based approach, which excludes personality traits. The trait and the mixed models (Goleman, 1998; Petrides, 2010), in contrast, are highly dependent on self-reporting and tend to overstep the limits between EI and the general constructs of personality, which also casts a shadow on conceptual clarity (Antonakis et al., 2009). Based on those limitations, the ability model is the preference of this study because it has greater empirical strength, objective assessment devices, and is better delineated as compared to personality theory. Although trait and mixed models are more practical in the context of organisations, their theoretical obscurity should be treated with some reservations. So, the model of ability is a more scientifically credible source when considering EI as a leadership attribute.

Recent studies have indicated that EI may be employed in developing effective leadership styles and health as a whole in an organisation. The literature available, however, tends not to include studies that were conducted in the framework of the banking industry and intercultural studies that may shed light on how EI and leadership effectiveness interplay within the framework of the organisations in question. This presents a significant research gap, and there is a need to carry out additional research on how different cultures and organisational structures apply and are utilised in the effective application of EI in leadership and team relationships. Closing this gap can provide useful insights to academics and professional practitioners.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the methodological choices made in this study are discussed regarding each phase of the investigation. The study examines the place of EI in leadership practice, especially in such organisational and cultural contexts as human interaction, situational decision-making processes, team management and conflict resolution. Due to the complexity and subjective characteristics of EI and leadership, the methodological orientation toward this study rests on philosophical presuppositions, which are aligned with interpretivist traditions.

This is because the choice of a suitable research methodology is crucial for producing authentic and reliable, as well as contextually relevant, findings. According to Adams et al. (2014), ontological and epistemological clarity should assist in providing coherence in the investigative route of research conducted in the social sciences. Accordingly, this chapter starts by commenting on the philosophical positioning of the study, which looks at how the study is situated in ontology and epistemology. Such philosophical backgrounds shape the following methodological choices, such as the research strategy and methods.

Qualitative approaches to investigating lived experiences, perceptions and behaviours in organisational settings in studies on EI and leadership have previously been adopted in numerous studies, e.g., Ashkanasy and Daus (2005), and Afzalur Rahim et al. (2002). Inspired by the precedent, the research in question pursues a like-minded exploratory direction, trying to develop knowledge of the effect EI has on the process of leadership and its efficiency in relation to others.

In this chapter, firstly, the ontological and epistemological backgrounds on which the current research is based are discussed. Thereafter, the rationale of the adopted philosophical position, course of research, and research design are outlined. The subsequent section emphasises data collection and data analysis. Special interest is focused on ethical considerations which present part of the research on human subjects.

3.2. Research ontology

Ontology is the assumptions a researcher makes about what reality is; in other words, what is a truth and what aspects of the environment in question exist. Ontological views in social science research aid in determining how researchers approach the subjects of their research and what type of knowledge they consider legitimate (Bell, 2014; Bryman & Bell, 2015). The ontological position taken in this study is the relativist one according to which reality is pluralist and subjective, constructed in the process of social interaction and individual experience.

Both phenomena of study, namely, EI and leadership, are humanistic and contextual. As opposed to the physical and natural sciences, where there are objective measures of phenomena, the constructs of empathy, emotional awareness and leadership influence are construed in individual, organisational and cultural contexts (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005; Clarke, 2006). This ontological position recognises that there is not one definite reality in leadership or EI, but that there exist various ways of seeing, which are as numerous as individual and group lived experiences.

To illustrate, Bratton et al. (2011) state that leadership is not just the exercise of authority but an exercise that is seen through perceptions and the exchanges between leaders and followers. On the same note, EI, according to some models, is not a fixed trait but a malleable skill that varies according to individual qualities and the given context (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). The study will therefore not attempt to define universal laws or measurable patterns of leadership behaviour; it will rather dwell upon how leaders perceive their EI when they react to followers and situations.

Applying a relativist ontology, Groves et al. (2008) investigated the development of leadership and EI through interviews and narrative inquiry. They found that individual perception had a significant role in defining the effectiveness of leadership, which further vindicates the ontological underpinnings of the current research study.

The research will embrace a relativist ontological position, as a step towards the comprehension of both individual and social reality that defines leadership interaction. It will study the perceptions and practices of leaders in terms of implementing EI in their leadership and regarding the emotional competencies, or rather, how leaders see and practise EI in their

leadership, how they interpret followers' experience, and how they react to such emotional competencies. Qualitative research design, including interviews and focus groups, will be used to record the stories of the leaders and the extent to which emotional competence impacts the way they interact, manage teams and resolve conflict.

3.3. Research epistemology

Epistemology is the philosophical position about the question of the nature, the origin of knowledge, and the question of how people know what they know (Adams et al., 2014). Within the framework of this research, knowledge concerning leadership and EI is perceived as co-created by human interaction, dialogue and interpretation. The epistemological stance adopted is interpretivism which is very much in tandem with the relativist ontological premise of the study (Ugwu et al., 2021).

Interpretivism affirms the view that knowledge is socially created and subjective, especially in the sphere of human experience. In the framework of leadership and EI, interpretivist research does not aim to discover the truth or to set some universal laws but tries to interpret and find sense in the world based on those involved in the process. Such an orientation is appropriate because both practices in leadership and emotional competencies are personal and situational (Bolden et al., 2023).

An example is that leadership does not just rely on transactional mechanisms of control and reward. Effective leadership is also widely dependent on affective bonding, emotional cognisance and contextual adaptability (Burns, 1978). Similarly, EI includes self-awareness, empathy and social skills, which partly depend on interpersonal and organisational conditions (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005). In this research, the researcher will acknowledge that leaders and their followers can have completely different perceptions of the EI of a leader. Although leaders can feel that they illustrate high EI, followers can present the opposite perception due to their understanding of the situation and expectations. These perceptions can be contrasting, highlighting the need to explore the subjective realities of both leaders and followers through conversation and qualitative approaches (Thor & Johnson, 2011). With these multiple perspectives being recorded in the study, a better interpretive picture of the effects on the issue of EI in leadership contexts will be gained concerning the perceptions and experiences of EI within the leadership dynamic.

This knowledge position is in line with earlier studies. One example is the study by Groves et al. (2008), which applied qualitative research methods and found that there are diverse ways of interpreting the EI concept by leaders in the workplace, where it depends on the context and culture. On the same note, Carmeli (2003) said that senior managers comprehend EI on a very personal and circumstance-driven basis that is framed by their professional histories and their social contexts.

The research itself entails reflexivity in interpretivist inquiry, where a researcher is aware of and reflects upon their position within the production of knowledge, recognising how views formed during social interactions with participants may influence the co-created meaning. Reflexive researchers do not remain neutral, and achieve that by an active engagement with the participants' stories, even if it does influence the interpretation of data (Pessoa et al., 2019). This is of relevance for the study of EI, because researchers rely on interpretation by themselves to a high degree when investigating participants' subjective experiences.

3.4. Research methods

3.4.1. Research philosophy

Social constructionism is a theoretical viewpoint that suggests that whatever reality may be, it cannot exist outside of social interaction and shared meanings (Burr, 2024). In this perspective, knowledge and understanding are constructed discursively, being mediated through culture, history and society. Social constructionists question the nature of reality, as individuals and groups actively construct their perception of it (Smollan & Parry, 2011). This position applies specifically in the case of exploring humanistic concepts like leadership and EI. According to interpretivism, the social world cannot be objectively and dispassionately studied as a natural science, especially when the subject of analysis involves individuals' processes of meaning-making (Bell, 2014).

This philosophy of interpretivism characterises knowledge as it is influenced by subjective impressions, and this assists in explaining the role of EI in effective leadership in different organisational and cultural contexts (Almudarra, 2019). EI is not a fixed entity, but rather a dynamic ability developed through socialisation and self-reflection (Cherniss, 2010). Similarly,

the process of leadership is also being embraced as a process of emotion with empathy, emotional awareness and flexibility, with potential changes in communication.

From a complementary subjectivist perspective, knowledge is viewed as a product and the result of a researcher's engagement, suggesting that understanding is dependent on who is pursuing the knowledge. Leadership practices cannot be understood without understanding the emotions, motivations and interpersonal experiences of followers and leaders. Research conducted by Carmeli (2003) and Barczak et al. (2010) pointed out that leadership efficacy is frequently perceived considering emotionally intelligent encounters, confidence and teamwork, and all of them are subjectively perceived.

The study is not intended to generalise but it aims at giving rich, context-sensitive information. Its purpose is to reveal the nature and application of EI in practice and the influence of these experiences on leaders and their followers and their view of effective leadership. The research by Clarke (2006) and Athota et al. (2023) showed that insights of this kind are to be achieved via in-depth qualitative exploration, which is based on the traditions of interpretivism. Critiquing is not the same as making a judgment about people; it involves thoroughly examining the data and looking for patterns, inconsistencies or other interpretations. Through this, the researcher will be assured that he has been able to cover and treat it rigorously. This is a critical viewpoint, which enables us to perceive the leadership and EI relationship as applied in the life of the organisation, which further interprets the information in a more detailed way.

3.4.2. Research approach

The underlying research methodology of this study is the inductive research strategy due to the focus on the exploration and exegesis of the lived experience of the leaders and how they apply EI in organisations. It is achieved through inductive reasoning that enables one to formulate a theory as a basis and not to evaluate a hypothesis that has been developed beforehand. This kind of thinking is especially appropriate when the study focuses on deconstructing the patterns, meaning and content of multidimensional social phenomena (Adams et al., 2014).

Inductive logic in inquiry results from making observations of data. That is, in an explicitly experience-based investigation of leadership and EI, inductive reasoning supports the investigator by remaining open to new theme development. This will help to protect against

the risk of missing new insights or surprising discoveries existing but unnoticed in collecting data, as here assumptions and sensitising concepts can develop from participants' stories rather than being tested out. Studies like those of Hopkins et al. (2007), and Barczak et al. (2010) have revealed that inductive approaches are appropriate to researching EI and leadership because they generate rich data which can serve as the basis for developing theory.

This study does not start with a rigid theoretical framework, rather, qualitative data will be gathered via the thoughts of participants. It is not about identifying cause and effect but rather to acquire an informed knowledge about how EI influences leadership behaviour and communication, team management and conflict resolution. This shows the methodological designs of scholars such as Blaik Hourani et al. (2021), Athota et al. (2023) who resorted to inductive strategies in order to reveal the complicated leadership patterns defined by EI.

The interpretivist position of this study is also complemented by the inductive approach because it emphasises the creation of meaning and co-constitutive knowledge with participants. Theories based on practical knowledge can help form a structure that is suitable for application to research (Bourdieu, 2020). Progress in theory and practice involves the generation of richer theoretical insights, as well as the development of practical strategies with which to interpret and use leadership and EI within organisations.

Deductive reasoning implies moving towards specific observations or conclusions based on general theories or known frameworks. The present research used a deductive method in the sense that the research was informed by the existing theories of EI as well as leadership, especially Goleman's mixed model and Salovey and Mayer's (1990) ability model. These theoretical premises were used in the creation of research questions and in data collection, using semi-structured interviews (Seal et al., 2010). The purpose was to investigate whether the trends in the banking industry of Bangladesh are consistent with the available theoretical constructs (Salovey & Pizarro, 2003). This approach enhances the analytical rigour of the research such that the results are methodically connected to the theoretical frameworks, hence improving the reliability and theoretical applicability of the role of EI in leadership practices.

3.4.3. Research strategy

In this research, a qualitative research strategy will be used and it is especially suitable to study subjectively experienced phenomena like EI and leadership. The domains of leadership are relational and situational and the construct of EI is an internally construed and externally developed action (Dong et al., 2022). Thus, qualitative research enables the exploration of the views, conceptions and realities experienced by the participants in a manner that quantitative research does not (Bell, 2014). The approach in qualitative research is congruent with an interpretivist and deductive tendency. It allows investigating the processes of perception, experience and application of EI by leaders at the highest levels of organisations, especially in a multifaceted organisational context. Research tools such as surveys, focus groups, etc. have been used in analysing the relationship between leadership and EI.

The main method used in this research is semi-structured interviews to gather research data. Semi-structured interviews provide consistency and flexibility as the researchers can include questions concerning important areas of interest but, at the same time, they are also open to the different views of the participants (Grey, 2021). Such an approach has become popular in leadership and EI research since it can help to extract rich and descriptive data (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005; Hopkins et al., 2007). In that regard, Mekpor and Dartey-Baah (2020) conducted semi-structured interviews to investigate the EI reported by leaders, specifically in the banking sector in Ghana, pointing at how such a method can disclose subtle and context-sensitive information. Previous research on EI has indicated that such an approach is an effective one. On the same note, Mekpor and Dartey-Baah (2020) relied exclusively on qualitative interviews in investigating the role of the EI of leaders regarding organisational behaviours.

Semi-structured interviews enhance methodological consistency regarding the research process, including philosophical assumptions, as well as data analysis. This clarity increases the reliability of the results because the method of gathering information directly nurtures the depth of interpreting information necessitated by the research questions (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The rationale is supported by past studies. As an example, both Ashkanasy and Daus (2005) and Barczak et al. (2010) not only showed that EI-related constructs, e.g., empathy, self-awareness and emotional regulation, should be evaluated more carefully and aggregately, but also indicated that such constructs were likely to be more thoroughly examined through a qualitative lens where the personal account and lived experiences were put first.

3.5. Data collection

3.5.1. Sampling method

The research took a purposive participant selection method as the participants were systematically chosen with a given criterion in relation to the research goals (Palinkas et al., 2013). This approach is also in line with earlier EI research in which scholars have tried to find answers with the help of people who hold a leadership office (Clarke, 2006). Inclusion criteria in this study were (i) only those individuals who were in formal leadership positions in their organisations, and (ii) those with at least five years of managerial experience to be reflectively mature and experienced enough. Purposive participant selection allows the choice of the so-called information-rich cases that have the potential of producing rich and insightful information. Participants were recruited using purposive participant selection to include those with exposure in leadership. The first contact was by email with a concise description of the aims and ethics of the study. Those who indicated that they were interested in the topic and met the criteria were invited to take part in the interviews so that different perspectives on this issue could be represented.

The sample was selected, using the available networks of people in the banking industry in Bangladesh. The managers (mid- to senior-level managers) of both public and private banks were chosen depending on their direct engagement in leadership and their knowledge of emotionally intelligent practices of leadership. Most of the sampled people had worked in the same institutions earlier and had displayed a tangible experience with team management, decision-making and conflict resolution. Preliminary contact and motivation to participate were facilitated by professional familiarity and shared institutional experience. This strategy ensured the availability of informed people who could give detailed information in line with the objectives of the research. The strategy also assisted in building rapport in the interview process, allowing credibility and richness of qualitative information gathered.

Before the data collection, the potential interviewees were informed through email about the study, provided with a brief description of it, and asked to take part. Those interested were then given a participant information sheet, consent form and personal details form to ensure informed and voluntary participation. After consent, semi-structured interviews took place, and the records became the major data source in the research. These audio records were transcribed

and formed the raw material for thematic analysis. The other background data that was collected included the organisational role of the participants and the type of banking industries they represented to ensure the contextualisation of the data collected was understood at the time of data interpretation.

The basic source of data was the verbatim recordings of the semi-structured interviews. The raw data of the subsequent analysis of the theme were these transcripts. Also, other background information including organisational status of the participants and the industry covered through the interviews was sought to aid contextualism during interpretation. While the focus was on participants' subjective experience, a strong body of theoretical literature provided the background to the study and acted as a framework during the formulation of interview questions and analysis of arising themes. Earlier studies like that of Sy et al. (2006), and Harms and Crede (2010) were used to create a foundation for the questions.

Using interviews as the only source of empirical data, as highlighted by Ashkanasy and Daus (2005), Clarke (2006), and Carmeli (2003), is justified by the fact that the richness and depth of qualitative data are especially well-suited to study the internalised and tacit aspects of EI as applied in leadership. These scholars emphasise that these data will allow the development of a more subtle analysis of the emotional and relational processes that cannot be easily measured using quantitative techniques, which supports the suitability of interviews to explore the complicated relationship between EI and leadership practices.

3.5.2. Participants' profiles

All participants of the study were male, which is one of the major limitations of the research, leading to the risk of gender bias. The profiles of the 10 participants of the interviews are furnished in Table 1. As reflected in the table, the participants had managerial roles in their organisations. One participant was in a first-level managerial position, two were in mid-level managerial positions and the remaining seven were senior managers. First-level managerial role indicates the first tier in the organisational management structure, and mid and senior levels follow that tier. The age group analysis of the participants indicates that six belonged to the 30-40 years age group, while the remaining six belonged to the 40-50 years age group. Lastly, only one participant had five-10 years of length of service, while the remaining nine had 10-15 years of length of service.

Table 1. Participants' profiles

Participant pseudonym	Rank	Age group (years)	Length of service (years)
Participant 1	Senior manager	40-49	10-15
Participant 2	First-level manager	30-39	10-15
Participant 3	Senior manager	30-39	10-15
Participant 4	Senior manager	30-39	10-15
Participant 5	Mid-level manager	30-39	5-10
Participant 6	Senior manager	40-49	10-15
Participant 7	Senior manager	30-39	10-15
Participant 8	Senior manager	30-39	10-15
Participant 9	Senior manager	40-49	10-15
Participant 10	Mid-level manager	40-49	10-15

3.5.3. Interview process

As the researcher is currently based in New Zealand and the target population were Bangladeshi banking professionals residing in that country, the interviews were conducted through Zoom and audio-recorded after informed consent. An interview guide was constructed which would be flexible to accommodate key themes identified within the literature such as self-awareness, empathy, conflict resolution and leadership decision-making (Barczak et al., 2010).

The interviews were facilitated by a series of semi-structured questions, which were to be used to investigate major themes attached to the aims of the study. To begin with, the respondents were questioned regarding their cognition and expression of EI skills, including self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy and social skills. After this were questions addressing the way these competencies affected their team management practices, such as communication practices, motivation practices, as well as team dynamics. Lastly, the participants were requested to consider how EI informed their approach to identifying, managing and resolving conflicts in the workplace. These themes are related to the indicative questions in Appendix IV of this thesis.

The semi-structured aspect of the research allowed the researcher to get a deeper level of response and meanwhile allowing the participants to express themselves freely and reflectively. This is close to the style adopted by Bratton et al. (2011), who examined self-awareness of leaders and their perception of performance using interviews. Similarly, Boyatzis et al. (2012)

stressed the importance of semi-structured interview questions in providing natural evidence of emotionally intelligent behaviour.

Reflexivity was an essential element of the interview. The researcher kept a field diary to record any non-verbal signs, background and reflection after the interview. This practice strengthens the reliability of the information that has been collected and agrees with the best methods of carrying out qualitative EI studies as observed by Ashkanasy and Daus (2005).

3.6. Data analysis

In this study, thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013) was used to analyse qualitative data because it is a framework that allows the clear and ordered organisation, description and explanation of patterns or themes within rich textual data, which allows data to be recorded in a meaningful way. Thematic analysis is flexible, simple to use, and can result in varied observations regarding how the participants experience and practise EI and leadership. According to the argument presented by Naeem et al. (2023), thematic analysis offers a theoretically inductive but powerful means of describing the multidimensionality of human behaviour, as well as sense-making, informing and driving, especially interpretivist and inductive research traditions.

Due to the semi-structured interviews conducted as the basis of research, thematic analysis is a good method to get close to the data and to enable the notions and constructs to emerge naturally. This is a way of not just using ready-made categories, but of giving more weight to the voices of the participants and the reality of situations in which they may find themselves (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This method fits very well with the objective of the current study which seeks to determine how EI is understood and practised by leaders as well as their experiences towards it in their organisational settings.

Thematic analysis involved the use of the six-phase approach as given by Braun and Clarke (2006):

Familiarisation with the data: The data was transcribed verbatim and the transcripts were read and re-read to have a clear idea of what the data included. First annotations were created on recurrent ideas, tone and language style.

Data coding: Manual coding of data was performed by using descriptive and interpretive code labels to mark the aspects of the research questions. The codes were inductively built to make

sure that they captured the language used and the meaning employed by the participants and were not subject to external theory influence, for example, Identifying self-feelings, Realising emotional shifts.

Seeking themes: A cluster of related codes was merged into subthemes in order to form broad categories or potential themes, deduced from the literature. For example, the codes of Identifying self-feelings and Realising emotional shifts were components of the subtheme, Emotional recognition. This subtheme, together with others, was placed in the theme of Self-awareness.

Themes checking: The new themes were checked through the data to check consistency, coherence and depth. Some were collapsed or refined and others were separated to enable them to reflect better dimensions of experience.

Establishing and labelling themes: All themes were clearly defined and were accompanied by sample quotes of the participants. The themes that were developed possessed descriptive and analytical qualities and were used to provide a complete interpretation of the implications of EI on the practice of leadership. They not only explain how EI affects the behaviours of a leader, but also examine the processes behind these effects (Santa et al., 2023). Through the discovery of different leadership styles and practices, the themes helped to further understand how EI empowers leaders to make more informed decisions, manage teams, resolve conflict and create positive working environments,

Report writing: The last step was how to compile the thematic results with the findings to create an evidence-based storytelling to respond to the research questions and gain insight into theories.

Thematically based analysis has precedence in EI and leadership studies. As an example, thematic analysis has been applied by Clarke (2006), who examined how managers can develop emotional capabilities through experiential learning, and Boyatzis (2008), who applied a similar strategy in studying emotional competencies development by emotionally intelligent leaders. These studies show how thematic methods allow patterns of behaviour and cognition that are difficult to measure but are key to leadership performance to be disclosed.

3.6.1 Data structure of the study

The selection of themes and subthemes of the study has been guided by the conceptual framework presented at the end of the literature review. The data structure furnished in tables

2, 3 and 4 has been designed around the three specific research objectives of the study, each represented by themes, subthemes and codes appropriate to the central idea of the research.

Table 2 addresses Research Objective 1, which focuses on identifying the critical EI competencies of banking leaders. This part is divided into themes representing both leaders' emotions and subordinates' emotions, including subthemes such as emotional recognition, emotional control, empathy, social behaviours, emotional judgement and others. Each subtheme is supported by coded extracts from participants' narratives, illustrating how these competencies manifest in the workplace. The themes have been adopted from the studies of Daus and Ashkanasy (2005); Dulewicz et al. (2005); Hawkins and Dulewicz (2007); Edelman and van Knippenberg (2018).

Table 2. The EI competencies of banking leaders

Themes	Subthemes	Codes
Leaders' emotions:		
Self-awareness	Emotional recognition	Identifying self-feelings Realising emotional shifts Categorising self-emotions Recognising emotional triggers Understanding emotional patterns
	Emotional impacts	Understanding emotional impacts on decisions Realising emotional impacts on behaviour Identifying emotional impacts on communication process Recognising emotional impacts on judgement Connecting emotions to results
	Self-reflection	Reviewing self-reactions Learning from past behaviour Reflecting on outcomes Evaluating self-responses Recognising scope for emotional growth
Self-regulation	Emotional control	Managing self-reactions Retaining sound composure Avoiding impulsive actions Regulating negative emotions Enhancing patience
	Stress management	Tackling work pressure Adopting stress-relief techniques Prioritising tasks Keeping focus

Themes	Subthemes	Codes
		Avoiding burnouts
	Emotional flexibility	Adapting to situations Adjusting to appropriate tone Accepting changes Adopting emotional approaches
Subordinates' emotions:		
Social awareness	Empathy and perceived emotional cues	Reading facial expressions Sensing tension or discomfort Understanding hidden feelings Recognising emotional needs Balancing empathy Responding to emotional cues
	Understanding social and cultural norms	Respecting cultural differences Acknowledging cultural beliefs Adapting to cultural norms Adjusting to cultural fits
	Social behaviour	Observing interaction patterns Noticing withdrawal or separation Identifying behavioural changes Understanding group dynamics Detecting social tension
Emotional application	Emotional judgement	Assessing emotional suitability Evaluating emotional setting Analysing emotional ground Measuring emotional exposure Inferring emotional implications
	Emotional adaptation	Adjusting behavioural approaches Adapting leadership styles Customising responses Modifying communication Adopting appropriate tone
	Emotional decision-making	Employing emotion in decision-making Harmonising logic and emotion Prioritising emotional consequences Anticipating emotional outcomes Adopting emotion-guided actions

Table 3 addresses Research Objective 2, which determines the team management strategies that banking leaders apply using EI to cultivate a productive organisational culture. The analysis has been structured on topics such as the formation of a team environment and communication practices, which are referenced under subtopics which entail collaboration, workplace

environment, emotional motivation, emotional sensitivity, effective communication and inclusive participation. The quotations are given in the interview data to demonstrate how EI can be applied in team management choices and interactions of leaders. The themes were inspired by the works of Wolff et al. (2002) and Prati et al. (2003).

Table 3. The effective team management strategies connected with EI that are applied by banking leaders

Themes	Subthemes	Codes
Building team environment	Collaboration and cooperation	Inspiring collaborative effort using emotional insights Endorsing team goals through emotional understanding Enabling teamwork by recognising shared emotional states Reinforcing collaborative habits through empathetic support
	Workplace environment	Ensuring psychological wellbeing Endorsing positive environment Emphasising respectful behaviour Upholding harmonious workspace Averting toxic dynamics
	Emotional motivation	Encouraging emotional actions Recognising team emotions Inspiring during stress Extending emotional support Enhancing team morale
Communication practices	Emotional sensitivity	Responding empathetically Calming tense situations Adjusting tone to emotional changes Displaying emotional understanding Providing emotionally driven feedback
	Clear and precise communication	Conveying structured instructions Clarifying expectations Avoiding emotional ambiguity Ensuring consistency
	Inclusion and participation	Inspiring to opine Promoting open dialogue Inviting introverts exhibiting emotional actions Confirming equality in feedback Endorsing participatory decisions

Table 4 addresses Research Objective 3, which explores the role of EI in fostering an effective conflict resolution environment within banking organisations. The themes under this section

include emotion-based recognition of conflict and emotional regulation, and these are further subdivided into detection of emotional fluctuations, interpretation of emotional triggers, empathetic mediation, and negotiation and solution. The insights of the participants are given to demonstrate the ways leaders recognise, perceive and act on emotionally colourful situations when settling workplace disputes. The themes were borrowed from the research conducted by Flores et al. (2018).

Table 4. The role of banking leaders' EI in cultivating an effective conflict resolution environment

Themes	Subthemes	Codes
Emotion-based identification of conflict	Detection of emotional fluctuations	Perceiving emotional changes Identifying rising tension Detecting discomfort signals Recognising emotional withdrawal Detecting frustration Recognising cultural conflicts
	Interpretation of emotional triggers	Recognising reasons for disputes Identifying trigger events Understanding emotional backgrounds Linking behaviour to triggers Mapping emotional growth
	Proactive intervention	Taking early action Avoiding conflict escalation Immediate addressing of issues Initiating early dialogues Observing emotional blockades
Emotional regulation	Emotional management	Helping to calm down Reducing emotional intensity Guiding emotional expression Promoting emotional balance Reducing reactive behaviour
	Empathetic mediation	Mediating with understanding Inspiring open expression Validating feelings of stakeholders Ensuring calm dialogue Establishing emotional balance
	Negotiation and empathetic solution	Guiding mutual agreements Assisting to identify shared goals Organising solution-focused discussion Inspiring to compromise Ensuring clarity

The data structure provides an outline of how the research objectives have been addressed in the study by analysing the interview data collected from banking leaders in Bangladesh. The themes and subthemes presented in the tables capture suitable insights curated from the interviews to understand how banking leaders' EI helps them improve their leadership efficiencies.

3.7. Ethical issues

Ethics play a central role in carrying out a responsible and credible study especially when it includes human subjects. In this study, the main ethical principles of confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent were followed according to the academic guidelines of the British Educational Research Association (2018) or the Economic and Social Research Council (2023).

Informed consent was obtained by providing all the participants with a detailed information sheet including the aim of the study, the kind of involvement they would have in the research, voluntary participation, and the entitlement to withdraw from participation at any time without any repercussions. Approval was obtained from the Auckland University of Technology's Ethics Committee to conduct the interviews with the indicated questions (Ethics Application no. 25/175).

3.8. Researcher positionality

The researcher was a former employee in the banking sector in Bangladesh, where he had first-hand experience as a direct report, observed the challenges faced by the banking leaders. This professional experience created a strong interest in knowing how EI influences leadership practice in this high-pressure setting. This indicates a personal attachment to the industry, which was one of the driving forces behind carrying out this research. It is admitted that the researcher's working experience and contextual knowledge and familiarity with some of the participants could have affected the study. However, the maximum possible effort was directed towards being reflexive and reducing bias during the research process and making the interpretation of the data even-handed and objective.

3.9. Chapter summary

The chapter presented the overview of the philosophical and methodological background of the research study whose key issue was to establish how the concept of EI can be associated with leadership. According to ontological commitment to the fact that there exist different subjective truths and to an epistemological commitment based on interpretivism, the research was designed to generate rich and context-specific information from the participants through their lived experiences. This study used semi-structured interviews of 10 participants as a detailed source of data. The ethical implications, such as informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity of participants in the research, were all adhered to in the study.

Chapter Four: Findings

4.1. Introduction

The chapter presents the findings generated from the thematic analysis of interviews conducted with banking leaders in Bangladesh. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how the data collected from participants responds to the research aim, i.e., to evaluate the influences of EI on leadership practices in the banking sector in Bangladesh, and how it answers the research questions. Guided by the conceptual framework, the analysis is structured around the three core research objectives, each represented through major themes, subthemes and codes developed during the coding process.

The chapter is divided into three main sections, each presenting the findings related to fulfilling the three specific research objectives of the study. In the first section, both leaders' and subordinate' emotions have been evaluated with suitable themes and subthemes. For evaluating leaders' emotions, self-awareness and self-regulation were found to be appropriate, whereas for evaluating subordinates' emotions, social awareness and emotional application appeared to be suitable. Each of these themes was divided into relevant subthemes, e.g., self-awareness included emotional recognition, emotional impacts and self-reflection; and self-regulation included emotional control, stress management and emotional flexibility, which captured how banking leaders drove their own emotions. Social awareness included empathy and perceived emotional cues, understanding social and cultural norms, and social behaviour; and emotional application included emotional judgement, emotional adaptation and emotional decision-making, which helped evaluate how banking leaders responded to subordinates' emotions.

The second section provides an analysis of effective team management strategies influenced by the EI of banking leaders. Further to that, collaboration and cooperation, workplace environment, and inspiration were the subthemes of building a team environment; and emotional sensitivity, clear and precise communication, and inclusion and participation were the subthemes of communication practices. The third section presents the analysis of the role of banking leaders' EI in cultivating an effective conflict resolution environment, using themes such as emotion-based identification of conflict and emotional regulation. Detection of emotional fluctuations, interpretation of emotional triggers and proactive intervention were the subthemes of emotion-based identification of conflict; and emotional management, empathetic mediation, and negotiation and empathetic solution were the subthemes of emotional. The

detailed list of themes, subthemes and codes is presented in Tables 2, 3 and 4 in the previous chapter.

4.2. Critical EI competencies of banking leaders

4.2.1. Leaders' emotions

Leaders' emotions are best understood by the major two themes: self-awareness and self-regulation. Bank leaders notice their internal emotional states, consider how these states influence their behaviour and outcomes, and gradually refine their emotional responses over time, in ways that are sometimes conscious and sometimes less conscious.

4.2.1.1. Self-awareness

4.2.1.1.1. Emotional recognition

Leaders' narratives show a clear capacity for identifying self-feelings, realising emotional shifts, categorising self-emotions, recognising emotional triggers and understanding emotional patterns. This detailed listing indicates careful identification and categorisation of their own emotions. Participant 5, working in treasury, likewise distinguished his feelings, saying,

I often feel a sense of responsibility, especially because my decisions affect the bank's financial position. Stress comes up with tight deadlines, big transactions or market shifts.

By clearly naming these states and their triggers, he demonstrates both emotional recognition and awareness of patterns. Several leaders described how they notice shifts in their emotions across different situations. Participant 4 explained,

At work, I experience a range of emotions depending on what's going on. When I'm helping clients, meeting goals, or managing my team successfully, I feel satisfaction and pride. Stress and frustration are also part of the job, especially when there are tight deadlines, compliance issues, or unexpected delays, but I prioritise tasks and ask for help when needed.

His movement across satisfaction, stress, frustration, anxiety, joy and excitement shows an ability to realise emotional shifts and link them to concrete events. Leaders also made explicit connections between specific triggers and their emotional states. Participant 8 noted that "Stress pops up during busy periods or big projects. Pride shows up when a big client's happy

or we finish something tough.” Here, heavy workload, technical failures and success with clients are clearly recognised as triggers shaping distinct emotions. Participant 9 described a similar pattern in his branch: “Stress and anxiety during busy periods or when targets feel tough. Excitement and joy when we hit our targets.” The anticipation of these reactions indicates an internalised map of emotional causes and regularities.

4.2.1.1.2. Emotional impacts

Emotional impacts capture how leaders understand the influence of emotions on decisions, behaviour, communication and outcomes. Participant 2 clearly linked feelings to decision-making, noting, “Emotional intelligence helps me build trust and work better with my colleagues by understanding their challenges and perspectives. When we understand each other emotionally, we can align our efforts toward the bigger goals.” Here he explicitly describes understanding emotional impacts on decisions and connecting emotions to results. Participant 1 voiced a similar concern in the high-risk banking context, explaining that, “Without EI, I might’ve made faster but short-term decisions. With EI, my decisions are calmer, more thoughtful, and sustainable”, thereby recognising emotional impacts on behaviour, judgement and organisational outcomes. Leaders frequently connected their internal states to the way they communicate. Participant 6 stated,

I notice someone getting stressed or frustrated, I encourage them to share their concerns in a relaxed setting. My response always tries to strike a balance - sometimes, they just need reassurance, while other times, I’ll jump in with a practical solution to help lighten their load.

This shows awareness of identifying emotional impacts on communication process and adjusting expression accordingly. Emotional impacts were also framed in terms of judgement and problem solving. Participant 5 stated that:

Keeping emotions in check is super important in a high stress job like mine. I know that my emotions can influence the team’s mood, so I try to stay calm and collected, no matter what happens.

This gives a clear picture of the connection between emotional influence and self-regulation. The participants appear to know that uncontrolled emotions may affect their judgment and shape the atmosphere, which has a direct impact on their team. This realisation brings to the fore the significance of self-regulation in emotional control to avoid the negativity of what they

do to others, but at the same time accepts the emotional impact of their mood on others. Several leaders also emphasised the cumulative impact of emotional patterns on performance. Participant 6 commented that he sees stress as “It helps me stay focused and organised so I can handle everything that’s on my plate”, directly connecting a typically negative emotion to positive results.

4.2.1.1.3. Self-reflection

Self-reflection emerged strongly in leaders’ accounts as they described systematically reviewing reactions, learning from past behaviour, and seeking scope for emotional growth. Participant 3 openly contrasted his earlier and current practices:

Earlier in my career, I used to get frustrated easily. But over time, I realised that shouting or blaming doesn’t solve anything. Now, if I’m disappointed, I calmly explain what went wrong and how we can do better next time.

This is a clear example of reviewing self-reactions, learning from past behaviour and reflecting on outcomes to develop more constructive emotional responses. Participant 4 similarly stated, “Managing my emotions at work is something I’ve learned through experience”, signalling recognition of growth and deliberate evaluation of his previous responses. Participant 6 reported that when he shared his stress or concerns, “They didn’t see it as a weakness. It actually motivated them to step up and contribute more”, which he presents as evidence that his emotionally open approach is effective, again indicating reflective assessment of outcomes. Here, he acknowledges the presence of frustration and disappointment, but describes an intentional effort to stay calm and manage his reaction before addressing staff.

Leaders also articulated a broader developmental view of emotional competence. Participant 1 remarked that “In the workplace, EI helps me work with my team and manage things better. If I want to grow professionally, I need skills but without EI, it’s hard to make those things work”, thereby framing emotional growth as central to his ongoing professional development.

4.2.1.2. Self-regulation

4.2.1.2.1. Emotional control

Many leaders explicitly linked their role to the need for composed behaviour in front of subordinates. Participant 6, a branch manager, highlighted this when he remarked, “If

something goes wrong, I remind myself that setbacks are just temporary and can be fixed with the right approach. I keep open communication with my team to prevent misunderstandings and keep things clear, which helps reduce frustration.”

Leaders also recognised the potential risks of poor emotional control in a high-stakes sector such as banking. Participant 1 made this link very clear: “If I’m not emotionally intelligent, I won’t be able to handle the team well, and that can lead to negligence, which in banking is considered a serious crime.” His comment suggests that unchecked anger, stress or frustration might impair supervision, leading to operational negligence. Consequently, he positions emotional control as a professional obligation, not merely a personal preference. The fear of negligence encourages him to monitor and regulate his inner states, showing how emotional control is integrated into his ethical understanding of leadership.

4.2.1.2.2. Stress management

Participants first described the sources and intensity of stress in their roles. Participant 6, a branch manager, highlighted the breadth of his responsibilities, explaining that “meeting financial targets, managing the team, and dealing with customer issues can be intense”. Despite this, he reframed pressure as something functional. In his perception of stress as an organisational/focusing factor and not a negative one, he portrays a cognitive approach to addressing the work pressure and keeping on track. Leaders frequently described specific techniques they use to regulate their stress levels. Participant 5 gave a detailed account of such strategies, stating,

It is very important to have control over emotions in a stressful job as I do. I understand that my feelings may have an impact on the mood of a team, and thus I tend to remain calm and collected regardless of the situation.

These comments directly illustrate the adoption of stress relief techniques and show how short pauses, breathing exercises and micro breaks are integrated into his daily routine to prevent impulsive reactions and emotional exhaustion. Participant 4 described a similarly structured approach to managing pressure. He acknowledged that,

When it comes to challenging emotions like stress, depression or anxiety, I try to be really attentive. Often, people won’t come out and directly say they’re struggling, but I can usually spot it in their body language, tone or behaviour.

He then outlined several methods, including taking breaks when overwhelmed, reframing difficult encounters and practising self-care: “When things get overwhelming, I take a short break to clear my head... I make sure to take breaks throughout the day, whether it’s for a walk, some breathing exercises, or just a moment to recharge.” Participant 9 illustrated this when describing Ramadan, a religious fasting season,

For instance, during Ramadan, transaction volumes go through the roof, and the team can get really tired. I try to lighten the mood by reminding them that we’re all in it together. Sometimes, I’ll arrange for some snacks or tea, just to bring a smile to their faces and show them I appreciate their hard work.

Leaders frequently pointed out that, although they do feel stress or anxiety, they attempt to frame these emotions carefully when communicating with their teams. Participant 5 described this balance: “Stress is a part of the job too, especially when deadlines are tight or when unexpected challenges pop up. But I try to look at those stressful moments as opportunities to learn and adapt.” This account shows a sophisticated form of emotional control in which the leader differentiates between internal experience and external expression. By choosing calm, constructive language and sometimes restricting negative conversations to private settings, he contains the spread of his own stress and irritation. These behaviours show leaders using stress management tactics not only to stabilise themselves but to sustain collective energy and prevent burnout among subordinates.

4.2.1.2.3. Emotional flexibility

A core aspect of emotional flexibility is the ability to vary emotional expression depending on context and audience. Participant 5, a treasury officer who also leads a team, offered a clear example of this calibration. He explained:

I try to look at challenges with a different perspective, seeing them as opportunities to learn rather than as setbacks. And when I have to give constructive feedback, I make sure it’s done respectfully and in a way that helps the team improve.

Here he adapts his behaviour to the situation by acknowledging his stress but adjusting his tone to remain focused. Emotional flexibility extends to how leaders interpret and respond to their own emotions. Participant 6 noted that although he feels stress and a strong sense of responsibility, he chooses to see stress as something that “keeps me on my toes and really challenges me as a leader”, transforming a potentially negative state into a stimulus for growth. Participant 8 described using reframing problems as a technique, choosing to look at tough

situations as learning opportunities. These examples show that leaders not only express emotions differently across contexts but also reinterpret them internally, which makes it easier to adopt constructive emotional approaches in rapidly changing conditions.

Finally, emotional flexibility is reflected in leaders' willingness to share vulnerability when it is likely to build trust, and to contain it when it might unsettle others. Participant 2 explained that he does express emotions but tries to keep them balanced and professional, sharing appreciation and pride openly while presenting concerns in a measured tone. Participant 5 encouraged his team to talk about how they feel, trust starts with open communication, yet he remains careful not to overwhelm them with his own anxiety.

4.2.1. Subordinates' emotions

Awareness of subordinates' emotions can be captured effectively through two major themes, social awareness and emotional application. Bank leaders notice the emotions of their subordinates by applying their social awareness and emotional availability, competencies which help them empathise with their subordinates to create a more harmonious and pleasant workplace environment.

4.2.2.1. Social awareness

4.2.2.1.1. Empathy and perceived emotional cues

Leaders often described an ability to sense when team members are under pressure, even before they explicitly say so. Participant 5 remarked,

I can usually tell how they're feeling based on their body language or the tone of their voice. In meetings, I encourage everyone to express how they feel, and I make sure to offer empathy and practical help when needed.

Here he moves from simply sensing tension to responding to emotional cues by inviting people to speak and then offering support. Participant 6 similarly noted that when he shared his own emotions, his team also opened up:

When I shared my stress or concerns, they saw that I was committed to overcoming challenges, just like they were. It helped strengthen our relationships, and they in turn felt more comfortable sharing their own concerns.

His account shows that he recognises the emotional need for openness and uses his own disclosure to meet that need. Understanding hidden feelings is also important, as many subordinates do not state their worries directly. Participant 3 explained that he tries to maintain a friendly and family-like vibe so that colleagues feel able to talk, but he also watches for subtle changes. He said he does not want a “strict, robotic environment where people are afraid to talk to their boss”, and prefers that his team see him “as more of an older brother figure than just their manager”. This persona enables him to notice when someone is unusually withdrawn and to ask gently what is wrong.

At the same time, he emphasised fairness and respect when resolving conflicts, saying, “I make sure that I treat everyone the same, and if someone disagrees with me or isn’t happy with a decision, I take the time to listen to them.” This shows balancing empathy with clear standards: he recognises feelings and responds to emotional cues, but also maintains performance and discipline.

4.2.2.1.2. Understanding social and cultural norms

Understanding social and cultural norms illustrates how leaders recognise and work with the social and cultural context of their subordinates, aligning with the codes of respecting cultural differences, acknowledging cultural beliefs, adapting to cultural norms, and adjusting to cultural fits. Though the participants were clear when describing their approach to treating staff as family, paying attention, and not embarrassing them publicly, the comments that they demonstrated that they understood emotional expression in the context of Bangladeshi social norms. All these behaviours reflect respect hierarchy and collectivist values.

Respectful handling of disagreement and mistakes was another way in which leaders acknowledged cultural expectations of dignity. Participant 7 explicitly stated that,

I always try to stay neutral and avoid taking sides, which helps maintain objectivity.
Everyone gets an equal opportunity to voice their concerns, which makes them feel respected and ensures no one feels dismissed.

This choice to handle criticism privately rather than publicly reflects an understanding that open humiliation would be culturally inappropriate and could damage long-term relationships. It illustrates respecting cultural differences in communication style and demonstrates sensitivity to norms around honour and respect. Leaders also indicated that they attend to the

broader social realities of their staff, which can be seen as a form of acknowledging cultural beliefs and life contexts. Participant 3 noted when he talks with his team that,

I approach each situation with an open mind, keeping things balanced and not rushing to judgment. I understand that emotions can play a big part in conflicts, so I try to be sensitive to everyone's feelings and ensure that I address any underlying emotional issues, not just the professional ones. It's about making sure the resolution is truly beneficial for everyone involved.

In doing so, he recognises that, in the local context, personal and professional spheres are closely intertwined and that acknowledging these personal dimensions is important for trust. Leaders' emphasis on training and workshops around EI can also be interpreted as an attempt to integrate evolving organisational expectations with existing cultural norms. Participant 2 suggested that organisations should arrange training sessions, workshops and regular team-building activities to help staff understand emotions and work better together. Participant 9 proposed open discussions so employees feel comfortable sharing feelings and challenges. In promoting these practices, leaders are gently shifting norms towards more explicit emotional communication, while still operating within a framework of respect, privacy and hierarchy that is culturally familiar.

4.2.2.1.3. Social behaviour

Social behaviour is the capability of the leaders to notice and analyse the slightest social signals, their perception of group processes and emotional changes within their teams. This skill can be useful in the management of emotional temperatures at the workplace to achieve mutually harmonious and peaceful interactions and prevent the development of conflicts prior to their escalation. Participant 4 mentioned the significance of observing the patterns of interaction in his team in the following words, "We all work together, solve problems, share ideas and support each other. I make sure to offer regular feedback, praise and guidance so everyone feels valued and inspired."

This reveals how he is keen on the dynamics of a team and observes the dynamics between the team members to point out any changes that could be a sign of an underlying problem. On a similar note, Participant 3 has explained how he would monitor the behaviour of his team and make amends when he notices anything:

I would not get annoyed when team members would take a coffee or chat to their colleagues, but I would notice when one of them would be abnormally quiet, and it would serve as an indicator of withdrawal or separation.

This indicates that the leader is attentive to subtle changes in the behaviour of his team members, which suggests that he is well aware of the changes in interactions that signal concerns in the workplace situation. With such observations of unusual withdrawal of subordinates, leaders can exhibit a proactive approach by leveraging on EI capabilities to address potential issues before they trigger further.

4.2.2.2. Emotional application

4.2.2.2.1. Emotional judgement

Emotional judgment is crucial in the way leaders evaluate and control their emotional demonstrations in leadership contexts, particularly in dealing with subordinates. This competency enables leaders to balance their feelings well, adjust in response to the situation to ensure that their emotional reactions are appropriate to the situation being addressed. Emotional judgement helps leaders to understand the suitability of their own emotional responses and affects their decision-making, as well as the emotional environment of their teams.

Participant 6 provided a very good example of evaluating emotional appropriateness, “Yes, I do express my emotions, but I try to keep it balanced and professional. I think sharing emotions like appreciation, pride or encouragement can really help to build stronger relationships.” This is an indication of how he considers when and how much emotion to express, ensuring that his emotional reaction does not interfere with his own decision-making or cloud his judgment. He understands the significance of emotional exposure and makes prudent choices on the level of emotional exposure in various situations.

In the same way, Participant 5 also mentioned the situation in which emotional judgment plays a role in making a critical decision, “When I’m feeling stressed or anxious, I try to communicate it calmly and constructively, ensuring it does not negatively impact my own actions or decisions.” In this particular case, Participant 5 was able to have an insight that he felt frustrated but articulating such feelings may have disrupted his personal clarity and decision-making. The

fact that he is able to control his emotions and reluctance to express them externally further proves that his emotional responses do not adversely affect his productivity and judgment.

Emotional judgment is also the process of judging the emotional context and comprehending the consequences of emotions in making decisions. Participant 2 noted that empathy is an essential element in decision-making, “The role of emotional intelligence is critical in decision-making, as without empathy or consideration of these factors, one may not get the desired outcome when making decisions.” By weighing up the emotional implications of his decisions, he makes sure that he considers the emotional responses of other people, and this affects the consequences and success of his decisions.

4.2.2.2.2. Emotional adaptation

Emotional adaptation is a very crucial skill of leadership that helps leaders to vary their behaviours, communication and attitudes depending on the emotional situation they are addressing. It is also suitable in stressful settings such as the banking sector, where the emotional atmosphere may change rapidly, and a leader needs to be reactive to changes to protect team unity and efficiency. Participant 7 talked about his changes in leadership style depending on the members of the team,

Working with a new or less experienced person, I would give them more instructions, ensuring they feel supported. However, with my senior employees, I provide them with a higher degree of space to make independent decisions, believing that they are aware of what they are doing.

This explains the way he tailors his leadership style depending on the emotional maturity and level of experience of the team members. Equally, Participant 8 thought about how he would balance being emotionally sensitive and making decisions,

When I am highly stressed, I make a point to recognise my stress and take steps to manage it effectively. During calmer times, I feel more comfortable providing direct feedback, as I find it is easier to process and act upon in such moments.

In this case, his capacity to adjust his communication according to the emotional situation of his team members ensures that his feedback will always be clearly understood. Participant 4 also admitted the importance of emotional exposure changes:

I also figured out that in some other instances, it would be more suitable to keep my anger in and especially when the emotions are already elevated. I am also aware that being open-minded in dealing with my problems makes me look at them with a balanced mind and view them in a more constructive way.

This shows that he knows when to suppress his feelings and when it is possible to reveal them to make the surroundings conducive. Participant 5 had an interesting insight:

I sometimes need to change my leadership style depending on the circumstances. When one of the team members is not motivated, I will adjust to this by offering him or her greater personal encouragement. When a person is overenthusiastic to make himself prove anything, I would adjust by reminding him/her to take his/her time and be critical of his/her thoughts.

This brings out the adaptability of his emotions, enabling him to deal with various personalities and emotional reactions in order to keep the whole team on track.

4.2.2.2.3. Emotional decision-making

One of the significant leadership competencies that can assist leaders in the banking sector is to include emotional awareness in their decision-making processes. Leaders have to know the emotional background of decisions they take and consider emotional and logical factors to make balanced decisions. The skill is particularly essential in an organisation whose stakes are high, like a bank, where the decisions undertaken not only impact the organisation but also the employees and clients. Participant 1 pointed out that decisions are made with the help of EI, “You have to think of the consequences when you make decisions. What will this effect entail for the individuals? How will it affect the team or the client? Lack of empathy can cause your decisions to backfire.”

Here, the participant stresses the role of empathy in consideration of the emotional implications of decisions, with the aim that the effects of decisions may not be purely pegged on rationality but also on the human element. Decision-making in the banking industry, in the case of Participant 7, is founded on both emotional and logical reasoning, “The emotional intelligence helps me to stay calm and concentrate on what matters, have the team concentrate and build confidence when the market is unpredictable, as it is in times such as now.” This points to the fact that EI does not just help leaders manage their emotions, but also helps in integrating the

team even when things get out of control. Participant 5 also elaborated on the need to strike a balance between emotions and logic, “When a challenging decision needs to be made, I strive to keep in mind morale and make objective and non-disrespectful decisions, considering the workload and stress levels of all people.” In this instance, the leader is an example of a duality of balancing the rationality with emotional considerations.

4.3. Effective team management strategies facilitated with EI of banking leaders

How leaders’ EI competencies can be used in facilitating effective team management strategies can be understood by two major themes building team environment and communication practices. Bank leaders identify the emotional states of their subordinates and connect their own emotions with them, to employ effective team management strategies which can bring positive results for the organisation.

4.3.1. Building a team environment

4.3.1.1. Collaboration and cooperation

Collaboration and cooperation dwell on the importance of EI in enhancing teamwork and encouraging collaborative activities in a team. Banking leaders use EI to motivate people to work together, make tasks relevant to emotional knowledge, and maintain the habits of collaboration by providing understanding and support. Some of the ways that different leaders use EI to facilitate cooperation within their teams are highlighted below. According to Participant 9, cooperation is paramount in a high-pressure setting such as banking.

I would also encourage my team to help one another, particularly in difficult moments. It gives them a feeling of togetherness once they see each other assisting, and this makes them even more motivated towards reaching our objectives.

This statement draws attention to the fact that the leader employs emotional understanding in order to develop a culture of teamwork, so that the members of the team are not in a vacuum but rather serve common goals. Participant 2 also stressed emotional comprehension of matching the group objectives:

I ensure that my team is aware not only of the professional objectives alone, but also of the emotional dynamics involved. In case they are stressed, I would attempt to relieve them in order to be more compatible in terms of goal alignment.

This indicates that EI assists in balancing emotional and professional objectives, which creates a smooth path towards the realisation of the objectives of the team. Equally, Participant 4 said, “I can intervene by noticing when the team is experiencing stress or being overwhelmed and help them through it by reminding them of the bigger picture and that we are all in it together.” This is indicative of how an appreciation of the mutuality of emotional states enables leaders to facilitate group action, particularly during high-stress situations, during which mutually shared emotional comprehension leads to morale and encourages individuals to work together. As well, Participant 3 talked about the importance of supporting the concept of teamwork regularly,

I always remember to recognise the efforts of the team in group activities. I compliment them when they do a good job as a team. It strengthens the positive behaviour, and they are more open to working on new projects.

The culture of collective success breeds a culture of cooperation, in which emotional recognition builds team unity. Participant 3 explained how he would monitor the behaviour of his team and make amends when he notices anything:

I would not get annoyed when team members would take a coffee or chat to their colleagues, but I would notice when one of them would be abnormally quiet, and it would serve as an indicator of withdrawal or separation.

His emphasis on withdrawal shows his vulnerability to the alterations in the social structure of the team, as he employs this signal to resolve the problems prior to their influence on the unity of the group. In his comment, participant 6 acknowledged the effect of positive emotions on teamwork: "When I said I was proud, or I felt a sense of appreciation, the response was excellent. They felt appreciated, and this gave them morale, and they made extra efforts." He did not just observe the response of each individual but knew the way that positive feelings were diffused through the group, helping to enhance the cohesion of the team.

4.3.1.2. Workplace environment

The workplace environment in the context of building a team environment concerns the issues of psychological well-being, fostering a positive environment, respectful behaviour and toxic dynamics prevention. Leaders are specifically important because they help to provide a

favourable environment in which employees feel appreciated and secure, which results in the success and unity of the team. Participant 2 was concerned with the role of EI in creating a healthy working environment,

When we have a high degree of emotional awareness, it allows us to know how the other person is feeling, whether they are stressed, motivated or possibly distracted. Discovering such things enables us to make more effective decisions as a team, have a good working atmosphere, and keep everyone informed.

Such awareness of the subjective condition in the team is essential in maintaining the psychological state of affairs since the leader should be able to adjust his or her strategy to make sure that everyone is active and motivated. Participant 5 placed emphasis on the importance of EI in encouraging a positive environment,

I always acknowledge the efforts of the people. Even minor victories are worth recognition, and that will go a long way in establishing a good culture. Rewarding the achievements helps to maintain a positive environment in which the employees will feel appreciated.

It is a way of not only enhancing morale but also creating a workplace that makes individuals feel encouraged to do whatever they can to produce their best work. Participant 4 emphasised the importance of respectful behaviour as he said,

I ensure to always deal with any disrespectful behaviour as soon as it comes. This is imperative in ensuring that all people feel respected regardless of their status. Once that is in place, the entire team works in a better way.

Respect is a culture that should be upheld by the team, and this will be the basis of a harmonious workspace. Leaders need to lead by example and resolve any lack of respect immediately to make sure that all work under a positive atmosphere.

4.3.1.3. Emotional motivation

Emotional motivation is caused by emotions like happiness, fear, love, pride or anger. It affects behaviour by compelling people to pursue pleasure, or to fulfil emotional needs instead of logical or rational aspirations. Emotional motivation is important in establishing a team environment of support through encouraging emotional behaviours, identifying team feelings,

motivating in times of stress, proffering emotional support, and improving team spirit. The practices are necessary to ensure that the atmosphere of motivation, appreciation and connection between team members is created. These are tips on how leaders working in the banking industry use emotional motivation to create a positive working atmosphere. Participant 4 spoke about the necessity to motivate the members of the team to act emotionally, “I make sure that my team knows how crucial it is to be in a positive emotional state, especially in difficult moments. People will perform highly and above when they are emotionally involved.” This shows that by inspiring team members emotionally, it is possible to raise their commitment and performance levels, which confirms the importance of leaders appreciating and using emotional dynamics to achieve success.

Another important ingredient of emotional motivation is the identification of team emotions. Participant 2 went on to describe the fact that,

I am ever attentive to the mood of my team. When I detect cases of stress or exhaustion, I counter them as soon as possible. I would understand my own emotions so that I can modify my leadership style to provide them with the necessary support.

This method of identifying emotions ensures that leaders are aware of the emotional situation in the team, a fact that will assist them in maintaining the required support and avoid burnout. Participant 9 related an experience of how he has motivated his team in a very stressful situation,

A few months ago, we had a huge flood of loan applications, and the team was getting overwhelmed. I divided them into small groups and worked with them. This not only assisted in lessening their workload but also boosted their morale and saw them through the stress.

The given example reflects the proactive attitude of the leader toward motivating the team, his EI in dividing tasks, introducing cooperation, and providing direct assistance during stressful periods.

4.3.2. Communication practices

4.3.2.1. Emotional sensitivity

Communication practices that include emotional sensitivity will help leaders control emotional dynamics in teams. This includes the ability to react with empathy, defusing stressful moments, tone-switching to various emotional states, expressing emotional sensitivity, and delivering responses that are emotionally driven. When leaders practise them well, it is possible to improve communication and conflict management, and have a good, productive, working environment. Participant 5 contemplated the necessity of responding in an empathic way, as well as sharing, saying,

I attempt to remain rational and empathetic. I always recognise the merits of the team when they perform well, and applaud their success. I establish a positive atmosphere and hear the concerns of all people when we are in a stressful situation.

This emphasises the fact that emotionally sensitive responses can promote free communication, making team members feel heard and supported. Also, it is important to de-escalate stressful circumstances to ensure a peaceful workplace. Participant 4 gave this explanation, “When there is any stress or tension, then I can step in right away and assure everyone that we are all there. I attempt to establish a relaxed environment so that we can reorient on the task at hand.”

His style is an example of how leaders can defuse emotional tension to provide employees with a chance to focus on solutions instead of being overwhelmed by negative feelings. The other important aspect of emotional sensitivity is to adjust the tone to variations in emotion. Participant 6 stated that he observed that when a person gets frustrated, they will change their tone. “I understand that my voice may either contribute to calming down the situation or worsen it, and I attempt to be aware of that.” This shows how leaders should be conscious of emotional swings and change their communication approach to match the emotional environment of the team to avoid unnecessary conflict.

4.3.2.2. Clear and precise communication

Clarity and accuracy of communication are two of the pillars of effective leadership, especially in high-stress situations such as banking. This is vital in communicating instructions, expectations and information in clear ways, so that misunderstandings can be reduced and the efficiency of the team can be improved. It incorporates the communication of structured

instructions, the clarification of expectations, the absence of emotional vagueness, and consistency. Delivery of systematic patterns is a critical element in effective communication.

Participant 3 talked about the importance of dividing tasks into small steps that are easy to understand, “When I give instructions, I make sure that they are clear and well-structured. I also divide big jobs into smaller stages to ensure that everybody understands what is required.” This shows the necessity to make sure that team members are aware of which steps need to be taken in order to accomplish their work. Through giving clear instructions in a structured format, leaders reduce the possibility of errors, which is critical to ensure efficiency within a banking institution that is very fast-paced. On the same note, setting expectations is important in aligning the goals of the team to organisational goals. Participant 6 said,

I ensure that I make it clear to each individual what is expected of them, especially when there are new tasks or projects. In this manner, there are no misunderstandings, and everybody is at the same level. Not only is setting expectations vital in making each member of the team aware of what is being expected of them, but it also makes the members feel safe in their positions.

When expectations are clearly spelt out, team members are in a better position to achieve their objectives and help in the general success of the organisation. Another important aspect of communication is that it needs to be clear and precise to avoid emotional ambiguity. EI, especially via self-awareness, empathy and social skills, is closely related to the effective communication of instructions. High-EI leaders are in a better position to understand the emotional status and understanding of the emotions of team members and therefore are able to deliver messages in a clear and sensitive manner. This makes sure that instructions are not just heard but are also received well and hence there is less misunderstanding and resistance. Communication that is emotionally intelligent creates an atmosphere of trust, where employees contribute feedback, and where a teamwork mood prevails and employees feel respected and are not afraid to perform their duties correctly. Participant 5 described the way he makes sure that his messages are aligned with his emotional tone,

I always make sure that when communicating, I do not have mixed messages. In cases where I am providing feedback or instructions, I make sure that whatever I say goes with my tone, and there is no possibility of being misunderstood.

4.3.2.3. Inclusion and participation

The practices of communication play a critical role in developing a workplace atmosphere in which the members of the team feel understood, encouraged, and identify with the objectives of the organisation. Banking leaders need to be able to show effective communication abilities, and be clear and well-informed to make sure staff members are informed, emotionally stable and motivated. One of the bases of communication that enhances efficiency in organisations is clarifying expectations. Participant 6 said, “I always strive to communicate expectations of individual team members, particularly where there is a new task or project.” Leaders set clear expectations, hence giving team members a road map of success that enhances their confidence and motivation. In the absence of clear expectations, employees may not understand what they should or should not do, and this may cause stress and inefficiencies. Participant 5 elaborated, in a scenario of avoiding emotional ambiguity, that when communicating, he ensures that his emotional tone is consistent with whatever he is saying, “I also understand that constructive feedback should be given critically and will not [always] go down well.” This point emphasises the significance of matching feelings with words in order to avoid misunderstanding. Leaders need to be aware of the effects of their emotional tone on the message. A manager can give constructive feedback, yet at the same time, they can be frustrated or impatient and send it in a way that will cause the team to be demotivated or scared.

4.4. Role of EI for banking leaders in cultivating a conflict resolution environment

Leaders’ EI competencies can be critical in cultivating an effective conflict resolution environment in the workplace. In this connection, the two most appropriate themes applicable here are emotion-based identification of conflict and emotional regulation, which can help banking leaders recognise conflict situations successfully and address them effectively.

4.4.1. Emotion-based identification of conflict

4.4.1.1. Detection of emotional fluctuations

Banking leaders should be capable of recognising emotional shifts, increasing tension, signs of discomfort and emotional withdrawal, frustration or even cultural differences. When leaders can identify these emotional changes correctly, they can intervene beforehand and resolve conflicts, avoiding the creation of a toxic environment. Participant 9 explained that it is necessary to see emotional changes in order to manage the situation in a team. This capacity of

sensitive detection of emotional changes enables leaders to respond faster, addressing any conflicts which are likely to arise. In the same way, another important element of emotional detection is the detection of increasing tension. Participant 5 explained that,

Whenever I sense that the atmosphere is becoming tense, I take a moment to assess whether there are any underlying issues, such as heavy workloads, tight deadlines, or personal challenges that might be making my team uncomfortable. It's about maintaining awareness of the overall mood in the room.

His active style of thinking demonstrates how the ability to identify the first signs of tension allows leaders to act and prevent the situation from deteriorating, which will allow members of the team to feel strong and understood. It is also important to detect indicators of an uncomfortable working environment to ensure that the working environment is positive. Participant 2 elaborated that,

I would listen when others begin to withdraw or appear to be uncomfortable. Usually, that is an indication of something that needs to be taken care of; it could be work-related or a personal disagreement.

This shows how one should be sensitive to any time team members or the leader show signs of discomfort, since such are usually signs of unresolved emotional tensions between the leader, team members or even colleagues. Unless these emotional conflicts are addressed, they may affect individual performance and team dynamics negatively. Tension can be caused by differences in expectations, misunderstandings or even personal problems, but it is always important to identify them at the initial stage to ensure that they do not develop and influence the overall productivity and morale.

4.4.1.2. Interpretation of emotional triggers

Interpreting emotional triggers is a critical sub-topic in Emotion-based Identification of Conflict because it helps leaders to be aware of the issues behind the conflict and how to deal with emotionally charged situations. By understanding the causes of conflicts, the identification of trigger events, the emotional background, and the connection of behaviour to trigger events, leaders can both avoid the further escalation of conflicts and respond more proactively to the issues. Participant 5 explained the importance of understanding causes of conflict as a way of resolving a conflict situation,

When a conflict occurs, I would first seek to understand why it occurred. Is it personal problems, stress at work, or is it because of something else? Determining the cause will enable me to solve the actual cause and not the symptoms.

His style explains how understanding the causes of conflicts enables leaders to make relevant decisions to address the problem and avoid a repeat of the same. Effective conflict resolution depends on how emotional triggers are interpreted, since the leaders are able to see the root causes of conflicts. As participant 10 described, “In case there is a conflict, I would first want to know the reason why it took place. Is it something personal, work pressure, or is it due to something else?” This shows the need to find emotional triggers, as this enables leaders to deal with the underlying causes of the conflict and not the symptoms. Knowing such triggers, leaders will be able to be more considerate and understanding in their solutions to avoid further problems.

Learning about emotional backgrounds is also significant in understanding emotional triggering. Participant 3 also brought up the idea of personal histories or external stressors affecting the responses, “Sometimes, it is not only the current circumstances that cause emotional responses. Knowing the emotional background of a person will make me deal with the situation with more empathy and give them more effective solutions.” The other skill required by leaders is the connection of behaviour to triggers. Participant 6 said,

Whenever it happens to me that one of my team members is acting out of character, I attempt to find out whether it is as a result of a major conflict, like a disagreement at a past meeting or a conflict of opinions on one of the projects. Indicatively, in the case that two team members had a heated argument on how to go about a task, this can be displayed as tension or avoidance of one of them in future interactions. Understanding the emotional nature of such conflicts, I will be able to approach the matter more narrowly and provide assistance to overcome the existing conflict.

This shows that leaders can identify the emotional triggers that lead to conflicts using behavioural cues, which can be used to make better interventions.

4.4.1.3. Proactive intervention

One of the aspects of emotion-based identification of conflict is proactive intervention, which aids leaders in solving the possible problems before they grow out of control. Leaders are able to control emotional situations and have a harmonious working environment through early actions, preventing the escalation of conflict, and early dialogues. This plays a critical role in solving conflict, since it is concerned with the necessity of dealing with the issues at the earliest possible time. Participant 7 said about the importance of making early steps,

When I notice a problem that is about to occur, I act instantly. This may translate to talking to the member of staff in question or even reallocating the workload to lessen the pressure. I believe that early intervention is useful in ensuring that conflicts do not escalate.

This is a proactive way of ensuring that problems are addressed before getting momentum, the team stays focused towards their objectives, and the work environment is positive. Along with early intervention, it is important to address the problem as soon as it occurs to avoid subsequent complications. Participant 3 mentioned that,

When there are conflicts, I do not leave them to linger. I ensure that I deal with the problem immediately. This straightforward method sees to it that all are aware of what to expect and any misunderstandings are resolved promptly.

These situations will always be addressed effectively when they arise and therefore do not develop, and the leader will be able to control their emotions to help the team stick to its mission. Early discussions are also another tool to employ proactive intervention. Participant 4 clarified, "I have learned that early introduction of the open conversations with the team members can clear the air. In the event of a dispute or conflict, I ensure that we discuss it as early as possible." Early occurrence of such dialogues holds the doors of communication open, and the emotions will not accumulate. This will help future conflicts be solved effectively, and they will not be allowed to develop into more serious issues.

4.4.2. Emotional regulation and conflict resolution

4.4.2.1. Emotional management during conflict

The role of emotional management in emotional regulation is essential because it provides the leader with the instruments that help to cope with conflict and emotional aspects in their team.

Leaders can prevent conflicts and work towards a more collaborative, productive working environment effectively by assisting in calming down individuals, reducing emotional intensity, directing emotional expression, encouraging emotional balance, and reducing reactive behaviour. Participant 6 talked about the necessity of assisting in calming down the members of the team during contentious moments,

When the tension in the team grows, I ensure that I intervene in a calm manner. I instruct people to take a deep breath and focus. In other cases, all one needs to do is provide assurance, and the situation will be alleviated.

This illustrates the effectiveness of emotional regulation skills, including the provision of reassurance, in keeping the team in a composed state and avoiding the escalation of conflict. Leaders also need to be instrumental in suppressing emotional reactions so that the team is not distracted by emotional upsets or frustration with the task at hand, but focuses on solving the problems. Participant 2 also explained how he concentrates on bringing down the intensity of emotions in his team,

When a situation begins to get heated, I make it a priority to cool down the emotional temperature. I urge them to make a break, and I urge the people to look at the big picture. This aids in taking the discussion back to a more productive level.

Managers show leadership by taking the initiative to reduce the emotional intensity so that their team members can experience emotions more healthily, making them less hasty in decision-making, and a more thoughtful and balanced approach can be used to resolve conflicts. Emotional expression is also an important emotion management strategy that should be guided. Participant 5 shared that when team members become frustrated or angry,

I attempt to steer them in such a way that they can release their concerns, but not in a manner that will lead to other relationships with other people. I will advise them to be constructive when they are conveying their feelings in a way that they are comprehended without bringing harm to others.

This is a good example of how leaders guide team members to use their feelings to have a constructive conversation, which is the key to effective conflict resolution and a healthy team climate.

4.4.2.2. Empathetic mediation

Empathetic mediation is a significant part of emotional regulation, which enables leaders to handle conflicts and emotionally coloured situations with insight and tolerance. Empathetic mediation is to mediate with understanding, motivate the expression, justify the feelings, maintain a cool conversation, and balance emotions. These EI habits assist leaders in running their teams when there is confrontation, by creating emotional knowledge, decreasing tensions, and guaranteeing effective communication. Participant 3 emphasised the role of mediating with understanding, “In case of conflict, I do not simply listen to what the person is saying; I listen to the way they feel. The knowledge of why somebody is upset enables me to rectify the actual problems.”

This shows how empathy influences the mediation process, where one needs to learn the emotions and not only the superficial issue of conflict resolution. Another vital element of empathetic mediation is inspiring the ability to be candid. Participant 2 said,

I empower my team by encouraging them to talk frankly about themselves and impact their mood, especially in conflict situations. Whenever individuals listen, it becomes easier to get beyond the tension and come up with a solution.

Leaders can achieve this by providing a platform on which team members can share their emotions without being subjected to judgment; this will help to make the conflict less emotional. Participant 7 mentioned the importance of justifying the emotions of stakeholders when mediation is involved,

It is also important to recognise the feelings of everyone, and it is more so when tempers are soaring. Whenever individuals are made to feel valid, they will listen to one another and work together to reach a solution.

This brings out the value of ensuring team members feel understood and honoured, which should ensure more constructive and understanding conflict management. Empathetic mediation is an important aspect of effective conflict resolution, since it entails the ability to know the emotional background of everyone. Participant 10 pointed out that, “It is important to be mindful of how what you are saying or how you are saying it, as it will impact people, especially if you say something that might easily offend them.” This demonstrates the need to identify emotional indicators to prevent the escalation of conflict.

A major measure to ensure that conflicts do not escalate is to ensure that discussions are conducted calmly. Participant 4 clarified that this is because, “When the emotions are high, I ensure that the conversation is calm and respectful. I facilitate the conversation by addressing the facts at hand and allowing everybody to talk without interruption.” Leaders can avoid emotional eruptions by sustaining a cool voice and a well-organised conversation; this will help them to have a productive conversation by making sure that everyone speaks out.

4.4.2.3. Negotiation and empathetic solutions

Negotiation and empathetic solutions are an important sub-theme of emotional regulation, which deals with the skills of the leader to lead the team to an agreement with each other without being emotionally insensitive. Leaders can encourage an open, solution-oriented attitude to conflict resolution by encouraging mutual direction and agreements, participating in finding common objectives, structuring solution-oriented conversations, motivating to compromise, and maintaining clarity. Participant 7 provided his experience with how mutual agreement mediation is essential in conflict resolution,

When the conflict occurs, I make sure that the interests of all parties are taken into account. I lead the team to arrive at a compromise so that we enjoy the benefits of a win-win situation, even when it is a compromise.

This emphasises the need to encourage such negotiations to yield agreements that are mutually beneficial to all parties, and that is important in keeping the team harmonious. Conflict resolution requires negotiation and understanding solutions that will balance divergent interests and reach a solution that everyone will agree upon. Participant 10 also pointed out that when conflict arises, “I ensure that the interests of every party are taken into consideration, and this is a sign that I need to consider the views of everyone during negotiations.” This is not only a way of building understanding, but also promoting cooperation and compromise. By choosing to benefit the team, leaders can also steer it to successful, emotionally intelligent solutions, to provide a team spirit, where respect and strong relations are upheld in the workplace. Another important aspect in effective conflict resolution is to help in the process of finding common ground. Participant 3 said,

I always begin by reminding the team about our shared goals. Being caught up in disagreements is easy; once we look at the bigger picture, the solutions are easy to come up with, and everyone can agree on them.

Focusing on the common goals, leaders will be able to minimise the emotional tension and encourage teamwork, thereby making the resolution of conflict more effective. In the same vein, it is important to arrange solution-oriented talks to keep in mind a progressive manner of negotiation. Participant 5 stated,

I would rather avoid focusing on the issue, so I would attempt to direct the discussion to the possible solutions. The notion that we should be thinking about what we can do to correct the situation instead of what has gone amiss enables all of us to feel included in the process and keeps our emotions in check.

This will make the discussions constructive, and smooth out the emotional nature that comes with conflict resolution, thereby making the conversation lean towards solutions on the ground.

4.5. Chapter summary

The findings of the research have been presented in this chapter, which is laid out under three major sections based on the specific research objectives of the study. First, through discussion under themes and sub-themes, the findings highlight the critical EI competencies of banking leaders of Bangladesh; second, the ways they leverage these competencies in utilising effective team management strategies; and, third, how they facilitate conflict resolution in the work environment. The essence of the findings indicates that EI competencies have crucial impacts on how banking leaders in Bangladesh manage their subordinates and create positive workplace environments for them.

Chapter Five: Discussion

5.1. Introduction

The chapter discusses the results of the study based on the research questions and existing literature on EI and leadership in the banking industry in Bangladesh. The discussion starts with Research Question 1, the most significant EI competencies of banking leaders. The findings, especially self-awareness, emotional control and empathy, are discussed and related to current EI models and to previous empirical research.

Next, Research Question 2 is discussed, and this explores the role of emotionally intelligent practices of leadership in managing a team successfully, particularly by means of communication, trust building and creating a positive work environment. Finally, Research Question 3 investigates the relevance of EI in improving conflict resolution in banking organisations. The study critically assesses the application of emotional awareness and regulation by leaders to understand and solve conflicts in the workplace.

5.2. Critical EI competencies of banking leaders

Research Question 1 was about finding the key EI skills of leaders in the banks of Bangladesh. Shown in the results in Table 3 (see p. 57), these competencies relate to the self-management of emotions of leaders and their skills at becoming aware of the emotional situation of subordinates and addressing this. The accounts given by the participants reveal that EI is not only a concept but also an embodied leadership practice that is influenced by organisational stressors, interpersonal needs and current realities of the banking industry. This confirms the contention that EI is a decisive factor in leadership effectiveness, especially in emotionally charged settings (Goleman, 1998; Mayer et al., 2008; Salovey et al., 2008).

5.2.1. Self-awareness and emotional recognition among banking leaders

The findings of the research emphasise the significance of self-awareness as a central EI competency, particularly when it comes to determining and understanding patterns of emotions. The participants, including Participant 5, proved to be capable of recognising emotions such as stress and pressure associated with major decisions related to finance, thus exemplifying their skills of labelling and making accurate interpretations of emotional conditions. This awareness is also exhibited in the thoughts of Participant 4, who mentions emotional changes such as satisfaction in interaction with clients' frustration at compliance pressures. These instances

affirm the claim by Goleman (1998) that emotionally intelligent leaders have increased sensitivity to their inner emotional environment and are similar to Salovey et al.'s (2008) view that emotional perception is central to EI.

More importantly, the discovery cuts across the notion that emotional awareness is of lesser significance than cognitive skills in sectors such as banking. According to Antonakis et al. (2009), cognitive skills are the most important, and the accounts of my participants indicate that emotional awareness is part of leadership effectiveness. The capability to identify and act on emotions seems to have a direct effect on leadership behaviour and decision-making that supports the opinion expressed by Joseph and Newman (2010), which holds that EI is able to supplement cognitive intelligence, but not to supersede it. It means that leaders, who are sensitive to the personal and emotional issues of employees in such complicated working environments as banking, are better placed to deal with complex interpersonal relationships and make more informed decisions. The banking industry is not like any other industry because it faces high regulation levels, frequent technological changes, and significant financial risk. Its leaders have to deal with rigorous compliance systems and ensure effective operation and retention of customers (Singh et al., 2022). Furthermore, stiff competition and performance expectations increase pressure on employees, thus increasing stress in the workplace. This is further complicated by the necessity to deal with big groups of people, confidential financial information and changing demands of the clients. The following factors require a leadership style that balances between strategic decision-making and EI to ensure stability, motivation and ethical behaviour.

This study opposes conventional opinions as well as those expressed by Antonakis et al. (2009), who focus on cognitive intelligence as the most important characteristic of banking leadership. Conversely, this study has shown that emotional awareness is just as important, and leaders who can sense and react to emotional signals make better decisions. This idea is associated with the ideas of transformational leadership, where leaders apply emotional awareness to inspire and motivate their teams and servant leadership, where the leaders need to be empathetic to the emotions of the team (Hannah et al., 2014).

Additionally, the results also align with situational leadership in which the leaders have to change strategy depending on the emotional processes within the team. Leaders with high emotional intelligence have a better chance of managing the emotional dynamics of the work

environment in the banking industry since they are prone to making high-stakes decisions in the workplace (Geier, 2016). The study thus helps in the comprehension of the significant role of EI in the performance of leaders, and this is consistent with the expansive body of literature on leadership in general, including Gardner et al. (2009) and Rosete and Ciarrochi (2005), who have also highlighted the positive effects of EI on the performance of leaders.

Compared to previous studies, which rely on the concept of cognitive intelligence as the most influential among other aspects in an industry like banking (Van der Linden et al., 2017), the results of this study reveal that emotional awareness is also an important factor in leadership performance. The emotions of Participant 4 in responding to distress due to strict regulation pressure and satisfaction when customers are well represented are indicative of the EI model put forward by Salovey and Mayer (1990), which emphasises a sense of emotional awareness as a factor that leads to successful leadership. These findings support the existing literature that leaders possessing high EI, especially effective self-awareness, are more apt to cultivate positive working conditions and make more informed decisions (Gardner et al., 2009).

By answering Research Question 1, which aims to determine the primary EI abilities of banking leaders, the results indicate that self-awareness and emotional recognition are core in effective leadership in the banking industry. Like the findings of Rosete and Ciarrochi (2005), this research indicates that a leader capable of perceiving and decoding their emotions and applying the knowledge to control their behaviours is in a better position to manage the emotional demands of their roles, which in the long term positively impacts their leadership performance.

5.2.2. Understanding emotional impacts on decision-making and behaviour

The research findings bring to the fore the paramount role of emotions in the consideration of leadership decisions, leadership behaviours and leadership communication. The perceptions that the emotional decisions described by Participant 1 are less emotional, more deliberate and lasting is directly connected to EI and improved decision-making in the scenario of high stress. This is congruent with the statements made by Mayer et al. (2008) that successful application of emotions improves complex judgment. Recognising and understanding emotional cues enables leaders to make decisions not based on impulsive reactions but that are thoughtful and long term in nature. Equally, the knowledge of Participant 2 that emotional awareness builds trust and alignment between colleagues highlights the role played by EI in the development of

a harmonious and collaborative workplace. This supports the argument by Dasborough et al. (2022) that ethical leadership behaviour is grounded in EI, which allows a leader to be sensitive and ethically clear when dealing with subordinates.

Some scholars, including Conte (2005), challenge this point by questioning the ability of EI to explain leadership outcomes beyond those that personality traits can explain. This critique indicates that EI may not be able to further explain and predict leadership effectiveness beyond the already defined role of personality. However, this argument appears to be countered by the participant evidence in this study. Trait-based models fail to capture the direct behavioural implications of the participants highlighted by them, such as the ability to identify emotional states and modify leadership behaviours in response to the same. This implies that EI contributes to leadership performance independent of personality factors.

Using the example of the leadership skills of the participants, including their capacity to cope with complicated emotional scenarios, stress management, dealing with difficult interactions, and making ethical choices, the role of such traits as extroversion or agreeableness cannot be a sufficient explanation. Van Rooy et al. (2010) hold the view that EI has incremental value when it comes to predicting leadership effectiveness, especially in contexts of emotionally coloured decisions. This point of view is supported by the stories of the participants, who show how emotional awareness and regulation can improve the decision-making process in a manner that cannot be reduced solely to personality characteristics.

5.2.3. Self-reflection as a mechanism for emotional growth

The findings also indicate that self-reflection is an important EI skill, which allows leaders to examine their emotional responses and change their leadership behaviours over time. The reflection of emotional calibration, as described by Participant 4 regarding the situation of learning when to hold on to anger and when to communicate constructively, is a good example. This means that self-reflection would help the leadership to analyse their emotional responses and readjust them in emerging situations to become better leaders. Similarly, the fact that Participant 5 developed a routine of revisiting the responses of past emotions to enhance future leadership behaviour also supports the importance of reflection in the development of leadership skills. These perceptions agree with the assertion by Dulewicz and Higgs (2000), which indicated that the most important dimension of emotionally intelligent leadership is

reflective capability. In their view, reflection transforms individuals into being emotionally aware and empowers them to handle future problems in a more desirable way. In addition, Sadri (2012) argued that continuous reflection will result in enduring emotional development, and this will generate additional capacity in leaders to evolve alongside dynamic organisational environments.

In contrast, Zeidner et al. (2004) stated that excessive emotional introspection may be counterproductive to decisional leadership, because it can lead to the development of indecisiveness, which can be counterproductive to good leadership, particularly in circumstances which involve high stakes and where speed is of the essence. The problem is that leaders spending too much time pondering over their emotional responses may be too self-centred and miss an opportunity to act quickly and decisively when it is needed. What is required is the ability to examine the emotional reactions, as illustrated by Participants 3 and 7, which leads to a better understanding of the nature of the emotions being experienced and how they can be applied in making decisions and connecting with others.

These results of this research directly justify the assumptions of Neubauer et al. (2018), due to their ability to illustrate how reflective emotional learning works in practice in the context of leadership experiences of the participants. The participants continually reported applying the practice of self-reflection to overcome emotional strain, adjust to regulatory requirements, and react to organisational dynamics. This paper demonstrates that emotional maturity acquired via reflective practice helps leaders to strike a balance between deliberate contemplation and immediate action, which results in making informed decisions without loss of emotional sensitivity (Sharma & Singh, 2021). Although overindulgence in introspection was recognised as a possible limitation, the narratives of the participants reveal clearly that reflective learning of emotion is the key to the highly desired emotionally intelligent leadership in flexible and emotionally demanding organisations (Santa et al., 2023).

5.2.4. Self-regulation and emotional control in leadership practice

The results of the study highlight how important emotional control is in leadership, and the respondents also highlighted the significance of emotional control in being able to sustain professionalism and authority, particularly in stressful work situations. Participant 8 explained that he was forced to change his emotional expression in a stressful moment, and Participant 4

intended to control his anger even in a moment of personal stress, which is a sign of the strategic control of emotions. These examples are consistent with the observation of Goleman (1998) that emotional self-control is a feature of effective leaders, since it makes them stand out from those who react impulsively or emotionally. On the same point, Dhani and Sharma (2016) also noted that emotional control is another essential skill of leadership, in particular, the ability to remain calm in a challenging situation.

The findings also show that there might be a conflict in the literature on emotional regulation and authenticity. According to Antonakis et al. (2009), the ability to control emotions, and in particular, to suppress emotions, can decrease the authenticity of a leader because it can bring a disparity between how the individual truly feels and affect their outward manifestation of emotion. In this view, it is possible that emotional regulation would be considered inauthentic, and erode trust and undermine the credibility of a leader. The stories of the participants involved in this research indicate that emotional control does not always mean suppression to the extent of inauthenticity. Rather, leaders seem to have a strategic control over their emotions and modify their expression to the situation without completely subduing their emotions. This difference is essential because it means that emotional control cannot be strictly repressive; it is adaptive.

The results of this research explain how essential emotional control is in leadership, especially in being professional and authoritative during high-stress scenarios. Participant 8 and Participant 4, exhibited the emotional control that is viewed as strategic, which coincides with Goleman's (1998) statement that emotional control is one of the characteristics of a good leader. This characteristic is critical in transformational leadership, where leaders need to inspire and motivate through sets of examples involving being emotionally composed even under difficult situations. Employees who employ and manage their emotions well with leaders will develop trust and also exhibit emotional stability, which are the attributes of transformational leaders who can lead their staff in times of turbulence (Geier, 2016).

The results of this research indicate that emotional control does not mean that one should not feel anything, but rather adjust it to the situation, which is in line with the concept of adaptive emotional regulation. Neubauer et al. (2018) state that such leaders who strategically regulate emotions remain themselves and remain unaffected by emotions and stress in demanding and emotionally tense moments. This is in line with the situational leadership theory that offers

leaders the ability to change their emotional reactions depending on the situation of the team in terms of emotional condition and the needs of the situation at hand (Føllesdal & Hagtvet, 2013).

It is consistent with Neubauer et al. (2018), who argued that adaptive emotional regulation enables leaders to retain authenticity and remain stable and calm in stressful situations, namely, the banking sector. By doing so, the regulation of emotions does not entail concealing emotions but rather being able to regulate them in an effective way so that the leadership does not become ineffective and unprofessional in more emotionally charged situations. Consequently, the issues of authenticity are justified, but the results of the study indicate that emotional control, as a strategy, can positively affect but not decrease leadership performance.

The significance of emotional self-control is matched by the argument of Goleman (1998) that great leaders have emotional control, a trait that allows them to be singled out among those leaders who act impulsively and emotionally. This is in tandem with the previous research that has revealed that leaders who have high EI are likely to stay calm in the most volatile of conditions (Boyatzis et al. 2002). Although these works state the overall advantages of emotional control, the present research questions certain classical assumptions related to emotional control, at least regarding its effects on authenticity.

The results here, in contrast, confirm the research of Neubauer et al. (2018), who suggested that adaptive emotional regulation is one of the major aspects of leadership. They indicated that emotional control does not necessarily imply that emotions must be hidden completely, but rather, they should be controlled so that one expresses themselves appropriately depending on the nature of the situation. This adaptive control assists leaders to remain authentic, calm and composed even in emotionally tense situations. Indicatively, Participant 5 has talked about how emotional regulation allowed them to deal with their stress in such a manner that they did not cover up their emotions entirely, implying that emotional control, when done strategically, can be a way of increasing authenticity and trust in leadership.

The findings of this research indicate a more complicated interaction; emotional control is adaptive and situational, and not necessarily repressive. Being able to control one's emotions and, at the same time, be authentic to their own inner self appears to be a core competence of leaders. Addressing Research Question 1, the present research proves that self-regulation is not

only the opportunity to suppress emotions but also to manage them smartly and with authenticity to make them beneficial to leadership.

5.2.5. Stress management in high-pressure banking contexts

The results of the research indicate stress management to be an important EI skill, especially considering the nature of banking leadership, which is stressful. The importance of emotional regulation in managing stress is highlighted by the fact that Participant 9 focuses on the importance of identifying stress when the workload is at its maximum level, and proactively change priorities, as well as the stress-relief strategies employed by Participant 5 to prevent burnout. These views are congruent with the claim made by Salovey and Pizarro (2003) that good emotional management shields leaders against chronic stress, and thus they can cope with stressful situations without letting it affect their well-being. Also, Hur et al. (2011) noted the EI of leaders in providing psychologically safe working conditions, indicating that EI not only enables leaders to cope with their stress, but also to spread a positive atmosphere among their subordinates.

Razzaq et al. (2016) opined that organisational structures (rigidity of hierarchies, distribution of workloads, and communication channels) are potentially a greater contributor to stress outcomes than the individual EI of a person. According to this view, systemic organisational practices are the main cause of stress, and not individual emotional competencies. Although structural factors are a cause of stress, results presented by this research show that emotionally intelligent leaders are crucial in the process of interpreting early signs of stress and reacting positively. EI is therefore acting as a buffer to the idea that organisational arrangements are the sole determinants of stress-related effects.

As per Van der Linden et al. (2017), EI can be referred to as a mediating aspect between organisational stressors and an individual's well-being. Leaders exhibiting high EI are in a better position to deal with personal pressure, besides establishing a favourable work atmosphere that helps sustain concentration and efficient operation in a difficult situation. This counters the belief that organisational structures are sole determinants of the outcome of stress and emphasises EI as a tool for managing stress in the workplace.

5.2.6. Emotional flexibility and adaptive leadership styles

The results of this study demonstrate that emotional flexibility is a very important leadership skill, especially in adjusting the leadership style to the situational needs and emotional demands of employees. The comments of the participants reveal that successful leaders are not dependent on a single approach but rather change their behaviours when emotional situations change. Participant 8 explained emotional adaptability as having the ability to re-tune leadership reactions when responding to pressure, and Participant 5 elaborated how they deliberately changed the tone and delivered a feedback response depending on their level of stress and the mood of their team. These depict the role of emotional flexibility in responding to stress and humanistic leadership in stressful working conditions.

The results are in line with the situational leadership model. McCleskey (2014) claimed that a good leader adjusts their behaviour to suit the context and the willingness of followers. This model is supported by the fact that the participants can customise their leadership styles, which indicates that emotional awareness improves situational judgement. The versatility exhibited by respondents means that emotionally flexible leaders are in a better position to cope with diversity in the workplace because they can adapt to the different needs of employees and teams concerning emotions and motivation.

According to Sambol et al. (2022), too much emotional adaptability can result in inconsistency of leadership. They claim that a frequent shift in leadership style may mislead subordinates or cause distrust because the employees may not comprehend the main values or intentions of this leader. This criticism demonstrates a possible danger and, as much as adaptability is a great quality, its excessive application can lead to instability in leadership.

The transformational leadership theory is indicated by the capability of leaders to identify and change emotional changes in the team (Bass, 1990). Transformational leaders apply EI to influence and motivate their followers through the identification of emotional cues and using these cues to the best of their ability to create a conducive environment, which promotes growth and cooperation (Fitzgerald & Schutte, 2010). The strategy of Participant 5, who adapts the feedback delivery according to the mood within the team, is an example of how leadership can be emotionally flexible to lead to positive results, since the emotional reaction of the leader should be adjusted in accordance with the needs of the team.

The results of this study indicate that participants were able to have emotional flexibility within definite boundaries. It was uniform that respondents mentioned that they stuck to consistent leadership ideals, including the aspects of professionalism, power and justice, and adjusted their communication approach and emotional reactions to the circumstances. This implies that emotional flexibility was not practised at random but was an intentional and disciplined approach. Leaders changed their leadership styles and did not change what they represented.

This moderate stance helps to support the idea of Lee et al. (2023), who proposed that emotional adaptive leadership can help leaders to be responsive without undermining their authority. The results of this paper support the opinion that emotional flexibility is not an indication of inconsistency, but a skill of leadership. Used wisely, it will enable leaders to navigate through difficult emotional situations, maintain trust and react well in various organisational situations whilst preserving a robust and coherent sense of leadership identity.

Accordingly, despite the warning of Sambol et al. (2022), the research findings in this study indicate that balanced emotional flexibility in conjunction with a set of formal leadership principles can be associated with better leadership performance and does not result in inconsistency. The flexibility and retention of power assists leaders to remain receptive to changing circumstances without losing their credibility or sense of direction.

5.2.7. Social awareness and empathy towards subordinates

In the study, social awareness surfaces as a major aspect in leadership, and the respondents reported high levels of empathy and sensitivity to emotional clues. Participant 9, in particular, pointed out how they had noticed minor shifts in body language and tone, whereas Participant 2 pointed out that they were able to notice withdrawal as a symptom of an unresolved problem. These results are consistent with the notion of social competence introduced by Goleman (1998), where the author emphasised the value of being able to identify and learn the emotions of other people in the establishment of effective interpersonal relationships. Further, Ciarrochi et al. (2000) opined that empathy is a major aspect of EI, which influences interpersonal effectiveness by helping leaders address emotional needs appropriately and respond to challenging situations with sensitivity.

Some criticise the idea of empathy in leadership. Zeidner et al. (2004) were concerned with the cross-cultural question of the consistency of empathy, and they asked whether emotional processes can be universalised across all cultures and in all cases. They postulated that empathy might be different in different cultures, and what is viewed as empathetic behaviour in one culture might not be the same in another culture. Although this criticism holds, the accounts of the participants in this study indicate that empathy, which is an element of EI, is not culturally specific. To illustrate, the capability to identify emotional indicators and respond in the same way appears to be culturally sensitive, as confirmed by the fact that the respondents were aware of emotional changes in the workplace. This confirms the opinion of Van der Linden et al. (2017) that competencies of EI, such as empathy, are contextually specific in the sense that they are adaptable and adjustable in various cultural and organisational contexts.

In addition, the research discovered that empathy, as one of the components of EI, is critically important in the management of emotional dynamics in a team. Leaders with the ability to understand subordinates' feelings would be in a better position to grasp their emotional needs and be able to resolve conflicts or concerns. This is in line with the study by Shih and Susanto (2010), where empathy was shown to be an important aspect of leadership since it helps leaders to react to difficult circumstances with sensitivity and understanding. When leaders understand and satisfy the emotional needs of team members, they not only establish a stronger interpersonal relationship with them, but also help create a healthier and more productive workplace. The results confirm that empathy improves the leadership skills of leaders taking their team through emotionally difficult circumstances to facilitate a favourable organisational culture.

Empathy in leadership literature has been criticised. Santa et al. (2023) questioned the cross-cultural generalisability of empathy and wondered whether the emotional mechanisms that support empathetic behaviour are homogenous in terms of cross-cultural applicability. They indicated that the behaviours that are viewed as empathetic in one cultural setting may not be in line with the expectations of another cultural setting. Even though the negative comments on cultural differences in empathy in leadership are justified, the results of the given study indicate that this specificity is not always predetermined. This flexibility is especially relevant to the context of the Bangladeshi banking industry, where different cultural standards influence the manner in which emotions are conveyed and interpreted. Leaders more effectively handle

complex interpersonal relationships by modifying their empathic reactions to various cultural situations, and in this way, make leadership more effective in a culturally diverse workplace.

Moreover, the findings of the present study are concurrent with a study conducted by Karim et al. (2024) that emphasised the beneficial consequences of empathetic leadership in the performance of the employees of Bangladeshi banks. Like their research, the findings of this study indicate that empathy that is suitably adjusted to the emotional dynamics of workplaces may lead to improved leadership in a culturally diverse environment. It once again supports the notion that empathy can be expressed in various ways depending on the culture, but the value of the competency of EI is universal and is known to add to the success of a leader.

As an answer to Research Question 1, which examines the essential EI competencies of banking leaders, the results provide clear evidence that social awareness and empathy contribute to making a leader successful. Leaders who are sensitive to the emotions of their subordinates are in a better position to handle emotional issues, create good relationships and improve the performance of the team in general. Empathy is not only a culturally sensitive skill but a general leadership skill that can be adjusted to different organisations, hence it is one of the most important aspects of EI in banking leaders.

5.2.8. Emotional judgement and emotionally informed decision-making

Emotional judgement is a key competency that has been identified in the study to allow leaders to balance logic and emotional outcomes in decision-making. The fact that Participant 1 focuses on the effects of decisions on people and groups highlights the need to incorporate emotional awareness in decision-making into leadership. In the same vein, the emotional judgement that Participant 7 applied in staying calm and confident at the time of market uncertainty also highlights the importance of emotional judgement in helping leaders cope with high-pressure situations. These observations conform to the claim by Joseph et al. (2015) that EI enables integrative decision-making, which involves an emotional and a rational component. In addition, Mayer et al. (2008) postulated the concept of emotional reasoning as an EI capacity that is a higher order in nature, meaning that good leaders use their emotional awareness to make decisions in a manner that maximises overall leadership performance.

A critical view was expressed by Nawaz et al. (2024), who argued that emotional aspects of decision-making can be a source of inability to achieve objectivity since these approaches can lead to bias or subjective evaluation. Emotions in this respect can be viewed as a disruptive element that clouds one's judgment, causing one to make irrational choices, mainly in the workplace, where science prevails as the key element.

Despite these concerns, the views of the respondents in this study show that emotional judgment should lead to better leadership performance due to the fact that it elevates the level of ethical awareness and overall quality of long-term decisions. The fact that participants are able to find emotional considerations and incorporate them into their decision-making procedures seems not to compromise objectivity. Rather, emotional sensitivity helps leaders to make more integrative decisions when considering both personal and group emotional effects. This result disputes the dichotomy offered by Antonakis et al. (2009), which divides rationality and emotion in the practice of leadership. The findings of the present research prove that emotional judgment can contribute to better decision-making instead of harming it, which in turn proves beneficial in building more thoughtful, ethical and people-focused leadership styles.

5.3. Team management strategies facilitated by EI

Objective 2 of the study was to test the effect of EI on team management styles in the Bangladesh banking industry. As provided in Table 3 (see p, 57), emotionally intelligent leaders can establish a productive and supportive working environment in different ways. These include teamwork, which is founded on emotional empathy, an effective and respectful work environment, and motivation of team members, which is achieved by taking care of their emotional needs. The testimonies of the participants also underline that the most appropriate communication behaviours, which are guided by emotional sensitivity and clarity, are also the components of managing the dynamics of teamwork and the achievement of organisational goals. These results demonstrate that EI is at the core of enhancing team cohesion and team performance (Gooty et al., 2010; Prati et al., 2003). Different major components of EI can affect leadership efficiencies in a positive manner. EI components can help leaders perform their supervisory role well, and collaborate with team members effectively in achieving common objectives.

5.3.1. Building a team environment through EI in banking leadership

The results of the study show that emotionally intelligent banking industry leaders employ their emotional sensitivity to promote collaboration and cooperation among their employees. Participants point out that their emotional insights enabled them to deal with team dynamics in a powerful way, match team goals with EI, and establish a unified working atmosphere. Emotionally intelligent leaders influence their teams to work together. As an example, Participant 2 reported that they used EI to become aware of the less obvious changes in emotional tones of the team, such as when stress or frustration could be felt when completing high-pressure tasks. This awareness enabled them to intervene and assist the team in refocusing on common objectives, which is often through providing emotional support and emphasising the team's success. This behaviour illustrates the significance of EI in helping to build cooperation, which aligns with Goleman's (1998) claim that emotionally intelligent leaders can more easily appreciate cooperation by understanding the emotional needs of team members. This practice is consistent with Yusof et al. (2014), who observed that high-EI leaders appear to be good at group dynamics management in that they can deal with the emotional undercurrents within team behaviour. Similarly, Participant 4 said that he uses emotional insights in promoting team objectives. They elaborated that when they realised the emotional stakes that team members had in achieving targets, or in concerns about job security, they could introduce goals which were presented in a manner that would emotionally appeal to the team. This emotional congruency facilitated the accomplishment of the team goals and also produced a further sense of dedication to common goals. These approaches are in harmony with the findings of Mayer et al. (2008), who claimed that emotionally intelligent leaders harness the emotional energy of their team to the achievement of organisational objectives, so it becomes easier to make employees personally interested in the result. Leaders can motivate more employees and seek collaboration, especially during difficult circumstances, by applying EI to comprehend and express the emotive significance of organisational objectives.

On the one hand, these strategies worked out well in certain situations, but the study also showed shortcomings. Indicatively, Participant 3 observed that collaborative efforts can be boosted by the use of EI leadership styles, but the fast-paced and stressful atmosphere of the banking industry could prove difficult. They indicated that the emotional needs of the team were occasionally lost to the external pressure of tight deadlines, regulatory changes and the need to always perform. This point is an interesting observation, since it shows how

complicated the relationship is between EI and situational issues that are faced by leaders. Goleman (1998) argued that EI may lead to the establishment of a good team climate, but it may be challenging to balance emotions in the industry, which is a highly stressful one (Rong & Yusuf, 2020). This issue is evident as it happened to Participant 3, who was aware of the emotional status of their colleagues, but the work pressures associated with their work in the banking industry would not grant them the opportunity or space to discuss specific emotional needs.

In addition, the emotional fit between the leadership style of Participant 4 and the concept of emotional congruence suggested by Mayer et al. (2008) is consistent with the idea that emotionally intelligent leaders are capable of using employee emotional energy in order to direct it to the organisational objectives. This is one of the important aspects of both transformational and servant leadership, where the leaders empower the teams by being empathetic and understanding to gain motivation and commitment (Farzana & Charoensukmongkol, 2024).

The research also emphasises the issues of the EI-high-pressure relationship in the banking industry. Participant 3 noted that emotional needs may be neglected because of the external force can be explained by the fact that although EI can contribute to the creation of a positive team atmosphere, it is not always easy to control emotions in the stressful world. This criticism goes in line with the situational leadership theory, according to which a leader has to change based on the emotional and situational needs of his/her team, particularly in challenging circumstances (Eva et al., 2019).

The respondents commented that empathic leadership was one of the most important aspects in building a culture of trust and cooperation. Participant 7 elaborated that they could develop good team spirit behaviour, especially through showing empathy to team members with problems in their personal or career life. This type is related to that employed by Barling et al. (2000), who claimed that empathetic and emotionally supportive leaders create a culture of respect and trust between people, and that culture helps to work as a team. Furthermore, Cherniss (2001) stated that empathy contributes to long-term team collaboration as team members feel appreciated and heard.

The answers to Research Question 2 show clearly that emotionally intelligent leaders are transformative when it comes to inspiring collaboration and cooperation within the team. These leaders can easily manage the dynamics in teams and encourage high rates of team collaboration by applying emotional understanding to identify shared emotional conditions, support team objectives, and strengthen group behaviours. The study also finds that even though EI is an essential instrument for establishing teamwork, it should be moderated alongside real leadership competencies, especially in stressful workplaces.

5.3.2. Building a positive workplace environment through EI

The results of the present study reveal that emotionally intelligent leaders are crucial to the establishment of psychological well-being and respect, and the management of toxic behaviours, in addition to other factors. Psychological well-being in the team is one of the major goals for emotionally intelligent leaders. Participant 2 stated that they were always aware of the emotional conditions of their team members, especially at times of stress such as financial deadlines or a change in regulations. They said that when they identified stress and burnout symptoms, they could prevent them by either rearranging workloads or providing emotional comfort to the team members. This is a strategy that echoes the opinion of Goleman (1998) that leaders who have EI can identify emotions of distress and engage in proactive measures in order to help their team members preserve a healthy mind. As Cherniss (2001) argued, emotionally intelligent leaders contribute to a psychologically safe team environment. This active assistance serves to sustain the morale of the team even under the conditions of external pressures, which is especially important in the sphere of high-pressure situations.

The other important strategy mentioned by the participants was promoting a positive working environment. Participant 5 explained that they worked towards building an environment where members of the team feel appreciated, especially through appreciation of minor accomplishments and giving positive feedback. The given practice is consistent with the findings of Gooty et al. (2010), who suggested that emotionally intelligent leaders support a positive working environment by strengthening the desirable behaviours and establishing a culture of recognition. Participant 5 also added that team celebration not only increases morale but also contributes towards building a culture of working together and trust, which subsequently helps in enhancing the overall performance of the team. This goes in line with Føllesdal and Hagtvet (2013), who postulated that a positive environment in the team is

facilitated by recognition of emotional contributions in the team, leading to team cohesion and satisfaction of individuals.

The study also indicated that emotionally intelligent leaders are dynamic in preventing toxic situations in their teams. Participant 8 emphasised the need to identify early signs of poor behaviours, such as gossip or exclusion, and manage these behaviours before they deteriorate. This can be attributed to the fact that EI leaders are proficient in team dynamics, where they can easily identify negative emotional responses and intercede to ensure such responses do not harm the team's collaboration, and it is also consistent with the findings of Prati et al. (2003). Gooty et al. (2010) agreed that a leader who responds to toxic behaviours promptly is capable of avoiding the degradation of team relationships and morale over a considerable period of time.

The answers to Research Question 2 indicate that EI is a key factor that influences the workplace environment in the banking industry. Leaders with EI, concentrating on the maintenance of psychological well-being, the promotion of a positive climate, respect, and the mitigation of unhealthy relationships, make a valuable contribution to a constructive and favourable work environment. The study also notes that EI is an important aspect in enhancing workplace culture, but the external forces of the environment and the stressors that are inherent in the banking sector may make it difficult to sustain a positive working environment all the time.

5.3.3. Emotional motivation in leadership: Inspiring and supporting teams in banking

The results of this study reveal that EI is at the core of the process of influencing emotional motivation in teams working in the banking industry. Consistent with the Research Question 2 that examines the significance of EI in team management in challenging circumstances, the research findings reveal that emotionally intelligent leaders are especially effective in motivating teams by understanding this emotional signal, reacting promptly to stress and maintaining motivation even at times of organisational tension. These results indicate that emotional motivation is not by chance but through a dynamic leadership process that is based on emotional awareness, control and responsiveness.

The participants explained that emotionally intelligent leaders worked hard to provide an environment where team members felt secure to share problems, frustrations, and other emotional issues. An example is Participant 9, who said that when members of the team seemed to be disengaged or demotivated, leaders would take it upon themselves to find out the emotive reasons as to why the individuals behaved in those ways. Instead of using performance indicators, leaders took the initiative to make people talk and express their emotional lives. This result contributes to the position taken about EI in the literature review, which states that it improves communication and builds trust, which are essential in maintaining motivation in high-pressure situations (Mayer et al., 2008).

Notably, the results also suggest that emotional motivation is not restricted to alleviating negative emotions. Participant 3 mentioned that the promotion of positive emotional conditions, i.e., enthusiasm, pride and a feeling of achievement, is another aspect of emotionally intelligent leadership. In this study, positive emotional engagement was promoted, and the leaders intentionally recognised team accomplishments in order to keep momentum and motivation. This is in line with past literature that has proposed that leaders who enhance positive emotions boost the degree of engagement and long-term performance (Salovey et al., 2008). The consistency of the results with the literature validates the fact that emotional motivation works in a balance of emotional regulation, reducing negative effects and enhancing positive emotional experiences.

The other major finding is associated with how leaders can identify and address team emotions. Participant 6 explained that emotionally intelligent leaders could recognise common emotional situations, including increased stress or irritation when revenue seasons had reached their peak. These states of emotion were identified to have an impact on morale and productivity. Leaders reacted by balancing workloads, giving assurances or providing practical emotional support. The given observation is in line with literature, which states that emotionally intelligent leaders are in a better position to handle the emotional state of a group and effectively lead the team's behaviour (Afroz et al., 2017). The results of the given study support the notion that emotional motivation is not limited to individual interactions but is also able to deal with the emotional climate of the whole team.

Another crucial element of emotionally intelligent leadership is the possibility to inspire the teams at a time when the level of stress is very high. Participant 5 explained that regulatory

changes and strict financial deadlines usually induced anxiety and uncertainty among subordinates. In that case, leaders had to use EI to ensure team members were calm, focused and supported the common purpose. Instead of refusing to acknowledge any emotional strain, the leaders openly admitted stress and advocated for perseverance and hardiness. This observation aligns with the views of previous researchers that emphasise the importance of emotionally intelligent leaders in maintaining hope and motivation even in adversity within an organisation (Dhani and Sharma, 2016). The findings of this research show that emotional motivation is especially crucial in the context of pressure as, in any other case, emotional neglect is likely to cause disengagement or burnout.

The results give a clear and concise response to Research Question 2. EI leaders are crucial in team motivation by understanding emotional cues, effectively reacting to stress, encouraging emotional communication, and maintaining perseverance in stressful situations. The findings have a close relationship with those themes uncovered during the literature review, and they validate that emotional motivation is fundamental in the operation of emotionally intelligent leadership within the banking industry.

5.3.4. Emotional sensitivity in communication practices

The results of this study show that emotionally intelligent leaders employ emotional sensitivity as a potent instrument in organisational team dynamics and team communication. Participant 3 described how they tended to employ empathy to figure out the emotional conditions of their team, especially when they were stressed. By understanding team members' feeling and assuring them, they could build trust and a feeling of security, which helped the team overcome tough situations. This observation aligns with the perception of Goleman (1998) that empathy allows a leader to develop an emotional attachment with a team, and this becomes imperative in the way a leader deals with relationships effectively and allows teamwork. On the same note, Conte (2005) implied that leaders who use an empathetic approach can reduce the incidence of negative feelings, such as anxiety or frustration, by aiming to provide an emotionally secure environment where team members can express concerns.

Participant 2 mentioned that the de-escalation of a tense situation was easily achieved by recognising and responding to the underlying emotions, thus making sure that minor conflicts were not exacerbated. It aligns with Lee et al. (2023), who believed that emotionally intelligent

leaders excel at reducing the stressed atmosphere and returning balance to the work environment. Leaders can also deal with their teams by responding empathetically to them to ensure that they can overcome emotionally laden situations, whereas a lack of understanding can undermine teamwork.

The research also found that emotionally intelligent leaders can adjust their tones in an effort to adapt to emotional forces within a team. Participant 4 pointed out that they would vary in terms of communication based on the group mood, speaking in a more reassuring and calming voice because of high-stress levels and a firmer and clearer voice when decisive actions had to be made. This opinion is corroborated by Antonakis et al. (2009), who suggested that emotionally intelligent leaders are able to readily modify their communication to correspond to the emotional atmosphere in the team. The tone, as perceived by the participants of this study, serves to make sure that the message is perceived in the intended manner to minimise the chances of receiving it wrongly or misperceiving it, which may happen when communication lacks emotional sensitivity.

Adaptive communication is an essential component of the study since participant 4 has used different tones to suit the mood of the team. Emotionally intelligent leaders are capable of modifying their communication according to the emotional climate to make sure that the messages are directed in a clear manner and received as intended. This is in line with situational leadership theory, which emphasises the need for leaders to adapt their style to suit the emotional needs and readiness of the followers (Edelman & van Knippenberg, 2018).

The strategy of Participant 5 to consider the emotional status of team members before trying to resolve any of the work-related issues helps substantiate Mayer et al. (2008), who argue that emotionally aware leaders who know and take action on their emotional knowledge can make the workplace a more inclusive and supportive environment. This study shows that emotionally intelligent leadership that includes empathy, adaptive communication, and emotional intelligence play an important role in team cohesion and performance, which can be applied to both the transformational and situational leadership theories.

The respondents also explained how emotional knowledge formed part of their communication practices, particularly when they realised and acted on the emotions of other people. Participant 5 described that they would tend to recognise the emotional state of a member of the team first

before handling the issue at hand. As an illustration, when one of the team members seemed frustrated or uninterested, first they would recognise their feelings and then speak about the concerning issue. According to Participant 5, this approach assists in building rapport and makes team members feel that they are heard and appreciated. This aligned with Mayer et al. (2008), who believed that emotionally knowledgeable leaders provide a more inclusive and supportive workplace environment, which subsequently enhances greater teamwork and productivity. Zeidner et al. (2004) warned that emotional insight should not be harmful to efficiency. Leaders have to manage emotional sensitivity to the requirements of running the business, so emotional responses should not jeopardise the accomplishment of goals.

The results of the study are consistent with the second research objective that emotionally intelligent leadership is an essential factor that depends on emotionally sensitive communication. The ability of leaders to respond empathetically, manipulate tone of voice in line with changes in emotions, evidence emotional knowledge, and deliver emotionally oriented feedback makes the workplace a better and more conducive place to work.

5.3.5. Clear and precise communication in leadership: Fostering collaboration and cohesion

The results of the study provided insight into the role of emotionally intelligent leaders employing clear and precise communication to bring their teams under control. Through giving structured messages, clarifying expectations, avoiding emotional uncertainty, and consistency, these leaders make teams more focused, motivated and geared towards organisational objectives. This not only responds to Research Question 2, which addresses the question of the role of EI in the management of teams, but also highlights the importance of communication practices in direct relationship to leadership effectiveness.

One of the aspects of effective communication in emotionally intelligent leadership is the ability to deliver clear instructions. Some of the participants, including Participant 3, emphasised the need to give clear instructions, particularly when the tasks are complicated or the deadline is short. Breaking tasks into smaller steps and offering all the needed information, the leader with EI will avoid misunderstandings and minimise the chances of making the wrong choice to keep the team on track. Such a practice complies with the idea of Goleman (1998) that emotionally intelligent leaders are able to communicate better in a manner understood and

followed by subordinates. Emotional strain may be experienced when tasks are vague or ambiguous, and this results in frustration and disengagement among team members. Van der Linden et al. (2017) established that leaders with clear instructions have a better capacity to enable their teams to work harmoniously, and this will increase productivity.

The study also found that there are certain issues associated with clarity of communication, especially in situations of high pressure. Participant 5 added that in financial reporting periods or when addressing more complicated client requests, time would sometimes prevent leaders from being as structured in their communication as they would desire to be. Similarly, Mrisho and Mseti (2024), pointed to this challenge that leaders need to be able to communicate with a high degree of clarity, but at the same time, they tend to be pressured by external factors and cannot sustain such a high level of structure. This observation indicates that in spite of the intentions of emotionally intelligent leaders to give clear instructions, the dynamic nature of the banking industry regularly compels them to change their style of communication in the moment and, in the process, lose some clarity in favour of speed.

Another aspect in which emotionally intelligent leaders performed well, according to the participants of the study, was clarifying expectations. Participant 2 described how they prioritised making sure that team members were fully aware of what was expected of them, especially regarding performance targets and timelines. Through expressing goals and expectations, leaders avoid ambiguity, which may cause confusion and loss of interest. This supports the study of Antonakis et al. (2009), which identified that effective communication of expectations is an important factor in team motivation and aligning a team to organisational goals. When the members of the team know their roles and responsibilities, there is a greater chance of increasing a sense of ownership and commitment to their work, leading to increased collaboration and productivity.

One major observation in this study was that emotionally intelligent leaders were able to reduce emotional ambiguity in their communications. Lack of consistency in the expression of emotions by leaders may cause confusion and a lack of trust among team members. Similarly, Van Rooy et al. (2010) asserted that emotional consistency in leadership is critical to the development of trust as team members depend on leaders to offer them consistent emotional direction, particularly in a situation marked with uncertainty. A lack of clarity and even the development of anxiety in team members because of emotionally ambiguous communication,

when a leader says something, and it sounds completely different, would not allow team members to do their best.

The current results of this study indicate the paramount importance of effective and accurate communication in emotionally intelligent leadership, which is consistent with Research Question 2. Leaders who deliver organised guidelines, clarify expectations, do not use ambiguous emotional terminologies, and maintain consistency in their communication help a lot in aligning the team, their performance and morale. The study also indicates that it is not always easy to have good communication in a high-stress and busy workplace.

5.3.6. Inclusion and participation: Promoting open dialogue and equality in leadership communication

Inclusion and participation in leadership behaviours are increasingly significant considerations in the workplace. This paper is concerned with the significance of emotionally intelligent leaders who involve their subordinates through their communication strategies in motivating them to participate, communicate freely and ensure their voices are heard. By encouraging inclusiveness, leaders find it simpler to collaborate with their staff, inspire them and boost their performance. These practices may be connected with Research Question 2, which is devoted to the analysis of the role played by EI in team management and communication in a banking setting.

One important discovery of this research was the capacity of leaders with EI to motivate their team members to give their opinions. According to Participant 10, they could foster an open and trusting atmosphere in order to make team members express themselves openly without concern for their rank or experience. This strategy aligns with the argument by Seal and Andrews-Brown (2010), who suggested that a leader who has high EI will promote open communication that will facilitate a sense of ownership and participation by the respective team members. Providing an inspiration to express themselves and to achieve the necessary changes, emotionally intelligent leaders make everyone feel special and make sure that different points of view are considered during the decision-making process.

Participant 4 also emphasised the necessity to create an atmosphere where team members were not afraid of sharing their ideas and concerns. This, according to them, was particularly

applicable in the banking industry, where decision-making can be very decisive and where divergent opinions are also necessary. It is in line with the research of Nawaz et al. (2024), who assumed that the transparency of leaders promotes innovation and problem-solving since the team is dependent on team intelligence. Another critical point by Participant 5 was the consideration of issues of encouragement to engage in a high-pressure situation. They noted that though they tried to create an open area where they could discuss issues, there were other incidences when team members were not prepared to communicate, either due to the pace of work or because they feared making errors.

Another important feature of promoting inclusion in the leadership communication would be ensuring that introverted team members, who may not self-disclose, would also have an opportunity to express their feelings and views. Participant 6 also mentioned that emotionally intelligent leaders make a conscious effort to involve less vocal members of the team by ensuring they have a comfortable environment to share their views without being overshadowed by more vocal employees. The strategy is consistent with the findings of Dhani and Sharma (2016), which proposed that emotionally intelligent leaders ought to ensure that all team members, regardless of the style they use to communicate, feel like members of the team and are valued. This is in order to ensure that no one member of the team feels neglected or left out, and also to promote variety in thinking when making decisions.

In addition to facilitating a discussion, emotionally intelligent leaders are also keen to make feedback equitable. Participant 8 highlighted the importance of ensuring that each member of the team receives equal attention and helpful feedback regardless of his/her position and experience. It is particularly crucial in a multicultural team, where the lack of equal chances to receive feedback or be appreciated might occur because of experience, knowledge and personality disparity. On the same note, Razzaq et al. (2016) found that emotionally intelligent leaders will present feedback in a way that embraces fairness and inclusiveness, such that every employee in the team can feel appreciated and motivated. Participant 8 further discussed this, by saying that they made their best effort to ensure that nobody was excluded in the performance review and development discussions, regardless of their seniority or position. This will bring equity and fairness in the team, culminating in trust and cooperation.

The results show that emotionally intelligent leaders establish an inclusive and participatory working environment which is consistent with Research Question 2. Emotionally intelligent

leaders can foster a culture of valuing and engaging every member of the team by motivating team members to share their ideas, fostering open communication, promoting equality in feedback, and reinforcing participative decision-making. The analysis has also shown that some obstacles, including dealing with a variety of communication styles, dealing with prejudices in feedback, balancing between inclusivity and effectiveness, have to be addressed to make sure that EI can be maximised to benefit team dynamics and performance in the banking industry.

5.4. Conflict resolution and EI in leadership

Research Question 3 of the study investigated the role of EI in conflict resolution methods in the Bangladeshi banking industry. Based on the theme and sub-theme presented in Table 4 (see p. 58), it is possible to propose that emotionally intelligent leaders adopt a wide range of conflict management and conflict resolution methods. These are awareness of emotional indicators in conflict experiences, application of emotional control methods to subdue tensions, and application of empathetic communication in bridging conflict between parties. According to the comments of the respondents, it is evident that EI helps leaders to manage not only interpersonal conflicts, but also larger, team-based problems in a manner that leaves relationships intact and the workplace in harmony. The findings indicate that EI is very crucial in the establishment of a setting in which conflict is positively resolved, which correlates with the current literature on EI as an instrument in conflict management and enhancement of organisational performance (Goleman, 1998; Joseph & Newman, 2010).

5.4.1. Emotion-based identification of conflict: Detecting emotional fluctuations in leadership

The results of this study reiterate the paramount importance of EI in identifying and remediating conflict between subordinate and team leaders, especially in such a high-stakes and highly stressful banking industry. Sensitive leaders can address the emerging issues and friction within their teams as they arise before they degenerate into conflict, therefore holding their teams together. This also fits into Research Question 3 that examines how EI can help resolve conflicts in the banking industry. The results show that emotionally intelligent leaders who can recognise emotional differences are more likely to deal with interpersonal and team conflicts in a way that will allow building understanding and creating relationships.

According to this research, one of the essential findings was the ability of leaders to notice emotional differences among their subordinates, which is a valuable skill for conflict identification. Participant 4 stated that they were particularly efficient in seeing subtle shifts in the mood within their group, like subtle shifts in tone or body language, indicating some discomfort or frustration. This emotional sensitivity is in line with the statement made by Goleman (1998), who believed that leaders with high EI are good at understanding the emotions of others and thus can deal with relationships easily. Such perceptiveness would prove useful in banking, where time is of the essence, and teamwork is needed to address an arising tension before it turns into a major conflict. On the same note, Alhamami (2016) believed that leaders capable of identifying shifts in emotions are in a better position to change their leadership style and intervene in a manner that does not disrupt the harmony of the team.

Though this emotional sensibility ability is a major strength, it turns out that emotional changes are not necessarily instantly observable and interpretable. Participant 2 emphasised that not all employees, especially those of a more introverted nature, might express their emotional condition, and it becomes more difficult to notice tension or discomfort. This observation is similar to that of Hoang et al. (2025), who stated that, although leaders with high EI may be able to detect changes in emotions, the extent to which they can respond effectively is dependent on the level to which emotions are manifested in the team. When emotional indicators are less observable, the leader might have to employ other mechanisms, including direct interaction with the team members, to ensure they are okay or give them a chance to have a personal conversation.

The other important point that was observed when detecting conflict is the emerging tension in a team. Participant 6 said that they were frequently aware when the group dynamics were getting strained, before it resulted in a verbal disagreement. They explained this vulnerability by the fact that they realised when there was a change in energy or mood, and this indicated that something was not going right in the team. This is consistent with the statement of Dunbar-Smalley (2024), who determined that emotionally intelligent leaders are aware when a group is experiencing tension despite no open conflict. The point that Participant 6 could identify the tensions early enough enabled them to proactively address them by holding a team session to discuss any issues before they led to communication or cooperation breakdown.

In addition, the identification of frustration was another important aspect of conflict detection. Participant 7 described that when frustration in the team was identified they could solve the problem before it arose, including offering team members extra resources or explaining the misunderstanding. Makkar and Basu (2019) confirmed this, reporting that frustration is one of the early signs of conflict, and when it is addressed in time, then other serious issues will not emerge. When working in a banking environment, where irritation could be caused by time constraints, complicated assignments or regulatory pressures, these feelings could be dealt with early on to avoid burnout and detachment of members on the team.

The results indicate that EI plays a significant role in the detection of emotional variations and conflict in the banking industry and it is consistent with Research Question 2. Leaders who are sensitive to the emotional signals of their team, like mood changes, increasing tension, discomfort and frustration, are in a better position to intervene at an earlier stage and solve conflicts before they get out of hand. The study also indicates that EI is not necessarily enough, especially in stressful or non-verbal and culturally sensitive situations. Leaders should take the initiative to establish a setting whereby emotional signals can be communicated and addressed openly and should be flexible in their conflict-detecting and problem-solving strategies, especially when handling multicultural teams. The results emphasise the importance of EI in the role of a leader, not only in terms of emotions but also to make sure that the conflict is solved positively, creating a smoother and more fruitful work environment.

5.4.2. Interpretation of emotional triggers in conflict resolution: Understanding the roots of disputes with subordinates and team leaders

The results of the present research highlight the necessity for leaders to interpret emotional triggers to coordinate and overcome conflict situations. Being sensitive to the emotional elements of conflicts, the ability to distinguish situations that trigger conflicts, and the goal to comprehend the emotional underpinnings of their subordinates, leaders can address conflict situations to not only help resolve the immediate problem but also promote cohesion in the team in the long term. This directly responds to Research Question 3, which examines the role of EI in conflict resolution within the banking industry.

The skill of emotionally intelligent leaders to identify the causes of disagreements is one of the major discoveries made during the study. Participant 4 stated that in many cases, conflicts can

be from emotional causes, stress, insecurity or frustration, which may not be immediately apparent. Emotionally intelligent leaders can see these underlying emotional problems and explicitly tackle them, as opposed to merely noting the superficial argument. This can be compared to the argument of Goleman (1998) that emotionally intelligent leaders understand that there is something beyond the problem at hand and consider the emotional background behind the conflict. On the same note, Nawaz and Khan (2016) observed that such leaders can de-escalate conflicts by focusing on the underlying emotional conflict, which eventually results in a better resolution and robust team behaviour. Participant 2 emphasised the difficulties of unearthing these emotional reasons, especially where the members of a team are not willing to show their emotions. This highlights the difficulty of applying EI in conflict resolution because leaders have to strike a balance between emotional awareness and the necessity to build trust, and it may require time as supported the findings made by Bwalya (2023).

Another essential point of conflict resolution, which was voiced by participants, is the skill to realise those trigger points which make conflicts worse. Participant 6 said that disagreements usually start with apparently minor incidents, like a misunderstanding during a conversation or an unfulfilled expectation. Emotionally intelligent leaders can prevent the situation by identifying these trigger events at an early stage. This observation confirms the view of Bratton et al. (2011), who opined that leaders who are able to recognise the initial symptoms of a conflict, like an increasing tension or irritation, can avert more serious problems. Similarly, Ayalew and Ayenew (2022) contended that leaders who have high EI will easily detect when emotional dynamics in a team are starting to change, and hence they will be able to identify conflict at the earliest stages.

Besides identification of trigger events, emotionally intelligent leaders should also be knowledgeable of the emotional background of the people they are leading. Participant 3 talked about how being aware of the emotional backgrounds and triggers of individual team members gave them an opportunity to become more sensitive to conflicts. This knowledge enables leaders to resolve conflicts in a manner that will take into consideration the individual emotional reactions and experiences of every member of the team. Similarly, Athota et al. (2023) claimed that leaders who are emotionally aware of the background of their team members are better placed to handle conflicts among them since they can approach every situation with empathy and a set of solutions. Wen et al. (2019) warned that interpreting emotional backgrounds can be tricky in multicultural teams where individual and cultural

diversities may affect the expression or perception of emotions. Participant 8 also brought it up, noting that although they were trying to get an idea about the emotional backgrounds of their team members, the issue was that of different backgrounds; in many cases, it was quite challenging to clear up the emotional triggers that were involved.

The results of the study indicate that EI is a key element in the resolution of conflicts in the banking industry which is consistent with Research Question 3. Such leaders who can identify the emotion triggers, what emotions are at the root of conflict, the emotional backgrounds, and how behaviours can be related to emotional triggers, have a better chance to handle conflicts. The study also shows the problems that emotionally intelligent leaders encounter when trying to implement these strategies in highly stressful areas, especially when members of their team are unwilling to open up about their feelings or when other factors prevent them from giving time to resolve conflicts.

5.4.3. Proactive intervention in conflict resolution: Preventing escalation through early actions

The results of the current study demonstrate the idea that leaders in the banking industry can become proactive to help avoid small conflicts that may grow into bigger and more disruptive ones. This is in direct relation to Research Question 3 that investigates the role of EI in the resolution of conflict in the banking sector. These findings indicate that a culture of trust and open communication can be cultivated by emotionally intelligent leaders who intervene early in order to avoid escalation of many possible conflicts.

Flexibility to take actions at an early stage of clashes was among the best strategies identified by those involved. Participant 4 mentioned that they listened to ensure early intervention because they did not wish simple issues to grow into bigger conflicts. Participant 2 also mentioned that early intervention helped them to address emotional issues, such as stress or frustration, at an early stage before they led to interpersonal conflicts within the team. This is an active approach that compares to Yusof et al. (2014), who argued that leaders need to be sensitive to emotions at an early phase and intervene to make sure that conflicts do not undermine the unity of the team.

Participant 3 also cited the challenge of the application of early intervention in a uniform manner, particularly in busy environments where the leader does not have the time to study a situation comprehensively until it has gone out of control. The fact that the banking industry requires leaders to make really fast decisions, and at times in a high-stress environment, creates pressure that may compel a leader to act on the spur of the moment without having a thorough grasp of the emotional game they are engaging in. This is contrary to Zawadzki et al. (2024), who expressed the view that though EI helps leaders to intervene early, the intervention process takes time to analyse and understand the emotional clues of team members. Thus, although the response must occur early, the conflict process at high-stress workplaces, like banking, can render such a response difficult in practice, which suggests that the theory of EI has a gap that should be addressed with sector-specific responses.

Another important strategy that was pointed out by the participants was to avoid escalation of conflict. Participant 6 said that when leaders were emotionally intelligent, they could defuse conflicts before they got out of control, as they were able to realise the initial signs of discomfort or tension. This was specifically noticeable in cases where conflicts involved more than two team members because early de-escalation was used to ensure that the team dynamics did not turn out to be more negative. This observation agrees with Brown and Nwagbara (2021), who stated that highly emotionally intelligent leaders can sense emerging tensions and intervene in a manner that would not lead to a breaking point in conflicts. Furthermore, Participant 7 talked about applying empathetic listening as an intervention to avoid escalation, in which they engaged in the discussion by paying attention to the issues without responding instantly, which made the team member feel appreciated, and reduced the amount of emotional colouring involved in the scenario.

Those leaders who use EI to identify and resolve emotional tensions in their initial stages do not allow minor problems to develop into more severe ones. This aligns with the transformational leadership theory of Bass (1990), which emphasises the importance of EI in fostering cooperation and trust within the team. According to Goleman (1998), transformational leaders are able to make the environment positive by effectively managing their emotional state as well as that of other people. The situational leadership theory (Den Hartog et al., 1997) is evident in the approach that Participant 4 has used to avert a minor conflict from becoming a major challenge by adopting an early intervention approach. Situational leadership is a leadership approach that assumes that a good leader has to modify

their behaviour to the emotional needs of their followers and the situational requirements (Den Hartog et al., 1997). Early intervention helps leaders to keep the sense of stability and direction, hence keeping the team dynamics positive.

Regardless of the positive impact of EI, studies take into consideration the negative influence of external factors, including performance pressure and time pressure, as stated by Participant 5. Such pressures may prevent the leader from being fully involved in the emotional interaction of his or her team, and this leads to the idea that EI need to be incorporated with other leadership skills. By way of example, the agility in decision-making and time management skills, which are central to both situational leadership and transactional leadership theories, are very important in the situation of leaders operating in high-pressure environments (Farzana & Charoensukmongkol, 2024).

Participant 5 expressed a critical issue over escalation prevention in most competitive settings. The banking industry is one sector where performance pressure is intense, and leaders tend to encounter resistance when they are trying to de-escalate conflicts, especially when people are emotionally attached to their standpoints (Lee et al., 2023). This echoes Drigas et al. (2023), who opined that though EI may aid in the identification and management of conflicts in the initial stages, external forces and organisational culture may pose a challenge in ensuring that it does not escalate. In such places, it is possible that the leader has to interfere with the emotion, yet external demands such as deadlines or targets would complicate the process of constructively addressing the emotions.

The other strategy that the participants have identified is dealing with the problem as soon as possible. Participant 8 emphasised the importance of solving the problems as they were presented, in order to prevent accumulation of unspent emotions that could be converted into conflict later. This is a proactive strategy in line with Peiris and Ulluwishewa (2023), who proposed that timely intervention averts emotional accumulation that may result in frustration, lack of interest or even team failure. To illustrate, in a situation where there was a disagreement in the direction of a project, Participant 8 explained how they would instantly handle the situation by conducting a team meeting, which would give them a clear picture of how to discuss the emotions in the situation. This enabled the team to get the problem fixed within a very short time, hence preserving the morale and the productivity of the team. This conflict resolution method is in contrast to Cross and Travaglione, (2003), who believed that it may be

effective in quick conflict resolution, but at times, it overlooks deeper emotional issues that require more time to resolve. Therefore, although instant solutions to the challenges stop further development of the problem, they can miss the emotional causes that can be renewed in the future, which will influence the work of the whole team over time.

Emotional blockages were also an important proactive intervention that was observed and discussed by a number of respondents. Participant 4 said that they tried to pay attention to when team members appeared to be emotionally blocked, when they appeared disengaged, unresponsive, or when they were unable to communicate effectively, then they would intervene to help these members overcome these emotional obstacles. This is in line with Goleman's (1998) view on the assumption that emotionally intelligent leaders are able to determine when emotional barriers are impeding effective communication and make efforts to overcome them. According to Hannah et al. (2014), such interventions are only effective when the leader can read between the lines of the emotional signals that are not necessarily evident in a stressed team. Participant 6 mentioned that they attempted to monitor emotional blockages, but it was not always easy to discuss these problems straightforwardly without provoking additional inconvenience, which is a weakness of EI use in conflict resolution.

These findings are consistent with the Research Question 3 as it showed that proactive intervention is one of the foundations of EI during conflict resolution. Early action, preventing escalation of conflicts, solving problems immediately, early dialogues, and watching emotional blockages are also other factors that can enable leaders to manage conflicts in the banking industry. The research also demonstrates some of the complications of implementing proactive intervention strategies in high-pressure settings, with other external influences such as performance pressure and time pressure limiting the capacity to engage with emotional dynamics in their entirety.

5.4.4. Emotional regulation in conflict resolution: Managing emotions in leadership

The outcomes of the research emphasise the role of emotional management in preventing the emergence of conflict, and the fact that team members should be capable of surmounting emotional challenges in a positive way. These conclusions align with the third research question that is aimed to comprehend that EI could assist in workplace conflict resolution, specifically through the management of emotional response to any conflict. According to the results,

effective leaders are the ones who can balance using emotions to bring a productive and emotional working environment.

Among the probabilities observed in the course of the study, it is possible to single out the ability of the emotionally intelligent leaders to make their subordinates relax when they feel more emotional. Participant 4 indicated that one of the most significant processes during conflict management, especially in situations that are very stressful, is to ensure that team members relax. When employees were at their emotional best, leaders would be aware of this and be able to intervene in order to allow the team to relax, think properly, and even engage in productive discussions. This observation is associated with the argument formulated by Goleman (1998), who argued that emotionally intelligent leaders are skilled in the suppression of emotionally oriented reactions, which allows them to make more rational decisions. Participant 2 narrated that whenever there was a rift, they would often come in by either having one-on-one discussions or a meeting, which would get the problem back on a more balanced basis. The approach is similar to Lauer and Lauer (2021), who found that emotional management in the leadership process is a crucial aspect of preventing the negative outcomes of emotional elevation, such as wrong perception, disengagement or violence. Employing emotionally intelligent people to lead organisations helps to prevent such negative outcomes because of the increased level of emotional calmness and the ability of leaders to hold their teams together.

None of the participants found such calming strategies easy to implement. Participant 5 underlined that they were striving to ensure that members of the team would relax but they were unable to do so because of external influences of deadlines or financial objectives. In such stressful circumstances, the emotions of team members might be overwhelming, and possibly led to conflict, and the reduction of emotional intensity could not always be done instantly. Hoang et al. (2025) supported this limitation by suggesting that, though the regulation of emotions is significant, workplace stressors usually provide an environment where it is difficult to regulate emotions. Although EI assists leaders in controlling their emotions, its efficacy may be restricted by the general environment in which leaders operate.

Participants highlighted that the reduction of emotional intensity is a crucial strategy. Participant 3 noted that in instances where tension existed, especially when discussing financial performance or client relations, leaders had to deal with the emotional undertones which were

contributing to the level of tension in the conflict. The leaders could recognise their feelings, frustration, disappointment or fear and thus defuse the emotional aspect of a situation and refocus on what was at stake. This is supported by Gooty et al. (2010), who mentioned that emotionally intelligent leaders are adept at recognising when emotions are influencing decision-making in an undesirable way and making every effort to mitigate the intensity of this influence. This emotional response control process allows leaders to make emotional responses to their teams more logical and objective, thereby avoiding the development of conflicts.

Participant 6 also discussed the struggle with lowering the intensity of emotions, especially when they are deeply connected to previous experiences or issues which have been developing over the years. He observed that although emotional regulation methods might prove to be effective in the short term, more deeply rooted emotional reactions meant that there must be continued effort and knowledge. Zeidner et al. (2004) addressed the issue that even though emotional regulation can be effective, the underlying emotional source of conflict cannot always be addressed by it, especially where these emotions are systemic.

Participants indicated that directing emotional expression is a part of emotional regulation. Participant 7 added that emotionally intelligent leaders can control their emotions as well as those of their team members, making them express their emotions in the right way. This is crucial in the banking industry, where such expressions of emotions are usually suppressed because of the professional and competitive character of the work. Participant 7 mentioned that making members of the team share their feelings, either through organised feedback meetings or unofficial talks, served to wipe out misunderstandings and stop feelings developing into bigger conflicts. This conforms with Føllesdal and Hagtvvet (2013), who recommended that leaders with a high EI ensure that their teams express their emotions in positive ways that would not damage productivity but would add to it.

The answers to Research Question 3 indicate that emotionally controlling conflicts is vital in the management of the banking industry. Leaders who assist in calming their teams, cooling emotional situations, steering emotional expression, encouraging emotional balance, and lessening reactive behaviour may manage conflicts well and increase harmony within the team. The research also shows that emotional control is not always the easiest process, and can be constrained by outside forces, individual variations, and deep-rooted emotional problems. EI

is important in conflict resolution, but it should be applied flexibly, in a context-sensitive way to help the banking industry navigate crises and financial challenges.

5.4.5. Empathetic mediation in leadership: Navigating emotional dynamics in banking

The results of this study show how emotionally intelligent leaders can resolve conflicts through empathetic mediation to ensure effective communication and harmony in teams. This is also in tandem with Research Question 3, which examines the extent to which EI can be used to resolve conflicts in banking by dealing with emotional and practical dimensions of conflicts.

Making peace with understanding is one of the most important strategies of conflict resolution. Some of the participants, such as Participant 2 and Participant 4, remarked that emotionally intelligent leaders are good at listening to both sides of a conflict before taking any action. They stressed that when leaders can intimately observe the feelings and interests of all the involved parties, they will be able to come up with unbiased, equitable solutions that deal with the problem and not its manifestation. This conforms to Mrisho and Mseti, (2024), who postulated that leaders who have high EI can easily resolve conflicts by employing their empathy to appreciate divergent views and give people directions towards understanding each other. This opinion is shared by Mayer et al. (2008), who added that empathy allows leaders to become unbiased mediators so that team members can feel listened to and appreciated.

The research also indicated the difficulties of mediating conflict with the knowledge that, especially in highly stressful situations, feelings can be confusing. Participant 3 noted that although they tried to mediate with empathy, the stress to solve problems fast at times resulted in simplification of the conflict, concentrating more on quick fixes instead of delving deeper into the emotional context. This finding is supported by Nawaz et al. (2024), who indicated that even though EI could help the process of mediation, it needs to be implemented in a way that does not affect the comprehension of the problem under consideration in an effort to meet deadlines or performance targets that are considered urgent. Empathy is important for mediation, but leaders must apply it efficiently and promptly, especially in a dynamic and fast-paced banking sector.

The other significant emotionally intelligent leader tactic that was applied in this research was inspiring open expression. Participant 9 noted that in order to resolve conflicts successfully, it

is relevant to provide an open environment in which team members feel free to share their ideas and emotions. Open communication enables leaders to make team members feel that their problems are taken seriously, which, in addition to avoiding the looming conflicts, will also avoid miscommunication in the future. Conte (2005) argued that the culture of transparency that has been nurtured by leaders who are highly emotionally intelligent and open in their expression has helped in maintaining good and trust-based relations within teams. It is critical in this kind of environment, such as a bank, where clear communication is essential in decision-making and problem-solving.

Participant 4 had a point to make regarding the challenges of promoting open expression in the work setting, whereby the individual may feel that the problem of keeping emotions under wraps is an issue due to cultural or organisational pressure. They explained that not all members of the team would open up during conflicts in the events; they could be persuaded, even in the case of a member of the team who has a more conservative or competitive background. This observation is similar to the results of Seal and Andrews-Brown (2010), who pointed out that emotional expression is not necessarily right in all situations for all team members, and the ability of a leader to create a psychological sense of safety, along with the team members, is essential to create a feeling of inspiration. Although emotionally intelligent leaders can facilitate open expression, this needs to be a continuous process of ensuring an open culture which accepts and values emotional openness.

The other vital issue of empathetic mediation is the validation of the feelings of the concerned stakeholders involved in a conflict. Participant 7 discussed how it is possible to reduce the tension by learning and recognising the emotional condition of the individuals in the team, and getting people to feel that their voice is being heard, and the solution is not just what they wanted. The given strategy aligns with the words of Alhamami (2016), who said that the validation of feelings is a vital step in conflict resolution since it will enable reducing the level of emotional defensiveness and will offer a chance to employ more constructive discussions. Participant 3 explained that, by considering the emotional element of a conflict, whether it be stress, frustration or the sense that they have been wronged, they would be able to generate a sense of empathy and mutual respect, even when they were unable to resolve their disagreements at that particular moment. Another point highlighted by Goleman (1998) was that emotional validation is not only a way of resolving conflicts but also of making stronger relationships.

The responses to Research Question 3 indicate the significance of empathetic mediation as one of the tools emotionally intelligent leaders can use in conflict management. Whichever way, leaders are able to deal with conflicts positively and hold their members of the team together through mediating with empathy, promoting openness, justifying their feelings, maintaining peaceful dialogue, and establishing a balance between feelings. The study also suggests that empathetic mediation can be problematic in the banking industry due to the complexity of emotional forces and pressure, which are complex to overcome. Leaders must act with EI and pragmatic judgment, and they should alter their attitude towards the unique needs of their team and remember the overall organisational goals.

5.4.6. Negotiation and empathetic solutions in leadership: Resolving conflicts

The results of this research indicate that emotionally intelligent leaders can handle conflict situations by steering teams to find common ground, define common objectives, and advance solutions. The study also points to the fact that, no matter how efficient the use of emotionally intelligent mediation, negotiation and clarity challenges in the sphere of the fast-paced industry constrain the scope of the solutions to the problems that such strategies can provide.

One of the major discoveries was the capacity of leaders who had EI to make mutual decisions. Participant 4 emphasised that this includes not just the identification of emotional stakes of parties participating in the conflict, but also identifying the ground where both groups can meet halfway. This is in line with the argument by Goleman (1998) of how emotionally intelligent leaders are better placed to recognise the kind of emotional needs of other people and apply the same knowledge to mediate. The research, however, also showed that although leaders make efforts to ensure that the team works towards a win-win deal, external forces like financial crisis and regulatory limits will tend to hinder proper negotiation. According to Antonakis et al. (2009), leaders might be under pressure to solve conflicts fast, and such solutions are occasionally not able to factor out all the emotional or practical issues. This shows a very significant lacuna in the application of EI that enables leaders to get in touch with emotional triggers, but fast-paced banking situations might demand quicker solutions to be made; not all emotional needs can be addressed.

The skill to pinpoint and underscore common objectives was also an essential course of action. Dhani and Sharma (2016) opined that emotionally intelligent leaders can resolve conflicts by refocusing the teams on the greater perspective, which could be shared organisational goals or shared interests. Participant 6 said that conflicts were easily resolved when the focus was not on personal differences but rather on team objectives. This is something that enables leaders to convert emotionally charged circumstances into joint problem-solving opportunities. Nevertheless, this method was not effective for all the participants. Participant 2 mentioned that in some conflicts, where there were strong personal beliefs or values, the combination of goals did not help much in reducing the tensions. Ashkanasy and Daus (2002) concurred with this view by stating that although goal focus can be effective in some instances, certain conflicts are so emotional that mere focus on the goals will not solve the emotional needs. This demonstrates how ego fixation in goal fit can result in conflict resolution in emotionally charged situations.

In addition, solution-based conversations turned out to be a significant element of EI conflict resolution. Participant 8 explained that they could sustain the involvement and drive of the team by ensuring that discussions were solution-oriented rather than problem-related. Wen et al. (2019) supported this view by stating that a solution-based approach will help avoid the conflict but will not allow it to spread further. However, Participant 3 emphasised that it was difficult to discuss the issue in a solution-based way, which was heightened in cases where emotions were sharp. They noted that emotionally strained team members could hardly positively contribute, and it would disastrously derail the discussion and make the conflict longer. This quandary resonates with Drigas et al. (2023), who thought leaders must undertake research in line with the existing emotional vibe within the team and determine when feelings can be relieved, then move on to the solutions.

The responses to Research Question 3 contribute to demonstrating that emotionally intelligent leaders are quite effective in conflict resolution, as it may result in mutual agreements, focus on the goal of the common interests, promote compromise, and be clear. The study also identifies some of the failures when it comes to the application of EI in resolving conflicts, particularly in high-pressure situations like banking. Although conflict can be solved using EI, other cases have been identified that may aggravate the more emotional or systemic issues that might be rooted in the conflict. Moreover, the ability of emotionally intelligent leaders to

compromise in order to settle on solutions that will satisfy everybody is limited by external forces and beliefs that have been well-established.

5.5. Chapter summary

This chapter covers the critical role of EI in leadership practices within the banking sector in Bangladesh. It provides an in-depth discussion of key EI competencies, such as self-awareness, emotional regulation and empathy, highlighting their importance in decision-making and interpersonal interactions. The chapter discusses how these competencies enable participants who are banking leaders to effectively manage teams and resolve conflicts.

Among the major competencies is the focus on self-awareness, where leaders consider their emotional conditions and acknowledge the influence of these emotions on their choices. Self-regulation is also of the essence, particularly in high-pressure set-ups such as banking, where leaders are obligated to control their emotions and the emotions of those under them in order to ensure a productive environment. The chapter study also investigates the use of EI in team management, communication strategies, motivation and emotional sensitivity to improve the processes within a team. It further discusses the ways that EI can be useful in resolving conflicts, in which the leaders recognise the emotional triggers, mediate conflicts, and develop win-win solutions. The results indicate that EI is a determining factor when it comes to leadership effectiveness, especially in highly emotional situations.

Chapter Six: Conclusions and Implications

6.1. Introduction

The conclusion is the last chapter of this research paper and it summarises the key findings in the context of relevance of EI in leadership in the Bangladesh banking industry. It is informed by the purpose of the research that seeks to explore the effects of EI on leadership practices, management of teams and conflict management. The study confirmed that EI is a crucial element of improving the effectiveness of a leader, especially in the banking industry, which is dynamic and demanding. The results show that banking executives with elevated EI are in a better position to handle teams, conflict management, and negotiate intricate decisions. This chapter is a reflection on the implications of these findings for practice in the banking industry. In addition, the limitations of the study are outlined together with recommendations for further research.

6.2. Implications for theory

The current study is an important theoretical addition to the growing research into EI and leadership by offering culturally contextualised information based on the Bangladeshi banking industry. Although earlier study has generally determined EI to be a useful characteristic in successful leadership (Boyatzis, 2013; Goleman, 1998; Salovey & Mayer, 1990), the study meets a gap by examining how EI is practised and perceived in a given national and institutional setting. In analysing behaviours of emotional self-regulation, empathy, social awareness and interpersonal responsiveness in banking leaders, the study adds to the theoretical discussions on the generalised constructs to managerial practices in the real-world working environment in a non-Western setting.

One of the main theoretical implications is that the study focuses on the use of EI in high-stakes and highly controlled financial settings. Unlike past studies, which rely heavily on general organisational environments, the banking industry presents challenges of regulatory checks, customer pressures and inflexibility in organisational structures (Farzana & Charoensukmongkol, 2024). Leaders are expected to manage stress and pressure while maintaining morale and team spirit. This study shows that emotionally intelligent banking executives have the adjustment ability to control stress, manage interpersonal conflict, and inspire employees in a long-term and strategic way. These results add a different view to the

widely held argument that EI makes good leaders since it contextualises this argument in the sector where the concept of accountability and compliance usually takes precedence over the aspect of relationships (Joseph & Newman, 2010; Rosete & Ciarrochi, 2005).

In addition, the study also contributes to theoretical insights on EI by showing how central it is in team dynamics. Emotionally sensitive leaders contribute to psychological safety, trust and a collaborative environment (Bass, 1990; Greenleaf, 1977). It is not similar to many of the Western-based models that presuppose a flat organisational structure and the open culture of feedback, as the current study shows that EI has a distinctive mediating role in Bangladesh, where hierarchy and formality are predominant. Instead of breaking down hierarchy, emotionally intelligent leaders work in it, using emotional signals, non-direct communication, and unobtrusive movements to engage people in collaboration and keep the team together (Giao et al., 2020; Karim et al., 2024).

Regarding conflict management, the research supports the assumption that EI adds value to the positive management of conflicts in the workplace. High emotional awareness was observed to be the tool that leaders used in conflicts to find a way with empathy and communication, which aligns with the findings from the existing literature on EI and conflict competence (Shih & Susanto, 2010; Winardi et al., 2022). However, the study also points to the cultural peculiarities that whereas direct communication is emphasised by most of the EI models as one of the ways of conflict resolution, the current study reveals that emotional diplomacy and non-confrontational strategies will be more useful in Bangladesh. Leaders who are emotionally intelligent in such environments can solve conflict by maintaining harmony (Cherniss, 2010).

6.3. Implications for practice

The research has multiple implications in the practice of banking organisations, leadership development practitioners, human resource professionals and policymakers who want to develop effective leadership in organisations. The study, based on EI applied to the Bangladeshi banking sector, offers guidelines on how to transform the theoretical knowledge into practical leadership development practices that address the cultural and institutional peculiarities of the sector.

One of the main practical implications is the necessity to incorporate EI development as a formal part of leadership training. It has been revealed in the study that the majority of bank managers had learnt emotional competencies in an informal manner by means of years of experience and introspection. The use of experiential learning can only result in inconsistency, knowledge gaps or reinforcement of old behavioural patterns. Organisations need to use designed EI training units that will foster central emotional skills like self-awareness, self-control, empathy and relationship management (Drigas et al., 2023). The programmes are not limited to theoretical presentation but introduce the experiential activities such as peer coaching, emotional judgement and group reflection to develop practical skills in emotion recognition and regulation.

Another widely recognised instrument of the mixed model of EI is the Emotional Competence Inventory by Boyatzis (2013). The Mayer-Salovey Ability Model, which is related to the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT), offers another vision of EI. The MSCEIT is an EI test that concentrates on the ability associated with EI, and evaluates the ability of individuals to perceive, comprehend, control and manage emotions (Mayer et al., 2008). These two tools are indispensable in the measurement of emotional competencies in organisations. In their specific case, the MSCEIT may provide a more cognitive and skills-based conceptualisation of EI, while Boyatzis concentrates on the competencies and behaviours. It is possible to integrate these tools into organisational development programmes to measure and monitor EI developments over time so that organisations can measure the advancements in EI and transfer them to practice. These actions may help to improve communication, trust and decision-making based on emotions that play a vital role in the high-stress atmosphere of the banking industry (Afroz et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the study demonstrates that emotionally intelligent leadership can play a critical role in facilitating good team functioning. Emotionally sensitive, empathetic and open communication leaders were considered to have a greater ability to build trust and motivate the team members. Hence, interpersonal effectiveness and technical knowledge should be valued in development programmes in leadership. The active listening skills, empathetic feedback, and inclusive conversation skills need to be actively developed to promote team cohesion and high performance (Daus & Ashkanasy, 2005; Wolff et al., 2002).

The practical utility of EI is even more evident in conflict-prone scenarios. Emotionally intelligent managers were found in the current study to handle tensions more sensitively, as most times they prevented tensions from escalating out of hand by becoming aware of emotional undertones early. This implies that organisations ought to incorporate the principles of EI into their conflict management procedures and training. The activities centred on sympathetic mediation, emotion-driven conflict diagnosis, and de-escalation techniques would help managers to easily solve conflicts and preserve harmony in teams (Lobo, 2023; Melita Prati et al., 2003). Notably, this training should also be based on cultural values and communication standards.

The study identifies the imperative of culturally sensitive leadership practice. Leaders in Bangladesh are working in a high power-distance society where concepts of respect, seniority and indirect communication are dominant (Solan, 2008; Taliadorou & Pashiardis, 2015). Thus, leadership development must be created in such a way that it embraces these cultural parameters and fuels active EI competencies. As an example, handling conflict in Bangladeshi society might involve being subtle and discreet, i.e., providing feedback privately but not publicly (which is also advisable in Western societies), a relational mediator, or non-verbal communication to ensure the preservation of face and dignity (Eva et al., 2019). Such behaviours are also quite in opposition to more direct or assertive Western versions of leadership, yet they are very effective in maintaining organisational harmony in collectivist cultures (Fiedler, 2006).

6.4. Limitations of the study

The study has several limitations that determine the extent, depth and applicability of the results. It is critical to identify these parameters to place the study in the context of a larger research environment and to guide future research.

The first limitation of the study is the somewhat small and demographically narrow sample. Ten participants were used in the study, and they represented male managers working in the banking sector in Bangladesh. Although this sample size aligns with the qualitative research tradition in which depth is prioritised over breadth, it is bound to restrict the extrapolation of results to the larger population (Hopkins et al., 2007). A more diverse and wider pool of

participants, such as female managers and leaders at various levels of the organisation, may provide a more in-depth insight into EI in banking leadership.

The lack of subordinate viewpoints is closely connected with the demographic constraint. It can be concluded that the study has mostly used self-perceptions since it only used managerial accounts to develop its findings. Although useful, such a one-sided opinion does not include the input of employees who work with these leaders daily. The EI of the manager executives could have a wide variety of effects on subordinates, particularly in emotional contexts or when resolving conflicts (Law et al., 2004). These voices can be included in future research, which might give a more balanced and relational picture of EI in leadership, and will help to triangulate the self-reported assertions with those of third parties.

The other limitation is the fact that the data is self-reported. Since respondents were requested to consider their own leadership behaviours, it is possible that they responded because of social desirability bias, the propensity to present self-reports in a positive way (Sfetcu, 2020). This danger is especially relevant in situations in which EI is becoming positively correlated with effective leadership. The research lacked any mechanism of cross-checking, 360-degree feedback, or observations to justify the self-assessment. In addition, the interview questionnaire did not specifically focus on emotional failure, blind spots and mismanagement instances, which are also crucial to learn the limits of emotional effectiveness (Murphy, 2014). This could have caused unintentionally biased data towards a more positive characteristic of the leadership behaviours.

The geographic and cultural location also limits the applicability of the study. The study was only carried out in Bangladesh, and this is why the results are representative of the particular cultural, social and economic reality of one national context. Although it allows investigating the concept of leadership in a high power-distance, collectivist society in depth, it does not allow cross-cultural comparisons and a conclusion that can be drawn for any other area. The affective standards, communicational patterns, and leadership expectations witnessed in Bangladeshi banking might not necessarily take place in nations whose cultural logic and standards differ, including individualism or egalitarianism (Peiris & Ulluwishewa, 2023).

Moreover, the distinct socio-economic environment of Bangladesh, characterised by regulatory instability and technological infrastructure, as well as talent retention concerns, can also reduce

the number of applications of the results (Robin et al., 2018). Such structural features not only affect leadership practices but also the culture of the organisation in which EI is practised. Consequently, the results can be considered as culturally and institutionally specific and provide an insight that is best applicable in similar socio-economic and regulatory settings.

One of the possible limitations of the study is that the researcher had worked in the banking industry in Bangladesh and was personally acquainted with some of the interview participants. This familiarity might have affected the way in which the answers of the participants were interpreted, especially in terms of implicit assumptions or their common contextual knowledge. The researcher had a chance of influencing the analysis unintentionally by his/her experiences. In order to solve this, a reflexive approach was used in the research activities. The researcher always took personal biases into consideration and made sure that the interpretation was strongly based on the verbatim response of the participants, thus trying to maintain the objectivity and credibility of the study findings.

6.5. Future research directions

The limitations presented in this study offer some useful avenues of future research. With the growing academic attention towards EI in organisational and leadership research, an urgent concern is to elaborate and broaden the investigation of the use of EI in different contexts, populations and institutional environments, as well as critically analyse it. This study of male banking managers in Bangladesh provides a good starting point through which a more inclusive and comparative study can be established. A comparative analysis of other South Asian nations, including India, Pakistan or Sri Lanka, would prove helpful in terms of how the differences in culture and institutions affect the role of EI in leadership within the region.

The recent study has solely used self-reports of the managers, and these reports, though informative, may be an aspiration or an idealised representation of emotionally intelligent behaviour. The voices of the team members interacting with the leaders daily and being in a good position to evaluate the immediate impacts of their emotional regulation, communication and empathy should be involved in future research. Through these perceptions, researchers may get a more comprehensive understanding of how interactions work, and identify some of the mismatches between self-reported and externally measured EI (Farnia & Nafukho, 2016). This

method would help create a better overview of the practice of leadership and enable the interpretation of emotional competence at multiple layers.

The other area that needs to be explored in future is the incorporation of female leaders. EI has been repeatedly considered in the context of gender, and it has been proposed that women are more emotionally conscious or possibly emotional in the leadership context (Nanjundeswaraswamy et al., 2024). But these presumptions have to be closely empirically explored in different cultural settings. Female leaders in Bangladesh might have their own emotional challenges and pressures at work because of social norms and institutional obstacles that promote gender roles. Studies that explore the process through which female managers handle emotional leadership and how their experiences are related to male peers would contribute to EI theory and practice significantly (Zawadzki et al., 2024). Additionally, this investigation would bring value to models of development of gender-inclusive leadership that would represent the diversity of leadership trajectories better.

Outside of individual variations, cross-national comparative analysis is essential to the development of culturally sensitive insights into EI. Since the current research project was done in the Bangladeshi setting, which is a high power-distance, collectivistic society, the results might not be directly applicable to other areas. Comparative research of other countries with different cultural profiles, such as Singapore, India and even Western countries, including the UK or the US, might shed some light on how EI applies to the situation, depending on the national culture, institutional maturity and leadership expectations. The comparisons would also test the universality of existing EI models and guide the creation of culturally calibrated assessment instruments and training models (Brown & Nwagbara, 2021; Bwalya, 2023).

One of the least explored and especially significant new avenues of future research is studying EI failures. A significant part of the extant literature, which this study belongs to, is devoted to emotionally intelligent behaviours and their positive consequences. Little has been done to reveal cases of leaders who have not been successful in regulating their emotions, be it in over-regulation, in suppressing emotion or in misinterpreting emotional signals. Such failures may lead to escalation of conflict, disengagement of a team or damage to a reputation. Studies on these dark sides of EI would offer a more balanced and critical view, whereby leadership training programmes would not only focus on strengthening a skill, but they would also look at what pitfalls and vulnerabilities are prevalent (Kilduff et al., 2010).

Also, emotionally intelligent leaders in a high-stress or crisis setting might be a valuable study. In these situations, leaders are more likely to be affected by emotional misjudgement or burnout. A study of the behaviour of emotional competencies when put in situations of acute stress, scarce resources or organisational change would challenge the validity of EI theories and offer effective lessons into leadership resilience. Certain patterns of emotional adaptation and recovery could be observed by longitudinal studies of leaders in various stages of crisis before, during, and after (Melita Prati et al., 2023).

6.6. Methodological clarification

Methodologically, the study used a hybrid research design that was a combination of deductive and inductive reasoning that examined the issue of the importance of EI in banking leadership in Bangladesh. This two-sided approach allowed the researcher to rely on the established theory bases, but also be sensitive to new themes and cultural attributes in the information. The mix of methodologies is becoming more accepted in qualitative research studies as a means to reconcile theory-based inquiry with a practical richness (McCleskey, 2014).

The deductive part of the study was based on the existing models of EI, especially that of Salovey and Mayer (1990). This paradigm gave the theoretical framework of the study design, such as the development of interview protocols and the determination of the initial thematic areas. The choice to adopt these accepted models enabled the researcher to put the study in its own context of a strong body of literature and thus made the research questions and the conceptual parameters consistent with current academic knowledge of EI.

Meanwhile, the study acknowledged the weakness of a deductive design, in particular, when studying socially constructed and culture-based phenomena like EI (Malik et al., 2019). Thus, the research also had an inductive aspect to it, as it was based on the lived experience and stories of the participants. Interviewing was semi-structured, which allowed the interviewee to express his/her understanding of EI and its use using his/her words. This approach allowed the individuals to reveal emerging themes that were not intended to exist in the existing models, such as emotional self-restraint in hierarchical settings or a refusal to encounter conflict in conflict management, therefore adding richness and cultural sensitivity to the findings (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005).

Themes were determined according to EI dimensions hypothesised by the available models - self-awareness, emotional regulation and empathy (Lee et al., 2023). Novel themes were inductively developed as a result of several coding cycles and repeated reading of the transcripts. These consisted of culturally mediated behaviours such as indirect communication and role-based emotional performance. The ability to balance pre-established and emergent categories made sure that the study was open to discovery yet, at the same time, grounded in scholarly precedent. This methodological dualism was useful, especially in strategies of navigating the cultural environment of Bangladesh, where the constructs of EI of Western origin might not be very effective in terms of the socio-emotional requirements of leadership.

For instance, whereas Western conceptualisations of EI tend to idolise emotional transparency, the interviewees in this research emphasised the importance of emotional regulation, non-verbal communication, and role-based affect regulation. This could have been missed during a deductive study that is solely focused on theoretical categories. On the other hand, the theoretical grounding of a pure inductive method, where there is no such anchoring, might not have been capable of placing such behaviours in the wider literature of EI. The mixed approach enabled the study to be theoretically informed but not theoretically constrained.

6.7. Chapter summary

This chapter highlights the results of the study on the role of EI in leadership practices in the banking sector in Bangladesh. It supports the argument that EI is the key to successful leadership, as it helps a leader to establish strong relationships, cope with emotions in themselves and their teammates, and create a positive work atmosphere. The study finds that EI also plays an important role in decision-making, team management and conflict resolution. The research also reveals the deficiencies in the literature as far as the use of EI in the Bangladesh banking industry is concerned. Moreover, the chapter recognises the research weaknesses, such as the small geographical area of the study and the qualitative method. On the basis of these findings, it provides recommendations on how EI can be incorporated into leadership development programmes, with future research to investigate EI in other sectors and regions. The paper closes by showing how EI can enhance leadership performance in the banking sector of Bangladesh.

6.8. Final thoughts

Through the findings of the study, some interesting insights have been made regarding the overlap of EI and leadership practices in the banking industry of Bangladesh and the importance of the EI attribute in effective leadership, particularly in a high-pressure environment. It shows that leaders who have high levels of EI competencies are better placed in handling teams, conflict resolution, and making decisions that encourage a positive and productive organisational culture. The literature review also revealed a major gap in the literature available, especially with respect to Bangladesh, where the cultural, socio-economic and regulatory forces influence the dynamics of leadership in a rather different manner.

The study highlights the importance of incorporating EI into leadership training programmes, particularly in the banking sector, which is experiencing a swift transformation due to changes brought about by technology and regulatory changes. The development of EI skills will allow banking leaders to improve their emotional control, communication, empathy and decision-making skills, which eventually will result in improved management of teams, employee performance and customer satisfaction. Moreover, EI is also helpful in conflict resolution, as it allows leaders to handle conflicts more sensibly and emotionally, thereby keeping teams in balance and avoiding the escalation of situations.

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Appendices

I: Consent form



Project title: *An evaluation of the influences of emotional intelligence on leadership practices in the banking sector in Bangladesh*

Project Supervisor: *Dr Roy Smollan, Management, Technology and Organisation, Faculty of Business, Economics and Law*

Researcher: *Mohammad Sohrab Hossain*

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 15 May 2025.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes No

Participant's signature:

.....

Participant's name:

.....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....
.....
.....
.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on type the date on which the final approval was granted AUTEK Reference number type the AUTEK reference number

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

II: Participant information sheet



Date that data collection will start:

15 June 2025

Project Title

An evaluation of the influences of emotional intelligence on leadership practices in the banking sector in Bangladesh.

Hello!

You are invited to participate in a research study on the influence of emotional intelligence on leadership efficiency in the banking industry in Bangladesh. This study is being conducted by Mohammad Sohrab Hossain from Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand who also worked in the banking sector in Bangladesh for x years. The study is being carried out as a requirement for Master of Business under Department of Management, Technology and Organisation, Faculty of Business, Economics & Law, Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand.

What is the purpose of this research?

The research is going to investigate the effects of influences of emotional intelligence on leadership practices in Bangladeshi banking sector. In this research, how banking leaders' emotional intelligence affects team management and conflict resolution at workplaces will be investigated. The study will also attempt to identify the critical emotional intelligence competencies of banking leaders in Bangladesh. In this pursuit, bankers from Bangladesh will be involved in this research for collecting primary data to derive the desired findings from the investigation. The bankers will be in two roles – team leaders and team members. In this way, the views and perceptions of both team leaders and team members can be obtained. Online interviews using Zoom will be conducted with the selected participants for data collection for the investigation. In the online interview session, the participants will be asked questions regarding emotional intelligence of leaders in banking industry and how it can help improve effectiveness of semi-structured so that the subjective views of the participants can be obtained.

The primary aim of the study is to evaluate the influences of emotional intelligence on leadership practices in the banking industry in Bangladesh. In line with this, the specific objectives of the study have been developed as follows:

To identify the critical emotional intelligence competencies of banking leaders.

To determine the effective team management strategies facilitated with emotional intelligence that are applied by banking leaders for facilitating productive work cultures.

To evaluate the role of emotional intelligence in fostering effective conflict resolution environment by banking leaders within workplaces.

The findings of this research may be used for academic publications and presentations.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

According to the information provided by the peers from the banking industry of the researcher, you have been selected as the potential participant based on two key criteria: 1) 5 years of working experience in any banking firm operating in Bangladesh, 2) working in a team within the banking firm where team operations are required for serving customers, e.g., treasury, credit, general banking, cash management, trade services, etc.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You can withdraw from the study at any time by informing the Researcher. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you can ask for information collected up until your withdrawal from the study to be deleted unless you withdraw after the study analyses have been undertaken.

You are free to withdraw at any time. To do this, simply express your will to withdraw yourself from the interview process. Any information you have entered up to that point will be deleted from the data set, upon your request. However, as the research targets to interview you anonymously, completion of the interview will be taken as consent and agreement to participate.

Prize Draw/Koha

As a gesture of appreciation for your time and contribution, you will receive a Koha (a small token of appreciation). This is intended solely to acknowledge your cooperation and support for the research project.

What will my participation involve?

You will have to participate in an interview to be held via Zoom platform. In the interview, open-ended questions will be asked to you regarding emotional intelligence and its influence on leadership effectiveness. The interview is likely to take 45-60 minutes to be completed. It will be conducted according to your convenience via Zoom platform, i.e., the interview session will be remotely administered. Indicative interview questions have been sent to you along with this information sheet and consent form. However, any subsequent questions can be asked to clarify your answers, if any confusion arises at the researcher's end.

What are the benefits?

Though you will not be benefited directly from the research outcomes until the results of the investigation, the final outcomes are likely to contribute to the academic field with unique insights regarding the nexus between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness in the Bangladeshi banking sector. Besides, there will be practical implications of the outcomes as they can be implied in practical workspaces and the stakeholders of the financial sector in

Bangladesh can utilize the findings to design more effective frameworks for leaders to practise their emotional intelligence in leading their teams.

What are the costs?

Since the interview will be conducted online, no costs will be incurred at your end, except for the internet bandwidth charges. Significant cost of participation in the interview will be your time, which may be around 45 to 60 minutes. However, to appreciate your time and contribution, you will receive a Koha (a small token of appreciation), which is purposed for acknowledging your cooperation and support for the investigation.

Will the results of the study be published?

The results of this research will be published in a Master's thesis. This thesis will be available to the general public through the AUT library. Results may be published in peer-reviewed, academic journals. You will not be identifiable in any publication.

What are the discomforts and risks?

It is highly unlikely that you will experience any discomfort or embarrassment answering the interview questions. If you feel uncomfortable during the interview, you will be at liberty to terminate the session. Besides, no possible risk of significant extent has been identified which may expose you to threats during the interviews. The interview will deal with emotions but negative outcomes are not foreseen.

What will happen to information about me?

The interview sessions will be recorded; and thus, data collected from you and used in this investigation can be individually identifiable.

Other than the recorded interview sessions, there will be no other identifiable information to be collected in the interview.

The interview data and transcripts will be stored in the cloud server for at least 6 (six) years after data analysis is completed. After 06 (six) years of the completion of data analysis, your data will be removed safely through permanent deletion from the cloud servers.

The researcher and the supervisor will have the access to your interview data.

You are requested to provide consent for the use of your identifiable data for this project only.

Your data will be stored in a data-encrypted and password-protected cloud storage.

Your data will be handled with the highest level of confidentiality. It is to be mentioned that apart from recommending potential participants, no third party have been engaged in collecting any information (other than your email address).

No personal data will be sought in the interview; however, you will have the liberty to modify your views and opinion until the interview session ends.

By signing the consent form, you are agreeing to the use your information as stated in this Information Sheet. However, any identifiable information will only be disclosed outside of the study with your, or as required by law.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You will be allowed 07 (seven) days to consider the invitation and send the signed consent form to participate in the Zoom interview.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, *enter name, email address, and a work phone number*.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, *ethics@aut.ac.nz*, (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

Who do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Mohammad Sohrab Hossain
Postgraduate Student, Master of Business
Department of Management, Technology and Organisation
Faculty of Business, Economics & Law
Auckland University of Technology (AUT)
www.aut.ac.nz
Email: Xgd1639@autuni.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Dr Roy Smollan
Faculty
Department of Management, Technology and Organisation
Faculty of Business, Economics & Law
Auckland University of Technology (AUT)
www.aut.ac.nz
Email: roy.smollan@aut.ac.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *type the date final ethics approval was granted*, AUTEK Reference number *type the reference number*.

IV: Indicative interview questions

Topic: An evaluation of the influences of emotional intelligence on leadership practices in the banking sector in Bangladesh

Indicative questions for Zoom Interview:

1. Please explain what you understand by the term emotional intelligence.
2. Do you believe that you have emotional intelligence competencies such as the ability to understand your own emotions and those of others that you can manage your own emotions, and respond appropriately to those of others?
3. How do you attempt to understand and respond to the emotions of your team members?
4. How do you attempt to control your own emotions?
5. Do you think these competencies help you become a good leader in the current banking industry in Bangladesh?
6. How do these competencies affect your decision-making?
7. How do these competencies affect your relationships with your team members?
8. Do your emotional intelligence competencies help you in achieving your personal goals within your organisational settings?
9. How does your emotional intelligence help in building trust and collaboration among your team members?
10. How does your emotional intelligence help in resolving conflict among or with your team members?
11. How do you ensure fairness and sensitivity while resolving conflict?
12. What measures should your organisation take that can help you develop or improve the emotional intelligence of all its employees?

V: Invitation email to participants

Subject: Invitation to Participate in a Research Interview on Emotional Intelligence and Leadership in the Bangladeshi Banking Sector

Dear Mr./Ms. XXXXXXXX,

I hope you are doing well.

I am writing to invite you to participate in an online interview as part of my academic research for a Master of Business degree at the Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand titled “An Evaluation of the Influences of Emotional Intelligence on Leadership Practices in the Banking Sector in Bangladesh.” I grew up and was educated in Bangladesh and have worked in the banking sector for x years.

Purpose of the Study:

The aim of this research is to evaluate the influences of emotional intelligence on leadership practices in the banking industry in Bangladesh. Your participation will provide valuable insights that can help improve leadership development programs and contribute to academic knowledge in this field.

Interview Details:

- Format: Online (via Zoom)
- Duration: Approximately 45–60 minutes
- Scheduling: At a time convenient for you

Participation is entirely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any stage of the interview process without any consequences. All information you share will remain confidential and anonymous. The data collected will be used strictly for research purposes and handled with full respect to your privacy.

If you consent to an interview I will email you documents approved by the University: a full Participant Information Sheet, a Consent Form, and a Participant Personal Details Form.

My supervisor is Dr Roy Smollan (email: roy.smollan@aut.ac.nz) and you can contact him too if you have any queries.

Only add this if they agree to an interview:

Consent and Participation:

Attached to this email, you will find:

1. **Participant Information Sheet**, outlining the research details, your rights, and how your data will be handled.
2. **Consent Form**, confirming your understanding and willingness to participate.
3. **Participant Details Form.....**

If you agree to take part in the interview:

1. Please read both documents carefully.
2. Sign the Consent Form digitally to indicate your agreement.
3. Reply to this email with the signed consent form attached and a short note confirming your willingness to participate.

Koha:

As a gesture of appreciation for your time and contribution, participants will receive a Koha (a small token of appreciation). This is intended solely to acknowledge your cooperation and support for the research project.

If you have any questions or require further clarification, please feel free to contact me via this email (Xgd1639@autuni.ac.nz).

Thank you very much for considering participation. I look forward to your response.

Warm regards

Mohammad Sohrab Hossain

Postgraduate Student, Master of Business

Department of Management, Technology and Organisation

Faculty of Business, Economics & Law

Auckland University of Technology (AUT)

www.aut.ac.nz

Email: Xgd1639@autuni.ac.nz

Phone: +64224082211

VI: Ethics approval



Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

9 July 2025

Roy Smollan
Faculty of Business Economics and Law

Dear Roy

Re Ethics Application: **25/175 An evaluation of the influences of emotional intelligence on leadership practices in the banking sector in Bangladesh**

Thank you for your responses to AUTEC's conditions.

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 9 July 2028.

Non-Standard Conditions of Approval

1. Provide the exact location of data storage for example, OneDrive, and include this in the Information Sheet.

Non-standard conditions do not need to be submitted to or reviewed by AUTEC unless requested but must be completed before commencing your study.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. The research is to be undertaken in accordance with the [Auckland University of Technology Code of Conduct for Research](#) and as approved by AUTEC.
2. All public facing documents must have the AUTEC approval number and be of a high standard of spelling and grammar. Dates on the Information Sheet(s) and Consent Form(s) must be consistent.
3. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented.
4. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date.
5. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project.
6. Any serious or adverse events must be reported to AUTEC, this includes unforeseen issues that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.
7. AUTEC grants ethical approval only. You are responsible for obtaining management permission for access from any institution or organisation at which your research is being conducted and you need to meet all ethical, legal, public health, and locality obligations or requirements for the jurisdictions in which the research is being undertaken.

The application number and title need to be referenced on all correspondence related to this project.

All forms are available online <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics>

For any enquiries, please contact the Secretariat at ethics@aut.ac.nz
(This is a computer-generated letter for which no signature is required)

The AUTEC Secretariat
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: sgd1639@aut.ac.nz; sohrab.ru24@gmail.com