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Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Employees Performance in Commercial Bank: A Mediating Role of Leadership Style

Preeti Mandal [1], Majibur Rahman Siddique [2*], Bhijil Kanwar[3]

[1]Quest International College, Pokhara University, Nepal

[2]Quest Research Management Cell, Quest International College, Pokhara University, Nepal

[3]Quest International College, Pokhara University, Nepal

***Correspondence:**

majibur@quest.edu.np

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Abstract

Emotional intelligence (EI) and leadership styles are increasingly recognized as critical determinants of employee performance in dynamic and service-intensive sectors such as banking. This study investigates the influence of EI and leadership styles on employee performance in the banking industry, with a focus on the mediating role of transformational leadership. An explanatory research design was employed, and data were collected from 406 respondents using purposive sampling and self-administered structured questionnaires via the KOBO toolbox. The analysis was conducted using Excel and SmartPLS 4.0. Findings reveal that among the EI dimensions, self-awareness and self-management did not significantly impact employee performance, whereas social awareness and relationship management were significantly associated with both employee performance and leadership styles. The study concludes that EI, particularly social awareness and relationship management, alongside transformational leadership, plays a significant role in enhancing employee performance in the Kathmandu banking sector. Transformational leadership acts as a mediator between EI and performance, highlighting the importance of EI-focused leadership development programs. The findings provide practical implications for HR managers and policymakers to enhance strategic human resource decisions and suggest further research across different industries and regions to strengthen organizational outcomes.

Keywords: *employee performance, emotional intelligence, leadership style, SmartPLS 4.0*

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1. Introduction

The concept of emotional intelligence (EI) has received a lot of academic attention as an important human competence with a massive impact on the results of individual performance, interpersonal performance, and leadership in working environments (Saxena, 2025; George, 2000). In contemporary organizations, especially those that serve in the service-oriented and knowledge-based field, employees and leaders are often expected to operate under complicated, dynamic and pressure-driven circumstances (Aalam et. al., 2025). In this case, accurate perceiving, managing and responding to emotions in a proper way is an essential factor of proper behavior and results in an organization. The development of emotional intelligence provides people with the ability to cope with problems in the workplace, stay intrinsically motivated, and establish positive and cooperative relationships, which are the key factors in ensuring the high rates of performance and organizational efficacy.

Conceptually speaking, emotional intelligence is a concept that involves numerous intertwined capabilities such as self-awareness, emotional control, empathy, and the capacity to deal and shape interpersonal relationships positively (Goleman, 2001; Aalam et al., 2025). The emotional and social skills help employees to react flexibly and adaptably to changing organizational needs by augmenting the mental processes which include decision-making, communication, and problem-solving (Sony & Mekoth, 2016; Jeni & Reddy, 2024; Sony & Mekoth, 2022). Empirical evidence also indicates that increased levels of EI are positively related to organizational citizenship behavior, quality of problem solving, and quality conflict management behaviors (Day & Carroll, 2004; Liao et. al., 2022). Furthermore, emotional intelligence leads to less stress and better psychological health, hence contributing to the overall mental wellbeing and resilience of employees in the work environment (Olaleye & Lekunze, 2024; Rao et. al., 2024). In conflict management, EI has been identified to facilitate collaborative and integrative styles of resolving conflicts whereas it was negatively correlated with competitive and adversarial bargaining styles (Zhang et. al., 2015).

Leadership style becomes an important mechanism where emotional intelligence is converted into performance that is realized at an individual level and at an organizational level. Transformational leadership has been given special focus among other leadership paradigms because of its focus on inspirational motivation, individual consideration and intellectual stimulation to the followers (Bass, 1985; Osborn et al., 2002). Transformational leaders exhibiting leadership behaviors encourage workers to go beyond their own personal interests and perform at levels above what they are supposed to achieve, thus creating an organizational environment that is highly innovative, committed, and improvement driven (Chitiga, 2018). The successful implementation of these leadership behaviors is inherently connected with the concept of emotional intelligence because such competencies as self-awareness, empathy, and interpersonal sensitivity are needed to comprehend the needs of the followers, effective support, and employee development (Bass and Avolio, 1994; George, 2007; Goleman, 2001; Dulewicz et al., 2005).

Empirical evidence from diverse global contexts further corroborates the significance of EI in enhancing leadership effectiveness and employee performance. In Taiwan, team trust exerts an indirect positive influence on job performance through EI (Lee et al., 2023). Research in India demonstrates that the integration of EI with transformational leadership minimizes emotional exhaustion while enhancing productivity (D'Souza et al., 2022). Studies in Indonesia identify EI as a key determinant of leadership effectiveness (Amisha, 2021), whereas Chinese research highlights that cultural norms underpin the positive relationship between EI and transformational leadership (Lam

& O'Higgins, 2013). Additionally, evidence from Pakistan indicates that the combined influence of transformational leadership, EI, and intellectual competence significantly contributes to project success (Farid et al., 2021). Collectively, these findings underscore the universal relevance of EI in shaping leadership and organizational outcomes across varying cultural and institutional contexts.

In Nepal, the scholarly exploration of EI and leadership within organizational settings has gradually intensified. For example, studies in the higher education sector demonstrate that university faculty with higher EI report greater job satisfaction (Chapagain, 2021), reinforcing the critical role of EI in influencing leadership effectiveness and employee performance in Nepalese workplaces. Nevertheless, significant research gaps persist. Much of the extant literature is concentrated in Western contexts, limiting the generalizability of findings to developing economies such as Nepal (Amisha, 2021). Within the Nepalese context, existing research confirms associations between EI, transformational leadership, and organizational outcomes such as employee commitment and entrepreneurial orientation (Lama et al., 2023; Paudel, 2020). However, the mechanisms through which leadership style mediates the influence of EI on employee performance remain largely underexplored. Furthermore, contextual factors, including organizational support, political skills, and perceived organizational politics, may moderate or shape these dynamics (Shrestha & Baniya, 2016; Aalam et al., 2025). Addressing these gaps is particularly critical in the banking sector, where employee performance and service quality are directly linked to organizational success. A deeper understanding of the mediating role of leadership style in the EI–performance relationship offers both theoretical contributions and practical guidance for leadership development and organizational effectiveness in Nepalese banks.

2. Literature Review

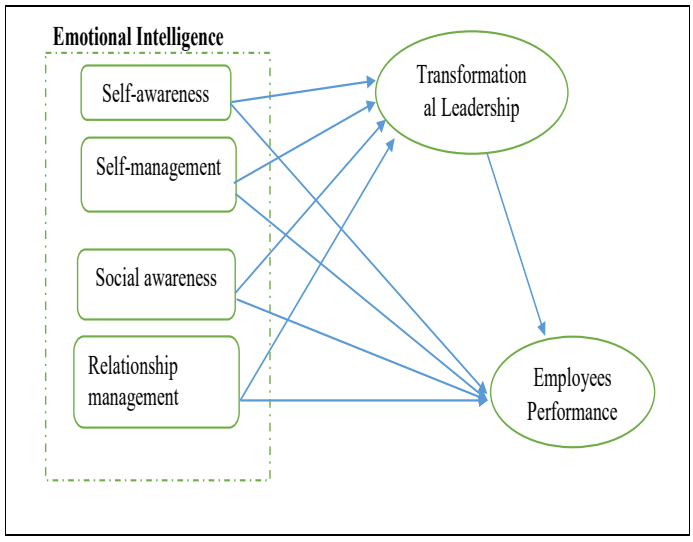
2.1 Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis

A theoretical framework is a systematically constructed and interconnected collection of concepts and premises, derived from one or more theories, which a researcher uses to support a study. aAtheoretical framework represents the researcher's effort to apply a theory to a specific study (Varpio et al., 2020) theoretical frameworks, and conceptual frameworks in their research. However, all too often, these words are used interchangeably or without a clear understanding of the differences between these concepts. Further problematizing this situation is the fact that theory, theoretical framework, and conceptual framework are terms that are used in different ways in different research approaches. In this article, the authors set out to clarify the meaning of these terms and to describe how they are used in 2 approaches to research commonly used in HPE: the objectivist deductive approach (from theory to data. The Integrated Talent Management Theory explains how organizations can enhance workforce performance and overall organizational outcomes through coordinated talent practices, particularly in competitive environments (Nunhes et al., 2016). According to Human Capital Theory, organizations are encouraged to invest in employees' education, training, and skill development to improve productivity and organizational performance (Gelens et al., 2013). Similarly, the Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory posits that firms can achieve sustainable competitive advantage by acquiring and maintaining human resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and well-organized (VRIO) (Astawa, 2022). Equity Theory emphasizes that employees' attitudes and behaviors are influenced by their perceptions of fairness in reward distribution relative to their contributions (Gelens et al., 2013). Expectancy Theory suggests that employee motivation depends on the perceived relationship between effort, performance, and rewards (Mathibe, 2008). Social Exchange Theory further highlights that positive employee behavior and engagement emerge

from reciprocal interactions between employees and organizations, fostering loyalty and commitment (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

From the above discussed theories, Emotional Intelligence theory by Daniel Goleman's and Transformational Leadership theory by James Downton was used in the study. Emotional Intelligence Theory provides a framework to understand how individuals' abilities to perceive, understand, and manage emotions affect their performance and interactions within organizational settings. Transformational Leadership Theory is chosen for its emphasis on leaders who inspire and motivate their teams through visionary goals, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation. These leadership behaviors are posited to foster higher employee engagement, commitment, and performance, which are critical in the dynamic and customer-centric context of banking services. The variable used in the studies by Lam & O'Higgins, (2012) , Lee et al., (2023) and Alwali & Alwali, (2022) are closely related to show the relationship between emotional intelligence , leadership style and employees outcome. Together, these theories offer a comprehensive lens to explore the complex interactions between emotional intelligence, leadership styles, and employee performance within the banking sector.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Source: *Modified from Daniel Goleman Emotinal Intelligence Model (2001), Lam & O'Higgins (2012) and Supramaniam & Singaravelloo (2021)*

Self-awareness

The capacity to recognize your own feelings and how they affect your performance is known as self-awareness. Self-awareness is an essential feature in each of the four models described in the study of emotional intelligence (Palmer, 2009; Goleman, 2001). The leader's capability to distinguish that performances are affected by the feelings and that includes the sub-divisions "self-confidence and self-assessment" the transformational leadership is strongly correlated with Self-Awareness (Lam & O'Higgins, 2012). Employee performance is positively correlated with self-awareness, as self-awareness enables employees to maintain their skills, improve on weaknesses, and adapt to changes, thus enhancing overall performance.

H_1: Self-awareness has significant relationship with Transformational Leadership

H_2: Self-awareness has significant relationship with employee performance

Self-management

Self-Management assists pioneers in appropriately overseeing themselves and subordinates with the sole point of achieving organizational greatness. "Emotional intelligence" assists leaders handle themselves and employees effectively, with the ultimate goal of achieving success in organizations (Margaret & Ngui, 2017). Self-management significantly enhances employee performance by fostering traits like self-motivation, adaptability, and proactive behavior, which contribute to better task execution and decision-making. However, an excessive focus on perfectionism may lead to time inefficiency. Managers should support self-management behaviors to maintain productivity and job satisfaction (Goleman, 2001). Transformational leadership has a significant impact on self-management by inspiring and motivating employees to exceed their

usual capabilities and achieve collective goals. This leadership style fosters an environment where employees feel empowered to manage their own work, align their actions with organizational objectives, and continuously improve their performance (Bass, 1985; Shamir et al., 1993).

H_3: Self-management has significant relationship with Transformational Leadership

H_4: Self-management has significant relationship with employee performance

Social awareness

Treadway et al. (2013) explain that social awareness significantly enhances employee performance by fostering better understanding and interactions within the workplace. Employees with high social awareness are more likely to seek advice, build strong relationships, and maintain motivation, which leads to improved job performance. However, overreliance on social connections and excessive empathy, particularly in fields like medicine, can diminish performance, necessitating a balanced approach. Research has consistently highlighted the strong connection between social awareness and transformational leadership. Goleman (2001) argues that emotional intelligence, which encompasses social awareness, is crucial for effective leadership. Transformational leaders often exhibit high social awareness, enabling them to connect with followers, manage emotions, and drive organizational change effectively (George, 2007). This correlation underscores the importance of social awareness in fostering transformational leadership capabilities.

H_5: Social awareness has significant relationship with Transformational Leadership

H_6: Social awareness has significant relationship with employee performance

Relationship management

The Leaders developed everyone, built teams, supervise difference, influence, catalyse change, inspire, and collaborate. Aalam et. al. (2025) highlights that employees with strong relationship management abilities can leverage their influence to access necessary resources, enhance their output, and guide less experienced colleagues. Effective relationship management not only aids in turning poor performance into desired outcomes but also ensures that teams benefit from diverse skills, competences, and knowledge. Treadway et al. (2013) further emphasize the importance of situational diagnosis and strategic influence tactics to achieve organizational goals. Therefore, self-management, through adept relationship handling and strategic influence, is crucial for improved job performance and achieving organizational objectives. Goleman (2001) and Bass (1985) emphasize that relationship management is crucial for transformational leadership, as it leverages emotional intelligence to manage interactions effectively. Transformational leaders excel in this area by fostering high commitment and engagement through personalized attention and clear communication, which in turn enhances leadership effectiveness and employee outcomes.

H_7: Relationship management has significant relationship with Transformational Leadership

H_8: Relationship management has significant relationship with employee performance

Transformational Leadership as Mediating

Ugoani et al. (2015) examined the dimensions of Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership. The Pearson correlation coefficient indicates a clear positive association between emotional intelligence and the style of transformation. Therefore, the report suggests that leadership effectiveness is to a greater degree due to emotional intelligence. Transformational leadership significantly enhances The dependent variable was employee commitment. The descriptive research design was used. The population of the study was 46408 employees and a simple random sample technique was used to choose 396 employees from 11 commercial banks under probability sampling method. Data were collected

Table 1: Variables and Definitions

Construct	Observed Variable	Indicators	Explanation	Citation
Self-awareness	Strengths and weaknesses	SA1	acknowledge own strengths and weaknesses	(Goleman, 2001)
	Feeling	SA2	know how their feelings effect their actions	
	Sense of humor	SA3	sense of humor about oneself	
	Believe oneself	SA4	Believe oneself to be capable for a job	
	Presence of mind	SA5	Have presence of mind in workplace	
	Own emotions	SA6	Awareness of my own emotions is very important to me at all times	
Self-management	Composed and positive	SM1	Stay composed and positive, even in trying moments	(Goleman, 2001)
	Impatience	SM2	Impatience and show frustration in job	
	Ways	SM3	Seek ways to improve my performance	
	Values	SM4	act on own values even there is a personal cost	
	Behave	SM5	Behave calmly in stressful situations	
	Initiate actions	SM6	Initiate actions to create possibilities	
Social awareness	Understand informal	SW1	I Understand informal structure in the organization	(Lee et al., 2023)
	Personal responsibility	SW2	I will take personal responsibility to satisfy customers	
	self-available	SW3	I will make self-available to customers	
	Understand historical reasons	SW4	Understand historical reasons for organizational issues	
	Customer needs	SW5	Act according to customer needs	
Relationship management	Strength	RM1	Recognize strength of others	(Munir & Azam, 2017)
	Constructive feedback	RM2	give constructive feedback	
	Mentoring	RM3	Provide on-going mentoring	
	Relationship	RM4	Establish close relationship with group members	
	Self-interest	RM5	Support people self-interest	
Transformational Leadership	supervisor values and beliefs	Tl1	The supervisor shares with us the values and beliefs that he finds important	(Lee et al., 2023)
	Encouragement	Tl2	I feel that the supervisor will provide me with sustained encouragement	
	Thoughts and opinions	Tl3	The supervisor encourages me to express my thoughts and opinions	
	Firm ambitions	Tl4	I feel that the supervisor has firm ambitions.	
	Needs	Tl5	I consider individual as having different needs	
	Individualized consideration	Tl6	I feel that the supervisor will be willing to make time to extend guidance to employees.	

Employees Performance	Perform work	EP1	I was able to perform my work well with minimal time and effort	(Munir & Azam, 2017)
	Employee productivity	EP2	Employee productivity levels in the company is high as compared to the beginning	
	Arrive	EP3	Employees arrive for work on time	
	Decision making	EP4	The current level of the decision-making process in the company is highly formal	(Gunu, 2014)
	Employees satisfaction	EP5	Employees are extremely satisfied working for this company	
	Recommend	EP6	I would recommend this company as a good working place	

employee performance by fostering high levels of motivation and commitment. Research indicates that transformational leadership's creative vision and supportive work environment positively impact employee commitment (Alwali & Alwali, 2022) their performance at work is crucial in determining patient satisfaction regarding care quality. Design/ methodology/approach: A quantitative approach with structural equation modelling via partial least squares (PLS-SEM. Meta-analyses reveal a strong connection between transformational leadership and employee commitment affecting all dimensions of commitment (Biza & Irbo, 2020). Unlike transactional leadership, which lacks a similar effect, transformational leadership's approach effectively boosts job performance through increased engagement and dedication (Silva & Mendis, 2017).

H_9: Transformational Leadership has significant relationship with employee performance

H_{10}: Transformational Leadership plays as mediating role between emotional intelligence and employees' performance

3. Methods

3.1 Study Area and Population

The study focuses on the banking industry within Kathmandu. The Kathmandu Valley located at approximately 27.7172° N latitude and 85.3240° E longitude Nepal's banking sector plays a crucial role in the country's economy, serving a diverse population and encompassing various financial institutions ranging from national banks to regional cooperatives. The population for this study comprises employees working in various roles within the banking industry in Kathmandu. In Nepal there are 5049 branches of commercial banks (Kharel & Niraula, 2024). Specifically, the study targets professionals across different levels of management and operational roles within selected banks and financial institutions in Kathmandu. The selection of this population is based on their direct involvement in daily banking operations, decision-making processes, and interactions with customers and colleagues. Employees from diverse backgrounds and job functions are included to ensure a comprehensive analysis of how emotional intelligence and leadership styles impact their performance(Shrestha & Baniya, 2016).

3.2 Sampling Techniques

Methods for selecting a subset of a population to analyze and draw statistical conclusions about the entire population are known as sampling techniques. Due to their efficiency in terms of both money and time, they are an essential component of research design(Haute, 2021). Sampling techniques are generally categorized into two main types: probability and non-probability sampling. For this study, non-probability sampling was selected due to the lack of a clearly defined population (Görgens-Ekermans & Roux, 2021).

Non-probability sampling can be further divided into several types, including convenience or haphazard sampling, volunteer sampling, purposive sampling, quota sampling, and snowball or network sampling. In this study, purposive sampling was chosen. Purposive sampling is a non-probability method in which participants are selected based on specific characteristics that align with the research objectives. This method relies on the researcher's judgment to identify information-rich cases or individuals, providing deeper insights. It is commonly used in qualitative research to effectively utilize limited resources and focus on particular subsets of the population that possess unique attributes(Memon et al., 2020).

3.3 Sample Size Determination

The process of determining how many observations or replicates to include in a statistical sample is known as sample size estimation or determination. When drawing conclusions about a population from a sample in an empirical study, the sample size is a crucial component (Lenth, 2010). According to Adcock (1997) determining the appropriate number of replicates or observers to include in a statistical sample is a critical step in research methodology. It's a crucial component of any empirical research that uses a sample to draw conclusions about the population.

Cochran develop the following equation for establishing a representative sample for proportions:

The following Formula is used to determine the sample size:

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The following Formula is used to determine the sample size:

$n = (Z^2 PQ)/e^2$ (Basnet et al., 2024; Singh et al., 2011)

Where,

n = Sample size of study

Standard tabulated value for 5% level of significance(z)= 1.96

Prevalence or Proportion of an event 50% = 0.50

So, p=0.5, q=1-p, =0.5

Allowable error that can be tolerated (e) =5%

So, total population for this study (n) = $(Z^2 PQ)/e^2$

$=(1.96)^2*0.5*0.5/(0.05)^2$

$= 384.16$

Non-response error 5% i.e., 384.16*5/100, =19.208

Thus, sample size was calculated to be (384.16+19.208) = 403.368 (=403). But during the data collection process, a total of 408 data points was collected, to make the data more robust, exceeding the expected sample size.

Research Instrument, Data Collection and Data Analysis

The main research tool used to gather data is the structured questionnaire (Rajbhandari et al., 2022). A structured questionnaire was developed for the data gathering procedure through a survey to analyze emotional intelligence, leadership style, and employee performance in commercial banks. The survey questionnaire created with KOBO Toolbox featured both closed-ended and open-ended items for reliable analysis. Additionally, a pilot survey with 18 responders was conducted in July 2024. This pilot research was successful in detecting formatting and content issues, which were fixed before the final field survey.

Data analysis for this study was conducted using structural equation modeling (SEM), along with descriptive and inferential analyses, focusing on various latent constructs. This study utilized software like KOBO Toolbox, Microsoft Excel, and SMART PLS 4.0 for the collection and analysis of the data. Microsoft Excel was used for data entry followed by descriptive analysis through graphs and tabulation, while SMART PLS 4.0 was applied for inferential analysis to assess the impact of emotional intelligence and leadership style on employee performance.

3. Results

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 2: Socio Demographic Characteristics

Title	Category	Number	%
Gender	Male	231	56.9
	Female	175	43.1
Marital Status	Married	206	50.74
	Unmarried	198	48.77
	Others	2	0.49
Age (in Years)	Below 20	16	3.94
	21-30	222	54.68
	31- 40	143	35.22
	Above 40	25	6.16
Department	Operation	146	35.96
	Loan	170	41.87
	Back Office	90	22.17
Current Position in Bank	Assistant	143	35.22
	Supervisor	142	34.98
	Officer	106	26.11
	Above officer	15	3.69
Average Monthly income (in NPR)	Below 20,000	22	5.42
	20,000-40,000	150	36.95
	40,000-80,000	153	37.68
	80,000-1,00,000	69	17
	1,00,000 and above	12	2.96
Working Experience	1-3 Years	149	36.7
	4-6 years	155	38.18
	7-9 years	73	17.98
	10 years and above	29	7.14
Location	Lalitpur	122	30.05
	Kathmandu	196	48.28
	Bhaktapur	88	21.67

The socio-demographic profile of the participants showed in table 1. Out of total respondents, 56.9% were male and 43.1% female. Regarding marital status, 50.74% were married and 48.77% were unmarried. Most participants (54.68%) were aged 21–30, followed by 35.22% aged 31–40. Department-wise, 41.87% worked in loans, 35.96% in operations, and 22.17% in back-office roles. Positions held included assistants (35.22%), supervisors (34.98%), officers (26.11%), and above-officer roles (3.69%). Monthly income was mostly NPR 40,000–80,000 (37.68%) and NPR 20,000–40,000 (36.95%). Work experience ranged from 1–3 years (36.7%) to 4–6 years (38.18%), with smaller percentages having 7–9 years (17.98%) and over 10 years (7.14%). Geographically, 48.28% were from Kathmandu, 30.05% Lalitpur, and 21.67% Bhaktapur. Overall, the sample reflects a well-distributed and representative group for the study.

4.2 Inferential analysis

Inferential statistics are used to draw conclusion and inferences from survey result. Inferential statistics use hypothesis tests and estimation to make comparisons, prediction, draw conclusion from sample data will benefit population (Haden, 2011). The section includes the evaluation of the structure model, which includes factor loading, convergent and discriminant validity, goodness of fit, and common method bias

Measurement models involve the underlying frameworks, whether implicit or explicit, that connect a latent variable to its observable indicators (Toscas et. al., 1999). Under measurement Validity and Reliability is tested. This study is a reflective measurement model. In reflective model, Internal Consistent Reliability, Convergent Validity and Discriminant Validity are observed. In this study, internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. While Cronbach's alpha is widely used, composite reliability is preferred as it accounts for differing indicator contributions (Dang et al., 2014). For exploratory research, values of 0.60–0.70 are acceptable, 0.70–0.90 satisfactory, and above 0.95 may indicate redundancy (Adhikari et al., 2024; Lawaju & KC, 2024). As shown in Table 3, RM, SA, and TL exhibited strong reliability (>0.80), SM and SW were satisfactory (>0.70), and EP (0.651) was acceptable. These results confirm the reliability of the measurement model in this study.

Table 3: Internal Consistent Reliability

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
ep	0.648	0.651
rm	0.841	0.842
sa	0.815	0.816
sm	0.735	0.747
sw	0.760	0.762
tl	0.793	0.795

Convergent validity is confirmed when measures of the same concept are highly correlated, ensuring reliability and accuracy. Key criteria include a loading factor greater than 0.7 (0.6 to 0.7 is acceptable in exploratory research), a communality greater than 0.5, and an average variance extracted (AVE) greater than 0.5 (Lawaju et al., 2024). These criteria demonstrate that the indicators accurately capture the essence of the construct and correlate well (Carlson & Herdman, 2012). The results reveal that the outer loadings of the indicators generally exceed the threshold of 0.7, with some falling within the acceptable range of 0.6 to 0.7, making them suitable for exploratory research. The average variance extracted (AVE) for all constructs meets or exceeds the 0.5 threshold, indicating that each construct's indicators effectively capture the essence of the construct and have strong correlations with one another.

Table 4: AVE for each construct and loadings for each indicator

Construct	Indicators	Outer loadings	AVE
Employees Performance	ep3	0.727	0.587
	ep4	0.771	
	ep5	0.798	
Relationship Management	rm1	0.764	0.612
	rm2	0.751	
	rm3	0.799	
	rm4	0.793	
	rm5	0.803	
Self- Awareness	sa1	0.726	0.519
	sa2	0.688	
	sa3	0.748	
	sa4	0.724	
	sa5	0.713	
	sa6	0.723	
Self-Management	sm1	0.795	0.558
	sm3	0.703	
	sm4	0.688	
	sm5	0.794	
Social Awareness	sw1	0.706	0.511
	sw2	0.652	
	sw3	0.728	
	sw4	0.722	
	sw5	0.761	
Transformational Leadership	tl2	0.794	0.617
	tl3	0.752	
	tl4	0.79	
	tl6	0.806	

This study analyses discriminant validity using Fornell-Larcker criterion, cross-loadings, and HTMT criteria. The Fornell-Larcker criterion states that the square root of each construct's average variance extracted (AVE) must be greater than its correlations with other constructs (Hair et al., 2019)yet concise, overview of the considerations and metrics required for partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM.The results reveal that square roots of AVE for constructs such as "Employees Performance" (0.766) and "Transformational Leadership" (0.786) outperform the inter-construct correlations, confirming discriminant validity. Cross-loadings also support discriminant validity, as each indicator's highest loading is with its own construct, far outweighing its loadings on other constructs. "ep3" has a loading of 0.727 on "Employees Performance," which is higher than the loadings on the other constructs. The HTMT results show that all HTMT values fall below the thresholds of 0.85 for more distinct constructs and 0.90 for similar constructs, indicating that the constructs are empirically distinguishable (Lawaju et al., 2024; Tiwari et al., 2025). These findings demonstrate that the constructs are distinct and accurately measure their intended concepts with minimal overlap.

Table 5: Factor Cross-Loading

	ep	rm	sa	sm	sw	tl
ep3	0.727	0.414	0.378	0.354	0.423	0.444
ep4	0.771	0.489	0.378	0.322	0.385	0.528
ep5	0.798	0.464	0.404	0.360	0.432	0.500
rm1	0.456	0.764	0.568	0.550	0.514	0.529
rm2	0.455	0.751	0.571	0.545	0.514	0.562
rm3	0.424	0.799	0.588	0.584	0.558	0.595
rm4	0.509	0.793	0.475	0.466	0.518	0.568
rm5	0.487	0.803	0.529	0.508	0.503	0.560
sa1	0.350	0.472	0.726	0.476	0.394	0.400
sa2	0.340	0.461	0.688	0.488	0.459	0.425
sa3	0.414	0.496	0.748	0.468	0.417	0.427

sa4	0.399	0.507	0.724	0.523	0.428	0.412
sa5	0.329	0.514	0.713	0.493	0.383	0.416
sa6	0.341	0.565	0.723	0.576	0.477	0.417
sm1	0.383	0.537	0.609	0.795	0.508	0.501
sm3	0.267	0.564	0.482	0.703	0.505	0.477
sm4	0.274	0.417	0.440	0.688	0.484	0.397
sm5	0.399	0.503	0.540	0.794	0.505	0.518
sw1	0.455	0.498	0.517	0.481	0.706	0.499
sw2	0.300	0.504	0.395	0.491	0.652	0.483
sw3	0.368	0.431	0.387	0.449	0.728	0.453
sw4	0.415	0.436	0.381	0.459	0.722	0.451
sw5	0.370	0.509	0.422	0.505	0.761	0.525
tl2	0.532	0.543	0.440	0.462	0.512	0.794
tl3	0.502	0.515	0.438	0.498	0.527	0.752
tl4	0.457	0.566	0.463	0.504	0.502	0.790
tl6	0.525	0.632	0.473	0.536	0.580	0.806

Furthermore, Fornell-Larcker Criterion and HTMT criteria are used for discriminant analysis

Table 6: Fornell-Larcker Criterion and HTMT Results

	Fornell-Larcker Criterion						**HTMT Results**					
	Ep	*Rm*	*Sa*	*sm*	*Sw*	*tl*	*Ep*	*Rm*	*sa*	*sm*	*sw*	*Tl*
ep	0.766											
rm	0.596	0.782					0.805					
sa	0.504	0.697	0.721				0.692	0.844				
sm	0.45	0.677	0.698	0.747			0.644	0.862	0.897			
sw	0.538	0.666	0.591	0.668	0.714		0.764	0.833	0.748	0.898		
tl	0.642	0.72	0.577	0.637	0.676	0.786	0.892	0.879	0.718	0.829	0.868	

Collinearity analysis in PLS-SEM, as proposed by Kock (2015), assesses common method bias by evaluating variance inflation factors (VIFs) across all constructs. This approach, extending beyond traditional confirmatory factor analysis, detects how common method variance inflates path coefficients and loadings. A VIF value less than 5 indicates significant common method bias, which can lead to false positives or negatives (Hair et. al., 2019). As shown in the table above, all VIF values are below 3.3 (Adhikari et. al., 2024), confirming that there is no evidence of multicollinearity in this mode.

Table 6: VIF for Multicollinearity

Relationship Management	**Self- Awareness**	**Self-Management**	**Social Awareness**	**Transformational Leadership**
2.961	2.400	2.611	2.357	2.495

Model fit PLS-SEM is assessed using the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) The SRMR values below 0.085 indicate a good (Dang et al., 2014). Since the study's model produced a result of 0.062, which is less than the 0.085 threshold, it is therefore considered to be fit.

The structural model assessment in SEM is conducted to examine the relationships between latent variables by analyzing path coefficients, overall model fit, and variance explained. Key steps in this assessment include evaluating collinearity, determining the significance and relevance of relationships, assessing explanatory power, and examining predictive capabilities. In PLS-SEM, this involves employing bootstrapped coefficients, path coefficients, bias-corrected confidence intervals, R^2, effect sizes (F^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2) to evaluate the model's quality, validity, and predictive accuracy (Hair et al., 2019; Hoyle, 2012).

The exploratory power of the model was assessed using coefficient of determination (R^2). It measures the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by independent variables in a regression model (Ozer, 1985). It ranges from 0 to 1, indicating the model's predictive accuracy. In PLS path models, R^2 values of 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19 are deemed substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively (Hair et. al., 2019). The result reveal that for "Employees Performance," R^2 is 0.467 and Adjusted R^2 is 0.461, indicating a moderate level of variance explained by independent variable. For "Transformational Leadership," R^2 is 0.599 and Adjusted R^2 is 0.595, reflecting a substantial

proportion of variance explained.

Based on the theoretical framework and prior empirical evidence, this study formulates testable hypotheses to examine the relationships among the study variables. Hypotheses are evaluated at the 5% level of significance ($p < 0.05$) (Singh et al., 2024) and are considered unsupported when the beta coefficient lies within the confidence interval (Lawaju et al., 2024). Each hypothesis is assessed using the path coefficient (β), standard deviation (SD), t-value, p-value, and the lower and upper bounds of the confidence interval.

Table 7: Hypothesis

Hypothesis		Beta	SD	T-value	P values	Lower limit 2.50%	Upper limit 97.50%	Decision
H_1	sa -> ep	0.142	0.082	1.719	0.086	-0.014	0.312	Not Supported
H_2	sa -> tl	0.006	0.058	0.11	0.913	-0.102	0.126	Not Supported
H_3	sm -> ep	-0.141	0.078	1.795	0.073	-0.283	0.022	Not Supported
H_4	sm -> tl	0.157	0.089	1.776	0.076	-0.006	0.339	Not Supported
H_5	sw -> ep	0.13	0.065	2.014	0.044	0.008	0.259	Supported
H_6	sw -> tl	0.291	0.061	4.755	0.00	0.172	0.411	Supported
H_7	rm -> ep	0.211	0.086	2.443	0.015	0.035	0.371	Supported
H_8	rm -> tl	0.415	0.085	4.889	0.00	0.233	0.569	Supported
H_9	tl -> ep	0.41	0.066	6.191	0.00	0.272	0.529	Supported

The results, as presented in Table 7 indicate that self-awareness and self-management have no significant relationship with employee performance, whereas social awareness and relationship management exhibit a positive and significant relationship with employee performance and transformational leadership at the 5% significance level. Furthermore, self-awareness, self-management, and social awareness do not demonstrate a significant relationship with employee performance through transformational leadership.

4.3 Mediation Analysis

To examine the underlying mechanism among the study variables, mediation analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 4.0. Transformational leadership was tested as a mediating variable between emotional intelligence dimensions and employee performance. The significance of indirect effects was assessed through bootstrapping and confidence interval analysis. Self-awareness and self-management are insignificant with the employee performance and transformational leadership where social awareness and relationship management significant with employee performance and transformational leadership. Therefore, relationship management and social awareness demonstrate effective mediation through transformational leadership on employee performance. Self-awareness and self-management do not significantly mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance through transformational leadership. The results indicate that transformational leadership effectively mediates the impact of relationship management and social awareness on employee performance, highlighting the crucial role of leadership style in leveraging emotional intelligence to enhance performance.

Table 8: Mediation Analysis

	Beta	SD	T -Value	P values	Confidence interval		Decision
					2.50%	97.50%	
rm -> tl -> ep	0.17	0.047	3.615	0.00	0.081	0.266	Supported
sa -> tl -> ep	0.003	0.024	0.109	0.913	-0.043	0.051	Not Supported
sm -> tl -> ep	0.065	0.038	1.685	0.092	-0.003	0.147	Not Supported
sw -> tl -> ep	0.119	0.029	4.18	0.00	0.067	0.179	Supported

4.4 Effect sizes (f^2) and Predictive power (Q^2)

Effect size was calculated to assess the independent

contribution of each dependent variable on dependent variable. It provides a measure of the magnitude of an effect, independent of sample size, and highlights the practical significance of findings (Selya et al., 2012). Table 11 presents the effect sizes (f^2) of the predictor variables. Relationship management (rm) shows a small effect on employee performance ($f^2 = 0.028$) and a medium effect on transformational leadership ($f^2 = 0.17$). Social awareness (sa) exhibits negligible effects on both outcomes, while self-awareness (sw) has a small effect on employee performance ($f^2 = 0.014$) and transformational leadership ($f^2 = 0.098$). These results indicate the practical significance of the predictors in the model.

Table 9: F-Square

	Beta value
rm -> ep	0.028
rm -> tl	0.17
sa -> ep	0.016
sa -> tl	0.00
sm -> ep	0.014
sm -> tl	0.024
sw -> ep	0.014
sw -> tl	0.098
tl -> ep	0.126

Predictive relevance model was assessed using the blindfolding procedure. In structural equation modeling, a Q^2 value greater than zero, obtained through the Blindfolding procedure, indicates that the model has predictive relevance and accurately reconstructs endogenous constructs (Selya et al., 2012). All Q^2 values are positive i.e greater than zero indicating that the model has predictive relevance for each endogenous construct, as determined by the Blindfolding procedure

Table 10: PLS Predict LV Summary

Indicators	Q²predict	RMSE	MAE
ep	0.375	0.797	0.594
tl	0.578	0.656	0.468

4.5 Robustness Check

Robustness checks in PLS-SEM are crucial for validating the reliability and validity of model outcomes. They involve testing the model under various conditions to ensure consistent and unbiased results, addressing issues like linearity and heterogeneity.

Linearity was assessed using quadratic effects (QE) for all paths (Table 11). Most p-values exceeded 0.05, indicating that the relationships between variables are linear and no significant non-linear effects exist.

Table 11: Linearity

	Beta	SD	t	P values
QE (sa) -> ep	0.08	0.041	1.956	0.05
QE (sa) -> tl	-0.027	0.033	0.808	0.419
QE (sm) -> ep	-0.008	0.052	0.153	0.878
QE (sm) -> tl	0.052	0.052	1.009	0.313
QE (sw) -> ep	-0.034	0.036	0.947	0.344
QE (sw) -> tl	-0.025	0.035	0.724	0.469
QE (tl) -> ep	-0.023	0.032	0.717	0.474
QE (rm) -> ep	0.057	0.046	1.241	0.215
QE (rm) -> tl	0.055	0.047	1.171	0.241

FIMIX-PLS analysis (Table 12) identified five optimal segments, demonstrating the presence of unobserved heterogeneity in the data. Accounting for these segments ensures the model provides accurate and generalizable results across subgroups.

Table 12: The Finite Mixture Partial Least Squares (FIMIX-PLS) Result

Number of segments	1	2	3	4	5
AIC (Akaike's information criterion)	1690.235	1593.908	1536.329	1466.96	1433.883
AIC3 (modified AIC with Factor 3)	1706.235	1626.908	1586.329	1533.96	1517.883
AIC4 (modified AIC with Factor 4)	1722.235	1659.908	1636.329	1600.96	1601.883
BIC (Bayesian information criterion)	1754.337	1726.118	1736.646	1735.386	1770.416
CAIC (consistent AIC)	1770.337	1759.118	1786.646	1802.386	1854.416
MDL5 (minimum description length with factor 5)	2138.743	2518.957	1615.61	3345.089	3788.551
EN (normed entropy statistic)	0.00	0.586	2937.917	0.733	0.781

5. Discussion

This study examined emotional intelligence (EI) dimensions on employee performance (EP), with leadership style acting as a mediating variable in the context of Nepalese commercial banks. The analysis considered five dimensions of EI self-awareness (SA), self-management (SM), social awareness (SW), and relationship management (RM) and their direct and indirect effects on EP through TL. This study employed SmartPLS 4.0 to test measurement and structural models, along with bootstrapping for hypothesis testing and mediation analysis.

The results revealed that not all dimensions of EI equally contribute to employee performance. Relationship management (RM) emerged as the most influential predictor, showing a significant positive effect on both transformational leadership ($\beta = 0.415$, $p < 0.05$) and employee performance ($\beta = 0.211$, $p < 0.05$). Social awareness (SW) also had a significant positive effect on TL ($\beta = 0.291$, $p < 0.05$) and EP ($\beta = 0.13$, $p < 0.05$). In contrast, self-awareness (SA) and self-management (SM) did not significantly influence either TL or EP. Specifically, SA had non-significant effects on EP ($\beta = 0.142$, $p > 0.05$) and TL ($\beta = 0.006$, $p > 0.05$), while SM similarly showed non-significant relationships with EP ($\beta = -0.141$, $p > 0.05$) and TL ($\beta = 0.157$, $p > 0.05$). These findings suggest that interpersonal and social competencies, rather than intrapersonal dimensions, are the primary drivers of performance outcomes in the banking sector, likely due to the high relational and team-oriented demands of the industry.

Mediation analysis further clarified the mechanisms through which EI influences performance. Transformational leadership significantly mediated the effects of RM and SW on EP, as evidenced by significant indirect effects. In contrast, SA and SM did not demonstrate significant indirect effects via TL. These results highlight that TL acts as an essential conduit through which relational and social EI competencies translate into enhanced employee performance. In practical terms, employees who are skilled in managing relationships and understanding social dynamics can foster transformational leadership behaviors that encourage engagement, motivation, and productivity, ultimately leading to better performance outcomes (Shrestha & Baniya, 2016; Aalam et al., 2025).

The results underscore the pivotal role of transformational leadership as a mediator between EI and employee performance. Among EI dimensions, relationship management and social awareness stand out as the most influential factors, directly and indirectly enhancing performance through leadership behaviors. These findings are consistent with prior research emphasizing the importance of relational competencies and social intelligence in shaping effective leadership and organizational outcomes (Carlson & Herdman, 2012; Farid et al., 2021). The non-significance of self-awareness and self-management may reflect contextual factors in the Nepalese banking sector, where interpersonal interactions and team dynamics are critical to performance, whereas intrapersonal EI may play a more limited role. this study provides both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it integrates Emotional Intelligence Theory with Transformational Leadership Theory to explain mechanisms through which EI influences employee performance in a non-Western, banking context. Practically, it informs HR practitioners and organizational leaders that fostering relational and social EI skills, along with transformational leadership development, can enhance employee outcomes, engagement, and productivity. Future interventions should focus on training programs that enhance relationship management and social awareness competencies among employees to strengthen leadership behaviors and performance.

6. Conclusion

This study examined the influences of emotional intelligence (EI) and transformational leadership (TL) on the performance of employees working in the banking sector of Kathmandu. The results indicate that social awareness and relationship management attributes of EI showed positive effects on employee performance, but not self-awareness and self-management. Transformational leadership showed a strong direct impact on the performance of employees and mediated the communication between the relational dimensions of EI (social awareness and relationship management) and performance. On the contrary, self-awareness and self-management did not have a mediating effect in TL. These findings indicate how the importance of transformational leadership in deploying EI to positively impact employee outcomes can be extremely important and the interpersonal and social competencies are more vital than the intrapersonal skills in this case. The research has a number of practical implications on human resource management. By improving the social and relational EI of the employees, as well as by building transformational leadership abilities, one may increase the level of performance, job satisfaction, team processes, and effectiveness of the organization. These insights will help HR professionals and managers to develop specific training, recruitment, and performance appraisal initiatives, which will contribute to creating team-based and durable workplaces. In addition, the findings can be utilized by policymakers and executives in strategizing their activities and organizational development projects in the banking industry.

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