

## Emotional Intelligence as a Predictor of Leadership Competence in Ethiopian Higher Education

Assefa Degebas

Department of Behavioural Sciences, College of Education and Behavioural Science, Wollega University, Nekemte, Ethiopia

### Abstract

*The major objective of this study was to examine the extent of the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership competence in Ethiopian higher education using a correlational design. To examine these phenomena, seven universities were randomly selected by the cluster area sampling technique. After the data was collected using 360-degree self and observer rating questionnaires, factor analysis was made to validate the instrument, and correlation and multiple regression analyses were used to compute the result. A significant positive correlation was found between leadership competence and emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence also significantly predicted leadership competence, as reported by academic leaders after controlling demographic and personality variables. Thus, it was concluded that this study helps to understand the contribution of emotional intelligence to leadership competence for higher education academic leaders and staff. These findings imply that higher education officials and leaders identify and recognize the emotional intelligence qualities that are expected of them in leading their staff. Besides, it helps to promote training to develop complete and holistic future leaders in higher education.*

### Article Information

#### Article History:

Received: 16-07-2023

Revised : 24-08-2023

Accepted : 28-09-2023

#### Keywords:

*Educational Leaders, Emotional Intelligence, Higher Education, Leadership Competence*

\*Corresponding Author:  
Assefa Degebas

E-mail:  
adegebas@yahoo.com

Copyright©2023STAR Journal, Wollega University. All Rights Reserved.

## INTRODUCTION

The combination of qualities and skills a leader use to persuade and inspire followers to achieve organisational objectives is known as leadership competency (Teambuilding, 2022). A leader must display a variety of values, abilities, traits, and behaviours to inspire followers to participate, grow, and be committed (Bolden, 2003; Society for Human Resource Management, 2008). This is known as leadership competency. It offers

quantifiable behaviours and actions related to leadership roles and acts as a guide for success on both an individual and organisational level (Fallesen & Hore, 2004). Leadership proficiency is essential for success, particularly in higher education, as it is a vital component of maintaining and enhancing the calibre of work that adds to the organization's supremacy (Packard, 2009; Panggabean, 2004).

Assefa, D.

Higher education institutions are occasionally growing in the current Ethiopian context. For every individual and group activity to be planned and focused on the institution's objective, some level of leadership competency is needed. Therefore, in order to carry out duties that achieve the desired outcomes, higher institution leaders require this collection of knowledge, abilities, and behavioural patterns for certain jobs. These qualities of emotional intelligence—the capacity to recognise, understand, regulate, and use emotions in productive and successful interpersonal interactions—should be connected to these leadership abilities (Charry, 2022).

In order to be authentic and successful leaders, implement this idea, and support the growth of a learning society and the global standard of the education sector, leaders in higher education must assess their own leadership competencies in relation to their emotional intelligence traits. Universities are distinct establishments in relation to other organisations since they work with intricate human behaviours to mould and process people for the benefit of their future lives. Regarding this idea, Campbell, Corbally, and Ramseyer (1962) asserted that universities, as educational establishments, are distinct due to the intricacy of their operations and the range of services they offer the public.

Academic leaders at universities are therefore faced with a variety of difficult responsibilities, such as managing change, striking a balance between the interests of stakeholders, and assessing departmental performance. The long-term stability of academic leadership roles is impacted by these

*Sci. Technol. Arts Res. J., July – Sep. 2023, 12(3), 75-93*

difficulties. This is due to the fact that managing in organisations with such intricate responsibilities necessitates the possession of leadership skills in order to preserve and raise performance standards (Coco, 2011). In the past, personal cognitive intelligence (IQ) has been linked to leadership competency in higher education and has been shown to be a reliable indicator of both career and life success (Parrish, 2010). But IQ is no longer the standard for effective leadership in many organisations (Stum, 2000).

Numerous investigations, such as those by Singh et al. (2007) and Goleman et al. (1995). Additionally, Manser and Mestry (2007) have demonstrated that a tiny amount of leadership ability for successful and effective performance can be attributed to cognitive intelligence. This has led to an interest among researchers and practitioners in understanding the qualities of competent and effective leaders as well as the ways in which great leaders influence and wield power inside their organisations (Collins, 2001; Greenleaf, 2002; Ireland & Hitt, 2005). The goal of leadership studies over the past few decades has been to pinpoint the personal traits and attributes—such as emotional intelligence—that indicate leadership competency. In particular, studies have shown that when predicting leadership competency, emotional intelligence (EI) is twice as important as cognitive talents. It gains traction in organisations as a gauge of professional achievement (Goleman, 2000; Singh et al., 2007; Gardner & Stough, 2003). According to Matthews et al. (2002), Sala (2005), and Zeidner et al. (2012), emotional intelligence is a general competency that aids

Assefa, D.

in perceiving emotions in oneself and others as well as in identifying, expressing, understanding, and assimilating emotions in thought to manage both positive and negative emotions in oneself and others. According to Cocco (2011), Goleman's model of emotional intelligence also sees emotional intelligence as a collection of social and emotional competencies that support effective management. The primary characteristic that sets exceptional performers apart from others who are merely competent is emotional intelligence. According to Goleman (2004), it is also regarded as a potent predictor of how well a leader is able to improve organisational performance.

Higher education should therefore include emotional intelligence in addition to analytical intelligence (IQ) since one of its goals is to prepare students for their future lives. They will have a more self-aware and confident perspective on the world as a result of this. Thus, in order for this idea to be implemented, leaders in higher education themselves must possess both emotional intelligence and leadership competencies. This is due to the fact that multifaceted leadership competencies that are associated with emotional intelligence traits can lead to the attainment of ultimate achievement in life. Additionally, research has demonstrated the important roles that emotional intelligence plays in leadership and human performance.

The ability model, the mixed model, and the trait model are the three models of emotional intelligence (Aya & Alan, 2006; Allen et al., 2012). The ability model (Salovey et al., 2001) sees emotions as helpful information sources that aid in understanding

*Sci. Technol. Arts Res. J., July – Sep. 2023, 12(3), 75-93*

and navigating the social environment. Since emotional intelligence is regarded as a sort of intelligence in and of itself, emotional intelligence and cognitive ability overlap in the ability model (Joseph & Newman, 2010). Bar-On (1997) and Goleman (1995) created the mixed model. It integrates social intelligence, cognitive capabilities, and emotional components of personality traits, including mood, stress management, and interpersonal and intrapersonal skills (Goleman et al., 2002; Day & Carroll, 2008). In addition to other traits like reality testing, assertiveness, self-regard, and self-actualization, the mixed model incorporates emotion-related traits such as emotional self-awareness and empathy (Mayer et al., 2000). Unlike the ability model, this one describes personality traits including self-esteem, achievement drive, openness, practical intelligence, and subjective wellbeing that go hand in hand with emotional intelligence (Klenke, 2007).

Mixed models are frequently used in business, training, education, and leadership development because they provide a broad definition of emotional intelligence (EI) (Brackett et al., 2014; Antonakis et al., 2009). Petrides and Furnham (2006) identified a constellation of emotional self-perceptions at the lower personality levels that comprise the trait emotional intelligence model (Mikolajczak, 2009). Trait Emotional Intelligence, to put it simply, is how someone feels about their own emotional intelligence. Therefore, the mixed model is favoured in this study in order to fully comprehend the intricacies and range of emotional intelligence. Furthermore, Goleman's (2002)

Assefa, D.

emotional intelligence model is a powerful yet rather straightforward one. It is also more generally used and accepted in an organisational setting, and it may be employed with ease in both personal and professional contexts.

According to Goleman (1995), emotional intelligence is often cited as having a significant impact on contemporary society by influencing real-life outcomes in addition to general intellectual capacity and personality traits. Additionally, according to Mayer et al. (2008), it has a favourable correlation with adjustment, emotional well-being, professional success and satisfaction, and academic progress. Matthews et al. (2002) also highlight the significance of emotional intelligence (EI), noting that individuals with strong self-awareness and empathy handle their situations with grace and wisdom, even when faced with difficult situations. By lowering conflict, emotional intelligence contributes to stress reduction for both individuals and organisations.

By fostering more harmony, consistency, and stability, it also strengthens bonds and understanding (Goleman, 1995). Furthermore, research indicates that those with elevated emotional intelligence exhibit improved health, increased self-assurance, enhanced focus, and greater professional performance. Additionally, they have a stronger influence on their employees to inspire them, and they are also more successful leaders (Ganjeh et al., 2011). According to Bar-On's (2007) theory, people who possess emotional intelligence that is above average are better able to cope with the demands and stresses of their surroundings. Moreover, Caruso et al. (2004)

*Sci. Technol. Arts Res. J., July – Sep. 2023, 12(3), 75-93*

asserted that "emotion is information" and proposed a comparison between emotion and personal radar, which gathers data about an individual's surroundings, personnel, and self. One can use information to make better decisions based on important information from the environment when one is emotionally intelligent, in touch with, and able to access emotion. Emotion, then, gives extra information to help make better judgements by providing a gut feeling or intuitive understanding of what to do next (Mersino, 2007).

Like EI, personality also has an impact on how people respond to various circumstances, perform best, handle conflict, and communicate. Consequently, personality—a person's unique ways of feeling, thinking, and acting—also affects one's capacity for leadership. In psychology, the Big Five traits—conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism—are frequently used to characterise personality. Success in leadership has been linked to high levels of conscientiousness and openness. The most crucial quality in a leader is conscientiousness, especially under pressure when dependability and responsibility are crucial. Since team leaders are creative thinkers who eagerly take in knowledge and work through issues, transparency is essential to their leadership style (Grice, 2019).

This suggests that among the Big Five Personality Types, open and conscientious leaders are capable of doing their jobs well. Additionally, research has shown a connection between leadership competency at work and personality and emotional intelligence (Bar-On, 2002; Hogan & Hogan, 2007).

*Assefa, D.*

When it comes to communication, empathy, self-control, and personal motivation, emotional intelligence outperforms IQ in the leadership domain (Goleman, 1998). Despite not being cognitive, emotional variables are more important in achieving more positive results in interactions at work (Singh et al., 2007). This is due to the fact that emotional intelligence is tactical, instantaneous, and indicative of an individual's 'common sense' and social skills (Herbst et al., 2006). In addition, it influences most of one's everyday activities, establishes priorities, and moulds one's connections with others (Richards, 2007).

Leaders who are aware of their emotions are then able to identify and understand how those feelings impact their behaviour, as well as how they impact the calibre of their work and professional relationships. Similarly, since personality shapes people's actions, leaders who ascertain the personality type of their team members have a greater chance of influencing them. In addition, those with emotional intelligence who are able to identify the personality types of their teammates are more objective and capable of handling day-to-day situations with poise, confidence, and good judgement. These characteristics foster a positive work environment where connections grow, creativity soars, and production soars. Leaders in higher education must also possess emotional intelligence, be able to identify the personality types of their employees, be sufficiently knowledgeable, and be prepared to operate in a way that upholds moral principles and self-honesty. The relationship between emotional

*Sci. Technol. Arts Res. J., July – Sep. 2023, 12(3), 75-93*

intelligence, personality traits, and leadership competence has been the subject of relatively little, if any, empirical research, despite the theoretical connections between these constructs and Ethiopian higher education. It is still uncertain how much the variables relate to one another and how much personality traits and emotional intelligence account for variance in leadership ability, particularly in higher education. Furthermore, a major methodological flaw in many of these research was their reliance on the leader's self-report to gauge emotional intelligence. However, the researcher aimed to use 360-degree self- and observer-rated questionnaire assessment methods to counteract the bias that is likely to arise from utilising simply self-assessment. Put another way, both staff and self-ratings were used to evaluate each concept.

Furthermore, an effort was made to account for additional variables, including the five personality type dimensions and demographic variables (age, position, education, and work experience), in order to precisely examine the degree to which emotional intelligence (EI) is a predictor of leadership competency. Therefore, by examining the association between emotional intelligence, personality traits, and leadership competencies (Lcop) in Ethiopian higher education, the researcher in this study sought to close the knowledge gap in the literature. Since leadership is the foundation of any organisation, educational leaders must prioritise the holistic development of their students by bridging the gaps between their social and personal lives and the organization's objectives and core values. Leaders in higher education deal with highly

Assefa, D.

skilled and sophisticated workforces that require expertise in order to lead. Due to the complexity of the issues at hand, leaders must possess both emotional intelligence and leadership competency. This is due to the fact that emotional intelligence supports leaders in their ability to comprehend and control their own and others' emotions. Additionally, exceptional leaders can be distinguished from mediocre leaders using their EI talents.

Higher EI therefore becomes more significant when one advances throughout the company (Frank et al., 2012). Moreover, it was proposed that having adequate competence in addition to emotional intelligence benefits leaders in terms of increased well-being, better connections, enhanced teamwork, increased productivity, increased job satisfaction, and increased levels of creative thinking (Singh, 2004). As a result, they exhibit honesty, humility, and empathy while becoming focused and accurate in their pursuit of outcomes.

According to empirical data, personality type and emotional intelligence have been crucial in helping organisations achieve their objectives (Dhani & Sharma, 2017). More importantly, there is a much higher chance of performance success when the two previously described qualities are combined with leadership ability.

Thus, emotionally knowledgeable and competent leaders steer others in the proper direction without allowing emotion influence their decisions. Instead, they look for constructive ways to settle disputes and focus on how to make duties better. Because of the aforementioned details, university administrators need to possess emotional

*Sci. Technol. Arts Res. J., July – Sep. 2023, 12(3), 75-93*

intelligence traits and leadership competencies in order to perform better in their jobs. While research indicates that emotional intelligence can enhance both individual and group performance, it is unclear which emotional intelligence characteristics are most beneficial to academic leaders, and it is still unclear to what degree leaders with high emotional intelligence are considered more valuable assets than less emotional leaders in terms of leadership competency in Ethiopian higher education. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate how personality traits and emotional intelligence relate to leadership competency in higher education in Ethiopia. Therefore, the following research questions were addressed in light of the study's goal, which was to ascertain the degree to which emotional intelligence, personality traits, and leadership abilities relate to one another within the context of higher education in Ethiopia:

1. *To what extent are EI and personality traits positively correlated with academic leaders' leadership competence?*
2. *To what extent does EI predict leadership competence after controlling for demographic variables and personality traits?*
3. *Among subscales of emotional intelligence, which variable significantly contributes to leadership competence?*
4. *Among subscales of personality traits, which variables significantly contribute to leadership competence?*

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This study was conducted using a quantitative method with a correlational research design.

*Assefa, D.*

Seven universities, namely Jimma, Haromaya, Hawassa Wollega, Deberaberhan, Wello, and Diredawa, were selected by the cluster area sampling technique as a sample for the study. From the sample university, 354 academic staff and 163 leaders—top-level (presidents and vice presidents), middle-level (directors and faculty or school deans), and lower-level (department heads)—were included in the study.

### **Instruments**

A multi-rater or 360-degree feedback questionnaire in which academic leaders and academic staff members were self-rated and observed raters, respectively, was prepared to collect data. This is because multi-rating helps to get valid and reliable information about work-related behavior and performance to be measured (Michael & Fleener, 1997). Consequently, a leadership competency multi-rater questionnaire, which was adapted based on Wagner (2000), was used. Based on Goleman's et al.'s (2002) model, an emotional intelligence questionnaire was prepared, and five dimensions of personality traits were adapted from Muck et al. (2007) and used. All scales were answered on a six-point Likert scale from 1 (not at all) to 6 (always). In order to investigate the practical use of these questionnaires, a pilot study was conducted on 42 academic leaders and 42 academic staff. Using SPSS version 25, the reliability of the instruments was tested through Cronbach's alpha, and items with too low reliability were rejected, as well as comments from the pilot study results. Accordingly, 24 items for leadership competence with a reliability of 0.93, 18 items for emotional intelligence with reliability of 0.92, and 10 items

*Sci. Technol. Arts Res. J., July – Sep. 2023, 12(3), 75-93*

for personality traits with a reliability of .55 were selected and used.

The reliability of the internal consistency of personality traits is low. This is because as the number of items decreases, the reliability of internal consistency becomes smaller (Cohan, 1988). With respect to the validity of the scales, factor analysis was performed to strengthen the validity of emotional intelligence and leadership competence constructs. For this purpose, the principal axis factoring analysis method of extraction and direct oblimin rotation, which allow components to be correlated with one another (Kaiser, 1960), were utilized. Then all constructs showed an interpretable and understandable factor structure, which illustrates and confirms their validity. The data was analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistics to describe the demographic variables. Factor analysis was used to investigate the validity of the instruments; Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to test the reliability of these instruments; Pearson product moment correlation was used to investigate the extent of the relationship among the variables; hierarchical multiple regression analysis was used to investigate the incremental contribution of personality trait and EI to leadership competence; and finally, stepwise regression analysis was performed to identify the most significant subscales of personality trait and emotional intelligence that predict leadership competence.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

Based on the data collected from respondents on the variables of the study, analyses and interpretations were made as follows:

Assefa, D.

From the total respondents of academic leaders, only 6 (4%) were females in the position, while 157 (96%) were males, which shows a very small number of females compared to males. Out of the total sample of academic leaders, 6% were top leaders, 41% were middle leaders, and 53% were lower-level leaders. Qualification-wise, 21% were PhD holders, 77% were MA/MSc/MPH graduates, and 2% were BA degree holders. Concerning academic staff, 14 (4%) of them were female respondents, which is very small compared to

male respondents, which were 340 (96%). Out of the total number of academic staff, 15% were rated as top leaders, 40% were rated as middle leaders, and 45% were rated as lower-level leaders. Qualification-wise, 1% of professors, 3% of associate professors, 11% of assistance professors, 76% of lecturers, and 9% of BA degree holders participated. The correlation was computed to test the extent of the relationship among the variables.

**Table 1**

*Academic leaders self-reported correlation of TIPI and EI with Lcop*

variables	Openness	Consciousness	Extroversion	Agreeableness	Neuroticism	EI	Lcop
Openness	1						
Consciousness	.316**	1					
Extroversion	.208**	0.086	1				
Agreeableness	.259**	.266**	0.089	1			
Neuroticism	-0.064	-0.046	0.125	-0.139	1		
EI	.344**	.205**	.238**	.371**	-0.093	1	
Lcop	.250**	0.126	.304**	.198*	-0.025	.671**	1

Note.  $N = 163$ ; \*\* $P < .01$  and \* $P < .05$  level (2-tailed)

The data reveals a significant correlation between emotional intelligence (EI) and leadership competence (Lcop) with the value of ( $r = .67$ ,  $p <$

$.01$ ), as well as between personality traits Openness  $r = .250$ , Extroversion  $r = .304$ ,  $p < .01$  and Agreeableness  $r = .198$ ,  $p < .05$ .

**Table 2**

*Observer (academic staff) reported correlation of TIPI and EI with Lcop (r)*

Variables	Openness	Consciousness	Extroversion	Agreeableness	Neuroticism	EI	Lcop
Openness	1						
Consciousness	.299**	1					
Extroversion	.420**	.291**	1				
Agreeableness	-0.014	-0.057	-0.076	1			
Neuroticism	-.466**	-.440**	-.354**	-0.047	1		
EI	.447**	.449**	.375**	0.037	-.558**	1	
Lcop	.336**	.259**	.236**	0.035	-.397**	.594**	1

Note.  $N = 354$ ; \*\* $P < .01$  (2-tailed)



Assefa, D.

As the staff -reported EI correlated positively to Lcop with the value of ( $r = .59, p < .01$ ), and personality traits: Openness  $r = .336$ , Conscientiousness  $r = .259$ , Extroversion  $r = .236$  and Neuroticism  $r = -.397, p < .01$ . The analysis indicated that there is significant relationship between EI and Lcop as well as

some personality traits and leadership competence as rated by both academic leaders and academic staff. Multiple hierarchical regression model was used to test the contribution of self-reported EI to Lcop after controlling for demographic variables and personality dimension.

**Table 3**

*Hierarchical regression of self-reported EI after controlling demographic variables and personality trait*

	B	Std. Error	Beta	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> Change
<i>Step 1.demg var</i>				.040	.015	.040
(Constant)	130.199	6.517				
Position	-2.804	1.768	-.133			
Age	.955	1.336	.063			
Experience	-.144	1.219	-.010			
Qualification	-4.798	2.225	-.183*			
<i>Step 2.demg vr +TIPI</i>				.177	.128	.137
(Constant)	87.507	12.997				
position	-1.975	1.680	-.093			
Age	1.069	1.263	.071			
Experience	-.182	1.165	-.012			
Qualification	-4.529	2.116	-.172*			
Openness	1.559	.786	.161*			
Conscientiousness	.189	.663	.023			
Extroversion	1.801	.556	.248**			
Agreeableness	.899	.610	.116			
Neuroticism	-.333	.648	-.039			
<i>Step3.dmg vr+ TIPI +EI</i>				.485	.451	.308
(Constant)	46.286	11.183				
position	-.987	1.337	-.047			
Experience	.697	1.003	.046			
Qualification	.258	.925	.017			
Age	-2.509	1.692	-.095			
openness	.201	.640	.021			
Conscientiousness	-.080	.527	-.010			
Extroversion	1.032	.449	.142*			
Agreeableness	-.437	.504	-.057			
Neuroticism	.036	.516	.004			
EI	.802	.084	.642***			

Note:  $N=163$ ; \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Assefa, D.

The Table 3 shows the multiple hierarchical regression results. As indicated in the table above, demographic variables contribute 1.5% to leadership competence, which is negligible. After self-reported personality variables were included, the model explained 12.8% of the variance with  $F(9, 153) = 3.654 < .001$ . Finally, when self-reported emotional intelligence was added to the regression as a

whole, 45.1% was explained as the variance in leadership competence. However, after controlling both demographic variables and personality dimensions,  $R^2$  changes indicate that emotional intelligence alone accounted for 30.8% of the variance in leadership competence. It is a significant contribution, as indicated in Sig. F change  $(1, 152) = 90.967 < .001$ .

**Table 4**

*Academic staff reported multiple hierarchical regression of EI after controlling personality dimension*

	B	Std. Error	Beta	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> Change
<i>Step.1.TIPI</i>				.195	.183	.195
(Constant)	70.118	14.778				
Openness	2.278	.778	.168**			
Extroversion	1.153	.787	.080			
Consciousness	.752	.797	.052			
Agreeableness	.667	.978	.033			
Neuroticism	-3.296	.739	-.263***			
<i>Step.2.IPI+ EI-S</i>				.364	.353	.169
(Constant)	30.069	13.799				
Openness	1.013	.704	.075			
Extroversion	-.510	.721	-.035			
Consciousness	-.216	.716	-.015			
Agreeableness	.175	.872	.009			
Neuroticism	-1.044	.699	-.083			
EI	.912	.095	.535***			

Note:  $N=354$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

Table 4 shows the result of the hierarchical regression of the contribution of EI to leadership competence after controlling for personality. The table showed that personality traits accounted for 18.3% of the variance in leadership competence. After the entry of EI at step 2, the total variance explained by the model as a whole is 35.3%,  $F(6,347) = 33.093 < .001$ . However, in the table,  $R^2$

change indicated that EI alone accounted for 16.9% of the variance in leadership competence, with F change  $(1, 347) = 92.262 < .001$ . In both self-report and observer report analyses, the results show significant contributions. However, the self-rated result shows a far greater contribution of EI to leadership competence after controlling both demographic variables and personality traits.

Assefa, D.

### Stepwise Regression Analysis

A stepwise regression was used to identify the major predictors of leadership competence using subscales of EI and personality traits as

*Sci. Technol. Arts Res. J., July – Sep. 2023, 12(3), 75-93*

predictors based on academic leaders' self-reports and observer reports. Table 5 shows the results of EI stepwise regression analysis as reported by Academic leaders

**Table 5**

*The results of EI stepwise regression analysis*

Variables	Beta	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> Change
Self-awareness	.343***	.380	.376	.380
Social awareness	.241**	.449	.442	.069
Self-management	.235**	.47	.470	.031

*Note: N=163; .05, \*\*p <.01, \*\*\*p <.001*

All four subscales of EI, namely self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management were entered in a stepwise regression. Then self-awareness, social awareness and self-management were significant

predictors of leadership competence and accounted for 47% of variance with  $F(3,159) = 48.818, p < .001$  as rated by academic leaders. Table 6. Shows the results of personality dimension stepwise regression analysis as reported by Academic leaders

**Table 6**

*The results of personality dimension stepwise regression analysis as reported by Academic leaders*

Variables	Beta	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> Change
Extroversion	.263**	.092	.089	.092
Openness	.195*	.129	.118	.036

*Note: N=163; \*p <.05, \*\*p <.01*

All five personality dimensions, namely extroversion, openness, agreeableness, conscientiousness and Neuroticism were entered in a stepwise regression; however, the model showed only two significant predictors, namely extroversion and openness.

The model was statistically significant,  $F(2,160) = 11.821, p < .001$  and accounted for 12% of variance of leadership competence as rated by academic leaders. Table 7 shows the results of EI stepwise regression analysis as reported by academic staff.

**Table 7**

*The results of EI stepwise regression analysis as reported by academic staff*

Variables	Beta	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> Chang
Social awareness	.386***	.336	.334	.336
Relationship management	.245**	.358	.354	.022

*Note: N=354; \*\*p <.01, \*\*\*p <.001*

Social awareness and relationship management were significant and accounted for the variance of 35.4% at  $F(2,351) = 97.874$ ,  $p < .001$  as rated by academic staff.

Table 8 shows the results of personality dimension stepwise regression analysis as reported by academic staff.

**Table 8**

*The personality dimension stepwise regression analysis as reported by academic staff*

Variables	Beta	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> Chang
Neuroticism	-.307***	.157	.155	.157
Openness	.193***	.186	.182	.029

*Note: N=354; \*\*\*p <.001*

Neuroticism and openness were the significant predictors of leadership competence and accounted for the variance of 18% at  $F(2,351) = 40.198$ ,  $p < .001$  as reported by academic staff.

In general, from the subscales of EI and TIPI, the most significant predictors of leadership competence were identified. Hence, as rated by academic leaders' self-awareness from EI and extroversion from TIPI, they were selected as the largest predictors of leadership competence, while social awareness from EI and neurosis from TIPI were considered the best predictors of leadership competence as rated by academic staff.

## DISCUSSION

This study set out to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership competence in Ethiopian higher education. EI was significantly correlated with leadership competence as rated by the university academic leaders and academic staff with  $r = .67$  and  $r = .59$  respectively, which shows a strong positive relationship as suggested by Cohen (1988). In support of this finding, previous research also confirmed a significant positive correlation. For instance, Amram (2009) found a significant relationship between academic

Assefa, D.

staff reports of EI and leaders' effectiveness. Wendorf-Heldt (2009) also found strong correlations between emotional intelligence and research-based school leadership practices. Furthermore, Hoffman (2010), Ramchunder (2012) and Koh et al. (2018)) also revealed a significant positive relationship between leaders self-reported emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness.

Likewise, regression analysis of EI with leadership competence also showed a significant amount of variance for leadership competence, as reported by both academic staff and academic leaders. After controlling both demographic variables and personality dimensions, emotional intelligence significantly accounted for 31% of the variance in leadership competence, while in the case of academic staff, EI accounted for 17% of the variance in leadership competence. This showed that emotional intelligence makes a significant difference in the leadership competence of leaders in their leading practices.

The present study was also supported by different researchers. Cook (2006) found that self-reported EI predicts principals' leadership performance to meet their student needs. Wendorf-Heldt (2009) also confirmed a significant variance of EI in leadership in research-based school leadership practices. Furthermore, Goleman et al. (2002), in their research, also approved the unique contribution of EI to making leaders more effective. Thus, emotional intelligence needs to be considered a major component of leadership as it contributes to leadership effectiveness. Being emotionally intelligent

*Sci. Technol. Arts Res. J., July – Sep. 2023, 12(3), 75-93*

means one is aware of how he or she communicates with others and evaluates how his or her actions and behaviors affect people around him or her and their work performance. In addition to this, emotionally intelligent leaders are aware of themselves and can identify their weaknesses and strengths by observing and evaluating the situation in which they are to come up with a positive outcome. They concentrate on positive aspects of life to improve the work environment and then the world. They surround themselves with positive, successful, and brilliant minds while leaving any negative people behind (Hiren, 2008).

Leaders with deep emotional connections to their staff generate positive feelings that enhance collective performance, use leadership styles that are visionary, rely on coaching instead of coercion, build harmony, and value input and participation (Goleman et al., 2002). The emotional intelligence of a leader is then found to influence the staff's behavior, work environment, relationships with colleagues and students, and communication styles (Allen et al., 2012). Hence, from these reviewed studies, the aforementioned qualities may lead to interconnectedness and sociability by creating relationships, harmony, and integrity between and among educational leaders and staff, which in turn leads to greater organizational success and staff satisfaction.

Therefore, higher education leaders need to develop skills that are associated with emotional intelligence to effectively implement leadership practices, as this supports greater levels of effectiveness. Higher education demands highly qualified

Assefa, D.

staff and competent, as well as emotionally intelligent, academic leaders who are accountable for their actions.

Based on the stepwise regression of the personality variables, as reported by academic leaders, extroversion and openness significantly predicted Leadership Competence. This is also related to the result of correlations, which depicts the significant correlation of extroversion and openness to leadership competence. Extroversion, which is the tendency to be sociable and assertive, is strongly associated with leadership and has been described as the most important personality trait of an effective leader (Wanberg et al., 2019; Michelle, cited in Udueze, 2021). However, as reported by academic staff, neuroticism and openness were the subscales that significantly predicted leadership competence from the five personality dimensions. Openness is an intellect that implies a sense of creativity and artistic-aesthetic appreciation, and it plays a modest but important role in status attainment (Afhami & Zarghan, 2018). Openness was positively correlated with transformational leadership, while neuroticism was negatively correlated (Easley, 2019). Neuroticism represents vulnerability to stress, a level of anxiety and self-esteem, anger, or insecurity (Afhami and Zarghan, 2018). Neuroticism is the most consistent predictor of relationship dissatisfaction and marriage dissolution (Javanmarda & Garegozlo, 2013). Therefore, this kind of behavior does not fit with leading activities, so such kinds of leaders have lower scores in this trait to be effective. In the case of the EI subscales, self-awareness, social awareness, and self-management were

*Sci. Technol. Arts Res. J., July – Sep. 2023, 12(3), 75-93*

significant predictors of leadership competence as rated by academic leaders. This finding was supported by Legesse (2018) in that there was a significant contribution from all dimensions of emotional intelligence to primary school principals' leadership effectiveness. However, as rated by academic staff, social awareness and relationship management were the subscales that significantly predicted leadership competence. Self-awareness and self-management were not significant predictors of leadership competence as rated by academic staff. This finding was supported by Fianko's (2020) finding that there was a significant contribution of social awareness to leadership and management effectiveness. The difference might be because of social desirability: leaders wanted to be considered good leaders and rate themselves positively, ignoring their weaknesses. However, the behavior and activity of the leaders can be manifested in the staff, as leaders have been leading their staff by influencing and exerting power over them. Hence, the staff can genuinely rate and evaluate their leaders. This implies that leaders have a limited awareness of their own emotions.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

As indicated in the results and summarized in the findings, EI is significantly correlated with leadership competence in this study. This shows that EI has a positive effect on leadership competence as rated by both academic leaders and academic staff. This implies that the quality of leadership competence increases as the quality of EI increases. Therefore, from this finding, one can infer that leaders who have emotional

Assefa, D.

intelligence qualities can have the qualities of leadership competence, which, in turn, have an effect on leadership performance. EI predicted leadership competence significantly after controlling for all the variables (demographic variables and personality dimensions) that were included in this study. This suggests that both EIs make a significant contribution to leadership competence. Consequentially, it was concluded that being emotionally intelligent as a leader has a great contribution to the effect and success of the organization as well as to the fulfillment of staff satisfaction. The awareness of both academic leaders and academic staff about the constructs of emotional intelligence was limited. Very few academic leaders and academic staff have identified the meaning and concepts of these terms. This indicated that this construct is a new concept and needs further awareness through training for higher education members.

Competence is a broad concept that incorporates knowledge, skills, abilities, and experiences. However, behavioral and skill competencies are competencies that are manifested in interpersonal and interpersonal attributes to perform a certain physical or mental task. It is the products of personal motives, traits, and self-images that show the way a person acts, thinks, or feels. Thus, from this explanation, it can be inferred that these behavioral competencies are a specific person's ability and attitude to do something well in a given situation. Therefore, leaders have to be acquainted with these competencies to be effective in their performance.

Attributes or qualities that designate the behavior of authentic types of leadership

*Sci. Technol. Arts Res. J., July – Sep. 2023, 12(3), 75-93*

qualities, such as being true to oneself and living one's values and beliefs to increase autonomy and self-determination for others who they lead, are found to be vital leadership behaviors that may enhance the awareness of spiritual and emotional intelligence.

### **Recommendations**

This study may serve as a basis for future research on these ideas, allowing researchers to explore the function of emotional intelligence in many domains and determine which EI subscales are most predictive of leadership competency. Emotional self-awareness, emotional self-management, social awareness, and relationship management are the four subscales that make up the emotional intelligence (EI). As a result, research investigations must determine how much each of these subscales contributes. It may be worthwhile to explore the potential impact of gender as a demographic variable on the ability to predict leadership capability.

Because the factors of interest in this study, especially EI, are complicated, future research could repeat this study using additional variables, such as self-efficacy, to determine if it might be serving as an intervening variable. The intricacy of EI may also be better understood by employing semi-structured or unstructured interviews to acquire detailed information on the topics not covered by a questionnaire in this investigation.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The author is thankful to Wollega University for the necessary funding.

### **DECLARATION**

Assefa, D.

The author declares that there is no competing interest

## DATA AVAILABILITY

Any required data will be made available on request.

## REFERENCES

- Afhami, R., & Zarghan, M.S. (2018). The Big Five, aesthetic judgment styles, and art interest. *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, 14(4), 764-775.
- Allen, S. J., Shankman, M. L., & Miguel, R. F. (2012). Emotionally Intelligent Leadership: An Integrative, Process-Oriented Theory of Student Leadership. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 11(1).
- Amram, Y. (2009). The Contribution of Emotional and Spiritual Intelligences to effective and cascading model. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 95(1), 54–78. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0017286>
- Antonakis, J., Ashkanasy, N. M., & Dasborough, M. T. (2009). Does leadership need emotional intelligence?. *The leadership quarterly*, 20(2), 247-261.
- Aya, H., & Alan, E. (2006). Outdoor leaders' emotional intelligence and transformational leadership. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 28(3), 222-242.
- Bar-On, R. (1997). The Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-I): *Technical manual*. Toronto, Canada: Multi-Health Systems
- Bar-On, R. (2002). Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-I): *Short technical manual*. Toronto, Canada: Multi-Health Systems
- Sci. Technol. Arts Res. J., July – Sep. 2023, 12(3), 75-93*
- Bar-On, R. (2007). The Bar-On model of emotional intelligence: A valid, robust and applicable
- Brackett, M., Delaney. S., & Salovey, P. (2014). *Emotional Intelligence*. <http://nobaproject.com/modules/emotional-intelligence>
- Business Leadership: Unpublished Doctoral thesis, California. Retrieved from [http://www.yosiamram.net/docs/EI\\_and\\_SI\\_in\\_Leadership\\_Amram\\_Dissert.pdf](http://www.yosiamram.net/docs/EI_and_SI_in_Leadership_Amram_Dissert.pdf)
- Campbell, R.F., Corbally, E.J., & Ramseyer, A. J. (1962). *Introduction to Educational Administration*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon
- Caruso, R.D., Salovey. P., & Mayer, D.J. (2004). Emotional Intelligence: Theory finding and Implications. *Psychological inquiry*. 15 (3), 197-215.
- Charry, K. (2022). What Is Emotional Intelligence. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-emotional-intelligence-2795423>
- Coco, C. M. (2011). Emotional Intelligence in Higher Education: Strategic Implications for
- Cohen, J.W. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Collins, J. (2001). Level 5 Leadership: The Triumph of Humility and Fierce Resolve. *Harvard Business Review*, 67-76.
- Cook, C. R. (2006). Effects of Emotional Intelligence on principals' Leadership performance. creative leadership. Green stooro Carolina
- Day, A. L., & Carroll, S. A. (2008). Faking emotional intelligence (EI): comparing response distortion on ability and trait-based EI measures. *Journal of Organizational*



- Assefa, D. Behavior: *The International Journal of Industrial, Occupational and Organizational Psychology and Behavior*, 29(6), 761-784.
- Dhani, P., & Sharma, T. (2017). Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Personality: Easley, S. (2019). The Relationship between Leadership Style and Personality Type Among College Students. Dominican University of California Follow. <https://doi.org/10.33015/dominican.edu>
- EI model. *Organisations and People*, 14, 27-34. emotional intelligence. journal home page: <http://www.elsevier.com/locate/orgdyn>
- Fallesen, J.J., & Hore, J. D. (2014). Leadership Competencies for Contemporary Army Operations: development, review and validation. <http://www.Internationalmta.org/Documents/2004/2004045P>.
- Fianko, S. K. (2020). Does the Interpersonal Dimension of Goleman's Emotional Intelligence model predict Effective Leadership? *African Journal of Business and Economic Research*. 15(4), 221 – 245.
- Frank, W., Humphrey, H.R., & Cole, S.M. (2012). Toward an evidence-based management of Ganjeh, K.B., Manafi, M., Hojabri, R., Aghapour, A. H., & Gheshmi, R. (2011). The relationship between emotional intelligence and effective delegation. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 2(19).
- Gardner, L., & Stough, C. (2003). Measuring Emotional Intelligence in the workplace with the Swinburne University emotional intelligence Test. Preceding of the first *Sci. Technol. Arts Res. J.*, July – Sep. 2023, 12(3), 75-93 international Conference on contemporary management
- Goleman, D. (2000). Emotional Intelligence: Issues in Paradigm Building. [http://www.eiconsortium.org/pdf/emotional\\_intelligence\\_paradigm\\_building.pdf](http://www.eiconsortium.org/pdf/emotional_intelligence_paradigm_building.pdf)
- Goleman, D. (2002). The Emotionally Intelligent Workplace. <http://www.cdnnetwork.org>
- Goleman, D. (2004). What Makes a Leader? Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2004/01/what-makes-a-leader>
- Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R., & McKee, A. (2002). Emotional Intelligence: An Overlooked Aspect of Effective Leadership Practices: A Review of the Literature on Desirable Traits, Behaviors and Characteristics for Successful Leadership Promoting Transformation Change. <http://cnx.org/contents/2b261647-2356-44e6-b35d->
- Goleman's, D. (1995). Emotional intelligence theory (EQ - Emotional Quotient) Retrieved from <http://www.businessballs.com/eq.htm>.
- Golman, D. (1998). Working with Emotional intelligence, London, Bloomsbury publishing. [http://www.eiconsortium.org/pdf/emotional\\_intelligence](http://www.eiconsortium.org/pdf/emotional_intelligence).
- Grice, J. W. (2019, January 04). Five-factor model of personality. <https://www.britannica.com/science/five-factor-model-of-personality>
- Herbst, H. H., Maree, J. G., & Sibanda, E. (2006). Emotional intelligence and leadership abilities. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 20(5), 592-612.
- Hiren, S. (2008). Spiritual and Emotional Intelligence; Consciousness and intellect.

- Assefa, D.  
<http://wplay.wordpress.com/2008/07/31/spiritual-and-emotional>
- Hoffman, P. (2006). The Strategy of Leadership is Thinking, Vision, and Planning - The Future Depends on It retrieved from [https://medium.com/@levi\\_27264/the-strategy-of-leadership-is-thinking-vision-and-planning-the-future](https://medium.com/@levi_27264/the-strategy-of-leadership-is-thinking-vision-and-planning-the-future).
- Hogan, R., & Hogan, J. (2007). Hogan Personality Inventory manual (3rd ed.). Tulsa, OK: Hogan Assessment Systems.
- Ireland, R. D., & Hitt, M. A. (1999). Achieving and maintaining strategic competitiveness in the 21st century: The role of strategic leadership. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 13(1), 43-57.
- Javanmard, G. H., & Garegozlo, R. M. (2013). The Study of Relationship Between Marital Satisfaction and Personality Characteristics In Iranian Families. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 84, 396–399. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.06.573>
- Joseph, D. L., & Newman, D. A. (2010). Emotional intelligence: An integrative meta-analysis
- Kaiser, H. (2013). What is Problem Solving? <https://www.mindtools.com/a6tcgqp/what-is-problem-solving>
- Klenke, K. (2007). Trilogy of the Leaders Mind EI, CI and SI retrieved from [http://www.aomiaom.org/feature\\_new.html](http://www.aomiaom.org/feature_new.html)
- Koh, C. B., & O’Higgins, E. (2018). Relationships between emotional intelligence, perceived and actual leadership effectiveness in the military context. *Military Psychology*, 30(1), 27-42.
- Legesse, M. (2018). Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Effectiveness of Principals in Pre-primary Schools in Yeka sub city. (MA Sci. Technol. Arts Res. J., July – Sep. 2023, 12(3), 75-93 Thesis). Addis Ababa University. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- Matthews. G., Zeidner, M., and Roberts, R.D. (2002). Emotional Intelligence Science and Myth MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts London, England
- Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., & Caruso, D. R. (2008). Emotional intelligence: New ability or eclectic traits?. *American psychologist*, 63(6), 503.
- Mayer, J.D., Salovey, P., & Caruso, D. (2000). Models of emotional intelligence. In J.R. Sternburg (Ed.), *Handbook of Intelligence*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Mersino, C. A. (2007). Emotional Intelligence for Project Managers. The People Skills You Need to Achieve Outstanding Results. Retrieved from <http://www.Amacombbooks.org>
- Michael, J.P and Floonor, W.J (1997). Using 360-degree feedback on organization. Center for
- Mikolajczak, M. (2009). Going beyond the ability-trait debate: The three-level model of emotional intelligence. *E-Journal of Applied Psychology*, 5(2), 25-31.
- Muck, P. M., Hell, B., & Gosling, S. D. (2007). Construct validation of a short five-factor model instrument. *European journal of psychological assessment*, 23(3), 166-175.
- Packard, T. (2009). Leadership and performance in human services organizations. *The handbook of human services management*, 143-164.
- Panggabean, H. (2004). Characteristics of Indonesian intercultural sensitivity in multicultural and international work groups.

- Assefa, D.  
<https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1270&context>.
- Parrish, D. (2010). Effective leadership in higher education: The 'circles of influence'. In Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) 2010 *Conference Melbourne*, Australia, 29, 1-17.
- Petrides, K. V., & Furnham, A. (2006). The role of trait emotional intelligence in a gender-specific model of organizational variables 1. *Journal of applied social psychology*, 36(2), 552-569.
- Ramchunder, Y., & Martins, N. (2014). The role of self-efficacy, emotional intelligence and leadership style as attributes of leadership effectiveness. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 40(1), 1-11.
- Sala, F. (2005). Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI). Technical Manual. Hay Group Mc- Clelland Center for Research and Innovation. [www.eiconsortium.org/](http://www.eiconsortium.org/)
- Salovey, P., Woolery, A., & Mayer, J. D. (2001). Emotional intelligence: Conceptualization and measurement. *Blackwell handbook of social psychology: Interpersonal processes*, 279-307.
- Singh, P., Manser, P., & Mestry, R. (2007). Importance of emotional intelligence in conceptualizing collegial leadership in *Sci. Technol. Arts Res. J.*, July – Sep. 2023, 12(3), 75-93
- education. *South African Journal of Education*, 27(3), 541-563.
- Stum, G. (2000). Emotional Competence and Leadership. The Leadership News. Web edition. <http://www.usscg.mil/hg/g-wt/g-wyy/fall00/emot.htm>
- Teambuilding. (2022). Key Leadership Skills & Competencies for Work in 2023. <https://teambuilding.com/blog/leadership-skills>
- Wagner, S. (2000). A Leadership Competency Model: Describing the Capacity to lead. Servant Leadership. Retrieved from <http://www.manchesterchristian.com>
- Wanberg, R.C., Kammeyer-Mueller, J.D., and Ones, S.D. (2019). Extraversion Advantages at Work: A Quantitative Review and Synthesis of the Meta-Analytic Evidence. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 104(12), 1-24.
- Wendorf-Heldt, K. K. (2009). Emotional Intelligence: The Link to School Leadership Practices That Increase Student Achievement. (Doctoral thesis). Cardinal Stritch University. [https://www.allthingsplc.info/files/uploads/emotional\\_intelligence\\_leadershippractices-wendorfheldt.pdf](https://www.allthingsplc.info/files/uploads/emotional_intelligence_leadershippractices-wendorfheldt.pdf)
- Zeidner, M., Matthews, G., & Roberts, R. D. (2012). What we know about emotional intelligence: How it affects learning, work, relationships, and our mental health. MIT press.