# A STUDY ON THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN EMERGENT LEADERSHIP

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## ABSTRACT

Leadership and emotional intelligence have been an important part of research in management and psychology since years. With more studies on leadership effectiveness, team effectiveness, virtual teams, informal teams, self-managed teams, etc., Emergent Leadership theory has gained more importance. Emergent leadership is the one in which the leader is not appointed or elected; leader emerges. The present study presents the existing literature on emergent leadership and emotional intelligence with an intend to highlight the role of emotional intelligence in emergent leadership. The study is based on analysis books, articles and thesis on leadership and emotional intelligence. With paradigm shift, from autocratic controlled teams to informal adaptive teams, emotional intelligence of a leader plays a vital role for optimal team outcomes. The existing literature points that emotional intelligence consisting of self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, social skills and relationship management play a vital role in leadership emergence. There is further scope for research in the area, to bring out how emotional intelligence predicts leadership emergence. This would help to adopt proper techniques to enhance emotional intelligence in the new generation emerging leaders that would fill the leadership gap in the future.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Emergent Leadership, Emergent Leader, Emotional Intelligence, Leadership Emergence

## INTRODUCTION

## LEADERSHIP

Leadership is the skill and act of influencing, leading and motivating group of people. It is the ability to guide individuals, teams and organisation. Leadership has been defined as "a process of social influence in which one person is able to enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of common tasks" (Chemers, M. M. 2002).

Chapter 3 verse 20 and 21 of Bhagvad Gitaassist in understanding who a leader is. karmaaiva hi sansiddhimāsthitā janakādaya, loka-sa grahamevāpisampaśhyankartumarhasi. yad yadācharatiśhre has tat tad evetarojana, sayatpramā a kurutelokas tad anuvartate which means by performing their prescribed duties, king Janak and others attained perfection. You should also perform your work to set an example for the good of the world. Whatever actions great persons perform, common people follow. Whatever standards they set; all the world pursues.

Leadership theories started with Great man theory which states that leaders are born and not made (Sethuraman, K., & Suresh, J. 2014). And then came the trait theory by thinkers like Cecil, Rhodes Thomas Carlyle and of Francis Galton who identified the physical characteristics,and skills of people who

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rose to power. The behavioural leadership theory was based on identifying successful leaders based on set of behaviours by psychologists like David McClelland, Kurt Lewin, Ronald Lippit, Ralph White and studies of Ohio State University and the Michihan State Studies. Robert Blake and Jane Mouton gave the leadership grid and B F Skinner developed the positive reinforcement concept. Further Bass focused on employee centred and task centred behaviour of leaders (Goff, D. G. 2003).

The Situational and Contingency theories surfaced which pointed at that the characteristics of the situation influence the act of the leader (Nawaz, Z. A. K. D. A., & Khan, I. 2016). Fiedler contingency model, Vroom- Yetton decision model, Path goal theory were the major theories explaining leadership in context of situational variables (House, R. J. 1996). Another theory in leadership was the functional leadership theory by researchers like Zaccaro, Rittman, Hackman, Walter, Ziegert, which identified key functions of leadership (Santos, J. P., Caetano, A., & Tavares, S. M. 2015).

Integrated psychological theory came with James Scouller's Three Levels of Leadership model where outer leadership (public and private leadership) and inner leadership (personal leadership)has focused on integrating the strengths of earlier theories (Larsson, G., & Eid, J. 2012). Further Bernard Bass and team came with the transactional (reward exchange) and transformational (individual consideration, motivation,intellectual stimulation and idealised influence) leadership theory(Deveshwar, A., &Aneja, I. 2014). The Leader Member exchange theory emphasis on the aspect of creation of in-group and out-groups based on the type of exchange between the leader and the followers (Van Breukelen, W., Schyns, B., & Le Blanc, P. 2006). The Primal leadership of Daniel Goleman unleashes the power of emotional intelligence where he explains that the impact of emotions decides the resonance or absence of resonance (Perkel, S. E. 2004). The Neo-emergent
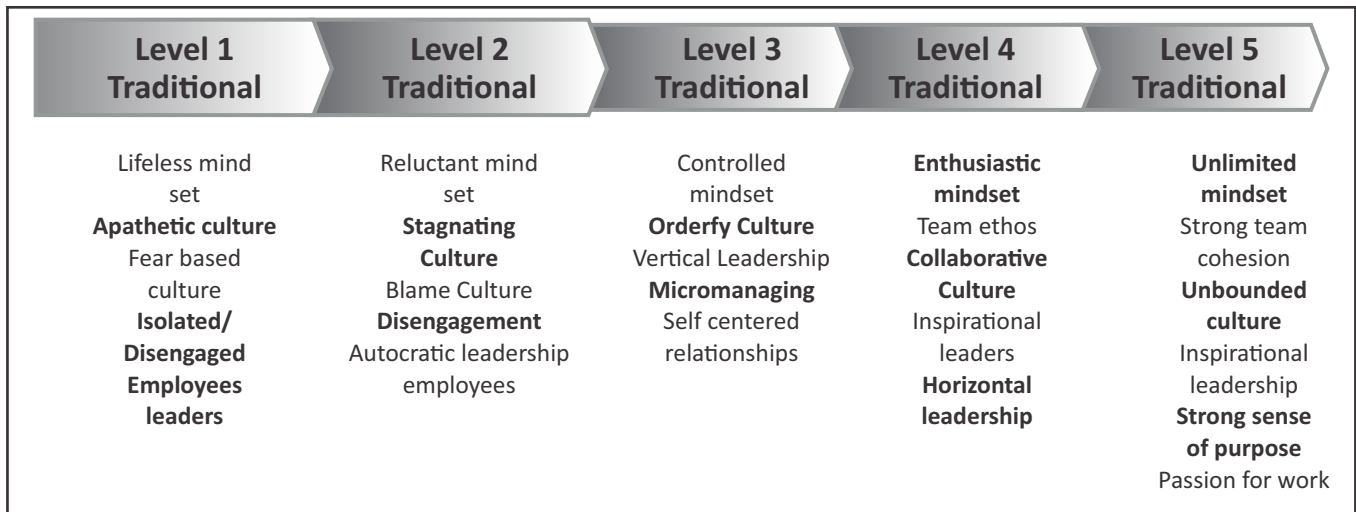
leadership theory highlights that the information emerging creates the perception of leadership (Chendroyaperumal, C. 2011).

# EMERGENT LEADERSHIP THEORY

Emergent leadership is a type of leadership where the leader emerges as a result of group interaction and not by mere position, appointed or elected role. Emergent leadership has been described asan emergent phenomenon which develops as a part of the group process andwhich is the team member accord spontaneously (Yoo, Y., &Alavi, M. 2004). Emergent leadership is a two-way process where leader and the follower equally participate and it develops from the interaction of group. Whereas the assigned traditional leadership comes from the hierarchical position of the leader. The role of emergent leader is to improve task coordination, boost optimism, support and bring a sense of belonging among the group members for better task engagement (Wolff, S. B.,Pescosolido, A. T., & Druskat, V. U. 2002).

The Five Level Leadership Model by Dr Vlatka Hlupic explains how there is a paradigm shift in leadership from the traditional to the emergent leadership. Leadership emerges when there is a shift in mindset from lifeless, reluctant, controlled mindset to enthusiastic, unlimited mindset. Organisations with emergent leadership have collaborative to unbounded culture. The leadership is impactfully inspirational. The leadership shifting from traditional emergent shows signs of team ethos and there is strong team cohesion in the next level. From vertical leadership there is a shift towards horizontal leadership and further taken to informal leadership which is based on a strong sense of purpose. Passion for work is the key ingredient for the in emergent leadership.

Fig 1: Five level Leadership Model

| Level 1 Traditional | Level 2 Traditional | Level 3 Traditional | Level 4 Traditional | Level 5 Traditional |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lifeless mind set | Reluctant mind set | Controlled mindset | **Enthusiastic mindset** | **Unlimited mindset** |
| **Apathetic culture** | **Stagnating Culture** | **Orderfy Culture** | Team ethos | Strong team cohesion |
| Fear based culture | Blame Culture | Vertical Leadership | **Collaborative Culture** | **Unbounded culture** |
| **Isolated/ Disengaged Employees leaders** | **Disengagement** | **Micromanaging** | Inspirational leaders | Inspirational leadership |
| | Autocratic leadership employees | Self centered relationships | **Horizontal leadership** | **Strong sense of purpose** |
| | | | | Passion for work |

**Source:** Hlupic, V. (2014). The management shift: How to harness the power of people and transform your organization for sustainable success. Springer.

# EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

ya hi navya thay antyētēpuru a puru ar abha samadu khasukha dhīra sō. m tatvāyakalpatē which means that who is not affected by happiness and distress, and remains steady in both, becomes eligible for liberation.

The above verse from Bhagavat Geeta chapter 2 verse 15 draws our attention that far before the western world coined the word emotional intelligence Bhagavat Geeta not only enlightens on nature of emotions but also speaks on why have emotional stability (Gayathri, N., & Meenakshi, K. 2012).

In 1930 Edward Thorndike defined 'social intelligence' "the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls, to act wisely in human relations" which was described as the ability of getting along with others (Thorndike, R. L., & Stein, S. 1937,Herkenhoff, L. M. 2009).In 1940s David Wechsler defined intelligence as "the aggregate or global capacity of the individual to act purposefully, to think rationally, and to deal effectively with his environment". Further in 1950 Humanistic psychologists Abraham Maslow described emotional strength. In 1975 Howard

Gardner introduced the concept of multiple intelligences, where he says recognising the range of human intelligence enhances the probability of living together in impressions of harmony Gardner, H. (1987).

It was in 1985 that Wayne Payne introduced the term emotional intelligence. He guided by providing a framework to examine important issues and questions about emotions.He contributed by providing concepts, methods and tools regarding emotional intelligence (Payne, W. L. 1985). In the year 1987 Keith Beasley used the word emotional quotient in his article.

Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990) defined emotional intelligence "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions". They gave the original framework of and developed two tests for measuring emotional intelligence. (Zysberg, L. E., & Raz, S. E. 2015).

Though coined by Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D., emotional intelligence was popularised by the work of Daniel Goleman. 1992 Daniel Go leman started to write a book 'Emotional Intelligence' which got published in 1995. In 1998 Goleman published

another book 'Working with Emotional Intelligence' in which he mentioned twenty-five skills, abilities and competencies constitute emotional intelligence and his book 'Primal Leadership: Unleashing the Power of Emotional Intelligence' published in 2001 is focused towards leadership development. Among all the leadership skills, emotional skills are the most important for effectiveand efficientjob performance (Bradberry, T., & Greaves, J. 2009).

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kayworth, T. R., & Leidner, D. E. (2002). Studied the role and nature of team leadership in virtual teams. They discovered that highly effective virtual team leaders display a high degree of empathy and emerge in a mentoring role. It was also found that effective leaders communicated very well with their peers and articulated role responsibilities among the team members.

Wolff, S. B., Pescosolido, A. T., & Druskat, V. U. (2002) conducted longitudinal study of 382 team members consisting of 48 self-managing teams. They presented and tested a theory on leader emergence which emphasis on emotional and cognitive skills leading to the selection of an informal leader. The results show that empathy is the basic for the understanding and behaviours that assist leader emergence. It was also found that group task coordination skills influence being selected as informal leader and member focused behavioural skills improved the task focused behaviour.

Yoo, Y., &Alavi, M. (2004). The purpose of the study was to examine the behavioural differences between emergent leaders and team members through their electronic messages' analysis. The results suggest that emergent leaders influenced the temporal rhythm of the team by starting and coordinating synchronous communication. Emergent leaders in the study played the role of integrator.

Higgs, M., & Aitken, P. (2003) in their exploratory research with sample consisting of forty senior managers, explored the extent to which emotional intelligence predicts leadership potential. The research provides evidence that emotional intelligence is a predictor of leadership potential. Leadership was measured using competences such as strategic leadership, intellectual leadership,leading capability building, leading culture building, building relationships and reputation, leading political/stakeholder interface, leading change, building personal learning. Emotional intelligence was measured using resilience, self-awareness, conscientiousness, motivation, influence, interpersonal sensitivity and intuitiveness.

Kellett, J. B., Humphrey, R. H., & Sleeth, R. G. (2006) conducted an empirical study to understand the relationship among the leadership emergence, emotional intelligence and cognitive ability. Empathy consisting of the abilities to express self-emotions and identify others emotions was considered as emotional intelligence ability in the study. The results showed that the respondents with high empathy displayed leadership emergence when complex task performance and cognitive ability were controlled. Empathy, as one of the emotional intelligence abilities was positively related to task and relations leadership. The model showed that empathy had mediating effecton the relationship between 1) the ability to express self-emotions and task relations leadership 2)ability to identify others emotions and task relations leadership.

Côté, S., Lopes, P. N., Salovey, P., & Miners, C. T. (2010) conducted two studies the results revealed that group members having higher emotional intelligence displayed more leadership emergence than their group mates with less emotional intelligence score. The first study result showed that overall emotional intelligence and leadership emergence were positively related. Specially the abilities to perceive and understand emotions predicted leadership emergence. The second study revealed that the abilities to understand, use and manage one's emotions were positively associated with leadership emergence.

Hong, Y., Catano, V. M., & Liao, H. (2011)

conducted two studies related to emotional intelligence, motivation to lead and emergent leadership. The results of the study confirmed that motivation to lead is an important predictor for leadership emergence. It was also found that there was an indirect effect of use of emotions, a construct of emotional intelligence on leadership emergence, through affective-identity motivation to lead and social-normative motivation to lead.

Walter, F., Cole, M. S., van der Vegt, G. S., Rubin, R. S., &Bommer, W. H. (2012) conducted two studies, the first study revealed that are connected with a team member's task coordination behaviour. It was also found that task coordination behaviour mediated the relationship of leader emergence with extraversion and emotion recognition. The second study results confirmed that the indirect relationship between emotion recognition and leader emergence, mediated by task coordination, was positive among extraverts.

Gerpott, F. H., Lehmann-Willenbrock, N., Voelpel, S. C., & Van Vugt, M. (2019). Study was conducted to check the association of task-oriented, change-oriented, and relations-oriented communication to emergent leadership in early, middle, and late team phases taking forty-two teams. It was found that relations-oriented communication gained importance, there was an increase in relations-oriented behaviours towards the end of the project which predicted emergent leadership. Authors suggest that future research should be carried on to find new insights into the magic that happens when groups interact and due these interactions leadership emerges.

## OBJECTIVE

The objective of the paper is to highlight the role of emotional intelligence construct which consists of self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, social skills and relationship management in emergent leadership.

## METHODOLOGY

The present descriptive paper is based on secondary data. Literature available in the books, research articles and thesis on emotional intelligence and leadership has been reviewed and the role of emotional intelligence in emergent leadership is discussed.

## DISCUSSION

The most researched or studied area in psychology and management areemotional intelligence and leadership(Carte, T. A., Chidambaram, L., & Becker, A. 2006).Effective leaders are people who are sensitive of their emotions and awareof the impact of emotions on others (Northouse, P. G. 2018). Emotional quotient is found to be the major predicator for achieving excellence in personal and profession life and for leadership it is the strongest essential drive. (Bradberry, T., & Greaves, J. 2009). A direct relation between emotional skills, interpersonal efficiency, level of satisfaction, organizational effectiveness and productivity exists which suggest that employee citizenship behaviour is greatly affected by the employees' level of emotional intelligence (Sharma, K., & Mahajan, P. 2017). Effective Leaders don't let their senses master them rather they master their senses(Dhiman, S. 2015).

In the recent years many companies now have steered away from the assigned leadership to emergent leadership. It is evident that an individual who has the ability to make teammates follow his directions through his competence, deals with the social situation efficiently and not with the derived power of position. For a leader to lead without the formal position or power, emotional intelligence becomes inevitable. Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990) gave the emotional intelligence framework consisting of firstly identifying emotions in the self and others, integrating them into one's thought processes, further effectively processing the complex emotions and also regulating self-emotions and the emotions of others. The emergent leadership develops as the team interacts and followers accord the leader with their support. For this to happen the emerging leader should identify his emotions, perceive the group members' emotions, process them and regulate his and group members emotions.

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Goleman recognised five essentials of emotional intelligence as Emotional self-awareness, Self-regulation, Motivation, Empathy and Social skills.Self-awareness leads to self-management and social awareness, these in turn lead to better relationship management. Specially in absence of formal position leaders require a rare virtue: awareness, and this awareness starts with self-awareness (Chatterjee, D. 2012). Leadership effectiveness depends on the emerging leader's ability to be aware of one's emotions and its impact on group members, ability to control and redirect one's emotions, sense group members emotions, ability to manage relationship, motivate and inspire group members.

Intelligence quotient, emotional quotient and personality determine how one thinks and acts and emotional quotient is the one which is most flexible and improved. (Bradberry, T., &Greaves, J. 2009). Hence as the team interacts intelligence quotient, emotional quotientand personality of group members come into the play. The group member with higher emotional quotient emerges as the leader as he displays, empathy, the ability to understand self and others, self-motivation, controls impulse andregulates emotions.According to the Bhagavad Gita, it is not possible to become an effective leader if the leader does not understand his or her own self, and does not understand his or her own potential and purpose. Emergent leadership starts with understanding oneself i.e., self-awareness that brings in confidence, leading to self-management and understanding others.

Empathy is defined as "An ability to understand another person's perspective plus a visceral or emotional reaction" by Smith, A. A team member with empathy has the ability to understand and identify the needs of teammates (Bell, G. B., & Hall Jr, H. E. 1954)he is more likely to emerge as an informal leader by using theemotional information for better understanding of team issues(Wolff, S. B., Pescosolido, A. T., &Druskat, V. U. 2002).

Travis Bradberry, Jean Greaves andPatrick M. Lencioniauthored book 'Emotional Intelligence 2.0' portrays emotional intelligence as a tree trunk (host of a lot of critical skills) with branches as change tolerance, accountability, communication, customer service, social skills, flexibility, presentation skills, anger management, trust, stress tolerance, empathy, assertiveness, time management, decision making.Emergent leadership can develop only in the presence of these skills like effective communication, stress tolerance, trust, decision making ability etc., and hence emotional intelligence is a vital requisite in leadership emergence.Emotion recognition is positively related to leader emergence which is mediated by task coordination and more so with extroverts (Walter, F., et al., 2012).

"Leadership is an emotion-laden process" (George, J. M. 2000) and the existing literature reveals thatemergent leaders are outspoken, innovative, perceived as contributors of great ideas and also idea seekers, verbally involved with team, seek others' opinion, present themselves as intelligent and confident. These underlying characteristics are the outcome of the higher order skills like self-awareness and self-regulation, social awareness and social skills, empathy which constitute the emotional intelligence construct.

In 'TheThree Levels Leadership Model'Scouller emphasises on self-mastery as a key to grow leadership presence (Scouller, J. 2011). Self-mastery is synonymous to the combination of self-awareness and self-regulation. Self-regulation, self-management trigger motivation from within and a person with better interpersonal and intrapersonal skills has effective leadership qualities (Rani, M. M. S., & Devi, P. 2016). Leadership presence flourishes by building trusting relationships with followers and permitting behavioural flexibility(Scouller, J. 2011) which is achieved by social awareness and social skills. The elementary characteristics of emergent leader is there is no formal authority and its period depends on the followers' willingness to accord the emergent leader such a status (Wolff, S. B.,

Pescosolido, A. T., &Druskat, V. U. 2002). Hence emergent leader to continue as a leader needs self-confidence, self-control, transparency, adaptability, achievement drive, initiative, empathy, service orientation, inspirational leadership, conflict management, building bonds, team work and collaboration which are the variables in the first order constructs of emotional intelligence.

## CONCLUSION

The present study has highlighted the role of emotional intelligence in emergent leadership. Emergent leadership is inevitable in the shifting paradigm in business environment, for the effectiveness and growth of the organisations. Since emotional intelligence plays a vital role in emergent leadership in the era of virtual teams, self-managed teams, more research has to happen on why and how emotional intelligence/ abilities lead to emergent leadership and what are the mediators involved.

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