



## **Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Styles: A Case Study of Leaders in Selected Banking Institutions in Kenya**

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# Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Styles: A Case Study of Leaders in Selected Banking Institutions in Kenya

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## Abstract

Since leadership plays a critical role in the success of banking institutions, the ability to identify and focus on the factors that enhance it is crucial. The ever dynamic, demanding and competitive environment in the banking sector requires inspirational leaders who are sensitive to the feelings of employees, who are supportive, and who are able to positively influence their behaviour and secure their willing commitment towards organizational objectives. This study sought to determine the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and leadership styles of managers and supervisors among selected banking institutions in Kenya. It proposed that EI; the ability to perceive, understand and manage moods and emotions in self and others, predicts transformational leadership (TL) style that contributes to employee satisfaction and effectiveness in banking institutions. The EI scores for the managers and supervisors were obtained by administering the Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI), and to measure the perceived leadership styles, the rater form of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5x) was completed by the subordinates, peers and superiors of each manager/supervisor. The research sample composed of 300 respondents (n=300; leaders = 60 and raters = 240) drawn from six banks. Spearman's Rank Order Correlation was carried out on the data and the results indicated a significant positive relationship between EI scores of leaders and TL style. Further analysis indicated a positive relationship between EI and contingent reward and active MBE components of transactional leadership. On the contrary significant negative relationships were revealed between EI scores and passive MBE as well as laissez-faire leadership style.

**Keywords:** *Emotional Intelligence, Transformational, Transactional, Laissez-faire, Leadership Outcome*

## **1.0 Introduction**

Leadership is a key determinant of organizational success; through it, managers influence employees' behaviour towards organizational objectives and this justifies extensive researches in the area of leadership that has emerged, and the quest for the most appropriate of its style, as well as the factors that predict it. One method in the literature that seems to be widely accepted is to link effective leaders to those demonstrating transformational leadership (TL) behaviours. This is because transformational leaders, due to their charisma, are known to create and articulate an attractive vision, and to inspire and revitalize their followers to perform beyond their expectation in order to achieve that vision. These attributes are beneficial in general to organizations of any kind, but more so to banking institutions that unpredictably have to contend with financial crisis of every kind.

While most studies describe effective leaders, what they do and how they make decisions, the effects of their feelings, moods and emotions, and generally, the role of emotions in the leadership process, are often not explicitly considered (George, 2000). Moreover their selection disregards emotional aspects. This is partly due to the fact that for many centuries cognitive ability has been treated as a key determinant of decision making, and feelings and emotions have been regarded as impediment to rational choice (Hudson, 2007). Nonetheless, psychologists have begun to assert that decision making relies upon emotional assessment. In fact, according to McDermott (2004), individuals who cannot reference emotional memory because of brain injuries are unable to make rational decisions at all. Furthermore, studies on leadership have indicated unexplained variance in performance that is not accounted for by general intelligence (Bumphus, 2008) and this has led to extensive researches on EI.

Emotional Intelligence refers to the ability of an individual to identify their own emotions and those of others, to manage these emotions and to use them to guide decision making (Mayer and Salovey, 1997). In leadership, this attribute enables leaders to understand others' needs and to develop strategies for fulfilling them in order to influence their behaviour. This is significant since leadership relates to the process of influencing others to understand and agree on what needs to be done and how to do it, and facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives (Yukl, 2010). Generally the role of EI in leadership among banking institutions in Kenya could be described as blurred, a situation that is partly caused by disregard of emotional factors in decision making where the focus is on task and meeting targets.

## **1.1 Problem Statement**

The banking sector has evolved drastically; commercial banks have become very competitive resulting in various strategies for attracting new customers and retaining old ones in order to have a larger market share. To become more customer-focused, banks have increased their opening hours, introduced a wider range of products, opened up more branches and have adopted the latest IT infrastructure, all of which improve their financial base but, unfortunately, with little regards to employees' mental and psychological wellbeing. Overloading and extreme burden of work, stringent work deadlines, extended working hours, fear of termination of job contracts, etc. are common problems among bank employees which have resulted in extremely high level of stress and emotional imbalance. Fear of uncertainty during periods of financial crisis also often leads to bank employees' negative and defensive attitude and behaviour, their turnover and eventual customer loss (Bushra et al., 2011).

The prevailing work situations in the banks reinforce the need for leaders who are in touch with employees' feelings and emotions and who can effectively manage these emotions so as to minimize their negative impact. Bank employees also need leaders who not only focus on the

task, but also maintain a relationship with them so that while upholding a position of authority, they are still considered friendly, understanding and considerate. According to Ciulla (1998), the effort of building intimate relationships, based on emotions, is particularly evident in transformational leaders who enable their followers to excel beyond expectations by unifying their beliefs and values. Researchers such as Awamleh et al (2005) and Riaz et al (2011) have confirmed that TL is positively related to employee job satisfaction, commitment and performance in the banking sector. This then raises the important question: do emotionally intelligent leaders provide such kind of leadership? Emotionally intelligent leaders are known for their social charm, empathy, self-awareness and self-control (Garg & Jain, 2013); how do these attributes relate to TL?

Although many studies have been done separately in the areas of leadership and EI, the relationship between these variables is not widely tested, probably because people's attitude towards EI has, to some extent, been influenced by critics who disregard its significance. For example, Antokanis (2009) asserts that if anything matters for leader-member relations, it is personality and IQ and definitely not EI. Such arguments seem to have influenced leader selection approaches that organizations adopt to the extent that identification of employees for leadership positions tend to be based primarily on intellectual abilities and experience whereas emotional attributes are downplayed. This is the case, notwithstanding the fact that banks require TL style that general intelligence and experience may not be able to predict. There have been lots of researches demonstrating the effectiveness of TL behaviour in organizations (Judge & Piccolo, 2004) but as to the antecedents of these behaviours, there is a relative lack of research (Rubin et al, 2005). Prior studies link it to biographical background factors (Avolio, 1994), psychological factors (Bono & Judge, 2004) and intelligence (Atwater & Yamarino, 1993), but in the overall the capacity of these factors to predict TL has been inadequate and as a consequence it has been suggested that other unexplored factors such as EI may play a prominent role in predicting TL behaviours (Nye, 2008).

As banks in Kenya contend with increasingly globalized and hyper-turbulent global market, there is need to reconsider competitive advantage provided by effective leadership and this requires the extension of its possible determinants beyond intellectual abilities and personality attributes. The purpose of this study therefore was to test the relationship between EI and leadership styles as it attempted to fill the elusive dimension of emotions in leadership. The study adds to the body of knowledge in the area of leadership by introducing EI as one of the factors that organizations could use to identify effective leaders.

## 1.2 Research Objectives

- i. To find the relationship between EI and transformational leadership style
- ii. To evaluate the relationship between EI and transactional leadership style
- iii. To assess the relationship between EI and laissez-faire leadership style

## 1.3 Research Hypotheses

$H_1$ : There is a positive relationship between EI and Transformational leadership

$H_2$ : There is a positive relationship between EI and transactional leadership

$H_3$ : There is a negative relationship between EI and Laissez-faire Leadership

## 2.1 Literature Review

### 2.1.1 History and Development of Emotional Intelligence

The interest in EI is founded on studies made several years ago indicating that IQ alone failed to consistently predict individual success in the workplace (Thorndike, 1920). The validity of the general academic measure of IQ was challenged on the grounds that it ignored situational factors such as the environment or cultural setting when predicating achievement (Riggio et al, 2002), and theorists began to hypothesize that perhaps cognitive intelligence as a measure of IQ test did not encompass intelligence in its entirety, but that perhaps several types of intelligences could coincide within one person (Stys & Brown, 2004).

To account for variations of outcomes that were not accounted by IQ, Thorndike (1920) proposed three “intelligences”: abstract (the ability to understand and manage ideas and symbols); mechanical (the ability to learn, understand and manage objects); and social intelligence (the ability to understand and manage people). Gardner (1983) further expanded Thorndike’s idea of multiple intelligences and suggested that there are seven intelligences.

The idea of multiple intelligences paved way for more research in the area of intelligence and eventually the term “emotional quotient (EQ)” is believed to have first entered the literature world when Beasley (1987) used it in an article published in Mensa Magazine, although Bar-On (1997) claims to have used it in an unpublished version of his graduate thesis. Subsequently, Salovey and Mayer’s (1990) article on Emotional Intelligence stirred great interest on the concept both within and outside the field of psychology. The concept was further popularized by Goleman (1995). This was followed by several empirical studies to determine the relationship between EI and several constructs, including organizational performance, leadership effectiveness, employee satisfaction, etc.

### 2.1.2 Emotional Intelligence Models

A number of EI models exist but literature extensively reviews three main models: Ability Model developed by Mayer and Salovey (1997) and two Mixed Models proposed by Bar-On (1997) and Goleman (2001). This study focused on Goleman’s Mixed Model.

#### *Goleman’s Mixed Model of Emotional Intelligence*

In his model that combines mental abilities and personality traits, Goleman (2001) identified five EI components categorized as personal competences (self-awareness, self-regulation and self-motivation) and social competences (empathy and social skills). These components were eventually revised and Boyatzis and Goleman (2007) provide the current version with four components (Self-awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness and Relationship Management) and twelve competencies. Self-awareness component is captured in emotional self-awareness competency, and refers to the ability to understand own emotions and their effects on performance. Self-management - the ability to effectively manage own emotions, is captured in emotional self-control, achievement orientation, positive outlook and adaptability. Social Awareness on the other relates to recognizing and understanding emotions of others as portrayed in empathy and organizational awareness. Finally relationship management, which is captured in five competencies: influence, coach and mentor, conflict management, inspirational leadership and teamwork is the application of emotional understanding in dealing with others.

### 2.1.3 Leadership Theories

Babooa (2013) defines leadership as the process of influencing behaviour in such a way that goals are achieved. It involves persuading and modifying the conduct of the followers to work towards set goals and through it willing commitment is obtained which enables organizations

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to achieve objectives. This explains the importance of good leadership. According to Leavitt (2005), “Leadership has become the most widely discussed, taught and written about subject in the world of organizational studies”. This statement in summary describes the interest placed on leadership and the resultant numerous theories to explain it. This study focused on Full-Range Theory (FRT) of leadership that encompasses transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles.

### *Full-Range Theory of Leadership*

The concept of TL was first introduced by McGregor Burns in 1978 (Hinkin & Schriesheim, 2008) after which Bass (1985) built its new version on Burn’s work. The current full-range theory (FRT) of this leadership style proposed by Bass and Avolio (1994) consists of nine factors comprising of five transformational, three transactional and one non-transactional (laissez-faire) leadership factors (Antonakis et al, 2003). Based on this theory, transformational leaders encourage, inspire and excite followers to higher levels of performance (Burns, 1978), are proactive and help their followers to attain unexpected goals (Anonakis et al, 2003) and rely on their personal attributes to manage followers (Quick & Nelson, 2011). They also change their organizations’ status quo by taking bold strategies to transform or align organization’s strengths and weaknesses with emerging opportunities and threats (Lussier & Achua, 2015). Through TL style, a leader establishes oneself as a role model by gaining trust and confidence of followers (Bass, 1985).

The sub-dimensions of TL include Idealized Influence attribute, Idealized Influence behaviour, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized Consideration (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Idealized influence attribute refers to the socialized charisma of the leader enabling him to be perceived as confident, powerful and focusing on higher-order ideals and ethics (Antonakis, et al, 2003). It empowers the leader to be trusted and respected (Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012) by doing the right thing and inspiring the followers to do likewise, hence acting as role model. Idealized Influence behaviour on the other hand describes the leaders’ excellent behaviour and willingness to forgo their personal needs to improve the objectives of their workgroup (Moss & Ritossa, 2007). The leader’s ability to articulate an attractive and encouraging vision to followers describes the Inspirational Motivation of the leader (Judge & Piccolo, 2004) who energizes their followers by viewing the future with optimism, stressing ambitious goals, projecting an idealized vision and communicating to followers that the vision is achievable (Antokanis et al, 2003). Such leaders motivate those around them by providing meaning and challenge to their followers’ work (Bass et al, 2003) thus enabling them to perform beyond their expectation.

Intellectual Stimulation enables transformational leaders to challenge old assumptions, take risks, and solicit followers’ ideas (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Leaders exhibiting this attribute encourage innovation and creativity, create an environment that is tolerant to new ideas and encourage others to consider old problems with a renewed perspective. Through Individualized Consideration leaders contribute to follower satisfaction by advising, supporting and paying attention to their individual needs that allow them to develop and self-actualize (Antokanis et al, 2003). Leaders exhibiting this attribute treat followers as individuals, attend to their unique needs and may delegate certain responsibilities that help them to grow through personal challenges, while acting as mentors or coaches to the followers (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Bass et al, 2003; Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

Transactional leadership is the second part of the FRT of leadership. As contrasted with transformational leaders who rely on their personal attributes to manage followers, transactional leaders use rewards and punishment to strike deals with them and to shape their behaviour (Quick & Nelson, 2011), thus depending on the follower’s performance, they offer

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reward or punishment. This leadership style focuses on the leader-follower exchange process; the leader rewards the follower for specific behaviours.

Transactional leadership has three dimensions: contingent reward that describes the degree to which the leader sets up constructive transactions or exchanges with followers by clarifying expectations, establishing the rewards for meeting these expectations (Judge & Piccolo, 2004) and providing followers with material or psychological rewards contingent on the fulfillment of contractual obligations (Antokanis et al, 2003); Active Management-by-exception (MBE) that describes the ability to specify compliance standards, what constitutes ineffective performance and the action to be taken for noncompliance (Bass et al, 2003) and Passive MBE that describes the behaviour of a leader who does not monitor performance but only intervenes after noncompliance has occurred or when mistakes have already happened. According to Bass (1999), active MBE is likely to be more effective than passive MBE.

The third part of the FRT of leadership is the Non-transactional Laissez-faire leadership which represents the absence of transaction of all sorts with respect to leadership (Antokanis et al, 2003). Laissez-faire leaders avoid specifying agreements, clarifying expectations and providing goals and standards to be achieved by followers (Bass et al, 2003). This represents the avoidance or absence of leadership and leaders who score high on this style avoid making decisions, hesitate taking action and are absent when needed (Judge & Piccolo, 2003).

## **2.2 Empirical Review**

Most studies in the area of EI and leadership focus on TL as a result of equating effective leaders to those demonstrating TL behaviours (Rosete, 2007) and several of them indicate that TL predicts numerous criteria such as follower job satisfaction, leader effectiveness ratings, organizational performance and follower motivation (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Popularity of TL style as well as its specific elements that are relevant to EI has also led to a keen interest in this form of leadership (Harms & Crède, 2010). Regarding EI-leadership styles relationship with specific focus on the Full-range Theory of Leadership, the findings of the previous studies are not conclusive and this justifies the need for further research.

### **2.2.1 Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership**

Researchers have recently started to question what influences certain individuals to adopt transformational style of leadership and whether emotional intelligence plays any role in leadership. As a result, many studies that linked EI to TL reported that leaders who considered themselves transformational reported that they were able to identify their own and others' feelings and emotional states, to express their own feelings to others, to use emotional knowledge when solving problems and to effectively manage emotions. Lopez-Zafra et al (2012) found that EI predicts TL and that, together with femininity was the most predictive factor of TL accounting for 17% of variance in this leadership style. Hebert (2011) on the other hand found that EI is positively related to TL, while Barling et al (2000) found that it was associated with some aspects of TL. On the contrary, however, other studies found either negative or no relationships between EI and TL. For example, a study conducted by Moss et al (2006) revealed that individuals who reported high EI were not more likely to demonstrate TL style. Moreover, Chatterjee and Kulakli (2015) found no significant correlation for the entire comparison between various dimensions of EI and TL. Various factors are attributable to the mixed findings on EI-TL relationship. Although most previous researchers used MLQ to identify the managers' perceived leadership styles, they differed on the EI tools used as well as their data source. To evaluate EI, most researchers used ability measures (EQi, MSCEIT and TMMS) and some of them utilized self-assessment data which may have led to exaggerated findings.

### **2.2.2 Emotional Intelligence and Clusters of Transformational Leadership**

Generally, studies that support the relationship between EI and TL indicate that emotional intelligence has a significant positive relationship with at least three dimensions of TL: idealized influence, inspirational motivation and individualized consideration (Barling et al, 2000; Palmer et al, 2001; Gardner & Stough, 2002). According to Barling et al (2000), leaders' EI aspect of self-control and self-management is consistent with idealized influence. When leaders understand their emotions and those of others, they are supportive to their followers and this enhances their trust and confidence on the leaders. Notably, consistent among most previous studies, inspirational motivation correlates relatively highly with EI. Transformational leaders, according to Brief and Weiss (2002) feel excited, are enthusiastic and energetic and thus revitalize their followers to focus on the vision. The link, therefore, between EI and inspirational motivation is in emotional appeals that transformational leaders use for inspirational motivation (George, 2000).

In their study, Palmer et al (2001) found that the ability to monitor and manage emotions were both significantly related to the individualized consideration, implying that EI enables a leader to be aware of others' needs and to react accordingly by being in touch with their emotions. Such leaders are also more likely to subordinate their personal needs in favour of others' (Sosik & Megarian, 1999). The positive relationship between EI and individualized consideration is strengthened by empathy, which is a dimension of EI that enables leaders to identify with and to show individual concern towards followers.

Intellectual stimulation reveals mixed results in its relationship with EI. According to Sosik and Megarian (1999), managing emotions may promote positive effect and confidence in followers expressing and generating new ideas. Thus intellectual stimulation is expected to be positively related to EI. However, some previous studies (Palmer et al., 2001; Barling et al., 2000) found an absence of relationship between this attribute and EI, a situation that may require further investigation. Palmer et al (2001) attributes the lack of correlation among the clusters of EI and intellectual stimulation to other possible aspects of EI not assessed in their study. This is because, according to them, the absence of relationship does not mean that this attribute is not related to EI since creative thinking and flexible planning required for intellectual stimulation (Avolio et al., 1991) have been associated with EI construct, and especially with the ability to use and assimilate emotions and thoughts (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Barling et al (2000) on the other hand attributes the absence of this relationship to the nature of intellectual stimulation construct, in the sense that presenting an intellectual challenge and getting people to think about old problems in new ways is more cognitive than the other components of TL and therefore does not rely on individual's EI in the same way that individualized consideration, idealized influence and inspirational motivation do. A more recent study by Rahman, et al (2012) sought to examine the relations between EI and the components of TL, contrary to the above findings, revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between EI and intellectual stimulation.

### **2.2.3 Emotional Intelligence and Transactional Leadership**

Although transactional leadership style is often viewed narrowly in terms of leader-follower exchange relationship, it has been suggested that to provide the effective and equitable exchanges characteristic of contingent reward behaviour, leaders should have abilities and traits associated with EI (Barling, Slater, & Kelloway, 2000). This might explain the consistent findings among researchers indicating positive correlation between EI and contingent reward. Harms and Credè (2010) found, in their study, that contingent reward had a positive relationship with EI at comparable levels to that of TL. Similarly, Palmer et al (2001) found that contingent reward had a significant positive correlation with the ability to monitor one's

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emotions and those of others. They also found that this construct correlated significantly with total TL and several of its components, including idealized influence, inspirational motivation and individual consideration. This, according to them suggests a possibility that “contingent reward” overlaps with the TL components. Bass (1999) however attributes the positive correlation between EI and contingent reward, to the idea that this dimension shares some common aspects of TL.

Active MBE has been found to have no significant relationship with EI, while passive MBE and laissez-faire leadership are known to be negatively related to EI (Harms & Credè, 2010; Gardner & Stough, 2002). According to Gardner and Stough (2002), leaders who considered themselves as passive are likely to be unable to identify their own feelings and emotions, to understand the emotions of others, to manage emotions and to effectively control them. Contrary to many researchers, Chatterjee and Kulakli (2015) found no relationship between EI and transactional leadership. They concluded that the importance of EI in leadership is possibly grossly exaggerated, but this conclusion, they suggested, ought to be taken cautiously as some limitations of MSCEIT with low reliabilities do not allow for such conclusions and instead further research is called for.

#### **2.2.4 Emotional Intelligence and Laissez-Faire Leadership**

Laissez-faire leadership, just as passive MBE, is a form of non-leadership style and thus it is expected that individuals with low levels of EI would not make effective leaders. Empirical studies by Hebert (2011) and Gardner and Stough (2002) reveal negative relationship between laissez-faire leadership and EI implying that those leaders who considered themselves as avoiding responsibility, being absent when required, failing to follow up on request for assistance and resisting expression of opinion on important issues (Bass, 1999) were more likely to be unable to identify their own feelings and emotional states, understand the emotions of others, and to effectively control emotional states in the workplace. According to Herbert (2011), the relationship between laissez-faire leadership and EI is negative but insignificant.

### **3.0 Research Methodology**

#### *Research Design*

This study adopted correlational research design since the researcher’s objective was simply to determine the relationship between EI and leadership styles with no intention to manipulate the research variables. Survey methodology was used in which case, data were collected through questionnaires distributed among managers/supervisors and their subordinates. Many research studies linking EI to leadership have documented the predominance and suitability of survey methods in obtaining data to measure its relationship with other constructs and this justifies the adoption of this methodology.

#### *Population, Sampling and Sampling Procedure*

The target population for this study consisted of leaders, categorized as managers and supervisors of six banks in Kenya with the approximate total population of 400. The study used a sample size of 300 respondents that composed of 60 leaders and 240 raters. Ten leaders were selected for the study and in addition, four raters per leader were nominated to provide feedback on the EI and perceived leadership styles of the respective leaders. Probability and non-probability sampling techniques were adopted. Convenient sampling was used to identify the banks from which the study would be carried out. Six main banks were targeted based on the researcher’s knowledge and familiarity with them. The identification of the banks was influenced by the researcher’s judgment that the employees in those banks would be willing to participate in the study since there was heavy reliance on the bank account holders’ introduction of the researcher to the management of the banks. Having identified and stratified the sample

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units, simple random sampling method was applied to pick the ten leaders from each stratum. The leaders were then asked to nominate the raters who would evaluate their level of EI and the leadership styles.

#### *Data Collection Instruments*

The leaders' EI scores were evaluated by administering the Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI) to them as well as their respective raters. This is a 72-item questionnaire developed by the Hay Group (2011). The leaders self-rated their emotional quotient using a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (consistently). Similarly, four raters evaluated each leader's level of EI using the same scale. To measure the perceived leadership styles, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X) was administered to the four raters of each leader. The various dimensions of each leadership style were measured using 45 items and the raters evaluated each leader using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (not at all) to 4 (frequently, if not always). The MLQ-5x further reported results on the leadership outcome as measured by three dimensions: satisfaction with the leader, extra effort, and the leader's effectiveness.

#### *Reliability and Validity of Research Instruments*

This study relied on the psychometric property analysis of previous researchers on the reliability and validity of ESCI and MLQ. According to Boyatzis and Gaskin (2010), internal consistency estimates (Cronbach's alpha values) for ESCI subscales ranged from .79 to .91, indicating that the instrument is acceptably reliable. Similarly, according to Tejada et al (2001), Cronbach's alpha values for MLQ subscales ranged from .70 to .94. Thus, the internal consistency reliability for ESCI and MLQ are generally above the acceptable minimum standard of .70 suggested by Loewenthal (2001) implying that they are good measurement tests for the constructs under study.

The validity of ESCI and MLQ is also guaranteed since many researchers and scholars have used them to test EI and leadership style constructs and there is documentation to that effect. According to Boyatzis and Goleman (2007), ESCI is supported by robust validity evidence from research in a variety of organizational contexts worldwide. MLQ is also a well-established tool that has been used in a variety of settings and broad population, such as industry, military, primary and secondary schools, marketing and higher education organizations in different countries (Antonakis et al, 2003). Besides, a number of recent studies have used it as a measure of leadership effectiveness (Hebert, 2011; Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012; Lopez-Zafra et al, 2012; Owoseni & Olakitan, 2014; Chatterjee & Kulakli, 2015).

#### *Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing*

Out of 60 sets of questionnaires distributed, 52 were collected duly filled and these were used for analysis. The raw data were entered into the computer, grouped into clusters making up components of EI and leadership styles, and their average scores calculated. These were then recorded and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). To begin with, leaders' demographic data were tabulated and analyzed after which their EI information and perceived leadership styles investigated according to the hypotheses of the study. For each hypothesis testing, Spearman's Rank Order Correlations among variables were run.

To test the overall hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between EI of bank leaders and TL Style, a Spearman's Rank Correlation was run between the overall scores of leaders' EI and their respective overall leadership style scores, and to gain more insight into this relationship, multiple correlations among the four clusters of EI and the five dimensions of TL style were run in order to determine the extent to which each cluster of EI correlates with the

various components of TL. The same two-step analysis was carried out in testing the relationship between EI and transactional leadership as well as Laissez-faire leadership styles.

#### 4.0 Findings and Discussion

##### Relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership

Hypothesis 1 (H<sub>1</sub>) stated a positive relationship between EI and TL style. To test this hypothesis, the Spearman's Correlation was run between the 52 leaders' overall EI score and TL style. The results indicated a moderately strong positive relationship, which was statistically significant ( $r_s = 0.424$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) and therefore hypothesis 1 was supported.

**Table 1: Correlation between EI and Transformational Leadership Style**

		EI Score	TL
Spearman's rho	EI Score	1.000	.424**
	TL	.424**	1.000

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Further analysis on the relationship between EI and the various components of TL as stated in hypotheses (H<sub>1b</sub>) through to (H<sub>1e</sub>) was conducted by running multiple correlations among the clusters of EI and the five components of TL. The correlations revealed positive significant relationships among the four clusters of EI: Self-Awareness (SA), Self- Management (SM), Social Awareness (SoA) and Relationship Management (RM), and idealized influence attribute (IA), idealized influence behaviour (IB), inspirational motivation (IM) and individualized consideration (IC). Highest correlations, however, were found to exist among Relationship Management and idealized influence, inspirational motivation and individualized consideration. Although there were positive correlations among the four clusters of EI and intellectual stimulation, these relationships were insignificant.

**Table 2: Correlations among EI and Transformational Leadership dimensions**

		IA	IB	IM	IS	IC
Spearman's rho	Self-Awareness	.399**	.369**	.393**	.143	.413**
	Self-Management	.549**	.483**	.561**	.210	.372**
	Social Awareness	.506**	.496**	.557**	.008	.443**
	Relationship Management	.566**	.498**	.587**	.087	.650**

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

##### Relationship between emotional intelligence and transactional leadership style

The second hypothesis (H<sub>2</sub>) stated a positive relationship between EI and Transactional leadership style. While the correlation results between the overall EI scores and transactional leadership indicated a positive insignificant relationship between the variables ( $r_s = 0.118$ ,  $p = 0.202$ ), the correlations among each of the four clusters of EI and the three components of Transactional Leadership Style: Contingent Reward (CR), Active and Passive MBE showed that there were significantly positive correlations between the EI clusters and Contingent Reward (CR) as well as between EI clusters and Active MBE. Both Contingent Reward and Active MBE correlated highly with Self-Awareness component of emotional intelligence ( $r_s = 0.507$ ,  $p = 0.000$  and  $r_s = 0.460$ ,  $p = .000$  respectively). Further analysis revealed that there was a negative insignificant relationship between the four clusters of EI and Passive MBE.

**Table 3: Relationship between EI and Transactional Leadership Style**

Correlations			EI Score	TSLeadership
Spearman's rho	EI Score	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.118
	TSLeadership	Correlation Coefficient	.118	1.000

**Table 4: Relationships among EI and Transactional Leadership components**

		Contingent Reward	Active MBE	Passive MBE
Spearman's rho	Self-Awareness	.507**	.460**	-.072
	Self-Management	.456**	.338**	-.123
	Social Awareness	.410**	.304*	-.114
	Relationship Management	.346**	.296*	-.040

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

### Relationship between emotional intelligence and laissez-faire leadership style

The third hypothesis (H<sub>3</sub>) stated a negative relationship between EI and Laissez-faire Leadership style. Contrary to the hypothesis, the correlation between the total EI scores of leaders and laissez-faire leadership (LFL) revealed a positive non-significant relationship ( $r_s = 0.067, p = .317$ ). However, the correlation results between each of the four clusters of EI and laissez-faire leadership style indicated a significant negative relationship.

**Table 5: Relationships between EI and Transactional Leadership**

Correlations			EI Score	LFL
Spearman's rho	EI Score	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.067
	LFL	Correlation Coefficient	.067	1.000

**Table 6: Correlations among EI clusters and Laissez-faire Leadership**

Correlations		Laissez-faire Leadership
Spearman's rho	Self-Awareness	-.357**
	Self-Management	-.371**
	Social Awareness	-.311*
	Relationship Management	-.409**

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

### Relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership outcome

Although leadership effectiveness was not the focus of this study, correlations were run among EI clusters and the three leadership outcome factors: Extra Effort (EE), Effectiveness (EEF) and Satisfaction (SAT) in order to determine the role of EI beyond that of predicting leadership styles. The results revealed significant positive relationships among all the variables. Further

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analysis indicated highest correlations ( $r_s = 0.790, p = .000$ ;  $r_s = 0.783, p = .000$  and  $r_s = 0.692, p = .000$ ) among Self-Management and indicators of leadership outcome.

**Table 7: Correlations among EI clusters and Leadership Effectiveness Scales**

		EE	EEF	SAT
Spearman's rho	Self-Awareness	.474**	.422**	.451**
	Self-Management	.790**	.783**	.692**
	Social Awareness	.688**	.632**	.548**
	Relationship Management	.703**	.663**	.602**

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

### Relationship between Leadership Styles and Leadership Effectiveness

This study further extended its investigation to include the extent to which the various leadership styles relate to leadership outcome with the results that TL as well as contingent reward and active MBE component of transactional leadership had positive relationships with leadership outcome. On the contrary passive MBE and Laissez-faire leadership negatively related to each of the three measures of leadership outcome.

**Table 8: Correlations among Leadership Styles and Leadership Effectiveness scales**

		Extra Effort	Effectiveness	Satisfaction
Spearman's rho	Idealized Influence Attribute	.545**	.554**	.558**
	Idealized influence Behaviour	.524**	.532**	.477**
	Inspirational Motivation	.627**	.570**	.639**
	Intellectual Stimulation	.075	.089	.146
	Individualized Consideration	.471**	.439**	.434**
	Contingent Reward	.397**	.315*	.396**
	Active MBE	.335*	.265	.280*
	Passive MBE	-.091	-.067	-.058
Laissez-faire leadership		-.379**	-.386**	-.394**

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).  
 \* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Based on this study leaders who scored highly on EI were perceived as using TL style, thus supporting the findings of several previous studies on EI-TL relationship, although with some variation. In their meta-analysis of competing claims on EI-TL style relationship, Hunt and Fitzgerald (2013) found that studies that utilized small samples ( $n < 50$ ) and that used same-source data reported a positive relationship between EI and TL style. On the contrary, studies that used multi-source data from larger samples found little support for this relationship. The results of the current study that used multi-rater assessment data from a sample of 52 indicated a positive relationship between the variables, hence supporting the findings of the researchers that used leader self-assessment data. This confirms that EI plays a role in predicting TL style. Leaders who are in touch with their own and others' emotions and who are able to manage these emotions create an enabling relationship that inspires and motivates their followers to improved performance. Such leaders can transform their organizations by building stronger relationships with others and influencing them through their charisma.

The positive relationships among EI clusters and the components of TL further confirm the findings of previous studies that reported positive correlations between EI and idealized influence, inspirational motivation and individualized consideration (Barling et al, 2000; Palmer et al, 2001; Gardner & Stough, 2002). Effectively managing emotions empowers leaders to win the trust and confidence of their followers, to project an attractive vision and to instill confidence in others that such a vision is achievable. Emotionally intelligent leaders also appreciate the uniqueness of others and so will treat them as individuals; not just as members of a group. The link between EI and individualized consideration is in leaders' traits of being appreciative, compassionate and responsive to the individual needs of others.

The highest positive correlations among the Relationship Management and TL components have important implications; leadership nests in Relationship Management dimension of EI captured in influence, ability to coach and mentor, conflict management, inspirational leadership and teamwork skills. Since leadership is influence, the leader's ability to influence others rests on maintaining and managing relationship with them. Therefore, leaders with a positive impact on others and who persuade them to gain their support are perceived as effective leaders capable of inspiring and guiding the group towards achievement of goals. The highest correlation between relationship management and TL therefore implies that leaders who are capable of managing emotions in their relationship with others win their trust and confidence and create conducive environment for the achievement of goals.

The relationship between EI and intellectual stimulation calls for further investigation. Contrary to the previous studies that found no relationship between EI and this construct, the current study revealed an insignificant positive relationship. Intellectual stimulation describes a leader with an open mind encouraging creativity and innovation through critical thinking, challenging status quos, questioning assumptions and approaching old situations in new ways. Emotionally intelligent leaders are expected to be open-minded and tolerant to new ideas and therefore the insignificant positive relationship, and more so, the absence of relationship revealed in the previous studies, is a matter that requires further study.

Like most previous studies, this study revealed significant positive relationships among EI clusters and Contingent Reward and Active MBE. In the previous researches contingent reward was found to be positively related to EI at comparable levels to that of TL, leading some scholars to argue that this dimension overlaps with TL components; more so because apart from its relationship with EI, it correlates significantly with total TL and with several of its components. Emotionally intelligent leaders clearly stipulate the standards of performance, monitor performance and reward achievement of goals implying that EI supports certain transactional leadership elements, for example, when they use the contingent reward characteristic in order to inspire and motivate followers to perform well. This is important for the success of organizations because by combining transactional leadership and EI, employees will be more committed to their job and this increases their job performance. Because of EI, transactional leaders make and fulfill promises by rewarding employees appropriately and linking those rewards to performance. This inspires involvement, loyalty, commitment and performance from the followers. This study further found that contingent reward correlates highly with all the components of TL confirming that it might represent another subcomponent of TL as suggested by previous researches (Barling et al, 2000).

Contrary to some studies such as that of Harms and Credè (2010) that found no relationship between active MBE and EI, the current study revealed a significant positive relationship between the variables. Active MBE describes leaders who closely monitor performance and intervene readily whenever there are deviations from the standards. Achievement oriented leaders are more likely to actively monitor performance so as to ensure that goals are achieved,

and so EI is expected to be positively related with active MBE. Emotionally intelligent managers monitor performance and ensure things are done according to the standards. Being in touch with what goes on around them enables them to decide as to when and how to intervene whenever deviations are perceived. The negative relationship between EI and Passive MBE indicates that leaders aware of their own and other's emotions do not wait for things to go wrong before taking action; emotionally intelligent leaders are generally proactive leaders.

Supporting the findings of previous researches, this study further indicated a significant negative relationship between EI and Laissez-faire leadership implying that emotionally intelligent leaders will neither avoid responsibility nor be absent when required and will not take a passive role in leadership. Such leaders have high relationship management traits like mentoring and coaching, team-working and influencing others by working with them towards shared goals; on the contrary, leaders avoiding responsibility are unable to understand their own and others' feelings and emotions and to effectively control them (Bass, 1999). This study revealed strong positive correlations among all EI clusters and the three leadership outcome scales implying that EI plays a major role in leadership. Even if EI did not predict leadership styles, the ability of leaders to handle emotions is critical in effectively influencing the behaviour of followers. Leaders with high EI create satisfaction among followers, motivate them to exert extra effort in their work and are generally effective in meeting organizational goals and therefore EI plays a critical role in the performance of banks.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

The nature of bank jobs and the context within which banks in Kenya operate call for transformational leaders capable of improving the future of the banking institutions by creating a vision and revitalizing their followers to take action to achieve it. Because of their growth mindset, such leaders encourage teams to develop ideas and to continuously transform their organizations to become better. This is critical because banks constantly face financial uncertainty and fear of losing customer confidence during periods of financial crisis.

This study found significant positive relationships between EI and TL as well as between EI and contingent reward and active MBE components of transactional leadership, thus providing evidence that individuals with high levels of EI are more likely to adopt the TL style ideal for banking institutions. Such individuals are also able to clearly specify performance standards, to monitor performance and to reward achievement of goals, all of which have positive effects on the performance. Leaders who abscond their responsibility, who avoid making decisions and who take a passive stand in leadership do not facilitate achievement of goals and these attributes are associated with individuals with low levels of EI. The positive relationship between EI and effective leadership outcome demonstrated by this study provides evidence that emotionally intelligent leaders positively influence their subordinates by encouraging them to put in extra effort in their work, to help their leaders to be more effective and to be more satisfied with them. This implies that EI has a positive impact on leadership outcome.

## **6.0 Recommendations**

Numerous practical implications arise from the findings of this study and therefore recommendations can be made to the management of banks, which might also be transferred in part to similar contexts. First, in the selection process of employees for leadership positions, emotional intelligence tests should be incorporated among other selection tests so that banks identify those candidates with high levels of emotional intelligence as such individuals are likely to adopt the TL style ideal for banks. Emotionally intelligent candidates are also identified with positive aspects of transactional leadership style such as systematically setting

goals, monitoring performance and rewarding achievement of goals which encourage commitment among employees.

Apart from selecting employees on the basis of emotional intelligence banks should consider interventions for training employees on strategies for developing and nurturing their EI so as to build an awareness of emotional aspects of leadership competencies in order to respond to the growing complexity of businesses. The negative relationship between Laissez-faire leadership style and positive leadership outcome provides an indication that for organizations to leverage on leadership role, they should beware of individuals who adopt a passive role in leadership as this may jeopardize the achievement of organizational objectives. It is also recommended that managers as well as employees at large should be taught to play a more active role in leadership in order to minimize the effects of passive avoidant leadership.

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