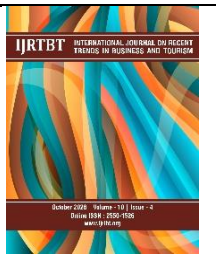
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Original Article

A Cross-Sectional PLS-SEM Study of Leaders' Emotional Intelligence, Leadership Styles, and Employee Job Performance in Myanmar Food and Beverage Organizations

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Abstract

Background: Studies often aggregate EI or focus on transformational leadership, leaving limited evidence on how specific EI competencies relate to performance through multiple leadership styles in emerging-economy food and beverage organizations. **Objectives**: This study examined associations between five workplace EI dimensions, three leadership styles, and leaders' ratings of subordinate-group performance in Myanmar's food and beverage sector. Methods: Of 700 questionnaires distributed across 16 purposively selected Yangon organizations, 547 usable leader responses were analyzed. Leaders rated their own EI and leadership behavior and the performance of supervised employees. Parallel partial mediation was tested with PLS-SEM and 5,000 bootstrap resamples. **Results**: The model explained 46.3% of the variance in leader-rated subordinate-group performance. Transformational (β = 0.226, p < 0.001) and transactional leadership (β = 0.230, p < 0.001) were positively associated with performance, whereas laissez-faire leadership was negatively associated (β = −0.204, p < 0.001). All five EI dimensions were positively associated with transformational leadership and negatively associated with laissez-faire leadership; four were positively associated with transactional leadership. Social relationship management was the only EI dimension with a significant direct association with performance (β = 0.234, p < 0.001). Fourteen of 15 specific indirect associations were significant. **Conclusion**: EI was associated with performance mainly through leadership pathways, including stronger active leadership and lower laissez-faire behavior. The cross-sectional, single-rater design, purposive Yangon sample, and unadjusted organizational clustering preclude causal conclusions and limit generalizability.

***Keywords**: Emotional Intelligence; Employee Job Performance; Leadership Styles; PLS-SEM; Myanmar*

Introduction

Employee job performance includes effective task completion, reliable and cooperative behavior, and adjustment to changing work demands (Reig-Botella *et al.,* 2024). In this study, the outcome is each leader's rating of the overall performance of the employees directly supervised. It is therefore a leader-perceived subordinate-group outcome, not an independently observed or individual-level employee score. This distinction matters in Yangon's food and beverage organizations, where production,

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warehousing, distribution, retail, and service activities rely on coordinated work, quality and safety procedures, customer response, and timely decisions. Yangon was selected as the study setting because the participating organizations and their managerial respondents were located there; the findings are specific to this accessible urban sample rather than to Myanmar's entire food and beverage sector. Economic and infrastructure pressures described in national reports provide context for the study but were not measured as respondent- or organization-level variables (World Bank, 2025).

In this study, emotional intelligence (EI) refers to workplace emotional competencies in Goleman's competency framework: self-awareness, self-management, self-motivation, social awareness, and social relationship management (Goleman, 1999). It is not defined or measured as an ability-based EI test. This distinction is important because ability models and competency frameworks describe related but different constructs. The present study examines self-reported workplace competencies and does not claim to compare competing EI theories. Evidence links EI with work attitudes, job performance, and leadership outcomes, but a single overall EI score can obscure differences between self-focused and socially focused competencies (Doğru, 2022).

Full Range Leadership Theory explains how EI may be related to employee outcomes. Transformational leadership builds shared purpose, supports development, and encourages new thinking. Transactional leadership clarifies expectations, monitors performance, and links outcomes to rewards or corrective action. Laissez-faire leadership reflects delayed decisions, limited guidance, and avoidance when intervention is required (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Recent evidence shows that active and avoidant leadership styles differ in their relationships with employee outcomes (Garzón-Lasso *et al*., 2024; Zheng & Li, 2024).

Four limitations in the literature motivate this study. First, using an overall EI score can conceal whether self-focused and socially focused competencies have different behavioral correlates. Second, studies have often emphasized transformational leadership, leaving transactional and laissez-faire pathways less fully examined. Third, direct-effect models do not show whether EI is associated with performance through active leadership or reduced avoidance. Fourth, evidence from operationally intensive organizations in emerging economies remains limited. This study addresses these gaps by testing five EI dimensions as antecedents of all three full-range leadership styles and of leader-rated subordinate-group performance in Yangon. The parallel partial-mediation model retains all five direct EI-to-performance paths, allowing the direct and indirect associations to be estimated together. The study's contribution lies in this dimension-by-style comparison in a Myanmar food and beverage sample; it does not claim causal effects or population representativeness.

Emotional Intelligence and Full Range Leadership

Goleman's workplace competency framework distinguishes self-awareness, self-management, self-motivation, social awareness, and social relationship management (Goleman, 1999). Full Range Leadership Theory describes transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire behavior as distinct leadership patterns (Bass & Avolio, 1994). EI should therefore be examined as a set of related competencies whose behavioral expression may differ by leadership style. Recent reviews and empirical studies associate leader EI with leadership outcomes, although much of the evidence gives greater attention to transformational leadership than to the transactional and avoidant dimensions (Gerhardt *et al.,* 2026; Lee *et al.,* 2023; Paredes-Saavedra *et al.,* 2026).

EI Dimensions and Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership depends on leaders' ability to regulate their own responses, communicate purpose, recognize employee needs, and encourage development and new thinking. Self-awareness can help leaders understand how their conduct affects followers and act with greater consistency. Self-management can support emotional control during challenge; self-motivation can sustain initiative and persistence; social awareness can inform individualized consideration; and social relationship management can enable influence, coaching, and inspirational communication. These proposed links are consistent with Goleman's competency framework and with evidence associating EI with

transformational leadership and workgroup outcomes (Goleman, 1999; Gerhardt *et al.,* 2026; Lee *et al.,* 2023; Pulido-Martos *et al.,* 2024). The evidence supports a general positive expectation, while the dimension-level strength of each relationship remains an empirical question.

H1a: Self-awareness is positively associated with transformational leadership.

H1b: Self-management is positively associated with transformational leadership.

H1c: Self-motivation is positively associated with transformational leadership.

H1d: Social awareness is positively associated with transformational leadership.

H1e: Social relationship management is positively associated with transformational leadership.

EI Dimensions and Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership involves defining expectations, monitoring performance, providing contingent recognition, and correcting departures from standards. Self-awareness may help a leader assess personal biases when setting standards; self-management may support consistent responses; and self-motivation may reinforce goal focus and follow-through. Social awareness can help leaders identify performance barriers and interpret employee responses, while social relationship management can make expectations and feedback easier to communicate and accept. Prior evidence links leader EI with transactional as well as transformational leadership, although these competencies do not necessarily translate into formal monitoring or contingent-reward practices to the same degree (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Lee *et al.,* 2023). The predicted relationships are therefore positive but are not assumed to be uniform in strength.

H2a: Self-awareness is positively associated with transactional leadership.

H2b: Self-management is positively associated with transactional leadership.

H2c: Self-motivation is positively associated with transactional leadership.

H2d: Social awareness is positively associated with transactional leadership.

H2e: Social relationship management is positively associated with transactional leadership.

EI Dimensions and Laissez-Faire Leadership

Laissez-faire leadership is characterized by delayed decisions, limited guidance, and failure to intervene when support is needed. Emotional competencies may help leaders notice emerging needs and remain engaged rather than withdraw. Self-awareness can make the effects of nonresponse more visible; self-management can support constructive action under pressure; and self-motivation can sustain follow-through. Social awareness can help leaders detect employee concerns, while social relationship management can support timely communication and problem-solving. Research on avoidant leadership links it to disengagement and adverse employee behavior, while also showing that employee coping and context can shape the response (Glaas *et al.,* 2026; Zheng & Li, 2024). This evidence, together with the behavioral demands of EI, supports the expectation that each EI dimension will be associated with lower laissez-faire leadership.

H3a: Self-awareness is negatively associated with laissez-faire leadership.

H3b: Self-management is negatively associated with laissez-faire leadership.

H3c: Self-motivation is negatively associated with laissez-faire leadership.

H3d: Social awareness is negatively associated with laissez-faire leadership.

H3e: Social relationship management is negatively associated with laissez-faire leadership.

Leadership Styles and Employee Job Performance

Employee job performance includes task completion, contextual contribution, and adaptation to changing demands (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997; Pulakos *et al.,* 2000; Reig-Botella *et al.,* 2024). Transformational leadership may support these domains by communicating meaning, building confidence, and encouraging learning and discretionary effort. Transactional leadership may support them through clear role expectations, performance monitoring, and timely consequences. Full Range Leadership Theory treats these styles as distinct patterns, and empirical research reports associations between full-range leadership styles and employee effectiveness and engagement (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Garzón-Lasso *et al.,* 2024; Thanh & Quang, 2022).

Laissez-faire leadership may undermine performance when nonresponse restricts access to decisions, feedback, and support, increasing ambiguity and leaving coordination problems unresolved. These risks are relevant to food and beverage operations that depend on quality, safety, service, and process continuity. However, avoidant leadership effects may vary with employee coping and job crafting, so the expected negative association is a theory-based average relationship rather than a claim that every employee responds identically (Glaas *et al.,* 2026; Zheng & Li, 2024).

H4a: Transformational leadership is positively associated with employee job performance.

H4b: Transactional leadership is positively associated with employee job performance.

H4c: Laissez-faire leadership is negatively associated with employee job performance.

Direct and Mediated Pathways

Leadership styles may explain part of the association between EI and performance, but full mediation would imply that EI has no association with performance beyond the three broad leadership-style measures. That restriction is not warranted because the EI competencies also involve communication, emotion regulation, initiative, empathy, and conflict management, which may shape routine work interactions not fully represented by a global leadership-style score. A meta-analysis reports associations between EI and employee outcomes, and empirical work links leader EI with job performance through leadership-related processes (Doğru, 2022; Lee *et al.,* 2023). The present model therefore retains direct paths while recognizing that direct associations may be weak after leadership behavior is considered.

The five direct paths are proposed for distinct behavioral reasons. Self-awareness may help leaders recognize how their reactions affect the group; self-management may support consistent decisions and composure; self-motivation may sustain initiative and follow-through; social awareness may help identify employee needs and emerging work problems; and social relationship management may support communication, coaching, coordination, and conflict resolution. These mechanisms align with task, contextual, and adaptive performance domains, but the direct contribution of each EI dimension beyond leadership styles is uncertain and must be tested (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997; Doğru, 2022; Pulakos *et al.,* 2000; Reig-Botella *et al.,* 2024).

H5a: Self-awareness is positively associated with leader-rated subordinate-group performance after the three leadership styles are included in the model.

H5b: Self-management is positively associated with leader-rated subordinate-group performance after the three leadership styles are included in the model.

H5c: Self-motivation is positively associated with leader-rated subordinate-group performance after the three leadership styles are included in the model.

H5d: Social awareness is positively associated with leader-rated subordinate-group performance after the three leadership styles are included in the model.

H5e: Social relationship management is positively associated with leader-rated subordinate-group performance after the three leadership styles are included in the model.

Mediating Role of Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership can translate emotional competencies into performance-relevant behavior by linking work to shared purpose, recognizing individual needs, and encouraging development and adaptive effort. Prior research reports relationships among leader EI, transformational leadership, and employee outcomes, and recent evidence connects transformational leadership with team effectiveness and affective commitment (Lee *et al.,* 2023; Paredes-Saavedra *et al.,* 2026; Pulido-Martos *et al.,* 2024). Because each EI dimension may contribute to one or more of these behaviors, a positive indirect association through transformational leadership is expected for each dimension.

H6a: Transformational leadership mediates the positive association between self-awareness and leader-rated subordinate-group performance.

H6b: Transformational leadership mediates the positive association between self-management and leader-rated subordinate-group performance.

H6c: Transformational leadership mediates the positive association between self-motivation and leader-rated subordinate-group performance.

H6d: Transformational leadership mediates the positive association between social awareness and leader-rated subordinate-group performance.

H6e: Transformational leadership mediates the positive association between social relationship management and leader-rated subordinate-group performance.

Mediating Role of Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership may transmit EI associations through clear expectations, monitoring, contingent recognition, and corrective feedback. Emotional competencies can support the delivery of these practices by helping leaders regulate responses, remain goal-focused, interpret employee reactions, and communicate feedback. Empirical work has linked leader EI and transactional leadership with job performance, including through mediating processes (Lee *et al.,* 2023). Yet EI does not itself ensure formal performance-management behavior; therefore, the indirect paths are proposed but may differ across dimensions. The hypothesized direction is positive where EI predicts more transactional behavior and transactional behavior is positively related to performance.

H7a: Transactional leadership mediates the positive association between self-awareness and leader-rated subordinate-group performance.

H7b: Transactional leadership mediates the positive association between self-management and leader-rated subordinate-group performance.

H7c: Transactional leadership mediates the positive association between self-motivation and leader-rated subordinate-group performance.

H7d: Transactional leadership mediates the positive association between social awareness and leader-rated subordinate-group performance.

H7e: Transactional leadership mediates the positive association between social relationship management and leader-rated subordinate-group performance.

Mediating Role of Laissez-Faire Leadership

Laissez-faire leadership provides a distinct, avoidant mediation pathway. If EI competencies are associated with fewer delayed decisions and omissions, and laissez-faire behavior is associated with weaker access to guidance and performance support, the resulting indirect association between EI and performance is expected to be positive. This pathway is plausible for self-regulatory as well as socially focused competencies because both follow-through and interpersonal responsiveness may reduce avoidant behavior. Evidence associates laissez-faire leadership with disengagement and employee outcomes, although contextual and employee-level factors can alter its effects (Glaas *et al.,* 2026;

Zheng & Li, 2024). The indirect hypotheses are therefore tested as specific associations rather than assumed causal mechanisms.

H8a: Laissez-faire leadership mediates the positive association between self-awareness and leader-rated subordinate-group performance.

H8b: Laissez-faire leadership mediates the positive association between self-management and leader-rated subordinate-group performance.

H8c: Laissez-faire leadership mediates the positive association between self-motivation and leader-rated subordinate-group performance.

H8d: Laissez-faire leadership mediates the positive association between social awareness and leader-rated subordinate-group performance.

H8e: Laissez-faire leadership mediates the positive association between social relationship management and leader-rated subordinate-group performance.

Figure 1 presents the parallel partial-mediation model. It includes 15 EI-to-leadership paths, three leadership-to-performance paths, and five direct EI-to-performance paths. The hypotheses concern associations among leader-reported constructs and leader-rated subordinate-group performance.

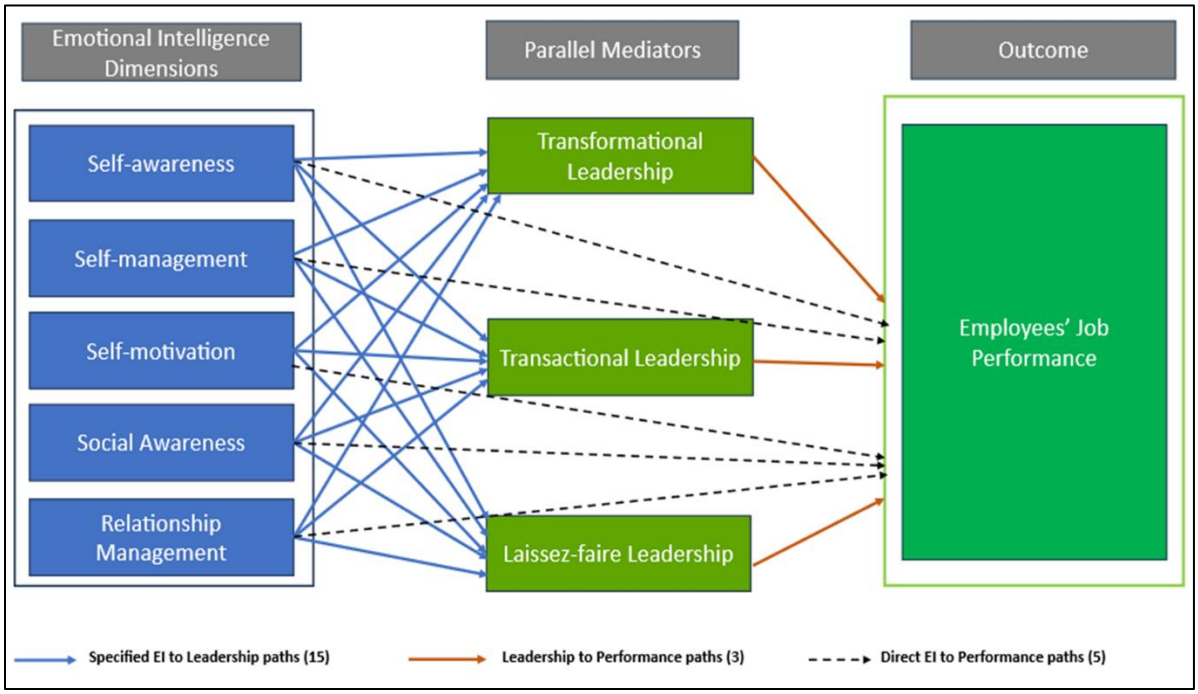


Figure 1: Proposed Parallel Partial-Mediation Model

Note: *Solid arrows represent the 15 specified EI-to-leadership paths and the three leadership-to-performance paths. Dashed arrows represent the five retained direct EI-to-performance paths. All five EI dimensions were specified as antecedents of each leadership style.*

Methodology

Research Design and Setting

Following established guidance for explanatory and predictive PLS-SEM research (Hair *et al.,* 2022; Becker *et al.,* 2023), the study used a quantitative, cross-sectional survey. The design tested theory-based associations among latent constructs and assessed how well the model explained the endogenous variables. Because all measures were collected during one period, the directional paths represent theoretical ordering rather than confirmed temporal causation. The setting comprised 16 food and beverage organizations in Yangon, Myanmar. Organizations were selected purposively because they met the sector definition, had supervisory or managerial structures, granted access, and were practically accessible. The allocation record in Table 1 shows that 50 questionnaires were assigned to

each of 11 organizations in the larger-allocation group and 30 to each of five organizations in the smaller-allocation group. Authorized organizational contacts circulated questionnaires to eligible respondents. The available records do not provide a complete sampling frame or the number of eligible managers in each role category; proportional probability sampling therefore cannot be verified. The respondent sample is treated as nonprobability recruitment with planned coverage across job-position categories, not as a statistically representative sample of all Yangon or Myanmar organizations. The questionnaire recorded five job-position categories: executive, manager, senior manager, general manager, and director/CEO/MD. The manuscript does not contain separate usable response counts by these categories or the allocation within each organization by category. These categories are reported to clarify the managerial levels represented; they should not be interpreted as demonstrated proportional strata.

Population Eligibility Sampling and Unit of Analysis

The target population comprised full-time supervisors, executives, and managers with formal responsibility for employees. Inclusion required direct supervisory responsibility, full-time employment in a participating food and beverage organization in Yangon, and at least 12 months of service in the current organization. Part-time, temporary, contract, newly appointed, and non-supervisory personnel were excluded.

A total of 700 questionnaires were distributed from November 2025 through January 2026. After screening for eligibility and completeness, 547 usable responses were retained, giving a usable-return proportion of 78.1% (547/700). The leader or manager was the unit of analysis. Respondents rated their own EI and leadership behavior and the overall performance of employees directly under their supervision. All eight performance items used this same subordinate-group referent. The outcome must therefore be interpreted as leader-perceived group performance, not as independently measured performance for each employee.

Organization names are withheld under the confidentiality agreement. The questionnaire and available respondent-level data record age, gender, education, job position, marital status, salary, years of service in the current company, and years of service at the management level. They do not record total work experience as a separate variable. The study files also contain no organization workforce-size or food-and-beverage-subsector classifications. These organizational characteristics were therefore unavailable for estimation; confidentiality explains why names are not reported, but the missing classifications reflect absent data rather than an inference from the confidentiality agreement. Table 1 reports questionnaire allocations, not eligible-manager counts or usable responses by organization.

Table 1: Questionnaire Allocation Across Participating Organizations

Allocation Band	Number of Organizations	Questionnaires Per Organization	Total Questionnaires
Larger allocation	11	50	550
Smaller allocation	5	30	150
Total	16	—	700

Note: *Organization names are withheld to protect confidentiality. The table reports planned organization-level questionnaire allocations, not eligible-manager counts, stratum sizes, or usable responses by organization. The supplied records do not demonstrate proportional allocation across managerial categories.*

Measures and Instrument Development

All focal constructs were specified reflectively and measured with five-point Likert-type scales. The questionnaire contained 43 indicators. EI was measured through self-awareness (three items), self-management (three items), self-motivation (four items), social awareness (three items), and social relationship management (eight items). Item content followed Goleman's competency framework, with wording informed by Wong and Law's Emotional Intelligence Scale where the content was conceptually consistent (Goleman, 1999; Wong & Law, 2002). The instrument was researcher-adapted and was not presented as the original WLEIS.

Transformational leadership was measured with five items covering inspiration, employee development, intellectual stimulation, and ethical example. Transactional leadership was measured with five items addressing expectations, contingent exchange, monitoring, and corrective feedback. Laissez-faire leadership was measured with four items covering delayed decisions, avoidance, limited guidance, and postponed responses. The items were adapted from the Full Range Leadership framework (Bass & Avolio, 1994). The study did not claim to administer the official Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire.

The outcome was measured using eight indicators rated by each leader with reference to the employees under that leader's direct supervision: overall performance, work quality, job knowledge, efficiency and time management, dependability, teamwork, flexibility, and compliance with organizational requirements. The content drew on task, contextual, and adaptive performance domains (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997; Pulakos *et al.,* 2000). Williams and Anderson's (1991) items use an individual employee referent; the present questionnaire changed the referent to the subordinate group. The instrument was therefore adapted for a group-level leader rating and should not be described as the unmodified Williams and Anderson measure or as an independently validated group-performance scale. Table 2 (A) provides all eight item wordings.

Two academic experts and one senior food and beverage practitioner reviewed the questionnaire for content relevance, clarity, and suitability for the sector. A pilot survey was then conducted with 100 respondents from three food and beverage organizations that were excluded from the main study. The pilot assessed item clarity, response variation, completion time, and preliminary reliability. Items identified as unclear were revised, and all construct-level Cronbach's alpha values exceeded 0.70 before the main survey.

The questionnaire was administered in Myanmar. The English questionnaire was translated into Myanmar and back-translated into English to check for consistency of meaning. Three bilingual experts reviewed the versions and resolved differences for conceptual and linguistic accuracy. The manuscript identifies the five-point response format, but the supplied questionnaire does not show the endpoint labels.

Table 2 summarizes the constructs, indicators, content, adaptation sources, and rater. The EI instrument is a researcher-adapted competency measure informed by Goleman's framework and selected WLEIS wording; it is not the official WLEIS. The leadership items were adapted from the Full Range Leadership framework and are not the official MLQ. Table 2 (A) reproduces all 43 item wordings. In the full sample, the five EI dimensions were evaluated as distinct reflective constructs using loadings, reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant-validity criteria. The analyses did not compare this structure with alternative EI measurement models, so they provide evidence for the specified measurement model but do not constitute definitive validation of the five-factor instrument.

Table 2: Measurement Specification and Adaptation Sources

Construct	Indicators	Content Represented	Source /Adaptation	Scale and Rater
Self-awareness	SA1–SA3	Emotional awareness, accurate self-assessment, self-confidence	Goleman (1999); wording informed by Wong and Law (2002)	5-point; leader self-report
Self-management	SM1–SM3	Self-control, trustworthiness, adaptability	Goleman (1999); wording informed by Wong and Law (2002)	5-point; leader self-report
Self-motivation	SMT1–SMT4	Initiative, achievement drive, optimism, commitment	Goleman (1999); wording informed by Wong and Law (2002)	5-point; leader self-report
Social awareness	SOA1–SOA3	Empathy, service orientation, organizational awareness	Goleman (1999); wording informed by Wong and Law (2002)	5-point; leader self-report

Social relationship management	SRM1–SRM8	Influence, coaching, collaboration, conflict and change management	Goleman (1999); wording informed by Wong and Law (2002)	5-point; leader self-report
Transformational leadership	TFL1–TFL5	Inspiration, development, intellectual stimulation, ethical example	Adapted from Bass and Avolio (1994)	5-point; leader self-report
Transactional leadership	TSL1–TSL5	Expectations, contingent exchange, monitoring, corrective feedback	Adapted from Bass and Avolio (1994)	5-point; leader self-report
Laissez-faire leadership	LFL1–LFL4	Delayed decisions, avoidance, limited guidance, postponed response	Adapted from Bass and Avolio (1994)	5-point; leader self-report
Employee Job Performance (leader-rated group level)	EJP1–EJP8	Overall performance, quality, knowledge, efficiency, dependability, teamwork, flexibility, compliance	Adapted to a group referent from task, contextual, and adaptive performance domains (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997; Pulakos *et al.*, 2000)	5-point; leader rating of subordinate group

Note: *All items were researcher-adapted and administered in Myanmar after translation and back-translation; the official WLEIS and MLQ were not administered. The manuscript reports a five-point response format, but the exact endpoint labels were absent from the supplied materials.*

Table 2 (A): Full Questionnaire Items

The items below reproduce the questionnaire wording supplied for the study. The item codes correspond to the reflective measurement model reported in Table 4. EI and leadership behavior were rated by leaders on five-point response scales; the eight performance items were rated by leaders with reference to the employees under their direct supervision. The performance score is therefore a leader-perceived subordinate-group rating.

Construct	Code	Questionnaire Item
Self-Awareness	SA1	I always know which emotions I am feeling and why.
	SA2	I am aware of my strengths and weaknesses.
	SA3	I am decisive and able to make sound decisions despite uncertainties and pressures.
Self-Management	SM1	I manage my impulsive feelings and distressing emotion well.
	SM2	I build trust by being reliable and authentic.
	SM3	I am flexible in how I see events.
Self-Motivation	SMT1	I am always ready to seize opportunities.
	SMT2	I am result oriented with highly drive to meet objectives and standards.
	SMT3	I operate from hope of success rather than fear of failure.
	SMT4	I commit to my team performance and align with the goals of our organization
Social Awareness	SOA1	I help out based on other peoples' needs and feeling.
	SOA2	I seek ways to increase customers' satisfaction and loyalty.
	SOA3	I usually accurately read situations and organizational & external realities.
Social Relationship Management	SRM1	I am able to arouse enthusiasm for a share vision and mission.
	SRM2	I am skilled at the art of persuasion.
	SRM3	I offer useful feedbacks and identify people needs for development.
	SRM4	I orchestrate win-win solutions.

	SRM5	I recognize the need for change and remove barriers to it.
	SRM6	I listen well, seek mutual understanding, fully welcome sharing of information.
	SRM7	I make and maintain personal friendships among work associates.
	SRM8	I collaborate, share information and resources, building team spirit and synergy.
Transformational Leadership	TFL1	I make followers feel good to be with me, creates a sense of belonging to be common cause and care about the interest of the followers.
	TFL2	I act with integrity, displays a high ethical and moral code and has a strong sense of mission.
	TFL3	I promote employees creative and innovative ideas to solve problems.
	TFL4	I motivate followers by encouraging them to put group interest.
	TFL5	I focus on the growth and development of each follower providing them with new opportunities to learn and giving them personalized attention.
Transactional Leadership	TSL1	I accept Goals, Structure and Culture of the current organization.
	TSL2	I promote compliance by followers with Rewards and Punishment.
	TSL3	I focus on Supervision, Organization and Performance of Team.
	TSL4	I pay attention to followers work in order to find faults and deviation.
	TSL5	I entail waiting, and intervening only if standards are not met or when things go wrong.
Laissez-Faire Leadership	LFL1	I believe that my employees are skilled, loyal, experienced and intellectual.
	LFL2	I totally trust team to perform the jobs themselves.
	LFL3	I concentrate on intellectual or rational aspects of employees' work and do not focus on management aspects.
	LFL4	I believe that and team are welcomed to share their views and provide suggestions which are best for organizational interest.
Employee Job Performance	EJP1	My employees consistently perform their assigned job responsibilities effectively.
	EJP2	My employees' work output consistently meets established quality standards.
	EJP3	My employees possess and apply the knowledge and skills required to perform their job duties.
	EJP4	My employees manage their time efficiently to complete assigned tasks within required deadlines.
	EJP5	My employees reliably complete assigned tasks with minimal supervision.
	EJP6	My employees work cooperatively with others and contribute positively to team objectives.
	EJP7	My employees adapt willingly to changing work priorities and job assignments.
	EJP8	My employees comply with organizational rules and policies.

Data Collection Ethics and Common Rater Risk

Questionnaires were administered in paper and online formats through authorized organizational contacts. The information sheet described the study purpose and confidentiality arrangements. Participation was voluntary; the consent process and ethics-review details are reported in the back matter. No direct personal identifiers were collected, and results were reported in aggregate form.

The same leader rated EI, leadership behavior, and the performance of the subordinate group. This common-rater design may inflate or suppress covariance through self-presentation, favorable response tendencies, consistency motives, implicit leadership beliefs, or halo effects. Procedural safeguards included anonymity, neutral wording, separate questionnaire sections, distinct instructions and referents for self-ratings versus subordinate-group performance, and voluntary participation. No marker variable, latent method factor, time separation, or independent outcome source was available. The study therefore cannot establish that common-method bias was absent; the safeguards reduce but do not eliminate this risk, and the findings are interpreted as associations.

Research data were stored securely and used for academic purposes. Access to the raw dataset was restricted to the researcher and authorized academic supervisors. Reporting was designed to prevent identification of individual respondents and participating organizations.

Data Analysis

SPSS 26 was used for data screening and descriptive analysis, and SmartPLS 4 was used for model estimation. PLS-SEM was selected because the study estimates a nine-construct, 43-indicator model with 23 direct paths and 15 specific indirect effects and emphasizes explained variance and predictive relevance. The analysis was designed to evaluate the specified theory-based model rather than to confirm a global covariance structure; this rationale is consistent with current PLS-SEM guidance for complex predictive and mediation models (Becker *et al.,* 2023; Hair *et al.,* 2022).

The reflective measurement model was assessed using outer loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, average variance extracted, HTMT, and the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Structural assessment examined inner variance inflation factors, path coefficients, R^2, adjusted R^2, f^2, and blindfolding-based Q^2. Statistical inference used two-tailed tests, 5,000 nonparametric bootstrap resamples, and bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals. Specific indirect effects were assessed directly; an indirect association was treated as supported when its confidence interval excluded zero (Hayes, 2022). Q^2 was interpreted as in-sample predictive relevance, not as holdout-sample prediction. Because respondents were nested within 16 organizations and organization identifiers were withheld, standard errors were not adjusted for clustering; the reported inferential statistics may not reflect within-organization dependence.

A supplementary sensitivity model added the available respondent-level characteristics as direct predictors of leader-rated subordinate-group performance: age, gender, education, job position, marital status, salary, years of service in the current company, and years of service at the management level. These variables were included because demographic profile, position, and career tenure may be associated with managerial experience or performance ratings. Total work experience was not collected as a separate measure; organization size and subsector were also absent from the questionnaire and available records, so they could not be tested. The sensitivity model retains the focal structural paths; it does not address organization-level clustering.

Ethical Approval and Informed Consent

Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained before questionnaire completion. Participants received information about the purpose of study, procedures, academic use of the data, confidentiality, and their right to decline or withdraw without penalty. No direct personal identifiers were collected.

Data Availability

The data are not publicly available because of confidentiality commitments to participating organizations and respondents. De-identified summary information may be provided by the corresponding author upon reasonable request, subject to ethical and organizational restrictions.

Results

Respondent Profile and Descriptive Results

Table 3 presents the respondent profile for the 547 valid cases. Men represented 66.9% of respondents, and the largest age group was under 30 years (40.6%). Graduates accounted for 47.5% of the sample, while executives represented 50.1%. Mean scores were relatively high for the five EI dimensions (M = 3.88–3.95) and leader-rated subordinate-group performance (M = 3.85). Transformational leadership averaged 3.78, transactional leadership 3.52, and laissez-faire leadership 2.10. Skewness ranged from −0.51 to 0.52, and kurtosis ranged from −0.15 to 0.42. Performance correlated positively with social relationship management (r = 0.507), transformational leadership (r = 0.500), and transactional leadership (r = 0.449), and negatively with laissez-faire leadership (r = −0.458). These correlations are

descriptive, not structural effects. Respondents were nested in 16 organizations, but individual-level estimates do not separate within- and between-organization variation.

Table 3: Respondent Characteristics (N = 547)

Characteristic	Distribution
Gender	Male: 366 (66.9%); Female: 181 (33.1%)
Age	Under 30 years: 222 (40.6%); 31–40 years: 180 (32.9%); 41–50 years: 104 (19.0%); Above 50 years: 41 (7.5%);
Marital status	Single: 186 (34.0%); Married: 346 (63.3%); Divorced: 15 (2.7%)
Education	Undergraduate: 179 (32.7%); Graduate: 260 (47.5%); Postgraduate diploma: 39 (7.1%); Master's: 65 (11.9%); Other: 4 (0.7%)
Job position	Executive: 274 (50.1%); Manager: 166 (30.3%); Senior manager: 52 (9.5%); General manager: 36 (6.6%); Director/CEO/MD: 19 (3.5%)

Measurement Model

The specified reflective measurement model met the reported reliability and validity criteria. Table 4 presents all retained outer loadings and construct-level reliability and convergent-validity statistics. Indicator loadings ranged from 0.752 to 0.884. Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.829 to 0.924, composite reliability ranged from 0.897 to 0.937, and average variance extracted ranged from 0.631 to 0.757. These results support the reliability and convergent validity of the specified constructs in this sample; they do not establish that this researcher-adapted instrument is valid across other populations or languages.

Table 4: Indicator Loadings, Reliability, and Convergent Validity

Construct	Indicator	Loading	Cronbach's *α*	CR	AVE
Self-Awareness	SA1	0.858	0.829	0.897	0.745
	SA2	0.864			
	SA3	0.867			
Self-Management	SM1	0.884	0.839	0.903	0.757
	SM2	0.884			
	SM3	0.841			
Self-Motivation	SMT1	0.819	0.856	0.902	0.698
	SMT2	0.851			
	SMT3	0.811			
	SMT4	0.859			
Social Awareness	SOA1	0.848	0.837	0.902	0.755
	SOA2	0.875			
	SOA3	0.883			
Social Relationship Management	SRM1	0.752	0.916	0.932	0.631
	SRM2	0.835			

	SRM3	0.807			
	SRM4	0.813			
	SRM5	0.807			
	SRM6	0.766			
	SRM7	0.791			
	SRM8	0.781			
Laissez-Faire Leadership	LFL1	0.855	0.870	0.911	0.720
	LFL2	0.810			
	LFL3	0.861			
	LFL4	0.866			
Transactional Leadership	TSL1	0.823	0.883	0.915	0.682
	TSL2	0.792			
	TSL3	0.818			
	TSL4	0.855			
	TSL5	0.840			
Transformational Leadership	TFL1	0.809	0.880	0.912	0.676
	TFL2	0.815			
	TFL3	0.825			
	TFL4	0.821			
	TFL5	0.839			
Employee Job Performance	EJP1	0.808	0.924	0.937	0.652
	EJP2	0.817			
	EJP3	0.837			
	EJP4	0.815			
	EJP5	0.788			
	EJP6	0.842			
	EJP7	0.781			
	EJP8	0.771			

Note: *CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted. Construct-level statistics are shown on the first indicator row for each construct.*

Table 5 presents selected higher HTMT values. The full Fornell-Larcker matrix appears in Table 6 and the full lower-triangular HTMT matrix in Table 7. HTMT values range from 0.276 to 0.552, below the conservative 0.85 threshold. The supplied SmartPLS export does not contain bootstrap confidence intervals for HTMT, so interval estimates are not reported. The two matrices support discriminant validity for the specified constructs in this sample.

Table 5: Selected Higher HTMT Values

Construct Pair	**HTMT**
Transformational – employee job performance	0.552
Social relationship management – employee job performance	0.549
Laissez-faire – employee job performance	0.510
Transformational – social awareness	0.499
Transactional – employee job performance	0.494
Transformational – social relationship management	0.483
Transformational – self-awareness	0.479
Transformational – self-management	0.468

Note*: Selected higher HTMT values are presented here. The complete Fornell-Larcker and HTMT matrices are reported in Tables 6 and 7. The supplied SmartPLS export does not include bootstrap confidence intervals for HTMT.*

Table 6: Full Fornell-Larcker matrix

Var.	EJP	LFL	SA	SM	SMT	SOA	SRM	TSL	TFL
EJP	0.808								
LFL	−0.458	0.848							
SA	0.276	−0.310	0.863						
SM	0.365	−0.333	0.319	0.870					
SMT	0.309	−0.273	0.281	0.280	0.835				
SOA	0.356	−0.352	0.301	0.253	0.274	0.869			
SRM	0.507	−0.330	0.292	0.308	0.244	0.270	0.794		
TSL	0.449	−0.256	0.251	0.281	0.274	0.315	0.358	0.826	
TFL	0.500	−0.390	0.413	0.403	0.373	0.430	0.436	0.246	0.822

Note: *Diagonal values are the square roots of AVE; off-diagonal values are latent-variable correlations. EJP = employee job performance; LFL = laissez-faire leadership; SA = self-awareness; SM = self-management; SMT = self-motivation; SOA = social awareness; SRM = social relationship management; TSL = transactional leadership; TFL = transformational leadership.*

Table 7: Full Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio Matrix

Var.	EJP	LFL	SA	SM	SMT	SOA	SRM	TSL	TFL
EJP									
LFL	0.510								
SA	0.311	0.364							
SM	0.413	0.389	0.381						
SMT	0.344	0.315	0.330	0.330					
SOA	0.404	0.412	0.359	0.303	0.323				
SRM	0.549	0.368	0.332	0.350	0.276	0.308			
TSL	0.494	0.291	0.292	0.325	0.314	0.363	0.396		
TFL	0.552	0.444	0.479	0.468	0.429	0.499	0.483	0.276	

Note: *Values are HTMT ratios. All values are below .85. EJP = employee job performance; LFL = laissez-faire leadership; SA = self-awareness; SM = self-management; SMT = self-motivation; SOA = social awareness; SRM = social relationship management; TSL = transactional leadership; TFL = transformational leadership.*

Structural Model and Direct Effects

Table 8 shows that the model explained 46.3% of the variance in leader-rated subordinate-group performance and 40.0% in transformational leadership. It explained 24.4% in laissez-faire leadership and 21.7% in transactional leadership. Blindfolding-based Q^2 values were positive.

Table 8: Explanatory and In-Sample Predictive Relevance

Endogenous construct	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Q^2	Interpretation
Employee Job Performance	0.463	0.455	0.298	Moderate
Transformational Leadership	0.400	0.395	0.266	Moderate
Laissez-Faire Leadership	0.244	0.237	0.173	Small–modest
Transactional Leadership	0.217	0.210	0.141	Small–modest

Note*: Q^2 values are blindfolding-based in-sample statistics and are not holdout-sample prediction results*

Table 9 reports the path-level f^2 values. Most effects were small or negligible, indicating that the model's explanatory power was spread across several predictors rather than driven by one relationship.

Table 9: Path-Level Effect Sizes

Predictor	Dependent Construct	f^2	Magnitude
LFL	EJP	0.058	Small
SA	EJP	0.003	Negligible
SM	EJP	0.006	Negligible
SMT	EJP	0.002	Negligible
SOA	EJP	0.002	Negligible
SRM	EJP	0.073	Small
TSL	EJP	0.077	Small
TFL	EJP	0.056	Small
SA	LFL	0.016	Negligible
SM	LFL	0.029	Small
SMT	LFL	0.011	Negligible
SOA	LFL	0.045	Small
SRM	LFL	0.030	Small
SA	TSL	0.004	Negligible
SM	TSL	0.013	Negligible
SMT	TSL	0.016	Negligible
SOA	TSL	0.032	Small
SRM	TSL	0.055	Small
SA	TFL	0.042	Small
SM	TFL	0.041	Small
SMT	TFL	0.034	Small
SOA	TFL	0.072	Small
SRM	TFL	0.074	Small

Cross-validated communality Q^2 was positive for each reflective construct, ranging from 0.469 for self-awareness to 0.550 for leader-rated subordinate-group performance (Table 10). These blindfolding statistics describe in-sample indicator reconstruction and do not indicate out-of-sample prediction.

Table 10: Cross-Validated Communality Q^2

Construct	Cross-Validated Communality Q^2	Interpretation
Employee job performance	0.550	Positive
Social relationship management	0.523	Positive
Laissez-faire leadership	0.522	Positive
Transactional leadership	0.517	Positive
Transformational leadership	0.507	Positive
Self-management	0.491	Positive
Self-motivation	0.488	Positive

Social awareness	0.487	Positive
Self-awareness	0.469	Positive

Table 11 reports all 23 direct paths. All five EI dimensions were positively associated with transformational leadership, supporting H1a–H1e. Self-management, self-motivation, social awareness, and social relationship management were positively associated with transactional leadership, supporting H2b–H2e; H2a was not supported. All five EI dimensions were negatively associated with laissez-faire leadership, supporting H3a–H3e.

Transformational leadership ($\beta = 0.226$, $p < 0.001$) and transactional leadership ($\beta = 0.230$, $p < 0.001$) were positively associated with performance, while laissez-faire leadership was negatively associated ($\beta = -0.204$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H4a–H4c. Of the five hypothesized direct EI-to-performance paths, only social relationship management was significant ($\beta = 0.234$, $p < 0.001$). H5e was supported; H5a–H5d were not.

Table 11: Bootstrapped Direct Effects

Path	*β*	*t*	*p*	95% bias-corrected CI	Decision
SA → TFL	0.178	4.723	< 0.001	[0.104, 0.252]	Supported
SM → TFL	0.174	4.687	< 0.001	[0.101, 0.246]	Supported
SMT → TFL	0.155	4.135	< 0.001	[0.081, 0.229]	Supported
SOA → TFL	0.228	6.347	< 0.001	[0.157, 0.298]	Supported
SRM → TFL	0.231	6.252	< .001	[0.158, 0.303]	Supported
SA → TSL	0.062	1.428	= 0.153	[-0.023, 0.148]	Not supported
SM → TSL	0.113	2.645	= 0.008	[0.030, .198]	Supported
SMT → TSL	0.122	2.911	= 0.004	[0.039, .203]	Supported
SOA → TSL	0.172	3.956	< 0.001	[0.086, .257]	Supported
SRM → TSL	0.228	5.561	< 0.001	[0.146, .308]	Supported
SA → LFL	-0.121	2.874	= 0.004	[-0.203, -0.038]	Supported
SM → LFL	-0.165	4.176	< 0.001	[-0.242, -0.088]	Supported
SMT → LFL	-0.097	2.353	= 0.019	[-0.178, -0.016]	Supported
SOA → LFL	-0.202	4.971	< 0.001	[-0.282, -0.123]	Supported
SRM → LFL	-0.165	3.923	< 0.001	[-0.248, -0.083]	Supported
TFL → EJP	0.226	5.692	<0.001	[0.148, 0.304]	Supported
TSL → EJP	0.230	6.782	< 0.001	[0.163, 0.296]	Supported
LFL → EJP	-0.204	5.519	< 0.001	[-0.276, -0.131]	Supported
SA → EJP	-0.049	1.453	= 0.146	[-0.115, 0.017]	Not supported
SM → EJP	0.065	1.805	= 0.071	[-0.005, 0.136]	Not supported
SMT → EJP	0.034	0.968	= 0.333	[-0.034, 0.101]	Not supported
SOA → EJP	0.041	1.108	= 0.268	[-0.032, 0.112]	Not supported
SRM → EJP	0.234	6.193	< 0.001	[0.160,0 .308]	Supported

Note: *SA = self-awareness; SM = self-management; SMT = self-motivation; SOA = social awareness; SRM = social relationship management; TFL = transformational leadership; TSL = transactional leadership; LFL = laissez-faire leadership; EJP = employee job performance rated at the subordinate-group level.*

Mediation and Total Effects

Table 12 presents all 15 specific indirect effects. Fourteen were significant. Transformational leadership mediated the association between each EI dimension and performance (H6a–H6e). Transactional leadership mediated four of the five associations; the self-awareness → transactional leadership → performance indirect effect was not supported (H7a), while H7b–H7e were supported. Its confidence interval included zero, consistent with the nonsignificant self-awareness → transactional leadership path. Laissez-faire leadership mediated all five EI–performance associations (H8a–H8e).

Table 12: Bootstrapped Specific Indirect Effects

Specific Indirect Path	*β*	*p*	95% bias-corrected CI	Decision
SA → TFL → EJP	0.040	< 0.001	[0.018, 0.063]	Supported
SA → TSL → EJP	0.014	= 0.171	[-0.006, 0.035]	Not supported
SA → LFL → EJP	0.025	= 0.011	[0.005, 0.044]	Supported
SM → TFL → EJP	0.039	< 0.001	[0.018, 0.061]	Supported
SM → TSL → EJP	0.026	= 0.015	[0.005, 0.047]	Supported
SM → LFL → EJP	0.034	= 0.001	[0.013, 0.054]	Supported
SMT → TFL → EJP	0.035	< 0.001	[0.015, 0.055]	Supported
SMT → TSL → EJP	0.028	= 0.009	[0.007, 0.049]	Supported
SMT → LFL → EJP	0.020	= 0.034	[0.001, 0.038]	Supported
SOA → TFL → EJP	0.051	< 0.001	[0.028, 0.075]	Supported
SOA → TSL → EJP	0.040	< 0.001	[0.016, 0.063]	Supported
SOA → LFL → EJP	0.041	<0 .001	[0.019, 0.063]	Supported
SRM → TFL → EJP	0.052	< 0.001	[0.027, 0.077]	Supported
SRM → TSL → EJP	0.053	< 0.001	[0.027, 0.077]	Supported
SRM → LFL → EJP	0.034	= 0.001	[0.013, 0.054]	Supported

The negative EI-to-laissez-faire paths and the negative laissez-faire-to-performance path produced positive indirect-effect estimates. Table 13 reports bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals and *p*-values for the total indirect and total effects. All five total indirect effects were significant. The self-awareness total indirect effect was positive and significant, but its total effect was nonsignificant because the confidence interval for the combined direct and indirect association included zero; the remaining four total effects were significant. Social relationship management had the largest total indirect-effect estimate ($\beta = 0.138$) and total-effect estimate ($\beta = 0.372$). Its significant direct path and three significant specific indirect paths are consistent with complementary mediation.

Table 13: Direct, Total Indirect, And Total Effects on Leader-Rated Subordinate-Group Performance

EI Dimension	Direct effect *β* (*p*)	Total indirect *β* [95% CI]	Total effect *β* [95% CI]
Self-Awareness	−0.049 (0.146)	0.079 [0.043, 0.115]	0.030 [−0.042, 0.102]
Self-Management	0.065 (0.071)	0.099 [0.065, 0.133]	0.164 [0.088, 0.241]
Self-Motivation	0.034 (0.333)	0.083 [0.050, 0.115]	0.116 [0.045, 0.187]
Social Awareness	0.041 (0.268)	0.132 [0.093, 0.171]	0.173 [0.096, 0.248]
Social Relationship Management	0.234 (< 0.001)	0.138 [0.097, 0.179]	0.372 [0.298, 0.446]

Note: *Direct-effect p-values are available in Table 11. Total indirect and total-effect estimates use bias-corrected 95% bootstrap confidence intervals and two-tailed p-values from 5,000 bootstrap resamples. A confidence interval excluding zero indicates a statistically significant effect. The specific indirect effects are reported in Table 12.*

Control-Variable Sensitivity Analysis

In the model that added the eight available respondent-level controls, none had a statistically significant direct association with subordinate-group performance. The focal performance paths were materially stable: transformational leadership ($\beta = 0.227$, $p < 0.001$), transactional leadership ($\beta = 0.232$, $p < 0.001$), and laissez-faire leadership ($\beta = -0.207$, $p < 0.001$) remained significant. Social relationship management remained the only significant direct EI path ($\beta = 0.233$, $p < 0.001$); the other

four direct EI paths remained nonsignificant. Thus, the substantive pattern is robust to the available respondent-level controls. The model R^2 was 0.467 (adjusted R^2 = 0.451), compared with R^2 = 0.463 in the primary model. The full direct-path estimates and confidence intervals are reported in Table 14. This analysis does not control for total work experience, organization size, subsector, or organization-level clustering.

Table 14: Direct Effects in the Supplementary Control-Variable Model

Predictor	*β*	*p*	95% bias-corrected CI
Age	−0.067	0.176	[−0.163, 0.031]
Education	−0.005	0.914	[−0.094, 0.087]
Gender	−0.037	0.283	[−0.105, 0.030]
Job position	−0.003	0.950	[−0.111, 0.104]
Marital status	−0.009	0.774	[−0.072, 0.055]
Salary	0.030	0.640	[−0.095, 0.155]
Management-level tenure	0.045	0.464	[−0.077, 0.162]
Current-company tenure	−0.010	0.824	[−0.096, 0.076]
Self-awareness	−0.046	0.180	[−0.114, 0.022]
Self-management	0.067	0.063	[−0.003, 0.139]
Self-motivation	0.030	0.390	[−0.039, 0.099]
Social awareness	0.035	0.345	[−0.037, 0.109]
Social relationship management	0.233	< 0.001	[0.156, 0.309]
Laissez-faire leadership	−0.207	< 0.001	[−0.280, −0.135]
Transactional leadership	0.232	< 0.001	[0.162, 0.301]
Transformational leadership	0.227	< 0.001	[0.147, 0.306]

***Note:** β = standardized coefficient; intervals are bias-corrected 95% bootstrap confidence intervals from 5,000 resamples. Total work experience, organization size, and subsector were unavailable; category coding details for education and job position were not supplied.*

Discussion

Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Behavior

All five EI dimensions were associated with transformational leadership. The coefficients for social awareness and social relationship management were numerically larger than the other EI coefficients, a pattern consistent with the relevance of recognizing employee needs and managing relationships in inspirational and developmental leadership. The study did not test whether these coefficients differed statistically from the other dimensions (Gerhardt *et al.,* 2026; Pulido-Martos *et al.,* 2024).

The transactional results were more selective. Self-management, self-motivation, social awareness, and social relationship management were significant, whereas self-awareness was not. Transactional leadership requires leaders to set standards, monitor outcomes, give feedback, and manage exchange. Personal insight may be useful, but it does not by itself ensure these behaviors. The result extends evidence that EI can be linked with both transformational and transactional leadership while showing that individual EI dimensions do not contribute equally (Lee *et al.*, 2023).

All five EI dimensions were negatively associated with laissez-faire leadership. Social awareness had the largest absolute negative coefficient among the EI dimensions. This pattern is consistent with the view that leaders who recognize employee concerns and contextual signals may be less likely to remain passive when action is needed. No pairwise test established that the social-awareness coefficient differed from the other EI coefficients. Recent evidence also links laissez-faire leadership with employee disengagement, although coworker support and employee coping may shape its effects (Glaas *et al.,* 2026; Zheng & Li, 2024).

Leadership Styles and Employee Performance

Transformational and transactional leadership had similar positive point estimates. This pattern is consistent with the possibility that the two active styles complement each other in food and beverage

operations, although the study did not test whether their coefficients differed. Transformational leadership can strengthen purpose, confidence, and adaptation; transactional leadership can provide clear standards, monitoring, and timely consequences. Recent full-range leadership research also links both styles with effectiveness and employee outcomes, with relative associations varying across contexts (Garzón-Lasso *et al.,* 2024; Thanh & Quang, 2022).

Laissez-faire leadership was negatively associated with leader-rated subordinate-group performance. The measure represented avoidant nonresponse rather than intentional delegation. This result is consistent with the operational importance of access to decisions, feedback, and support in food and beverage work. However, power interruptions, input constraints, and demand uncertainty were not measured in this study and cannot be identified as causes or moderators of the observed relationship.

Mediation and Theoretical Contribution

Fourteen of the 15 specific indirect effects were significant, indicating that leadership behavior was one route through which EI dimensions were associated with group performance in this sample. The only nonsignificant specific indirect effect was self-awareness through transactional leadership; its bootstrap interval included zero, and the self-awareness-to-transactional-leadership path was itself nonsignificant. This pattern is consistent with parallel mediation, but the cross-sectional design does not establish temporal or causal mediation. Social relationship management had a distinctive pattern: it was the only EI dimension with a significant direct association with leader-rated subordinate-group performance (β = 0.234, $p < 0.001$), had significant specific indirect associations through all three leadership styles, and produced the largest total-effect point estimate (β = 0.372). Communication, coaching, influence, collaboration, and conflict resolution may relate to group functioning beyond broad leadership-style scores. The study did not report bootstrap confidence intervals or *p*-values for total effects, or bootstrap contrasts between EI dimensions; therefore, the largest total-effect estimate is a descriptive ranking. The cross-sectional, common-rater design also prevents a causal interpretation. The other EI dimensions had significant specific indirect paths but no significant direct paths in the fitted model.

Food and beverage organizations should replace generic EI awareness sessions with behavior-based development tied to recurring operational situations. This approach is consistent with the view that leaders shape work resources such as support, feedback, predictability, and emotional stability (Bakker & Demerouti, 2024). Managers can practice shift handovers, difficult performance conversations, customer or distributor complaints, production disruptions, cross-functional conflict, and coaching after quality or safety deviations. Role plays should be scored against observable behaviors—recognizing emotional cues, remaining composed, clarifying the issue, listening, resolving conflict, agreeing on action, and following up. Pre- and post-training assessments can combine manager self-ratings with employee feedback and operational indicators such as rework, service recovery, absenteeism, complaint closure, and missed handoffs. Social awareness and social relationship management merit priority because they showed the strongest links with active leadership and overall performance.

Leadership development should integrate transformational and transactional behaviors because effective performance requires both inspiration and operational discipline. Transformational practices should help managers communicate the purpose behind standards, encourage employees to suggest improvements, provide coaching, and recognize adaptive effort. Transactional practices should ensure that managers set clear shift-level expectations, monitor critical quality and service indicators, give timely corrective feedback, and apply rewards consistently. Recent reviews indicate that emotional intelligence is closely associated with leadership effectiveness and transformational leadership, particularly through relationship-focused capabilities such as empathy, communication, and influence (Gerhardt *et al.*, 2026; Paredes-Saavedra *et al.,* 2026).

Organizations should also reduce laissez-faire behavior by establishing clear decision-response times, escalation procedures, backup authority, and regular reviews of unresolved issues. Leadership dashboards and 360-degree feedback can identify delayed decisions, unavailable supervision, recurring

conflict, and incomplete corrective actions. Finally, selection and succession systems should assess multiple dimensions of emotional intelligence, including self-management, social awareness, and relationship management, rather than assuming that self-awareness alone is sufficient for effective leadership.

Limitations

The cross-sectional design does not establish temporal order or causality. High-performing employees may encourage more active leadership, and organizational conditions may influence both leadership behavior and performance. Longitudinal, cross-lagged, experimental, or intervention studies are needed to test whether EI development produces later changes in leadership and performance. The same leaders rated EI, leadership styles, and subordinate-group performance. Common-rater effects, self-enhancement, and lenient or severe performance judgments may have influenced the estimates. Future studies should separate the data sources by combining leader EI reports, employee ratings of leadership, and objective, archival, or independently rated performance indicators. The sample was limited to purposively accessed food and beverage organizations in Yangon, and the findings should not be generalized statistically to all firms in Myanmar. Respondents were nested in 16 organizations but analyzed as individual cases. Organization identifiers and organization-level classifications were unavailable for multilevel modeling or cluster-robust inference; if responses within organizations were correlated, standard errors may be too small. The job-performance outcome was each leader's rating of a subordinate group, not independent or objective employee-level performance. Although years of service in the current company and years at management level were recorded, total work experience was not measured as a separate variable. Organization size and food-and-beverage subsector were also absent from the questionnaire and available records, limiting adjustment for organizational heterogeneity. The analysis did not report bootstrap contrasts comparing EI coefficients; statements about which dimension had the largest estimate therefore describe point-estimate rankings only.

Future Scope

Future research should replicate the model across regions, sectors, ownership types, managerial levels, and firm sizes. Longitudinal, cross-lagged, experimental, or intervention studies should test whether EI development produces later changes in leadership and performance. Researchers could also examine environmental uncertainty, psychological safety, employee resilience, work engagement, and organizational climate as moderators or sequential mediators. Other forms of leadership, such as ethical, servant, inclusive, authentic, or abusive leadership, may explain additional mechanisms. Measurement invariance should be tested across language, gender, organization, and managerial groups. Future predictive assessment should also use holdout samples or PLSpredict in addition to blindfolding-based Q^2.

Conclusion

The study found that associations between leader EI and leader-rated subordinate-group performance differed across EI dimensions and leadership behaviors. All five EI dimensions were positively associated with transformational leadership; four were associated with transactional leadership; and all five were negatively associated with laissez-faire leadership. Transformational and transactional leadership had similar positive associations with performance, whereas laissez-faire leadership had a negative association. Fourteen of 15 specific indirect effects were significant. Social relationship management was the only EI dimension with a significant direct association with performance and had the largest point estimate for the total effect. The findings support considering EI together with observable leadership behavior and relationship work in food and beverage management development. Cross-sectional, single-rater data and unadjusted organization clustering limit causal interpretation and precision.

CRediT Authorship Contribution Statement

S.S.H: Conceptualization, methodology, investigation, data curation, formal analysis, visualization, project administration, and writing – original draft. **M.C**: Supervision, methodology, validation, and

writing – review and editing. **A.B**: Supervision, conceptual refinement, validation, and writing – review and editing. All authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript.

AI Assistance Declaration

During preparation of this manuscript, OpenAI's ChatGPT was used for language editing, grammar correction, sentence restructuring, and improvements in clarity. The authors reviewed and revised all AI-assisted texts and take full responsibility for the final manuscript. The tool was not used to generate data, conduct statistical analysis, or make the substantive research decisions reported in the article.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

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