

Developing a Framework for Integrating Emotional Intelligence into Crisis Leadership Models

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Abstract

This paper builds and empirically explains the development of a theory of introducing emotional intelligence (EI) into the models of crisis leadership with an emphasis on the EI competencies that enhance leadership performance in the context of organisational disruption. The quantitative design was cross-sectional based on survey data of 214 organisational leaders that represent corporate, healthcare, and educational industries. The operationalisation of emotional intelligence involved four dimensions competency areas of self-awareness dimension, self-regulation dimension, social awareness dimension, and relationship management dimension, which had a 5 point Likert scale measurement. Effectiveness of crisis leadership was measured in terms of clarity of decisions made, effectiveness of communication, employee morale and adaptability of the organisation. Data was analysed with SPSS by descriptive statistics, reliability test (Cronbachs alpha), Pearson correlation analysis and multicollinearity diagnostic multiple linear regression (VIF).

Descriptive findings showed that there were moderate-to-high scores of EI and crisis leadership effectiveness within the sample. Reliability test revealed high internal consistency of EI and leadership effectiveness constructs. The correlation analysis indicated that the effective crisis leadership was positively related with all of the EI dimensions, with the relationship management demonstrating the most significant correlation. Findings of the regression showed that the EI competencies, as a group, were able to predict a significant percentage of variance in the effectiveness of crisis leadership ($R^2 = 0.52$, $p = 0.001$). The strongest predictor was relationship management ($\beta = 0.39$, $p = 0.001$), then social awareness ($\beta = 0.24$, $p = 0.001$), self-awareness ($\beta = 0.21$, $p = 0.004$) and self-regulation ($\beta = 0.18$, $p = 0.012$). The values of VIF were lower than conservative values which means that there could not be any serious cases of multicollinearity.

The results validate that emotionally intelligent leadership has a significant positive impact on the effectiveness of crisis leadership by increasing the degree of trust-based relationships, empathetic communication, and ability to remain stable during pressure. According to the proposed framework, the integration of EI competencies should be systematic at all the crisis stages preparedness, response, stabilisation, recovery, and reflection. In practice, the study suggests the incorporation of EI training in the leadership development and crisis preparedness programs to enhance organisational resiliency and employee relatively high morale in case of crisis.

Keywords – Crisis Leadership, Emotional Intelligence, Leadership Development, Organizational Resilience, Crisis Management

Introduction

Organisations are becoming more and more exposed to an environment that tends to be systemically disrupted, volatile and uncertain. The last crises such as world pandemics, geopolitics, cyber collapse, and climate-based disasters have revealed structural constraints in the traditional crisis leadership framework that focuses on operational coordination and strategic control without accounting behavioural and psychological dynamics in organisational systems. In line with the current research findings, it is acknowledged that the effectiveness of crisis response is not only determined by technical competence, but also by the ability of leaders to control emotional climates, their ability to sustain trust, and their ability

to continue collective functioning despite stress. As a result, researchers have started to make emotional and relational competencies vital factors of leadership effectiveness in organisational disruption.

Emotional intelligence (EI) has become a key construct in the literature on behavioural leadership and it can be generally defined as the capacity to perceive, manage, understand as well as use emotions in an individual and others [1], [2]. Ability-based and mixed competency theoretical frameworks propose that EI improves interpersonal communication, adaptive reasoning, and stress resilience and, therefore, leadership performance in complex situations [3]. Empirical research shows that emotionally intelligent leaders have a better conflict management competence, as well as a better team cohesion and organisational trust formation, which are especially relevant under crisis conditions [4], [5]. The results put EI not as an auxiliary leadership attribute but as an operative ability that has quantifiable behavioural outcomes.

Recent sectoral studies have validated the importance of emotional intelligence in a crisis environment. Research that was performed both in educational and corporate settings throughout the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that leaders who showed empathy, emotional awareness, and relational sensitivity were more effective in keeping morale and stabilising organisational communication channels [6], [7]. Similar studies on remote leadership also find EI to be one of the predictors of relational continuity and engagement in the context where physical interaction is limited [8]. Further studies in the field of healthcare and small business settings demonstrate statistically significant correlations among competencies of emotional intelligence, crisis management performance, decision quality, and adaptive responsiveness ability [9], [10]. Taken together, these results suggest that emotional intelligence has an impact on the psychological as well as operational aspects of crisis leadership.

Even though there is an increase in empirical support, the current crisis leadership models are still mainly based on logistical, strategic, or risk-management paradigms that offer minimal information about incorporating emotional intelligence competencies throughout the life cycle of crisis. Fragmentation in terms of frameworks is still present, and EI is usually studied as an isolated feature but not as a structural component of preparedness, response, stabilisation, and recovery. Studies examining distributed leadership and organisational resilience indicate that the leadership behaviours considered to be emotionally intelligent help in generating psychological safety and decentralised decision-making in the context of disruption [11], although systematic absorption machinery is still in a Developing Stage. This difference between conceptual acknowledgment and structural integration inhibits its practical use in the field of leadership formation and organisational policy formulation.

Besides, quantitative research reports quantifiable correlations between EI dimensions and crisis outcomes, such as enhanced stability of communication, minimized emotional contagion impacts, and more powerful reaction of institutional governance [12], [13]. These results support the need to go beyond conceptual advocacy to empirically viable frameworks that may be used to inform leadership practice and evaluation. In the absence of structured integration models, organisations can easily overlook the utilisation of emotional competencies that can help reduce behavioural instability in crisis.

To this end, this paper aims at formulating and testing a systematic approach to the incorporation of emotional intelligence skills in crisis leadership theories. The research will seek to offer a systematic mechanism through which EI can be integrated throughout the stages of leadership and organisational preparedness measures by integrating behavioural theory and empirical evidence. This contribution is filling a recognised gap in the leadership scholarship by re-focusing the role of emotional intelligence as an adjunct attribute of leadership architecture to a functional element of crisis leadership architecture.

Review of Literature

The importance of emotional intelligence (EI) as an aspect of leadership research has been the focus of a recent surge of studies since it is evident that certain leaders are resilient when situations become increasingly stressful and schedules become disrupted. The leaders are supposed to be able to make quick decisions, communicate effectively, guard coordination, and confidence in a crisis environment among the teams that are likely anxious, fatigued, and uncertain. EI is important in this case since crisis is not merely an operational disturbance, but also an emotional episode that defines attention, judgement, trust, and behaviour. The new scholarship is beginning to view EI as a skill that facilitates sensemaking, stabilises interpersonal interactions and decreases the amount of human friction that can easily escalate crises. Under such a strand, EI has been generally described using core competencies, namely, self-awareness, self-regulation,

social awareness, and relationship management all of which are associated with particular behavioural outcomes that are applicable in leadership during crisis.

An expanding literature links EI straight to employee morale and organisational stability in case of disturbance. According to Sharma, morale is boosted with the help of emotionally intelligent leadership that reduces the perception of uncertainty and promotes the supportive leader behaviours that maintain the engagement of the teams even in the face of a long-term instability [14]. The given view aligns with education-based evidence whereby EI is positioned as a viable tool that can be used by leaders to deal with staff anxiety, workload pressure, and emotional fatigue during organisational shock. Similarly, Nkpu and colleagues state that leaders who are more EI are more likely to exercise more leadership in situations of crisis, especially by building trust in their employees and making emotionally supportive decisions [15]. Collectively, these studies salience the thesis that EI is not only desirable but pragmatically strong since it dictates the confidence of its employees, their collaboration, and readiness to undergo a leadership guidance when institutional signals are weakened.

The COVID-19 era also hastened the empirical focus on EI in a crisis situation by providing a high-volume natural environment in which leadership behaviour may be monitored during a time of stressful circumstances. Jackman-Ryan and colleagues, in their study of leadership in the context of the pandemic, note that the organisational response based on the use of emotional intelligence was linked to more stable communication, enhanced relationship maintenance and organisational functioning during uncertainty [16]. Their results support the notion that the effectiveness of crisis leadership is frequently dictated by the level of emotional communication and the capacity of the leader to stay connected to people in the process of operating discontinuity. Applying the same reasoning to the area of remote and hybrid working, Wittmer and Hopkins highlight that EI is even more important in an environment where the communication between the leader and the subordinate is minimised, as leaders need to depend more on intentional relational activities to maintain contact and eliminate disengagement [17]. Such contributions explain why EI is being considered an active tool of leadership in contemporary crises whereby teams can be dispersed and communication facilitated by technology.

Other than pandemic-specific research, recent resilience-focused research expands the argument by relating EI-related behaviours to adaptive leadership capacity. Mei, Chen and Sun suggest the adaptive leadership strategies are essential when external conditions change fast and they find emotional and relational competencies as the part of the mechanism that facilitates organisational adaptation and recovery [18]. Although not necessarily referred to as EI, this work fits in with the EI literature and is characterised by calm control, positive interpersonal behaviour and ability to stay in the same track when plans are altered. It means that EI helps to build resilience by stabilizing behaviour and the overall adaptability, not just by managing personal feelings, but also by the way leaders organize team reactions and learning following the disruption.

Small and medium enterprise (SME) research can contribute additional background information by demonstrating that crises tend to enhance resource scarcity and decision-making urgency, thus, increasing the salience and causal impact of leadership behaviour. According to Soltani, Shahsavari and Moradi, stress management and self-perception are EI dimensions that affect crisis management abilities and that emotionally intelligent managers can react rationally and in a timely manner when faced with pressure [19]. This is significant, since SMEs often lack buffers and formal systems and this fact means that the emotional and interpersonal competence of a leader could have a big influence on whether an organisation stabilises or falls into a spiral. The research in collective leadership also supports this opinion: Semenets-Orlova et al. indicate that EI plays a role in psychological safety and more decentralised and trust-based leadership practices within the case of crisis situations and allows adjusting more quickly and coordinating the actions of organisational members more effectively [20]. All of these findings suggest that EI plays both a system-level role (in facilitating cooperation, safety, and joint decision-making) and an individual-level role (in regulating the emotions and attention).

However, historical and political-economic lenses warn about the tendency of leaders who are emotionally unintelligent to cause instability in the long-term when faced with a crisis. David employs a historically based discourse to demonstrate how leadership, that lacks a balance between strategic objectives and emotional insight, can produce long-lasting impacts as well as long-term unrest, such as a long-lived conflict [21]. Even though this literature is not a part of organisational leadership in the strict sense of the term, it reinforces the conceptual argument: crisis leadership is not just a matter of immediate control but also a matter of the emotional and relational state of affairs, which can impact recovery in the long run. This is very applicable to organisations since mismanagement of crises usually incurs a reputational loss, internal disintegration, and lack of capacity to learn, an impact that can be long-term after the inciting incident.

Crisis communication studies also shed light on EI being a communication skill and not just an individual attribute. Yuste also points out that emotionally intelligent leaders stabilise teams by facilitating clarity, honesty and trust in times of fear and uncertainty, which encourages further engagement and minimises opposition to change [22]. This argument is solidified in the context of healthcare leadership in which communication is closely linked with performance outcomes. The EI-related behaviours in the analysis of medical team leadership during COVID-19 by Ward include active listening, empathy, and relationship management as the key to collaborative work and efficient work in emergency conditions [23]. All these contributions contribute to a stronger argument that EI in crisis leadership manifests itself in communication options, listening behaviour and the ability of the leader to keep a team together psychologically but at the same time organize action operationally.

The literature on industries can also provide a deeper level of insight because it demonstrates that the relevance of EI can be different across the sector conditions including volatility, regulation, and risk exposure. Kasapi and Mihiotis, who are concerned with leadership in the pharmaceutical sector, identify leadership effectiveness and EI in complicated and controlled settings with high pressure on uncertainty and accountability [24]. This implies that EI is especially useful in environments where a decision has high stakes at hand and a coordination breakdown can be extremely expensive. Equally, Brown and Nwagbara associate leadership that is emotionally intelligent with transformational leadership strategies in times of a pandemic disruption and believe that EI promotes resilience by facilitating hope, mutual meaning, and consistent behavioural change as opposed to a strictly directive control of a crisis [25]. These results are applicable on the framework construction since they indicate that EI and leadership style are interconnected, which means that EI can be treated as the collection of behavioural enablers that enhance crisis leadership strategies instead of eliminating them.

Practice-based analysis and applied case broaden the discussion with a focus on what EI is when applied in real-life stories of leadership. The studies of Sharma on the use of EI as a strategy in crisis-related marketing and leadership scenarios indicate that EI can enable balanced leadership of decisive and supportive type, but caution is necessary not to consider EI as a competence that solely suffices without technical and operational competence [26]. This fact is important in building the model as it does not allow the model to get too psychological or idealistic. Operation skill is needed in crisis leadership, yet it seems that EI defines the degree to which the operational skill is mobilised by people. Stated differently, EI could be viewed as the human operating system, which enables crisis plans to work under stress.

Managerial research on the quantitative evidence supports further EI-crisis relationships; nevertheless, the studies indicate that not all EI dimensions might work equally. Ardestani and Amirzadeh describe a positive relationship between a number of EI dimensions and crisis coping capacity of managers, showing that emotionally intelligent managers can cope in times of disruption more effectively through the preservation of trust, communication, and attention to new conditions in the organization [27]. Mohammed and fellow scholars focus on EI at board of directors level by noting that EI has the potential to affect crisis response and instability and institutional practices such as more conservative and proactive decision orientation [28]. This extends the applicability of EI to frontline leadership to strategic governance and oversight, suggesting that EI-inspired crisis leadership is a managerial concern and a governance skill with implications on organisational stability.

Lastly, the academic connection between EI and the use of language highlights the reason why crisis communication may fail despite the positive intentions of the leaders. Hancizoglu underlines the empathic linguistic power and states that the insufficient empathic communication can worsen the miscommunication and social segregation in the situation of crisis [29]. In the case of organisation, this means that EI should be operationalised into certain communicative actions and not just the internal emotional awareness. It also contributes to one of the major design considerations of an EI-integrated crisis leadership framework: EI competencies must be represented in visible behaviours at crisis phases, such as framing messages, listening behaviour, and trust-repair behaviours following disruption.

Overall, the literature consistently suggests that EI is a meaningful predictor of crisis leadership effectiveness because it supports trust, communication stability, decision quality under pressure, and resilience-oriented recovery. At the same time, the reviewed studies also reveal a persistent gap: EI is often examined as an individual attribute or leadership advantage, but it is less frequently embedded as a structured component of crisis leadership models across preparedness, response, stabilisation, recovery, and reflection phases. This gap motivates the present study's framework contribution, which aims to integrate EI competencies into crisis leadership in a systematic, phase-linked manner while maintaining balance between emotional capability and operational leadership requirements.

In line with the above discussion, the following hypotheses are formulated for this study:

- H1: Emotional intelligence significantly enhances leaders' effectiveness in managing organizational crises.
- H2: Integrating emotional intelligence into crisis leadership models improves employee morale and organizational resilience during crises.

Methodology

The research design of the study is cross-sectional quantitative research design because it seeks to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and crisis leadership performance. It is a suitable design since it allows testing the associations between psychological leadership qualities and organisational outcomes at one time point in a statistically significant manner. The methodology applies measurement in form of surveys and multivariate analysis to establish whether EI dimensions are significant to explain variation in leadership effectiveness under crisis situations.

The sample of data collected consisted of 214 organisational leaders operating in the fields of corporate, healthcare, and education. The strategy used to select the participants was a purposive sampling method because the participants needed to have relevant experience in dealing with organisational crises and disruption. The responses were collected in the form of a structured questionnaire based on electronics. The questionnaires that were sent were only analyzed in the form of final and viable ones.

The proposed questionnaire measured emotional intelligence using modified questions on validated EI tools that measured four dimensions of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, and relationship management. The measurement of all EI items was based on a 5-point Likert scale where a higher level of a measurement reflected a stronger EI capability. Indicators that measure crisis leadership effectiveness were the clarity of decisions, effectiveness of communication, employee morale, and organisational adaptability, which were measured on the same response format to ensure uniformity across constructs.

The analysis of the data was performed with the help of SPSS. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and skewness) were used to initiate the analysis, as a way of summarising the distribution of the variables. To establish internal consistency of the EI and crisis leadership effectiveness scales Cronbach alpha was adopted to perform the reliability test. Pearson correlation coefficients were then calculated to determine the strength and direction of relationship between EI dimensions and leadership effectiveness. Lastly, the estimation of predictive value of dimensions of EI in leader effectiveness in crises and the measure of model fit and model significance was performed using multiple linear regression. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) statistics was analyzed to test whether multicollinearity was not posing a risk to the interpretation of regression estimates.

Results

This section reports the statistical findings in the same sequence as the methodology: (i) descriptive statistics, (ii) reliability testing, (iii) correlation analysis, (iv) regression modelling, and (v) multicollinearity checks using VIF. The analysis is based on responses from **214 organisational leaders** across corporate, healthcare, and educational sectors.

1) Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and skewness) for all study variables. Overall, the mean scores indicate that respondents generally reported moderate-to-high emotional intelligence competencies, with the highest mean observed for relationship management. Crisis leadership effectiveness also shows a relatively high mean, suggesting that most respondents perceived themselves as reasonably effective in crisis contexts.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics (N = 214)

| <i>Variable</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>Skewness</i> |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------------|
| <i>Self-awareness (SA)</i> | 3.92 | 0.71 | -0.32 |
| <i>Self-regulation (SR)</i> | 3.78 | 0.69 | -0.18 |
| <i>Social awareness (SOA)</i> | 3.88 | 0.74 | -0.27 |

| | | | |
|--|------|------|-------|
| <i>Relationship management (RM)</i> | 4.01 | 0.65 | -0.35 |
| <i>Crisis leadership effectiveness (CLE)</i> | 3.95 | 0.68 | -0.29 |

The mean values (3.78 to 4.01) suggest that leaders, on average, rated their EI competencies above the scale midpoint. Relationship management ($M = 4.01$) is the strongest dimension, which is meaningful in crisis settings where trust, conflict handling, and coordination become critical. The standard deviations (0.65 to 0.74) show moderate dispersion, indicating noticeable variation across leaders rather than uniform responses. Skewness values are mildly negative across variables, implying responses are slightly clustered towards higher agreement, but not to an extreme level that would undermine normality assumptions for parametric testing. Taken together, these results justify moving forward with Pearson correlations and regression modelling.

2) Reliability Testing

Internal consistency reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha for each EI dimension and the crisis leadership effectiveness construct. Table 2 summarises the results. All alpha coefficients exceed commonly accepted thresholds for research instruments, indicating that the items within each scale measure their intended construct consistently.

Table 2. Reliability Results (Cronbach's Alpha)

| <i>Construct</i> | <i>Cronbach's Alpha (α)</i> |
|--|---|
| <i>Self-awareness (SA)</i> | 0.84 |
| <i>Self-regulation (SR)</i> | 0.82 |
| <i>Social awareness (SOA)</i> | 0.85 |
| <i>Relationship management (RM)</i> | 0.88 |
| <i>Crisis leadership effectiveness (CLE)</i> | 0.87 |
| <i>Overall EI (combined)</i> | 0.90 |

The reliability findings show that there is high internal consistency in all scales. Relationship management is the most reliable ($\alpha = 0.88$) implying that its measurement items are very coherent. The crisis leadership effectiveness scale is equally high ($\alpha = 0.87$) and it supports the use of the crisis leadership effectiveness scale as a dependent variable in the regression analysis. The general EI reliability ($\alpha = 0.90$) also confirms that this study measures emotional intelligence strongly. These findings reinforce the belief of the following correlations and regression coefficients indicating actual construct relationships other than measurement noise.

3) Correlation Analysis

The direction and strength of the linkages between EI dimensions and crisis leadership performance were calculated using Pearson correlation coefficients. The correlation matrix is reported in table 3. Each of the EI dimensions is statistically significantly correlated with crisis leadership effectiveness with a positive relationship and therefore, higher EI is likely to be positively related to higher leadership effectiveness in the crisis.

Table 3. Correlation Matrix (Pearson r , $N = 214$)

| <i>Variable</i> | <i>SA</i> | <i>SR</i> | <i>SOA</i> | <i>RM</i> | <i>CLE</i> |
|--|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| <i>Self-awareness (SA)</i> | 1.00 | 0.56 | 0.58 | 0.60 | 0.46 |
| <i>Self-regulation (SR)</i> | 0.56 | 1.00 | 0.52 | 0.55 | 0.42 |
| <i>Social awareness (SOA)</i> | 0.58 | 0.52 | 1.00 | 0.63 | 0.48 |
| <i>Relationship management (RM)</i> | 0.60 | 0.55 | 0.63 | 1.00 | 0.61 |
| <i>Crisis leadership effectiveness (CLE)</i> | 0.46 | 0.42 | 0.48 | 0.61 | 1.00 |

The strongest correlation with crisis leadership effectiveness is observed for relationship management ($r = 0.61$), indicating a strong positive association. This suggests that leaders who are better at maintaining relationships, building trust, resolving

conflict, and communicating supportively are more likely to be effective in crisis contexts. Social awareness also correlates positively with crisis leadership effectiveness ($r = 0.48$), implying that empathy and sensitivity to team emotions help leaders respond more appropriately under uncertainty. Self-awareness ($r = 0.46$) and self-regulation ($r = 0.42$) are also positively related to effectiveness, supporting the view that emotional clarity and composure matter for crisis decision-making.

Importantly, correlations among EI dimensions ($r = 0.52$ to 0.63) indicate that the dimensions are related but not identical, which is theoretically expected. Because these inter-correlations could introduce overlap in regression estimates, multicollinearity checks (VIF) are essential and are reported later.

4) Regression Modelling

A multiple linear regression model was estimated with crisis leadership effectiveness as the dependent variable and the four EI dimensions as predictors. The results are reported in Table 4. The model is statistically significant and explains a substantial proportion of variance in crisis leadership effectiveness.

Table 4. Multiple Regression Predicting Crisis Leadership Effectiveness (N = 214)

| <i>Predictor</i> | <i>Unstandardised B</i> | <i>SE</i> | <i>Standardised Beta (β)</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|---|----------|----------|
| <i>Constant</i> | 0.74 | 0.24 | — | 3.08 | 0.002 |
| <i>Self-awareness (SA)</i> | 0.17 | 0.06 | 0.21 | 2.92 | 0.004 |
| <i>Self-regulation (SR)</i> | 0.14 | 0.06 | 0.18 | 2.55 | 0.012 |
| <i>Social awareness (SOA)</i> | 0.19 | 0.06 | 0.24 | 3.29 | 0.001 |
| <i>Relationship management (RM)</i> | 0.33 | 0.06 | 0.39 | 5.91 | <0.001 |

Model fit: $R^2 = 0.52$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.51$; $F(4, 209) = 56.14$; $p < 0.001$

The model explains **52%** of the variance in crisis leadership effectiveness ($R^2 = 0.52$), which is a strong explanatory level in behavioural and leadership research. This indicates that EI competencies collectively provide substantial predictive power for how effective leaders are perceived to be during crises.

Among the predictors, **relationship management** is the strongest and most significant contributor ($\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$). This means that, holding other EI dimensions constant, leaders who are better at sustaining relationships and guiding interpersonal dynamics show markedly higher crisis leadership effectiveness. In practical terms, crisis situations require leaders to maintain trust, handle tension, and keep collaboration functioning; this result strongly supports that argument.

Social awareness is the second strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.24$, $p = 0.001$), suggesting that leaders who can read emotional cues, show empathy, and understand team anxieties are more effective during disruption. **Self-awareness** ($\beta = 0.21$, $p = 0.004$) also significantly predicts effectiveness, implying that recognising one's own emotional triggers and limitations supports better judgement and steadier leadership behaviour. **Self-regulation** ($\beta = 0.18$, $p = 0.012$) remains significant, indicating that composure and impulse control under pressure materially contribute to crisis leadership performance.

The fact that all four EI dimensions remain significant in the same model suggests that each dimension adds something unique to crisis leadership effectiveness rather than being redundant. This strengthens the case for integrating EI systematically into crisis leadership frameworks rather than focusing on a single EI component.

5) Multicollinearity Checks (VIF)

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were examined to confirm that multicollinearity does not undermine the regression estimates. Table 5 shows the VIF results.

Table 5. Multicollinearity Diagnostics (VIF)

| <i>Predictor</i> | <i>Tolerance</i> | <i>VIF</i> |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|------------|
| <i>Self-awareness (SA)</i> | 0.54 | 1.85 |
| <i>Self-regulation (SR)</i> | 0.60 | 1.67 |
| <i>Social awareness (SOA)</i> | 0.49 | 2.04 |
| <i>Relationship management (RM)</i> | 0.47 | 2.13 |

The values of all VIFs are considerably less than conservative levels (typically 5, and more rigorously 3), which means that the issue of multicollinearity is not urgent. Although there are inherent interrelations between EI dimensions, they are not very overlapping such that they mislead coefficient estimates and inflate standard errors. This contributes to the validity of the regression results and serves to agree the potent effect of relationship management is not merely an artefact of high correlation with other dimensions of EI.

In all descriptive, correlation, and regression results, emotional intelligence competencies show significant and steady relationships with crisis leadership effectiveness. It has been shown that leaders with a greater score on EI particularly on relationship management and social awareness report greater crisis leadership results in clarity of decision-making, effectiveness in communication, motivation of employees, and organisational flexibility. These findings are empirical evidence to incorporate EI competencies in crisis models of leadership at various stages of crisis management.

Discussion

The results of the study are substantively relevant to the assertion that emotional intelligence (EI) is a critical behavioural ability in crisis leadership, and not a marginal personal quality. The statistical data of the presence of strong positive correlations between EI competencies and crisis leadership effectiveness is consistent with the accepted theoretical views placing emotional regulation and interpersonal awareness as predictors of leadership flexibility in a stressful situation. Emotional intelligence also plays a role in the ability of leaders to read between the lines and stabilize the team, build trust in times of uncertainty, which are all prerequisites to successful organisational reaction to disruption. Similar studies on leadership that have been based on psychological capability models also prove that emotional capabilities increase cognitive processing and behavioural flexibility when decision situations are volatile or emotive [30].

The prevalence of relationship management as a predictive facet of leadership efficacy that was identified in this study supports the existing empirical literature that describes interpersonal competence as the key to crisis navigation. Leaders that can support positive social interaction and conflict mediation have better chances of supporting collective cohesion and flow of information in the case of destabilising events. This notion can be related to behavioural leadership theories that reveal that emotionally competent leaders facilitate cooperation and mutual situational awareness, enhancing organisational resilience [31]. Communication behaviours based on social awareness and empathy which also portrayed high statistical relationships in the current analysis have also been proved to decrease employee uncertainty and avoid emotional contagion effects that otherwise damage collective judgement during crisis situations [32].

The findings also corroborate theoretical hypotheses that self awareness and self regulation lead to stability in decision and stress resilience in situations of leadership. Leaders with emotional intelligence are less susceptible to the reactive patterns of decision making and cognitive bias when faced with pressure because they are able to regulate their emotional reactions. Emotional self-regulation has been extensively linked with greater executive functioning, assessment of risk, and quality judgement in high stakes settings [33]. This observation is in line with cognitive-affective leadership studies which argue that emotional awareness enhances metacognitive monitoring and promotes deliberate as opposed to impulsive response in case of organisational emergencies [34]. As a result, it seems that EI competencies can also improve not only the interpersonal aspects of leadership but also the decision-processing processes within a person.

The other important implication that the study has brought up is the need to incorporate EI in the systems of leadership development and preparedness in organisations. The identified empirical relationships indicate the possibility of developing emotionally intelligent leadership behaviours not as the assumed personality traits but through the structured training programme. The literature on leadership development is now giving more prominence to training models, which are competency-based and in which emotional awareness, empathy, and communication skills are developed systematically to

enhance organisational functioning under pressure [35]. Incorporating EI into crisis preparedness programs can thus be beneficial to institutional preparedness by making sure that leaders have behavioural strategies that can be used to cope with uncertainty, minimise the escalation of conflict and maintain morale in times of disruption.

The research is also relevant to the overall debate on organisational resilience by identifying the impacts of emotional intelligence types of leadership in crisis recovery. According to resilience studies, the leadership behaviours that determine the creation of psychological safety and trust have a significant role in organisational learning and adaptive capacity following destabilising incidents [36]. Leaders who are emotionally intelligent provide the opportunity to engage in reflective communication and joint problem solving, which enable organisations to transform the experience of crisis into an institutional knowledge, as opposed to a chronic malfunction. Such a view is consistent with socio-cognitive models of resilience that focus on leadership-centered meaning-making and shared sense making as means by which organisations should re-establish themselves and recover a sense of strategic direction [37].

Moreover, there is an implication of the introduction of EI into the models of crisis leadership to governance and communication with stakeholders outside of the internal organisational processes. It has been revealed that transparent and empathic communication practices linked to the leadership of emotionally intelligent leaders play a significant role in enhancing the perceptions of stakeholder legitimacy and public trust in times of organisational disruption [38]. This type of trust building is necessary in modern settings where reputational harm and social opinion can result in recovery as an important element as operation performance. This observation underscores the applicability of EI in the internal management processes as well as on the institutional dimensions of accountability and legitimacy.

Even though the findings strengthen the importance of EI, they also suggest that emotional intelligence must be used to complement, but not to substitute the technical and strategic leadership skills. The relationship between behavioural competence and operational expertise yields crisis leadership effectiveness. Studies on integrative leadership models indicate that the most effective results are obtained when emotional awareness, analytical reasoning, and strategic planning are used together [39]. Thus, the framework suggested in the present paper can be seen as the development of the crisis leadership architecture and not necessarily redefining it through the lens of the emotional.

Overall, the reformulated discussion places the empirical results of the study in the context of the current research on the topic of leadership and behavioural science. Emotional intelligence is raised as a multidimensional ability, which enhances better interpersonal coordination, cognitive compatibility, decision effectiveness, and resilience within an organisation in crisis scenarios. The study justifies the inclusion of EI competencies in the systematic crisis leadership models by empirically showing the associations, and it is part of the evidence-based leadership development practices that are applicable to the modern organisational instability.

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