

## ***The New Yardstick: The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Styles of Senior Male Managers in Colombo District***

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Emotional Intelligence (EI) is considered as one of the key factors that detect potentially effective leaders. Trait EI includes emotion related characters and self-perceptions. Leadership is the process of influencing people to strive willingly towards achieving the group goals beside dictating and controlling. There are three main types of leadership styles (LS): Transactional, Transformational, and Laissez-faire. This study addresses the gap in research on the EI in senior managers by examining EI levels and LS in Office Automation Industry (OAI) of Sri Lanka, a field that requires a high innovation, adaptability and decision-making. This quantitative research employed purposive sampling with the participants who were well experienced and knowledge in the OAI. The objectives of this study were to assess the EI levels of senior male managers, identify the highest perceived leadership style, and to explore the relationship between EI and the predominant leadership style among them. In this study, 82 senior male managers from the OAI based in the Colombo district were assessed using self-administered Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire and Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (5X-Short Form) for EI and LS. Correlation and mean analyses were conducted using SPSS. Based on the results, 56.10% of senior managers had a higher EI level, highlighting the importance of EI in leadership. Among these high EI managers, 80.43% preferred transformational leadership, known for inspiring and motivating employees. Although 13.04% preferred transactional leadership, which focuses on task structuring, and 6.52% used a combination of both styles, none exhibited laissez-faire leadership, which is less engaging. The study found a strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.777$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ) between EI and transformational leadership, suggesting that high EI enhances the inspire and engage ability in leaders. Organizations should invest in EI development to boost leadership effectiveness and encourage transformational leadership. The study is limited by its sample size and focuses on one district. Future research should incorporate local languages, diverse samples, and government settings to better understand EI's effectiveness in leadership.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Leadership Styles: Transformational, Transactional, Laissez-faire, Office Automation Industry, Senior Male Managers.