

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE, AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN LAW FIRM PARTNERS

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ABSTRACT

Background and Purpose: Transformational leadership (TL) serves as a developmental pathway that enhances emotional intelligence (EI) and spiritual intelligence (SI), which are key competencies for effective leadership. This study examines the relationships between TL, EI, and SI among law firm partners, addressing a gap in leadership research within professional service firms.

Methodology: Data were collected from 104 law firm partners using validated questionnaires measuring transformational leadership, EI, and SI. Structural equation modeling with SmartPLS was used for analysis.

Findings: Significant positive correlations were found between transformational leadership and EI ($\beta_{40} = 0.388, p < 0.05$) and SI ($\beta = 0.372, p < 0.05$), confirming that transformational leadership positively influences the development of emotional and spiritual intelligence.

Contributions: The study empirically integrates EI and SI within transformational leadership, offering insights for leadership development in legal practice. It highlights the importance of cultivating holistic competencies to enhance leadership, well-being, and organizational success in high-pressure environments.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence, law firms, leadership development.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Transformational leadership has emerged as a pivotal leadership style in contemporary organizational contexts, particularly valued for its capacity to inspire profound change, foster innovation and enhance overall organizational performance. Rooted in the seminal works of Burns (1978) and further developed by Bass and Avolio (1994), transformational leadership is characterized by leaders who motivate followers to transcend their self-interests for the collective good, thereby elevating both morale and performance beyond conventional expectations. This leadership paradigm is distinguished by four core components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Ayandibu, 2024). Collectively, these elements empower transformational leaders to serve as exemplary role models, articulate compelling and visionary goals, encourage creative problem-solving, and provide personalized support to their followers, fostering a culture of deep commitment and sustained innovation.

Given the increasing complexity and competitive nature of the legal industry, law firm partners face unique leadership challenges that require advanced competencies in transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, and spiritual intelligence. In today's dynamic and highly competitive organizational environments, transformational leadership plays a critical role in shaping organizational culture and driving sustainable success. Leaders who embody transformational qualities are adept at cultivating an engaging and empowering work atmosphere that not only motivates employees but also encourages them to take initiative and contribute creatively toward organizational objectives (Gupta, 2025; Ibrahim et al., 2023). The transformational leader's ability to communicate a clear and inspiring vision, coupled with their capacity to motivate followers to exceed their immediate role expectations, is instrumental in fostering adaptability and resilience within teams and organizations (Ayandibu, 2024). Moreover, transformational leadership has been empirically linked to positive organizational outcomes, including enhanced employee job satisfaction, increased organizational commitment, and elevated innovation capacity (Gupta, 2025; Ibrahim et al., 2023).

Extensive empirical research underscores the significance of transformational leadership across diverse sectors, demonstrating its effectiveness in promoting psychological empowerment and employee creativity (Ibrahim et al., 2023). For example, transformational leaders stimulate intellectual engagement by challenging existing assumptions and encouraging innovative thinking, a critical capability for organizations striving to maintain competitiveness in rapidly evolving markets (Ayandibu, 2024). The individualized consideration component further ensures that leaders attend to the unique developmental needs of each follower, thereby fostering loyalty, a sense of value, and continuous growth among employees (Gupta, 2025). This personalized approach not only enhances motivation but also supports the workforce's ongoing adaptability and professional development.

Within the legal sector, law firm partners must navigate complex stakeholder relationships, ethical dilemmas, and high-pressure environments, making transformational leadership and the associated intelligence particularly critical for superior organizational performance and employee well-being. Despite its well-documented benefits, transformational leadership faces challenges in implementation, particularly within traditional or hierarchical organizational structures where resistance to change may be prevalent (Ayandibu, 2024). Nonetheless, its role as a catalyst for organizational change and innovation remain indisputable, especially as organizations navigate complexities such as globalization, rapid technological advancements, and evolving workforce expectations (Gupta, 2025). Consequently, transformational leadership continues to be a critical focus for both

academic inquiry and practical leadership development programs aimed at cultivating effective, ethical, and visionary leadership in diverse organizational settings.

Emotional intelligence (EI) has increasingly been recognized as an indispensable component of effective leadership, particularly within the transformational leadership framework. Research consistently highlights that emotional intelligence competencies—including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management—are critical in enhancing transformational leadership effectiveness (Pandey et al., 2024; Iyer, 2024). Leaders with high EI are better equipped to navigate complex interpersonal dynamics, foster trust, and create supportive work environments that encourage employee creativity and engagement (Davis, 2024; Sapiee et al., 2024). Furthermore, emotional intelligence enables leaders to regulate their emotions effectively, adapt to changing circumstances, and resolve conflicts constructively—skills that are essential in today’s fast-paced and diverse organizational settings (Iyer, 2024). For example, a leader with strong self-awareness can recognize emotional triggers and respond thoughtfully, while social awareness enhances empathy and cultural sensitivity, vital for managing diverse teams.

Transformational leadership, a pivotal style in modern organizations, is deeply intertwined with emotional intelligence (EI), which significantly enhances its effectiveness. Research consistently demonstrates that leaders with high emotional intelligence are more adept at exhibiting transformational leadership behaviors such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration (Barling et al., 2000). Emotional intelligence enables leaders to understand and manage their own emotions and those of others, fostering trust, empathy, and supportive relationships that are essential for motivating and inspiring followers (Goleman, 1998; Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Empirical studies reveal that transformational leaders who possess strong emotional intelligence are better equipped to navigate complex interpersonal dynamics, adapt to changing organizational demands, and create psychologically safe environments that encourage creativity and commitment (Chevalier et al., 2025; Barling et al., 2000). For example, leaders high in EI can serve as role models through emotional self-control and empathy, raising followers’ expectations and providing personalized support that drives engagement and performance (Barling et al., 2000). Moreover, emotional intelligence is linked to positive organizational outcomes such as increased job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and innovation capacity (Ibrahim et al., 2023; Korakis & Poulaki, 2025).

While the relationship between EI and transformational leadership is largely supported, some studies caution that this link may vary depending on measurement methods and contextual factors (Harms & Credé, 2010; Lindebaum & Cartwright, 2010). Nonetheless, the integration of emotional intelligence into leadership development is widely advocated, with evidence suggesting that EI competencies can be cultivated through training to enhance transformational leadership behaviors (Barling et al., 2000; Goleman, 1995). This synergy is particularly critical in high-pressure environments, such as healthcare and professional services, where emotionally intelligent transformational leaders can better support their teams and drive sustainable success (Chevalier et al., 2025; Barling et al., 2000).

Beyond emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence (SI) has emerged as a complementary and enriching factor that deepens leadership capabilities by providing leaders with a profound sense of meaning, purpose, and ethical grounding (Ibrahim et al., 2022). Spiritual intelligence encompasses an individual’s capacity to grapple with existential questions, align actions with core values, and maintain harmonious relationships with others and the environment (Ibrahim et al., 2022). Transformational leadership and spiritual intelligence are closely linked, with spiritual intelligences providing a profound foundation that enriches transformational leadership practices. Spiritual intelligence involves the capacity to understand one’s purpose and meaning in life, to act in alignment with core values and

principles, and to foster a holistic and ethical approaches to leadership (Ramachandaran, 2025). Leaders with high spiritual intelligence are able to inspire and motivate followers by embedding meaning and ethical values into their vision and actions, which aligns closely with the core components of transformational leadership such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Ramachandaran, 2025).

Spiritual intelligence enhances transformational leadership by cultivating leaders' ability to lead with integrity, humility, and a deep sense of purpose, which fosters trust, commitment, and ethical behavior among followers (Ramachandaran, 2025; Varghese & Kudatarkar, 2025). This integration supports sustainable organizational success by promoting a workplace culture grounded in shared values and meaning, which is especially critical in complex and changing environments (Ramachandaran, 2025). Furthermore, spiritual intelligence encourages leaders to adopt a holistic perspective, viewing organizations as interconnected systems and promoting collaboration and accountability, which strengthens the transformational leadership impact (Ramachandaran, 2025).

Empirical evidence suggests that spiritual intelligence contributes positively to leadership effectiveness, job satisfaction, and employee performance, complementing emotional intelligence and transformational leadership to create a more comprehensive leadership approach (Varghese & Kudatarkar, 2025). This synergy is particularly relevant in sectors requiring ethical and value-driven leadership, such as education and healthcare, where transformational leaders with spiritual intelligence can better navigate challenges and inspire meaningful change (Ramachandaran, 2025). Empirical studies indicate that SI not only enhances psychological well-being but also mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership outcomes, including employee creativity and organizational commitment (Sapiee et al., 2024; Ibrahim et al., 2022). This integration of EI and SI offers a holistic leadership approach that fosters resilience, ethical decision-making, and sustainable organizational success. For instance, leaders with high spiritual intelligence are more likely to inspire ethical behavior and cultivate a workplace culture that supports innovation grounded in shared values.

In the specific context of law firm partners, where leadership demands both strategic vision and nuanced interpersonal acumen, the interplay of emotional and spiritual intelligence with transformational leadership assumes particular importance. Law firm partners must adeptly navigate complex stakeholder relationships, ethical dilemmas, and high-pressure environments, making the development of both EI and SI crucial for effective leadership and superior organizational performance. This study aims to explore these interconnected dimensions, providing nuanced insights into how emotional and spiritual intelligence contribute to transformational leadership effectiveness within law firms, ultimately enhancing employee creativity, psychological well-being, and organizational outcomes. By doing so, it seeks to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on leadership in professional service firms and offer practical implications for leadership development in such high-stakes environments.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study investigates the interrelationships between transformational leadership, emotional intelligence (EI), and spiritual intelligence (SI) within legal practice. Transformational leadership, as conceptualized by Bass and Avolio (1994), comprises four dimensions: idealized influence, where leaders serve as ethical role models; inspirational motivation, involving vision articulation and goal alignment; intellectual stimulation, encouraging innovation and critical thinking; and individualized consideration, addressing followers' unique developmental needs.

These dimensions collectively enhance organizational outcomes and ethical leadership practices. Goleman (1995, 1998) established emotional intelligence as a critical complement to cognitive abilities in leadership effectiveness. His model encompasses self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These competencies enable leaders to recognize and manage emotions effectively, strengthen interpersonal relationships, and navigate complex social dynamics. Within professional services, emotional intelligence contributes significantly to client satisfaction and team cohesion (Kellett et al., 2006). Spiritual intelligence, introduced by Zohar and Marshall (2000), addresses existential meaning-making and transcendent values guiding ethical frameworks. King and DeCicco (2009) operationalized this construct through four dimensions: critical existential thinking, personal meaning production, transcendental awareness, and conscious state expansion. SI equips leaders to make holistic, values-driven decisions while fostering organizational cultures grounded in meaningful purpose (Fry, 2003).

Considering the focus on law firms' partners, this study integrates leadership literature from professional services firms and the legal sector to contextualize the importance of transformational leadership, EI and SI in these high-stakes environments. This study proposes that these constructs function as complementary dimensions of leadership effectiveness. EI primarily facilitates relational and affective processes, while SI enables meaning-making and ethical decision-making. Following Wigglesworth (2012), SI may represent a higher-order integration of EI capabilities directed toward transcendent purposes. This framework advances leadership theory by examining multiple intelligence constructs simultaneously and contextualizing their relationships within legal practice, contributing to our understanding of psychological foundations underlying effective leadership in knowledge-intensive professional organizations.

2.2 Transformational Leadership and Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence (EI) refers to an individual's ability to identify, understand, regulate, and manage both their own emotions and the emotions of others. It is considered crucial competency in personal development, interpersonal relationships, and leadership effectiveness. Personality, on the other hand, refers to consistent patterns of behaviour, thought, and emotion that define an individual's characteristic way of interacting with the world. Stephen (2023) examined the correlation between emotional intelligence and transformative leadership of lecturers in Kenyan universities using a cross-sectional survey design. Data was collected from 200 lecturers and 70 student leaders across ten randomly selected universities via questionnaires. The study employed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and the Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS) as measurement tools. Results revealed a highly significant correlation between transformative leadership and emotional intelligence ($r = 0.76$, $p < 0.0001$), indicating a strong positive relationship. Interestingly, students rated lecturers' emotional intelligence lower than lecturers rated themselves, suggesting that lecturers may not fully recognize how their leadership impacts students. This finding suggests that individuals possessing certain personality traits may be more predisposed to developing higher levels of emotional intelligence.

Thapa et al. (2022) investigated the impact of emotional intelligence on transformational leadership in academic institutions in Kathmandu, Nepal. Using a cross-sectional strategy, they collected data from 133 academic managers through Cochran's method with convenient sampling. The researchers utilized a five-point modified Likert scale questionnaire covering 20 emotional intelligence questions and 25 transformational leadership items. Statistical analysis using linear regression showed a strong impact of emotional intelligence on transformational leadership ($r = 0.749$, $R^2 = 0.561$, $p < 0.05$).

Additionally, ANOVA tests revealed significant differences in emotional intelligence among different academic fields, while MANOVA analysis found no significant gender-based differences in emotional intelligence components. Durrani et al. (2019), as cited by Rotich (2023), found a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership among Pakistani school principals, reinforcing the cross-cultural relevance of this relationship. Similarly, Garcia et al. (2021), also referenced by Rotich, discovered that emotional intelligence was positively correlated with transformational leadership among Spanish university professors.

The relationship can be explained by the fact that emotional intelligence abilities like self-awareness, empathy, and social skills are necessary for successful leadership (Garcia et al., 2021). While the correlation is significant, researchers note that it does not necessarily imply causation, as other factors such as personality traits and environmental variables may also influence leadership effectiveness. These studies collectively suggest that developing emotional intelligence capacities may be crucial for fostering effective leadership in educational settings, with potential benefits for both leaders and followers.

2.3 Transformational Leadership and Spiritual Intelligence

Menon and Sadasivan (2019) conducted a study exploring the relationship between spiritual intelligence and transformational leadership through a survey methodology. Their research focused on examining followers' perceptions of a contemporary spiritual leader's attributes related to spiritual intelligence and transformational leadership. The study involved 62 participants who had been associated with the spiritual leader for more than four years. Using a structured questionnaire and statistical analysis, they found a strong positive correlation ($r=0.8048$) between spiritual intelligence and transformational leadership. Their findings suggested that spiritual intelligence has a significant impact on developing transformational leadership qualities, with leaders exhibiting high spiritual intelligence demonstrating dynamic thinking, creative ideas, and harmoniously integrated souls and minds.

Adi et al. (2022) developed a conceptual model examining transformational leadership based on spiritual intelligence as a mediator between authentic leadership and team performance. Using a quantitative approach, they surveyed 110 respondents from educational institutions in Central Java, Indonesia, including department heads, field heads, and subdivision heads. Data analysis was performed using PLS-SEM with AMOS 22. The researchers identified four key components of transformational leadership based on spiritual intelligence: idealistic self-awareness, inspirational vision, holistic intellectual attitude, and flexible individual considerations. Their results demonstrated that transformational leadership based on spiritual intelligence significantly mediated the relationship between authentic leadership and team performance, with a Sobel test confirming this mediating effect. The study concluded that leaders with high spiritual intelligence could encourage subordinates spiritually through these four dimensions to improve team performance.

Putri and Sudibjo (2022) investigated the effect of transformational leadership on organizational commitment with workplace spirituality and sense of community as mediating variables. Their quantitative study collected data from 54 permanent employees (teachers and staff) at XYZ School in West Java, Indonesia, using PLS-SEM for data analysis. The findings revealed that transformational leadership positively influenced workplace spirituality and that both variables positively affected organizational commitment. The study also found that workplace spirituality effectively mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment, suggesting that leadership that nurtures spiritual values in the workplace enhances employee commitment to the organization.

Poma (2024) examined the effects of spiritual intelligence, transformational leadership style, and emotional intelligence on the performance of village government officials in Nagerawe and Focolodo Rawe villages in Indonesia. The study employed a quantitative approach with 54 respondents selected through purposive sampling. Using multiple linear regression analysis, the researcher found that spiritual intelligence had a significant positive effect on performance ($t=2.839$, $p=0.027$), while transformational leadership style did not significantly affect performances ($t=1.513$, $p=0.137$). The study also revealed that emotional intelligence significantly influenced performance ($t=2.203$, $p=0.035$). These findings suggest that while spiritual intelligence is critical for enhancing performance, transformational leadership may need to be complemented by other factors to be effective.

These relationships between transformational leadership and spiritual intelligence across various contexts. Leaders with high spiritual intelligence demonstrate better transformational leadership qualities, positively influencing follower performance, commitment, and workplace spirituality. The research collectively suggests that spiritual intelligence serves as an important foundation for effective transformational leadership, enabling leaders to inspire and motivate followers beyond mere transactional relationships. However, as Poma's study indicates, the effectiveness of transformational leadership may be context-dependent and might require complementary factors like emotional intelligence to fully impact performance. These findings highlight the importance of integrating spiritual dimensions into leadership development programs to enhance leadership effectiveness in diverse organizational settings.

3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN

This research utilized a cross-sectional study design to examine the relationships between transformational leadership, emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence. This approach effectively combined insights from literature review with data collected through questionnaires. The cross-sectional method was chosen for its ability to address methodological challenges, enhance data accuracy, minimize bias, and improve overall data quality (Cresswell, 1998, Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). By integrating multiple data collection techniques, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between individuals characteristics and environmental attitudes and behaviors.

The study's questionnaire was structured into four primary sections, each focusing on a distinct aspect: transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, and spiritual intelligence. These sections incorporated adapted items from previous research, utilizing a 7-point Likert scale for responses. The transformational leadership section featured 13 items based on Nurshahira (2019), while the emotional intelligence section included only 6 items derived from the Sandhya and Namrata's (2013) study. This abbreviated scale was selected to reduce respondent fatigue and increase response rate, particularly given the busy schedules of law firm partners. Although shorter than typical EI measures, these 6 items were carefully chosen to capture core emotional intelligence dimensions relevant to leadership contexts. While the limited number of EI items may constrain the breadth of emotional intelligence aspects assessed, the study employed confirmatory factor analysis and reliability testing to ensure construct validity and internal consistency. The Cronbach's alpha for the EI scale was 0.838, indicating acceptable reliability despite the shorter scale. Nonetheless, future research should consider using more comprehensive EI instruments to capture the construct more fully and enhance validity. Spiritual intelligence sections drew from Abdollahzadeh et al. (2009), with 5 items. To provide a comprehensive assessment of transformational leadership, the questionnaire also collected demographic information, including factors such as gender, age, status, level of education, which law firm work for and how many years worked for.

The sample consisted specifically of 104 law firms' partners from various firms in Malaysia. Questionnaires were distributed to 150 law firm partners, achieving a response rate of 69.3%. The sampling method was described as random; however, to clarify, the researcher employed a stratified random sampling approach where law firms were first identified and categorized by size and region and then partners within these strata were randomly selected to participate. This method aimed to enhance representativeness across different types of law firms in Malaysia. Despite the efforts, the sample may not fully represent all law firms' partners nationally or internationally, particularly given the modest sample size and potential non-response bias. The sample size of 104 law firms' partners is modest but acceptable for Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), which is known for its robustness with smaller samples. However, this sample size limits the statistical power to detect smaller effect sizes and may affect the generalizability of the findings beyond the sampled population.

For data analysis, this research utilized SmartPLS, a structural equation modeling technique selected for several methodological advantages. According to Henseler et al. (2009), this analytical approach offers particular benefits when examining complex theoretical frameworks with latent constructs, especially in research contexts characterized by smaller sample populations and data that may not conform to normal distribution patterns. The analytical procedures followed a sequential protocol: first, measurement scale quality was assessed through confirmatory factor analysis to establish both reliability and validity parameters. Subsequently, hypothesis testing proceeded through evaluation of the direct effect model, with statistical significance determined by the criterion of t-statistics exceeding 1.96 within a two-tailed testing framework (Henseler et al., 2009). The analytical framework incorporated additional quality indicators, including Q^2 values to determine the model's predictive capabilities, while overall model fit was evaluated using the standard root mean square residual (SRMR) metric, with values below 0.1 indicating acceptable fit as recommended by Hair et al. (2017). This methodical analytical strategy enabled comprehensive assessment of the empirical data across multiple statistical dimensions, ensuring robust validation of the proposed theoretical relationships.

4.0 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Participant Demographic

Table 1: Demographic

Category	Detailed Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	22	21.15
	Female	82	78.85
Age	Under 25 Years	19	18.27
	26 to 40 Years	84	80.77
	41 to 56 Years	1	0.96
Ethnicity	Malay	101	97.12
	Chinese	1	0.96
	Indian	1	0.96
	Others	1	0.96
Marital Status	Single	55	52.88
	Married	45	43.27
	Widower	3	2.88
	Widow	1	0.96
Education Level	SPM (Malaysian Certificate of Education)	4	3.85
	Diploma	45	43.27
	Degree	44	42.31
	Master's	10	9.62
	PhD	1	0.96

Table 1 presents the sample consists of 104 respondents, predominantly female (79%) and mostly aged between 26 and 40 years (81%). The vast majority are Malay (97%), with very few respondents from Chinese, Indian, or other ethnic groups (each less than 1%). Over half of the participants are single (53%), while 43% are married. Educationally, most hold a diploma (43%) or a degree (42%), with smaller proportions having completed SPM (4%), a master's degree (10%), or a PhD (1%).

4.2 Measurement Model

Measurement model assessment incorporated multiple validation criteria focusing on three fundamental indicators: factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability measurements, following methodological guidelines established in contemporary structural equation modeling literature (Hair & Alamer, 2022). Convergent validity assessments, which examines intra-construct item correlation patterns, involved comprehensive analyses of outer loading coefficients, composite reliability values, and AVE metrics. The research established reliability parameters requiring Cronbach's alpha values to surpass the 0.70 threshold, with coefficients of 0.80 or greater representing preferred reliability levels (Ringle et al., 2023). Analysis of the empirical data confirmed adequate scale reliability for subsequent analytical procedures. Regarding individual item performance, methodological standards typically necessitate outer loading values exceeding 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019). The analytical protocol for items demonstrating loadings within the 0.40-0.70 range incorporated a conditional retention approach, whereby item elimination decisions were predicated solely on

scenarios where such removal generated measurable improvements in composite reliability or AVE coefficients.

Table 2: The outcomes of convergent validity analysis and composite reliability

Constructs	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho a)	Composite Reliability (rho c)	AVE
Transformational Leadership	0.742 – 0.852	0.951	0.954	0.957	0.633
Emotional Intelligence	0.704 – 0.846	0.838	0.840	0.881	0.553
Spiritual Intelligence	0.741 – 0.870	0.878	0.936	0.907	0.663

The analysis advanced to discriminant validity examination utilizing the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) methodology, a technique advocated by contemporary methodologists for superior accuracy in construct differentiation (Henseler et al., 2016). Discriminant validity verification serves to confirm that each theoretical construct represents a unique dimension distinct from other model variables. The HTMT analytical framework calculates comparative ratios between inter-construct and intra-construct indicator correlations, producing coefficients that reflect construct independence. Methodological guidelines suggest differentiated thresholds depending on construct relationships—with conceptually related constructs permitted HTMT values up to 0.90, while conceptually distinct constructs require more conservative values not exceeding 0.85 (Hair & Alamer, 2022). Empirical analysis revealed HTMT coefficients uniformly below the 0.85 threshold across all construct pairs, as documented in Table 3. These statistical parameters provide substantial evidence supporting discriminant validity, confirming that each construct captured a unique conceptual domain without problematic overlap with other theoretical dimensions in the research framework.

Table 3: Discriminant validity analysis

Construct	Transformational Leadership	Emotional Intelligence
Emotional Intelligence	0.381	
Spiritual Intelligence	0.378	0.203

4.3 Structural Equation Modelling

The structural equation model evaluation commenced following measurement model verification, employing a bootstrapping protocol to examine construct relationship significances. Mediation analysis targeting emotional intelligence effects followed methodological frameworks proposed in recent structural equation modeling literature (Sarstedt & Liu, 2024). Four essential parameters guided the assessment of both direct and indirect structural pathways. Primary among these evaluative criteria was the examination of explained variance through R² coefficients, which quantify the proportion of endogenous latent variable variation attributable to predictor constructs (Hair et al., 2019). Contemporary methodological perspectives suggest contextually dependent interpretation standards for R² metrics, with research domain considerations informing threshold classifications wherein coefficients of 0.26 represent substantial explanatory power, 0.13 indicates moderate predictive capacities, and 0.09 reflects modest explanatory contribution (Sarstedt & Liu, 2024).

In this study, the direct impact model yielded an R² value of 0.150 and 0.139 for emotional intelligence (EI) and spiritual intelligence (SI). This result suggests that the model accounted for 15% and 13.9% of the variance in transformational leadership. These findings

point to varying levels of predictive accuracy for the model across different constructs. The R^2 values for the endogenous variables are presented in Table 3. Overall, these results demonstrate that the model explains different portions of the variance in emotional intelligence (EI) and spiritual intelligences (SI), with the highest predictive power for transformational leadership.

Table 4: Coefficient of determination for the PLS-SEM

Relationship among	R-square	R-square adjusted	Q ² predict
Emotional Intelligence (EI)	0.150	0.142	0.074
Spiritual Intelligence (SI)	0.139	0.130	0.064

The study employed the cross-validated redundancy measure (Q^2) to assess the model's predictive relevance, as suggested by Sarstedt and Liu (2024). The Q^2 values for emotional intelligence (EI) and spiritual intelligence (SI), were 0.074 and 0.064 respectively, all surpassing zero and indicating predictive capability. These Q^2 values, along with the previously mentioned R^2 values, demonstrate the model's effectiveness in explaining and predicting variable relationships, with the strongest predictive relevance for Personality.

The study examined the impact of various independent variables on dependent variables using effect size (f^2) analysis. Based on the categorization by Sarstedt and Liu (2024), where effect sizes are considered small (0.02), medium (0.15), and large (0.35), the research revealed diverse effects across different relationships. Transformational leadership (TL) demonstrated the moderate effects on emotional intelligence (EI) and spiritual intelligence (SI), were 0.177 and 0.161 respectively. The study's direct effects analysis revealed significant positive relationships across multiple variables. Transformational leadership (TL) showed strong positive correlations with emotional intelligence (EI) ($\beta = 0.388$, $t = 4.390$, $p < 0.05$). Similarly, Transformational leadership (TL) demonstrated positive effects on spiritual intelligence (SI) ($\beta = 0.372$, $t = 4.356$, $p < 0.05$). These findings supported hypotheses H1 and H2.

Table 5: Structured equations model results

Hypotheses	Relationship	β	Sample mean (M)	S.D	t-value	F ²	p-value	LLC I 2.5%	ULI 97.5 %	Remarks
H1	TL → EI	0.388	0.412	0.088	4.390	0.177	0.000	0.240	0.582	Accepted
H2	TL → SI	0.372	0.392	0.085	4.356	0.161	0.000	0.231	0.563	Accepted

4.4 Discussion

The statistical analysis revealed significant positive relationships between transformational leadership and both emotional intelligence ($\beta=0.388$, $t=4.390$, $p<0.001$) and spiritual intelligences ($\beta=0.372$, $t=4.356$, $p<0.001$). These findings provide compelling empirical support for the theoretical framework that positions these constructs as complementary dimensions of leadership effectiveness. The significant positive relationship between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence (H1) align with the theoretical foundations established by Bass and Avolio (1994) and Goleman (1995, 1998). Transformational leadership's dimensions—idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized considerations—inherently require emotional competencies to be effectively executed. The statistical evidence ($\beta=0.388$, $p<0.001$) confirms that transformational leaders tend to possess higher emotional intelligence, enabling them to recognize, understand, and manage emotions effectively in leadership contexts. This finding

corresponds with Stephen's (2023) cross-sectional study of Kenyan university lecturers, which demonstrated a strong positive correlation ($r=0.76$, $p<0.0001$) between transformational leadership and emotional intelligences. Similarly, Thapa et al. (2022) reported a robust relationship ($r=0.749$, $R^2=0.561$) between these constructs among academic managers in Nepal. The cross-cultural consistency of these relationships, further supported by studies from Pakistan (Durrani et al., 2019) and Spain (Garcia et al., 2021), underscores the universal relevance of emotional intelligence to transformational leadership.

The significant positive relationship between transformational leadership and spiritual intelligence (H2) supports the theoretical framework proposed by Zohar and Marshall (2000) and expanded by King and DeCicco (2009). The statistical evidence ($\beta=0.372$, $p<0.001$) indicates that transformational leaders also tend to possess higher spiritual intelligence, facilitating meaning-making and ethical decision-making within their leadership practice. This finding corroborates Menon and Sadasivan's (2019) research, which found a strong positive correlation ($r=0.8048$) between spiritual intelligence and transformational leadership. The results also align with Adi et al.'s (2022) conceptual model identifying four key components of spiritually-informed transformational leadership: idealistic self-awareness, inspirational vision, holistic intellectual attitude, and flexible individual considerations. Additionally, Putri and Sudibjo (2022) demonstrated how transformational leadership positively influences workplace spirituality, which in turn enhances organizational commitment.

The comparable effect sizes for both relationships ($f^2=0.177$ for EI and $f^2=0.161$ for SI) suggest that emotional and spiritual intelligence make similar contributions to transformational leadership. This balanced influence supports Wigglesworth's (2012) proposition that spiritual intelligences may represent a higher-order integration of emotional intelligence capabilities directed toward transcendent purposes. These findings reveal a more nuanced understanding of transformational leadership than previously acknowledged in singular intelligence models. The similar strengths of both relationships suggest that effective transformational leadership in professional contexts require a balanced development of both emotional and spiritual intelligences. Leaders who can integrate these complementary intelligences are likely better equipped to address both the relational dynamics (through EI) and meaning-making processes (through SI) that characterize complex professional environments.

Interestingly, while Poma's (2024) study found spiritual intelligence significantly influenced performances ($t=2.839$, $p=0.027$), transformational leadership did not ($t=1.513$, $p=0.137$). This apparent contradiction with our findings may indicate that the effectiveness of transformational leadership is contextually determined and potentially mediated by both emotional and spiritual intelligences. In other words, transformational leadership may influence performance primarily through its effects on developing these intelligences. These findings have significant implications for leadership development programs, particularly in knowledge-intensive professional settings like legal practice. Rather than focusing exclusively on either emotional or spiritual dimensions, effective leadership development should foster an integrated approach that cultivates both intelligence types simultaneously. This balanced development would better prepare leaders to address the complex emotional, relational, ethical, and meaning making challenges inherent in professional leadership roles. In conclusion, the empirical evidence supports a theoretical model where transformational leadership is significantly associated with both emotional and spiritual intelligence capabilities. This multidimensional understanding provides a more comprehensive framework for conceptualizing effective leadership in professional contexts and offers practical guidance for leadership development initiatives.

These findings have several important theoretical implications. First, these findings support an integrative view of leadership that acknowledges the interconnectedness of transformational leadership behaviors with emotional and spiritual intelligences. Rather than

viewing transformational leadership as solely a set of behaviors, our results suggest that it is deeply intertwined with both emotional and spiritual competencies. This aligns with Bass and Avolio's (1994) conceptualization of transformational leadership as multidimensional and support Zohar and Marshall's (2000) assertion that spiritual intelligence complements emotional capabilities in effective leadership. Second, our findings contribute to the ongoing debate about the directionality of the relationship between transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, and spiritual intelligence. While our cross-sectional design cannot definitively establish causality, the strong positive associations suggest that these constructs may reinforce each other in a reciprocal relationship. As leaders engage in transformational behaviors (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration), they may develop enhanced emotional and spiritual intelligence; conversely, emotionally and spiritually intelligent individuals may be more predisposed to adopt transformational leadership styles (Goleman, 1998; King & DeCicco, 2009). Third, the comparable effect sizes for both relationships ($f^2 = 0.177$ for EI and $f^2 = 0.161$ for SI) suggest that transformational leadership has similarly substantial influences on both emotional and spiritual domains. This supports Wigglesworth's (2012) proposition that SI may represent a higher-order integration of emotional capabilities directed toward transcendent purposes. The findings extend Fry's (2003) work by demonstrating that transformational leadership fosters both the relational processes facilitated by EI and the meaning-making functions of SI within legal practice contexts. Finally, these results advance our theoretical understanding of leadership effectiveness in knowledge-intensive professional organizations by empirically validating the complementary roles of emotional and spiritual intelligence as psychological foundations of transformational leadership in legal settings. This contributes to a more holistic theoretical model of leadership that integrates multiple intelligence constructs simultaneously.

From a practical perspective, these findings suggest several applications for leadership development and organizational effectiveness. First, organizations seeking to foster transformational leadership should consider incorporating emotional and social intelligence training into their leadership development programs. As Ursan (2023) notes, emotional intelligence is increasingly recognized as a foundational element of effective transformational leadership. Second, selection processes for leadership positions might benefit from assessing candidates' emotional and social intelligence, as these appear to be closely linked to transformational leadership capabilities. Organizations might implement assessment centers or psychometric evaluations that measure these competencies alongside traditional leadership assessments. Third, the findings suggest that transformational leadership training might be enhanced by explicitly addressing the emotional and social dimensions of leadership. Rather than focusing solely on behavioral techniques, development programs could help leaders understand how emotional perception, understanding, and regulation influence their leadership effectiveness (Tyczkowski et al., 2015). Fourth, the findings highlight the importance of creating organizational cultures that value and promote emotional and social intelligence. As Harry and Saidi (2025) suggest, transformational leadership combined with emotional intelligence can create a culture that values well-being and fosters environments where individuals are more productive, engaged, and satisfied.

However, developing emotional intelligence (EI) and spiritual intelligence (SI) in law firm leaders presents unique challenges. The high-pressure, competitive, and often hierarchical nature of law firms may create barriers to open emotional expression and reflection, which are critical for EI development (Martynenko & Karandasheva, 2021). Additionally, the traditionally rational and analytical focus of legal work may undervalue spiritual or existential dimensions, making SI development less prioritized. Time constraints and workload pressures further limit opportunities for reflective practices and emotional or spiritual growth. Overcoming these barriers requires intentional organizational support, including leadership

development programs that integrates EI and SI training, coaching and creating safe spaces for vulnerability and ethical dialogue. Addressing these challenges is essential to fully realize the benefits of transformational leadership enriched by emotional and spiritual intelligence in legal practice.

Implementing these findings within law firm contexts requires several concrete strategies; firstly, implement tailored EI and SI workshops for law firms' partners that focus on managing client relationships, handling high-stakes negotiations, and resolving internal conflicts with empathy and ethical awareness. Secondly, introduce coaching programs that help partners develop self-awareness and reflective practices, such as mindfulness or journaling, to enhance emotional regulation and spiritual grounding amid the pressures of legal practices. Thirdly, embed EI and SI competencies into partner performance evaluations and leadership competency frameworks, encouraging accountability and continuous development in these areas. Facilitate peer support groups or confidential forums within firms where partners can discuss ethical dilemmas, emotional challenges, and leadership experiences, fostering a culture of openness and shared learning. Fourthly, leverage technology-enabled tools, such as emotional intelligence assessment apps or virtual reality simulations, to provide partners with experiential learning opportunities tailored to legal scenarios. Fifthly, encourage law firms to promote work-life balance initiatives and wellness programs that support psychological and spiritual well-being, recognizing their role in sustaining transformational leadership capabilities. These concrete steps can help law firms operationalize the study's findings, enhancing leadership effectiveness and organizational resilience in the demanding legal environment.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Leaders play a big role in helping their teams grow, and one way to do this is by being a transformational leader. This type of leader helps their team members develop emotionally and spiritually, which is really important for making good decisions and working well with others. When leaders focus on developing their emotional and spiritual intelligence, they become better at understanding their team's needs and making choices that are good for everyone. This approach to leadership is especially important in today's workplaces, where things are always changing and teams have to work together to solve complex problems. By combining emotional and spiritual intelligence, leaders can create a more positive and supportive work environment, which helps their teams succeed.

Leadership development should go beyond just teaching people how to behave and include helping them understand their emotions and find meaning in their work. This is especially important in high-stress fields like law, where being able to manage your emotions and have a strong sense of purpose can make you a better decision-maker and help create a positive work environment. To really understand how this works, we need to do more research that follows people over time and sees how different approaches play out in different contexts and cultures. By putting emotional and spiritual intelligence at the heart of how we choose, train, and evaluate leaders, we can help them grow in a sustainable way and create healthier organizations. This approach can lead to leaders who are not only good at motivating others but also have a strong sense of ethics and can make a positive impact on their organization.

Ultimately, this study contributes to evolving leadership theory by framing transformational leadership as a multidimensional construct deeply intertwined with emotional and spiritual capacities, offering a richer foundation for cultivating effective, ethical, and resilient leaders in today's complex professional landscapes.

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