

ПРИКЛАДНА ПСИХОЛОГІЯ. ПРОФЕСІЙНА Й ОРГАНІЗАЦІЙНА ПСИХОЛОГІЯ

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STRUCTURAL-DYNAMIC FEATURES OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF IT ORGANIZATIONS' LEADERS IN THE CONTEXT OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Objective – to theoretically substantiate and empirically investigate the influence of emotional intelligence on the managerial effectiveness of IT organization leaders under the conditions of digital transformation, hybrid employment, and technostress. Relevance of the study is driven by the rapid spread of remote and hybrid work formats in the IT sector; which are accompanied by increased psycho-emotional load on employees and managers, growing risks of professional burnout, and decreased team cohesion. In an environment where technical competencies become basic, soft skills, particularly emotional intelligence, come to the forefront, ensuring adaptability, stress resistance, and the ability to communicate effectively in a digital environment. Despite the acknowledged importance of emotional intelligence in management, there is a lack of comprehensive empirical research devoted to its role specifically in IT management, taking into account the specifics of hybrid work and technostress. Scientific novelty lies in the development and empirical verification of a five-component model of emotional intelligence for IT organization leaders, adapted to the conditions of the digital work environment; in identifying specific profiles of emotional intelligence depending on management experience and age; and in quantitatively determining the contribution of individual components of emotional intelligence (empathy and social skills) to predicting managerial effectiveness. The study was conducted on a sample of 85 IT organization leaders (mean age 34.2 years, management experience 6.8 years). A set of psychodiagnostic tools was used: N. Hall's Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire, the short version of R. Bar-On's EQ-i 2.0, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire MLQ-5X (to assess leadership effectiveness by indicators of staff motivation, conflict management, psychological safety, and burnout reduction), and E. Edmondson's Psychological Safety Scale. Statistical data processing was carried out using correlation analysis (Pearson's coefficient), regression analysis, and Student's t-test. The overall level of emotional intelligence of the surveyed leaders is predominantly average ($M = 72.4$ points, $SD = 11.8$). The most developed components were self-awareness ($M = 78.6$) and motivation ($M = 76.3$), while the least developed were empathy ($M = 65.4$) and social skills ($M = 67.1$), indicating a pronounced "technocratic" management profile. Correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between the overall level of emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness ($r = 0.62$; $p \leq 0.01$). The regression model showed that emotional intelligence explains up to 38 % of the variance in managerial effectiveness ($R^2 = 0.38$; $p \leq 0.001$), with the strongest predictors being empathy ($\beta = 0.45$) and social skills ($\beta = 0.41$). Using Student's t-test, statistically significant differences in the components

of emotional intelligence depending on management experience and age were found ($p \leq 0.05$): more experienced leaders (over 10 years of experience) demonstrated higher levels of self-regulation and empathy compared to younger managers. The obtained results allow identifying key problem areas of emotional intelligence among IT leaders (deficit of empathy in hybrid work, insufficient self-regulation in stressful situations related to technostress) and substantiate the need for targeted correctional and developmental programs to improve managerial effectiveness. Practical significance of the work lies in the possibility of using the obtained data for professional selection, evaluation, and professional development of managerial personnel in IT companies, as well as for the prevention of professional burnout in IT teams through the implementation of emotional competence training.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, leadership effectiveness, IT management, hybrid employment, technostress, psychological safety, professional burnout, managerial activity.

Statement of the problem. The current development of the IT sector is taking place under conditions of constant technological change, high competition for qualified professionals, and the active spread of hybrid and remote work formats. Work in IT organizations is associated not only with intensive intellectual load but also with the need to quickly adapt to changes, work under conditions of uncertainty, and maintain effective communication within teams. This significantly increases the level of psycho-emotional tension among employees.

According to international research, the IT sector demonstrates consistently elevated levels of professional burnout, while chronic stress, emotional overload, and insufficient psychological support from management remain among the most common reasons for changing jobs [1; 2]. Under such conditions, it becomes obvious that a manager's orientation solely toward technical competence or control of productivity indicators is no longer sufficient to ensure effective team performance.

A leader's emotional intelligence (EI) is considered an integrative system of emotional competencies that includes the ability to recognize one's own emotional states, understand the experiences of others, and regulate emotional responses according to the professional situation [3; 4]. This ability largely determines the quality of communication, team management style, and decision-making effectiveness under conditions of high uncertainty.

Modern research shows that the development of emotional competencies can influence leadership effectiveness even more than a high level of technical training or general intellectual abilities [3; 1]. This is of particular importance for the IT sector, as managers work in an environment of constant change, high information load, and the need to coordinate the interaction of distributed teams.

At the same time, the problem of the influence of EI on leadership effectiveness specifically in IT organizations remains insufficiently studied. This is especially true for conditions of hybrid work, the spread of technostress, and the active implementation

of artificial intelligence technologies in professional activities. In management practice, this manifests itself in increasing emotional exhaustion of managers, decreasing levels of psychological safety in teams, and the complication of interpersonal interaction.

In this regard, the issue of studying the structural features of emotional competencies of IT leaders, as well as determining the possibilities for their targeted development in the system of modern personnel management of technology companies, becomes relevant.

Analysis of recent research and publications.

The problem of EI has long remained one of the most relevant in psychological research on personality and professional activity. In modern science, the three most common approaches to understanding the phenomenon of EI are the ability model of J. Mayer, P. Salovey, and D. Caruso, as well as the mixed models of D. Goleman and R. Bar-On. R. Bar-On's model has gained particular popularity in organizational and managerial practice, becoming the basis for the EQ-i 2.0 methodology, which is actively used to assess emotional competencies in a professional environment [5].

In Ukrainian psychology, the issues of EI development were considered in the works of O. I. Bondarchuk, I. V. Oliynyk, O. G. Romanovskiy, and other researchers who studied its significance for managerial activity, interpersonal interaction, and the professional development of leaders [6; 7; 8]. At the same time, the specifics of the functioning of IT organizations are insufficiently covered in most studies.

In recent years, foreign scientific sources have seen research devoted to the features of EI development in a technological environment. However, the main focus is primarily on the problems of professional burnout of IT specialists, team interaction, or the psychological well-being of employees [3; 1]. The issue of developing emotional competencies of IT team leaders, especially in conditions of hybrid work and high levels of technostress, has been studied fragmentarily.

Today, the activities of IT leaders are complicated not only by the high dynamics of change but also by

the need to coordinate the work of distributed teams, maintain psychological safety of employees, and adapt to the active implementation of artificial intelligence technologies in management processes. In this regard, the study of which components of EI – empathy, self-regulation, social skills, or self-awareness – are most associated with leadership effectiveness in modern IT organizations becomes particularly relevant.

The problem of leadership as a socio-psychological phenomenon is traditionally considered within the framework of trait theories, behavioral and situational approaches [9]. In modern research, special attention is paid to transformational, authentic, and adaptive leadership, since these models are largely associated with the development of a leader's emotional competencies [10]. For the IT environment, where project activities, employee autonomy, and team interaction prevail, partnership, democratic, and servant management styles are considered most effective [11; 13].

Research in 2025–2026 also confirms the importance of empathy, emotional self-regulation, and communicative flexibility for maintaining effective interaction in hybrid teams [1]. At the same time, in modern psychological science, there are still not enough empirical works that quantitatively analyze the influence of individual components of EI on specific indicators of leadership effectiveness in IT organizations.

Task statement. The aim of this study is to identify the structural and dynamic features of EI of leaders in IT organizations, as well as to determine its influence on key indicators of leadership effectiveness, including communication quality, staff motivation, conflict management, the level of psychological safety in the team, and the prevention of professional burnout in the context of digital transformation.

The scientific novelty of the study lies in expanding current understanding of the role of emotional intelligence in leadership effectiveness within IT organizations under conditions of digital transformation. The findings demonstrate the significance of empathy and social skills as predictors of effective leadership and reveal age- and experience-related differences in the structure of emotional intelligence among IT team leaders.

Outline of the main material of the study. The study was conducted within the framework of systemic and subjective approaches, taking into account the principles of personality development and the unity of consciousness and activity. A cross-sectional study design was used, which involved a one-time measurement of emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness indicators, followed by comparative and correlation analysis.

A set of psychodiagnostic methods was used to study the features of EI and leadership effectiveness: N. Hall's Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (Ukrainian adaptation), the short version of the EQ-i2.0 by R. Bar-On [14], the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire MLQ-5X [10], and E. Edmondson's Psychological Safety Scale [12]. The use of several methods made it possible to comprehensively assess both individual emotional components and the features of leadership interaction in IT teams.

The study involved 85 IT team leaders at various levels. The sample was formed on the basis of voluntary participation of respondents. Among those surveyed, 45 % were team leads, 28 % were project managers, 15 % were Scrum masters, and 12 % were leaders in other management areas. The sample was predominantly male (62 %), with 38 % female. The average age of the study participants was 34.2 years, and the average management experience was 6.8 years. The vast majority of study participants (78 %) worked in a hybrid or remote format.

Statistical data processing was performed using SPSS Statistics 26.0. Descriptive statistics were computed. Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between the general level of emotional intelligence (EI) development and the composite indicator of leadership effectiveness ($r = 0.62, p \leq 0.01$).

All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and gave their voluntary consent to participate. The processing of results was carried out in compliance with the ethical principles of psychological research and ensuring the confidentiality of personal data.

The results of the study showed that the majority of surveyed IT leaders are characterized by an average level of EI development ($M = 72.4$; $SD = 11.8$). A low level of EI was found in 12 % of respondents, an average level in 58 %, and a high level in 30 % of the study participants. The analysis of the results showed that most managers have a sufficient level of emotional competence for effective professional interaction, but some components of EI require further development.

The most developed components of EI in the studied leaders were self-awareness ($M = 78.6$; $SD = 9.2$) and motivation ($M = 76.3$; $SD = 10.5$). This indicates a fairly high level of personal organization, result orientation, and the ability to maintain professional activity even under significant workload characteristic of the IT sector.

The lowest values were recorded on the scales of empathy ($M = 65.4$; $SD = 14.7$) and social skills

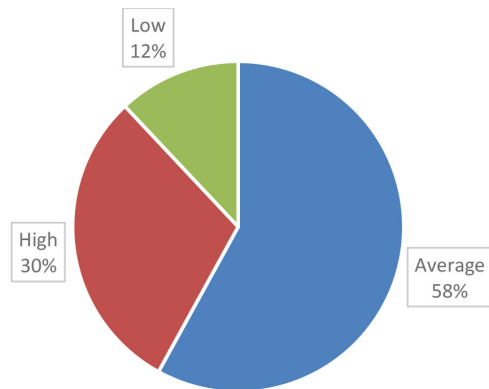


Fig. 1. Distribution of IT leaders by overall emotional intelligence level (%)

($M = 67.1$; $SD = 13.9$). This is likely due to difficulties in establishing emotional contact with team members, recognizing their psychological state, and maintaining effective interpersonal interaction, especially during remote or hybrid work. In this communication format, the number of non-verbal signals is significantly reduced, making it more difficult for managers to promptly notice the emotional state of employees and respond to their needs.

The level of self-regulation ($M = 71.2$; $SD = 12.4$) and stress management ($M = 69.8$; $SD = 13.1$) generally remained average and did not show consistently high values. Almost 28 % of respondents showed reduced results on these scales. This may indicate emotional exhaustion, difficulties in controlling tension, and insufficient stress resistance under conditions of high intensity of professional activity.

Pearson correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between the general level of EI development and the integral indicator of leadership effectiveness ($r = 0.62$; $p \leq 0.01$).

This indicates that a higher level of emotional competencies is associated with more effective managerial interaction and more efficient organization of IT team work.

The closest correlations were found between empathy and communication quality ($r = 0.68$; $p \leq 0.01$), as well as between empathy and the ability to maintain staff motivation ($r = 0.65$; $p \leq 0.01$). The obtained data confirm the important role of emotional understanding of others in forming a trusting atmosphere in the team, maintaining employee engagement, and creating a positive psychological climate.

A statistically significant relationship was also found between self-regulation and the effectiveness of conflict management ($r = 0.59$; $p \leq 0.01$). It is likely that the manager's ability to control their own emotional reactions and maintain emotional stability in difficult professional situations contributes to more constructive conflict resolution in the team.

At the same time, some indicators showed moderate or weak correlations. This indicates the multifactorial nature of leadership effectiveness and the need to take into account not only emotional but also organizational, professional, and communicative factors.

According to the results of the correlation analysis, a statistically significant relationship was found between the level of self-regulation of the manager and the indicator of burnout prevention in the team ($r = 0.35$; $p \leq 0.05$). This indicates that leaders with a higher level of emotional self-regulation are able to better control their reactions, act constructively in tense situations, and maintain a more stable psychological climate in the team.

The results of regression analysis showed that the level of EI development explains 38 % of the variance in leadership effectiveness indicators ($R^2 = 0.38$; $p \leq 0.001$). The greatest contribution to predicting the effectiveness of managerial activity was made by empathy ($\beta = 0.45$) and social skills ($\beta = 0.41$). This suggests that the manager's ability to understand the emotional state of others, maintain productive interaction, and build constructive relationships is one of the key factors for successful leadership in the IT environment.

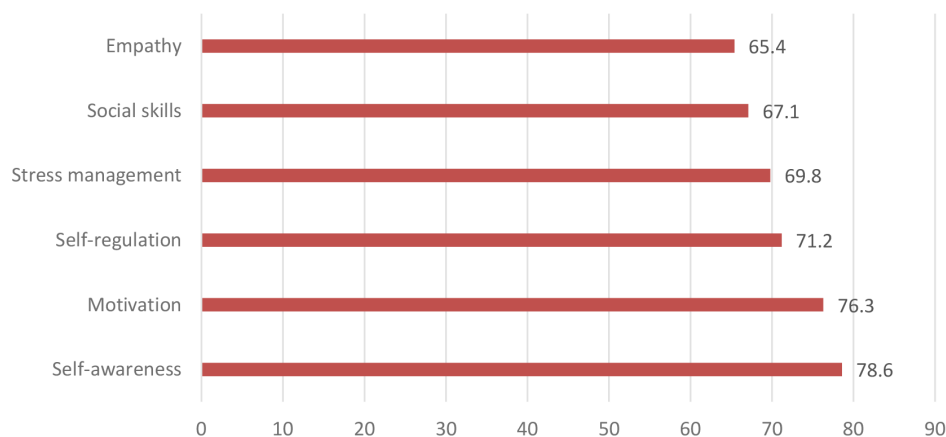


Fig. 2. Mean values of emotional intelligence components of IT organization leaders (M)

Table 1

Correlation coefficients between emotional intelligence components and indicators of leadership effectiveness

EI Component	Communication quality	Staff motivation	Conflict management	Psychological safety	Burnout reduction
Empathy	0,68**	0,65**	0,32*	0,45**	0,33*
Self-regulation	0,18	0,21	0,59**	0,30*	0,35*
Social skills	0,38*	0,35*	0,29*	0,41**	0,30*

Note: * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$.

Comparative analysis using Student's t-test for independent samples allowed establishing statistically significant differences between individual groups of respondents ($p \leq 0.05$). In particular, managers with over 8 years of managerial experience demonstrated a higher general level of EI ($M = 77.2$) compared to the group of leaders with up to 5 years of experience ($M = 68.5$). This may indicate the gradual formation of emotional competencies in the process of professional and managerial experience.

In addition, respondents over 35 years of age had higher scores on social skills ($M = 72.4$) compared to participants in the 25–34 age group ($M = 63.8$). This is likely due to the accumulation of experience in interpersonal interaction and more developed professional communication skills. At the same time, team leads demonstrated higher empathy scores ($M = 70.1$) than higher-level managers ($M = 64.2$), which may be explained by their closer daily interaction with teams.

The findings suggest that, in the modern IT environment, the professional effectiveness of a manager increasingly depends not only on technical training but also on the ability to maintain psychologically safe interaction in the team. That is why the development of emotional and communicative competencies is gradually becoming one of the key areas of training and support for IT leaders. In practice, even a high level of technical expertise does not always compensate for a lack of empathy or difficulties in interpersonal interaction.

Recent studies increasingly show a tendency towards a decrease in empathy and emotional involvement of employees in the digital work environment, which some authors define as the phenomenon of reduced emotional engagement in the context of digitalization [1]. This phenomenon refers to the gradual weakening of the ability to empathize, emotionally engage, and self-regulate in the context of professionally mediated digital technologies. This is most pronounced in remote work formats, where the number of direct interpersonal contacts decreases and the emotional distance between team members increases.

In our view, it is precisely under such conditions that the manager's ability to maintain informal contact with employees, timely notice signs of emotional exhaustion, and create an atmosphere of trust in the team becomes particularly important.

At the same time, the results of the study should be considered taking into account certain limitations. The majority of study participants worked in large IT companies and used a hybrid work format, which may limit the possibility of generalizing the results to small organizations or teams with a fully office-based work format. An additional limitation is the use of self-reported psychodiagnostic methods, as they partially depend on the subjective perception of respondents and may contain the influence of socially desirable responses. The use of elements of 360-degree feedback partially helped to reduce this influence.

Conclusions. The results of the study made it possible to establish that the structure of EI of IT organization leaders is unevenly formed. The most developed components were self-awareness and motivation, while the lowest scores were recorded on the scales of empathy and social skills. This indicates a sufficient orientation of modern IT leaders towards professional results and the ability to maintain high work efficiency even under significant workload.

Analysis of the obtained data showed a statistically significant positive relationship between the general level of EI development and the integral indicator of leadership effectiveness ($r = 0.62$; $p \leq 0.01$). The most significant predictors of effective managerial activity were empathy and social skills, which emphasizes the importance of emotional and communicative competencies for IT team leaders.

Statistically significant differences were found in the structure of emotional components depending on the age, managerial experience, and professional role of managers. In particular, more experienced leaders demonstrated higher EI scores and better developed social skills, which may indicate the gradual formation of emotional competencies in the process of professional development.

Particular attention is drawn to the insufficient level of development of components related to

self-regulation and stress management. Under conditions of high work pace, constant changes, tight deadlines, and significant psycho-emotional load, these characteristics become critically important for maintaining leadership effectiveness and the psychological well-being of the team. This underscores the need to create practical programs for the development of emotional competencies for IT managers, primarily trainings aimed at developing empathy, emotional self-regulation, and constructive communication skills.

The results of the study showed that in the context of digitalization and the active implementation of automated management systems, it is the «human factor» that increasingly determines the effectiveness of team interaction and the competitiveness of IT companies. In this regard, the development of EI among managers should be considered an important component of modern corporate leadership and personnel management programs.

At the same time, the practice of IT teams shows that even a high level of professional competence does not always compensate for the lack of a manager's emotional sensitivity. In many cases, it is the quality

of interpersonal interaction that determines the level of trust, engagement, and stability of the team. In our opinion, in the coming years, the manager's ability to maintain a psychologically safe environment will become no less important a professional requirement than technical or managerial training.

Prospects for further research should be linked to the development and testing of training programs for the development of emotional competencies for various categories of IT leaders, as well as to the study of the impact of hybrid work formats and digital load on the psychological well-being of managers and teams.

Practical significance of the study lies in the possibility of using the obtained results in the activities of HR specialists and managers of IT companies to improve the systems of selection, evaluation, and professional development of managerial personnel. In particular, the results of the study confirm the feasibility of taking into account empathy, social skills, and the ability for emotional self-regulation as important competencies of candidates for managerial positions. The obtained data can also be used in the development of leadership development programs and the prevention of professional burnout in IT teams.

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Ільїна Ю. Ю., Світлична Н. О. СТРУКТУРНО-ДИНАМІЧНІ ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ЕМОЦІЙНОГО ІНТЕЛЕКТУ ЛІДЕРІВ ІТ-ОРГАНІЗАЦІЙ В УМОВАХ ЦИФРОВОЇ ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЇ

Мета статті – теоретично обґрунтувати та емпірично дослідити вплив емоційного інтелекту на ефективність управлінської діяльності керівників ІТ-організацій в умовах цифрової трансформації, гібридної зайнятості та техностресу. Актуальність дослідження зумовлена стрімким поширенням віддалених гібридних форматів роботи в ІТ-секторі, що супроводжується підвищенням психоемоційного навантаження на працівників і менеджерів, зростанням ризиків професійного вигорання та зниженням згуртованості команд. В умовах, коли технологічні компетенції стають базовими, на перший план виходять «м'які навички» (soft skills), зокрема емоційний інтелект, який забезпечує адаптивність, стресостійкість і здатність ефективно комунікувати в цифровому середовищі. Попри визнання важливості емоційного інтелекту в управлінні, бракує комплексних емпіричних досліджень, присвячених його ролі саме в ІТ-менеджменті з урахуванням специфіки гібридної роботи та техностресу. Наукова новизна полягає в розробці та емпіричній верифікації п'ятикомпонентної моделі емоційного інтелекту керівника ІТ-організації, адаптованої до умов цифрового робочого середовища; у виявленні специфічних профілів емоційного інтелекту залежно від стажу управлінської діяльності та віку; а також у кількісному визначенні внеску окремих компонентів емоційного інтелекту (емпатії та соціальних навичок) у прогнозування управлінської ефективності. Дослідження проведено на вибірці з 85 керівників ІТ-організацій (середній вік – 34,2 року, управлінський стаж – 6,8 року). Використано комплекс психодіагностичних методик: опитувальник емоційного інтелекту Н. Холла, скорочену версію EQ-i 2.0 Р. Бар-Она, багатофакторний опитувальник лідерства MLQ-5X (для оцінки ефективності лідерства за показниками мотивації персоналу, управління конфліктами, психологічної безпеки та зниження вигорання) та шкалу психологічної безпеки Е. Едмондсона. Статистичну обробку даних здійснено з використанням кореляційного аналізу (коефіцієнт Пірсона), регресійного аналізу та t-критерію Стьюдента. Загальний рівень емоційного інтелекту досліджуваних керівників є переважно середнім ($M = 72,4$ бала, $SD = 11,8$). Найрозвиненішими виявилися компоненти самосвідомості ($M = 78,6$) та мотивації ($M = 76,3$), найменш розвиненими – емпатія ($M = 65,4$) та соціальні навички ($M = 67,1$), що свідчить про виражений «технократичний» профіль управління. Кореляційний аналіз засвідчив статистично значущий позитивний зв'язок між загальним рівнем емоційного інтелекту та ефективністю лідерства ($r = 0,62$; $p \leq 0,01$). Регресійна модель показала, що емоційний інтелект пояснює до 38 % дисперсії ефективності управлінської діяльності ($R^2 = 0,38$; $p \leq 0,001$), при цьому найсильнішими предикторами виступили емпатія ($\beta = 0,45$) та соціальні навички ($\beta = 0,41$). За допомогою t-критерію Стьюдента виявлено статистично значущі відмінності у вираженості компонентів емоційного інтелекту залежно від управлінського стажу та віку респондентів ($p \leq 0,05$): досвідченіші керівники (понад 10 років стажу) демонструють вищі показники саморегуляції та емпатії порівняно з молодшими менеджерами. Отримані результати дозволяють ідентифікувати ключові проблемні зони емоційного інтелекту керівників ІТ-сфери (дефіцит емпатії в умовах гібридної роботи, недостатня саморегуляція в стресових ситуаціях, пов'язаних з техностресом) та обґрунтувати необхідність цілеспрямованих корекційно-розвивальних програм для підвищення управлінської ефективності. Практичне значення роботи полягає в можливості використання отриманих даних для професійного відбору, оцінки та підвищення кваліфікації управлінських кадрів в ІТ-компаніях, а також для профілактики професійного вигорання в ІТ-командах шляхом впровадження тренінгів розвитку емоційної компетентності.

Ключові слова: емоційний інтелект, ефективність лідерства, ІТ-менеджмент, гібридна зайнятість, технострес, психологічна безпека, професійне вигорання, управлінська діяльність.

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