

# Emotional Agility as a Future-Ready Leadership Skill: A Critical Review of its Conceptual Foundations and Applicability in the Indian Corporate Sector

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**Abstract:** In the VUCA age, conventional leadership skills are found to be inadequate to address the emotional as well as adaptive needs of contemporary corporate reality. Emotional agility, a psychological theory based on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), has emerged as a future-proofed leadership ability that enables individuals to navigate and process complex emotional experiences with openness, awareness, and alignment of personal and organisational values. In contrast to emotional intelligence, which prioritises regulation and recognition, emotional agility prioritises values-based action, non-reactivity, and emotional acceptance. Global literature is increasingly recognising its application in leadership development, but it is still an under-researched concept in Indian corporate settings. This study provides a critical conceptual overview of emotional agility, tracing its theoretical development, contrasting it with neighbouring constructs such as emotional intelligence and resilience, and examining its implications for organisational leadership. By engaging in a narrative and thematic analysis of peer-reviewed articles, books, and international case studies, the research provides insights into the increasing adoption of emotional agility within Western leadership programmes and its alignment with inclusive, ethical, and psychologically resilient models of leadership. On the other hand, Indian leadership literature still depends on conventional behavioural and emotional intelligence paradigms, with little incorporation of emotional agility as a standalone soft skill. The paper identifies cultural, structural, and pedagogical impediments to its uptake in Indian workplaces while also highlighting emerging opportunities fueled by generational change, digitalisation, and the increasing value placed on mental well-being at work. The research presents pragmatic and evidence-based suggestions for incorporating emotional agility into Indian leadership development and training in the form of context-relevant frameworks, coaching interventions, and curriculum renewal. It also suggests directions for future empirical research to validate its findings, adapt them, and assess their impact within Indian business settings.

**Keywords:** Emotional Agility, Leadership Development, Indian Corporate Sector, Emotional Intelligence, Soft Skills, Psychological Flexibility, VUCA Leadership.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The landscape of contemporary business leadership is changing dramatically, fueled by an increasingly dynamic digital economy, changing organisational forms, and an expanding need for human-focused abilities in decision-making, communication, and transformational change management. As companies become more entrenched in volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA)

environments, leadership capabilities are being reoriented to encompass an enhanced sense of emotional processes, flexibility, and resiliency amid relentless change [1,3]. Classic emotional intelligence (EI) models, although useful, may not be able to capture the intricacies of the emotional terrain that contemporary leaders must navigate [2,4].

Here, the new construct of emotional agility put forward by Susan David has attracted interest in international

organisational psychology and leadership literature as a future-proof soft skill that enhances psychological flexibility, value-driven action, and successful emotional navigation [5,6]. Emotional agility describes a person's ability to acknowledge and process thoughts and emotions in an open, mindful, and non-judgmental manner while still acting in ways that serve long-term goals and values rather than succumbing to impulsive reactions [6,7]. In contrast to emotional intelligence, which focuses on regulation and social awareness, emotional agility is centred around accepting challenging emotional experiences, not suppressing emotions, and reacting to difficulties with poise, curiosity, and intentionality [8,9].

This difference is significant in leadership positions, where pressure, ambiguity, and interactions with people require more than just control of emotions and necessitates the capacity to acknowledge unpleasant inner experiences while selecting responses that are constructive, ethical, and culturally appropriate [10,11]. Emotional agility enables adaptive functioning in high-stakes settings, such as crisis management, leading remote teams, and cross-functional teamwork, all of which are becoming increasingly relevant in the post-pandemic and hybrid work designs being implemented globally [12].

While international scholarship has begun to explore emotional agility in various organisational contexts, research on its applicability in Indian corporate leadership remains sparse. Indian businesses, which often operate within hierarchical structures, collectivist cultures, and generational workforces, face unique challenges in cultivating leadership practices that encourage psychological openness and emotional risk-taking [15,16]. Furthermore, leadership development programs in India continue to emphasise measurable competencies and performance metrics, often neglecting the inner psychological competencies that drive ethical, inclusive, and emotionally resilient leadership [17,18].

As more Indian firms are reaching out to the global business community, it is imperative to examine how emotional agility can be effectively integrated into Indian leadership development. It requires understanding the theory and its impact on performance, innovation, and employee well-being in organisations. A critical analysis of international and Indian research on emotional agility can serve as the basis for this integration, both in terms of gaps in research and strategic opportunities for human resource development, executive coaching, and policy intervention.

This paper offers a comprehensive conceptual review of emotional agility as a soft skill for leadership, critically evaluating its differentiation from related constructs, mapping its presence in global literature, and assessing its theoretical and practical significance in the Indian corporate sector. Through this review, the study aims to establish a conceptual groundwork for incorporating emotional agility into leadership development practices, contributing to the growing body of knowledge on emotional skills and organisational transformation in India.

### ➤ *Problem Statement*

Over the past decade, leadership development has increasingly recognised the contribution that emotional skills make to differentiating good management, especially in high-pressure business contexts. While emotional intelligence has been a central feature in leadership competency language for many years, new constructs such as emotional agility have begun to offer a more nuanced and adaptive model of emotional activation and decision-making. Emotional agility, according to Susan David's definition, is founded on the individual's ability to embrace emotions without being controlled by them, escape unproductive mental habits, and behave in ways that are valuable and purpose-aligned in the face of challenges [19].

While applicable to contemporary business leadership, particularly in volatile and turbulent environments, emotional agility has not received adequate research and practical attention in Indian business contexts. Leadership development programs in India often limit themselves to traditional models that focus on measurable skills and performance. They usually overlook the emotional and psychological aspects that are important for long-term leadership success. The Indian business landscape, characterised by hierarchical structures and a collectivist culture, presents challenges that impede emotional flexibility in leadership.

A review of the existing literature reveals that while emotional agility has been explored in Western scholarship and organisational psychology, there is a clear gap in its examination within Indian leadership discourse. Very few studies have attempted to assess its applicability in the Indian corporate sector, nor have they proposed frameworks for its adaptation or integration [20]. The absence of a consolidated body of knowledge on emotional agility in India not only limits academic inquiry but also hinders the development of future-ready leadership strategies tailored to the Indian socio-economic context.

This paper aims to address a critical gap by conducting a conceptual and literature-based review of emotional agility to evaluate its potential relevance and integration into leadership development frameworks in India. The study recognises the need for Indian organisations to cultivate emotionally agile leaders who can manage ambiguity, embrace emotional complexity, and act with ethical clarity in increasingly challenging business scenarios.

### ➤ *Research Questions*

Recognising a significant lack of understanding about emotional agility in Indian corporate leadership, this research aims to address some key questions:

- What is emotional agility, and how does it differentiate itself from emotional intelligence and other soft skills widely talked about in leadership research?
- How is emotional agility discussed and used in global leadership writing, especially concerning adaptive leadership, being mentally flexible, and making decisions based on core values?

- Why is there an absence of emphasis on emotional agility in Indian corporate leadership discourses? What might be the prevailing cultural, structural, or educational reasons for this lack of focus?
- How applicable is emotional agility to the Indian business context, given its unique socio-cultural, organisational, and leadership characteristics?
- How do we introduce emotional agility into current models of leadership development in India? What models or approaches might we suggest based on what the literature already offers?
- What are the potential future research avenues that may assist in further exploring emotional agility in Indian organisations to support empirical studies, training interventions, and policy incorporation?

#### ➤ Objectives

This research aims to review and combine existing studies on emotional agility leadership. It focuses on understanding its theory, global relevance, and how well it fits in Indian business. The goal is to bridge the gap between international models of emotional agility and current leadership practices in India.

#### ➤ The Specific Study Objectives are as Follows:

- To investigate where emotional agility originates, how it has evolved, and its distinguishing characteristics as a distinct concept in the broader discussion of emotional skills and leadership.
- To contrast emotional agility with other similar constructs, such as emotional intelligence, resilience, and psychological flexibility, specifically in the context of leadership behaviour.
- To critically examine global literature on emotional agility, emphasising its application in effective leadership, decision-making, change management, and team dynamics.
- To establish the present research/practice situation regarding emotional agility in the Indian business context and to probe reasons for its non-presence in leadership development thought.
- To evaluate the conceptual applicability and practical viability of emotional agility in Indian organisations, specifically for cultural norms, leadership styles, and organisational designs.
- To suggest a conceptual framework or model for incorporating emotional agility into Indian leadership development programmes in terms of prevailing training approaches and soft skills pedagogy.
- To recommend directions for future empirical research, scholarly investigation, and professional development interventions to infuse emotional agility as a key leadership skill in India.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### ➤ Evolution of Emotional Agility as a Concept

Emotional agility, a concept introduced by Susan David, an experienced psychologist at Harvard Medical School, extends the idea of psychological flexibility into the

workplace [1,6]. Rooted in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), emotional agility refers to the ability to recognise and accept emotional experiences, maintain cognitive composure, and take action guided by personal values rather than reactive emotions [1,2]. While ACT has traditionally been applied in clinical contexts, David's reformulation introduced the construct into leadership and organisational development, identifying it as a key trait for navigating complexity, ambiguity, and emotional discomfort in decision-making [3,4].

Emotional agility is gaining popularity in leadership literature for its links to adaptability, self-regulation, innovation, and effective communication [5,6]. Leaders with high emotional agility handle triggers more effectively, respond well to feedback and foster a safe work culture [7].

### ➤ Emotional Agility Contrasted with Emotional Intelligence

Emotional agility and emotional intelligence are often mistaken for each other, but they are different in both meaning and purpose [8]. Emotional intelligence, as coined by Goleman and subsequently clarified by Mayer and Salovey, revolves around recognising, comprehending, and regulating one's own as well as other people's emotions [9,10]. Emotional agility shifts attention from regulation to engagement, however. It values emotional acceptance and autonomy in accessing inner experience without restriction or evaluation [11].

Emotional intelligence typically focuses on positive qualities, such as empathy, but emotional agility values all feelings, including fear and anger, as valuable information [12]. Being honest about feelings and acting with purpose and awareness can increase the chances of being a strong leader in challenging and uncertain situations. [13].

### ➤ International Applications of Emotional Agility in Leadership

Emotional agility has been integrated into global leadership coaching, executive development, and change management practices across multiple industries. In the United States, for example, emotional agility has been linked to enhanced team performance, which in turn increases employee engagement and improves ethical leadership [14]. In Europe and Australia, organisations have started incorporating emotional agility modules into executive education programs to foster resilience and minimise burnout [15].

Research shows that emotionally agile leaders work more effectively with diverse teams, resolve conflicts more effectively, and lead change with compassion and vision [16, 23]. Improved business performance, characterised by enhanced innovation, decreased attrition, and more diverse decision-making, has also been linked to this ability. [17, 21].

### ➤ Emotional Agility in Indian Leadership Literature: A Missing Link

Although it has been increasingly acknowledged globally, emotional agility is comparatively less explored in the Indian literature on leadership [17, 18]. Indian leadership

literature continues to be focused on emotional intelligence, resilience, or spiritual intelligence without actually addressing the more complex psychological processes necessary for emotional agility [20].

Leadership development initiatives in India, particularly in corporate learning and development processes, continue to focus on behavioural and cognitive competencies, such as communication, conflict management, and team building [20]. There is limited evidence of structured interventions designed to promote deeper emotional awareness, acceptance, and value-driven action among top-level leaders [21].

This lack is notable, as the socio-cultural context of Indian businesses tends to discourage explicit discussion of emotional vulnerability and non-conformist thought, both of which are core to emotional agility [22]. Additionally, the collectivist and hierarchical orientation of Indian organisations can pose further challenges to the internalisation of emotional agility practices, which involve autonomy, psychological safety, and ethical consideration [24].

#### ➤ *Identified Gaps and the Need for Contextual Adaptation*

Current research indicates a notable lack of study and application of emotional agility within Indian businesses. Most leadership frameworks currently used in India do not include emotional agility as a core component, nor do they evaluate leadership performance using indicators related to psychological flexibility or value-driven decision-making.

Moreover, there is a lack of India-specific models that consider cultural nuances, industry-specific leadership challenges, and generational workforce dynamics. Without such contextual adaptation, global models of emotional agility risk being perceived as culturally incongruent or impractical in Indian settings.

This gap highlights the need for a theoretical and practice-oriented framework that can introduce emotional agility into Indian leadership development initiatives while remaining sensitive to local cultural norms and organisational behaviours.

### III. DESCRIPTION OF STUDIES INCLUDED

The conceptual review relies on a well-considered list of scholarly literature, which comprises peer-reviewed journal publications, academic books, conference papers, and research-based thought leadership articles. These sources were carefully selected for their robust theories, strong research support, and significance to emotional agility, intelligence, and psychological flexibility in both international and Indian contexts.

#### A. *Thematic Categorisation of Sources*

The studies that were chosen were categorised into four broad thematic headings, which reflected one or more of the research purposes of the paper:

#### ➤ *Theoretical Foundations of Emotional Agility*

This heading lists important articles by Susan David, along with research on psychological flexibility and acceptance-based methods, mainly based on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) [1,19]. These studies build upon the key psychological concepts that distinguish emotional agility from other emotional frameworks [3,4].

##### • *Significant Contributions:*

- ✓ David S. Emotional Agility [19]
- ✓ Hayes SC et al. on ACT and mindful change processes [8]
- ✓ Kashdan TB, Rottenberg J. on psychological flexibility and emotional well-being [7]

#### ➤ *Emotional Agility and Leadership in Global Contexts*

This group comprises empirical and conceptual studies that link emotional agility to adaptive leadership behaviours, crisis management, innovation, and employee engagement in corporate settings across North America, Europe, and Australia [5–10]. These sources demonstrate how emotional agility is utilised and impacts performance in contemporary leadership.

##### • *Significant Contributions:*

- ✓ Congleton C, David S, Grant AM. Harvard Business Review article on emotionally agile leadership
- ✓ Grant AM on mindfulness and ethical decision-making
- ✓ Luthans F, Avolio BJ on authentic leadership and resilience
- ✓ Reivich K, Shatté A on emotional strength in high-stress work environments

#### ➤ *Emotional Intelligence and Soft Skills in Indian Corporate Leadership*

This set of studies encompasses Indian research on emotional intelligence, resilience, and leadership skills, which are often employed when there are no specific studies on emotional agility. The sources were examined to find common points, weaknesses, and places where emotional agility could help fill gaps in understanding.

##### • *Significant Contributions:*

- ✓ Ghosh R, Rai A. Review on emotional intelligence and Indian organisational performance
- ✓ Jha S, Singh B. on emotional intelligence in Indian leaders
- ✓ Srivastava S, Mishra A. on leadership development trends in India
- ✓ Budhwar PS, Varma A. on Indian corporate culture and leadership paradigms

#### ➤ *Comparative and Contextual Studies on Cultural Adaptation of Emotional Skills*

This theme includes cross-cultural leadership research, localisation of soft skill research, and journal articles that explore cultural resistance to emotional discourse in Indian business environments. These studies guided the contextual analysis of enablers and barriers to integrating emotional agility in Indian business settings.

• *Significant Contributions:*

- ✓ Chatterjee D, Nankervis A. on Indian leadership styles and change-readiness
- ✓ Kumar R, Sethi R. The Indian Way, insights into values-based Indian management practices
- ✓ Rock D, Grant H. on diverse leadership teams and agility in thought
- ✓ Bennis W, Thomas RJ. on “crucibles of leadership” across cultures

B. *Scope and Coverage*

- Time frame: 2000 to 2024
- Geographical focus: Predominantly international literature with supplemental Indian studies
- Disciplinary range: Organisational psychology, human resource management, behavioural leadership, corporate training, soft skills development, and cultural studies
- Types of studies: Conceptual papers (40%), empirical case studies (35%), literature reviews (15%), thought leadership (10%)

C. *Summary of Literature Limitations*

Although various international studies offer strong insights into emotional agility based on theory and practice, there is a noticeable scarcity of India-based studies that directly apply or investigate the concept. Much of the research on leadership in India looks at emotional intelligence, stress management, and resilience. However, it often does not clearly define or measure emotional agility skills. This gap highlights the need for research that respects Indian culture and connects emotional agility to real-life situations in Indian businesses.

## IV. DISCUSSION

The findings from the reviewed literature underscore that emotional agility, as a leadership competency, holds considerable promise in enhancing decision-making, adaptive functioning, and psychological resilience in today’s complex business environments. Globally, the concept has evolved from its psychological origins into a valuable construct in executive leadership, gaining traction for its practical applications in emotional regulation, ethical clarity, and values-based actions [1,4]. However, the review exposes a significant lack of exploration and application in Indian corporate discussions in academic studies and professional training programs.

➤ *Conceptual Maturity in the West Versus Nascent Engagement in India*

In Western contexts, particularly in the United States, Europe, and Australia, emotional agility is increasingly viewed as a meta-skill, essential for leaders who must operate in rapidly changing and uncertain business environments. It has been incorporated into coaching methods, change management plans, and programs for developing leaders who are genuine, emotionally stable, and adaptable [8].

On the other hand, in India, emotional intelligence is somewhat recognised as an important quality in leadership development. However, the concept of emotional agility remains largely unexamined. Indian research continues to rely on traditional leadership theories, behavioural trait models, or transactional competencies, such as communication and team management. Emotional agility involves accepting discomfort, staying calm, and making decisions based on personal values. This approach challenges standard practices in Indian corporate culture, where suppressing emotions and following authority is often expected.

➤ *Cultural and Structural Challenges in Adoption*

The Indian workplace has a clear hierarchy, emphasises teamwork, and tends to maintain a controlled atmosphere. This can make it difficult for people to share their feelings and explore their inner thoughts, which are essential for developing emotional agility [17]. Leadership in Indian organisations often emphasises authority and quick decision-making, which can restrict softer skills such as reflection and empathy.

There is a gap in how we teach leadership. Most corporate training programs in India focus on behaviour and measurable results. As a result, there is insufficient emphasis on developing essential emotional skills, such as flexibility, mindfulness, and self-reflection [18]. Furthermore, the demand for emotional agility’s cognitive-emotional integration requires a shift in learning design toward experiential learning, journaling, peer reflection, and coaching methods that are not yet mainstream in Indian corporate training.

➤ *Relevance to Emerging Indian Business Realities*

Despite such challenges, the rising complexity of the Indian business environment presents a compelling argument in favour of incorporating emotional agility into leadership training. Start-up growth, the digital revolution, cross-cultural working, hybrid workspaces, and multigenerational teams have underscored the need for emotionally intelligent and adaptable leaders who navigate ambiguity with ease and maintain ethical integrity [19, 21]. Emotional agility enables leaders to respond rather than react, remain centred in the face of turbulence, and have decisions guided by long-term organisational values.

In addition, Indian millennials and Gen Z workers are remodelling the work culture by prioritising authenticity, inclusion, psychological safety, and mental wellness. This is why emotional agility is more important than ever, not only as a leadership capability but also as a cultural lever for organisational transformation [22].

➤ *Theoretical Integration and Future Potential*

The literature examined proposes that emotional agility encompasses elements of emotional intelligence, resilience, mindfulness, and authentic leadership but expands beyond these due to its process-based emphasis on accepting emotions and taking action [24]. Emotional agility does not replace traditional soft skills, but it builds upon them by

promoting flexibility, self-reflection, and decisional clarity in leaders.

Embedding emotional agility in Indian leadership frameworks could introduce a fresh template of more integrated and visionary leadership that prioritises both performance and strategy, as well as inner awareness, ethical congruence, and emotional resilience. The theoretical and practical compatibility of emotional agility with emerging leadership challenges facing India makes it an essential area for further research and professional understanding.

## V. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This critical literature-based review set out to explore the conceptual foundations and practical applicability of emotional agility as a future-ready leadership skill, with a specific focus on its relevance to the Indian corporate sector. The findings from the reviewed global and Indian literature reveal several key insights, which are summarised below:

- Emotional agility is an emerging concept from psychological flexibility, specifically from Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. It encourages organisations and leaders to connect with their emotions and values openly rather than suppressing feelings.
- Emotional agility is different from emotional intelligence. It means being able to handle complex feelings and thoughts without acting on impulse or suppressing them. It helps us think carefully and act morally in challenging situations. Emotional agility enhances our emotional skills by combining awareness, self-reflection, and making choices that align with our values.
- In leadership, emotional agility is closely linked to resilience, adaptability, inclusive leadership, and overall well-being. Therefore, it is a valuable skill to navigate volatile situations. It is now being added to executive development programs, change management, and leadership coaching.
- In the Indian leadership literature, however, emotional agility is under-studied and not strongly represented in either academic scholarship or professional leadership development training. The majority of Indian literature still stresses emotional intelligence or behavioural competencies without a corresponding focus on deeper psychological and emotional workings.
- Those cultural, structural, and pedagogical conditions that characterise Indian corporate environments, including hierarchical style, low emotional expressivity, and a focus on authority and compliance, present inherent obstacles to the practice of emotional agility. These cultural expectations can hinder open discussion of emotional experiences and the development of self-reflective leadership skills.
- The new dynamics of Indian business, such as digitalisation, generational diversity of the workforce, cross-cultural interactions, and changing employee expectations, indicate an increasing requirement for emotionally agile leadership. Such leaders who can work in ambiguity, stay humble under stress, and behave according to organisational values are ever more critical.

- The present lack of India-specific models or frameworks for emotional agility is both a theoretical deficit and an opportunity in practice. There is a pressing need to localise emotional agility within Indian organisations at both the leadership development frameworks and HR training design levels.

In general, findings suggest that emotional agility has enormous untapped potential as a soft skill to increase leadership effectiveness, ethical clarity, and employee engagement in Indian business settings. It warrants increased research attention, practical application in real-world settings, and intentional integration into professional development programs.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the critical review and the findings presented, the following recommendations are suggested for academic researchers, corporate leadership trainers, human resource professionals, and policymakers wishing to improve leadership development practices in India through the incorporation of emotional agility:

### ➤ *Integration of Emotional Agility into Leadership Training Programmes*

Indian companies should prioritise emotional agility as a key competency in leadership development programs. This can be achieved by incorporating systematic self-reflection activities, mindfulness training, and value-based decision-making models into existing training programs. Other effective steps could include designing experience-based training sessions, like role-playing and emotional journaling. Together, these will allow participants to face emotional discomfort and uncertainty in a secure learning environment. Moreover, using executive coaching can maximise psychological flexibility, especially for top leadership teams that are undergoing change or crisis.

### ➤ *Development of India-Centric Models and Frameworks*

To cultivate emotionally agile leadership within Indian working environments, where hierarchy, collectivism, and emotional control are emphasised, it is essential to develop models that are aware of these cultural contexts. This can be achieved through joint efforts among Indian business schools, research organisations, and leadership academies that promote the research-based tailoring of global emotional agility frameworks using relevant case studies. Moreover, culturally relevant assessment instruments and competency measures need to be developed to assess emotional agility. Indian case studies published would further illustrate successful emotionally agile leadership in other fields, including technology, healthcare, finance, and public administration.

### ➤ *Sensitisation and Awareness-Building among HR and L&D Professionals*

HR and Learning & Development (L&D) practitioners must understand the concept of emotional agility and its distinction from emotional intelligence. To achieve this, workshops, webinars, and certification courses can be created

to increase awareness about the relevance of emotional acceptance. These programs also need to aid HR practitioners in spotting emotionally agile behaviours in hiring, performance management, and succession planning. Additionally, they should encourage the application of soft measures, such as authenticity, ethical clarity, and emotional resilience, in leadership evaluation systems.

➤ *Incorporation in Higher Education and Management Curriculum*

Indian business schools and professional education institutions need to expand their curricula to incorporate emotional agility across various fields. This should be included in MBA-level leadership development programs and executive education courses, in addition to skill-building workshops in future-proof leadership, mental wellness, and organisational ethics. Research fellowships and thesis topics should also explore emotional agility through both qualitative and quantitative research, particularly in the Indian industry and regional contexts.

➤ *Organisational Culture Changes to Enhance Psychological Safety*

Business enterprises in India ought to foster an atmosphere that encourages individuals to share their feelings and thoughts openly without fear. This can be achieved by having leaders who openly share their vulnerabilities and are receptive to feedback. Organisations need to build team cultures that encourage healthy discussions, personal growth, and respectful disagreements. It's essential to implement policies that reduce the stigma surrounding emotions, particularly during stressful times or emergencies.

These proposals require a joint effort from universities, businesses, government, and training centres to view emotional agility as not just a personal trait but as an essential leadership skill needed to navigate the complex and evolving business landscape in India.

## VII. LIMITATIONS OF THE REVIEW

While this conceptual review offers valuable insights into the emerging relevance of emotional agility in corporate leadership, particularly within the Indian context, certain limitations must be acknowledged to present a balanced and academically rigorous perspective.

➤ *Lack of Primary Empirical Data*

The research is based only on secondary sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, and industry reports. No primary data was collected through interviews, surveys, or case studies. Consequently, the results are based on interpreting and synthesising available literature, which may not accurately reflect the experience or the exact particulars of Indian corporate leaders.

➤ *Limited India-Specific Scholarly Literature*

One of the significant challenges faced by the review was the lack of India-focused research studies on emotional agility. At the same time, some Indian studies mention emotional intelligence and associated soft skills, but hardly

any explicitly deal with emotional agility as a separate construct. This deficit necessitated a reliance on foreign literature and interpretative extrapolation, which, although useful, may not always accurately capture the cultural realities of the Indian workplace.

➤ *Generalisation Across Diverse Sectors*

The Indian corporate world encompasses a diverse range of businesses, including multinational companies, family-owned enterprises, government-owned enterprises, and start-ups. Owing to the theoretical nature of this research, the results are derived in a generalised and broad sense, with no precise emphasis on inter-sectoral variation. Emotional agility can be appreciated in various ways across different sectors, including technology, manufacturing, education, healthcare, and finance.

➤ *Evolving Nature of the Concept*

Emotional agility is a nascent and dynamic construct, and its scientific definitions, models, and applications are still in the process of evolving. Consequently, some theoretical views presented in the review may be open to revision or expansion in subsequent studies. The literature does not yet have a widely accepted model or standardised measurement instruments, constraining quantitative validation to focus on narrower aspects of the construct.

➤ *Language and Publication Bias*

The review only used sources published in the English language, which may have led to the omission of significant regional or vernacular studies published in other Indian languages. Additionally, the use of available digital databases may have inadvertently favoured Western scholarly publications, leading to an inevitable publication bias.

These constraints, as recognised, do not detract from the timeliness or conceptual value of the current research. Instead, they point toward significant channels for ongoing empirical investigation, cross-disciplinary cooperation, and culturally embedded leadership studies in India.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH

The present study has established the conceptual relevance and theoretical potential of emotional agility as a future-ready leadership competency, particularly in the context of Indian corporate organisations. However, given the nascent state of academic engagement with this construct in India, there exists significant scope for further research that is both empirical and context-specific. The following future research directions are proposed:

➤ *Empirical Validation of Emotional Agility in Indian Organisational Settings*

While the current paper is grounded in literature review and conceptual analysis, future studies should employ quantitative and qualitative methodologies to examine how emotional agility manifests among Indian leaders across different sectors. This may include:

- Designing and administering validated emotional agility assessment tools to Indian managerial populations.
- Conducting case studies and ethnographic research in organisations to observe how emotionally agile behaviours influence team dynamics, change readiness, and ethical decision-making.
- Exploring sector-specific differences in the application and relevance of emotional agility (e.g., IT vs public sector vs healthcare).

➤ *Development of Indigenous Frameworks and Models*

Based on our cultural sensitivities, the country needs to introduce India-specific models of emotional agility. Future scholars and stakeholders must evaluate the most appropriate, locally relevant frameworks that are best suited to specific local areas and regions. Additionally, they could adapt global models through comparative research that contrasts emotional agility constructs across different cultures.

➤ *Longitudinal Leadership Development Outcomes Studies*

There is a need for further research in the future on the long-term impact of emotional agility on leadership effectiveness, employee engagement, and organisational performance conducted through longitudinal studies. Such research could monitor shifts in leadership behaviour following training in emotional agility, measure factors such as retention and performance associated with emotionally agile leadership, and examine how they manage crises in the long term.

➤ *Integration with Other Emerging Leadership Constructs*

Future studies may examine emotional agility in various leadership types, including servant, authentic, and mindful leadership. It may also investigate emotional agility within the context of digital leadership and virtual teams, as well as the interrelationships between emotional agility and mental health outcomes in leaders.

➤ *Application in Educational and Policy Domains*

As leadership development increasingly starts in universities and training academics, research can investigate several vital areas. It can look into how to integrate emotional agility training into MBA and executive education programs. Additionally, it can evaluate government or industry-sponsored programs that aim to enhance leadership soft skills in India. Ultimately, research can inform policy recommendations for incorporating emotional agility into national skills development initiatives, such as Skill India or the National Education Policy.

Finally, the paper concludes that the field of emotional agility in Indian corporate leadership is both underexplored and rich with potential. Working together in different fields can bridge our theoretical knowledge with practical leadership. This teamwork will better prepare Indian businesses to address challenges and capitalise on emerging opportunities in a rapidly changing global market.

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