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Emotional Intelligence and Digital Transformation Adaptation among University Lecturers: Evidence from the Faculty of Economics at Hanoi University of Natural Resources and Environment

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Abstract
Digital transformation has become a strategic priority for higher education, yet its success depends not only on infrastructure and digital platforms but also on lecturers' psychological readiness and adaptive capacity. This study examines how emotional intelligence (EI) is associated with lecturers' digital transformation adaptation (DTA) through technology-acceptance beliefs derived from the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT). Drawing on the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale and UTAUT, the study conceptualises EI through four dimensions: self-emotion appraisal, others' emotion appraisal, use of emotion and regulation of emotion, and examines performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence and facilitating conditions as explanatory mechanisms. A survey of 115 lecturers at the Faculty of Economics, Hanoi University of Natural Resources and Environment, was analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling. The measurement model demonstrated adequate reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity after removing two low-loading indicators. The structural results show that performance expectancy is the strongest direct predictor of DTA (beta = 0.431, $p < 0.001$), followed by facilitating conditions (beta = 0.294, $p < 0.001$) and effort expectancy (beta = 0.275, $p < 0.001$). Social influence has no statistically significant direct effect on DTA (beta = 0.097, $p = 0.064$). EI contributes to DTA mainly through indirect pathways: self-emotion appraisal and use of emotion increase performance expectancy, while self-emotion appraisal and regulation of emotion increase effort expectancy. The model explains 67.5% of the adjusted variance in DTA and shows positive predictive relevance. The findings suggest that digital transformation in universities should integrate technology training with emotional-capability development, practical support and evidence-based communication about the pedagogical benefits of digital tools.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Digital Transformation, University Lecturers, UTAUT, PLS-SEM, Higher Education, Vietnam

1. Introduction

The digital transformation of higher education has moved from an optional innovation agenda to a core requirement of university governance, teaching and research. Digital platforms, learning management systems, online assessment tools, digital learning resources, artificial intelligence and data analytics have changed how lecturers design courses, interact with students, manage academic information and evaluate learning outcomes. In the Vietnamese higher-education context, digital transformation is also embedded in national policy priorities, including the national digital transformation programme to 2025 with orientation to 2030, which emphasises data and digital technologies as drivers of comprehensive socio-economic change (Government of Vietnam, 2020) [11].

Despite this strategic momentum, the transformation of higher education cannot be reduced to the installation of technological systems. Digital transformation requires lecturers to reconfigure established routines, redesign pedagogical practices, manage online and blended classrooms, produce digital learning materials and respond to technological interruptions or platform changes. These demands generate not only technical challenges but also emotional and psychological pressures, including anxiety, loss of confidence, perceived overload and resistance to change. In this sense, the lecturer is not merely an end user of technology but also a professional actor whose emotional resources shape the quality and sustainability of digital adoption.

Emotional intelligence (EI) offers a useful theoretical lens for understanding this human dimension. In the ability-oriented tradition, EI refers to the capacity to perceive, understand, use and regulate emotions in ways that support thinking and action (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Salovey & Mayer, 1990) [16, 17]. In organisational studies, Wong and Law (2002) [21] operationalised EI through four dimensions: self-emotion appraisal, others' emotion appraisal, use of emotion and regulation of emotion. These dimensions are particularly relevant to lecturers because digital teaching requires self-awareness under pressure, empathy toward students in mediated learning environments, motivational use of positive affect and emotional regulation when technological problems occur.

Technology-adoption research provides a complementary explanation of how users come to accept and sustain new systems. The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) identifies performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence and facilitating conditions as key determinants of technology acceptance and use (Venkatesh *et al*., 2003) [19]. In higher education, lecturers are more likely to adapt to digital transformation when they believe that technology improves teaching outcomes, when digital systems are easy to use, when professional communities encourage adoption and when technical and organisational support is available.

Existing research has examined EI in relation to teaching performance, work engagement, stress and professional effectiveness, while digital-transformation studies have often emphasised technological readiness, policy, infrastructure and user acceptance. However, fewer studies integrate EI with technology-acceptance mechanisms to explain lecturers' digital transformation adaptation (DTA), especially in the Vietnamese university setting. This study addresses that gap by testing an integrated EI-UTAUT model among lecturers at the Faculty of Economics, Hanoi University of Natural Resources and Environment (HUNRE).

The study makes three contributions. First, it positions EI as a psychological antecedent of technology-acceptance beliefs rather than as a peripheral trait. Second, it empirically tests how UTAUT beliefs mediate the relationship between EI and DTA. Third, it provides context-specific evidence from a Vietnamese higher-education institution, thereby supporting both theoretical development and practical interventions for lecturer development in the digital era.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses

2.1 Emotional intelligence in higher education

The concept of EI emerged from earlier work on social intelligence and was later developed through ability-based, mixed and organisational models. Salovey and Mayer (1990) [17] defined EI as a form of social intelligence that enables individuals to monitor their own and others' emotions and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behaviour. Mayer and Salovey (1997) [16] refined the construct into four branches: perceiving emotions, using emotions to facilitate thought, understanding emotions and managing emotions. Goleman (1995) [9] popularised the construct by linking emotional competencies to motivation, self-regulation, empathy and relationship management.

For organisational and educational research, the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) is widely used because it is concise, theoretically grounded and suitable for work settings. It conceptualises EI as self-emotion appraisal (SEA), others' emotion appraisal (OEA), use of emotion (UOE) and regulation of emotion (ROE). In teaching, SEA helps lecturers recognise their own emotional reactions when facing new pedagogical technologies; OEA helps them interpret students' needs and colleagues' reactions; UOE supports motivation and experimentation; and ROE helps lecturers remain calm and resilient in the face of digital disruptions.

Prior studies generally suggest that EI is associated with teaching effectiveness, job performance, engagement and stress management. In digital or remote teaching contexts, emotional capabilities may help teachers cope with uncertainty, maintain work engagement and sustain self-efficacy. However, the specific pathways through which EI supports digital transformation adaptation require further clarification.

2.2 Digital transformation adaptation and UTAUT

Digital transformation is commonly distinguished from digitisation and digitalisation. Digitisation refers to converting analog information into digital form, whereas digitalisation refers to using digital technologies to improve existing processes. Digital transformation involves a more fundamental reconfiguration of organisational processes, value creation, roles and culture through digital technologies (Vial, 2019) [20]. In higher education, this transformation affects curriculum design, learning resources, student interaction, assessment, data management and academic governance.

At the individual level, adaptation to digital transformation reflects a lecturer's readiness, flexibility and proactivity in learning, using and sustaining digital practices. DTA differs from simple technology use because it includes the capacity to respond to ongoing change, maintain effectiveness when systems evolve and update digital skills over time. UTAUT provides a theoretically robust explanation of the beliefs and conditions that shape such adaptation. Performance expectancy (PE) concerns the perceived work benefits of technology; effort expectancy (EE) reflects perceived ease of use; social influence (SI) captures perceived pressure or encouragement from important others; and facilitating conditions (FC) capture the perceived availability of resources and support (Venkatesh *et al*., 2003) [19].

2.3 Emotional intelligence as an antecedent of UTAUT beliefs

EI may shape technology-adoption beliefs because emotions influence how individuals appraise new demands, evaluate difficulty and mobilise effort. Lecturers with higher SEA are more likely to recognise anxiety or hesitation when using digital systems and reinterpret these feelings constructively. This may strengthen the belief that technology can enhance professional performance and reduce perceived effort. Similarly, UOE may help lecturers convert positive affect into experimentation and learning, thereby increasing the perceived usefulness of digital tools. ROE may reduce frustration and technostress, making systems appear easier to learn and use. OEA may strengthen sensitivity to social expectations from students, colleagues and leaders, thereby increasing perceived social influence.

Theoretically, these mechanisms align with emotion-regulation theory (Gross, 1998) [12], social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997) [3] and the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001) [8]. When users regulate emotional reactions and experience positive affect, they tend to process information more flexibly, maintain self-efficacy and appraise new systems as more manageable. Accordingly, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

- **H1:** Self-emotion appraisal positively affects performance expectancy.
- **H2:** Self-emotion appraisal positively affects effort expectancy.
- **H3:** Others' emotion appraisal positively affects social influence.
- **H4:** Use of emotion positively affects performance expectancy.
- **H5:** Regulation of emotion positively affects effort expectancy.

2.4 UTAUT beliefs and digital transformation adaptation

PE should increase DTA because lecturers who perceive clear benefits from digital tools have stronger motivation to invest effort, redesign teaching and sustain technology use. EE should also support DTA because systems perceived as easy to learn reduce cognitive load and anxiety, especially for lecturers with varying levels of digital experience. SI may encourage DTA when leaders, colleagues and students create positive norms for digital teaching. FC should strengthen DTA because infrastructure, technical support, compatible systems and institutional guidance reduce practical barriers. Therefore, the study proposes:

- **H6:** Performance expectancy positively affects digital transformation adaptation.
- **H7:** Effort expectancy positively affects digital transformation adaptation.
- **H8:** Social influence positively affects digital transformation adaptation.
- **H9:** Facilitating conditions positively affect digital transformation adaptation.

Table 1: Constructs and operational definitions

Code	Construct	Operational definition	Source
SEA	Self-emotion appraisal	Ability to recognise and understand one's own emotional states in teaching and digital work situations	WLEIS; Wong & Law (2002) [21]
OEA	Others' emotion appraisal	Ability to perceive students' and colleagues' emotional states in academic interactions	WLEIS; Wong & Law (2002) [21]
UOE	Use of emotion	Ability to use positive affect to sustain motivation, experimentation and professional goals	WLEIS; Wong & Law (2002) [21]
ROE	Regulation of emotion	Ability to remain calm, regulate negative affect and recover after digital teaching incidents	WLEIS; Wong & Law (2002) [21]
PE	Performance expectancy	Belief that digital technologies improve teaching quality and work performance	UTAUT; Venkatesh *et al.* (2003) [19]
EE	Effort expectancy	Perceived ease of learning and using digital teaching systems	UTAUT; Venkatesh *et al.* (2003) [19]
SI	Social influence	Perceived encouragement and expectations from leaders, colleagues and professional community	UTAUT; Venkatesh *et al.* (2003) [19]
FC	Facilitating conditions	Perceived availability of resources, infrastructure and technical support	UTAUT; Venkatesh *et al.* (2003) [19]
DTA	Digital transformation adaptation	Readiness, flexibility and proactivity in adopting new digital tools and maintaining teaching effectiveness	Adapted from technology-adaptation literature

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Context

The study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional design supported by a preliminary qualitative refinement of the questionnaire. The empirical context was the Faculty of Economics at HUNRE. The faculty offers training and research in business administration, accounting and auditing, tourism and hospitality management, logistics, digital economy and related fields. Digital transformation has direct implications for these programmes because lecturers increasingly use digital tools for teaching, learning management, academic communication, assessment and professional development.

Before the main survey, the questionnaire was reviewed and adjusted through expert consultation and preliminary interviews with lecturers who had experience using digital platforms for teaching. This step helped improve wording, reduce overlap among items and clarify specialised concepts such as digital transformation adaptation, performance expectancy and effort expectancy.

3.2 Measurement

The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). EI was measured using items adapted from WLEIS (Wong & Law, 2002) [21], covering SEA, OEA, UOE and ROE. UTAUT constructs were adapted from Venkatesh *et al.* (2003) [19], covering PE, EE, SI and FC. DTA was operationalised as lecturers' readiness, confidence, flexibility and proactivity in adapting to newly implemented digital systems and digital teaching requirements. The final instrument contained 34 substantive items before measurement-model refinement: 16 EI items, 13 UTAUT items and 5 DTA items.

3.3 Sample and Data Collection

The target respondents were lecturers at the Faculty of Economics. A convenience sampling strategy was used because the study focused on a specific faculty context and required respondents with direct experience of digital teaching tools. Data were collected from 20 March to 6 April 2026 through direct and online survey distribution. A total of 120 responses were received; after data screening, five incomplete or low-quality responses were removed. The final dataset comprised 115 valid responses.

The sample was relatively balanced by gender, with 52.2% male and 47.8% female respondents. Most lecturers were aged 25-44, and the largest group had 6-10 years of teaching experience. Nearly half of the respondents held a master's degree, while around one quarter held a doctorate. All respondents reported at least moderate use of digital technology, with 51.3% reporting high or very high use.

Table 2: Sample profile (n = 115)

Category	Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	60	52.2
Gender	Female	55	47.8
Age	25-34	52	45.2
Age	35-44	55	47.8
Age	45 or older	8	6.9
Teaching experience	Up to 5 years	28	24.3
Teaching experience	6-10 years	55	47.8
Teaching experience	11 years or more	32	27.8
Academic degree	Bachelor	34	29.6
Academic degree	Master	53	46.1
Academic degree	Doctorate	28	24.3
Specialisation	Business administration/marketing	49	42.6
Specialisation	Accounting/auditing	26	22.6
Specialisation	Logistics	17	14.8
Specialisation	Tourism/hospitality management	19	16.5
Specialisation	Digital economy	4	3.5
Use of digital technology	Moderate	56	48.7
Use of digital technology	High or very high	59	51.3

3.4 Data Analysis

The data were analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS. PLS-SEM was appropriate because the model included multiple latent constructs, mediation mechanisms and a modest sample size, and because the study aimed to explain and predict DTA rather than only confirm a covariance-based model (Hair *et al*., 2017) [13]. The analysis followed a two-stage procedure. First, the measurement model was assessed through outer loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), Fornell-Larcker criterion and the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT). Second, the structural model was evaluated through inner VIF, path coefficients, t-statistics, p-values, R-square, f-square and PLSpredict indicators. Bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was used to test statistical significance.

4. Results

4.1 Measurement Model

The initial outer-loading assessment indicated that two indicators, OEA2 and ROE3, had loadings below the recommended threshold of 0.70. These indicators were removed to improve measurement quality. After refinement, all retained indicators had acceptable outer loadings, ranging from 0.765 to 0.872. The reliability and convergent validity results are reported in Table 3. Cronbach's alpha values range from 0.791 to 0.868, composite reliability rho_c values range from 0.878 to 0.905 and AVE values range from 0.655 to 0.721. These results exceed commonly accepted thresholds and indicate adequate internal consistency and convergent validity.

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and HTMT. The square roots of AVE were higher than corresponding inter-construct correlations, and all HTMT values were below 0.90. The highest HTMT value was 0.834 for ROE and EE, which remained within the recommended boundary. These results support adequate discriminant validity among the constructs.

Table 3: Reliability and convergent validity

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	rho_a	rho_c	AVE
DTA	0.868	0.869	0.905	0.655
EE	0.795	0.803	0.880	0.709
FC	0.806	0.806	0.886	0.721
OEA	0.805	0.812	0.884	0.719
PE	0.831	0.833	0.888	0.665
ROE	0.791	0.792	0.878	0.705
SEA	0.834	0.837	0.890	0.669
SI	0.793	0.799	0.879	0.707
UOE	0.845	0.856	0.895	0.681

4.2 Structural Model

The inner VIF values were below conventional cut-off values, indicating that multicollinearity was not a serious concern. The structural-path results are presented in Table 4. Among the antecedents of UTAUT beliefs, SEA positively affects PE (beta = 0.479, $p < 0.001$) and EE (beta = 0.347, $p < 0.001$); OEA positively affects SI (beta = 0.563, $p < 0.001$); UOE positively affects PE (beta = 0.288, $p = 0.007$); and ROE positively affects EE (beta = 0.490, $p < 0.001$). These findings support H1-H5.

Among the predictors of DTA, PE has the strongest direct effect (beta = 0.431, $p < 0.001$), followed by FC (beta = 0.294, $p < 0.001$) and EE (beta = 0.275, $p < 0.001$). SI does not have a statistically significant direct effect on DTA at the 5% level (beta = 0.097, $p = 0.064$). Thus, H6, H7 and H9 are supported, whereas H8 is not supported.

Table 4: Direct effects and hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Path	beta	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	SEA -> PE	0.479	5.109	0.000	Supported
H2	SEA -> EE	0.347	4.461	0.000	Supported
H3	OEA -> SI	0.563	5.875	0.000	Supported
H4	UOE -> PE	0.288	2.695	0.007	Supported
H5	ROE -> EE	0.490	6.147	0.000	Supported
H6	PE -> DTA	0.431	5.855	0.000	Supported
H7	EE -> DTA	0.275	4.933	0.000	Supported
H8	SI -> DTA	0.097	1.852	0.064	Not supported
H9	FC -> DTA	0.294	5.100	0.000	Supported

4.3 Mediation Effects

Table 5 reports the specific indirect effects. Four indirect pathways are statistically significant. SEA influences DTA through PE (beta = 0.206, $p < 0.001$) and through EE (beta = 0.096, $p = 0.002$). UOE influences DTA through PE (beta = 0.124, $p = 0.016$). ROE influences DTA through EE (beta = 0.135, $p < 0.001$). In contrast, the OEA -> SI -> DTA pathway is not statistically significant (beta = 0.055, $p = 0.094$), consistent with the non-significant direct effect of SI on DTA. The results therefore indicate that EI contributes to DTA primarily by strengthening lecturers' perceptions of technology usefulness and ease of use rather than through social-norm pressure.

Table 5: Specific indirect effects

Indirect path	beta	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
SEA -> PE -> DTA	0.206	3.894	0.000	Significant
ROE -> EE -> DTA	0.135	4.033	0.000	Significant
UOE -> PE -> DTA	0.124	2.405	0.016	Significant
SEA -> EE -> DTA	0.096	3.133	0.002	Significant
OEA -> SI -> DTA	0.055	1.674	0.094	Not significant

4.4 Explanatory power, effect size and predictive relevance

The model explains a substantial proportion of the variance in lecturers' DTA. The adjusted R-square for DTA is 0.675, meaning that PE, EE, SI and FC explain 67.5% of the variance in DTA. The adjusted R-square values for EE, PE and SI are 0.526, 0.419 and 0.311 respectively, indicating that EI dimensions provide meaningful explanatory power for technology-acceptance beliefs. PLSpredict results show positive Q^2predict values for all endogenous constructs, supporting predictive relevance.

Table 6: R-square and predictive relevance

Endogenous construct	R-square	Adjusted R-square	Q^2predict	RMSE	MAE
DTA	0.687	0.675	0.562	0.677	0.517
EE	0.535	0.526	0.518	0.711	0.571
PE	0.429	0.419	0.398	0.799	0.598
SI	0.317	0.311	0.282	0.870	0.690

Effect-size analysis further clarifies the relative contribution of each predictor. PE has a large effect on DTA ($f^2 = 0.410$), FC and EE have medium effects ($f^2 = 0.227$ and 0.170 respectively), while SI has only a small effect ($f^2 = 0.024$). For the antecedent relationships, OEA has a large effect on SI ($f^2 = 0.463$), ROE has a large effect on EE ($f^2 = 0.380$), and SEA has a medium-to-large effect on PE ($f^2 = 0.330$). These findings help prioritise intervention strategies: improving lecturers' perception of the pedagogical value of technology and ensuring practical support should be more influential than relying solely on social pressure.

Table 7: Effect sizes (f^2)

Relationship	f^2	Interpretation
PE -> DTA	0.410	Large
FC -> DTA	0.227	Medium
EE -> DTA	0.170	Medium
SI -> DTA	0.024	Small
ROE -> EE	0.380	Large
SEA -> EE	0.191	Medium
SEA -> PE	0.330	Medium-to-large
UOE -> PE	0.119	Small-to-medium
OEA -> SI	0.463	Large

5. Discussion

The findings provide empirical support for an integrated EI-UTAUT explanation of lecturers' adaptation to digital transformation. EI does not appear as a simple direct managerial slogan; rather, it operates through specific cognitive and behavioural mechanisms. Lecturers who better understand and use their own emotions are more likely to perceive digital technologies as beneficial to teaching performance. Lecturers who regulate emotions effectively are more likely to perceive digital tools as manageable and easier to use. These mechanisms are theoretically coherent because emotional awareness and regulation reduce defensive reactions to change, increase learning persistence and support more positive appraisals of technology.

The strongest direct predictor of DTA is PE. This result implies that lecturers adapt to digital transformation most strongly when they can see concrete pedagogical and professional value: better lecture quality, faster work completion, improved classroom management and more effective achievement of teaching goals. This is consistent with UTAUT, in which PE is often the most powerful determinant of technology-use intention and behaviour (Venkatesh *et al*., 2003) [19]. For university managers, the implication is that digital-transformation initiatives must be communicated and implemented through demonstrable academic benefits rather than abstract policy language.

FC also plays an important role. Even emotionally capable and motivated lecturers may not adapt sustainably if infrastructure, technical support and compatible systems are lacking. This finding confirms that adaptation is not only an individual trait but also an organisational outcome. Digital transformation therefore requires an ecosystem of training, hardware, software, help-desk support, stable platforms and clear procedures. In practice, strengthening FC may also reduce perceived effort and emotional stress.

EE significantly affects DTA, showing that lecturers' adaptation improves when digital systems are easy to learn and use. This is particularly important in a faculty where lecturers vary by age, teaching experience, academic degree and level of technology use. Usability, platform consistency and step-by-step support can reduce cognitive load and prevent avoidance behaviour. Emotional regulation may further enhance this pathway because lecturers who manage frustration and anxiety are more likely to persist until they become proficient.

The non-significant direct effect of SI on DTA is theoretically noteworthy. Although OEA strongly predicts SI, SI does not translate into significant adaptation. One possible interpretation is that lecturers may recognise expectations from leaders and colleagues, but social pressure alone is insufficient unless accompanied by perceived usefulness, ease of use and facilitating resources. In higher education, professional autonomy may also reduce the direct force of normative pressure. This result cautions against relying only on administrative requirements or peer pressure to promote digital transformation.

6. Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to the literature in three ways. First, it extends EI research by positioning emotional capabilities as antecedents of technology-acceptance beliefs in higher education. Rather than treating EI only as a predictor of performance or well-being, the study shows how specific EI dimensions shape PE, EE and SI. Second, it extends UTAUT by integrating emotional antecedents into the model. This integration responds to the human-centred nature of digital transformation and helps explain why users with similar infrastructure may form different beliefs about technology. Third, it contributes evidence from Vietnam, a context in which higher-education digital transformation is developing rapidly but remains underrepresented in international empirical research.

7. Practical Implications

The findings point to several practical implications for university leaders and faculty managers. First, digital-transformation programmes should emphasise performance benefits. Training should not be limited to technical instructions; it should show how digital tools improve lecture design, student engagement, assessment, feedback and academic productivity. Demonstration classes, peer showcases and evidence of learning improvement can strengthen PE.

Second, universities should reduce perceived effort through user-centred training. Training modules should be short, practical and differentiated by proficiency level. Lecturers who are less confident with technology may need guided practice, checklists and responsive technical support rather than generic workshops. Platform simplification and standardisation can also strengthen EE.

Third, emotional-capability development should be integrated into lecturer development. Workshops on stress regulation, emotional self-awareness, classroom empathy and coping with technological incidents can complement digital-skills training. The significant indirect effects through PE and EE suggest that developing SEA, UOE and ROE may indirectly improve digital adaptation by changing how lecturers appraise usefulness and difficulty.

Fourth, universities should invest in facilitating conditions. Stable infrastructure, compatible systems, timely help-desk support, digital learning resources and clear institutional procedures are essential. Because FC directly predicts DTA, organisational support should be treated as a core component of transformation rather than an auxiliary service.

Finally, social influence should be used carefully. Leadership expectations and peer norms can create awareness, but the present results suggest that social pressure is insufficient on its own. It should be combined with practical support and clear evidence of professional value.

8. Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study used a cross-sectional survey design, which limits causal inference. Although the model is theoretically directional, longitudinal or experimental designs would provide stronger evidence on how EI and technology beliefs evolve during digital-transformation implementation. Second, the sample was drawn from one faculty at one university; therefore, the findings should be generalised with caution. Future studies should test the model across multiple universities, disciplines and regions. Third, the study relied on self-reported data, which may be affected by common-method bias and social desirability. Future research could combine survey data with system-use logs, peer assessment or qualitative interviews. Fourth, although the model explains substantial variance in DTA, it does not include all relevant factors, such as digital self-efficacy, technostress, leadership style, organisational culture or prior training. These variables may enrich future models.

9. Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and lecturers' digital transformation adaptation through UTAUT beliefs. Based on survey data from 115 lecturers at the Faculty of Economics, HUNRE, the results show that EI contributes to adaptation mainly through performance expectancy and effort expectancy. PE is the strongest direct predictor of DTA, followed by FC and EE, whereas SI is not statistically significant. These findings demonstrate that the success of digital transformation in higher education depends on both human emotional capabilities and the perceived value, usability and support conditions of digital systems. Universities seeking sustainable digital transformation should therefore move beyond infrastructure-centred approaches and design integrated development programmes that combine digital skills, emotional capability, practical support and pedagogical evidence.

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