

# Applied Leadership and Management in the Workplace

## Module Assignment Submission

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## Introduction

Emotional intelligence and mindfulness are now an important part of the modern workplace because they influence how people communicate with each other and build workplace relationships. As many jobs involve working under stressful conditions, being able to recognise and manage emotions may be a key part of how employees grow and how a business performs (Landry, 2019). This report explores the main ideas behind emotional intelligence, including the work of Mayer, Salovey and Goleman. By examining the strengths and limitations of these theories, it becomes easier to understand how emotional intelligence may support workforce development and organisational performance (Mayer & Salovey, 1997) (Goleman, 1995). This report also looks at mindfulness and how emotions affect workplace performance. By discussing workplace examples, the report examines how mindfulness and emotional intelligence may work together to help individuals manage stress, communicate more effectively, and respond more calmly during difficult workplace situations (Kabat-Zinn, 1994).

## Critically evaluate the theories of Emotional Intelligence and their relevance to Workforce Development and Business Performance

### What is Emotional Intelligence?

Emotional intelligence is about understanding your own emotions and being able to deal with other people's emotions properly too. (Goleman D. , 1998) identified emotional awareness, emotional control, and empathy as three main aspects of emotional intelligence. Emotional awareness is knowing how you feel and why, emotional control is being able to stay calm and manage reactions and empathy is understanding how other people are feeling. Emotional intelligence is really important in leadership because good leaders need to communicate well, handle problems professionally and build good relationships with their team. A leader with strong E.I can help create a more positive workplace and make employees feel understood and motivated (Goleman D. , 1995). In the workplace emotional intelligence can be measured through teamwork, communication, employee feedback, performance reviews, or conflict (O'connor, Hill, Kaya, & Matrin, 2019).

### Main Theories of Emotional Intelligence

John D. Mayer and Peter Salovey look at emotional intelligence as a set of mental skills (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Their idea is that people can learn to notice, understand and then use their feelings to help them make better choices. Instead of focusing on someone's personality this theory is more about how the brain processes emotional information to solve problems (Mayer, John D.; Caruso, David R.; Salovey, Peter, 2016). Essentially, it views E.I as a skill that gets stronger as a

person gains more life experience (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 1999). In a workplace, this theory is useful for things like leadership and communication. Staff who can read a room well are usually better at staying calm and making smart decisions when work gets stressful but there are some fair criticisms of this model. (Peptrides & Furnham, 2003) argues that it ignores how a person's natural personality or background affects their reactions for example, in a high-pressure job an employee's ability to stay patient often comes from their own natural resilience rather than just data processing.

Daniel Goleman famously argued that emotional intelligence can be more important for career success than traditional IQ. His model focuses on five main areas (self-awareness, Self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills) (Goleman, D, 1995). Because these areas are all about how we act and get along with others, they have a direct impact on how well a team handles pressure. Goleman's ideas are popular because they are very practical and it is easy to see how these skills apply to daily work. But some experts, like (Locke, 2005) think the model is too broad because it mixes actual intelligence with personality traits. On top of that, while Goleman says high intelligence leads to star performance, researchers like (Zeidner, Matthews, & Roberts, 2004) are more cautious, as they point out that personal skills can only do so much if the workplace culture is poor or if there aren't enough staff to handle the workload.

### Comparing the Theories

Both of these theories are useful, but they focus on different things. (Mayer & Salovey, 1997) are mostly interested in the mental side and how we recognise and manage emotions, while (Goleman, D, 1995) is more focused on how those emotions play out in a job role like leadership or teamwork. This is why Mayer and Salovey theory often feels more like a school or research project because it tries to measure emotional intelligence as a specific set of abilities. On the other hand, Goleman's ideas feel more at home in a workplace because he links them directly to how people talk to each other and handle pressure as a team. However, both ideas have their flaws. Mayer and Salovey's model can be criticised for ignoring how a person's natural personality or their life at home affects how they act at work. At the same time, Goleman's theory can be seen as too broad because he mixes emotional intelligence with personality traits, so it is hard to measure where one ends and the other begins (Locke, 2005).

In the end even though they have different starting points, both theories agree on the main point that being emotionally aware is what makes you better at your job. Whether you view it as a mental skill or a personality trait, both suggest that understanding emotions helps people stay calm, make better decisions, and get along with colleagues during stressful situations. By looking at both theories together, you get a much better understanding on how emotions affect everything from communication to overall performance.

## What is Workforce Development?

Workforce development is about helping employees improve their skills, knowledge, and overall ability to do their jobs well. This can include things like training, learning on the job and ongoing support from the organisation. It is important because it helps employees continue developing in their roles while also supporting the performance of the organisation. Some definitions focus more on the organisation and describe workplace development as a way to improve productivity and business performance. And others focus more attention on the individual and highlight career progression, personal growth, and continuous learning (Jacobs & Hawley, 2009) (Noe, 2017). This shows that workforce development is not only about improving business results but also about helping employees build confidence, knowledge, and workplace skills over time. The level of support employees receive can vary between organisations. Some workplaces invest more in training and employee development while others might pay more attention maintaining productivity and meeting workplace demands. This can sometimes create challenges for employees if they are limited opportunities for support or growth in the workplace.

In care environments, workforce development can be particularly important because employees often work in demanding situations where communication, teamwork and emotional awareness are needed on a daily basis. So, by developing these skills employees have a better chance of being able to manage pressure more effectively and maintain professional standards in work (Garavan, Carbery, & Rock, 2012).

## Emotional Intelligence and Workforce Development

Emotional intelligence plays an important part in workforce development especially in how employees learn, communicate, and respond to workplace challenges. Skills like self-awareness, emotional control and communication can affect how individuals respond to feedback, adapt to change and work with others. This can mean that employees with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to be open to learning and work more effectively (Cherniss, 2012). Emotional intelligence can also be important in leadership development because understanding emotions and managing relationships may help managers communicate better, handle conflict and support employees fully in the workplace (Boyatzis, 2009). In workplace environments where teamwork and communication are necessary, emotional intelligence can help create more supportive and cooperative working relationships.

In care settings emotional intelligence may support workforce development because employees work in an emotionally demanding environment where emotional awareness, professionalism and understanding other people's needs are paramount (Gray, 2009). So, staff who are able to manage these emotions appropriately may find it easier to work under pressure and maintain professional relationships with colleagues, residents, and residents' families.

## Emotional Intelligence and Business Performance

How employees handle themselves and interact with others has a significant impact on how a business actually performs. It comes down to things like emotional management and good communication because when people can keep calm and talk effectively, they make better decisions and work much better as a team. If you can manage your emotions, you are more likely to stay on task and stay professional when things get stressful. This also carries over to how customers are treated. If an employee is emotionally aware they are usually much better at handling complaints or tense moments without losing their patience and that is a big plus for customer satisfaction and the overall quality of service (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005).

In a care home setting this is even more critical because staff are constantly balancing the needs of residents, families, and their own team members. So having that emotional awareness helps keep the peace, keep the team close and ensures that the level of care does not drop just because the shift gets difficult.

That said, emotional intelligence is not a magic fix all. It does not explain business success all on its own because experience, leadership, and the workplace culture all matter as much (Locke, 2005). In the care sector they may have the most emotional intelligent team in the world but if you are short staffed or everyone is overworked, morale and performance is still going to take a hit. Because there are so many factors like staffing levels and support systems it is hard to pin success on emotional intelligence (Joseph & Newman, 2010).

## Is Emotional Intelligence important for Business Performance?

There is no doubt that emotional intelligence influences performance, though people still argue over exactly how much it matters. Some research shows it can improve leadership and teamwork which naturally helps the organisation do better overall (Côté, 2014 ). Staff who are emotionally aware are better at talking through problems, handling conflict, and working under pressure, all of which are great for business. However, emotional intelligence is not a guarantee that things will go well, technical skills, experience and having the right systems in place are just as important for getting the job done (Zeidner, Matthews, & Roberts, 2004). You can still end up with low morale or poor performance if the wider problems in the company are not fixed, no matter how emotionally intelligent the team is. So, this shows that while emotional intelligence is a big part of the puzzle, it is just one factor among many, rather than the sole reason a business succeeds.

**Use theories of Emotional Intelligence and Mindfulness to review the effect of emotions on your own workplace performance.**

## What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the practice of being aware of thoughts, emotions, and surroundings in the present moment (Kabat-Zinn J. , 2003). It encourages individuals to slow down and think about emotional reactions before responding. Jon Kabat-Zinn helped develop mindfulness approaches by focusing on awareness and accepting thoughts and feelings without judgement. It is a tool used to help people understand their emotions more clearly and respond to situations in a more productive and controlled way. Mindfulness has also become more recognised in workplace settings because emotions affect concentration, communication, and overall performances so by being more aware of emotions, it can help individuals handle pressure better and avoid reacting negatively to tricky situations (Hülshager, Alberts, Feinholdt, & Lang, 2013).

## Main Mindfulness Theories

Jon Kabat-Zinn developed Mindfulness- Based stress reduction (MBSR) to help people manage stress by building better emotional awareness. The main idea is to pay attention to your thoughts and feelings in the present moment without judging them or reacting to them too quickly (Kabat-Zinn J. , 2003). While it started out in healthcare it is now used a lot in the workplace because it helps employees handle heavy pressure and emotional demands much more effectively. In the work environment, MBSR helps staff stay composed when things get intense and it makes people more aware of how their emotions are affecting their communication and behaviour. This is really useful in high pressure jobs where conflict and heavy workloads are common. So, by encouraging people to slow down and notice their emotional triggers, MBSR helps cut down on impulsive reactions and keeps everyone acting professional during challenging times (Hülshager, Alberts, Feinholdt, & Lang, 2013).

Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) created by (Segal, Williams, & Teasdale, 2002) takes mindfulness and adds cognitive techniques to it. This approach is about spotting negative thought patterns and understanding how they influence the way we act. Instead of just reacting automatically to stress or frustration, employees learn to catch these negative thoughts before they turn into a full-blown emotional response. At work MBCT can help employees see when stress or downward spirals are starting to interfere with their concentration or decision making. This supports their overall wellbeing by helping them handle pressure better and stops their personal stress from damaging their work relationships or their performance (Glomb, Duffy, Bono, & Yang, 2011).

Both of these methods are about being more aware of your emotions so you can manage your reactions better. The main difference is that MBSR is more about reducing stress and staying in the moment, whereas MBCT is more about spotting negative thinking and understanding how it affects your mood. While both can really help workplace wellbeing, it is worth noting that mindfulness is not a one size fits all solution. some researchers argue that it does not work the same for everyone as

people respond to stress and emotional pressure in quite different ways (Montero-Marín, Crane, Gauntlett-Gilbert, & Williams, 2022).

### How Mindfulness and Emotional Intelligence Work Together

Mindfulness and emotional intelligence are closely connected because both involve being more aware of emotions and responding to situations properly. While mindfulness encourages people to pay attention to their thoughts and feelings in the moment, emotional intelligence is about recognising, understanding, and managing those emotions effectively (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Working together, they help individuals stay calm during stressful moments at work rather than just reacting straight away. Mindfulness strengthens E.I by enhancing self-awareness, which Daniel Goleman identified as a core part of the model (Goleman D. , 1998). When employees become more aware of their emotional reactions as they happen, they can better understand how stress and frustration is affecting their communication and behaviour. This is especially helpful in demanding jobs where intense emotional situations are common.

Mindfulness also helps emotional management by encouraging people to pause and think more carefully before they react (Brown, 2003). This simple pause can help reduce conflict, improve work relationships, and ensure communication stays professional during difficult moments. Employees who are more emotionally aware usually find it easier to stay focused and handle stress better when things get busy and full on. Both mindfulness and emotional intelligence can provide a lift to workplace performance because they encourage better awareness, communication, and more appropriate responses to stress. However, even though they are linked, they are not exactly the same thing. Mindfulness is more about awareness and paying attention to the now, whereas emotional intelligence focuses on understanding emotions and using them effectively in social and professional situations (Schutte, Malouff, & Bhullar, 2007).

### Workplace Situation and Emotional Performance

The author works as a housekeeper within a care home, a role that is physically demanding but also carries a heavy emotional load. Daily responsibilities involve cleaning resident's rooms, cleaning all main areas, maintaining hygiene standards, and supporting infection control. There are also frequent shifts within the laundry department. While these tasks might seem routine, the reality of working in a care home is often high pressure. Maintaining a safe and clean environment for vulnerable residents is a big responsibility and when staffing issues arise it becomes an environment where emotions are constantly tested.

Over recent months, the workplace has become increasingly difficult. Since January, there have been constant staff shortages due to sickness, annual leave, and

pregnancy. This has left the remaining team to pick up the slack. The author noticed that as weeks went by, the workload felt heavier and more overwhelming. On busy shifts, it often felt like a race against the clock to complete tasks while trying to keep standards high. This situation is a perfect example of how social awareness and relationship management work in the real world (Goleman D. , 1998). The author found that they had to balance their own rising stress levels while also navigating the difficult atmosphere of a team that was falling apart due to these staff shortages. It shows that in a care home; emotional intelligence is what helps a person stay professional when everyone around them is feeling the pressure. The pressure is even more intense in the laundry department because only a small number of employees are trained for this role so, any absence means a huge amount of extra work falls on those who are left. The author found that trying to juggle laundry duties alongside normal housekeeping was both mentally and physically draining. It led to genuine feelings of anxiety, especially when it felt impossible to be in two places at once. As discussed before, (Mayer & Salovey, 1997) argue that being able to regulate emotions is a vital skill, but the reality of a busy care home makes this much harder than it sounds. When a person is physically exhausted from covering other people's work, trying to keep a perfect emotional balance can feel like an extra job in itself. This shows that while the theory is important, the physical environment has a huge impact on how well someone can manage their feelings.

The stress was increased further by an upcoming inspection. Management naturally placed greater expectations on the staff to be perfect, but this put a lot of extra strain on a team that was already exhausted. The author felt a sense of frustration trying to balance management's expectations with the physical reality of the job. This constant pressure to avoid mistakes increased anxiety across the team. It created a cycle where the physical exhaustion of the staff led to constant worry about whether they were performing well enough. This situation aptly illustrates what (Bar-On, 1997) describes as the "stress management" component of emotional intelligence. According to this model when people are under pressure their stress tolerance and impulse control are tested. In the care home the more tired the employees became, the more their emotional state interfered with their ability to stay calm and focused, so this made daily workloads even more overwhelming than it actually was.

Eventually, this ongoing pressure began to take an emotional toll. The author noticed that being stressed and frustrated made it harder to stay patient or concentrate properly during the shift. Communication with colleagues started to suffer and there was added worry about work-life balance due to the uncertainty of weekend shifts. This state of emotional exhaustion is a common barrier to effective work, however, the author attempted to manage it by using basic self-awareness and self-regulation techniques (Goleman D. , 1998). By recognising when frustration was beginning to surface and taking a moment to breathe and step back the author was able to prevent their emotions from negatively affecting their performance.

## How Mindfulness Affects Their Work

Reflecting on these experiences helped the author see how constant pressure at the care home can slowly drain someone's emotional battery. When you are dealing with staff shortages and a never-ending list of rooms to clean, mental exhaustion is not just a feeling. It becomes a barrier to doing the job well and the author noticed that stress does not usually happen all at once, it builds up shift after shift.

The author found that becoming more aware of these emotional triggers is the first step to staying professional. In Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) there is a big focus on moving away from "auto pilot" (Kabat-Zinn J. , 2003). In a care home, it is very easy to work on autopilot when you are rushing from one task to the next without thinking. However, when the author practiced a simple MBSR technique, like a three-minute breathing space, it allowed for a moment of calm. This pause made it easier to stop frustration turning into a short-tempered comment to a colleague and help keep the whole team morale from dropping. The author also realised that the Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) is useful for handling the mental chatter that happens during a busy shift. (Segal, Williams, & Teasdale, 2002) talk about stepping back and learning to see a thought as a thought, not a fact. For example, when the author felt overwhelmed in the laundry room and thought they were never going to get the work finished they used the MBCT techniques to help them recognise this as a stress related thought rather than the absolute truth. This reduced the urge to panic and allowed the author to focus on one task at a time, which improved their speed and accuracy.

This reflection also showed that workplace stress does not always stay at work. Worrying about weekend shifts or staffing levels often followed the author home, affecting their sleep and rest days. By using the non-judgemental awareness found in mindfulness, the author started to notice when they were ruminating or overthinking work issues. Learning to leave work at the door is an important part of workforce development because an employee who cannot switch off will eventually burn out (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). All in all, this review shows that unmanaged stress is a slow leak that eventually affects a person's patience and performance. Developing these mindfulness skills is not just about feeling calm, it is a practical way to manage the physical and mental demands of a care home environment. By using these tools, the author was able to maintain better communication and protect their own wellbeing, even when the workplace felt chaotic.

## Conclusion

This report has looked at the main ideas behind emotional intelligence and how they fit into staff development and business success. By looking at theories from (Goleman, D, 1995) and (Mayer & Salovey, 1997), it is clear that being able to handle emotions is a key part of how people work together and lead others. Of course, while emotional intelligence is important, it works alongside other things like a person's experience, their training, and the kind of support they get from the

company. The work also looks at mindfulness, specifically MBSR (Kabat-Zinn J. , 1994) and MBCT (Segal, Williams, & Teasdale, 2002). These theories show that mindfulness and emotional intelligence go hand in hand. Together, they give people a way to stay aware of their feelings and manage their stress, even when the job gets difficult.

By looking at the reality of working in a care home, this report shows the real impact that staff shortages and heavy workloads can have. The authors own experience proves that if stress and frustration are not managed, they can quickly start to affect concentration and how people get along with their colleagues. It shows that in a high-pressure environment, staying aware of your emotions is what helps you keep doing your job well. In the end this report shows that emotional intelligence and mindfulness are practical skills for any workplace. They help people stay calm, act professionally, and keep positive relationships that a business needs to run smoothly.

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