



The Role of Emotional Intelligence and Mindfulness in Contemporary Organisations

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Section A: Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace

1. Introduction

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has become one of the most influential concepts in contemporary organisational behaviour. Salovey and Mayer (1990, p. 189) first defined EI as “the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions”. Goleman (1995, p. 34) later popularised the construct, describing it as a set of abilities “such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control the impulses and delay gratification; to regulate one’s mood and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathise and to hope”. Indeed, Ovans (2015) observes that EI has evolved from a minor idea into a “key leadership skill” demanded by employers. This evolution coincides with the challenges of managing multiple generations working simultaneously in the workplace. This report critically analyses three main models of EI: Goleman’s competency framework, Mayer-Salovey’s ability model, and Bar-On’s emotional-social intelligence model. It then evaluates how EI influences performance, collaboration, and wellbeing. Additionally, since each generation has unique values, expectations, and communication styles—making generational diversity a source of both creativity and conflict—the report examines Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. It shows how EI and mindfulness can assist organisations in recruiting, managing, and retaining suitable staff to benefit their business.

2. The Emotional Intelligence Models

Modern organisations operate in environments characterised by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. Under these conditions, relying solely on traditional cognitive measures such as IQ or technical skills is inadequate for staying competitive. To establish a solid strategic framework, organisations need to assess EI using three key theoretical perspectives.

2.1 The Mayer-Salovey’s ability model

Mayer and Salovey view EI as a distinct form of mental ability, in which emotional information is processed similarly to cognitive information in intelligence. Their Four-Branch Model describes a clear hierarchical progression: **perceiving emotions-** accurately identifying emotions in faces, voices, and situations; **facilitating thought using emotions-**

harnessing emotional states to support reasoning and creativity; **understanding emotions-**comprehending emotional language and how emotions evolve; **managing emotions-**regulating emotions in oneself and others to attain goals (Salovey and Mayer, 1990).

Since they view even the most fundamental skills and management as highly sophisticated and consider EI a form of intelligence, it is assessed using performance-based tests rather than self-reports.

2.2. Goleman's Emotional Competencies Model

Daniel Goleman shifted the focus by linking emotional skills directly to work performance and leadership quality. His model highlights learned abilities that lead to outstanding performance. Goleman's refined framework (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee, 2002) organises EI into four domains arranged along two dimensions: the self and the social, and two axes: recognition and regulation (Figure 1). On the **Recognition** axis, **self-awareness** encompasses emotional self-awareness, accurate self-assessment, and self-confidence, while **social awareness** comprises empathy, organisational awareness, and service orientation. On the **Regulation** axis, **self-management** includes self-control, transparency, adaptability, achievement drive and initiative. At the same time, **relationship management** covers inspirational leadership, developing others, influence, acting as a change catalyst, conflict management, building bonds, and teamwork and collaboration. The model is explicitly leadership-oriented: Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002) argue that "great leadership works through the emotions".

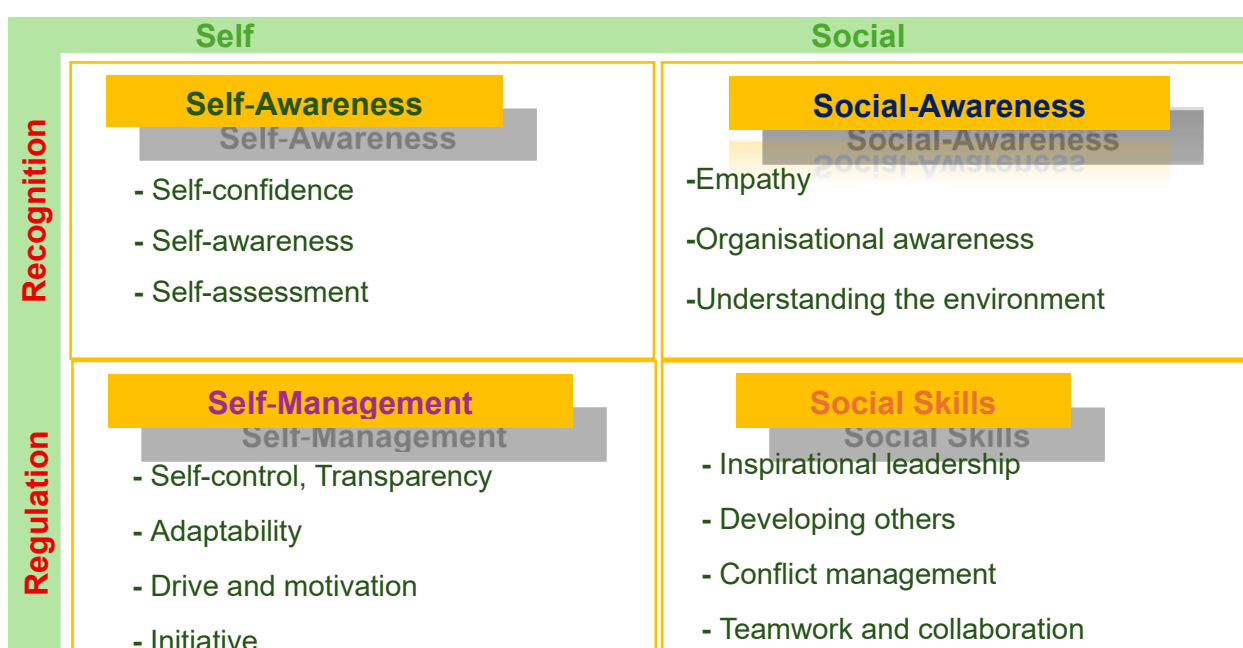


Figure 1: Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Framework (2002). Source: Self-made

However, the framework helps individuals first recognise emotions in themselves and others and then regulate them to achieve constructive outcomes.

2.3. The Bar-On Model of Emotional-Social Intelligence

Bar-On (200, p.14) defines emotional-social intelligence as “a cross-section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that determine how effectively we understand and express ourselves, understand others and relate with them, and cope with daily demands”. The model contains five composite dimensions: **intrapersonal** (self-awareness, assertiveness, independence, self-regard, self-actualisation), **interpersonal** (empathy, social responsibility, interpersonal relationship), **stress management** (stress tolerance, impulse control), **adaptability** (reality testing, flexibility, problem solving), and **general mood** (optimism, happiness)-all of which converge on **effective performance**. (Figure2) Its distinctive contribution is the explicit integration of coping and mood, which directly links EI to well-being.

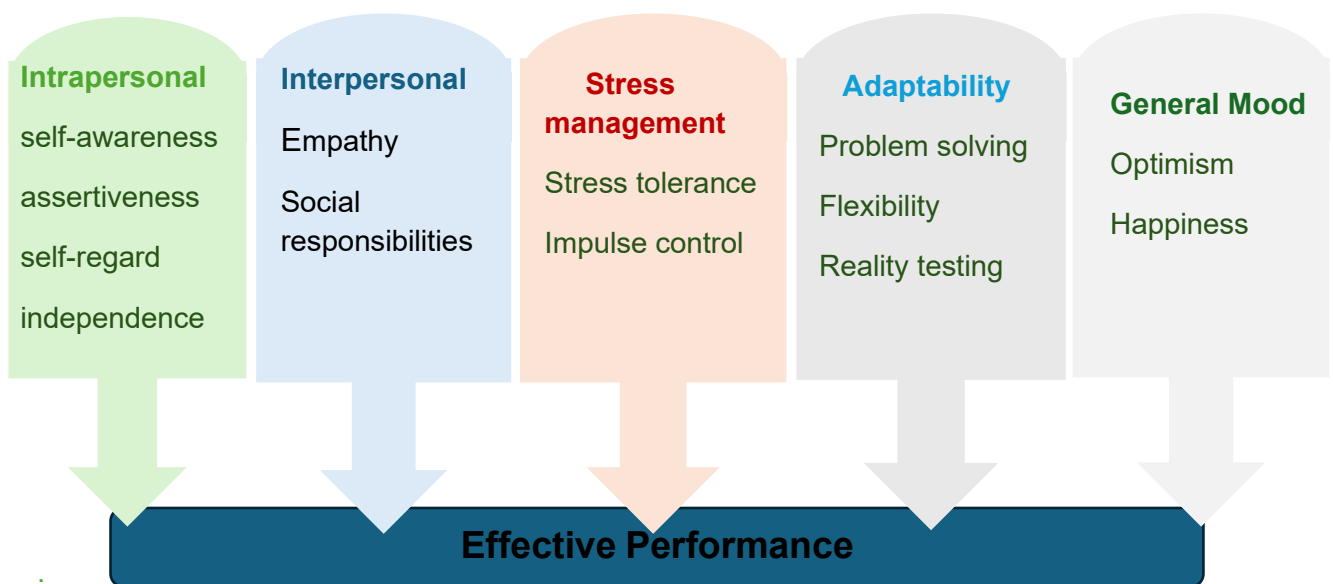


Figure 2: Reuven Bar-On Model of Emotional-Social Intelligence. Source: self-made.

Among the three models, the Mayer-Salovey framework is the narrowest and most scientific, viewing EI as a measurable ability. Goleman’s model is broader and more focused on practical management, combining innate abilities with learned skills. Bar-On’s model falls in between, integrating traits, skills, and coping resources. Collectively, these models imply that emotions can be identified, understood, and intentionally managed to support organisational objectives.

3. How Employees Can Use EI to Improve Performance

The core components of EI translate directly into individual performance. **Self-awareness** enables employees to recognise their strengths and limitations honestly, allowing them to seek development where it is needed. For example, a project analyst who recognises that time pressure makes him irritable can proactively schedule complex tasks earlier in the day and request support before the deadline slips rather than after. **Self-regulation** helps employees remain calm under pressure and make better decisions: a customer service adviser, for example, who pauses before responding to an aggressive complaint avoids an impulsive reply, retains the customer and protects the organisation's reputation. This reflects Goleman's (1995) emphasis on the capacity "to control impulse and delay gratification" as central to effective functioning. **Motivation**, the internal drive to achieve beyond external rewards, sustains productivity and goal attainment. Emotionally intelligent employees interpret setbacks as feedback rather than failure, and "persist in the face of frustration" (Goleman, 1995). In a sales environment, for instance, an intrinsically motivated representative who reframes a lost contract as market intelligence typically outperforms colleagues who dwell on the rejection. In each case, EI converts emotional information into more deliberate, higher-quality workplace behaviour and decision-making.

4. How EI Improves Communication and Collaboration

EI is equally consequential for how employees work together. **Empathy**- the ability to sense and understand others' perspective- underpins effective communication because messages are framed around what the listener needs to hear, not merely what the speaker wants to say. A team leader who notices that a normally engaged colleague has become withdrawn can enquire privately, uncover a workload problem and redistribute tasks before performance deteriorates. **Social skills**, described in Goleman's relationship management domain as building bonds, influence and collaboration (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee, 2002), support teamwork by creating trust and psychological safety; colleagues share ideas more freely when they believe disagreement will not be punished. EI is also central to **conflict management discussions toward shared objectives**. Rather than allowing a dispute between two departments over resource allocation to escalate into personal antagonism, an emotionally intelligent manager acknowledges each side's frustration, separates emotions from interests

and steers In hybrid workplaces, where digital communication strips away tone and body language, these skills matter even more: an employee with strong EI rereads a blunt email before reacting, considers the sender's probable intent and responds constructively, preventing the misunderstandings that commonly corrode virtual collaboration.

5. EI and Mindfulness in supporting employees' well-being

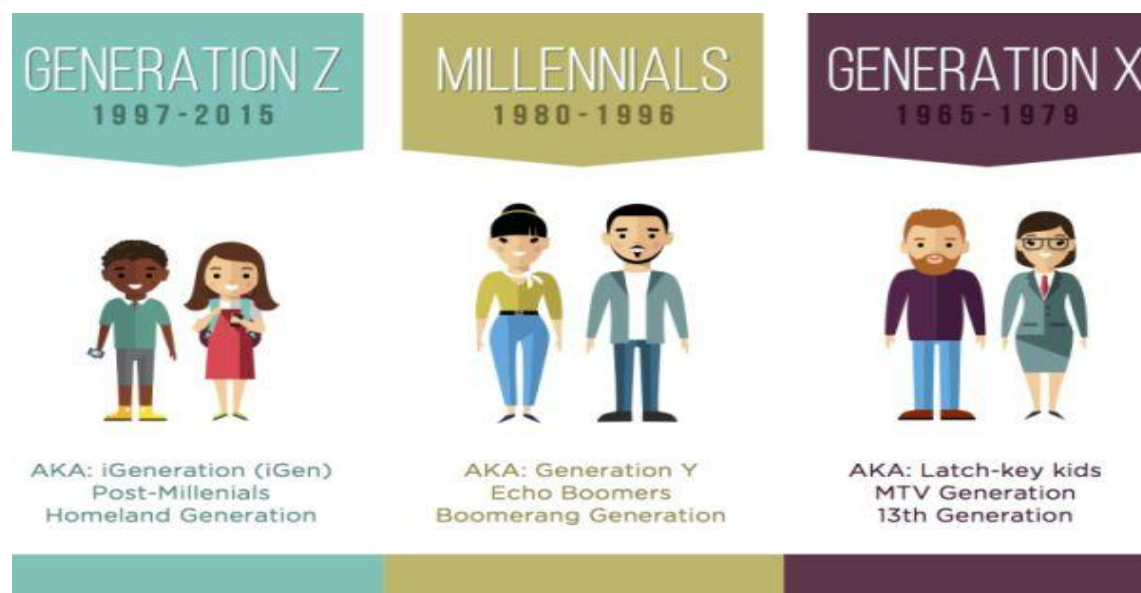
Beyond performance, EI is a significant resource for well-being. Employees with strong emotional self-awareness detect early signs of stress (irritability, poor sleep, loss of concentration) and act before exhaustion sets in, for instance, by renegotiating deadlines or using recovery strategies. This connects EI with mindfulness, defined by Kabat-Zinn (1994) as “paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally”; mindful attention strengthens precisely the emotion recognition and regulation capacities on which EI depends. Bar-On's (2002) inclusion of stress tolerance, impulse control and optimism makes this link explicit: emotionally intelligent employees exhibit greater resilience, reinterpreting organisational change as a challenge rather than a threat and adapting more quickly to restructuring or new technology. EI also fosters job satisfaction and healthier workplace relationships. Employees who manage their moods contribute to a more positive emotional climate, which, in turn, is reciprocated by colleagues. Professional bodies increasingly recognise this dynamic. The CIPD (2023) argues that employees' well-being should be a strategic priority rather than an add-on, while Mind (2021) recommends practical emotion-management routines: taking proper breaks, talking about pressure, and building supportive relationships at work that closely mirror the self-management and social competencies of EI models.

6. Conclusion to section A

The analysis shows that EI, whether called competency (Goleman), ability (Mayer-Salovey), or emotional-social intelligence (Bar-On), provides organisations with a clear way to understand how emotions influence performance, teamwork, and well-being. Self-awareness, self-regulation, and motivation boost individual decision-making and productivity; empathy and social skills enhance communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution; and stress management, along with optimism, helps protect employee health and satisfaction. However, the critical literature warns that EI is not a cure-all and is not always harmless: measurement

issues remain, and its added value is debated. Emotional skills can be used both harmfully and positively. For modern organisations, the best approach is to develop EI through training, feedback, and mindful practice, while incorporating ethical leadership to ensure emotional skills benefit the collective rather than just individuals.

Section B: Managing a Multigenerational Workforce



7. The multigenerational workforce

A multigenerational workforce is one in which employees from several distinct generational cohorts- groups shaped by shared birth years, formative events and cultural experiences-work side by side. For the first time in history, as many as five generations may share a single workplace, from Traditionalists to Generation Z. Wiedmer (2015, p. 51) argues that “generations do differ” in meaningful ways and that leaders who invest in “understanding people’s generational differences and similarities” are best positioned to manage them effectively.

7.1 Generational Profiles: Generation X, Millennials and Generation

Generation X (born 1965-1980) grew up during economic uncertainty, rising divorce rates and the emergence of personal computing. Often described as “latchkey children”, they developed market independence, scepticism toward institutions and pragmatic self-reliance (Wiedmer, 2015). At work, they value autonomy, efficiency, and work-life balance, having watched their parents’ loyalty to employers go unrewarded. They are “digital adapters” rather than natives: they adopted email, mobile phones and the internet in adulthood and use technology instrumentally rather than socially.

Generation Y, or Millennials (born 1981-1996), came of age with the internet, globalisation and terrorist events. They are typically achievement-oriented, team-focused and civic-minded, and they entered employment expecting development, regular feedback and meaningful work. Wiedmer (2015) characterises them as confident, collaborative and technologically fluent, but also as a cohort willing to change employers quickly if growth stalls. The quality of the line manager and the sense of organisational purpose are decisive to their engagement and retention.

Generation Z (born 1997-2015) are the first true digital natives, having grown up with smartphones, social media, and instant access to information. Their experiences include the financial crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic. They exhibit a blend of entrepreneurial spirit and a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion, while also prioritising financial security and mental health. They prefer to communicate via instant, visual, mobile-first platforms. Studies indicate they still value face-to-face coaching, honest, frequent feedback from managers, and ongoing opportunities to acquire marketable skills.

7.2 Comparing Value, Communication, Motivation and Technology

The table below synthesises the principal differences between the three cohorts across the dimensions most relevant to management practice.

Dimension	Generation X	Millennials/Gen Y	Generation Z
Core workplace values	Independence, Pragmatism, Work-life balance	Purpose, collaboration Personal development	Authenticity, security and Individuality Diversity
Feedback preferences	Periodic, “no news is good news”	Frequent and structured	Continuous, Honest and Immediate

Expectation of employers	Autonomy and flexibility; Minimal micromanagement	Career progression, Coaching Meaningful work	Continuous learning Mental health support, Ethical employers
Communication style	Direct and efficient Email and phone	Digital and informal, Email, Text, Instant message	Instant, Visual and Mobile-first, apps, messages, social media, video
Motivation	Being trusted to deliver results independently	Feedback, Visible Growth, Recognition	Financial stability Skills acquisition Personalisation and creativity
Attitude to technology	Digital adapters Use technology as a tool	Digital pioneers Technology integral to work and life	Digital natives, Technology inseparable from identity.

7.3 Implications for Organisational Effectiveness

These differences have significant implications for organisational effectiveness. When Generation X offers institutional knowledge and independent judgment, Millennials contribute collaborative energy and digital confidence, and Generation Z brings technological instincts and challenges to outdated norms. Cross-generational teams can thus serve customers more authentically across all ages and foster stronger innovation. However, poor management of these differences can lead to friction. Communication issues are the most noticeable: a Generation X manager who prefers concise emails might view Gen Z's instant messaging as unprofessional. At the same time, the latter finds formal emails slow and unclear. Differing feedback expectations can also cause tension—annual appraisals may satisfy Generation X but leave Millennials and Gen Z feeling ignored, reducing engagement and increasing turnover. Stereotyping is another risk: treating group traits as fixed truths rather than tendencies can cause bias, and critics argue many differences are influenced more by age and career stage than cohort. Nonetheless, Wiedmer (2015) believes recognising broad generational patterns can help managers tailor recruitment, communication, and retention strategies, as long as these patterns serve as starting points for dialogue rather than labels.

7.4 Using EI and Mindfulness to recruit, manage and retain across generations

Emotional intelligence and mindfulness provide managers with practical tools to turn generational diversity into a strategic advantage. In recruiting, socially aware managers tailor their approach for each generation: emphasising autonomy and flexibility for Generation X, highlighting purpose and career development for Millennials, and demonstrating genuine commitments to inclusion, well-being, and learning for Generation Z. Showing empathy during the selection process—by understanding what candidates value rather than relying on stereotypes—improves both fit and the employer’s reputation. In leadership, Goleman’s recognition and regulation model aligns closely with multigenerational management. Self-aware managers recognise when their own generational biases influence their judgments, such as equating physical presence with dedication.

Self-regulation helps prevent biased reactions—such as dismissing a younger employee’s request for flexibility as entitlement or viewing an older colleague’s caution as resistance. Social awareness enables leaders to understand what motivates everyone, while relationship management allows them to adjust communication: offering in-depth discussions in one-to-one meetings or quick updates through instant messaging, depending on preferences.

Mindfulness supports these skills; as Kabat-Zinn (1994, p.4) notes, mindful attention is deliberately “non-judgmental.” A manager observing intergenerational tensions without immediate blame can address underlying interests rather than surface behaviours. Brief mindfulness exercises before tough conversations—such as pausing or checking one’s emotional state—reduce reactive stereotypes and foster psychological safety, encouraging contributions from all generations.

For retention, Generation X remains where autonomy and balance are truly valued; Millennials stay where they see growth opportunities and receive investment from their managers; and Generation Z remains where learning is continuous, feedback is honest, and well-being is actively supported priorities highlighted by Mind (2021) and CIPD (2023). These organisations link supportive, emotionally intelligent management directly to higher engagement and retention. Innovative reverse mentoring programs, where Gen Z employees coach senior staff on new technologies while gaining organisational insights, show how emotional intelligence can turn generational differences from fault lines into bonds. Ultimately, creating an inclusive, multigenerational workplace depends not on treating everyone equally but on managers using empathy, self-regulation, and mindful awareness to see each employee as an individual within a broader generational context.

8. Conclusion

This report critically examines how emotional intelligence and mindfulness influence modern organisational life. Section A highlights that the three main models—Goleman’s competency framework, Mayer-Salovey’s ability model, and Bar-On’s emotional-social intelligence model—share a key insight: emotions serve as organisational data that can be recognised, understood, and regulated to boost performance, communication, collaboration, and well-being. It also emphasises that EI should be viewed critically: measurement is debated, its predictive value is often overstated, and its skills can be used both manipulatively and ethically. Section B reveals that different generational cohorts vary systematically in values, communication, motivation, and tech use, which can either improve or hinder organisational effectiveness depending on management approaches. The overarching conclusion is that emotionally intelligent, mindful leadership transforms individual emotions and generational differences into organisational value. For senior management, practical strategies include investing in ethically grounded, evidence-based EI development; implementing mindfulness practices to enhance focus and reduce impulsive judgments; and tailoring recruitment, management, and retention practices to generational preferences while respecting individual

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