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Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Module: Developing Emotional Intelligence Skills

Module code: LCLM5006

Lecturer: Kazeem Oseni

Assignment: Component 2 - Individual written report

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1. Introduction

In today's complex and dynamic workplace, technical knowledge alone is no longer sufficient to ensure professional success. Increasingly, organizations recognize the importance of emotional intelligence (EI) and mindfulness as key competencies that influence employee performance, leadership effectiveness, and workplace relationships. Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to perceive, understand, and regulate emotions in oneself and others (Mayer and Salovey, 1997), while mindfulness involves being fully aware and present in the moment, allowing individuals to manage their thoughts and emotional responses more effectively.

As highlighted by Goleman (2001), individuals who are unaware of their own emotions often struggle to interpret the emotions of others, which negatively affects teamwork and communication. This idea is particularly relevant in modern organizations where collaboration and interpersonal skills are essential.

This report critically evaluates how employees use emotional intelligence components in the workplace, supported by established theoretical models. It also examines the key characteristics managers should consider when recruiting employees, with particular attention to generational differences such as Generation X, Y, and Z.

This idea emphasises the importance of self-awareness as a fundamental component of emotional intelligence. Without understanding one's own emotions, individuals may struggle to interpret and respond effectively to others, which can negatively impact teamwork and workplace relationships. Therefore, emotional intelligence is not only an individual skill but also a critical factor in organisational effectiveness.

2. Emotional Intelligence and Mindfulness

Emotional intelligence and mindfulness are closely interconnected concepts that contribute to effective workplace behaviour. Emotional intelligence focuses on understanding and managing emotions, while mindfulness enhances awareness and emotional control.

According to Mayer and Salovey (1997), emotional intelligence consists of four key abilities: perceiving emotions, using emotions to facilitate thinking, understanding

emotions, and managing emotions. These abilities allow individuals to process emotional information and respond appropriately in different situations.

Goleman (2001) expanded this framework by introducing five workplace competencies: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These competencies are particularly relevant in organizational contexts, as they influence communication, decision-making, and leadership effectiveness.

Mindfulness strengthens these components by encouraging individuals to remain present and observe their emotional responses without reacting impulsively. Chung, Cichocki and Chung (2023) suggest that mindfulness improves emotional regulation and interpersonal relationships, making it a valuable tool for enhancing emotional intelligence in the workplace.

Emotional intelligence has also been conceptualised as a multidimensional construct that goes beyond cognitive processing and includes behavioural and personality-related aspects. Research has identified three main streams of emotional intelligence: ability-based models, self-report models, and mixed models, each offering a different perspective on how emotional intelligence can be measured and applied in the workplace (Doğru, 2022).

This distinction is important because it highlights the ongoing debate regarding whether emotional intelligence should be considered a form of intelligence or a set of personality traits. For example, ability-based models focus on objective emotional problem-solving skills, while mixed models incorporate competencies such as motivation, social skills, and leadership behaviours (O'Boyle et al., 2011).

Furthermore, emotional intelligence is strongly linked to psychological wellbeing and stress management. Employees with higher levels of emotional intelligence are more capable of managing workplace pressures, maintaining emotional balance, and avoiding burnout (Chung, Cichocki and Chung, 2023).

3. Critical Evaluation: Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace

Employees use emotional intelligence in multiple ways to improve workplace interactions, performance, and decision-making. One of the most influential frameworks is the ability model proposed by Mayer and Salovey (1997), which focuses on emotional perception, understanding, and regulation.

For instance, emotional perception allows employees to recognize non-verbal cues such as facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language. This is essential in team-based environments where effective communication is required. However, a limitation of this model is that it primarily focuses on cognitive abilities and may not fully capture behavioural competencies in real-world situations.

Goleman's (2001) competency model addresses this limitation by linking emotional intelligence to observable workplace behaviours. Self-awareness enables employees to understand their emotional triggers, while self-regulation helps them control impulsive reactions, particularly in stressful situations. These competencies are essential for maintaining professionalism and managing workplace conflict.

Empathy is another critical component of emotional intelligence. It allows employees to understand the perspectives and emotions of others, which enhances collaboration and reduces misunderstandings. Goleman and Boyatzis (2008) argue that empathy is a key characteristic of effective leaders, as it enables them to build strong relationships and foster a positive work environment.

Despite these advantages, emotional intelligence is not without criticism. Tan, Voon and Ngui (2022) highlight that many emotional intelligence models lack consistent measurement methods, which creates challenges in evaluating its effectiveness. This suggests that while emotional intelligence is widely accepted as important, its practical application can vary across different contexts.

Empirical research strongly supports the positive impact of emotional intelligence on workplace outcomes. O'Boyle et al. (2011) conducted a meta-analysis and found that emotional intelligence is positively correlated with job performance across various

industries. Similarly, Dođru (2022) confirmed that emotional intelligence improves job satisfaction and organizational commitment while reducing stress levels.

Furthermore, emotional intelligence plays a significant role in leadership effectiveness. Coronado-Maldonado and Benítez-Márquez (2023) found that emotionally intelligent leaders improve teamwork, communication, and employee engagement. This demonstrates that emotional intelligence not only benefits individual employees but also contributes to overall organizational performance.

However, emotional intelligence alone is not sufficient to ensure success. Organizational culture, leadership style, and external factors also influence employee behaviour (Lima, Spahi and Shala, 2022). Therefore, emotional intelligence should be considered as part of a broader framework that includes both individual and organizational factors.

In addition, mindfulness enhances the application of emotional intelligence by improving emotional awareness and control. Employees who practice mindfulness are better able to manage stress, avoid reactive behaviour, and maintain focus under pressure (Chung, Cichocki and Chung, 2023). This suggests that combining emotional intelligence with mindfulness can significantly improve workplace performance.

Furthermore, research suggests that emotional intelligence significantly influences employee attitudes and behaviours within organisations. For example, employees with higher emotional intelligence tend to experience greater job satisfaction and stronger organisational commitment due to their ability to interpret workplace events more positively and manage emotional responses effectively (Miao, Humphrey and Qian, 2017).

However, despite strong empirical support, emotional intelligence has been criticised for conceptual ambiguity and measurement inconsistency. Some scholars argue that overlapping definitions and measurement tools make it difficult to distinguish emotional intelligence from personality traits or social skills (Kim and Kim, 2017).

Moreover, while emotional intelligence positively correlates with job performance, its predictive power is often moderate rather than strong. O'Boyle et al. (2011) found that emotional intelligence contributes to job performance, but it should be considered alongside cognitive ability and personality rather than as a replacement.

4. Recruitment and Generational Differences

When recruiting employees, managers need to understand that different generations may bring different expectations, communication styles and workplace values. However, managers should critically consider generational diversity while avoiding stereotyping and instead apply emotionally intelligent leadership approaches tailored to individual employee needs.

Generation X employees (born approximately between 1965 and 1980) are generally independent, self-reliant, and value work-life balance. They prefer autonomy and are less dependent on supervision. In contrast, Millennials (Generation Y) tend to be more collaborative, technology-oriented, and motivated by feedback and career development opportunities.

Generation Z, the most recent entrants to the workforce, are digital natives who are highly adaptable and comfortable with technology. They value diversity, flexibility, and meaningful work. These differences can create challenges in communication, expectations, and work styles.

Emotional intelligence plays a critical role in managing these generational differences. Leaders with high emotional intelligence are better able to adapt their communication styles and understand the needs of employees from different age groups (Goleman and Boyatzis, 2008). For example, they may provide structured guidance for Generation Z employees while allowing greater independence for Generation X employees.

However, it is important to avoid overgeneralizing generational characteristics. Not all individuals fit into these categories, and personal differences should also be considered. Emotional intelligence allows managers to recognize these individual differences and respond appropriately.

Additionally, generational diversity can be both a strength and a challenge. While different perspectives can improve innovation and problem-solving, they can also lead to conflict if not managed effectively. Emotionally intelligent leadership helps to bridge these gaps by promoting understanding and collaboration.

Therefore, managers should combine emotional intelligence with flexible recruitment strategies to create inclusive and effective work environments.

Research also indicates that emotional intelligence plays a critical role in managing generational diversity in the workplace. Different generations may have varying communication styles, emotional expectations, and workplace values, which can lead to misunderstandings and conflict. Emotionally intelligent managers are better equipped to navigate these differences by adapting their leadership approach and promoting inclusive communication (Coronado-Maldonado and Benítez-Márquez, 2023).

Furthermore, emotional intelligence contributes to more effective recruitment strategies. Organisations that integrate emotional intelligence into their hiring processes are more likely to select candidates with strong interpersonal skills, adaptability, and resilience, which are essential in modern work environments (Lima, Spahi and Shala, 2022).

However, generational theories have been criticised for oversimplifying workforce diversity. Not all individuals conform to generational stereotypes, and factors such as culture, personality, and experience may have a greater influence on behaviour than age alone. Therefore, while generational frameworks can provide useful insights, managers should avoid relying solely on them and instead adopt a more individualised approach supported by emotional intelligence.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, emotional intelligence and mindfulness are critical competencies that significantly influence employee performance, leadership effectiveness, and workplace relationships. The evidence reviewed in this report demonstrates that emotional intelligence enables employees to manage emotions, interpret workplace situations effectively, and build strong interpersonal relationships.

However, emotional intelligence should not be viewed as a standalone solution. While it contributes to performance and leadership effectiveness, its impact is influenced by other factors such as organizational culture, leadership style, and individual differences. Additionally, the lack of consistency in EI measurement highlights the need for further research in this field.

Overall, emotional intelligence provides a valuable framework for understanding human behaviour in the workplace, particularly in diverse and dynamic environments.

6. Recommendations

Organizations should invest in emotional intelligence training programs to develop key competencies such as self-awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation. Mindfulness practices should also be encouraged to reduce stress and improve focus. Managers should consider generational differences when recruiting employees and adopt flexible leadership approaches to meet diverse workforce needs. By integrating emotional intelligence into organizational practices, companies can enhance employee performance and create a more inclusive workplace.

Organisations should also incorporate emotional intelligence assessments into recruitment and leadership development programmes to ensure that employees possess strong interpersonal and emotional skills. Additionally, diversity awareness training should be implemented to address generational differences and promote inclusive workplace practices.

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