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Emotional intelligence and mindfulness in contemporary organisations.

A critical assessment of the contributions of their employees' performance, leadership and managing a multigenerational workforce.

Executive Summary

In the modern age, organizations are increasingly complex and diverse and employees must be able to work together, adapt to change and maintain good working relationships. Emotional intelligence (EI) and mindfulness are becoming key skills for employees and leaders, and in this report we will assess the impact of emotional intelligence on workplace performance and communication, leadership, decision making and employee well-being. We will also focus on the extent to which emotional intelligence and mindfulness can be used to support organisations in maintaining a multigenerational workforce. We first study three major emotional intelligence models of Goleman (1998), Mayer & Salovey (1997) and Bar-On (2006). The models are examined critically to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses in modern organisations. Then the topic shifts to how emotional intelligence fosters better teamwork, conflict management, employee engagement and leadership performance. The second part of the report focuses in the next section on Generation X, Millennials (Generation Y) and Generation Z and how their values, expectations, communication preferences and technology-laced skills impact organisational performance. Finally, practical suggestions are given to senior managers to enable them to create psychologically safe, inclusive workplaces where the best talent from all ages can work and retain their job opportunities.

Introduction

As a workplace today, technical knowledge is no longer enough for employees to be successful. Organizations realise that the ability to relate to and be emotionally sensitive and resilient are also necessary to be successful at working. People are often working in different teams and with customers from different backgrounds, so they face difficult situations where empathy, communication and sound judgement are required. As a result, emotional intelligence is one of the most important capabilities in modern

organizations (Goleman, 1998). Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to recognise, understand, manage, and use emotions in any situation in life (Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

People with high emotional intelligence are better at building relationships, managing conflict, communicating with colleagues and making right decisions when things get tough. The effect of these skills on employee performance, organisational culture and leadership effectiveness is also well established. In addition to emotional intelligence, mindfulness has been developed and more focused on how you keep focus, self-aware and emotionally balanced. Mindfulness is the ability to observe and make an appropriate decision in the present environment without judgment (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Researchers suggest that mindfulness improves emotional regulation, reduces workplace stress, and psychological well-being, and allows workers to react more thoughtfully rather than react impulsively in a difficult situation. This report critically evaluates the use of emotional intelligence and mindfulness within today's organisations. It reviews the major emotional intelligence theories and how they can be used to enhance communication, leadership, conflict management, decision-making, and employee success in organisations. The report also looks at how emotional intelligence can help to attract, manage and retain employees of all ages to the workplace in a safe and inclusive way by creating a safe environment.

Task 1 - Emotional intelligence at the workplace.

3.1 Emotional Intelligence.

Although emotional intelligence is one of the most widely debated concepts in organisational behaviour, there is still debate on its exact meaning. Early research by Mayer and Salovey (1997) defined emotional intelligence as an ability to perceive, understand, use and control emotions. They think emotional intelligence is just an achievement in a measurable way as logical reasoning. Goleman (1998) extended this concept to include behavioral skills that are directly related to workplace success. Goleman (1998) believes emotional intelligence is why employees who are also technical can perform differently in leadership positions, so emotional intelligence is a very important skill to be able to learn. Bar-On (2006), for instance, offered an alternative perspective in which emotional intelligence is defined as a combination of emotional and social abilities that help us to adapt to the environment. While Mayer and Salovey took a cognitive approach to cognitive skills, Bar-On's model considers personality traits like optimism, stress tolerance and relationship building. While different models may have different assumptions about emotion and how to control our emotions, we can all agree that understanding and managing emotions positively affects behaviour in the workplace. Emotional intelligence helps employees to remain calm during stressful situations; to communicate with others and resolve conflicts; and

to develop good relationships with coworkers and customers. However, some scientists have claimed that emotional intelligence is very closely related to well-established personality traits such as conscientiousness and emotional stability. Joseph and Newman (2010) argue that though emotional intelligence is essential to job performance, its impact depends on the role, structure and workplace context. This criticism is of course not necessarily what makes emotional intelligence the answer to all problems of the workplace, but rather is a part of the job skill set along with technical knowledge and experience.

3.2 Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Framework.

Goleman's theory, among all others, has been one of the most influential ones in organisational practice and is the most influential one to date. His theory has five interconnected competencies: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. Emotional intelligence is based on self-awareness since you are more likely to know how your feelings affect behaviour and decision making. A manager who knows a bit about why he is frustrated before he goes to a team meeting can consciously take a calm approach in the face of emotions, rather than allow them to be affected in a relationship with his colleagues. When employees are self-regulated, they cope with conflict and take control of emotions in the workplace better, work better and act in a rational manner. And this ability is increasingly important as organisations are dealing with changing and constantly changing business environments. Motivation is the internal motivation of an individual to achieve something external to salary (and promotion). People with strong intrinsic motivation are more resilient, persistent and dedicated to a business task. Empathy allows employees to feel and understand the other person's feelings. Rather than simply being like your colleagues, empathy means thinking about others' point of view before responding. This skill is particularly helpful in managing a team and dealing with conflicts in the workplace. Social skills are the ability to build positive relationships through communication, working together, negotiation and influence. People who have good social skills are good team members as they can work together, gain trust and maintain good work relationships. Goleman's approach is very practical in the organisation's leadership development. Many organisations use the model to design coaching, leadership training and employee development projects as the skills can be observed and enhanced through practice. But Goleman's model mixes personality traits, behaviours and emotional abilities without clearly delineating between them. Locke (2005) argues that Goleman's model is too abstract in relation to ability-based theories. Despite such criticism, Goleman is still relevant because it is so directly linked to workplace performance and leadership performance.

3.3 Mayer and Salovey's ability model.

Unlike Goleman's behaviour, Mayer and Salovey (1997) developed emotional intelligence as a real sense of intelligence. They develop their model with four progressive abilities. The first is to accurately understand emotions in yourself and others. This involves recognizing facial expressions, tone of voice and body language. Employees who can read emotional signals well are more effective communicators as they are more likely to recognize when colleagues are in need of support or clarification. The second skill involves emotional processing. Positive emotions might drive creative and innovative thinking, while moderate concern might drive attention to detail in decision making. The third part of this job involves understanding emotions so that people can recognize how emotions grow and develop over time and the way which emotions do so. People who know how emotions work can predict how employees will react and adapt their communication in a better way. The last branch involves managing emotions in personal and interpersonal contexts. Rather than suppressing emotions, we have to learn to regulate them in a way that can lead to positive results. Mayer and Salovey's model has a strong theoretical foundation and emotional intelligence is viewed as a measurable cognitive ability and not a personality characteristic in research in this field. Although it explains how emotional abilities function, it provides less guidance on how managers should develop these skills in ordinary workplace environments. Consequently, companies often integrate this model with competency-based approaches like Goleman's framework.

3.4 Bar-On's Emotional-Social Intelligence Model.

While Goleman's model deals with workplace competencies and Mayer and Salovey see emotional intelligence as a cognitive ability, Bar-On (2006) says emotional intelligence is a combination of emotional and social skills that affect people's capacity to understand themselves, interact with other people, and cope with the daily demands of life. His Emotional-Social Intelligence (ESI) Model covers five broad areas: intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, adaptability, stress management, and mood. Intrapersonal skills are self-awareness, emotional expression, independence, and self-confidence. People with high intrapersonal skills are more likely to understand their strengths and weaknesses, to be honest with the other person, and to take responsibility for their own actions. This gives you more confidence in how you tackle problems in your own workplace or make big decisions. Interpersonal skills are related to empathy, social responsibility, and good relationships. They are critical to organisations that are built on teamwork and collaboration. Those employees who understand the feelings and needs of others are better at resolving conflicts and

establishing trust with their partners and clients. Adaptability describes how to adapt to different situations and to solve them. In today's rapidly changing working environment, adaptability is more critical as companies adapt to technology and remote work with the changing customer expectations. People with high adaptability will be more flexible than ones that fight change. Managing stress is about controlling emotions when things get difficult and getting through it. Employees who are able to combat stress are less likely to burn out and more likely to be successful at work during times of uncertainty. And finally, general mood is optimism and a positive outlook. Positive employees often benefit from a healthier organisational culture because their attitude affects team morale and motivation to work. The strengths of Bar-On's model are that it is a comprehensive way to understand emotional intelligence and, therefore, personality, resilience, and social behaviour. It would be particularly useful if the aim of the organisation was to promote well-being along with performance. But the model was also criticised for including personality traits that might not be intelligence. According to research, optimism and happiness may be the outcome of experience rather than emotional intelligence (Ashkanasy and Dorris, 2017). Despite these criticisms, Bar-On's framework is still used by many organisations because it links emotional competencies with employee resilience, adaptability, and psychological well-being.

3.5 Emotional Intelligence and Workplace Performance.

Employee performance can be influenced by technical knowledge, motivation, organisational support, and interpersonal relationships. Emotional intelligence is important for employees because it affects how they communicate, solve problems, deal with stress, and work in a team. High emotional intelligence employees are more self-aware and they can identify how their emotions impact behaviour. They are not allowing frustration or anxiety to impact their performance, and they are able to control their emotions so they can remain focused on organisational objectives. In a process of organisational change, such uncertainty can bring on stress and resistance in employees. Imagine a project team working toward an end date. Unexpected technical problems can slow things down and create a sense of tension between the team members. A low emotional intelligence person may be defensive, blame colleagues, and avoid discussion. An emotionally intelligent person is more likely to remain calm, engage in open communication, and work with others to solve problems. As a result, the team is still productive even with a challenge. According to Côté (2014), emotional intelligence has positive effects on individual performance because emotionally intelligent employees are better able to build relationships and adapt behaviour to various situations. But the relationship is not always seamless. Technical competence, organisational culture, the leadership style, and job design all play a role in employee performance. And so emotional intelligence should be seen as a component of a

culture and not as a substitute for professional experience as it is in the workplace. And organisations are becoming more and more aware that employee well-being is part of productivity, and more and more employers understand that employee well-being is the basis of productivity and not just their pay or job performance. Workplace stress leads to low motivation, absenteeism, and poor decision-making. Emotional intelligence helps employees to recognize early signs of stress and have a healthy way of coping with it so that they are not burned out and more effectively respond to times of stress, which in turn prevents burnout. Emotional intelligence, in combination with mindfulness tips, helps people think more carefully and not react emotionally (to help with their own mental state of mind) and respond less emotionally when in high-stress situations.

3.6 Emotional Intelligence and Communication.

Communication is one of the most vital elements of success in an organisation. Poor communication causes communication to be misinterpreted, trust is broken, the workplace gets tense, and people are not involved with the business. Emotional intelligence improves communication as it allows people to detect verbal and non-verbal signs of emotional distress early and respond with the right words. That self-awareness can help people to know emotions are affecting conversations. For example, receiving critical feedback may initially be painful or frustrating. An emotionally intelligent person will be able to recognise these feelings and respond professionally instead of defending them. Empathy is also essential to workplace communication. Managers that are sensitive to their employees are more likely to build trust and have open discussions. We want to build psychological safety, and that is the feeling of being able to express ideas and not fear criticism. This was especially true in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic when a lot of organisations were moving to hybrid and remote work environments. Virtual communication limited the ability to observe body language and emotions, and this is a risk of misunderstanding. Strong emotional intelligence was generally more adaptable to changing situations by communicating clearly, listening, and maintaining a safe and supportive relationship despite distance. Yet emotional intelligence alone is not enough to overcome poor organisational communication systems. If the information is opaque, not well-managed, and not directed by the leadership, emotionally intelligent employees can still be frustrated. In this sense, organisations need to merge emotionally intelligent leadership with efficient communication and transparent decision-making processes.

3.7 Emotional intelligence and conflict management.

Because people have personal and work experiences, priorities (and therefore different ways of working) conflict is inevitable in organisational life. Conflict is one thing that

stimulates creativity and innovation but the way it is handled is not always a positive thing, and the conflict can cause low productivity and strained work relationships. Emotional intelligence enables people to take decisions in a positive manner and not just in emotion. Self-regulation minimizes the impulse to react and empathy motivates one to consider the other before making judgement. Social skills enable employees to negotiate solutions that address a range of views rather than just those of personal interest. If two employees have a hard time working on a client project and we do not give the deadline on a project, and if you are not doing that, the problem gets personal and it becomes the blame game and the employees will blame each other for not doing the job. An emotionally intelligent manager would have both of them come to the table to share their feelings and concerns. As a result of this, the manager can facilitate a productive discussion of how quality and customer expectation should be balanced by listening to each person's feelings in a genuine way, and by identifying common goals. Rather than settling the issue in the moment, this approach builds the trust and will make the team more forthcoming. And emotional intelligence is not always enough to resolve serious workplace disputes. Structural factors such as job roles, workloads and unfair organisational rules will still generate conflict and are always a problem for employees who have emotional intelligence. And so organisations need to change both work habits and organisational structures to create a healthier working environment.

3.8 Emotional Intelligence and Leadership

Leadership is widely recognized as one of the most impactful areas in which emotional intelligence plays a crucial role. Today's leaders are not only expected to achieve organisational objectives but also motivate employees to change things, to make the world a better place, and to make sure people get to be part of it all. Goleman (1998) argues that emotionally intelligent leaders have more self-awareness, empathy and social skills and therefore are more likely to build trust and commitment with employees. Emotionally intelligent leaders are more than just in power but in knowing, communicating and offering emotional support. For example: Employee uncertainty about job security during organisational restructuring. A low level emotional intelligence leader might be so obsessed with operational changes that he or she does not listen to the employees' feelings and does not pay attention to them emotionally. This is going to increase the anxiety, reduce morale, and damage trust. An emotionally intelligent leader does listen to the reasons for change, and is more likely to listen to employees and reassure them when possible. Change is difficult but employees are more likely to accept organisational decisions when they feel respected and informed. Research has often linked emotional intelligence to transformational leadership, where leaders create a common vision for the team, drive creativity and support personal growth (Miao, Humphrey and Qian, 2018). However, emotional intelligence is not the only criteria for

effective leadership. Leaders also need to be strategic, have technical know-how, ethical judgment and decision-making skills.

3.9 Emotional intelligence and decision-making.

There is also decision-making under pressure to some extent, and with incomplete information. Emotional intelligence allows a person to recognize when they feel that emotions play in judgement and to make a more balanced and unbiased decision. A manager who's frustrated with a bad employee might not have a positive reaction to the negative. Without emotional intelligence, the manager might make a quick emotional decision based on emotion rather than fact. An emotionally intelligent manager would first reflect on these feelings, gather the facts and understand the situation of the employee before making a proper decision. Mindfulness also helps in decision making more effectively through present-moment awareness and less automatic emotional responses. People who practise mindfulness are more likely to stop and think and reflect before responding and therefore make more thoughtful and ethical decisions. Emotional intelligence not only improves the performance of employees but also the performance of the entire organization which works well to develop communication, leadership, collaboration, conflict resolution and decision making. But its effectiveness depends on culture in the organisation, leadership support and opportunities for continuous learning. Emotional intelligence must therefore be seen as an integral part of organisational success and not as a stand-alone solution.

4.1 Introduction

People in the corporate world come from different generations at work today— all with different perspectives, beliefs and expectations in our organisations have their own particular experiences, values and expectations to share at work. This diversity is one of the advantages we now work with people of all ages that are bringing in and different generations in the workplace. But generational differences in people will also be bad for communication skills, teamwork, motivation and leadership if not addressed properly and if it is not well managed with such generational differences, communication, teamwork, motivation and leadership skills. In this section, we see how we can identify these differences, and use emotional intelligence (EI) and mindfulness as well as emotional intelligence (EI) and mindfulness to create an inclusive workplace of all ages to make sure that employees of all ages feel respected or appreciated across

generations and so that they feel valued. Generation X, Millennials (Generation Y) and Generation Z and their characteristics of Generation X are examined in this section, as well as how emotional intelligence and mindfulness can help in recruiting, employee engagement and retention of employees in the recruitment, employee engagement, collaboration and retention can be assessed on a more holistic basis.

4.2 Characteristics of Different Generations.

Although every employee is unique, studies show that people of different generations have similar work experiences because they grew up during very different periods of society, economy and technology. Managers should avoid stereotyping employees based on age, but knowledge of the general trend is crucial to leadership and communication.

Generation X (Born 1965–1980).

Generation X people are known for independence, loyalty and practical work habits. As workers with a history of economic uncertainty and organisational restructuring, job security, professional development and work-life balance are what people in Generation X want. They have a lot of knowledge about organisational systems and are good mentors to young people. But they might not always be in favour of rapid change in organisation and technology development as opposed to younger workers. Empathy and active listening will increase their willingness to take part in organisational change.

Generation Y (Millennials) (Born 1981–1996).

Millennials are one of the largest groups in many organisations. They are generally comfortable with technology, have a good relationship with collaboration, and they prefer to do work for something in the world beyond money. Millennials' need for regular feedback, flexible working environment and continuous learning, and managers to help their work are not old schools; they expect coaching rather than just being managers. It can be argued that Millennials have been treated as too demanding or not loyal to their companies. In fact, many Millennials change jobs for professional sake, not because they are reluctant to commit to the organisation (Twenge, 2017). Managers have to stop buying into stereotypes and just be a good person. Emotional intelligence is the kind of thing that encourages communication and recognition of successes and provides them with positive feedback that is important and not just positive for them but what can help them with their career and life growth.

Generation Z (Born 1997 onwards).

Generation Z is the new generation entering the workforce. They have grown up in this digital world of technology, social media and access to information and have been conditioned to communicate with people based on that. Digital technology and technology-based training was introduced in the youth generation and an adaptable workforce is one of the things that most Generation Z employees understand. Many people value diversity, flexibility and mental health support. They also expect constant communication from managers, like opportunities to advance careers. Despite these strengths, a small number of Generation Z employees may have very limited job experience and therefore require better professional communication and social skills. Emotionally intelligent managers that are able to recognise these needs will give coaching, build confidence and create psychologically safe environments for younger employees to ask questions and learn from mistakes.

4.3 Different generations in different ways affect organisations.

As a result, employees from different generations can have a huge impact on organisational performance because each generation brings to it their own knowledge, skills and perspective. And those of Generation X, for example, have a lot of experience in the industry and can be very helpful mentors. Millennials and Generation Z are very creative and innovative and they have the potential to bring in new ideas into the business. When organisations are able to combine their strengths, they get more creativity, better problem solving and more innovation. But generational diversity is also a problem. The kinds of communication preferences of generations differ. Generation X prefer to meet in person or send emails and younger employees and Generation Z often use instant messaging and electronic collaboration tools. If communication methods are not agreed upon, there is confusion and frustration. Leadership attitudes can be different as well. Younger employees may be more comfortable with hierarchical management, while older employees are more likely to be encouraged to participate, have coaching and to get regular feedback. But conflict doesn't necessarily arise between management and employees if they don't know how to meet different expectations. This is why emotional intelligence is so important for modern managers. Emotionally intelligent leaders do not simply assume one style of leadership is the best when it comes to them; they adapt their communication style and management strategy to meet employees' needs.

4.4 Emotional Intelligence for managing a multigenerational workforce.

Emotional intelligence prepares managers to lead diverse teams. Self-awareness first enables managers to recognise that they themselves are making assumptions and biases. A manager who believes younger employees aren't willing to commit or that older employees resist technology can end up creating unequal opportunities. Emotionally intelligent managers will consider these assumptions before making decisions. Secondly, empathy allows managers to understand what people think. Instead of judging people's communication, emotionally intelligent leaders know that people from different generations have different expectations of work based on how they have experienced it so far. If a Generation Z person asks for regular feedback, an emotionally intelligent manager knows that is because they want better work and not because they don't trust themselves so much that they are insecure in the workplace. And if a Generation X worker values independence, the manager sees that as confidence that has developed from experience and not some sort of resistance to collaboration. People with managers who speak clearly, encourage collaboration, and appreciate the contributions of all generations will be more successful in their relationships. Team-building activities, mentoring programmes, and cross-generational projects enable employees to learn from each other's strengths instead of focusing on differences. Research suggests that emotionally intelligent leaders have more engagement in their employee base as employees feel respected, understood, and supported (Miao, Humphrey and Qian, 2018).

4.5 How mindfulness is the building blocks of an inclusive corporate culture (in addition to working from the inside out to the heart).

Even as emotional intelligence is built on the ability to analyse and manage our feelings, mindfulness is about how you can get people to be really present in the moment. Mindfulness is a great resource to use as a manager who makes the right decisions (people do not make quick judgements if they are not aware of their feelings) in terms of listening and processing and reacting, not just reactively but in a way that is mindful of who is going to be right for you when you say or do things. Mindfulness is especially important to people of all generations because a lot of misunderstandings are based on perception rather than on fact. In performance reviews, mindfulness is a good way to get managers to focus on evidence and not on emotions (and not emotions to manipulate feedback). Mindfulness also leads to psychological safety in organisations. When we're psychologically safe, people can ask questions, ask for help, admit to mistakes, share ideas, participate in conversations, and don't fear embarrassment or criticism (Edmondson, 2019). Psychological safety for all generations is so prevalent; it is much better for the employees to share thoughts that are different and to understand others' opinions. Simple mindfulness practices, such as listening to others before

meetings or taking time to consider different perspectives before making decisions, can help improve communication and reduce workplace tension.

4.6 Recommendations for the Senior Management Team.

Based on the evidence in this report, there are a number of practical recommendations that can bring in the development of employees and the organisational performance as a whole. We should add emotional intelligence training to the leadership development programme. Managers with self-awareness, empathy, communication, and conflict management skills are better equipped to lead diverse teams. Secondly, mindfulness workshops for employees and managers should be offered to build resilience, reduce workplace stress, and make better decisions. Thirdly, organisations must implement mentoring programmes that encourage inter-generational collaboration. Generation X professionals can share their professional knowledge and experience, and younger people can contribute new technologies and innovative ideas. Fourth, managers should look to have flexible communication strategies that integrate face-to-face meetings, email, and digital collaboration tools to accommodate different employee demands. And lastly, recruitment and performance management should be personal and based on skills, behaviour, and potential (not age or generation).

Conclusion

Emotional intelligence and mindfulness have become essential human competencies for effective communication, leadership, team building, and employee well-being in modern organisations. The three different emotional intelligence models discussed in this report are very different in their outlooks, but they are all in agreement that emotional intelligence is not a single solution to all organisational problems, so in the end, it is the human intelligence that enables people in the workplace and managers to deal with conflict, make the right decisions, and have good working relationships and not the other way around. When mindfulness is added to emotional intelligence, it also promotes psychological safety by promoting healthy communication, reflection, and empathy. With a multi-generational workforce, there are opportunities and challenges in managing a multigenerational workforce. Gen X, Millennials, and Generation Z bring with them a diversity of experiences and expectations that can help to drive organisational innovation and performance when managed. Unquestionably, organisations should look beyond generational stereotypes and focus on individual differences and adopt inclusive leadership methods based on the value of all employees' contributions. Emotional intelligence development, mindfulness approaches, and inclusive leadership are all factors that promote employee engagement and a better culture for long-term business success.

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