

Individual Report

Developing Emotional Intelligence Skills LCLM5006

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Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI) has become increasingly important (Gupta et al., 2018) in modern workplaces, where employees are expected not only to perform tasks effectively but also to manage relationships, communicate clearly and respond to challenges in a professional manner. It refers to the ability to recognise, understand and manage own emotions, as well as the emotions of others. In environments that are often fast-paced and diverse, these skills play a key role in teamwork, leadership and decision-making.

One of the most widely recognised models of emotional intelligence is Goleman's framework, which highlights key components such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. These elements help explain how individuals interact and perform within organisational settings.

This report will critically evaluate how emotional intelligence is used by employees in the workplace, supported by relevant theoretical models. It will also examine how generational differences influence emotional intelligence in organisations, particularly in relation to recruitment and management. Finally, the report will provide a brief conclusion and practical recommendations.

Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace

Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in how employees function within the workplace, particularly in areas such as communication, teamwork and leadership. While technical skills remain important, organisations increasingly recognise that the ability to manage emotions can directly influence performance, decision-making and relationships at work. However, the use of emotional intelligence is not always straightforward, as it can vary depending on the individual, the situation and the organisational context. For this reason, it is important to critically evaluate how emotional intelligence is applied in practice using relevant models and theories.

One of the most influential frameworks is Goleman's model of emotional intelligence (APA, 1995), which includes five main components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. Self-awareness allows employees to recognise their own emotions (University of New Hampshire, n.d.) and understand how these may affect their behaviour. In a workplace context, this can help individuals remain calm under pressure and avoid reacting impulsively. For example, an employee who is aware of their stress levels may take steps to manage it before it affects their performance or interactions with colleagues. However, self-awareness alone is not always enough. Some individuals may recognise their emotions but still struggle to control them, which highlights a limitation of relying on this component alone.

Self-regulation builds on this by focusing on the ability to manage emotions effectively. Employees who demonstrate strong self-regulation are less likely to engage in conflict or make decisions based on temporary emotional reactions. This is particularly important in leadership roles, where decisions can impact teams and organisational outcomes. For example, a manager who can remain composed during a crisis is more likely to make rational and effective decisions. Despite this, excessive self-regulation may also lead to a lack of emotional expression, which could make leaders appear distant or less approachable to their teams.

Motivation, as described by Goleman, refers to an individual's internal drive to achieve goals through their intrinsic factors. In the workplace, motivated employees tend to be more committed (Gupta et al., 2018) and productive. They are also more likely to persevere through challenges, which contributes to long-term success. However, motivation can be influenced by external factors such as organisational culture, leadership style and reward systems. This means that emotional intelligence alone may not fully determine an individual's level of motivation.

Empathy is another key component, particularly in roles that involve teamwork or customer interaction. The ability to understand and respond to the emotions of others helps build stronger relationships and improves communication. For example, a manager who shows empathy towards employees may create a more supportive working environment, leading to higher job satisfaction. On the other hand, an overreliance on empathy could potentially affect decision-making, as individuals may prioritise personal feelings over organisational objectives.

Social skills, the final component of Goleman's model, relate to the ability to interact effectively with others (Saxena et al., 2017). This includes communication, conflict management and collaboration. Strong social skills are essential in team-based environments, where cooperation is necessary to achieve shared goals. However, these skills can sometimes be used in a manipulative way, particularly if individuals use emotional understanding to influence others for personal gain rather than organisational benefit.

Another important perspective is the Bar-On model (Bar-On, 2006), takes a broader approach to emotional intelligence by including factors such as stress management, adaptability and interpersonal skills. This model highlights the importance of resilience in the workplace. Employees who can manage stress effectively are more likely to maintain performance under pressure. For example, in high-demand roles, the ability to remain focused despite challenges is essential. However, the Bar-On model has been criticised for being too broad, as it includes traits that may overlap with personality rather than strictly emotional intelligence.

Mindfulness-based approaches, such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), also contribute to the development of emotional intelligence. MBSR focuses on increasing awareness of the present moment and reducing stress through techniques such as meditation and breathing exercises. In the workplace, mindfulness can help employees (**Gupta et al., 2018**) improve concentration, reduce anxiety and enhance emotional control. This can lead to better decision-making and improved wellbeing. Despite these benefits, not all employees may be open to mindfulness practices, and their effectiveness can vary depending on individual engagement.

Management by Walking Around (MBWA) provides another practical way in which emotional intelligence can be applied in organisations. This approach involves managers interacting directly with employees in their work environment, allowing them to observe behaviours, understand concerns and build relationships. Through regular interaction, managers can develop empathy and improve communication. This supports a more

open and responsive organisational culture. However, MBWA can also be time-consuming, and its success depends on the manager's ability to engage genuinely with employees rather than simply monitoring performance.

When these models are considered together, it becomes clear that emotional intelligence is not a single skill but a combination of different abilities that interact in complex ways. While emotional intelligence can improve workplace relationships and performance (ScienceDirect, 2022), it is not without limitations. Its effectiveness depends on how it is applied, the context in which it is used and the willingness of individuals to develop these skills.

In conclusion, emotional intelligence plays a significant role in the workplace by influencing behaviour, communication and decision-making. Models such as Goleman's, Bar-On and approaches like MBSR and MBWA provide useful frameworks for understanding how these skills can be developed and applied. However, organisations must recognise that emotional intelligence is not a complete solution on its own and should be supported by other factors such as organisational structure, leadership and culture.

Generational Differences and Emotional Intelligence

In modern organisations, it is common to find employees from different generations working together (Brainz Magazine, n.d.). Each generation has been shaped by different social, economic and technological environments, which influences their attitudes, behaviours and levels of emotional intelligence. Understanding these differences is important for managers, particularly when recruiting and managing diverse teams. Emotional intelligence plays a key role in this process, as it affects communication, teamwork and the ability to adapt within the workplace.

Traditionalists, also known as the Silent Generation, tend to value stability, discipline and hard work. Having grown up during periods of economic uncertainty and post-war recovery, they often demonstrate strong self-regulation and respect for authority. In terms of emotional intelligence, they are generally reliable and composed, but they may be less open to expressing emotions or adapting to new communication styles. For managers, this means recognising their experience and providing clear structure, while also encouraging more open communication when necessary.

Baby Boomers are often described as career-focused, responsible and highly committed to their work. They tend to have strong interpersonal skills, which can be linked to emotional intelligence components such as empathy and social awareness. Many Boomers are experienced in teamwork and leadership roles, making them valuable contributors within organisations. However, they may sometimes struggle with adapting to rapid technological changes, which can affect communication with younger employees. Managers should therefore support continuous learning and encourage collaboration across generations.

Generation X is typically characterised by independence, adaptability and a strong focus on work-life balance. They are often comfortable working autonomously and tend to be pragmatic in their approach. In terms of emotional intelligence, Generation X employees often demonstrate self-awareness and resilience, particularly in managing stress and balancing responsibilities. This makes them effective in roles that require problem-solving and decision-making. However, their preference for independence may sometimes reduce collaboration if not managed carefully. Managers should aim to balance autonomy with teamwork.

Millennials, or Generation Y, have grown up during a period of rapid technological development and globalisation. They are generally confident, competitive and comfortable with digital communication. In terms of emotional intelligence, Millennials

tend to be more open about expressing emotions and seeking feedback. This can improve communication and collaboration within teams. However, they may also be more sensitive to criticism and may require more support in developing resilience. Managers should provide regular feedback and create opportunities for development to support their growth.

Generation Z, the most recent generation entering the workforce, is highly influenced by technology and social media. They are often described as pragmatic, financially cautious and aware of global issues. In terms of emotional intelligence, Generation Z employees may demonstrate strong self-awareness, particularly in relation to mental health. However, they are also more likely to experience anxiety and stress, which can affect their performance. Managers need to provide a supportive environment, focusing on wellbeing and clear communication, to help them manage these challenges.

When considering these generations together, it becomes clear that emotional intelligence is expressed differently depending on individual experiences and social influences. For example, older generations may demonstrate stronger self-regulation and discipline, while younger generations may show greater openness and adaptability. Neither approach is inherently better, but understanding these differences allows organisations to create more balanced and effective teams.

From a recruitment perspective, managers need to consider how emotional intelligence varies across generations. Rather than focusing only on technical skills, employers should assess candidates' ability to communicate, manage emotions and work with others. This is particularly important in roles that require teamwork or leadership. In addition, organisations should avoid making assumptions based solely on generational stereotypes, as individuals may not always fit typical patterns.

There are also challenges associated with managing generational differences. Miscommunication can occur when employees have different expectations regarding feedback, communication styles or work practices. For example, younger employees may prefer digital communication such as automation and robotics, while older employees may value face-to-face interaction. Emotional intelligence can help bridge these gaps by encouraging understanding and adaptability.

At the same time, generational diversity can be a strength. Different perspectives can improve problem-solving and innovation, as employees bring varied experiences and ideas. By promoting emotional intelligence within teams, organisations can encourage

collaboration and reduce conflict. Managers play a key role in this by creating an inclusive environment where all employees feel valued and understood.

In conclusion, generational differences have a clear impact on emotional intelligence in the workplace. Each generation brings unique strengths and challenges, which influence how employees communicate, manage emotions and interact with others. By understanding these differences and applying emotional intelligence effectively, managers can improve recruitment, teamwork and overall organisational performance.

Conclusion

Emotional intelligence is a key factor in the workplace, influencing how employees communicate, manage relationships and respond to challenges. The analysis has shown that models such as Goleman's and Bar-On provide a useful framework for understanding how emotional intelligence operates in practice, while approaches like MBSR and MBWA highlight its practical application. In addition, generational differences play an important role, as employees from different backgrounds demonstrate emotional intelligence in different ways. Understanding these variations allows organisations to improve teamwork, communication and overall performance. Therefore, emotional intelligence should be seen as an essential skill in modern organisations.

Recommendations

Organisations should invest in training programmes that develop emotional intelligence skills, particularly in areas such as self-awareness, communication and stress management. This can help employees improve their performance and relationships at work. In addition, managers should adapt their leadership style to suit different generations, recognising that employees may have different expectations and ways of working. Encouraging open communication and providing regular feedback can also help reduce misunderstandings between teams. Finally, organisations should promote a supportive working environment that prioritises employee wellbeing, as this can improve motivation, reduce stress and enhance overall productivity.

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