



Developing emotional intelligence skills for the workplace

**BA LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS FOR THE
WORKPLACE**

Faculty of business and management

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1.0 Introduction

Emotional intelligence a term often known as EQ (emotional quotient) has become very central in today's workplace especially when it comes to organizational productivity, individual performance and people development due to the fact that EQ's underlying principles facilitate insight in understanding and assessing of management styles, behaviours, interpersonal skills, attitudes and people's potential. In addition, it provides a benchmark for recruitment, selection, interviewing and human resource planning as a whole predicting the direction of learning and development as well as customer services and client's relations in a company (Serrat, 2017).

1.1 Emotions

Emotions have a connection to psychological changes such as heart rate, breathing, changes in one's cognitive feelings, facial activities, and assessments such as "anger" or "fear" (Frijda, 2000). Conversely, although several behavioral neuroscientists and psychological scientists attest to the emotions' influence on one's thinking, actions, decision making, wellbeing, social relationships, mental and physical health, no standard definition of emotion exists (Izard, 2010). While this is the case, sometimes, emotions are perceived to be a state, an individual may find themselves in because of an occurrence (Scherer et al., 2004)

Therefore, emotions may refer to coordinated responses enabling one to handle psychological systems (Salovey and Mayer, 1990), although Denzin (1984) pointed out that emotions are a process. In one way, emotions contribute to how one may spontaneously respond to situations (Holmes, 2010). Previously researchers put together 92 definitions of emotions into one list and alongside statements contradicting emotion as stated in various journals and textbooks (Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981). In contrast, emotions in the form of a state of being, authors like (Denzin, 1990) referred to emotions as a process as can be seen in the heuristics (Izard, 2010) where the emotional state referred to the physiological, cognitive, subjective components, behavioral constituting the appraisal processes.

1.2 Intelligence

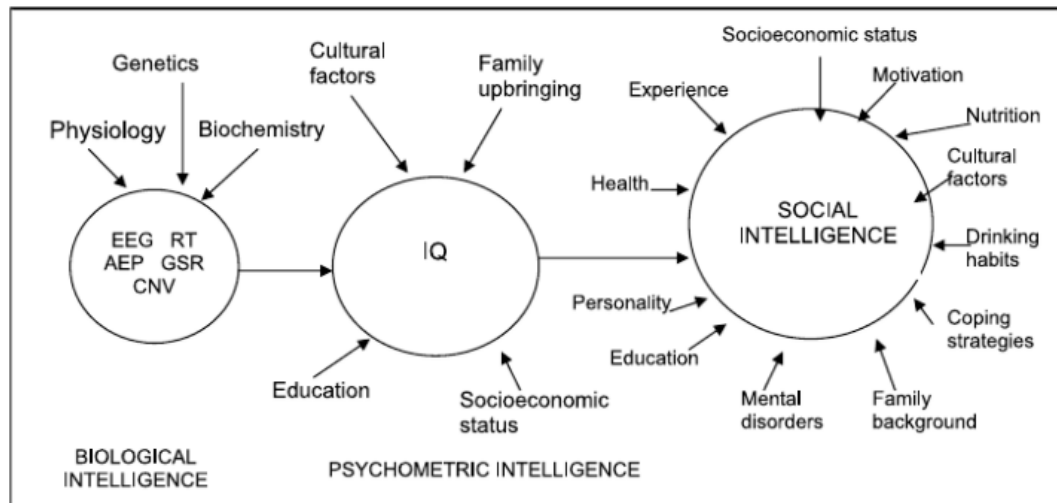
The definition of intelligence has evolved spanning from Pythagoras's interpretations of intelligence as "wind" to more meaningful definitions such as the ability to form an opinion on truth and false by Decartes (Laertius, p. 347 1925). Subsequently intelligence is often interpreted as one's overall capacity to wilfully reason and be able to manage their environment (Wechsler, 1958).

1.2.1 Eysenck's Model of intelligence

Although some authors debate the existence of EI as a real intelligence as opposed to being "social intelligence" although perceived to be more of a trait, social skills with as many causes as the consequences they cause rather than intelligence (Furnham, 2012). Intelligence was deemed to exist in three types that is to say; Biological, psychometric and social intelligence as indicated in figure 1 (Eysenck (1985).

When it comes to establishing and sustaining social relations, social intelligence is of fundamental importance. At its inception, social intelligence was regarded just a part of the generalised intelligence; describing it as one's ability to comprehend humans and take wise or informed actions during interactions (Thorndike, 1920) however the definition has evolved into the accumulation of cognitive abilities, knowledge and sensitivities which facilitate navigation of one's social world (Furnham,2012). Later definitions of social intelligence refer to it as the capacity to engage well with others, manage social relations which are both a complex in nature and environments (Honeywill ,2015; Albrecht ,2005)

Fig. 1. The three conceptions of intelligence by Eysenck's



Source: (Furnham, 2012)

Some jobs in a workplace such as managerial jobs require one to have social skills and emotional sensitivity (Furnham,2012). The multifunctional existence of social intelligence inform of social insight, communication, and sensitivity promotes the idea that it exists as a personality or social variable as opposed being a cognitive variable accumulating and processing information; thus, the emotional intelligence trait as posited by Petrides & Furnham (2001).

1.3 Emotional intelligence (EI)

EI has become a topic of popular interest among researchers for many years (Lopes et al., 2006) with researchers such as Mayer & Salovey (1997) defining it as a cognitive capacity to understand, recognise, and regulate the use emotions within an individual and those around them although EI can be used to manage relationships aswell as motivate oneself (Goleman, 1998).

The incorporation of social and emotional intelligence into developing leadership theories has made it an essential part of the competence that managers and leaders need in order to exhibit behavioral and cognitive flexibility and complexity (Boal & Whitehead, 1992). Furthermore, The term social intelligence was used by Salovey & Mayer (1990) to explain components of EI in terms of capacity to analyse and control both one's emotions and those around, and therefore make informed decisions.

2.0 A Case study of IKEA

It has been almost 60 years since the founding of IKEA in Sweden, a company that has grown to the point of being the largest retailer of furniture in the whole world, with approximately 104, 000 employees selling over 12,000 products up to a tune of 17 billion euros. IKEA has maintained the marketing strategy of pushing products at low prices. In order to keep the costs low, the first purchases IKEA made, were of unsold packs bought from the producers. IKEA was able to design its models and then send the order to the local manufacturers due to the big success the company was making. Then IKEA innovated the flat packs, reducing costs on both transport and production, followed by the idea of using showroom-warehouse to reduce the cost of retailing. The idea of establishing major suppliers was one of the main strategies that IKEA used during the 1960s' expansion. It now has a complex network of suppliers across the world, relying on the 1960s' strategy of designing and purchasing low costs of production and transport. IKEA can only implement this strategy by being mindful of the activities within its network as posited by Enrico (2008).

3.1. EI in workplaces

EI is of critical importance to the success of both individuals and businesses, based on various research about its importance (Hughes & Terrell, 2011). With the consideration of Emotional Intelligence as a significant contributor to individuals' positive behaviours, attitudes and ultimately outcomes in a workplace (Sony and Mekoth, 2016) subsequently, possessing significant amounts of EI enables employees to handle work-related stressors in a better way (Keskin et al., 2016).

The use of emotions to appraise others, regulate, and appraise oneself constitute four main blocks leading up to the multifaceted concept of EI (Wong & Law, 2002). Furthermore, the above dimensions of emotional intelligence tend to intersect with the capacity to re-experience as well as understand emotions of others; a term often referred to as empathy used to encourage the development of positive relationships among individuals (Schokman et al., 2014). In other words, for an individual to be psychologically adjusted, they need to be better at observing, comprehending, and managing the use of their own emotions and those of others (García et al., 2014).

3.2. *EI frame works and models*

One of the first models of emotional intelligence often referred to as the personality traits model was extracted from the emotional quotient according to Bar-on's (1997) work and as shown in figure 2 below, the models concentrated on those personality traits deemed to be central to an individual's wellbeing. The other model referred to as the intelligence/ability's model, (Mayer & Salovey, 1993) concentrated on the ability to understand one's emotions as well as those of others right after identifying them and hence the engagement of emotional problems solving. Goleman (1995) fused both the abilities and personal traits model, introducing the famous mixed model as shown in figure 2 below, singling out performance as the principal result; thereby collapsing the original five domains (Goleman, 2001a) into 4 i.e. self and social awareness, self-management and relationship or social management respectively the competences from 25 to 20.

Figure 2. The emotional intelligence mixed model

Personal Competence		Social Competence
Recognition	Self-Awareness -Emotional self-awareness -Accurate self-assessment -Self-confidence	Social Awareness -Empathy -Organisational awareness -Service
Regulation	Self-Management -Emotional self-control -Transparency -Adaptability -Achievement -Initiative -Optimism	Relationship Management -Inspirational leadership -Influence -Developing others -Change catalyst -Conflict management -Building bonds -Teamwork & collaboration

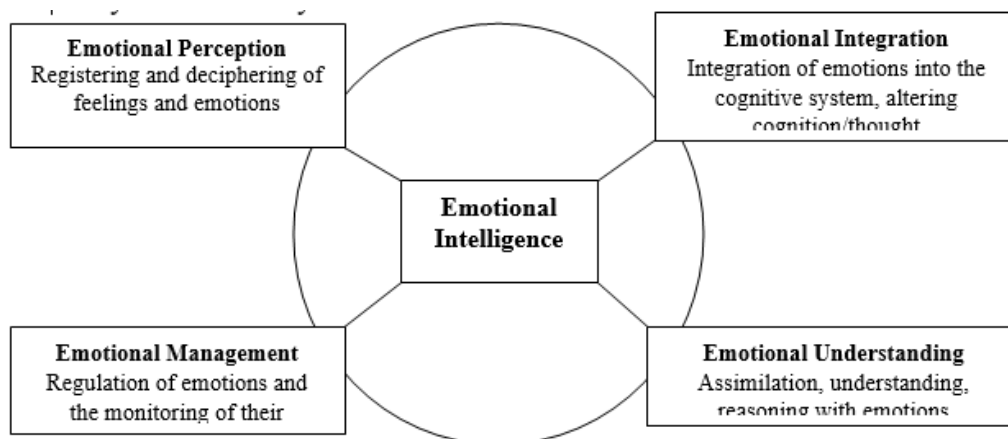
Source: (Goleman, 2001)

3.2.1 Mayer and Salovey's' emotional intelligence model

It is impossible to quantify differences in levels of emotional intelligence among individuals through traditional means by estimating an individual's capability to deal with, realize and practice empathy within the emotional intelligence model (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Cognitive consideration was the benchmark against which mental brilliance was deemed instrumental in analysing and sifting through emotions. Furthermore, the Goleman's mixed model was able to unify cognition and emotions (Goleman, 2001) involving the strategic selection and facilitation of ideas as individuals learn to identify, express their emotions and those of others.

He emphasised that alternative individual perspectives could be helpful in problem solving by exhibiting the ability to distinguish and label emotions, master feelings of any complex nature. Ultimately managing emotions and maintaining social goals requires one's ability for selective emotional engagement and director both self and others' emotions (Goleman, 2001).

Figure 3: Mayer and Salovey's emotional intelligence model



Bar-On and Parker (2000)

Cognitive ability was first introduced as a concept of EI that is different from general intelligence by Mayer & Salovey's model of EI, comprising of emotions' perception, Facilitation, understanding and managing, as four main abilities in the model (Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

Table 2. Bar-On emotional-social intelligence model

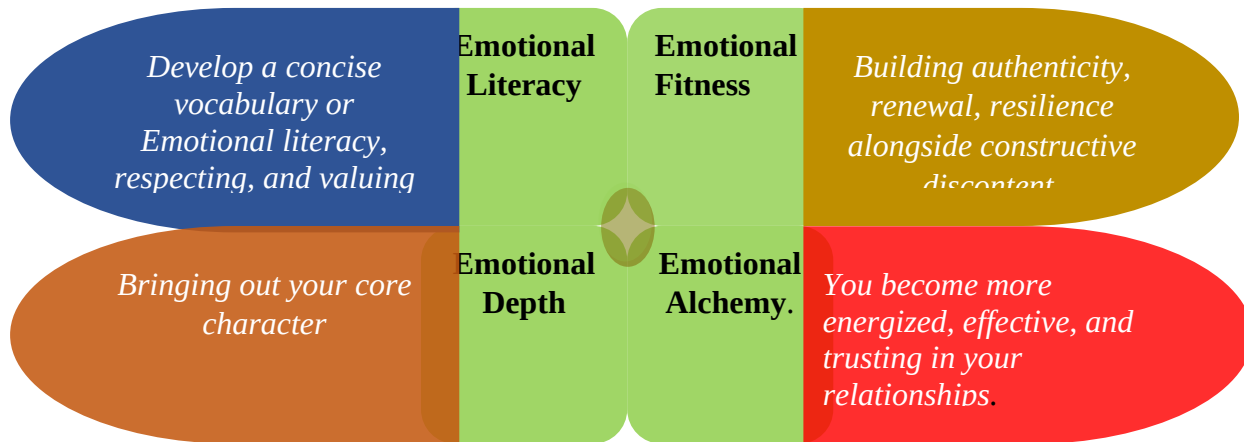
EQ-I SCALES	The EI competencies and skills assessed by each scale
Intrapersonal Self-regard Emotional self-awareness Assertiveness Independence Self-actualization	Self-awareness and self-expression: To accurately perceive, understand and accept oneself To be aware of and understand one's emotions To effectively and constructively express one's emotions and oneself To be self-reliant and free of emotional dependency on others To strive to achieve personal goals and actualize one's potential
Interpersonal Empathy Social Responsibility Interpersonal relationship	Social awareness and interpersonal relationship: To be aware of and understand how others feel To identify with one's social group and cooperate with others To establish mutually satisfying relationships and relate well with others.
Stress management Stress tolerance Impulse control.	Emotional management and regulation: To effectively and constructively manage emotions To effectively and constructively control emotions
Adaptability Reality-testing Flexibility Problem-solving	Change management: To objectively validate one's feelings and thinking with external reality To adopt and adjust one's feelings and thinking to new situations To effectively solve problems of a personal and interpersonal nature
General mood Optimism Happiness	Self-motivation: To be positive and look at the brighter side of life to feel content with oneself, others and life in general

Source: (Goleman, 1998)

Goleman's EI model is divided into five main dimensions with Self- awareness taking the lead in focusing on competence and consciousness of moods, impulse, emotions that an individual may be experiencing as well as those of others. The second dimension often referred to as Self- regulation, which is used to keep one's impulses and emotions in check a trait that enables one to maintain their calmness and composure in highly volatile situations. Motivation, which is the third dimension pertains being goal-oriented and stayed focused no matter the obstacles one faces with adjustments in their approaches such as delayed satisfaction. The fourth dimension is the empathy dimension where an individual exhibits competency in understanding expressions of feelings transmitted through nonverbal and verbal communication. The final dimension is the social skills dimension which displays one's competency in managing difficult situations by deflecting the feeling that would negatively affect collaboration, and hence this becomes an instrumental skill in conflict management (Goleman, 1998).

3.2.2 The four-cornerstone model of emotional intelligence

Figure 4. The four-cornerstone model of emotional intelligence



Source: Author

The four-cornerstone model of emotional intelligence is often operational at executive level in workplaces constituting the capacity to know and understand an individual's emotions and functions (emotional literacy), The emotional hardness, trustworthiness and flexibility (emotional fitness), The emotional intensity and growth (emotional depth) and finally the emotional alchemy in which individual use emotions as a trigger of innovation opportunities of a creative nature (Cooper and Sawaf,1997).

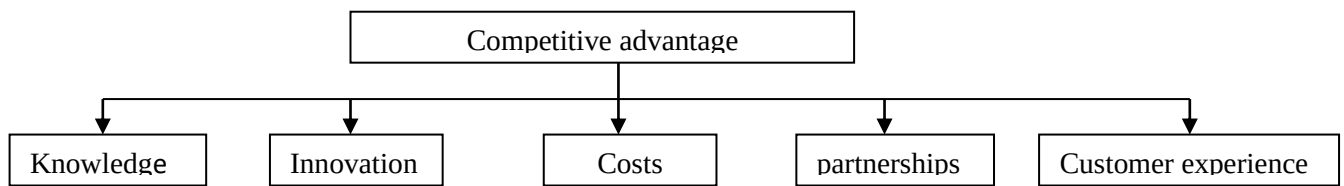
4.0 Effect of emotional intelligence on effective management communication in a workplace

Voluntary and automatic mental operations either increase or reduce an individual's emotional experience; thus one's ability to manage these experiences ardently amplifies or decreases the flow of information that is essential in problem-solving within the workplace. In other words, emotional intelligence management limits an individual's experience and therefore, very often, information channels are often affected by emotional intelligence (Freud, 1966). The expression and regulation of emotions coupled with an accurate appraisal of one-self and others is fundamental in emotional intelligence; reorganizing emotional qualities that can be universally agreed upon (Mayer et al., 1990).

4.1 Emotional intelligence and business advantage

Business advantage is strategically planned and executed mainly based on knowledge, cost reduction, partnerships and customer experience Linton (2019) and thus developing a leadership strategy in these aspects of the business, guarantees competitive advantage.

Figure 3. Structure of business advantage in a workplace



Source: author

4.1 Knowledge

Organisations have been evolved over the last twenty years with organisations moving towards team, knowledge based and client focused business which capitalises on autonomy and thus the knowledge base of employees at all levels in the workplace. More so, the success benchmarks have evolved along with new recruits hired in the organisation based on emotional intelligence rather than those who are smart (House and Aditya, 1997). The organisation's leadership requires more emotional awareness and regulation, the second and first dimensions in the Goleman Model (Goleman, 1998) as these affect the social intelligence levels and interactions in in a leader as far as the social context is concerned (House and Aditya, 1997).

Moreover, Mackintosh (1998) suggested that a combination of successful social interactions with competence is referred to as social intelligence and is adaptive to a point that even other species of animals have it. He added that it enables individuals understand the beliefs, hope, wishes and fears of others; hence the simplicity associated with defining social intelligence as a measurable social skill although he maintained a difference of opinion on the social skills' correlation with the acceptable IQ measures when it comes to one's cognitive ability and the convergence of interpersonal and social skills into one dimension.

4.2 Cost

The cost aspect of business advantage IKEA keeps in mind the impact of cost on the quality of the products when it comes to dealing with suppliers taking into consideration the customer reviews to make informed decisions about the cost quality , design and product functionally a quality of self-awareness (Enrico, 2008). Individuals with emotional intelligence tend to have more career success, advance steady personal relations, advanced skills in leadership and healthier than others with low emotional intelligence.

Furthermore emotional intelligence gives a company competitive advantage by creating trusting relationships, example of the quality of relationship between IKEA and its suppliers (Enrico, 2008), amplifying effectiveness and energy, both of which are fundamental in the four cornerstone EI model, such as motional fitness, literacy, alchemy and depth as shown in the figure below (Cooper, 1997).

4.3 Partnerships

Emotional literacy in the four cornerstones model emphasises the development of a useful vocabulary that is clear whilst reorganising, valuing and respecting one's implicit foresight of feelings. Emotional literacy is made up of emotional energy, honesty, applied intuition and feedback. Emotional fitness, the second cornerstone in the four cornerstones model comprises

of renewal, authenticity, constructive discontent and resilience e, qualities which highlight one's character, feelings and values that they live by in the process of forging their authentic position in work and life (Cooper, 1997).

4.4 Innovation

The third corner stone in the cornerstones model is emotional depth which individuals use to summon their innate character to identify and enhance their potential and purpose. In so doing, one can show commitment, initiative, drive, accountability and conscience using integrity to influence their authority, title and rank. The last corner stone which is referred to as the alchemy blends all forces that give an individual the ability to source for creative opportunities and thus turning small ideas into big ones (Cooper, 1997).

One could say it empowers out innovation an attribute that IKEA specialises in by developing explicit concepts of products and services as well as ensuring that guides are made available to the customers to enable them to assemble and use the products (Wietze and Elfring, 2002). Application of emotional alchemy in IKEA led to the several innovations such as the introduction of flat packs and thus reducing cost on both transport and production on top of the show room -warehouse which cut the retailing cost significantly as posited by Enrico (2008).

Because at the alchemy level individuals become more energized, effective, and trusting in relationships (Cooper, 1997), this has given IKEA a competitive advantage in the sense that the established relationships have led to a well-managed supply chain which emphasises accruing mutual benefits between both suppliers and IKEA with IKEA paying for many tests while on long term stable orders and projects of a technical nature (Enrico, 2008).

Furthermore, IKEA applies the emotional alchemy to ensure trust in their relationships with suppliers depending on the complexity of the product. IKEA tends to assign complex products development contracts to supplier with considerable mutual commitment, trust and knowledge built over long periods of time where as easily interchangeable products which require simple technical means to develop are entrusted to those with short term relationship with IKEA and the same principal is applied to its logistics partner (Enrico, 2008).

4.5 Customer Experience

IKEA systematically involves its customers in its service delivery based on the customer observation for those customers who have the potential to handle certain activities in the delivery process that initially were handled by employees (Schneider & Bowen, 1995). This done whilst motivating customers empowering them besides giving the incentives. And hence IKEA customers are educated and informed about being involved in the production process, a new competence on the side of IKEA employees and it is seen through the entire service delivery system (Wietze and Elfring, 2002)

5.0 EI Models and development needs of individuals in a workplace

5.1 EI aligns skills to the required job task

The most efficient way of making sur that employee have the competence and right skill set to enable them deliver to the company's expectation, is by making sur that managers take time to engage with staff and discover their individual needs, a practice most managers don't carry out (mindtools.com, 2015) furthermore, Time is required to find out what staff need

rather than using a one size fit all training approach, in order to save money, resources and time by ensuring there right people get the right training. This leaves the employees more empowered to align their personal objectives to those of the company and hence improve performance.

There has been a great deal of excitement generated in the public regarding the notion that, high emotional intelligence improves performance. EI is seen to influence an individual's performance according to testimonial from workplace, and popular opinion and thus improving the overall quality of work, enhancing, one's career (Coleman, 1997). He added that it gives one the competitive edge for example one may become the best scholar of law or fiscal analyst, but without EI, they cannot be a brilliant lawyer or even CEO material.

5.2 EI improves job performance

Theoretical and empirical studies have subsequently implied the notion that EI has an implication on aggression aswell as the individual's success in a workplace (Quebberman & Rozell, 2002). This is evidenced in a model by (Dulewicz & Higgs, 2001) which suggests that management competences coupled with cognitive ability have an inclination on EQ, specifically the self-awareness dimension of EI and interpersonal sensitivity which are central in predicting job performance. In addition, they suggested that the modification of EQ by factors such as decisiveness and absence of emotional resilience have and impact on related and specific leadership abilities like change creation, engagement, implementation and sustaining.

5.3 EI improves leadership

The development of the MEIS (Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale) made it possible to take a deeper look at how EI affects one's performance on the job (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). These claims were further validated by examining one's general intelligence and EI in relation to their cognitive based performance (Weisinger, 2006). Other EI models such as the four corner stones model applied at an executive level (Cooper and Sawaf (1997) exhibited the capacity of a leader to know and recognise how their emotions work (emotional literacy), their emotional flexibility, hardness and trustworthiness (emotional fitness), their emotional intensity and growth (emotional depth) and finally deriving creativity from emotions (emotional alchemy).

Emotional fitness is at the very foundation of IKEA's business strategy where a profound level of informality and simplicity are evidenced in the culture practiced in IKEA (Heritage, 2017) Case in point, IKEA USA allows all employees to sit side by side irrespective of designation, with only a few executives having business cards (Kowitt, 2016) often referred to as a place where no stroking of egos is welcome; a notion Ashforth and Humphrey (1995) would stand to agree with by positing that the intertwining of a job role, performance with emotions may have negative or positive connotations on the task management.

In IKEA teamwork is at the core of their values, whereby only staff willing to appreciate and value the IKEA culture are recruited through a rigorous process involving online tests with actions to choose from 10 work based scenarios and how one answers the questions forms the basis for the management's recruitment decision (Dudovskiy, 2017).

6.0 The importance of EI and mindfulness in a company's competitive advantage

Competitive advantage is associated with provision of high quality products or services at high prices whilst lowering the cost of production of these products or services (Pickard, 2018). Individuals with high EQ tend to communicate their goals, ideas and intentions better in a more articulate, sensitive and yet assertive way, creating an environment where leaders know their teams, weakness and strengths and thus facilitating adaptability and organisation commitment to guarantee business success (Furnham, 2012).

6.1 Mindfulness leads to life satisfaction and higher EI

The absence of a mechanism to account for the correlation between well-being, mental distress, contentment and mindfulness still permits the establishment of the relationship between these three, with some researchers asserting mindfulness' role in enabling individuals to develop emotional competences through accurate perception and effective regulation of emotions (Chambers *et al.*, 2009). Individuals with high mindfulness levels have been known to have great emotional intelligence (Baer *et al.*, 2006) and as such they tend to present with high levels of satisfaction in life due to less mental distress (Davis and Humphrey 2012).

6.2 Mindfulness reduces employee burnout

As individuals accept and live every single moment of their life in a "moment -to-moment awareness" (Kabat-Zinn, 2013, Brown *et al.*, 2007) without intrapersonal judgement (Brown & Ryan 2003) they tend to adopt personality traits that distinguish them from other individuals. When connected to emotional intelligence, mindfulness facilitates self-regulation, awareness and attention (Lawson, 2011) and presents in form of a good acumen as opposed to burnout which causes absenteeism, increases employee turnover and negatively impacts productivity in an organisation (Vallen, 1993).

6.3 Mindfulness improves customer services

Therefore, mindfulness in an organisation increases employees' self-awareness and thus they tend to have a more focused positive perception of their working environment, which in turn escalates into positive job appraisals, minimising the possibility and effects of employee burn out (Gerzina & Porfeli, 2012). Mindfulness improves communication and minimised tension among employees in a workplace, and thus equips them to manage workplace conflicts (Bodhi, 2011) a skill that gives business a competitive advantage as employees with mindfulness tend to provide the high levels of customer services by appropriately dealing with challenges (Alexander, 2010).

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