

Developing Emotional Intelligence Skills for the Workplace

Module Code: BMSW6106

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a. Introduction

Emotional intelligence, or emotional quotient (EQ) is the ability of a person to identify, understand, and manage emotions which is critical in interpersonal communication. Harnessing the power at workplaces can be done with proper EQ as it improves communication, problem-solving, and decision-making skills. The present study deals with a few EQ issues that are writ large in Sainsbury's. In this context, the appropriateness of theories of EQ is evaluated with the current situation of the organisation.

b. Brief Introduction to the organisation

Sainsbury's is a truly national retailer that makes accessible, affordable, and joyful food at competitive prices which were established in 1969 (Sainsbury's, 2024). Sainsbury's is present in 600 supermarkets with over 800 stores with more than 148k employees (Sainsbury's, 2024). The brand Argos is the fourth most visited retail website in the UK where Sainsbury's is committed to **sustainable shopping** and aimed at investing £1 billion over fifteen years to become a net zero business by 2035 (Sainsbury's, 2024). The **"Plan for Better"** agenda of Sainsbury's is destined to build a more sustainable food system adhering to the UNSDGs and considering three interlocking pillars of "Better for you, Better for everyone, and Better for the planet".

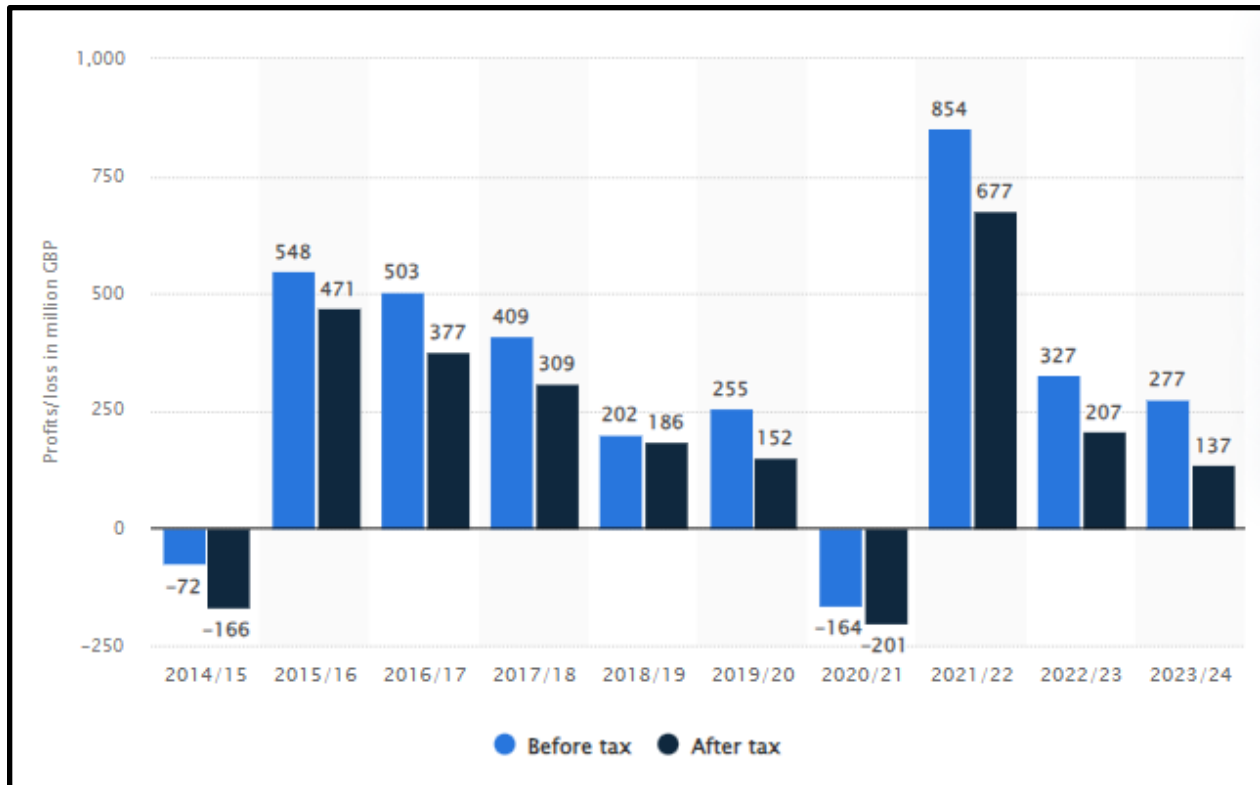


Figure 1: Profit/loss of Sainsbury's during 2014-2024

(Source: Statista, 2024)

Sainsbury's recorded a profit of 277 million British Pounds before tax and 137 million British pounds after tax in 2024 which is an improvement compared to 2021 (Statista, 2024). However, the company made a significant loss as it made 327 million British pounds in FY 2022-2023. Headquartered in London, Sainsbury's is the second largest supermarket in the UK and placed itself among the "big four" grocery retailers in the form of Asda, Tesco, and Morrisons. In March 2024, the company had 1431 grocery stores across the UK however, the growth of the supermarket has slowed down of late. On the other hand, while talent and people development are considered, "*apprenticeship*" is carried out by Sainsbury's with its continuous investment leading to getting the "*Gold Status*" (Sainsbury's, 2024). Moreover, £2,00 million investment in colleague's pay is a key part of the "*Save to Investment*" program (Sainsbury's, 2024).

c. A brief introduction to the key models of emotional intelligence

Daniel Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence

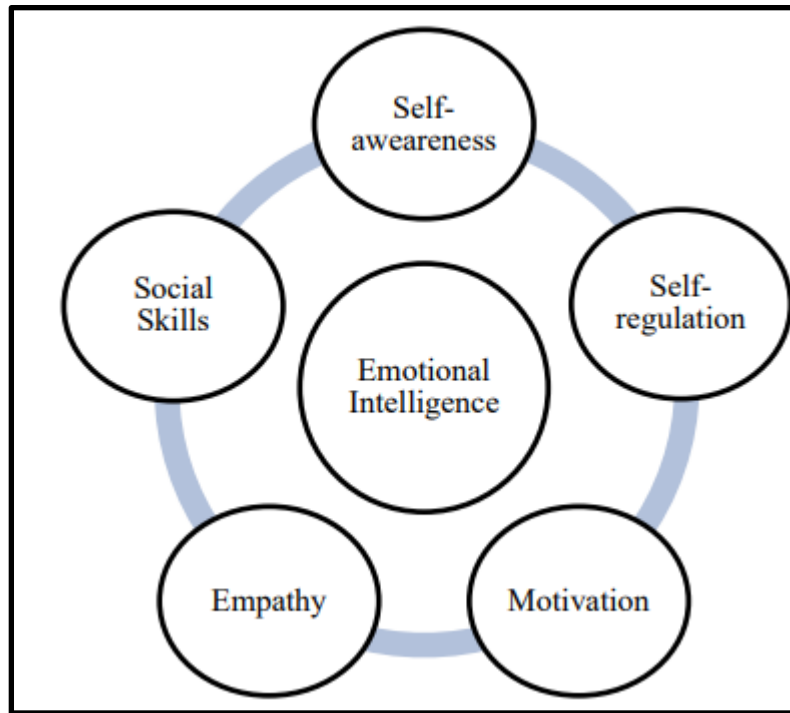


Figure 2: Daniel Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence

The interplay between social, and emotional functioning includes self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.

Self-awareness

Self-awareness is identifying and understanding feelings, emotions, and thoughts while communicating with others. When the manager of a company has low self-awareness, the employees struggle to recognize their feelings, and thoughts to make sound decisions.

Self-regulation

Self-regulation is the ability to get control over disruptive, or unexpected emotions through maintaining a positive outlook when situations go unplanned. Self-regulation enhances the openness to change, and adaptability among individuals by empowering integrity, and optimism.

Motivation

The third component of Goleman's model constitutes the inner force of an employee to perform a task as motivation is the drive when individuals feel to perform a specific work. Focusing on

strength, self-reflection, and rewarding oneself are the key factors in driving self-motivational goals.

Empathy

When an individual makes out the emotions of others, empathy grows to make objective decisions by reducing bias. Besides, ***empathetic*** leaders find the root causes of employee grievances instead of jumping to conclusions.

Social skills

Social skills are concerned with verbal, and nonverbal skills, and active listening skills that enable one to connect with the team. Social skills determine the extent to which networking and relationships are built.

Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso's EI model

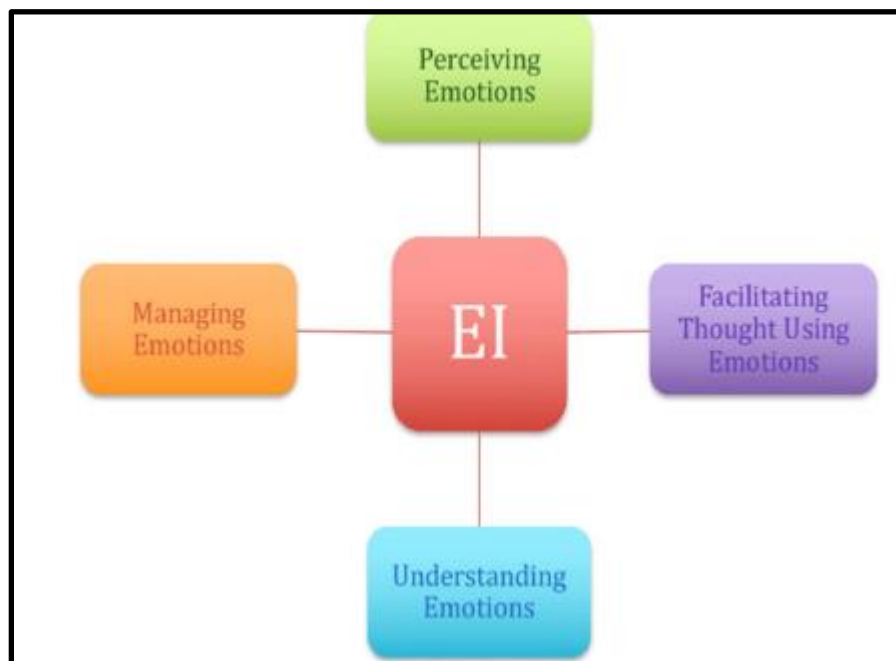


Figure 3: Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso's EI model

(Source: Pandey, 2021, p.68)

This EQ model means that information from the perceived understanding of emotions and management of emotions are used to guide decision-making and facilitate thinking. This model comprises four key branches such as perceiving emotions, using emotions to foster thinking, and understanding emotions followed by management of emotions.

Perceive emotions

Perception of emotion is the pivotal aspect of this branch includes being able to recognise emotions with the postural, and facial expressions of others (Bru-Luna *et al.* 2021, p.20).

Facilitation of thought by emotions

This branch is the ability to use emotions to aid thinking. This aspect includes being capable of harnessing emotions to motivate oneself and others as well as to achieve specific goals.

Understanding emotions

The capability to understand emotions is crucial followed by analysing the emotions with the awareness of the likely trends of emotions. Moreover, this includes the ability to label and discriminate between feelings.

Managing emotions

This branch is significant as it deals with the attribute of ***emotional self-management*** involving an individual's personality with self-knowledge, goals, and social awareness. This EQ model is highly influential in fostering communication, conflict resolution, and leadership development to inspire and motivate the teams (Bru-Luna *et al.* 2021, p.19). Furthermore, with this model, organisations can be able to train employees while customer service and customer loyalty are considered.

Bar-On's Emotional Quotient Inventory



Figure 4: Bar-On's Emotional Quotient Inventory

(Source: Sánchez-Teruel *et al.* 2020, p.5)

The Bar-On EQI is dependent on five major factors, and 15 sub-factors that can define the concept of emotional intelligence or EI.

Interpersonal

Interpersonal relationships, social responsibility, and empathy are the key aspects of interpersonal attributes where social group and mutual understanding are fostered with a self-awareness of what others feel.

Intrapersonal

Emotional self-awareness and self-regard are pivotal in intrapersonal factors to be aware of one's emotions, and understand, and accept oneself. In addition, assertiveness, and independence are also related to being self-reliant, and free of emotional dependency on others.

Stress management

Impulse control and stress tolerance are the primary factors of stress management that need to be abided by the employees to constructively manage, and control emotions.

Adaptability

Flexibility, reality-testing, and problem-solving are interconnected in terms of adaptability to adapt and adjust feelings followed by thinking to new situations. Additionally, adaptability also involves effectively solving problems of personal, and interpersonal.

General Mood

Feeling content with oneself, and looking at the positive aspects of life cater to optimism and happiness. Employees who rank high in their general moods tend to possess a positive outlook with overall satisfaction in their lives.

d. Answering the question with the models of emotional intelligence

Importance of the development of emotional intelligence

EQ has much to offer to modern workplaces along with the stakeholders. EQ aids leaders to motivate and inspire good work while making out other's motivations. It can bring more individuals to the table followed by resolving disputes, and conflicts. EQ is highly valued, and sought-after by employers where internal or external stimuli can cause physical changes followed by facilitating communication with visible cues (Forbes, 2020). Brands with higher EQ or emotional intelligence can outperform others in stock markets. In the era of economic volatility, Samsung beat Apple in IQ whereas Ebay lost to Amazon in fostering EQ. *[Referred to*

Appendix 2]

It was found that the online ordering of groceries hit Sainsbury's a few days ago and it apologised to the customers as it was unable to contact them customers (BBC, 2024). The development of EQ is writ large in this case where the ***empathy*** aspect of Daniel Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence has been implemented by the organisation. Hence, it is understood that the development of an intelligent workforce is indispensable for an organisation.

In contrast, the strike of nearly 500 Sainsbury's lorry drivers in Birmingham, and Essex led to severe "disruption to deliveries". Moreover, the transfer of the drivers may result in no longer being eligible for benefits such as a 15% discount card worth up to £11.6k in a year's savings as an incentive scheme (Retailgazette, 2024). From this information, it can be said that Sainsbury's lacked in EQ which could be their business priority. Here, Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso's EI model are highly important where social awareness and the goals of an organisation are invariably related.

Apart from these, Sainsbury's has not adhered to "*discretionary spending*" such as fashion clothing as it shifted resources to the most important items (Management Today, 2020). Moreover, the connection with colleagues has not been up to the mark by Sainsbury's as in April 2020 it announced that no bonus would be paid to the employees followed by a 13% pay cut (Management Today, 2020). Besides, there could be open communication but in the case of Sainsbury's, everyone was not involved and was well-informed as well. Thus, it can be said that the current volatile economic environment negatively affected the organisational culture of Sainsbury's. In this concern, the interpersonal attribute of Bar-On EQI is effective for Sainsbury's as it deals with empathy and social responsibility to the workers which is important. Furthermore, controlling emotions with Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso's EI model is also needed where Sainsbury's could show loyalty to its employees. Sainsbury's needs to train its workers to make an emotionally intelligent workforce to meet the needs of employees.

Other than these, Sainsbury is supposed to cut nearly 1500 roles to reduce operational costs by nearly £1bn per year (The Guardian, 2024). Along with these, 75 shops remain closed which can be a cause of concern for the customers. From this information, it can be said that self-awareness and self-regulation aspects of the senior teams of Sainsbury's plummet which are paramount which is found in Daniel Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence. For this reason, the development of an emotionally intelligent workforce is essential for Sainsbury's to drive collaborative leadership followed by perseverance, and resilience. Moreover, EQ is essential for Sainsbury's in terms of conflict management as Sainsbury's is struggling with the "*equal pay battle*". Besides, there was significant reputational damage as employees complained of a "*cost of living crisis*" (Glasgow Times, 2023). Therefore, EQ development is highly important for Sainsbury's to get rid of weak team cohesion, poor communication, and lack of empathy.

The relationship between emotional intelligence and effective management communication and business advantages

There is an intricate relationship between EQ and effective management communication which can be fostered in Sainsbury's. An enhanced understanding is paramount for the organisation where communication needs to be improved leveraging emotional control, and awareness. Besides, there can be **active listening** as senior managers need to listen to the employees to mitigate the issues that have cropped up in recent years (Gómez-Leal *et al.* 2022, p.15). Daniel Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence signified that **motivation** plays a significant role as effective communication by managers can motivate, and inspire the employees followed by boosting productivity, and morale. In addition to these, emotionally intelligent managers can be able to adapt communication styles that can heighten the growth, and development of the effectiveness of the employees. Self-awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation can foster a sense of connection in the workplace which can enhance communication skills (Dobrovolska *et al.* 2021, p.3). Along with these, a sense of **social awareness** can also be fostered with improved communication where the leaders are sensitive to the emotions of others. Bar-On's Emotional Quotient Inventory is relevant in this context where empathy cultivation is necessary.

Apart from these, better self-regulation, and motivation can be implemented with higher EQ among the leaders which can result in enhanced employee performance. Moreover, there can be sophisticated business advantages as emotionally intelligent employees can communicate, and show empathy to the customers leading to customer satisfaction, and loyalty. As employee turnover and grievance are evident in Sainsbury's in recent years, emotional intelligence can be effective as employees can feel valued and understood followed by reduction of turnover along with the costs associated with training and development of the employees. In addition to these, **effective leadership** can be fostered inside the workplace as emotionally intelligent employers can guide and inspire their teams effectively leading to organizational productivity, and better decision-making for the business. On the other hand, an emotionally intelligent workforce is more adaptable with innovative ideas that can exert great business advantage in a well-directed manner. Lastly, Sainsbury's can achieve a competitive advantage when the workers are emotionally intelligent as customer relationships, employee engagement, and operational efficacy can be improved.

e. Evaluation of Models of Emotional Intelligence

Appropriateness of the models to meet the development needs of the organisation

Daniel Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence

This theory is highly appropriate for Sainsbury's where five core aspects are highly relevant for the organisation. Self-awareness of the managers is crucial to identify the emotions, and feelings of the employees as the organisation suffered in the past with incidents such as equal pay, and employee conflicts. Furthermore, intrinsic motivation is the need of the hour for the employees resulting in job satisfaction, and increased productivity. Additionally, organisational goals can be accomplished where performance and employee engagement can also be heightened with proper motivation. The developmental needs of the organisation such as employee retention and training can also be incorporated with proper motivation as an integral part of the EQ.

Sainsbury's customers slammed "**bad service**" as it failed to deliver a wide range of online orders due to a technical glitch (Independent, 2024). In this context, **empathy** needs to be shown to the customers to address the customers' needs for maintaining better workplace relations. Additionally, the aspect of self-regulation is highly appropriate for Sainsbury's which has an inextricable connection to dealing with conflicts. It is seen that Sainsbury's failed to handle the strikes of the lorry drivers which resulted in severe disruption in service deliveries. Hence, the developmental needs of the lorry drivers need to be properly met which can be done by adhering to the principles of Daniel Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence.

Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso's EI model

Perceiving emotions of this model is essential for the Sainsbury's employees where perceiving and interpreting emotions are required to deal with the customers. Decade-old local stores of Sainsbury's are shut across the UK as "the Union of Shop, Distributive, and Allied Workers" or **USDAW** said that the shop closures affected 14 members (The Sun, 2024). In this way, the shoppers, and employees are left devastated by the situation of economic inertia. For this reason, interpreting emotions can be appropriate for Sainsbury's as emotional information can cater to

problem-solving and decision-making. Furthermore, the needs of the customers and employees can be met through emotional intelligence.

Apart from these, Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso's EI model seems highly appropriate as Sainsbury's failed to understand the emotions of the employees. As shown in **Appendix 3**, bullying has become a predicament for Sainsbury's where the managers are responsible. In this context, Sainsbury's must equip its employees with proper training and development to regulate their emotions in maintaining positive work environment. Other than these, conflict resolution skills need to be incorporated to bolster the EQ among the employees as managing emotions augurs well for the organisation. Besides, this theory is also appropriate as emotions can be used for the developmental needs of the employees in a well-directed way.

Bar-On's Emotional Quotient Inventory

From the above discussion, it can be said that Bar-On's Emotional Quotient Inventory model can be fruitful where performance management is characterised by EQ. In this context, an **unjust recruitment process** is invariably linked to personal ties, and favouritism which do not create value (Williams *et al.* 2021). In this regard, self-perception, and self-actualisation are appropriate for Sainsbury's to deal with this challenge. Additionally, intrapersonal skills are valuable for improvement in communication and building clarity. Along with these, personalised developmental plans are also beneficial for the organisation where the employees can remain socially aware of the external situations with a good sense of their emotions, and values.

Adaptability is a vital ingredient for Sainsbury's where it can prepare the employees to deftly handle the uncertainty and change of the retail industry. Furthermore, the employees might require proper training to get adhere to the practicability of the recent scenarios. Besides, **Appendix 4** depicts that there have been payment issues along with excessive stress. In this regard, the stress management attribute of Bar-On's Emotional Quotient Inventory is highly appropriate where development needs and overall well-being of employees can be effectively maintained.

Sainsbury's

Sainsbury's Employee Review

1.0

☆☆☆☆

Mostly negative experience.

Trading Assistant (Former Employee) - Glasgow City, Glasgow - 7 April 2023

Some stores were actually good to work on. But the majority are bad. Very bad management with bad talking. Unhealthy night shifts with working over 6 hours on the fridge section, not allowed to drink and followed at your every move. If you complain, they either cancel your shifts or look down on you. Very rude management and poor leadership skills. They do not know how to guide or talk. They will usually scold you in front of colleagues or customers for every little unnecessary detail. Micro-managing policy to a level that is out of common sense. In general in Sainsbury's I always feel like I am in school and we have a very bad principal, expected to be working like a robot. I have ever barely heard a good word even if I stay for 8-9 hours straight fully concentrated and focus on putting things on the shelf and try to clean it and make it look the best way possible I have ever seen it. Most colleagues are very helpful and kind. But I have always wondered how they worked there for years, being fully supported by this job at such a bad environment and never stood up. I have been in front of cases that the person is literally freezing to death and the manager was yelling at them that they must not be fast enough to produce warmth from their own body after working for hours in the fridge section.

Figure 5: Unhealthy work environment of Sainsbury's

(Source: UK Indeed, 2024)

From the above figure, it is seen that the internal work environment is not always employee-friendly. Therefore, the **general mood** aspect of this model can be appropriate where optimism and happiness are fostered along with the promotion of a positive work environment.

f. Recommendations for better connectedness and collaborations

Recommendations	Specific (S)	Measurable (M)	Achievable (A)	Relevant (R)	Time-bound (T) (Months)
Effective training and development program	Sainsbury's needs to provide effective training to its employees considering the five core aspects of EQ such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, motivation, and social skills.	It can be measured by the collaborations between the employees along with the relationship with their senior managers. Moreover, the interpersonal, and intrapersonal skills would also be heightened with the training programs. Employee feedback and post-training assessments can be carried out for improved performance.	Training programs can be delivered with the organisational resources as Sainsbury's has already implemented several employee training programs.	The strategic goal of Sainsbury's is to heighten customer service and customer loyalty along with conflict reduction. The training program would be highly beneficial to heighten overall productivity, business performance, and employee morale.	10
Employee well-being measures	The physical and mental health of the Sainsbury's employees can be improved with several well-being initiatives such as financial wellness, and mental health support.	Absenteeism rates, turnover, and regular surveys can be done to assess the mental health of the employees. Additionally, communication needs to be performed to	Proper collaboration with health professionals can be effective in dealing with the mental health issues of the employees. Furthermore,	High EQ behaviours among the employees can be seen with the mental health support programs that can improve the overall productivity of	7-8

		measure mental health improvement.	access to mental health services needs to be implemented which is essential.	Sainsbury's. Along with these, a positive work culture, and work environment are expected with mental health support systems.	
<i>Enhancing communication with the employees</i>	A consistent, open, and clear communication channel is highly recommended for the employees of Sainsbury's. Transparency needs to be maintained without any bias in the communication	The managers must be trained as they must be equipped with ethical communication techniques. Communication analytics can be used to measure the effectiveness of communication enhancement (Giermindl <i>et al.</i> 2022, p.3).	Various types of employee communication software such as Slack, or MS Teams can be incorporated to measure the effectiveness of communication (Menzies and Zarb, 2020, p.1). Proper connectedness and collaboration can be fostered with communication enhancement.	Employee engagement can be improved followed by ample trust, and collaboration between the employees, and senior managers. Furthermore, the overall performance of Sainsbury's can be enhanced with a reduction in employee turnover, and higher EQ.	4-5
<i>Employee recognition and reward with</i>	High EQ behaviours need to be appreciated inside the	Financial literacy among employees can be improved	The budget must be fixed for rewards as the reward	The values and strategic goals of Sainsbury's can be	6

workforce flexibility	workplace along with workplace flexibility to navigate economic volatility	followed by an assessment of employee satisfaction rates (Oppong <i>et al.</i> 2023, p.5).	program is invariably related to improved connectedness among the managers, and the employees.	heightened with employee recognition that can motivate other employees to perform better. Economic uncertainty can be mitigated when the employees are committed to work.	
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Table 1: Recommendation plan for Sainsbury's

(Source: Author)

Conclusion

From the above discussion, it can be stated that EQ plays a pivotal role in heightening the morale of the employees which leads to organisational productivity. Sainsbury's, despite being the second-largest retailer in the UK suffered from a few issues. EQ aids leaders in motivating and inspiring good work while making other's motivations. Daniel Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence, Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso's EI model, and Bar-On's Emotional Quotient Inventory are discussed with proper illustrations, and relevance is given with Sainsbury's. Discretionary spending, job cuts, and employee retention issues are writ large in Sainsbury's that constitute EQ. operational efficacy and employee well-being can take place with a focus of the mental health, and emotional well-being of the employees. The models are appropriate while meeting the developmental needs of the individuals of Sainsbury's. Sainsbury's can achieve a competitive advantage when the workers possess high EQ as customer relationships, employee engagement, and operational efficacy can be improved. In essence, Sainsbury's lacked in EQ which hampered their business priority to some extent.

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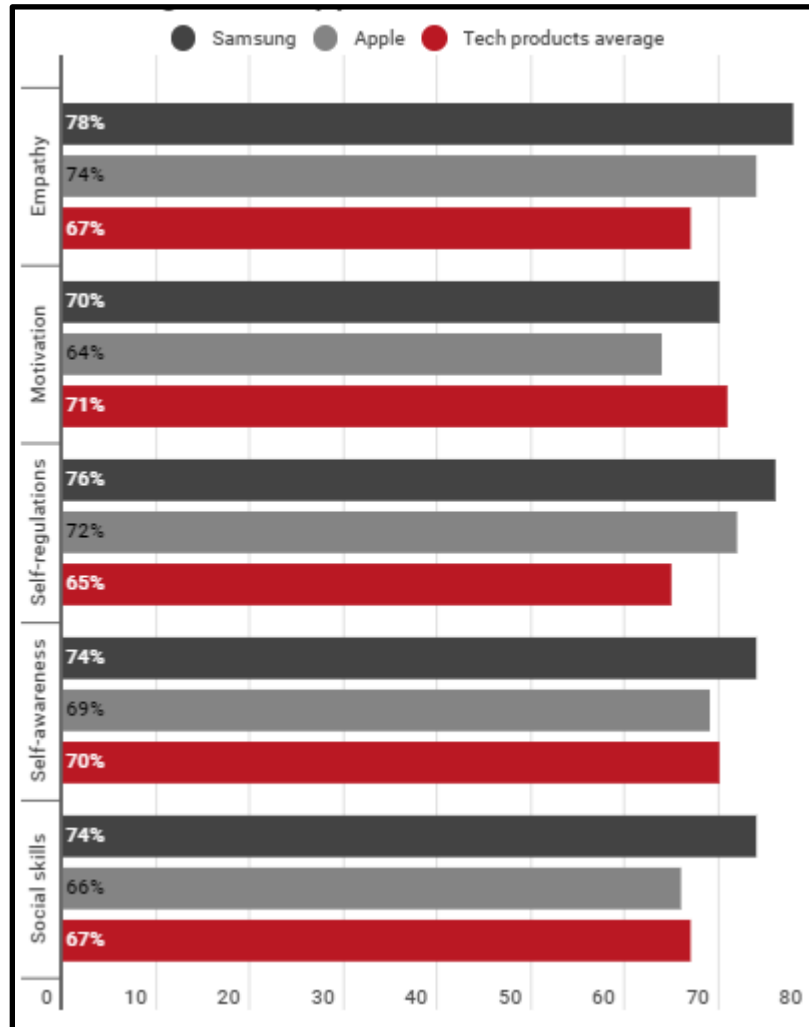
Appendices

Appendix 1: Next level Sainsbury's



(<https://www.about.Sainsbury's.co.uk/our-strategy>)

Appendix 2: EQ Score of Samsung, and Apple



(<https://www.performancemarketingworld.com/article/1791369/%E2%80%9Cbrands-emotional-intelligence-important-ever%E2%80%9D-outperform-stock-markets>)

Appendix 3: Employee Grievance at Sainsbury's

 **Sainsbury's**

Extremely poor treatment of staff - Anonymous employee Sainsbury's Employee Review

[See all Reviews \(16237\)](#)

1.0 ★☆☆☆☆

17 Sept 2017 ...

 Anonymous employee

Former employee, more than 3 years

☒ Recommend

☐ CEO approval

☐ Business outlook

Pros

CSA work colleagues can be good to work with.

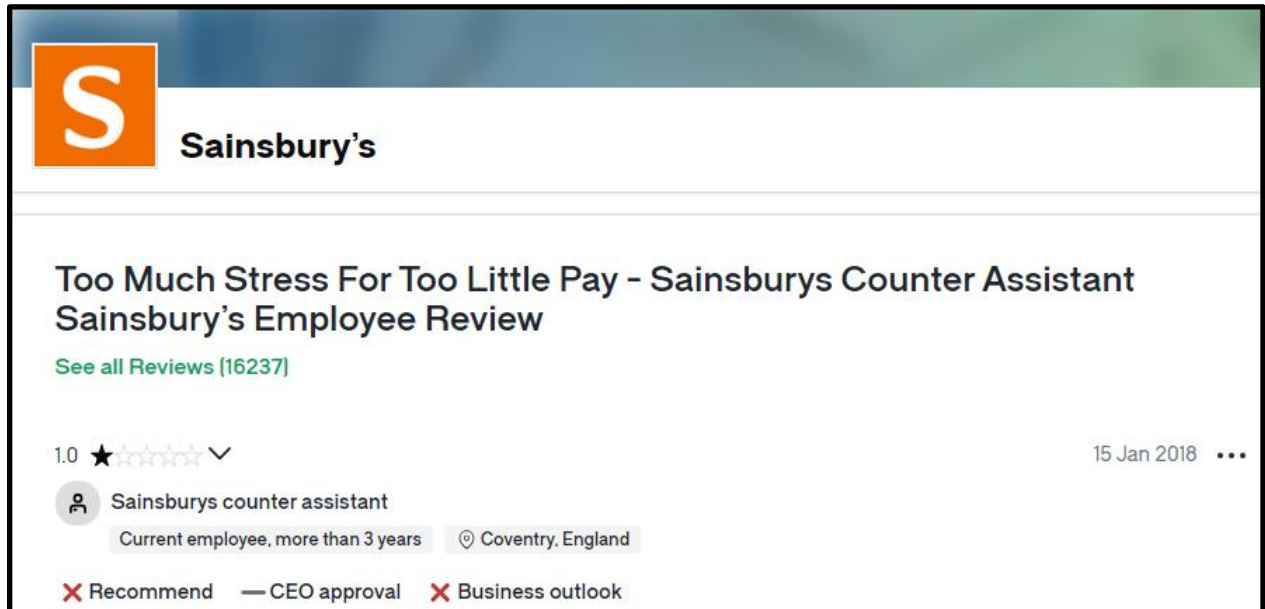
Cons

Managers have a tendency to bully "unpopular" members of staff and create a toxic and dangerous work environment for them. During my time, I had 3 managers who all encouraged some form of bullying or harassment to select members staff, causing them to leave or transfer to another store.

The first manager attempted to have a pregnant team leader's contract terminated; the second manager encouraged staff bullying, prompting at least 4 colleagues to leave; the third manager further created a stressful and toxic work environment, is unprofessional and rude, lacking professional communication skills with staff, as well as a liar while only choosing to cooperate with and support select members of staff who have disclosed disabilities.

(<https://www.glassdoor.co.in/Reviews/Employee-Review-Sainsbury's%E2%80%99s-RVW16864627.htm>)

Appendix 4: Employee Stress at Sainsbury's



(<https://www.glassdoor.co.in/Reviews/Employee-Review-Sainsbury's%E2%80%99s-RVW18747814.htm>)

Appendix 5: Poster

DEVELOPING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

REFLECTION ON MY OWN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EI)

Communication: Effective communication is important in any environment besides the business environment to resolve different issues (Kalogiannidis, 2020). It is a crucial aspect of resolving issues like employee grievances and strikes. Reflecting on my own experience, I understand the importance of acknowledging the performance of employees who provide constructive feedback.

Decision-Making: Good decision-making in challenging situations, such as handling the employee pay cut, requires selective humility from the leaders (Brunzel and Ebsen, 2023). As a leader of an organisation, I will embrace the ability to apologise to people with whom I have made wrong decisions.

Mental Health: Good mental health is important for understanding employee problems (Bulińska-Stangrecka and Bagieńska, 2021). I can understand that developing good mental health can allow me to tackle the problems of the employees.



USAGE OF MY EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE TO ADDRESS THESE ISSUES

Employee Grievance: I will need to acknowledge the employee's situation and address the employee's grievances. By providing alternative solutions, I can reduce the employees' dissatisfaction.

Employee Strike: Being willing to take responsibility during strikes and face the problem of miscommunication will allow me to resolve the conflicts of management. This process will involve understanding the root causes of employee dissatisfaction.

Pay Cut: Pay cuts deeply affect employee morale. By understanding their perspectives and why the problem is occurring, I can reduce the reasons behind the employee pay cut. Showing the employees empathy and understanding of their concerns will foster two-way communication, leading to effective solutions (Fuller et al. 2021).

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	the potential benefits of EI		the type of EI Skills		How you could improve your EI
1	Communication Process	1	Acknowledge and give constructive feedback to the people to understand their motives	1	Acknowledge the situation and assess how what kind of resolution is needed to solve the problem
2	Decision Making Factors	2	Willing to apologise to the team and admit the fault	2	Be willing to take responsibility for the mishappenings and address them effectively
3	Mental Health	3	Empathise with the workforce to understand their problems	3	Empathise with their perspectives to mitigate any unresolved problem

