



Leadership and Management Skills for the Workplace

Module: Developing Emotional Intelligence Skills

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1. Introduction

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the ability to recognise, understand, manage, and use emotions effectively in oneself and in others. In modern workplaces, employees are required to work collaboratively, manage pressure, communicate with people from different backgrounds, and respond positively to constant organisational change. As a result, emotional intelligence has become a key factor in employee performance, leadership effectiveness, and organisational success, alongside technical skills and professional knowledge.

One of the most widely used emotional intelligence frameworks is Goleman's (1998) model, which identifies five core components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Self-awareness allows individuals to recognise their own emotions and understand how these emotions influence behaviour and decision-making. Self-regulation involves controlling emotional reactions, especially in stressful or challenging situations. Motivation refers to an internal drive to achieve goals, remain committed, and maintain optimism even when difficulties arise. Empathy involves understanding the emotions and perspectives of others, while social skills focus on communication, teamwork, and relationship management.

Wiedmer's Emotional Intelligence model also highlights the importance of emotional awareness and emotional control, particularly in leadership and management roles. According to Wiedmer, emotionally intelligent individuals are better able to communicate clearly, manage conflict constructively, and create supportive working environments. Emotional intelligence is closely linked to mindfulness, which involves paying attention to the present moment without judgment. Mindfulness helps individuals become more aware of their emotional responses and choose appropriate reactions. This report critically evaluates how employees use emotional intelligence in the workplace and examines how managers should consider emotional intelligence when recruiting employees from different generations.

2. Critical Evaluation of Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace Using Wiedmer's Model

Emotional intelligence plays a vital role in improving workplace effectiveness, employee well-being, and leadership performance. In modern organisations, employees are expected to work under pressure, collaborate with diverse teams, manage conflict, and adapt to rapid change. Emotional intelligence supports these demands by helping employees understand their own emotions and respond appropriately to the emotions of others. Research consistently shows that emotionally intelligent employees tend to perform better, experience lower stress levels, and contribute to more positive workplace cultures. High levels of emotional intelligence are also linked to improved job satisfaction, stronger commitment, and reduced staff turnover. However, despite its many advantages, emotional intelligence is not without limitations. Its effectiveness depends on organisational support, leadership behaviour, and individual willingness to develop emotional skills. This section critically evaluates how employees use emotional intelligence components in the workplace by applying key emotional intelligence models.

2.1 Emotional Intelligence Models

Goleman's Emotional Intelligence model is one of the most widely applied frameworks in workplace and leadership studies. The model identifies five core components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These components explain how emotions influence behaviour, decision-making, and interpersonal relationships at work. Self-awareness is the foundation of emotional intelligence, as it allows employees to recognise their emotions and understand how these emotions affect their thoughts and actions. Employees who are self-aware are more likely to behave professionally, accept feedback, and reflect on their performance. This awareness also supports ethical decision-making, as individuals understand how emotions may bias judgment.

Self-regulation refers to the ability to manage emotional reactions in a controlled and appropriate manner. In workplace settings, this is

particularly important during stressful situations such as tight deadlines, conflict with colleagues, or organisational change. Employees who demonstrate strong self-regulation are less likely to react impulsively or emotionally, which helps maintain a respectful and productive working environment. This skill is especially valuable in leadership roles, where emotional reactions can strongly influence team morale. However, excessive self-regulation without emotional support may result in emotional suppression, which can negatively affect well-being and lead to disengagement.

Motivation in Goleman's model relates to an internal drive to achieve goals, remain committed, and maintain optimism. Emotionally intelligent employees are often motivated by personal values, purpose, and professional growth rather than external rewards alone. This internal motivation supports resilience, persistence, and long-term performance, particularly during organisational change. Nevertheless, motivation can decline if employees feel undervalued, emotionally unsupported, or overworked, highlighting the need for emotionally intelligent leadership.

Empathy involves understanding the emotions and perspectives of others. In the workplace, empathy improves teamwork, leadership effectiveness, and customer service quality. Empathetic employees are better able to manage conflict, support colleagues, and respond to customer needs with sensitivity. However, empathy may also lead to emotional strain if employees are required to engage constantly with others' emotions without adequate support or boundaries.

Social skills refer to the ability to communicate effectively, build relationships, and manage interactions positively. Strong social skills support collaboration, trust, negotiation, and conflict resolution. Employees with well-developed social skills are more likely to succeed in team-based environments and leadership positions. In contrast, employees with poor social skills may struggle with teamwork and communication, reducing overall performance.

The Bar-On model expands the concept of emotional intelligence by focusing on emotional and social functioning. It includes five areas: intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, adaptability, stress management, and general mood. This model highlights that emotionally intelligent employees must not only understand emotions but also cope effectively with change and pressure. Adaptability is particularly important in dynamic workplaces, as it supports innovation, problem-solving, and flexibility. Stress management helps employees maintain performance and well-being under pressure, while general mood reflects optimism and emotional balance. A limitation of the Bar-On model is that it can be difficult to measure accurately, as many assessments rely on self-reporting and personal perception.

Wiedmer's Emotional Intelligence model places strong emphasis on leadership and emotional application. It suggests that emotionally intelligent leaders influence employee behaviour by modelling emotional awareness, control, and empathy. Leaders who apply emotional intelligence effectively create supportive environments where employees feel valued, respected, and motivated. This approach increases trust, engagement, and psychological safety. However, if leaders lack emotional intelligence, employees may feel disengaged, misunderstood, and emotionally unsafe. Together, Goleman's, Bar-On's, and Wiedmer's models provide a comprehensive understanding of emotional intelligence in the workplace.

2.2 Use of Emotional Intelligence Components by Employees

Self-awareness is essential for effective workplace behaviour and professional development. Employees who understand their emotional strengths and weaknesses are better able to manage stress, seek feedback, and improve performance. For example, an employee who recognises feelings of anxiety during presentations may prepare more thoroughly, practise delivery, or request training. This awareness reduces mistakes, increases confidence, and supports continuous improvement. However, self-awareness often requires organisational support through feedback systems, coaching, and reflective practices.

Self-regulation allows employees to manage emotions such as anger, frustration, and anxiety. In high-pressure environments, emotionally regulated employees contribute to a calm and respectful workplace culture. Techniques such as mindfulness, reflection, and emotional pauses support self-regulation. While emotional control is beneficial, continuous emotional suppression without support may lead to emotional exhaustion, stress, and reduced engagement.

Motivation supports sustained performance, goal achievement, and resilience. Emotionally intelligent employees tend to remain focused during change and setbacks. They are more likely to take initiative, show commitment, and maintain a positive attitude. However, motivation may decrease when employees experience burnout, lack recognition, or feel emotionally disconnected from leadership, demonstrating the importance of emotionally supportive management.

Empathy improves communication, teamwork, and leadership effectiveness. Employees who demonstrate empathy can understand colleagues' perspectives and respond with sensitivity and respect. This reduces conflict and supports collaboration. In customer-facing roles, empathy enhances service quality and customer satisfaction. However, emotional labour associated with empathy may negatively affect well-being if employees are not provided with emotional support or recovery time.

Social skills enable effective collaboration, negotiation, and conflict resolution. Employees with strong social skills communicate clearly, listen actively, and manage disagreements constructively. These skills are essential for teamwork, leadership development, and organisational success. Poor social skills may result in misunderstandings, reduced trust, and lower performance.

2.3 Mindfulness, MBWA, and Emotional Intelligence in Practice

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) supports emotional intelligence by improving attention, emotional awareness, and self-regulation. Mindfulness encourages employees to focus on the present moment and observe emotions without judgement. This helps individuals

recognise emotional triggers and respond thoughtfully rather than reacting impulsively. Research shows that mindfulness reduces stress, improves concentration, and supports psychological well-being. Mindfulness also supports empathy and compassion, strengthening workplace relationships. However, mindfulness programmes require time, training, and organisational commitment to be effective.

Management by Walking Around (MBWA) is a leadership practice that supports emotional intelligence by encouraging regular interaction between managers and employees. Through informal conversations, managers can listen to concerns, observe emotional cues, and provide timely feedback. Emotionally intelligent managers who use MBWA demonstrate empathy, openness, and approachability. This creates psychologically safe workplaces where employees feel comfortable sharing ideas and challenges. A limitation of MBWA is that it requires consistent effort and genuine interest from managers to avoid being perceived as superficial.

When mindfulness practices and emotionally intelligent management approaches are combined, employees are more likely to feel supported, engaged, and valued. These practices strengthen communication, trust, and emotional awareness across the organisation.

2.4 Benefits and Limitations of Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace

Emotional intelligence offers many benefits, including improved communication, stronger teamwork, effective leadership, higher employee engagement, and enhanced well-being. Emotionally intelligent organisations are often more adaptable and resilient, particularly during periods of change and uncertainty. Employees experience higher job satisfaction, better mental health, and improved work relationships.

However, emotional intelligence also has limitations. Cultural differences may influence how emotions are expressed and interpreted, leading to misunderstandings. Emotional labour may cause burnout, especially in service-oriented roles where employees are expected to manage emotions continuously. In addition, measuring emotional intelligence accurately

remains challenging due to reliance on self-report assessments and subjective interpretation. Despite these challenges, emotional intelligence remains a valuable workplace skill when supported by training, leadership development, and positive organisational culture.

3. Emotional Intelligence and Generational Differences in Recruitment

Emotional intelligence is a critical consideration in recruitment and talent management, especially in organisations that employ people from different generations. Each generation has developed distinct emotional traits, values, and workplace expectations based on the social, economic, and technological environments in which they grew up. Managers who understand these differences can use emotional intelligence to recruit more effectively, reduce conflict, and build inclusive and productive teams.

Applying emotional intelligence during recruitment helps organisations identify candidates who not only have the required skills but also the emotional abilities needed to work well with others and adapt to change.

Recruitment decisions that ignore emotional intelligence and generational differences may lead to communication problems, low engagement, and higher staff turnover. Emotionally intelligent managers recognise that no generation is better than another; instead, each group brings unique strengths and emotional characteristics to the workplace. The following sections evaluate the key emotional intelligence characteristics of different generations and explain how managers can respond effectively during recruitment.

3.1 Traditionalists

Traditionalists are generally characterised by strong values such as stability, loyalty, discipline, and respect for authority. Many members of this generation were influenced by post-war economic recovery and value job security and long-term commitment. From an emotional intelligence perspective, Traditionalists often demonstrate high levels of self-regulation and responsibility. They are more likely to manage emotions quietly, follow organisational rules, and show respect for hierarchical structures.

During recruitment, emotionally intelligent managers should demonstrate respect, reliability, and professionalism when engaging with Traditionalist candidates. Clear communication, structured interviews, and recognition of experience are important. Traditionalists may prefer formal feedback and clear expectations. However, managers should also be aware that some Traditionalists may be less comfortable with rapid technological change or informal communication styles. Emotional intelligence allows recruiters to provide reassurance, patience, and support while valuing their experience and commitment.

3.2 Baby Boomers

Baby Boomers are often described as hardworking, career-focused, and highly committed to organisational success. They bring a wealth of knowledge, experience, and professional expertise to the workplace. Emotionally, Baby Boomers tend to value recognition, achievement, and responsibility. They often demonstrate strong motivation and social skills, particularly in leadership and mentoring roles.

Emotionally intelligent recruitment of Baby Boomers involves recognising their experience and showing appreciation for their contributions. Managers should use empathy to understand their desire for meaningful work and professional respect. Clear communication about role expectations, opportunities for leadership, and knowledge-sharing responsibilities is important. However, managers should also be sensitive to potential challenges, such as resistance to change or stress related to workload. Emotional intelligence helps recruiters balance respect for experience with openness to new ideas and flexible working arrangements.

3.3 Generation X

Generation X employees are known for valuing independence, flexibility, and work–life balance. They grew up during periods of economic uncertainty and rapid technological development, which shaped their self-reliance and adaptability. From an emotional intelligence perspective, Generation X often demonstrates strong self-awareness and adaptability.

They prefer autonomy and are comfortable managing their own emotions and responsibilities.

When recruiting Generation X candidates, emotionally intelligent managers should focus on trust, transparency, and flexibility. Providing clear information about work–life balance, autonomy, and performance expectations is essential. Generation X employees value honest communication and are more likely to engage when they feel trusted and respected. However, they may become disengaged if they perceive micromanagement or lack of emotional understanding from leadership. Emotional intelligence allows managers to build respectful relationships and support long-term engagement.

3.4 Millennials (Generation Y)

Millennials are highly technology-oriented, competitive, and motivated by personal development and meaningful work. They are also cautious about personal data and value transparency and ethical behaviour from employers. Emotionally, Millennials often seek regular feedback, emotional support, and opportunities for growth. They value collaboration and inclusive workplace cultures.

Emotionally intelligent recruitment of Millennials requires open communication, empathy, and clarity. Managers should clearly explain organisational values, development opportunities, and support systems. Providing regular feedback and demonstrating emotional availability helps build trust and engagement. However, Millennials may experience stress and anxiety related to performance pressure and job security. Emotional intelligence enables recruiters to recognise these concerns and respond with reassurance, flexibility, and supportive leadership approaches.

3.5 Generation Z

Generation Z is the newest generation entering the workforce and is characterised by strong digital skills, financial awareness, and a pragmatic approach to work. Many members of this generation are cautious savers and investors, influenced by economic uncertainty and global challenges.

However, Generation Z is also more prone to anxiety and places high importance on mental health and emotional safety.

From an emotional intelligence perspective, recruitment of Generation Z should focus on psychological safety, clear expectations, and well-being support. Emotionally intelligent managers should communicate clearly, provide structure, and create safe spaces for questions and feedback. Generation Z values honesty, inclusivity, and mental health awareness. However, they may struggle with stress and confidence in unfamiliar environments. Emotional intelligence allows managers to offer reassurance, mentoring, and gradual development opportunities.

3.6 Managing Generational Diversity through Emotional Intelligence

Managing a multi-generational workforce requires high levels of emotional intelligence from leaders and recruiters. Managers must use empathy to understand different emotional needs, communication preferences, and motivational factors. Self-awareness helps managers recognise their own biases and assumptions about different generations. Social skills support effective communication and collaboration across age groups.

Emotionally intelligent recruitment practices help organisations select candidates who can work effectively in diverse teams. By valuing generational differences and applying emotional intelligence models, organisations can reduce conflict, improve engagement, and create inclusive workplaces that benefit from a wide range of perspectives and experiences.

4. Conclusion

Emotional intelligence (EI) is an essential skill in contemporary workplaces, influencing individual behaviour, interpersonal relationships, and organisational performance. Models such as Goleman's, Wiedmer's, and Bar-On's demonstrate how the awareness, understanding, and management of emotions affect decision-making, collaboration, and adaptability. Employees with higher EI are more resilient under stress, communicate effectively, and navigate change with confidence.

Organisations that acknowledge generational differences and embed EI practices into their culture create environments that support diverse teams and inclusive leadership. When emotional intelligence and mindfulness are actively incorporated into organisational processes, workplaces benefit from enhanced employee well-being, improved teamwork, better conflict resolution, and sustained productivity, ultimately contributing to long-term organisational success.

5. Recommendations

Organisations should systematically integrate emotional intelligence into recruitment, onboarding, and leadership development. EI-focused interviews and assessments can identify candidates with strong self-awareness, empathy, and adaptability. Training programmes should cultivate skills such as emotional regulation, active listening, effective communication, and collaborative problem-solving. Incorporating mindfulness practices, including Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), can help employees manage stress, maintain focus, and build emotional resilience. Managers should employ Management by Walking Around (MBWA) techniques to foster open communication, trust, and engagement across all generations. Additionally, organisations should prioritise a culture that values emotional well-being and generational diversity by offering mental health support, flexible working arrangements, and regular constructive feedback. These strategies collectively enhance employee engagement, retention, collaboration, and overall organisational

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