

Factors Influencing Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace: A Literature Review

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Abstract

Many organisations now recognise that emotional intelligence (EI) is not simply an inherent personality trait associated with workplace success. This literature review therefore examines how organisational practices contribute to the development and strengthening of employees' emotional intelligence. By reviewing current research, the paper explores how career development, training and development, and employee empowerment influence employee's emotional intelligence. The study reveals that when organisation offer clear growth paths and true autonomy, employees naturally get better at self-awareness and self-management. On top of that, structured training and development programs give employees practical tools to manage workplace's relationship. This review proves that organizations can grow employee's emotional intelligence from the ground up, giving managers a realistic roadmap to boost both employee well-being and performance.

Keywords: Career Development, Training and Development, Employee Empowerment, Emotional Intelligence, Workplace

Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI) has attracted considerable attention in workplace studies deal to its relevance to employees' everyday interactions and behaviour. EI acts as the ability to recognise and understand emotions, manage emotional responses, and deal appropriately with the emotions of others. In an organization, these skills can influence how employees handle pressure, communicate with colleagues, build relationships, and respond to challenging issues. Previous studies have related EI with several important work-related outcomes, such as job satisfaction, employee performance, organisational commitment, and turnover intentions (Giao et al., 2025; Sapta et al., 2025; Sharmin et al., 2024; Sukhragchaa et al., 2021). This suggests that emotional competencies can have a significant role in shaping employees' experiences at work. Previously, emotional intelligence was mainly discussed as an individual trait. More recent research, however, provides support for the opinion that emotional competencies can be developed via experience and learning.

Employees are experienced to different scenarios throughout their careers, including working with colleagues, receiving feedback from supervisors, handling demanding tasks, and

making decisions that affect others. These experiences may provide opportunities to become more aware of personal emotions and to enhance the way emotions are managed. Evidence from previous studies support the possibility of developing EI through structured interventions. For example, training can produce improvements in emotional intelligence (Mattingly & Kraiger, 2019). More recently, Mehler et al. (2024) revealed that workplace interventions can also support the development of emotional competencies. The organisation plays a role in creating opportunities for this development. Career development is one area that might contribute to employees' emotional growth. Career planning, mentoring, increased responsibilities, and opportunities for advancement can place employees in new situations and encourage them to reflect on their abilities and interactions with others. Training and development can provide employees with chances to gain new knowledge and practise skills linked to communication, emotional management, and interpersonal relationships. In addition, employee empowerment gives employees greater freedom to make decisions and take responsibility for their work. By having greater autonomy may require employees to manage their emotions, consider the views of others, and deal with workplace relationships more effectively.

The relationship between workplace experiences and EI can be understood through Social Cognitive Theory. Bandura (1986) explained that learning and development are influenced by the interaction between individuals, their behaviour, and the environment in which they operate. Employees therefore learn not only through formal programmes but also via observation, personal experience, feedback, and interaction with others. In this setting, organisational practices can form part of the environment that supports employees' personal development. Goleman's (1998) emotional competency model provides further view into the competencies involved in EI, specifically self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. While many studies have studied the influences of EI on employee and organisational outcomes, comparatively less attention has been given to the workplace practices that may help employees develop their emotional competencies. This is particularly relevant when considering career development, training and development, and employee empowerment as part of the organisational environment. As a result, this literature review examines these three workplace practices and their potential influence on EI. It also draws on Social Cognitive Theory and Goleman's emotional competency model to provide a theoretical understanding of how employees may develop emotional competencies via their working experiences.

Literature Review

Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace

Emotional intelligence has become increasingly linked to workplace study as employees rarely work in isolation. Communication, teamwork, decision-making, conflict management, and dealing with different personalities engage in the daily work. These conditions need employees to understand their own emotional reactions while also recognising how their behaviour might affect other employees. If employees can manage these conditions effectively might be better positioned to maintain positive working relationships and demands. Previous studies have found a positive relationship between EI and various workplace outcomes (Miao et al., 2017; Reisi & Ghoddousi, 2025; Ullah et al., 2022). Although the findings show the importance of EI, but they focus on how EI can contribute to employees

and organisations. Less attention has been given to the factors within the workplace that may help employees develop these emotional competencies.

This issue is crucial because emotional intelligence not fixed. Employees obtain experience as they progress through their careers, and their working environment can expose them to conditions that promote emotional learning. Training, feedback, mentoring, increased responsibility, and interaction with colleagues may all provide opportunities for employees to develop greater awareness of their emotions and improve their responses to others. Mattingly and Kraiger (2019) found evidence that EI can be developed through training, while Mehler et al. (2024) reported that workplace interventions can enhance emotional competencies. These findings provide a foundation for examining organisational practices as influences on EI.

Career Development

A well-implemented career advancement program can significantly boost and sustain organizational commitment, particularly emotional commitment (Aristawidya & Lataruva, 2024). Inadequate career development programs might lead to low motivation (Knezović & Greda, 2021). Employee are motivated to work hard in order to advance their careers and become more effective and productive at work. Furthermore, the more prospects for advancement through awareness of traits in one's work performance, the more inclined people are to work hard and give their all. (Fida et al., 2021). Career advancement allows individuals to enhance their skills, knowledge, behaviours, and capabilities while also providing motivating possibilities at work (Adeniji et al., 2019). Goleman (1998) suggests that job success depends on how you manage significant situations throughout your career. Career development can improve self-readiness and enable best utilization of opportunities. It can boost employee enthusiasm and drive for growth and development. Employees are promoted to appropriate positions while maintaining excitement, enjoyment, and calm at work (Setyawati et al., 2022). Career development is crucial for shaping employee perceptions and expected to improve emotional attachment to the institution (Napitupulu et al., 2017).

Most of the previous study has suggested that there is a positive relationship between career development and emotional intelligence. For example, the study found that career development and emotional intelligence are linked together after systematic literature review (Aristawidya & Lataruva, 2024), the study found a positive association between career advancement and emotional intelligence among the faculty members at the Islamia University of Bahawalpur and Bahudin Zakria University of Punjab (Fida et al., 2022), Mendoza and Hontiveros (2017) conducted a descriptive correlational investigation in University of Santo Tomas, suggested career development program can reinforce emotional intelligence, career development procedures exist alongside goal setting and management processes, both of which entail refined affective experiences that aid in emotional development (Jiang, 2016). Career development allows employees to gain new experiences, accept greater responsibilities, and prepare for future career opportunities. Throughout this process, employees may become more aware of their strengths and weaknesses when learning how to manage workplace challenges and build relationships with colleagues. These experiences can help them develop emotional skills, particularly self-awareness and social awareness. Social Cognitive Theory suggests that individuals learn through their experiences,

observation, feedback, and interactions with others (Bandura, 1986). In this regard, career development may provide valuable opportunities for employees to strengthen their emotional intelligence as they learn to understand themselves and respond more effectively to others in the workplace.

Training and Development

Given the reported improvements, organizations would benefit from creating job qualities that foster meaningfulness. One possible method comes from training and development (Thory, 2016). The emphasis on self-actualization, life purpose, engagement (Fairlie, 2011), meeting inner needs (Bates et al., 2002), and bringing the complete self to work (Chalofsky, 2003) all imply growth themes in meaningful employment. Job gets more meaningful when tactics like continuous learning, enhancing competencies, building meaningful relationships, and stimulating work are implemented (Chalofsky & Cavallaro, 2013). Maps EI abilities and aptitudes to the meaningfulness framework, demonstrating how EI training can enhance work-related worth and value. Provide meaningful training and empower employees to generate meaning at work (Thory, 2016). Most effective training strategy is a combination of in-service training and coaching on the job which will enhance the behaviour of staff. Emotional intelligence training for client-facing professionals can reduce stress and bad emotions (Zijlmans et al., 2015). Developing emotional intelligence skills through learning programs can boost job happiness and performance (Turner & Lloyd-Walker, 2008).

Previous research suggests that training and development have a good impact on emotional intelligence. For example, training resulted in significant improvement in one of four emotional intelligence clusters, but only in a few specific characteristics at five branches of a public bank in Iran (Beigi & Shirmohammadi, 2010), research indicates that project managers' emotional intelligence in UK can be improved through training (Clarke, 2010), training program for the teachers in Israel improved their emotional intelligence skills and most individuals incorporated these competences into their personal, professional, and group identities, and transformed their EI-related behaviours (Dolev & Leshem, 2016), participating in the 13-week training course improved goal-focused coaching skills and emotional intelligence (Grant, 2007), Pakistani university librarians need training to address skill inadequacies in emotional intelligence (Khan et al., 2015), research suggests that training can boost emotional intelligence and lead to favourable outcomes (Schutte et al., 2013), and the experimental group's emotional intelligence improved significantly compared to the two control groups following training (Zijlmans et al., 2015). Social Cognitive Theory helps explain how training can contribute to the development of emotional intelligence. Through training, employees can observe how others behave, practise different ways of responding to workplace situations, and receive feedback to improve their performance (Bandura, 1986). These experiences may help employees manage their emotions more effectively and build better relationships with colleagues, which are important aspects of Goleman's (1998) emotional intelligence competency model. However, attending training alone may not be sufficient. Employees also need opportunities to apply the skills they have learned in their daily work to strengthen these emotional competencies over time.

Employee Empowerment

Empowerment is a method for motivating employee to take control of their everyday practices while adhering to policies (Albuqami et al., 2020). Empowering people leads to

increased happiness and a sense of value in the workplace (Rukh et al., 2023). Empowerment initiatives increased self-efficacy among employees (Turkmenoglu, 2019). Having greater autonomy may also create situations in which employees need to manage their emotions and work more effectively with others. For example, making independent decisions can involve dealing with uncertainty, considering different opinions, and resolving disagreements with colleagues. Through these experiences, employees may become more aware of their emotional responses and how their behaviour affects people around them. Such experiences may be relevant to the development of self-management and social awareness, although the extent to which empowerment contributes to EI requires further investigation.

Previous studies suggest that employee empowerment has a positive relationship on emotional intelligence. For example, empowering in organizations improves emotional intelligence in production sector (Adiguzel & Uygun, 2020), the study found a positive correlation between psychological empowerment and emotional intelligence in hotels' industry (Cudjoe et al., 2023), strong association between psychological empowerment and emotional intelligence among employees was found in banking sector (Dogar et al., 2024), psychological empowerment was found to have a substantial positive correlation with emotional intelligence among nurse (Mohamed et al., 2017). Social Cognitive Theory offers a useful explanation of how these experiences may influence employee development. Bandura (1986) emphasised that personal factors, behaviour, and the working environment influence one another. When employees are given opportunities to make decisions, they can learn from the outcomes of their actions and use feedback to improve their responses in future situations. These learning experiences may help strengthen emotional competencies associated with self-awareness, self-management, and relationship management in Goleman's (1998) model.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework (see Figure 1) consists of: independent variables (career development, training and development, and employee empowerment), and dependent variable (emotional intelligence). The conceptual framework:

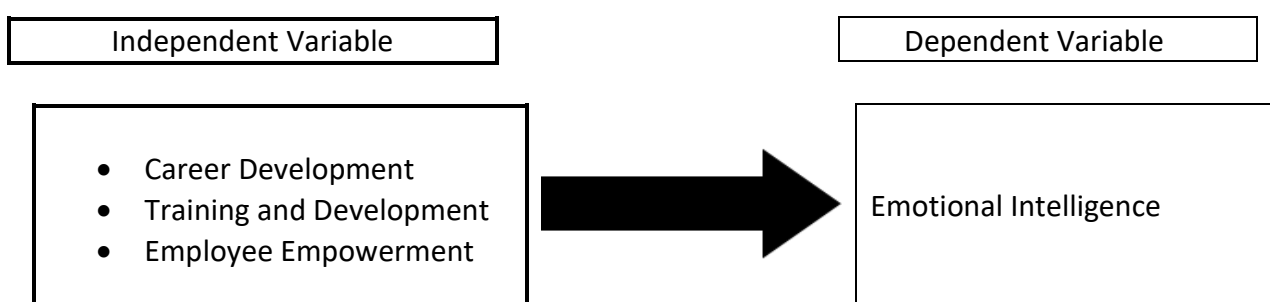


Figure 1: Conceptual framework for the influence of career development, training and development, and employee empowerment on emotional intelligence

Propositions

Based on the literature review, the following propositions will be addressed, including:

P1: Career development is significantly related to emotional intelligence.

P2: Training and development is significantly related to emotional intelligence.

P3: Employee Empowerment is significantly related to emotional intelligence.

Conclusion

Emotional intelligence is a crucial competency in the workplace because employees need to manage their own emotions when interacting with colleagues, supervisors, and other stakeholders. Although EI has often been treated as an individual trait, existing research indicates that it can also be developed through learning and workplace experiences (Mattingly & Kraiger, 2019; Mehler et al., 2024). This provides a justification to look beyond individual differences and consider the role of organisational practices in supporting the development of emotional intelligence.

This literature review has emphasized three workplace practices: career development, training and development, and employee empowerment. Each practice can provide employees with different opportunities to learn, gain experience, receive feedback, and take greater responsibility for their work. Social Cognitive Theory offers a useful explanation of how these experiences may influence individual development, while Goleman's (1998) emotional competency model helps identify the emotional competencies that may be strengthened through these experiences.

Based on the literature reviewed, career development, training and development, and employee empowerment are proposed as factors that may influence employees' emotional intelligence. However, the strength of these relationships may depend on how these practices are implemented and experienced by employees. Further empirical research is required to examine these relationships and provide a clearer understanding of how organisations can create workplace conditions that support the development of emotional intelligence.

This review contributes to existing EI literature by exploring how organisational practices may help employees develop their emotional competencies, rather than focusing solely on the outcomes associated with EI. Social Cognitive Theory helps explain how employees learn from their workplace experiences, while Goleman's (1998) model provides a framework for understanding the emotional competencies involved. By considering career development, training and development, and employee empowerment, the review draws attention to the role organisations may play in employees' emotional growth. It also opens opportunities for further research across different industries and countries to explore how these workplace practices may influence emotional intelligence.

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