


Chapter 6


The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Innovative Leadership

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ABSTRACT

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is increasingly recognized as a crucial factor in contemporary leadership, enabling managers to understand and guide others effectively while fostering a collaborative workplace. This chapter explores the role of EI in innovative leadership, emphasizing its impact on creativity and problem-solving. The chapter begins by defining EI and its core components self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills before connecting them to leadership effectiveness. It then delves into innovative leadership, identifying traits that distinguish innovative leaders and demonstrating how EI serves as a catalyst for creative thinking and decision-making. Key EI competencies, emotional regulation and social intelligence, will be examined in fostering innovation. Challenges to implementing EI in organizations, including resistance and stress management. Finally, the chapter will assess the measurable impact of EI on innovation and explore future perspectives, including the integration of AI to enhance emotionally intelligent leadership.

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INTRODUCTION

In an era of rapid technological advancement and global interconnectivity, traditional leadership paradigms are evolving. While technical skills and strategic vision remain important, contemporary research highlights emotional intelligence (EI) as a critical determinant of effective and innovative leadership. *Emotional intelligence* refers to the ability to recognize and manage one's own emotions and to understand and influence the emotions of others. Leaders with high EI – encompassing self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills – are more adept at fostering innovation, collaboration, and resilience within their organizations. Sharma (2024) noted that such leaders create trusting, positive work climates that encourage creative problem-solving and adaptability.

UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN LEADERSHIP

Definition and Significance of EI: Emotional intelligence is broadly defined as the capacity to recognize and manage one's own emotions, as well as to perceive and influence others' emotions. Psychologists Peter Salovey and John Mayer, who first coined the term in 1990, describe EI as the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions. It was Daniel Goleman, however, who popularized EI in the mid-1990s and framed it in terms of key competencies for the workplace. Goleman's model identifies five core components of EI – self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills – which collectively enable effective leadership behavior. Some scholars debate whether EI is an innate trait or a learned ability. While there is evidence of genetic predispositions, most researchers and practitioners view emotional intelligence as a set of skills that can be developed through training and experience.

Key Components of EI: According to Goleman and subsequent research, the five components of emotional intelligence provide a framework for understanding how EI manifests in leadership. Below, we delve into each component, explaining its meaning and illustrating how it applies to effective leadership:

Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is the foundational element of emotional intelligence. It is the ability to recognize and understand one's own emotions, drives, and their effect on others. Leaders with strong self-awareness have a clear sense of their strengths and

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