

Exploring the role of Emotional Intelligence in Trust Building within High-Reliability Environments

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The role of emotional intelligence and trust in high-reliability environments: A systematic literature review

Examining Emotional Intelligence (EI) in high-reliability settings, this review identifies its critical role in trust dynamics. Utilizing three databases, 15 studies were included which demonstrate EI's significant influence on trust building in certain high reliability contexts similar to disasters. Findings advocate integrating EI into recruitment and training for organizational success.

Introduction

Disaster response requires many specialised organisations to work together to tackle complicated problems. Such collaboration relies on trust to promote knowledge sharing, reciprocity, and value alignment while preventing exploitation.

Trust building involves cognitive and affective processes. Affective trust comes from connections, while cognitive trust comes from perceived competence and honesty. Even cognitive trust is affected by emotions as they alter perception, memory, and reasoning. Therefore, emotional intelligence (EI) is crucial to trust.

EI is the capacity to perceive, understand, manage, and influence emotions. EI and trust are linked in many fields, but its use in disaster response is unexplored. Since there are no studies relating EI and trust in disaster response, this systematic literature review examines similar high-reliability contexts for insights and transferrable lessons on disaster response dynamics.

Methodology

This review employed a systematic methodology guided by PRISMA guidelines, searching three primary databases to gather relevant studies.

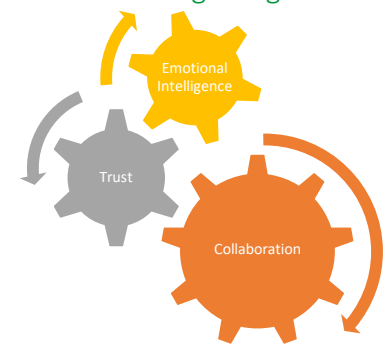
Employing three databases, Inter Rater Reliability was used for screening of titles and abstracts. The Mixed Methods Assessment Tool served for quality appraisal. From 735 initial articles, 15 studies were included, spanning diverse high-reliability contexts. A Reflexive Thematic Analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), was conducted on definitions of EI and trust, the impact of EI on trust, and strategies to leverage EI. NVivo was used for thematic analysis.

Findings & Discussion

EI improved trust as per the fifteen studies from selected high-reliability contexts of Healthcare, Defence, remote leadership, Not-for-profit, and project management.

EI is predominantly conceptualized as an ability, with occasional references as a trait, encompassing intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions. EI is action-oriented serving strategic aims like trust building.

Trust is identified as a psychological state, with both cognitive and emotional underpinnings. Trust building mimics risk management when trustors' risks are identified and addressed proactively.



EI helps create and sustain trust by facilitating open communication, leadership, conflict management, impulse control, and rationalising atypical behaviours.

Structured EI training for professional development and trust building should complement EI evaluation in recruitment.

Conclusion

This review confirms Emotional Intelligence's (EI) vital role in fostering trust in high-reliability sectors. Despite limited direct research in disaster management, the correlation between EI and trust is evident across similar settings. Highlighting EI's impact on trust and team effectiveness, the study emphasizes the need for focused research in disaster management and suggests integrating EI into hiring, training, and leadership development, to strengthen team resilience and trust in high-stakes environments.



Further information

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