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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AMONG IMM ADMINISTRATORS IN MEDAN: IMPLICATIONS FOR CADRE DEVELOPMENT POLICY

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Abstract

Organizational communication involves interpreting emotions as well as exchanging information. This conceptual article examines emotional intelligence in interpersonal communication among Ikatan Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah (IMM) administrators in Medan and considers its implications for cadre development policy within a 2019 temporal frame. A narrative literature review integrates scholarship on emotional intelligence, social interaction, emotion regulation, listening, psychological safety, and training. The synthesis proposes that perceiving, understanding, and managing emotional information can inform how administrators clarify messages, respond to criticism, and discuss disagreements. However, emotional intelligence should not be equated with emotional suppression, agreement, or moral character. Policy implications include clearly defined learning objectives, contextual communication practice, mentoring, feedback, and proportionate evaluation. Evidence supporting emotional intelligence training provides a rationale for considering developmental activities, but it does not establish their effectiveness within IMM. The article concludes that emotional intelligence offers a useful framework for connecting interpersonal communication with cadre development. Proposed policies require adaptation and evaluation, while actual emotional abilities and communication practices among IMM administrators in Medan remain matters for empirical investigation.

Keywords: cadre development; emotional intelligence; IMM; interpersonal communication; Medan.

INTRODUCTION

An organizational conversation carries more than instructions and information. A request may communicate urgency, an objection may express disappointment, and silence may have several meanings. Administrators must interpret these messages while considering their own reactions. Misunderstanding can arise when emotional cues are overlooked or treated as certain evidence of another person's intentions. Emotional intelligence offers a perspective for examining this aspect of interpersonal communication.

Emotional intelligence concerns abilities related to emotions and emotional information. Mayer et al. (2004) explain the construct through abilities involving emotional perception, the use of emotions in thought, emotional understanding, and emotional management. This perspective treats emotions as information that can be examined rather than merely reactions to be controlled. It also provides a boundary for the concept. Emotional intelligence should not become a general label for every desirable personal quality.

The relevance of emotional intelligence to communication has been examined in interpersonal research. Lopes et al. (2003) investigate emotional intelligence alongside personality and perceived relationship quality. Lopes et al. (2004) further examine emotional abilities and social interaction. These studies provide reasons to consider emotional information when discussing relationships. However, they do not establish that emotional intelligence determines all communication outcomes or operates identically across settings.

Administrators of Ikatan Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah (IMM), the Muhammadiyah Students Association, in Medan provide the context for this article's conceptual application. Meetings, task coordination, feedback, and disagreements offer relevant situations for examining emotional information. These settings are illustrations rather than reports of observed organizational events. The article does not assess administrators in any particular organizational unit. The year 2019 defines its temporal scope.

Cadre development policy is relevant because communication learning requires more than encouragement to behave appropriately. Developmental objectives need to specify the abilities or actions being addressed. Activities also require suitable opportunities for practice and evaluation. A policy that broadly demands emotional maturity

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may leave its expectations unclear. The connection between emotional intelligence and cadre development therefore needs conceptual precision.

This article examines how emotional intelligence can inform interpersonal communication and cadre development policy. It considers emotional interpretation, listening, responses to criticism, and discussion of differences. It also examines the limits of applying evidence from other settings to IMM. The objective is to develop a coherent framework for organizational discussion. Its conclusions are conceptual and do not establish the emotional abilities or communication practices of IMM administrators in Medan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotional Intelligence as a Set of Abilities

The ability model provides the principal conceptual framework for this article. Mayer et al. (2016) update the model by examining emotional intelligence as a mental ability involving reasoning about emotional information. This approach helps distinguish emotional abilities from broad judgments about confidence, friendliness, or leadership potential. It also supports separating what a person can understand from how that person chooses to behave. Such distinctions are important when translating a psychological construct into developmental expectations.

Salovey and Mayer (1990) introduce emotional intelligence as a framework involving the appraisal, expression, regulation, and use of emotions. Their formulation provides a historical foundation for examining emotional information in interpersonal situations. It connects understanding emotions with how individuals think and act. In this article, that foundation supports discussing communication as involving emotional interpretation alongside message exchange. It does not establish the emotional abilities of IMM administrators in Medan.

Mayer et al. (2008) review emotional intelligence research and its relationship with meaningful outcomes. Their discussion highlights the importance of clearly defining the construct and examining supporting evidence. This prevents emotional intelligence from being used as an explanation for every successful interaction. Within this article, emotional abilities are considered alongside communication skills and organizational conditions. They are not presented as a sufficient explanation of behavior.

Joseph and Newman (2010) examine emotional intelligence through an integrative meta-analysis and cascading model. Their discussion addresses conceptual distinctions among emotional abilities and broader approaches to emotional intelligence. This reinforces the need to define the construct before connecting it with organizational outcomes. For cadre development, objectives should specify which abilities or behaviors are being addressed. Findings concerning job performance should not be transferred directly to communication within IMM.

Emotional Intelligence and Interpersonal Interaction

Lopes et al. (2004) report positive relationships between emotion-management abilities and aspects of social interaction quality. Their findings support examining how emotional information is handled during exchanges. However, an association does not establish that increasing an ability will necessarily improve every relationship. The situations and measures used in the research remain relevant. Application to organizational communication requires attention to those limits.

Brackett et al. (2006) compare self-report and performance measures of emotional intelligence in examining social functioning. Their research supports distinguishing perceptions of emotional ability from performance-based assessment. This distinction matters when interpreting administrators' judgments about their communication skills. Confidence in understanding emotions does not itself demonstrate accurate interpretation during interaction. Developmental evaluation should therefore identify what each source of evidence can reasonably establish.

Côté (2014) reviews emotional intelligence in organizations and discusses its definition, measurement, and organizational relevance. This provides a foundation for connecting emotional abilities with interactions involving responsibilities and leadership. Nevertheless, organizational behavior involves conditions beyond individual ability. Expectations, opportunities, and relationships can shape how abilities are expressed. The present article therefore considers emotional intelligence within the setting of interpersonal exchange.

Emotion Regulation and Communication

Emotional intelligence and emotion regulation are related concepts with different scopes. Gross (2015) provides a framework for examining processes that influence emotional experience and expression. Regulation is relevant to communication because emotions may affect attention, timing, and responses. Its effectiveness cannot be judged solely by the absence of visible emotion. A person may remain outwardly calm while avoiding the substance of a discussion.

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For this article, emotional management involves considering how a response fits the situation and purpose of communication. It may include requesting clarification or taking time before answering. These actions should not be interpreted as evidence of emotional intelligence without considering their context. A pause can support reflection or postpone engagement indefinitely. The distinction depends on what follows.

Listening and Conditions for Participation

Bodie (2011) conceptualizes active-empathic listening and presents evidence supporting its measurement in interpersonal settings. This work gives listening a clearer place in the communication discussion. Understanding emotional information requires attention to what the other person actually communicates. It should not depend only on assumptions drawn from appearance or tone. Listening therefore complements emotional interpretation through opportunities for clarification.

Edmondson (1999) links psychological safety with learning behavior in work teams. Detert and Burris (2007) examine leadership behavior and employee voice. Together, these perspectives support considering organizational conditions alongside individual communication abilities. Members need opportunities to ask questions and express concerns if their abilities are to be used. Findings from workplaces nevertheless require contextual adaptation before application to IMM.

Emotional Intelligence Training and Evaluation

Hodzic et al. (2018) report evidence of improvement in emotional intelligence following training across the studies included in their meta-analysis. They also identify variation associated with training and model characteristics. This provides a basis for considering development rather than assuming emotional abilities are entirely fixed. However, the evidence does not identify one universally suitable program. Its application requires attention to the objectives and context of training.

Nelis et al. (2009) investigate whether emotional intelligence can be developed through training. Dacre Pool and Qualter (2012) examine a teaching intervention for university students and report improvements in emotional self-efficacy and some emotional intelligence abilities. These studies provide a rationale for considering structured learning activities. However, their findings do not establish the effectiveness of a particular cadre development policy. Application within IMM requires contextual adaptation and evaluation against clearly defined objectives

Mattingly and Kraiger (2019) also examine emotional intelligence training through meta-analysis. Their work strengthens the rationale for evaluating whether planned activities develop the abilities they target. Evidence from training research should remain distinct from assumptions about local effectiveness. A program proposed for IMM requires its own objectives and evaluation. Participation alone does not demonstrate improvement in interpersonal communication.

O'Connor et al. (2019) review emotional intelligence measurement and recommendations for research and practice. Their discussion distinguishes approaches that do not necessarily measure identical constructs. This is relevant when choosing how to evaluate developmental activities. Self-perceptions, performance on ability tasks, and observed communication should not be treated as interchangeable. Policy evaluation must specify the outcome being assessed.

METHOD

This article uses a narrative literature review to examine emotional intelligence and interpersonal communication. The year 2019 provides its temporal frame, and the cited literature was available by that year. The article involves no respondents, interviews, questionnaires, or field observations. IMM administrators in Medan provide the setting for conceptual application. The discussion does not reconstruct actual organizational conditions during 2019.

The approach draws on Baumeister and Leary (1997) and Snyder (2019). Literature is used to compare concepts, examine arguments, and develop an integrated interpretation. The review does not claim an exhaustive or systematic search. Its purpose is to clarify relationships relevant to the article's question. Conclusions remain bounded by the selected literature and its contexts.

Sources address emotional intelligence, social interaction, emotion regulation, listening, psychological safety, leadership, and training. Publications are considered according to relevance and conceptual contribution. Differences between ability models, self-report approaches, and behavioral observations are retained. Findings from other populations are not presented as evidence about IMM administrators. Their role is to inform a framework requiring contextual examination. The synthesis organizes the discussion around emotional interpretation, communication

responses, and developmental implications. These categories are analytical arrangements developed for the article. They are not themes extracted from participant accounts or organizational records. Illustrations involving meetings and feedback explain possible applications. Policy proposals are distinguished from established institutional arrangements and tested interventions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Recognizing Emotional Information without Assuming Its Meaning

The synthesis positions emotional information as something requiring interpretation rather than immediate certainty. A member's brief response may reflect frustration, time pressure, uncertainty, or another consideration. Administrators should therefore distinguish an observation from an inference. Noticing a change in tone does not establish its cause. Clarification can connect emotional perception with the speaker's explanation.

In an illustrative meeting, an administrator may become quieter after receiving a new assignment. Others might assume disagreement or lack of commitment. Asking whether the responsibility is clear can reveal information relevant to coordination. The member may explain a concern without being required to discuss private circumstances. This example illustrates a possible communication process rather than an observed IMM interaction.

Table 1. Emotional Abilities and Their Proposed Communication Applications

Ability discussed	Proposed application	Interpretive boundary
Perceiving emotions	Notice emotional cues and check interpretations	A cue does not establish another person's internal state
Using emotions in thought	Consider how feelings direct attention to an issue	Emotional importance does not prove factual accuracy
Understanding emotions	Examine possible causes and changes in feelings	Several explanations may fit the same situation
Managing emotions	Select a response appropriate to the communication purpose	Calm appearance alone does not establish effective management

The ability categories draw on Mayer et al. (2004, 2016), while their communication applications are developed in this article. The table is not an assessment instrument. It cannot establish an administrator's emotional intelligence from isolated behavior. Its purpose is to clarify possible connections between concepts and actions. Those connections require evaluation before being used in formal assessment.

Understanding Emotion and Maintaining Attention to the Issue

Emotions can indicate that an interaction matters to the participants. Disappointment may accompany an unmet expectation, while anxiety may arise around uncertainty. These possibilities can help frame questions without determining the answer in advance. Administrators can ask what expectation or concern needs discussion. This keeps emotional interpretation connected to the substantive issue.

The same approach helps distinguish acknowledgment from agreement. A person can recognize another member's disappointment while continuing to question the proposed solution. Respectful acknowledgment does not require endorsing every interpretation. It can establish that the concern has been heard before alternatives are examined. This distinction is useful when organizational decisions involve competing priorities.

Responding to Criticism

Criticism can create tension between examining information and protecting personal standing. Emotional awareness may help individuals identify that tension before responding. However, recognizing discomfort does not automatically produce a constructive answer. Administrators still need skills for clarifying the concern and presenting relevant explanations. Organizational conditions also affect whether this process is possible.

In an illustrative evaluation, a report may be criticized for incomplete information. The recipient can ask which sections require correction and explain any relevant constraints. The person giving feedback can focus on the missing information rather than making broad personal judgments. This approach provides material for a practical response. It does not require the recipient to accept criticism that is inaccurate.

Listening, Disagreement, and Mutual Understanding

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Listening helps test whether an emotional interpretation matches the other person's meaning. Administrators can summarize a concern and invite correction before offering a response. This reduces reliance on assumptions without guaranteeing agreement. Participants may understand one another accurately and still prefer different actions. Communication quality therefore needs to be distinguished from consensus.

Emotional intelligence should also remain separate from expectations of permanent friendliness. An administrator may communicate a necessary boundary or a serious objection. The relevant issue is how the concern is understood and addressed. Firmness can coexist with attention to emotional information. Developmental policy should preserve this possibility rather than reward agreement alone.

Implications for Cadre Development Objectives

The first policy implication concerns defining learning objectives precisely. A general aim such as improving emotional maturity leaves unclear what participants should learn. More specific objectives can address distinguishing observations from interpretations and explaining concerns without unnecessary personal judgment. These objectives connect emotional concepts with communication actions. They also provide a basis for evaluation.

Objectives should remain appropriate to organizational development rather than become informal psychological diagnosis. A difficult interaction does not establish a stable deficit in emotional intelligence. Administrators may lack information, face conflicting responsibilities, or disagree for legitimate reasons. Development should address the situation before assigning personal explanations. This preserves a clear boundary between learning needs and judgments about character.

Implications for Learning Design

Cadre development may include structured discussion of illustrative organizational situations. Participants can compare how the same message might be interpreted and identify questions needed for clarification. Role practice can then provide opportunities to explain concerns and respond to feedback. Reflection connects the exercise with the intended learning objective. These activities are proposals rather than descriptions of an official IMM curriculum.

Practice should be accompanied by feedback specific to the behavior being developed. A participant may receive feedback about whether a summary accurately represented another person's concern. This is more directly interpretable than a general judgment about emotional intelligence. It also identifies an action that can be attempted again. Improvement in the exercise still needs to be distinguished from transfer to organizational interaction.

Table 2. Proposed Components of Cadre Development Policy

Component	Proposed provision	Possible evaluation focus
Learning objectives	Define emotional and communication abilities explicitly	Clarity and relevance of objectives
Contextual practice	Use situations involving coordination, criticism, and disagreement	Application of the targeted communication actions
Feedback	Address specific actions and interpretations	Usefulness and specificity of feedback
Mentoring	Provide opportunities to review relevant interactions	Identification of feasible improvements
Follow-up	Revisit learning after opportunities for application	Evidence of continued use and remaining difficulties
Evaluation boundaries	Distinguish ability, self-perception, and behavior	Alignment between measures and claimed outcomes

The table translates the conceptual synthesis into policy considerations. It does not establish a tested developmental model. Each component requires adaptation to available resources and organizational arrangements. Evaluation should examine whether the selected activities achieve their stated objectives. Benefits should not be assumed from program completion alone.

Mentoring and Leadership Responsibilities

Mentoring can provide a setting for examining communication decisions without requiring sensitive personal disclosure. A mentor may ask what occurred, how the message was interpreted, and what alternative response could be considered. The discussion should remain connected to relevant organizational responsibilities.

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Participants can retain boundaries around private experiences. Mentoring is therefore framed as support for learning rather than unrestricted access to personal information.

Leaders also shape the setting in which communication learning is applied. Encouraging members to clarify concerns has limited value if questions receive dismissive responses. Administrators exercising authority can model explanation, correction, and acknowledgment of uncertainty. These actions complement individual learning opportunities. Their effects in IMM would need to be examined rather than presumed.

Evaluating Development without Confusing Outcomes

Evaluation needs to distinguish satisfaction with an activity from learning and behavioral application. Participants may enjoy a session without developing the targeted ability. They may also understand a concept but find it difficult to use in a demanding discussion. These differences require more than one general question about program success. The outcome claimed should match the evidence collected.

O'Connor et al. (2019) emphasize distinctions among emotional intelligence measurement approaches. For policy purposes, a self-report score should not automatically be interpreted as demonstrated ability or observed interpersonal conduct. Similarly, a communication exercise does not measure every aspect of emotional intelligence. Clear alignment between objectives and evidence limits overinterpretation. This supports proportionate claims about developmental outcomes.

Limitations and Future Directions

This article relies on selected literature and conceptual interpretation. Its sources address populations and settings that differ from IMM administrators in Medan. Their findings provide a rationale for discussion but do not establish local characteristics. The proposed policy components have not been evaluated within IMM. They should therefore be treated as considerations for adaptation.

The article also makes no empirical assessment of emotional intelligence during 2019. It cannot determine administrators' abilities, the quality of their relationships, or the effectiveness of existing cadre development. Future research may examine clearly defined constructs within specific organizational settings. Program evaluation may then assess learning and application against explicit objectives. Such work would provide a stronger basis for institutional decisions.

CONCLUSION

Emotional intelligence offers a framework for examining how emotional information is perceived, understood, and managed during interpersonal communication. Its conceptual relevance includes checking interpretations, responding to criticism, and discussing differences. However, emotional abilities should not be equated with agreement, emotional suppression, or moral character. Communication also depends on skills, information, and organizational conditions. These distinctions are necessary for a balanced interpretation.

For cadre development policy, the article proposes explicit learning objectives, contextual practice, specific feedback, mentoring, and follow-up. Evaluation should distinguish emotional ability, self-perception, and observed communication. Evidence supporting emotional intelligence training provides a rationale for considering development, not proof of a particular program's local effectiveness. The year 2019 defines the article's temporal scope. Actual practices and policy outcomes among IMM administrators in Medan require empirical examination.

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