

# The Impact Of Emotional Intelligence On Employee Creativity: A Bibliometric Review And Analysis

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## Abstract

*This study investigates the established relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and employee creativity (EC) through a comprehensive reviews and Bibliometric Analysis of 413 research articles sourced from the SCOPUS database. This study employed performance analysis, thematic and network analysis. The study identifies the key contributors, global research trends, and the evolution of scholarly interest over the past two decades. The findings of the study highlight significant literature gaps and provide future research directions to enhance the role of EI in fostering creativity and innovative behavior in the workplace. The novelty lies in developing a holistic framework and in revealing transnational research dynamics in EI-EC literatures.*

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence; Employee Creativity; Organisational innovation; Bibliometric Analysis.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-paced world, organisations are constantly pressured to create, accommodate, and remain at a competitive edge. As the world advances into a knowledge-driven economy, the necessity for innovation or new ideas in the workplace has never been more crucial, which directly amplifies the organization's success. A noteworthy yet uncharted force behind creative thinking in the workplace is emotional intelligence (EI). Hence, regardless of the increasing attention in the fusion of EI and employee creativity (EC), particular concerns the moderating and mediating factors that impact this connection. This study fills the gap by executing a bibliometric analysis to investigate how EI impacts EC, mapping research trends, key contributors, and thematic progressions within the domain.

EI refers to the ability to recognize, understand and manage one's own emotions as well as those of others. It plays a crucial role in leadership effectiveness, improving communication, decision-making, and interpersonal relationships (Ahsan, 2023). Leaders with high EI are more effective in managing teams, fostering collaboration, and driving organizational success, especially in contexts like CSR (Gómez-Leal et al., 2023). As EI enhances emotional regulation and social interactions, it becomes indispensable for leaders aiming to motivate teams and build positive organizational cultures (van Dun & Kumar, 2023). This ability to connect and empathize with stakeholders contributes to stronger organizational performance and the successful adoption of innovative technologies (Audrin & Audrin, 2023). Developing EI in leaders is critical for fostering a supportive, productive work environment that aligns with organizational goals and enhances overall team performance (Zhou et al., 2022).

EC is the key catalyst for organisational achievement, creativity and agility particularly in sectors under continuous demands to bring about new solutions. Creativity among employees enables the generation of novel ideas, processes, and solutions, which contribute to maintaining competitive advantage in today's fast-paced business environment (Barua et al., 2024). Empowering leadership has been shown to significantly enhance EC by fostering autonomy and promoting a culture of knowledge sharing, which are essential for innovative behavior (Joo et al., 2022). Moreover, organizational environments that support autonomy and encourage intrinsic motivation further boost creative output, underscoring the importance of a supportive climate for fostering creativity (Nili & Tasavori, 2022). In addition, leadership styles, such as humble and transformational leadership, contribute to EC by providing supportive structures and creating conditions where employees can freely explore innovative solutions (Zheng & Ahmed, 2022). However, factors such as workplace bullying and psychological distress can undermine

creativity; thus, psychological resilience plays a key moderating role in mitigating these negative effects, ensuring that creativity remains robust even in challenging environments (Anasori et al., 2023). Effective job design, with the inclusion of supervisor support, is also vital in enhancing EC and innovative behaviors, ensuring that job demands align with the necessary resources to foster creativity (Hernaus et al., 2024). As organizations increasingly adopt digital tools, integrating AI, such as ChatGPT, in creative processes can further stimulate creative performance by enabling employees to generate new ideas more efficiently (Thomas et al., 2024).

Existing studies have connections with leadership styles, organisational culture and creativity but, there is insufficient study about how EI plays major role in innovation with varied work cultures which entirely determines the global patterns, key players and thematic developments in this area over the last twenty years and the current study addresses the following research questions.

RQ1: How to understand the established relationship between EI and EC by applying the bibliometric analysis?

RQ2: How can we review the two decades of literature to understand the relationship on EI and EC?

RQ3: How can we identify global research trends, key contributors, and effective publications in EI and EC research, highlighting gradual growth and transnational distribution?

RQ4: How can we examine the thematic growth of EI and EC to spot the upcoming and core topics through keywords co-occurrence and thematic mapping?

RQ5: How can we identify literature gaps & put forward prospective guidelines by merging bibliometric perceptions with the systematic literature review, aiming to impose EI for stimulating moral and inventive behaviour in the workplace?

The continuation of the manuscript is organised and continues in the following manner. Following the introduction, the *Methodology* section details the methodology followed, and *Results* Section presents the analytical approach. Then the subsequent sections of *Themes*, *Frontiers* and *Conclusion* are outlined.

## 2. METHODS

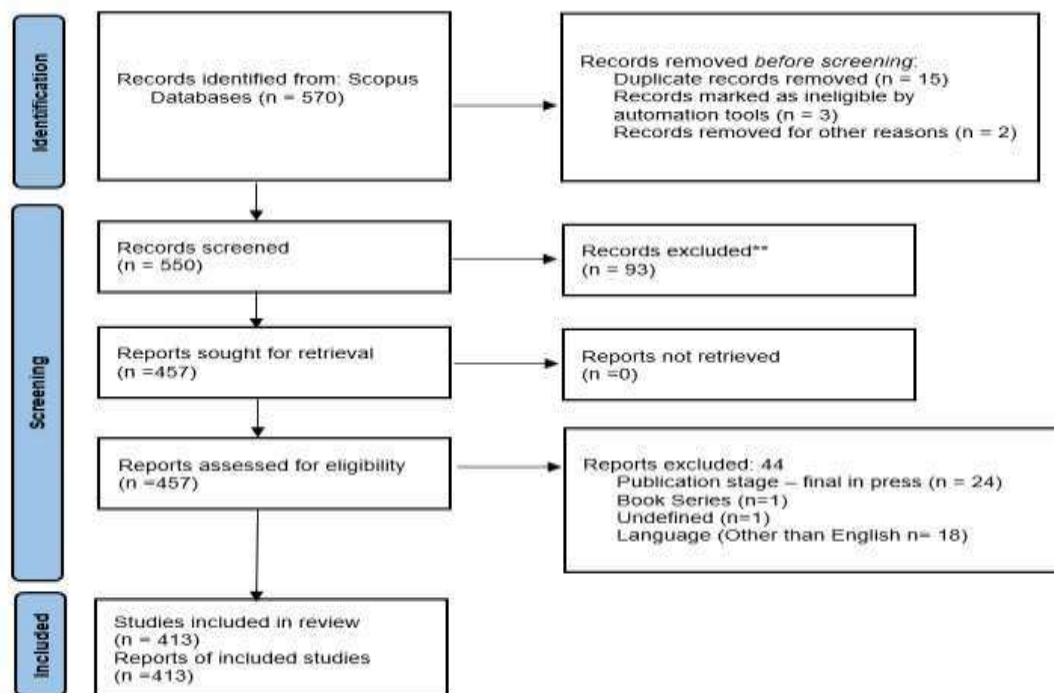
To deliver a well-rounded review of the literature on EI and EC, this research predominantly applies the bibliometric method. This helps in reducing the bias in understanding that often plagues reviews that employ qualitative techniques (MacCoun, 1998). Further, the availability of tools and techniques, such as performance analysis, network analysis and bibliographic coupling, facilitates handling large amounts of bibliographic data (Ramos-Rodríguez & Ruiz-Navarro, 2004). Therefore, using the bibliometric approach is appropriate for tackling our research questions and patterns in the EIEC field.

We implement a search with a set of targeted keywords related to EI and EC within the title, abstract and keyword fields of research papers indexed on the Scopus database. The goal of creating keyword sets is to broaden the search and to incorporate a diverse range of articles relating to EI–EC in the bibliographic data. To uphold the standard and appropriateness of the articles, we apply an inclusion filter, narrowing down only on journal articles published in peer-reviewed journals. This results in 571 articles. Finally, we eliminate articles that do not articulate meaningfully, which culminates in a final dataset of 433 articles from the EI and EC areas from 2004 through 2025. Following this, we analyse the dataset applying an array of bibliometric tools.

To examine research questions (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3), a set of bibliometric tools is used, starting with performance analysis to recognise the overall publication trends, prominent sources (journals), prolific authors and impactful articles in the field of EI and EC. This involves analyzing publications and their citations as measures of productivity and impact, respectively (Ding, Yan, Frazho, & Caverlee, 2009). For exploring our research question RQ4, we use co-authorship analysis (Acedo, Barroso, Casanueva, & Galan, 2006), which involves assessing the network of researchers who have jointly contributed. This analysis is useful in identifying “invisible collages” (Crane, 1977) and the intellectual framework of the field. Utilising this analysis, we highlight the principal author groups and the topics or themes explored by each cluster.

To respond to our research questions (RQ4 and RQ5), which strives to recognise the main themes in the literature, we use bibliographic coupling (Baker, Kumar, & Pandey, 2020). In bibliographic coupling, it is assumed that the similarity between two articles is based on their shared literature references (Weinberg,

1974). Given that scientific progress typically builds upon foundational research, this assumption holds true. By clustering articles based on these commonalities, we can discover emerging trends and spotlight prevailing themes in the literature on EI and EC. To analyse the new research frontiers (RQ5), we employ bibliographic coupling precisely to publications from the last three years (2004 – 2025). This facilitates us to capture the advanced topics that is steering the course of future in EI and EC research. We use a variety of software packages for our analyses, including VOSviewer for analyses on co-authorship and bibliographic coupling (van Eck & Waltman, 2010) and Gephi for network visualization (Bastian, Heymann, & Jacomy, 2009).

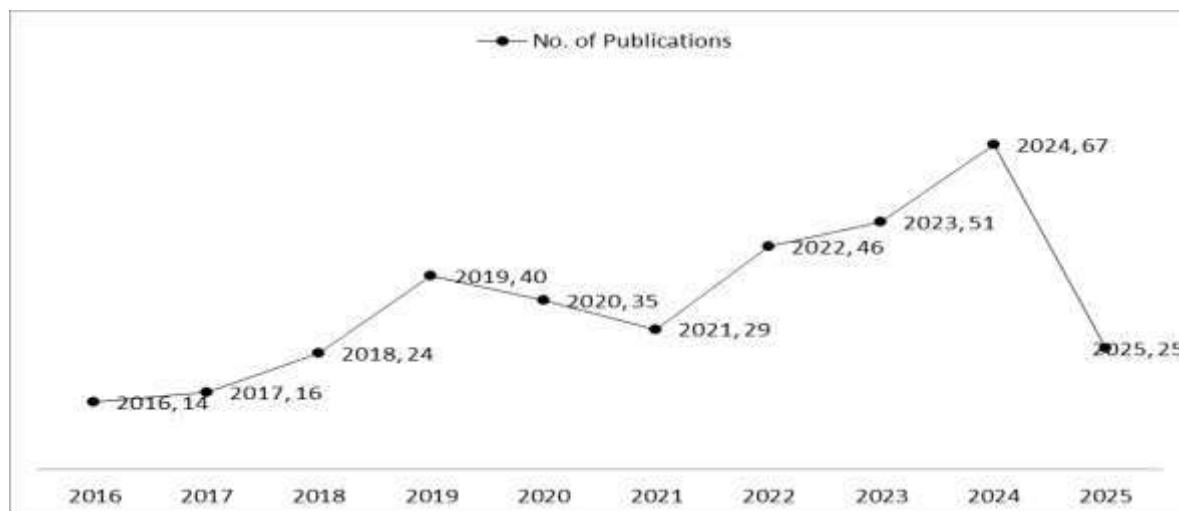


**Figure 1** - Flowchart of the retrieval of records using PRISMA method

The PRISMA flow diagram in the Figure 1 depicts the process of sourcing and screening eligible academic publications from the Scopus database for inclusion in a study. In the first stage, a total of 570 records were collected. 20 duplicate records were removed before the screening phase. During the screening phase, 93 records were excluded: Book chapter (n=24), Book (n=4), Note (n=2), Conference paper (n=34), Conference Review (n=11), Review (n=12), Erratum(n=4) and retracted (n=2). In the Eligibility phase, an additional 44 records were excluded: Publication stage – Final in press (n=24), Book series (n=1), Undefined (n=1), Language (Other than English, n=18). Upon completion of the exclusion phase, a final total of 433 records were considered suitable and were included in the comprehensive analysis of the study.

### 3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

#### 3.1 Performance Analysis



**Figure 2** - Publication pattern over the years in EI and EC research

The Figure 2 represents the pattern in the volume of publications from 2016 to 2025. The findings indicate a gradual rise in publication count from 2016 (14 publications) through 2019, topping out at 40 publications. A minor dip is recorded in 2020 (35) and 2021 (29), potentially indicating interruptions resulting from global disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the progression recovers pace with a significant growth in 2022 (46) and a sharp increase in 2023 (51), peaking in 2024 with 67 publications – the maximum level recorded. Notably, 2025 shows a steep drop to 25 publications, which may signify a real decline in publications or suggest partial data collection for the year. In general, the pattern suggests growing academic activity over time, with short-term variations likely affected by extrinsic variables.

**Table 1**- Prolific authors in EI & EC research

Authors	TP	TC	TC/TP
Zhang, Xiaomeng et al.	1	2125	2125
Gumusluoglu, Lale et al.	1	916	916
Pieterse, Anne Nederveen et al.	1	634	634
Zhou, Jing et al.	1	417	417
Alge, Bradley et al.	1	228	228
Vadera, Abhijeet K et al.	1	224	224
Afsar, Bilal et al.	1	217	217
Miao, Qing et al.	1	205	205
Sun, Li-Yun et al.	1	193	193
Knol, Jeannette et al.	1	186	186

TP: Total publications; TC: Total citations

Table 1 outlines the top ten authors focused on the highest average citations per publication (TC/TP), with each entry depicting a highly influential article. Zhang, Xiaomeng et al. occupy the top position with a remarkable 2125 citations, signifying a strikingly substantive research output. They are trailed by Gumusluoglu, Lale et al. and Pieterse, Anne Nederveen et al., with 916 and 634 citations, respectively, both revealing meaningful citation influence. Authors such as Zhou, Jing, Alge, Bradley, and Vadera, Abhijeet K, also reflect high levels of academic recognition, ranging from 224 to 417, despite contributing just once. The repeated trend in the data, with only one study per author team where each author has just one publication yet a high citation average, reinforces the excellence and impact of distinct contributions. This draws attention to a meaningful academic work which is not solely based on quantity, through significance, innovation and scholarly merit. In general, the data reinforces the scholarly rigor and widespread scholarly effect that one expertly conducted article can have across research fields.

**Table 2** - Major affiliations in EI and EC research

Affiliations	TP	TC	TC/TP
Kogod School of Business, American University, Egypt; Department of Management and Organization, Robert H. Smith School of Business, University of Maryland, College Park, United States	1	2125	2125
Bilkent University, Faculty of Business Administration, Department of Management, Bilkent, Ankara, Turkey; Hacettepe University, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Department of Business Administration, Beytepe, Ankara, Turkey	1	916	916
Erasmus University, Rotterdam, Netherlands	1	634	634
J.H. Jones Graduate School of Mgmt., Rice University, Houston, TX 77005, United States; Department of Psychology, Rice University, Houston, TX, United States	1	417	417
Purdue University, United States; Krannert School of Management, Purdue University, United States; McIntire School of Commerce, University of Virginia, United States; Krannert School of Management, Rawls Hall, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907-7434, 100 South Grant Street, United States	1	228	228
Indian School of Business, Gachibowli, Hyderabad 500 032, India; Boston College, United States	1	224	224
School of Management, Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand; Dongling School of Economics and Management, University of Science and Technology, Beijing, China	1	217	217
Zhejiang University, China; Deakin University, Australia; SOAS University of London, United Kingdom; Monash University, Australia	1	205	205
Faculty of Management and Administration, Macau University of Science and Technology, Taipa, Avenida Wai Long, Macao; W. P. Carey School of Business, Arizona State University, United States; Carlson School of Management, University of Minnesota, United States; School of Management, Marketing and International Business, The Australian National University, Australia	1	193	193
Intensive Care Department, Tergooziekenhuizen, Blaricum, Netherlands; Nursing Science Department, Utrecht University Medical Centre, Netherlands	1	186	186

TP: Total publications; TC: Total citations

Table 2 demonstrates the leading Ten institutional Affiliations based on the highest average citations per publication (TC/TP), with a single entry from each university (TP=1). Ranking first is the Kogod School of Business, American University (Egypt) and the Robert H. Smith School of Business, University of Maryland (USA) with an outstanding 2125 citations for one research article, indicating significant influence. This is followed by a collaborative effort from Bilkent University and Hacettepe University (Turkey), attaining 916 citations and Erasmus University (Netherlands) with 634 citations. Importantly, affiliations like Rice University (USA), Purdue University (USA) and the Indian School of Business (India) are present, illustrating worldwide effort and influential research. Affiliations from multiple nations – such as the Asian Institute of Technology (Thailand), Zhejiang University (China) and Macau University of Science and Technology (Macao) – additionally emphasize the global scope of the highquality output. The repeatedly strong citation ratios in the ranking highlight the research excellence and reach over raw numbers, as each institution produced one impactful paper.

**Table 3** - Prominent and impactful sources of EI and EC research

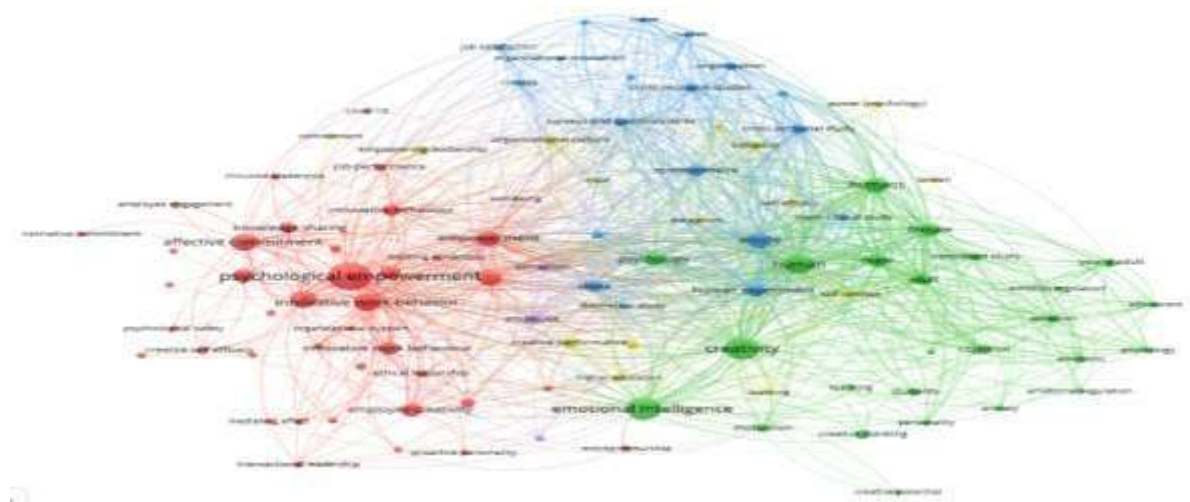
Journals	TP	TC	TC/TP
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Academy of Management Journal	1	2125	2125
Journal of Business Research	5	1080	216
Journal of Organizational Behavior	1	634	634
Leadership Quarterly	2	610	305
European Journal of Innovation Management	11	598	54.4
Leadership and Organization Development Journal	8	411	51.4
Sustainability (Switzerland)	10	368	36.8
Journal of Applied Psychology	3	357	119
International Journal of Human Resource Management	4	257	64.3
Journal of Creative Behavior	9	251	27.9

TP: Total publications; TC: Total citations

Table 3 shows the Top Ten journals listed by their average citations per publication (TC/TP), highlighting the academic influence of each journal. Heading the list is the Academy of Management Journal, which secured an outstanding 2125 citations from one research article, indicating a highly impactful work. The Journal of Business Research succeeds with 1080 from five research articles, The Journal of Organizational Behavior with 634 citations and Leadership Quarterly, which, with two publications, holds a solid mean of 305 citations per paper. Journals like the European Journal of Innovation Management (598), Leadership and Organization Development Journal (411) and the Sustainability (Switzerland) (with ten publications totalling 368 citations and an average of 36.8 ) exhibit both quality and quantity. Other prominent listings include the Journal of Applied Psychology, International Journal of Human Resource Management Journal of Creative Behavior – which also sustain respectable citation rates. In general, the data highlights that high-impact and niche journals can publish influential studies, supporting the significance of impact over quantity in research publishing.

#### 4. THEMATIC ANALYSIS



**Figure 3** - Thematic clusters in EI and EC research area

For imploring the main themes in the EI & EC research, bibliographic coupling is being employed and found in the Figure 3. The tool's application resulted in 3 clusters from EI area and 2 clusters from EC area. We then analyse these thematic clusters to find the core themes.

#### 5. MAJOR THEMES IN THE EI AREA

##### 5.1 Cluster 1: Affective commitment

Institutional efficiency as well as staff productivity within current times have progressively remain connected with the intensity of Affective commitment. Such type of commitment, wherein personnel

align sentimentally alongside their companies has shown essential significance throughout industries. In the healthcare sector, affective commitment outperforms self-efficacy in predicting readiness for organizational change (Harrison et al., 2022). This insight echoes findings from (Alqudah, CarballoPenela, and Ruza-Sanmartín 2022), that linked top-tier human resource management strategies with affective commitment and resulting performance of the employee in the banking sector. Inclusive leadership also enhances affective commitment, enabling better adaptation in diverse workforces (Srimulyani et al., 2023). In education, (Meredith et al. 2023) found that collaborative cultures within informal subgroups had a stronger influence on teachers' affective commitment than school-wide culture. A similar positive link was observed in the construction sector, where (Tan et al. 2023) demonstrated that occupational safety and health practices promote sustainability through employee affective commitment. Moreover, (Choong et al. 2023) emphasized that economic and social sustainability outcomes also depend on emotional investment in occupational safety systems.

Societal and moral principles strengthen the affective congruence. In the family businesses of Indonesia, (Udin et al. 2022) showed that Islamic work ethics are positively associated with both affective commitment and employee performance. (Srimulyani et al. 2023) similarly found that the AKHLAK corporate culture mediates the effect of inclusive leadership on performance via affective commitment. (Grund and Titz 2022) emphasized that both firm-sponsored training opportunities and actual employee participation increase affective commitment. Supporting this, (Rana and Singh 2022) established that perceived fairness in performance appraisal is significantly correlated with stronger affective commitment, especially across different age and gender groups. This alignment among personal beliefs and organisational guidelines creates a basis for reciprocal confidence and allegiance. Moreover, training-driven commitment appears especially robust among highly educated employees, who are more responsive to perceived development support (Grund & Titz, 2022). Additionally, organizational justice frameworks that emphasize equity in feedback and development boost affective commitment across age cohorts and diverse teams (Rana & Singh, 2022).

Within online realm, the idea of affective commitment expands to client conduct. (Rizomyliotis et al. 2022) examined small family businesses adopting AI chatbots and found that customer affective commitment moderates satisfaction outcomes, indicating that emotional ties can compensate for the technology's impersonal nature. This emotional congruence enables companies to maintain trust despite whenever virtual assistant capability remains restricted or erratic. Likewise, (Giovanis et al. 2022) highlighted that customer affective commitment in digital interfaces plays a dual role in trust development and experience continuity. As privately-owned firms hold a pivotal function in numerous markets, affective commitment between equally in-house and outside participants is vital to sustained viability and advancement. The conclusions confirm that across industries among across government wellness to learning, building, digital offerings and family operated ventures, the affective commitment is beyond a mere psychological outcome; it is a strategic driver of resilience, innovation, and sustainable performance (Alqudah et al., 2022; Harrison et al., 2022; Meredith et al., 2023; Rizomyliotis et al., 2022; Srimulyani et al., 2023; Tan et al., 2023; Udin et al., 2022; Choong et al., 2023; Giovanis et al., 2022; Rana & Singh, 2022).

## 5.2 Cluster 2: Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy, a fundamental idea within Bandura's interpersonal mental framework, remains vital for student's achievement, drive as well as flexibility in both educational and career settings. (Rodríguez-Ruiz et al. 2025) showed that students with strong self-efficacy were more likely to use AI tools for educational growth rather than avoidance. The conclusions highlight the controlling influence of self-trust in online choices. (Getenet et al. 2024) found that digital self-efficacy (DSE) mediates the relationship between technology literacy and online engagement. (Ulfert-Blank and Schmidt 2022) stressed that DSE is foundational to digital competencies and enhances critical problem-solving skills. (Prifti 2022) revealed that student satisfaction in blended learning correlates strongly with confidence in navigating course content. (Baldwin et al. 2023) extended this to climate education, showing that youth with strong self-efficacy are more likely to engage in pro-environmental actions. (Graham 2022) highlighted that in second-language learning, self-efficacy determines persistence more than raw aptitude.

Within Educational settings, focused strategies may substantially influence field-related self-efficacy. (Power et al. 2025) observed that experiential and gender-responsive learning approaches enhanced engineering student's academic confidence. (Getenet et al. 2024) similarly found that inquiry-based technology uses reinforced students' perceived competence and participation. (Tang et al. 2022) established that students with high information-seeking self-efficacy demonstrate better academic outcomes and resilience in digital contexts. (Hitches et al. 2022) revealed that academic self-efficacy buffers the impact of stress, with implications for student support policies. (Graham 2022) argued for the integration of motivational structures into curriculum design, asserting that self-efficacy enhances cognitive control. (Rodríguez-Ruiz et al. 2025) showed how AI usage can be personalized to student profiles based on self-efficacy metrics. (Prifti 2022) supported these findings, noting that confidence and control promote student satisfaction in hybrid models. (Warner and Schwarzer 2022) explained that self-efficacy underpins health and academic behavior, bridging knowledge and action.

The mental aspects of self-efficacy extend virtual, affective as well as conduct-related areas. (Tang et al. 2022) linked online performance with digital confidence in searching and problem-solving. (Power et al. 2025) confirmed that interventions emphasizing inclusion and feedback build lasting self-efficacy. (Warner and Schwarzer 2022) identified feedback loops where increased self-efficacy drives healthier academic habits and improves well-being. (Getenet et al. 2024) found that strong DSE supports peer engagement and collaborative learning. (Hitches et al. 2022) added that self-efficacy mitigates negative academic stress, especially across gender and age. (Rodríguez-Ruiz et al. 2025) concluded that studentspecific motivational profiling improves AI learning outcomes. (Ulfert-Blank and Schmidt 2022) emphasized embedding DSE frameworks in curricular development. (Prifti 2022) and (Graham 2022) urged course designers to reflect self-efficacy principles across learning formats. Altogether, these findings establish self-efficacy as a powerful, cross-domain driver of student achievement and adaptability (Power et al., 2025; Tang et al., 2022; Warner & Schwarzer, 2022).

### 5.3 Cluster 3: Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation (IM), participating with activities due to its natural fulfilment supports purposeful education as well as innovation. (Lai et al. 2023) found that student's IM significantly influences adoption of AI tools like ChatGPT, driven by curiosity and interest over utility. (Giurge and Woolley 2022) showed that working at non-standard hours weakens IM through counterfactual thinking. Similarly, (Schüler et al. 2023) demonstrated in sports settings that autonomy-supportive coaching enhances enjoyment and intrinsic drive. (Kotera et al. 2023) observed that graduate students with higher self-compassion more readily shift from extrinsic to intrinsic goals. (Kácvský et al. 2023) identified that perceived value of hands-on activities in physics, more than competence alone, significantly predicted IM. (Meulenbroeks et al. 2024) confirmed that inquiry-based learning fosters intrinsic engagement in science education. (Waterman and Schwartz 2024) added that volitional engagement remains essential across the adult lifespan, reinforcing IM as a persistent need.

In academic environments, teaching holds an essential function. (Haw and King 2022) emphasized the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness for building IM in diverse reading contexts. (Schüler et al. 2023) found that mastery goals promote motivational persistence across settings. (Meulenbroeks et al. 2024) added that inquiry learning increases both interest and motivation over time. (Kotera et al. 2023) stressed the role of emotional well-being in sustaining IM during academic stress. (Gulzar et al. 2022) showed that social media, while boosting creativity through IM, has diminished effects under cyberbullying. (Giurge and Woolley 2022) reiterated that work-time mismatches decrease IM even when tasks are enjoyable. (Kácvský et al. 2023) noted that usefulness perception, more than pressure or competition, drives sustained motivation. (Yesuf et al. 2023) found that IM mediates the impact of job design on creativity, highlighting its cross-context relevance. (Lai et al. 2023) confirmed that learners driven by curiosity show stronger, sustained technology engagement. Importantly, (Schüler et al. 2023) showed these motivational dynamics are not limited to athletics, they translate into classroom persistence.

Organisations should promote internal drive via socially adaptive and exploration-driven instruction. (Meulenbroeks et al. 2024) noted that structured inquiry tasks allow students to explore meaningfully, reinforcing IM over time. (Kotera et al. 2023) found that supportive environments improve mental health



and academic self-determination. (Haw and King 2022) reaffirmed that teacher autonomy support fosters reading achievement through IM. (Yesuf et al. 2023) emphasized the role of IM in translating job satisfaction into creativity. (Giurge and Woolley 2022) warned that organizational structures undermining volitional engagement reduce creativity and satisfaction. (Gulzar et al. 2022) observed a similar dip in IM when digital learning becomes socially toxic. (Káčovský et al. 2023) stressed that aligning task effort with usefulness increases motivation. (Waterman and Schwartz 2024) argued for lifelong educational design that sustains volition and engagement. In sum, these studies affirm IM as a key to meaningful, resilient, and creative learning (Lai et al., 2023; Schüler et al., 2023; Meulenbroeks et al., 2024)

## 6. MAJOR THEMES IN THE EC AREA

### 6.1 Cluster 4: Organisational innovation

Corporate advancement remains progressively regarded as the central distinguisher within volatile corporate landscapes. (Mollah et al. 2025) noted that leader-member exchange relationships foster innovation by boosting intrinsic work motivation, especially in tech-intensive contexts. (Khan et al. 2024) demonstrated that when human resource configurations are strategically aligned with intellectual capital, they drive innovation across operational layers. (Alblooshi et al. 2022) showed that Lean Six Sigma (LSS) contributes indirectly to innovation by enhancing employee trust and participation. (Tripathi and Kalia 2024) emphasized the importance of a supportive work environment and organisational learning culture in enabling continuous performance and innovation. Additionally, (Osuva et al. 2022) revealed that strategic flexibility mediates the effect of competitive intelligence on innovation capacity, particularly in agile organisations. (Kalyar et al. 2022) found that psychological empowerment and leadership collaboration jointly enhance organisational innovation in public and private sectors.

Throughout fields cross-functional cooperation and values formation serve as essential drivers. (Cai and Lönnqvist 2022) argued that developing interdisciplinary programs requires not just structural change but strategic integration of innovation into institutional DNA. (Tripathi and Kalia 2024) reinforced that when organisational learning is prioritized, innovation emerges as a byproduct of agile and reflective work cultures. (Alblooshi et al. 2022) found that LSS builds an internal innovation climate by encouraging openness and autonomy among employees. (Mollah et al. 2025) observed that technological turbulence weakens the effect of intrinsic motivation on innovation, pushing organisations to adopt proactive leadership strategies. (Khan et al. 2024) demonstrated that intellectual capital mediates the HRinnovation link, indicating the need for knowledge-based resource allocation. (Karim et al. 2022) added that leadership strategies emphasizing participative decision-making facilitate bottom-up innovation and resilience. (Aftab et al. 2023) found that shared vision and feedback orientation predict innovation outcomes in high-performing teams, supporting the notion that cultural alignment matters.

Management and employee mindset remain crucial for influencing creativity results. (Kalyar et al. 2022) linked leadership involvement and employee affective commitment to stronger innovation climates. Powerfully, (Mollah et al. 2025) emphasized the need for motivational alignment between leaders and employees in turbulent environments. (Khan et al. 2024) showed that HR systems built around talent nurturing improve not just satisfaction but also innovation throughput. (Alblooshi et al. 2022) stressed that cultural interventions, even in bureaucratic environments, can foster grassroots innovation. (Osuva et al. 2022) confirmed that strategic agility and learning loops are essential for innovation sustainability. (Cai and Lönnqvist 2022) highlighted those institutional policies need to evolve alongside innovation strategies to prevent stagnation. (Tripathi and Kalia 2024) reiterated that employee adaptability is a precursor to innovation readiness. Together, these findings confirm that organisational innovation is driven by human-centric design, leadership foresight, and culture-backed strategy (Kalyar et al., 2022; Khan et al., 2024; Mollah et al., 2025; Tripathi & Kalia, 2024; Alblooshi et al., 2022).

### 6.2 Cluster 5: Creative thinking

Creative thinking is more widely acknowledged as a fundamental modern skill vital to learning and employment achievement. (Segundo-Marcos et al. 2023) emphasized that cooperative learning promotes creative thinking during childhood, encouraging flexible idea generation. (Willemsen et al. 2023) found both convergent and divergent thinking to be significant predictors of scientific reasoning in children, reinforcing the value of dual-mode cognitive development. (Mou 2024) demonstrated that integrating

visual storytelling in STEM enhances design student's creative self-efficacy and originality, especially when linked to inquiry tasks. Authentic assessment methods that prioritize real-world creativity were shown by (Karunarathne and Calma 2024) to boost creative expression in higher education. Additionally, (Meulenbroeks et al. 2024) showed that inquiry-based science learning environments directly support the development of students' intrinsic interest and creative engagement.

Information frameworks establish the mental foundation of innovation. (Kenett 2025) explained that individuals with richer semantic memory networks show greater associative flexibility, which supports creative ideation. The DA VINCI model introduced by (Corazza and Agnoli 2022) outlines creativity as a process with dynamic mental states—attention, information, novelty, creativity estimation and implementation allowing serendipitous thinking and divergent evaluation. (Acar et al. 2023) applied automated originality scoring to assess creativity, validating it as a scalable metric through the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking. Societal and affective influences likewise shape originality. (Suherman and Vidákovich 2024) noted that student's ethnic identity and positive mathematical attitudes predicted mathematical creativity, emphasizing the importance of inclusive pedagogy.

Contextual and instructional planning elements significantly impact learners' imaginative expression. (Yao et al. 2024) found that teacher's sustainable teaching innovation, mediated through playfulness and academic self-efficacy, significantly enhanced graduate students' creative thinking. (Corazza and Agnoli 2022) reiterated that creativity should be viewed as an evolving cognitive process rather than a fixed trait. Classroom climates emphasizing open-ended problem-solving have measurable effects on divergent thinking and student autonomy (Mou, 2024). (Kenett 2025) emphasized that integrating computational models to map semantic networks allows us to better understand creative cognition. (Karunarathne and Calma 2024) concluded that aligning assessment tasks with real-world creativity increases both engagement and skill transfer. Finally, (Suherman and Vidákovich 2024) and (Meulenbroeks et al. 2024) both underscore that creativity is fostered when learning environments honor cultural context, autonomy, and inquiry, further confirming that creativity can be taught, supported and measured in meaningful ways.

## 7. DISCUSSIONS

The thematic clusters are arrived by applying bibliographic coupling on EI&EC Research areas, resulting in 5 thematic clusters; 3 clusters in The EI and 2 clusters in The EC published in the journal's list considered between 2004-2025. **7.1 Frontier #1: EI and Leadership**

The largest research frontier underlines the impactful union of evolving of organisational complexities and emotional skills. As shown in the frontier table, (Li et al. 2025) offers a bibliometric synthesis affirming EI (EI) as a persistent factor in educational leadership over time. In practice, (Hadi et al. 2024) highlight how digital leadership and organizational support indirectly shape innovation through the mediating effect of EI, a claim reinforced by (Anwar and Saraih 2024), who found digital leadership enhances knowledge sharing and emotional adaptability in higher education. Moreover, (Rahimi et al. 2024) established that psychological empowerment and teacher mindsets, both shaped by EI, amplify innovativeness in education settings.

The research also highlights the managerial success as situation-specific. For example, (Duan et al. 2023) showed how EI influences high-performance leadership among women leaders, mediated by organizational culture. Similarly, (Nabih et al. 2023) documented gender-based moderation in the EIleadership link, suggesting that leadership training must be culturally and demographically sensitive. Altogether, these findings affirm EI as a core attribute that not only supports but actively fuels highperforming leadership across varied institutional and academic settings.

Future research should explore how EI can be integrated into hybrid leadership models to navigate both digital and interpersonal demands (Hadi et al., 2024). Longitudinal studies could also clarify how EI-driven empowerment influences sustained innovation in education settings (Rahimi et al., 2024).

**Proposition 1a:** How does the EI of leaders influence the creative performance of their subordinates?

**Proposition 1b:** To what extent does EI mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and team creativity?

**Proposition 1c:** Can emotionally intelligent leadership styles buffer the negative effects of workplace stressors on EC?

## 7.2 Frontier #2: Digital leadership and innovation

The second research frontier illustrates how the digital-era leadership serves as a driving force for innovation in various fields. (Gao and Gao 2024) conceptualize digital leadership as a cognitive-affective processing system, explaining how leaders stimulate innovative behavior through both rational planning and emotional resonance. (Hadi et al. 2024) further emphasize the mediating role of EI in aligning digital leadership with innovation, reinforcing its human-centered approach. In a complementary analysis, (Zia et al. 2024) demonstrate that digital leadership and engagement mediate the relationship between digital resources and innovative work behavior, positioning leadership as a core driver within the job demands-resources framework.

Meanwhile, (Malik et al. 2024) underlines the leader's influence on digital transformation through business model innovation, suggesting that effective digital leadership reshapes both internal culture and external value delivery. (Bellis et al. 2024) confirm these findings in hybrid work contexts, showing how agile digital leadership supports ideation and organizational adaptability. Together, these literatures confirm that digital-era leadership is more than just IT alignment but about cultivating environments where innovation can flourish durably and deliberately.

Future research should prioritize understanding how digital leadership enables business model innovation and strategic transformation, especially under evolving technological pressures (Malik et al., 2024). Additionally, deeper investigation into employee-level mediators, such as ambition and innovation self-efficacy, can clarify how leadership translates into sustained innovative behavior (Sun et al., 2024). These mechanisms are essential in forming flexible and innovation-ready enterprises.

**Proposition 2a:** How does EI enable digital leaders to foster a culture of innovation in remote or hybrid teams?

**Proposition 2b:** What role does EI play in digital leadership's capacity to navigate technological disruptions while enhancing EC?

**Proposition 2c:** Does the alignment between a leader's digital competence and EI predict innovation outcomes in technology-driven organizations?

## 7.3 Frontier #3: Psychological empowerment and work behaviour

This frontier highlights Psychological Empowerment (PE) as a core driver structuring Employee Innovative Work behaviour (IWB). (Rahimi et al. 2024) demonstrate that both psychological empowerment and teacher mindsets mediate the relationship between quality of work life and innovation outcomes in educational settings, affirming PE's role in fostering individual creativity and performance. Similarly, (Mustafa et al. 2024) show that affective organizational commitment is closely tied to empowerment that which drives innovative behaviour among middle managers, highlighting how emotional ownership contributes to organizational change.

Expanding on this, (Lim et al. 2024) investigate cognitive leadership dynamics in knowledge-based environments and find that aligned thinking between leaders and employees is key to unlocking innovation. (Li and Long 2025) contribute by applying the dualistic AMO (Ability, Motivation, Opportunity) framework, identifying how empowerment-focused HR configurations trigger digital innovation at the employee level. These perspectives align with (Garg et al. 2022), who found that transformational leadership enhances employee IWB through psychological empowerment, reinforcing PE's role as both a motivational and structural enabler in complex work environments.

Future research should examine whether psychological empowerment functions consistently across different job roles or varies by context and industry (Garg et al., 2022). These strategies can support to explain under what conditions employee autonomy effectively fuels shifts in employee behaviour in fastpaced creative work settings.

**Proposition 3a:** How does EI enhance the relationship between psychological empowerment and employee creative behavior?

**Proposition 3b:** Can emotionally intelligent individuals leverage psychological empowerment to overcome organizational constraints and innovate?

*Proposition 3c:* Is the effect of psychological empowerment on creativity stronger in employees with high emotional self-awareness and self-regulation?

#### **7.4 Frontier #4: Organisational support and innovation**

The fourth research frontier underlines how Organisational Support factors impact creative outcomes by means of affective and cognitive channels. (Gao and Gao 2024) employ a cognitive, affective framework to demonstrate how digital leadership triggers innovative behavior by activating emotional engagement and ambition. (Hadi et al. 2024) further reveal that organizational support, alongside digital leadership, nurtures innovation via emotional intelligence, suggesting that support systems must cater not only to technical needs but also to emotional alignment.

Rahimi et al., (2024) emphasize that perceived quality of work life, bolstered by psychological empowerment, significantly contributes to innovation in educational contexts. Their results emphasize the importance of nurturing workplace environments in enabling innovative experimentation. Similarly, (Mustafa et al. 2024) show how affective organizational commitment, shaped by a sense of ownership, translates into innovative behavior among middle managers, especially when reinforced by institutional trust. These Results confirm that affective foundation and accountability attitudes work. These findings confirm that emotional infrastructure and ownership mindsets complement each other to drive creativity. Future research should further examine how digital leadership, when paired with sustained organizational support, influences employee innovation over time (Gao & Gao, 2024). Additionally, longitudinal studies should assess how empowerment and commitment shape adaptive innovation across hierarchical levels (Rahimi et al., 2024).

*Proposition 4a:* How does perceived organizational support moderate the link between EI and creative performance?

*Proposition 4b:* Does EI mediate the effect of organizational support on individual innovation behavior?

*Proposition 4c:* What types of organizational support mechanisms are most effective for emotionally intelligent employees to enhance creativity?

#### **7.5 Frontier #5: Creativity and mental health**

The fifth frontier highlights the link between Creativity and Mental well-being. (Barnett and Vasiu 2024) reviewed how engagement in creative arts, such as music and visual expression, activates neural pathways that contribute to therapeutic benefits, reinforcing creativity's relevance to mental health support. (Li et al. 2025) further illustrates this by tracing the bibliometric rise of EI and creativity within educational contexts, suggesting emotional expression through creative processes plays a persistent role in learner development.

Rahimi et al., (2024) contribute empirical evidence showing that psychological empowerment and adaptive teaching mindsets, both nurtured through creativity, enhance well-being and professional innovation. Likewise, (Mustafa et al. 2024) demonstrated how ownership and affective commitment, often tied to creative autonomy, influence middle manager's workplace engagement. (Kaban 2024) extended this conversation to family enterprises, where inclusive leadership spurs innovation and emotional resilience during foundational transitions, linking leadership, mental well-being and creativity in dynamic ways.

Future research should prioritize longitudinal tracking of how specific creative practices sustain mental resilience across age groups, as emphasized in the psychosocial model of creativity and mental health (Zhou et al., 2024). Additionally, arts-based interventions like "Creativity Camp" have demonstrated effectiveness in supporting adolescent mental health, highlighting the need for further exploration into their long-term psychological impact (Krüger et al., 2024).

*Proposition 5a:* What is the role of EI in balancing creativity and mental well-being under high work pressure?

*Proposition 5b:* Can EI act as a protective factor against burnout in highly creative roles?

*Proposition 5c:* To what extent does EI predict sustainable creativity without negatively impacting employees' mental health?

**Table 4** – Summary of research frontiers

Author(s)	Article Title	Source Title (Journal)	Year	TC
<b>Frontier #1: EI and Leadership</b>				
Hadi S.; Setiawati L.; Kirana K.C.; Lada S.B.; Rahmawati C.H.T.	The Effect of Digital Leadership and Organizational Support on Innovative Work Behavior: The Mediating Role of Emotional Intelligence	Quality – Access to Success	2024	10
Barnett K.S.; Vasiu F.	How the arts heal: a review of the neural mechanisms behind the therapeutic effects of creative arts on mental and physical health	Frontiers in Behavioral Neuroscience	2024	2
Mustafa M.J.; Zainal Badri S.K.; Melanie Ramos H.	Linking middle-managers' ownership feelings to their innovative work behaviour: The mediating role of affective organisational commitment	Journal of Management and Organization	2024	12
Rahimi H.; Hejazi S.Y.; Lou N.M.; Heidarzadeh M.	Are teachers with better quality of work life more innovative? The mediating roles of psychological empowerment and teaching mindsets	Acta Psychologica	2024	8
<b>Frontier #2: Digital Leadership and Innovation</b>				
Gao P.; Gao Y.	How Does Digital Leadership Foster Employee Innovative Behavior: A Cognitive–Affective Processing System Perspective	Behavioral Sciences	2024	6
Hadi S.; Setiawati L.; Kirana K.C.; Lada S.B.; Rahmawati C.H.T.	The Effect of Digital Leadership and Organizational Support on Innovative Work Behavior: The Mediating Role of Emotional Intelligence	Quality – Access to Success	2024	10
Li F.; Long J.	Tapping into the configurational paths to employee digital innovation in the realm of the dualistic AMO framework	European Journal of Innovation Management	2025	3
Lim W.; Mahmood T.; Zaidi S.A.; Areeb Y.M.	Leadership Dynamics in the Knowledge-Based Landscape: Unravelling the Mediating Forces of Cognition on Innovative Behaviour	Journal of Information and Knowledge Management	2024	4
Kaban L.M.	Inclusive leaders for innovation in the founder stage and sibling partnership of family enterprises	Southern African Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management	2024	1
<b>Frontier #3: Psychological Empowerment and Work Behavior</b>				

Rahimi H.; Hejazi S.Y.; Lou N.M.; Heidarzadeh M	Are teachers with better quality of work life more innovative? The mediating roles of psychological empowerment and teaching mindsets	Acta Psychologica	2024	8
Mustafa M.J.; Zainal Badri S.K.; Melanie Ramos H.	Linking middle-managers' ownership feelings to their innovative work behaviour: The mediating role of affective organisational commitment	Journal of Management and Organization	2024	12

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Author(s)	Article Title	Source Title (Journal)	Year	TC
Lim W.; Mahmood T.; Zaidi S.A.; Areeb Y.M.	Leadership Dynamics in the Knowledge-Based Landscape: Unravelling the Mediating Forces of Cognition on Innovative Behaviour	Journal of Information and Knowledge Management	2024	4
Li F.; Long J.	Tapping into the configurational paths to employee digital innovation in the realm of the dualistic AMO framework	European Journal of Innovation Management	2025	3
Kaban L.M.	Inclusive leaders for innovation in the founder stage and sibling partnership of family enterprises	Southern African Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management	2024	1
<b>Frontier #4: Organizational Support and Innovation</b>				
Hadi S.; Setiawati L.; Kirana K.C.; Lada S.B.; Rahmawati C.H.T.	The Effect of Digital Leadership and Organizational Support on Innovative Work Behavior: The Mediating Role of Emotional Intelligence	Quality – Access to Success	2024	10
Rahimi H.; Hejazi S.Y.; Lou N.M.; Heidarzadeh M.	Are teachers with better quality of work life more innovative? The mediating roles of psychological empowerment and teaching mindsets	Acta Psychologica	2024	8
Mustafa M.J.; Zainal Badri S.K.; Melanie Ramos H.	Linking middle-managers' ownership feelings to their innovative work behaviour: The mediating role of affective organisational commitment	Journal of Management and Organization	2024	12
Li F.; Long J.	Tapping into the configurational paths to employee digital innovation in the realm of the dualistic AMO framework	European Journal of Innovation Management	2025	3
Gao P.; Gao Y.	How Does Digital Leadership Foster Employee Innovative Behavior: A Cognitive-Affective Processing System Perspective	Behavioral Sciences	2024	6
<b>Frontier #5: Creativity and Mental Health</b>				

Barnett K.S.; Vasiu F.	How the arts heal: a review of the neural mechanisms behind the therapeutic effects of creative arts on mental and physical health	Frontiers in Behavioral Neuroscience	2024	2
Li Z.; Li X.; Chen J.	EI of educators: a bibliometric review, 1998–2024	Social Psychology of Education	2025	0
Rahimi H.; Hejazi S.Y.; Lou N.M.; Heidarzadeh M.	Are teachers with better quality of work life more innovative? The mediating roles of psychological empowerment and teaching mindsets	Acta Psychologica	2024	8
Mustafa M.J.; Zainal Badri S.K.; Melanie Ramos H.	Linking middle-managers' ownership feelings to their innovative work behaviour: The mediating role of affective organisational commitment	Journal of Management and Organization	2024	12
Kaban L.M.	Inclusive leaders for innovation in the founder stage and sibling partnership of family enterprises	Southern African Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management	2024	1

## 8. IMPLICATIONS

### 8.1 Theoretical implications

This research offers an important conceptual input through combining traditional and modern frameworks of emotional intelligence (EI) with recognised innovation theories. It relies on Salovey and Mayer's (1990) four-domain framework of EI, Goleman's (1995) and Wong and Law's (2002) ability-based EI scale, providing a layered interpretation of how emotion control and recognition affect innovative thinking. Such affective processes are shown to trigger affective commitment, self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation which are the key mental components originating in the research's conceptual groupings. The integration of the AMO framework and emotional flexibility across the study's analytical boundaries additionally enhances the theoretical view of Emotional Intelligence as a flexible, environment-responsive concept within creative studies.

Moreover, this research corresponds to three major innovation models: Amabile's componential theory (emphasizing motivation, skills and environment), Woodman et al.'s Interactionist Perspective (person-situation interplay) and Sternberg & Lubart's Investment Theory (creative idea valuation). Additionally, the study aligns with three leading creativity theories: Amabile's Componential Theory (highlighting drive, capabilities and surroundings), Woodman et al.'s Interactionist Perspective (individual-context interaction) and Sternberg & Lubart's Investment Theory (innovation worth estimation). Through bibliometric coupling and thematic mapping, the study shows how emotional intelligence enhances mental enablement and inclusive choices in tech-driven settings. By merging affective, cognitive and structural viewpoints, this research frames emotional intelligence not just as a cognitive resource but as a critical conceptual foundation to foster innovation, flexibility and lasting outcomes in modern organisational settings.

### 8.2 Managerial implications

For professionals, this research emphasizes the importance of incorporating emotional intelligence within workforce development and creativity plans. Leaders and managers must acknowledge that promoting employee creativity demands more than hard competencies which depends on affective congruence, mental enablement and encouraging organisational climates. Firms ought to fund emotional intelligence training initiatives that build introspection, compassion and mood management in groups. This becomes particularly important within virtual and blended workplace models where affective detachment and exhaustion may reduce innovation. The findings indicate that emotionally aware leaders are better equipped to establish affective commitment and psychological safety which are crucial for creative job conduct.

In addition, the research outcomes regarding company-level assistance identify practical approaches to enhance innovation results. Human resources policies must emphasize collaborative choices, independence-promoting supervision and constructive evaluation to foster internal drive. Virtual-era leadership styles that combine IT expertise with affective flexibility are especially influential in modern rapidly evolving organisational contexts. By ingraining emotional intelligence into organisational culture starting from hiring through executive growth enterprises can form affectively strong, innovation-driven groups that is able to manage ambiguity and promote lasting creativity.

## 9. CONCLUSION

This research facilitates a holistic bibliometric overview of the relationship between EI and EC, linking the field's intellectual trend over the years and trending research frontiers over the last twenty years (2004-2025). By scrutinizing 433 articles sourced from peer-reviewed journals indexed in the Scopus database, the study identifies five major thematic frontiers: EI and Leadership, Digital Leadership and Innovation, Psychological Empowerment and Work Behaviour, Organisational Support and Innovation, and Creativity and Mental Health. Performance analysis, co-authorship networks, and bibliographic coupling was analysed with the help of bibliometric tools in which the research lists the critical contributors, influential institutions, publication trends, and collaborative dynamics aligning in this field.



The findings emphasize that EI serves as both a fundamental self-efficacy and as a change agent for amplifying innovation across sectors.

Notably, the clusters recognise and recommend that Affective skills such as empathy, affective commitment, and psychological empowerment are deeply interconnected with institutional creative approaches. Leadership styles, especially those highlighting tech adaptability, collaborative governance and empathic alignment, surface as substantial facilitators of EC. Moreover, situational factors like wellbeing and diversity, Tech confidence, contribute mediating roles in shaping how EI influences innovative results. Moreover, creative thinking is no longer constrained to operational solution-focused but is progressively associated with individual and psychological health, notably in academic and workplace contexts. The recognised boundaries confirm the significance of a cross-functional and people-centric strategy in leveraging the capacity of cultivating creativity and adaptability in today's unstable professional settings.

### 9.1 Directions for future research

The future researcher may consider the following research questions that we have identified based on the different clusters and frontiers of EI and EC.

RQ1: How does leader EI influence EC?

RQ2: Can digital leadership effectiveness be enhanced by emotional intelligence?

RQ3: Does EI strengthen the link between empowerment and creativity?

RQ4: How does EI affect creative performance under organizational support?

RQ5: What is the impact of EI on creativity and mental health balance?

RQ6: How do emotionally intelligent leaders foster team innovation?

RQ7: Can EI reduce remote work stress and sustain creativity?

RQ8: Does EI training boost psychological empowerment and innovation?

RQ9: What role does EI play in creative self-efficacy?

RQ10: How does EI vary across generations in digital innovation teams?

Future research should expand these findings by performing longitudinal studies that monitor how affective and mental characteristics evolve over time in diverse institutional environments. Further exploration into blended management frameworks, particularly in tech-driven industries, may reveal how EI engages with digital competencies to produce lasting innovation and advancement. Merging a systematic literature review with bibliometric mapping can help connect descriptive and statistical robustness. As organizations continue managing intricate social-tech landscapes, incorporating EI into leadership development, HRM strategies, and employee development programs will be crucial. Ultimately, the research affirms that EI is not just a supplementary attribute, but a tactical enabler of EC, organizational flexibility and sustainable outcomes.

### 9.2 Limitations of the Study

While this research provides meaningful findings via bibliometric analysis it does have certain constraints. Depending solely on the SCOPUS index it might have omitted pertinent publications catalogued in other resources possibly reducing the scope and completeness of the evaluation. Moreover, although bibliographic coupling and performance indicators expose systematic trends they could miss subtle interpretive dimensions within emotional intelligence-employee creativity linkages. The cross-sectional nature of the dataset also restricts cause-effect conclusions. Upcoming investigations ought to include time-based and data-driven inquiries to confirm the suggested theoretical models and examine situational variations among industries, social backgrounds and employment formats.

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