

Exploratory study of the role of emotional intelligence in business innovation from the perspective of organizational processes

Estudio exploratorio del papel de la inteligencia emocional en la innovación empresarial desde la perspectiva de los procesos organizacionales

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to explore the role of emotional intelligence (EI) in business innovation from the perspective of organizational processes. A qualitative, documentary and descriptive approach was employed, and a total of $n = 20$ scientific articles were identified and selected from databases. The results reveal that emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial innovation stand out for their impact and the relationship between EI, entrepreneurial competence and knowledge management. The role of EI in business innovation and managerial effectiveness, its influence on collaboration and team performance, its relationship with adaptation to organizational change, and its link with business intelligence and decision making, as well as scientific productivity, were also analyzed. It is concluded that EI is an essential component for business innovation, especially from the perspective of organizational processes.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Development; Skills; Innovation; Emotional Intelligence; Business Development.

Resumen

El propósito de esta investigación fue explorar el papel de la inteligencia emocional (IE) en la innovación empresarial desde la perspectiva de los procesos organizativos. Se empleó un enfoque cualitativo, documental y descriptivo, y se identificaron un total de $n = 20$ artículos científicos, los cuales fueron seleccionados a partir de bases de datos. Los resultados revelan que la inteligencia emocional y la innovación empresarial se destacan por su impacto y la relación entre IE, competencia emprendedora y gestión del conocimiento. Asimismo, se analizó el papel de la IE en la innovación empresarial y la eficacia gerencial, su influencia en la colaboración y el rendimiento de los equipos, su relación con la adaptación al cambio organizacional, y su vínculo con la inteligencia de negocios y la toma de decisiones, además de la productividad científica. Se concluye, que la IE es un componente esencial para la innovación empresarial, especialmente desde la perspectiva de los procesos organizativos.

Palabras claves: Desarrollo Empresarial; Habilidades; Innovación; Inteligencia Emocional

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INTRODUCTION

In a highly competitive and constantly changing environment, business innovation has become one of the fundamental instruments for companies that want to remain competitive and socially responsible, according to González Molano and Martínez Campo (2014). According to THE FLASH CO, (2023), organizations face three key challenges to remain competitive and relevant: fostering a culture of innovation, ensuring continuous innovation, and developing an effective innovation process. Of these, fostering a culture of innovation is the most important, as it sets the basis for the other two challenges.

Business innovation is defined as “improvement in business activity through changes in business models, processes, organization, products, or marketing to make the business more efficient and achieve a better position in the market” (Alfaro Giménez & Pina Massachs, 2018, p. 31). Within this context, a prominent aspect of innovation lies in organizational processes, which encompass the adoption of new methods in areas such as knowledge management, training, evaluation and development of human resources, value chain management, process reengineering, and the implementation of quality systems (Alfaro Giménez & Pina Massachs, 2018).

Emotional intelligence plays an important role within these organizational processes. It allows us to become aware of our emotions, understand the feelings of others, tolerate the pressures and frustrations of work, improve our ability to work as a team, and adopt an empathetic and social attitude (Goleman, 2013). This not only facilitates personal development, but also leads to good business leadership. To do so, it is essential to propose models that allow us to understand the complexity of organizations and the relationship between internal agents (leaders and followers), who are a fundamental part of the organizational structure (Enríquez Chugá et al., 2021).

In this line of thought, this research aimed to explore the role of emotional intelligence in business innovation from the perspective of organizational processes.

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted under a qualitative approach that “starts from the assumption that the social world is made up of meanings and symbols shared intersubjectively” (Bernal Torres, 2016, p. 73) documentary “based on the search, recovery, analysis,

criticism and interpretation of secondary data, whether bibliographical, or recorded by other researchers in printed, audiovisual or electronic sources” (Artigas & Valencia-Arias, 2024, p. 65) and descriptive since “its purpose is to specify properties and characteristics of concepts, phenomena, variables or facts in a given context” (Hernández Sampieri & Mendoza Torres, 2018, p. 108).

For this study, n= 20 scientific articles were identified, which were searched in databases such as Google Scholar, SciELO and Redalyc, among others, using key terms such as “emotional intelligence”, “business innovation”, and “organizational processes”. The selection of these articles was based on their relevance, considering those related to the essence of the research, open access, with recognized indexing, and written in English or Spanish.

The writing and structuring of the content was carried out by analyzing the main summaries of the selected articles, processed through the Microsoft Word program, highlighting the most relevant aspects. Finally, the results, discussion and conclusions of the study are presented.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research has shown that emotional intelligence (EI) of senior executives has a significant positive impact on product and process innovation within organizations (Blázquez Puerta & Bermúdez González, 2019). In the tourism sector, EI has emerged as a key factor for business success, benefiting both internal and external customers (Valdés Bencomo et al., 2021).

EI (Emotional Intelligence) is also positively linked to openness to experience, which facilitates proactive innovation-oriented behavior (Winton & Sabol, 2024). Furthermore, it has been observed that EI, together with social intelligence, enhances innovation by fostering creativity, diversity, and strategic decision-making among employees (Valdés Bencomo et al., 2021).

A study conducted with Peruvian university students revealed a positive correlation between EI and entrepreneurial intention, suggesting that high levels of EI are associated with a greater propensity to undertake (Chávez Paz et al., 2020). In this sense, EI becomes a facilitating factor of entrepreneurial competence, by helping individuals develop key social and emotional skills to face the challenges of entrepreneurship.

On the other hand, a study in Spanish companies highlighted how knowledge management, entrepreneurial competence, and EI positively impact innovative capacity. Although the direct influence of EI was not significant in this case, when the three factors are integrated, a positive effect on innovative processes is observed (Blázquez Puerta et al., 2022).

EI is closely linked to innovation and managerial effectiveness, being considered an essential component for effective leadership (Yuvaraj & Srivastava, 2007). In addition, managerial emotional skills, such as empathy and motivation, are key to improving organizational competitiveness and business performance. Managers who develop these skills can improve the competitiveness of their companies, since human talent in managerial positions is essential for organizational success (Zamorano et al., 2018).

High EI teams are essential for effective business innovation. Integrating EI with cooperation skills is crucial to leverage diversity for innovation, which in turn improves team interaction and organizational performance (Druskat & Wolff, 2001; Erbe, 2010).

In addition, it has been noted that EI contributes significantly to improving organizational processes in the cooperative sector, promoting creativity and optimizing interaction between team members. This approach positively impacts innovation and performance within organizations in the solidarity sector (Orejuela Barberi, 2023).

Ibarra-Ariza, (2017) citing Goleman (2003), emphasizes the importance of individual emotional capabilities, such as the ability to work in a team and the ability to organize using EI. In addition, he highlights

the need to adapt to changing conditions in the business environment, maintaining self-control in stressful situations and showing integrity at all times.

On the other hand, it is observed that business intelligence is enhanced when supported by rational processes. The knowledge of the environment generated by business intelligence is better leveraged through systematic, rule-based analysis, rather than relying exclusively on experience and perception. This facilitates more accurate and agile decision-making in organizations (Gómez-Duque et al., 2023).

Finally, in terms of scientific production, moderate growth has been observed in research on business innovation, with an increase reflected in an $R^2 = 0.3992$ during the years 2019-2020 (Acosta-Tzin et al., 2023). On the other hand, studies on EI show a very significant exponential growth, with an $R^2 = 0.8646$, reflecting a notable increase in scientific production during the period 2012-2022 (Raudales-García, 2023).

CONCLUSIONS

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a fundamental pillar for business innovation. Its impact is evident in the synergy between EI, entrepreneurial competence and knowledge management, promoting a more agile and adaptable organizational culture. In addition, EI improves managerial effectiveness, fosters collaboration and team performance, and facilitates adaptation to organizational change. Its link with business intelligence and strategic decision-making enhances innovation, as demonstrated by the growing scientific interest in this field. Finally, it is recommended to develop empirical research that allows measuring the relationships and influences of these constructs in the organizational field

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