Emotional Intelligence and its Role in Motivation, Leadership, and Academic Success: A Bibliometric Mapping with Islamic Cultural Insights

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Abstract

This study presents a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of literature on emotional intelligence (EI) and its interconnections with motivation, leadership, and academic success, using the Scopus database and PRISMA framework. A total of 422 documents published between 2004 and 2024 were analyzed to identify publication trends, prolific authors and institutions, key sources, and thematic patterns. The findings show a substantial increase in research output, particularly in recent years, with the United States, Spain, and Malaysia leading global contributions. Emotional intelligence was found to be embedded in various disciplines, including psychology, education, business, and health sciences, with emerging interests in digital learning and cultural leadership. Despite the global breadth of research, there is limited representation from Gulf countries such as Oman, where EI aligns naturally with Islamic principles like self-awareness, empathy, and ethical conduct. The study highlights the potential for culturally contextualized research in Oman and other Islamic societies to fill this gap and shape future discourse. It concludes with a call for localized, values-driven models of emotional intelligence that reflect both academic and spiritual dimensions of leadership and learning.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Motivation, Leadership, and Academic Success.

Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI), defined as the capacity to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions and those of others, has emerged as a pivotal factor influencing motivation, leadership, and academic success in contemporary educational and organizational settings (Goleman, 1995). In the Sultanate of Oman, a nation characterized by

its rich Islamic heritage and rapidly evolving educational landscape, the integration of EI into academic and leadership paradigms holds particular significance.

Recent studies within Oman have underscored the positive correlation between EI competencies and academic performance among university students. For instance, research conducted at the Arab Open University in Oman revealed that students exhibiting higher levels of EI, particularly in social skills and empathy, tend to achieve better academic outcomes (Hussainy & Al Wahaibi, 2023). Similarly, a study focusing on higher education institutions in Oman found that components of EI such as self-awareness, emotion management, and self-motivation significantly contribute to students' cumulative grade point averages (CGPAs) (Al-Mahrooqi & Denman, 2019).

Leadership within the Omani context is deeply intertwined with Islamic values, emphasizing traits such as compassion, justice, and community welfare. The Islamic perspective on leadership advocates for a model that is not only effective but also ethically grounded, aligning closely with the principles of EI. Leaders who embody EI competencies are better equipped to inspire and motivate their teams, fostering environments conducive to academic and organizational excellence (Al-Harthy & Al-Mahrooqi, 2018).

Moreover, the Islamic cultural framework in Oman places a strong emphasis on emotional moderation, empathy, and social harmony, all of which are integral components of EI. This cultural alignment suggests that the development and application of EI within educational and leadership contexts are not only beneficial but also culturally resonant. Educational institutions in Oman are increasingly recognizing the importance of integrating EI training into their curricula to enhance students' academic performance and prepare them for leadership roles that reflect Islamic ethical standards (Al-Mahrooqi & Denman, 2019).

Despite the growing recognition of EI's importance, there remains a paucity of comprehensive bibliometric analyses that map the landscape of EI research within the Omani and broader Islamic contexts. This study aims to fill this gap by systematically analyzing the existing literature on EI's role in motivation, leadership, and academic success, with a particular focus on Islamic cultural insights. By doing so, it seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of how EI is conceptualized and applied within Islamic educational and leadership frameworks, thereby informing future research and practice in this domain. In this cotext; the following research questions are formulated:

RQ1: How has the volume of publications on emotional intelligence in relation to motivation, leadership, and academic success evolved over the period 2004–2024?
RQ2: Which countries have contributed the most to the scholarly discourse on emotional intelligence and its impact on motivation, leadership, and academic success?
RQ3: Who are the most prolific and influential authors in the field of emotional intelligence in relation to motivation, leadership, and academic achievement, and what is the nature of their scholarly impact?
RQ4: Which academic institutions and research organizations are leading in publishing studies on emotional intelligence and its connections to leadership, motivation, and academic outcomes?

RQ5: What are the most prominent journals or publication sources for research on emotional intelligence and its role in leadership, motivation, and academic success?

RQ6: What are the major disciplinary areas engaging with the study of emotional intelligence in relation to leadership, motivation, and academic performance?

RQ7: What are the most frequently used keywords and emerging thematic trends in the literature on emotional intelligence, motivation, leadership, and academic success?

Methodology

This bibliometric analysis was conducted in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines to ensure methodological transparency, reproducibility, and rigor in identifying, screening, and selecting the relevant literature (Page et al., 2021). The PRISMA model was particularly suited for this study as it provides a structured and widely recognized framework for processing a large volume of bibliographic records. The process consisted of four key phases: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. This study also builds upon and extends the methodological foundation laid by previous bibliometric investigations. For instance, Alshehhi et al. (2022) applied performance measurement analysis to human resource management in crisis contexts, while Kiyomi et al. (2022) explored entrepreneurship education trends using bibliometric mapping. Similarly, Yaarubi et al. (2022) investigated the impact of future technological skills on student achievement, and in a subsequent study, Yaarubi et al. (2023) assessed the effect of 21st-century skill-based modules on academic performance. Alshabibi et al. (2022) examined how values influence teaching and learning through bibliometric insights, and Abuhassna et al. (2022) analyzed sustainability themes in future education research. Moreover, Qi et al. (2024) conducted a systematic review of flipped classroom applications in language learning, while Almheiri and Abuhassna (2024) focused on the adoption of innovative management practices by school leaders. These studies collectively offered methodological direction and theoretical framing for the current research.

Identification Phase

The initial search was performed on the Scopus database, which is widely recognized for its expansive coverage of peer-reviewed publications across disciplines. The following advanced search query was used "TITLE-ABS-KEY (emotional AND intelligence AND motivation AND leadership OR academic OR success) AND PUBYEAR > 2003 AND PUBYEAR < 2025 AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar") OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "cp") OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ch")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English"))". This search string was specifically crafted to retrieve documents that examine emotional intelligence in connection with motivation, leadership, or academic success, published between 2004 and 2024. The search yielded 578 documents in total.

Screening Phase

In the second phase, all retrieved records underwent title and abstract screening. Duplicates were removed, and irrelevant records—such as those focusing exclusively on emotional intelligence in clinical settings without educational or leadership relevance—were excluded.

Eligibility Phase

Full-text documents were then assessed for eligibility based on clearly defined criteria. Publications had to address emotional intelligence in direct relation to at least one of the core

themes: motivation, leadership, or academic achievement. This phase helped refine the dataset for thematic coherence.

Inclusion Phase
After applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, a final total of **422 documents** were retained for the bibliometric mapping and thematic analysis. The following table (Table 1) outlines the specific inclusion and exclusion criteria used throughout the process.

Table 1
Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Articles, conference papers, or book chapters published between 2004 and 2024	Publications outside the date range (before 2004 or after 2024)
Written in English	Non-English language documents
Indexed in Scopus	Non-indexed or non-peer-reviewed documents
Studies addressing emotional intelligence in relation to motivation, leadership, or academic success	Studies focusing solely on emotional intelligence in clinical or therapeutic contexts
Focused on educational, psychological, or leadership-related outcomes	Irrelevant domains (e.g., AI modeling, medical imaging, or robotics)

This structured methodology allowed for a focused, evidence-based analysis of the literature landscape. A PRISMA-compliant flow diagram (Figure 1) visually represents the transition of documents through each stage of the review process.

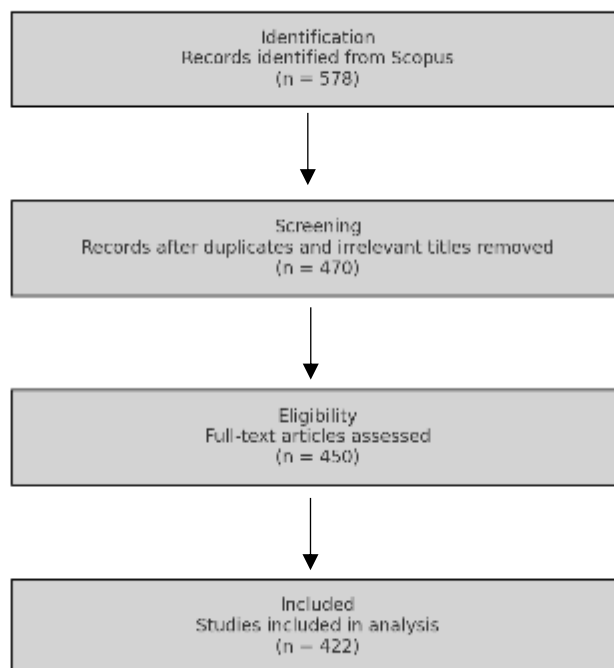Figure 1: PRISMA Flow Diagram for Document Selection

Identification
Records identified from Scopus
(n = 578)

Screening
Records after duplicates and irrelevant titles removed
(n = 470)

Eligibility
Full-text articles assessed
(n = 450)

Included
Studies included in analysis
(n = 422)

Figure 1: the PRISMA Framework

Results

RQ1: *How has the volume of publications on emotional intelligence in relation to motivation, leadership, and academic success evolved over the period 2004–2024?*

Understanding the temporal distribution of publications offers valuable insights into how scholarly interest in emotional intelligence (EI) has grown, especially in relation to the domains of motivation, leadership, and academic success. Figure 2 presents the number of relevant documents published each year from 2004 to 2024, reflecting the evolving academic engagement with the topic over two decades.
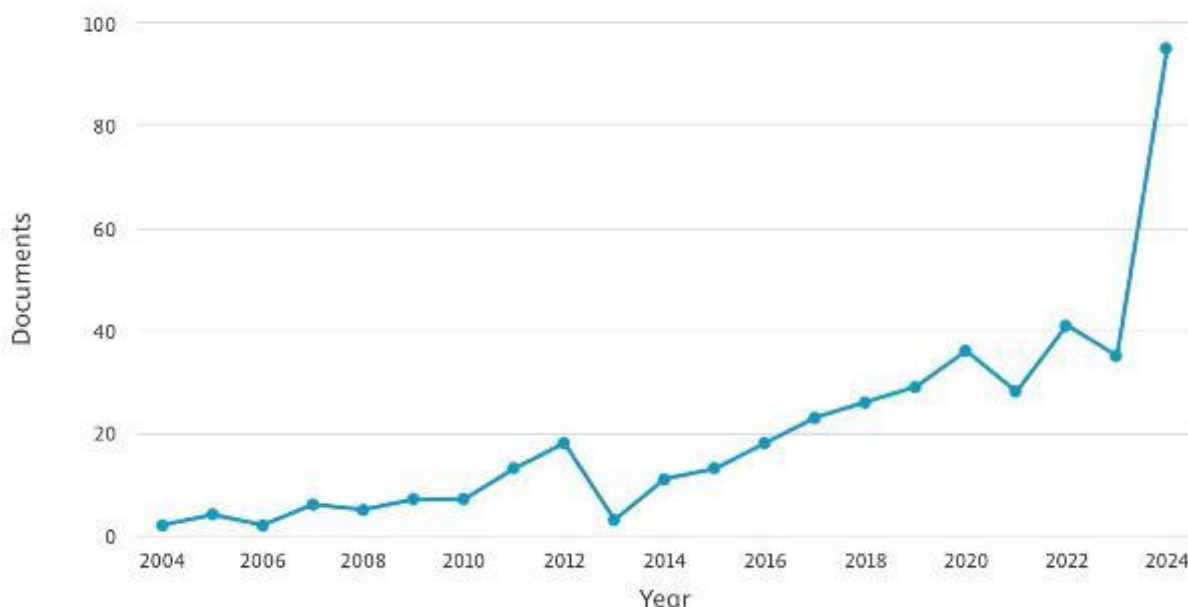

Figure 2: documents by years

As shown in Figure 2, the field exhibited modest scholarly attention in its early years, with fewer than 10 publications annually between 2004 and 2010. A gradual increase in publication volume is observed starting from 2011, reaching a small peak in 2013. This was followed by a slight dip in 2014, likely due to shifting academic priorities or database indexing delays. From 2015 onward, the trend demonstrates a clear upward trajectory, reflecting growing academic interest and recognition of EI as a crucial element in leadership and educational performance. The most notable spike occurred in 2024, with nearly 100 publications, marking the highest number of annual outputs in the two-decade span. This surge likely corresponds to heightened interest in emotional and psychological dimensions of education and management post-pandemic, as well as the increased integration of emotional intelligence frameworks in both research and policy. This rapid escalation highlights not only the maturity of the field but also an urgent scholarly response to global challenges where emotional resilience, leadership agility, and student motivation have become more important than ever. It also signals a broader acceptance of EI as a vital component of educational and organizational success—especially in culturally rich and emerging contexts like Oman and the wider Islamic world.

RQ2: *Which countries have contributed the most to the scholarly discourse on emotional intelligence and its impact on motivation, leadership, and academic success?*

Analyzing the geographic distribution of publications helps to identify the global centers of research productivity and influence in the field of emotional intelligence. Figure 3 displays the top contributing countries based on the number of publications related to EI in the context of motivation, leadership, and academic performance.
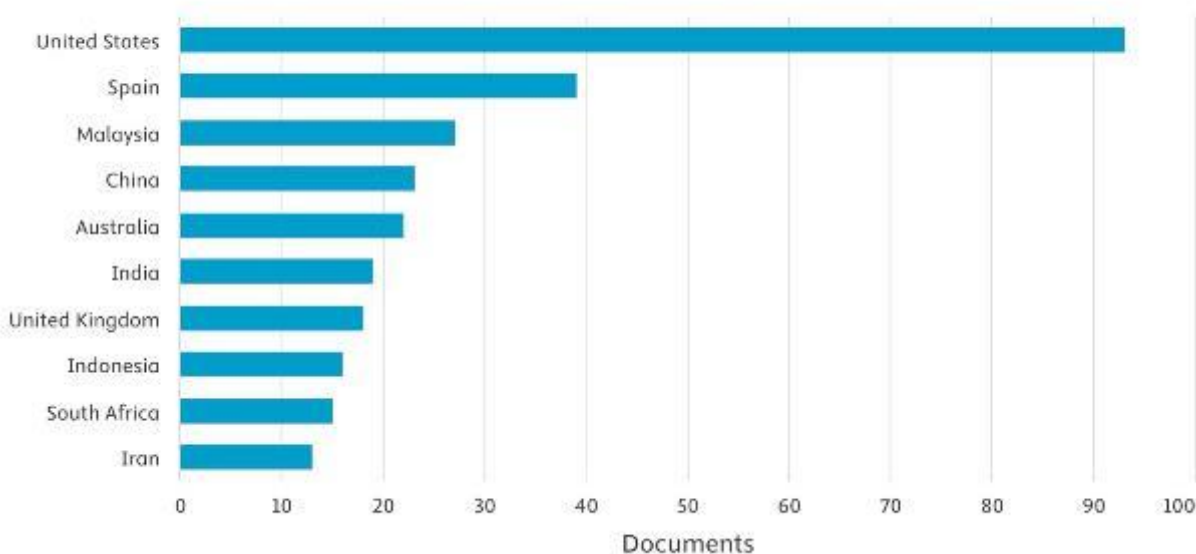

Figure 3: documents by country or territory

As depicted in Figure 3, the United States leads by a substantial margin, with nearly 100 documents, positioning it as the dominant contributor to global EI scholarship. This can be attributed to the country's long-standing emphasis on psychological research and leadership development within both academic and corporate settings. The U.S. is followed by Spain, which shows a strong publication footprint, reflecting its growing interest in emotional and social competencies in educational psychology. Malaysia ranks third, which is particularly noteworthy given its strategic educational reforms and increasing adoption of emotional intelligence frameworks in both higher education and teacher training. Countries such as China, Australia, India, and the United Kingdom follow, indicating a widespread and multicultural academic interest in the subject. These countries reflect varied socio-educational systems and leadership models, contributing to the diverse exploration of EI-related constructs. Importantly, although not in the top tier, countries from the Middle East such as Iran and Indonesia are emerging contributors. However, it is worth noting that Oman, despite its growing policy emphasis on holistic education and values-based leadership, has yet to feature prominently in this global bibliometric landscape. This highlights a potential research gap and opportunity for Omani scholars and institutions to engage more actively in the field, especially from an Islamic cultural perspective that aligns naturally with EI principles.

RQ3: *Who are the most prolific and influential authors in the field of emotional intelligence in relation to motivation, leadership, and academic achievement, and what is the nature of their scholarly impact?*

Identifying key authors in a field not only highlights leading contributors but also reflects broader research networks and regional trends. Table 2 presents the top 10 most prolific and impactful scholars based on total publications (TP), total citations (TC), and h-index scores within the context of emotional intelligence (EI) and its links to motivation, leadership, and academic performance.

Table 2
Top 10 authors in the ferild of Emotional Intelligence and Its Role in Motivation, Leadership, and Academic Success

#	Authors	S.ID*	TP*	TC*	H-index	affliation	Country
1	Saraih, Ummi Naiemah	58519735900	118	324	9	Universiti Malaysia Perlis, Arau.	Malaysia
2	Chacón-Cuberos, Ramón	56748025100	125	1,628	22	Universidad de Granada, Granada.	Spain
3	Hamdan, H.	57225806726	5	4	1	Universiti Malaysia Perlis, Arau.	Malaysia
4	Zurita-Ortega, Félix	18439042400	246	3,078	26	Universidad de Granada, Granada.	Spain
5	Ángel, Nieves Gutiérrez	57211513440	20	144	7	Universidad de Almería, Almeria.	Spain
6	Ahadi, Hassan	37062984300	47	161	8	Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch, Tehran.	Iran
7	Ahsan, Muhammad Junaid	58290853300	12	70	4	Dipartimento di Economia e Management, Pisa.	Italy
8	K. S, Anandh Sugirthamani	57190190953	58	324	11	SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Kattankulathur.	India
9	Asghar, Muhammad Zaheer	57208667494	29	525	14	Helsingin Yliopisto, Helsinki,	Finland
10	Ashraf, Muhammad Azeem	57199507488	41	768	16	Hunan University, Changsha,	China

S.ID*= Scopus ID, TP*= Total Publications, TC*= Toyal citations

According to Table 2, Zurita-Ortega, Félix from the Universidad de Granada emerges as the most influential scholar, with an impressive output of 246 publications, 3,078 citations, and an h-index of 26, indicating both productivity and scholarly impact. His frequent collaboration with other Spanish researchers—such as Chacón-Cuberos, Ramón and Ángel, Nieves Gutiérrez—illustrates the strength of Spain's academic presence in EI-related domains. Chacón-Cuberos holds the second-highest citation count (1,628) and a strong h-index of 22, with research that intersects educational psychology and personal development. Meanwhile, Saraih, Ummi Naiemah from Universiti Malaysia Perlis leads in terms of total publications (118), reflecting Malaysia's growing emphasis on emotional intelligence in educational policy and teacher training. Another contributor from the same university, Hamdan, H., has fewer publications but reflects the collaborative trend within Malaysian institutions. Other notable figures include Ashraf, Muhammad Azeem from Hunan University, with 41 publications and 768 citations, and Asghar, Muhammad Zaheer from Helsinki, reflecting an expanding global interest across Asia and Europe. Scholars like Ahadi from Iran and Ahsan from Italy further indicate that EI is a topic of cross-regional academic appeal, especially when it intersects with education, management, and leadership. Interestingly, the presence of authors from Islamic-majority countries such as Malaysia, Iran, and India suggests a cultural alignment between emotional intelligence and the ethical, interpersonal focus often emphasized in Islamic educational systems. This trend highlights a growing space for integrating Islamic values and EI principles in both theoretical and applied educational research.

RQ4: *Which academic institutions and research organizations are leading in publishing studies on emotional intelligence and its connections to leadership, motivation, and academic outcomes?*

Institutional affiliation offers insight into the academic hubs driving scholarly inquiry in a given field. Figure 4 highlights the top institutions contributing to the research landscape on emotional intelligence (EI) and its applications in leadership, motivation, and academic performance.
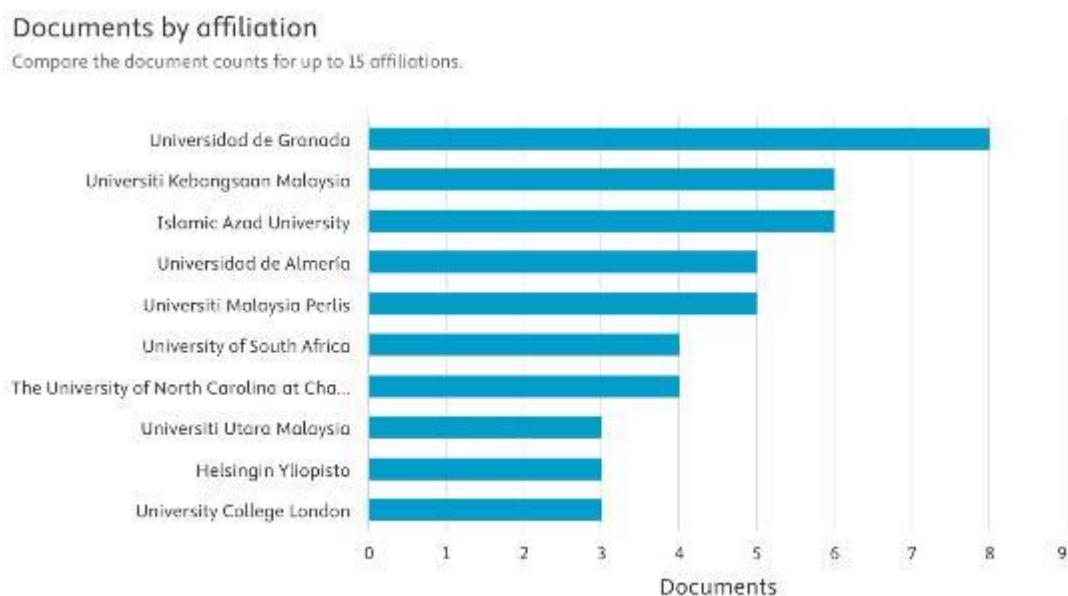

Figure 4: documents by affiliation

As presented in Figure 4, the Universidad de Granada in Spain leads the chart, with the highest number of EI-related publications among the top affiliations. This aligns with the presence of prolific scholars like Zurita-Ortega and Chacón-Cuberos, reflecting a strong institutional research culture focused on socio-emotional competencies in education and leadership. Close behind is Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), which demonstrates Malaysia's significant institutional investment in exploring EI through educational psychology, leadership development, and teacher training. The presence of Universiti Malaysia Perlis and Universiti Utara Malaysia among the top ten further strengthens the case for Malaysia as a key regional player in this domain. Islamic Azad University in Iran also shows notable activity, consistent with the broader academic engagement across Islamic cultural contexts. This reinforces the notion that emotional intelligence resonates deeply with cultural and religious frameworks that emphasize empathy, self-regulation, and social harmony—values deeply rooted in Islamic teachings. Institutions such as the University of South Africa and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte demonstrate the geographical diversity of EI research, highlighting its global relevance across both developed and emerging educational systems. Interestingly, Helsingin Yliopisto (University of Helsinki) and University College London also make the list, reflecting active European engagement in exploring EI from cognitive, psychological, and educational perspectives. This institutional spread suggests that emotional intelligence research is not only thriving across Western academic powerhouses but also gaining strong momentum in the Global South, particularly in Islamic and multicultural contexts. However, the absence of institutions from Oman in this list points to an opportunity for Omani universities to take a more prominent role in this growing and impactful area of inquiry.

RQ5: *What are the most prominent journals or publication sources for research on emotional intelligence and its role in leadership, motivation, and academic success?*

Analyzing the distribution of publications across academic sources provides valuable insights into which journals and conferences are central platforms for disseminating research on emotional intelligence (EI). Figure 5 illustrates the leading publication outlets from 2013 to 2024, highlighting both academic journals and conference proceedings.
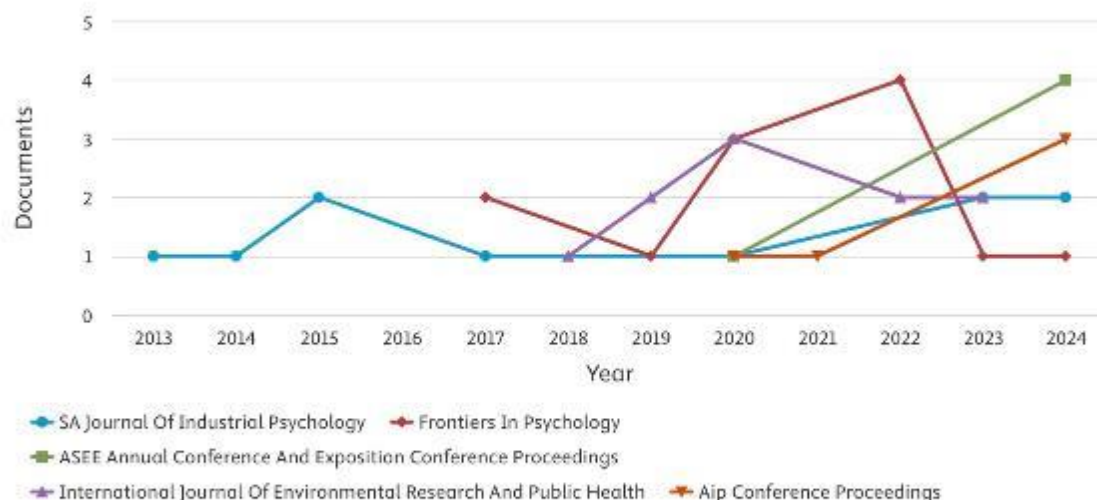
Figure 5: documents by sources

As shown in Figure 5, the SA Journal of Industrial Psychology has maintained a steady contribution over the years, reflecting sustained interest in the role of EI in workplace behavior, leadership development, and employee motivation. This aligns with the journal's thematic focus on applied psychology in organizational settings.

Frontiers in Psychology, an open-access, peer-reviewed journal with high visibility, shows a notable increase in recent years. Its growing involvement suggests expanding interdisciplinary interest in emotional intelligence, particularly in areas such as educational psychology, cognitive science, and emotional regulation in learning environments. Conference proceedings also play a critical role in advancing EI research. Notably, the ASEE Annual Conference and Exposition and the AIP Conference Proceedings consistently contribute to the literature, especially where EI intersects with engineering education, leadership training, and management. Their inclusion highlights the practical and applied dimensions of EI in real-world educational and professional contexts. Another leading outlet is the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, which reflects an emerging trend to study EI in the context of mental well-being, stress regulation, and social health—especially in educational institutions and community organizations.

This variety of sources underscores the interdisciplinary nature of emotional intelligence research. While rooted in psychology, EI studies increasingly appear in journals and conferences related to education, public health, industrial behavior, and management. This distribution suggests that EI is viewed as a critical variable across sectors, reaffirming its importance in leadership, motivation, and academic achievement globally.

RQ6: *What are the major disciplinary areas engaging with the study of emotional intelligence in relation to leadership, motivation, and academic performance?*

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a multidisciplinary construct, intersecting various academic domains that explore human behavior, learning, leadership, and well-being. Figure 6 presents a breakdown of the primary subject areas contributing to EI research, highlighting the fields most actively engaging with its application in motivation, leadership, and academic success.

Documents by subject area

Other (15.9%)
Nursing (3.2%)
Arts and Humani... (3.2%)
Environmental S... (3.6%)
Economics, Econ... (4.8%)
Computer Scienc... (5.4%)
Engineering (5.9%)
Medicine (10.0%)
Business, Manag... (10.6%)
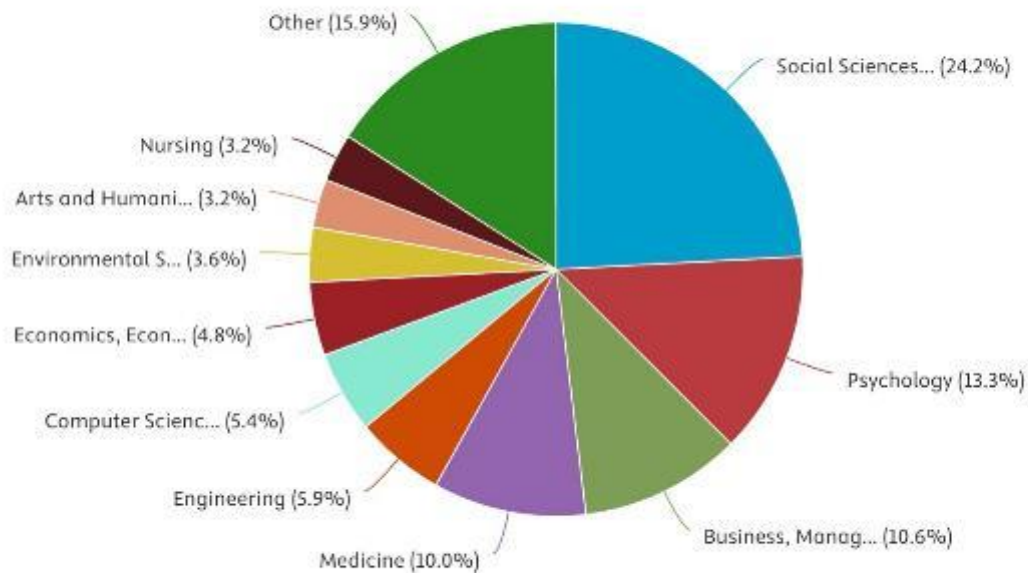Psychology (13.3%)
Social Sciences... (24.2%)

Figure 6: documents by subject area

As illustrated in Figure 6, the Social Sciences dominate the field, accounting for 24.2% of all EI-related publications. This is not surprising, given that social sciences frequently address human development, education, and interpersonal communication—all critical to understanding and applying emotional intelligence.

The Psychology domain follows with 13.3%, emphasizing the conceptual and empirical foundations of EI, including emotional regulation, personality, and cognitive-affective processing. This field has been instrumental in establishing EI as a scientifically valid construct and in developing widely used measurement tools.

Business and Management emerges as the third most represented area (10.6%), reflecting the increasing importance of emotional intelligence in organizational behavior, leadership development, employee engagement, and human resource strategies. Closely aligned is Medicine (10.0%), where EI plays a role in patient communication, stress management, and empathy in clinical settings.

Other contributors include Engineering (5.9%) and Computer Science (5.4%), which may reflect interdisciplinary efforts to integrate emotional modeling into artificial intelligence or investigate EI in team-based STEM education. Additionally, Economics, Environmental

Sciences, and Arts and Humanities each contribute modest shares, further illustrating the broad relevance of EI across sectors.

The Nursing field also shows a notable presence (3.2%), supporting its role in healthcare training programs where emotional sensitivity and leadership are essential for patient care and team collaboration.

The presence of 15.9% under "Other" subject areas reinforces the idea that emotional intelligence is a truly cross-cutting theme, adaptable to diverse educational, professional, and cultural contexts—including those framed by Islamic values.

This multidisciplinary engagement with EI confirms its growing importance not only as a psychological attribute but also as a strategic competency in education, leadership, and beyond.

RQ7: *What are the most frequently used keywords and emerging thematic trends in the literature on emotional intelligence, motivation, leadership, and academic success?*

A keyword co-occurrence analysis is essential for uncovering the conceptual structure of a research field. It reveals the dominant themes, evolving interests, and research hotspots over time. Figure 6 presents a keyword visualization map generated using VOSviewer, showing clusters of frequently co-occurring terms in the literature on emotional intelligence (EI) and its connections to motivation, leadership, and academic performance.

Figure 6: documents by trends and keywords

At the core of the map is the term "emotional intelligence", confirming its centrality and high frequency across the dataset. Closely surrounding it are key terms such as "leadership",

"motivation", "academic success", and "self-regulation", indicating that these constructs are not only conceptually linked but also frequently explored together in empirical studies.

The presence of "self-awareness," "self-efficacy," "job satisfaction," and "performance" suggests a strong interest in personal and organizational outcomes, particularly in educational and professional leadership contexts. Other closely related terms like "social competence," "interpersonal relations," and "professional development" further emphasize the social and applied dimensions of EI, especially in leadership and collaborative learning environments.

A notable emerging trend is the integration of "artificial intelligence" and "digital learning," indicating a shift toward examining EI within technology-enhanced environments. This aligns with the current educational and managerial transitions toward hybrid models of instruction and remote leadership, where digital emotional competencies are increasingly relevant.

Several keywords also reflect a strong pedagogical orientation, such as "curriculum," "teaching," "academic achievement," and "student engagement." These affirm that EI is widely studied within educational settings as both a skill to be developed and a factor influencing learning outcomes.

From a cultural and values-based lens, keywords such as "culture," "values," and "ethics" subtly highlight an interest in how emotional intelligence operates within different socio-cultural contexts—including Islamic educational traditions where moral reasoning, self-discipline, and empathy are foundational.

Together, the keyword landscape indicates that EI research has evolved from psychological theory into a multifaceted field encompassing education, leadership, human development, and digital transformation. The breadth and clustering of these terms show a healthy diversification in research focus, with ample room for future studies—particularly in underrepresented contexts like Oman and broader Islamic educational frameworks.

Discussion

This bibliometric analysis offers a multidimensional view of the scholarly landscape surrounding emotional intelligence (EI) and its intersections with motivation, leadership, and academic success. Spanning a twenty-year period (2004–2024), the study reveals the field's evolving dynamics, geographic concentrations, disciplinary reach, and thematic directions. Collectively, the results affirm the expanding academic commitment to understanding how emotional intelligence shapes personal and professional outcomes, while highlighting critical opportunities for further development—especially within Islamic and Omani contexts.

In response to RQ1, the analysis of annual publication trends confirms a clear trajectory of growth, particularly since 2015, with a dramatic surge in 2024. This uptick may reflect a heightened global interest in emotional well-being, educational resilience, and values-based leadership following the COVID-19 pandemic. The recent explosion in publications suggests that emotional intelligence has become a critical research priority, particularly in the face of ongoing educational reforms and societal shifts (Al-Mahrooqi & Denman, 2019; Qi et al., 2024).

Regarding RQ2, geographic distribution data reveal that the United States dominates in terms of research output, followed by Spain and Malaysia. While Western dominance is expected due to historical academic infrastructure, the emergence of Malaysia and other Asian countries like China and India signifies the internationalization of EI research. Notably, countries such as Iran and South Africa are also making meaningful contributions. However, the absence of Oman from the top contributors points to an underexplored context where EI—deeply aligned with Islamic principles of self-awareness, empathy, and ethical leadership—could hold transformative potential (Al-Harthy & Al-Mahrooqi, 2018). Institutions in Oman could significantly benefit from contextualizing and expanding research in this field, both to inform national educational policy and to contribute to global knowledge from an Islamic perspective.

In relation to RQ3, the identification of key scholars—most notably Zurita-Ortega, Chacón-Cuberos, and Saraih—demonstrates the role of academic networks in advancing EI discourse. Spanish and Malaysian researchers are particularly prominent, and their institutional affiliations suggest that national research agendas are increasingly prioritizing emotional and social development as central components of education and leadership. This reinforces the importance of strategic investment in institutional research support for countries like Oman wishing to advance in this field (Hussainy & Al Wahaibi, 2023).

RQ4 explored institutional contributions, with Universidad de Granada, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, and Islamic Azad University emerging as prolific sources of EI scholarship. The clustering of multiple Malaysian universities—such as Universiti Malaysia Perlis and Universiti Utara Malaysia—suggests an integrated and possibly coordinated national research effort. For Oman, this presents a useful model; universities could collectively develop emotional intelligence-focused research centers or modules aligned with national education strategies and Islamic pedagogical principles (Al-Mahrooqi & Denman, 2019).

The results from RQ5 show that research on EI is disseminated across diverse sources, including psychology journals, health sciences outlets, and multidisciplinary conference proceedings. This signals the field's transdisciplinary appeal and its applicability across domains—education, organizational leadership, engineering, and public health among them (Qi et al., 2024). Journals such as Frontiers in Psychology and the SA Journal of Industrial Psychology have become central platforms, underscoring a shift toward applied emotional intelligence research that bridges theory and practice.

RQ6 confirms this breadth at the disciplinary level, where EI is embedded primarily within the social sciences (24.2%), psychology (13.3%), business and management (10.6%), and medicine (10.0%). These areas are deeply interwoven with the goals of educational transformation, leadership development, and student-centered learning. Notably, disciplines like engineering, computer science, and environmental science are also increasingly incorporating EI frameworks, particularly in response to the need for emotionally intelligent technological solutions and team-based problem-solving (Qi et al., 2024). This opens a pathway for Omani institutions to integrate EI into interdisciplinary research that aligns with national development priorities and ethical considerations.

Thematic keyword analysis under RQ7 reinforces the conceptual and applied centrality of EI, with dominant themes such as self-awareness, leadership, job satisfaction, and student performance. Emerging themes—like artificial intelligence, academic motivation, digital learning, and curriculum design—reflect an evolution of the field toward technology-enhanced learning and globalized education. These trends offer fertile ground for Islamic pedagogy to merge with modern educational demands. For example, integrating EI into digital education in Oman through culturally responsive content could promote both academic excellence and moral development (Al-Harthy & Al-Mahrooqi, 2018; Al-Mahrooqi & Denman, 2019).

Overall, this study reveals that emotional intelligence is no longer a marginal psychological concept but a central theme in global research on effective leadership, motivation, and academic performance. However, it also underscores the need for more regionally grounded studies—particularly from the Islamic world. Oman, with its rich educational reform efforts and deep-rooted Islamic values, is well-positioned to contribute original perspectives to this global discourse. Islamic teachings emphasize traits central to EI—such as patience (ṣabr), self-restraint (taqwā), empathy (raḥmah), and social responsibility (ukhuwwah)—making the integration of EI with Islamic cultural insights both natural and necessary (Al-Harthy & Al-Mahrooqi, 2018).

Therefore, future studies in Oman and other Islamic societies should not only adopt existing EI frameworks but also critically adapt and enrich them through cultural, linguistic, and religious lenses. Doing so would not only address current research gaps but also offer valuable contributions to the global academic community in crafting ethically grounded and contextually relevant educational leadership models (Hussainy & Al Wahaibi, 2023; Almheiri & Abuhassna, 2024).

Conclusion
This bibliometric mapping study has systematically examined the intellectual landscape of emotional intelligence (EI) research as it intersects with motivation, leadership, and academic success. The results show a steadily growing body of literature, particularly in the post-pandemic era, highlighting the increasing recognition of EI as a critical component in education, workplace leadership, and personal development.

Geographic and institutional analyses reveal a concentration of scholarly activity in Western and Asian contexts, with notable contributions from Spain, the United States, and Malaysia. However, a significant gap remains in terms of contributions from Gulf countries, including Oman, despite the strong alignment between Islamic ethical teachings and EI principles.

Disciplinary engagement has shown that EI transcends psychology and education, extending into business, health sciences, engineering, and computer science. Thematic keyword analysis further points to a shift in research toward digital integration, self-regulation, and leadership in culturally diverse settings.

Importantly, this study underscores the opportunity for Omani scholars and institutions to contribute more substantively to the field by contextualizing emotional intelligence within Islamic pedagogical traditions and socio-cultural realities. This can support the development

of leadership models and learning strategies that are both globally relevant and culturally authentic.

Limitations and Future Directions

While this study offers a robust bibliometric overview, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the analysis was limited to the Scopus database, which, while comprehensive, may not capture all relevant regional or non-English publications—particularly from the Arab and Islamic world. Including additional databases such as Web of Science or Google Scholar in future studies could provide a more inclusive global perspective. Second, this study is quantitative in nature and does not evaluate the quality or contextual depth of the publications reviewed. Future research could incorporate qualitative systematic reviews or meta-analyses to evaluate how emotional intelligence is conceptualized and applied within specific cultural or educational systems.

A further limitation concerns the underrepresentation of research from Oman and similar Islamic contexts. This gap presents a critical opportunity for future scholarship to develop localized models of EI grounded in Islamic values such as taqwā (self-regulation), raḥmah (compassion), and ṣabr (patience), thereby enriching the global discourse.

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