



Global Trends in Emotional Intelligence Research and Their Implications for Education: A Bibliometric Analysis (2010–2025)

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the development of emotional intelligence research and its implications for educational practice through a bibliometric analysis of global scientific publications. Using the Scopus Performance Analysis approach, a dataset of 28,404 articles indexed in Scopus between 2010 and 2025 was examined. Descriptive bibliometric techniques were employed, including annual publication trends, author productivity, institutional contributions, and thematic evolution, to identify dominant research patterns and emerging directions. The findings indicate substantial growth in emotional intelligence research over the past decade, peaking in 2021, reflecting increasing attention to social-emotional competencies in education, mental health, and resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thematic analysis shows a shift from early trait-based and self-report approaches toward integrative models linking emotional intelligence with psychological capital, educational outcomes, and emerging digital technologies such as artificial intelligence. These developments underscore the growing recognition of emotional intelligence as a critical factor in supporting student well-being, learning engagement, and adaptive skills in contemporary educational environments. This study provides a comprehensive mapping of emotional intelligence research evolution and identifies key gaps for future studies. For the Indonesian educational context, the findings highlight the importance of integrating emotional intelligence into curriculum design, teacher training, and social-emotional learning initiatives to strengthen students' psychological resilience and learning readiness in an increasingly complex digital era.

Article History

Received: 15-01-2026

Revised: 20-02-2026

Accepted: 11-03-2026

Published: 20-04-2026

Key Words:

Emotional Intelligence;
Bibliometrics; Research
Trends; Ability Model;
Self-Report, Education;
Mental Health.

How to Cite: Matondang, M. R., Solehuddin, M., Riyadi, A. R., Widiaty, I., & Surya, Y. (2026). Global Trends in Emotional Intelligence Research and Their Implications for Education: A Bibliometric Analysis (2010–2025). *Jurnal Paedagogy*, 13(2), 717-727. <https://doi.org/10.33394/jp.v13i2.19332>



<https://doi.org/10.33394/jp.v13i2.19332>

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Introduction

In the modern era, rapid social, technological, and economic transformations have intensified psychosocial pressures across societies, making emotional intelligence increasingly important for individual well-being and adaptive functioning. Educational institutions, organizations, and governments are now facing growing challenges related to mental health, social resilience, and emotional regulation, particularly in contexts shaped by digital disruption and global crises. Consequently, emotional intelligence has gained recognition as a crucial competency that supports interpersonal relationships, psychological resilience, and effective learning environments. The increasing integration of social and emotional learning (SEL) programs in educational systems across America, Europe, and Asia reflects the global urgency to develop emotional competencies alongside cognitive abilities (Parker et al., 2022; Sutarto et al., 2022; Cabello et al., 2024)..

This global urgency is reflected in the rapidly expanding body of scientific literature on emotional intelligence. Bibliometric evidence shows a significant increase in publications,



international collaborations, and cross-disciplinary research addressing EI in educational, organizational, and mental health contexts (Al Shidi et al., 2025; Sharma & Tiwari, 2024). However, EI research still faces several conceptual and methodological challenges, including variations in theoretical models, the dominance of self-report measurement approaches, and limited integrative frameworks connecting EI with broader psychological and technological contexts.

Increasing psychosocial pressures from mental health crises, digital disruption, and globalization have made EI research increasingly urgent. Afiatin et al. (2023) found that emotional intelligence affects psychological resilience and occupational motivation in education and government, while the meta-analysis by Joseph and Newman (2010) confirms EI's importance for performance across ability domains. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated awareness of EI's importance: Brooks et al. (2020) documented severe psychological impacts of isolation and quarantine, while Chaudhary et al. (2022) demonstrated EI's moderating role in employee well-being during the pandemic. Despite growing evidence of EI's benefits, persistent conceptual and methodological challenges remain, including ambiguity across ability, trait, and mixed models (Mayer et al., 2008; Petrides et al., 2016) and the overreliance on self-report instruments vulnerable to self-perception bias and cross-cultural insensitivity (Lievens & Chan, 2017; Keefer, 2015).

In responding to contemporary work and educational dynamics, recent studies emphasize the importance of integrating emotional intelligence with resilience, self-efficacy, and adaptive competencies required in rapidly changing social environments (Anwar et al., 2023; Li et al., 2022; López-González et al., 2024). Furthermore, improving the credibility of emotional intelligence research requires the development of measurement instruments that combine ability-based and self-report approaches while ensuring cross-cultural validity (Wong & Law, 2002; Ruiz-Ortega & Berrios-Martos, 2025). Based on these gaps, the present study aims to systematically analyze global research trends on emotional intelligence through a comprehensive bibliometric approach. Specifically, this study seeks to identify dominant research themes, map the evolution of scholarly publications over the last two decades, and analyze how factors such as interdisciplinary collaboration, digital transformation, and global crises influence the development of emotional intelligence research. It is expected that the findings of this study will contribute to providing a clearer research roadmap and offer strategic insights for future studies, particularly for the development of emotional intelligence research and educational practices in the context of contemporary global challenges.

Research Method

This study employs the Scopus Performance Analysis method, a bibliometric approach widely recognized for systematically mapping scientific production, inter-author and institutional collaboration patterns, and annual publication distribution (Donthu et al., 2021; Zupic & Čater, 2015). Scopus was selected as the data source for its broad multidisciplinary coverage spanning psychology, education, organizational behavior, and health sciences, its built-in analytical features for quantifying thematic evolution and collaboration networks, and its validated reliability for bibliometric analysis in comparable studies (Ruiz-Ortega & Berrios-Martos, 2025; Sharma & Tiwari, 2024; Al Shidi et al., 2025).

Data were collected on July 3, 2025, by searching titles, abstracts, and keywords in Scopus using the term "*Emotional Intelligence*" a standardized descriptor widely adopted across psychology, education, and management literature (de Bellis, 2009; García-Madurga et al., 2024). This single-term strategy was deliberately chosen to maximize coverage without



toward more rigorous empirical investigations exploring the relationship between emotional intelligence and various psychological and educational outcomes.

Petrides is widely recognized for developing Trait Emotional Intelligence Theory and the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue), which has become one of the most widely used instruments in EI research across cross-cultural and educational settings. The prominence of these scholars highlights the role of collaborative research networks in advancing EI studies and facilitating its integration with constructs such as resilience, psychological capital, well-being, and learning engagement.

Table 1. Most Popular Articles by Author Extremera Natalio on Emotional Intelligence

No	Index & Year	Research Objective	Method	Key Findings	Recommendations
1	Extremera & Rey (2016) Ability emotional intelligence and life satisfaction: Positive and negative affect as mediators	Analyze how emotional intelligence (ability-based) affects life satisfaction through mediation of positive and negative affect	Cross-sectional design, N=721 students, using MSCEIT, PANAS, and Satisfaction with Life Scale; analyzed with path analysis	Emotional intelligence is positively and significantly related to life satisfaction; positive & negative affect fully mediate this relationship	Need longitudinal research to confirm affective mediation role and develop interventions to improve affective abilities to enhance well-being
2	Sánchez-Álvarez, Berrios-Martos & Extremera (2020) A Meta-Analysis of the Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Academic Performance...	Assess and compare correlations between emotional intelligence (various approaches) and academic performance in high school students	Meta-analysis of 44 studies (N≈19,861), calculating d_r for ability EI, self-report, and mixed	Emotional intelligence generally has significant impact on achievement ($r\approx 0.26$), with highest effect on ability EI ($r\approx 0.31$) compared to self-report ($r\approx 0.24$)	Suggest using ability-based measurement in academic evaluation and developing emotional intelligence interventions in schools
3	Mérida-López & Extremera (2020) The Interplay of Emotional Intelligence Abilities and Work Engagement on Job and Life Satisfaction...	Explore the role of emotional intelligence abilities and work engagement on job and life satisfaction among high school teachers	Cross-sectional survey with teachers, measuring ability EI, work engagement, and job and life satisfaction	Emotional intelligence abilities enhance work engagement, which subsequently strengthens job and life satisfaction; some emotional abilities have primary roles	Teacher professional training should include emotional intelligence ability enhancement modules to strengthen engagement and well-being

Three of Extremera’s most influential articles converge on a central finding: ability-based EI, measured through the MSCEIT, robustly predicts well-being and performance. Extremera and Rey (2016) show EI influences life satisfaction through positive and negative affect mediation; Sánchez-Álvarez et al. (2020) confirm in a meta-analysis of 19,861 participants that ability EI yields stronger academic achievement correlations ($r = 0.31$) than self-report approaches; and Mérida-López and Extremera (2020) extend this to teachers, showing higher EI relates to greater work engagement and life satisfaction. Together, these studies position ability-based EI as a practical foundation for evidence-based interventions in schools and professional development programs.



2) Document Analysis by Affiliation



Figure 2. “Emotional Intelligence” Keyword from Scopus by Affiliation

Figure 2 would show the results from Scopus database search with keyword "Emotional Intelligence" based on documents by affiliation. Based on Scopus data from 2010 to 2025, the top ten institutions reflect both geographical concentration and disciplinary diversity. University College London (UCL, 248 documents) leads as the global home of K. V. Petrides, focusing on TEIQue psychometric validation and cross-cultural EI research. Universidad de Málaga (242 documents) serves as the European center for MSCEIT adaptation, led by Extremera and Fernández-Berrocal, with extensive work on EI contributions to well-being and academic performance. King’s College London (217) and Universidad de Granada (211) further consolidate UK-Spain dominance, supported by collaborative networks that have produced evidence-based EI training programs embedded in Spanish school curricula (Gutiérrez-Cobo et al., 2023). UCL’s leadership reflects the UK’s national commitment to social-emotional competency, while Spain’s high output stems from a self-reinforcing cycle where government SEL mandates generate research funding, validated findings inform curriculum policy, and policy expansion produces new research questions. Beyond Europe, Harvard Medical School (174 documents) reflects EI’s integration into clinical training, and the Chinese Academy of Sciences (129 documents) signals Asia’s growing contribution in AI-assisted emotion measurement. Together, these institutions offer a strategic model that countries such as Indonesia can adapt to build their own EI research infrastructure.

Table 2. Document Interpretation by Affiliation

No	Institutional Affiliation	Number of Documents
1	University College London	248
2	Universidad de Málaga	242
3	King's College London	217
4	Universidad de Granada	211
5	Harvard Medical School	174
6	Universitat de València	154
7	Universidad de Jaén	139
8	University of Toronto	139
9	Chinese Academy of Sciences	129
10	The University of Sydney	~128 (from graph)

3) Document Analysis by Year

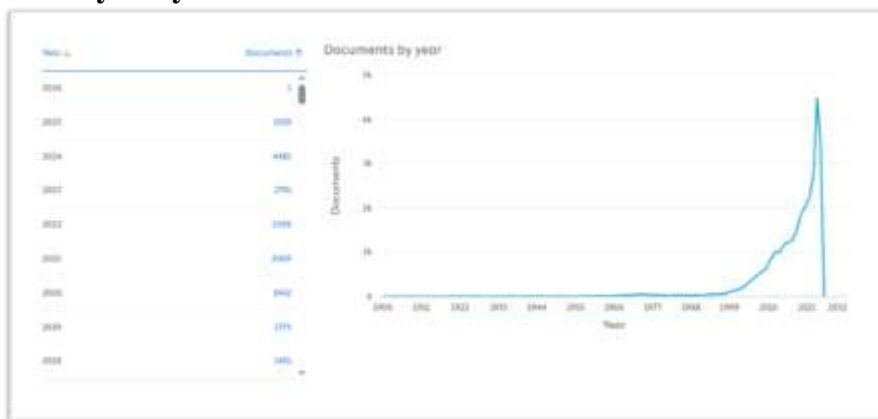


Figure 3. “Emotional Intelligence” Keyword from Scopus on Document Analysis by Year

Figure 3 would show the results from Scopus database search with keyword "Emotional Intelligence" based on documents by year. The annual publication trend on EI traces a journey from near-total obscurity to a center of global cross-disciplinary research attention. Prior to 1990, EI publications were virtually nonexistent. The field’s foundational milestone came in 1990 when Salovey and Mayer formally introduced the construct, followed by Goleman’s 1995 book that brought EI into education and organizational discourse. The subsequent development of the MSCEIT and TEIQue provided empirical legitimacy and enabled systematic quantitative research across disciplines.

From 2010 onward, EI research entered its golden phase, peaking at approximately 4,800 documents in 2021. Three converging forces drove this growth: EI’s centrality to SEL frameworks in education (Extremera, Fernández-Berrocal, Brackett, and Rivers); organizations integrating EI into leadership and development, with Cherniss (2010) and Bar-On (2006) reinforcing that professional success depends as much on emotional as cognitive competence; and the COVID-19 pandemic creating unprecedented urgency around emotional regulation and resilience, triggering a surge in EI research on coping and online learning challenges (Brooks et al., 2020; Extremera et al., 2020).

The 2021 peak was followed by a moderate decline to 2,306 documents in 2022 and 2,791 in 2023, yet both figures remain substantially higher than pre-pandemic levels. Stable annual output above 2,000 documents confirms that EI has transitioned from a niche construct into a central multidisciplinary theme with applied relevance across education, organizations, clinical settings, and digital technology.

For Indonesia, this post-pandemic consolidation presents an important opportunity to strengthen educational research and practice by adopting validated EI instruments, evidence-based Social Emotional Learning (SEL) models, and emerging AI-supported tools. However, Indonesia’s education system remains relatively disconnected from these developments, as EI competencies are not yet embedded in the Kurikulum Merdeka, teacher training programs (PPG) have not systematically incorporated EI development, and no standardized EI measurement instrument exists in Bahasa Indonesia. Considering the post-COVID-19 challenges faced by Indonesian students and educators, integrating EI frameworks into curriculum policy, counseling practices, and teacher professional development should become a strategic priority to support students’ emotional resilience, engagement, and holistic learning outcomes



Conclusion

This bibliometric study provides a comprehensive overview of the development of emotional intelligence research over the past two decades. The findings reveal a significant increase in scientific publications, growing interdisciplinary collaboration, and an expanding application of EI across education, mental health, and organizational studies. The analysis indicates a shift in research focus from early trait-based and self-report approaches toward more integrative perspectives combining EI with psychological resilience, well-being, and emerging technological contexts. These findings highlight the increasing recognition of EI as an essential competency supporting student well-being, learning engagement, and adaptive capacity in modern educational settings. EI development should be integrated more systematically into educational practices, including curriculum design, teacher professional development, and SEL initiatives. In the Indonesian context, strengthening EI education can contribute to improving students' resilience, collaboration skills, and emotional regulation in response to rapidly evolving social and technological challenges. Future educational research and policy should prioritize EI competencies as part of holistic education systems that balance cognitive achievement with socio-emotional development.

Recommendation

Based on the bibliometric review, future research should combine ability-based and self-report measurement instruments, adopt longitudinal and causal methodologies, and integrate AI technology into EI assessment and intervention. For education policy makers, particularly in Indonesia, priority actions include: embedding EI competency standards in the Kurikulum Merdeka; incorporating EI training into teacher certification (PPG); commissioning nationally standardized EI instruments in Bahasa Indonesia; and establishing a national EI research center to generate locally validated evidence that informs policy replicating the institutional model that has made Spain and the UK the world's most productive EI research ecosystems.

Acknowledgment

The authors sincerely thank all individuals and institutions who contributed to the successful completion of this research. Special appreciation goes to the funding bodies, advisors, and research participants for their support and cooperation. Gratitude is also extended to colleagues and peers who provided valuable insights and encouragement throughout the study. Any shortcomings remain the responsibility of the authors, and constructive feedback is welcomed to improve future work.

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