

The effects of Emotional Intelligence on the Organizational Climate Los efectos de la Inteligencia Emocional en el Clima Organizacional

Dra. Heira Georgina Valdez Bocanegra¹, Diego Alberto Zepeda Guzmán¹, Dulce María Sánchez Pérez¹

¹Universidad de Guanajuato
hg.valdez@ugto.mx

Summary

This article presents the results obtained from a theoretical review on the concepts of Emotional Intelligence, Organizational Climate and the relationship between them. Based on exhaustive research, Emotional Intelligence is defined as a psychological construct that includes various personality traits that allow for the recognition of our own emotional and affective reactions and states, self-motivation, emotional regulation, empathy, and social skills to establish bonds with others. For instance, the Organizational Climate is defined as the psychological and cognitive perception that employees have of their work environment, as well as its evaluation. Several investigations indicate that there is a significant relationship between both concepts, being that Emotional Intelligence promotes a positive Organizational Climate and stimulates productivity and the achievement of the objectives established by the organization, although there are other research papers whose results highlight the null link between both variables or the existence of an inverse relationship.

Key words: organizational climate; emotional intelligence.

Introduction

Research around Emotional Intelligence has increased in recent years, especially in its application or link with other variables and specific environments. Thus, the application of this construct to the work context can be observed in a first approach through the words of Tirado-Vides and his collaborators (2020), who state that employees of an organization with adequate levels of Emotional Intelligence have the ability to *"to take your work team to the highest levels of production; otherwise, the risk is assumed that collaborators adopt apathetic and unproductive positions for the company or organization"* (p. 442). However, since this is a recent construct that has begun to be studied in various contexts, the organizational environment turns out to be a promising field of research that can be studied.

On the other hand, the study of Organizational Climate focuses on examining how employees react to and experience their work environment (Schneider and Barbera, 2014). Through the analysis of the Organizational Climate, we can discover the opinions and perceptions of workers about work environments, which are frequently built from emotions (Tintaru et al., 2021). Likewise, Iglesias and Torres (2018) and Vilorio et al. (2016) point out that the Organizational Climate plays a fundamental role in organizational processes related to change, management, and innovation. In fact, the environment in which employees develop and their perception of the work environment are of great importance to maintain an adequate level of work performance.

Emotional Intelligence

To begin with the conceptualization of Emotional Intelligence, it is essential to consider the work of Salovey and Mayer (1990), who first defined this concept as *"the ability of an individual to monitor their own feelings and emotions and those of others, to discriminate between them and use this information to guide one's thinking and actions"* (p. 189).

From these pioneering contributions, the concept of Emotional Intelligence can be understood, as defined by Pitafi et al. (2018), as the ability that people must perceive and control their feelings, based on five basic attributes that are listed and explained below:

1. **Self-awareness**, refers to the ability to know one's own strengths, areas of opportunity, motivations, values, and the way in which these characteristics influence other people; through this attribute of self-awareness, self-confidence and critical construction are validated (Rezvani et al., 2016; De Jong et al., 2016);
2. **Self-regulation**, this attribute allows people to manage and redirect disruptive emotional reactions in order to promote reasoned action, that is, an action more consistent with the person's own motivations and leading the person towards pleasant emotions (Zhang et al., 2018);
3. **Motivation** is an attribute that must be achieved and in emotionally intelligent people it is expressed through the passion they have for work, as well as a tendency to accept changes and interpret them as opportunities (Khosravi et al., 2020);
4. **Empathy**, allows the individual to understand how social interactions can affect the participants in this dynamic, specifically referring to the recognition and understanding of other people's emotions in order to use this information in social situations (Macht et al., 2019);
5. **Social skills**, the ability to make other people aware of their emotions to establish links and communicate through verbal and non-verbal language, with genuine interest and active listening (Suwandana, 2019).

Emotional Intelligence can be defined essentially as the efficient use of emotional information to achieve objectives, the establishment of affective bonds and productive labor relations, in addition to the generation of a work environment that manages to link its actors with success. In fact, having a good Emotional Intelligence promotes correct decision-making in a sensible way, even under pressure, as well as the possibility of showing the personal characteristics of everyone, such as their values and integrity, acting ethically and motivated (Setyaningrum et al., 2016).

According to Sembiring et al. (2019), Emotional Intelligence is made up of the elements presented in Figure 1 and is defined as the ability of people to recognize their emotional reactions during the experimentation of affective states related to work activities.

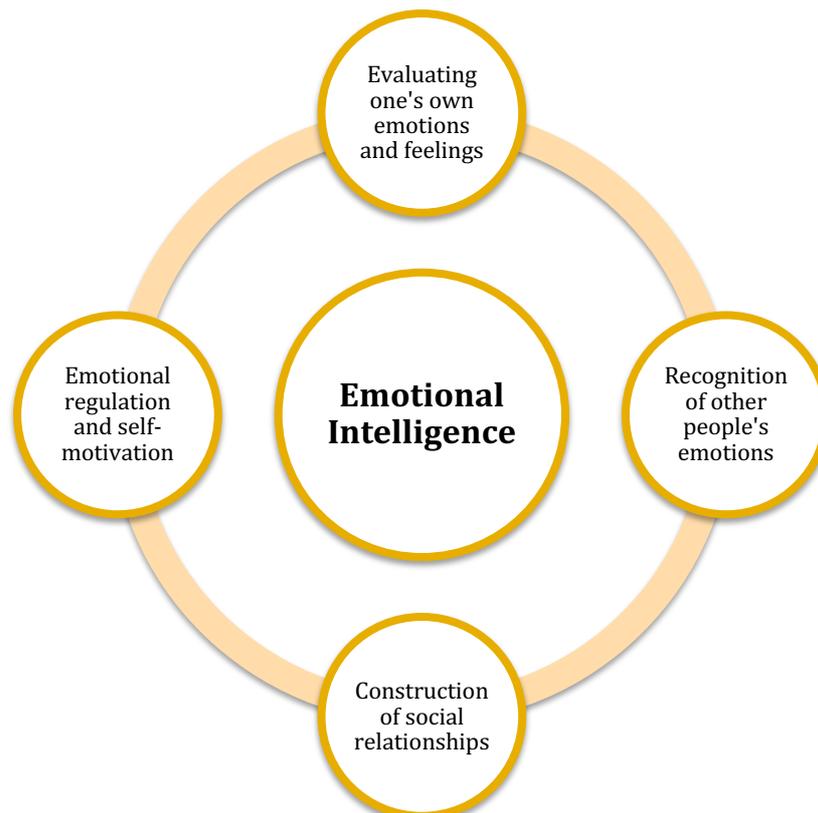


Figure 1. Components of Emotional Intelligence
 Source: Own elaboration with data from Sembiring et al. (2019)

In addition to what was previously stated, Rechberg (2020) argues that it is thanks to Emotional Intelligence that the creation of knowledge about the environment based on self-knowledge is achieved, that is, the components of Emotional Intelligence have a great influence on the interpersonal relationships that are established daily, as well as teamwork and communication that develops, which allows the exchange of ideas and promotes civilized and adaptable behaviors for knowledge retention and job satisfaction.

Most compelling evidence indicates that other elements of Emotional Intelligence, such as self-discipline and self-awareness, are key to modifying maladaptive behaviors in the workplace, as well as providing the opportunity to regulate emotions and other personality traits, transforming the organizational climate energy into a driver for employee motivation (Zhu et al., 2022). Another key point is that Emotional Intelligence is a good predictor for academic success, as well as stress and anxiety management, a stimulator for learning and the promotion of social skills, communication, empathy and establishing relationships with others (Vejayaratnam et al., 2023).

For instance, due to all of the aforementioned, Emotional Intelligence turns out to be a critical factor to be able to evaluate the performance of a person in the professional field as well as in the socio-personal sphere, and it could even become the key to success, especially in the organizational atmosphere where the managerial capabilities of the leaders have a great influence on Emotional Intelligence and where having developed this capacity can be a factor that provides a key competitive advantage to collaborators (Başoğul and Özgür, 2016).

Organizational Climate

In the first place, the term "Organizational Climate", also known as work climate, arose in the 1960s and was proposed by prominent researchers such as Likert and McGregor. In fact, these experts considered that it was crucial to study the appropriate environment that leaders provide to their collaborators so that they can carry out their activities effectively and efficiently (Fabara, Jaramillo, and Falcón, 2020).

For instance, it should be mentioned that the term "Organizational Climate" originated in the private sector with the concept that a favorable work environment would result in higher employee satisfaction. This satisfaction, in turn, would translate into greater productivity, cost reduction and increased production, which would result in greater profitability for companies (Paz and Saldarriaga, 2020). Specifically, the concept of Organizational Climate, this refers to how individual members of an organization perceive and make sense of their work environment from a cognitive and psychological perspective. It should be noted that this definition has been supported by several studies such as those carried out by Abbey and Dickson (1983), Sarros et al. (2008), Scott and Bruce (1994), and Mutonyi et al. (2020).

Historically, early research in the field of organization theory suggests that the "environment" or "Organizational Climate" in the workplace can have an impact on both personal and work outcomes (Katz & Kahn, 1978). It should be noted that as the study of management theories progressed, the Organizational Climate became more relevant as part of the factors that determine the good performance of labor organizations, focusing on human relations and emphasizing the perceptions of the people in the organizations (Iglesias-Armenteros et al., 2009).

Accordingly, Zhou and Shalley (2003) have argued that climate refers to an individual's visible experiences and perceptions. In similar terms, Burton et al. (2004) have defined the Organizational Climate as the attitude that individuals have towards the organization. Greenhalgh et al. (2005), in turn, define the Organizational Climate as the level at which employees feel it is acceptable to experiment with new ideas. In addition, according to Sutton et al. (2016), the Organizational Climate is related to the way in which employees perceive and describe the characteristics of the organization in which they work.

Another key point is that an Organizational Climate that encourages learning highlights the importance of consciously addressing mistakes and failures as learning opportunities (Putz et al., 2012; Van Dyck et al., 2005). In fact, in this type of climate, employees notice that the organization learns lessons from experiences, and this makes it possible to adapt to future challenges. Furthermore, learning about Organizational Climate focuses on positive adaptation and requires managing the balance between exploring new challenges and building on existing skills (Vogus & Sutcliffe, 2007). In turn, it has been determined that leadership plays a fundamental role as the main stimulating factor of the Organizational Climate (Putter, 2010). In specific, according to Davidson (2003), Organizational Climate measurements provide managers and team leaders with important feedback about the impact their leadership behavior has on others.

Equally important, according to data presented by Chiang et al. (2008), the Organizational Climate "*is characterized by two present qualities: it is a perception, and it is descriptive; the first is about sensations tested by people; while the second is the testimony of a person of said sensations*". In the same way, he adds that the Organizational Climate is made up of a series of perceptions shared by the members of an organization in relation to their work. In a timely manner, these perceptions cover the present physical environment, interpersonal relationships in the workplace and the elements that can influence their work. Indeed, it is considered one of the determinants of job satisfaction (Montoya et al., 2017).

It should also be mentioned that the nature of the Organizational Climate varies from one organization to another, due to the characteristics and qualities of the work environment that are observed or perceived in the operation of the organization and that can influence its behavior (Dávila Morán et al., 2021). Within this framework, Schneider et al. (2013) argue that the Organizational Climate is associated and constituted by specific actions, such as management practices, that organizations implement to promote the desired behavior in their employees. According to Connelly et al. (2010), these actions can communicate to employees that their organization appreciates certain types of behavior, which means that the Organizational Climate can have a direct impact on work outcomes, whether positive or negative (DuBois & Reeb, 2000).

In this context, Haritha and Subrahmanyam (2013) pointed out that there are certain characteristics that describe the concept of Organizational Climate and distinguish it from other concepts. The most relevant are listed below:

- The Organizational Climate is commonly seen as a comprehensive concept that can undergo changes over time.
- It refers to the perceptions shared by the members of an organization, which can generate agreements between them.
- Involves members of the organization forming general impressions through interaction with the organization's policies, structures, and processes.
- The perceptions of the Organizational Climate focus on the description of events and environmental conditions instead of making evaluations about them.
- The concept of Organizational Climate covers several dimensions and represents the general perception of the organization.
- In addition, the Organizational Climate could influence people's behavior in significant ways.

Finally, Litwin and Stringer (1968) identified nine dimensions that can represent the Organizational Climate, which are summarized below in Figure 2:



Figure 2. Dimensions of Organizational Climate
 Source: Own elaboration with data from Litwin and Stringer (1968)

Considering the information presented in Figure 2 previously exposed, the explanation of each one of the dimensions of the Organizational Climate is described below, as proposed by the authors Litwin and Stringer (1968).

- **Structure.** It focuses on the perception of employees about the restrictions and rules established within the organization. This is how it is perceived whether the organization has well-defined processes and procedures that must be followed or is characterized by a more flexible approach to task performance.

- **Responsibility.** It is related to the feeling that employees have of being able to make decisions for themselves without having to constantly consult with a superior. This involves employees being clear about their individual responsibilities and making sure the job gets done.
- **Reward.** It focuses on how employees perceive rewards for their work. Emphasis is placed on positive recognition and the perception of fairness in terms of compensation and promotion policies.
- **Risk.** It is intended to explain the level of risk or challenge associated with a specific job, as well as the organization's usual attitude toward risk-taking or its preference for a stronger vision.
- **Comfort.** It refers to the focus on the general perception of friendship and closeness in the groups of the organization.
- **Support.** It focuses on the evaluation of collaborators towards co-workers considering the availability to provide support.
- **Standards.** This dimension refers to the degree of importance that is assigned to reaching the goals set, complying with the standards, and doing an outstanding job.
- **Conflict.** This dimension reflects the willingness of managers and employees to openly address difficulties or concerns rather than ignore them, as well as their willingness to explore different perspectives.
- **Identity.** This dimension assesses the level to which employees feel appreciated and perceived as an integral part of the organization.

Considering the above, it can be concluded that the creation of an effective work environment has a significant impact on the productivity of employees, since it provides them with greater comfort in their work environments, which in turn translates into more favorable responses in regarding productive behaviors (Agbajeola, 2019; Ancarani et al., 2019; Delmas and Pekovic, 2018; Yantu, 2018).

Link of Emotional Intelligence and Organizational Climate

In the first place, it is essential to highlight that human capital is the essential strength of all organizations and starting from the previous review of both variables as independent concepts, it is time to analyze and visualize the current context of the findings made in various investigations in the which addresses the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Organizational Climate. To begin with, over the years, the experts Van Vegchel et al. (2002) have highlighted the relevance of Emotional Intelligence, since it is a factor that improves the understanding that employees have of the Organizational Climate and its relationship with the organizational culture in different environments, overcoming the effects of other predictive factors such as mental capacity, general intelligence, personality, and professional experience.

On the other hand, Emotional Intelligence is present in various contexts where one or more people interact. It should also be mentioned that, in general, people adjust to various situations to satisfy their needs and find an emotional balance. Specifically, these needs are not only physiological and security, but also include the sense of belonging to a group and the search for self-fulfillment (Ferrer-Rivera & Tello-Castañeda, 2022). It is necessary to emphasize that the analyzed parts of Emotional Intelligence that are present in the Organizational Climate and that have an influence on it are motivation and social skills (de Pelekai et al., 2006). In fact, motivation refers to individual aspects, while the Organizational Climate is related to the organization (Ferrer-Rivera and Tello-Castañeda, 2022).

Specifically, in the business field, it has been increasingly recognized that success in organizations is linked both to intellectual intelligence and to the achievements achieved through problem solving and the development of new strategies that promote increased productivity and competitive stability within the organizational field. In fact, as organizations face increasingly competitive and changing markets, they find it necessary to implement strategies to reduce staff due to restructuring or integrate to globalization, which implies making significant changes in their methods of management (Gamboa-Daniel, 2018).

In this context, Feldman (2014) points out that job performance is influenced by personal and family aspects, so it can be said that Emotional Intelligence is a requirement to achieve high performance at work. It should be emphasized that Emotional Intelligence, along with intellectual intelligence, life habits, the presence of emotionally intelligent colleagues and other factors, determine the productivity of a worker. It is convenient to underline that Emotional Intelligence plays a fundamental role in the dynamics of current organizations with their workforce, because it encompasses both skills and abilities that can be seen below in Figure 3 (Basurto and Guardiola, 2015).

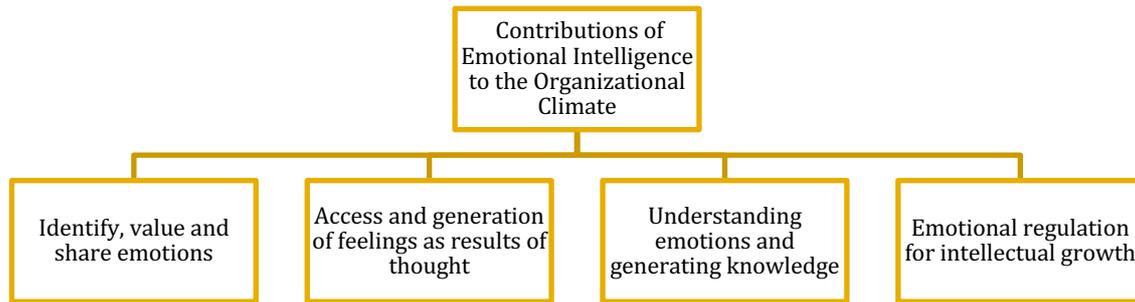


Figure 3. Skills and capacities that Emotional Intelligence encompasses necessary for a favorable Organizational Climate
 Source: Own elaboration with data from Basurto y Guardiola (2015) and Tirado-Vides et al. (2020).

Within this framework, Bar-On (1997) proposed a model that describes Emotional Intelligence as a set of personal, emotional, and social skills that determine the ability to successfully face the demands and challenges of the environment. In this context, currently, in the work environment, it is no longer valued only the training or experience of a worker at the time of hiring him, but his ability to relate to others is of vital importance. Typically, the interpersonal interactions of the members of an organization constitute the basis of business success today (Vargas-Hernández and Carmona-Fuentes, 2015). Thus, the relevance of this approach lies in the fact that the behavior of a member of the organization not only depends on the external and internal environment but is also determined by the perceptions that the worker has of each of these factors.

In other words, Goncalves (2000) proposes that the external and internal aspects of an organization affect the performance of its workers and contribute to the formation of the environment in which the organization develops. However, these factors do not directly affect the organization, but influence the perceptions that employees have of these factors. For instance, scholars on the subject, Danvila and Sastre (2010), have concluded that the emotions of workers have a significant impact on their job performance. In addition, for a person to be able to perform effectively, it is necessary for them to feel good about themselves and their environment, and to be able to understand the environment in which they interact with the organization's personnel (Goleman, 2004).

Synthesizing what has been mentioned so far, it can be said that Emotional Intelligence provides essential skills so that people can adapt in a competitive, demanding and constantly changing environment, in addition to promoting their well-being in a holistic way. In this regard, some scholars on the subject have found some findings in their research that confirm that if collaborators have a greater development of Emotional Intelligence, this in turn will improve the work environment, because this is perceived by the individuals who are part of this atmosphere and, in turn, significantly influences their behavior (Ferrer-Rivera & Tello-Castañeda, 2022).

In addition, it should be noted that the development and implementation of an Emotional Intelligence course or workshop is essential to improve the Organizational Climate, since it contributes to developing and regulating the emotions and behaviors of employees, as well as a significant improvement of their social ties inside and outside work, thereby increasing productivity (Veloso et al., 2013).

Considering the work of Al Ghazo et al. (2018), it is stated that Emotional Intelligence has a positive and significant influence on the Organizational Climate, concluding that the first variable should have a greater weight during the recruitment, selection, and promotion processes of employees. In addition and complementing the above, Ramírez and Giraldo (2016) warn that, in managerial positions, it is essential to promote employees with a suitable emotional stability performance, which can be operationalized through observable behaviors such as the knowledge that the person has on their own emotions, which facilitates the establishment of good labor relations and the favoring of the Organizational Climate, which leads to achieving the objectives more efficiently. The above described is summarized below in Figure 4.



Figure 4. Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Organizational Climate
 Source: Own elaboration

In a similar way and in addition to the aforementioned, it can be considered what was stated by Tirado-Vides et al. (2020) regarding the benefits of Emotional Intelligence for the Organizational Climate, since employees with greater emotional stability assertively contribute their point of view during important decision-making, considering the needs and demands of others, which reduces stress and other psychosocial risks such as burnout, anxiety or depression.

Regarding the specific case of stress, authors such as Matthews and Zeidner (2000) have suggested that individuals with high levels of Emotional Intelligence can have a better stress management, since their emotional abilities allow them to be more aware of their emotions and capable of regulate them effectively. Therefore, Emotional Intelligence is considered a potential resource that could facilitate coping with stressful situations, leading to experiencing lower levels of stress and, consequently, having a greater sense of well-being. In addition, it should be noted that, in the workplace, it has been observed that those with higher Emotional Intelligence tend to show better performance in their job functions.

Within this framework, it should be emphasized that the importance of improving the Organizational Climate is that when it is optimal, change and transition processes are facilitated, as well as process innovation or personnel management, so that, if the employees have a high level of Emotional Intelligence, the Organizational Climate will benefit and, therefore, the pace of work will allow for better performance, both in employee functions and at a business level in the long term (Iglesias and Torres, 2018; Vilorio et al., 2016).

In this context, it should be added that there is a research problem that concerns the subjective evaluation of the effects of both Emotional Intelligence and Organizational Climate. However, in the research carried out by Delmas and Pekovic (2017) they discovered that it is not necessary to use a configuration in which too many resources are invested in Emotional Intelligence training, but only one of the three elements should be chosen as observed in Figure 5 in relation to environmental practices, which predicts greater productivity, changes in the interpretation of organizational norms, increased employee commitment and alignment of their values and interests with those of the company, as well as favoring the social capital of the company and the operators.

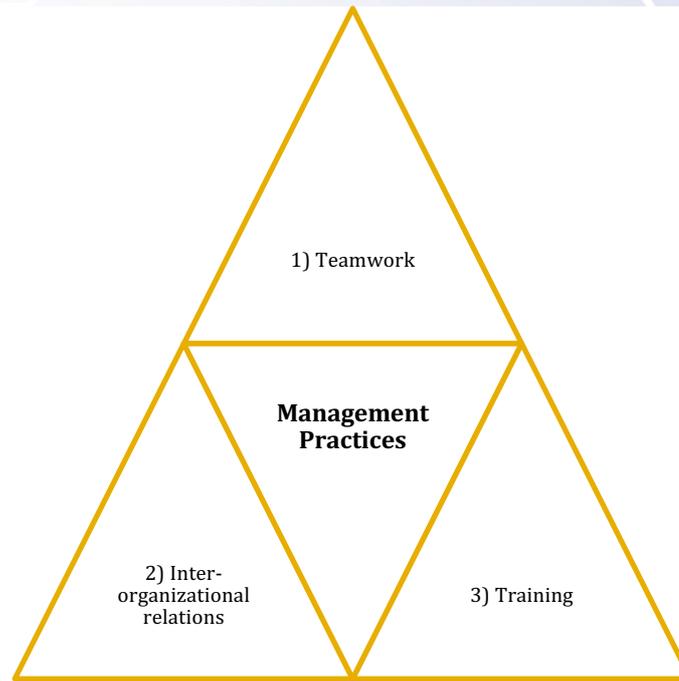


Figure 5. Organizational management practices where Emotional Intelligence is involved to improve the Organizational Climate
 Source: Own elaboration with data from Delmas and Pekovic (2017)

Additionally, it is essential that employees in organizations experience the fulfillment of their needs from the primordial to the highest hierarchy. Therefore, this allows them to maintain an adequate state of mind avoiding work stress (Castro and Rodríguez, 2022), since in case there are important requirements in their work areas, they must be able to handle emotional pressure to avoid possible disorders that affect their quality of life and their work and personal environment (Castro and Rodríguez, 2022).

On the contrary and in contrast to the positive results on the influence of Emotional Intelligence on the Organizational Climate, which were mentioned in previous paragraphs, Milhoan (2007) found that there is a negative and significant correlation between these variables, which indicates that in the Employees with high levels of Emotional Intelligence perceive a more negative Organizational Climate.

In this context and considering the ideas of the authors Tirado-Vides et al. (2020), who carried out a research in which the findings obtained in it confirmed a significant relationship between the Organizational Climate and work stress, but with a negative direction, it is concluded that it is essential that organizations build programs focused on promote and develop Emotional Intelligence in its collaborators, this, in order to reduce stress. In addition, these same authors mention that:

“Organizations must recognize that maintaining an efficient, committed, and motivated workforce implies optimizing lifestyle and well-being, and that if employees are trained, they will have greater empowerment in company processes” (p. 449).

Finally, from this starting point, it is necessary to clarify the relationship that exists between Emotional Intelligence and Organizational Climate, due to the multiple existing research papers that are contradictory, but that have been of great relevance to broaden the panorama on this topic. In the words of Cabas and his collaborators (2017), the evidence is conclusive on the need to continue researching these variables in the future, to clearly glimpse how Emotional Intelligence and Organizational Climate interact in various contexts, since actors emanate from these and different links depending on the environment in which these dynamics take place.

It can be concluded that Emotional Intelligence is essential in organizations, especially among workers since it allows them to relate to each other and share knowledge and skills that can benefit their colleagues. In addition, it contributes to the achievement of organizational success through the fulfillment of organizational goals and objectives. Therefore, it is essential to take into consideration that having personnel with adequate levels of Emotional Intelligence increases productivity. It should be added that this is because they are creative people, with controlled abilities and emotions, which promotes a good work environment and favors teamwork aimed at short and long-term success.

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