

Does emotional intelligence impact service innovation capabilities? Exploring the role of diversity climate and innovation culture

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Abstract

Purpose – The study examines the impact of emotional intelligence on service innovation capabilities. Furthermore, it explored the mediating role of diversity climate and the moderating role of innovation culture.

Design/methodology/approach – An online questionnaire helped to collect data from 257 public sector employees in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The proposed hypotheses were analysed using structural equation modelling.

Findings – Building on the ability model, the study found that employees' emotional intelligence has a positive impact on diversity climate; that diversity climate does not mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and service innovation capabilities and that innovation culture has a moderating effect between diversity climate and service innovation capabilities.

Originality/value – The paper clarifies the emotional intelligence of the workforce and its ability to influence innovation culture and diversity climate in public organisations, ultimately benefiting service innovation capability research. As such, the study contributes to the literature by proposing and analysing some antecedents of service innovation capabilities in the context of public organisations. The study also offers policymakers information on what prevents innovation, which they can use to raise the bar on service quality requirements in the public sector.

Keywords Service innovation, Service innovation capabilities, Emotional intelligence, Diversity climate, Innovation culture

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Intellectual capital and innovation have become pivotal in delivering consumer value as the economy leans towards the “soft” service sector (Zhong *et al.*, 2016). Intellectual capital encompasses human capital (employees' knowledge, skills), structural capital (codified knowledge, databases, culture), and relational capital (internal and external relationships) (Malodia *et al.*, 2023). In contrast, innovation capital represents the competencies enabling organisations to innovate (García-Rodríguez *et al.*, 2020). Innovation culture aids knowledge extraction, encouraging innovative service development and removing innovation hurdles

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(Kremer *et al.*, 2019), and in the case of the UAE public sector, the culture is directly connected to the organisation (Jabeen and Isakovic, 2018). Key to public sector performance and service innovation competitiveness are Emotional Intelligence (EI), Diversity Climate (DC), and Innovation Culture (IC). EI, encompassing skills in emotion management and use, improves teamwork and creativity, promoting intellectual capital crucial to product and service innovation. In the public sector, diverse talents must collaborate to generate new ideas to improve service innovation.

Both public and private organisations in the Gulf Cooperation Council must encourage employee participation, leveraging leaders/management support, individual attributes, and organisational culture (Jabeen *et al.*, 2020). In Diversity Climates, issues, like perceived procedural unfairness and employment discrimination can significantly impact performance (Kadam *et al.*, 2020). Ethics and corporate social responsibility play a considerable role in organisational performance, especially in developing markets (Farouk and Jabeen, 2018). EI, DC, and IC collectively influence service innovation capabilities (Paruchuri and Asadullah, 2018).

EI, DC, and IC's effects on public sector service innovation have been researched less than other factors (Demircioglu and Audretsch, 2020). Firm strategy and innovation activities in developing nations (Bansal *et al.*, 2023) have been significantly impacted by the last several years' economic volatility and environmental turmoil (Lei *et al.*, 2020). Resource restrictions have encouraged acquiring market firms to rethink innovation. EI and innovation skills are the best ways organisations gain a competitive advantage, although other methods may aid (Paruchuri and Asadullah, 2018). The UAE public sector strives to improve service quality (Alsaadi *et al.*, 2019); hence, this research fills a gap in the literature. UAE public sector managers and executives making service innovation choices might use three critical insights from this research. We conceptualise an EI ability model to test its practicality in public organisations in the rising UAE market. The paradigm states that people must control their emotions while impacting others to achieve goals (Mayer *et al.*, 2016). Thus, EI adequately predicts SI capacity when we combine the ability model with an organisation's DC and IC. This study explores specific relationships within public sector organisations in an emerging market. The research questions are four-fold.

- RQ1. How does EI influence DC within public sector organisations in an emerging market? What specific aspects of EI contribute most significantly to shaping DC?
- RQ2. How does DC mediate the relationship between EI and SI capabilities? What are the underlying mechanisms that DC affects the linkage between EI and SI?
- RQ3. How does IC moderate EI, DC, and SI relationships within public sector organisations? What specific elements of IC contribute to this moderating effect?
- RQ4. How do EI, DC, SI, and IC relationships differ across various public sector organisations within an emerging market? What implications do these relationships have for organisational effectiveness and innovation?

While the suggested study of the connection between EI, DC and the ability to innovate in the service sector is interesting, many unanswered questions still need to be addressed. Before conducting the study, several aspects require investigating the link between EI, DC, and the ability to innovate in the service sector. First, while significant work has been conducted on the influences of EI (Mayer *et al.*, 2007), SI capabilities (den Hertog *et al.*, 2010), and the dynamics of multicultural teams (Stahl *et al.*, 2010), there is a dearth of research on how exactly EI influences SI capabilities, especially in the setting of multicultural teams. Second, more research needs to be done on how DC and innovation culture influence the link between emotional intelligence and the ability to innovate services. Finally, though EI has often been

considered an individual-level concept (Mayer *et al.*, 2007), much of the existing literature needs to look into the potential influences of the team and organisational factors within the context SI (den Hertog *et al.*, 2010). A deeper knowledge of the connection between EI and capability in this study area will inform the practical techniques for fostering SI in businesses.

This study proposes three significant service innovation contributions. First, the research merges EI scope, the Interactional Model of Cultural Diversity (IMCD), the New Service Development (NSD), and IC models to integrate EI, DC, SI capacity, and IC. Second, given that the impact of EI on DC remains unclear, this study partially fills the UAE public sector research gap (Behery and Abdallah, 2019). Finally, the moderation analysis of IC on DC-SI capability improves academic knowledge. As such, the paper contributes to the literature on service innovation, analysing the antecedents, mediators and moderators of service innovation capabilities in public organisations of an emerging market, namely the UAE. Moreover, the paper adds to the intellectual capital literature, showing that emotional intelligence fosters innovation culture and service innovation capabilities (Martín-de Castro *et al.*, 2013).

The remainder of this paper is organised as follows. Section 2 examines the theoretical background of the proposed model and the underpinning theories used to formulate our hypotheses. Section 3 explains the method of data collection. Finally, Section 4 reports the results, Section 5 discusses the interpretations, and Section 6 provides the conclusion.

2. Literature review

Human Capital Theory (HCT) illustrates how investing in people boosts economic growth. Adam Smith's 18th-century idea that production determines a nation's wealth inspired HCT. HCT research was unique in the 20th century. In 1920, economist Alfred Marshall invented "human capital" to describe employees' skills (Marshall *et al.*, 1938). Human capital enhances efficiency. According to the HCT theory, investing in skills increases production. Education boosts human capital and economic prosperity, according to research. HCT was studied in the 1950s. Becker and Schultz invented HCT in 1964 (Becker and Collins, 1964). Neoclassical economics emphasises rational decision-making and resource allocation for economic growth, which underpins HCT. Evoking slavery, according to John Stuart Mill, overlooks human potential and transforms individuals into manufacturing parts. Despite these difficulties, HCT is investigated and utilised in education, labour economics, and public policy. The idea now emphasises investing in people for economic growth. Human capital and innovation are hot topics. Human capital boosts innovation and technology (Subramaniam and Youndt, 2005). Human capital and service innovation are new disciplines.

Goleman's EI study improved human capital. He feels EI is vital to personal and professional success (Goleman, 1996). His research shows that emotional solid intelligence improves leadership, collaboration, and customer and colleague management. Goleman's study also emphasises workplace empathy, communication, and cooperation. Goleman's research suggests that training and development that promotes continuous learning and professional progress may benefit organisations (Goleman *et al.*, 2001). Human capital development helps companies hire, retain, and innovate (Goleman and Boyatzis, 2008).

Amabile (1988) has studied the impact of human creativity in businesses and how intrinsic motivation and supportive organisational climates enhance creative performance. Amabile *et al.* (2014) also stressed the importance of knowledge and expertise, or human capital, in the creative process, claiming that different skill sets and experiences lead to innovative and beneficial ideas. Csikszentmihalyi (2014) also stressed the significance of human capital in the creative process, stating that individuals who are experts in their respective fields are more likely to bring about innovation and make significant contributions. Drazin *et al.* (1999) agreed that knowledge and skills in human capital help firms innovate and create. According to Huber (2000), people with different talents and experiences are likelier to develop new and

practical ideas. Richards and Goslin-Jones (2018) also claimed that diversified knowledge leads to unique and beneficial ideas.

The latest scholarly research (Dabić *et al.*, 2020) links human and intellectual capital to management and economics. Human capital—knowledge, skills, and abilities—drives organisational productivity and economic progress. Education, training, and health spending boost worker productivity. Intellectual capital is an organisation's knowledge, procedures, and connections that produce value (Barrena-Martinez *et al.*, 2019).

Emotional intelligence (EI), innovation culture (IC), service innovation capabilities (SI), and diversity climate (DC) are among the characteristics that have been recognised as impacting intellectual capital in academic literature (Buenechea-Elberdin, 2017). The capacity to recognise, comprehend, and control one's emotions and those of others is called emotional intelligence (EI). According to research, people with high EI scores are likely to have greater success in both their personal and professional life (Sivanathan and Cynthia Fekken, 2002). EI may impact people's capacity for collaboration and relationship-building in the context of intellectual capital, which may result in the production and dissemination of knowledge (Jafri *et al.*, 2016). An organisation's intellectual capital may improve (Paruchuri and Asadullah, 2018).

Understanding EI and intellectual capital requires a better link. EI as a human capital (HC) component may show this link. EI's role in developing and managing an organisation's intellectual capital may be better assessed. EI is a subgroup of HC that includes the emotional and social skills needed to maintain relationships. These skills enable effective communication, collaboration, and knowledge management (McKay and Avery, 2015). EI in HC is supported by intellectual capital literature (Aqeel *et al.*, 2019). Emotional intelligence helps intellectual capital flourish, according to study. Prior research on intellectual capital has focused on EI, illuminating the link between these two concepts (Rezaei *et al.*, 2021). EI via the lens of intellectual capital may help organisations manage and utilise their intellectual capital. Learning how EI affects intellectual capital may help firms maximise performance and innovation.

Innovation culture (IC) is a company's values, beliefs, and practices that promote innovation. New products, services, and business models from a productive IC may boost an organisation's intellectual capital (Lewis *et al.*, 2018; Rajapathirana and Hui, 2018). Service innovation capabilities (SI) are an organisation's ability to create and deploy new and improved services. Strong SIs may boost an organisation's intellectual capital by creating new services (Janssen and Castaldi, 2018).

"Diversity climate" (DC) explains how employees see and act on diversity and inclusion in an organisation (Schwarzenthal *et al.*, 2020). Variety may boost creativity, problem-solving, and decision-making (Li *et al.*, 2020). Diversity may boost an organisation's intellectual capital (Dong *et al.*, 2022). However, a negative DC might lead to exclusion and prejudice, hindering information generation and lower intellectual capital (Jada *et al.*, 2016).

Recent studies have shed new light on EI, DC, and SI dynamics. Davaei *et al.* (2022) explored EI's role in virtual teams, while Lee *et al.* (2022) examined the impact of cultural diversity on SI. Furthermore, Lee *et al.* (2022) work on innovation culture in emerging markets has added depth to our understanding of these interrelationships, aligning with the current trends and affirming the significance of this study's focus.

2.1 Theoretical background

This research interweaves Psychological Contract Theory, Public Service Motivation (PSM) Theory, and the Diffusion-of-Innovation Theory with the Ability Model to examine organisational and individual behaviours in innovation and service delivery contexts. The Ability Model, which categorises Emotional Intelligence (EI) into four abilities, claims that EI, by enhancing emotional perception and understanding, fosters better communication and empathy in the workplace. Thus, EI can improve PSM and drive a healthy work atmosphere

conducive to innovation (Levitats and Vigoda-Gadot, 2017). Further research should investigate the complex relationship between these theories and emotional understanding to foster workplace empathy and innovation.

This study emphasises the link between these ideas since they all illuminate how different variables influence individual and organisational behaviour and performance. Psychological contract theory implies work circumstances impact fairness and loyalty. PSM suggests that public sector personnel are more driven to serve. The diffusion of innovation theory explains how new ideas, goods, and practices move throughout a population and how organisations embrace them. These theories vary in how variables affect individual and organisational performance.

2.2 Service innovation capabilities

SI enables innovative procedures and results (Rajapathirana and Hui, 2018). SI skills help organisations to innovate and increase service value, according to (Mahmoud *et al.*, 2018). Based on earlier research, SI provides new solutions for companies to offer distinctive services. Assimilation, demarcation, and synthesis define SI capabilities (Janssen and Castaldi, 2018). These viewpoints explain skills' responsibilities and relevance to organisations. The assimilation perspective suggests that capability is essential to SI integration (Witell *et al.*, 2016) because it encourages technology-based innovations that can be achieved by developing an IC in which employees use existing knowledge and resources to create new ways to incorporate technology into services. The demarcation viewpoint emphasises that SI capabilities are intangible, according to Witell *et al.* (2016). SI capabilities management should emphasise this distinction. The service-dominant view synthesises SI capabilities with services and physical items (Sreenivasa *et al.*, 2022).

Information access lets companies personalise and customise customer services, broadening SI capabilities (Mercan *et al.*, 2021). Tortonesi *et al.* (2019) stated that SI capabilities have become information-centric, especially in public service organisations that employ an information-driven IC to recognise patterns and predict customer wants. Today's SI capabilities encompass more participants, resulting in the interaction between actors and organisational elements that affect the firm's IC, according to Kiani *et al.* (2019).

3. Hypotheses

EI affects DC, IC, and SI, making it essential for excellent services (Clark and Polesello, 2017). EI is the capacity to control and comprehend emotions, empathise with others, diffuse disputes, overcome problems, and communicate effectively. EI is crucial for good workplace relationships because emotions impact social behaviour (Darvishmotevali *et al.*, 2018). Leadership empowers workers (Mehrajunnisa *et al.*, 2022). Thus, public sector executives must adopt EI to inspire their staff to innovate (Darvishmotevali *et al.*, 2018). Psychological aspects promote performance efficiency when EI and motivational atmosphere are included, according to Castro-Sánchez *et al.* (2018). Clark and Polesello (2017) revealed that creative workplaces boost EI and IC in heterogeneous organisations. Managers' EI-driven psychological DCs increase their perceived organisational usefulness in the dynamic period (Madera *et al.*, 2017). Paruchuri and Asadullah (2018) found that a firm's IC DC affects innovation. EI practices promote progressive policies to address innovation, diversity, and climate change. EI also improves performance and reduces conflict (Khosravi *et al.*, 2020). Thus, progressive culture organisations seek competitive advantages (Luncheon and Kasztelnik, 2021).

The above discussion leads to the development of the following hypothesis:

H1. EI positively and significantly influences an organisation's DC.

Culturally varied teams benefit from DC, which embraces individual diversity (García-Rodríguez *et al.*, 2020). DC is a company's diversity-friendly culture. Diversity in opinions, experiences, and backgrounds may be included. Diverse workplaces boost creativity, innovation, and problem-solving (Cox, 2005). A well-known study found that individual views of the DC increase work satisfaction and employee engagement (Jackson and Ruderman, 1995). Cox (2005) observed that good attitudes toward workplace diversity improved team creativity and problem-solving. DC encompasses organisational values that promote diversity and inclusion. Diverse workplaces boost creativity, innovation, and problem-solving (Nguyen *et al.*, 2022). Scholars have sought ways to reduce diversity issues while boosting advantages (Chatterjee *et al.*, 2018). Two quantitative experiments by Schein and Schein (2018) found that trust and openness help working groups communicate. Leadership predicts organisational creativity. Leaders' EI fosters employee innovation and pleasant relationships between superiors and subordinates (Issah, 2018). Witell *et al.* (2016) noted that DCs help SI capabilities improve service quality and customer interactions. DCs and ICs help SI by letting workers use their knowledge and abilities to produce new and valuable ideas (Luu *et al.*, 2019). Simonet *et al.* (2021) found that EI involves connected emotional and social competencies, skills, and facilitators that help one negotiate circumstances. Emotionally intelligent people also create techniques to manage everyday demands, problems, and stresses (de Geofroy and Evans, 2017), which improves interactions with colleagues and customers. Emotionally intelligent individuals can manage daily stress and improve organisational efficiency, leading to SI capabilities.

The above discussion leads to the development of the following hypothesis:

H2. DC mediates the relationship between EI and SI capability.

Intellectual Capital (IC) fosters innovation, encompassing employees' knowledge, skills, and an organisation's intangible assets (Dabić *et al.*, 2019). Strong IC can enhance public services by promoting creativity, supporting idea sharing, and resource allocation (Sadiku and Musa, 2021). Emotional Intelligence (EI), with elements like motivation, empathy, and social skills, affects public sector innovation. Studies suggest that Service Innovation (SI) skills improve competitiveness via EI, Diversity Climate (DC), and IC (Darvishmotevali *et al.*, 2018). Leadership's role in creating a flexible, fear-free environment is also emphasised, as it boosts creativity and contributes to superior service delivery, improving customer experiences (Chaudhary *et al.*, 2022).

Emotionally intelligent leaders can empathise with their employees and meet their needs and emotions, making them better communicators. Appealing to workers' emotions may enhance morale, engagement, interdepartmental collaboration, and innovation (Lumpkin and Achen, 2018). Transformational leadership also enables managers to engage with their employees on a deeper level, which helps them grow professionally by offering the resources they need (Li *et al.*, 2020). As Khalili (2017) and Zhang *et al.* (2018) note, EI impacts transformative leadership. Thus, great transformational leaders must build EI to influence and inspire individuals while recognising their needs. Rezaei *et al.* (2021) state that knowledge management maximises resources and personnel. According to the authors, leadership and corporate culture affect knowledge management via employee autonomy. Thus, strong leadership and innovative company cultures that enable employees to apply their knowledge and skills to generate and implement solutions may boost SI capabilities. EI also improves HR management by assessing employee strengths and customising tasks to their abilities. Thus, emotionally intelligent employees are less affected by workplace disagreements and task ambiguity (Madanaguli *et al.*, 2022).

According to Schwarzenthal *et al.* (2020), DC drives public sector SI because a more diversified workforce yields more novel solutions. Culture influences how people approach problems. They could provide various possibilities that can be mixed and matched to create

novel and fruitful setups. [Schwarzenthal et al. \(2020\)](#) noted that DCs had diverse cultures, ethnicities, genders, ages, and educational backgrounds.

A Diverse Climate impacts innovation capabilities by limiting groupthink, which may be detrimental to the performance and innovation of an organisation. For instance, [Paik et al. \(2019\)](#) suggest that EI promotes the effectiveness of heterogeneous teams by decreasing and resolving disputes. Therefore, adopting EI in the public sector’s varied workforce is beneficial.

The above discussion leads to the development of the following hypothesis:

H3. IC moderates the relationship between EI and DC such that the positive relationship is stronger when the IC is high rather than low.

The IC model by [Naranjo-Valencia and Calderon-Hernández \(2018\)](#) links management and organisation skills to creative cultural qualities. Culture influences these qualities, which affect IC and behavioural roles. In their conceptual model, Naranjo-Valencia and Calderon-Hernández classify managerial talents as EI and organisational capacities as SI. The Interactional Model of Cultural Diversity (IMCD) states that in a given social system (e.g. a public organisation), kinds and forms of diversity will mix with the DC to affect collective organisational outcomes ([McKay and Avery, 2015](#)). This research coupled the IMCD model with the IC model and the organisational result with the organisational IC. New service development capability frameworks are SI capability models. Strategy, knowledge management, customer interaction, and networking may build SI capabilities. Employee EI improves customer and knowledge management, according to the ability model. [Witell et al. \(2016\)](#) stressed that a DC with an IC helps SI by enabling workers to use their knowledge and abilities to create new and beneficial ideas. EI improves situational management, according to [Simonet et al. \(2021\)](#). Emotionally intelligent people also find ways to handle everyday stress, improving relationships with co-workers and clients. Our conceptual paradigm, which promotes strategy, knowledge management, customer interaction, and networking, includes this New Service Development (NSD) framework. IC may reduce DC-SI capabilities ([Bresciani et al., 2021](#)) (see [Figure 1](#)).

The above discussion leads to the development of the following hypothesis:

H4. IC moderates the influence between DC and SI capabilities such that the relationship is stronger when the IC is high rather than low.

4. Method

4.1 Sampling

This research obtained cross-sectional data randomly from UAE public sector service organisations ([Alkatheeri et al., 2021](#); [Mehmood et al., 2023](#)). Frontline public service workers from eight local bureaus contributed to the data ([Mehmood et al., 2021](#)). They provide social security, land and housing, public transit, and civic affairs. Employees with two years of

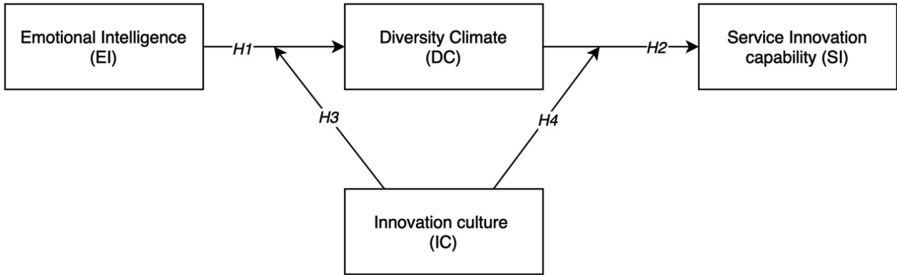


Figure 1.
Conceptual model

Source(s): Authors

experience at various SI evaluation levels were included. A list of workers with two or more years of experience was acquired, and an online survey was issued to a random sample of public sector employees after HR clearance. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed, of which 257 responses were received, providing a response rate of 85.5%, sufficient to estimate the proposed model suggested by [Mehmood et al. \(2022\)](#).

4.2 Measures

A survey questionnaire instrument was used, which was distributed in both English and Arabic. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. We used the 16-item scale developed by [Wong and Law \(2002\)](#) to measure EI, which was later applied by [Law et al. \(2004\)](#). The items rated on the 16-item scale included four dimensions of EI: self-emotion appraisal, others-emotion appraisal, use of emotion and emotion regulation. The authors opted to use a single construct for EI, encompassing all four dimensions, as supported by the theoretical basis provided by [Salovey and Mayer \(1990\)](#) and empirical evidence from studies by [Petrides and Furnham \(2001\)](#) and [Goleman \(1995\)](#). This approach allows for greater measurement efficiency while being consistent with the interrelated nature of the dimensions, as demonstrated in the literature ([Bar-on, 1997](#)).

We adopted the 10-item scale of [Jin et al. \(2019\)](#) to measure IC and the 9-item scale developed by [Barak et al. \(1998\)](#) to measure DC. The authors used a composite factor for innovation culture based on theoretical support ([Tellis et al., 2009](#)) and empirical evidence from previous research ([Martensen et al., 2007](#)). This approach allows us to capture the combined effects of innovation engagement and success while maintaining methodological consistency with other constructs in our research model.

Finally, we adopted the 5-item scale [Grawe et al. \(2009\)](#) developed to measure SI capability.

5. Results

5.1 Descriptive analysis

As shown in [Table 1](#), most respondents were male (53.3%) UAE nationals with bachelor's degrees. Furthermore, most respondents (77.6%) were in the 18–44-year age group.

5.2 Validity and reliability analysis

Covariance-based SEM was used for the research analysis because it may explore complicated latent variable interactions ([Hair et al., 1998](#)) and evaluate the model fit ([Kline, 2023](#)). SEM balanced methodological complexity with interpretability for multilevel data. We checked all survey responses for missing data before analysing them. After reviewing all data were complete, we looked for responses that lacked engagement (i.e. the same answer for all talents). Ocular examination showed no disengaged reactions. To assess data appropriateness, many tests were run during analysis. KMO and Bartlett sphericity tests were utilised. A KMO rating of 0.939 indicates strong item appropriateness for factor analysis. Data multicollinearity was not severe. Item correlations supported a component analysis in Bartlett's sphericity test ($p < 0.05$). Exploratory factor analysis assessed research concept validity and reliability. They are substantially higher than 0.7, demonstrating strong internal consistency for all constructions. Cronbach's alpha values showed the dimensions' internal consistencies in [Table 2](#).

One DCI item (DC1) and two EI items (EI6 and EI7) showed low extraction values (<0.5) with a total eigenvalue of 68.02% for all constructs. After eliminating DC1, the incremental loading rose above 69.35%, demonstrating that omitting specific abilities reduces DC and EI build dispersion. [Tables 2 and 3](#) provide loadings, validity, and reliability.

Demographics		Frequency	%
Gender	Male	136	53.3
	Female	119	46.7
	Prefer not to say	0	0
Age	18–29 years	99	38.8
	30–44 years	99	38.8
	45–59 years	57	22.4
	Older than 60 years	0	0
Nationality	UAE National	197	77.3
	Non-UAE National	55	21.6
Level education	High School/Diploma	93	36.5
	Bachelor's	101	39.6
	Master's	47	18.4
	PhD/DBA Equivalent	14	5.5
Number of years of experience in the current job	2–5	110	43.1
	6–10	24	9.4
	11–20	47	18.4
	Above 21	74	29
Level in the hierarchy	First level	96	37.6
	Middle level	107	42
	Top level	52	20.4

Table 1.
Descriptive analysis **Source(s):** Authors

The study results support the hypothesis that EI shares positive correlations with DC (H1: $b = 1/4 \ 0.43$; $p < 0.001$), and DC has a significant positive correlation with SI (H2: $b = 1/4 \ 0.78$; $p < 0.001$).

5.3 *Confirmatory factor analysis*

IBM® SPSS® AMOS (version 26) tests numerous indices to characterise how a model fits a situation. Chi-square, CMIN, is the initial index. If this number is insignificant, the model is acceptable. The observed and model-predicted covariance matrices are compared. Several research advocates utilise this comparison to gauge model fitness (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988).

The goodness-of-fit index shows how much variation the predicted population covariance explains. RMSEA was also utilised. A good match requires RMSEA < 0.08 . Until the early 1990s, RMSEA values between 0.05 and 0.10 were considered excellent, whereas values over 0.10 were poor (MacCallum *et al.*, 1996). Later, an RMSEA of 0.08–0.10 was regarded as average. Thus, a fit below 0.08 is satisfactory nowadays (MacCallum *et al.*, 1996). The comparative fit index (CFI) evaluates model fitness by comparing data to the hypothesised model and correcting for sample size. Higher CFI values indicate greater match. The Bentler–Bonett normed fit index (NFI) measures incremental statistical model fitness regardless of parameter count. Several interventions on additional covariances between mistakes and the standardised residual covariance stabilised the model. This model suited content validity analysis well. Table 4 shows model fitting indices.

The main indexes listed in Table 5 demonstrate an acceptable fit for the model.

5.4 *Moderation and mediation analysis*

Multiple model iterations examined IC mediation. DC mediation between EI and SI was investigated for statistical significance. A bivariate regression between EI and SI capabilities was tested in Model 1. The connection is substantial (0.000). Model 2 examined EI's direct influence on DC. Both models were statistically significant. A Sobel test showed that DC mediation between EI and SI capacity is not significant ($p = 0.4769$) (see Table 6).

Study measures	Measurement items	CFA	Mean	Cronbach alpha
Emotional intelligence (EI)	EI1: I have a good sense of why I have certain feelings most of the time	0.722	4.25	0.938
	EI2: I have good understanding of my own emotions	0.794		
	EI3: I really understand what I feel	0.742		
	EI4: I always know whether or not I am happy	0.745		
	EI5: I always know my friends' emotions from their behaviour	0.726		
	EI8: I have good understanding of the emotions of people around me	0.716		
	EI9: I always set goals for myself and then try my best to achieve them	0.658		
	EI10: I always tell myself I am a competent person	0.635		
	EI11: I am a self-motivating person	0.751		
	EI12: I would always encourage myself to try my best	0.735		
	EI13: I am able to control my temper so that I can handle difficulties rationally	0.632		
	EI14: I am quite capable of controlling my own emotions	0.718		
	EI15: I can always calm down quickly when I am very angry			
	EI16: I have good control of my own emotions			
Innovation culture (IC)	IC1: The organisation's technological equipment is updated	0.740	4.01	0.930
	IC2: The organisation is constantly looking for information concerning the potential integration of new technologies	0.781		
	IC3: The organisation is constantly developing new service or new processes	0.764		
	IC4: The organisation is orientated towards investing in new technologies	0.755		
	IC5: There is a budget for the development of R&D&I activities	0.729		
	IC6: The organisation has been successful in process innovation	0.664		
	IC7: The organisation has been successful in service innovation	0.622		
	IC8: The organisation owns patents or utility models	0.557		
Diversity climate (DC)	DC2: The managers have a track record of hiring and promoting faculty members objectively regardless of their race, sex, religion or age	0.737	3.77	0.938
	DC3: The managers here give feedback and evaluate the employee fairly, regardless of such factors as the faculty member's race, sex, age, or social background	0.828		
	DC4: The managers here make promotion and tenure decisions fairly, regardless of such factors as the faculty member's race, sex, age, or social background	0.833		
	DC5: The managers interpret human resource policies (such as sabbaticals) fairly for all faculty	0.848		
	DC6: The managers give assignments based on the skills and abilities of the faculty	0.746		
	DC7: The managers here encourage the formation of faculty network support groups	0.710		

(continued)

Table 2.
Factor loadings

Study measures	Measurement items	CFA	Mean	Cronbach alpha
Service innovation capability (SI)	DC8: There is a mentoring program in use here that identifies and prepares all employees of colour and white female employee for promotion	0.604		
	DC9: "The 'old boys network' is alive and well here"	0.541		
	DC10: The organisation spends enough money and time on diversity awareness and related training	0.524		
	SI1: Innovation is readily accepted in managing projects in our organisation	0.599	4.093	0.928
	SI2: Our organisation's top management gives special emphasis to service innovation	0.700		
	SI3: Our organisation constantly seeks new ways to better service our customers	0.634		
	SI4: Our organisation is able to change/modify our current service approaches to meet special requirements from customers	0.540		
	SI5: Compared to our competition, Our organisation is able to come up with new service offerings	0.702		

Table 2. Source(s): Jin *et al.* (2019), Barak *et al.* (1998), Grawe *et al.* (2009), Wong and Law (2002)

Factors	M	SD	1 (EI)	2 (DC)	3 (SI)	4 (IC)
Emotional intelligence (EI)	68.00	11.32	1			
Diversity climate (DC)	35.31	8.3	0.45**	1		
Service innovation capability (SI)	20.48	4.42	0.50**	0.78**	1	
Innovation culture (IC)	32.14	6.69	0.53**	0.66**	0.73**	1

Source(s): Authors

Table 3. Discriminant validity

χ^2	DF	P	GFI	CMIN/DF	NFI	RMSEA
1298.11	605	0.000	0.847	0.092	0.847	0.067

Source(s): Authors

Table 4. Fitting index of the model

Model	χ^2	DF	TLI	CFI	RSMEA
Model 1 (DC dependent variable)	2075.89	659.00	0.815	0.826	0.092
Model 2 (covariances on E32 and E39; 31 and E39; E28 and E39; E21 and E22)	1975.32	655.00	0.816	0.838	0.89
Model 3 (covariances on E1 and E2; E3 and E4)	1817.96	653.00	0.870	0.857	0.84
Model 4 (covariances on E5 and E6; E14 and E15)	1698.49	650.00	0.888	0.872	0.80
Model 5 (covariances on E9 and E10; E9 and E11; E11 and E12)	1620.81	647.00	0.894	0.881	0.077
Model 6 (without DC10)	1505.82	614.00	0.901	0.886	0.75
Model 7 (without EI6)	1298.11	605.00	0.903	0.890	0.67

Table 5. Results of the confirmatory factor analysis for the measures of the variables

Note(s): N = 257. Abbreviations: CFI, comparative fit index; RMSEA, root mean square error of approximation; TLI, Tucker–Lewis index

Source(s): Authors

The moderating of the IC variable was analysed many times using all three models:

Model 1: EI, DC, SI IC moderator. The model exhibits a much different F-change with moderator IC, suggesting the control variable better explains it. Both theories are substantial. DC predicts SI well (Beta 0.700). IC predicts the second (Beta 0.354, unlike DC). Mediation is statistically insignificant.

Model 2: EI/DC IC moderator. $R^2 = 0.4510$ makes the model significant at 0.000. Thus, EI does not predict DC (0.7021), and the model explains 4.5%. IC does not predict DC (0.0001). IC moderating is also insignificant (0.2428).

Model 3: DC/SI IC moderator. $R^2 = 0.7056$ and 0.000 make the model significant. The model explains 7%. DC significantly predicts DC (0.0000). IC predicts (0.0001) and moderates (0.0116) SI (see Table 7).

6. Discussion

6.1 Discussion of results

Employees in UAE public organisations assessed EI's influence on DC. DC, IC, and SI's mediating roles were also examined. Most hypotheses were validated by Pearson correlation and various model studies (see Figure 2, Table 8).

H1 suggested a DC-EI positive correlation. Previous research (Fiori *et al.*, 2018) suggests that DC-friendly workplaces are EI-rich. Emotionally intelligent workers prefer collaborative problem-solving and environmental transformation approaches. Organisational innovation boosts firm performance and EI. This efficiently classifies and ranks firms (Camisón and Villar-López, 2014). This seeks to improve competition, examine the relationship between entrepreneurial attitudes and productivity, and determine whether innovation and organisational creativity boost performance (Rajapathirana and Hui, 2018).

DC mediates the relationship between EI and SI capabilities, as anticipated by H2 and corroborated by earlier research (Paruchuri and Asadullah, 2018). DC did not mediate the EI-SI capacity relationship in this study. SI skills improve organisational performance. Rajapathirana and Hui (2018) found that innovation in finances, growth, customers, and internal procedures in process, organisation, and institution boosts organisational performance. H3 and Rezaei *et al.* (2021) suggested that IC moderates EI-DC connections.

Model	Unstandardized B	Coeff. St. Error	t	Sig
Model 1 (DC Dependent variable)	0.333	0.042	7.897	0.000
Model 2 (SI Dependent variable)	0.370	0.023	16.394	0.000

Note(s): *Significant at $p = 0.05$; **Significant at $p = 0.01$

Source(s): Authors

Table 6.
Results of mediation

Model	R square	F	T	Sig
Model 1 (IC moderator on EI, DC and SI)	0.703	51.936	7.897	0.000
Model 2 (IC moderator on EI and DC; DC dependent variable)	0.450	1.178	16.394	0.2248
Model 3 (IC moderator on DC and SI; SI dependent variable)	0.7056	6.4750	-2.544	0.0116

Note(s): *Significant at $p = 0.05$; **Significant at $p = 0.01$

Source(s): Authors

Table 7.
Results for moderation

Figure 2.
Interactive effects of
innovation culture (IC)
and diversity climate
(DC) on service
innovation
capabilities (SI)

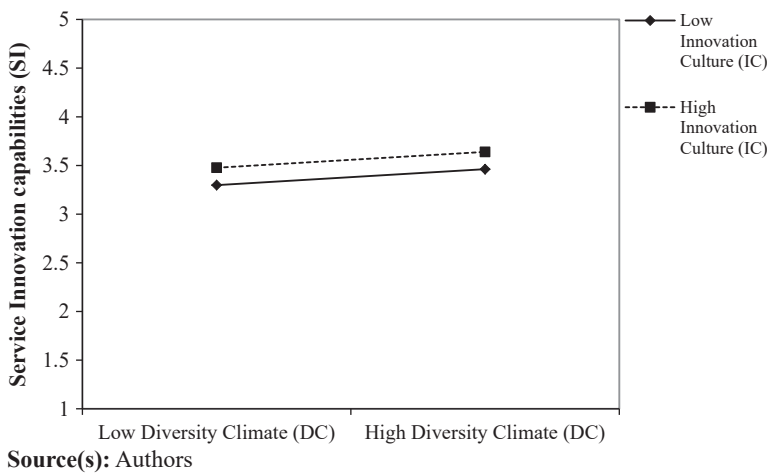


Table 8.
Hypothesis review

Hypothesis	Path	Supported
H1. EI positively and significantly influences an organisation's DC	EI → DC	Yes
H2. DC mediates the relationship between EI and SI capability	EI → DC → SI	No
H3. IC moderates the relationship between EI and DC such that the positive relationship is stronger when the IC is high rather than low	EI → IC → DC	No
H4. IC moderates the influence between DC and SI capabilities such that the relationship is stronger when the IC is high rather than low	DC → IC → SI	Yes

Source(s): Authors' elaboration

IC had no moderating influence on EI-DC. The inconsistency has numerous causes. First, the nature of public organisations in the UAE may vary from those in other countries where similar research has been done, which may explain our findings. Second, our IC measure may have caught different aspects of the concept than earlier studies, resulting in different conclusions. Finally, our UAE public sector workers sample may have damaged EI-DC interactions. To confirm our results, future study may examine additional intervening factors or examine this association in various circumstances.

H4 anticipated and Li *et al.* (2019) supported IC's moderating influence on DC-SI capabilities. IC moderated DC-SI capabilities in this study. According to G. Li *et al.* (2019), organisational success improves diversity. Innovation and strategic planning help companies grow, develop, and survive in our fast-changing environment. Many studies have demonstrated that innovation may boost profits (Dong *et al.*, 2022).

6.2 Theoretical implications

This study advances theoretical understanding in this sector. First, EI's effects on DC are little understood, hence this study partly covers the UAE public sector research vacuum. This research shows how DC mediates the EI-SI capacity relationship. Second, IC's moderating effect on DC-SI capacity improves academic understanding. Bellucci *et al.* (2021) suggested that future researchers should examine intellectual capital and creativity. This work fills that

gap. IC moderates EI's SI capacity. EI also fosters IC and SI skills, adding to the understanding of intellectual capital (Pedro *et al.*, 2019).

6.3 Practical implications

This study provides three SI decision-making tips for UAE public sector managers and executives. First, the conclusion that workers' EI positively connects to DC suggests that leaders and managers should push HR organisations to recruit people with higher EI (Choi *et al.*, 2019) to maintain competitive advantages and performance levels. Existing staff should get EI training to improve their emotional management, empathy, and communication skills. Koc and Boz (2020) argued that HR organisations might help DC. Second, as DC is highly connected with SI capabilities, UAE public sector executives should adopt DC promotion plans. Diversity and inclusion in the workplace may lead to more creative ideas. SI paradigms help customers, society, and the government. Thus, leaders and managers should be ready to use DC to attract and choose a diverse workforce. Third, IC moderates, supporting Moussa *et al.* (2018). Innovation culture boosts service innovation. Thus, we advocate IC in UAE public organisations for employee EI benefits and DC, since both boost SI capabilities. Companies should foster a culture of innovation and risk-taking. Thus, UAE public organisations should spend in technology renewal, innovation, and employee incentives to establish and enhance IC. This might involve funding and recognising creative ideas and results. These tips may increase SI capabilities in UAE public organisations, improving outcomes.

UAE public organisations should promote DC as it highly correlates with SI capabilities. Customers, society, and public organisations gain SI capabilities. The EI of managers and leaders improves SI skills. Emotionally intelligent leaders may inspire creativity, establish an inclusive workplace, and nurture an innovation culture (Paruchuri and Asadullah, 2018). Leaders and managers should be prepared to develop DC for fair recruitment and selection of diverse individuals.

This study's findings urge business leaders to foster emotional intelligence within organisational culture. Policymakers can leverage these insights to create supportive frameworks for innovation. Practitioners should integrate diversity climate in knowledge management strategies to drive sustainable growth. Emphasising emotional intelligence, adapting to cultural diversity, and aligning with innovation culture can streamline intellectual property strategies, enhancing competitiveness and adaptability in today's rapidly evolving markets.

6.4 Limitations and future research directions

Although this study has been taken cautiously, the findings have certain limitations. First, social desirability bias may have affected the study of self-reported data. The results were also restricted to the public sector, limiting their applicability. The research was confined to UAE public sectors, limiting generalisability. Third, non-longitudinal cross-sectional data were used. Interventions and adjustments on SI capabilities were ignored. These techniques would improve UAE public sector EI, DC, and IC assessment.

This study primarily focused on public sector organisations in the UAE, and the findings may vary across different industries or regions. Specific organisational contexts, industry characteristics, or regional cultural nuances might influence the relationships between EI, DC, and SI. Future research could explore these variations in greater depth to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how these factors interact within different settings and geographical locations.

In this research, laws and rules may have affected public sector employees' emotions and attitudes. Political appointments, budget constraints, and policy changes may have

influenced results. These probable impacts contextualise the results. Politics may affect public sector employees' emotions and attitudes; hence the findings may only apply in certain political situations. Sampling bias must be considered since political connections may have impacted participants' responses. Finally, the study may not have captured all the complexities of how politics affects public sector personnel.

Future researchers may eliminate these constraints by using other methods in the same locations or reproducing this work in different regions. To test these results' generalisability, apply the same approaches to other nations' public sectors. To assess the effects of different therapies and how EI moderates DC and IC's effects, longitudinal UAE data should be examined. Future researchers should also qualitatively evaluate private sector small- and medium-sized firm studies.

Finally, future research can include other types of organisations to test our assumption that emotional intelligence positively affects public-sector organisational decision-making.

7. Conclusion

Applying the ability model, this study offers insights into the relationship between EI, DC, IC and SI capability. The study adopted a survey methodology targeting public organisations in the UAE via a structured questionnaire. Our findings demonstrate that employees' EI positively relates to DC, which was found to have a strong connection to SI capability. The study offers managers and leaders in public sector settings a comprehensive understanding of decentralising the climate to promote wisdom-sharing. Our findings indicate a moderating role for IC in the relationship between EI and DC and between DC and SI capability. Our study contributes to the literature by partially filling the gap in the UAE public sector.

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