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RECENT TRENDS IN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: MEASUREMENT, NEUROSCIENCE, ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, AND THE GLOBAL EMOTIONAL RECESSION

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ABSTRACT

Background: *Emotional intelligence (EI), formerly a contentious psychological notion, has evolved into a crucial paradigm for understanding human behavior in organizational, educational, clinical, and technological contexts. Based on over thirty years of empirical study, this review highlights the most significant new advances in EI studies from 2019 to 2025.*
Methods: *Using sources that were obtained from PubMed, PsycINFO, Web of Science, and Scopus.*
A comprehensive narrative evaluation was conducted and screened for recent publication, methodological quality, and relevance. . Thematic clustering was used to identify important topics.
The evolution and convergence of EI theoretical models, a global "emotional recession" (–5.79% EQ decline, 2019–2024), advances in the neuroscience of EI, the integration of AI and affective computing with EI frameworks, the expansion of EI interventions in education, healthcare, and leadership, and the emergence of gender-related and cross-cultural disparities are the six main trends that are identified.
Conclusions: *There is a paradigm change at the nexus of applied EI research, AI, and neuroscience. The ethical concerns of emotionally intelligent AI systems, assessment validity across cultural contexts, and the causative factors behind post-pandemic EQ reduction must all be addressed in future study.*

KEYWORDS: *Emotional Intelligence; Affective Neuroscience; Artificial Intelligence; Emotional Recession; Social-Emotional Learning; Cross-Cultural EI; EI Measurement; Post-Pandemic Wellbeing*

1. INTRODUCTION

For more than thirty years, emotional intelligence (EI), which is roughly defined as the ability to effectively recognize, comprehend, use, and manage emotions in oneself and others, has held a significant place in psychological study (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Mayer & Salovey, 1997). From its theoretical beginnings as an ability-based construct to its widespread application in organizational, clinical, and educational psychology, emotional intelligence (EI) has garnered both rigorous scholarly investigation and popular attention. Goleman's (1995) seminal assertion that EI may be more important than IQ in determining life success is the most notable example.

As a researcher who joined this subject around the time of Salovey and Mayer's seminal 1990 publication, I have seen significant conceptual improvements, methodological discussions, and applied extensions that have both complicated and enhanced the field of emotional intelligence.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic, the widespread use of artificial intelligence, and an increasing amount of neuroimaging data that has started to define the neurological underpinnings of emotional competence have all contributed to a particularly dramatic period of change over the last five years (2019–2025).

The two main goals of this review are to: (1) identify upcoming research frontiers that will likely define the field in the next ten years; and (2) document and critically evaluate the most important current trends in EI scholarship. The essay is organized around six subject tendencies, each of which is covered in a separate section. These are followed by an integrative discussion and suggestions for further research.

Beyond scholarly interest, this synthesis is significant. Emotional intelligence has continuously been listed as one of the top ten competencies for 2025 and beyond in the World Economic Forum's Future of Work studies (WEF, 2023). In the meantime, a statistically significant, ongoing fall in emotional intelligence since 2019 has been reported in the longest longitudinal study of global EQ (N = 28,000 across 166 countries); this phenomena is now known as the "emotional recession" (Freedman et al., 2025). A thorough study is both

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important and urgent due to the convergence of scientific advancement and societal urgency.
y and scientific advancement makes a comprehensive review both timely and necessary.

2. THEORETICAL MODELS

Convergence and Remaining Controversies
Although there is still disagreement about whether emotional intelligence (EI) is better understood as a personality characteristic, a cognitive skill, or a combination of abilities, current research indicates a positive convergence (Table 1)

Table 1. Comparative Overview of Major Emotional Intelligence Models (2025 Update)

Model / Theorist	Type	Core Constructs	Primary Measure	Key Strength
Mayer–Salovey–Caruso (1990; 1997)	Ability	Perceive, Use, Understand, Manage emotions	MSCEIT	Criterion validity; objective scoring
Goleman (1995)	Mixed	Self-awareness, Motivation, Empathy, Social skill	ECI / ESCI	Leadership & organisational applications
Bar-On (1997)	Mixed	Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Adaptability, Stress Mgmt	EQ-i 2.0	Breadth; wellbeing integration
Petrides (2001)	Trait	Emotionality, Sociability, Self-control, Wellbeing	TEIQue	Personality framework alignment
Six Seconds (Freedman, 2011)	Competency	Know Yourself, Choose Yourself, Give Yourself	SEI	Longitudinal global tracking (28,000+)

Note. ECI = Emotional Competence Inventory; ESCI = Emotional and Social Competence Inventory; MSCEIT = Mayer–Salovey–Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test; SEI = Six Seconds Emotional Intelligence Assessment; TEIQue = Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire.

With the MSCEIT offering objective scoring through expert standards and consensus, the ability model of Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso continues to be the most psychometrically robust framework (Mayer et al., 2016). The incremental validity of ability EI over personality and general intelligence in predicting job performance and relationship quality is still supported by recent meta-analytic study (O'Boyle et al., 2011). The consensual scoring method has been contested by some, who contend that it may represent social and cultural standards rather than emotional truth in and of itself.

Because of its compatibility with personality trait structures and usefulness in lifespan developmental investigations, the trait EI model, operationalized through the TEIQue (Petrides, 2001), has regained popularity in neuroscience research. In comparison to the Big Five personality characteristics, Petrides and colleagues have repeatedly shown discriminant validity, validating trait EI as a separate entity.

Applied and organizational settings are still dominated by the mixed model heritage, which is exemplified by Goleman's competency framework and Bar-On's emotional-social intelligence model. Recent validation work in healthcare settings has shown the predictive value of Bar-On's EQ-i 2.0 for patient outcomes and clinician fatigue, making it one of the most extensively used instruments in the world (Mendonça et al., 2023).

The development of the Six Seconds EI paradigm, which presents EI as a collection of learnable, actionable competencies arranged around three basic pursuits—Know Yourself, Choose Yourself, and Give Yourself—has been a major theoretical advancement over the last five years. The accompanying SEI instrument, which now supports the largest longitudinal EI database globally, offers cross-sectional and temporal studies that are currently unmatched in scope by any other model (Freedman et al., 2025).

3. THE GLOBAL EMOTIONAL RECESSION: LONGITUDINAL TRENDS POST-PANDEMIC

Over the past five years, a significant theoretical breakthrough has been the creation of the Six Seconds EI paradigm, which views EI as a set of learnable, actionable skills organized around three fundamental goals: Know Yourself, Choose Yourself, and Give Yourself. Now supporting the biggest longitudinal EI database in the world, the accompanying SEI instrument provides cross-sectional and temporal analyses that are currently unmatched in scope by any other model (Freedman et al., 2025).

The reported worldwide, persistent loss in emotional intelligence is arguably the most concerning empirical development of recent years. Freedman and colleagues (2025) examined a stratified sample of 28,000 adults from 166 countries between 2019 and 2024 using data from the Six Seconds Emotional Intelligence Assessment (SEI), a validated 77-item test measuring eight basic EI competencies.

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Table 2. EI Competency-Specific Declines and Associated Burnout Risk, 2019–2024

EI Competency	Description	% Change (2019–2023)	% Change (2019–2024)	Burnout Risk Correlation
Know Your Emotions	Naming & recognising one's own feelings	–6.1%	–4.8%	High
Recognise Patterns	Identifying triggers and habitual responses	–5.9%	–5.2%	High
Apply Consequential Thinking	Evaluating action outcomes	–5.7%	–4.6%	Moderate
Navigate Emotions	Using emotions productively	–5.8%	–5.0%	High
Engage Intrinsic Motivation	Self-directed purpose & drive	–6.3%	–5.7%	Very High
Exercise Optimism	Positive attribution in adversity	–5.5%	–4.3%	Moderate
Increase Empathy	Perspective-taking & compassion	–5.4%	–4.1%	Moderate
Pursue Noble Goals	Values-based action	–6.0%	–5.4%	High

Source: Adapted from Freedman, Freedman, & Choi (2025), Frontiers in Psychology; and Six Seconds State of the Heart Report (2024). All changes statistically significant at $p < 0.001$.

The term "emotional recession" has been used more frequently in academic literature. It was coined in analogy to economic recession and refers to a persistent decline in emotional capability and welfare across communities (Freedman et al., 2025). These results are supported by the Mercer Global Talent Trends report (2024), which estimates that over 80% of workers worldwide are at risk of burnout, with that number climbing to 83% in Asia. These trends align with data from the McKinsey Health Institute (2025), which estimated that businesses with a holistic structure may generate global economic value of about US$11.7 trillion.

One particularly noteworthy sub-finding has been the emergence of gender differences. Women's EQ scores increased starting in 2021, whereas men's maintained multi-year drops. Although a thorough theoretical explanation for this disparity is still lacking, socialization variations in emotional expressiveness, varying pandemic caring responsibilities, and gendered patterns of help-seeking behavior are likely significant factors.

There is also a strong generational susceptibility. A higher risk of burnout and disengagement is indicated by the fact that 53.7% of Generation Z (born about 1997–2012) in workplace settings scored in the low-satisfaction category. Significant contributing variables include loneliness and social isolation, which are made worse by digital-first social development during the early adolescent years (Six Seconds, 2024).

4. NEUROSCIENCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: MAPPING THE AFFECTIVE BRAIN

Finding its neurological correlates is one of the most intellectually stimulating areas of current EI research. The most thorough synthesis of this body of work to date is provided by a systematic review of the neurobiological underpinnings of emotional intelligence (EI), published in PeerJ and based on 34 empirical studies retrieved from Scopus, Web of Science, PsycINFO, and PubMed (with studies spanning 1990 to February 2024) (Gómez-Leal et al., 2026).

Lesion studies, task-based functional MRI (fMRI), resting-state fMRI, structural MRI (grey and white matter), and EEG were among the brain-mapping methods used in the review. A consistent collection of brain areas was linked to EI-related processing across various methodological techniques. The main neuroimaging results are arranged by brain area in Table 3.

Figure 2. Neural Correlates of Emotional Intelligence: Key Brain Regions and EI-Specific Findings

Brain Region	Functional Role	EI-Specific Finding
Ventromedial Prefrontal Cortex (vmPFC)	Emotion regulation; reward & decision-making	Negative connectivity with amygdala in high-EI individuals
Amygdala	Fear & threat processing; emotional memory	Reduced over-reactivity in high-EI; linked to EQ via fALFF (Kong et al., 2015)
Insula	Interoception; emotional awareness	Positive fALFF correlation with EI & social anxiety regulation (Xue et al., 2024)
Dorsolateral PFC (dlPFC)	Cognitive control; top-down emotion regulation	Positive resting-state connectivity with insula in high-EI groups
Superior Temporal Gyrus (STG)	Social cognition; speech–emotion processing	Elevated activation in empathy and EI tasks
Parahippocampal Gyrus	Contextual emotional memory encoding	Correlated with EI scores in fALFF studies (Xue et al., 2024)
Orbitofrontal Cortex (OFC)	Reward value; emotional decision-making	fALFF changes as a function of EI levels (Zhang et al., 2023)

Note. fALFF = fractional amplitude of low-frequency fluctuations. Connectivity patterns derived from resting-state fMRI studies. Adapted from Gómez-Leal et al. (2026), PeerJ; Xue et al. (2024); Kong et al. (2015); Zhang et al. (2023).

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Higher EI is linked to decreased amygdala reactivity to emotionally salient stimuli, especially in situations of perceived danger or social appraisal, according to a consistent finding across task-based fMRI investigations. According to Alkozei & Killgore (2015) and Gómez-Leal et al. (2026), this trend is not indicative of decreased emotional sensitivity per se, but rather of enhanced top-down regulation—the capacity of prefrontal structures to govern limbic response.

Higher EI is linked to negative functional connectivity between the ventromedial prefrontal cortex (vmPFC) and the amygdala in resting-state fMRI studies, according to Killgore (2013). This connection pattern is consistent with effective emotion regulation. EI and fractional amplitude of low-frequency fluctuations (fALFF) values in the insula, parahippocampal gyrus, superior temporal gyrus, and superior parietal lobule were found to be positively correlated in more recent research by Xue and colleagues (2024), which involved 267 college students.

These spatial findings now have complementary temporal resolution because to EEG-based research. Early components (P100, N170) during the processing of emotional facial expressions have been found to be regulated by emotional intelligence (EI) in studies employing event-related potentials (ERPs), indicating that EI affects both automatic and controlled phases of affective cognition.

Studies using structural neuroimaging have started to find grey-matter correlates of emotional intelligence. The insula, anterior cingulate cortex, and orbitofrontal cortex are the areas where EI scores are correlated with grey matter volume or density. Together, these structures make up what has been called the "affective brain network," which includes areas essential to reward-based decision-making, social cognition, and interoception. The development of this neuroscience literature is an important step toward the EI construct's biological validity(Pathinettampadiyan, n.d.).

5. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE FUTURE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE RESEARCH

5.1 AI as a Researcher: Emotion Recognition Systems

Artificial intelligence has entered the field of emotional intelligence study from two different angles: as a tool for identifying and assisting human emotional processes, and as a subject of EI assessment. In relation to the former, six large language models (LLMs), including GPT-4, Gemini 1.5 Flash, Copilot 365, Claude 3.5 Haiku, and DeepSeek V3, were exposed to typical human EI assessments in a seminal work from the Universities of Geneva and Bern (Schlegel & Mortillaro, 2025). With an average score of 82%, the LLMs outperformed human participants, who scored an average of 56%. Additionally, GPT-4 produced new EI test scenarios that demonstrated the same level of dependability, clarity, and realism as instruments created by experts. This led to a significant discussion regarding whether LLMs are clever emulators of emotional reasoning or actually possess emotional knowledge(Pathinettampadiyan & Thavaraj, 2025).Using Scopus as the main database, a comprehensive review of 79 studies on emotion classification in AI systems was published in Engineering Proceedings (2025). Five forms of AI-based emotional support and eight forms of AI-based cognitive support were found. Using deep learning architectures, such as transformer models and graph neural networks, contemporary multimodal emotion identification systems include facial expressions, vocal prosody, text sentiment, gesture analysis, and physiological signals (electrodermal activity, heart rate variability) (Liu, 2024). In controlled settings, these systems can now recognize objects with an accuracy of over 85%; but, in noisy, realistic, and cross-cultural settings, their performance drastically deteriorates.

5.2 AI as an Intervention: Emotionally Intelligent Technologies

The use of emotionally intelligent AI in medical and educational contexts has grown significantly. Learner engagement, self-efficacy, and knowledge acquisition have all been shown to benefit from intelligent tutoring systems with affective state detection (Wang & Huang, 2025). According to a meta-analysis of 172 studies on emotional AI in education from 2000 to 2025 that was published in the Educational Psychology Review, emotional supports controlled achievement-related emotions while cognitive supports enhanced perceived control; combined approaches produced the best results(AI in Education Meta-Analysis, 2025) However, this training raises significant ethical and psychological issues. Critical scholars have issued warnings regarding "simulated empathy," which describes sympathetic responses produced by AI that lack intentionality and genuine reciprocity, as well as affective reliance, which happens when users gradually give algorithmic systems emotional control (Sedlakova & Trachsel, 2023).

The idea of "emotional hyperconnectivity"—in which digital platforms mediate emotional expression and comfort-seeking, displacing face-to-face encounters—represents a structurally relevant mechanism in the emotional recession phenomenon reported by Freedman and colleagues (2025).

Ethical concerns include data privacy, algorithmic bias in emotion classification (particularly across ethnic and cultural groups), and the risk of reducing complicated emotional experiences to machine-readable categories. Since legislative frameworks for emotionally intelligent AI are still in their infancy, the field urgently needs interdisciplinary governance structures.

6. EI IN EDUCATION, LEADERSHIP, HEALTHCARE, AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Using important measurement tools and new empirical data, Table 3 offers a methodical mapping of EI's use across seven significant fields. A number of domain-specific advancements deserve careful consideration.

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Table 3. Application of Emotional Intelligence Across Key Research Domains (2019–2025)

Application Domain	Core Applications	Primary Instruments	Key References
Healthcare & Clinical	Clinician–patient rapport, nurse burnout prevention, psychiatric outcomes	EQ-i 2.0; MSCEIT	Mikolajczak et al., 2007; Mendonça et al., 2023
Education & SEL	Teacher effectiveness, social-emotional learning, student resilience	MSCEIT; TEIQue; SEI	Brackett et al., 2012; Solih et al., 2024
Organisational Leadership	Transformational leadership, retention, engagement, innovation	ESCI; EQ-i 2.0	O'Boyle et al., 2011; Freedman et al., 2025
Technology & AI-Mediated	Affective computing, emotion recognition, AI coaching tools	Multimodal ML; fMRI-linked models	Liu, 2024; Schlegel & Mortillaro, 2025
Cross-Cultural Contexts	Global EQ disparity, collectivist vs individualist emotion regulation norms	SEI; TEIQue (adapted)	Freedman et al., 2025; De Neve et al., 2024
Mental Health & Wellbeing	Anxiety, depression, resilience, stress management	TEIQue; MSCEIT; SEI	Kotsou et al., 2019; Doğru, 2022
Entrepreneurship	EI–psychological ownership links, start-up growth, burnout resilience	Mixed EI scales	Yitshaki, 2021; Hoang et al., 2025

Note. ESCI = Emotional and Social Competence Inventory; EQ-i 2.0 = Emotional Quotient Inventory version 2.0; MSCEIT = Mayer–Salovey–Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test; SEI = Six Seconds EI Assessment; TEIQue = Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire.

6.1 Education and Social-Emotional Learning

There is still a lot of empirical interest in social-emotional learning (SEL) programs, which specifically teach emotional intelligence (EI) skills inside curricula. The number of EI education research articles increased steadily between 2012 and 2021, according to a bibliometric analysis (Solih et al., 2024), with Fernández-Berrocal and colleagues emerging as the most productive and cooperative research cluster. Evidence-based SEL programs like RULER (Recognise, Understand, Label, Express, Regulate), which has shown quantifiable improvements in student wellbeing, academic performance, and teacher job satisfaction across numerous randomised controlled trials, were developed in large part by Brackett and colleagues at the Yale Centre for Emotional Intelligence.

6.2 Organisational Leadership and Workforce Resilience

Meta-analyses have confirmed that EI predicts leadership effectiveness, job performance, and engagement above and beyond cognitive IQ and personality (O'Boyle et al., 2011; Bass & Riggio, 2023). The organizational research on EI has advanced significantly. Based on 27 focus groups and cross-sectional surveys, the O.C. Tanner Institute's 2025 Global Culture Report identifies applied emotional intelligence—the display of empathy, vulnerability, and genuine connection—as a key differentiator between successful and unsuccessful leaders in the post-pandemic setting.

The relationship between psychological safety, or the widespread belief that taking chances with people is safe, and emotional intelligence (EI) has been a particularly productive field of study.

According to Edmondson (2023), EI seems to be a major antecedent of psychological safety at both the individual and group levels, and psychologically safe teams are more creative and successful at cooperative problem-solving.

6.3 Healthcare

Higher EI healthcare workers show enhanced adherence to evidence-based treatment, reduced burnout rates, and better patient rapport in clinical settings (Mikolajczak et al., 2007). Recent theoretical models and long-term occupational health studies have validated the chronic burnout-EQ depletion cycle, in which burnout depletes the emotional resources needed to maintain emotional intelligence (EI), increasing vulnerability to burnout.

(Mikolajczak et al., 2007). Recent theoretical models and longitudinal occupational health studies have validated the chronic burnout-EQ depletion cycle, which is characterized by burnout eroding the emotional resources needed to maintain EI, which in turn increases vulnerability to burnout (Mendonça et al., 2023). EI assessments are being used more frequently by healthcare organizations in hiring, professional development, and support program creation(Pathinettampadiyan & Thavaraj, n.d.).

7. CROSS-CULTURAL AND GENDER DIMENSIONS OF EI

The notion that EI norms and notions are culturally universal has come under increasing scrutiny. Significant regional heterogeneity in EI profiles is revealed by the Six Seconds longitudinal dataset: all seven worldwide regions exhibit distinct competency strengths and challenges, with Oceania consistently reporting the highest average EI scores and Asia reporting the lowest (Freedman et al., 2025).

These differences are likely caused by cultural norms on emotional expression, display standards, individualist versus collectivist frameworks for self-other boundaries, and structural disparities in access to mental health care. Cross-cultural validity tests using EI instruments, particularly the TEIQue and

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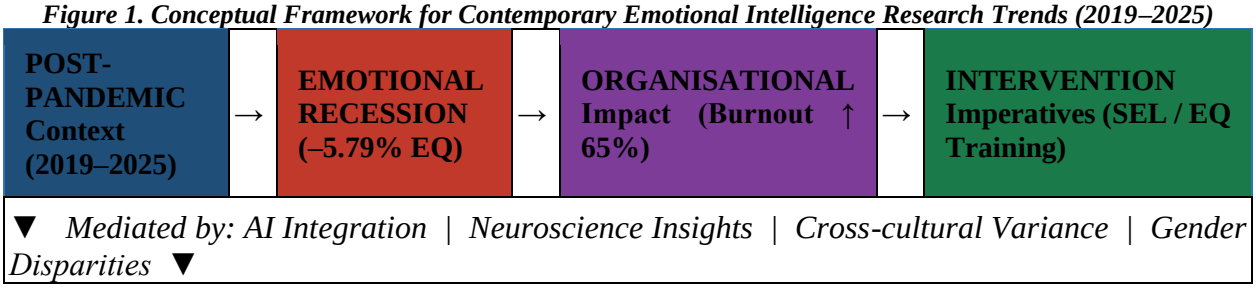
EQ-i 2.0, have indicated measurement non-invariance between cultural groups, casting doubt on the comparability of absolute EI scores across populations(Karthigeyini & Thavaraj, 2016).

The gender disparity seen in the Six Seconds data after 2021, where women's EI ratings increased but men's continued to decline, has received theoretical attention. Some factors include the pandemic's uneven impact on male occupational identity, gendered differences in the propensity to seek mental health care, and unequal social acquisition of emotion language and regulation strategies. Longitudinal research that differentiates between-person and within-person patterns is necessary to resolve these competing narratives(Thavaraj, 2012).

8. CONCEPTUAL INTEGRATION: A STRUCTURE FOR CURRENT EI STUDIES

The aforementioned six tendencies interact in intricate ways that necessitate integrative theoretical modeling; they are not autonomous. A conceptual framework illustrating the key links and dynamics that define the state of EI research today is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for Contemporary Emotional Intelligence Research Trends (2019–2025)



Note. With AI integration, neuroscience insights, and sociodemographic modifiers serving as mediating and moderating elements, the framework shows the causal linkages connecting post-pandemic contextual stressors to the global emotional recession.

The framework claims that the post-pandemic environment is a macro-level stressor that has contributed to the emotional recession in several ways, such as the quick replacement of human emotional engagement by AI-mediated interaction, the disruption of adolescents' developmental emotional experiences, the breakdown of social connections, and an increase in chronic stress and burnout. While AI integration offers both aggravating (simulated empathy, affective dependency) and ameliorative (early detection, scalable intervention) dynamics, advances in neuroscience give the biological basis for understanding these trajectories(Thavaraj & Varghese, 2015).

9. DISCUSSION

This article outlines an area of EI research that is both increasing in theoretical sophistication and addressing a critical global concern. It is worthwhile to take into consideration three general points.

First, despite its shortcomings, the convergence of ability, trait, and competency models has produced a more practical and useful understanding of emotional intelligence than the previous theoretical conflicts may have implied. Instead of picking only one model, practitioners and organizations can choose the framework and tool that best suit their assessment objectives, intervention targets, and cultural setting. The growing use of multi-method assessment designs, which combine ability-based, informant, and self-report ratings, is an example of best practice that somewhat mitigates the psychometric shortcomings of any one method.

Second, an unprecedented population-level decline in a psychological ability that the same literature shows is essential for resilience, leadership, wellbeing, and organizational performance is represented by the emotional recession. The need for scaled EI intervention research is highlighted by the economic scope of this issue, with McKinsey estimating that wellbeing-supportive workplaces may generate US$11.7 trillion in potential value. Crucially, the field presently lacks the causal evidence needed to create policy solutions that are as effective as possible. There is an urgent need for experimental and longitudinal intervention studies with strong control conditions, as the majority of the evidence is still correlational or cross-sectional.

Third, the most difficult conceptual and empirical problem the area has encountered is the connection between EI and AI. It is still unclear if LLMs who score 82% on human EI tests have anything really similar to emotional intelligence, which has significant ramifications for our comprehension of the nature of EI in general. More immediately, the widespread use of emotionally intelligent AI technologies in clinical, educational, and professional contexts need governance frameworks based on actual data regarding their impact on relational competence and human emotional development.

10. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The following research priorities are suggested in light of this review:

The emotional recession's causes include: To determine the relative roles of pandemic disruption, digital socialization, AI interaction, and structural inequality to documented reductions in EQ, longitudinal, multi-wave panel studies with experimental components are required.

Cross-cultural measurement validity: Global EI research will require a systematic program of measurement invariance testing across language and cultural groups in addition to the development of emic (culturally generated) EI constructs.

Neuroscience-intervention bridges: Neuroimaging research conducted both before and after EI training programs will aid in determining the neural mechanisms behind EI development

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and direct the creation of more potent, biologically based interventions.

Ethical frameworks for emotionally intelligent AI: To create governance frameworks for emotion-sensitive AI deployments in clinical, educational, and workplace settings, interdisciplinary collaboration between psychologists, ethicists, legal academics, and AI technologists is necessary.

Gender and generational EI dynamics: The observed post-pandemic divergences will be clarified by longitudinal studies particularly created to look at within-person EI trajectories across gender and generation, paying attention to socialization mechanisms.

Integration of digital phenotyping with EI assessment: AI-driven behavioral analysis, wearable sensor data, smartphone-based ecological momentary assessment, and traditional self-report techniques offer new opportunities for dynamic, ecologically valid EI assessment.

11. CONCLUSION

Emotional intelligence research is at a critical juncture. Cross-disciplinary synthesis, longitudinal data, and neuroimaging findings have all substantially strengthened its theoretical foundations.
However, the populations it aims to characterize and assist are seeing a quantifiable, multi-year loss in the same skills that EI research has determined are most essential for both individual and group thriving.

Artificial intelligence's introduction into this environment opens up possibilities that are both revolutionary and unsettling. AI systems can now recognize emotional states from multimodal data streams with growing accuracy, produce EI measuring tools with amazing speed and fidelity, and surpass people on standardized EI tests. One of the key issues of the next 10 years of EI research will be whether these capacities can be used to actually promote human emotional growth rather than mimic, replace, or unintentionally undermine it.

The current situation necessitates both intellectual humility and a renewed sense of urgency for those of us who have dedicated our careers to comprehending and utilizing emotional intelligence. The need has never been higher as science has advanced.

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