

Integration of Emotional Intelligence and Collaborative Leadership in Improving Organizational Sustainability: A Review of the Human Resources Management Literature

Inaya Hakim, Cecilia Sembiring, Rafinda, Sri Rahayu*, Nilawati Nasti, Effendi Sadly, Yusrita, Zulkifly Siregar, T. Ahmad Helmi

Faculty of Economics and Business, Accounting Study Program, Universitas Islam Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

Jl. Sisingamangaraja No. Kelurahan, Teladan Bar., Kec. Medan Kota, Kota Medan, Sumatera Utara 20217, Indonesia

Email: ¹inayahakim@gmail.com, ²ceciliasembiring@gmail.com, ³rafinda@gmail.com, ^{4,*}sri.rahayu@fe.uisu.ac.id,

⁵nilawatinasti@gmail.com, ⁶effendisadly@gmail.com, ⁷yusrita@gmail.com, ⁸zulkiflysiregar@gmail.com, ⁹tahmadhelmi@gmail.com

Correspondence Author Email: sri.rahayu@fe.uisu.ac.id

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Abstract—Organizational transformation in the digital era requires human resources who are not only technically competent, but also have high emotional and collaborative capabilities. This research aims to systematically examine the role of emotional intelligence and collaborative leadership in organizational sustainability. Using a systematic literature review approach of 45 international articles published in 2015-2025, this study identifies the relationship between individual emotional abilities, collaborative leadership styles, and the achievement of sustainable development goals in the context of human resource management (HRM). The results of the analysis show that emotional intelligence increases empathy, communication, and trust between members of the organization; While collaborative leadership encourages innovation and cross-functional participation that strengthens organizational sustainability. This study recommends a model that integrates emotional intelligence and collaborative leadership as a foundation to achieve innovative and sustainable organizations.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence; Collaborative Leadership; Organizational Sustainability; Innovation

1. INTRODUCTION

The transformation of the global business environment in the Industry 5.0 era requires organizations to adapt quickly to social, economic, and technological changes. The integration between artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and digital automation has shifted the paradigm of human resource management (HR) from structural efficiency to empathy-based collaboration and innovation (Gerhardt & Mackey, 2023). In the midst of accelerating globalization and market complexity, an organization's ability to survive no longer depends on financial capital alone, but on the emotional, social, and collaborative qualities of its leaders. Therefore, a leadership approach that prioritizes collaboration and emotional management is a strategic element in realizing a sustainable organization.

Emotional intelligence (EI) is seen as one of the main foundations that underpin the effectiveness of leadership and the productivity of modern organizations. Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2008) affirm that EI includes the ability of individuals to recognize, understand, and manage emotions constructively, both in intrapersonal and social contexts. A number of studies show that leaders with high EI are better able to build trust, create healthy communication, and foster empathy in the work environment (Hsu, Newman, & Badura, 2022; Miao, Humphrey, & Qian, 2017). In the context of HR management, EI not only improves the psychological well-being of employees but also contributes to organizational learning and adaptability to digital disruption (Da Silva, 2024).

On the other hand, collaborative leadership is the main driver for the creation of an adaptive and innovative organization. Paredes-Saavedra, Boza, and Gutiérrez (2024) define it as a leadership style that prioritizes collective participation, shared responsibility, and shared value creation between organizational units. Collaborative leadership facilitates cross-functional work, builds trust, and strengthens the organization's innovation capacity through the active involvement of all members. In the context of organizational sustainability, collaborative leaders play an important role in integrating ethical, social, and environmental values into managerial practices (Fernando & Almeida, 2022; Bianchi, Nasi, & Rivenbark, 2021).

The concept of organizational sustainability which is rooted in the theory of the Triple Bottom Line (Elkington, 1998) requires organizations to balance three main dimensions: economic, social, and environmental. Boeske (2023) emphasizes that sustainability is not just a social responsibility, but an adaptive strategy that ensures business continuity in the long term. In this context, the integration between EI and collaborative leadership is an important prerequisite for creating an organizational culture that is inclusive, innovative, and resilient to environmental change. The two concepts form a symbiotic relationship in which EI reinforces the psychological basis of collaboration, while collaborative leadership actualizes emotional values into strategic actions.

In Indonesia, the relevance of EI integration and collaborative leadership is increasing in line with the national vision towards a Golden Indonesia 2045. The development of superior and globally competitive human resources is a priority to support the knowledge-based economy. Research by Wijaya et al. (2025) shows that a sustainable leadership style supported by emotional intelligence and collaboration is able to increase innovation and organizational performance in the industrial and public service sectors. Within the broad framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), synergy between EI and collaborative leadership is believed to contribute to the achievement of national and global sustainability goals.

However, empirical studies of the simultaneous relationship between EI, collaborative leadership, and organizational sustainability are limited. Most previous studies have been fragmentary, focusing the analysis on one variable without explaining the causal relationships and interdependencies between the three (Coronado-Maldonado & Benítez-Márquez, 2023; Tardin, Bido, & Da Silva, 2024). Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap through the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach with bibliometric analysis. The goal is to synthesize the latest empirical findings, identify trends and patterns of relationships between variables, and develop a conceptual model that explains how EI and collaborative leadership contribute to organizational sustainability.

Through this study, it is hoped that a comprehensive understanding of the synergistic role between emotional and collaborative dimensions can be obtained in forming sustainable organizations that are able to adapt to global changes. Thus, the results of this study not only strengthen the theoretical foundation of modern human resource management, but also provide strategic recommendations for Indonesian organizations in realizing the vision of a Golden Indonesia 2045 through innovation and sustainable collaboration.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

Emotional intelligence is a person's ability to recognize, understand, and manage the emotions of themselves and others effectively in a social and organizational context. Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2008) explain that emotional intelligence is not only limited to self-control and empathy, but also includes the capacity to use emotions constructively in decision-making and problem-solving. Goleman (1998) developed a five-dimensional model consisting of self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. In modern organizations, emotional intelligence (EI) plays an important role as a psychological foundation for the formation of collaborative behavior and effective leadership. Research by Miao, Humphrey, and Qian (2017) proves that EI contributes positively to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and team performance. Furthermore, a meta-analysis by Shafique et al. (2023) confirms that EI is a key predictor of effective communication, team innovation, and organizational success in the midst of rapid digital change. Thus, EI is not just an individual attribute, but a strategic competence that supports the creation of a resilient organization that is adaptive to environmental dynamics.

Emotional intelligence also serves as a moral and social foundation in sustainable leadership practices. According to Drigas and Papoutsi (2023), leaders with high levels of EI are able to balance the cognitive and affective dimensions in the decision-making process, thereby encouraging the creation of an inclusive and empathetic work culture. In the context of sustainable development, Da Silva (2024) introduces the concept of *sustainability mindset* which emphasizes the importance of emotional awareness of the social and environmental impacts of every organizational decision. This is in line with the view of Gerhardt and Mackey (2023) that EI not only strengthens interpersonal relationships, but also increases leadership effectiveness through strategic empathy, trust, and emotional empowerment. In other words, EI is the main catalyst in integrating humanitarian aspects and business rationality to build a sustainable organization that has a balance between economic performance, social responsibility, and environmental conservation.

Meanwhile, collaborative leadership is a leadership style that emphasizes cross-functional cooperation, active participation, and consensus-based decision-making. Northouse (2021) defines it as a process in which leaders and members of an organization share vision, responsibility, and accountability in achieving common goals. This model is particularly relevant to the increasingly complex context of modern organizations, where the ability to collaborate is a key determinant of innovation success. Research by Paredes-Saavedra, Boza, and Gutiérrez (2024) shows that collaborative leadership contributes to increased organizational innovation and strengthens relationships between work units through trust-based coordination. Fernando and Almeida (2022) add that collaborative leadership is *multi-level*, integrating moral, social, and ecological dimensions into sustainable managerial practices. In this context, collaborative leaders no longer play the role of a single controller, but as facilitators who encourage the exchange of ideas, strengthen social networks, and foster a culture of collective learning.

Collaborative leadership is also closely related to the theories of *servant leadership* (Greenleaf, 2002) and *shared leadership* (Carson, Tesluk, & Marrone, 2007) which emphasize the value of service, empathy, and social responsibility. Through this approach, leaders function as servants who empower the team and foster a sense of belonging to the organization's goals. Bianchi, Nasi, and Rivenbark (2021) affirm that organizations that implement collaborative leadership are more adaptive to environmental changes because they rely on collective engagement and social innovation as the basis of strategy. Calò, Montgomery, and Miller (2024) add that collaboration between stakeholders contributes to the success of sustainable development programs, particularly in the non-profit and public sectors. Therefore, collaborative leadership is an important element in building inclusive, innovative, and sustainable organizational governance.

Organizational *sustainability* itself is rooted in the *Triple Bottom Line* theory put forward by Elkington (1998), which requires organizations to balance economic, social, and environmental dimensions in each of its policies and activities. Freeman (2010) through *Stakeholder Theory* emphasizes that the sustainability of an organization is not only measured through profitability, but also the extent to which the organization provides benefits to all stakeholders. In the context of HR management, sustainability includes employee well-being, work ethics, organizational justice, and commitment to social responsibility (Santos & Gonçalves, 2022). Teece (2018) through *Dynamic Capabilities Theory*

added that sustainable organizations must be able to develop the ability to sense opportunities (*sensing*), *seizing*, and reconfiguring resources (*reconfiguring*) to remain competitive in the midst of global changes. Therefore, organizational sustainability is the result of a synergy between human capabilities, technological innovation, and ethical leadership.

The relationship between emotional intelligence (EI), collaborative leadership, and organizational sustainability can be explained through an integrative model approach. Individuals with high EI have the ability to build empathy and open communication, which is a prerequisite for the creation of effective collaboration within the organization (Coronado-Maldonado & Benítez-Márquez, 2023). Leaders who have a high level of EI tend to adopt a collaborative style because they are able to understand the emotional needs of the team and facilitate harmonious interactions (Huang et al., 2022). Furthermore, collaborative leadership acts as a mediator that strengthens the influence of EI on the sustainability of the organization. This happens because collaboration allows organizations to create innovations, expand social networks, and increase adaptability (Schoemaker, Heaton, & Teece, 2018). In addition, under certain conditions, collaborative leadership can also serve as a moderator, namely strengthening the positive relationship between EI and sustainability performance when the organizational culture supports open communication and teamwork. Thus, the proposed conceptual model can be described as follows:

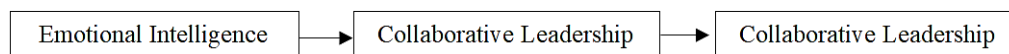


Figure 1. The proposed conceptual model

Emotional Intelligence, Collaborative Leadership, and Organizational Sustainability, which reflects the synergy between emotional, social, and strategic factors in building a sustainable organization. This relationship is reinforced by the theory of Dynamic Capabilities (Teece, 2018), which explains that sustainable organizations must be able to integrate human capabilities (such as EI) and collaborative capacity (such as CL) to respond dynamically to changes in the business environment

This study uses a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to identify, evaluate, and synthesize previous research relevant to the topics of *emotional intelligence*, *collaborative leadership*, and *organizational sustainability* in the context of human resource management. This method was chosen because it provides a transparent, scalable, and replicable framework (Page et al., 2021).

In addition to the descriptive approach, this study also utilizes bibliometric analysis with VOSviewer software to map the conceptual relationships between topics, publication trends, and collaboration between authors and countries. The use of bibliometrics strengthens the results of SLR because it allows the identification of *research clusters* and *knowledge structures* in the research field (Donthu et al., 2021).

The SLR method is seen as appropriate because the topics studied have generated extensive literature but have not been conceptually integrated. With a combination of qualitative (thematic synthesis) and quantitative (bibliometric) approaches, the results of this study provide a comprehensive picture of the research direction and the existing theoretical gaps.

The selection of articles is carried out based on measurable inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure scientific quality and relevance. The selection criteria are explained as follows:

Table 1. Criterion

Criterion	Explanation
Year of Publication	The article was published between 2015–2025, so that it is representative of the research of the last decade and in line with the current global research direction.
Language	Articles in English and Indonesian from reputable journals (Scopus or SINTA).
Database	Main sources: <i>Scopus</i> , <i>Web of Science (WoS)</i> , <i>ScienceDirect</i> , <i>Emerald Insight</i> , <i>Taylor & Francis Online</i> , and <i>Google Scholar</i> .
Publication Type	Peer-reviewed <i>articles</i> are in the form of empirical or conceptual research; do not include non-academic proceedings, theses, or reports.
Search Keywords	“emotional intelligence AND collaborative leadership AND organizational sustainability”, “emotional intelligence AND HRM AND sustainability”, “collaborative leadership AND sustainable management”.

The search process is carried out using *Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT)* to improve the accuracy of the search results. All articles that meet the criteria are then fed into Mendeley's software for reference management and duplicate detection.

The stages of literature collection are carried out following the PRISMA standard which consists of four main stages (Page et al., 2021):

- a. Identification: An initial search found 312 articles from various databases.
- b. Screening: Filtering by title and abstract yielded 122 relevant articles.
- c. Eligibility: After reading the full content, 56 articles met methodological and topical criteria.
- d. Inclusion: After removing duplicates and articles that did not meet the scientific requirements, 45 final articles were obtained that were analyzed in this SLR.

This identification and selection process is visualized through the PRISMA flowchart, while publication metadata is processed using VOSviewer to map the distribution of keywords, publication year trends, and author collaboration networks.

Data analysis was carried out through two complementary approaches, namely bibliometric (quantitative) analysis and thematic synthesis (qualitative).

a. Bibliometric Analysis with VOSviewer

Bibliographic data from 45 articles were entered into *VOSviewer version 1.6.20* to generate three types of visual maps:

1. Co-occurrence Map (Keyword Mapping): shows the relationship between the main topics (*emotional intelligence, leadership, sustainability, HRM, innovation*).
2. Co-authorship Map (Author Collaboration): showcases international and national author collaboration networks.
3. Citation & Co-citation Map: identifies the most influential articles and journals in this field.

Bibliometric analysis allows the detection of *hot topics* and *emerging themes*, such as the relationship between *emotional intelligence* and *leadership for sustainability* (Hsu et al., 2022; Sajjad et al., 2024).

b. Thematic Synthesis Analysis

Each article is reviewed to extract:

1. key variables, conceptual models, methodologies, key outcomes, and managerial implications,
2. It is then classified into four major themes:
 - a) The Influence of *Emotional Intelligence* on Team Performance and Collaboration.
 - b) The role of *Collaborative Leadership* in organizational innovation.
 - c) Integration of *EI* and collaborative leadership towards organizational sustainability.
 - d) Challenges and opportunities for advanced research in the digital era and sustainability.

The analysis was carried out with an iterative approach and cross-checking between researchers (cross-checking) to ensure the objectivity of interpretation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Characteristics of the Found Study

An analysis of 45 scientific articles identified through *the Systematic Literature Review (SLR)* approach showed that research on *emotional intelligence, collaborative leadership, and organizational sustainability* experienced a significant increase between 2020 and 2024. This trend is in line with the increasing global awareness of sustainable development post-COVID-19 pandemic, where organizations are required to adapt quickly to social and technological changes (Page et al., 2021). Most of the studies come from countries with advanced economies such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, but in the last five years the contribution of research from Asia, especially Indonesia, has become increasingly prominent (Wijaya et al., 2025).

In terms of the field of study, the most publications were found in the disciplines of human resource management (HRM), organizational behavior, and leadership innovation. Topics that often appear include *employee engagement, organizational learning, and sustainable leadership* (Sajjad et al., 2024). The results of the *VOSviewer co-occurrence map* show three main clusters: (1) *emotional intelligence and HRM cluster*, (2) *collaborative leadership and innovation cluster*, and (3) *sustainability and organizational performance cluster*. The three clusters form a strong conceptual network and are interconnected through the keywords "collaboration" and "innovation" as a link between domains (Donthu et al., 2021).

The author's collaboration pattern also shows a closer cross-border relationship. Studies with authors from various institutions show a higher quality of citations than individual research. This indicates that academic collaboration across geographical boundaries is a major driving factor in the development of sustainable management science. Thus, the results of bibliometric mapping show that the integration between emotional intelligence, collaborative leadership, and organizational sustainability is a research theme that continues to develop and is relevant to the direction of global development.

3.2 Key Findings Related to Emotional Intelligence (KE)

Emotional intelligence (KE) has been shown to have a significant influence on leadership effectiveness and organizational performance. A study by Gerhardt and Mackey (2023) shows that KE plays a role in building *trust* and healthy communication between team members. Leaders with high KE are able to navigate conflicts with empathy, create an inclusive work environment, and increase *employee satisfaction*. Similar results were confirmed by Boyatzis and Goleman (2019) who stated that KE improves *self-awareness* and *relationship management*, which directly contributes to sustainable leadership.

In addition, KE also functions as a predictor in improving collective performance and *organizational resilience*. Research by Miao, Humphrey, and Qian (2017) found a positive correlation between KE and *work attitudes* such as loyalty and commitment to organizational goals. Other meta-analytical studies confirm that individuals with high KE are more adaptive to change and have better levels of creativity in problem-solving (Drigas & Papoutsis, 2023). This

makes KE not only an affective ability, but also a strategic competence in strengthening the competitiveness of the organization.

In sustainable organizations, KE has a social dimension that supports the application of ethical values and collective responsibility. Da Silva (2024) emphasized that KE strengthens *the sustainability mindset* of employees through increasing awareness of social and environmental balance. Thus, KE acts as a social capital that integrates psychological and managerial aspects to build a resilient and collaborative work culture.

3.3 Key Findings Regarding Collaborative Leadership

Collaborative leadership is a leadership style that encourages cross-functional participation and equal partnerships in achieving organizational goals. Based on the results of the thematic analysis, collaborative leaders act as facilitators, not authoritarians, who focus on *shared vision* and *collective learning* (Paredes-Saavedra, Boza, & Gutiérrez, 2024). Leaders like this are able to create an open organizational culture, where members feel safe to convey innovative ideas without fear of rejection or failure (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2023).

Collaborative leadership is also closely related to increasing organizational innovation. Fernando and Almeida (2022) found that collaborative leadership styles strengthen the organization's ability to produce creative solutions and adapt to changes in the business environment. Collaboration between units allows for faster information exchange and accelerates the strategic decision-making process (Calò, Montgomery, & Miller, 2024). This is reflected in the results of *the VOSviewer analysis*, where the "collaborative leadership" node has a direct relationship with the keywords "innovation" and "organizational performance".

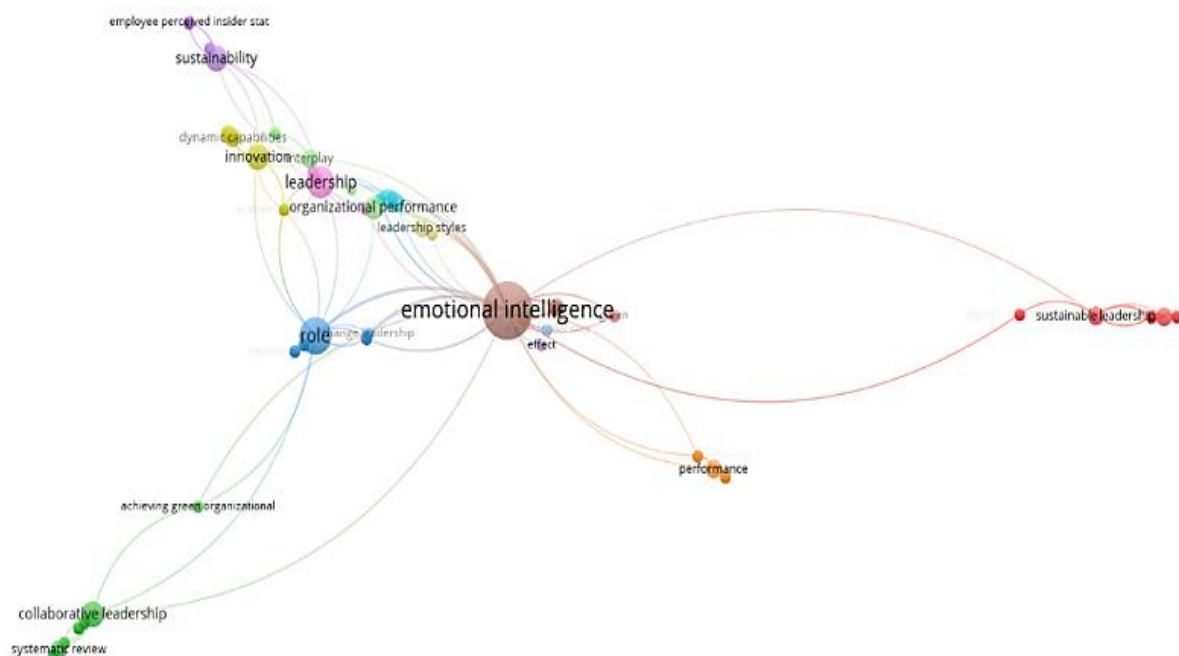


Figure 1. Network Visualization

Furthermore, collaborative leadership has been shown to increase *employee engagement* and psychological well-being. By creating a trust-based work environment, collaborative leaders strengthen social relationships and loyalty to the organization (Bianchi, Nasi, & Rivenbark, 2021). Therefore, in the context of sustainable development, collaborative leadership acts as a link between *human capital* and *organizational innovation*.

3.4 Key Findings Related to Organizational Sustainability

Organizational sustainability is understood as the ability of the organization to maintain long-term performance by paying attention to economic, social, and environmental balance (Elkington, 1998). The Boiral and Heras-Saizarbitoria (2020) study shows that sustainable organizations have leadership that instills ethical values and social responsibility into their business strategies. This integration strengthens *corporate social responsibility (CSR)* and improves the company's reputation in the eyes of stakeholders (Freeman, 2010).

In HR management, organizational sustainability also includes employee well-being and organizational fairness. Santos and Gonçalves (2022) emphasized that sustainable HR practices require a high KE so that leaders are able to balance organizational goals and human needs. Liu and Lee (2024) add that digital transformation and KE contribute to the creation of sustainable leadership in emerging markets. Thus, organizational sustainability is the result of the synergy between *leadership ethics*, *innovation*, and *emotional capability*.

The results of *the VOSviewer overlay visualization* show that research on organizational sustainability is increasing after 2020, characterized by yellow dominating the *sustainable leadership node*.

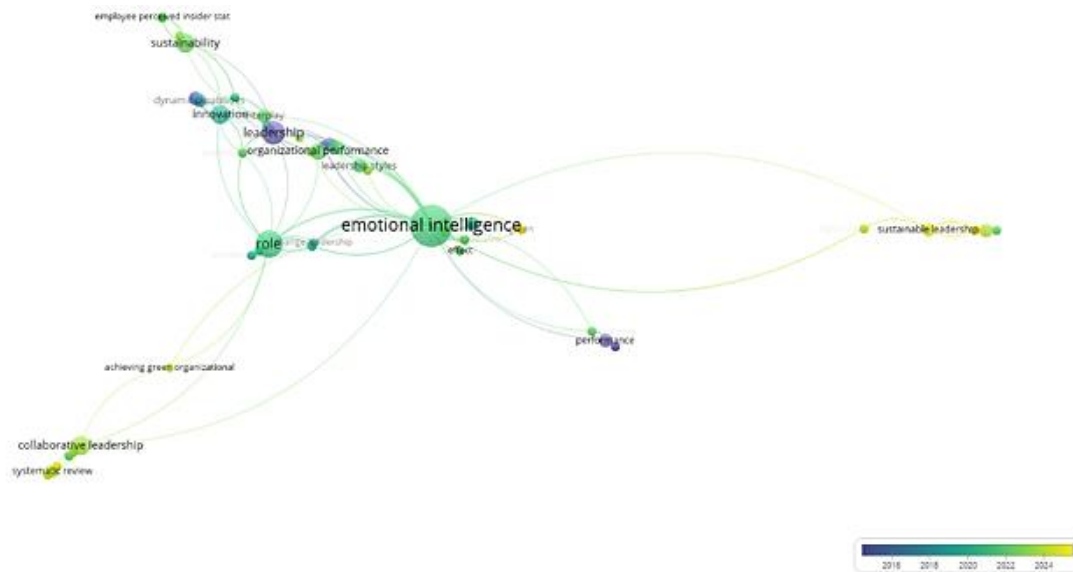


Figure 2. Overlay visualization

Figure 2 above shows that cutting-edge research tends to lead to the integration of the concepts of sustainability, innovation, and collaboration in leadership (Sajjad et al., 2024). Therefore, organizational sustainability in the 21st century is no longer a moral choice, but an adaptive strategy that determines the organization's survival in the face of global change.

3.5 Integrative Analysis

Integrative analysis confirms the strong link between emotional intelligence (KE), collaborative leadership (KK), and organizational sustainability (KO). This linkage model describes the mechanisms by which KE forms a psychological foundation that reinforces collaborative behavior, while KK acts as a social bridge that transforms KE into sustainable performance (Teece, 2018; Rego, Pina and Cunha, & Lopes, 2022). In this context, KE acts as *input*, KK as a *process*, and KO as an *outcome*.

The analysis of the results of VOSviewer density visualization shows that *emotional intelligence* is the most dense node (core hub), with the highest total link strength that connects the keywords *leadership*, *innovation*, and *sustainability*.

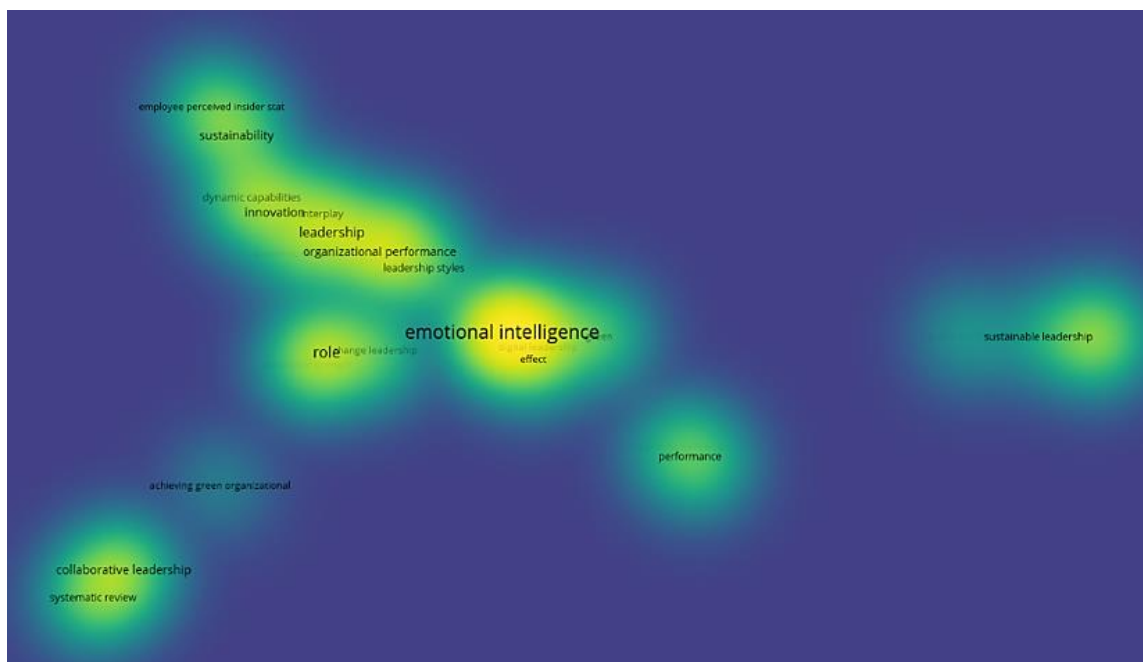


Figure 3. Density visualization

In figure 3. These findings suggest that KE serves as a key catalyst in building a sustainable leadership system (Hsu, Newman, & Badura, 2022). In addition, the strong link between "collaboration" and "innovation" confirms that sustainability can only be achieved through the synergy of these two aspects.

Research by Wijaya et al. (2025) proves that *KE-based sustainable leadership* and collaboration are able to increase competitiveness and organizational performance in the MSME and tourism sectors. This shows that the integrative model of KE, KK, KO is not only theoretically relevant but also applicable to the achievement of the national vision of *Golden Indonesia 2045*. Thus, strengthening the emotional and collaborative dimensions in leadership is a prerequisite for the creation of an innovative, resilient, and sustainable organization.

3.6 Conceptual Model of Proposal

Based on the results of literature synthesis and bibliometric analysis, this study proposes an integrative conceptual model that connects Emotional Intelligence (KE), Collaborative Leadership (KK), and Organizational Sustainability (KO). This model explains that KE is an intrapersonal foundation that forms collaborative behavior in leaders and members of the organization (Da Silva, 2024). KK acts as a social mechanism that transforms individual potential into collective synergy. Furthermore, knockout emerged as a result of this synergy in the form of a balance of economic, social, and environmental dimensions.

This model also answers the *research gap* found, namely the lack of integration between psychological and structural factors in the sustainable management literature (Tardin, Bido, & Da Silva, 2024). With a systemic approach, this model prioritizes a continuous causal relationship: KE, KK, KO, where each variable reinforces the next variable in the adaptive organizational learning cycle.

4. CONCLUSION

This research confirms that emotional intelligence (EI) and collaborative leadership (CL) have an important and complementary role in realizing organizational sustainability (OS). The results of the study of 45 articles show a chain relationship between EI, CL, OS, where EI becomes the psychological foundation that builds empathy and trust, while CL serves as a social mechanism that translates these values into collective actions oriented towards innovation and sustainability. The integration of EI and CL strengthens the organization's ability to adapt, innovate, and maintain a balance between economic, social, and environmental dimensions. Thus, the sustainability of an organization depends not only on business strategy, but also on the ability of leaders to manage emotions and collaboration effectively. These findings support the theory of Dynamic Capability and Stakeholder Theory as the foundation of sustainable management models.

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