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Innovative Work Behaviour, Emotional Intelligence, Creativity, and Organisational Climate in High Schools

Innovations are one of the driving forces leading towards sustainable future, and schools represent a space where young people learn to use and create innovations. A significant aspect for innovative behaviour is the organisational climate in which teachers feel free to create and innovate. The emotional intelligence of teachers is another essential factor enhancing job satisfaction and strengthening personal relationships. Consequently, organisational climate, teachers' emotional intelligence, and approach to education are crucial factors affecting teachers' motivation to be creative and incorporate innovative teaching in their everyday work. The study analyses the interaction between emotional intelligence, creativity, organisational climate, and innovative work behaviour in general education schools in Lithuania. 336 participants took part in the survey research to empirically investigate the relationship among the four variables: emotional intelligence, creativity, organisational climate, and innovative work behaviour. Results revealed that there is a positive relationship between teachers' emotional intelligence, academic creativity, and innovative work behaviour. The findings suggest that supporting teachers to increase their emotional intelligence may benefit their innovative work behaviour.

Keywords: innovative work behaviour, creativity, organisational climate, emotional intelligence, teachers.

Introduction

Emotional intelligence, creativity, critical thinking, and innovation are among the top 15 in-demand skills for 2025 listed in the World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report (2020). In a study by the World Economic Forum on the future of work (2020), as many as 94% of employers expect employees to acquire new skills at work. Therefore, many employees face significant challenges. What they studied at universities or other schools in the past will no longer be enough today. Significant challenges await not only employees but also children. Knowing mathematical formulas, grammar, and foreign languages is no

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longer enough. It is necessary to develop children's emotional intelligence, creativity, critical thinking, and understanding of sustainability value (Zhao & Watterson, 2021). However, is the Lithuanian education system, where the average age of teachers is more than 50 years old (Statistics Lithuania, 2022), ready for this?

The way educators approach creativity in schools has substantially changed due to how it is now recognised, fostered, and connected with real-world issues for rising workforces (Harris & De Bruin, 2018). The recent pandemic has created a unique opportunity to review the future direction of the whole education system, including inevitable changes in the curriculum (what to teach?), pedagogy (how to teach?), and organisation (where and when to teach?) (Zhao & Watterson, 2021). Creativity, in terms of novel and valuable approaches, will play a vital role in educational advancement, and teachers will deliver these transformations in the creative teaching process.

The value of creativity in educational policy, curriculum, learning environments, and school-industry partnerships is rising in many nations. Keeping the above in mind, the teachers' perceptions of creativity play a significant role in the implementation of creativity in education – as it can be both – initiator of creativity, as well as "the environment" that accepts or rejects those ideas (Bereczki & Karpati, 2018; Long et al., 2022). The relationships between an educator and their surroundings, their sense of self and others, are discussed in contemporary theories of creativity, which strongly emphasize the role that environmental context plays in diverse theories of creativity (Harris & De Brun, 2018; Brimhall & Mor Barak, 2018).

A critical social context influencing employee performance is how people interact with one another and their environment at work. Academics define employees' perceptions of the work environment as an organisational climate. Different organisational climates form different behaviour (Çelik et al., 2024). Literature reveals that organisational climate is an essential contextual condition for innovative work behaviour (Phatak & Mishra, 2019; Ren & Zhang, 2015). The success and efficiency of the educational system are greatly dependent on teachers. Therefore, it is essential to pay close attention to variables such as organisational climate, to maintain the educational system to modern advances (Chou et al., 2019).

Teaching is considered one of the most stressful professions, mainly because it entails regular social contact where the teacher must exert significant effort to control not only his or her emotions but also those of children, parents, and co-workers (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). Emotional intelligence enables teachers to handle daily stressors with tolerance and interpersonal relationships with empathy.

Further, the twenty-first century's labour market demands workers who actively participate in developing innovations (Andrabi & Rainayee, 2020; Shanker et al., 2017; Shin et al., 2017) and resolving challenging issues (Coun et al., 2021). Innovative work behaviour appears to be an emerging concept, with little research conducted that explores innovative teacher behaviour and factors that influence this behaviour (Lambriex-Schmitz

et al., 2020a; Thurlings et al., 2015; Zainal & Matore, 2019). Innovative work behaviour in general educational institutions is vital to keep up to date with a rapidly changing society, especially in the context of the AI era, upcoming new technologies, and insights about sustainable life-style (Lambriex-Schmitz et al., 2020a; Wang et al., 2024; Tan et al., 2025). Moreover, schools should set a good example and act as a starting point for citizens' more innovative behaviour so that society would develop their sustainability oriented mindset (Thurlings et al., 2015). In other words, innovative work behaviour is crucial for the sustained development of educational professions, school organisations, and the growth of the knowledge society. The primary role is played by the teachers of the educational institution, who directly transfer knowledge to children, teach them and shape their worldview. To adapt to the rapidly developing society and enhance educators' sustainability-oriented mindset that is transferred to students, the innovative and creative behaviour of each person in the education system is needed (Zainal & Matore, 2019).

The research problem. Is there any relationship between teachers' emotional intelligence, creativity, organisational climate and innovative work behaviour in general education schools in Lithuania?

The aim is to explore the relationship between teachers' emotional intelligence, creativity, organisational climate, and innovative work behaviour in general education schools in Lithuania.

The research object. This study investigates the relationship between teachers' emotional intelligence, creativity, organisational climate, and innovative work behaviour in high schools in Lithuania.

The research methodology. Quantitative research instrument – survey – is applied to empirically investigate the relationship among the four variables: emotional intelligence, creativity, organisational climate, and innovative work behaviour.

Literature overview and hypothesis development

Throughout the pandemic years of isolation, stress, anxiety, and uncertainty, emotional intelligence (EI) levels declined almost universally, making EI a timely and essential variable for this study (Miller, 2021). Individuals with higher EI traits/abilities are more resilient to environmental factors, are competent in using emotions to achieve desired outcomes, and maintain sustainable relationships with others (Bar-On, 1997; Goleman, 1995; Petrides & Furnham, 2001). Additionally, innovation relies on interpersonal social interactions (Nasifoglu Elidemir et al., 2020), which benefits from the capacity to understand and control self and others' emotions. Furthermore, in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's report (Care & Luo, 2016), interpersonal skills and creative and innovative thinking are the two primary areas on which educational policies will concentrate in the twenty-first century. However, there appears to be a research gap regarding the relationship of EI with innovative work behaviour (Abdullah et al., 2021). According to some studies, employees can benefit

from the positive effects of EI on organisational innovation (Zhou, 2008; Zhou & George, 2003; Jafri et al., 2016). However, the findings are inconsistent. For example, Khan et al. (2021) showed that EI does not affect the employee's behaviour in terms of innovation. To test our argument, we developed the following hypothesis:

H1. There is a positive correlation between teachers' emotional intelligence and innovative work behaviour in general education institutions in Lithuania.

The value of creativity in educational policy, curriculum, learning environments, and school-industry partnerships is rising in many nations, as creative individuals have the awareness and capacity to respond to crises in innovative ways (O'Hara, 2017). Creativity is perceived as a precondition to innovative work behaviour (Amabile, 2012). Professionals in the education sector are expected to embrace their creativity more than ever and demonstrate innovative work behaviour to modernise the learning process (Lambriex-Schmitz et al., 2020a). Creativity is one of the most desirable characteristics in the education sector, therefore, the academic literature recognises the need to further investigate it on the personal level as well correlation with innovation and other constructs (Nakano & Wechsler, 2018).

Although many scholars view creativity and innovation as somewhat similar concepts or as the start and finish of a multi-stage process (Nasifoglu Elidemir et al., 2020), a rising number of academics disagree with this oversimplified interpretation of the relationship between the two concepts (Nakano & Wechsler, 2018). The main differences are that creativity requires complete uniqueness in terms of ideas, while innovation requires originality to be relevant to a particular situation or environment.

Another question in literature is whether innovation results from extrinsic incentives or the need to defy accepted ways of doing things, whereas creativity is driven by internal motivation (Nakano & Wechsler, 2018). Emotional intelligence is thought to include motivation (Goleman et al., 2002). Moreover, creativity is found to be generated by emotions (Xu et al., 2019). EI and creativity seem to be positively linked. However, there is some uncertainty and a lack of consensus on this matter. Speculatively, EI reflects the ability to reach a compromise and produce normative solutions. At the same time, creativity requires breaking from routines and thinking unorthodoxly. The studies find that the positive effect of high EI benefits the idea generation process and empowers the creative process's persistence (Furnham, 2016). Based on this, it is possible to hypothesise that creativity may have significant implications as a mediator between innovative work behaviour (IWB) and emotional intelligence. Therefore, we formulated the following hypothesis:

H2. Teachers' academic creativity has a mediating effect on emotional intelligence and innovative work behaviour relationship in general education institutions in Lithuania.

A literature analysis reveals that organisational climate (OC) is an essential contextual condition for IWB (Phatak & Mishra, 2019; Ren & Zhang, 2015). The success and efficiency of the educational

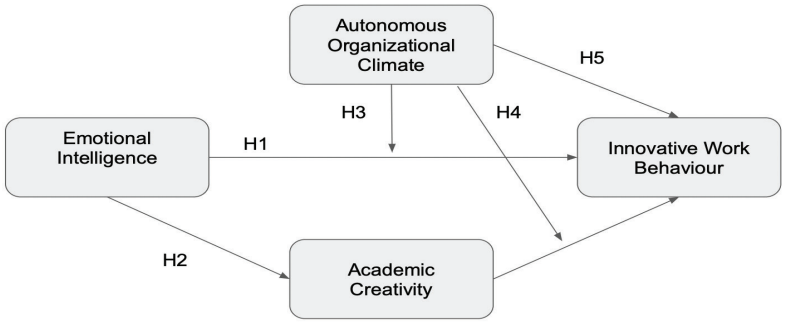

Fig. 1. **Conceptual model**

system are greatly dependent on teachers. Therefore, it is essential to pay close attention to variables such as the OC to maintain the educational system's relevance to modern advances (Chou et al., 2019). OC determines the behaviour of teachers and their further actions in the work environment (Yusrina, 2022). Research shows that OC improvement affects teachers' work efficiency, EI, and professional competence. Researchers have already noticed that the OC could impact employee engagement and behaviour during work (Yusrina, 2022; Nguyen et al, 2023). Thus, based on the proceeding arguments, we propose the following hypotheses:

H3. An autonomous organisational climate moderates the correlation between teachers' emotional intelligence and innovative work behaviour in general education institutions in Lithuania.

H4. An autonomous organisational climate moderates the correlation between teachers' academic creativity and innovative work behaviour in general education institutions in Lithuania.

H5. There is a positive correlation between an autonomous organisational climate and teachers' innovative work behaviour in general education institutions in Lithuania. (Figure 1).

Methodology

Survey research is used to empirically investigate the relationship among the four variables: emotional intelligence, creativity, organisational climate, and innovative work behaviour. Data was obtained by distributing questionnaires online across the country's private and public schools, addressing educators who teach grades in general education schools. To contact the intended audience, 592 emails were sent. Some emails were addressed to school offices asking to share them among teachers (incorporating the snowball technique), and some were emailed to teachers. A total of 359 respondents' answers were collected, including those teachers who were approached in person or by phone, requesting to fill out the questionnaire and share it with their colleagues. The final number of valid surveys was 336 after 23 filled-out surveys were disqualified due to inaccuracy or missing information.

The original scales used to compose the questionnaire are Schutte Self Report

Emotional Intelligence Test (Schutte et al., 1998), Kaufman Domains of Creativity Scale (Kaufman, 2012), Organisational Climate Measure (Patterson et al., 2005), and multidimensional Innovative Work Behaviour (Lambriex-Schmitz et al., 2020b).

Data analysis and results

The Shapiro-Wilk normality test was used to determine whether a sample is likely to come from a normal distribution. Cronbach's alpha reliability test was used to measure the internal consistency of scales. A T-test was used to ascertain whether two groups differ in how they interpret research variables. Pearson's correlation coefficient was applied to determine the value of how strongly and in which direction two variables are related. SPSS macro PROCESS v4.1 by Andrew F. Hayes was used to determine the mediating and moderating effects of study variables. Multiple linear regression was applied to measure explanatory factors (independent variables) to predict the results of a response variable (dependent variable).

The Shapiro-Wilk test was performed to determine data normality for the variables used in this study before selecting appropriate statistical methods. However, the Shapiro-Wilk test is significant at $p < 0.05$ for all study variables, and the skewness and kurtosis range from -1 to 1, indicating little non-normality in the data. In other words, the normality test was close to the normality distribution, which proves that parametric criteria can be applied to these scales (George & Mallery, 2010). Each scale was tested for reliability, with an overall Cronbach's alpha ranging between $\alpha = .770$ and $\alpha = .855$. Cronbach's alpha of the emotional intelligence scale is $\alpha = .885$, autonomous organisational climate – $\alpha = .770$, innovative work behaviour – $\alpha = .855$, and scholarly creativity – $\alpha = .771$.

Demographic data. Respondents' gender, age, tenure, teaching subject, and type of school, whether they teach in a private or public school, were checked. The distribution between males and females was 7.9% and 91.8%, respectively. Also, 0.3% indicated their gender as "other." 60% of respondents listed their age as 50+ years old. Only 2% of respondents indicated their ages between 20 and 29 years. The remaining 38% of respondents were between 30 and 49 years old. 62.6% of teachers have been employed by the same school for ten years, with the remaining 37.4% working in the same institution for less than ten years. Comparing teachers from private and public schools, those working in private schools make up 8,2% of the respondents.

The respondents indicated that the subjects they teach are very diverse, and no one subject made up a more significant part worth paying attention to. More than 22% of respondents said they teach Lithuanian or foreign languages, 9.5% mathematics, and 5.3% history. Since this control factor failed to demonstrate meaningful relationships with other variables upon evaluation, it was excluded from further investigation.

Each variable was tested among all control factors (gender, age, tenure, type of school) of the study, looking for statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$). The descriptive data was determined by comparing two demographic groups' views on the research variables in terms of means and standard deviation using

the T-test. Only those findings that differentiate between two grouping variables are presented below.

Emotional intelligence descriptive data. Statistically significant differences were found when comparing the emotional intelligence of women and men (Table 1). In general, women's EI was higher than men's ($p < 0.05$) (means 3.06 and 2.94, respectively). Women have higher emotion perception, managing others' emotions and emotion utilisation ($p < 0.05$). The managing own emotions dimension failed to demonstrate significance ($p > 0.05$), indicating no difference in this dimension across genders. Managing others' emotions had the lowest means for males ($m = 2.7740$) and females ($m = 2.9848$) compared to other EI dimensions. Age, school type, and tenure do not statistically affect EI.

Teachers' academic creativity descriptive data. Statistically significant differences were found when comparing the younger than 50-year-olds and older than 50 years estimates of academic creativity. Those over 50 years old were higher than those under 50 years old ($p < 0.05$) (means 2.77 and 2.67, respectively). Gender, school type, and tenure do not affect academic creativity ($p > 0.05$). Data is presented in Table 2.

Autonomous organisational climate descriptive data. Statistically significant differences were found between private and public schools when comparing teachers' autonomy. The autonomy of teachers in private schools was higher than the autonomy of teachers in public schools ($p < 0.05$) (means 3.05 and 2.75, respectively) (see Table 3). Gender, age, and tenure do not affect teacher perceptions of organisational climate ($p > 0.05$).

Table 1. **Teachers' emotional intelligence**

Factor	Determinant	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	p
Overall EI	Women	302	3.0643	.28239	2.065	326	.040
	Men	26	2.9418	.37136			
Managing Own Emotions	Women	302	3.1435	.34841	-.685	326	.494
	Men	26	3.1923	.34933			
Emotion Perception	Women	302	3.0760	.34644	2.450	326	.015
	Men	26	2.8957	.49606			
Managing Others' Emotions	Women	302	2.9848	.34027	3.003	326	.003
	Men	26	2.7740	.37918			
Emotion Utilization	Women	302	3.0318	.37223	2.119	326	.035
	Men	26	2.8654	.50776			

Table 2. **Teachers' academic creativity**

Factor	Determinant	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	p
Academic creativity	Age under 50	132	2.6762	.34894	-2.332	328	.020
	Age above 50	198	2.7662	.34008			

Table 3. **Autonomous organisational climate**

Factor	Determinant	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	p
Autonomous organisational climate	Public school	302	2.7454	.53893	-2.824	327	.005
	Private school	27	3.0494	.49943			

Innovative work behaviour descriptive data. Statistically significant differences were found when comparing the innovative work behaviour of private and public-school teachers. In private schools, teachers' innovative work behaviour was higher than in public schools ($p < 0.05$) (means 2.94 and 2.79, respectively). Gender, age, and tenure do not affect teachers' innovativeness. ($p > 0.05$). It was observed that there is a statistically significant difference between men and women regarding the IWB dimension of idea realisation. The mean of idea realisation of female teachers was higher than that of male teachers ($p < 0.05$) (means 2.94 and 2.79, respectively). Opportunity exploration and idea generation have no influence when comparing gender, age, type of school, and experience at school (see Table 4).

Hypotheses Testing

H1. There is a positive correlation between teachers' emotional intelligence and innovative work behaviour in general education institutions in Lithuania.

In order to test H1, the Pearson correlation was used to determine the strengths and direction of the relationship between EI and IWB. Pearson correlation coefficient proved a statistically significant, strong positive link between emotional intelligence and innovative work behaviour, $r(336) = 0.638$, $p < 0.001$. All correlations between the dimensions of the two variables were determined to be significant, as $p < 0.001$ (see Table 5). The strongest positive association was found between managing one's own emotions and idea realisation $r(336) = 0.593$, $p < 0.001$, compared to other EI dimensions. However, another EI dimension, managing others' emotions, has a stronger positive link to the IWB dimension of idea generation $r(336) = 0.526$, $p < 0.001$. Also, managing others' emotions dimension shows a weak positive link to opportunity exploration $r(335) = 0.246$, $p < 0.001$. As a result, H1 can be confirmed statistically. There is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and innovative work behaviour.

H2 Teachers' academic creativity has a mediating effect on the emotional intelligence

Table 4. **Teachers' innovative work behaviour**

Factor	Determinant	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	p
General IWB	Public	302	2.7924	.33610	-2.118	327	.035
	Private	27	2.9371	.38191			
Idea Realisation	Women	302	2.9439	.36637	2.058	326	.040
	Men	26	2.7885	.40738			

Table 5. **Correlation of dimensions of emotional intelligence and dimensions of innovative work behaviour**

Dimension		IWB Opportunity Exploration	IWB Idea Generation	IWB Idea Realisation
EI Managing Own Emotions	Pearson Correlation	.179**	.433**	.593**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	<.001	<.001
	N	335	336	336
EI Emotion Perception	Pearson Correlation	.193**	.335**	.477**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	335	336	336
EI Managing Others' Emotions	Pearson Correlation	.246**	.526**	.560**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	335	336	336
EI Emotion Utilisation	Pearson Correlation	.210**	.447**	.578**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	335	336	336

and innovative work behaviour relationship in general education institutions in Lithuania.

Using SPSS macro PROCESS v4.1 by Andrew F. Hayes model 4, it was tested whether EI influences the mediator academic creativity, which then affects IWB. Also, mediator academic creativity should be included with EI and / or IWB (indirect path). Moreover, it determines whether the path between EI and IWB is statistically significant (direct path).

An analysis was conducted to ascertain whether there is a relationship between EI and academic creativity (path A) and whether there is a relationship between academic creativity and IWB (path B). Path C is a direct relationship, which says that EI influences IWB directly, which was also tested. Path A = EI -> Academic creativity. Path B = Academic creativity -> IWB. Path C = EI -> IWB.

After performing the Path A analysis, it was discovered that there is a direct effect between the predictor variable, emotional intelligence (p-value = .000), and the outcome variable, academic creativity. It is significant because the p-value is less than or equal to 0.05. Looking further at the outcome of innovative work behaviour, it is observed that it is significant because there is an effect between emotional intelligence (p-value = .000) and academic creativity (p-value = .000), and the p-value is less than or equal to 0.05 (see Figure 2). Finally, direct and indirect relationships between variables were tested. The indirect effect of EI on IWB via the mediator variable, academic creativity, with a point effect calculated at 0.312. Furthermore, since BootSE (0.0398), BootLLCI (0.235), and BootULCI (0.3913) do not exclude zero, academic creativity mediates. Path A = EI -> Academic creativity (coeff = 0.729, p = .000). Path B = Academic creativity -> IWB (coeff = 0.427, p = .000). Path C = EI -> IWB (coeff = 0.439, p = .000).

Hypothesis H2, that teachers' emotional intelligence can affect innovative work behaviour through the mediator of

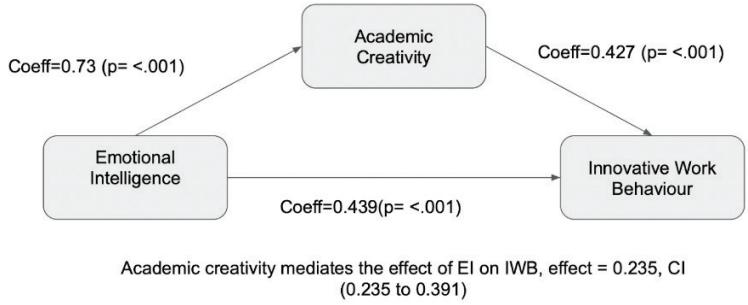

Fig. 2. **Mediation coefficients**

academic creativity in general education institutions of Lithuania, was confirmed (Figure 2).

H3. An autonomous organisational climate moderates the correlation between teachers' emotional intelligence and innovative work behaviour in general education institutions in Lithuania.

H4. An autonomous organisational climate moderates the correlation between teachers' scholarly creativity and innovative work behaviour in general education institutions in Lithuania.

The analysis was performed on whether an autonomous organisational climate moderates the correlation between emotional intelligence and teachers' innovative work behaviour in general education institutions of Lithuania (H3) and between academic creativity and innovative work behaviour (H4). Moderation analysis was performed using SPSS macro PROCESS v4.1 by Andrew F. Hayes model 1 on innovative work behaviour with emotional intelligence and autonomous organisational climate as a predictor (H3) and academic creativity with IWB when autonomous organisational climate as a predictor (H4). During the analysis, an attempt was made to ascertain whether the relationship between two variables (EI as an independent variable -> IWB as a dependent variable and academic creativity as an independent variable -> IWB as a dependent variable) is constant or dependent on the third variable – autonomous organisational climate. That is, whether there is moderation. No moderation was observed in both cases, therefore, hypotheses H3 and H4 were not confirmed.

H5. There is a positive correlation between an autonomous organisational climate and teachers' innovative work behaviour in general education institutions in Lithuania.

In order to test H5, the Pearson correlation was used to determine the strengths and direction of the relationship between autonomous organisational climate and teachers' innovative work behaviour. Pearson correlation coefficient proved the link between concepts to be statistically insignificant with $p<0.001$. However, when the same statistical test was applied using dimensions of IWB, it showed a significant ($p < 0.05$) weak negative correlation with the opportunity exploration dimension. Other IWB dimensions did not show a statistically significant correlation to

autonomous organisational climate (Table 6). Therefore, H5 was rejected.

Multiple regression models were developed and tested to identify predictors for innovative work behaviour to gain a deeper understanding of the relationships between the research variables. The autonomous organisational climate was disregarded as a predictor because it did not exhibit a meaningful association with IWB. Only a tiny percentage of the dependent variable could be explained by the control factors (up to 3,6%). Only more important findings are acknowledged in the multiple regression results shown below.

Multiple linear regression analysis using EI and academic creativity as predictors and general IWB as a dependent. After primary analysis, which found strong positive correlations between EI and IWB ($r(336) = 0.638$, $p < 0.001$) and creativity and IWB ($r(336) = 0.662$, $p < 0.001$), it was decided to conduct a more thorough investigation to determine whether independent variables may predict the dependent variable. Multiple regression analysis was used to test if EI and creativity are predictors for IWB. The overall regression was statistically significant ($F(2,333=183.896$, $p<.001$) with an R^2 of =.525. EI and scholarly creativity (the independent variables)

Table 6. **Correlation between autonomous organisational climate and innovative work behaviour**

Correlation		IWB	IWB Opportunity Exploration
Autonomous OC	Pearson Correlation	.094	-.108*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.084	.049
	N	336	335

*correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 7. **Consolidated results of tested hypotheses**

Raised hypotheses	Result
H1: There is a positive correlation between teachers' emotional intelligence and innovative work behaviour in general education institutions in Lithuania	Accepted
H2: Teachers' academic creativity has a mediating effect on the emotional intelligence and innovative work behaviour relationship in general education institutions in Lithuania.	Accepted
H3: An autonomous organisational climate moderates the correlation between teachers' emotional intelligence and innovative work behaviour in general education institutions in Lithuania.	Rejected
H4: An autonomous organisational climate moderates the correlation between teachers' scholarly creativity and innovative work behaviour in general education institutions in Lithuania.	Rejected
H5: There is a positive correlation between an autonomous organisational climate and teachers' innovative work behaviour in general education institutions in Lithuania.	Rejected

significantly predicts IWB (the dependent variable). The higher the participants perceived EI ($\beta = .37$, $t = 7.81$, $p = .001$) and academic creativity ($\beta = .43$, $t = 9.08$, $p = .001$), the more likely to exhibit IWB. So, independent variables (EI and creativity together) explain 52% (adjusted R square) of the variance of the dependable variable (IWB). The results of hypotheses testing are presented in Table 7.

Discussion

Existing research on teachers' emotional intelligence, academic creativity and general education schools' climate impact on teachers' innovative work behaviour is scarce. In this paper, the research was conducted to enhance our current comprehension of individual teachers' factors and schools' climate in promoting teachers' innovative work behaviour that can contribute to a healthy, ethical, and sustainable society creation.

A significant finding of this research is the positive association between emotional intelligence (EI) and innovative work behaviour (IWB). This finding supports previous research results from high-tech (Shojaei & Siuki, 2014), banking (Malik, 2022), and manufacturing (Abdullah et al., 2021) industries. However, it is essential to highlight that this study confirms a strong positive correlation between these constructs in the education sector. The results show that teachers' IWB is positively and significantly affected by all four elements of EI (managing own emotions, emotion perception, managing others' emotions, emotion utilisation). It is consistent with other researchers' findings on EI dimensionality (Malik, 2022; Shojaei & Siuki, 2014). Managing others' emotions shows the strongest correlation with the IWB concept compared with other EI dimensions. It implies that others' emotional control skills may facilitate favourable interpersonal results in delivering innovations. The empirical research findings, however, imply that the least developed aspect of the sample audience's EI is managing others' emotions. Collaboration and participation in decision-making among teachers are considered essential factors for practising IWB (Tura & Akbasli, 2022). It is also in line with the findings by Stoffers et al. (2018) that the introduction, promotion, and realisation of new ideas, involvement, and performance in diverse working groups appear to be crucial. Therefore, the capacity to understand and control others' emotions facilitates teamwork among teachers while developing novel sustainability-focused ideas. Additionally, studies have shown that people get along with their coworkers better when they have higher EI (Schlegel et al., 2017). As a result, coworkers can share knowledge more frequently, encouraging the development of novel ideas and creative solutions to workplace difficulties. These findings signify that interaction and communication among the institution's employees should be emphasised as a critical feature of IWB (Gkontelos et al., 2022).

Some interesting observations can also be made by evaluating the IWB concept and its dimensions concerning control variables. For example, gender positively impacts idea realisation, with women reporting themselves higher than men in this dimension. Literature on this finding is inconsistent with

Jannsen's (2000) reporting that there is no significant correlation between these two variables. On the other hand, Lambriex-Schmitz et al. (2020) in their research on teachers' IWB, found that women rate themselves higher on all concept dimensions. According to this study's findings, this can be linked to the fact that women have higher EI skills. In academic literature, it is widely acknowledged that women tend to possess overall higher EI (Jafri et al., 2016; O'Connor et al., 2019).

Another interesting finding of this research is the mediating effect of academic creativity in emotional intelligence and innovative work behaviour relationship. Previous research exploring the link between EI and creativity in different samples – nurses, travel agents and salespeople (Xu et al., 2019), also found significant correlation. People with high EI are better at maintaining and utilising positive affect, which has been shown to foster creativity by broadening the spectrum of idea exploration and generation. This research extended current literature by exploring the mediating effect of creativity between EI and IWB. The empirical research showed that EI is positively associated with innovative work behaviour via creativity in the educational sector. One of the reasons is that emotionally intelligent people can transform negative emotions into strategies that focus on change. These results are consistent with previous studies, e.g., Afida et al. (2013) demonstrated in their study that with creativity and innovative work behaviour, teachers can achieve complex educational goals, develop critical skills in students, and help students function more responsibly in today's turbulent world.

This study found that teacher age is important in studying academic creativity. The findings showed that teachers over fifty years old are more creative than younger teachers. One of the more important findings is that teachers over the age of fifty have significantly higher levels of academic creativity compared to teachers under the age of fifty. This result is consistent with a previous study by Lambriex-Schmitz et al. (2020b), which indicated that teachers who are older score themselves higher in the IWB's creativity stage (opportunity exploration and idea generation). This conclusion can be explained by the fact that more mature Generation X employees have the necessary knowledge and competence, which leads to creative and innovative activities in their educational work.

Earlier research shows that teachers' perceptions of the work environment significantly impact their behaviour and attitudes. According to the literature, job autonomy is a significant predicate of an employee's creativity and IWB (Ozdemir & Şahin, 2019). Employees with autonomy in their jobs can try various working styles and approaches. It allows one to generate ideas and refine them through the use of these ideas. However, this study's results imply no correlation between autonomous OC and IWB. It was hypothesized that autonomous OC moderates the relationship between EI and IWB and the relationship between academic creativity and IWB. None of these hypotheses was confirmed. The results are surprising as they are misaligned with previous research in other sectors, such as manufacturing (Parker et al., 2006; Patterson et al., 2009). The results of this study show a more complicated

relationship between autonomous OC and its impacts on innovative work behaviour. The reason behind this could be that since teacher autonomy is a complicated factor, it may only function well in conjunction with other elements like a strong incentive structure and a clear accountability framework (Dou et al., 2016). This study added to the body of literature, particularly in the educational sector context, even if it could not replicate the moderating effects of autonomous organisational climate as in previous research in other industries.

Another significant observation can be made, drawing from the results, contradicting the hypothesis that autonomous OC has a weak negative correlation to opportunity exploration. There is no supporting evidence for this finding in the literature. However, the presumption can be made that autonomous OC prevents the feeling of involvement and collaboration, which contributes to the scores of the IWB (Lambriex-Schmitz et al., 2020b). On the other hand, this finding contradicts claims by Ozdemir & Sahin (2019), where the authors find that teachers' job autonomy is related to enhanced communication at work, a precondition of innovative practices. Once again, turning to the recent qualitative study on factors that affect IWB among teachers by Tura & Akbasli (2022), knowledge sharing, fostering cooperation, and collaboration are among those organisational factors that the educators themselves appreciated. Also, Lambriex-Schmitz et al. (2020a) add to this, stating that wide social networks within the school environment positively affect IWB. An autonomous climate may hinder teacher interactions to a certain extent, inclining toward a more individualistic outlook.

It is worth noticing that academic creativity has shown a weak positive correlation to an autonomous OC. The literature supports the evidence of a relationship between perceived autonomy and academic creativity. Spiegelaere et al. (2014) found that autonomy greatly influences employee creativity, encouraging employees to offer suggestions for enhancing innovative growth. Similarly, Messmann et al. (2017) state that autonomy gives employees a feeling of control over their job and is likely to boost their intrinsic motivation, which is a key driver of creativity. This study hypothesised that an autonomous OC might moderate the linkage between academic creativity and IWB as an encouraging factor to implement creative ideas. Although there is a weak positive correlation between these variables, the autonomous OC does not moderate the relationship between academic creativity and IWB. With changing working conditions (sudden introduction of remote work) in the education sector, employees' perceptions of the work environment might shift. Recent years have been characterised by exclusion and isolation. Thus, it stands to reason that cooperation and communication among coworkers could be viewed as more valuable than ever, while autonomy may be perceived as given.

Conclusions and Implications

The findings of this study suggest that supporting teachers to increase their emotional intelligence may benefit their innovative work behaviour. According to empirical studies in the educational sector, EI competencies can be learned or improved by training (Maillefer & Saklofske, 2018, Mehler et al., 2024). It was found that EI training affected changes in teaching strategies, intrinsic motivation, and workplace communication, which can be linked to the IWB. These results have been observed across a wide range of populations (Maillefer & Saklofske, 2018). Given the present health and geopolitical crises, which may affect teachers' emotional states and, in turn, their ability to innovate, such training would be especially timely.

The demographic analysis disclosed that private school teachers report higher levels of innovative work behaviour. Even though some retrains may be enforced by state organisations, which may obstruct the IWB, managers of public schools should be on the lookout for best practices used in private schools regarding innovations. Administration of public schools could arrange for day trips to private schools to observe, learn and then impart knowledge. Also, public schools should aim to attract professionals from private schools and create space for their potential to unravel. In general, considerable emphasis should be given to sharing and communication among educational institutions with a common goal of increasing innovative teaching methods throughout the country.

Furthermore, it was discovered that academic creativity mediates the association between EI and IWB. Therefore, managers and recruiters need to focus on creativity and other personal attributes, such as EI, while looking for new talent in the education field. Employers who want to select creative and emotionally intelligent individuals should use behavioural interviewing approaches in addition to specially developed tests to measure creativity or emotional intelligence. Further to the requirement process, there should not be any discrimination during the hiring process because the results indicated that older generations (those aged 50 and older) are more creative, even though this group makes up the majority of educators now engaged in the Lithuanian educational sector.

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