

The Influence of Emotional Intelligence and Organizational Climate on Creativity and Entrepreneurial Orientation of Small to Medium-Sized Enterprises

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Abstract

These new evidences indicate that emotional intelligence and organizational climate have an important role in generating creativity and organizational entrepreneurial orientation, however, so far little work has been done to prove this. Hence, the aim of this study was to investigate the influence of emotional intelligence and organizational climate on employee creativity and an entrepreneurial orientation among managers. A sample of 181 managers was selected among 345 SMEs' in Bushehr. The conceptual model was plotted based on theoretical studies of emotional intelligence, employee creativity, organizational climate and entrepreneurial orientation. Then, a questionnaire was designed and the data were collected. Finally, by using the structural equation modeling and AMOS Software, the hypotheses were investigated and it was determined that emotional intelligence had a positive impact on organizational climate and employee creativity. Also, the organizational climate influences the employee creativity and employee creativity in turn has an effect on entrepreneurial orientation. At the end, the recommendations are offered.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Entrepreneurial orientation, Organizational climate, Creativity, Small to medium-sized enterprises

Introduction

Today Entrepreneurial as the engine of growth and economic development can have an important role in economic growth of countries, job creation and social welfare (Amin Bidakhti, 2009). Entrepreneurial is the process of creating something new and valuable with spending time and effort along with the assumption of psychological, social and financial risks, and obtaining financial and non-financial rewards (Kalathayi et al, 2010). In this regard, the creation of small and medium enterprises (SME) and the supporting them is one of the main priorities of the economic development programs in many developed countries, since the SMEs are important in creating entrepreneurial opportunities and provides the perfect platform for worker's creativity (Bidakhti, 2009). Creativity is a mental process which includes creating new concepts and ideas and it needs a proper environment which provides a favorable mixture of different factors in a given situation in order to achieve an essential goal (Neshat et al., 2012). In organizations with consistent organizational climate and supportive of entrepreneurial culture and creativity, all members of the organization are committed and adherent to the new initiatives (Kazemi, et al., 2012). In the current era, in response to the rapidly changing environment, a new concept has entered in management domain called emotional intelligence and has become one of the major organizational merits. Salovey and Mayer (1990) introduced the meaning of emotional intelligence as a form of social intelligence which includes the ability to control your own and other's feelings and emotions and also the ability to distinguish them and using this information as a guide for person's thought and action. Emotional intelligence has been the target of many different areas of study which a lot of researches, including entrepreneurial literature especially in the field of SMEs, support it. However, so far there is only limited knowledge about company entrepreneurial and how to promote

entrepreneurial behavior, which is of considerable importance for entrepreneurship researchers. Accordingly, the present study examined the impact of emotional intelligence and entrepreneurship in SMEs in Bushehr city. The study also examined the two factors associated with entrepreneurial orientation, including organizational climate and employee creativity. Therefor the aim of this paper is to explain the impact of emotional intelligence and organizational climate in employee's creativity and entrepreneurial in SMEs city of Bushehr.

Theoretical Foundations and Research Background

Emotional Intelligence: The authors have presented different definitions for it according to the features and functions of emotional intelligence:

According to Kamalian and Fazel (2011), emotional intelligence is the ability to identify feelings and emotions of one's own and others so that one can have effective relationship with others using them. According to Salovey and Mayer (1990), emotional intelligence is the ability to evaluate, express and regulate one's and other's emotions and efficient use of them.

Scientific roots of emotional intelligence can be found in Intelligence Theory of Thorndike (1920), this type of intelligence is connected to the ability to understand yourself and others, better understanding of your own feelings and emotions and compatibility with people and the environment. In 1980, first Rivonbaran used emotional gain for the assessment of non-cognitive abilities and provided the first test in this case. Finally, two American psychologists named Salovey and Mayer (1990) presented an acceptable definition of emotional intelligence in an article with the same title. In that article, they determined emotional intelligence scientifically as a Testable and scalable intelligence. These two researchers used the term "emotional intelligence" as a form of social intelligence which includes the ability to control feelings and emotions of one's own and other's and also ability to distinguish them and using these information as a guide for one's thought and actions.

Organizational Climate: Several definitions have been proposed for Organizational climate like; the environment in which they work and reflect the attitude of the staff and the way the organization is managed. By another definition: the common perception of the organizational policy, habits and formal or informal procedure. It also includes a value system, which specifies the manner of doing job and what behaviors to be rewarded. Organizational climate is considered referred to perceptions, feelings and values of staff in workspace, also includes the commitment to the organization, sense of belonging and trust to organization, confidence and loyalty that is affected by many factors such as physical space, governing institutional rules the behavioristic characteristics of people in the workplace (Kazemi et al., 2012)

Creativity: Numerous and diverse definitions are provided for the creativity. The Farid (2009) a creative act is an act which has two criteria of novelty and appropriateness. The most common meaning of creativity is that the individuals offer innovative and different intellectual. Most of psycho experts agree on this subject that the creativity points to new and valuable achievements. Based on this, the first criterion for creative work is its novelty. (Alvani & Rodgarnejad, 2010). Of course, there are different views about the meaning of novelty. Some researchers believe that an idea or achievement is new if at least it is novel in its creator's perspective. But some others believe that the term novel can be used for cases that have enormous differences with ideas and achievements up to that time. In addition to the novelty, the achievement should be efficient and valuable. This means that it should fit and be useful with respect to the cognitive demands of the situation. In fact, the volubility is an essential piece of creativity that enables us to bring new and efficient achievements out of creativity range (Farid, 1388).

Entrepreneurial: Entrepreneurial is a process of innovation and using opportunities with great effort and persistence and associated with accepting financial, mental and social risks which is of course motivated by financial gain, success, personal satisfaction and independence and entrepreneurs are people who create new jobs which did not exist before. They mobilize resources to take advantage of opportunities for creating new businesses (Alvani & Rodagrnejad, 2010).

SMEs: the wide range of studies about SMEs causes variety of definitions to be presented for these kinds of units based on the structure of age, population, culture and level of development in countries. The comparative investigations of these units in different countries show their enormous structural similarities. However, one cannot offer any Single and Identical definition for them. Some of the major indicators that are generally used in the definition of SMEs are: number of employees, capital, total assets, sales volume and production capacity. The definition of SMEs in Iran has a great diversity due to the multiplicity of decision making centers. Based on the definition of Iran's Ministry of Mines and Industry, SMEs are industrial and service sectors (urban and rural) that have fewer than 50 workers.

Statistical Center of Iran has classified businesses into four categories that include: businesses with 1 to 9 employees, 10 to 49 workers, 50 to 99 workers and more than a hundred workers. Despite the apparent similarities with the definition of the Europe Union, but Statistical Center of Iran classifies only the businesses with less than 10 employees among SMEs and all other business are considered as large industrial Factories (Qasemi & Elmimoghaddam, 1388).

Table (1) presents the criteria for defining small and medium enterprises from the Europe Union point of view.

Table 1: Definition of small and medium enterprises from the Europe Union perspective

Definition of enterprise	Number of employees
minor companies	Less than 10 employees
Small companies	Between 10 to 49 employees
Medium-sized companies	Between 50 to 249 employees
Big companies	250 employees and more

Emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial orientation: Many studies have shown that emotional intelligence has a significant impact on several variables, but few studies are done on the direct relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational entrepreneurial orientation. Researchers such as Awad and Kadaali (2012) found in a study on small and medium-sized enterprises in Jordan that the emotional intelligence of managers has a direct and positive impact on entrepreneurial orientation of such firms. In another study of Yaghoubi and Narouee (2011), on industrial workers the province Sistan Baluchestan, they observed that employees with high emotional intelligence have a high propensity to entrepreneurship. Mobini and colleagues (2012) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial orientation and perceived that emotional intelligence and personality traits of staff are effective on corporation's entrepreneurial orientation. On the other side, Hadizadeh and colleagues (2009) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence of employee and entrepreneurship orientation of organizations affiliated to the National Iranian Oil Company and concluded that a positive relationship between aspects of entrepreneurial orientation and dimensions of emotional intelligence. Pachulia and Henderson (2009) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence of employee and entrepreneurship orientations of SMEs in Sweden. They showed that emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial orientation of the firm are not correlated. While Sulimon and Al-Shaikh (2007) stated in another study, that emotional intelligence has an important and positive relationship with innovation, and thus with entrepreneurial orientation.

Emotional Intelligence and Organizational climate: Several studies show that the leadership styles and behavior of management is the most important factor influencing the attitudes of personnel in organizational climate. Haghigat Talab & Haghigat Monfared (2012) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational leadership in the National Iranian Oil Company and found a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational leadership. Khalili (2011) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational commitment in small and medium enterprise in Iran. He indicated that a significant relationship exists between the dimensions of emotional intelligence and organizational commitment. Adeoye & Torubelli (2011) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and human resources management programs in state organizations and found that two factors of emotional intelligence and human resource management programs have positive impacts on commitment of employees. Mo'meni (2009) analyzed the relationship between emotional intelligence and dimensions of organizational climate and showed that emotional intelligence has an effect on organizational climate. Milhoan (2007) examined the relationship between organizational climate and EI of faculty members of university and showed that there is a negative relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational climate.

Emotional intelligence and creativity of employees: A significant number of empirical studies are done examining the relationship between emotional intelligence and creativity of employees and have shown that there is an important and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and creativity of the staff. Rego and Colleagues (2007) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence of leaders and creativity of employees and found that leaders with high emotional intelligence can enhance the creativity of their employees. Zhou and George (2003) examined the role of emotional intelligence of leaders on enhancing employee's creativity and concluded that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence of leaders and creativity of staff. Leaders with high emotional intelligence have a greater ability to encourage employee's creativity. Thus, they concluded that emotionally intelligent of leaders is one of the most important factors in employee's creativity.

Organizational climate and employee's creativity: Although some research has been done in Iran and outside of Iran about creativity and organizational climate, but few studies are in the field of Iran's Small and Medium Enterprises. Here we briefly mention some related works. Hong Yan (2010) examined the impact of organizational climate on employee's creativity in small and medium enterprise and concluded that organizational climate is positively related to employee's creativity. Wang and colleagues (2010) examined the role of supporting collaborative work in creativity of staff and showed supporting teamwork is positively related to employee's creativity. Coveney (2008) examined the impact of organizational climate on employee's creativity in the public libraries in England. Results showed that organizational climate creates creativity in library services. Senekal (2007) examined the impact of organizational climate on employee's creativity in a technology-driven company in South Africa. The results showed that the organizational climate has significant effect on employee's creativity.

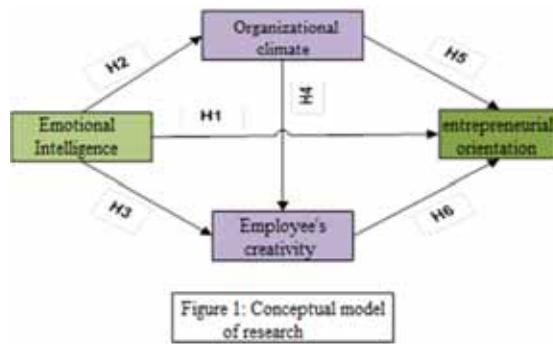
Organizational climate and entrepreneurial orientation: Hugh and Scheepers (2008) examined the relationship between organizational climate and entrepreneurial orientation of companies and showed that entrepreneurial orientation is strongly influenced by organizational climate. In a study on family and nonfamily companies in Mexico, Belausteguiotia and colleagues (2007) examined the impact of organizational climate on the entrepreneurial orientation of the firms. They showed that the organizational climate has an important impact on entrepreneurial orientation.

Employee creativity and entrepreneurial orientation: Up to now the relation between creativity and entrepreneurial orientation has largely not been studied clearly. Matthews (2007)

found that the creativity has important impact on innovation process of company and development of entrepreneurial orientation. Griffin and Coulthard (2005) indicated that creativity has positive and important impact on entrepreneurial orientation.

Conceptual model of research and hypotheses

Figure 1 shows the conceptual model of research which is taken from the study of Awad and Kada Ali (2012) and shows that emotional intelligence of managers has a direct impact on organizational climate, employee's creativity and the entrepreneurial orientation. This model also shows that organizational climate has a direct impact on employee's creativity and entrepreneurial orientation. In addition reflects the direct impact of the creativity of employees on entrepreneurial orientation.



Based on our conceptual model, the following hypotheses can be proposed:

- 1: Emotional intelligence of managers has significantly positive effect on entrepreneurial orientation of small and medium enterprises.
 - 2: Emotional intelligence of managers has positive and significant impact on the organizational climate on small and medium enterprises.
 - 3: Emotional intelligence of managers has significantly positive effect on employee's creativity in the small and medium enterprises.
 - 4: Organizational climate has positive and significant impact on employee's creativity in small and medium enterprises.
 - 5: Organizational climate has positive and significant impact on entrepreneurial orientation in small and medium enterprises.
 - 6: The creativity of staff has positive and significant impact on entrepreneurial orientation in small and medium enterprises.

Methodology

Present Study is practical in terms of objective and descriptive explorative in terms of data collection. The statistical population of research consists of all small and medium enterprise managers in Bushehr, which are 345 individuals. 250 people were randomly selected from the population (according to Morgan volume determination Table) questionnaires were sent online to the managers. A total of 197 questionnaires were returned completed. 16 questionnaires were flawed and ultimately 181 questions were used in the analysis. Data collecting tool is questionnaire. This questionnaire has 27 questions and has 5 sections (demographic information, emotional intelligence, organizational climate, employee's creativity, entrepreneurial orientation). Variables assessed through the five option Likert range. The validity of questionnaire was measured using confirmatory factor analysis. Since all of the coefficients are greater than 0.6, so the questionnaire is in a good validity. Cronbatch's alpha was used to assess the reliability of a questionnaire which results are given in Table 2.

Table 2: results of Cronbatch's alpha test and variables reliability

Variables	Emotional Intelligence	Organizational climate	Employee's creativity	entrepreneurial orientation	Whole questionnaire
Cronbach's alpha	0.82	0.90	0.86	0.89	0.94

According to the data of Table 2, the Cronbatch's alpha values of all variables are greater than the minimum acceptable value, i.e. 0.7, so Q has a good reliability.

In order to examine the relationship between variables, the Pearson correlation test was used and to test the research hypothesis and fit the conceptual model of research, the structural equation modeling is used.

Result and findings

Table 3 shows the distribution of demographic variables. Based on the results of this table, 56% of respondents are male and 44 percent are female. Frequency distribution of age, education and work experience, respectively, is shown in this table.

Table 3: Distribution of demographic variables

Name of demographic characteristic	levels	Amplitude percentage
Gender	male	0.76
	female	0.24
Education	Associate and lower	0.29
	Bachelor	0.50
	Master and Ph.D.	0.21
Work experience	Less than 6 years	0.35
	6 to 10 years	0.27
	11 to 20 years	0.30
	More than 21 years	0.08
Age	Less than 30 years	0.26
	31 to 40 years	0.39
	41 to 50 years	0.22
	More than 51 years	0.13

Table 4 illustrates the correlation between model variables. Based on this, there is a direct and positive relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational climate and it can be stated with 99% confidence level that the higher emotional intelligence the manager has, the more he would create an climate which encourages employee's creativity. In Table 4, the variables correlation model is given together which we can say with 99% confidence level that all indexes have direct and positive relationship with each other, since the level of significance level for all the parameters are below 0.05.

Table 4: Evaluation of correlation between the parameters of the model

Variables	Emotional intelligence	Organizational climate	Creativity	entrepreneurial
Emotional intelligence	1	(**)0.32	(**)0.44	(**)0.27
Organizational climate	(**)0.32	1	(**)0.76	(**)0.68
Creativity	(**)0.44	(**)0.76	1	(**)0.67
entrepreneurial	(**)0.27	(**)0.68	(**)0.67	1

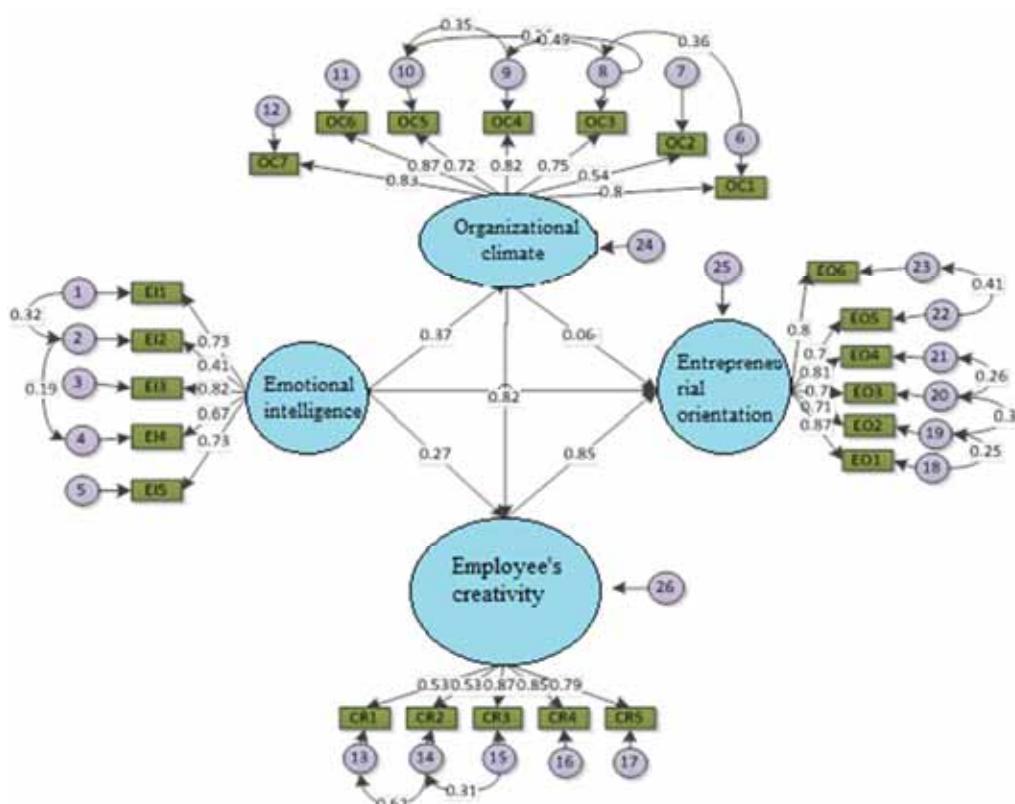
** Significance at 99% confidence level

In order to examine the model fit we should notice a set of indicators in structural equation modeling, most notably P-value index and the Square Root of variance estimation of the approximation error. (RMSEA) according to the findings of corrected model test, chi-square / freedom degree ratio equals 1.16 and with respect to that the acceptable value for index is between 1 and 3, therefor the model fit is very good in this index's perspective. The results of RMSEA equal to 0.04 which would be an acceptable and logical fit. Index of P-values for the research model calculated to be 0.06 that shows good fit of the model. Finally, Goodness Fit Index (GFI) for the research model is 0.86, which is higher than number 0.08 (acceptable value) then in terms of this indicator, the research model has a good fit. The results obtained for the model indexes are given in Table 5.

Table 5: Fit indexes of model

Model fit index	Chi square/freedom degree ratio	RMSEA	p-value	GFI
Calculated value	1.16	0.04	0.06	0.86
Standard value	Between 1 and 3	0.05 and less	0.05 and more	0.08 and more
Admission/rejection	Good fit	Acceptable fit	Acceptable fit	Good fit

The results of structural equation modeling based on data from the study are displayed in Figure 2.



The results of research hypothesis testing are shown briefly in Table 6 based on the results of structural equation modeling.

Table 6: Standardization coefficients and significance numbers of model

Hypothesis	Standard coefficient	Significance number	Result
H1: emotional intelligence of managers has significant & positive impact on entrepreneurial orientation of SMEs in Bushehr.	-0.23	-1.63	Rejected
H2: emotional intelligence of managers has significant & positive impact on organizational climate of SMEs in Bushehr.	0.37	3.09	Verified
H4: Organizational climate has significant & positive impact on creativity of SMEs employees in Bushehr.	0.82	6.72	Verified
H5: Organizational climate has significant and positive impact on entrepreneurial orientation of SMEs in Bushehr.	-0.06	-0.17	Rejected
H6: Employee's creativity has significant and positive impact on entrepreneurial orientation of SMEs in Bushehr.	1.08	2.54	Verified

Conclusions and suggestions

As the results show, the effect of emotional intelligence on entrepreneurial orientation equals (-0.23) and given that its significance number (-1.63) is greater than (-1.96), first research hypothesis is rejected. This result is similar to the findings of Pachulia and Henderson (2009), which stated that emotional intelligence of managers have not considerable relations with dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation in SMEs which is not consistent with findings of the Awad and Kada-ali (2012), Hadizadeh and colleagues (2009) and Zampetakis and colleagues (2008), since they stated that emotional intelligence has a positive impact on entrepreneurial orientation. The impact of emotional intelligence on organizational climate equals (0.37), which indicates relatively weak and direct emotional intelligence effect on the organizational climate. Also since the significance number (3.09) is greater than (1.96), the research second hypothesis is confirmed. These findings are consistent with the findings of Awad and Kada ali (2012), Mo'meni (2009), Reed (2005) and Yoder (2003) and implies that emotional intelligence of managers is most important factor in creating a positive Organizational climate. The amount of emotional intelligence impact on employee's creativity equals (0.27), which indicates a relatively weak effect of Emotional Intelligence on employee creativity. Also since the significance number (3.88) is greater than (1.96), the third hypothesis is confirmed. These results are confirmed by studies of Rego et al. (2007) and Zhou and George (2003) which emotional Intelligence of managers has a strong impact on employee's creativity, and are inconsistent with the findings of Awad and Kada-ali (2012) which believed that there is not any relationship between emotional intelligence of managers in SMEs in Jordan and creativity of staff. Besides that, the impact of organizational climate on employee's creativity is (0.82), which indicates a strong effect of organizational climate on employee's creativity. Also since its significance number (6.72) is greater than (1.96), so the fourth hypothesis of research is confirmed too. These result are consistent with findings of Awwad and Kada-ali (2012), Hong-Yan(2010), Wang et al. (2010), Coveney (2008) and Senekal (2007). Since the impact of organizational climate on entrepreneurial orientation is (-0.6) and regarding that the significance number of that is (-0.17) and greater than (-1.96), the fifth research hypothesis is rejected. This result is contrary to the findings of studies such as Awwad and Kada-ali (2012), Belausteguiotia and colleagues (2007) and Hugh and Scheepers (2008) which showed that organizational climate has a direct and positive impact on entrepreneurial orientation. . These findings were Unexpected for researchers. Ultimately the effects of employee's creativity on entrepreneurial orientation is (1.08),

which suggests a direct and strong effect on employee creativity entrepreneurial orientation, in addition to that the significance number (2.54) is greater than (1.96), the sixth hypothesis of research is confirmed. These results are consistent with findings of the researches by Hamidi (2008), Matthews (2007) and Lumpkin and dess (1996).

The findings of this research show that manager's emotional intelligence has a direct and positive impact on organizational climate and employee's creativity. Also organizational climate is known to be an important factor in motivating and enhancing the employee's creativity and creativity of staff is in turn as an important motivator for entrepreneurial orientation in SMEs. In other words, increasing the employee's creativity will lead to improvement in entrepreneurial orientation. In this study, the impact of emotional intelligence on the entrepreneurial orientation in SMEs was rejected. Finally with respect to the results of the research, we can say that the organizational climate do not have effect on entrepreneurial orientation of these companies. It means that organizational climate do not have any roles in accepting the entrepreneurial culture with staff. Since the emotional intelligence of managers has a direct impact on organizational climate in this research and on the other hand organizational climate do not have any effects on entrepreneurial orientation, therefore managers should have high emotional intelligence so that they can create more appropriate organizational climate to motivate entrepreneurship.

Practical Suggestions: According to the above results, the following practical suggestions can be effective:

- 1- It seems that managers of small and medium enterprises can provide a better environment to use employee's new ideas and to encourage them to present and test their creative ideas with a slight improvement in the organizational climate and change these enterprises to completely entrepreneur organizations. This action is better to be applied by using staff's new ideas, encouraging them to plan more such comments and giving them adequate opportunities to test and operate freely these ideas.
- 2- Organizational climate and employee's creativity are very important records in entrepreneurial attitude. Therefor the managers must notice the relationship between the organizational climate and employee's creativity in order to improve the entrepreneurial orientation in SMEs and create a better organizational climate, appropriate for Appearance of employee's creativity.
- 3- In order to increase emotional intelligence we suggest that the managers to be trained to gain the necessary qualifications for emotionally intelligent.

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