



Science

SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE: A PRIMER

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Abstract

Social intelligence refers to the ability to build relationships successfully and navigates social environments. It is about figuring out the best way to get along with others. It is the ability to adequately understand and evaluate one’s own behavior and the behavior of others. It is the ability to get along well with others and win their cooperation. It is the key to life and career success. This paper provides a primer to social intelligence.

Keywords: Social Intelligence; Interpersonal Intelligence; Cultural Intelligence; Social Skills; Street Smarts.

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1. Introduction

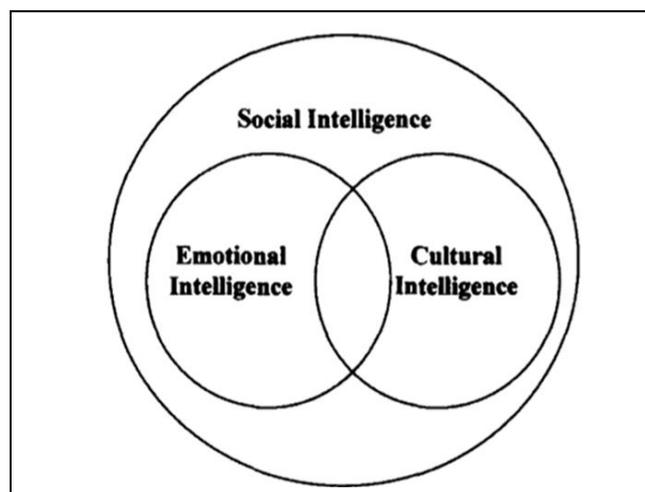


Figure 1: Relationship between social intelligence, emotional intelligence, and cultural intelligence [4].

Intelligence refers to the practical problem-solving ability, verbal ability, social competence, and effective adaptation to one’s environment [1]. It emerges from local interactions among a large

number of individuals, none of whom acts as a leader or central controller. Individuals who score high on IQ tests are regarded as having intellectual giftedness. Intelligence measured by IQ tests is not the be all and end all. Two kinds of intelligence that are unmeasurable in IQ tests are pivotal for success in life and career: Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Social Intelligence (SI). Social intelligence is different from academic intelligence. For example, some individuals who are successful in solving problems may find it difficult getting along with others.

Social Intelligence (SI), or street smarts, is the ability to understand and manage men and women to act wisely in their social interactions. It is about understanding your environment and having a positive influence on your social interactions. It is an adaptation for dealing with highly complex social situations, such as politics, romance, family relationships, quarrels, and collaboration [2]. No one is born socially intelligent. SI is mostly learned from experience with people and success and failures in social settings. We are wired to connect and manners are essentially cultural social intelligence.

Cognitive intelligence, emotional intelligence, and social intelligence are important components of general/human intelligence. Although social and emotional intelligence is different from cognitive intelligence, social intelligence is strongly related to emotional intelligence, political skill, and empathy. Empathy is the awareness of another person's thoughts, feelings, and intentions [3]. Emotional intelligence is a set of emotional and social abilities, competencies, and skills that enable individuals to cope with daily demand. It is the ability to identify and manage your own emotions and the emotions of others. It is significantly related to the ability to exercise personal judgment in decision-making. Emotional intelligence and social intelligence provide a valuable understanding of why some people behave more intelligently than others. Cultural intelligence builds on emotional intelligence and social intelligence. The three are related as shown in Figure 1 [4].

The concept of social intelligence was introduced in 1920 by American psychologist Edward Thorndike., who characterized social intelligence as the ability to accomplish interpersonal tasks. It is the ability to read nonverbal cues or make accurate social inferences. Unlike general intelligence, social intelligence can be developed. Social intelligence increases with academic level and experience of a person.



Figure 2: Social intelligence profile [5].

2. Elements of Social Intelligence

Social intelligence is about successfully navigating interpersonal relationships. Individuals with high social intelligence can sense how others feel and intuitively know what to say in social settings. The social intelligence profile is shown in Figure 2 [5]. The key elements of social intelligence include [6]:

- 1) Verbal fluency and conversational skills
- 2) Knowledge of social roles, rules, and scripts
- 3) Effective listening skills
- 4) Understanding what makes other people tick
- 5) Role-playing and social self-efficacy
- 6) Impression management skills

The core characteristics of someone who is socially intelligent include [7,8]:

- 1) They do not try to elicit a strong emotional response from anyone they are holding a conversation with.
- 2) They do not speak in definitives about people, politics, or ideas.
- 3) They don't immediately deny criticism or have such a strong emotional reaction to it that they become unapproachable or unchangeable.
- 4) They do not confuse their opinion of someone for being a fact about them.
- 5) They never overgeneralize other people through their behaviors. They rarely use absolutes. They don't use "you always" or "you never" to illustrate a point.
- 6) They speak with precision and choose their words carefully.
- 7) They know how to practice healthy disassociation.
- 8) They do not try to inform people of their ignorance.
- 9) They validate other people's feelings.
- 10) They recognize that their "shadow selves" are the traits, behaviors, and patterns that aggravate them about others.
- 11) They do not argue with people who only want to win, not learn.
- 12) They listen to hear, not respond.
- 13) They do not post anything online they would be embarrassed to show to a parent, explain to a child, or have an employer find.
- 14) They do not consider themselves a judge of what's true.
- 15) They don't "poison the well," or fall for ad hominem fallacy to disprove a point.
- 16) Their primary relationship is to themselves, and they work on it tirelessly.
- 17) They recognize mistakes and are ready to accept apologies and forgive.
- 18) They don't immediately deny criticism.
- 19) They value compassion over empathy.
- 20) They see problems as growth opportunities, not finalities.

3. Demonstration of Social Intelligence

Social intelligence is particularly useful in various contexts. It represents a form of wisdom that encompasses social awareness, social understanding, and social interactions. It shows itself in the nursery, on the playground, in barracks, in classroom, hotels, and factories. Here are a few ways SI is applied.

- **Business Community:** Social intelligence represents a manager's tacit knowledge, abilities, and skills to sense and understand the needs of customers and employees. The managers' levels of social intelligence affect employees' emotional labor and the emotional climate of the workplace. Managers with high social intelligence manage the emotional labor of their employees [9].
- **Classroom Discipline:** Teaching requires the careful handling of students' and teachers' own emotions. Social intelligence as a prerequisite for teachers because it helps teachers anticipate the future behavior of students. For example, they need SI for classroom discipline. Classroom discipline management strategies are a set of interactions that assist teachers to influence students' behavior and teach them to act positively [10].
- **Social Computing:** The rapid development in technologies has changed the interaction between individuals. Human survival requires that new technologies be designed to support our adaptation to a changing environment. This, in turn, alters the structure and practices of social interaction. People are increasingly using the blog, forum, and bulletin boards to express their experiences. Social computing recreates facets of what it means to be human through technology [11]

4. Benefits and Challenges

Increasing a person's social intelligence will provide benefits throughout his professional and personal lives. It can help promote mutual respect, active listening, and lead to successful intercultural collaboration. Working toward a strong social intelligence can lead to a richer life.

In spite of its intuitive appeal, social intelligence faces some challenges. Social intelligence is a multidimensional construct that people use to solve their daily life problems. Some critics argue that SI does not necessarily apply across all situations.

It remains a difficult construct to operationalize. Social intelligence may be used to harm others as typified by bullying behavior, aggression, workplace abuse, gossip, and rumor. Summarize the results in words rather than numbers and elaborate on the extent to which the objectives of the study were met. Do not include information from a literature search. Instead, focus on the primary conclusions of the study. Interpret the results for the audience; do not leave any results unexplained. Scientific writing cannot be left open for interpretation.

5. Conclusion

Social intelligence is an individual's competence to understand one's environment and react appropriately for socially successful conduct. It plays a crucial role in an individual's socialization process and professional development. It paves the way for cultural intelligence, social reform, and social activities that are intended to improve human well-being. There is still a great deal to be known about social intelligence. Science and technology will continue to advance our thinking about SI [12]. More information on social intelligence is available in the books in [13,14] and other books available on Amazon.com.

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