Role of Social Intelligence in Organizational Leadership

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Abstract
Interest in social intelligence has known a renaissance under the general term of social effectiveness constructs. The abilities of emotional intelligence are the basis for the construction of human relation, communication ability, and sensitivity to errors which are described as social intelligence. Social intelligence defines in terms of behavioral outcomes as one’s ability to accomplish relevant objectives in specific social settings. It may be regarded as an overall construct for understanding how successfully people manage social relationships. A key aspect of social intelligence development is learning to be as clear and present as possible. Besides, leadership as a social process that is the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organization. Some emerging leadership theories imply that social intelligence is more important for leaders, because cognitive and behavioral versatility and flexibility are important characteristics of competent leaders. Individuals who are socially intelligent appear to experience a rich, meaningful life, as opposed to truncated affective experiences. Furthermore, aspects of social intelligence have been found to be associated with enhanced social problem-solving abilities, experienced leadership, and positive interpersonal experience. Social intelligence can serve as a foundation for, and help facilitate in the leadership effectiveness and success. It is suggested to measure a manager’s social intelligence and help him or her develop a plan for improving it.

Keywords: intelligence, social intelligence, emotional intelligence, leadership

1. Introduction
Research on human abilities is more than 100 years old (Fakultät, 2008), and intelligence is considered a general unified concept, largely related to cognitive ability. The literature review shows that there are a lot of intelligence which should be considered in the organizations, such as organizational intelligence, psychological intelligence, moral intelligence, emotional intelligence, social intelligence and so on.

A key aspect of social intelligence development is learning to be as “clear” and present as possible (Phipps, 2007). In the other words, the concept of intelligence generally refers to the ability to think and learn, and has been predominately used to describe the learning and application of skills and facts (Clarken, 2009); and in recent years, interest in social intelligence has also known a renaissance under the general term of social effectiveness constructs (Lievens & Chan, 2009).
Research on social intelligence started only a few years after Spearman (1904) introduced academic intelligence. Thus, social intelligence was one of the first candidates for a new intelligence construct to complement traditional human ability concepts (Fakultät, 2008). Social intelligence has the longest history. The idea goes back to Thorndike (1920), who defined social intelligence as “the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls – to act wisely in human relations”. As noted by Landy (2005), Thorndike did not build a theory of social intelligence but he only used the notion of social intelligence to clarify that intelligence could manifest itself in different facets (e.g., abstract, mechanical, social) (Lievens, F. & Chan, 2009). Emotional intelligence and social intelligence have - without doubt - become two very important constructs to organizations.

Several studies have shown that social intelligence is multidimensional and distinguishable from general intelligence domains (Dong, et al. 2008). The concept of emotional intelligence has roots in social intelligence developed by Thorndike (1920) who proposed multiple forms of intelligence including abstract, mechanical and social (Parolini, 2005). Daniel Goleman, who has written extensively on emotional intelligence, published social intelligence in late 2006 (Dong, et al. 2008). Emotional intelligence has become a common phrase in the vocabularies of organizational leaders and managers today. Salovey and Mayer (1990) defined it as “the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and other’s feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s own thinking and actions” (Fambrough & Hart, 2008). In this regard Mayer and Salovey (1990) and Salovey and Mayer (1993) asserted that social intelligence is a broader construct that subsumes emotional intelligence (Bosman, 2003). Emotional intelligence includes the following abilities:

a) Ability to recognize own emotion (self-recognition),
b) Ability to control own emotion to a moderate state (self-control),
c) Ability to enhance own feeling to attain own purpose (motivation).

These abilities are the basis for the construction of human relation, communication ability, and sensitivity to errors which are described below as social intelligence (Murata, 2008).

The ability of managers to connect with the people who work for them is an essential element in enhancing the work their employees do. To construct an organization with high performance, it is important and essential to raise employees with social intelligence. Therefore, the aim of the present study is to advance research on social intelligence and to establish it as a practical new construct within organizations.

2. Definition of Social Intelligence
Ford and Tisak (1983) defined social intelligence in terms of behavioral outcomes and were successful in supporting a distinct domain of social intelligence. They defined social intelligence as “one’s ability to accomplish relevant objectives in specific social settings”. More recently, Goleman’s (2006) definition divides social intelligence into two broad categories: social awareness and social facility. He defined social awareness as “what we sense about others” and defined social facility as “what we then do with that awareness” (Dong, et al. 2008).

Several definitions of social intelligence have been offered by theorists, but all share two common components: a) the awareness of others and b) their response and adaptation to others and the social situations (Dong, et al. 2008).

Table 1 lists definitions extracted from the literature. The list contains both definitions from theoretical accounts and operationalizations. They are classified into cognitive and behavioral components. Additionally, the cognitive components are subdivided into different operational requirements (i.e., reasoning, memory, perception, creativity, and knowledge requirements) (Fakultät, 2008).

3. Social Intelligence Models
Social skills represent a broader range of abilities that is most closely linked to the construct of social intelligence. Although social intelligence, the ability to think and act wisely in social
situations, was first explored by psychologist Edward Thorndike (1920), and later by Guilford (1967) in his model of “behavioral intelligence,” it is only in the last few years that social intelligence has been popularized by Goleman (2006) and Albrecht (2006). Social skills that are key components of social intelligence include the following:

- The ability to express oneself in social interactions,
- The ability to “read” and understand different social situations,
- Knowledge of social roles, norms, and scripts,
- Interpersonal problem-solving skills, and
- Social role-playing skills (Riggio & Reichard, 2008).

Martinussen and Dahl (2001) operationalized social intelligence into a scale (TSIS) containing three distinct components: social information processing, social awareness and social skills. The first two factors are related to cognitive aspects of understanding and interpreting ambiguous social information. The last factor, social skills, is vastly different and relates to positive beliefs about one’s social performing abilities (Friborg, et al. 2005).

Also, Marlowe’s (1986) model of social intelligence comprised five domains: pro-social attitude, social performance skills, empathetic ability, emotional expressiveness, and confidence. Pro-social attitudes were indicated by having an interest and concern for others; social performance skills were demonstrated in appropriate interaction with others; empathetic ability refers to one’s ability to identify with others; emotion expressiveness describes one’s “emotionality” toward others; and confidence in social situations is based on one’s comfort level in social situations (Dong, et al. 2008).

In another model, social Intelligence includes the following aspects:

- Primal empathy: Feeling with others, and sensing non-verbal emotional signal.
- Attunement: Listening with full receptivity, and attuning to a person
- Empathy accuracy: Understanding other’s thoughts, feelings, and intentions.
- Social cognition: Knowing how the social world works.
- Social facility builds on social awareness to allow smooth and effective interactions, and includes the following aspects.
- Synchrony: Interacting smoothly at the nonverbal level.
- Self-presentation: Presenting ourselves effectively.
- Influence: Shaping the outcome of social interactions.
- Concern: Caring about others’ needs and acting accordingly (Murata, 2008).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive Requirements</th>
<th>Cognitive Components</th>
<th>Behavioral Components</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reasoning</td>
<td>Insight into the moods or personality traits of strangers (Vernon, 1933)</td>
<td>Get along with others and ease in society (Vernon, 1933)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Judge correctly the feelings, moods, and motivation of individuals (Wedek, 1947)</td>
<td>Ability to get along with others (Moss &amp; Hunt, 1927)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ability to judge people with respect to feelings, motives, thoughts, intentions,</td>
<td>The ability to deal with people and the applications of means to manipulate the</td>
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<td>attitudes, etc. (O’Sullivan et al., 1965)</td>
<td>responses of others (Orlik, 1978)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Understand the feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of persons, including oneself</td>
<td>Act appropriately upon an understanding of the feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Marlowe, 1986)</td>
<td>persons, including oneself (Marlowe, 1986)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Judgment in social situations (Moss et al., 1955)</td>
<td>The ability to manipulate the responses of others (Weinstein, 1969)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Recognition of the mental states behind words and from facial expressions (Moss et</td>
<td>Attainment of relevant social goals (Ford, 1982)</td>
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<td>al., 1955)</td>
<td>Ability to speak effectively, to be appropriately responsive to the interviewers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Role-taking ability (Feffer, 1959)</td>
<td>questions, to display appropriate nonverbal behaviors (Ford &amp; Tisak, 1983)</td>
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Table 1: Definitions of Social Intelligence Extracted from the Literature - continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive Requirements</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reasoning</td>
<td>The ability to interpret social cues (O’Sullivan &amp; Guilford, 1966)</td>
<td>Effectiveness in heterosexual interaction (Wong et al., 1995)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The ability to predict what will happen (O’Sullivan &amp; Guilford, 1966)</td>
<td>Social problem solving (Cantor &amp; Harlowe, 1994)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The ability to identify the internal mental states (O’Sullivan &amp; Guilford, 1966)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Decoding of social cues (Barnes &amp; Sternberg, 1989; Buck, 1976; Sundberg, 1966)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ability to comprehend observed behaviors in the social context in which they occur</td>
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<td>(Wong, Day, Maxwell, &amp; Meara, 1995)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>Memory for names and faces (Moss et al., 1955; Sternberg et al., 1981)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>Sensitivity for other people’s behavior (Orlik, 1978)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The ability to perceive the present mood of other people (Orlik, 1978)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creativity (Fluency)</td>
<td>The ability to create recognizable categories of behavioral acts (Hendricks et al., 1969)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The ability to imagine many possible outcomes of a setting (Hendricks et al., 1969)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Knowledge of social matters (Vernon, 1933)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The capacity to know oneself and to know others (Gardner, 1983)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Individuals fund of knowledge about the social world (Cantor &amp; Kihlstrom, 1987)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Social problem solving (Cantor &amp; Harlowe, 1994)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge of rules of social interaction (Orlik, 1978)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowing the rules of etiquette (Wong et al., 1995)</td>
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Moreover, any organization ready to move to social intelligence should understand the level of commitment and work it takes to implement. There is no turn-key solution, no technology that will solve all the problems and deploy instantaneously. The next three steps to adopt the concept of social intelligence are:

1) Run through the decision framework – collect enough information to make a sound, logical decision
2) Measure internal predisposition – your organization must be on board with the need to do more than simple monitor and dashboard analytics from social media to embrace Social Intelligence
3) Find more information – this white paper is just an introduction to a very complex group of technologies, processes, and the entry way to a long journey; find more information on Social Intelligence and plan the journey accordingly (Think-Jar and Visible Technologies, 2010).
4. Social Intelligence and Leadership

General intelligence continues to exhibit a strong connection to various indices of leadership and leader effectiveness, and this association has been observed under a variety of research settings (Zaccaro, et al. 2003). Some emerging leadership theories also imply that emotional and social intelligence are even more important for leaders and managers, because cognitive and behavioral versatility and flexibility are important characteristics of competent leaders (Bosman, 2003).

In general, social intelligence has a connotation closely related to notions such as social skills and competence (Björkqvist, et al. 2000). Social intelligence may be regarded as an overall construct for understanding how successfully people manage social relationships (Friborg, et al. 2005). House and Aditya (1997) explain that leadership is rooted in a social context and social intelligence is a required trait for leaders. House et al. (1999) describe leadership as a social process that is "the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organization" (Parolini, 2005).

In organizations, social intelligence refers to intentionally using good people skills with an understanding that the effective use of those skills will have a positive impact on others - an impact which is biologically based and observable (Kolski-Andreaco, 2010). Zaccaro and his colleagues (Zaccaro, 1999, 2001, 2002; Zaccaro, Foti, et al., 1991; Zaccaro, Gilbert, Thor, & Mumford, 1991) have argued that social appraisal skills, or social intelligence, reside at the heart of effective leadership (Zaccaro, et al. 2003).

In essence, social intelligence is using an awareness of the substantial impact of relationships to help leaders enhance the performance of the people they are leading. Personal skills such as initiative, empathy, adaptability, and persuasiveness are vital for a leader’s toolbox. Lacking awareness of his or her emotional impact on others can doom a leader to failure as a people manager, regardless of how competent in the subject matter or job skills he or she may be. Social intelligence, when applied to leadership, recognizes that the most important activity of a leader is to connect with others in order to amplify the latter’s performance (Kolski-Andreaco, 2010).

Social intelligence also includes the ability to select an appropriate response and to be flexible on one's behavior (Robert, 2008). Meanwhile, people who haven’t developed their social intelligence skills cannot connect effectively with others and may even alienate or offend them. That can be true both of employees and leaders alike (Kolski-Andreaco, 2010).

A study focuses on two factors: social intelligence and self-esteem. A sample of 419 undergraduates at two universities in the western United States was used to examine the relationship between social intelligence and intercultural communication sensitivity. Additionally, the relationship between self-esteem and intercultural communication sensitivity was examined. Results support hypothesized relationships and indicate a statistically significant relationship between social intelligence and intercultural communication sensitivity, with social intelligence accounting for more than 10% of the variance in ICS (Dong, et al. 2008). Moreover, Björkqvist, et al. (2000) shows the correlations between social intelligence and all types of aggression increase, while correlations between social intelligence and peaceful conflict resolution decrease.

Another study shows that social intelligence is a key to workplace communication and innovation (Phipps, 2007). Furthermore, the positive relationships of intelligence to leadership are highly significant (Zaccaro, et al. 2003). Many studies show that social intelligence is one of the best determinants to individuals’ success and improvement in their duties (Goleman, 2006).

Therefore, social intelligence is the ability of people to relate to others, understand them, and interact effectively with them (Marti, 2005). It involves recognizing emotions in others, listening, caring about the emotional state of others, and helping others manage their emotions. Studies indicate that clarifying these characteristics of social intelligence is part of effective leadership. Social intelligence can in large part be learned in an organization.

5. Conclusion

Social intelligence as a concept was developed in an effort to explain variations in outcome measures (i.e. behavior) (Bosman, 2003), and the paper shows how social intelligence is essential for effective leadership through a literature review.
Contemporary research on intelligence offers renewed potential for leadership trait research. Leadership is embedded in a social context, and the idea of social intelligence as a required leadership trait is a powerful one (Bosman, 2003). Because social intelligence develops over a lifetime of learning, understanding and developing it requires more than cognitive learning such as reading and hearing information (although these are helpful as well) (Phipps, 2007).

Marlowe (1986) suggested that individuals who are socially intelligent appear to experience a rich, meaningful life, as opposed to truncated affective experiences. Furthermore, aspects of social intelligence have been found to be associated with enhanced social problem-solving abilities, experienced leadership, and positive interpersonal experience (Dong, et al. 2008).

People who learn to enhance their own social intelligence abilities are more successful in developing the creativity and productivity of those who report to them and, in turn, are more acknowledged for their leadership capabilities. Elements of social intelligence serve to reduce stress by moderating conflict, promoting understanding and relationships and fostering stability and cooperation (Kolski-Anderaco, 2010).

Accordingly, social intelligence enables knowledge managers to enhance their collective intelligence, yielding higher levels of productivity. What's more, managers with high social intelligence seem to be success in effective cooperation, problem-solving, and increasing creativity. Research evidence suggests that social intelligence is related to leader effectiveness and is able to be improved through training interventions. This study suggests that social intelligence can serve as a foundation for, and help facilitate in the leadership effectiveness and success. So, it is suggested to measure a manager’s social intelligence and help him or her develop a plan for improving it.

References


