



## MEASURING SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE: A STUDY AMONG PUBLIC SECTOR EXECUTIVES IN TAMILNADU

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### **Abstract**

*The present study aimed at measuring the level of social intelligence of executives and examining the relationship between social intelligence and profile variables. Regarding the purpose and method of data collection, this study is applicable and descriptive-survey, respectively. The study population comprises of executives working in public sector carefully chosen using quota sampling. To collect data, the social intelligence questionnaire of Tromso which comprises of 21 items divided into three sub scales was used, the validity and the reliability of this questionnaires was tested using Cronbach's alpha. For statistical analysis, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, Pearson correlation and chi square test were used. The results are as follows: Social Intelligence is not associated with gender, age or experience of the executives as revealed in this study. Social intelligence in individuals can actually be developed through systematic training.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Workplaces are complex webs of interactions. To be successful in the workplace a leader needs to be authentic, connect with others, communicate with skill and use logic and reason in decision making. Being authentic is intrapersonal intelligence, connecting well with others is interpersonal intelligence, communicating with skill is verbal-linguistic intelligence, and using logic and reason in decision-making is logical-mathematical intelligence. These four intelligences are essential for a successful leader. It's been observed that some leaders with strong intellectual abilities seem to struggle to master social skills which will enable them to interact successfully with other people and get things done. His ability to "get along" with others has now been officially recognised as a form of competency or even a specific type of intelligence called Social Intelligence (SI).

Social Intelligence, commonly referred to as people skills, is the ability to relate to, understand, and interact effectively with others on a daily basis. Individuals with high social intelligence consistently display the communication and interpersonal skills that are critical for influencing internal and external customers and for gaining commitment to challenging goals.

### **BACKGROUND**

Edward L. Thorndike (1920) identified three types of intelligence: abstract, mechanical, and social intelligence. He defined social intelligence as "the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls, to act wisely in human relations". He maintained that social intelligence is different from academic ability and is a key element in what makes people succeed in life. J.P. Guilford (1967) suggested that social intelligence is a separate cognitive capacity from general intelligence. Gardner (1983) also distinguished interpersonal and intrapersonal types of intelligence. R. Sternberg (1985) expanded a model of intelligence to include practical and social intelligence. D. Goleman (1985) developed the concept of emotional intelligence that overlaps with SI. He described SI as a collection of abilities that enable us to be effective in managing our social interactions. In his view, "social intelligence" has two major sets of components: social awareness (*what we sense*) – and social facility (*what we do*).

### **NEED FOR THE STUDY**

Indian Public Sectors have come a long way from being sleepy business institutions to highly practical and dynamic entities. Liberalization and economic reforms have largely brought about this transformation. Competition has revamped the services and product portfolio of Public Sectors. With efficiency being the major focus, Public Sectors are leveraging on their strengths. They are also going in for major image changes and customer friendly policies. Research studies have shown that intelligent quotient does not guarantee success for individuals and that those who combine high intelligent quotient and high social intelligence are the most likely to succeed. Command and control, as a managerial style, no longer draws sufficient loyalty, inspiration and motivation from people. Top performing managers work together effectively because they possess inter-personal effectiveness. In other words, they possess a high level of social intelligence. Socially intelligent managers evoke more from their people and achieve considerably in the market place.

Due to the plethora of interpersonal issues within today's Public Sectors, it is not surprising that the concept of social intelligence is most needed. Indian Public Sectors, to achieve competitive advantage, leverage their human resource management strategy to develop and maintain socially intelligent managers and workforce.



Thus an attempt is made by the researcher to identify the level of social intelligence among public sector executives and the various determinants of social intelligence required for excellence in a demanding, complex and ambiguous place of work.

### The Tromso Social Intelligence Scale

Silvera, D.H., Martinussen, M. & Dahl, T. I. (2001) identified three factors representing social intelligence, namely Social Information Processing, Social Skills and Social Awareness. Social Information Processing is the ability to understand verbal or nonverbal messages regarding human relations, empathizing and reading hidden messages as well as explicit messages. Social Skills refers to the basic communication skills such as active listening, acting boldly, establishing, maintaining, and breaking up a relationship. Social Awareness is the ability of active behaving in accordance with the situation, place, and time. They developed a scale and it consists of 21 items, 7 in each. They calculated its validity and reliability in Norway. Gini(2006) applied this scale to an Italian adolescent population. Here the researcher adopted the English version of Tromso Social Intelligence scale for measuring the social intelligence of executives in Tamil Nadu.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To study the profile variables of executives working in public sector companies
2. To measure the level of social intelligence of executives
3. To study the relationship between profile variables and social intelligence of executives.

### HYPOTHESES

The present study tests the following hypotheses:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of social intelligence and gender of the executives
2. There is no significant difference between the level of social intelligence and age of the executives
3. There is no significant difference between the level of social intelligence and the years of experience of the executives.

### METHODOLOGY

This study measures the level of Social Intelligence of executives working in public sectors in Tamil Nadu. A descriptive research design is followed. The research population includes executives working in public sectors in Tamil Nadu chosen through quota sampling.

The Tromso Social Intelligence Scale has three factors: Social Information Processing, Social Skills and Social Awareness. Internal reliability for each of the three factors was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Based on this measure, the Social Information Processing ( $\alpha = 0.867$ ), Social Skills ( $\alpha = 0.753$ ) and Social Awareness ( $\alpha = 0.809$ ) subscales of the Tromso Social Intelligence Scale showed acceptable internal reliability.

### ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Analysis of the profile variables reveals that 85.9% of the respondents are male. The age component shows that 36.2% of respondents are between 25-35 years of age, 6 % of the respondents are between 35 – 45 years, 26.8 % of respondents are between 45 -55 years of age and 15% of respondents are above 55 years of age. 53.1% of the respondents have less than 10 years of experience and about 23.5% of the respondents who are senior executives have above 30 years of experience.

Measurement of the level of social intelligence reveals that 19% of the respondents have moderate level of Social Intelligence, 67% of the respondents have high level of Social Intelligence and 14% of the respondents have very high level of Social Intelligence. Hence it is concluded that the executives have moderate to high level of Social Intelligence.

#### Hypothesis 1

$H_0$ : There is no significant association between the Gender of the executives and overall Social Intelligence (SI).

The above hypothesis is tested with the help of Pearson's Chi square test and the results are presented below.

**Table -1, Pearson's Chi Square test between Gender of the Executives and Overall Social Intelligence (SI)**

Test	<sup>2</sup> Value	df	p value	Result
Pearson Chi Square	57.547	42	.055	$H_0$ : Accepted



Since the p value is greater than 0.01, the null hypothesis is accepted at 1% level of significance. Hence there is no significant association between the Gender of the executives and Overall Social Intelligence. This shows that Overall Social Intelligence is not associated with the Gender of the executives.

To conclude, gender of the executives does not have any influence on the three dimensions and on overall level of Social Intelligence.

**Hypothesis 2**

*H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between the Age of the executives and Social Intelligence.*

The above hypothesis is tested with the help of Correlation analysis and the results are presented below.

**Table – 2, Correlation matrix for Age and Social Intelligence (SI)**

	Age	SP	SS	SA	Overall SI
Age	1				
Social Information Processing (SP)	.057	1			
Social Skills (SS)	.077	.316**	1		
Social Awareness (SA)	.022	.432**	.085	1	
Overall Social Intelligence (SI)	.055	.499**	.688**	.492**	1

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Since the p value is greater than 0.01 for age and the variables of Social Intelligence, the null hypothesis is accepted at 1% level of significance. Hence there is no significant correlation between the age of the executives and Social Intelligence. This shows that Social Intelligence and their factors are not correlated with the Age of the executives. Age does not have any influence on the three dimensions and the overall Social Intelligence

**Hypothesis 3**

Correlation Analysis is applied to find out whether there is any significant association between the experience of executives and Social Intelligence.

*H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant association between the Experience of executives and Social Intelligence.*

The above hypothesis is tested with the help of Correlation analysis and the results are presented below.

**Table- 3 Correlations between Experience and Social Intelligence**

	Experience	SP	SS	SA	Overall SI
<b>Experience</b>	1				
<b>Social information Processing (SP)</b>	.064	1			
<b>Social Skills (SS)</b>	.092	.316**	1		
<b>Social Awareness (SA)</b>	.003	.432**	.085	1	
<b>Overall Social Intelligence (SI)</b>	.084	.499**	.688**	.492**	1

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

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

Since the p value is greater than 0.01 for number of years of experience and all the variables of Social Intelligence, the null hypothesis is accepted at 1% level of significance. Hence there is no significant association between the Experience of the executives and Social Intelligence. This shows that Social Intelligence and their factors are not associated with the Experience of executives.



## DISCUSSION

Social Intelligence is not associated with gender, age or experience of the executives as revealed in this study. Social intelligence in individuals can actually be developed through systematic training.

Social and emotional learning is different from cognitive and technical learning, and it requires a different approach to training and development. This cannot be taught to a whole group of employees in a day through inspirational lectures or intense, short-lived experiences. This is a step by step learning process. To develop social competence, first we have to unlearn old habits of thought, feeling, and action that are deeply ingrained, and grow new ones. Such a process takes motivation, effort, time, support, and sustained practice. This becomes a part of organisational development so that the whole organisation can develop together.

## FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

There is scope for further research in this emerging field of social Intelligence. Social intelligence can be analysed with personality traits of an individual and it can also be analysed with other variables like performance, ability, self, efficacy, job satisfaction, employee morale etc.

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