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## **Social Intelligence and Effective Leadership: Content Analysis Approach**

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### **Abstract**

The study is designed to explore the different domains of social intelligence which are necessarily important for effective leadership performance. To achieve the objectives of the study qualitative approach is applied. By employing qualitative content analysis technique on the previous research works we find that socially intelligent leaders have social understanding, situational awareness, situational response, social memory, social perception, social skills, social knowledge, social creativity and empathy for better understanding and facilitation of social relations.

**Key words:** Social Intelligence; Leadership; Social; Social Relations  
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## **1. Introduction**

Social intelligence refers to moral forces, motives and powers to observe and understand the social situation. Similarly, (Thorndike, 1920) proposes that social intelligence is the ability to handle, comprehend and wisely act in human relations. These definitions are focusing social intelligence more towards understanding and facilitating the social relations. (Cantor & Harlowe, 1994) define the social intelligence as to solve social problems to achieve social goals. According to (Sternberg, 2002) social intelligence is the ability to comprehend other's feelings, thinking, and behavior, properly interact, and effectively act in different situation. According to (Sanders, 2006) Social intelligence is the process of delivering emotional and physical benefits to create positive attitudes in others and increase the quality of your relations. "The capacity to comprehend and oversee men and ladies to act carefully in human relations". It is comparable to relational insight, one of the sorts of insight recognized in Howard Gardner's hypothesis of various insights, and firmly identified with "hypothesis of mind". Some creators have confined the definition to bargain just with information of social intelligence, maybe more legitimately called social intelligence or social knowledge, in accordance with slanting socio-mental promoting and advertising techniques and strategies. As indicate, social knowledge is a man's ability to ideally comprehend one's condition and respond properly for socially effective conduct. It is critical to take note of the numerous definitions recorded above, as there is yet to be an entire consensus on the operational meaning of social intelligence.

The basic objective of the study is to explore the important domains of social intelligence necessary for performance of effective leaders. This study seeks to increase understanding with regard to social intelligence and its relationships with effective leadership. This is done with a view to establishing the understanding of variables which directly affect the social intelligence and to what extent it affects the effective leadership.

## **2. Literature Review**

Socially intelligent leaders are enthusiastic, turn thought into action, like the challenges to meet new and different people, Love to make connection and break

the ice, good communicator, and sense the feelings of others (empathy). (Sternberg, 1985) suggests that there are three types of intelligence i.e. creative, analytical, and practical. Practical intelligence is parallel to social intelligence. Social intelligence has two main components social awareness “what we sense about others” and social faculty “what we do with that awareness” (Coleman, 2006). Social intelligence basically includes convergent and divergent production, memory, cognition and evaluation of behavioral contents which consists of information about social interactions and ability of leaders to comprehend the desires, feelings, moods, emotions, thoughts, intentions, and actions of other persons and of ourselves.

### 2.1. *Perception*

Social observation (or individual recognition) is the investigation of how individuals shape impressions of and influence about. Individuals find out more about others' sentiments and feelings by getting relevant information so they can accumulate from physical appearance, verbal, and nonverbal correspondence

### 2.2. *Social Knowledge*

The aggregate collection of learning delivered by your group or group of friends what is known as social Knowledge. In a society, social information can be the collective learning base of little gathering of information, similar to a family, or it can be a gigantic and always developing variety of information, as Wikipedia or other social websites sites. The social learning is that it is a result of the gathering, sharing and contributing information.

### 2.3. *Situational awareness*

Situational awareness is the view of ecological components and occasions concerning time or space, the cognizance of their significance, and the projection of their status after some factor has changed, for example, time, or some other variable, for example, a foreordained occasion.

Situation awareness includes monitoring what is going on in the region to see how data, occasions, and one's own behavior will affect objectives, both instantly and sooner rather than later. Insufficient situation awareness has been recognized as one of the essential factors in mishaps human error. Thus, situation awareness is particularly imperative in workplaces where the data stream can be very high and poor choices may prompt genuine outcomes.

#### 2.4. *Social skill*

A social skill is any capability encouraging connection and correspondence with others. Social rules and relations are made, conveyed, and changed in verbal and nonverbal ways. The process of learning these skills is called socialization. For socialization, interpersonal abilities are fundamental to identify with each other. Interpersonal abilities are the interpersonal demonstrations a man uses to communicate with others, which are identified with strength versus accommodation, adore versus abhor, alliance versus hostility. Constructive interpersonal abilities incorporate influence, undivided attention, and assignment, among others. Social psychology is the study in which one studies the aspects of social skills. This train considers how aptitudes are found out by a person through changes in attitudes of a person, how person thinks and behavior of the people.

#### 2.5. *Situational response*

Situational response teaches in specific situation how a person does perform. It not only gives you confidence but also gives you the courage to your reflex to analysis and respond to a particular situation. This factor is driven from Sun Tzu's strategy. It is not only at the highest point of decision making but also considered as the most powerful decision making techniques powerful among all. In most of training session on this topic covers 4 aspects i.e. 1) Fast Response, 2) Creative Response, 3) Position Claiming, and 4) Position Security.

#### 2.6. *Social creativity*

To be socially creative, it does not require any gathering of information from the surroundings to be a creative mind set. Individuality is the most important thing in the process of creativity because by this the company can get a good set of creative people. If companies can take good action to build a creative organization some socio technical techniques must be apply. This also increases the creativity of the individuals by multiplying not by summing up (Fischer, Shah, Tubiello, & Velhui, 2005).

#### 2.7. *Empathy*

If you see different point of view from the point of others, see is called empathy. You put yourself in the shoes of others and feel what they are feeling. Empathy is known to increment prosaically (helping) practices. American culture may be socializing individuals into ending up more individualistic instead of empathic.

### 2.8. *Social Understanding*

Social Understanding is the way we see the world, ourselves as well as other people with dreams, sentiments, needs and significance. Social Understanding rose up out of Social Psychology in the 1950s with the concentration being the “everyday thinking that makes social interaction possible”. Social Understanding is a unique concept of viewing the world, ourselves and different peoples with their own wishes and dreams, their utmost feelings and what they want or desire in their lives. Social Understanding emerged from Social Psychology in the 1950s with the focus being the “everyday thinking that makes social interaction possible”.

### 2.9. *Social memory*

The investigation of social memory as a sub-discipline in history is a new idea. For most of the historical backdrop of recorded investigation (called historiography), historians have considered the individual history of people and gatherings - whether genuine or invoked - to be of little use to students of history. With human memory's natural blemishes and steady doctoring of occasions to fit one's own particular mental self-view, students of history have favored what they thought to be more solid renditions of occasions: court archives, onlooker declarations, individual diaries.

## 3. **Methodology**

To achieve the objectives, qualitative research approach is applied, (Cooper & Schindler, 2006) describe that, the reason of using qualitative research strategy is to collect data which portray a detailed picture of events, situations and interactions with people & things and qualitative research is more relevant to study social relations. On the basis of qualitative approach, we apply “qualitative content analysis” technique for information analysis. According to (Paul, Bauer, & Gaskell, 2000) content analysis is the classical procedure to analyze textual material without any concern with source or media. The material analyzed for the study is collected from internet and library sources by using the words social intelligence, leadership & social intelligence, social intelligence & leadership

effectiveness and social awareness. Total documents selected are 20. The data is transcribed into (N-vivo 10) software to analyze different queries.

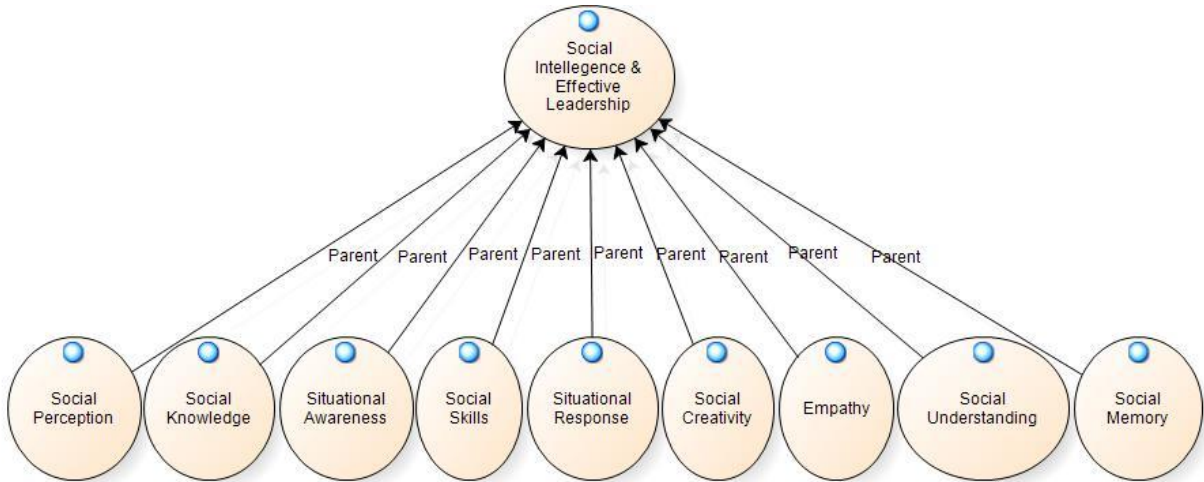


Figure – 1: Thematic Framework



Figure – 2: Word Tag Cloud

#### **4. Discussion**

The results (Figure 1 & 2) obtained from Nvivo-10 show that the effective leaders have different domains of social intelligence. Weis & Sub (2005) suggest there are some basic domains of social intelligence (ranges from social understanding, social memory, social perception, social creativity, to social knowledge) which are required by a leader to perform effectively in social context. Social Understanding is the core ability of social intelligence of leaders. According to (Weis & Sub, 2005) individual requires social understanding to understand and interpret social stimuli and background of the social situation which means to correctly understand what a person want to express through verbal and non-verbal communication. In the same way a leader should have the Memory, for names and faces of others to effectively understand and act in certain situation, which is referred to as Social Memory (Kosmitzki & John, 1993). Weis & Sub (2005) “defined social memory as the storing and recall of objectively given social information that can vary in complexity”. Similarly (Probst, 1982) the narrow subset of social information is memory for names and faces while “the memory for a sequence of interactions represents a rather complex entity”. With human memory's natural blemishes and steady doctoring of occasions to fit one's own particular mental self-view, students of history have favored what they thought to be more solid renditions of occasions: court archives, onlooker declarations, individual diaries. In order to process social understanding and social memory a leader requires Social Perception. Social perception is theoretical perspective reveals that social perception represents relevant ability domain. Both social memory and social understanding require a leader's prior perception of stimuli e.g. smile of a person can be perceived to conclude the mental state of that person. This perception is usually happened in short period of time. According to Weis & Sub (2005) social perception is the ability of a person to perceive quickly the relevant information in complex situation. After effectively perceive the situation, a leader requires the ability to be socially creative to interpret situation to find solutions effectively. Social observation (or individual recognition) is the investigation of how individuals shape impressions of and influence about. Individuals find out more about others' sentiments and feelings by getting relevant information so they can accumulate from physical appearance, verbal, and nonverbal correspondence. Lee et al. (2002) define the Social Creativity as production of interpretation of social situation. Social creativity is the retrieval ability, Weis & Sub (2005) argue that in accordance with the (Lee et al., 2002) that social creativity is the production of many diverse

solutions for social problem and situation. Finally, in order to distinguish between what is right or wrong it is necessary to understand the different situational contexts, and cultural environment. In order to understand the situational contexts and cultural environment, Social Knowledge is required. Cantor and Kihlstrom (1987) defined the social knowledge is the knowledge about the world ranges from social rules to social matters. According to the Weber and Westmeyer (2001) knowledge depend upon the cultural environment e.g. learning from family, from school or work groups or from peer groups. Leaders should best utilize the knowledge to effectively deal with different situations.

Similarly, Rahim (2012) defines the social intelligence as “ability to be aware of relevant social situational contexts; to deal with the contexts or challenges effectively; to understand others’ concerns, feelings, and emotional states; and to build and maintain positive relationships with others”. It consists of four categories of abilities—situational awareness, situational response, cognitive empathy, and social skills. We considered the (Weis & Sub, 2005) social understanding similar to Situational awareness of (Rahim, 2012). Situational awareness is the ability of leaders to gather relevant information to analyze situation to correctly formulate problem for effective performance. Albrecht (2007) defines situational awareness “as the ability to read situations and comprehend social contexts that influence behavior, and choose strategies that are likely to be effective.” Similarly, according to (Baron & Ensley, 2006), it is the entrepreneurial ability to identify new and unique business opportunity. Mayo and Nohria (2005) suggest social awareness is associated with leadership effectiveness and is the ability to adapt diverse and unusual different situational contexts. Literature on leadership behavior matches the leadership style with situational variables to improve job performance (Yukl, 2002). Situational awareness is the adaptive capacity of the leader to deal effectively with any social situation and is effective for decision making (Bennis & Thomas, 2002). Insufficient situation awareness has been recognized as one of the essential factors in mishaps human error. Thus, situation awareness is particularly imperative in workplaces where the data stream can be very high and poor choices may prompt genuine outcomes. Similarly, Situational Response is the ability and competence of leaders to deal and adapt with the social situation. This decision making competence of leaders was described by (Bennis & Thomas, 2002) in the context of adaptive capacity (Situational Response) which is different from situational awareness. But (Mayo & Nohria, 2005; Albrecht, 2007)



could not differentiate between situational response abilities and situational awareness abilities. In this paper we are making a difference between them because the leaders have the ability to diagnose and recognize the problem and effectively respond to them for favorable outcomes. Cognitive Empathy is another component of social intelligence which is the ability to comprehend, taking interest and understands the feelings of others as well as recognizes and respond the changes in other's emotions. (Goleman, 2005; Ang & Goh, 2010) describe that empathy is the essential part of Social Intelligence, deals with the knowhow of feelings, thinking, and moods of others. With the essence of empathy, Social skills of an effective leader involve constructing and maintaining positive relationship, negotiate, manage conflict and speak clearly what to say and how to say. (Baron & Markham, 2000; Baron & Tang, 2009) suggest that social skills help to effectively interact with others, help them and play an effective role in the success of others.

## **5. Conclusion**

In the paper we attempted to explore the possible domains of social intelligence which an effective leader should have to perform efficiently. Through content analysis conducted on previous research works, we found that the social intelligence is the core ability of leaders to meet the requirements and challenges of social contexts. Furthermore, we found that effective leaders have the essential elements of social intelligence. These elements are social understanding, situational awareness, situational response, social memory, social perception, social skills, social knowledge, social creativity and empathy. All these domains are necessary for leaders for effective performance, better understanding and successfully facilitate the social contexts and situations.

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