

Future Directions - A Time of Change

Are We Socially Intelligent?

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Abstract:

The topic of Social Intelligence has been researched by many neuroscientists, psychologists, management consultants and educational specialists up until now. There is as yet no sign of any research on this topic by property professionals. This paper is thus a discussion paper aimed at stimulating interest in this topic so that research on social intelligence can be carried out by property professionals in the future.

It was Daniel Goleman's book "Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships"² that started the author thinking on the relevance of social intelligence to property professionals. In the course of practicing as a property consultancy and lecturing at various universities over the years, the author notices that a property professional tends to lack the many soft skills of emotional and social intelligence. In this paper, he advocates the need to include such soft skills of 'social intelligence' as an essential component in the training of future property professionals.

The term 'we' in the title therefore refers to property and real estate professionals such as property valuers, real estate agents, property developers, architects and other design consultants, quantity surveyors, builders and includes those amongst us who are involved in the training of these professionals.

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² Goleman, D. (2006). "*Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships*." Arrow Books, Croydon, CRO 4TD.

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As mentioned earlier, the author cannot find any research on the relevance of emotional and social intelligence to property issues. However, in topics related to the teaching profession, there is now a ground swell of opinions advocating the need for teachers to be learners and to engage their students in a teaching-learning environment.³ This is essentially a call for teachers to be socially intelligent in their relationships with their students or learners. Whilst the hard skills of the property profession such as property valuation, to take an example, can in future be replaced by a computer application, it is the soft skills such as a person-to-person relationship that need to be understood by property professionals of the future.

This paper thus advocates:

- (1) the need for research on the relevance of social intelligence to property related issues; and
- (2) if found relevant, the need to include the teaching of social intelligence in property studies at university level.

Key words: Social Intelligence; Property Professionals; Teacher-Learner Autonomy.

³ See googled topics under the search heading of 'teacher-learner autonomy'. One example worth reading is a 2000 book entitled "*Learner autonomy, Teacher autonomy: Future directions*" edited by Smith, R.C. and published by Longman.

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Introduction

By social intelligence is meant the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls --- to act wisely in human relations.

Edward Lee Thorndike (1920, p. 228)

Way back in 1920, Thorndike⁴ defined ‘social intelligence’ as “the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls – to act wisely in human relations”. During the period between 1920 and 1990 when Salovey and Mayer⁵ introduced the term ‘emotional intelligence’, the ideas expressed in Thorndike for ‘social intelligence’ overlapped those expressed in later articles on the subject of ‘emotional intelligence’. Gardner⁶ in 1983 described social intelligence as “the capacity to know oneself and to know others is an inalienable a part of the human condition as is the capacity to know objects or sounds, and it deserves to be investigated no less than these other ‘less charged’ forms.” The two aspects of social intelligence, namely (a) the ability to understand others and (b) to act wisely in social situations, have been researched by many psychologists and social scientists since Thorndike’s days. Recent research has shown that it is important to distinguish between socially intelligent thought and socially intelligent action (or behavior) and to distinguish both of these from sociability.⁷ Whilst sociability is simple a personality trait, indicating the ability to be fond of the company of others, a socially intelligent person has a combination of sensitivity to the needs and interests of others (termed the ‘social radar’) and an attitude of generosity and consideration. The difference between socially intelligent thought and socially intelligent action needs no elaboration as a thought is just a mind-set whilst an action illustrates that mind-set in demonstrable form.

⁴ Thorndike, E. L. (1920). *Intelligence and its uses*. Harper’s Magazine, 140, 227-235.

⁵ Salovey, P. & Mayer, J. D. (1990) *Emotional Intelligence*. Found in website
http://www.unh.edu/emotional_intelligence/EI%20Assets/Reprints...EI%20Proper/EI1990%20Emot...

⁶ Gardner, H. (1983). *Frame of mind: The theory of multiple intelligence*. New York: Basic Books. p. 243).

⁷ Read *Social Intelligence* by Kihlstrom, J. F. & Cantor, N. published in Sternberg, R. J. (ed. 2000). *Handbook of Intelligence*, 2nd ed. (pp. 359-379). Cambridge University Press.

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In 2006, Daniel Goleman⁸ rediscovered social intelligence in his book ‘Social Intelligence: the New Science of Human Relationship,’ revealing that the human minds are made to connect with one another during any interaction. He had, in 1995, published a book on Emotional Intelligence where he discussed the human’s ability ‘to manage our own emotions and inner potential for positive relationships.’ In Social Intelligence, he enlarges his scope of investigation to include our human ability to connect with one another. In the words of an editorial review from Publishers Weekly,

“Goleman persuasively argues for a new social model of intelligence drawn from the emerging field of social neuroscience. Describing what happens to our brains when we connect with others, Goleman demonstrates how relationships have the power to mold not only human experience but also human biology. In lucid prose he describes from a neurobiological perspective sexual attraction, marriage, parenting, psychopathic behaviors and the group dynamics of teachers and workers. Goleman frames his discussion in a critique of society's creeping disconnection in the age of the iPod, constant digital connectivity and multitasking. Vividly evoking the power of social interaction to influence mood and brain chemistry, Goleman discusses the "toxicity" of insult and unpleasant social experience as he warns of the dangers of self-absorption and poor attention and reveals the positive effects of feel-good neurochemicals that are released in loving relationships and in caregiving. Drawing on numerous studies, Goleman illuminates new theories about attachment, bonding, and the making and remaking of memory as he examines how our brains are wired for altruism, compassion, concern and rapport.”

What is the relevance of social intelligence to us, property professionals? This paper attempts to answer this question and hopes to kindle research by property professionals on this topic. It is

⁸ Goleman, D. (2006). *“Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships.”* Arrow Books, Croydon, CRO 4TD.

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worthy of note at this juncture that the only university course available in Australia and New Zealand on the topic of social intelligence is the one-day workshop conducted at the University of Sydney for the general public. The course uses the same book by Goleman described above.

Emotional Intelligence, Social Intelligence, Empathy and Alexithymia

These four terms, Emotional Intelligence, Social Intelligence, Empathy and Alexithymia, have overlapping meanings⁹ and it is useful to have these terms understood.

Following Goleman's work as previously stated, emotional intelligence is the study of how well we handle ourselves and our relationships in four domains – (1) self awareness, knowing what we are feeling and why we are feeling it which is a basis of good intuition and sound decision making; (2) self management, which means the handling of distressing moments in effective way such that they do not cripple us, blocking us of construction activities; (3) empathy, knowing what someone else's feelings; and (4) putting all of the three previous domains together in skills relationship.

Social intelligence, according to Goleman, is the inter-personal part of emotional intelligence and is based on the discovery of social neuroscience in that the brains are designed to connect especially during interactions. "During these neural linkups, our brains engage in an emotional tango, a dance of feelings. The resulting feelings have far-reaching consequences that ripple throughout our body, sending out cascades of hormones that regulate biological systems from our heart to our immune cells."¹⁰

⁹ For a fuller explanation of these overlapping constructs, read Dr. Kimberley Anne Barchard's thesis *Emotional and Social Intelligence: Examining its place in the Nomological Network* in fulfilling the requirements for her PhD degree at the University of British Columbia in August 2001.

¹⁰ Goleman, D. (2006). *"Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships."* Arrow Books, Croydon, CRO 4TD, p. 5.

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In the briefest form then, while emotional intelligence deals with self-awareness and self-management of emotions, social intelligence deals more with the handling of another person's emotions - dealing with the other person, not the self.

Empathy has been psychologically defined in two different ways. First, it can be defined as the ability to understand another person's feelings and perspective and to accurately predict their thoughts, feelings and actions.¹¹ Second, empathy can be defined as a vicarious emotional response to the perceived emotional experiences of others.¹² Clearly both definitions are relevant in the context of social intelligence. One can even say that there can be no social intelligence without some degree of empathy.

The term 'Alexithymia' literally means 'not having words for feelings' and this is the direct opposite of the ability to recognize, understand and describe one's feelings, a key requirement of emotional intelligence. Alexithymia comprises of four dimensions - (a) difficulty in identifying feelings and distinguishing between feelings and bodily sensations of emotional arousal; (b) the difficulty of describing feelings to others; (c) constricted imaginable processes and (d) externally-oriented cognitive style.¹³ Conflicting results have been reported in studies examining the relationships between alexithymia and intelligence but several of the symptoms of alexithymia overlap those with the concept of emotional intelligence. Suffice it to say that when a person is suffering from alexithymia, it is difficult to know if that person is emotionally or socially intelligent.

¹¹ Dymond, R. F. (1949). *"A scale for the measurement of Empathy Ability."* Journal of Consulting Psychology, 1949, 13: pp 127-133

¹² Mehrabian, A., Young, A. L. & Sato, S (1988). *"Emotional empathy and Associated individual differences."* Current Psychology: Research and Reviews 7: pp 221-240.

¹³ Taylor, G. J., Bagby, R. M. & Parker, D. A. (1997). *"Disorders of Affect Regulation: Alexithymia in Medical and Psychiatric Illness."* Cambridge University Press.

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Measures of Emotional and Social Intelligence

Many tests that promise to measure both emotional and social intelligence have appeared in recent years but most have not been empirically evaluated. Some of these tests are briefly sketched here.

We begin with Guilford (1967)¹⁴ when he postulated a system called Structure of Intellect (SI) comprising of at least 120 separate intellectual abilities, based on all possible combinations of five categories of operations (cognition, memory, divergent production, convergent production and evaluation), with six categories of products (units, classes, relations, systems, transformations and implications), and five kinds of contents (visual, auditory, symbolic, semantic, behavioral). This is illustrated in Diagram No. 1 below.

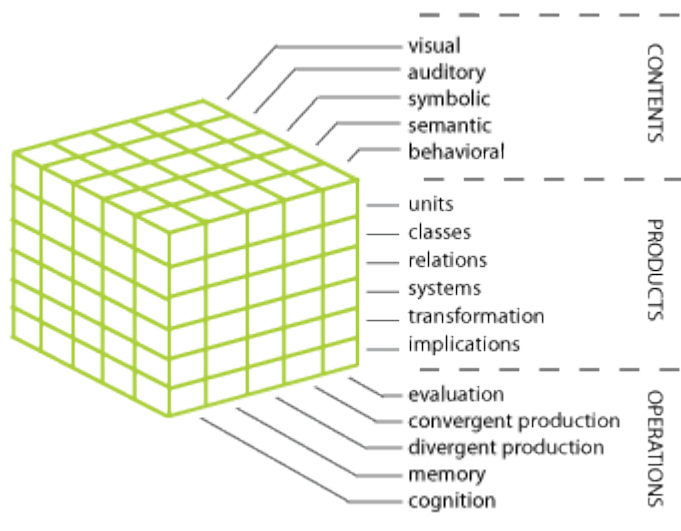


Diagram No. 1: Guilford's Structure of Intellect (SI)

In Guilford's Structure of Intellect (SI) theory, each of the dimensions mentioned above can be independent and there are theoretically 150 different components of intelligence.

¹⁴ Guilford, J. P. (1967). *The Nature of Human Intelligence.* New York: McGraw Hill.

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Guilford researched and developed a wide variety of psychometric tests to measure the specific abilities predicted by SI theory. These tests provide an operational definition of the many abilities proposed by the theory.

O'Sullivan and Guilford (1975)¹⁵ developed a series of tests to measure six different behavioural-cognition abilities. The four most successful of these tests are Expression Grouping, Missing Cartoons, Social Translations and Cartoon Predictions.

Riggio (1986)¹⁶ introduced a conceptual framework of Social Skills Inventory (SSI) for defining and assessing basic social skills derived from the attempts of social personality psychologists to measure individual differences in nonverbal communication skills. This framework comprises one hundred and five items of measure in seven basic dimensions of social skills. In a series of validation studies using 149 undergraduate students, the SSI demonstrated convergent and discriminant validity in relation to other measures of nonverbal social skill and traditional personality scales such as the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire [16PF]¹⁷ and the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (SDS)¹⁸. Scores on the SSI can predict typical social behaviours and the depth of social networks. Evidence so far has suggested that the SSI could prove to be a valuable tool for research in personality and social psychology in applied settings.

The Style in the Perception of Affected Scale (SIPOAS) developed by Bernet (1996)¹⁹ is a 93-item measure of personal preferences for each of three approaches to emotions, namely BB (Based on Body); EE (Emphasis on Evaluation); and LL (Looking to Logic). The BB scale

¹⁵ O'Sullivan, M., Guilford, J. P. (1975). *"Six factors or behavioural cognition: Understanding other people."* Journal of Educational Measurement, issue 4, pp. 255-271.

¹⁶ Riggio, R. E. (1986). *"Assessment of basic social skills."* Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, vol 51(3), September 1986, pp 649-660.

¹⁷ See Cattell, R. B. (1995). *"Personality Structure and the New Fifth edition of the 16PF."* Education and Psychological Measurement, Dec 1995, vol. 55 no. 6 pp. 926-937.

¹⁸ Crowne, D. P., Marlowe, D. (1960). *"A new scale of social desirability independent of psychopathology."* Journal of Consulting Psychology, vol. 24(4) August 1960, pp. 349-354.

¹⁹ Bernet, M. (1996). *"Emotional Intelligence: Components and correlates."* Paper presented at the 104th Convention of the American Psychological Association in Toronto, Canada.

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measures the construct of “being in touch with one’s feelings” and is considered an indicator of emotional intelligence.

Tett and his associates (1997)²⁰ developed the Tett’s Emotional Intelligence Scale (TEIS) which is a multi-dimensional measure of emotional intelligence. It gives scores for twelve separate subscales, namely:

- (1) Emotion in the Self – verbal;
- (2) Emotion in the Self – non-verbal;
- (3) Recognition of Emotions in Others;
- (4) Empathy;
- (5) Regulation of Emotion in the Self;
- (6) Regulation of Emotion in Others;
- (7) Flexible Planning;
- (8) Creative Thinking;
- (9) Mood Redirected Attention;
- (10) Motivating Emotions;
- (11) Delay of Gratification; and
- (12) Emotional Appropriateness.

The first ten sub-scales cover the four areas of emotional appraisal, emotional expression, the regulation of emotion and the utilization of emotion – the areas first outlined by Salovey and Mayer in 1990.²¹ Mayer et al²², in 2002, expended on the four areas of emotional intelligence, namely ‘perceiving emotions’, ‘facilitating thoughts’, ‘understanding emotions’ and ‘managing emotions’, and developed the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT).

²⁰ Tett, R., Wang, A., Fisher, R. et al. (1997). *“Testing a Model of Emotional Intelligence.”* Paper presented at the 1997 Annual Convention of the Southeastern Psychological Association, Atlanta, G.A.

²¹ Salovey, P. & Mayer, J. D. (1990) *Emotional Intelligence*. Found in website http://www.unh.edu/emotional_intelligence/EI%20Assets/Reprints...EI%20Proper/EI1990%20Emot...

²² Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., Caruso, D. R. & Sitarenios, G. (2003). *“Measuring Emotional Intelligence with the MSCEIT”* v.2.0 Emotion, 3. pp. 97-105.

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More recently, Min²³ has developed a short form measure for assessment of emotional intelligence for tour guides.

Perhaps the most interesting article on social intelligence tests from the perspective of a property professional is the one written by Kate Unterborn (2011)²⁴ entitled “Creating a Performance-Based Social Intelligence Measure using Situational Judgement Test”. The measure here used a situational judgement test format to capture the richness of real world situational cues. Scores on the performance-based social intelligence were compared to personality traits and general mental ability to give evidence of construct validity.

The social intelligence measure here was one where the participant was presented with social situations designed to measure social intelligence. Each situation was followed by several behavioural responses and the participant was required to mark with a cross the “most effective” and “least effective” response. One example related to the property profession is tabulated in Diagram No. 2 below:

Diagram No. 2:		
Situational Analysis:		
Alice, who had long been employed for some years by a property consultancy, was usually very upbeat, social and assertive. Today Alice was very non-responsive and sad looking – almost depressed. Ellen, her supervisor, who is also a high energy person, walks pass Alice’s cubicle to drop off some reposts. If you were Ellen, what should you do?		
	Most Effective	Least Effective
Ask Alice if she is feeling alright or if there is something bothering her.		
Stop and chat with Alice, she’ll tell you if something		

²³ Min, J. C. H. (2012). *“A short-form measure for assessment of emotional intelligence for tour guides: development and evaluation.”* Tourism Management vol. 33:1, pp. 155-167.

²⁴ Unterborn, K. (2011). *“Creating a Performance-Based Social Intelligence measure using Situational Judgment Test.”* PhD Thesis at Central Michigan University.

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is bothering her.		
Ask Alice if she has any lunch plans and ask her to accompany you.		
Tell Alice you will be in your office later on, in case she needs to talk about anything.		

Can Social Intelligence be learnt or taught as a Subject within the Property or Building Industry?

Can the soft skill of social intelligence be taught at universities as part and parcel of the property or building curriculum? The answers to this question are explored here.

We start by introducing Linda Lantieri who is an internationally known expert in social and emotional learning, conflict resolution and crisis intervention with over forty years of experience in the field of education. Her book, written together with Daniel Goleman²⁵ in 2008, gives a step-by-step guide that teaches children how to quiet their minds, calm their bodies, and manage their emotions more skillfully. Can we explore the contents of this book to assist us in determining whether this book is useful to be included in the syllabus on the subject of social intelligence for future property professionals?

There is no denying that sociability is a personal trait and therefore the understanding of how much of social intelligence that we already possess is a vital beginning to the learning of social intelligence skills. This can be achieved by a Belbin²⁶ self-analysis test to determine which of the nine team roles we are born. The nine team roles are briefly described in Diagram No. 3 below and Belbin's work can form a part of the topics to be taught within the social intelligence program.

²⁵ Lantieri, L., Goleman, D. (2008). *Building Emotional Intelligence: Techniques to Cultivate the Inner Strength in Children*, published by Sound True, Inc. Boulder CO 80306.

²⁶ Belbin, R. M. (2012). *Team Roles at Work.* 2nd Edition. Published by Elsevier Ltd. UK.

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Diagram No. 3: Table of Belbin's Team Roles and their Descriptions²⁷

Team Role Name	Team-Role Contribution	Allowable Weaknesses
Plant	Creative, imaginative, unorthodox. Solves difficult problems.	Ignores incidentals. Too pre-occupied to communicate effectively.
Resource Investigator	Extrovert, enthusiastic, communicative. Explores opportunities. Develops contacts.	Over-optimistic. Loses interest once initial enthusiasm has passed.
Coordinator	Mature, confident, a good chairperson. Clarifies goals, promotes decision-making, delegates well.	Can be seen as manipulative. Offloads personal work.
Shaper	Challenging, dynamic, thrives on pressure. The drive and courage to overcome obstacles.	Prone to provocation. Offends people's feelings. Becomes impatient.
Monitor Evaluator	Sober, strategic and discerning. Sees the big picture and all options. Judges accurately.	Lacks drive and ability to inspire others.
Team-worker	Co-operative, mild, perceptive and diplomatic. Listens, builds, averts friction.	Indecisive in crunch situations.
Implementer	Disciplined. Reliable, conservative and efficient. Turns ideas into practical actions.	Somewhat inflexible. Slow to respond to new possibilities.
Completer Finisher	Painstaking, conscientious, anxious.	Inclined to worry unduly.

²⁷ Source: *Belbin's Team Role Contributions*. Belbin Associates, Cambridge, UK.

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	Searches out errors and omissions. Delivers on time.	Reluctant to delegate.
Specialist	Single-minded, self-starting, dedicated. Provides knowledge and skills in rare supply.	Contributes on only a narrow front. Dwells on technicalities.

Handbook for Developing Emotional and Social Intelligence²⁸ is an authoritative collection of practical contents – best practices, case studies, and tools – that showcases the application and development of emotional and social intelligence in the workplace. This book features a wealth of case studies written for the executive coaches and consultants in human resource. It includes proven strategies that can be used to help leaders and teams develop their emotional and social effectiveness.

Developing Emotional and Social Intelligence²⁹ is another good text for the subject of social intelligence. The book provides an array of activities for developing emotional intelligence in both the coaching and team environment. These activities have stood the test of time and can help trainers in active and experiential learning.

Stephen Sampson³⁰ together with others have written three books on developing social intelligence skills for specific occupations such as correction officers, government supervisors/managers and Law Enforcement Officers, basing on the collective experiences of the three authors in the training and research in the field of criminal justice. There is therefore every

²⁸ Hughes, M., Thompson, H. L., Terrell, J. B., Ed. (2009). **Handbook for Developing Emotional and Social Intelligence: Best Practices, Case Studies and Strategies**. Pfeiffer, An Imprint of Wiley, San Francisco, CA 94103-1741

²⁹ Hughes, M., Miller, A. (2011). **Developing Emotional and Social Intelligence: Exercises for Leaders, Individuals and Teams**. Pfeiffer, An Imprint of Wiley, San Francisco, CA 94103-1741

³⁰ Sampson, S. J., Blakeman, J. D., Carkhuff, R. R. (2006) **Social Intelligence Skills for Government Supervisors/Managers**. HRD Press Limited, Amherst, MA 01002.

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opportunity for researchers in the property profession to concentrate on this field of specialization and produce similar books for the various players in the property arena.

Future Research

The importance of social intelligence and how social intelligence can be measured are discussed in this paper. How social intelligence can affect the lives of property professionals has been touched upon. A project manager of a property development or a property management manager of a shopping center can relate to the many frustrations of their workplaces where conflicting demands are placed before them. A quantity surveyor has to communicate his analysis to his fellow team players such as design consultants or developer and here social intelligence plays a vital role in the success of a construction project.

So far, there has not been any visible evidence that property professionals are interested in this research area of social intelligence or the teaching of such soft skills to future property professionals.

The wish of the author is to have more researchers amongst property professionals taking up the challenge of this research area. The research can simply be a study into the level of social intelligence of new intakes to property and building course or it can be a more complicated study and development of relevant emotional and social intelligence tests for workers in the property and building industries.

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