

Social Intelligence Amongst Undergraduate Management Students: An Exploratory Study

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Social Intelligence, as the ability to evaluate one's own behavior and to adequately understand the behavior of others, helps in developing ability for building relationships successfully and gives better insights in to the social environment. This study explores the factors affecting Social Intelligence of undergraduate students of management discipline. It also assesses the gender-wise differences in the students' Social Intelligence levels. Data was analyzed through total correlation, Reliability, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Barlets Test of sphericity, t-Test and Factor analysis. The study identified 6 key factors influencing Social Intelligence viz., Social Assertiveness, Social Connectedness, Interpersonal Skills, Emotional Intelligence, People's Skills, and Empathy.

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Introduction

Psychologist Edward Thorndike propounded the concept of Social Intelligence in 1920. Social Intelligence is “the ability to understand men and women, boys and girls and to act wisely in human relations”. The concept of Social Intelligence is related to both practical and cognitive aspects. Practical aspect is the ability to respond towards people and the cognitive aspect is the ability to understand people. A clear understanding of the people and their behavior is important as this helps in shaping the attitude towards different individuals and situations. From elementary nurseries to meeting boardrooms Social Intelligence is required everywhere. With the work of Edward Thorndike publications began to appear on Social Intelligence in Harpers Monthly magazine in the 20th Century. Thorndike also stressed on interpersonal effectiveness as one of the vital parameters for attaining success in

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various fields of life. Later in 1920s, Social Intelligence was defined by Moss Hunt (1927) as “the ability to get along with others”. With the understanding of the behavioral traits of others, how well one is able to get along with others is also important. In order to unlock the stems of dialogue, a proper communication is necessary as communication is the key for getting along with others.

Vernon (1933) described that, “Social Intelligence is reflected in the general ability to get along with people in general, social technique or ease in society, knowledge of social matters and susceptibility to stimuli from other members of a group, as well as insight into the temporary moods or underlying personality traits of strangers”. A general assumption is that people continue to learn as they age with experience and maturity. This helps them in attaining an understanding of their surroundings. Social Intelligence helps in assessing the impact of one’s behavior over others. With combination of new strategies and new behaviors one can be successful in dealing with others.

Models of Social Intelligence

Greenspan’s Hierarchical Model of Social Intelligence (1979): The model designed by Greenspan laid emphasis on Social Intelligence to be only one constituent of adaptive intelligence. There are three main constructs in social intelligence namely; social sensitivity as reflected in social reasoning and role taking, social insight dealing with moral judgment and intuitions and social

communication dealing with problem solving skills.

Maslow’s Model of Social Performance: Abraham Maslow, in 1986, designed a model of Social Intelligence with five focus points. Social attitudes display the concern for others and the interest level. Social performance skill deals with the actions. The ability of an individual to relate to others is the empathetic ability. The level of an individual’s sensitivity with others is the emotional expressiveness. A person’s comfort level in social situation is the confidence level.

Albrecht’s Model of Social Intelligence: The model by Albrecht’s proposed in 2005 has five key constituents which were called as SPACE. “S” stands for situational radar which is the ability to scan situations and also perceive the context that helps in determining the successful behavioral strategies. “P” stands for Presence and defined as self-worth or self confidence or the exterior sense of one own self perceived by others. “A” stands for Authenticity which deals with the perception of an individual being honest with one-self or with others. “C” stands for Clarity which implies using clear concepts and a clear and understandable language. “E” stands for being Empathetic which implies the sense of belongingness with others.

Goleman’s Model (1998;2001): Goleman proposed a model of Social Intelligence in 1998 which was a combination of biology and brain. Goleman tried to distinguish between two cerebral processes as “high road” and “low road”.

When one thinks and analyze deliberately he/she uses a slower neurological passage and is on the “high road”. On the contrary, when one’s thoughts are more emotion based, they are on the “low road”. According to Goleman, the skill of successfully utilizing both high and low road processes is Social Intelligence. The model given by Goleman presents two broad categories as:

- Social Facility includes self presentation and also embraces synchrony.
- Social Awareness deals with the social cognition, empathy and attunement.

Literature Review

Survival in the society without Social Intelligence is not possible. An individual is able to develop healthy co-existence with other people because of Social Intelligence. It has been observed in various studies that Social Intelligence helps an individual in tracking various social tasks and in solving major life issues. The review of related literature on Social Intelligence reveals that it has attracted researchers globally. The success in academic performance depends on Social Intelligence of students. Academic performance is positively related to Social Intelligence (Brown & Anthony, 1990). In a study conducted by Bailey in 1968, the assessment of Social Intelligence

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amongst the students of fifth grade was done using the friendship rating scale which revealed that Social Intelligence is different from academic achievement. In a study it was found that the students with high score are higher achievers of Social Intelligence (Saxena & Panigrahi, 2009). Another study conducted by Riggio et.al. (1991) revealed that Social Intelligence and academics are overlapping but conceptually different constructs.

No significant difference was observed in Social Intelligence between low creative and high creative adolescents (Singh, 2007). According to a study by Kaur and Kalaramna (2004), socio economic status and home environment affect Social Intelligence. Inter-connections between Social Intelligence, values, wisdoms and interpersonal personality traits were revealed in a study conducted by Vyrost and Kyselova (2006). Social skills are required in learning environment for the students entering into a new educational stage with different caliber peers and of different cultural background. According to Davis (2010), the college environment and university environment are very different. Students should use their social skills for interacting with teachers and peers. Students with a better level of Social Intelligence tend to be better achievers (Robert et.al., 2013). Malik et.al. (2018) revealed in their study that male students have a better Social Intelligence than the female students. As per their findings during the university years the overall development of Social Intelligence was good. Another study conducted by Nagra (2014) and Kundu et.al. (2015) revealed that as their study was

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conducted in the Indian background there is no significance difference between female and male students regarding their social skills. The difference between these studies is because that the roles of females differ in different societies and cultures. According to the study by Kanimozhi and Vasimalairaja (2020) socially intelligent people are wise and more socially refined. The high school students are influenced by the level of Social Intelligence. In another study conducted by Rani et.al. (2019) it was revealed that there is no significant difference in all aspects of Social Intelligence of adolescents. The basis of the statistical difference was income and family type. In relation to the gender of students, Dhingra and Tiakala (2016) concluded that there is no significant difference in dimensions of Social Intelligence between both the genders.

Objectives

1. To compare levels of Social Intelligence of male and female undergraduate students of management discipline.
2. To explore the factors affecting Social Intelligence amongst undergraduate students of management discipline.

Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no correlation among twenty one variables in the population under study.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between male and female undergraduate students of management discipline in terms of levels of their Social Intelligence.

The Sample

The sample comprised 756 undergraduate students (378 boys and 378 girls) of various management institutes across the state of Madhya Pradesh. Convenience sampling has been used for data collection (Table 1).

Table 1 Case Processing Summary

| | | N | % |
|-------|-----------------------|-----|-------|
| Cases | Valid | 756 | 100.0 |
| | Excluded ^a | 0 | .0 |
| | Total | 756 | 100.0 |

a. List wise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Data Collection & Analysis

The Tromsø Social Intelligence Scale, a self-report measure of Social Intelligence, developed by Silvera et.al. (2001) was used to collect data. This scale has 21 items for measuring the level of Social Intelligence. The scale has ten negatively worded items. For these items reverse scoring was done before analysis. These items are item no. 2, 4, 5, 8, 12, 13, 15, 16, 20, and 21. Item-total Correlation, Reliability, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test of

sphericity, Independent Samples t-Test and Factor Analysis were used to analyze data using SPSS.

The Scale adopted in this study consists 21 items. As the sample size was 756, items with correlation value less than 0.1948 should be dropped. All the items in the study had correlation values more than 0.1948 thus; no item was dropped from the questionnaire.

Reliability of the Measures

Reliability of the measures was assessed with the use of Cronbach’s alpha on all the items. Cronbach’s alpha consists of estimates of how much variation in scores of different variables is attributable to chance or random errors (Selltiz et. al., 1976). As a general rule, a coefficient greater than or equal to 0.7 is considered acceptable and a good indication of construct reliability (Nunnally, 1978). The Cronbach’s alpha for the questionnaire was found to be 0.820 (Table 2). Hence, it was found reliable for further analysis.

Table 2 Reliability Statistics

| Cronbach’s Alpha | N of Items |
|------------------|------------|
| .820 | 21 |

To test the correlation among all the variables in the population under study, Kaiser- Meyer- Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett’s test of sphericity were performed and to explore the factors affecting Social Intelligence among undergraduate students of management discipline, the data were

Table 3 Group Statistics

| VAR00001 | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|----------|-----|---------|----------------|-----------------|
| FEMALES | 378 | 80.7593 | 8.66302 | .44558 |
| MALES | 378 | 79.4630 | 7.28903 | .37491 |

Table 4 Independent Samples t Test

| | Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|------|------------------------------|---------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|---------|
| | F | Sig. | T | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| VAR00002 | | | | | | | | | |
| Equal variances assumed | 4.126 | .043 | 2.226 | 754 | .026 | 1.29630 | .58232 | .15314 | 2.43945 |
| Equal variances not assumed | | | 2.226 | 732.579 | .026 | 1.29630 | .58232 | .15308 | 2.43951 |

treated with factor analysis. To compare, male and female undergraduate students of management discipline in terms of levels of their Social Intelligence, t-test was applied.

Independent Samples t-Test

As per Table 4, p value is .043, which is less than .05, which indicates that H_{02} is rejected at 5 percent level of significance. It implies that there is significant difference between male and female undergraduate students of management discipline with reference to the levels of their Social Intelligence. As per the results, female students were found to be more Socially Intelligent than male students (Table 3). As per Table 4, p value is .043, which is less than .05, which indicates that H_{02} is rejected at 5 percent level of significance. The previous study conducted by Saxena and Jain (2013) revealed that the female students are socially more intelligent than the male students in arts stream than in any other streams. On the basis of patience and sensitivity, females are better than males as females are better in cooperation and more patient. This study supports the above study as well. Unlike males, females learn to give more value to interpersonal connectedness because of their past experiences (Gunkel et.al., 2007). In another study conducted by Szymanowicz and Furnham (2013), more cognitive abilities are seen in the mascu-

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line counterpart and less social abilities, while it is the reverse for the females.

KMO & Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

The generated score of KMO, 0.675, reasonably supports the appropriateness of using factor analysis (Table 5). The Bartlett's test of sphericity was highly significant ($p < 0.01$), rejecting the null hypothesis (H_{01}) that the twenty-one variables are uncorrelated in the population. Using Principal Components with Varimax rotation only attributes with factor loadings of 0.5 or greater on a factor were regarded as significant. The factor analysis generated six factors explaining 58.752 of the variability in the original data.

Factor Analysis

To explore the factors affecting Social Intelligence amongst undergraduate students, factor analysis using Principle Component Method with Varimax Rotation and Kaiser Normalization was applied (Table 6).

The analysis extracted following 6 factors:

1. *Social Assertiveness*: This factor has a load of 2.706. It includes a total of 4 items. Item 10 "I am good at entering new situations and meeting people for the first time (.774)", item 7 "I fit in easily in social situations (.743)", item 17 "I can predict how others will react to my behavior (.609)" and item 18 "I am good at getting on good terms with new people

Table 5 KMO and Bartlett’s Test

| | | |
|--|--------------------|---------|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. | | .675 |
| Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | 4.783E3 |
| | Df | 210 |
| | Sig. | .000 |

Table 6 Results of Factor Analysis

| Factor | Items under study | Item Load | Factor Load | Eigen value | Percent of Variance |
|-------------------------------|---|-----------|-------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Social Assertiveness | I am good at entering new situations and meeting people for the first time | .774 | 2.706 | 4.384 | 12.100 |
| | I fit in easily in social situations | .743 | | | |
| | I can predict how others will react to my behavior | .609 | | | |
| | I am good at getting on good terms with new people | .580 | | | |
| Social Connectedness | Other people become angry with me without me being able to explain why | .734 | 3.053 | 2.401 | 11.562 |
| | I have a hard time getting along with other people | .724 | | | |
| | People often surprise me with the things they do | .675 | | | |
| | I find people unpredictable | .476 | | | |
| | I often feel uncertain around new people who I don’t know | .444 | | | |
| Interpersonal Skills | It takes a long time for me to get to know others well | .670 | 2.565 | 1.435 | 10.526 |
| | I frequently have problems finding good conversation topics | .642 | | | |
| | I have often hurt others without realizing it | .634 | | | |
| | I am often surprised by others’ reactions to what I do | .619 | | | |
| Emotional Intelligence | I understand other’s wishes | .645 | 2.194 | 1.323 | 9.657 |
| | I can often understand what others really mean through their expression, body language etc. | .615 | | | |
| | I know how my actions will make others feel | .481 | | | |
| People’s Skills | I understand other people’s feelings | .453 | 1.343 | 1.201 | 7.667 |
| | I can predict other people’s behavior | .734 | | | |
| Empathy | I often feel that it is difficult to understand other’s choices | .609 | 1.335 | 1.144 | 7.239 |
| | I can often understand what others are trying to accomplish without the need for them to say anything | .814 | | | |
| | It seems as though people are often angry or irritated when I say what I think | .521 | | | |

(.580)”. This is the first important factor of Social Intelligence of undergraduate students of management discipline. This factor explained 12.10 percent of variance with highest eigen value 4.384. Our

findings are supported by Andrea et.al. (2013) and Janki et.al. (2019). Andrea et.al. (2013) stressed on the importance of assertiveness and it is associated with psychological well-being and self esteem.

According to Janki et al. (2019) for developing an assertive behavior among adolescents, assertive training can be effective. Assertive behavior helps in developing a positive mental well-being in individuals.

2. *Social Connectedness*: This factor has a total load of 3.053. It includes a total of 5 items. Item 8 “Other people become angry with me without me being able to explain why (.734)”, item 12 “I have a hard time getting along with other people (.724)”, item 5 “People often surprise me with the things they do (.675)”, item 13 “I find people unpredictable (.476)” and item 4 “I often feel uncertain around new people who I don’t know (.444)”. This was the second important factor of Social Intelligence of undergraduate students of management discipline. This factor explained 11.56 percent of variance with eigen value 2.401. The findings of this study are supported by Miyamoto et al. (2020), Cruwys (2014), Holt-Lunstad et al. (2010), Berkman (2001) and Perkins et al. (2015). Research conducted by Miyamoto et al. (2020) revealed that engaging in social interactions helps in gaining higher levels of positive emotions and social connectedness. According to a study by Cruwys et al. (2014) Social Connectedness is crucial for good health. Individuals are exposed to depression and poor mental health if they have limited social connectedness. There is a low life expectancy of people with low social connectedness (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010). In public health literatures there is widespread consensus that social connectedness has a positive impact on the mental

health (Kawachi & Berkman, 2000; Perkins et al., 2015).

3. *Interpersonal Skills*: This factor has a load of 2.565. It includes a total of 4 items. Item 15, “It takes a long time for me to get to know others well (.670)”, item 20 “I frequently have problems finding good conversation topics (.642)”, item 16 “I have often hurt others without realizing it (.634)” and item 21 “I am often surprised by others’ reactions to what I do (.619)”. This was the third important factor of Social Intelligence of undergraduate students of management discipline. This factor explained 10.526 percent of variance with the eigen value 1.435. The findings of this study are supported by Hunt and Bruch (2018) and Quinn (2014). In the development of Interpersonal Skills, the perspective of human resource management revolves around negotiations and communication skills (Hunt & Baruch, 2018). Interpersonal skills comprise effective communication, team building and conflict management (Quinn, 2014). As per report of a survey, college graduates entering the workforce should communicate with confidence and be proficient in public speaking (survey in the Workforce-Skills Preparedness Report, PayScale, 2016). The survey also revealed that poor communication skills could affect the goals and expectations of the students.

4. *Emotional Intelligence*: This factor has a total load of 2.194. It includes a total of 4 items. Item 9, “I understand other’s wishes (.645)”, item 19 “I can often understand what others really mean through their expression, body language

etc. (.615)”, item 3 “I know how my actions will make others feel (.481)” and item 6 “I understand other people’s feelings (.453)”. This is the fourth important factor of Social Intelligence of undergraduate students of management discipline. This factor explained 9.657 percent of variance with the eigen value 1.323. The findings of this study are supported by Kant (2019), Mayer and Salovey (1997) and Annaraja and Jose (2005). Emotional Intelligence is a very popular concept and acts as a mirror of a person’s personal and professional life. Emotions are involved in every activity, action and reaction of human being and are a popular parameter of an individual’s school, and overall success (Kant, 2019). Emotionally intelligent people are able to recognize their potentialities better. According to a study conducted by Mayer and Salovey (1997) people try to suppress their negative emotions and unpleasant feelings and look for pleasant feelings. Their study also concluded that emotional intelligence positively affects the individual’s attitude at workplace. A study conducted on B.Ed students by Annaraja and Jose (2005), revealed that students’ place of residence has some effect on their emotional intelligence, although place of residence has effect on their social skills and self control.

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5. *People’s Skills*: This factor has a load of 1.343. It includes a total of 2 items. Item 1 “I can predict other people’s

behavior (.734)” and item 2 “I often feel that it is difficult to understand other’s choices (.609)”. This is the fifth factor of Social Intelligence of undergraduate students of management discipline. This factor explained 7.667 percent of variance with eigen value 1.201. The findings of this study are supported by Sherine et.al; (2012) and Fotis (2008). The students are expected to have people’s skills of credibility and adaptability. Credibility deals with competence and commitment. People’s skills also involve the ability to persuade people and also give an idea of how to present in front of others (Sherine et.al., 2012). “9 Most Powerful Ways to Improve Your Personal Skills” a book by George W. Fotis (2008) explains that the nine people skills namely personal ethics, adaptability, tact, credibility, inter-communication, persuasiveness, objectivity, initiative and self-discipline contribute to gaining cooperation, respect and also winning confidence within a community or even a family.

6. *Empathy*: This factor has a load of 1.335. It includes a total of 2 items. Item 14 “I can often understand what others are trying to accomplish without the need for them to say anything (.814)” and item 11 “It seems as though people are often angry or irritated when I say what I think (.521)”. This is the sixth factor of Social Intelligence of undergraduate students of management discipline. This factor explained 7.239 percent of variance with eigen value 1.144. The findings of this study are supported by Bozkurt and Ozden (2010) and Sahin (2012). In many educational settings

teachers are expected to be empathetic by being good problem solvers and enhancing the positive environment in the institutes. An empathetic classroom climate is an important pedagogical approach towards student's performance (Bozkurt and Ozden, 2010). Enhancing empathy through training has been a crucial topic for discussion amongst many researchers since 1960. According to Sahin (2012) it has been a matter of discussion and debate whether the skill of empathy is completely intrinsic in human nature or it can be learned.

Conclusion

The present research revealed that there are six factors namely: Social Assertiveness, Social Connectedness, Interpersonal Skills, Emotional Intelligence, Personal Skills and Empathy contributing towards better Social Intelligence of the management students of undergraduate discipline. It is also found that the female students are more Socially Intelligent than the male students. Social Intelligence helps an individual in being an excellent listener, being expressive and handling every situation tactfully. Every individual is exposed to various elements and from the above research it can be concluded that Socially Intelligent people are more liked in the society. Social Intelligence is required by individuals while presenting or dealing in with any situation.

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The universities and institutes should hold webinars with speakers who are veterans in the field of Social Intelligence for providing knowledge and creating awareness amongst students. Workshops may also be organized to train students to improve their Social Intelligence which will help students to evolve as better human being and be successful in their respective fields.

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