

## Emotional Social Intelligence and Gardner's Interpersonal and Intrapersonal Intelligence: A Conceptual Analysis

Sindhu K\*, Ampili Aravind\*\*

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### Abstract

*Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences, particularly interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence, aligns with the concept of Emotional Social Intelligence (ESI). Interpersonal intelligence refers to the ability to understand others, akin to social intelligence, whereas intrapersonal intelligence, often termed self-psychological intelligence, is associated with emotional intelligence. Research studies indicate that socially oriented intelligence encompasses the capacity to assess social situations through the effective application of emotional intelligence. Social intelligence includes self-awareness and self-regulation as its key components. This paper explores the relationship between Gardner's interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence and the broader constructs of ESI.*

**Keywords:** Emotional intelligence, Emotional Social Intelligence (ESI), social intelligence, multiple intelligence, interpersonal intelligence and intrapersonal intelligence

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### Introduction

'Emotional strength' was a concept developed by Abraham Maslow (1950). The term 'emotional intelligence' appears to have originated in a study by Michael Beldoch in 1964. However, it gained prominence following the publication of Daniel Goleman's book, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* (1995). The term 'social intelligence' was coined by Edward Thorndike in 1920. In his 2006 book *Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships*, Goleman explores social intelligence as a developing field of study that significantly influences how we interact with one another. Gardner in his book *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (1983) emphasises that people possess different types of intelligence. He clarifies that interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence

form the foundation of his understanding of personal intelligence. According to his theory of multiple intelligence, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence are closely related subcategories of intelligence. The latter focuses on self-awareness and the ability to control one's own emotions, complementing emotional intelligence. On the contrary, the former relates to understanding and effectively interacting with others, which is strongly connected with social intelligence.

### Emotional Social Intelligence: An Overview

Carolyn Saarni (1990) listed eight interconnected social and emotional qualities that together define emotional competence. According to research studies conducted by Ravuen Bar-On (1988, 1997 and 2000), ESI comprises various intrapersonal and

interpersonal capabilities and skills that work together to determine appropriate behaviour. In his model, Bar-On argues that this construct should be referred to as ESI rather than merely social intelligence.

The ability to identify and regulate one's own and other people's emotions is commonly referred to as emotional intelligence. The term 'emotional intelligence' was introduced by Mayer and et al. in their 2004 study, wherein they described it as the ability to understand and regulate emotions within oneself and while interacting with others. It is the ability to distinguish between signals and use this information to regulate thoughts and behaviours. They added that socially oriented intelligence refers to the application of emotional intelligence in social interactions. It includes the intelligence to judge social situations and build relationships.

Goleman (1995) identified self-awareness, empathy, motivation, social skills and self-regulation as the components of emotional intelligence. In 2000, he refined his model by categorizing it into four broad areas — relationship management, self-management, societal awareness and self-awareness. Understanding social dynamics, responding to them appropriately and fostering meaningful relationships are the components of social intelligence. The integration of emotional and social intelligence is commonly referred to as Emotional Social Intelligence (ESI), highlighting their complementary nature.

## **Gardener's Theory of Multiple Intelligences**

Howard Gardner, in his 1983 *Frames of Mind* in 1983, introduced the concept of multiple intelligences, challenging the idea of a single IQ. According to Gardner, human intelligence is multidimensional and include eight different forms, i.e., linguistic, spatial, musical, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic, naturalistic, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence.

Intelligence, particularly significant to this paper, is interpersonal intelligence, which

refers to the ability to understand and interact effectively with others based on their requirements. This type of intelligence serves as the foundation of all social relationships, interpersonal interactions and communication.

Intrapersonal Intelligence, on the other hand, involves self-awareness, critical thinking and the ability to regulate one's own emotions, as well as those of others. It also helps people to understand their capabilities and assess where they stand in terms of needs, emotions and passion.

## **Interpersonal Intelligence and Emotional Social Intelligence**

Gardener's concept of interpersonal intelligence aligns with the emotional and social aspects of intelligence as it emphasizes understanding and interacting with others. Interpersonal intelligence is present in individuals who are able to build good relationships with others and demonstrate empathy, awareness of desires and needs, and social adaptability.

ESI, particularly the elements of empathy and social skills, reiterate the attributes of interpersonal intelligence. Central to both frameworks is the ability to recognise and respond to the emotions of others. Since these skills complement each other, a person with high interpersonal intelligence is also likely to possess strong emotional and social intelligence.

## **Intrapersonal Intelligence and Emotional Intelligence**

Gardener's intrapersonal intelligence is closely linked to the self-awareness and self-regulation components of emotional intelligence. Individuals with high intrapersonal intelligence are skilled at self-analysis, understanding their emotions, motivations and reactions. This self-awareness is crucial in the emotional intelligence model as it enables them to regulate their emotions and manage expressions effectively.

## **Interpersonal Intelligence and Social Intelligence**

The ability to understand and communicate with others is a common trait of both social and interpersonal intelligence. Interpersonal intelligence, a component of Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences, refers to the ability to consider others and respond appropriately to their needs. While social intelligence involves understanding social frameworks and behaviour, interpersonal intelligence mainly focuses on interaction between two persons or one-on-one interactions. When combined, these cognitive abilities enhance interpersonal communication, empathy and relationship.

## **Relationship between ESI and Gardner's Intelligence**

The intersection between ESI and Gardner's interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences suggests that these concepts are not separate but interrelated. ESI can be viewed as a bridge between interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence as it involves self-regulation and effective social interactions.

From this perspective, we get a better understanding of the relationship between these two concepts and how they impact human capabilities—individually, as well as collectively—in areas like leadership, teamwork performance, and communication. For instance, individuals with strong ESI can navigate complex interpersonal relationships, make decisions on the basis of their emotional intelligence and build trust in others. Additionally, they excel in

self-management, emotional regulation and stress management—the key factors that enhance productivity across various fields.

## **Conclusion**

The connection between emotional intelligence, social intelligence, and Gardner's interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence offers a comprehensive view of human potential in regulating and understanding emotions, as well as functioning within social structures. Goleman identifies self-regulation, motivation, communication skills, empathy and self-awareness as key components of emotional intelligence. This aligns with Gardner's theories of intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence, which focus on the ability to understand oneself and engage with others in a productive way.

According to Bar-On's concept of ESI, these two forms of intelligence are integrated. Interpersonal intelligence relates to social intelligence as both involve the ability to understand and navigate interactions. However, while interpersonal intelligence focuses on individual interactions, social intelligence addresses people in groups. Intrapersonal intelligence is quite similar to one of the aspects of emotional intelligence, which helps a person control one's emotions and actions. The application of these concepts enhances understanding about people, promotes self-regulation of emotions, controls social behaviour, and strengthens both individual and collaborative relationships, as well as effective leadership.

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