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# Methods of Teaching Social Intelligence and its Impact on Service Quality

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METHODS OF TEACHING SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE AND  
ITS IMPACT ON SERVICE QUALITY

by

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### **Abstract**

Current literature on social intelligence was reviewed and analyzed and most was focused on the general understanding of social intelligence and methods of measurement. There is little literature that connects social intelligence to the business world and none that focuses on the hospitality industry. It is important to fill the gap in research because social intelligence could have a significant impact on service quality, which in turn affects revenues. The current literature provides a good foundation, but more research is needed in the hospitality industry to determine the impact social intelligence actually has on service quality. Experimentation utilizing several measurement techniques from the literature could help add to the research and bridge the gap between social intelligence and service quality in the hospitality industry.

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## **PART ONE**

### **Introduction**

Common sense tells us that most employees and leaders need to be smart. Traditionally this has meant having a high IQ. It has become increasingly evident that these individuals also need to be able to read situations and people well, especially in the hospitality field. In the 1950s social intelligence (SI) was dismissed as simply general intelligence in social situations, but since then has been rethought, as neuroscience has been able to more accurately explain what different areas of the brain regulate. It can now be seen that the brain is actually “wired to connect” (Goleman, 2006). One of the major topics of focus in hospitality right now is customer relationship management, and most employers understand that hospitality businesses must create relationships with customers in order to increase customer loyalty. Social intelligence studies address how people interact within a relationship and focuses on a two-person interaction (Goleman, 2006). In hospitality it is extremely important to be socially intelligent to effectively fulfill customers’ needs and this paper will look at different methods, based on a literature review, of teaching social intelligence to employees.

Increasing social intelligence could potentially have an impact on service quality, which would impact both customer loyalty and revenue. Therefore, the impact on service quality will also be a major focus throughout the paper. Once the literature review is complete and methods of educating staff have been established, the paper’s focus will be on proposing research to demonstrate a correlation between teaching social intelligence and service quality as well as ideas for teaching social intelligence based on current findings. Finding methods to teach SI is important because it is vital that hospitality businesses not only train their employees, but also train them on the right material to increase the quality of service they provide customers.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this paper is to explore how current methods of teaching social intelligence can be utilized in hospitality businesses to increase service quality. Most of the existing research on social intelligence is not specific to the hospitality industry and this paper will examine this gap in research as well as create a proposal for research in the future. Suggestions will also be made for teaching social intelligence to hospitality employees based on the current literature.

### **Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

The main areas of literature that will be focused on throughout the paper are methods of measuring and teaching social intelligence. There have been several studies on the ability to measure SI, but they have been limited and many did not use nonverbal stimuli, which is a large part of the science (Conzelmann, Weis, & Süß, 2013). As Goleman (2006) describes, it is important to measure social intelligence using both the conscious and the unconscious mind because both play a part in how people interact with one another. This will also be critical when researching teaching methods and analyzing their validity.

Service Quality and its importance in hospitality businesses is a key aspect of this paper as well because this is the area that will potentially be improved by the use social intelligence training. Service Quality is vital in hospitality because it is connected to satisfaction and loyalty. Research has shown that creating relationships with customers can increase their loyalty and positively affect consumers' purchasing behavior (Beatson, Lings, & Gudergan, 2008). Understanding the importance of service quality and its affects on the hospitality business as a whole make it easy to see why it is important to find methods of increasing quality. This paper

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will focus on whether an increase in quality can be achieved by educating frontline employees and managers on social intelligence.

### **Statement of Problem**

The current literature focuses on explaining social intelligence and methods of measuring it. A limited amount of research has begun to focus more thoroughly on whether or not it can be taught and if so how. There has not been a connection to the service industry and very little research into the business world at all. Teaching social intelligence could have a significant impact on service quality, but the research has not bridged the gap as of yet. This paper will look at how teaching methods of social intelligence can be applied to the hospitality industry and what impact it could have on frontline service employees.

### **Limitations**

The major constraint for this study is the amount of research that has been done. There have not been many studies looking at different methods of teaching social intelligence and the connection between social intelligence and the hospitality industry is still very new. There are a lot of implied connections, but past research has been on general interactions and not specific to the hospitality industry. That is why one of the main focuses of the paper is to propose additional research in this area.

### **Definitions**

**Social intelligence:** the ability to understand the feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of persons, including oneself, in interpersonal situations and to act appropriately upon that understanding (Marlowe, 1986).

**Emotional intelligence:** the set of abilities enabling a person to generate, recognize, express, understand, and evaluate their own, and others' emotions in order to guide thinking and

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action that successfully cope with environmental demands and pressures (as cited in Cha, Cichy, & Kim, 2008).

**Customer relationship management:** Developing and maintaining enduring relationships with customers through the management of interactions between the company and customers (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, & Gremier, 2002).



## **PART TWO**

### **Introduction**

The literature review focuses on the overall aspect of social intelligence with particular attention paid to the measurement and teaching practices in use. Only a small section of the review focuses on its relation to the hospitality industry simply because there has not been much research done. This will be addressed more fully in part three. Social intelligence allows for a better understanding of others and is important to study because if it can be measured and taught it would mean that employees and managers could learn ways to positively impact interactions and create better working environments, which leads to better performance and a higher level of service quality. Through the use of the current literature it is hoped to be able to answer the question of how to effectively teach social intelligence in the hospitality industry and improve service quality.

What follows is an overview of the current and past literature on the study of social intelligence. This section goes through the history of social intelligence and details the evolving definition of the term. It then focuses on early research that was conducted in the early twentieth century. Next it looks at what social intelligence is and the science behind it as well as why it is so important. A significant portion of the review focuses on past and current measurement tools and teaching practices. Finally, there are sections on cross-cultural issues, service quality, and any current relation to the hospitality industry.

### **History of Social Intelligence**

#### **Evolving Definitions**

In 1920 E.L. Thorndike divided intelligence into three categories including abstract, mechanical, and social. He defined social intelligence as the ability to understand and manage

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people (as cited in Thorndike & Stein, 1937), while another quoted definition from Thorndike 1920 added on to the definition above with "...to act wisely in human relations" (Hackworth & Brannon, 2006, p. 171). The encyclopedic dictionary of psychology defined it as a person's ability to interact sensitively and effectively with others (Cooper, 2006). Hackworth and Brannon (2006) looked at social intelligence as two separate pieces. Discriminative facility focused on sensitivity to situational cues and self-monitoring looked at people's tendency to modify their own behavior to fit a situation. Marlowe (1986) also distinguished two separate pieces of the intelligence with his definition. He defined it as, "the ability to understand the feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of persons, including oneself, in interpersonal situations and to act appropriately upon that understanding (p. 52). It is noted that he also separated the intelligence into social cognition and behavioral performance, which was a trend that continued to modern approaches (Marlowe, 1986; Romney & Pyryt, 1999; Lievens & Chan, 2010).

### **Origins of Research**

E.L. Thorndike (1937) said that social intelligence could be clearly seen in most areas of human interaction like a playground or sales floor, but it had not been seen or tested in a laboratory. He advocated that having effective interpersonal skills was essential in many fields, but especially leadership. As time went on, social intelligence was dismissed. David Wechsler, who created one of the most widely used measures of IQ in the 1950s, thought of social intelligence simply as general intelligence applied to social situations. In recent years, social intelligence came back into the foreground because of neuroscience and a better understanding of how the brain functions in social situations. More recently, social intelligence was established as distinct from general intelligence (Goleman, 2006; Cooper, 2006).

### **What is Social Intelligence?**

The definition of social intelligence has already been established, but it was important to look beyond the definition to the functions in the human brain that make some more socially intelligent than others. There have been measurements of varying degree since 1920, but only recently has neuroscience provided insight into the chemistry of social intelligence in the brain. Romney and Pyryt (1999) asked the question of why some were better at detecting emotions and facial cues than others. Following are several aspects of social intelligence that were found through research to be key elements in the science.

Goleman (2006) explained two aspects of the human brain central to the understanding of social intelligence. The brain has two roads, one high and one low. The low road is composed of systems that operate below a person's awareness. This happens automatically and very quickly. It is what accounts for sensations like a gut reaction to a person. The high road goes much slower and is more deliberate. This accounts for a person's awareness and gives them control over themselves. The low road provides an instantaneous emotional feeling, while the high road provides a more educated understanding of the situation and allows for a generated appropriate response. Both the high and low roads are necessary to be socially intelligent because the low road provides the social intuition and the high road allows for the creation of a response to that feeling (Goleman, 2006).

Two types of neurons were discovered relatively recently and they provided scientific explanation as to what was happening in the brain. Mirror neurons and spindle cells helped in understanding why some people were more socially intelligent than others. Mirror neurons help to imitate, read intentions, and read emotions (Goleman, 2006; Spaulding, 2013). Goleman (2006) continued with, "sensing what other people intend, and why, offers invaluable social

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information, letting us keep a step ahead of whatever will happen next” (p. 42). Spaulding said, however, that mirror neurons may only contribute to the understanding of intent from someone’s behavior, but more likely help understand “goal-directed behavior” (p. 239). Spaulding’s more recent study called into question the exact function of mirror neurons, but neuroscience is still new and evolving. Mirror neurons were still explained as having an important function in the science of social intelligence.

A shared state of empathy sends signals to the “motor area of the brain” and makes people more prepared for action. When they see something and empathize, they are more likely to act on it. Charles Darwin said that feeling any emotion made people want to act (as cited in Goleman, 2006). Therefore it would make sense that empathizing with another person makes people want to act on their feeling because they are now feeling that sensation as well. This is due to the low-road subconscious aspect of the brain. Emotional contagion, or the spreading of emotion, prepared people to act, which led to the question of why do people so often not act? Goleman (2006) explains that in modern society people often feel empathy at a distance. E-mail, telephone, and the Internet allow for virtual communication and do not allow for emotional connection as well as direct personal contact. When there is a distance it is also possible to simply experience sympathy and feel sorry for someone instead of feeling their emotions for ourselves. Face-to-face interactions allow for more direct emotional contagion.

Another reason that face-to-face communication creates better empathy is because people can look into someone’s eyes. While it is a well known saying that the eyes are the window to a person’s soul, there is an actual scientific fact that Goleman (2006) points to in that there are “nerve projections in the eyes that lead to the orbitofrontal (OFC) area of the prefrontal cortex. This area is a key structure for empathy and matching emotions” (p. 63). The OFC is where the

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high (conscious) and low (subconscious) road of the brain meet. It connects the cortex “thinking brain”, amygdala “trigger point for emotional reactions”, and the brain stem unemotional “zones of automatic response” (p. 64). When all of this meets in the OFC it provides an understanding of what is happening in the social world and how someone should feel about the people they are with.

Besides mirror neurons, Goleman (2006) explained the importance in social intelligence of another neuron known as spindle cells. He stated that neuroscientists felt spindle cells explained the speed with which people feel social intuition. Some think that these cells are what make humans different from other species and they are why some people are more socially aware than others. Spindle cells connect the OFC with the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC). “The ACC directs our attention and coordinates our thoughts, our emotions, and the body’s response to our feelings” (p. 66). Brain imaging showed that people with a higher-level ACC are more socially aware and can interpret how others are feeling in a social situation. Spindle cells are also seen in an area of the ACC that allows people to interpret emotions from facial expressions. They help to recognize the emotions seen and, as stated before, explain the speed at which the low road or subconscious allows for recognition of the emotions.

The understanding of social intelligence was further enhanced by Goleman’s (2006) explanation of social awareness and social facility. He separated social intelligence into the two main categories as had earlier researchers. Social awareness addressed the instantaneous sense people got from another’s feelings and thoughts as well as aided in the reading of social situations accurately. Social Facility went beyond awareness and referred to one’s ability to interact affectively, which included demonstrating self-presentation, synchrony, and rapport.

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One aspect of social awareness (primal empathy) was scientifically measured, which will be discussed in the next section, but Goleman (2006) described other aspects of social awareness including attunement and social cognition. Attunement can be seen when a person gives their full attention to another, listens, and fully engages in the interaction. Goleman explained that this is a trait seen in many top performers in business. He went on to state that the ability to listen well was found to distinguish the best leaders and managers. By thoroughly listening, it reorients neural circuits for connectivity and allows people a better chance of engaging in rapport and synchrony throughout an interaction. Social cognition means understanding how the social world works. He stated in the book that people could be very bright in social cognition, but if they lacked the skills of social facility their interactions would still be extremely awkward. This is because simply understanding a concept does not mean it will be translated into how a person actually interacts in real life. Therefore, he established that both awareness and facility were necessary to be a socially intelligent individual.

A main element of social facility is rapport and it includes three elements. Mutual attention, shared positive feeling, and a well-coordinated nonverbal duet. A person gets a sense that the other feels what they are feeling and empathizes. Being eye to eye helps increase empathy as does tone of voice and facial expressions. Having rapport makes it more likely that people express themselves and act freely. However, by forcibly trying to imitate another person it comes off fake and does not work in building rapport. How people act when they have rapport is subconscious and on the low road. It is still important to be in synch because people tend to feel more positive about the interaction, it just cannot be forced through the high road (Goleman, 2006). This section provides a brief illustration of what social intelligence is through modern

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research conducted in the brain. This new information gives a better understanding of what makes this intelligence distinct.

### **Why is Social Intelligence important?**

#### **Social Intelligence and Leadership**

Leaders in a business affect all of the people around them and especially the employees who work under them. The following literature reviews studies that have been conducted to see just how they affect people in the workplace and how social intelligence could impact their interactions. Daniel Goleman (2006) stated in his book, “our sense of engagement and satisfaction at work results in large part from the hundreds and hundreds of daily interactions we have while there, whether with a supervisor, colleagues, or customers. The accumulation and frequency of positive versus negative moments largely determines our satisfaction and ability to perform” (p. 279). Boyatzis and Saatscioglu (2008) stated that there were three competencies, from previous research, that had been shown to predict an exceptional leader, manager, or professional. Those included some combination of abilities from cognitive intelligence, emotional intelligence, and social intelligence. Stephen Covey (1996) wrote that highly effective teamwork and synergy could aid in the creation of better outcomes and that they should be valued. He went on to say, however, that synergy was not usually taught and how this negatively affected American companies. Other cultures value relationships in business more and Americans must develop those skills in order to compete.

Boyatzis and Saatscioglu (2008) carried out a longitudinal study of MBA programs to see if students could be taught emotional and social competencies along with cognitive ones within their program. The researchers used a multi-method approach to measuring the level of intelligence. They found a significant increase in all three and found that certain changes were

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critical to teaching social and emotional intelligence. Those included creating a Leadership Assessment and Development class that focused specifically on the two intelligences. In addition they found that increasing group work, participation, and collaboration were also key factors in the improvement. They concluded that in order to teach social and emotional intelligence along with cognitive knowledge, the “typical lecture and discussion” model would have to change (p. 105).

Another study focused on stress and malice and how they could affect a person’s “social self”. Sally Dickerson and Margaret Kemeny found that the social brain makes a distinction between accidental and intentional harm and it reacts more severely when the harm is intentional. They gauged the level of stress by measuring the level of cortisol in the body. When the source of stress was impersonal, like an annoying alarm, the jump in cortisol only lasted about forty minutes, but when the stress was interpersonal, like being judged by another person or supervisor, the rise in cortisol remained fifty percent longer (as cited in Goleman, 2006).

Goleman (2006) looked at other studies conducted in the United Kingdom and Sweden, which concluded that workers in lower positions were four times as likely to develop cardiovascular disease than top management. In addition, workers who felt unheard and criticized by supervisors had a thirty percent higher rate of coronary heart disease than workers who felt they were treated fairly. Another study by W. Edward Deming, an authority on quality control, looked at the idea of fear in the workplace and how it crippled workers who would not share ideas, speak up, or improve the quality of their work (as cited in Goleman, 2006).

On the opposite side of the coin, neuroscientist Antonio Damasio found that “joyous states” allowed people to have a sense of well-being and thrive. Images of the brain also showed that when people were in an upbeat mood there was a lot of activity in the prefrontal cortex and



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that meant increased mental ability and information processing (as cited in Goleman, 2006).

George Kohlrieser, a professor of leadership, tied in with Damasio's thought and looked at the idea of a "secure base" provided by a manager. He stated that if employees were given a secure base they would be more likely to be innovative and creative. He went on to say they would likely handle tough feedback with a more positive outlook (as cited in Goleman, 2006). To create this secure base, managers must understand how to connect with people. The emotional tone leaders set as well as the connections they foster impact companies' objectives including retention and sales (Goleman, 2006).

Gough (1965) stated, "in any situation calling for leadership, diagnostic sensitivity, therapeutic skill, or managerial effectiveness, social insight will play a major role" (p. 366). Deil-Amen (2006) took it back to the importance of teaching in schools. She said that employers placed a significant amount of weight (almost as much as technical skills) on non-cognitive behaviors like social skills. By teaching social skills in school it opened more people up to the labor pool and provided superior employees for customer oriented jobs. In Jay Juchniewicz's (2008) study on the effectiveness of music teachers, it was found that external observers also rated effectiveness based primarily on social skills. This further reinforced the importance of social intelligence for leaders because even if it was not essential to success, other individuals perceived it as being so. This has big implications for leaders and managers who interact with customers on a regular basis.

Goleman and Boyatzis (2009) saw the importance of social intelligence in business and therefore proposed a measurement using evaluations of behavior called the Emotional and Social Competency Inventory. The evaluations were completed by bosses, peers, and direct reports on

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seven social intelligence traits including, empathy, attunement, organizational awareness, influence, developing others, inspiration, and teamwork.

Managers need to understand how to deal with employees just as front-line employees must know how to interact with customers. Both circumstances point to the realization that increased social intelligence would benefit businesses. All of the above studies make it clear that how a boss or supervisor interacts with employees has a very real affect on them and it will trickle down to the business.

### **I-It vs. I-You**

Several studies have examined the I-It and I-You relationship. Philosopher, Martin Buber explained that an I-It relationship was when a person did not attune or listen to the other and felt no sense of empathy toward them. He believed that modern society was depersonalizing relationships and increasingly changing I-You connections to I-It (as cited in Goleman, 2006).

A study of first-grade teachers found that the worst teachers created I-It relationships with students where they were uninvolved, distant, and laid out their own plan for students without listening to their needs. Another situation looked at restorative justice, in which criminals were made to repair specific damage that they had caused. Many times this included apologizing and listening to victims. The idea of the program was to connect offenders with their victims and crimes so that it changed from an “it” to a “you” relationship and it hopefully allowed them to feel empathy towards another person. An I-You approach would allow for an increase in empathy and more empathy naturally leads to concerned action. Increased social intelligence will allow people to connect, be in synch, and understand others better, which will help change relationships from “it” to “you” (Goleman, 2006). The literature in this section demonstrated the

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necessity of research in social intelligence. It would benefit any service business, but especially those in the hospitality industry that are trying to create experiences for their customers.

### **Measuring Social Intelligence**

#### **Early Social Intelligence Tests**

Several early attempts at measuring social intelligence by researchers were laid out by Thorndike and Stein (1937). They explained a test created by Gilliland and Burke that measured memory through Picture recognition and questionnaires about number of friends, social outings, and activities. The Bureau of Public Personnel Administration conducted tests using pencil and paper, which included 100 questions about types of people, behavior, as well as situation analysis. Participants answered how they would act in a given situation. In addition, two more researchers, Reed and Weidemann, developed a test using a likert scale and asked participants how much they agreed with statements on behavior in social situations (as cited in Thorndike & Stein, 1937).

Lastly, Thorndike and Stein (1937) studied the George Washington Test of Social Intelligence, developed in 1926 at George Washington University, and was the most widely used and studied during that time. The test used paper and pencil with several sub-tests including judgment in social situations, recognition of mental state of a speaker, observation of human behavior, memory of names and faces, sense of humor, identification of emotional expression, and social information. Since then, the test was highly criticized because it did not correlate with other social intelligence tests as well as the fact that it did correlate with tests of abstract intelligence.

All of the early tests pulled from a very narrow group of participants. Most were college students that researchers had convenient access to and could have influenced the results and

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correlations of the tests. The fact that most of the early tests were paper and pencil and participants had to have a thorough knowledge of words clouded the ability to clearly depict a distinction between social and abstract intelligence (Lievens & Chan, 2010). Thorndike and Stein (1937) concluded that tests based in verbal skills are not able to accurately measure social intelligence and called for future research using situation tests and movies. Most of the previous tests were either found insufficient or evolved into more modern interpretations as will be discussed next.

### **Current Measurements**

Several measurements have been in use in the recent past for social intelligence. The following are some of the more modern approaches that have been seen in the literature as well as whether or not they have been reliable throughout the research. As seen earlier in the paper, the research tried to prove over time that social intelligence was different from abstract or academic intelligence. Cantor and Kihlstrom stated that people used the same intellectual resources to solve academic and social problems (as cited in Riggio, Messamer, & Throckmorton, 1991). This led Riggio et al. to look at whether there was overlap between the two intelligences. They used a number of measurements including the Factor Test of Social Intelligence and the Social Skills Inventory measure along with measurements of academic intelligence. Their study found that there was indeed overlap between the two intelligences. They went on to say that academic and social intelligence utilized similar cognitive processes, which explained why there was significant overlap in measurements of both.

The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale- Revised or WAIS-R was used as well because there was thought to be only a small distinction between social and general intelligence. It has been widely used as a measurement of general intelligence. There are four sections on the test

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including comprehension, picture arrangement, vocabulary, and block design. Two of the sections, comprehension and picture arrangement, are thought to measure social intelligence. Results from a study by Campbell and McCord (1996) suggested that they were in fact not a good measure because there was no correlation between their scores and other social intelligence measurements like the following tests. There has yet to be new evidence proving the two sections can accurately measure social intelligence.

Guilford created a model called the Structure of Intellect model, which contained 30 factors of social intelligence. They also created nonverbal tests in order to distinguish social from academic intelligence. The Factor Tests of Social Intelligence included four of the original 30 factors. Section one measured how well subjects predicted behaviors based on a sequence. The second measured the ability to analyze relationships and understand verbal and nonverbal cues. Third, analyzed if a person could determine another's personality or character from their behavior. Lastly, the fourth test attempted to measure if subjects could determine the feelings of others. This measurement was not widely used in research, but was found to have decent levels of validity and reliability (as cited in Riggio, Messamer, & Throckmorton, 1991).

Riggio et al. (1991) concluded with the idea that, based on their study, social intelligence was multidimensional and as such, a multidimensional measurement should be used. Other researchers like Marlowe and Bedell also sought to distinguish social intelligence from academic. They utilized a test, which required only true/false answers so as minimize academic necessity (Marlowe, 1986). Marlowe (1986) tested the multidimensionality of social intelligence by measuring four separate factors. The test supported multidimensionality and found five separate factors of social intelligence including: prosocial attitude, social skills, empathy skills,

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emotionality, and social anxiety. Marlowe did recognize the necessity of continued research to verify the domains that he found.

Another pair of researchers, Weis and Süß (2006) found that studies focusing on verbal tasks were not accurate, but those utilizing nonverbal performance tasks were much more valid measurements of social intelligence. They too went on to examine studies using Multitrait-multimethod designs (MTMM). The use of these studies showed that social intelligence was indeed multidimensional. Weis and Süß focused on three dimensions of social intelligence, which included social understanding, social memory, and social knowledge. Social understanding focused on the ability to understand social stimuli in a situation. Social memory included storing and remembering social information objectively, and social knowledge referred to social content stored in a person's procedural memory. Through this study, they were able to identify a performance model of social intelligence and found that the three domains were positively correlated.

The Profile of Nonverbal Sensitivity (PONS) tests primal empathy, which is one of the main aspects of social awareness described previously. Judith Hall and Dane Archer created the test using videos of Judith in a scene. Participants saw moments of the film where they would only see her face, or just her body, or simply hear her voice. They were then asked what was happening emotionally. It was found that facial cues provided the most accurate assessment. The pair found that those who performed well on the test were more likely to be rated as interpersonally sensitive by peers and supervisors. They received higher job performance ratings and depending on their industry, were either seen as effective or having more satisfied customers. The findings of this study demonstrate a connection with a later section focusing on the relationship to the hospitality industry. One large limitation of the test was the use of only

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one person for all scenes. Participants could take cues from one scene and carry it over to the next (as cited in Goleman, 2006; Costanzo & Archer, 1989).

Other researchers, Campbell and McCord (1996) used tests such as the Chapin Social Insight Test (SIT) and the Interpersonal Perception Task (IPT). The SIT was a paper and pencil test measuring understanding of social conventions and how to resolve situations productively (Gough, 1965). The test included 25 paragraphs each containing a different situation where a problem occurred with an interpersonal relationship and participants chose the best course of action from four choices. The test was found to be valid and reasonably reliable (Campbell & McCord, 1996; Gough, 1965). Gough studied the validity of the SIT and compared it with other cognitive tests. He found a high correlation with a test on how to survive, which also measured subjects' social judgment and insightfulness.

The IPT, created by Archer and Costanzo, consisted of video clips of social interactions. The clips ranged in time from twenty to sixty seconds and were made up of natural and unprompted behavior and conversations, which is an improvement on the PONS test. Clips were edited to specific sections for the test and put into categories of five types of interaction: "status, intimacy, kinship, competition, and deception" (Costanzo & Archer, 1989, p.231). Participants analyzed the scenario and answered multiple-choice questions following each video. A correct answer was assigned a value of one and the score was between zero and thirty. To test the validation of the IPT, Costanzo and Archer designed studies to validate the test using various methods including "other reports" or other people's perception of the subjects social sensitivity (p. 238-240). The test was found valid of measuring people's ability to interpret nonverbal behavior as well as being generalizable to real world situations. One should recognize that although the study showed validity and generalizability, the sample was extremely small.

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Additional research with a larger sample should be conducted (Campbell & McCord, 1996; Costanzo & Archer, 1989). Both the SIT and IPT seemed to be decent measurements, but they were only focused on one aspect of social intelligence. They attempted to measure ability of interpreting behavior and feelings in others. They did not look at what should be done once those insights are recognized.

Archer and Costanzo developed the IPT-15, a more streamlined version, a few years later. The new test only had 15 one-minute videos with corresponding multiple-choice questions. The IPT-15 was found to be more reliable and valid than the original test and correlated with other measures of interpersonal skills including the Social Interpretations Task (SIT). IPT-15 measured the ability to “decode” information presented during interactions. This measure was then used in a study to see if social intelligence affected music teachers’ effectiveness. The test was given to twelve teachers and no differences were found between “exemplary” and “challenged” teachers (Juchniewicz, 2008). This seemed to imply that the test was not as valid as previously stated, but due to the extremely limited size of the study, it could not be assumed that this was not a decent measure. Simply put, more research needs to be done to further determine its reliability.

Lievens and Chan (2010) studied several methods of measurement, including self-reports, other-reports, performance-based tests, interviews, situational judgment tests (SJT), and assessment center exercises. Self-report and other-report both had validity issues, but it was argued that other-report was useful because social intelligence dealt with interpersonal interactions, therefore asking others insight on ones social intelligence had some legitimacy. Performance-based tests provided a problem to be solved and were the traditional method of measurement. Situational judgment tests provided realistic scenarios both written and video-



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based. Some of the first situational judgment tests stemmed from portions of the George Washington Social Intelligence Test. A flaw with SJTs was that respondents had to choose a “correct” answer to each situation from a limited set of choices. Lastly, assessment center exercises included actual simulations where actual behavior was observed. Activities included role-playing and interview simulation. Situational judgment tests and assessment center exercises were viable measurement approaches, but Lievens and Chan called for more research.

Lastly, a test created by Baron-Cohen called the empathy quotient (EQ) test measured how easily a person sensed what others were feeling. It was found that women scored higher when interpreting feelings from eyes alone. It was also found that the female brain was more empathetic and male more systematic, but that it was best to have balance and strengths in both areas (Goleman, 2006).

In 1989 Barnes and Sternberg made the statement that studies had not attempted to find out why some had higher social intelligence than others or what the underlying cause might be. They proposed that focus be turned to the discovery of fundamental processes. Now that neuroscience has provided a better understanding of the intelligence, new measurements must be created to utilize the new information and hopefully produce more accurate results. Goleman (2006) added to that when he stated that current measurements neglected too many lanes in the low road like synch, attunement, and empathic concern. Traditional paper and pencil tests could not test those aspects of the intelligence. Marlowe (1986) had thought the same and built on to the research that social performance was being ignored. He felt this was a major contributor to the belief that social and academic intelligence were too similar. Both the high and low roads must be measured and one solution would be to combine a paper and pencil questionnaire with a measure like PONS or simulations of social situations to better assess someone’s social

intelligence. With social neuroscience, the impact of science created a better understanding of the concept, but new measures need to be put in place.

### **Teaching Social Intelligence**

#### **Can it be taught?**

Throughout the research there was significant discussion about whether social intelligence could in fact be taught or if people were simply born more or less socially intelligent. In one article it was suggested that one aspect of social intelligence, discriminative facility, defined in the earlier section “evolving definitions”, was high in individuals with an incremental theory of behavior. Incremental theories said there were variations in how people act depending on the situation. This meant they paid attention to each new situation they were in and acted accordingly. Entity theory of behavior assumed people acted similarly in all situations. The study suggested that it could be possible to change entity theorists into incremental theorists by teaching participants to look at more possibilities and tactics in new situations, but they call for more research in creating a method for teaching (Hackworth & Brannon, 2006).

Discovery of mirror neurons helped explain why babies learn from watching and alluded to the fact that those same neurons could help adults learn new social skills from observing. “Simulating an act is, in the brain, the same as performing it, except that the actual execution is somehow blocked” (Goleman, 2006, p. 42). Mirror neurons help people mimic behaviors and actions they see in others. The neurons help people understand what others are feeling and what is in their mind by replicating the same actions. When an emotion is seen on someone’s face, the person seeing it can experience the same emotion. For example, when a person smiles it can be instinctive to smile back at them. This is what allows emotions to be spread and felt by a group of people. When someone is unhappy it is common knowledge that that feeling can spread to

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those around them. Mirror neurons help explain why this happens (Goleman, 2006). The explanation of mirror neurons validated some of the measures mentioned previously that cited performance and simulation methods as the more valid measures.

Goleman (2006) also discussed a test created by Paul Ekman, the authority on reading emotions from facial expressions. Ekman's test depicted a series of faces that changed from a neutral position to a distinct emotion for less than a second and the participant had to describe what emotion was just displayed. This test examined primal empathy. Ekman found that if a participant completed practice sessions their scores increased dramatically. means that the low road is trainable and the more people train the better they become at interpreting nonverbal cues and increasing their primal empathy.

Another experiment conducted by John Crabbe focused on nature vs. nurture. He stated that genes and the environment were interdependent. Some might be inherently better at certain tasks, but genes can be nurtured to become more prominent (as cited in Goleman, 2006). Goleman (2006) explained that new neurons were created every day and their connection to other neurons was shaped by experience. The more often the experience was repeated the more densely the neural pathway was connected. Therefore it could be concluded that repetitive learning was key to creating the new pathways. As people accumulate experience the brain can change. Simulation could be a very affective way of teaching. This also makes old and traditional methods using pencil and paper seem even more illogical for accurate measurement or teaching methods. The main principle found in most of the previous literature was that through performance tasks and simulations people could increase their level of social intelligence.

### **Current methods of teaching social intelligence**

Sigmar, Hynes, and Hill (2012) agreed with the previous research that people could learn social skills by observing and imitating others and another researcher, Zull, suggested that those skills could be “deep learned” by participating in experiential training with other people (as cited in Sigmar et al., 2012) Rizzolati, another researcher, stated that due to mirror neurons, people could observe behavior in others and mimic them because there was an immediate comprehension without having to analyze the other person’s behavior (as cited in Sigmar et al., 2012). This relates back to the low road system that Daniel Goleman cited.

Sigmar et al. focused on four exercises to teach social and emotional intelligence including matrix, magic carpet, corporate blindfold, and xion. The matrix exercise focused more on improving emotional intelligence through the use of increased emotional vocabulary. The magic carpet activity included 12-18 participants trying to fold over a shower curtain on the floor without stepping off. This helped with communication, problem-solving skills, and nonverbal communication. Next, corporate blindfold mainly dealt with nonverbal communication. Participants were blindfolded and lined up. They held hands and the leader took them in some direction. The participants could not talk to each other and had to use nonverbal cues like squeezing hands to indicate directions. This did help with previously mentioned factors like attunement.

Lastly, xion focused on intercultural communication. For example, it demonstrated that some cultures do not make eye contact. One of the main lessons from this activity was simply that a person could be socially intelligent in one culture, but it might not cross cultural barriers very well (Sigmar et al., 2012). There were different rules for each culture, which made mastering each even more difficult. This will be further examined in the next section. Some of

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the activities mentioned by Sigmar et al. were very simple and some focused heavily on emotional intelligence, but they provided good examples of teaching methods and offer a platform from which to start looking at new methods.

Teaching social intelligence as a whole might not have been shown in research yet, but some have taught components of it. Cockburn-Wootten and Cockburn (2011) attempted to teach communication as it pertained to business and management. One of the points they wanted their students to take away was the idea of understanding “the world as someone else sees it” (as cited in Cockburn-Wootten & Cockburn, 2011, p. 47) Communication is a central component of social intelligence, especially in the idea of social facility, which was previously defined in the paper by Daniel Goleman. The authors were trying to stress the importance of it as well as the fact that it was not merely common sense. Cockburn-Wootten and Cockburn stressed “learning by doing” (p. 52) as well as putting students into working groups that not only had to work together, but analyze the group’s dynamic and work to improve it. They stressed that actual experiences would aid in students’ education because they would be able to apply the methods to business relationships and interactions in the workplace. This study reinforced the idea that teaching social intelligence should involve engaging in interactions and not simply studying them.

Once the understanding of social intelligence included its biological roots, Goleman and Boyatzis (2009) stated that in order to develop “social circuitry” in the brain, it was essential to consciously change behavior. They proposed several methods including rehearsing, shadowing with a coach, and utilizing a role model. They stressed that the behavior could be learned and that with ongoing training and preparation it could strengthen the neural connections needed. Working with a role model provided opportunities for mirror neurons to activate, which allowed people to better experience and imitate the observed feeling and behavior. There have been

several attempts at teaching individual aspects of social intelligence, but none that teach the entire concept. The research does demonstrate the importance of learning by actually engaging in activities and repeating processes. This information will be of use when creating a teaching model in the next chapter of this paper.

### **Cross-Cultural Challenges**

Businesses are becoming more and more globalized, which creates challenges because employees must learn to work across many cultural lines. In other words, they need “employees who have cross-cultural social intelligence (CCSI)” (Ascalon, Schleicher, & Born, 2008, p. 110). The number of businesses that now cater to multiple cultures is growing every day and the hospitality industry is one of the biggest. The idea of cross-cultural social intelligence is still very new and requires more research (Ascalon et al., 2008). The researchers tried to develop a situational judgment test of CCSI, which studied two factors: ethnocentrism and empathy. Ethnocentrism “measures the extent to which a person is judgmental of other cultures and is unwilling or unable to implement culturally relevant solutions” (p. 112). Empathy “measures the extent to which a person can relate to others and regulates his/her behavior based on another person’s behavior” (p. 112).

The situational judgment test was a paper-and-pencil test where participants had to read scenarios and choose a best answer from four choices. As stated earlier, a flaw with this kind of test was the fact that it was a written test as well as having to choose a best answer. The test scenarios, questions, and answers were created by almost thirty people of different nationalities and tested to choose the final scenarios. More research will need to be done to see if the test truly was valid, but it was seen as a useful tool for companies and a promising start to the study of CCSI. The test was also proposed as a useful training tool for companies (Ascalon et al., 2008).

### **Service Quality**

Relationship marketing has been an established method of increasing customer retention and can give companies a competitive advantage (Beatson, Lings, & Gudergan, 2008). Beatson et al. (2008) found it important to look at the relationship from the customer's perspective since the idea of relationships could provide such large benefits to the company. Bitner identified the importance of interactions with front-line employees as critical because consumers did not differentiate between the staff they interacted with and the company (as cited in Beatson et al., 2008).

Researchers studied the connection of satisfaction, trust, and commitment on relationship quality because they saw the importance of finding the cause of successful relationships (Beatson et al., 2008; Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, & Gremier, 2002). Once cause was known, they could create tangible strategies for developing relationships and increasing loyalty. One study found that all three elements led to positive behavioral intentions and were factors in repeat purchasing and positive word of mouth. Trust was focused on as it showed a direct relationship with commitment and satisfaction. It was stressed that companies behave in a way that show customers they were trustworthy in order to increase satisfaction (Beatson et al., 2008; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2002). Satisfaction was shown to have the strongest impact on loyalty (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2002). Beatson and her team did call for more research into the potential causes of successful relationship marketing and in order to make the results more generalizable to the industry as a whole.

Hennig-Thurau et al. (2002) went on to warn against loyalty programs. Through their research they found "special treatment benefits" did not improve satisfaction or loyalty (p. 242). Instead, special treatment showed a very temporary loyalty, but did not contribute to a real

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relationship. It was also pointed out that special treatments are easily duplicated by competitors and do not provide a sustainable competitive advantage (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2002). Lastly, Hennig-Thurau and his team stressed the distinction of a business relationship from a friendship. They noted that friendships could be easily damaged and that it was more important to focus on creating a rapport and positive interactions with customers.

The research showed that satisfaction impacted loyalty and that creating relationships positively affected satisfaction, therefore building those relationships and training in social intelligence could prove to be very valid tools to improve the quality of relationships between service businesses and customers.

### **Social Intelligence's Connection to Hospitality**

There was not clear research that connected the study of social intelligence with the hospitality industry, but it was easy to see the importance of the study in connection with the industry and in part three the lack of research will be addressed. The closest research to hospitality was a study of emotional intelligence (EI) to foodservice industry executives. While emotional and social intelligence is different, emotional intelligence does have its roots in social intelligence stemming back to Thorndike. Emotional intelligence is the understanding and control of ones own emotions (Cha, Cichy, & Kim, 2008). Cha et al. (2008) also cited Goleman's model of emotional intelligence, which included social awareness. The study concluded that those with high EI had better social skills and dealt with workplace stress more effectively.

### **Summary**

Throughout the literature it was seen that the very definition of social intelligence was ever evolving as the science itself grew. There were several measurements, although there



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seemed to be a convergence to a multi-method approach in which both cognitive and behavioral aspects were measured. In addition, the teaching methods were somewhat limited, but there was a consensus on the use of experiences, involvement in activities, and repetition. The research also shed light on SI's importance in the business world as a whole, but especially the hospitality industry where not only managers and employees interact, but the entire organizations revolve around interaction with customers. Each researcher called for more to be done, and there lacks a focus on hospitality currently.

### **PART THREE**

#### **Introduction**

As has been so evident throughout the literature review in part two, the idea of social intelligence has been studied, but there has been very little connection to real business problems and no real link to the hospitality industry. In the service industry today companies understand that in order to compete more effectively and create loyal customers, they must not only attract, but also retain customers. As stated in part one, this is why there is a major focus on customer relationship management. With a better understanding of social intelligence and a method of teaching, companies would be able to train employees to connect and interact in a positive manner with customers. However, current research is severely lacking in both methods of teaching as well as any connection to the hospitality industry.

New research is vital to the general study of social intelligence, but it needs to be focused on connecting with real service industry businesses as well as teaching methods to discover the best methods for implementing training in business. If this research is conducted, executives will have a more solid foundation from which to build training programs for both frontline employees interacting on a daily basis with customers as well as for managers who must work cohesively with subordinates. In addition, the research might also provide a better understanding of what social intelligence could do for increased loyalty and ultimately revenue.

The focus of this section will be on a proposal for research. Included are potential research questions along with proposed ideas on methodology. First, the results of the literature will be summarized and then the paper will shift focus to the implications of past research as well as recommendations for future research done in this area. Next, limitations will be explained. Lastly, possible ideas and general solutions will be suggested for potential training

activities. Through the proposed research, readers will gain a clearer understanding of the prominent gaps in current literature as well as provide useful information in going forward with the study of social intelligence, which has the potential to significantly affect revenue for businesses.

### **Results**

A multitude of different measurement tools have been used in the study of social intelligence since the 1920s and each one tests a slightly different aspect of the intelligence. Throughout the research there is little consensus on measurement techniques, but as more methods have been developed the measurements have tended towards multimethod designs like Weis and Süß (2006) used seeing as social intelligence is in itself multidimensional. As more was learned of how this intelligence differs from general or abstract intelligence, it was seen that paper and pencil tests would not be effective and more emphasis was placed on situational and perception tasks, which more closely mimicked real life. Simulations have been put to use to get more accurate data. The major limitations of these studies were that most were conducted with a limited number of subjects, many of which were students attending universities. Also, the measurements have been constantly evolving and new research should be focused and conducted using only the most valid measurement tools. A vast majority of the research concludes that social intelligence is a separate entity, but there are those who are still convinced that it overlaps too heavily with abstract or general intelligence and cannot be measured separately. This, however, this is a very small minority.

The literature also provides a consensus that social intelligence (SI) can be taught. The discovery and analysis of mirror neurons show that people can watch others and learn from their behavior. Goleman (2006) goes on to state that a person can mimic the emotion seen in another

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and actually feel that emotion for his or her own self. Furthermore, he states that neurons are created everyday and that repetitive learning and simulations are key to increasing ones abilities. Neuroscience is still new in this area and evolving rapidly. Additional research is necessary to further establish the relationship between the neurons discussed and social intelligence.

The main focus of this paper is on teaching social intelligence and the literature review shows that there is a serious lack of research on this aspect of the field. The limited techniques discussed in part two were exercises focused on specific pieces of the intelligence like communication or nonverbal communication. Sigmar et al. (2012) provided a few potential activities, but more research must be conducted to find better methods of teaching. Sigmar et al.'s examples do provide a starting point for future research and overall the current literature demonstrates that social intelligence is best learned by actually engaging in activities and "learning by doing" (Cockburn-Wootten & Cockburn, 2011, p. 52). Goleman and Boyatzis (2009) also proposed rehearsing, shadowing, and role models as possible training techniques to strengthen the necessary neurons. Most agree that this is not something people will learn from reading a textbook, but only by repetitive activity. This will be discussed further in the next section on recommendations.

The limited literature on SI's importance to businesses emphasized its importance for managers and leaders as well as frontline employees. Goleman (2006) looked at manager-subordinate interactions and found connections with stress and illness in negative situations and the opposite with positive interactions, including a sense of security and well-being. Social interactions in the workplace are a large factor in employees' attitude towards their job. In the hospitality industry it becomes doubly important because there are significantly higher amounts of interactions, as frontline employees must interact directly with guests all day, every day.

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Overall, the literature does support the original research problem. It shows that there is significant research on the general idea of social intelligence as well as the different methods of measurement, but little has been conducted on teaching methods and there is a large gap when it comes to social intelligence and its connection and use in the hospitality industry or even the business world as a whole.

### **Limitations**

The limitations of the literature mostly have to do with the amount of research that has been conducted. There simply is not enough to give definitive answers to the research questions. More research is necessary to establish the best method of measurement, if social intelligence is teachable, and how to teach it. Additionally, there needs to be significantly more research on social intelligence as it relates to business and the service industry. Based on the previous research it would seem that social intelligence could have an impact on the hospitality industry, but since no research has been conducted it is simply an educated guess and a big limitation. Another limitation is that a significant portion of the literature is from forty or more years ago and may not be the most reliable information. The fact that social intelligence has been separated from emotional intelligence, for the purposes of this paper, severely limits the research as well. They are distinct intelligences, but much of the research has them closely tied together and emotional intelligence was not presented in this paper. Finally, a limitation of the problem statement is the possibility that more research must be conducted to find the best measurement tool or to fully establish if social intelligence even can be reasonably taught before jumping to the question of how it is taught. This does fall back on the main limitation of needing more research.

### **Implications and Recommendations**

The research previously conducted provides a good starting point as it demonstrates the importance social intelligence can have in any business. It seems obvious that the more socially intelligent a person the better they will perform in a business setting, but the current research is not adequate enough to fully back up that statement. The recommendation of this paper is a proposal for more research. The next step is to conduct research in the service industry specifically. Conducting research in the field of hospitality can provide a substantial amount of data due to the copious amounts of interactions between employees and customers in addition to interactions with managers and subordinates. Separate studies should be conducted to look into both aspects separately.

### **Research Questions**

Possible questions that the research should focus on are:

1. What are the best methods of teaching social intelligence?
2. Which teaching methods have the biggest impact on service quality?
3. What has a larger impact on service quality, management social intelligence or frontline employee social intelligence?

### **Research Methodology**

The first proposed experiment will help to determine if training in SI can actually increase the level of service quality as established by the customer. Two groups of hotel front desk agents will be the participants. Both groups are tested using a situational judgment test as well as Goleman and Boyatzis's (2009) model for measuring social intelligence in business called the Emotional and Social Competency Inventory. This evaluation of seven social intelligence traits is collected from bosses, peers, and reports. This will test their initial level of

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social intelligence as well as make sure both groups are on an even level at the start of the experiment. If one group is already naturally higher in SI it could skew the results. Next, one group will receive training in social intelligence. They will go through simulations of interactions and facial cue interpretation tasks similar to the PONS and IPT tests (as cited in Goleman, 2006; Campbell & McCord, 1996). Then, both groups go through one week of shifts at the front desk and customers are asked to rate their level of service utilizing SERVQUAL. SERVQUAL is the traditional model of measuring service quality utilizing the five dimensions of the RATER scale: reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness. SERVQUAL has also been shown to have both validity and reliability and be most effective when used in conjunction with other measurements (Parasuramen, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). Participants will then be measured with another situational judgment test and Emotional and Social Competency Inventory to measure the change in levels of social intelligence.

Another experiment, similar to the first, focuses on which training methods produce higher levels of service quality. Each group of front desk agents is trained in a different manner. One group uses facial cue interpretation while another goes through video simulations of conflict that they must find solutions to. Again, they will go through a week of shifts and their customers will rate their service quality using SERVQUAL and the RATER scale in addition to the situational judgment test and Emotional and Social Competency Inventory.

In the proposed experiments above, the focus is on the frontline employees. There will need to be studies conducted to see the effectiveness of training managers in social intelligence as well. In addition, the impact training management in SI has on service quality versus the impact that frontline employees' training has on service quality. This question was posed in an

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earlier section and would help companies better understand where to spend their time and money on training in order to be most effective.

The suggested research will greatly add to the existing literature on social intelligence. First, it will help further the research as it relates to the business world as a whole and secondly, it connects the gap between the general study of SI and the hospitality industry. The studies help test the effects of social intelligence specifically in the hospitality industry, which is much more service oriented than most other industries. Third, the research will help gain data and statistics on training methods. Currently, the research has only touched on the actual teaching techniques and research in this area could show companies the importance of SI and help them see that utilizing these techniques and the intelligence in general could help them grow their businesses.

Hopefully, this research will guide additional studies if they provide evidence that these techniques can in fact affect service quality. Additional research will further show the generalizability of the techniques used and increase the amount of studies on them or lead researchers to find new and better techniques for teaching the intelligence. By bringing the study of social intelligence to the business world instead of simply the academic, it will allow companies to see the potential benefits of understanding and utilizing social intelligence training to increase service quality and ultimately profits. This in turn will help guide future research in more practical terms.

### **Limitations of Proposed Research**

There are several limitations of the proposed research. The first includes the generalizability of the experiment. The sample size of the front desk agents of a hotel is a small sample and the test will need to be conducted several times at additional hotels to increase the sample to a size that can make the results more representative of the population of hospitality



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workers. To further enhance the generalizability, the study should be conducted at other points of guest interaction like wait staff or concierge in order to account for even more variations in the population. In addition, the validity of the Emotional and Social Competency Inventory could be questionable since it is a survey, which is inherently weak in validity. This is why the situational judgment test is being used in conjunction so as to help increase the validity overall.

### **Future Research**

Future research will have to take into account each segment of the industry. Findings may not be generalizable to all areas and separate studies may need to be conducted, but service quality is somewhat universal in the hospitality industry and if customers rate higher using the RATER scale, then all segments of the industry should take note. Additional research will also need to be conducted as teaching methods are developed to establish a best approach to training employees.

### **Training Suggestions**

Currently, training in social intelligence is not very prevalent in the literature, but there were a few suggestions made. In this section several methods will be mentioned so as to provide businesses an idea of where to start in the process of teaching social intelligence within their companies. Some suggestions mentioned in the literature review include: repetition, imitation, and teamwork. The main focus of the research is the importance of participants actually engaging in activities and “learning by doing” as Cockburn-Wootten and Cockburn (2011) stressed. Participatory activities are key and may help increase several aspects of social intelligence including, communication, problem-solving, and nonverbal communication or attunement. Repetition is another important component in order to improve levels of social intelligence, which means that it is important to understand that training in social intelligence

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should not take place once and then assume employees are set. This is training that will need to be repeated regularly. The nice part about the hospitality industry is that employees interact with customers and each other on a daily basis and sometimes hundreds of times a day. By taking the training and then having so many interactions it will allow them to use the information they learn and practice on a regular basis.

Some concrete ideas in teaching social intelligence in the business world include using the measurement methods mentioned previously, situational judgment tests or the Emotional and Social Competency Inventory, and identify the most socially intelligent employees or managers. Once they are identified have other employees and managers shadow them and learn their techniques. Create mentor programs that allow your best employees to shine and share the knowledge that they possess to improve other employees. Teamwork is another vital aspect of social intelligence. Employees must be able to work effectively in groups and interact with their peers, so the best method of training might simply be to throw them in and have employees work together on difficult or challenging tasks to become familiar with interacting with their peers and learn on the job how best to solve problems in a group.

### **Conclusion**

The literature on social intelligence is still relatively new. Yes, Thorndike was researching the concept back in the 1920s, but there was a large period of time when not much research was taking place. In recent years it has reemerged and now that more is understood about neuroscience, research has started to provide a better understanding of the intelligence. The literature, however, is still in desperate need for more research. There should be a focus on actual teaching methods and connections to the practical side of business. As mentioned above, some of the teaching methods to focus on now include shadowing role models, participatory

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activities, and of course, repetition. As more research is conducted there may be better teaching methods established, but this is a good starting point for companies looking to improve their employees' interactions and service quality.

The connection with the hospitality industry is also important, as the service industry would benefit greatly from understanding how to use social intelligence to their advantage. The proposed research focuses on the hospitality industry because service quality is imperative to any service business and increasing social intelligence in hospitality employees could drastically improve the service quality that companies can offer guests. This in turn can become a competitive advantage over competitors and even have an effect on revenues. The main takeaway is that the current literature provides a good foundation and businesses can utilize some of the techniques discussed, but a great deal more research is needed to establish any hard conclusions and to address the large gap when it comes to the hospitality industry.

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