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# Gender Aspects of Social Intelligence Management in the Context of Entrepreneurial and Civic Engagement



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Daniela Palaščáková<sup>1</sup>

Technical University of Kosice, Faculty of Economics, Department of Economics,  
Košice, Slovak republic

Ihor Liadskyi<sup>2</sup>

Poltava State Agrarian University, Poltava, Ukraine

Inna Senko<sup>3</sup>

Department of the Humanities and Social Sciences Poltava State Agrarian  
University, Poltava, Ukraine

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## ABSTRACT

*The research article investigates the relationship between a person's social intelligence according to gender identity and their entrepreneurial and social activity. A significant positive impact of the development of social skills, social information processing skills and social awareness on a person's motivation to take an active part in the life of their locality, region or state, interest in politics, business or civic activities was identified.*

*This result agrees well with the scientific assumption underlying the research that people with developed social intelligence should also have higher ambitions for a place in the social hierarchy choosing business or politics for this purpose. The research showed that civically active women have almost the same level of social intelligence as men, which confirms their equal chances of building a career*

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<sup>1</sup> Corresponding author, e-mail: [daniela.palascakova@tuke.sk](mailto:daniela.palascakova@tuke.sk)

<sup>2</sup> E-mail: [lyadskiy.igor@pdaa.edu.ua](mailto:lyadskiy.igor@pdaa.edu.ua)

<sup>3</sup> E-mail: [senko.inna@pdaa.edu.ua](mailto:senko.inna@pdaa.edu.ua)

*in the public sphere, regardless of whether they choose business, politics or public initiatives. It can be assumed that in the context of promoting gender equality in society, the development of women's social intelligence will contribute to their greater participation in social management and achieving a balance in leadership groups.*

**KEYWORDS:** *social skills, social awareness, social competencies, social intelligence, social information.*

## **Introduction**

Citizens seeking effective socialization can hardly ignore such components as entrepreneurial, political or civic engagement. One of the main criteria for interpersonal interaction is considered to be social intelligence (SI). It determines how quickly and effectively a person integrates into society and assumes a role in it. Accordingly, the working hypothesis of this research is that people with advanced social intelligence should have higher ambitions about their place in the civic hierarchy.

The previous research by the authors proved that the level of SI development determines a person's desire for self-development and willingness to be involved in volunteering (Liadskyi, 2022). Therefore, identifying the relationship between social intelligence and a person's civic ambitions was a logical continuation of the work already done. The connection of social intelligence with personal qualities, in particular social thinking, reflection, social sensitivity, empathy and social perception, was confirmed by different authors, in particular Onufrieva L. (2020). It is proved that SI is the basis of the communicative and reflective component of the individual's readiness for charitable activity at the psychological level.

The gender specificity of the development and manifestation of social intelligence is also a very important aspect of the problem of effective personal socialization, in particular in the context of political, economic and social awareness (Marilingappa, 2019). The problem of the low level of women's involvement in public administration, compared to men, is relevant for the whole world (Stepanenko, 2019). Based on the goal of this study, the main task of the experiment was not only to find a reliable influence of social intelligence on the entrepreneurial, political and civic ambitions of people, but also to identify gender-specific features for the formation of civic consciousness.

To accomplish this task, we conducted an anonymous survey among people actively involved in political, civic, or business activities. This allowed us to identify the connection between their social intelligence and civic ambitions, which is relevant for changes in public policy, including strengthening gender equality and involving women in government.

## **Literature Review**

The phenomenon of SI has been attracting the attention of scientists since the early twentieth century. There are several versions of who first used the term “social intelligence”. The most common opinion is that the American psychologist Edward Lee Thorndike was a discoverer of this concept (Garg, 2021).

In 1920, this researcher defined SI as the skill of “succeeding in relationships with other people while managing them” (Develi, 2022). Since his work appeared in the non-scientific publication Harper’s Journal, some scholars attribute the authorship of the term “social intelligence” to another scientist, namely Harry Barnes, who introduced this scientific concept in his monograph *History and Social Intelligence*, published in 1926. There are other versions of the origin of the term “social intelligence” that attribute the authorship to the American psychologist and philosopher John Dewey, whose research interests included SI in 1909, or to Lull Herbert Galen, who used the term in his publication in 1911 (Mateiuk, 2021).

Baumgartner and Vasil’ova (2005), Luptak (2003) and Orosova, Sarkova, Madarasova Geckova and Katreniakova (2004) state that other terms like “emotional intelligence”, “practical intelligence”, “social competence”, etc. are used in the same sense as social intelligence. Another problem is that the definition of social intelligence tends to emphasize different components. For example, Barnes and Sternberg (1989) concentrate on cognitive components, i.e. especially the ability to understand other people; Ford and Tisak (1983) focus more on behavioral components, i.e. the ability to interact successfully with others. Difficulties in understanding the concept also arise from the accepted multidimensionality of social intelligence. Kosmitzki and John (1993) identified the following components: perception of other people’s mental states and moods, general ability to get along with others, knowledge of social rules, understanding and sensitivity to complex social situations, use of social techniques to manipulate others, accepting the points of view of

other people, and social adaptation. As noted by Silvera, Martinussen and Dahl (2001), some dimensions of social intelligence are closely related to academic intelligence, but others are more related to personality traits such as extraversion.

In general, the twentieth century is characterized by rapid growth of global scientific interest in human cognitive-behavioral features, with the aim of educating a harmoniously developed individual as a conscious citizen (Hoseini, 2020).

Since then, psychologists have tried to develop an effective test of social intelligence. The tests by J. Washington (GWIST), Gilford and Sullivan (1975), and other tests are widely used (Gupta, 2021). However, these questionnaires have a number of drawbacks in common. Their effectiveness and versatility are reduced due to the time-consuming nature of completing them, the unclear nature of some questions, their ambiguous interpretation, difficulty in application, and low correlation with other tests. Due to this, the search for more effective and universal ways to assess SI continues today. One of the most versatile and easy-to-use tests is the TROMSØ. It was developed by D. Silvera, M. Martinussen, and T. Dahl. In their work, they relied on the research of O. John and K. Kosmijetski (Silvera, 2001). These scholars proposed three basic components of social intelligence:

- Social skills;
- Social information processing;
- Social awareness.

Norwegian researchers initially formulated 103 questions. In the final version, their number was reduced to 21 questions. These authors believe that the questions they proposed fully reveal the level of an individual's SI development. They do not complicate the process of answering and further analysis of the results.

## **Data and Methods**

The survey was conducted among entrepreneurial and civic active residents of the Ukrainian cities of Poltava and Pervomayskyi (Lozovskyi district, Kharkiv region). The total number of respondents was 132. The representatives of political parties and public associations, opinion leaders, entrepreneurs and public activists were invited to participate in the survey.

The authors are personally acquainted with each of the survey participants. The respondents do have certain civic ambitions and leadership qualities. In our experiment, we used the TROMSØ test. It consists of 21 questions covering Social information processing (SP), Social skills (SS), and Social awareness (SA).

The questions of the TROMSØ test were presented in a mixed way, i.e., the level of development of social awareness, social information processing and social skills was not consistently measured, but randomly. In addition, 10 questions were formulated in a positive context, and 11 in a negative context. This involved coding them. This was done on purpose to eliminate the possibility of biased answers. The interpretation of the test results consisted of calculating the scores for each factor and dividing the sum by the total number of items to obtain an average score. If the respondent's average score exceeded 4, it could be assumed that this person has the ability to correctly assess social situations and phenomena. In addition, they have developed communication skills. For each answer, a scale from 1 to 7 was defined, where one corresponds to the statement "Not at all about me" and seven corresponds to "Totally about me" (Tables 1-3).

*Table 1: Questions related to Social information processing*

<b>Question number</b>	<b>Question</b>
1.	<i>"I can predict the behavior of other people".</i>
3.	<i>"I know how other people will feel after my actions ".</i>
6.	<i>"I understand the feelings of other people ".</i>
9.	<i>"I understand the desires of other people ".</i>
14.	<i>"I can often figure out what other people want without asking them ".</i>
17.	<i>"I can predict how others will react to my behavior ".</i>
19.	<i>"I can often tell what others are really saying by their facial expressions and body language ".</i>

*Source: own processing*

Table 2: Questions related to Social skills

Question number	Question
4.	<i>"I often feel uncomfortable around new people".</i>
7.	<i>"I can easily adapt to different social situations".</i>
10.	<i>"I am quick to adapt to new situations and meet new people".</i>
12.	<i>"It is difficult for me to build relationships with other people".</i>
15.	<i>"It takes me a long time to understand other people well".</i>
18.	<i>"I am good at choosing the right words when talking to new people".</i>
20.	<i>"It is difficult for me to find an interesting topic to talk about".</i>

Source: own processing

The survey was conducted online using a questionnaire created in a Google form. The work was carried out in February 2023. The data was interpreted using Microsoft Excel. To establish the correlation between the two variables, the Spearman's rank correlation method was chosen according to the recommendations published in the works of V.F. Bosniuk (2020), where X (independent variable) is social intelligence, and Y (dependent variable) is a political, social or entrepreneurial activity.

Table 3: Questions related to social awareness

Question number	Question
2.	<i>"I often feel that it is difficult for me to understand the choices of other people".</i>
5.	<i>"People often surprise me with their actions".</i>
8.	<i>"Other people get angry with me, but I don't know why".</i>
11.	<i>"People often get angry or annoyed when I say what I think".</i>
13.	<i>"I find people unpredictable".</i>
16.	<i>"I often offend others without realizing it".</i>
21.	<i>"I am often surprised by the reactions of others to what I do".</i>

Source: own processing

The results were interpreted in accordance with the recommendations published in the work by Turan (2020). For this purpose, the Cheddock scale was used, which defines the following possible options for the strength of the correlation between two variables:

- weak - 0.1-0.3;
- significant - 0.3-0.5;
- moderate - 0.5-0.7;
- high - 0.7-0.9;
- very high - 0.9-1.0.

The questions related to determining the level of civic ambition and entrepreneurial engagement of the respondents were added according to a similar evaluation system (Table 4).

*Table 4: Questions to determine the level of civic ambition and entrepreneurial engagement of the respondents*

Question number	Question
22.	<i>Are you/have you been involved in social activities? If so, how active?</i>
23.	<i>Do you have any business experience? From an employee to a business owner.</i>
24.	<i>What are your political ambitions? From “being an active member” to “becoming a city mayor”.</i>

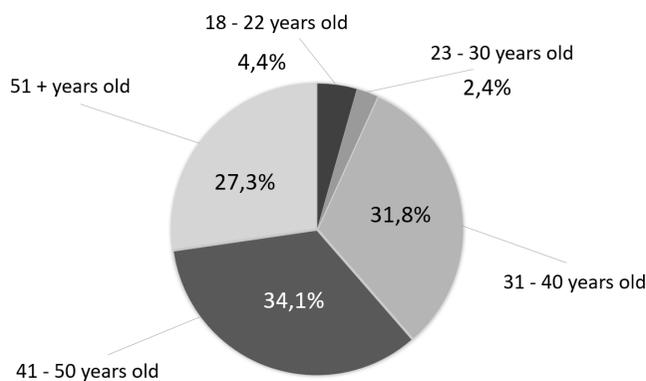
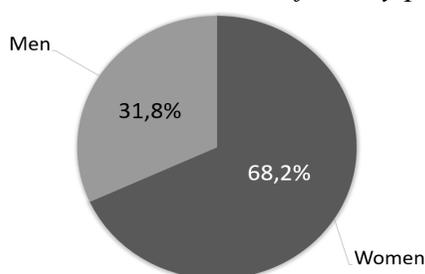
*Source: own processing*

## **Results and Discussion**

The study revealed a significant positive impact of SI on the level of respondents' involvement in political, business or social activities. In addition, all people with developed social intelligence sought self-realization in the communities to which they belonged.

Among those who were interested in participating in the survey, the majority were over 31 years of age (Figure 1). The age groups were divided approximately equally into three categories: 31.8% (31-40 years old), 34.1% (41-50 years old) and 27.3% (over 51 years old). Young people aged 18 to 30 made up a total of 6.8%.

Women were also more active (Figure 2), which indicates the positive trends in Ukrainian society in terms of creating equal opportunities for different genders in the entrepreneurial and civic sphere. Their share in the survey was 68.2%, compared to 31.8% among men.

*Figure 1: Age stratification of respondents**Source: own processing**Figure 2: Gender distribution of survey participants**Source: own processing*

It turned out that women and men, on average, show the same level of social intelligence (4.8 and 5 scores, respectively, out of 7 possible), but there is a difference in the development of its individual components, as shown in Table 5. The dynamics of the distribution of indicators are quite interesting. Women have the best developed ability to process social information SP (4.9 scores), slightly less developed social skills SS (4.8 scores) and less expressed social awareness SA (4.6 scores). In contrast, men rate social skills highest (5.2 scores), followed by social information processing (5 scores). Both women and men have social awareness behind the other components of social intelligence (4.7 scores).

*Table 5: Results of the analysis of the influence of social intelligence on entrepreneurial engagement and civic ambitions*

<b>Social intelligence component</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Total</b>
SP	4.9	5.0	5.0
SS	4.8	5.2	5.0
SA	4.6	4.8	4.7
<b>SI (total)</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4.9</b>

*Source: own processing*

The difference in the development of SP indicators can be explained by the fact that they depend on empathy more than any other SI components, thereby approaching emotional intelligence (EI), which is better developed among women compared to men (Patel, 2017). Research by Rahim (2018) also points to a close connection between social intelligence and empathy, which suggests that some components of SI and EI are related to each other (Williams, 2008).

They can be considered as two overlapping sets. In contrast, men show better socialization skills and awareness of social relations, including political and entrepreneurial issues. Similar conclusions were made by the authors of a study that used a two-level hierarchical linear model based on the analysis of the results of the 2009 European elections (Fraile, 2014). In everyday life, this pattern is expressed in a wider range of acquaintances and a willingness to join various social associations. However, these results are preliminary and require further research with a larger number of respondents.

The influence of social intelligence on self-control and gratitude is demonstrated in the study by Gulliford (2019). This opens up a new aspect of the predicted impact on social engagement and political motivation, namely the interest of a citizen in his or her own people and country.

The analysis of the answers of the total sample of respondents, presented in Table 6, demonstrated a statistically significant positive correlation between social intelligence and civic and entrepreneurial engagement. In particular, it is best illustrated by the ability to be socially aware, i.e., to possess the necessary information about the political situation in the city, region and country, as well as the formed axiological component of the personality.

Table 6: Results of the analysis of the influence of social intelligence on entrepreneurial engagement and civic ambitions

<b>TROMSØ test criterion / Civic and entrepreneurial engagement</b>	<b>Social information processing</b>	<b>Social skills</b>	<b>Social awareness</b>	<b>General level of social intelligence development</b>
Spearman's correlation coefficient	0.317	0.332	0.349	0.364
The strength of the relationship on the Chaddock scale	noticeable, positive	noticeable, positive	noticeable, positive	noticeable, positive
Statistical significance of the feature dependence	$p < 0.05^*$	$p < 0.05^*$	$p < 0.05^*$	$p < 0.05^*$

Note:  $p \leq 0.05$  – low statistical significance;  $p \leq 0.01$  – average statistical significance;  $p \leq 0,001$  – high statistical significance.

Source: own processing

In fact, the research of the respondents by gender, given in Tables 7 and 8, showed a significant difference between the relationship between SA and entrepreneurial, political or civic ambition among women and men. In particular, social awareness was more strongly correlated (0.356 - moderate relationship) with social intelligence for women than for men (0.278 - weak correlation). The men demonstrated a stronger correlation between SI and social information processing (0.331 - moderate correlation) and social skills (0.329 - moderate correlation). In contrast, female respondents showed a lower correlation between social skills (0.291 - weak correlation) and political and social ambition. Like men, women showed the most significant positive correlation between the SI component of social information processing (0.366) and the examined features.

In general, the correlation between women's social intelligence and motivation to build a political or public career (0.381) is significantly higher than that of men (0.288), which can be explained by historically formed gender stereotypes that are still observed in society, especially in developing countries. Ukraine, where the study was conducted, is one such country.

While men traditionally have stronger ambitions to join political and public associations, this percentage is much lower among Ukrainian women (Martseniuk, 2018).

*Table 7: Results of the analysis of the social intelligence influence on the civic and entrepreneurial engagement of women*

<b>TROMSØ test criterion / Civic and entrepreneurial engagement</b>	<b>Social information processing</b>	<b>Social skills</b>	<b>Social awareness</b>	<b>General level of social intelligence development</b>
Spearman's correlation coefficient	0.366	0.291	0.356	0.381
The strength of the relationship on the Chaddock scale	noticeable, positive	weak, positive	noticeable, positive	noticeable, positive
Statistical significance of the feature dependence	$p < 0.05^*$	$p > 0.05$	$p > 0.05$	$p < 0.05^*$

*Note:  $p \leq 0.05$  – low statistical significance;  $p \leq 0.01$  – average statistical significance;  $p \leq 0.001$  – high statistical significance.*

*Source: own processing*

This may be due to both the uneven development of SI and the differences in its individual components - SP and SA. Many Ukrainian women still position themselves as “keepers of the home”, paying less attention to the political sphere of life, which is dominated by men (Slobodianiuk, 2019). Given the fact that the distribution of social roles between the representatives of different genders has changed in modern Ukrainian society, women and men are beginning to accept new norms and rules of behavior.

Gender equality has both socio-cultural and biological explanations (Luptak, 2003). As Table 5 shows, female respondents demonstrated almost the same level of social intelligence as men, which confirms their equal chances of building a political career. It can be suggested that in the context of promoting gender equality in society, the development of women's social

intelligence will contribute to their more active involvement in social governance and achieving a balance in governing groups (Marilingappa, 2019).

*Table 8: Results of the analysis of the social intelligence influence on the civic engagement and political ambitions of men*

<b>TROMSØ test criterion / Political ambitions</b>	<b>Social information processing</b>	<b>Social skills</b>	<b>Social awareness</b>	<b>General level of social intelligence development</b>
Spearman's correlation coefficient	0.331	0.329	0.278	0.288
The strength of the relationship on the Chaddock scale	noticeable, positive	noticeable, positive	weak, positive	weak, positive
Statistical significance of the feature dependence	$p > 0.05$	$p > 0.05$	$p > 0.05$	$p > 0.05$

*Note:  $p \leq 0.05$  – low statistical significance;  $p \leq 0.01$  – average statistical significance;  $p \leq 0,001$  – high statistical significance.*

*Source: own processing*

Our results are in line with the studied components of social intelligence (Goswami, 2019). For example, SP is responsible for the quick perception and understanding of major trends in society. SS determines the ability to find the necessary information and interpret it correctly. SA is aimed at the self-identification of a person as a representative of his/her nation.

Taking into account different views on the components of SI, it can be noted that social skills, social information processing and social awareness were shown to be effective in the research, which was also demonstrated by such scholars as Silvera (2001) and further studies by Goswami (2019), Liadskyi (2022) and Sanwal (2023). It is important that the selected test questions were quite clear to the respondents and did not require additional explanations. They revealed a person's view of the level of development of their own social skills, knowledge and abilities. Since the completed

questionnaires contain all possible answers, it is likely that the invited respondents answered as honestly as possible. The test is completely anonymous, which also ensures its reliability.

The respondents were informed of the importance of this research, as it is aimed at strengthening gender equality in our country and improving the social and political situation in Ukraine. Their answers helped to verify the scientific hypothesis, the confirmation of which opens up broad prospects for building a democratic society with equal opportunities for different age and gender categories. Further research is also promising in order to establish relationships between social intelligence and other useful qualities of a citizen, such as anti-corruption, charity, etc. We believe that further research on social intelligence will enable us to develop effective gender-equitable recommendations for the development and management of education in schools, colleges and universities. Not only Ukraine, but every citizen will benefit from this. Social awareness and motivation to perform socially important activities have a significant positive impact on success.

## **Conclusion**

The study of the impact of SI on entrepreneurial, political and civic engagement revealed a tendency towards a significant positive relationship between the development of social awareness, social information processing skills, social skills and the desire of a person to actively participate in the life of their locality, region or state. This result is fully consistent with the scientific assumption made at the beginning of the study. We predicted that citizens with developed social intelligence are more likely to have higher ambitions regarding their place in the social hierarchy.

As social intelligence is closely related to political and civic engagement, its development is certainly useful for the formation of a conscious middle class in society. Among the recommendations that can be made are the following:

1. Determination of the pedagogical conditions for the formation of social intelligence at the national level in order to integrate such a curriculum into the educational system.
2. Active promotion of social intelligence among the adult population, including writing thematic books, publications on the Internet, and conducting lectures, seminars and training.

3. Development of organizational and methodological support for the introduction of social intelligence into the system of political education of citizens in social assistance centers and organizations that provide assistance in employment.

Developed social intelligence significantly correlates with the willingness of respondents to build an entrepreneurial, political or civic career. The fact that the authors of the research are personally acquainted with the people who took part in it allowed them to invite only those who are really involved in the local political community or public associations.

The research showed that entrepreneurial, political or civic active women have almost the same level of social intelligence as men, which confirms their equal chances of building a career in the public sphere. The realization of gender equality largely depends on the level of SI of the individual, regardless of gender identity. Thus, we can assume that in the context of promoting gender equality in society, the development of women's social intelligence will contribute to their more active involvement in social governance and achieving a balance in governing groups.

The findings suggest the satisfactory psychometric effectiveness of the survey, and we will continue to validate it on the Slovak population. The methodology presented above covers some aspects of the diverse phenomenon of social intelligence. This methodology has the advantage of being easy to use and evaluate. However, it would be more appropriate to combine it with other tools for more comprehensive research. The problem of developing new methods that are more focused on the qualitative differences in individual manifestations of social intelligence is still open. In this context, one possible approach is to apply a situational approach.

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