

# Original Article: Relationship between Social Intelligence of Marketing Managers and Organizational Learning: A Case of Staff in Insurance Centers, Isfahan



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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of social intelligence of marketing managers on organizational learning of sales and marketing staff of insurance centers in Isfahan. In this study, the effect of social intelligence components such as social information processing, social awareness and social skills on organizational learning of employees was investigated. The measurement tool was a questionnaire. The research method was correlational and descriptive in terms of purpose. The statistical population of this study included 50 managers and 400 employees, of whom 48 managers and 179 employees were selected by stratified random sampling. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.884 for social intelligence questionnaire and 0.796 for organizational learning questionnaire. The obtained data were analyzed using statistical methods such as frequency, percentage, mean and inferential statistics such as correlation coefficient test, regression analysis, path analysis, and multivariate analysis of variance. The results showed that the coefficient of determining social intelligence on organizational learning was 0.79, the coefficient of determining social information processing on organizational learning was 0.74, the coefficient of determining the level of social awareness on organizational learning was 0.43 and the coefficient of determining social skills on organizational learning was 0.62. There was no significant difference between the characteristics of social intelligence and organizational learning according to the variables of gender, age, education and work experience.

## Introduction

Many companies today face increasing competition and uncertainty, which has been exacerbated by technological innovations and changing customer needs. This critical situation has led to major improvements in the organization's strategic

vision, business priorities, and the revision of traditional and even relatively contemporary models. In other words, it can be said that other approaches and solutions of the past have lost their ability to meet organizational challenges and the external environment, and it is better to replace them with newer approaches and perspectives. Therefore, the leadership and management of an

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organization to adapt to change and in order to survive and grow in new environments requires special characteristics that managers generally face many difficulties to respond to them. Leadership refers to "the process of influencing and influencing the behavior of members of the organization to help and guide them in performing organizational tasks and achieving the desired goals" [1-4]. Managers need effective communication to be able to capture the hearts and minds of their employees. If people do not know what managers want and what their goals are, they will not accept their management. Managers need to find ways to stay afloat in order to survive the waves of changing turbulent seas. Studies show that future competition will be robbed by leaders who can communicate effectively and productively with their workforce. Many factors contribute to effective communication. Having the skills to communicate with others is one of these factors. Most researchers agree that managers should have communication skills in addition to cognitive skills, which can play a significant role in managers' relationships with members of the organization.

"Social intelligence refers to the precise understanding of a social environment and is a key and fundamental factor for understanding and discerning within the interpersonal domain" (Boal, 2000). Social intelligence theory provides a new perspective on predicting the factors affecting the success of managers. There is an argument today that success depends on several types of intelligence and emotion control, and recourse to general intelligence (cognition) alone is not enough to explain success and the reason for this claim is that social intelligence is a better predictor of success in social life compared to the structure of intelligence benefit [5].

There are different views on the definition and components of social intelligence that attention to interpersonal relationships is a common point of view of experts in the study of this variable. Silvera et al. (2001) consider the components of social intelligence to include social information processing, social skills, and social awareness. In the present study, despite the differences in the definition and components of social intelligence, an attempt has been made to use the Silvera model to measure social intelligence due to its

comprehensiveness in the studied components. This model refers to individual ability that facilitates interpersonal relationships. Meanwhile, organizational learning is considered as a new paradigm for engineering organizations in the face of environmental changes, which ensures the survival of organizations strategically by anticipating timely needs. Today, thinking and knowledge production play an essential role in sustainable organizational development, creating the right context for shaping the learning-teaching process that leads to the formation of a learning organization and thus the profitability of the organization is guaranteed. Employees are the core of the learning organization. Employees' knowledge means that they can produce, distribute and use knowledge well and turn it into a product. Organizational learning means changing the mental pattern of employees and creating a common ideal for learning in a way that all employees learn and teach [6-8].

Organizational learning is the process of improving performance through more knowledge and understanding. Organizational learning is a process by which an organization continuously exposes the product of its existing process and system to criticism and questioning and explains strategic situations, employing different learning patterns to achieve sustainable competitive outcomes (Wang, 2003). In his book, creating a Learning Organization, Michael J. Marquardt sees the organization as a powerful entity that learns knowledge and awareness collectively and constantly transforms itself in such a way that it can achieve more success in its goals [9].

The learning organization manages all the intellectual power, knowledge and experience of the organization to bring about change and continuous improvement for development, and has characteristics such as encouraging people at all levels to learn regularly from their work, having systems and processes to establish learning and disseminate it in the organization and value learning [10].

Due to the expansion of insurance offices and companies in the country, the competition in this industry has become more and more intense and harder, and every organization must make the most of its available resources to achieve the

highest level of productivity, given the current knowledge age and emphasizing that organizational employees in today's world are organizational assets and competitive advantage of leading organizations. Therefore, establishing organizational learning of employees can be a great way for managers of insurance companies to succeed in this competitive environment. of course, this is possible when managers use their social intelligence in their relationships with their employees. Therefore, the present study seeks to investigate the relationship between social intelligence of marketing managers on organizational learning of sales staff and marketing of insurance centers in Isfahan.

#### *Methods and tools of data collection*

Since the purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of managers' social intelligence on organizational learning of sales and marketing staff of Isfahan insurance centers, the correlation method was used [11].

#### *Statistical population of interviewees*

The statistical population of this study included all managers and marketing staff of sales and marketing units of insurance centers in 2021.

#### *Statistical sample of interviewees*

In this study, in order to measure the two variables of social intelligence and organizational learning, two groups of managers and employees were used. The first group was the marketing managers of insurance centers in Isfahan. Due to the limited statistical population, the census method was used in selecting the sample group of managers. There were 50 managers of insurance centers in Isfahan. The second group was the staff of the sales and marketing unit of insurance centers, whose opinions were extracted for the purpose of self-assessment of organizational learning. The sample size of employees according to Morgan table was 196 people, who completed questionnaires for final evaluation. As for sampling method, due to the limited statistical population that includes all managers of insurance centers in Isfahan, the census method was used in selecting the sample group of managers and all managers of insurance centers were included in

the sample. To test the hypotheses, we applied the following two questionnaires [12].

#### **Social Intelligence Assessment Questionnaire:**

This questionnaire was prepared by Silura (2001) and has 21 questions with a range of five options (very high, high, medium, low, very low) which are assigned a score of 5-4-3-2-1, respectively. This questionnaire assesses three components of social intelligence of department heads.

Content and face validity were used to assess the validity of this questionnaire. In order to assess the validity of Silvera (2001) social intelligence test, the correlation of each subscale with the whole test was measured, in the social information processing component, the correlation rate was 0.73, in the social awareness component, it was 0.73 and in the correlation skills component it was 0.79. In all cases, the correlation was significant at the level of  $P < 0.001$ . In Cronus Social Intelligence Questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this questionnaire was calculated to be 0.87. In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha value for this questionnaire was 0.80 [13].

#### **Organizational Learning Questionnaire:**

In order to collect data on the organizational learning variable, a standard questionnaire was taken from the book of Self-assessment Tools and Improving Human Resource Management by Iraj Soltani. This questionnaire consists of 15 questions with a range of 5 Likert options including intervals (strongly agree, agree, indifferent, disagree, strongly disagree), which evaluates organizational learning in the form of component components (shared vision, organizational culture, team learning work, knowledge sharing, systems thinking, participatory leadership, staff competency development). This questionnaire measures employees' organizational learning from the perspective of managers.

In the present study, in order to determine the face and content validity of the standard self-assessment questionnaire of organizational learning, the opinions of supervisors and consultants were used. The questionnaire was

verified according to the conditions of the statistical community, and thus the content validity of the questionnaire was confirmed. Also, the questionnaire was reviewed in valid articles and its accuracy and validity was confirmed. The reliability of the organizational learning questionnaire was also calculated using Cronbach's alpha, which was equal to 0.79 [14].

### Data Analysis

In the present study, Pearson correlation tests, analysis of variance, independent t-test and

multivariate regression analysis were used to analyze the data.

### Research Findings

In this section, the findings are presented according to the research hypotheses in Tables 1 to 4.

*The main hypothesis of the study was social intelligence of managers has an effect on organizational learning of sales and marketing staff of Isfahan insurance centers*

**Table 1.** Regression coefficient results of the effect of social intelligence of marketing managers on organizational learning of sales and marketing staff

Source	Benchmark Errors	The Regression Coefficient	t Value	The Coefficient of Determination	Significance level
Common vision	0.43	0.35	2.97	0.79	0.001
Organizational Culture	0.53	0.33	2.63	0.79	0.001
Teamwork	0.49	0.39	3.10	0.79	0.001
Knowledge sharing	0.55	0.26	1.71	0.13	0.09
Systematic thinking	0.36	0.12	1.11	0.13	0.27
Participatory leadership	0.36	0.45	4.13	0.79	0.001
Develop employee competencies	0.38	0.04	0.19	0.13	0.85

According to the results of Table 1, social intelligence affects the components of shared vision, organizational culture, teamwork and learning, and participatory leadership. And if insurance managers have social intelligence, it can be predicted that the shared vision, organizational culture, work and team learning and participatory leadership of organizational learning in insurance centers will also increase. Therefore, to construct a regression equation, the components of shared vision, organizational culture, teamwork and learning, and participatory leadership in insurance centers must be alongside the social intelligence of managers. The coefficient of determination shows

that 0.79 of the scores of the components of shared vision, organizational culture, work and team learning and participatory leadership are affected by the social intelligence of managers. However, knowledge sharing, systems thinking and development of employee competencies cannot affect the social intelligence of managers.

*The first hypothesis of the research: The component of social information processing from the social intelligence of marketing managers has an effect on the organizational learning of sales and marketing staff*

**Table 2.** Regression coefficient results of the effect of social information processing component of managers' social intelligence on organizational learning components of sales and marketing staff

Source	Benchmark errors	The regression coefficient	t Value	The coefficient of determination	Significance level
Common vision	0.20	0.49	4.25	0.74	0.001
Organizational Culture	0.24	0.53	4.80	0.74	0.001
Teamwork	0.22	0.40	3.93	0.74	0.001
Knowledge sharing	0.25	0.09	0.51	0.12	0.61
Systematic thinking	0.17	0.18	0.99	0.12	0.33
Participatory leadership	0.16	0.50	4.46	0.74	0.001
Develop employee competencies	0.17	0.32	1.51	0.12	0.13

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According to Table 2, the social information processing component affects the components of shared vision, organizational culture, teamwork and learning, and participatory leadership. And if the managers of insurance centers have the skills of processing social information, it can be predicted that the shared vision, organizational culture, teamwork and team learning and participatory leadership of organizational learning in insurance centers will also increase. Therefore, to construct a regression equation, the components of shared vision, organizational culture, teamwork and learning, and participatory leadership in insurance centers must be located alongside managers' social information processing skills.

The coefficient of determination shows that 0.74 of the scores of the components of shared vision, organizational culture, work and team learning and participatory leadership are affected by the social information processing skills of managers. However, knowledge sharing, systems thinking, and employee competency development cannot affect managers' social information processing skills [15-17].

*The second hypothesis of the research: The social skills component of managers' social intelligence has an effect on organizational learning of sales and marketing staff*

**Table 3.** Regression coefficient results of the effect of social skills component of managers' social intelligence on organizational learning components of sales and marketing staff

Source	Benchmark errors	The regression coefficient	t Value	The coefficient of determination	Significance level
Common vision	0.30	0.49	4.17	0.62	0.001
Organizational Culture	0.37	0.16	1	0.14	0.32
Teamwork	0.34	0.36	2.18	0.62	0.01
Knowledge sharing	0.38	0.32	1.88	0.14	0.12
Systematic thinking	0.26	0.29	1.29	0.14	0.29
Participatory leadership	0.25	0.42	2.75	0.62	0.001
Develop employee competencies	0.27	0.40	2.61	0.62	0.008

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According to the results obtained from Table 3, the social skills component affects the components of shared vision, teamwork and learning, participatory leadership, and the development of employee competencies, and if the managers of insurance centers have social skills, it can be predicted that the shared vision, teamwork and learning, participatory leadership and development of employees' competencies of organizational learning in insurance centers will also increase. Therefore, to construct a regression equation, the components of shared vision, teamwork and learning, participatory leadership, and the development of employee competencies in insurance centers must be placed alongside the

social skills of managers. The coefficient of determination shows that 0.62 of the scores of the components of shared vision, teamwork and learning, participatory leadership and development of employee competencies are affected by the social skills of managers. At the same time, organizational culture, knowledge sharing, systemic thinking cannot affect the social skills of managers [18].

*The third hypothesis of the research: The component of social awareness level of managers' social intelligence has an effect on organizational learning of sales and marketing staff.*

**Table 4.** Regression coefficient results of the effect of social awareness level component of managers' social intelligence on organizational learning components of sales and marketing staff

Source	Benchmark errors	The regression coefficient	t Value	The coefficient of determination	Significance level
Common vision	0.17	0.52	5.30	0.43	0.001
Organizational Culture	0.21	0.61	5.42	0.43	0.001
Teamwork	0.19	0.29	1.37	0.10	0.17
Knowledge sharing	0.21	0.25	1	0.10	0.32
Systematic thinking	0.14	0.10	0.34	0.10	0.73
Participatory leadership	0.14	0.45	3.87	0.43	0.001
Develop employee competencies	0.15	0.45	3.89	0.43	0.001

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The results obtained from Table 4 indicate that the component of social awareness level has an effect on the components of shared vision, organizational culture, participatory leadership and development of employees' competencies, and if the managers of insurance centers have a level of social awareness, it can be predicted that the common vision, organizational culture, participatory leadership and development of employees' competencies of organizational learning in insurance centers will also increase. Therefore, to construct a regression equation, the components of common vision, organizational culture, participatory leadership and development of employee competencies in insurance centers must be next to the level of social awareness of managers. The coefficient of determination shows that 0.43 of the scores of the components of common vision, organizational culture, participatory leadership and development of

employee competencies are affected by the level of social awareness of managers. However, teamwork and learning, knowledge sharing, systems thinking cannot affect the skills of managers' social awareness.

#### *Discussion and conclusion*

Findings on the relationship between managers' social intelligence on organizational learning of sales and marketing staff of insurance centers showed that there is a significant relationship between managers' social intelligence and employees' organizational learning due to the significant level of  $P \leq 0.05$ . The coefficient of determination shows that 0.79 of the scores of the components of shared vision, organizational culture, work and team learning and participatory leadership are affected by the social intelligence of managers. However, knowledge sharing, systems

thinking and employee competency development cannot be affected by managers' social intelligence. Therefore, with 95% confidence, it can be said that the main hypothesis was confirmed and the increase in social intelligence of insurance center managers has led to an increase in organizational learning of employees.

According to the results, managers who have higher social intelligence have high communication skills and high adaptability and the ability to do group work. And basically they have desirable personalities as well, and observe such things as: Creating a sincere and friendly atmosphere by gaining the trust of colleagues, paying attention to employees' suggestions and sensitivity to their needs and wants, giving them the opportunity to progress, paying attention to colleagues' feelings and emotions, and participating in decision making. By creating a friendly atmosphere, they try to mobilize all people with maximum power and talent to achieve the goals of the organization [19].

Lang Lee (2000) studies showed that the criteria of emotional, social intelligence and leadership are positively correlated with each other and emotional and social intelligence are components of leadership [20].

The results of Kevin Grooz (2002) showed that managers with high social and emotional intelligence show attractive managerial behavior. Studies by Boyatzis and Satsioglu (2008) showed that social and emotional intelligence affect the effectiveness of managers and leaders and can predict the effectiveness of managers and leaders. Therefore, the results of the main hypothesis are consistent with the research of Lang Lee, Quinn Groz, Boya Tezis, and Satsioglu.

Findings on the relationship between social information processing and organizational learning of sales staff showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between the two variables of social information processing of managers of insurance centers and organizational learning of employees. Therefore, it can be said with 95% confidence that the first hypothesis has been confirmed and the increase in the ability of insurance managers in the social information processing component has led to an increase in organizational learning of employees.

Findings also showed that according to the significance level of  $P \leq 0.05$ , the relationship between social information processing and the four components of shared vision, organizational culture, team work and learning and participatory leadership is significant, and the relationship between social information processing and knowledge sharing, systems thinking, and the development of non-significant employee competencies. The highest relationship is related to the component of organizational culture and the lowest relationship is related to knowledge sharing this means that the greater the ability of insurance managers to process social information, the greater the shared vision, organizational culture, teamwork and learning, and participatory leadership [21].

According to the results, managers who have higher social information processing are more successful because they have the ability to understand and predict the behaviors and feelings of others and pay attention to the feelings and emotions of colleagues and use their opinions in decisions.

Findings on the relationship between social skills and organizational learning of sales and marketing staff showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between social skills and organizational learning due to the significant level of  $P \leq 0.05$ . Therefore, it can be said with 95% confidence that the second hypothesis has been confirmed and the more the social skills of insurance managers increase, the more organizational learning they apply.

Also, the relationship between social skills and the components of shared vision, teamwork and learning, participatory leadership and development of employee competencies is significant and the relationship between social skills and knowledge, organizational culture and systems thinking is meaningless.

The highest relationship is related to the shared perspective component and knowledge sharing has the lowest relationship. This means that with 95% confidence, it can be said that the greater the ability of the group manager in social skills, the more that person will develop the competencies of employees by creating a common vision and also will have less systemic thinking. He tries to raise

the team spirit in the organization by reforming the cumbersome organizational culture.

Findings on the relationship between social awareness and organizational learning showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between social awareness and organizational learning with respect to the significance level of  $P \leq 0.05$ . Therefore, it can be said with 95% confidence that the third hypothesis has been confirmed. As the coefficient of determination of 0.43 shows that if the managers of insurance centers have a level of social awareness, they can increase the common vision, organizational culture, participatory leadership and develop the competencies of employees.

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