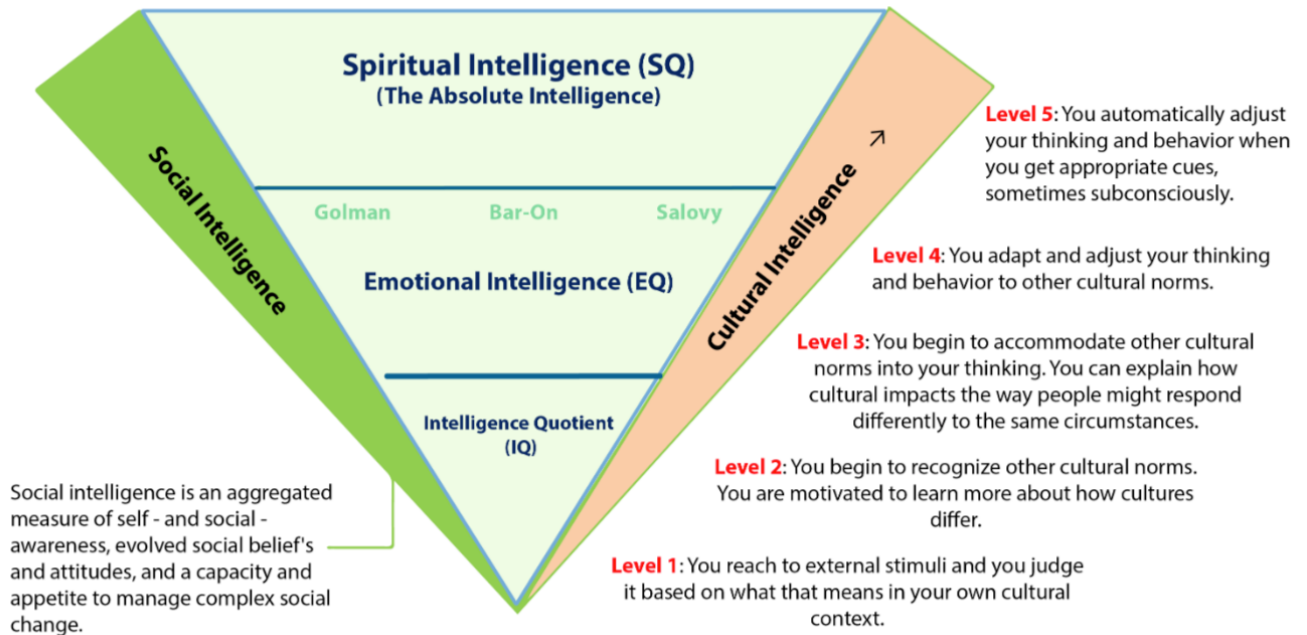# Tessema's Multiple Intelligence Framework: History, Definition, and Its Implementation for Organizational Transformation

Spiritual Intelligence (SQ)
(The Absolute Intelligence)

Golman   Bar-On   Salovy

Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

Intelligence Quotient (IQ)

Social Intelligence

Cultural Intelligence

Social intelligence is an aggregated measure of self - and social - awareness, evolved social belief's and attitudes, and a capacity and appetite to manage complex social change.

Level 5: You automatically adjust your thinking and behavior when you get appropriate cues, sometimes subconsciously.

Level 4: You adapt and adjust your thinking and behavior to other cultural norms.

Level 3: You begin to accommodate other cultural norms into your thinking. You can explain how cultural impacts the way people might respond differently to the same circumstances.

Level 2: You begin to recognize other cultural norms. You are motivated to learn more about how cultures differ.

Level 1: You reach to external stimuli and you judge it based on what that means in your own cultural context.

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Part I – Background Information

The Tessema Multiple Intelligence Framework originated from groundbreaking research conducted in 2010, which explored the connection between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership. This initial study surveyed 575 project managers globally, utilizing Bar-On's 15-point Emotional Intelligence framework alongside Bass and Avolio's 12-point leadership questionnaire. The findings revealed a direct correlation between emotional intelligence capabilities and leadership effectiveness, suggesting that organizations could significantly enhance leadership performance by implementing targeted emotional intelligence training for employees and executives.

Building on these foundational insights, Dereje Tessema expanded his research over the following decade to explore how other forms of intelligence—Intellectual Quotient (IQ), Spiritual Intelligence (SQ), Cultural Intelligence (CQ), and Social Intelligence (SI)—might collectively contribute to organizational transformation. This comprehensive investigation into the interplay between diverse intelligence dimensions culminated in developing the "Tessema Multiple Intelligence Framework." This innovative model illustrates how various forms of intelligence progress from personal to social dimensions, forming an integrated pathway toward sustainable organizational change.

Part II – Tessema's Multiple Intelligence Framework

Introduction

The Tessema Multiple Intelligence Framework significantly advances our understanding of how different forms of intelligence interact and contribute to organizational transformation. Unlike traditional approaches focusing on single intelligence dimensions, this framework draws upon and integrates established theories, including Gardner's (1983) multiple intelligences theory and Goleman's (1995) emotional intelligence model, to create a comprehensive and layered understanding of human intelligence in organizational contexts.

The framework was developed through extensive cross-disciplinary research over a decade, analyzing how various intelligence forms operate individually and collectively to influence leadership effectiveness and organizational performance. The model's distinctive contribution lies in its hierarchical conceptualization of intelligence. It demonstrates how foundational cognitive abilities (IQ) support and enhance more complex social and cultural competencies (CQ and SI), creating a progressive pathway from personal to collective intelligence development.

Historical Development and Research Methodology

The development of the Tessema Multiple Intelligence Framework began with doctoral research examining the relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership among project managers globally. This initial study utilized established measurement tools, including Bar-On's emotional intelligence inventory and Bass and Avolio's leadership questionnaire, to quantify the connection between emotional capabilities and leadership effectiveness.

Following this foundation, subsequent research expanded the scope to incorporate additional dimensions of spiritual, cultural, and social intelligence. The methodology incorporated qualitative and quantitative approaches, including cross-cultural studies, case analyses, and empirical investigations across diverse organizational settings. The framework evolved through iterative refinement based on theoretical analysis and practical application in leadership development programs.

Problem Statement – The Need for a Holistic Intelligence Framework

Before developing the Tessema Multiple Intelligence Framework, organizational research and practice typically addressed various forms of intelligence in isolation. While Gardner's multiple intelligences theory highlighted the diversity of human capabilities and Goleman's work established the importance of emotional intelligence in leadership, a significant gap remained in understanding how these different forms of intelligence interact and collectively impact organizational transformation.

The Tessema framework addresses this fragmentation by proposing that sustainable organizational change requires the integration of multiple intelligence dimensions. Traditional approaches that prioritize cognitive abilities (IQ) without corresponding development in emotional (EQ), spiritual (SQ), cultural (CQ), and social intelligence (SI) fail to equip leaders with the comprehensive capabilities needed to navigate complex organizational environments.

This integrated approach is particularly relevant in today's global business landscape, where organizations face unprecedented challenges requiring adaptability, cross-cultural competence, ethical decision-making, and collaborative problem-solving. By mapping the progressive development from personal to social intelligence, the Tessema framework offers a holistic understanding of how various capabilities combine to enable sustainable organizational transformation.

Significance of the Framework

The Tessema Multiple Intelligence Framework offers significant theoretical and practical value for understanding and fostering organizational transformation. From a theoretical perspective, it bridges previously disconnected research streams, creating a unified model that explains how different forms of intelligence interact to shape individual and collective behavior. This integration advances our understanding beyond the isolated examination of single intelligence dimensions, providing a more comprehensive explanation of leadership effectiveness and organizational dynamics.

From a practical standpoint, the framework provides organizations with a roadmap for developing leadership capabilities that address complex challenges holistically. By recognizing the hierarchical and interconnected nature of different intelligences, organizations can design more effective leadership development programs that simultaneously foster growth across multiple dimensions. This approach is particularly valuable for organizations seeking to build inclusive cultures, navigate global markets, and implement sustainable practices that balance economic, social, and environmental considerations.

Definition of Terms in the Tessema Framework

The Tessema Multiple Intelligence Framework incorporates five key intelligence dimensions:

Intellectual Intelligence (IQ): Intellectual Intelligence (IQ) represents "the aggregate or global capacity of an individual to act purposefully, reason, and deal effectively with the environment" (Wechsler, 1958). It encompasses cognitive abilities, including problem-solving, logical reasoning, abstract thinking, and analytical capabilities (Gardner, 1983). Sternberg (1985) further defined it through his Triarchic Theory as comprising analytical intelligence (used to analyze and evaluate), creative intelligence (used to create and discover), and practical intelligence (used to implement and apply knowledge). In organizational contexts, IQ measures an individual's capacity for performing complex mental processing, problem-solving, and decision-making (Goleman, 1995).

Emotional Intelligence (EQ): Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is defined as "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Goleman (1995) expanded this definition to include "the capacity for recognizing our feelings and those of others, motivating ourselves, and managing emotions well in ourselves and our relationships." In organizational contexts, EQ comprises four critical abilities: perceiving emotions accurately, using emotions to facilitate thought, understanding emotions, and managing emotions to achieve specific goals (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Goleman (1995) further identifies five components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.

Spiritual Intelligence (SQ): Spiritual Intelligence (SQ) is defined as "the intelligence with which we address and solve problems of meaning and value, the intelligence with which we can place our actions and our lives in a wider, richer, meaning-giving context" (Zohar & Marshall, 2000). It represents "the adaptive use of spiritual information to facilitate everyday problem solving and goal attainment" (Emmons, 2000). King (2008) further conceptualizes SQ as a set of mental capacities that contribute to the awareness, integration, and adaptive application of the nonmaterial and transcendent aspects of one's existence. In organizational contexts, SQ encompasses the ability to conduct business ethically, derive meaning from setbacks, and engage in morally uplifting behaviors that inspire others (Vaughan, 2002).

Cultural Intelligence (CQ): Cultural Intelligence (CQ) is defined as "an individual's capability to function and manage effectively in culturally diverse settings" (Earley & Ang, 2003). Ang & Van Dyne (2008) conceptualize it as a multidimensional construct comprising four capabilities: metacognitive CQ (mental processing of cultural knowledge), cognitive CQ (knowledge of cultural norms and practices), motivational CQ (capability to direct attention and energy toward cultural differences), and behavioral CQ (capability to exhibit appropriate verbal and nonverbal actions in culturally diverse situations). In organizational contexts, CQ represents "a person's capability to adapt effectively to new cultural contexts" (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004) and is a critical capability for leaders working across cultural boundaries.

Social Intelligence (SI): Social Intelligence (SI) is defined as "the ability to understand and manage people and to act wisely in human relations" (Thorndike, 1920). Goleman (2006)

expands this definition to encompass "being intelligent not just about our relationships but also in them," describing it as a combination of social awareness (what we sense about others) and social facility (what we do with that awareness). In organizational contexts, SI represents the ability to navigate complex social relationships and environments effectively, including skills in social perception, social knowledge, and behavioral flexibility (Marlowe, 1986). Albrecht (2006) further conceptualizes SI as the ability to get along well with others and get them to cooperate with you, comprising situational awareness, presence, authenticity, clarity, and empathy.

The Tessema Model Structure and Components

The Tessema Diagram of Multiple Intelligences provides a unique and integrative approach to understanding the layered nature of human intelligence and its impact on individual and organizational transformation. This model introduces a hierarchy of five interrelated intelligences – Intellectual Quotient (IQ), Emotional Quotient (EQ), Spiritual Quotient (SQ), Cultural Intelligence (CQ), and Social Intelligence (SI) – and illustrates how these forms of intelligence interact to shape personal growth and collective societal behavior.

Using the metaphor of an inverted wedding cake, the Tessema model depicts how each intelligence layer (IQ, EQ, SQ) expands in size as one progresses upward toward higher intelligence (CQ and SI). This expansion symbolizes each intelligence's increasing complexity and importance as individuals move from personal cognitive abilities (IQ) to broader social and cultural competencies (SI and CQ). The more extensive top layer of the cake (SI) reflects that social intelligence encapsulates a society's collective wisdom and dynamics, driving systemic transformation through integrated personal and cultural intelligence.
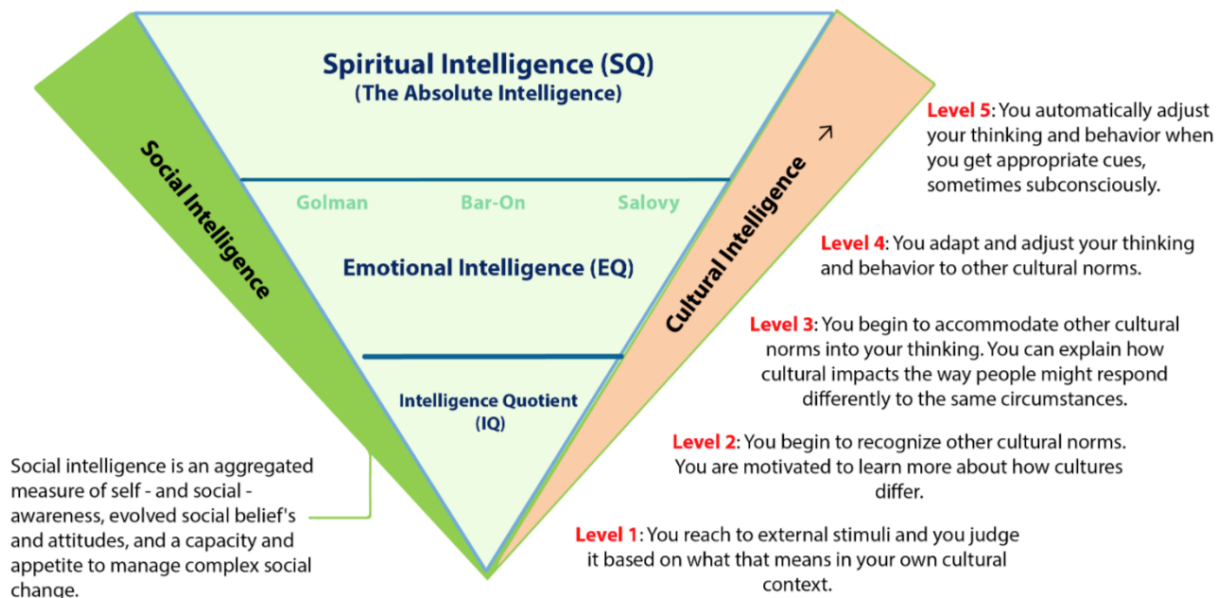

Figure 1: Tessema's Multiple Intelligence Framework (2018, All Rights Reserved)

The framework is structured as follows:

Foundations of Personal Intelligence in Organizational Transformation

Intellectual Quotient (IQ) as the Foundation: IQ encompasses cognitive abilities such as problem-solving, logical reasoning, and analytical thinking, commonly measured by standardized tests. According to the Tessema Diagram, IQ forms the base layer, signifying the intellectual skills necessary to manage the complexities of both personal and professional realms effectively. While cognitive abilities are crucial for gaining knowledge and technical skills, relying solely on IQ does not lead to effective leadership or sustainable decision-making in today's dynamic landscape (Sternberg, 2020). Robert Sternberg's Triarchic Theory of Intelligence argues for a comprehensive understanding of intelligence, including analytical, creative, and practical aspects, suggesting that IQ represents only a segment of a broader, more intricate intelligence system.

Emotional Quotient (EQ): Understanding and Managing Emotions: EQ takes the next layer in the Tessema model, highlighting the importance of emotional awareness and regulation. Daniel Goleman (1995) introduced the concept of Emotional Intelligence, emphasizing that successful leaders must understand and manage their emotions and empathize with others. This framework aligns with the Tessema model, stressing EQ's importance for personal development and interpersonal effectiveness. EQ plays a central role in navigating interpersonal dynamics, building trust, and fostering collaboration – critical for personal and organizational transformation. Leaders with high EQ are better equipped to lead teams, resolve conflicts, and promote a culture of inclusivity and empathy (Bradberry & Greaves, 2019).

Spiritual Quotient (SQ): Purpose and Meaning: Building on this foundation, Zohar and Marshall (2000) introduced the concept of Spiritual Intelligence (SQ) as a "higher intelligence" that centers on meaning, purpose, and ethical clarity. SQ transcends ego-driven motivations by fostering a sense of interconnectedness and purpose-driven leadership, aligning organizational actions with broader ethical principles and sustainability objectives. Leaders with high SQ bring ethical clarity and visionary thinking to their organizations, fostering cultures oriented toward long-term transformation. This dimension of intelligence is particularly relevant as organizations face increasing pressures to adopt sustainable practices that reflect a commitment to values and purpose (Zohar, 2018).

Cultural Intelligence (CQ): Adapting to Diverse Environments: As individuals cultivate their Spiritual Intelligence, they simultaneously develop Cultural Intelligence (CQ) – the ability to navigate and appreciate diverse cultural norms and practices. CQ is critical for leaders in global environments, where adaptability and cross-cultural communication are essential for building successful partnerships and driving innovation. The Tessema model positions CQ as a bridge between personal growth (IQ, EQ, and SQ) and broader social impact, emphasizing that leaders with high CQ are better equipped to create inclusive organizations and foster a sense of belonging across diverse groups (Ng et al., 2019). The model aligns with theories like Ang and Van Dyne's model of CQ, which suggests that CQ enhances leaders' capacity to engage with different cultural contexts and build globally inclusive organizational cultures.

Social Intelligence (SI): Collective Action and Social Dynamics: At the top of the Tessema Diagram is Social Intelligence (SI), which integrates personal intelligence (IQ, EQ, and SQ) with Cultural Intelligence (CQ) to form a framework for understanding and navigating group dynamics. SI represents an individual's ability to understand, interpret, and act within social environments, shaping how organizations and societies function. Thorndike (1920) described SI as the ability to "understand and manage people," a skill vital in effective teamwork, conflict resolution, and leadership in complex, collaborative settings (Goleman, 2006). SI is the culmination of a leader's journey through the various intelligences, fostering organizational cultures that are collaborative, adaptive, and innovative – qualities essential for long-term sustainability and transformation.

Comparison with Existing Intelligence Models

The Tessema Multiple Intelligence Framework both draws upon and extends several established intelligence theories:

Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory: While Gardner's (1983) theory identifies distinct types of intelligence (linguistic, logical-mathematical, and spatial), the Tessema framework focuses on intelligence most relevant to organizational and leadership contexts. Additionally, while Gardner's model considers these intelligences relatively independent, the Tessema framework emphasizes their hierarchical relationship and collective impact.

Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Model: The Tessema framework incorporates Goleman's (1995) conceptualization of emotional intelligence but positions it within a broader intelligence hierarchy. While Goleman's work focuses primarily on the relationship between EQ and leadership effectiveness, the Tessema model demonstrates how EQ interacts with other forms of intelligence to drive organizational transformation.

Sternberg's Triarchic Theory: The Tessema framework recognizes Sternberg's (1985) focus on three types of intelligence: analytical, creative, and practical. However, it incorporates emotional, spiritual, cultural, and social aspects. This broader perspective offers a deeper understanding of how various forms of intelligence influence organizational behavior and leadership effectiveness.

Zohar and Marshall's Spiritual Intelligence: The Tessema model incorporates Zohar and Marshall's (2000) concept of spiritual intelligence (SQ) as a critical component of leadership development. However, the framework positions SQ within a broader intelligence progression, illustrating how it builds upon cognitive and emotional capabilities while supporting cultural and social intelligence.

Implementation for Organizational Transformation

The Tessema Multiple Intelligence Framework provides a comprehensive roadmap for implementing leadership development programs that foster sustainable organizational transformation. Based on the model's hierarchical structure, implementation follows a progressive approach that builds capabilities across multiple intelligence dimensions:

Foundation Development (IQ): Initial implementation focuses on enhancing analytical and problem-solving capabilities through structured learning programs, critical thinking exercises, and technical training. This foundation ensures that leaders have the cognitive tools necessary for effective decision-making.

Emotional Capacity Building (EQ): Building on cognitive capabilities, organizations implement emotional intelligence training that enhances self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and interpersonal skills. These programs may include emotional assessment tools, feedback mechanisms, coaching, and simulation exercises.

Purpose and Values Integration (SQ): The following implementation phase focuses on enhancing spiritual intelligence by aligning leadership actions with a sense of purpose, meaning, and ethical considerations. This phase may involve exercises for clarifying values, frameworks for ethical decision-making, and ensuring that personal and organizational purposes are in harmony.

Cross-Cultural Competence Development (CQ): Implementation then expands to cultural intelligence development through cross-cultural training, international assignments, diverse team experiences, and cultural immersion opportunities. These initiatives enable leaders to navigate global environments effectively and create inclusive organizational cultures.

Collective Impact Facilitation (SI): The culminating implementation phase focuses on developing social intelligence through collaborative problem-solving, stakeholder engagement initiatives, systems thinking workshops, and community impact projects. These experiences enable leaders to orchestrate collective action toward sustainable organizational transformation.

Organizations using the Tessema framework typically adopt a comprehensive strategy. This strategy encompasses a range of elements, including assessment tools, hands-on learning experiences, coaching, mentoring, and real-world application projects. During the implementation process, the focus is on integrating various dimensions of intelligence rather than treating each as a separate development path. This approach aligns with the framework's belief in the interconnectedness of these dimensions.

Conclusion

The Tessema Multiple Intelligence Framework significantly advances our understanding of how different forms of intelligence collectively contribute to organizational transformation. By integrating existing theories into a hierarchical model that illustrates the progression from personal to social intelligence, the framework provides both a theoretical foundation and practical roadmap for developing leadership capabilities needed in today's complex organizational environments.

The framework's emphasis on the interconnected nature of intellectual, emotional, spiritual, cultural, and social intelligence offers a more holistic approach than traditional models that treat these dimensions separately. This integration enables organizations to develop leadership

capabilities that address technical and operational challenges and the human, cultural, and ethical dimensions of sustainable transformation.

As organizations navigate increasingly complex global challenges, the Tessema Multiple Intelligence Framework provides a valuable tool for understanding and developing the multidimensional capabilities needed for sustainable success. By recognizing the progressive development from personal to social intelligence, organizations can cultivate leaders capable of driving transformation that balances economic objectives with social and environmental responsibilities, creating value for diverse stakeholders while contributing to broader societal well-being.

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