

Social Versus Emotional Intelligence: Validating a Measure for the Social Competency Construct

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RATIONALE

Although different models have been proposed for the emotional intelligence (EI) construct, existing EI measures were developed assuming they assessed a cross-section of both emotional and social competencies. To date, little effort has been made to separate (where appropriate) social from emotional competencies. This becomes particularly relevant given widespread interest in the EI area in developing programs to teach or train specific competencies.

METHOD

Parker and Wood (2009) developed a measure to assess a broad set of important social competencies. The primary objective of the present study is to cross-validate the model upon which this measure is based. The study's second objective is to test the ecological validity of the measure by comparing social competency score differences across a variety of diverse groups.

Participants

The present study included data from 2563 adult individuals collected with the support of multiple community partners. Participants were organized into the five groups as shown in Figure 1.

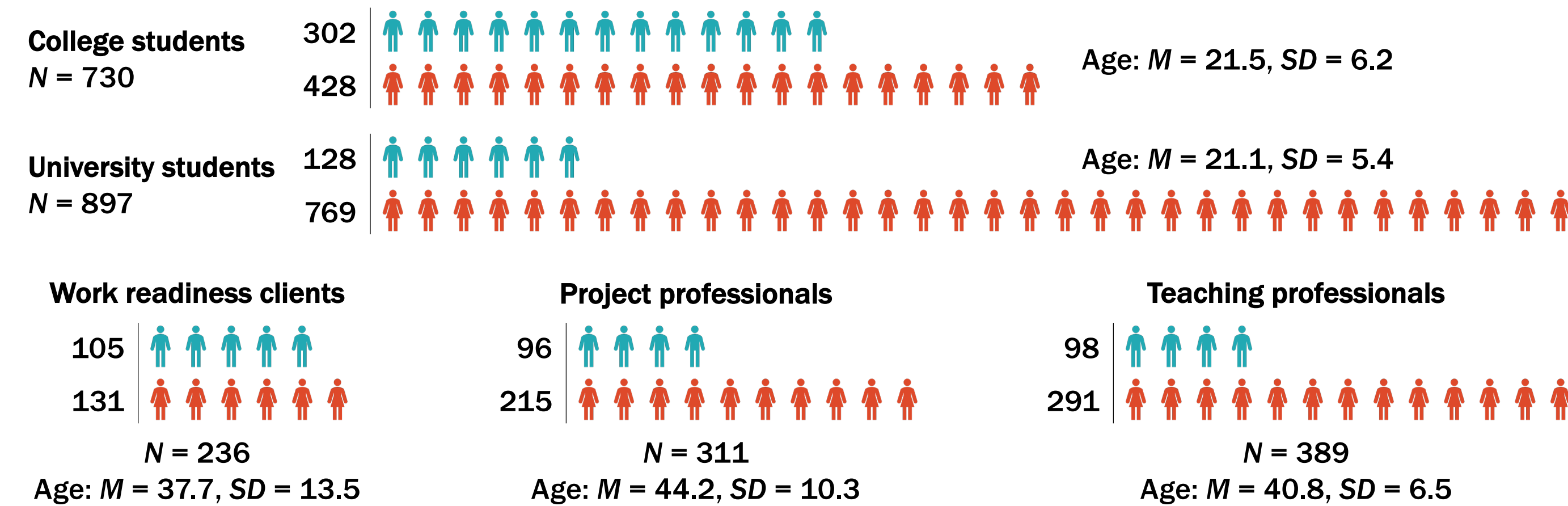


Figure 1. Participants

Measures

- The NEO personality inventory (NEO-FFI; Costa & McCrae, 1985).
- Short form of the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i:S; Bar-On, 2002).
- Multidimensional Inventory of Emotional Intelligence – Social Competency Scales (MIEI-SI; Parker & Wood, 2009) is a self-report tool that contains three scales associated with healthy social functioning, as well as a total score. The factors are defined as follows:



Social integration (SI): The ability to create meaningful and effective relationships with others across a variety of contexts.



Performance readiness (PR): The ability to subject oneself to others' evaluation in order to achieve a specific outcome.



Social agency (SA): The ability to make effective decisions and maintain a sense of personal control during social situations.

Statistical Procedures

- To establish discriminant validity of the measure, a series of hierarchical multiple regressions was performed with each MIEI-SI scale as a dependent variable and measures of personality (NEO-FFI) and emotional intelligence (EQ-i:S) as the independent variables.
- To establish the ecological validity of the measure, a series of ANOVAs was performed with each MIEI-SI factor as a dependent variable, while gender and occupational group were set as independent variables.

RESULTS

Standard regressions of personality variables on MIEI-SI factors appear in Figure 2. Standard regressions of emotional intelligence variables on MIEI-SI factors appear in Figure 3. All regression coefficients were statistically significant.

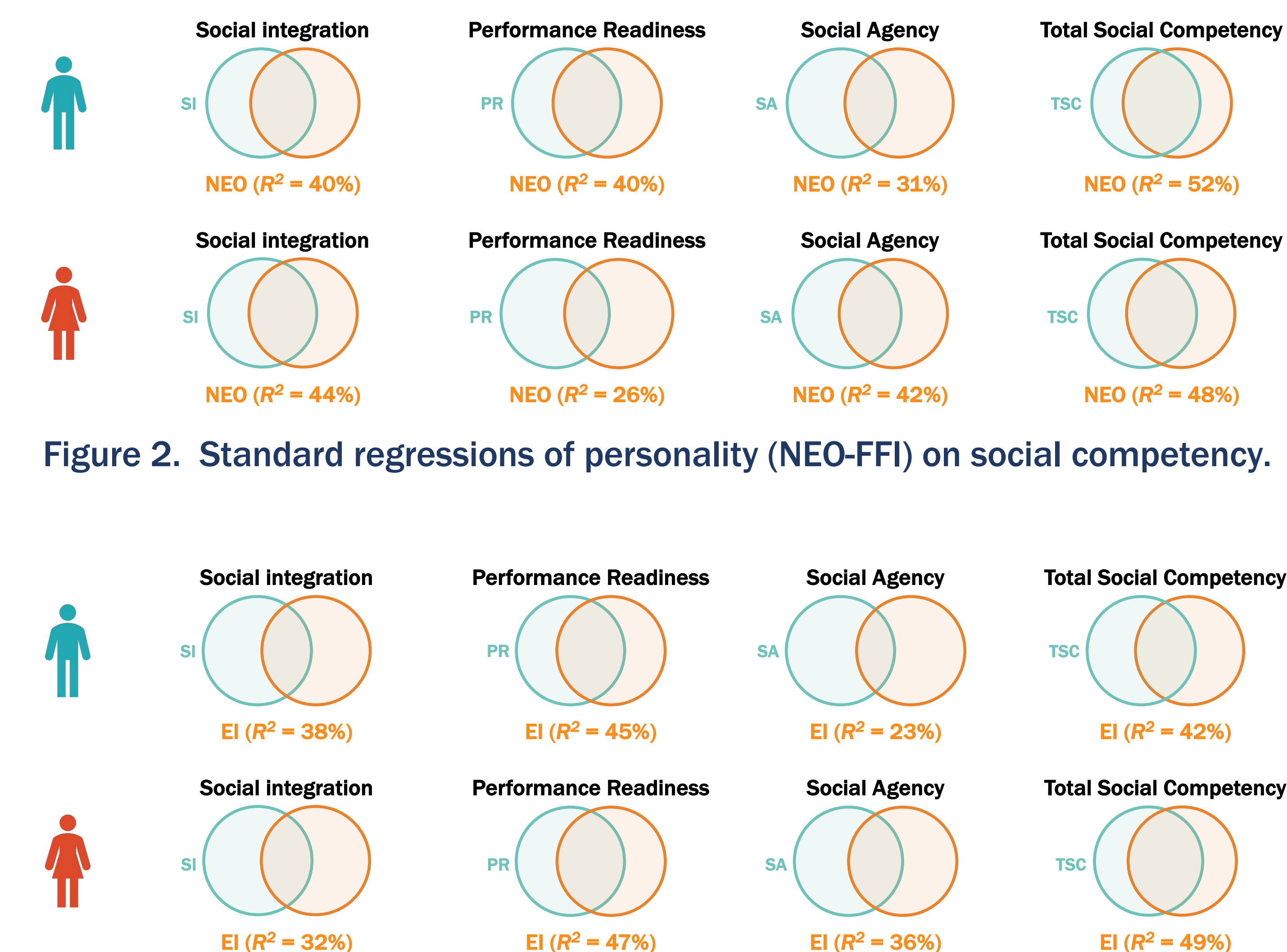


Figure 2. Standard regressions of personality (NEO-FFI) on social competency.

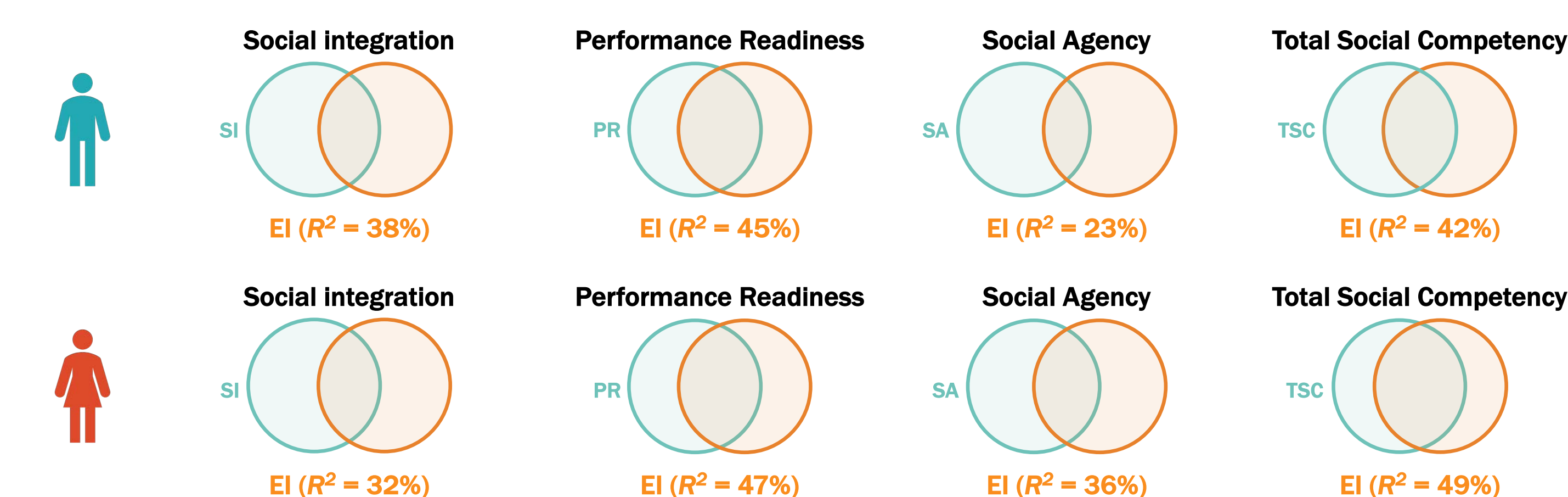


Figure 3. Standard regressions of emotional intelligence (EQ-i:S) on social competency.

Group by gender ANOVAs with social competency factor as the dependent variable found statistically significant differences between all groups for all factors. Gender differences were noted for work readiness clients' social integration and total social competency scores, and for project professionals' social integration scores. Results appear in Figure 4.

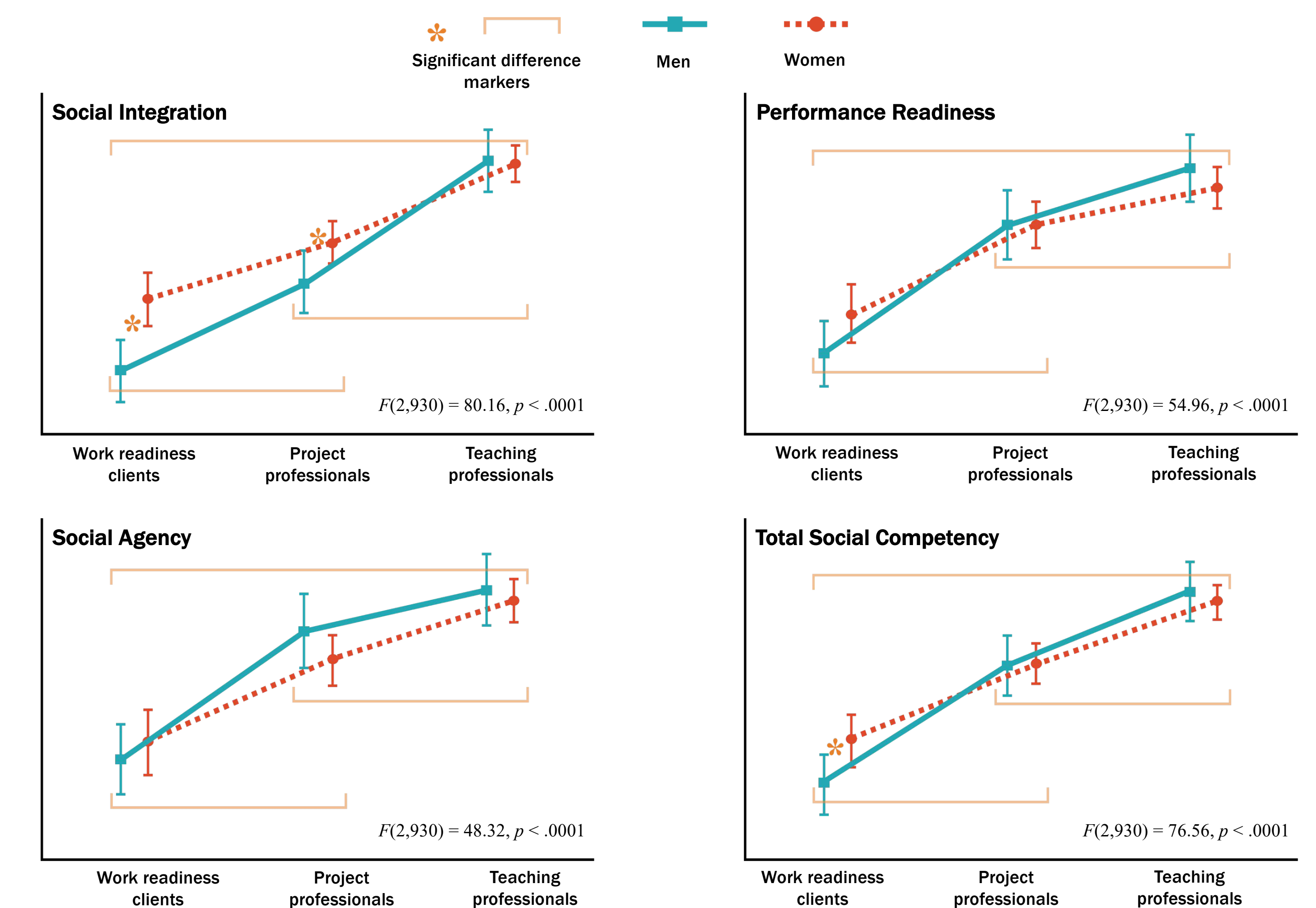


Figure 4. Social competency mean item scores – ANOVA by occupation and gender.

CONCLUSIONS

- Standard regressions suggest that the social competency factors measured by the MIEI-SI are sufficiently distinct from both personality and emotional intelligence constructs.
- Each of the three factors showed excellent ecological validity as significant score improvements were observed across an occupationally-defined hierarchy of social functioning that is consistent with prior research.
- These encouraging results suggest further investigation into the predictive validity of the instrument.

REFERENCES

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