

The Growth of Spiritual Intelligence

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ABSTRACT

In the last few decades, there has been a growing debate and some very substantive changes on the concept of intelligence. Gone are the days when the official line on intelligence was that it was a measurable quantity by means of IQ tests. Then the concept of emotional intelligence (EQ) was introduced. Emotional intelligence is not accessed like a fact or an answer, it is more a process of scanning the ways in which an individual experiences things working in the past and anticipating the ways he might operate in a new situation in the future.

The latest concept in intelligence is of spiritual intelligence (SQ). The spiritual intelligence helps an individual to live his individuality in line with the recent scientific discoveries about the true nature of reality. The present research work is an attempt to explore the various definitions, components, indicators and dimensions of spiritual intelligence that have been given by various psychologists and educationists from the time the concept has conceived.

Keywords: *Intelligence, Emotional Intelligence, Spiritual Intelligence*

Methodology

In the present study, the researcher has used the historical method of educational research. This method includes a meaningful and organized record of past events to arrive at conclusions concerning the same. This is usually accompanied by an interpretation of these events and of their relevance to present circumstances. The present study is an endeavor to find out the lines on which the concept of spiritual intelligence has emerged.

Introduction

Intelligence is understood as the ability to learn or understand from experience or to respond successfully to new experiences, the ability to acquire and retain knowledge. Its possession implies the use of reason or intellect in solving problems and directing conduct. Conventionally, the measurement of intelligence was done with the intelligence tests that give the results in the form of IQ or intelligence quotient. Almost three decades ago, the concept of emotional intelligence was conceived in the footsteps of Edward Thorndike who used the term social intelligence to

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describe the extent of one's ability to relate to other people, which he considered distinct from the typically-discussed verbal and mathematical abilities. Emotional intelligence, measured in the terms of EQ or emotional quotient was popularized by Goleman who wrote a book on the same. Emotional intelligence refers to the interpersonal and intrapersonal abilities of an individual which help him to understand the relationships and the world better and furthermore, act wisely in human relations. The intelligence of latest invent is the spiritual intelligence, measures as SQ or spiritual quotient.

Since spiritual abilities underlie aspects of spirituality, it would be appropriate to start off with the definition of spiritualism (spirituality) and then come to the definitions of spiritual intelligence. The word 'spirit' is derived from the Latin word 'spiritus', which means 'breath' or 'soul'. Prior to the emergence of spirituality within psychological literature, the words religion, religiosity and/or religiousness were more commonly used to describe all spiritual aspects of the human psyche (James, 1902/2002). While religiosity may have been equated with spirituality at one time, psychologists now make sharp distinctions between the two (King, 2008).

Palmer (1998) describes the spiritual as "the diverse ways we answer the heart's longing to be connected with the largeness of life - a longing that animates love and work, specially the work called teaching."

Koenig, McCullough, and Larson (2000) define religion as "an organized system of beliefs, practices, symbols and rituals designed (a) to facilitate closeness to the sacred or transcendent and, (b) to foster an understanding of one's relation and responsibility to others in living together in community." In contrast, Koenig, McCullough, and Larson (2000) define spirituality as "the personal quest for understanding answers to ultimate questions about life, about meaning, and about relationship to the sacred or transcendent, which may (or may not) lead to or arise from the development of religious rituals and the formation of the community."

Parks (2000) describes spirituality as "personal search for meaning, transcendence, wholeness, purpose, and the realization of spirit as the animating essence at the core of the life."

"Spirituality stresses the dynamic wholeness of self in which the self is at one with itself and with the whole of creation and it requires that people regard themselves and others as whole beings" (Zohar & Marshall, 2000).

King, Speck, and Thomas (2001) state that religion is a framework for a system of beliefs and values, while spirituality involves a person's belief in a power apart from his own existence.

Oxford Dictionary of Current English (2001) defines spiritual as "having to do with the human spirit as opposed to physical things."

Sinnott (2002) defines spirituality as "one's personal relation to the sacred or transcendent, a relation that then informs other relationships and the meaning of one's own life" while religious practices "may be the external sign of a spiritual orientation, or simply a set of culturally cohesive practices, beliefs, and habits."

Waaajman (2002) defines spirituality as "that which touches the core of human existence, namely, the relation to the absolute."

Wink & Dillon (2002) define spirituality as "the self existential search for ultimate meaning

through an individualized understanding of the sacred.”

Vokey (2003) emphasizes spirituality as a relational event; it either consists of or leads to experiences of connectedness with our deepest selves, other human and non-human souls, to the natural world and the cosmos beyond and the larger purposes and powers that transcend an ego's limited concerns.

In the words of King (2008), spirituality is best defined as an unbound set of personal drives, behaviours, experiences, values, and attitudes which are based on a quest for existential understanding, meaning, purpose, and transcendence. In addition, this personal quest typically involves the apprehension of a spiritual depth or nonmaterial dimension to reality.

Spiritual Intelligence

Zohar (1997) states that “Spiritual intelligence is the intelligence that makes us whole, that gives us our integrity. It is the soul's intelligence, the intelligence of the deep self. It is the intelligence with which we ask fundamental questions and with which we reframe our answers.”

Emmons (2000) defines spiritual intelligence as “the adaptive use of spiritual information to facilitate everyday problem solving and goal attainment.”

According to Noble (2000) spiritual intelligence includes “an openness to unusual and diverse experiences broadly labelled ‘spiritual’”, as well as a continuous attempt to understand the meaning of these experiences in the various aspects of one's life and “the awareness that the whole is always greater than the sum of its parts, no matter how cherished a part might be.”

According to Zohar (2000), “Spiritual Intelligence is the intelligence with which we access our deepest meanings, purposes, and highest motivations.”

Buzan (2001) defines spiritual intelligence as “awareness of the world and one's place in it.”

Spiritual intelligence is a set of mental abilities, making it one component of a person's total intellect (Oxford Dictionary of Current English, 2001).

Wolman (2001) defines spiritual intelligence as “the human capacity to ask ultimate questions about the meaning of life. It involves more than a set of mental abilities, a position which abandons practically all previously established criteria for intelligence. It is the ability to sense a spiritual dimension of life; which allows one to solve particular types of problems, primarily those of a spiritual or moral nature. Spiritual intelligence exists as a potential and innate human ability, which can be developed with training and experience.”

Zohar and Marshall (2000) suggest that spiritual intelligence represents the brain's tertiary process of punitive thinking, which combines the lower processes of rational and emotional intelligence in order to reframe or re-conceptualize one's experience and thus transform one's understanding of it, allowing for higher-order cognition of a spiritual and moral nature. It is the intelligence that makes us whole, that gives us our integrity. It is the soul's intelligence, the intelligence of the deep self.

According to Vaughan (2002), “Spiritual intelligence is the capacity to recognize multiple levels of consciousness; the awareness of spirit as the ground of being; and the awareness of one's relationship to the transcendent, to all people, and to the earth.” She believes that spiritual intelligence exists as a potential in all people and can be cultivated by a variety of practices or training. She also emphasizes the relationship between spiritual intelligence and adaptation to stressful events.

Nasel (2004) defines spiritual intelligence as “the application of spiritual abilities and resources to practical contexts. People use spiritual intelligence when they draw on their spiritual abilities and resources to make meaningful decisions, deliberate over existential issues, or attempt problem solving in daily life.”

Wigglesworth (2006) defines spiritual intelligence as “the ability to behave with compassion and wisdom while maintaining inner and outer peace (equanimity) regardless of the circumstances.”

In the words of King (2008), spiritual intelligence is defined as a set of adaptive mental capacities which are based on non material and transcendent aspects of reality, specifically those which are related to nature of one’s existence, personal meaning, transcendence and expanded states of consciousness. When applied, these processes are adaptive in their ability to facilitate unique means of problem solving, abstract-reasoning and coping.

Spiritual intelligence has been described as the ultimate intelligence by Zohar and Marshall (2000), who place it at the top of a hierarchy, with emotional intelligence below and rational intelligence (IQ) below that. As opposed to the earlier belief when spiritual intelligence was taken as a tangent with spirituality or religion, spiritual intelligence enjoys the distinction of being an intelligence, having to do with righteousness, conscience, insight, truthfulness, enlightened meaning of the self and wisdom.

Indicators for Spiritual Intelligence

According to Zohar and Marshall (2000), indications of a highly developed spiritual intelligence include:

- (a) The capacity to be flexible (actively & spontaneously adaptive);
- (b) A high degree of self-awareness;
- (c) A capacity to face and use suffering;
- (d) A capacity to face and transcend pain;
- (e) The quality of being inspired by vision and values;
- (f) A reluctance to cause unnecessary harm;
- (g) A tendency to see the connections between diverse things (being ‘holistic’);
- (h) A marked tendency to ask ‘Why?’ or ‘What if?’ questions and to seek ‘fundamental’ answers; and
- (i) Possessing a facility for working against convention.

Emmons’ (2000a) goal was to provide support for a spiritual intelligence according to Gardner’s (1983) eight criteria. He offered that spiritual intelligence includes:

- (a) the capacity for transcendence;
- (b) the ability to enter into heightened spiritual states of consciousness;
- (c) the ability to invest everyday activities, events, and relationships with a sense of the sacred;
- (d) the ability to utilize spiritual resources to solve problems in living; and
- (e) the capacity to engage in virtuous behaviour or to be virtuous (to show forgiveness, to express gratitude, to be humble, to display compassion).

The fifth capacity was later removed due to its focus on human behaviour rather than

ability, thereby not meeting previously established scientific criteria for intelligence.

Describing spiritual intelligence as “an innate human ability”, Noble (2001) contends that her research agrees with Emmons’ model and adds two additional core abilities:

- (a) the conscious recognition that physical reality is embedded within a larger, multidimensional reality with which we interact, consciously and unconsciously, on a moment-to-moment basis; and
- (b) the conscious pursuit of psychological health, not only for ourselves but for the sake of the global community.

Zohar (2004) introduced 12 principles of SQ. These principles have been derived from the qualities that define complex adaptive systems:

- (a) **Self-awareness:** Knowing what a person believes in and values, and what deeply motivates him
- (b) **Spontaneity:** Living in and being responsive to the moment
- (c) **Being vision- and value-led:** Acting from principles and deep beliefs, and living accordingly
- (d) **Holism:** Seeing larger patterns, relationships, and connections; having a sense of belonging
- (e) **Compassion:** Having the quality of “feeling-with” and deep empathy
- (f) **Celebration of diversity:** Valuing other people for their differences, not despite them
- (g) **Field independence:** Standing against the crowd and having one’s own convictions
- (h) **Humility:** Having the sense of being a player in a larger drama, of one’s true place in the world
- (i) **Tendency to ask fundamental “why?” questions:** Needing to understand things and get to the bottom of them
- (j) **Ability to reframe:** Standing back from a situation or problem and seeing the bigger picture; seeing problems in a wider context
- (k) **Positive use of adversity:** Learning and growing from mistakes, setbacks, and suffering
- (l) **Sense of vocation:** Feeling called upon to serve, to give something back.

Amram (2007) identified seven major themes related to spiritual intelligence, which can be more accurately and broadly defined as the manifestation of a lived spirituality (i.e., a spirituality that is put into daily practice):

- (a) meaning (experiencing meaning and purpose in daily activities);
- (b) consciousness (trans-rational knowing, mindfulness, and practice);
- (c) grace (trust, love, and reverence for the sacred);
- (d) transcendence (holism, nurturing relationships and connections);
- (e) truth (acceptance, forgiveness, and openness to all truth);
- (f) peaceful surrender to Self (egolessness, accepting one’s true nature); and
- (g) inner-directed freedom (liberation from attachments and fears, discernment, integrity).

Diedrich (2008) offers that there are three major aspects of spiritual intelligence as follows:

- (a) **Identifying with one’s Higher Self or Spirit rather than with the ego** - A person

identifies that he is not his body, problems, past, finances, job, gender, or ethnicity. These are each roles that a person play. An individual is a spiritual being having a human experience.

- (b) **Understanding Universal Law** - Cause and Effect - Spiritual Intelligence means that a person takes total responsibility for his life, situation, and for himself. The individual recognizes that he is the creator of his life and that his thinking, beliefs, and assumptions create one's world, and there is no blaming.
- (c) **Non-attachment** - As a spiritual being an individual is unattached to outcomes, forms, or experiences. His well-being comes from within, by way of his spiritual identity.

Spiritual intelligence is developed by practicing these three aspects. The tools of spiritual intelligence include prayer, meditation, contemplation, conscious awareness of one's tendencies toward fear or anger, shifting one's emotional state away from fear, and the ongoing daily practice of staying conscious of one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors.

Steps to become Spiritually Intelligent.

Bowell (2004) adds that there are seven steps to acquire the spiritually intelligent self for the practical pursuit of purpose, success and happiness. They include:

- (a) **Awareness** - A person becomes aware that he is lost, that he does not understand the purpose of his life, that this internal, "not knowing" sense is in fact the real sense of self confined by the lack of any intelligence to escape.
- (b) **Meaning** - A person explores the bigger picture, to make keys that might open the space he is confined in.
- (c) **Evaluation** - A person tries the keys, fit them in the lock and turn.
- (d) **Being centered** - A person opens the door inward and enables what is on the other side to access.
- (e) **Vision** - A person allows the light from the new, "bigger picture" to flood in so that he can see.
- (f) **Projection** - A person projects his new level of self into the new territory he can see ahead.
- (g) **Mission** - A person acts within the new territory and is now aware and conscious of what he is doing within a greater territory.

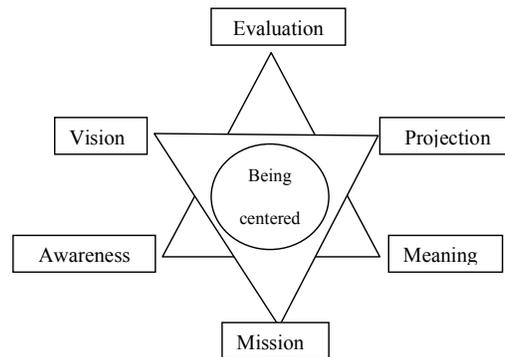


Figure: The Seven Steps of Spiritual Intelligence (Source: Bowell, R. A. (2004). *The seven steps of*

spiritual intelligence: The practical pursuit of purpose, success and happiness. London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

According to Wigglesworth (2006), there are certain skills which can be cultivated and seem to accurately reflect a spiritually intelligent person. The descriptors of these four skills for SQ reflect the vertical move toward less ego and greater expansion of awareness. These include:

- (a) ***Higher self/ego self awareness:*** This includes awareness of own worldview, awareness of life purpose (mission), awareness of hierarchy of values, complexity of inner thought and awareness of ego self / higher self.
- (b) ***Universal awareness:*** This includes awareness of interconnectedness of all life, awareness of worldviews of others, breadth of time / space perception, awareness of limitations/power of human perception, awareness of spiritual laws and experience of transcendent oneness.
- (c) ***Higher self/ego self mastery:*** This includes commitment to spiritual growth, keeping higher self in charge, living one's purpose and values, sustaining one's faith and seeking guidance from spirit .
- (d) ***Social mastery / spiritual presence:*** This includes being a wise and effective spiritual teacher/mentor, a wise and effective change agent, making compassionate and wise decisions, having a calm, healing presence and being aligned with the ebb and flow of life.

Components of Spiritual Intelligence.

King (2008) suggests four main components of spiritual intelligence:

- (a) ***Critical existential thinking:*** The capacity to critically contemplate meaning, purpose and other existential / metaphysical issues (eg death, universe) and to come to original existential conclusions.
- (b) ***Personal meaning production:*** The ability to derive personal meaning and purpose from all physical and mental experiences, including the capacity to create and master (ie live according to) a life purpose.
- (c) ***Transcendental awareness:*** The capacity to identify transcendent dimensions/patterns of the self, of others and of the physical world during normal states of consciousness accompanied by the capacity to identify their relationship to one's self and to the physical.
- (d) ***Conscious state expansion:*** The ability to enter and exit higher / spiritual states of consciousness of one's own discretion (as in deep contemplation or reflection, meditations, prayer etc).

In the words of Mamin (2008); "In order to better understand SQ and its potential application context it is useful to look at its qualities." Mamin (2008) has suggested, summarized and reconciled number of different capacities relevant to spiritual intelligence and resulting behavioural outcomes.

- (a) ***Existential thinking:*** It includes the capacity to critically contemplate the nature of existence, reality, the universe, space, time, and other metaphysical issues; also the capacity

to contemplate and re-frame non-existential issues from an existential perspective (King, 2008), the capacity to ask fundamental “Why?” questions, search for meaning (Zohar and Marshall, 2000) and awareness of own worldview (Wigglesworth, 2002).

- (b) **Holistic thinking:** It is the capacity to see larger patterns and connections, capacity to stand back and see situation or problems from a 10000m view; having a sense of belonging to a larger whole (Zohar and Marshall, 2000), awareness of interconnectedness of all life (Wigglesworth, 2002) and understanding of universal cause-effect law (Diedrich, 2008).
- (c) **Transcendental awareness and spiritual presence:** It comprises of the capacity to identify transcendent (non-material) dimension of self, others and physical world during normal states of consciousness (King, 2008), awareness of ego self and higher/spiritual self in oneself and others. It is the ability to identify and act from spiritual self rather than from ego habits (Wigglesworth, 2002; Diedrich, 2008; Belf, 2002) and awareness of spiritual needs of others and ability to be spiritual teacher/mentor.
- (d) **Expansion of consciousness:** It is the ability to experience heightened states of consciousness (e.g. pure consciousness, cosmic consciousness, unity and oneness) at one’s own discretion (as in deep meditation, prayer, etc.) (King, 2008).
- (e) **Connection to spirit:** It includes the awareness of connection to universal Spirit, Divine, God, Higher Power, Source, Ultimate Consciousness (or other words the person prefers) (Wigglesworth, 2002) and the ability to invite Spirit for guidance into daily happenings (Belf, 2002).
- (f) **Personal meaning creation:** It means the ability to derive personal meaning and purpose from all physical & mental experiences. It is the capacity to create and master a life purpose (King, 2008) and the ability to sanctify everyday experience (Emmons, 2002).
- (g) **Vision and values alignment:** It includes the ability to know and live in concord with own values hierarchy and deep motivations, being inspired by own calling and mission (Zohar and Marshall, 2000). It is the ability to stand against the crowd and have one’s own convictions (Zohar and Marshall, 2000).
- (h) **Perspective of service:** It is the feeling called upon to serve to our fellow humans and to the planet at large, ability to give something back. It is the sense of being a player in a larger drama (Zohar and Marshall, 2000).
- (i) **Compassion:** Compassion means the capacity of “feeling-with” and deep empathy to other people despite any differences. It is the ability to see inherent beauty of everything and everyone (Tolle, 2007).
- (j) **Humility and acceptance:** It includes the ability to accept adversity and suffering as an opportunity to learn, a capacity to face and transcend pain. It is the ability to express gratitude and have a positive attitude (Diedrich, 2008).
- (k) **Spontaneity and non-attachment:** It comprises of the capacity to be flexible, actively and spontaneously adaptive, while living in and being responsive to the moment (Davis, 2008). It means to be present here and now, being unattached to outcomes, forms or

experiences (Diedrich, 2008).

Conclusion

Human intelligence is full of complexity and IQ or EQ, alone or in combination is inadequate to explain the vast richness of the very essence and imagination of the human psyche and intelligence. Spiritual intelligence actually performs quite well according to the traditional criteria for intelligence. It represents a set of mental abilities, as opposed to behaviours and/or experiences. Spiritual intelligence is the blend of cognition with morality and nonmaterial aspects of reality. Spiritual intelligence is the intelligence of the soul which helps to analyze the cause of a person's existence and to attain heightened states of consciousness.

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