



An Overview of Spiritual Intelligence and its Potential Impact on Academic Achievement

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Abstract:

Spiritual Intelligence is a relatively new area of research that focuses on the ability to go beyond the materialistic values. Spiritual Intelligence is a higher dimension of intelligence that activates the qualities and capabilities of the authentic self or soul in the form of wisdom, compassion, integrity, love, creativity, empathy and peace. It is the complete inner consciousness and deep awareness of the world, spirituality and the life after death. Spiritual Intelligence is the attitude of self-awareness as well as our relationship with the Almighty and all the creatures. On the other hand, academic achievement is commonly defined as the level of educational attainment and performance in academic settings. This research paper aims to study the concept of spiritual intelligence and examine its potential impact on academic achievement. By examining the existing literature, this study seeks to provide an overview of spiritual intelligence and determine the relationship between spiritual intelligence and academic achievement. Based on the results of previous studies, it is evident that spiritual intelligence positively affects various aspects of academic achievement including motivation, self-regulation, emotional resilience and overall well-being.

Keywords: *Spiritual Intelligence and Academic Achievement*

I. Introduction

In the early part of the 20th century, IQ gained immense popularity for evaluation and assessment of an individual's intelligence. IQ correlates with academic success, job performance and socio-economic advancement of the individuals. However, it does not measure all aspects of intelligence such as creativity or spirituality. IQ catered to the material and mental pursuits of an individual but it failed to answer the call of creativity in the human spirit. In mid-90s Daniel Goleman popularized the notion of another quotient that is EQ- emotional intelligence quotient. EQ allows a person to judge what situation he is in and to behave appropriately within the boundaries of the situation. Over the past decade, it has been suggested that even EQ is not adequate to deal with the situations that individuals face in their personal and professional lives. This is because EQ enables one to adjust one's feelings according to the situation but it does not have the power to transform the negative feelings into positive ones. As research is an ongoing process, individuals confront both positive and negative feelings in their lives and how to overcome these negative feelings or failures is a major question that needs to be addressed. For answering this question, Danah Zohar propagated the concept of spiritual intelligence.

Spiritual intelligence and academic achievement are two important aspects of human growth and development. Spiritual intelligence involves in cultivating a deep understanding of oneself, others and the world around them. It is closely linked to a sense of purpose and meaning in life as well as personal & social well-being. On the other hand, academic achievement is commonly defined as the level of educational attainment and performance in academic settings. It describes academic outcomes that indicate the extent to which a student has achieved their learning goals. There are many researches

which showed significant positive correlation between spiritual intelligence and academic achievement. In this respect, Reddy, Chandrasekar's (2020) investigated on the connection between Indian college students' academic success and spiritual intelligence and the results showed that there was a strong relationship between spiritual intelligence and academic achievement & spiritual intelligence served as a reliable predictor of academic achievement. Similarly, Ahmed (2021) discovered that spiritual intelligence was a strong predictor of academic performance among Pakistani medical students.

2. Need and Significance of the Study

The aim of all educational research is enhancing academic achievement practically. There are few factors which have high impact in this regard like cognitive intelligence i.e., intelligence quotient (IQ) is being considered as major factor in achieving academic goals and success but there are other factors also which can be predictors for academic success such as emotional intelligence, social intelligence and spiritual intelligence. Previous studies (e.g., Wood & Hilton, 2012, William & Issac, 2016) found in their studies that spiritual intelligence contributed to students' academic achievement as it can assist as a source of inspiration to focus on studies and hard work. Many scholars revealed that spirituality works as a source of inspiration for excellence in academic field and they accepted that the Almighty or religion playing a role in supporting academic success. UNESCO (1996) report says "Education should contribute to every person's complete development- mind, body, intelligence, sensitivity, aesthetics, appreciation and spirituality". WHO (World Health Organization) defines health as "Physical, social, mental and spiritual well-being". Based on the concepts of spirituality, we might say that spirituality can be as guideline for students to achieve their life purposes such as academic goals in gaining a better life in the future. In the present study, the researcher has made an attempt to recognize, analyze and critically examine various dimensions of spiritual intelligence and its potential impact on students' academic achievement.

3. Objectives of the Study

The present study has the following objectives:

- 1.To study the theoretical and conceptual framework of spiritual intelligence.
- 2.To study the various dimensions of spiritual intelligence.
- 3.To examine the potential impact of spiritual intelligence on the academic achievement.

4. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework of Spiritual Intelligence

The term "Spirituality" has been derived from the Latin word "Spiritus" which literally means breath or breath of life. The Sanskrit term for spirituality is adhyatma that is Adhi+atman = Adhyatman. Adhi means 'related to' and atman means 'self. So, spirituality refers to anything that is concerning to the Self. Spirituality is the concept of an ultimate immaterial reality and an inner path that enabling a person to discover his essence or the deepest values and meanings of life. The Cambridge dictionary defines spirituality as, "the quality that involves deep feelings and beliefs of a religious nature rather than the physical parts of life." Spirituality also includes developing higher levels of consciousness and self-transcendence (Elkins & Associates). So, spirituality is the process of awakening from ordinary consciousness to wider consciousness and it is also a process of making the mind free from fears, worries and nonstop thinking and experiencing inner peace in one's everyday life.

Danah Zohar coined the term Spiritual Intelligence in her book "**Rewiring the Corporate Brain**" in 1997. In the same year, Ken O'Donnell, an Australian author and consultant also introduced the term Spiritual Intelligence in his book "Endoquality: The Emotional and Spiritual Dimensions of the Human Being in Organization". Danesh (1997) viewed that the ultimate human reality is spiritual one. It is highly individual and personal. It deals with the belief of a supreme power that governs the whole universe. Emmons (2000) defines "Spiritual intelligence as the adaptive use of spiritual information to facilitate and assist everyday problem solving and goal attainment". Wolman (2001) defined spiritual intelligence as "the human capacity to ask ultimate questions about the meaning of life and to

experience simultaneously, the seamless and flawless connection between each of us and the world in which we live". Zahar and Marshall (2004) defined, "Spiritual intelligence is the intelligence with which we access our deepest meaning, purposes and highest motivations." They introduced 12 qualities of SQ namely-self-awareness, spontaneity, being vision, holism, compassion, celebration of diversity, field independence, humility, tendency to ask fundamental "why" questions, ability to reframe, positive use of adversity and sense of vocation.

Spiritual Intelligence is a higher dimension of intelligence that activates the qualities and capabilities of the authentic self or soul in the form of wisdom, compassion, joy, love or integrity. In addition, Spiritual Intelligence is the complete inner consciousness, deep awareness of the world, spirituality and the hereafter. It is the attitude of self-awareness as well as our relationship with the Almighty and all the creatures. Humans rely on spiritual intelligence when we search the meaning of the questions like What am I? Why am I here? etc. Unlike traditional notions of intelligence such as IQ & EQ that are primarily focused on cognitive and emotional capabilities but spiritual intelligence goes beyond rational thinking and discovers deeper consciousness.

5. Various Components of Spiritual Intelligence

Spiritual Intelligence is not tied to any particular religious or spiritual belief systems rather it is a multifaceted concept that can be cultivated through various practices such as meditation, mindfulness, contemplation or engaging in the acts of service towards others. There are different components of spiritual intelligence which are given below:

- **Self-awareness:** Self-awareness refers to having a clear understanding of one's thoughts, emotions, beliefs, values, strengths, weakness and motivations. It involves introspection and reflection into own experiences and behaviours.
- **Transcendence:** Transcendence relates to the ability to go beyond ordinary perceptions and experiences that allows individuals to connect with something greater than themselves.
- **Meaning and Purpose:** This dimension involves in exploring and finding meaning in life as well as discovering one's purpose. It entails understanding why one exists, what values and principles guide their actions.
- **Mindfulness and Presence:** Mindfulness is the practice of paying deliberate attention to the present moment without judgement and reacting on the situations.
- **Compassion and Empathy:** Compassion is the sympathetic awareness of other's sufferings or distress accompanied by a desire to reduce it and empathy goes beyond merely sympathizing with someone's pain or situations rather it involves putting oneself in their shoes and truly attempting to understand their experiences.
- **Inner Wisdom:** Inner Wisdom refers to the intuitive and insightful knowledge that arises from within the individuals which helps in accessing one's inner feelings.
- **Love and Gratitude:** Love refers to cultivating a sense of connection, empathy and goodwill towards oneself, others and the world and gratitude involves in appreciating and expressing thankfulness for the blessings in life.
- **Equanimity:** Equanimity is the ability to maintain calmness, composure and balance in the time of challenges and adversity.
- **Holism:** Holism refers to the beliefs that all aspects of life and existence are interconnected and interdependent.
- **Spontaneity:** Spontaneity refers to the ability to act and respond authentically and intuitively guided by a deep connection with one's inner wisdom and greater connections.

6. Impacts of Spiritual Intelligence on the Academic Achievement

The impact of Spiritual Intelligence on academic achievement is a topic of interest for research because academic performance is typically associated with cognitive abilities and intelligence quotient (IQ). But several studies (Nouri, Kazemi, 2016; Toghiani, Hosseini, 2017; Midi, Cosmas & Sinik, 2019; Turi, Abidin, Mahmud & Adresi, 2020) have explored the relationship between Spiritual

Intelligence and Academic Achievement and found that there was a positive correlation between the two. Following are the points which show how spiritual intelligence can influence academic performance:

- **Motivation and Goal-setting:** Spiritual Intelligence helps students to develop a clear sense of purpose and meaning in their lives. This sense of purpose can serve as a strong motivator for academic success. Students with high spiritual intelligence are more likely to set meaningful goals, work diligently towards them and persevere in the face of challenges. Filia (2010) stated that students with high in spiritual intelligence will motivate to study harder and tend to show higher curiosity and motivation towards their study.
- **Emotional Well-being and Resilience:** Spiritual Intelligence enables students to develop a strong sense of emotional well-being and resilience. They are better equipped to manage stress, regulate their emotions and maintain a positive mindset which can have a direct impact on their academic performance. Emotionally balanced and matured students are more focused, attentive and able to handle academic pressures effectively.
- **Coping with Challenges:** Spiritually intelligent students tend to have a strong sense of faith, spirituality or belief in something greater than themselves. This belief system provides them with a source of strength and resilience during difficult times. They are better equipped to cope with failure or academic obstacles allowing them to quick recover and continue their academic journey with determination.
- **Improved Emotional Intelligence:** Spiritual Intelligence encompasses emotional intelligence which is the ability to identify, understand, and manage own and others' emotions. This emotional intelligence can positively impact on academic achievement by promoting self-regulation, interpersonal skills and effective communication. Saeed (2019) discovered that spiritual intelligence was favourably correlated with emotional intelligence and was positively associated with academic success among Pakistani medical students.
- **Improved Interpersonal Skills:** Spiritual Intelligence emphasizes on qualities such as empathy, compassion and forgiveness. Students who develop these qualities tend to have healthy relationship with their peers, teachers and parents. Positive relationship can impact positively on the learning environment and ultimately that leads to improve in academic fields.
- **Cultivation of Growth Mindset:** Spiritual Intelligence promotes a growth mindset with emphasizing the belief in one's capacity for growth and development. Students who cultivate a growth mindset are more likely to embrace challenges and seek out opportunities for learning and improvement.

7. Delimitations of the Study

Due to scarcity of time and resources, the study is delimited to only few aspects of the subject which are spiritual intelligence and academic achievement. It is entirely based on secondary data as for examples- books, journals, periodicals and newspapers etc and this constitutes a major constraint of the study as the journals and periodicals are sometimes subject to manipulation and information available in them in historical nature.

8. Methodology

Methodology plays an important role in any type of research as the reliability and validity of the findings depend upon the methods adopted and applied in the study. This paper is descriptive in nature and conducted mainly by analytical cum descriptive method for the study. The researcher has made an effort to express spiritual intelligence and its impact on student' academic success and well-being.

9. Analysis and Interpretation

The study showed that there is an effect of spiritual intelligence on academic achievement of the students. This finding was in line with Rachel and Salini's (2013) study that spiritual intelligence contributed to academic achievement for Christian and Muslim students. Students who scored higher in spiritual intelligence abled more open and perceived things in a bigger context and this led them to

be more critical particularly in academic matters. Nouri, Kazemi (2016) stated that Spiritual intelligence was found to be a strong predictor of academic success among Iranian university students and this link was partially mediated by self-esteem. Deka, Sarma (2016) also found a positive correlation between spiritual intelligence and academic performance. Toghiani, Hosseini (2017) discovered that academic accomplishment among Iranian university students was significantly positively impacted by spiritual intelligence and this effect was partially mediated by academic drive. Suriani and Phayilah's (2018) study found similar findings that spiritual intelligence able to produce an excellence youths. Midi, Cosmas & Sinik (2019) concluded that students with high spiritual intelligence were good in academic achievement. Turi, Abidin, Mahmud & Adresi's (2020) study revealed that a positive and significant correlation existed between spiritual intelligence and academic performance among Pakistani students.

10. Conclusion

The relationship between spiritual intelligence and academic achievement of students is a complex concept. Some studies have found a positive correlation between spiritual intelligence and academic performance and suggesting that students who possess high levels of spiritual intelligence tend to perform better academically. However, other studies have found mixed results with both positive and negative correlations between the two. Through examining various studies and theoretical frameworks of spiritual intelligence and academic achievement, it is evident that spiritual intelligence not only positively impacts academic performance but also contributes to holistic development and well-being of students. However, it is important to acknowledge that spirituality is a deeply personal and subjective aspect of human experience. Therefore, it is crucial to approach the integration of spiritual intelligence in education in a sensitive and inclusive manner respecting the diversity of beliefs and backgrounds of students.

11. Suggestions for Further Research

Further research in this area should focus on:

- ✓ Exploring the effective strategies and interventions for incorporating spiritual intelligence in educational settings.
- ✓ Investigating the long-term effects of spiritual intelligence on academic achievement, career success and overall well-being of the students.

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