

Spiritual Intelligence of Teachers and Students

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Abstract:

The citizens of a nation stay healthy, happy and successful when they have holistic approach to life. Spiritual intelligence (SI) is an intelligence that transforms emotions, thoughts, body and mind of an individual and helps in developing holistic approach to life. It not only helps to discriminate between good and bad but also helps to realize one's potential and activates positive qualities. Thus, it is a powerful ability to solve problems related to personal, professional, academic, social and other aspects of life. Developing a holistic approach to life is one of the key goals of higher education and SI enables students and teachers to handle difficult situations and to live a happy life. Keeping this in mind, the objectives of the present study was to measure the level of SI of teachers and students, explore the influence of designation on SI and its dimension based on cross sectional survey design. Data was collected randomly through a self-developed SI rating scale from 1266 students and 330 teachers. The findings revealed that almost equal number of teachers and students fall in low, medium and high level of SI. Results also showed no association between the level of SI and designation of participants. It was also found that designation of participants had significant influence on some dimensions of SI. Age and level of education may be responsible for this influence and that can be explored in further research.

Keywords: SI, Dimensions of SI, Higher Education, Students, Teachers, Designation

Introduction:

Every nation has its own vision, mission and goals to be achieved. The social, economic, political, religious, educational etc. conditions of the nation play a very important role in achieving its goal. On the other side, problems like religious intolerance, national dis-integration, misuse of resources, lack of innovation and creativity etc. act as big hurdles in achievement of goals of a nation and also many nations even though highly developed and rich are still not the happier nations. All this implies that it is not just the physical or material aspects that decide the success of a nation or a person but there are also many non-physical, transcendental factors which determine this. When a person develops capacity to transcend the physical and material aspects of life and develops an ability to enter into heightened spiritual state of consciousness not only to solve his own problems but also to become virtuous (show forgiveness, express gratitude etc.) he is considered to have a holistic approach to life. A nation which has the citizens who have a holistic perspective to life would be the

happiest one.

Education plays a very important role in developing this perspective. Education can help a person to attain inner peace and harmony amid the restlessness and uncertainties that surrounds him. However, in today's society we can see many people especially educated are trapped in restlessness and moving toward suicide. One of the most important reasons for this could be that for generations we tried to focus only on cognitive aspects of human mind i.e., Intelligence Quotient (IQ) and we forgot or created a huge imbalance by ignoring or giving less importance to emotional and spiritual intelligences. Spiritual Intelligence (SI) is considered to be the highest level of intelligence (Chin, Anantharaman & Tong, 2011). It is regarded as epic intelligence that integrates other intelligences (Sisk, 2002). It is the intelligence that enhances individual's daily functioning and well-being (Chin, Anantharaman & Tong, 2011) and also helps to be virtuous. It includes various dimensions like inner knowing, deep intuition, oneness with nature cum universe etc. (Aibinu, 2017).

Chin, Raman, Yeow and Eze (2013) conducted an investigation that showed that SI influences up to 99.8% of the innovations of engineering entrepreneurs among the sampled participants. Charkhabi, Mortazavi, Alimohammadi and Hayati (2014) reported that SI training conducted by them helped to decrease psychological disorders and increased the expected levels of mental health among high school students. According to Bhangale and Mahajan (2013) SI helps every individual to be compassionate with others. It enhances the capacity of an individual to understand others at deepest level. Srivastava & Misra, 2012, Azizi and Zamaniyan, 2013 concluded in their studies that high SI enables students to learn language in a better way and it also makes students more methodical in various aspects of their prospective life. According to Ker-Dincer (2007) educators with high level of SI are able to mold students from all age groups to experience a holistic approach to life filled with self-respect and creativity. Safara and Bhatia, (2013) found positive correlation between spiritual quotient and various attributes like health outcomes, marital satisfaction and stability, positive interpersonal performance and improved quality of life. Kim and Seidlitz (2002) in a study on 113 university students concluded that spirituality modulates the harmful impacts of stress.

SI is a multi-dimensional and abstract construct. Hence, it is very difficult to move it from a theoretical frame to an empirical frame where it can be studied. Also, growing number of researches on SI is emphasizing the positive power of SI and spiritual approaches in teaching learning (Safara & Bhatia, 2013). Intellectual intelligence, Emotional Intelligence and SI are the three intelligences that work together to support each other. Zohar and Marshall (2000) believed that SI can be learnt, improved and modified through proper training. Hence, many researchers are now working to explore the viability of SI and also the studies to measure it or to develop it are increasing. The present study is also an attempt in this direction. The purpose of the present research is to study the SI of teachers and students, to explore the influence of designation on SI and its dimension.

Method:

A cross-sectional survey design was adopted to explore the objectives of the study. The self-developed SI rating scale consisting of four dimensions i.e., Self-awareness, Values, Supreme power and Spiritual activities was tested for its psychometric properties and then used for data collection. The reliability coefficients respectively for Self-awareness, Values, Supreme power and Spiritual activities were 0.617, 0.612, 0.861, 0.825 and the overall reliability score of the tool was 0.868. In all, the scale consisted of 33 indicators out of which 25 were positive and 8 were negative indicators. These indicators were rated by the teachers and students on a 5-point scale of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Unsure, Agree, and Strongly Agree. Thus, the total number of indicators was 33 and hence the maximum score a participant can score is 165 and the minimum score that can be obtained is 33. The response rate was more than 90% for both teachers and students. After removing the outliers, 325 teachers and 1252 students constituted the final sample for the study.

Results:

The results of the present study show that the maximum score obtained on SI by teachers is 165 and the minimum is 90 (vide table 1). The mean score of SI of teachers is 128.21 and around 49% of them were above the mean score and around 50.7% of them were below the mean score. Further, the standard deviation score of SI of teachers i.e., 14.99 indicates that most of the teachers are alike in terms of their SI score. Also, in terms of their level of SI, almost equal number of teachers are in low, medium and high level of SI (vide figure 1). Regarding students, the maximum score obtained on SI by students is 160 and the minimum is 88 (vide table 1). The mean score of SI of students is 123.97 and around 50% of them were above the mean score and around 50% of them were below the mean score. Further, the standard deviation score of SI of students i.e., 13.65 indicates that most of the students are alike in terms of their SI score. Also, in terms of their level of SI, just like teachers, almost equal number of students are in low, medium and high level of SI (vide figure 1). This shows that, there is a need to organize programmes to develop the SI of both teachers and students.

Table 1: Summary of SI Score of Teachers and Students

	Teacher	Student
Mean	128.21	123.97
Std. Deviation	14.99	13.65
Minimum	90	88
Maximum	165	160

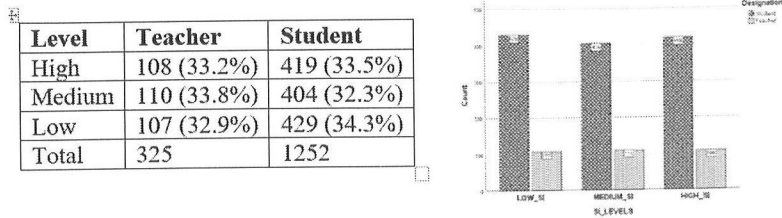


Figure 1: Frequency and Percentage of Teachers and Students in Low, Medium and High level of SI

To further explore if the designation has any association with the level of SI, a χ^2 test was conducted and results are presented in table 2. The results of χ^2 test revealed that there is no association between the level of SI and designation of participants ($p > 0.05$).

Table 2: Designation of participants and Level of SI wise observed frequencies and Chi-square value

		Designation		Total	Chi-Square	Remarks
		Student	Teacher			
SI_LEVELS	LOW_SI	429	107	536	0.844	$p > 0.05$
	MEDIUM_SI	404	110	514		
	HIGH_SI	419	108	527		
Total		1252	325	1577		

A further analysis into the data to understand about the dimensions of SI revealed that, teachers are scoring least in the dimension of spiritual activities followed by their least score in their belief in supreme power (vide table 3). It also appears that they are low in terms of self-awareness. However, teachers are high in terms of values. Surprisingly, the same pattern is observed in the students regarding various dimensions of SI (vide table 3).

Table 3: Dimension wise summary of Mean Score of SI of Teachers and Students

	Teachers	Students
Self-Awareness	33.10	32.38
Values	40.34	37.5
Supreme Power	29.4	28.73
Spiritual Activities	25.3	25.1

To study further deep into influence of the designation of participants i.e., teachers and students on dimensions of SI, Independent samples Mann-Whitney U test was applied on each dimension and the results showed that designation of participants had significant influence on self-awareness, values, supreme power dimensions of SI and in all these dimensions teachers scored more than students. However, regarding the spiritual activities dimension, it was observed that designation had no influence on it and hence both teachers and students did not differ significantly in that dimension (vide table 4).

Table 4: Dimension wise SI Mann-Whitney U test results of teachers (n = 325) and students (n= 1252)

Mean Rank Scores				
	Student	Teacher		
Self Awareness	775.52	840.95		
Values	732.26	1007.56		
Supreme Power	775.57	840.75		
Spiritual Activities	779.82	824.35		
Test Statistics ^a				
	Self Awareness	Values	Supreme Power	Spiritual Activities
Mann-Whitney U	186567.500	132417.000	186631.500	191962.000
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.021*	.000*	.021*	.116**
a. Grouping Variable: Designation				
b. *Significant **Not significant				

To study the influence of designation on SI, Mann-Whitney U test was applied. From the results of the test i.e., Mann-Whitney U = 170453, $p < 0.05$ (vide table 5) it is evident that designation has a significant influence on the SI and teachers are better in SI than students.

Table 5: Gender wise SI Mann-Whitney U test results of teachers (n = 325) and students (n= 1252)

Mean Rank Scores		
	Student	Teacher
SI TOTAL	762.64	890.53
Test Statistics ^a		
	SI TOTAL	
Mann-Whitney U	170453.000	
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000*	
a. Grouping Variable: Designation		
b. * Significant		

Discussion:

The SI of an individual is strongly correlated with various important life domains like mental health, happiness, problem solving, emotional intelligence, quality of life, decision-making styles, etc. It helps to understand the value and meaning of life. The findings of the present study revealed that, almost half of the teachers and students are below the average level of SI. The same was observed by Barot (2013); Vahabi, Vahabi, Vahabi, Roshani and Sayyadi (2017); Jahanger and Kumar (2018) in their studies. As SI is correlated with many important life domains, institutions can think about organizing faculty development programmes or trainings to enhance the SI of teachers and students. The study also revealed that both teachers and students are almost equally falling in the high, medium and low level of SI, which implies that there is a need to improve the SI of both teachers and students. Ker-Dincer, 2007 claimed in their study

that teachers who have high level of SI can mold students towards holistic approach in life and hence steps should be taken to improve the level of SI of teachers which can have a carry forward effect on students. Regarding the dimensions of SI, both teachers and students scored least in the dimension of spiritual activities followed by their least score in their belief in supreme power. The spiritual activities included indicators like ‘spending time with nature, showing interest in spiritual books and activities, learning new things from spiritual books/spiritual activities, relying on spiritual books/talks/videos etc. when in trouble’ etc. Supreme power included indicators like “Belief in existence of supreme power and gratitude towards it, support of supreme power and guidance from supreme power in facing challenges and day to day activities, connection with supreme power” etc. However, it was observed that teachers performed better in dimensions like self-awareness, values and supreme power over students. Further, it was also observed that in terms of overall SI of teachers and students, teachers performed better in SI compared to students and thus it can be concluded that designation has an influence on SI. Age and level of education may be two important factors which could have been responsible for this and influence of these factors can be explored in further researches.

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