8th ICEEPSY
The International Conference on Education and Educational Psychology

INCULCATING SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING

Anita Abdul Rani (a)*, Haslinda Hashim (b), Fatimah Ali (c),
Imaduddin Abidin (d) Aini Ahmad (e)
*Corresponding author

(a)) Universiti Malaysia Pahang, Pekan, Pahang, Malaysia, anita@ump.edu.my
(b) Universiti Malaysia Pahang, Pekan, Pahang, Malaysia, haslinda@ump.edu.my
(c) Universiti Malaysia Pahang, Pekan, Pahang, Malaysia, tym@ump.edu.my
(d) Universiti Malaysia Pahang, Pekan, Pahang, Malaysia, imaduddin@ump.edu.my
(e) Universiti Malaysia Pahang, Pekan, Pahang, Malaysia, aini@ump.edu.my

Abstract

Students who have psychological problems in their lives may also have problems in their academic performance. Inculcating Spiritual Intelligence (SI) is believed to be able to overcome psychological problems (Piedment, 2001) such as depression, anxiety and stress. However, not every student has the inspiration and knowledge to enhance their own SI. At Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP), a module has been developed for this purpose. The UMP SI module focuses on Islamic values to enhance the role of `Man as Caliph (leader)' and the connection between human and God. The objectives of this study are 1) to examine the effectiveness of the module on the students' emotional wellbeing and 2) to observe how it helps them to have more control of their lives. A qualitative research design was employed to collect data through interviews and reflections from 20 students who voluntarily participated in this study. Participants were required to apply the SI module in their daily lives for 40 days. They provided positive feedback especially after they had implemented the module. From the responses, there were positive changes in their behaviour especially when dealing with their emotions. The module was able to help them relieve stress, work better with others and become more focus in the classrooms. These findings revealed that the UMP SI Module is useful to university students and will also be beneficial for educators and counsellors to enhance students' psychological wellbeing.

Keywords: Spiritual Intelligence, Islamic Values, Academic Performance, Psychological Wellbeing

1. Introduction

In Islam, it is emphasised that a sound heart can enter heaven. It is stated in Al-Quran Verses Al-Fajr (27-30), "(To the righteous it will be said:) "O peaceful and fully satisfied soul, return to your Lord. You are well-pleased (with your good end) and well-pleasing (in the sight of your Lord). Join My (righteous) servants and enter My Paradise." Prophet Muhammad PBUH also said "Beware in the body there is a flesh, if it is sound, the whole body is sound, and if it is corrupt the whole body is corrupt and behold". The sound heart mentioned in both main references in Islam indicates the significance of a sound heart for Muslims. Islam as a religion of peace (based from its meaning) encourages its followers to always be calm so they can response to others peacefully. This suits with spiritual intelligence (SI) needs.

In principle, Spiritual Intelligence, as defined by Zohar and Marshall (2000) is intelligence with which people address and solve problems of meaning and value, place their actions and live their life meaningfully. In addition, Vaughan (2002) defines it as being apprehensive with the inner life of mind and spirit and its relationship with human's presence in the world. He also concludes that SI has the ability to create meaning based on a deep understanding of human existential questions and its awareness and also the ability to use multiple levels of consciousness in problem solving. SI inspires a person's best attitude (Weber, 1958) and moulds his or her capability and behaviour (Kripner & Welch, 1992) that contribute to a meaningful life performance (Zohar and Marshall, 2004).

A person with high SI shows positive attitudes and less negative effects in doing their work (Powers, Cramer & Grubka, 2007). Piedment (2001) in his research showed that ratings of well-being, life satisfaction and health were significantly related to spirituality. SI also enhances workers' effectiveness (George, 2006) and work performance (Anita, Imaduddin & Mohd Rashid, 2013). It promotes the capacity to care, tolerate and adapt; to develop a clear and stable sense of individual identity within shifting workplace relationships; to determine the meaning of work and events; to identify and align personal values with a sense of purpose; to live one's personal values; and to understand how ego can sabotage one's values and purpose (Christ-Lakin, 2010).

SI can also control human's emotional intelligence (EI) and gradually become a consulting mechanism that is essential to an individual performance (Lam & Kirby, 2002). Morehouse (2007) states that EI is an essential element of leadership. Improving EI can help improve psychological wellbeing. As for a student, EI is important to succeed and has significant positive relationship with academic achievement (Salami & Ogundokun, 2009; Grace, 2012).

Students' psychological wellbeing is about their positive mental health and attitude towards it particularly when facing with stress in their academic life. Ryff (1997) in his model of Multiple Facets of Psychological Wellbeing, mentioned that psychological wellbeing is an awareness of human's potential in life, life goal, quality of relationship and how they feel about their lives. SI is one of the ways to improve human's psychological wellbeing. A study of SI revealed there was a relationship between SI and wellbeing; people with higher level of spirituality have healthier, happier and more productive lives at work (Tischler, 2002). Others examined the significant relationship between SI and personality (Hill & Pargament, 2003; Farsani, Arofzad & Hosaini, 2013), adjustment, (Devi, Rajesh & Devi, 2017; Jain & Meena, 2013), motivation (Tee, Anantharaman, Yoon, 2011) and work performance (Alexander, 1993).

SI also can relate to gender factor (Saranya & Sangetha, 2017) and woman leadership (Ramachandran, Krauss, Hamzah & Idris, 2017) where it shows related effect.

2. Problem Statement

Our primary data showed that some of Universiti Malaysia Pahang students need a remedy to enhance their spiritual intelligence. Therefore, SI Module is introduced to highlight the importance of a sound heart to UMP students. The module consists of selected supplications or prayers from Al-Quran for them to read in the morning, before studying and at night. The module aims to enhance students' SI and to assist them to have a sound heart as it can help them to stay calm and make a good decision in whatever they do. This includes the ability to choose the correct way of thinking and expressing oneself.

3. Research Questions

This study is to answer the mentioned questions:

3.1. Does the module effect UMP students?

3.2. What kind of changes involved after the students apply the module?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine how this module gives impact to the students and how it helps them in their life.

5. Research Methods

The Spiritual Intelligence Module for students was developed in order to assist students in their psychological wellbeing. This SI module was given to volunteered students where they were asked to apply the module for 40 days. Prior to this, Anita, Imaduddin and Mohd Rashid (2013) had conducted a study of the impact of SI on work performance of 20 nurses at one of the government hospitals in Pahang. The nurses were requested to follow the spiritual intelligence program at their workplace. They managed to show positive feedback after implementing the treatment. With this evidence, it was hoped that the present study would discover positive feedback from the participants after using the module. In order to achieve this, a qualitative research design was employed to collect data from 20 students who voluntarily participated in this study. Two types of instruments were used: interviews and self-reflection in a journal. In order to understand about human experience, this qualitative research study was the best approach to be used (Richardson & King, 1991).

Students were required to write a journal for that particular days. Each of the changes sensed was underlined in the journal. After 40 days they attended interview sessions where they had to answer an open-ended questionnaire on how the module changed their behaviour. It was divided into three parts; emotional aspect, relationship with others and changes in study focus. The participants responses were documented until they became saturated.

6. Findings

From the self-reflection journal and interview transcriptions, the results were categorised into three aspects. The effects of the module were clearly highlighted. Three main aspects that changed UMP students after practicing the Spiritual Intelligence Module were:

7.1. Changes in Emotional Aspect

Emotion leads human's thoughts and behaviour. Students who can control their emotion can give high impact in their life. Table 01 shows 90% of the respondents knew how to manage and control their anger. They were able to control their anger and could easily calm down when they got angry.

Table 01. Effect on Emotion

Theme	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Anger Management	18	90
Feeling Calm	14	70
Feeling Positive	7	35

From the interview, they provided similar responses as expressed below:

S2 : I can control my emotion

S3 : I can control my anger

S9:   I hardly get angry

S12 : I can easily control my anger

S14 : I am emotionally stable

S15: Easy to control anger.

A high SI can lead to calmer person. In the interview, 70% of the respondents claimed that they were calmer as expressed by the respondents below:

S2 : Yes, I am calm

S9 : I can keep calm when things happen

S11 : I am more calm and can easily sleep at night

S13 : I am calmer than before

S14 : I am calmer

Positive mind is a proof of healthy psychological wellbeing. Among the students, 35% of them claimed that they had a positive mind setting as expressed by the respondents below.

S2 : I have positive thinking now

S3 : I am more positive than before

S13 : I am more grateful

S16 : I am more rational

S20 : I have positive thinking towards anything now

The results show the SI enhancement can help students in increasing their emotional wellbeing. It is important to concentrate on the emotions as it can lead to human behaviour and action. A person who is calm, able to control himself or herself and positive minded will respond positively and acceptably to

other people or to whatever happens in his or her life. Inevitably, he or she can think rationally and act wisely.

7.2. Changes in Aspect of Relationship with Others

In their daily lives, students are involved with many people around them. This includes parents, lecturers, friends, roommates and others. Remarkably, this study showed that all of the respondents (100%) experienced better relationships with others as stated in Table 02.

Table 02. Effect on Relationship with others

Theme	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Better relationship	20	100
Kind Hearted	9	45

Some of them could start a conversation, became friendlier and were able to tolerate others as expressed by the following respondents:

S2 : I am friendlier

S13 : I try to be good to others

S14 : I am open to make new friends

S16 : I can tolerate with others

S20: I try every day to do good to others

In addition, 45% said that they felt more kind-hearted to others and were able to appreciate others as expressed by the respondents below:

S2 : I can easily accept others' opinions

S3 : I can control myself to be positive-minded and kind to others

S4 : I can easily forgive and ask for forgiveness

In Psychological wellbeing, the way human interacts with others is important. It is impossible to live without others. When SI is higher students will have a better relationship with others. They will be more concerned of others, more caring and willing to help those in need around them.

7.3. Changes in Study focus

Spiritual intelligence can affect student's attitudes and also how they appreciate their lives. Table 03 shows how SI have impacted their study.

Table 03. Effects on Academic

Theme	Respondents	Percentage (%)
More Focus	14	70
More Motivated	9	45

Table 3 shows 70% of the respondents reported that after implementing the SI module, they were able to be focus more on their study. This is very important to a student's academic life as expressed in their statements:

S2 : I can focus and easily remember the lesson.

S11 : Easily understand what I'm learning

S13 : I am more focused in class

S14 : I found that I can easily understand my lesson

S16 : In class, I am more focused, I don't feel sleepy anymore and my laziness is lessen

In addition, 45% of the respondents felt more motivated in their study. This is a good impact to students as they expressed in the interview:

S9 : I am excited to work harder

S16 : I am motivated

In the academic world, low-achieving students are always associated with lack of focus and enthusiasm. As they deal with many challenges, it is essential for them to be focus and motivated. This module has proven to be one of the ways to help them.

7.   Conclusion

The Spiritual Intelligence Module is an impactful module as it gives effects to students' psychological wellbeing. As the module enhances the beliefs and spiritual understanding of the students, results have shown that after completing the module, students felt calmer, more patient, motivated and more focus. It is proven that the module can change student's attitudes. These changes which derived from the three aspects - emotion, relationship with others and study have shown positive results towards the students' behaviour. Being able to change the students' attitudes in a positive way, this study has made the Spiritual Intelligence Module a success in shaping students as they are leaders or 'caliph' in this world. A leader leads by example for that they have to have the best attitudes. Therefore, educators and counsellors are encouraged to emphasise on spiritual intelligence as a way to approach students nowadays.

References

Anita Abdul Rani, Imaduddin Abidin and Mohd Rashid Ab Hamid. (2013), The Impact of Spiritual Intelligence on Work Performance: Case studies in Government Hospitals of East Coast of Malaysia, *The Macrotheme Review*, 2 (3), Spring.

Christ-Lakin, H. (2010). *A Correlation Analysis of Transformational Leadership and Spiritual Intelligence*, PhD Thesis, University of Phoenix.

Devi, R.K., Nakulan, V.R. & Devi, M. A. (2017) Study of Spiritual Intelligence and Adjustment Among Arts and Science College Students. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 56 (3), 828-838.

Farsani, M. E., Arofzad, S. & Hosaini, T.A. (2013). The Study of Relationship between Spiritual Intelligence with Personality Traits among Physical Education Managers in Isfahan Province. *Advances in Applied Science Research*, 4(4): 140-144.

Gardner, H. (1999), Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century, Basic Books, New York, NY.

George, M. (2006). Practical Applications of Spiritual intelligence in The Workplace, *Human Resource Management International Digest*. Vol. 14 (5).

Grace, A. Fayombo. (2012). Emotional Intelligence as Predictors of Academic Achievement among Some University Students in Barbados. *International Journal of Higher Education*, Vol.1.

Hill, P.C. & Pargament, K.I. (2003). Advances in The Conceptualization and Measurement of Religion and Spirituality. *American Psychologist*, 58, 64-74

Hosseini, M., Elias, H., Krauss, S.T. & Siti Aishah (2010). "A Review Study on Spiritual Intelligence, Adolescence and Spiritual Intelligence, Factors that May Contribute to Individual Differences in Spiritual Intelligence, and the Related Theories." International Journal of Psychological Studies, Vol. 2 No. 2, pp. 179-188.

Jain, M. & Meena, S. (2013). A Study on Relationship of Spiritual Intelligence and Adjustment of Adolescents, Indian Journal of Psychological Science, 3, 12-16.

Kripner & Welch. (1992). *Spiritual Dimensions of Healing*, Irvington Publishers.

Lam, L.T. and Kirby, S.L. (2002), "Is emotional intelligence an advantage? An exploration of the impact of emotional and general intelligence on individual performance", *The Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 142 No. 1, pp. 133-43

Michelle M. Morehouse. (2007). An exploration of emotional intelligence across career arenas. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal* 2007 28:4 , 296-307.

Piedmont, R.L. (2001). Spiritual Transcendence and The Scientific Study of Spirituality. *Journal of Rehabilitation*, 67, 4-15.

Powers, D.V., Cramer, R.J., & Grubka, J.M. (2007). Spirituality, Life Stress and Affective   Well– being. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 35, 235-243.

Ramachandran, S.D., Krauss, S.E., Hamzah, A. & Idris, K. (2017). Effectiveness of The Use of Spiritul Intelligence in Woman Academic Leadership Practice. *International Journal of Educational Management,* 31 (2). 160-178.

Ryff C.D. (1997). Experience and Well-being: Explorations on Domains of Life and How They Matter. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 20, (2), 193-206.

Salami, S.O. & Ogundokun, M.O. (2009). Emotional Intelligence and Self Efficacy as Predictors of Academic Performance. Perspective in Education, 25 (3): 175-185.

Saranya, R. & Sangeetha, T. (2017). A Study of Spiritual Intelligence in Relation to Achievement in Science among Students in Coimbatore Educational District. *International Journal of Research-Granthaalayah*, 5 (6), 10-17.

Tee, S.C., Anantharaman, R.N. & Yoon, K.T. (2011). The Roles of Emotional Intelligence and Spiritual Intelligence at the Workplace. *Journal of Human Resources Management Research*, Volume 2011.

Tipping, C.C. (2004). *Spiritual Intelligence at Work: A Radical approach to Increasing Productivity, Raising Morale and Preventing Conflict in The Workplace*, Marietta, GA: Global 13 Publications.

Tischler, L., Biberman, Jerry., & Mckeage, R. (2002). Linking emotional intelligence, spirituality and workplace performance. *Journal of Manegerial Psychology,* 42(2), 16-33.

Vaughan, Frances. (2002). What is spiritual intelligence? *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 42(2), 16-33.

Weber, M. (1958). The Protestant Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism, New York: Scribner.

Zohar,D., & Marshall, I. (2000). *Spiritual intelligence: The Ultimate Intelligence*. New York: Bloomsbury.

Zohar, D. & Marshall, I.N. (2004). *Spiritual capital: Wealth we can live by.* San Francisco: Berret-Koehler Publishers.