
THE EFFECTS OF SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF YOUTHS IN KANIBUNGAN VILLAGE, PITAS

Melley Magdalena Midi, *Getrude Cosmas, & Stephencie Sinik

Faculty of Psychology and Education, University Malaysia Sabah

*Coresspondent author's e-mail: getrudec@ums.edu.my

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Abstract: Youths today deal with many challenges, such as gaining better academic success and maintaining psychological well-being. In dealing with these challenges, one of the factors that might predict youths' academic success and psychological well-being is spiritual intelligence. Therefore, a study was conducted to examine the effects of spiritual intelligence on youths' academic achievements and psychological well-being. Two hundred fifty youths from the Emmanuel Christian Fellowship group of Kanibungan village, Pitas took part in this study. A set of questionnaires, which consisted of four sections, were used to measures the youths' demographic profiles, academic achievements, spiritual intelligence, and psychological well-being. The research hypotheses were analysed using the simple regression test. Results showed that spiritual intelligence can stand as a predictor for both academic achievements and psychological well-being. Spiritual intelligence can be explained for 40% of the variance on academic achievement ($\beta=.64$, $F_{(1,248)} = 169.677$, $p < .05$). In addition, spiritual intelligence explained 25% of the psychological well-being ($\beta=.50$ $F_{(1,248)} = 84.656$, $k < .05$). The results revealed that the higher a youth's spiritual intelligence, such as when applying spiritual values when dealing with problems and adapting to new environments, the higher a student's academic achievements and psychological well-being. The findings allow us to reflect on how, aside from the intelligence quotient, spiritual intelligence is important for youths' academic success and psychological well-being. Instilling spiritual intelligence in youths may give them strength and faith when meeting the challenges of today's world.

Keyword; Spiritual Intelligence, Academic Performance, Psychological Well-Being

INTRODUCTION

In fulfilling and achieving academic goals and success, cognitive intelligence i.e. intelligent quotient (IQ) is not the sole factors. There are various cognitive intelligence such as crystallized intelligence, emotional intelligence, social intelligence and spirituality intelligence which can be predictors to academic and life successes. In regard to spirituality intelligence, students practice and learn the element of spirituality intelligence through religion education, moral education and spiritual activities (e.g, prayers and ethics practice) at schools. The moral education in the Malaysian Education System has been employed for more than two decades (Balakrishnan, 2010). This is to ensure that students will not only be provided with academic knowledge but also positive values that are emphasis in religion education, moral education and spiritual activities for students' future benefits.

Spirituality is a set of capacities and abilities that enable people to solve problems and attain goals in their everyday lives (Emmons, 2000). Signs of high SQ include an ability to think out of the box, humility, and an access to energies that come from something beyond the ego, beyond just me and my day-to-day concerns (Zohar, 2000). Past studies (e.g. William & Issac, 2016; Wood & Hilton, 2012) found that spirituality intelligence contributed to students' academic achievement as it can serve as a source of inspiration to focus on studies and hard work. In addition, spirituality concerned with our ability, through our attitudes and actions, to relate to others, to ourselves, and to God (Dollard, 1983). Spirituality is also concerned with the meaning and purpose we have in life and 'our sense of connectedness to each other and to the world around us'. Students revealed that spirituality served as a source of inspiration for excellence. They recognised that God or religion or faith played a role in supporting academic success. Spirituality helped indirectly was that spirituality make students' life purposes clear (Wood & Hilton, 2012). 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.

Low academic achievement among students is one of the major concerns among parents and educators. Parental support, teachers' support, peer support, school facilities and environment are a few examples that have been studied and may predict the academic

achievement. Besides those factors, values, motivation, learning and work ethics have also impact on students' academic achievement (Ornstein, 2010). These values can be expressed through the elements of spiritual intelligence that focuses on good learning ethics and values. With these positive values, they can empower students to overcome barriers that they encountered in academic world. For instance, when students face difficulties in academic, they bring their concern through prayers as stated by one student in Wood and Hilton's study (2012) that 'if I pray that day when I have a test or something, I ask God to help me pass a test, then it will maybe come true. And then I'll pass a test'. The spiritual intelligence provides a general basis for the individual to be able to consider his seeking for goals and meaning in life and to move in the direction of the aims which are personally meaningful (Hosseini et al., 2010).

Besides academic achievement, spiritual intelligence can also increase students' psychological well-being (Ivtzan et al., 2009). A study conducted by Raphael and Paul (2013) found the relationship between spiritual intelligence and psychological well-being. Psychology defines spiritual as something that can be observed and measured and it is the ability to develop a new way of interpreting and experiencing events of one's own life. Asmawati, Asmah and Zaini (2009) defined psychological well-being as social and psychological needs or freedom that give personal growth. Psychological well-being also defined as one's capability to cope with stress, avoid conflict, increase calm, motivation and self-confidence in life (Norsayyidatina, 2017).

Based on the preceding argument on the effects of spiritual intelligence on psychological well-being and academic achievement, there is a need to conduct a study that focuses on the spiritual intelligence and its effects on students' academic achievement and psychological well-being. This study also explores the effects of involvement in spiritual activities on spiritual intelligence as past studies (e.g. Bowen, 2015; Hosseini et al. 2010; Arbabisarjou ,2016) that spiritual intelligence can improve with exploration and training. Spiritual intelligence can be increased by joining in spiritual activities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A study conducted by Koohbanani, Dastjerdi, Vahididan Far (2013) found a significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and students' life

satisfaction that measured through their academic achievement. This is in line with Walker dan Dixon's study (2002) that found the significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and academic achievement. Another study conducted by Rachel and Salini (2013) also revealed the effects of spiritual intelligence on academic achievement besides form a good personality. A contrast finding however revealed by William and Issac (2013) that there was no significant relationship between student spirituality and academic performance (William & Issac, 2013).

Besides academic achievement, involvement in religious activities may also increase positively psychological well-being (Kibret & Tareke, 2017). Past studies (e.g., Ivtzan et al., 2009; Raphael & Paul, 2013) found that the higher is spiritual intelligence, the higher is students' psychological well-being. In addition, higher in spiritual intelligence may also decreased negative emotions such as depression and anxiety (Bozorgi & Borzorgi, 2016). Another study by Ahoei, Faramarzi and Hassanzadeh (2017) that involved cancer patients, also found the relationship between spiritual intelligence and psychological well-being. These past studies concluded that the higher is spiritual intelligence, the more positive is psychological well-being.

Involvement in spiritual activities also contributed to students' academic achievement (French et al. in Hamjah, et al., 2012). This was also found in past studies (French et al., 2008; Hamjah, et al., 2012) that Muslim students' involvement in religious activities related to students' academic achievement, prosocial behaviour and self-esteem. Involving in spiritual activities such as practicing the values in life may also related with students' academic achievement that involved 291 students (Hamjah, (2012).

The preceding findings from past studies may guide researchers in designing the research hypotheses in answering the dilemma of this study whether spiritual intelligence can predict the academic achievement and psychological well-being. Researchers assumed that the elements of spirituality such as applying spiritual values when dealing with problems and adapting to new environments, particularly academic problems may inspire and guide students to their academic goal in the midst of academic difficulties and challenges. The elements in spiritual intelligence however

need to be nurtured by involving in spiritual activities that are delivering in schools and outside schools.

METHODOLOGY

A survey method was used in gathering data from participants based on the quantitative approach. Data were collected based on two approaches i.e. by using paper and pencil based and through online questionnaires i.e. *Google Form*.

Location

This study was conducted in Kanibungan village, Pitas, Sabah. The reason to focus on this village because a majority of youths in Kinabungan village joined the youth group that called the Emmanuel Christian Fellowship. Members of this group are among school students aged between 13 years to 19 years old. This group is active in organizing many spiritual activities such as Leadership Camp, Discovery Camp and Medical Camp. The Emmanuel Christian Fellowship also organized workshop such as motivational camp and academic camp in assisting students for their exams. At a moment there are 380 students joined as members a majority of them actively involved in spiritual activities that organized under this fellowship.

Participants

Two hundred and fifty students took part in this study. According to Gay (1992), representative samples must be at least 10 percent from the population. The selection of participants is based on purposive random sampling that all participants are members of the Emmanuel Christian Fellowship and they all are Christian.

Procedure

Before the questionnaires distributed to participants, they were given brief research introduction. Once they showed their agreements they were requested to sign a consent form. The questionnaire took 10-15 minutes to be completed. Upon the completion, participants were debriefed by researchers. Participants were recruited individually and in a group. Data were collected using the paper-pencil based questionnaire and by using the google form to reach out other participants.

Instrument

A set of questionnaire which consists of four parts was used in this study.

Part A: Demographic Profile

Part A measured six items that measured participants' background i.e. age, gender, religion, academic level, types of class, and involvement in religious activities.

Part B: Spiritual Intelligence

The questionnaire used in Part B was adapted from questionnaires designed by Walker and Dixon (2002) and Siti (2013). The questionnaire consists of 15 items. Sample items, 'I can used spiritual values in coping with my problem,' and 'I can adapt with new environment without affecting my faith', Response scale is based on the Likert scale from 1 'strongly disagree; to 5 'strongly agree'.

Part C: Academic Achievement

Part C measured academic achievement that consists of 15 items. This questionnaire was adapted from Walker and Dixon (2002) and Siti (2013). The sample items, 'I passed all subjects in exam' and 'I always passed all subject on exam'. Likert scale was used from 1 'Strongly disagree' to 5 'Strongly agree'.

Part D: Psychological Well-Being

Part D measured participants' psychological well-being using Ryff and Keyes (1995) psychological well-being scale. There are 15 items and the sample items 'My decision usually not influenced by others behaviour, and 'In general, I feel confident and positive about myself'. Likert scale was used from 1 'Strongly disagree' to 5 'strongly agree'.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) Version 25.0. Data were analysed using descriptive and inference analyses. The research hypotheses were analysed using the Simple Regression Test.

RESULTS

Table 1 showed the demographic profile of participants. All participants are Christian and members of the Emmanuel Christian Fellowship of Kanibungan village. Their aged are from 14 to 19 years old.

Table 1: The Demographic Profile of Participants (N = 250)

Variables	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Lelaki	63	25.2
Perempuan	187	74.8
Types of class		
Very good	111	44.4
Moderate	139	55.6
Weak	0	0.0
Academic Achievement		
Unsatisfactorily	6	2.4
Satisfactory	43	17.2
Good	184	73.6
Very good	16	6.4
Excellence	1	4
Involvement in religious activities		
Never	2	.8
Rarely	14	5.6
Sometimes	73	29.2
Frequently	117	46.8
Always	44	17.60

The normality of data was checked based on the skewness and kurtosis of each variables before the simple regression was conducted as suggested by Sekaran (2003). The Skewness and Kurtosis showed less than 2.00 (see Table 2). According to George and Mallery (2010), the values for skewness and kurtosis that between -1 and +2 are acceptable. Therefore, we would say that the data are normal.

Table 2: Skewness and Kurtosis Values for Each Variable

Scale	Skewness	Kurtosis
Academic achievement	.281	1.10
Psychological well-being	-.073	-.384

Table 3: The Simple Regression Analyses to Examine the Effect of Spiritual Intelligence on Academic Achievement

Predictor	Academic Achievement		
	R ²	β	Sig.
Spiritual Intelligence	.40	.64	.00

The results showed that spiritual intelligence can explained 40% on the academic achievement variance ($\beta=.64$, $F_{(1, 248)} = 169.677$, $p < .05$). This showed that the higher the score for spiritual intelligence, the higher is students' academic achievement.

Table 4: The Simple Regression Analyses to Examine the Effect of Spiritual Intelligence on Academic Achievement

Predictor	Psychological Well-Being		
	R²	β	Sig.
Spiritual Intelligence	.25	.50	.00

The results showed that spiritual intelligence can explained 25% on participants' psychological well-being ($\beta=.50$ $F_{(1, 248)} = 84.656$, $p < .05$). ($\beta=.64$, $F_{(1, 248)} = 169.677$, $p < .05$). This showed that the higher the score for spiritual intelligence, the higher is participants' psychological well-being.

Table 5: The Simple Regression Analyses to Examine the Effect of Involvement in Religious Activities on Spiritual Intelligence

Predictor	Spiritual Intelligence		
	R²	β	Sig.
Involvement in religious activities	.06	.24	.00

The results showed that spiritual intelligence can explained 6% on the spiritual intelligence ($\beta=.24$, $F_{(1, 248)} = 15.332$, $p < .05$). This showed that the higher the score for spiritual intelligence, the higher is students' academic achievement.

DISCUSSION

The Effects of Spiritual Intelligence on Academic Achievement

The study showed that there is an effect of spiritual intelligence on academic achievement. 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 able more open dan perceived things in a bigger context and this led them to be more critical particularly in academic matters. Students with high in spiritual intelligence will motivate students to study harder. Students tend to show high in curiosities and motivation to study besides possess creativity in their study (Filia, 2010). In addition, Hamjah et al. (2012) stated that spiritual intelligence that gain through spiritual practice can lead to students' academic excellence and civility. Suriani and Phayilah's (2018) study also found similar findings that spiritual intelligence able to produce an excellence youths.

According to Masaong (2012) spiritual intelligence is the pinnacle of achievement because it can teach student to have good attitude, wisdom and honest. Febrianti (2015) stated that spiritual intelligence contributed to academic achievement. Students with high in spiritual intelligence are more open to criticism from others about their weaknesses and they have self-awareness to improve their weaknesses. High in spiritual intelligence can also prevent students from close interaction with other students who were potential distractions that may influence them to engage inappropriate actions. The inappropriate actions such as engaging in partying, substance abuse, womanizing, and other actions that would be considered inappropriate would distract students in achieving their academic goals. As a result of this, these students are able to pay adequate attention to their studies because relational distractions with other people were either lessened or not there at all (Wood & Hillto, 2012).

The Effects of Spiritual Intelligence on Psychological Well-Being

The study revealed that the spiritual intelligence can stands as a predictor on students' psychological well-being. A study by Ahoei et al. (2017) found the relationship between spiritual intelligence and psychological well-being. Students who have high in spiritual intelligence are able to adapt with the environment effectively. Researchers believe that in promoting a positive psychological well-being, spiritual intelligence plays an important role. This is as stated by Charkhabi, Mortazavi, Alimohammadi and Hayati (2014) that spiritual intelligence is a psychological and religion structure that can reduce mental health problem and increase positive mental health. It might be due to the fact that spiritual intelligence leads to life purposes, having good characters in dealing with crisis because they have faith in God (Sim & Loh, 2009). Spiritual intelligence can increase psychological well-being from time to time (Strawbridge et al., 2001). It is a fundamental for individual in implementing their roles in various life aspects especially in promoting quality of life and mental health (Zamani, Bahrainian, Ashrafi & Moqtaderi, 2015).

A study conducted by Bozorgi, and Borzorgi (2016) stated that people who have a high spiritual intelligence are happier in life. This may be because people with high in spiritual intelligence tend to have strong faith and perceive the world and its problems in different way. This may contribute

to high effect on the physical and mental aspects of people and decrease negative emotions such as depression and anxiety and increase positive emotions. Spiritual intelligence can also increase flexibility and self-consciousness, so that individuals become more tolerant against difficulties and hardships of life (Arbabisarjou et al., 2016). In other words, spiritual intelligence may increase resilience as revealed in Khosravi and Nikmanesh (2014). Spiritual intelligence will lead pure mind that may increase moral action or involvement in one's spiritual activities (Ronel, 2008).

The Effects of Involvement in Spiritual Activities on Spiritual Intelligence

The study revealed that the more students involved in spiritual activities, the higher is their spiritual intelligence such as having faith in dealing with difficulties and life goals and be relisilient. Dougherty's study (2011) revealed that there is a relationship between involvement in spiritual activities and and spiritual intelligence. Spiritual intelligence can improve with training (Hosseini et al., 2010; Arbabisarjou, 2016). Spiritual intelligence can be increased by joining in sprititual activities. For instance, among Chatolic believers, past studies found that involvement in spiritual activities such as attending mass is directly linked with enhancing believers' mood and improving their spiritual health (Bowen, 2015).

In this study, there are only two participants from 225 participants that are members of the Emmanuel Christian who are never involved in any religious activities. A majority of participants are frequently involved in spiritual activities such as Leadership camp, Discovery camp and Medical camp in 2018. Other than camps, participants were also involved in religious activities such as attending mass, bible reading and communical worship. These activities are the expression of spirituality as stated by Maroney (2008). William and Issac (2013) stated that spirituality that depends on the level of the student's involvement in spiritual activities can lead to academic achievement (William & Issac, 2013). The study findings and past studies showed that in promoting and enhancing spiritual intelligence, students need to be participated in religious activities. The involvement in spiritual activities may assist and enhance their spiritual intelligence. As the saying says believing without actions will not bring anything to one.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings that revealed in this study may increase our faith and beliefs that spiritual intelligence is one of the factors which contributed to students' academic achievement and psychological well-being. In today's world students face many challenges and influenced by many external factors such as media, peer pressure and other social influences which may distract them in achieving their academic goals. Therefore, students should be provided with the elements of spiritual intelligences not only in schools but also at home. Practicing the important elements of the spiritual intelligence such as to be grateful, show high empathy and compassionate towards and be resilient in dealing with life difficulties may help to develop a person to become a better person and a better student which may bring positive benefits to the society.

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