

Influence of Spiritual Intelligence on Stress Handling Capability of Senior Professionals

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With increasing responsibilities and accountability for senior working professionals due to continuously escalating business demands, enhanced stress handling capabilities are expected out of them. Focusing on this aspect, recent research studies indicate spiritual intelligence being one of the key factors to be leveraged upon to cope up with ever increasing stress levels amongst senior working professionals and deliver to the best of their abilities as well as management's expectation. With several research studies related to spiritual intelligence and stress been carried out in past, dedicated study on the three key components of spiritual intelligence namely Connection to Self, Connection to Others and Connection to Transcendent, their influence on each other and on Stress is rare.

The present study attempted to examine the influence of Spiritual Intelligence on Stress Handling Capability of senior working professionals from various industries and disciplines. The total of 82 participants completed the questionnaire on Self-Assessment Spiritual Intelligence at Work, and The Workplace Stress Scale Copyright © The Martin Company, North Haven, CT, and the American Institute of Stress, Yonkers, NY, a scale measuring eight major factors associated with levels of stress in a Workplace environment.

The findings suggested that there were significant positive correlations amongst the three components of Spiritual intelligence, along with significant negative correlation between Connection to Self and level of Stress. Results showed that by increasing Connection to Self, Stress levels can decrease. The findings of the study are relevant since it indicates a significant relationship and influence of Spiritual intelligence in managing the occupational stress levels of Senior Professionals.

Keywords: Spiritual Intelligence, Stress, Connection to self, Connection to others, Connection to transcendent, professionals

Introduction:

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For decades the entire concept of intelligence was restricted to Intelligence Quotient (IQ), with introduction of another dimension of intelligence namely emotional intelligence, with Emotional Quotient (EQ) as its measure cropping up during the early 90's. With IQ focusing on information processing and EQ concerned with managing emotions, EQ was deemed higher than IQ. Over a period of time there has been a shift from IQ to EQ and resting at Spiritual intelligence/Spiritual Quotient (SQ). Spiritual intelligence deals with the 'intelligence of meaning' and our existential nature as a human being.

Danah Zohar (1997)[1] coined the term "Spiritual intelligence" as it related to our deeper Self and answering fundamental questions on existence, values and meaning of life. Spiritual Intelligence allows an individual to gain insight over his or her Spiritual Quotient allowing h to harness our potential to the best to have higher level of satisfaction from life. A wide range of benefits can be reaped from spiritual intelligence, which can't be restricted to mere curbing workplace corruption at the workplace. It contributes towards good leadership (Zohar, 2005) [2], job satisfaction (Jeloudar & Goodarzi, 2012) [3] integrating the qualities of flexibility and emotional resilience (Noble, 2001) [4], proper behaviour (Zohar & Marshall, 2000) [5] and the list is endless.

However even after several studies, evidence reflects for non-clarity about the absolute definition of spirituality or associated benefits of it at a workplace (Rhodes, 2006) [6].

Neal (2004) [7] proposed the three major components of Spiritual intelligence namely Connection to self, Connection to others and Connection to Transcendent.

Stress in general leads to negative effect for the organization as well as individual employee (Kumar, C. S., 2011) [8]. There are lists of sources which can be categorized as organizational stressors (Bhatti, et. al., 2010) [9] along with another list accounted to personal finances and family expectation asextra-organizational stressors (Lasky, 1995) [10]. There are numerous researches which list down the various sources of stress for any professional, with Workload being one of the most common sources and the list is endless (Wilkes, 2015; Al-Aameri, 2003) [11] [12].

A vital aspect that needed an answer was how an individual with a high spiritual intelligence reacts while dealing with situations of stress? And is there a significant influence of Spiritual Intelligence on stress handling capacity of Professionals working at senior level management?

Objective of the study

The current study aimed to explore for any significant relationship amongst the levels of spiritual intelligence, its 3 components of Spiritual intelligence namely Connection to Self, Connection to Others, Connection to Transcendent and the level of Stress amongst the senior working professionals.

Literature Review

A series of research work have been carried out since then with findings relating spiritual intelligence focusing upon aspects like:

- Adaptability for problem solving and goal achievement (Emmons, 2000) [13]
- Awareness & Learning from all experiences from life as a whole (Noble ,2000)[14]
- Understanding the world and own position in that (Buzan, 2001)[15]
- Exploration of meaning of life (Wolman, 2001)[16]
- Intelligence of Self and Soul (Zohar & Marshall, 2001)[5]
- Behaving with compassion, practicality and calm mind even in adverse situations (Wigglesworth, 2006)[17]
- Better management of situations (Tirri, 2006)[18]
- Enhanced adaptability and strong mental stability (Grecian & Shear, 2006)[19]
- Better understanding of work and workplace reality (Dutta et al., 2013)[20]

Connection to Self (CTS), the first and most important component of spiritual intelligence, signifies that individuals having strong connection to self are more connected to their values and beliefs, possess high degree of emotional quotient levels, and spiritually developed to calmly analyse themselves and have control over their thoughts, feeling and behaviours(Neal, 2004) [7].

Connection to Others (CTO) was more concerned with the relationship an individual is having with other individuals at workplace, friend circle and society in general. This has got significance when it's a matter of working in groups, teams and even acceptability, leading and getting work done through others (Neal, 2004) [7].

Connection to Transcendent, is all about connection of an individual with greater than self, can be stated to as God, almighty, supreme power of universe etc. Individuals who reflect high "Connection to Transcendent" has a clarity about the purpose of their life and stay connected with ethical aspects and dimensions of life like justice and respect. (Neal, 2004) [7].

Stress has become an inevitable part of modern professional's life. With rising levels of frustration, burn-out and increasing number of stressors, it is portraying further challenges in front of senior management to perform and deliver much beyond their capabilities. Beehr and Newman (1978) [21] speak for stress as a hindrance disallowing an individual to act best as in normal state. Senior management professionals might be encountering role stress leading to adverse or negative results (Kahn and Quinn, 1970) [22]. And it's not that a senior management professional would have stress only due to his workplace assignments, they too have a set of expectations to fulfil from their families (Sarantakos, 1996) [23] and home-life (Alexandros-Stamatios G.A et al., 2003) [24].

There are researches who speak for a strong influence of spiritual intelligence on coping and avoiding situations of stress and depression (Khosravi & Nikmanesh 2014; Mahboobeh et al.,

2019; Pena, 2010; safavi et al., 2019) [25] [26] [27] [28]. However, specific empirical evidence regarding Spiritual intelligence with its components, Connection to self, Connection to others and Connection to Transcendent having any influence on Stress levels of senior professionals was still to be explored.

Research Methodology

A Sample of 82 senior professionals across industries was considered. The data was collected using established Neal scale of spiritual intelligence and work place stress by Martin Company.

Cronbach's alpha technique was adopted for analysing the reliability of the data. Any mean score of Connection to Self, Connection to Others, Connection to Transcendent and stress was considered to be extremely high for score of 4 or more and high for a score of 3 or more (Raw scores were divided by number of variables under all these to arrive at mean score).

Before analysing the data, a normality test was carried out using Shapiro-Wilk test, followed by a series of Pearson's correlation test for exploring significant relationships, if any. SPSS, version 20 was used for carrying out the tests.

Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between connection to self (CTS), connection to others (CTO), connection to Transcendent (CTT) with the overall score of Spiritual intelligence(SI)amongst senior working professionals.

H₀₂: There is no significant influence of high and very high level of CTS on CTO, CTT, SI and stress level amongst senior working professionals.

H₀₃: There is no significant influence of high and very high level of CTO on CTS, CTT, SI and stress level amongst senior working professionals.

H₀₄: There is no significant influence of high and very high level of CTT on CTS, CTO, SI and stress level amongst senior working professionals.

Analysis, Findings and Discussions

WithLillefor's sig. Value less than 0.05, the data set was found to be non-normal as per Shapiro-Wilk, confining analysis to non-parametric tests.

Reliability test of Cronbach' Alpha were carried out on the data set for questionnaires used for Spiritual Intelligence (30 Statements), Work place stress (8 Statements) and both combined as total data set (38 Statements). All the data sets were found to be reliable with a Cronbach's Alpha value > 0.70 depicted in Table1, Table 2 and Table 3 respectively.

Table 1: Reliability test for data collected - Spiritual Intelligence Questionnaire

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.751	30

Table 2: Reliability test for data collected - Workplace Stress Questionnaire

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.936	8

Table 3: Reliability test for Total data set for both Spiritual Intelligence and Workplace Stress Questionnaire data set

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.753	38

Table 4: Summary of Response for Components of SI

Scores	Very High	High	Low	Very Low
	>=4 and <5	>=3 and <4	>=2 and <3	>=0 and <2
Connection to Self	17	63	2	0
Connection to Others	16	62	4	0
Connection to Transcendent	35	41	6	0

Further, Pearson Correlation Sig.(2-tailed) was used to analyse the significant relationship for high and very high values of Connection to Self and Stress for senior professionals.

Further, Pearson Correlation Sig.(2-tailed) was carried out to test for any significant relationship between CTS, CTO, CTT, Spiritual Intelligence(SI) and Stress amongst the respondents.

Table 5: Correlation between the components of Spiritual Intelligence, Spiritual Intelligence and Stress amongst Senior Professionals

Correlations					
	CTS	CTO	CTT	SI	Stress
CTS	1	.347**	.413**	.670**	-.311**
		0.001	0	0	0.004
	82	82	82	82	82
CTO	.347**	1	.557**	.822**	-0.025
	0.001		0	0	0.826
	82	82	82	82	82
CTT	.413**	.557**	1	.868**	-0.025
	0	0		0	0.826
	82	82	82	82	82
SI	.670**	.822**	.868**	1	-0.121
	0	0	0		0.28
	82	82	82	82	82
Stress	-.311**	-0.025	-0.025	-0.121	1
	0.004	0.826	0.826	0.28	
	82	82	82	82	82

** . Correlation - significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Significant Positive correlation at 0.01 level (2-tailed) was found between all the three components of Spiritual Intelligence Namely Connection to Self, Connection to Others and Connection to Transcendent amongst themselves. This clearly indicates that enhancement of any of components, CTS, CTO or CTT, positively impacts in overall enhancement in the level of Spiritual intelligence (SI) of senior professionals. Measures taken to enhance Self-awareness, interpersonal relationship and aspects of high moral values, intuition, divinity and focussing on goals that are larger than life collectively lead to higher Spiritual Quotient (SQ) of Senior Professionals. Hence, our null hypothesis H_01 is not accepted.

Negative Correlation at 0.01 level (2-tailed) was found between Connections to Others --- Stress; Connection to Transcendent --- Stress; Spiritual intelligence ---Stress.

However, Significant Negative Correlation at 0.01 level (2-tailed) was found between Connection to Self and Level of Stress. In other words, results suggest that a senior professional who is more connected to Self will be having better stress handling capabilities.

Another, inference which can be derived based on the response received from senior professionals (Table 4) is that Connection to Self (CTS) is perhaps the most important component of Spiritual intelligence for Senior Professionals to handle Stress, as in comparison with other two components Connection to Others and Connection to Transcendent..

Table 6: Correlation between the CTS, CTO, CTT, SI and Stress amongst Senior Professionals with Very High CTS

Correlations					
	CTS	CTO	CTT	SI	Stress
CTS	1	0.174	0.025	0.263	0.422
		0.504	0.923	0.308	0.091
	17	17	17	17	17
CTO	0.174	1	.771**	.946**	0.09
	0.504		0	0	0.731
	17	17	17	17	17
CTT	0.025	.771**	1	.912**	0.076
	0.923	0		0	0.772
	17	17	17	17	17
SI	0.263	.946**	.912**	1	0.152
	0.308	0	0		0.56
	17	17	17	17	17
Stress	0.422	0.09	0.076	0.152	1
	0.091	0.731	0.772	0.56	
	17	17	17	17	17
**, Correlation - significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)					

With score of CTS being Very High, significant positive correlation was found between CTO and CTT at 0.01 level; CTO and SI at 0.01 level; CTT and SI at 0.01 level.

However, no significant relationship was found between CTS-Stress; CTO-Stress; CTT-Stress and SI-Stress. This spells that for the respondents with extreme high Connection to Self the level does not support in reducing stress.

Table 7: Correlation between the CTS, CTO, CTT, SI and Stress amongst Senior Professionals with High CTS

Correlations					
	CTS	CTO	CTT	SI	Stress
CTS	1	.273*	.425**	.605**	-.266*
		0.03	0.001	0	0.035
	63	63	63	63	63
CTO	.273*	1	.490**	.798**	0.037
	0.03		0	0	0.775
	63	63	63	63	63
CTT	.425**	.490**	1	.879**	0.038
	0.001	0		0	0.769
	63	63	63	63	63
SI	.605**	.798**	.879**	1	-0.028
	0	0	0		0.829
	63	63	63	63	63
Stress	-.266*	0.037	0.038	-0.028	1
	0.035	0.775	0.769	0.829	
	63	63	63	63	63
**, Correlation - significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)					
*, Correlation - significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)					

Results from above analysis reflect a significant negative correlation between High Connection to Self and Stress. This spells out that for the respondents with high connection to self, they are able to reduce their level of stress. It was also evident from (Table 5) that Significant Negative Correlation at 0.01 level (2-tailed) was found between Connection to Self and Level of Stress. Hence, null hypothesis H₀₂ is also not accepted.

Table 8: Correlation between the CTS, CTO, CTT, SI and Stress amongst Senior Professionals with Very High CTO

Correlations					
	CTS	CTO	CTT	SI	Stress
CTS	1	0.074	0.158	.549*	-0.302
		0.785	0.559	0.028	0.256
	16	16	16	16	16
CTO	0.074	1	0.324	.602*	.535*
	0.785		0.221	0.014	0.033
	16	16	16	16	16
CTT	0.158	0.324	1	.842**	0.279
	0.559	0.221		0	0.296
	16	16	16	16	16
SI	.549*	.602*	.842**	1	0.249
	0.028	0.014	0		0.352
	16	16	16	16	16
Stress	-0.302	.535*	0.279	0.249	1
	0.256	0.033	0.296	0.352	
	16	16	16	16	16
**. Correlation - significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)					
*. Correlation - significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)					

The results shed out an interesting result, speaking out for senior professionals with very high level of Connection to Others having a significant positive correlation with stress. This might be accounted to over indulgence in other professional's domain of work and over supervision of subordinate's task leading to increased level of stress. The result points to the present era corporate culture of 'Zero Error syndrome' wherein increased interactions at workplace either to increase productivity or prevent losses only lead to high level of stress. However, the result needs to be further substantiated with a higher sample value and in specific for respondents across different industries.

Table 9: Correlation between the CTS, CTO, CTT, SI and Stress amongst Senior Professionals with High CTO

Correlations					
	CTS	CTO	CTT	SI	Stress
CTS	1	.359**	.390**	.735**	-.282*
		0.004	0.002	0	0.026
	62	62	62	62	62
CTO	.359**	1	.382**	.702**	0.028
	0.004		0.002	0	0.827
	62	62	62	62	62
CTT	.390**	.382**	1	.841**	0.041
	0.002	0.002		0	0.751
	62	62	62	62	62
SI	.735**	.702**	.841**	1	-0.078
	0	0	0		0.545
	62	62	62	62	62
Stress	-.282*	0.028	0.041	-0.078	1
	0.026	0.827	0.751	0.545	
	62	62	62	62	62
**. Correlation - significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)					
*. Correlation - significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)					

Results from above analysis reflect a significant negative correlation between High Connection to Self and Stress at 0.05 level with CTO score being High. Hence, null hypothesis H₀₃ is also not accepted.

Table 10: Correlation between the CTS, CTO, CTT, SI and Stress amongst Senior Professionals with Very High CTT

Correlations					
	CTS	CTO	CTT	SI	Stress
CTS	1	0.312	0.01	.601**	-0.107
		0.068	0.955	0	0.539
	35	35	35	35	35
CTO	0.312	1	.354*	.877**	0.004
	0.068		0.037	0	0.98
	35	35	35	35	35
CTT	0.01	.354*	1	.585**	.595**
	0.955	0.037		0	0
	35	35	35	35	35
SI	.601**	.877**	.585**	1	0.174
	0	0	0		0.318
	35	35	35	35	35
Stress	-0.107	0.004	.595**	0.174	1
	0.539	0.98	0	0.318	
	35	35	35	35	35
**. Correlation - significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)					
*. Correlation - significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)					

Significant Positive Correlation was found between CTT and Stress for respondents with Very High score of CTT. Such a result might be accounted to the fact that very high level of Connection to Transcendent makes a person removed from the realities of the world. Workplace

stress demands workable and practical solutions to reduce the level of stress. The results call for further studies on a larger sample size of senior professionals across industries to substantiate the findings.

Table 11: Correlation between the CTS, CTO, CTT, SI and Stress amongst Senior Professionals with High CTT

Correlations					
	CTS	CTO	CTT	SI	Stress
CTS	1	0.173	.315*	.715**	-.448**
		0.279	0.045	0	0.003
	41	41	41	41	41
CTO	0.173	1	0.226	.745**	0.111
	0.279		0.155	0	0.488
	41	41	41	41	41
CTT	.315*	0.226	1	.618**	-.415**
	0.045	0.155		0	0.007
	41	41	41	41	41
SI	.715**	.745**	.618**	1	-0.299
	0	0	0		0.058
	41	41	41	41	41
Stress	-.448**	0.111	-.415**	-0.299	1
	0.003	0.488	0.007	0.058	
	41	41	41	41	41
**. Correlation - significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)					
*. Correlation - significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)					

Significant negative correlations were reflected between CTS & Stress and CTT & Stress for senior professionals with high level of CTT. The results suggest that senior professionals with high level of CTT are able to better manage their stress levels. Hence, null hypothesis Ho4 is also not accepted.

Conclusion

The analysis of the results suggests significant positive correlation between the components of spiritual intelligence, CTS, CTO&CTT and their relationship with the overall scores obtained on the Spiritual intelligence scale which speaks for a significant positive influence of the three components of Spiritual intelligence on each other and overall Spiritual Intelligence.

It can also be safely concluded that level of Spiritual intelligence is having a significant influence in reducing stress and enhancing stress handling capabilities for senior professionals, being supported by past research findings (Zohar & Marshall, 2000).

It can also be concluded that senior professionals who display very high level of CTS, CTO and CTT do not have any significant influence in reduction stress. However, at the same time it can

safely be concluded that display of high level of CTS and CTT do have a significant influence in reduction of stress levels amongst them.

Limitations and Scope for Future Research

The study was carried out on a relatively not very large sample size and respondents were belonging to various industries.

Research Studies can further be carried out in specific to influence of Connection to others and Stress handling capability amongst senior professionals and in general considering the three components of SI in specific sectors and industries for different levels of management.

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