

## Spiritual Health in Association with the Emotional Intelligence among Teachers

Hamna Imran<sup>1\*</sup>, Saba Shabir<sup>2</sup>**Abstract**

Education system has been changing throughout the world. There is need to have a focus on the ways or variables that have an impact on teachers or educational institutes. Spiritual health has been previously studied with respect to health or nursing domains. However, concept of spiritual health has not been explained much with respect to educational institutes. The present study investigated the relationship between the spiritual health and emotional intelligence among teachers. 250 participants (125 males and 125 females) were approached by multistage sampling. Cross sectional research design was employed. The data were collected using two questionnaires: Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (BEIS-10) and Spiritual Health Assessment Scale (SHAS). The data was analyzed through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Results revealed that spiritual health has significant relationship with emotional intelligence. Analysis of gender differences revealed that females are more spiritually healthy as compared to males while emotional intelligence was not significantly different across genders. The study concluded that high spiritual health has been related to the emotional intelligence of teachers which is essential to improve the students' academic progress. Teachers are not only delivering knowledge, rather they also learn on regular basis, having good spiritual health helps them to manage emotions appropriately which in turn enhances their learning.

**Key words:** Emotional Intelligence, Spiritual Health, Teachers

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**Introduction**

Spirituality is a dynamic term that is characterized by connectedness, reality and spirit or an individual's dimension associated with meaning of life (Hiatt, 1986; Young, 1984). The concept of spirituality has been changing. Initially it describes the pure religious individual but now it may include the religious seeker as well as the seeker of wellness and happiness. Spirituality is far

more than religion and culture. An effective spiritual connection may enhance one's sense of contentment (Delgado, 2005). Before moving on, it's important to understand the difference of spirituality and spiritual health. The significant difference between Spirituality and Spiritual Health is that spirituality refers to "Being" (Buck 2006; Carroll, 2001), on the other hand, Spiritual Health refers as "Becoming" (Bensley, 1991).

Spiritual health is defined as "The interrelatedness of body, mind, and spirit within the context of inner peace, and in terms of relationships with others and with nature" (Young, 1984). From the last few decades researchers have studied the spiritual health from many perspectives yet no one defined it in comprehensive form. It usually concerns about one's connectedness with the self, others, the nature/environment and with Allah (Gomez & Fisher, 2003). Various

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studies conducted on patients shows that spiritual health has positive impact on physical and psychological health as it helps the patient to experience less pain (Hilton & Child, 2014).

Initially spiritual health can be seen from Islamic point of view as it refers to as the Love of The Creator; that is defined as the sense of connectedness with Allah not to every supreme being (Heydari et al., 2016). But later on, few attributes were defined that includes:

### **Transcendence**

A salient characteristic of spiritual health mentioned in many studies (Barney & Buckingham, 2012; Bradley, 2011; Buck & Meghani, 2012). Ellison (1983) regards the transcendence as a sense of wellness that helps the individual to find sense and motive in life. Self-transcendence is the sense of making sincere connection with one self (Vachon et al., 2009).

### **Harmonious Interconnectedness**

Mutual interactions and having communications with oneself, others, nature or Allah is component of spiritual experience that gives you feeling fullness (Vachon et al., 2009). Human spirituality is distinctive experience through which each individual initiates an exclusive association.

### **Multidimensional and Holistic Being**

Many researchers believed that spiritual health is intricate concept and some believed that it consist of both parallel and vertical dimensions (Riley et al., 1998). Fisher (2011) concluded the four aspects of spiritual health, while Anandarajah and Hight in 2001 pointed to three aspects of spiritual health that are experimental (emotional), behavioral and cognitive (philosophical). It is comprehensive concept that includes multiple definitions based on individualistic point of view. Spiritual health consists of religious and existential approach (Ghaderi et al., 2018).

### **Integrative Power and Energy**

Integrative power is crucial attribute of spiritual health that unites and correlates all the aspects of health including physiological, social and emotional. Spiritual health affects other aspects of physical, mental and social health. Due to its dynamic nature, it can be enhanced that can be apparent in the individual behaviors (Ghaderi et al., 2018).

Spiritual health has been explored in various researches along with diseases. For example, a strong positive association has been found between spiritual health and quality of life of cancer patients (Mohebbifar et al., 2015), among patients with coronary artery disease (Jahani et al., 2013) and among heart transplant candidates (Taghavi et al., 2020). Along with physiological well-being, spiritual health has been studied with respect to mental or emotional health. A correlational study conducted in Iran among elderly people explores an association between spiritual health, religious coping and death anxiety. The result shows that increase in spiritual health score decreases the anxiety scores among individuals (Solaimanizadeh et al., 2020).

A study conducted in Italy during COVID-19 which indicates that there is correlation between perceived spiritual well-being and mental health. The study shows that during pandemic individuals perceive lower level of spiritual well-being as well lower mental health perception as compared to situations before pandemic. Moreover, spiritual well-being is preservative against anxiety and depression (Coppola et al., 2021).

After the pandemic that disturbs the individuals worldwide various studies has been done with respect to physical or mental health so at that time study conducted in Iran (2020) evaluate the behaviors of Muslims during pandemic showed that religious beliefs and moral values have positive effect on spiritual and other health related behaviors. Muslims avoid those behaviors that threatens their own and others health

(Asadzandi et al., 2020). Results of the study conducted among Pakistani religious and non-religious professionals show that religious professional tends to be more spiritually healthy than non-religious professional who proves that spiritual health is an important factor of holistic healing (Aslam et al., 2020).

Spiritual health of students has also been studied in various parts of world i.e., nursing students in Taiwan (Hsiao et al., 2010). A study conducted at university student of Jordan indicates a positive association between spiritual well-being, perceived social support and satisfaction of life (Alorani & Alradaydeh, 2018).

Emotional intelligence is considered an important aspect for the functioning of human beings. It is also responsible for maintaining the positive health behavior (Roxana et al., 2014). Good emotional handling is essential in various parts of life as it enhances the innovation and creativity. Not only student's emotional intelligence plays crucial role in academic achievement and performances rather it's important to consider the emotional intelligence of teachers. Emotions when combine with intelligence helps individuals to become better in their professions. Teachers are not all about to deliver knowledge; instead, they are also in learning phase and having good emotional intelligence helps them to develop themselves more appropriately. So, this study explains teachers' emotional intelligence relates to spiritual health.

Captivated by the previous findings Salovey & Mayer (1990) introduced the concept of Emotional Intelligence as they considered it the subset of social intelligence (Gardner's Theory of multiple intelligences) that is divided into Intrapersonal (knowledge of self) and Interpersonal Intelligences (focused on others). Emotional intelligence is defined as "The ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and

emotional knowledge and to effectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth" (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). According to O'Connor et al. (2019), "Emotional intelligence is the ability to sense, understand and effectively apply the power and acumen of emotions as a source of human energy, information, connection and influence."

According to Salovey and Mayer (1990) emotional intelligence is the cognitive potential and persons become emotionally intelligent through the four levels.

#### **Emotional Perception**

The self-awareness of the emotions and perceive them appropriately. When person become aware of emotions he moves on to the next level.

#### **Emotional Assimilation**

The ability to discriminate among the various emotions an individual is experiencing as well identifying thoughts that affects the thinking patterns.

#### **Emotional Understanding**

It is defined as one's ability to understand the complex emotions and recognizing the transformation from one emotion to another.

#### **Emotional Management**

Apprehending of emotions helps in dealing emotions thus individual become able to manage emotions by associating with other emotions or situations. In this way an individual has complete control over his impulses and think and behave logically (Gayathri & Meenakshi, 2013).

A study conducted among Indian adults examined the association between emotional intelligence and spiritual health. Findings revealed positive association between spiritual domain of health and two elements of emotional intelligence (appraisal of positive emotions and emotional facilitation) and negative correlation with the interpersonal conflict, component of emotional intelligence (Hooda et al., 2011).

There is a close relationship between a nurse inherent spirituality and the tendency to

provide spiritual care. A study conducted among nurses working in the teaching hospitals of Ilam found a relationship between demographics, spiritual health and emotional intelligence. The results concluded that nurses' spiritual health can be promoted by implementing education programs (Yarbeigi et al., 2021).

### **Rationale**

There is a gap in literature of spiritual health in educational domain. In Pakistan, spiritual healing with respect to maternal health (Mustafa et al., 2020), and spiritual care competencies of health care professionals has been studied (Parveen et al., 2021).

A study conducted in Iran among nurses (Heydari & Ebrahimi, 2016) and study among Indian adults (Hooda et al., 2011) found that spiritual health has been correlated with emotional intelligence. Much of the work around the globe done on spiritual health is in medical domain, as spiritual care was the dominant factor in this case. That's why, now there is a need to study spiritual health with respect to educational sector. Teachers' emotional intelligence has been influenced by fast changes in educational systems around the world that affects teachers' performance. As teaching is a spiritual practice, so need to see how spiritual health of an educator influences their abilities to manage their own and other's emotions (Emotional Intelligence). Educational processes can be improved by emotionally intelligent teacher.

### **Objectives**

The aim/purpose of this study is:

1. To evaluate the relationship between spiritual health and emotional intelligence among teachers.
2. To explain the gender differences among teachers of emotional intelligence and spiritual health.
3. To explore the difference in spiritual health and emotional intelligence among teachers working in different educational institutions.

### **Hypotheses**

**H1:** It is hypothesized that there is a significant relationship between spiritual health and emotional intelligence among teachers.

**H2:** It is hypothesized that emotional intelligence and spiritual health may be significantly different across gender.

**H3:** It is anticipated that Spiritual health and emotional intelligence are significantly different among teachers working in different educational institutions.

### **Method**

#### **Research Design**

This study is quantitative and cross sectional research design was employed.

#### **Participant Characteristics**

This study recruited 250 participants (125 males and 125 females) with age range of 29 to 55 years ( $M = 33.5$ ;  $SD = 7.56$ ) working in various educational institutes of Bahawalpur city. Participants include the teachers from different educational institutes. (School=86), (College=79) and (University=85).

#### **Sample**

It is calculated by using Effect size. Considering the effect size moderate with an alpha value  $= .05$ , the appropriate sample size is 200 but 250 sample size was taken for this study in order to avoid any error.

#### **Sampling Technique**

Data was collected by using stratified sampling technique. The population of teachers was divided into subgroups or strata based on different levels of educational institutions (School, College and Universities). Then, randomly selects a proportional number of teachers from each stratum.

#### **Measures**

##### **Informed Consent**

The development of informed consent provides information to the participant about nature of the, its purpose and goals as well ethical consideration.

### ***Demographic Sheet***

Participants' personal information was obtained through a demographic sheet that includes questions about participant's gender, age, qualification, currently working institute and experience.

### ***Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale***

Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (BEIS-10) of Davies et al. (2010) was used to measure emotional intelligence. This scale consists of 10 items with no reverse items having reliability of 0.83. BEIS 10 is a 5 point likert scale ranges from strongly agree strongly disagree. This scale consists of five factors that are utilization of emotions, one's own emotions, other people emotions, regulation of one's emotions, and regulation of emotions of other individuals.

### ***Spiritual Health Assessment Scale***

Spiritual Health Assessment scale (SHAS) of Gaur and Sharma (2014) was used to measure spiritual health. This scale consists of three domains of spiritual health that are: Self-Development, Self-Actualization and Self-Realization. Each domain comprises of seven items. There are 27 items in scale totally and have no reverse items. Total score ranges from 21-105. When the score ranges from 21-49 spiritual health is considered as poor, from 50-77 refers to fair spiritual health and score ranges from 78-105 was regarded as good spiritual health. This scale has 98.2%

### **Results**

Spiritual health is significantly correlated with emotional intelligence (Table 1). Spiritual Health shows 6.9 % impact on Emotional Intelligence ( $\beta=.82$ ,  $p<.001$ ) (Table 2). Results indicate no significant mean differences ( $p>.05$ ) between males and females for Emotional Intelligence.

applicability, with 81.14 percent reliability having validity of 0.8.

### **Procedure**

After the ethical approval of permission of data collection from the higher authorities of institutes from which we collect data, initiated the data collection. The research participants were approached in small groups. After meeting the ethical requirements, the informed consent was taken from the participants to ensure their willingness. The purpose of the study was briefly described to them and then they were requested to fill the questionnaires placed in the order of Spiritual Health Assessment Scale (SHAS) and Emotional Intelligence (BEIS-10). The data collected were analyzed by computing correlation, linear regression, independent sample *t*-test and ANOVA using SPSS.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical principles were taken into account while performing the research. Before participation into research, participant received all necessary information regarding research. Their data was held up confidentially. Participants were allowed to leave at any moment. Data collected from them were used only for the research purpose.

However, Spiritual Health is significantly different ( $p=.04$ ) between male and female. Female teachers are more spiritually healthy as compared to males (Table 3). Spiritual health and emotional intelligence are significantly different ( $p<.05$ ) among teachers of different educational institutions. Eta squared shows the small effect size (Table 4).

**Table 1***Correlation of Spiritual Health and Emotional Intelligence (N=250)*

| Variables              | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | 1     | 2 |
|------------------------|----------|-----------|-------|---|
| Emotional Intelligence | 39.12    | 6.71      | -     |   |
| Spiritual Health       | 82.17    | 13.45     | .82** | - |

\*\* $p < 0.01$ **Table 2***Linear Regression Model of Spiritual Health and Emotional Intelligence (N=250)*

| Variable         | <i>B</i> | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>SE</i> | <i>p</i> |
|------------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|
| Constant         | 6.01     |          | 3.32     | 1.81      | .001     |
| Spiritual Health | .40      | .82      | 18.65    | .02       | .000     |
| $R^2$            | .06      |          |          |           |          |

Note. Dependent Variable: EI= Emotional Intelligence

**Table 3***Independent sample T-Test for gender difference (N=250)*

| Variables | Male (n=125) | Female (n=125) | <i>df</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> | Cohen's d |
|-----------|--------------|----------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
|           | <i>M(SD)</i> | <i>M(SD)</i>   |           |          |          |           |
| EI        | 39.03(5.87)  | 39.2 (7.33)    | 179       | -.15     | .88      | 0.015     |
| SH        | 79.8(11.86)  | 84.01(14.36)   | 172       | -2.0     | .04      | 0.32      |

**Table 4***One Way Analysis of Variance across different Educational Institutions (N=250)*

|                        | School<br>(n=86) | College<br>(n=79) | University<br>(n=85) |                   |          |          |          |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Variables              | <i>M (SD)</i>    | <i>M (SD)</i>     | <i>M (SD)</i>        | <i>F</i> =(2,247) | <i>p</i> | $\eta^2$ | Post Hoc |
| Emotional Intelligence | 40.09<br>(7.64)  | 38.26<br>(5.45)   | 37.31 (5.76)         | 4.20              | .016     | 0.03     | 1>2>3    |
| Spiritual Health       | 83.67<br>(14.43) | 80.33<br>(12.43)  | 77.72 (13.37)        | 4.19              | .016     | 0.03     | 1>2>3    |

## Discussion

Teachers have a significant role in society as they are the backbone of the nation. In order to transfer their knowledge to students, teachers should be emotionally healthy or having good emotional handling ability that helps them not only to deliver lesson clearly but also help them to learn or enhances their innovation. The present study explores the relationship between spiritual health and emotional intelligence among teachers. To find this relationship it has been hypothesized that spiritual health has significant relationship with emotional intelligence. Results indicate strong positive correlation ( $r=0.82$ ,  $p<.01$ ) between the spiritual health and emotional intelligence. As previous studies show that fine perception of emotional intelligence is significantly important in maintaining optimal mental health because people with having higher emotional intelligence have a better sense of self-efficacy which in turn help them to keep away the feeling of professional burnout (Yin et al., 2013).

Moreover, the findings of various studies revealed that the ability to perceive, understand, regulate and manage one's own and others emotions is significantly important to develop better emotional and personal well-being (Rey et al., 2011). The study conducted among Indian adults also showed positive correlation between spiritual health and emotional intelligence (Hooda et al., 2011). Many studies in various cultural context shows that spiritual health is positively correlated with emotional intelligence. In this study, positive association is also found among teachers. The positive association is explained by religiosity as teachers perceive their practices as holy profession or their connectedness to religious beliefs. Teacher's adherence to spirituality leads to constructive and positive interaction with the students which in turns improves students' performance.

Linear regression was computed to find out the variance in emotional intelligence due to spiritual health. Spiritual Health shows 6.9 % impact on Emotional Intelligence ( $\beta=.82$ ,  $p<.001$ ).

Studies show that spiritual well-being was negatively correlated with symptoms severity as spiritual well-being may reduce the negative impacts of cancer and improves the life quality of patient (Wang & Lin, 2016). Research also indicates that increase in spiritual health score decreases the anxiety scores among individuals (Mohammadinia & Solaimanizadeh, 2020). People who have high emotional intelligence are more likely to prefer social work and teaching professions (Brackett et al., 2004). So, it is hypothesized that spiritual health influences the emotional intelligence of teachers. And the results of the study show that once having good connection between the mind, body and spirit has an impact on emotional management of self and others.

Gender differences for spiritual health and emotional intelligence were also examined. Results indicate no significant mean difference ( $p>.05$ ) between males and females for Emotional Intelligence. Previous study revealed that men have high level of emotional intelligence than that of women. The reason for this might be due to the fact that emotional intelligence is basically the management and expression of once emotions as well as social skills (Chu, 2010). Moreover, a cross sectional study among adults found that emotional intelligence was greater in women than men (Cabello et al., 2016). But in this study no gender differences were found among teachers. There might be the reason that teachers perceive their job as student focused or as in Islamic context teaching can be perceived in terms of spirituality, that's why either male or female perceive themselves equally emotionally intelligent means having similar abilities to manage one's or others' emotions.

However, for spiritual health, there is significant mean differences ( $p=.04$ ) between male and female. Females are more spiritually healthy as compared to males. It may be due to their emotional factors or spiritual motivation (Rich, 2012). Moreover, females perceive their work emotionally as compared to males who are more practical. Yuen and Lee studies concluded that girls, especially religious South Asian females, shows higher levels of satisfaction in life and greater spiritual health as compared to males. Female teachers are more spiritually healthy that may be due to the reason females in our culture are brought up in a way that they feel more social pressure to conform towards religiosity or they were socialized in a way that contributes to develop spirituality. Moreover, they perceive their jobs more connected to Allah or Islam specifically teaching as holy profession.

One way Analysis of Variance among different educational institutes shows that all the three variables are significantly different among teachers of schools, colleges and universities. School teachers are more spiritually healthy as compared to college and university educators; there might be the reason that school teachers are facing less occupational stress therefore, they are having good spiritual health. Wang and Lin (2016) found emotional intelligence of employees is negatively correlated with job burnout. So, school teachers reported good emotional intelligence.

### **Implications of the Study**

Results of previous studies showed that having good spiritual health is positively correlated with many aspects of life including health and performances. This study explores teachers who are spiritually healthy are more appropriately manages emotions. Emotionally intelligent teachers are more spiritually health means having good connection of their mind, body and soul. This study is helpful to explain by enhancing spiritual health of teachers improves their

emotional intelligence which in turn affects student's motivation and performance either directly or indirectly. The era in which we are living there is a need to boasts spiritual health of teachers that influences the students who are future of this nation. Previous studies focused on emotional intelligence of students that how it relates to their performances. But this study focused on teachers that how spiritual health of teachers relates to their emotional intelligence. By knowing its relationship, we can focus on ways or training sessions that increase spiritual health of teachers in order to get better performances in educational institutions.

### **Limitations & Suggestions**

This study includes the teachers from educational institutes of Bahawalpur. Spiritual health of other professionals like artist or athletes can be explored that how it influences their performances. Moreover, we can explore these variables in other domains as well or other factors that influence emotional intelligence of teachers.

### **Contribution of Authors**

Hamna Imran: Investigation, Methodology, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft

Saba Shabir: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing - Reviewing & Editing, Supervision

### **Conflict of Interest**

There is no conflict of interest declared by authors.

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### **Disclaimer**

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### **Data Availability Statement**

The datasets of the current study are not available publicly due to ethical reasons but



are available from the corresponding author [H.I.] upon the reasonable request.

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