

Spiritual Intelligence among the Elderly across Gender: A Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT

Aging, an inevitable process, is commonly measured by chronological age and as a convention, a person aged 65 years or more is often referred to as the "elderly." The present study intends to identify spiritual intelligence among the elderly across gender. Sample for the study comprised 133 elderly (97 males and 36 females) between 60 and above of 75 years of age group. The 29-item spiritual intelligence questionnaire by Abdollahzadap1 *et al.* (2009) was used to assess the level of spiritual intelligence. The questionnaire measures the spiritual in terms of who are and what a particular person is and what constitute person's spirituality. The test indicated no significant in spiritual well-being difference between male and female. In addition, there was no significant difference between females and males in terms of different components of spiritual intelligence.

Keywords: Elderly, Gender, Spiritual intelligence

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INTRODUCTION

Spiritual intelligence is a higher dimension of intelligence that activates the qualities and capabilities of the authentic self (or the soul), in the form of wisdom, compassion, integrity, joy, love, creativity, and peace. Spiritual intelligence results in a sense of deeper meaning and purpose, combined with improvements in a wide range of important life skills and work skills.^[1,2]

To understand spiritual intelligence, it is useful to first be clear on what we mean when we use these two words.

Being Spiritual: To be "spiritual" is to think, act, and interact from an awareness of self as spirit not form, soul not body. Most of us are taught to believe we are our physical forms, and so we identify with our body or the labels we give to our bodies such as nationality, race, gender, and profession. This wrong sense of self is what creates all fear, anger, and sadness in life. From a spiritual point of view, these emotions are always the result of ego (misidentification), which then blocks access to your true spiritual nature which is peaceful, loving, and joyful.

Having intelligence: Intelligence is to use what you know in the right way at the right time in the right place with the right intention. For example, if you "know" yourself as a spiritual being you will also "know" that you do not own or possess anything. When something in your life is damaged or lost, it does not affect you in any way – you are able to use your spiritual power to accept and move on. If someone praises the clothes you wear, or insults you in any way or comments negatively about your looks, you are NOT affected because you "know" that your real beauty lies within your character, within your nature, which no one can ever take away. In that moment, you draw on the inner power of that knowledge and use it to remain stable in the face of others negativity. In effect, you are drawing on your spiritual strength which is only released when you know who and what you are, and then using that strength in the right way, in the right place at the right time.^[3,4]

Spirituality is to "know" who you are and spiritual intelligence is to "realize" who you are and to live life in that awareness. You have always been who you are and, in truth, you can never be other than who you are, but it requires "realization," that is, that moment when you "see it," when you "get it" and then you "be it." Spirituality

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is the knowledge of yourself as spirit/soul, and the understanding of your highest spiritual qualities and attributes, which are love, peace, purity, and bliss. Spiritual intelligence is the expression of these innate spiritual qualities through your thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors. Being spiritual means, the ego has dissolved, virtue has been restored to character, and spiritual values connect your inner and outer worlds (thought to action). It is the ability to see every other human being as soul/spirit and thereby transcend all the false identities of race, color, gender, nationality, profession, and religion. It is in this awareness that we are then able to recognize and connect with the supreme power. When you realize who you really are you will be at peace with yourself not only because peace is your true and original nature but there is no longer any inner division and therefore conflict between the many identities that you had previously created (gender/nationality/profession/possessions, etc.). When you realize who you really are you are at peace with others. You no longer have to defend or protect any false image of yourself, so you no longer perceive anyone else as a threat to those images. When you realize who you truly are you are at peace with the world because you will contain the world instead of it containing you. Whereas before you allowed the world to impose itself on you and shape your perceptions and feelings according to your particular sense of identity, now your

self-perception is stabilized in the correct identity. In a sense, you shape the world as you bring it into your consciousness.

Spiritual intelligence expands your capacity to understand others at the deepest level. Spiritual understanding allows you to discern both the “true cause” of behavior without judgment and serve the “true needs” of others until they themselves learn to meet their own needs. This capacity is developed by first learning to free yourself from attachment and neediness and being able to meet our own inner needs. Attachment and neediness are the opposite of being spiritually intelligent.

Personal Life: Spiritual intelligence frees you from neediness and clinginess in your personal relationships. When you realize you already have within you what you seek from others (love, happiness, and peace), you are then free to act and interact without any “agenda.” In effect, you act from an authenticity that desires nothing of another, but serves only to give. Paradoxically, this frees both parties to “be themselves,” which is the deepest foundation for any open, healthy, and harmonious relationship built on the twin spiritual values of trust and respect.^[5]

Family Life: The culture of family life can easily revolve around too much “familiarity.” This results in behaviors which can swing from rejection, resistance, and avoidance one moment, to attachment, dependency, and clinginess the next. Being spiritually intelligent in a family, context allows individuals to find a more mature way to relate, free of emotional dependency, and able to embrace “the other” regardless of their behavior or their emotional state.

Working Life: When spiritual intelligence is brought into the workplace work ceases to become a daily chore to earn money and becomes a creative process of service and contribution. Others are seen and treated as people and not objects/resources to get a job done and individuals have an opportunity to learn the inner, invisible and subtle skills of building, and sustaining relationships in any area of life. These abilities include building trust, acting with integrity, empathizing at a level beyond emotion, and the leadership of others through a consistently proactive attitude and positive vision (Richard Griffiths, Instant transformation moment).

Objective

The objective of the study was to study the spiritual intelligence among the elderly across gender.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted at a gender male and female of Lucknow city, Uttar Pradesh, India. The sample comprised 133 elderly aged 60 above of 75 distributed over gender. Simple random sampling design was used for selecting the sample. Spiritual intelligence scale developed by Abdollahzadeh *et al.* (2009) and was used to study the spiritual intelligence among respondents across gender of the elderly and a self-structured sheet containing a list of family-related protective factors such as low family stress, expression of affection, and family support.

Tools and Technique

1. Self-made interview schedule to collect general and specific information about the respondents.

2. Spiritual intelligence questionnaire

An aspect of spiritual intelligence scale by Abdollahzadeh *et al.* was used to test the spiritual intelligence of the elderly.^[6,7]

The scale consists of 29 items and this scale has 5-point rating scale and the scoring ranges from 5 to 1 each item. Each item has 5-point rating. The five scales included were as follows:

1. Completely disagree
2. Disagree
3. Almost agree
4. Agree
5. Completely disagree

The scale was administered to the respondents and they were asked to respond to each one of the 29 statements. After getting responses, the scores for each dimension were calculated by summing up the weightage of responses for respective statements and they were categorized into low, high, average, and very high.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results in Table 1 described the distribution of respondents on the basis of their age. Results show that respondents male (30.82) and female (15.78) were of age group 65-70 years and more than male (22.55) and female (6.76) were of age group 70-75, and male person (18.79) and female (5.26) were of age group above to 75 years. Results show that place of stay of male (64.66) and female (25.56) elder peoples are with family and male (5.20), female (2.25) place of stay alone and then male (3.00) and female 0% only with spouse. Results show that marital status male and female (59.39) and (14.28) are married. And only 0% male and (0.75) female are divorced and widow male 0% and female (12.78) and (12.78) male and 0% female are widower. distribution of the respondents on the basis of their working status. Results show that working in male (57.14) and female (11.27) and nonworking male (15.03) female (16.54). showed that $P > 0.05$ in all the three components across gender. These null hypothesis was accepted. Mean values also depicted the same. That means no significant. Different was found in any of the components across gender among elderly.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents on the sociodemographic, $n=133$

Categories	Male	Female
Age of the respondents		
65-70 years	41 (30.82)	21 (15.78)
70-75 years	30 (22.55)	9 (6.76)
Above to 75 years	25 (18.79)	7 (5.26)
Place of the stay		
With family	87 (64.66)	34 (25.56)
Place of stay alone	5 (5.20)	3 (2.25)
Only with spouse	4 (3.00)	0 (0.00)
Marital status		
Married	79 (59.39)	19 (14.28)
Divorced	0 (0.00)	1 (0.75)
Widow	0 (0.00)	17 (12.78)
Widower	17 (12.78)	0 (0.00)
Working status (presently)		
Working	76 (57.14)	15 (11.27)
Non-working	20 (15.03)	22 (16.54)

Table 2: Distribution of the respondents on their component spiritual factor, n=133

Components	Male		Female	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Spiritual intelligence	2.31	0.715	2.56	0.765
First factor	3.94	0.099	3.93	0.016
Second factor	4.22	0.090	4.21	0.87

Results in Table 4 describe the distribution of respondents on the level of in very high for male respondents are (11.45) and (10.81) are female and 2nd level is high in male are (48.95) and (27.02) are females and 3rd level is average in male respondents are (36.45) and (56.75) are females and 4th level is low in male respondents are (3.125) and females are (5.40) and last is very low is not any respondents.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents on the basis of level

Level of spiritual intelligence	Male (n=96)	Female (n=37)
Very high	11 (11.45)	4 (10.81)
High	47 (48.95)	10 (27.02)
Average	35 (36.45)	21 (56.75)
Low	3 (3.125)	2 (5.40)
Very low	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

Table 2 depicted distribution of respondents across gender on the basis of various components of spiritual intelligence scale. Data showed that mean values in all the three categories across gender were similar. Highest mean value was observed in second factor (4.22percent) in males & (4.21percent) in female. While lowest was observed in spiritual intelligence component (2.31percent in males & 2.56percent in females).

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Table 4: There exists no significant difference between comparative score of different component across gender

Components	Mean	Df	F	Sig	Conclusion
Spiritual intelligence					
Male	2.31	132	3.26	0.073	NS
Female	2.56				
First factor					
Male	3.93		0.035	0.852	NS
Female	3.94				
Second factor					
Male	4.22		0.080	0.778	NS
Female	4.21				

CONCLUSION

The present study examined the level of spiritual intelligence of the elderly across gender. Results revealed on the level of in very high for male respondents are 11.45 and 10.81 female and the second level is high in male (48.95) and females (27.02) and the third level is average in male respondents (36.45) and females (56.75) and the fourth level is low in male respondents (3.125) and females (5.40) and last very low is not any respondents.

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