The International Journal of Indian Psychology
ISSN 2348-5396 (Online) | ISSN: 2349-3429 (Print)
Volume 12, Issue 2, April- June, 2024
DIP: 18.01.014.20241202, DOI: 10.25215/1202.014
https://www.ijip.in

Research Paper

Spiritual Intelligence and Altruism Among Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to explore the influence of spiritual intelligence on altruistic behavior among young adults. Spiritual intelligence refers to the human capacity for existential questioning and seeking deeper meaning about one's relationship to the world. Altruism involves selfless concern for others' well-being and prosocial actions. Data was collected from 155 young adults aged 18-25 years who filled out the Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory (SISRI-24) and the Self-Report Altruism Scale (SRAS). Correlation analysis indicated a statistically significant positive correlation between spiritual intelligence and altruism scores indicating higher spiritual intelligence was associated with greater self-reported altruistic tendencies. Further, linear regression analysis confirmed that spiritual intelligence significantly predicts altruism. These results highlight the potential benefits of nurturing spiritual intelligence in young adults to foster altruistic behaviours, enriching the ongoing discussion on how spirituality influences prosocial actions.

Keywords: *Spiritual Intelligence, Altruism, Young Adults, Prosocial Behavior*

Spiritual intelligence is the intrinsic human faculty to ponder existential queries about the quintessential purpose of existence and the integrated nexus between the self and the cosmos (Sahebalzamani et al., 2013). This aptitude entails the contemplation of metaphysical issues and the pursuit of a profound comprehension of our ontological situatedness within the grand cosmological schema. Conversely, the domain of altruism is characterized by an unselfish solicitude for the well-being of others, manifested through benevolent acts. While spiritual intelligence pertains to introspective reflection and meaning-making, altruism is oriented towards outward action and compassion. The influence of spiritual intelligence on altruistic propensities presents a compelling inquiry into how our innate desire to alleviate the suffering of others is enriched and elevated through spiritual awakening. As sentient beings, humans exhibit an inherent proclivity towards acts of kindness, compassion, and generosity. However, it is spiritual intelligence that refines and deepens these impulses, imbuing our altruistic actions with a profound authenticity and purity. This arises from a genuine understanding of the unity of all life that is cultivated through spiritual intelligence.

The lexical term "altruism" was coined by the 19th century philosopher Auguste Comte as an antonym for egoism, encapsulating other-regarding instincts in humans. Altruism has

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Received: April 01, 2024; Revision Received: April 12, 2024; Accepted: April 16, 2024

been employed to denote intentions, actions, and ideologies, giving rise to distinctions such as psychological altruism (intentions to aid others), behavioral altruism (actions benefiting others), and ethical altruism (prioritizing others' happiness). Obfuscation often arises in delineating psychological and behavioral altruism. Discourses on altruism involve inquiries into its origins, encompassing biological, psychological, social, and cultural factors, as well as debates concerning moral obligations to extend altruism to strangers and non-human animals. Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, and Emile Durkheim were early proponents of altruism, each with their respective interpretations.

Charles Darwin elucidated the phenomenon of self-sacrificing behaviors in animals through the lens of group selection. Herbert Spencer emphasized the evolutionary underpinnings of altruistic instincts, albeit underscoring individual liberties and voluntary altruism. John Stuart Mill's utilitarian philosophy advocated actions that augment societal happiness while preserving individual happiness. Altruism garnered varied interpretations within the context of Christianity, ranging from congruence with Christian love to criticism by Friedrich Nietzsche. The latter half of the 19th century witnessed the association of altruism with political ideologies of cooperation and collectivism, with certain communes adopting the moniker "Altruria." The first half of the 20th century experienced a decline in academic interest in altruism due to logical positivism and challenges to earlier theories of the gradual evolution of altruism. Since the 1960s, there has been a resurgence of scientific inquiry into altruism, particularly in the domains of social psychology and evolutionary biology. Debates persist regarding the nature of human altruism, its ethical implications, and its role in society.

The decision-making process underlying altruistic behavior involves specific brain structures and networks. These include the mentalizing network, which encompasses regions such as the medial prefrontal cortex (mPFC) and temporoparietal junction (TPJ). The mPFC is responsible for assessing reputation, comprehending others' thoughts and emotions, and distinguishing between self and others. The TPJ contributes to understanding others' perspectives and emotions. Altruism also engages reward regions in the brain. The ventral tegmental area (VTA), striatum (including the nucleus accumbens or NaCC), and the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) play vital roles in this context. The VTA is associated with the anticipation and experience of pleasure. The striatum is responsible for evaluating rewards and learning from such experiences, while the ACC is involved in both reward processing and evaluating the benefits of altruistic acts. Additionally, the "emotional salience network" contributes to altruistic behavior. Regions such as the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (DLPFC), amygdala, and insula play significant roles. The DLPFC aids in regulating attention and categorizing emotional stimuli and has connections with other emotion processing regions. The amygdala directs attention toward emotional stimuli, while the insula processes emotional and negative stimuli. These regions assist individuals in focusing on emotionally charged situations and evaluating the costs and benefits of altruistic choices.

This research aims to elucidate the influence of spiritual intelligence on altruism among young adults. It attempts to address a significant knowledge gap in understanding how contemplating existential questions may inspire selfless concern and action. The outcomes can inform strategies to promote altruism among youth by highlighting pathways between spiritual meaning-making and values of compassion. More broadly, this inquiry contributes to illuminating the role of human inner lives in shaping prosocial motivations and behaviors.

The term "Spiritual Intelligence" was first introduced in the book "Rewiring the Corporate Brain" by Danah Zohar (Zohar, 1997). Kathuria (2019) describes the concept of Spiritual Intelligence (SI) as the intelligence of the soul with the capacity to bring healing and a sense of wholeness to individuals. It suggests that SI can assist in recognizing existing values and sparking the creative discovery of new ones. Different scholars have provided diverse definitions and interpretations of SI. Emmons (2000), for instance, views SI as a form of intelligence that, akin to other cognitive abilities, empowers individuals to function effectively and solve problems. Initially, he outlined five components of SI, although one was later removed due to objections. Nasal, on the other hand, characterizes SI as the ability to tap into one's spiritual gifts and resources to address existential and practical issues.

Amram and Dryer present a framework that includes five dimensions of SI: Consciousness, Transcendence, Grace, Meaning, and Truth (Amram & Dryer, 2008). They argue that SI can be developed and improved, similar to other intelligences such as IQ. Another perspective shifts away from the religious aspects of SI, focusing more on its practical and human dimensions. Vaughan, for example, describes SI as an individual's capacity to deeply understand consciousness at various levels and grapple with questions related to human existence (Vaughan, 2002). Noble (2001) asserts that SI is an innate potential that can act as a catalyst for psychological growth and inner healing. Brian Mc Mullen (2003) emphasizes one facet of SI as wisdom and underscores that it's primarily about "being" rather than "doing." Negi & Khanna (2017) further categorize SI dimensions into three groups: one's relationship with oneself, encompassing self-respect, ego, purpose, gratitude, and personal virtues; one's relationship with others and the environment, involving forgiveness, compassion, kindness, and brotherhood; and an awareness of the universe, including intuition, mortality, and the ability to perceive the bigger picture.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Maheshwari et al. (2020) conducted a study to assess altruism levels within Generation Z, taking into account gender differences. The research sample consisted of 50 female and 50 male participants residing in the Gujarat region of India. Data was collected using the Altruism Scale, a tool developed by Dr. S.N. Rai and Dr. Sanwat Singh (Rai & Singh, 2004). The results revealed a significant difference in altruism levels between males and females, with females demonstrating higher levels of altruism than males in the Generation Z sample. In another study, P et al. (2013) investigated the potential connection between altruism and perceived subjective well-being in emerging adults. The study also aimed to determine whether there were any gender-based differences in these research variables. Involving 200 undergraduate college students, comprising both males and females, the data analysis was conducted using Karl Pearson's correlation. The findings indicated a significant positive association between altruism and subjective well-being among the emerging adults. Furthermore, while the research revealed no discernible gender-based distinctions in subjective well-being, it identified gender-based variations in altruistic behaviors, with females exhibiting higher levels of altruism compared to males.

In a recent study titled "Relation between spiritual intelligence and social competence in young adults," Deora (2023) aimed to explore the relationship between these two variables. Employing a simple random sampling method, the study collected data through questionnaires measuring spiritual intelligence using Dr. K.S. Misra's scale and social competence using the scale developed by Prof. V.P. Sharma, Dr. Kiran Shukla, and Dr. Prabha Shukla. A total of 105 young adults participated by completing both questionnaires.

The findings revealed a significant and positive relationship between spiritual intelligence and social competence.

Sethia et al. (2022) conducted a study exploring the potential link between spiritual intelligence (SQ) and divergent thinking skills among university students in India. Additionally, the research assessed whether any differences in SQ existed based on gender and course level (Bachelor's/Master's). To measure these constructs, the researchers utilized the 42-item Spiritual Intelligence Scale by Dr. K.S. Misra (SIS-MK) for assessing SQ and the Battery of Divergent Production Abilities by Dr. K.N. Sharma (DPA-S) for evaluating divergent thinking skills. The analysis involved Pearson's product-moment correlation, regression analysis, and independent samples t-tests. Surprisingly, contrary to previous studies, this research did not find any statistically significant overall relationship between spiritual intelligence and divergent thinking. However, further examination revealed a significant negative relationship between spiritual intelligence and only the "similarities" sub-test of divergent thinking. Furthermore, the study revealed a significant difference in SQ between males and females. This notable outcome challenges the conventional belief that strengthening one's SQ enhances their divergent thinking skills, thus re-evaluating the assumed connection between spirituality and divergent thinking.

Hassan et al. (2022) explored how altruistic behavior and spirituality among social welfare workers relate to their job satisfaction. Using social cognition theory as a framework, they examined how environmental, personal, and behavioral factors shape this phenomenon in achieving life satisfaction objectives. With a sample of 200 welfare workers, their findings revealed a notable positive link between altruism, spirituality, and life satisfaction. Altruism emerged as a key predictor of life satisfaction in social work. Substantial gender differences were also found, with male social workers reporting lower levels of altruism and life satisfaction compared to females. Arora (2022) investigated the relationships between emotional intelligence, altruistic behavior, and psychological wellbeing in adults aged 20-27 years old. Data from 150 participants showed a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and altruistic behavior, but a negative correlation between emotional intelligence and psychological wellbeing. No significant correlation was found between altruistic behavior and psychological wellbeing. When all three variables were analyzed together, the results were consistent, though the final hypothesis allows for future modification.

Two other studies highlighted spirituality's unique links to compassion and altruistic behavior, beyond the effects of religiosity. Salsow et al. (2013) found that more spiritual individuals experienced greater compassion, which predicted increased altruism towards strangers across multiple studies. In contrast, religiosity alone did not consistently predict compassion or altruism. Vázquez et al. (2020) also found spirituality indirectly related to prosocial bystander behavior in bullying situations through its positive influence on happiness and altruism using structural equation modeling.

Mandal & Mehra (2017) investigated the connection between altruism and emotional intelligence in high school students, differentiating between those whose mothers work and those whose mothers do not work. Additionally, they assessed whether emotional intelligence could predict altruism levels. The study involved 300 students aged 17-18 years and utilized an adapted altruism scale and the Bengali Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test.

The findings revealed that among students with non-working mothers, adolescent girls displayed higher altruism than boys, but no gender difference in emotional intelligence. A similar gender difference in altruism was observed for students with working mothers, but no gender difference in emotional intelligence. Overall, adolescent girls exhibited higher altruism than boys, regardless of their mothers' employment status, though they did not show higher emotional intelligence. Students with working mothers tended to be less altruistic and have lower emotional intelligence compared to those with non-working mothers. A significant positive correlation was found between altruism and emotional intelligence, with lower emotional intelligence associated with lower altruism. Emotional intelligence emerged as a predictor of altruism in the regression analysis.

Arnout et al. (2019) investigated the correlation between parents' spiritual intelligence and adolescents' psychological well-being, as well as differences based on parents' employment status. With a sample of 120 students (73 boys, 47 girls) aged 16-22 and their parents (68 fathers, 52 mothers), data was collected using a spiritual intelligence scale and psychological safety questionnaire. The results demonstrated that parents' spiritual intelligence was a robust predictor of adolescents' psychological well-being, accounting for 84.1% of the variance in psychological safety. No significant differences were observed in parents' spiritual intelligence or adolescents' psychological safety based on parental employment status. Pant & Srivastava (2017) assessed spiritual intelligence, mental health, and their relationship among 300 postgraduate college students, exploring potential gender and educational background (arts/science) differences. Employing purposive sampling and using relevant scales, the study found a significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and mental health among arts and science students, persisting when analyzed separately by gender. However, no significant differences were observed in spiritual intelligence or mental health based on gender or educational background.

Simatupang et al. (2023) conducted a study titled "Altruism Behavior in The Midst of a Student Moral Crisis" with the objective of establishing the significance of altruism intelligence in curbing juvenile delinquency. The research employed an ex post facto design, a systematic empirical investigation where the researcher cannot directly manipulate independent variables due to their inherent nature, and instead establishes a cause-and-effect relationship between these variables. The study population consisted of 54 students enrolled in department X at Tarutung State Institute for Christian Studies, with a sample size of 35 individuals. The findings revealed that altruistic behavior had the capacity to influence student conduct by 63%. Consequently, an increase in altruistic behavior carries the potential to mitigate the prevalence of juvenile delinquency currently observed among students.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

This study aims to examine the relationship between spiritual intelligence and altruism among young adults, with the overarching goal of understanding the extent to which spiritual intelligence influences altruistic behaviors.

Statement of Problem

This study seeks to explore and understand the potential influence and relationship of spiritual intelligence on altruism among young adults.

Variables

- Independent Variable: Spiritual Intelligence
- Dependent Variable: Altruism

Objectives of the study

The primary objective of this research is to investigate whether there is a significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and altruism in young adults.

Hypothesis

- **Ho:** There is no positive correlation between spiritual intelligence and altruism.
- **H0**: There is no significant influence of Spiritual Intelligence on Altruism in young adults.

Research Design

The research design selected for this study is quantitative.

Sample Size

A sample size of 100-150 young adults will be selected to participate in the study. This sample size is deemed sufficient for obtaining meaningful insights while managing the research resources effectively.

Data Collection Technique

Data will be collected through an online questionnaire. This method is chosen for its convenience and accessibility to a diverse group of young adults.

Statistical Techniques

Regression analysis will serve as the primary statistical technique for data analysis. Regression analysis will help identify any relationships or correlations between spiritual intelligence and altruism among the young adults in the study.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Convenience sampling was used in this study to gather information from 150 young adults in the sample. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling method wherein people who are conveniently accessible or readily available are chosen. Pilot testing frequently uses this technique to get first data. This study's use of convenience sampling made it easier to find volunteers from the nearby community, which made it a useful and economical strategy.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

- **Inclusion**: Participants in this study must be between the ages of 18 and 25 and meet the eligibility requirements.
- **Exclusion**: Individuals with Psychological Disorders.

Tools for the Study

Altruism: The Self-Report Altruism Scale (SRAS), created by J. Philippe Rushton, Roland D. Chrisjohn, and G. Cynthia Fekken, was utilized to evaluate the participants' altruism. Twenty items make up the SRAS, and each item has a 5-point Likert scale answer system: 0 = Never, 1 = often, 2 = More than often, 3 = Often, and 4 = Very often. Eight raters for every 118 undergraduates at the University of West Ontario participated in the peer-rating

research. The sum of all the item scores is calculated. There is a minimum score of 0 and a maximum score of 80 for each individual. Higher scores correspond to higher levels of generosity. The scale's validity and reliability were assessed using peer ratings. The measurement of the peer ratings' reliability involved calculating split-half reliabilities using odd and even numbered raters among the 80 individuals who had two or more raters. For the peer-rated SRA-scale altruism scores, this resulted in a substantial interrater reliability of r (78) = +0.51 (P < 0.01). A calculation of the 20-item peer rating form's internal consistency revealed that it was incredibly high (~ = 0.89, N = 416). Several scales, including a social desirability scale, were administered to about 200 university students to investigate the link between the Self-Report Altruism scale and current measures of social responsibility, moral judgment, empathy, and pro-social attitudes. Significant positive relationships were discovered in this study between several pro-social orientation questionnaire scores. Altruism as self-reported was associated with each of these.

Spiritual Intelligence: The Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory (SISRI 24) was utilised as a key instrument to evaluate people's spiritual capacities. This scale, created by King David in 2008, measures spiritual intelligence in four areas: critical thinking, transcending awareness, creating personal significance, and consciousness growth. The 24-item SISRI 24 is scored on a 4-point Likert scale, with the answers being "not true at all" to "very true to me." Higher degrees of spiritual intelligence are indicated by higher scores on the inventory. King (2008) confirmed the validity and reliability of the SISRI 24 through a thorough procedure involving 305 college students. Strong internal consistency was confirmed by the final alpha coefficient of 0.92. To improve the validity and reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was also carried out. To provide a varied participant demography, this pilot research included 40 parents and delinquent youths who were recruited via local social welfare agencies. Additionally, the questionnaire was translated via back translation under the supervision and approval of Malay language experts. For the study's intended audience, the translated version was judged appropriate. According to study findings, the SISRI 24 instrument's dependability value, which gauges spiritual intelligence, is.921. This indicates that SISRI 24 has extremely excellent reliability.

Procedure

The main goal of this study was to get insightful knowledge on a certain subject. A Google Forms questionnaire was distributed to 150 undergraduate and graduate students to accomplish this goal. In compliance with ethical requirements, informed consent was sought from each participant before the administration of the questionnaire. The participants were also provided with comprehensive information on the aim of the study, guaranteeing that they understood that their answers would be kept private and that the information gathered would only be utilized for educational purposes. This method not only followed ethical guidelines but also made sure that participants were educated and at ease, which is essential in any kind of research study.

RESULTS

The descriptive statistics in Table 1 provided insights into the mean levels of spiritual intelligence and altruism among the participants.

Table 1: The Descriptive Statistics of Spiritual Intelligence and Altruism

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Spiritual intelligence (mean scores)	155	0	4	2.11	.594
Altruism (mean scores)	155	1	5	2.59	.605
Valid N (listwise)	155				

The mean score for spiritual intelligence was 2.11 (SD = 0.594) on a scale ranging from 0 to 4, indicating a moderate level of spiritual intelligence within the sample. Regarding altruism, the mean score was 2.59 (SD = 0.605) on a scale from 1 to 5, suggesting a relatively high level of altruistic tendencies among the participants.

Table 2: Correlation between Spiritual Intelligence and Altruism

	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Intervals (2-tailed)[a]	
			Lower	Upper
Spiritual intelligence (mean scores) - Altruism (mean scores)	.398	<.001	.256	.523

a. Estimation is based on Fisher's r-to-z transformation.

The correlation analysis in Table 2 revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between spiritual intelligence and altruism ($r = 0.398$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [0.256, 0.523]). The correlation coefficient of 0.398 suggests a moderate positive relationship between these two variables. In other words, individuals with higher levels of spiritual intelligence tended to exhibit greater altruistic behaviour.

Table 3: Relationship between Spiritual Intelligence and Altruism

				Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square		R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.398[a]	.158	.153	.557	.158	28.732	1	153	<.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), Spiritual intelligence (mean scores)

The simple linear regression analysis further substantiated the relationship between spiritual intelligence and altruism. Spiritual intelligence in Table 3 showed a significant predictor of altruism ($F(1, 153) = 28.732$, $p < 0.001$). The regression model explained 15.8% of the variance in altruism ($R^2 = 0.158$).

Table 4: Spiritual Intelligence and Altruism

Model		Beta In	t	Sig.
1	Spiritual intelligence (mean scores)	.382[b]	5.072	<.001

b. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Age (Binned), Gender

Specifically, for every one-unit increase in spiritual intelligence, there was a corresponding 0.405 increase in altruism, after controlling for other factors. To account for potential confounding variables, a multiple regression analysis was conducted, including spiritual intelligence, gender, and age as predictors of altruism. Even after controlling for these demographic factors, spiritual intelligence remained a significant predictor of altruism ($t = 5.072$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 5: Spiritual Intelligence, Gender and Age

Model	R	R Square
2	410[b]	.168

The overall model, comprising spiritual intelligence, gender, and age, explained 16.8% (Table 5) of the variance in altruism ($R^2 = 0.168$).

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study elucidate a distinct positive correlation between spiritual intelligence and altruistic behaviors, leading to the rejection of null hypothesis. In essence, individuals with higher spiritual intelligence exhibit a greater propensity towards acting altruistically, leading to the rejection of null hypothesis again. This association persists even after accounting for variables such as gender and age, The correlation coefficient of 0.398 suggests that while a relationship between spiritual intelligence and altruism exists, other factors also influence an individual's likelihood to act for the benefit of others. Our analysis indicates that spiritual intelligence accounts for approximately 15.8% of the variation in altruistic behaviors, implying the presence of additional factors not covered in this study that could potentially impact these behaviors.

Further examination reinforces the case for spiritual intelligence as a significant predictor of altruism. This research contributes to the evidence linking spirituality and the propensity to help others. It suggests that fostering spiritual intelligence—which encompasses self-awareness, a sense of being part of something greater, and recognizing our connections to others—might encourage individuals to exhibit greater concern for the welfare of others. This has practical implications in promoting positive interactions and cultivating kinder communities. Specifically, incorporating spiritual intelligence development into educational programs, workplace training, or community activities could potentially enhance empathy, compassion, and care among individuals. Encouraging these qualities through the growth of spiritual intelligence may lead to increased participation in altruistic actions, benefiting society as a whole.

CONCLUSION

The primary objective of this research is to investigate whether there is a significant influence between spiritual intelligence and altruism among young adults. The study findings revealed that there is a significant influence of spiritual intelligence on altruism. The potential reasons for this influence could be attributed to various factors. However, a thorough examination of these characteristics was not possible due to the quantitative nature of this study. Consequently, further investigation, particularly qualitative research. It is also important to note that this study was conducted with a specific sample, and future research should aim to replicate these findings across diverse populations and cultural contexts to establish the generalizability of the results. Finally, there is research on the issue of spiritual intelligence and altruism, making it difficult to contextualize and compare findings. Thus,

future study is needed to create a more thorough grasp of the issue and investigate the potential relationships between the two.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study employed a quantitative approach, limiting the depth of understanding regarding the underlying mechanisms and nuances of the relationship between spiritual intelligence and altruism. Future qualitative research could provide richer insights into the lived experiences and perspectives of individuals exhibiting high levels of spiritual intelligence and altruism. The sample was drawn from a specific population, and future research should aim to replicate these findings across diverse cultural contexts and demographic groups to establish the generalizability of the results. Additionally, longitudinal studies could explore the potential bidirectional influence between spiritual intelligence and altruism, as well as the potential for interventions aimed at enhancing spiritual intelligence to promote altruistic behavior over time.

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Acknowledgment

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Chettri, K. & Vimala, M. (2024). Spiritual Intelligence and Altruism Among Young Adults. *International Journal of Indian Psychology, 12*(2), 125-136. DIP:18.01.014.20241202, DOI:10.25215/1202.014