

Association between Spiritual Intelligence and Compassion: A Review study

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ABSTRACT

The current review paper explores the interplay between the two variables namely spiritual intelligence (SI) and compassion (C) and could it be that if someone tends to possess spiritual intelligence, they also have compassionate tendencies? Spiritual Intelligence enables an individual with spiritual qualities and resources to participate in a selfless sphere of life. It draws a person toward asking certain questions about ultimate meaning, purpose, is associated with transcendental aspects of life and a sense of deep interconnectivity with the people that surround us. Supporting theoretical framework and research studies draws an inference that explains the dimensions and components found in the spiritual intelligence consists of compassionate thoughts and feelings encouraging compassionate actions. The present paper includes an inference drawn based on the referred research journals which shows a positive association between SI and compassion highlighting the presence of caring behaviour and empathy linked with fostering a sense of meaning and purpose in life. Based on the findings, it is also highlighted how practicing self-compassion can help in building high self-awareness, self- acceptance and self-kindness important for spiritual intelligence and also encompassing a flow of compassion toward others.

Keywords: *Spiritual Intelligence (SI), Compassion (C), Caring Behaviour, Self-Compassion*

Spiritual Intelligence was originally coined by Zohar which was later on added in the concept of human intelligence (Zohar, 1997). People who are considered to be high in spiritual intelligence draw their actions with a sense of wisdom and compassion enabling them to behave fairly and generously in a given situation (Aini, et al., 2023). A spiritual person can feel a great sense of connectedness with their surroundings and beyond, forming and constructing meaning out of their life. Moreover, a spiritually intelligent individual would possess elements of spirituality applying spiritual qualities and resources to enhance daily life functioning. D. B King (2008) in one of his theoretical works defining it as collective sets of adaptive cognitive abilities include themes related to higher consciousness, wisdom, aesthetics, transcendence and ultimate meaning which a person uses to understand one's significance, explore transcendence and experience heightened states of consciousness (Amram, 2007) (Amram Y. J., 2022).

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Received: June 04, 2024; Revision Received: July 31, 2024; Accepted: August 03, 2024

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Compassion is the tendency to show kindness, care and deep understanding towards someone followed by a motivation to alleviate the sufferings of others. It suggests the presence of the capability of a person to be able to feel the pain and suffering of others, coupled with a strong desire to relieve that suffering by taking action. It involves a genuine concern for the well-being of others and an elevated willingness to take action to provide the required support to those in need. A compassionate feeling involves a set of four dimensions of compassion empathetic compassion (to be aware of the feelings related to someone's pain, sorrow, and suffering), action compassion (to consider such measures that underlie an inclination towards reducing the suffering of others), concerned compassion (represents the compassionate person who often feels the urge to help), aspirational compassion (a strong inclination coupled with a cognitive desire to enhance compassion) (Ekman, 2014).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the study, **Amram (2022)**, the researcher highlighted a key model of SI, supporting its validity as a form of intelligence. It further discusses the existence of ground theory in which he explained seven dimensions of SI. . The paper concludes the study by emphasizing the need for further exploration into the subject and to further study the potential universality of the existing model of SI. The seven dimensions are consciousness, grace, meaning, transcendence, truth, serenity and inter-directedness. The 4th element aka Transcendence in which the importance of interconnectivity with people and society as a whole has been discussed highlighting one's ability to form interactions with compassion and empathy in fostering healthier interpersonal relationships.

Hosseini et al. (2010), in their review paper, highlighted the factors contributing to the individual differences associated with spiritual intelligence. The paper emphasizes how the development of spiritual intelligence can help foster gratitude, rational reasoning, and problem-solving skills. SI itself can navigate one to question the meaning and purpose of life allowing individuals to perceive a wider context.

In order to explore the impact of compassion on fostering a sense of meaning and facilitating flourishing in life, **Chan et al. (2022)** conducted a study. For administration, a sample size of 536 students from Hong Kong University was selected who accompanied to contribute to the study. Towards the results, it was found that showing self-compassion or compassion for others shows a positive association with high resilience, flourishing, and greater meaning in life. It was negatively correlated with psychological distress. By the end of the study, the researchers highlighted the importance of indulging in compassionate acts, practicing gratitude and kindness, and fostering greater meaning and purpose in life.

Plante and Halman (2016), the paper highlights a study on fostering compassion in college peers through participation in various extracurricular activities such as community-based services, diversity training, and attending religious and spiritual activities. The study was administered to 491 students from various Arts, business, Engineering, Humanities courses, etc. The longitudinal study structure was as follows:

Time 1: Students were freshmen when the survey was conducted using the Santa Clara Brief Compassion Scale. Proper demographic details and background data were used such as gender, race, participation in school and social activities, etc.). Time 2: A Survey was done on students as final year seniors using the same mentioned scale and gathered details related to behaviour in college and involvement in activities, personal values and attitudes, and goals.

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In conclusion, the compassion level of the students significantly decreased in Time 2 which is associated with the reduction in the participation of religious and community-based services indicating same students during the freshmen years participated in the community and spiritual activities more actively with a considerably high compassion levels assessed through Santa Clara Brief Compassion Scale.

Fakhrian and Abadi (2022), in their study, the correlational descriptive method has been adopted to investigate the role of self-compassion between SI and hope. The study was specifically focused on exploring the degree of SI and the hope of Nurses in Iran. For an adequate study, a convenience sampling method was used to collect data from 183 female nurses in the year 2019. The analysis was formulated using descriptive statistics and for calculating correlation Pearson correlation coefficient was used. The main hypothesis of the study was achieved indicating a strong mediating role of self-compassion between the two variables ($p < 0.05$). It was also suggested that SI and self-compassion are the strong predictors in the case of hope in nurses.

Sood et al. (2012), in their study, the researcher investigated to explore the relationship between personality traits and SI in university students. For determining the personality and its traits, the Big Five Factor Inventory was used and for the SI, SISRI-24 was considered. With the sample size of 120, 50 responses were collected from students enrolled in psychology post-graduation courses from the University of Jammu and another 70 responses were from Indira Gandhi National Open University. In the results, different subscales of SI predicted varying roles toward personality traits. The personality factor agreeableness is found to be positively correlated with the personal meaning production which serves as a valuable scale dimension for assessing SI.

Barkhordari-Sharifabad et al. (2020), investigated the relationship between SI associated with caring behaviour and empathy. The study was conducted on working nurses who were designated in hospitals that were affiliated with the University of Medicine. The research design of the study involves a descriptive correlational method with a sample size, comprising 185 nurses who were selected using the stratified random sampling method. The findings of the study suggested that the subscales of the king's SI instrument, conscious state expansion, and transcendent awareness could possibly contribute to the caring behaviour of nurses.

King et al. (2012), proposed that empathy shall be considered a part of SI, promoting the validity of spiritual intelligence. For this study, quantitative method was utilized, where 420 adults residing in Canada were selected for data collection. The paper investigated the presence of any possible correlation between existing scales such as Trait Meta Mood Scale, Assessing Emotions Scale, Emotional Empathy Scale, and SISRI-24. Following that, the correlational values for the SI instrument given by King (2008) (2009) were found to be positively correlated with AES and TMMS, highlighting a significant relationship between the subscales of spiritual intelligence and empathy scale.

NIṬĀ (2017), discussed the theoretical concepts of spiritual intelligence and its connection with compassion while focusing on its relevance in public administration. The paper suggests that spiritual intelligence holds the capacity to converge the personal self with the transpersonal self, highlighting its connection with compassion for enhancing the public and social services in public administration. Furthermore, the paper also examines the 10 components of SI given by Kabbalah literature in which the “Hesed” component highlights

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the ability to express positive emotions like love and perform compassion for the goods of others. A spiritually intelligent individual would appreciate the beauty of life and people in general while indulging oneself in compassionate acts for the better. In the principles of SI, compassion is mentioned as one of its essential part.

Gallese and Vittorio (2003) studied the biological fundamentals behind spiritual intelligence. It focused on SI and its related orientation to compassion and interconnectedness has provided important biological foundations that claim through mirroring actions and emotions, our biological fundamentals such as networks of neurons and their neural pathways allow individuals to understand and relate with the experiences of others, cultivating a strong sense of interconnectedness.

Lutz et al. (2004) conducted a study showing human capacities such as compassion and empathy can be fostered through certain spiritual activities and practices that facilitate brain activity. Development of SI qualities which also involves compassion and empathy is associated with certain changes in the brain activity. Indulging oneself in the long term practices such as compassion and loving-kindness meditation leads to short-term and long-term neurological changes.

Gilbert (2014) shows application of different flows of compassion can help an individual develop self-compassion and compassion toward society in a person. The study explored application of different flows of compassion where experiencing compassionate help can enhance other individual's ability to perform compassion to others and society creating a "flow" of compassion. His work particularly discussed about compassion-focused therapy (CFT).

Kirby et al. (2019) studied how compassion can motivate individuals to engage in self-compassion while simultaneously encouraging them to perform greater compassion for the good of others. This phenomenon of receiving compassion is also called the flow of compassion from others to self that facilitates self-compassion which again promotes one to perform greater compassion towards others. The researcher used self-report questionnaires for self-compassion and compassion for others for collecting data. Using statistical analysis the findings showed a significant correlation self-compassion and compassion for others. It suggests an individual practicing self-compassion are more likely to perform compassionate actions for others.

Hermanto and Zuroff (2016), in their study shows how indulging in compassionate interpersonal relationships shows a significant association with higher self-awareness, self-acceptance, and self-kindness. It highlights the essential association between compassionate relationship and self-perception which helps in fostering personal development and interrelatedness with the world.

Bettega and Fachinelli (2022) conducted a study on organizational employees to study a correlation between spirituality and compassion and its effects on work efficiency and optimal functioning. By using the qualitative analysis, it was found that there is an integration of spirituality and compassion is associated with better work environment, supportive culture and high productivity. Combining the art of spirituality and compassion can help in enhancing employment engagement and overall performance.

CONCLUSION

By reviewing the scientific data and findings, it can be concluded that SI is positively associated with compassion. Given in the ground theory of SI, the dimension of transcendence shows a clear ability of forming interconnectivity with others contributing to behave with empathy and compassion. Some results also emphasized that indulging in compassionate attitude, actions, practicing gratitude can help in fostering true meaning and purpose in life essential for developing spiritual perceptions. An active participation in the spiritual and religious activities or community-based curriculum can directly influence feelings and attitude of compassion in an individual. With the increasing popularity of meditative techniques, compassion and loving-kindness meditation contribute to enhancing the regulation of cognitive and emotional skills, fostering spiritual intelligence with a neurological basis. SI notion also tend to suggest having a rational mind with skills related to spiritual assets. Moreover, cultivating self-compassion in oneself can help in developing self-perceptions such as self-awareness, self-acceptance and self-kindness. Showing a significant level of self-compassion to oneself is associated with the same amount of compassion to others which again can help in fostering deeper interactivity with others thriving towards transcendence and a true meaning and purpose in one's life.

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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: Ahmed, A. & Gupta, A. (2024). Association between Spiritual Intelligence and Compassion: A Review study. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 12(3), 702-707. DIP:18.01.067.20241203, DOI:10.25215/1203.067