



## Contribution of spiritual intelligence to the development of moral reasoning at the workplace

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### Abstract

During the last decade, many organizations have gone bankrupt due to serious ethical problems. Spiritual intelligence denotes how much influence values, purposes, and significance have on a person's decisions and behavior. This phenomenon is considered to be a set of cognitive skills needed to develop an awareness, integration, and adaptive utilization of non-physical aspects of a human being's life, resulting in such consequences as existential contemplation, enhancing meaning-making, transcendental self-realization, and mastering spiritual states. Spiritual intelligence is the ability to become more conscious of motives of lower type (for example, fear, greed, egoism), as well as learning ways to turn them into higher motives (creativity, serving people in the community, etc.). Moral reasoning denotes how an organization considers what is good and bad, thereby taking the corresponding decisions and actions based on its own understanding of ethical norms. This aspect of business ethics plays a crucial role in forming choices based on such values as justice and responsibility for people's lives, assisting to deal with complex situations and maintaining integrity. The first and foremost purpose of this study is to analyze the importance of Spiritual Quotient in bringing back ethical moral reasoning among the employees. Spiritual Quotient can be termed as a kind of intelligence by virtue of which people deal with problems concerning meaning and value. The study concludes that any unethical behavior of employees can be handled with the help of spiritual quotient and moral reasoning.

**Keywords:** Moral reasoning, ethical behaviour, spiritual intelligence, human values, organizations, sustainable

### Introduction

In modern organizational settings, decision-making occurs under conditions of uncertainty, moral ambiguity, and intense pressure for high performance. Ethical lapses within corporations, including acts of fraud, bribery, and discriminatory practices, reveal the shortcomings of compliance strategies based on external rules. Increasingly, academics advocate for ethics founded on internalized values rather than on compliance requirements. Spiritual intelligence (SI) represents an intrinsic dimension of intelligence that integrates meaning, values, and awareness into human functioning. SI enables humans to reflect critically on their own purposes, relationships, and moral obligations. Moral reasoning refers to cognitive activity that assists in evaluating ethical issues and determining appropriate courses of action.

This paper focuses on the role of spiritual intelligence in fostering moral reasoning. The paper discusses how spiritual intelligence fosters self-awareness, empathy, transcendence of self-interest, and dedication to universal ethics. Spiritual intelligence pertains to the ways in which higher-level meanings, values, and purposes affect individual choices and behaviors. In addition, spiritual intelligence entails understanding lower motivations, including fear, greed, and self-interest, and converting them into higher motivations such as creativity and service to others. In an intricate world of ethics, where there are many ambiguities in business, leadership and decision making are under close examination. The global environment implies diversity in culture, stiff competition and fast development of technology. All of these aspects force managers into situations where tough moral decisions become inevitable. In the past, intelligence quotient (IQ) and emotional intelligence (EQ) were crucial criteria for assessing management performance. They played an important role in the process of decision making, but at the same time might prove insufficient if the manager needs to deal with any

issues that are based on values. Spiritual intelligence (SQ) serves as a powerful tool in guiding leaders through the maze of moral confusion in an attempt to discover right from wrong and understand the true purpose of their job.

### Conceptual Framework

#### Spiritual Intelligence

Spiritual intelligence (SI) denotes the capacity to use spiritual awareness, values, and understanding within daily life. As opposed to religion, which is a belief system, SI is based on values rather than religion. This concept consists of certain aspects that are common for all humanity, for example, integrity, compassion, humility, and interconnectedness. Spiritual intelligence can be defined as integrative intelligence that helps individuals to address existential issues, discover meanings in their experiences, and ensure consistency between values and behavior. In an organizational setting, SI makes it possible for people to consider their work not only as something to make money with but also as an opportunity to act according to ethical standards and purposes.

#### The following characteristics are typical of spiritual intelligence:

- Finding the deeper meaning of work
- Transcendence
- Self-awareness
- Interconnectedness

Examples of the application of SI include purposeful work, authenticity in leadership, and reflection.

#### Moral Reasoning

Moral reasoning is the cognitive process through which individuals evaluate moral dilemmas and determine appropriate responses. In organizations, it plays an essential role in determining decisions regarding justice, truthfulness,

responsibility, and regard for other people. Good moral reasoning is important in dealing with moral questions that lack clear-cut answers within organizational guidelines, particularly during ambiguous situations. Lawrence Kohlberg's theory on the stages of moral development is commonly used, including:

**Pre-conventional:** based on selfish motives

**Conventional:** following societal laws and regulations

**Post-conventional:** based on moral values that apply universally

Advanced moral reasoning is associated with ethical leadership, reduced unethical behavior, and effective organizational culture.

### **Theory Connecting Spiritual Intelligence to Moral Reasoning**

#### ▪ **Self-Awareness and Ethical Sensitivity**

Through spiritual intelligence (SI), people gain deeper insight into their personal values and biases, making them more ethical-sensitive, and thereby capable of detecting moral issues in situations.

#### ▪ **Spiritual Transcendence of Selfish Needs**

As a result of SI, individuals detach themselves from self-interests and think about the common good, thus making ethical decisions.

#### ▪ **Empathy and Compassion**

Empathy, one of the core features of SI, helps with moral reasoning because of the ability to understand other people's positions.

#### ▪ **Deliberative Decision Making**

Workers with high SI levels usually engage in decision-making with the end goal in mind.

### **Proposed Conceptual Model**

The research proposes a theoretical framework in the form of:

### **Spiritual Intelligence → Ethical Awareness → Moral Reasoning → Ethical Behavior.**

Spiritual Intelligence acts as a crucial competency that develops ethical awareness, thereby enhancing moral reasoning skills and resulting in ethical behavior at work.

### **Objective of the Research:**

- To analyze the relationship between spiritual intelligence and moral reasoning among workers.
- To identify the dimensions of spiritual intelligence that act as significant predictors of moral reasoning.
- To assess the effect of spiritual intelligence on ethical decision-making in organizational contexts.

### **Literature Review**

Joseph and Lakshmi (2012) in their paper on "Spiritual Intelligence at Work" describes the relationship of spiritual intelligence with ethical behaviour in the studies. They have stated that spiritual intelligence initiates the ethical behaviour and the personalities like responsibilities, self-problem solving, decision making and other inter personal qualities of the employees in the work place. They emphasize the significance of spiritual intelligence to

commitment to righteousness and ultimate wisdom at the workplace, which develops skills such as interpersonal and intrapersonal relations, problem solving, goal attainment, motivation, commitment, responsibility, self-awareness, team spirit, stress management, time management, leadership and transformation, all necessary for work and to be successful at workplace. In organisations, the code of ethics was framed based on the activities that involves organisation commitments, punctuality, loyalty, integrity, respect towards others, fairness, caring etc. Such principles show the effectiveness of an individual or an employee, as an ethical personality in an organisation. Researchers observed the activities of the employees those who have potential to be ethical and committed to responsibilities, are being spiritual in their work place (Joseph and Lakshmi, 2012). Spiritual persons are not driven by negative attitudes and pessimism like ego, anger etc in the workplace. They possess moral values and seek wholesome relationships with others and a greater meaning in what they do (Mitroff and Denton, 1999).

The employees possessing spiritual intelligence were found to be more tolerant and adaptable to the working environment and they helped their colleagues and subordinates to overcome the difficulties. They also built valued relationship in their workplace with the influence of their spiritual intelligence (Burke, 2006) [3, 5]. Gull and Doh (2004) [8] argued that spirituality can be the basis for ethical conduct in business. Where spirituality is absent, there is lack of understanding regarding interconnection among individuals. Research results show that the most important values associated with behaviour consistent with ethical conduct are "honesty" and "equality" (Palermo and Evans, 2012). A variety of studies demonstrates a clear link between values and workplace behaviour.

Petchsawanga and Duchon (2012) reports two studies that examine how an organization might enable more productive work practices by encouraging the expression of its employees' spiritual. Study 1 showed that people who regularly practice meditation have higher workplace spirituality scores than people who do not regularly practice meditation. Lips-wiersma and Nikalant (2008) in a study suggests that envy, callousness, selfishness, betrayal, mercilessness, insensitivity, gossip, disservice, and negligence emanate from people's moral weaknesses. Thus, spiritual paradigm reminds us that "our spiritual duty is to use our free will to help and not harm others to further their ends".

Peter Pruzan (2004) argues about new perspective on leadership: spiritually-based leadership. He explains that strong trend toward flatter, less hierarchical organizations, greater use of self-organizing project-teams, new types of production and production processes, value-based leadership, social and ethical accounting, corporate social responsibility, corporate branding, and ethical investing. Some of the important skills for the new age are: meaningful vision, enthusiasm, and strong sense of purpose, personal integrity, ability to instill confidence, openness, trustworthiness, and emotional intelligence (Amram, 2005) [2].

### **Role of Spiritual Intelligence**

Spirituality involves the recognition of a feeling, belief, or consciousness that something exists beyond oneself, a deeper reality in human life than just sensory experience, and this higher reality to which we belong is cosmically or

divinely related. Spiritual intelligence increases the capability to understand others profoundly. It helps us recognize the 'real cause' behind someone's behavior without judging and helps satisfy the 'real needs' of another individual until he/she learns how to satisfy his/her own needs. Spiritual intelligence helps us increase our awareness regarding our purpose in life and its real value. Spiritual intelligence helps us realize the interrelation of all life forms, thus helping us gain knowledge.

Spirituality acts as a guide within ourselves based on the following four core elements: self-transcendence, interrelatedness, meaning, and ultimate concerns of individuals. These factors define the perception, values, and actions of individuals. Gradually, the virtues formed by people through the moral values of spirituality bring many benefits to organizations.

### **Impact on Individual Employees**

Spiritual intelligence enables workers to act ethically despite encountering problems in the process, hence eliminating unethical practices such as lying and preferential treatment.

### **Impact on Organizational Culture**

Organizations that have spiritual intelligence in their workforce create a culture characterized by trust and shared values.

### **Leadership Implications**

Spiritual intelligence encourages ethical leadership that is characterized by humility, integrity, and service.

The concept of goodness is highly associated with the ethical codes and behavior of individuals. Every religion is deeply related to love, kindness, truthfulness, sincerity, justice, and equality. These are the main aspects that individuals consider when they behave ethically. Consequently, spiritual intelligence and ethics possess common features and applications. Scholars argue that Spiritually Intelligent Leaders depend on their intuition. They know what values they hold and how their behavior reflects these values. It means that these core values dictate their wise and kind behavior. They concentrate on the current situation in meditation and realize the relationship between the mind and body. This unique connection between the mind and body becomes stronger due to physical exercises, proper nutrition, and meditation.

### **Spiritual Intelligence: A Step Forward to Moral Reasoning of Employees in Organizations**

#### **Internal Moral Regulation**

SI plays a crucial role in the exercise of internal moral controls in that it makes use of an individual's conscience to regulate their conduct. Employees who demonstrate SI tend to ask themselves such questions as:

- "Am I doing what I should be doing?"
- "Whose interests would be affected here?"
- "Does this conform to my principles?"

#### **Diminishing Moral Disengagement**

One of the common elements in unethical behavior is the tendency of rationalizing such acts. This will be effectively combated as SI increases moral awareness and responsibility while decreasing the use of excuses such as "everybody else does it" and "just following orders."

#### **Raising Responsibility and Empathy**

Through the development of empathy through SI, the employee can foresee the repercussions of acting unethically and how it may affect other people, such as his fellow employees, the customers, and the society at large.

#### **Moral Consistency Over Time**

While ethical adherence is usually linked with conforming to set rules, the SI framework promotes consistency in moral decisions in any situation, particularly those involving pressure and uncertainty.

The role of moral reasoning in an age of rapidly changing organizations and increasing competitiveness is increasingly crucial. There are underlying moral problems in today's organizations, which have not been sufficiently addressed due to the limited effectiveness of the traditional approaches toward organizational ethics, which are largely centered on regulatory requirements, ethics codes, and sanctions. Through developing personal ethical awareness, purposeful thinking, and value-oriented decision making, spiritual intelligence plays a very important role in the enhancement of moral reasoning in organizations.

According to the analysis, by allowing individuals to rise above selfish interests and contextual factors, spiritual intelligence improves moral reasoning to a large extent. Because spiritually intelligent employees are aware of themselves and have high self-awareness, they can easily recognize moral dilemmas and reflect on their personal values before doing anything else. Specifically, spiritual intelligence makes the post-conventional level, which is based on universal ethical principles such as justice, equality, and human dignity, possible through reflective capacity, which, in turn, leads to greater ethical sensitivity.

Moreover, by developing empathy and compassion, spiritual intelligence improves moral reasoning. In order to make a morally correct decision, an individual needs to be aware of how his or her actions influence not only colleagues but also customers and society at large. Therefore, people with higher levels of spiritual intelligence are more likely to consider the opinions of multiple parties involved in the decision-making process, thus reducing their chances of engaging in immoral behaviors.

A third key contribution of spiritual intelligence to management involves the aspect of work as something meaningful and purposeful. Ethical behavior would not be externally imposed; instead, it will come automatically because of the belief by employees that what they do contributes towards an overarching purpose. In such instances, moral reasoning will be based on sincerely held ideals and beliefs and not merely as a response to organizational policies. Spiritual intelligence, through its capacity for promoting integrity, responsibility, and sustained commitment towards ethical conduct, limits the likelihood of immoral actions resulting from performance-related pressures.

Finally, there are important effects of spiritual intelligence within the organization. A spiritually intelligent leader acts as a moral role model through genuine moral conduct and not through the exertion of control over others. Leadership in this context leads to increased trust, facilitates honest discussions about ethical concerns, and creates psychologically safe environments in which moral reasoning is encouraged. Therefore, spiritually intelligent

organizations find it easier to cultivate moral reasoning as a collective attribute than a personal one.

While the report understands the challenges associated with introducing spiritual intelligence within the domain of workplace ethics, due to the advantages it offers, care must be taken when considering the complexities of conceptual confusion, limitations of measurement, cultural diversity, and the risk of misunderstanding the concept of spiritual intelligence as one of religious dominance. Such challenges do not reduce the importance of the concept but highlight the need to use it wisely.

### **Criticism / Limitations of the Paper**

#### **▪ Conceptual Ambiguity**

The absence of a widely accepted definition of spiritual intelligence may create confusion since the notion is theoretically similar to that of emotional intelligence, personal values, and even morality itself.

#### **▪ Measurement Issues**

Measuring spiritual intelligence and moral decision-making rely heavily on self-report questionnaires that are highly susceptible to response biases.

Objective measurement of spirituality poses considerable difficulties.

#### **▪ Misinterpretation of spirituality as religion**

While spiritual intelligence does not equate to religion, there is a chance that it may be misunderstood as supporting religion, leading to resistance in a secular workplace.

#### **▪ Issues of Implementation**

Integrating spiritual intelligence within corporate training sessions may be hindered by:

- Time restrictions,
- Resistance from upper management, and
- The complexity involved in developing standardized training programs.

### **Conclusion**

Empirical evidence suggests that people with high levels of spirituality have an ethical disposition both within society and at work. Spirituality helps to improve personal ethical behavior at work and develop an ethical organizational culture. Spiritual intelligence becomes a critical factor that enables an individual to access deep reservoirs within oneself and be able to care, endure, and adjust to the prevailing conditions.

In the final analysis, spiritual intelligence becomes a potent driver towards improving ethical reasoning within organizations by addressing intrinsic factors ignored by conventional approaches. Spiritual intelligence has the capacity to transform workplaces from places governed by rules into societies driven by principles if strategically integrated with organizational policies, moral leadership, and structural support. Future research should emphasize long-term studies to make causal connections and explore cross-cultural applications. Ultimately, fostering spiritual intelligence becomes a promising avenue towards copy creating ethically sound organizations capable of meeting the challenges of the contemporary business environment.

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