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DIFFERENTIAL DEMOGRAPHICS OF SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS OF KERALA

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Abstract

This study examined differences in the spiritual intelligence of elementary school teachers in Kerala with respect to gender, educational qualification, type of school management, and professional experience. Using a quantitative descriptive design, data were collected from a stratified random sample of 332 teachers across three socio-cultural regions of the state. The Spiritual Intelligence Inventory for School Teachers (SIST), a standardized 40-item scale measuring four dimensions of spiritual intelligence, was administered along with a Background Information Form. Data was analyzed using independent sample t-tests, one-way ANOVA, and Scheffe's post-hoc tests. Results showed significant gender differences, with male teachers scoring higher than female teachers. Educational qualification also exerted a significant influence, with Trained Graduate Teachers outperforming Diploma and Postgraduate holders. Type of school management emerged as another strong determinant: teachers in government schools demonstrated significantly higher spiritual intelligence than those in aided and unaided institutions. However, no significant differences were found among teachers with low, average, or high levels of professional experience. These findings indicate that spiritual intelligence is shaped more by demographic and institutional factors than by years of service. The study highlights the need for professional development initiatives that promote reflective and spiritually grounded practices, particularly for teachers in non-government sectors.

Keywords: Spiritual intelligence, Demographic factors, Elementary school teachers.

Introduction

Spiritual intelligence (SpI) is increasingly recognized as a broad human capacity that supports individuals in making meaning, applying value-based judgement, and drawing upon inner strengths to manage complexity and pursue purposeful action in both personal and professional domains (Pinto et al., 2024). Current reviews describe SpI as a developable skill linked with resilience, emotional balance, mental wellbeing, and positive social conduct, qualities that are closely connected to effective teaching and professional flourishing. Research in organizational psychology further shows that both spiritual intelligence and workplace spirituality contribute to improved problem-solving, shared awareness, and the achievement of collective goals. Such findings are relevant to schools, where cooperation, ethical decision-making, and reflective practice play central roles (Baykal, 2024). Studies involving teachers also highlight the potential significance of SpI in educational settings (Li, 2025). Recent international evidence suggests

that elements of spiritual leadership and workplace spirituality can enhance teacher wellbeing, with trust in leaders serving as a crucial pathway for this effect. Discipline-specific research adds that teachers with stronger spiritual intelligence, such as language teachers in East Asian contexts, tend to report higher engagement and stronger commitment to their instructional roles (Yin & Liu, 2025). These cross-cultural insights suggest that the impact of SpI on teachers is not limited to particular regions or educational systems.

Further empirical work links higher spiritual intelligence with improved classroom climate, greater job satisfaction, stronger professional performance, and other psychological strengths, though demographic trends remain inconsistent (Yadollahpour et al., 2022; Devaraju & Suneela, 2019). Indian studies, for instance, have reported variations in SpI based on gender, qualifications, and teaching experience, but many of these investigations are narrow in scope or centred on pre-service teachers rather than those currently serving in schools (Kauts, 2016; Kumari, 2017). Considering Kerala's unique educational landscape, teacher education traditions, and diversity of school managements, it is important to examine how demographic factors shape SpI among elementary teachers in the state. Exploring differences related to gender, academic qualifications, school type, and years of service can provide insights for designing professional development aimed at nurturing reflective, resilient, and ethically grounded teaching. The present study addresses this need by analyzing demographic variations in spiritual intelligence among elementary school teachers in Kerala, thereby filling a research gap and offering evidence that can guide future teacher development efforts.

Objective

To compare spiritual intelligence of elementary school teachers of Kerala with respect to their gender, qualification, type of management of the school, and years of professional experience.

Hypotheses

There is no significant difference in the spiritual intelligence of elementary school teachers with respect to (a) Gender, (b) Qualification, (c) Type of School Management, and (d) Professional Experience.

Methodology

The quantitative descriptive study used normative survey method for collecting data from a stratified random sample of 332 elementary school teachers (Male = 101; Female = 231) from Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam, Kozhikode districts of Kerala. Stratification of the population was done based on socio-cultural zones (Travancore, Kochi and Malabar), School locale (rural and urban) and school sector (government, aided and unaided). Data were collected by administering the Spiritual Intelligence Inventory for School Teachers (SIST) (Reni & Shrivastava, 2024). The SIST is a standardized psychometric instrument developed by the researchers for the purpose of the study. The SIST is a 40-item five-point rating scale covering four dimensions, viz., Critical Existential Thinking, Personal Meaning Production, Transcendental Awareness and Conscious State Expansion, of the construct of spiritual intelligence. A Background Information Form (BIF) was used to collect demographic information required for the study. The SIST and BIF were administered personally by the first investigator to collect the responses. The response sheets were later scored manually, and the data were consolidated with the help of an Excel sheet. The data were analysed with the help of IBM SPSS Statistics 21. Independent sample t-test, one-way ANOVA and Scheffe's post-hoc test were used to analyse the data.

Analysis and Interpretation

The differential influence of gender on the distribution of spiritual intelligence was examined by comparing the male and female teachers regarding the mean SIST scores. The result of the t-test performed in this context is given in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparison of the Spiritual Intelligence of Male and Female Teachers

Groups	Statistical Indices				t-value	Sig.
	N	M	SD	SE_M		
Male	101	211.76	23.008	2.289	2.569	.001
Female	231	203.98	26.370	1.735		

The t-value estimated is significant (t = 2.569; p<.001), revealing a true difference between male and female teachers in their spiritual intelligence. The mean SIST score computed for male teachers is 211.76 and that computed for the female teachers is 203.98, indicating that the male teachers excel the female teachers in their spiritual intelligence.

To find out the differential influence educational qualification on spiritual intelligence, teachers having Diploma (DIP), Graduation (TGR) and Postgraduation (TPG) were compared regarding their SIST score. Table 2 presents the summary of One-way ANOVA performed in this regard.

Table 2: Comparison of the SIST Scores of Teachers with Different Educational Qualifications (Summary of ANOVA)

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10781.386	2	5390.693		
Within Groups	206353.780	329	627.215	8.595	.000
Total	217135.166	331			

The F-ratio obtained from comparing teachers with different educational qualifications regarding their spiritual intelligence is significant (F = 8.595, p<.001). Putting differently, educational qualification is a significant decisive factor in spiritual intelligence of elementary school teachers. Table 3 gives the result of Scheffe's post-hoc test performed incidentally.

Table 3: Post Hoc Tests for Comparison of Teachers with Different Educational Qualification Regarding their Spiritual Intelligence

(I) SCH	(J) SCH	(I-J) Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					LB	UB
DIP	TGR	-13.422	3.293	.000	-21.52	-5.33
	TPG	-1.327	3.755	.939	-10.56	7.91
TGR	DIP	13.422	3.293	.000	5.33	21.52
	TPG	12.095	4.286	.020	1.56	22.63
TPG	DIP	1.327	3.755	.939	-7.91	10.56
	TGR	-12.095	4.286	.020	-22.63	-1.56

The results of the post hoc test show a significant difference between DIP and TGR regarding their spiritual intelligence (Mean difference = 13.422; $p<.001$), the TGR excelling the DIP. No self-efficacy, however, exists between DIP and TPG in their SpI (Mean difference = 0.939; $p>.05$). The difference between TGR and TPG is also significant (Mean difference = 4.286; $p<.05$), the TGR excelling the TPG.

Teachers from government, aided, and unaided schools were compared on their SIST scores to examine whether the type of school management exerts a differential influence on spiritual intelligence. Table 4 provides summary of One-way ANOVA conducted.

Table 4: Comparison of the SIST Scores of Teachers of Government, Aided and Unaided Schools (Summary of ANOVA)

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	17167.766	2	8583.883		
Within Groups	199967.400	329	607.804	14.123	.001
Total	217135.166	331			

The F-ratio obtained from comparing teachers working in Government, Aided, and Unaided schools on their SIST scores was found to be significant ($F = 14.123$; $p < .001$). This indicates that the type of school management has a significant differential effect on the spiritual intelligence of elementary school teachers. To identify the specific school groups that showed meaningful differences, a post-hoc analysis was conducted following the ANOVA. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Post-hoc test results comparing the spiritual intelligence of teachers from Government, Aided, and Unaided schools

(I) SCH	(J) SCH	(I-J) Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
GOVT.	Aided	15.466	2.953	.000	8.21	22.73
	Unaided	10.588	3.971	.030	.82	20.35
AIDED	Govt.	-15.466	2.953	.000	-22.73	-8.21
	Unaided	-4.878	4.041	.483	-14.81	5.06
UNAIDED	Govt.	-10.588	3.971	.030	-20.35	-.82
	Aided	4.878	4.041	.483	-5.06	14.81

The post-hoc analysis comparing the spiritual intelligence of teachers across different types of school management showed that government schoolteachers scored significantly higher than their counterparts in both aided and unaided schools, with mean differences of 15.466 ($p < .001$) and 10.588 ($p < .01$), respectively. However, no significant difference was found between teachers working in aided and unaided schools, as indicated by the nonsignificant mean difference of 4.878 ($p > .05$). Overall, the results highlight that teachers in the government sector demonstrate notably higher levels of spiritual intelligence compared to those in aided and unaided institutions.

Teachers with low, average, and high levels of experience were compared on their SIST scores to examine the differential influence of length of service on spiritual intelligence. A summary of the ANOVA results is presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Summary of ANOVA for Teachers' SIST Scores Across High, Average, and Low Experience Groups

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1883.352	2	941.676		
Within Groups	215251.814	329	654.261	1.439	NS
Total	217135.166	331			

The F-ratio obtained from comparing teachers with low, average, and high levels of service experience was not significant ($F = 1.439$; $p > .05$). In other words, length of service does not serve as a significant factor in distinguishing elementary school teachers in terms of their spiritual intelligence.

Conclusion

The present study set out to compare the spiritual intelligence of elementary school teachers in Kerala with respect to gender, educational qualification, type of school management, and length of professional experience. The hypotheses proposed that no significant differences would exist across these variables. However, the analysis clearly demonstrated that spiritual intelligence varies meaningfully across several demographic and professional categories. A significant gender difference was observed, with male teachers exhibiting higher spiritual intelligence scores than female teachers, thereby leading to the rejection of the first hypothesis. Educational qualification also emerged as a decisive factor, as Trained Graduate Teachers displayed significantly higher levels of spiritual intelligence compared to those holding Diploma or Postgraduate qualifications; this finding contradicts the second hypothesis. The type of

school management further showed a substantial influence: teachers working in government schools scored significantly higher than those in aided and unaided institutions, necessitating the rejection of the third hypothesis. In contrast, professional experience did not produce any significant differences in spiritual intelligence, thereby supporting the fourth hypothesis and suggesting that years of service alone do not contribute to the development of higher spiritual intelligence. Taken together, these findings highlight that spiritual intelligence among elementary school teachers is shaped more strongly by personal and institutional factors such as gender, qualification, and school management than by the duration of teaching experience. The study underscores the need for targeted professional development initiatives that integrate spiritual and reflective competencies, especially for teachers in non-government sectors and for those with lower academic qualifications, to foster holistic educational environments aligned with the aims of value-based education.

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