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STANDARDIZATION OF SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS SCALE – (SCS-SIA)

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Abstract: The paper is the original work of the authors whose intent was to create a standardized Spiritual Consciousness scale. In this paper, Spiritual consciousness is understood as an abstract and unrestrained force that instills compassion and a value system in an individual. It supplicates inner growth in an individual and helps people respect others on a soul level; thereby reverberating the concept of oneness and being a part of a more prominent energy form. Understanding the transcendental property of Spiritual Consciousness still remains a mystery, but the researchers have attempted to come a little closer to it. Tools on spirituality have only focused on the belief system so far rather than the impact spirituality has on the individual itself. To make the approach of the scale more consciousness centered the researchers have referred to the concept of Spirituality from both eastern and western perspectives along with a scientific approach to generate a well-balanced scale.

Index Terms - Spiritual Consciousness, Reliability, Validity and Norms

I. INTRODUCTION

The conundrum behind existence has always perplexed individuals from all walks of life always. Irrespective of the social, religious or economical background existential crisis creeps in the best of us and pushes us towards self-exploration; consequently, to look beyond our worldly constitution and cursory view of life. Here is where spirituality plays a role in guiding the individual. Innately one is equipped with skills and various intelligences and how one uses it is widely dependent on his/her moral compass and consciousness. A spiritually conscious person thus becomes compassionate.

Spiritual Consciousness can be explained as a transcendental phenomenon which connects an individual to God. It is a dynamic capacity wherein one becomes conscious of the soul and God within us. Spiritual Consciousness products itself in various forms such as brotherhood, kindness towards external and internal environment. Along with that as a product of a stronger moral compass and better control on one's mental affliction. Its extensive nature allows unity in diversity.

Characteristics of Spiritual Consciousness: -

1. Chardin (1964) suggested 'One is not a Human Being Having a Spiritual Experience, one is, in fact, a Spiritual Beings Having a Human Experience'. Innately one is born spiritual.
2. Spirituality is not found in religion as religions are just a mere pathway to reach spirituality.
3. Mature Spiritual activism is required to "Shake the world awake" (Coder, 2012) and Spiritual Consciousness is the answer to the failing moral compass.
4. Spiritual Consciousness has no stereotypes and prejudices.
5. It is liberal minded rather than conservative in nature
6. Togetherness or brotherhood is very important part to gain momentum in social service. It is just like the basic unit of human body is the cell; similarly the basic unit of an individual is the soul.
7. A highly spiritual individual has the ability to transcend into various Spiritual states which he/ she can achieve through meditation or yog. The ability to enter heightened spiritual states of consciousness'
8. Spiritual Consciousness is an evolutionary process rather than a revolutionary concept.
9. Some of the properties of Spiritual Consciousness are that it about human connectedness, meta-awareness, witnessing awareness (non- attachment) and acceptance of experience mindfulness (Brazdau, 2014).
10. A spiritually conscious person will invest everyday behaviour with a sense of sacred. (Emmons, 2000).

CONSTRUCTION OF SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS SCALE

The researchers felt the need mostly when either the counterpart scales/ tools had innumerable items (which in future could defunct the respondent's interest; thereby compromising result); or did not study Spirituality in terms of consciousness (by studying in form of just beliefs or religious values only). Therefore, the current researchers' investigators considered it best to construct and standardize a test well suited for 'Spiritual Consciousness' that could precisely study it. The researcher studied primarily focussed on understanding what 'Spirituality' is from various perspectives. Spirituality is the core of any individual who decides to grow within.

Spiritual Consciousness was understood to be 'inner allied (consisting of Soul, mind and brain) potentiality' capable of awareness and transcendence. This force instills motivation; thereby promoting virtues such as self-worth but also provide a purpose of life.

Other than stabilizing an individual's moral compass it keeps the individual connected to the universal spiritual fabric of God. Bulleh Shah the renowned philosopher and Sufi poet of 1700 BC suggested:

Rab bande di zaat iko.../jive Kapde di zaat hai ruuhhh// This basically translates to 'That Almighty/God and human's race is the same; just like Cloth is to cotton'. The researcher understands that the scope of Spiritual Consciousness lies in its vast magnitude. This being an abstract topic lead the researchers to see if it could be quantified to gain a sense of direction towards understanding this limitless phenomenon. Keeping everything in mind the researchers with ardour proceeded with constructing an easily administered, scored and interpreted scale. The scale is deeply influenced and adapted from the teachings of saints and is constructed in a way that it is psychologically standardized.

STEPS IN CONSTRUCTION OF THE SCALE:

1) PLAN FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SCALE

The researcher after reviewing related literature and discussion with the experts concluded that Spiritual Consciousness manifests in form of 6 paramount dimensions. Also, to encourage religious equanimity the researcher encouraged from literature secular in nature. Thus, items based on the following dimensions were collected. Table 1 shows the chosen dimensions of Spiritual Consciousness Scale.

Table 1: Dimension of Spiritual Consciousness Scale

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Serial	Dimensions	Number of Items
A	Brotherhood of Mankind	9
B	Conservation of Natural Resources	8
C	Mental Afflictions	6
D	Physical and Cognitive Consciousness	5
E	Spiritual Beliefs	23
F	Being Values	8

The initial draft had 53 questions covering these 5 dimensions. Later after further reviewing and discussion with the experts a 6th dimension 'Mental Affliction' was included. Addition of this new component led to the understanding of what Spiritual Consciousness was 'not'. Adding it lead to the increment in the number of items from 53 to 59. The following dimensions were considered to be the frame of Spiritual Consciousness.

Dimension A: 'Brotherhood of Mankind' was considered important due to the concept of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam' ie 'the whole world is a family'. The Eastern perspective of Spiritual Consciousness values togetherness. Having a compassionate attitude towards each individual is considered to be very important. Togetherness also encourages acceptance and deepens the understanding of other individuals. It is similar to Maslow's concept of 'Oceanic feeling', a characteristic of self-actualized person.

Dimension B: 'Conservation of Natural Resources' was the result of considering the treatment most spiritualists have towards their environment. An individual who disrespects the nature and environment develops an insensitive attitude which may further slip into the individual's general attitude. On the other end valuing nature and environment develops gratitude. Having gratitude can un-magnify problems and develop endurance towards situations in life. It also develops positive attitude towards 'dignity of labour'. A person who believes in Conservation of natural resources is expected to be high in Spiritual Consciousness.

Dimension C: 'Mental Afflictions' were added because Spiritually Conscious individuals must have low mental afflictions. Most problems in life are said to be created in life due to Mental afflictions like Egotism (Ahankar), Wrath (Krodh), Attachment (Moh), Greed (lobh) and Lust (Kaam). This causes general imbalance in life and disrupts spiritual growth. So, it was thought that presence of mental afflictions would be a sign of low Spiritual Consciousness.

Dimension D: 'Physical and Cognitive Consciousness' is an invaluable component as healthy body reaps healthy mind. To be conscious and to choose what is right for the physical and cognitive needs for the individual is necessary. Body is considered to be no less than a temple. Those who meditate are expected to be stable physically and mentally. Physical Consciousness encompasses perceptions, environmental awareness and most importantly sensations. Cognitive Consciousness refers to thinking, reflection, judgement and meaning of patterns of understanding.

Dimension E: 'Spiritual Beliefs'; belief system often are responsible for our perception thereby shaping the world around us. It also is responsible for our actions accordingly. Similarly the spiritual belief system one has shapes his/ her Spiritual Consciousness. It was ensured that spirituality was not understood by the number of times an individual visited any religious place. It was of more importance on how much the individual felt connected whilst whatever practice he/she wishes to follow. Spirituality is beyond caste, creed, gender and religion.

Dimension F: 'Being Values': Sound values encourage healthy lifestyle and out of drama lifestyle. The value of intent and a righteous mind is necessary. Being liberal and open minded opens room for social adjustment and acceptance.

2) ITEM SELECTION

The 6 dimensions: 'Brotherhood of mankind', 'Conservation of natural resources', 'Mental Afflictions', 'Physical and cognitive consciousness', 'Spiritual consciousness' and 'Being Values' were finally chosen due to their high interaction with spiritual consciousness. After rigorous reviewing of literature and discussions with intellectuals the items were created with contemplation. A set of 59 items was chosen. Instructions and scoring were decided. Ambiguous items were deleted and language of difficult items was made clear.

Instruction: -

The following Instructions were provided to the respondents. 'On the following page there are statements related to your life choices and behaviours. Read each statement carefully and respond according to what best represents your opinion. You are requested to choose between the following 'Strongly Agree' (SA), 'Agree' (A), 'Uncertain' (U), 'Disagree' (D) and 'Strongly Disagree' (SD). There are no right or wrong answers. You may circle the option which suits your understanding. There is no time limit but try to complete it as soon as possible. Your answer will be kept confidential.'

Scoring: -

All items are scored on a 5point Likert scale (Rating Scale). In front of each statement 'SA', 'A', 'U', 'D' and 'SD' were provided as options to choose from. The meaning in Table 3.2 is explained as follows; -

Table 2- Explanation of Rating Abbreviation

Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
SA	A	U	D	SD

If SA is chosen/ circled then it is scored as 5, 'A' being scored as 4, 'U' being scored as 3, 'D' being scored as 2 and 'SD' being scored as 1; except for five reverse items number 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15; the scoring will be done in reverse manner.

I share my life experience with God daily and find time to remember or to think about the almighty few times in a day.	SA	A	U	D	SD
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Before reaching the final form the researcher went through a process of adding, deleting and converting few items. The final draft was far more reviewed and stronger in applicability.

3) FIRST DRAFT

Along with the instructions to respond, the participant was provided with 59 items to respond to. A pilot study was done on adults above 25 years of age. The test was administered on 20 judges and some respondents. This was indeed the most crucial step for the researcher as it opened the eyes for further required work for a successful construction of scale.

4) SECOND DRAFT AND ITEM ANALYSIS

The scale was now ready for next try-out and item analysis. The scores from 60 respondents were obtained for item analysis. Item analysis was done and items were further analysed. The weak items with little or no discriminative value were rejected and discarded.

Item analysis was done by calculating coefficient alpha between scores of each item with that of the test. The items with high correlation with total test scores on assessment were retained and the others were rejected. Selected statements, if found to be ambiguous were pinpointed and groomed. Items with high positive correlations (CronBach Alpha was used to find correlation) were retained. Finally, 36 items were selected and retained in the test of Spiritual Consciousness. Table 3 shows the retained item of the Spiritual Consciousness Scale along with their values of Coefficient Alpha.

Table 3: Items Retained in the Spiritual Consciousness Scale

Item No.	Coefficient Alpha	Item No.	Coefficient Alpha	Item No.	Coefficient Alpha
1	.264	2	.222	3	.656
4	.137	5	.633	6	.181
7	.563	8	.535	9	.561
10	.529	11	.520	12	.192
13	.178	14	.186	15	.230
16	.507	17	.451	18	.288
19	.287	20	.367	21	.617
22	.571	23	.719	24	.584
25	.535	26	.681	27	.598
28	.722	29	.339	30	.588
31	.599	32	.517	33	.542
34	.583	35	.540	36	.522

5) FINAL DRAFT

After the selection of final 36 items, final draft was ready and the scale was ready to be used. The Scale has both positively directed question and negatively directed question. The respondents were now asked to circle/tick from the options he/she found apt. It is at this point the researcher added an open-ended question to the scale for the respondents to answer. The question was not compulsory but was added for validation and in-depth analysis. The simple question that was asked was "Would you like to share any personal experience in relation to Spiritual Consciousness? If yes, then please write." The final draft was administered on a sample of 300 cases out of which 226 were returned. The reliability, validity and norms were established.

In the final draft dimension wise distribution of item is as follows (Table 4):

Table 4: Dimension of Spiritual Consciousness (Item Description)

Serial	Dimensions	Number of Items	Item Number
A	Brotherhood of Mankind	3	1, 2, 3
B	Conservation of Natural Resources	4	4, 5, 6, 7
C	Mental Afflictions	8	8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
D	Physical and Cognitive consciousness'	4	16, 17, 18, 19
E	Spiritual Beliefs	14	20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 36
F	Being Values	3	33, 34, 35

6) STANDARDIZATION

Reliability: Test re-test reliability was found for this scale. The scale was administered on a sample of 30. After a period of 6 months, they were again requested to respond to the scale. The correlation of scores of the test and retest was obtained and found to be .676 which is significant at 0.01 level. The test can thus be understood as highly dependable and consistent. The test will provide similar result over time. Table 5 shows the coefficient of correlation between test and re-test.

Table 5 – Coefficient of Correlation (r) between Test And Re-Test

	Ist test of Spiritual Consciousness Scale	N	level of significance
Re-test of Spiritual Consciousness Scale	$r = .676^{**}$	30	$p < .01$
**p<.01; Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Validity: The current scale was validated against Spiritual Consciousness Scale from CQ- i (Consciousness Quotient Inventory) constructed by Brazdau (2016). The researcher established concurrent validity (criterion related validity) of the scale. The two scales were administered on a sample of 44 adults. The criteria were the scores obtained on Brazdau's scale of Spiritual Consciousness. The coefficient of correlation between the scores of the two scale gave validity coefficient of the current scale. The Pearson's coefficient of correlation was .399 and Spearman coefficient of correlation was .477. Both the coefficients of correlation indicate significant relation between the newly constructed test and Brazdau's Spiritual Consciousness scale at 0.01 level. Thus, researcher established concurrent validity (criterion related validity) of the scale and it can be concluded that the test is closely linked to intended objective. Table 6 shows Coefficient of Correlation by Pearson product moment method between Brazdau's scale of Spiritual Consciousness and the current Spiritual Consciousness scale.

Table 6 – Coefficient of Correlation between Brazdau's scale of Spiritual Consciousness and the Spiritual Consciousness scale.

	Spiritual Consciousness Scale by the Investigator Pearson's Coefficient of Correlation	Spiritual Consciousness Scale by the Investigator Spearman's Coefficient of Correlation	Level Of Significance
Brazdau's Spiritual Consciousness Scale	$r = .399^{**}$	$p = .477$	$p < .01$
**p<.01; Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Norms:

Norms are extremely important for interpreting personal scores of individual participants. It shows individual's position in the group. The norm table indicates higher the level of the SCS Score the higher will be an individual's Spiritual Consciousness and the lower score (below 136) indicates lower level of Spiritual Consciousness. Standard Score Norms (Z score) was calculated on a sample of 200 cases. Table 7 below displays Z score norms.

Table 7 – Standard Score Norms (Z Score Norms)

SCORE	Z SCORE	INTERPRETATION
180	3 σ	Extremely High
168	2 σ	High
152	1 σ	Above Average
136	0	Average
120	-1 σ	Below Average
104	-2 σ	Low
88	-3 σ	Extremely Low

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