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The Application of Content Analysis toward the Development of Spiritual Intelligence Model for Human Excellence (SIMHE)

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Abstract
To achieve human excellence, the authors proposed spiritual intelligence as the core value for holistic education as being outlined in the Malaysian National Philosophy of Education. Currently, the concept of spiritual intelligence is not widely discussed, especially in the context of Malaysian education. This study is focused in developing spiritual intelligence elements through a content analysis of two important texts; Ihya Ulumuddin (Book 3) by Imam al-Ghazali and Manusia dan Pendidikan by Hasan Langgulung. Based on the content analysis conducted, seven elements of spiritual intelligence were identified toward the development of the Spiritual Intelligence Model for Human Excellence (SIMHE).

Keywords: Spiritual intelligence; content analysis; human excellence; education; SIMHE

1. Introduction
Every nation’s educational philosophy should address the issue of values, beliefs and attitudes in developing individuals at the micro level, and later to develop the society and nation at the macro level. As for Malaysia, the vision, mission and the National Philosophy of Education (NPE) are as stated in the following:

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Vision: “Excellent School: Glorious Generation”; Mission: “Developing Individual Potentials through Quality Education”; NPE: “Education in Malaysia is an on-going effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious, based on a firm belief in and devotion to God………”

Education is reflected to be an essential and a foremost important route in developing individuals to be the key performers in achieving the country’s aspirations. The NPE stands as guidance for all the processes and activities in the Malaysian educational system. It sets the values, beliefs and principles of the Malaysian educational framework. The basis of the NPE is that individuals are committed to their notion of God and their religion. The ultimate aim of the NPE should pave the way to good ethics and moral values inculcated in responsible and learned individuals, members of the community and the nation. It has been more than 20 years since the NPE was developed, yet individual achievement from the perspective of spiritual is not emphasized in relation to cognitive ability as spirituality is only being viewed within the scope of religious and moral studies. In accordance with the initial value of creating a quality education and to identify the elements of spiritual intelligence from the Islamic perspective and be generalized to common perspectives, the research paradigm is given in Fig. 1:

Fig.1. The Research Paradigm

The nation’s education vision in achieving excellent school/glorious generation could be achieved through quality education with a holistic approach to create a well-balanced individual with high morality and ethics. The journey of Malaysian education toward achieving the vision, however, seems to be vague as there is a huge gap in one of the important elements of holistic education, namely the spiritual element. The majority of the schools and educational institutions in Malaysia are emphasizing more on the intellectual element and partly the emotional element. The spiritual element is being separated and narrowed down to religious and moral study, whereas according to the reality of education as emphasized by Hasan Langgulung (1986), Naqib Al-Attas (1999) and Sidek Baba (2004), there should not be any separation between the spiritual element and all other elements in holistic education. The spiritual intelligence should be the core element in guiding the other elements (Covey 2004). This study is initiated to research on spiritual intelligence which is the ultimate intelligence and its components toward the development of the spiritual intelligence model for human excellence (SIMHE).

2. Spiritual intelligence, an ultimate intelligence

As a human being we tend to ask some fundamental questions as to how we are created, who created us, where are we heading in life, how long we will be in this world and so on. These questions and others related to human self are being answered through an intelligence known as spiritual intelligence. It is the influence that we gain by acting from a deep sense of meaning, our deepest values, and sense of higher purpose through a life devotion (Zohar, 2010). One of the widely accepted definitions of spiritual intelligence is by Zohar and Marshall (2000); “Intelligence with which we access our deepest meanings, values, purposes, and highest motivations.”

There are four main components of spiritual intelligence identified by King and Decicco (2009): (1) critical existential thinking, (2) personal meaning production, (3) transcendental awareness, and (4) conscious state expansion.
This ‘four factor model’ displayed an acceptable fit to justify and reflect the spiritual intelligence capability of individuals to reframe, re-interpret or re-contextualize their thinking toward creating a purpose/meaning in life with a greater level of consciousness and transcendence awareness. Emmons (2000) identified 4 components of spiritual intelligence: (1) the capacity for transcendence, (2) the ability to enter into a heightened spiritual state of consciousness, (3) the ability to invest everyday activities, events, and relationships with a sense of the sacred and (4) the ability to employ spiritual resources to solve problems in living.

Amram and Dryer (2008) defined spiritual intelligence as “the ability to apply and embody spiritual resources and qualities to enrich daily functioning and wellbeing”. Seven major themes emerged which are universal across diverse traditions and cultures: consciousness, grace, meaning, transcendence, truth, peaceful surrender to self and inner-directedness. Zohar and Marshall (2000) justified that spiritual quotient/intelligence as an ultimate intelligence beyond the emotional intelligence (EQ) and conceptual intelligence (IQ) because neither EQ nor IQ is able to explain the full complexity of human intelligence and soul. They further outlined 10 indications of high SQ (p. 15): (a) Flexibility, (b) Self-awareness, (c) The capacity to face and use suffering, (d) The capacity to face and transcend pain, (e) The quality of being inspired by vision and values, (f) Reluctance to cause unnecessary harm, (g) The tendency to see the connection between diverse things, (h) Tendency to ask why, what if, and to seek answers, (i) Facility to work against convention and (j) Servant leader. These four sources (King & DeCicco, Amram & Dryer, Emmons and Zohar & Marshall) of spiritual intelligence were partially used as a platform to conduct the content analysis by identifying initial themes/components of the spiritual intelligence.

3. Content Analysis on *Ihya Ulumuddin* (Book 3) and *Manusia dan Pendidikan*

A content analysis was done based on Imam al-Ghazali’s *Ihya Ulumuddin* [Revival of Religious Sciences] (Book 3) and Hasan Langgulung’s *Manusia dan Pendidikan* [Man and Education] to find common spiritual intelligence components from the Islamic perspective and could as well be generalized beyond the religious scope. Imam al-Ghazali was chosen for being one of the greatest scholars in the history of Islamic thought and known as *Hujjat al-Islam* (proof of Islam). While Hasan Langgulung was chosen as he is a well-known academician in the field of education in Malaysia and Indonesia and till today his works are widely cited by many researchers in this particular field.

Content analysis allows researchers to establish their own context of inquiry, thus opening the door to a rich repertoire of social-scientific constructs by which texts may become meaningful in ways that a culture may not be aware of (Krippendorff 1989). In this study, the authors established few initial spiritual intelligence terms based on four secondary sources (Amram & Dryer, 2008; Emmons, 2000; King & Decicco, 2009; Zohar & Marshall, 2000). Content analysis serves many purposes; with regard to this study, the main purpose in conducting the content analysis is to discover a set of spiritual intelligence components from the Islamic perspective and in which the same elements could be applied to the general perspective in regards to any religion and spiritual background. A few steps are involved in conducting the content analysis (Ary et al., 2009):

1. Specifying the phenomenon to be investigated. In this study, the researchers investigated about the spiritual intelligence elements.
2. Selecting the media from which the observations are to be made. This study involved two main texts which were *Ihya Ulumuddin* (Book 3) by al-Ghazali (translated version by Fazlul Karim, 1991) and *Manusia dan Pendidikan* by Hasan Langgulung (1986).
3. Formulating exhaustive and mutually exclusive coding categories. In this study, seven categories were identified and each category contains 4 – 6 sub-categories. The seven categories are: purpose/meaning of life, consciousness, transcendence, spiritual resources, self-determination, reflection-soul purification and coping with obstacles.
4. Deciding on sampling plan. For this study, not the whole books from both texts were used as some chapters are not relevant to the study. For *Ihya Ulumuddin* (Book 3), the main concentration was given to chapter 1. For other chapters only related pages were used. For *Manusia dan Pendidikan*, from chapter one to the last chapter, only selected pages were used that can be related to the spiritual intelligence elements.
5. Training the coders. (Not applicable in this study as the researchers had the sole responsibility in the coding activity).
6. Analyzing the data. In this study no specific tool is used. Data were analyzed using secondary sources, including the Holy text of Al Quran and other literature to support the selected themes.

### 3.1 Content analysis and findings

| Code | Theme and sub-theme |
|------|---------------------|
|      | Theme 1: Purpose / meaning of life |
| A1   | Contemplating the meaning/purpose for being in this world |
| A2   | Contemplating the reason why this world is being created |
| A3   | Contemplate the oneness of God the Almighty and His grace towards the creations |
| A4   | Practicing good conduct to build a sense of purpose in this world and hereafter |
| A5   | Understand the inter-connectedness between oneself and others |
|      | Theme 2: Consciousness |
| B1   | Highly aware of the relationship between mind, body and soul |
| B2   | Conscious toward the knowledge of the soul to gain the knowledge of God |
| B3   | Being conscious of the origin/source of one’s thought (bad/good) |
| B4   | Being conscious of the importance that one’s choices have on one’s life |
| B5   | To keep one’s mind under control |
| B6   | Entering a state of consciousness during prayers/meditation |
|      | Theme 3: Transcendence |
| C1   | Recognize God’s existence, attributes and actions |
| C2   | Recognize the inter-connectedness of man’s attributes/potentials to God’s attributes/potentials. |
| C3   | Contemplate the nature of God’s creation and how He rules the world and the universe |
| C4   | Relating one’s actions to God |
| C5   | Realize and sense the non-material aspects of life |
|      | Theme 4: Spiritual Resources |
| D1   | Takes the holy/sacred/motivational text as the source of life direction/decision making |
| D2   | Practice daily life and actions according to as-Sunnah/a chosen role model |
| D3   | Having knowledge to reach God. (Intellect knowledge and religion knowledge) |
| D4   | Understand the holy/sacred/motivational text to gain a high level of intelligence |
| D5   | Using one’s senses and relate to the inner self |
|      | Theme 5: Self-determination |
| E1   | To have will to obtain good |
| E2   | Intensely work towards controlling negative thoughts and behaviour |
| E3   | Determined to make the best choice in one’s own behaviour |
| E4   | Determined to achieve the ultimate aim of being the servant and the vicegerent of God |
| E5   | Determined to achieve self-actualization through God-realization |
|      | Theme 6: Reflection/soul purification |
| F1   | Reflect on God’s creation to acquire self-motivation |
| F2   | Purifying oneself through worship of God |
| F3   | Purifying one’s heart through the remembrance of God |
The findings in Table 1 were derived from the content analysis done on the two major texts, as stated above. Seven themes and 34 sub-themes were identified with proper codification.

4. Discussion

4.1 Purpose/ meaning of life

Individuals with high spiritual intelligence should have the ability to contemplate the reason for being in this world and understand the connection of their soul to the Almighty. As God says in al-Qur’an:

“I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me” (Adh-Dhāriyāt, 51: 56)

Accepting oneself as a servant of God and worshipping Him is a sign of appreciation from humankind to the Almighty. A man with high spiritual intelligence will understand that “this world is the seed ground for the next world (hereafter) and a station of guidance” (Fazlul Karim, 1991, p. 3). Besides worshipping God, the purpose of a human being to be created is to be the vicegerent of God. As God says in al-Quran:

“And (mention, O Muhammad), when your Lord said to the Angels, ‘Indeed I will make upon the earth a successive authority’……” (Al-Baqarah, 2: 30)

A successive authority is referring to mankind as the vicegerent of God who has the responsibility not just toward God but also toward other creations. Mankind is chosen as the vicegerent of God, since the human soul has a unique attribute of knowing the truth which other creations did not possess. When human beings understand the purpose and the meaning of their creation, and act in accordance to the responsibility bestowed upon them by God, they will have a high tendency to do good. According to al-Ghazali (Fazlul Karim, 1991) good conduct is half of a religion. God gives strength through good conduct and benevolence and the best of good conduct among human beings is Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him (PBUH).

As being said by Hasan Langgulung (1986), the nature of human beings involved four important aspects: (1) The role of mankind in this life, (2) Power that belongs to the human origin, (3) The extent to which the environment be able to shape the human behavior and (4) The ability of a man to learn and gain new experience. These four aspects are very critical to be addressed by mankind in understanding the purpose/ meaning of life and move towards a high level of spiritual intelligence to achieve human excellence.

4.2 Consciousness

Individuals with high spiritual intelligence should have a greater level of consciousness in which they know their real self and live consciously with a clear mind and refined awareness. Zohar and Marshall (2000) clearly proved in their book *Spiritual Intelligence, The Ultimate Intelligence*, which, according to Neuroscientist Rodolfo Llinas, consciousness is connected with the presence of 40 Hz oscillations in the human brain and described it as a spiritual state of “high consciousness” within the realm of quantum physics. These frequencies are evidence of spiritual intelligence (intelligence of the soul).

According to al-Ghazali (Fazlul Karim, 1991) knowledge of the soul (qalb/ ruh/ nafs and aql) is the root to the knowledge of God. People with high spiritual intelligence will have a high level of consciousness about their own creation and possess a high ability to understand and gain knowledge about the soul and acquire the knowledge of God and His attributes. This knowledge will lead to a meaningful worshipping not merely a matter of body movement,
4.3 Transcendence

According to Le and Levenson (2005) self-transcendence is the ability to move beyond self-centered consciousness, and to see things with a considerable measure of freedom from biological and social conditioning. In this study, transcendence is being discussed from the spiritual perspective and being related to God-consciousness; how mankind is related to God. In this study transcendence is also considered as an ability that exists outside the ordinary consciousness, for example, like holism, inter-connectedness, non-materialism and others (King & Decicco 2009). According to al-Ghazali in The Alchemy of Happiness (Field, 1910) man’s attributes are the reflection of God attributes thus from the creation of man, he came to know the existence of God. As God says in al- Qur’an:

“And when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of my (created ) soul…..” (Al Hijr 15:29)

This verse clearly shows that human creation is from the sparkle of God in which God gives man potentials or abilities in accordance with God’s natures not only for his own use, but also for the use of other human beings and other beings (Hassan Langgulung, 1986).

From the Islamic perspective, human attributes/ potentials are summarized based on the natures of Allah that are the 99 names of Allah known as al-Asma al-Husna. The ability to develop God’s attributes (natures of Allah) within the self of a man will lead to a higher level of spiritual intelligence. For example, one of Allah’s names is al-Quddus derived from the word Quds meaning pure and blessed. This name refers to God as who is free and perfect from any deficiency and holy in all aspects. To develop this nature within mankind, God commands men to practice the five pillars of Islam; syahada is to purify one’s intention and thought from syirik (shirk), to perform prayers after cleansing oneself and one’s heart through ablution; to pay zakat to cleanse oneself from unlawful wealth; fasting to cleanse and detoxify one’s body and finally performing hajj or pilgrimage where, once in ihram no one is superior to another. So to reach a high level of spiritual intelligence through the aspects of transcendence, humans should strive to develop the 99 God’s nature within themselves.

4.4 Spiritual resources

According to Emmons (2000a), one of the important aspects of spiritual intelligence is the ability of an individual to utilize spiritual resources to solve problems. Spiritual resources can be considered as ethics and values (from any sources such as book, text, video and human being) but, in the Islamic perspective it is beyond these. Resources are considered as inputs needed to produce outputs. From the Islamic perspective of spiritual intelligence, resources are considered as inputs either external or internal factors within or surrounding humans. Al-Ghazali (Fazlul Karim, 1991) explained about the external human body which are related to the five senses and these five senses are considered as armies of the soul. For example how can individuals purify themselves? In Islam, individuals should safeguard their five senses against unlawful things and see, hear and say good things like reciting the Holy Qur’an and understanding its meaning and applying its contents in their daily life. Then they will be able to be in a state of high level of spiritual intelligence that is considered as an output. In Islam, the two main resources are al-Quran and as-Sunnah (words and actions of Prophet Muhammad PBUH). According to Hasan Langgulung (1986), the true way of life is gained by oneself through the reading of God’s revelation; the Qur’an. Individuals who possess a high level of spiritual intelligence will live their life in accordance with the Quran and as-Sunnah because they understand and cultivate the contents by practice, for their own benefits as well as to benefit others.

4.5 Self-determination

The ultimate concern of a human being is determined to achieve self-actualization, not just physically or materially but most importantly through spiritual achievement. According to Tillich (1963) in Emmons (2000, p. 4), spiritual is
“a state of being grasped by an ultimate concern, a concern which qualifies all other concerns as preliminary and which itself contains the answer to the question of the meaning of our life”. Individuals should have a high determination towards achieving ultimate concern in achieving Divine knowledge through acquiring a higher level of spiritual intelligence.

Determination can be in the form of will. According to al-Ghazali (Fazlul Karim, 1991), will is one of the important attributes for men’s soul to become fit to approach God and honored. When a man can understand by his intellect the result of any action and know what can bring good, there will grow in his mind a will to obtain that good and to do that action. People with high spiritual intelligence will be able to keep themselves under control and have a high will power to overcome passion, anger and pride. They also will have high determination to gain Divine knowledge that is the ultimate concern. Man has the freedom to make choices; the freedom to choose behavior, the choice to be a believer or not. Worshipping God and attaining the Divine knowledge are the highest level of fitrah (nature) development, it is a form of self-actualization and it can be done by individuals who have high self-determination (Hasan Langgulung, 1986).

4.6 Reflection-soul purification

For persons to have a high spiritual intelligence level, they should reflect upon themselves and their deepest motivation to search for meaning in life (Zohar & Marshall, 2000). In Islam, reflecting oneself means to think deeply and systematically or tafakkur in Arabic language. According to Gullen (n.d.), reflection is the light in the heart that allows a believer to differentiate what is good and evil, what is beneficial and what is harmful. Reflecting oneself and reaching God the Almighty needs the person to purify his or her soul. First and foremost believers should surrender their self to God in the sense that they gain self-acceptance, self-compassion, inner-wholeness and egolessness (Amram & Dryer 2008). According to al-Ghazali (Fazlul Karim, 1991) the soul which is pure is the soul that is firm in religion, purest in faith, most kind in treatment to others. Man needs to be prepared to remove any impurities to gain brightness of soul and the brightness of soul can be gained through remembrance of God (dhikr). The objective of purifying the soul is to gain the light of faith or the light of Divine knowledge (Fazlul Karim, 1991). By remembering God [dhikr, fikr (thought) and pious actions], individuals are able to tame the devil and save themselves from worldly passions, and temptations and able to achieve a high level of spiritual intelligence.

4.7 Coping with obstacles

The ability to cope with obstacles involves cognitive ability. Coping is a process in which individuals attempt to manage or deal with difficulties and any life obstacles or pressures. Coping does not just involve rational thinking, but emotional and spiritual thinking. Religious or spiritual coping is a search for significance in times of stress in ways related to the sacred (Pargament, 2001). According to al-Ghazali, there are many obstacles in gaining Divine knowledge, for example impurities of sin and worldly attention (Fazlul Karim, 1991). Purifying the soul will enable individuals to cleanse the soul from sin and to empty the soul from worldly passion. With a clear mind and soul coping with obstacles or problems will be easy. Ability to cope is not just a matter related to one’s own self, but also involves other human beings, other beings, life events and the environment. Higgins (1978) in (Hasan Langgulung, 1986) listed seven obstacles that can cause disaster to human nature and the world, for example, hunger, deficit in resources and others, but the most significant is the destruction of human morality. A person with high spiritual intelligence possesses a high ability to cope with these situations. Religious or spiritual coping is unique from standard measures of secular coping. When religion is entered into the coping equation, it increases the ability to predict outcomes beyond the effects of secular coping (Pargament, 2001).

5. Conclusion

The content analysis of al Ghazali’s Ihya Ulumuddin (Book 3) and Hasan Langgulung’s Manusia dan Pendidikan had initiated the seven components of spiritual intelligence; purpose/meaning of life, consciousness, transcendence, spiritual resources, self-determination, reflection-soul purification and coping with obstacles. Each of these
components was discussed as to how it was related to spiritual intelligence and how it could lead to the achievement of human excellence. Following the findings, these seven components were used to develop the Spiritual Intelligence Model for Human Excellence (SIMHE) which was later evaluated and validated using fuzzy Delphi method.

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