

Does Spiritual Intelligence impact Teachers' Engagement so that teachers ...

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Does Spiritual Intelligence impact Teachers' Engagement so that teachers can get engaged in Teaching the Green Curriculum?

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Abstract:

Educational institutions have a major influence on society. This is the reason why schools should adopt the green curriculum which concentrates mainly on using innovative rather than traditional methods of teaching. Thus, this research aims to investigate the impact of spiritual intelligence and its dimensions on teachers' engagement. The participants of this research are 360 teachers in governmental public secondary schools in Alexandria governorate. The research relationships are tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling, then the hypotheses are tested using path analysis technique based on the structural model. The results have shown positive and significant impact between the independent and dependent variables except for the two dimensions of spiritual intelligence: "personal meaning production" and "transcendental awareness", which have positive - but not significant - impact on "teachers' engagement".

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Keywords: spiritual intelligence , teachers' engagement, the green curriculum.

Literature Review and Hypotheses:

The Independent Variable : Spiritual Intelligence:

In the last twenty years, nerve psychology, anthropology and cognitive science proved that there is a kind of intelligence known by the name of "spiritual intelligence" (Al Masri *et al.*, 2020). Zohar *et al.*,(2000, p.30) introduced the concept of spiritual intelligence and defined it as "the intelligence with which people deal with and solve problems of meaning and value, the intelligence with which they can place their conduct and their lives in a wider, richer, meaning-giving context, the intelligence with which they can assess that one life-path is more meaningful than the other."

Zohar *et al.*, (2000, p.45) clarified that spiritual intelligence contains two words: spiritual and intelligence. The word "spiritual" is derived from the Latin word "spiritus" which means "the thing that gives life or essence". She maintained that it is the intelligence of the deep self, the intelligence through which people ask fundamental questions and reshape their answers. She argued that through spiritual intelligence, one can face danger and anger courageously and prudently. Spiritually intelligent people are more tolerant, honest and compassionate towards others. In (2005), she added that spiritual intelligence boosts creativity and innovation.

King *et al.*, (2009, p.70) defined spiritual intelligence as “a set of adaptive mental and cognitive capacities based on nonmaterial and transcendent aspects of reality related to the nature of one’s existence which helps people to solve problems at work and stick to high moral standards.” He proposed four main dimensions : the first is “critical existential thinking”, which is “the ultimate power to discuss existential, critical issues and indulging into investigating all life matters in addition to perfectly conceive, apply, analyze and assess information generated by observation, experience, reflection and communication” ; the second dimension is “personal meaning production”, which is “the perfection in finding a life purpose, solving problems and become full of hope and enthusiasm.” (King, 2010, p.3). His third dimension is “transcendental awareness”, which is “the ability to recognize unique accomplishments of the self and others as well as in depth perception-not perceived by the physical senses, which paves the way for far better consequences for the benefit of all people”. The fourth dimension is “conscious state expansion”, which is “the ultimate power to penetrate higher level of spiritual awareness and evoke spirit for guidance into daily difficult situations.” (King *et al.*, 2009, p.71)

The Dependent Variable: Teachers' Engagement:

In (1990), Khan was the first one to introduce the term “engagement”. He maintained that it is closely related to the

psychological presence of teachers when performing their role. In (2002), he added that engagement is “their dedication, happiness and vehemence for work.” In (2010), he enhanced the definition claiming that engaged teachers concentrate on work, implement their ideas, develop the capacity of problem solving and express their points of view freely and comfortably do the best they can at work (Nishadi *et al.*, 2017, p. 5). Shuck *et al.*, (2013, p.1) claimed that “engagement” is “the cognitive, emotional and behavioral energy that teachers channel toward positive school results.”

Imandin *et al.*(2014) proposed eleven dimensions for teachers' engagement: cognitive drivers; emotional engagement; behavioral engagement; feeling valued and involved; having an engaged leadership team; trust and integrity; nature of the job; connection between teachers and school performance; career growth opportunities; stress free environment and change management. The current research depends on only four of them: “emotional engagement”, which is having the capacity to concentrate on the tasks teachers perform without distraction. This expands teachers' available resources and boost critical and creative thinking processes. The second dimension is “change management”, which is empowering teachers to accept changes willingly in educational institutions to provide solutions to environmental crises to render schools sustainable. The third dimension is “behavioral engagement”, which is having the power to collaborate with colleagues and feeling that they are

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part and parcel of their school as well as being a part of a solution. The fourth dimension is “connection between teachers and school performance”, which is the extent to which teachers absorb school's objectives, current levels of performance and how best to contribute to them. These four dimensions consolidate schools to invest in teachers' creative thinking and urge them to change in search of innovation.

The Green Curriculum:

In September 2015, the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit adopted the principle of Transforming the World. It is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development on which the 21st century focuses. It is a value goal: the development of human society. (Liu *et al.*, 2021)

Sterling in (2010) defined the Green Curriculum as “the process of equipping students with the skills needed to work and live in a way that protects the environment, society and economy both for today and for future generations.” (Khadim *et al.*, 2021, p. 200). Sola, (2014, p.335) defined it as “the development of awareness, skills, knowledge, attitudes and values which solve environmental problems.”

In 2017, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) developed the following eight core competencies of the Green Curriculum: “systems thinking competency”, which is “breaking problems that are too difficult to deal with as a whole down into smaller and more manageable parts,

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each can be analyzed separately.” (Randle, 2014) “Integrated problem-solving competency”, which is “identifying problems, examining and recognizing scientific facts of problems through justified sources of information then removing obstacles to reach efficient decision making.” (Nurtant *et al.*, 2018, p. 5). “Critical thinking competency”, which is “analyzing, evaluating and transforming thinking for the better.” (Howlett *et al.*, 2016, p. 305). “Strategic Competency”, which is “having a vision and working to make it real.” (Warren *et al.*, 2014, p.4). “Anticipatory Competency”, which is “future thinking including possible outcomes of decisions and actions.” (Komasinsiki *et al.*, 2017, p. 22). “Normative Competency”, which is “the moral thinking that necessitates the awareness of different perspectives and the ability to find solutions.” (Komasinsiki *et al.*, 2017, p. 30). “Self-awareness competency” , which is “the examination of one’s new emotional states, thoughts and feelings comparing them to one’s old emotional states and thoughts.” (Fiore *et al.*, 2018, p.368). “Collaboration competency”, which is “the power to empathy and being sensitive to others.” (Fiore *et al.*, 2018, p. 369)

The Impact of Spiritual Intelligence on Teachers' Engagement:

The major hypothesis is based on Torabi *et al* (2016) who inspected the impact of spiritual intelligence on engagement and proved a significant relationship. Richard (2015) mentioned that Sheep and Foreman (2012) claimed that it is spiritual intelligence

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that decides whether one's job is monotonous or engaging and that spiritual intelligence is associated with teachers' commitment and strong affiliation to work and an increase in the growth of values and loyalty to their schools as it renders teachers' engagement an inherent dimension of personality. Richard (2015) indicated that spiritual intelligence at work transforms teachers into willing servants. As a result, a change of perceptions materializes which brings about complete compliance to teaching the green curriculum. Teachers who lack spiritual intelligence are unconnected, disengaged, lost and search for meaning.

Based on the above discussion, the researcher can propose the major hypothesis:

H1: "Spiritual Intelligence is expected to have significant and strong positive impact on teachers' engagement."

The Impact of Spiritual Intelligence dimensions on Teachers' Engagement:

(a) The Impact of Critical Existential Thinking on Teachers' Engagement:

Torabi *et al* (2016) uses the same dimensions that are going to be used in this research such as (a) critical existential thinking, (b) personal meaning production, (c) transcendental awareness and (d) conscious state expansion. Torabi *et al* (2016) proved a significant relationship between critical existential thinking and engagement.

King *et al.*, (2009) maintained that through critical existential thinking, teachers become proficient in meditating existential issues using critical thinking and reaching original conclusions concerning all life matters. Imandin *et al.*, (2014) claimed that positive emotions can promote teachers' creativity so that they can teach students how to understand the world in terms of connectedness. According to Kamppinen *et al.*, (2015), teachers can also teach students how to specify a problem, develop hypotheses and try to reach solutions based on perfect analysis and assessed information generated by observation, experience, reflection and communication which all lies at the heart of both the green curriculum and spiritual intelligence, as both pave the way for facilitating the educational process in solving global problems as they create global awareness among teachers and students.

Based on the previous discussion, the researcher can develop the first sub-hypothesis:

H1a: "Critical Existential Thinking is expected to have significant and strong positive impact on teachers' engagement."

(b) The Impact of Personal Meaning Production on Teachers' Engagement:

The second sub hypothesis of the current research is based on Torabi *et al* (2016) study as it indicated a significant relationship between personal meaning production and engagement. Personal Meaning Production, according to Saha *et*

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al., (2017), is mainly concerned with having a definite purpose for one's existence and being able to make use of it to solve problems prudently as well as considering the past carefully.

According to Nuntamanop *et al.*, (2013), teachers can be visionary, creative and analytical leading to safer, happier and healthier future changes and solutions for problems. This lies at the heart of both spiritual intelligence, which is based on solving problems, and teaching the green curriculum as sustainability requires future thinking which is mainly concerned with the ability to conjointly analyze and assess the future related to sustainability issues.

Based on the previous discussion, the researcher can develop the second sub-hypothesis:

H1b: "Personal Meaning Production is expected to have significant and strong positive impact on teachers' engagement."

(c) The Impact of Transcendental Awareness on Teachers' Engagement:

The third sub hypothesis of the current research is based on Torabi *et al* (2016). which proved a significant relationship between transcendental awareness and engagement. Solgil *et al.*, (2018) indicated that teachers who enjoy transcendental awareness are behaviorally engaged in a sense that they can investigate their personal self and thoughts and emphasize the association between their self-awareness and their ability to create and maintain meaningful relationships with students. This

boosts their ability to improve their own performance in teaching activities to have positive effects on students and have a better teaching performance.

Zakaria *et al.* (2018) and Rasheed *et al.* (2018) indicated that transcendent teachers can collectively map, specify, apply, reconcile and negotiate sustainability values, principles, goals and targets to become fully engaged in teaching the green curriculum as they have to evaluate a problem and its context comprehensively and discuss how justice, equity, social-ecological integrity and ethics vary across and within cultures, which is the essence of teaching the green curriculum.

Based on the previous discussion, the researcher can develop the third sub-hypothesis:

H1c: "transcendental awareness is expected to have significant and strong positive impact on teachers' engagement."

(d) The Impact of Conscious State expansion on Teachers' Engagement:

The fourth sub hypothesis of the current research is based on Torabi *et al* (2016). Torabi study proved a significant relationship between conscious state expansion and engagement. Conscious state expansion is, according to king *et al.*, (2009), the sixth sense which teaches people how to be sympathetic and cooperative.

Brundiers *et al.*(2010) indicated that teachers who possess conscious state expansion are fully engaged as they can teach students how to design, apply a collaborative process, create

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interpersonal skills, consider their experiences carefully, develop intimate relationships with their peers and become more proficient in managing difficult situations reaching different processes of reasoning and efficient decision-making concerning collaborative and participatory problem solving, which are all the essence of teaching the green curriculum.

Fiore *et al.*, (2018) indicated that such teachers can identify and spiritually sense sources of hardships and teach students how to control them in future dealing with problems to raise their awareness and skills to be able to solve environmental problems.

Based on the above discussion, the researcher can develop the fourth sub-hypothesis:

H1d: "Conscious State expansion is expected to have significant and strong positive impact on teachers' engagement."

Research Methodology:

This research is conducted to analyze the impact of spiritual intelligence on teachers' engagement in governmental public secondary schools in Alexandria in Egypt. The selection of this industry is due to the fact that the researcher's job is an instructor at a higher institute in Alexandria; she wants to be fully acquainted with the methods by which governmental public secondary school teachers deal with students and whether or not those teachers are spiritually intelligent and engaged to their schools to teach the green curriculum. Hence, the researcher can determine whether or not teachers have the adequate skills and competencies to become

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sustainability minded citizens and whether or not students can be sustainability change agents. The researcher can also determine the possibility of discussing with the officials the application of sustainability infused curriculum at the Institute.

Data is collected from teachers only once depending on proportionate stratified random sampling.

N= population size, n= sample size. Confidence level = 95% = (z-score) 1.96

Error = 0.05 (margin of error), P (standard deviation) = 0.5

Population Size = 5630

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times (0.5)^2}{(0.05)^2} / \left(1 + \frac{(1.96)^2 \times (0.5)^2}{(0.05)^2 \times 5630} \right) = 360$$

The sample size is 360.

The questionnaires are originally developed from foreign articles. They were translated to Arabic language before distribution to teachers. For measuring the independent variable "spiritual intelligence" and its dimensions, the researcher depends on a questionnaire consisting of twenty statements that was developed by (King & DeCicco, 2009). Based on a model developed by (Imandin & Bisschoff, 2014) to measure the dependent variable "teachers' engagement", the researcher depends on a questionnaire consisting of ten statements.

Depending on Likert scale, 400 questionnaires were distributed to teachers, 360 valid responses were returned and "6"

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questionnaires were excluded. The remained valid questionnaires are "354". The response rate of the research sample amounted to "90 %", which is considered a very acceptable percentage in the field of social sciences.

Data Analysis:

The normal distribution test is one of the required methods to verify that the data has been collected is suitable for statistical data analysis. The following table shows that the skewness and kurtosis value for all variables fall within the acceptable limits of the skewness and kurtosis values. Thus, it can be said that the data follows univariate normal distribution. As for the descriptive analysis of the variables, the mean indicates "agreement" on the "5 – point Likert type scale".

Table (1) :

	Items	Mean	SD	Kurtosis		Skewness	
				Statistic	SD	Statistic	SD
"Spiritual Intelligence"	"Critical Existential Thinking"	4.28	0.69	.010	.253	-.68	.127
	"Personal Meaning Production"	3.49	.44	1.195	.253	.393	.127
	"Transcendental Awareness"	3.80	.54	.733	.253	-1.00	.127
	"Conscious State Expansion"	4.13	0.79	-.79	.253	-.40	.127
	"Teachers' Engagement"	3.66	.34	2.071	.253	.262	.127

The deductive analysis of the data is examined using the Partial Least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) method. The path analysis technique is used to estimate the relationships between the independent and the dependent variables. This is done by relying on the statistical package for the social sciences program (IBM SPSS V.27). Then followed by deductive analysis, which is done through the use of the structural equations modeling program (Smart-PLS V.4) according to the partial least squares method.

The following table shows the factor loading items on their variables before their development. Due to the fact that the optimal value that remains undeleted is greater than "0.7", and that the deleted factor loading value is less than "0.4", all questionnaire items are retained except for six items.

Table (2) :

Factor loading items before their development.

	"Critical Existential Thinking"	"Personal Meaning Production"	"Transcendental Awareness"	"Conscious State Expansion"	"Teachers' Engagement"
TH 1	0.740				
TH 2	0.823				
TH 3	0.795				
TH 4	0.690				
TH 5	0.782				
Pro 1		0.753			
Pro 2		0.814			
Pro 3		-0.664			
Pro 4		0.787			
Pro 5		-0.637			

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Awar 1			0.799		
Awar 2			-0.593		
Awar 3			0.805		
Awar 4			0.695		
Awar 5			0.775		
Expa 1				0.892	
Expa 2				0.825	
Expa 3				0.890	
Expa 4				0.844	
Expa 5				0.850	
Enga 1					-0.672
Enga 2					0.689
Enga 3					-0.665
Enga 4					0.491
Enga 5					0.710
Enga 6					-0.532
Enga 7					0.682
Enga 8					0.658
Enga 9					0.711
Enga 10					0.772

*Item Coding :

*(TH) = "Critical Existential Thinking"

*(Pro) = "Personal Meaning Production"

*(Awar) = "Transcendental Awareness"

*(Expan) = "Conscious State Expansion"

*(Enga) = "Teachers' Engagement"

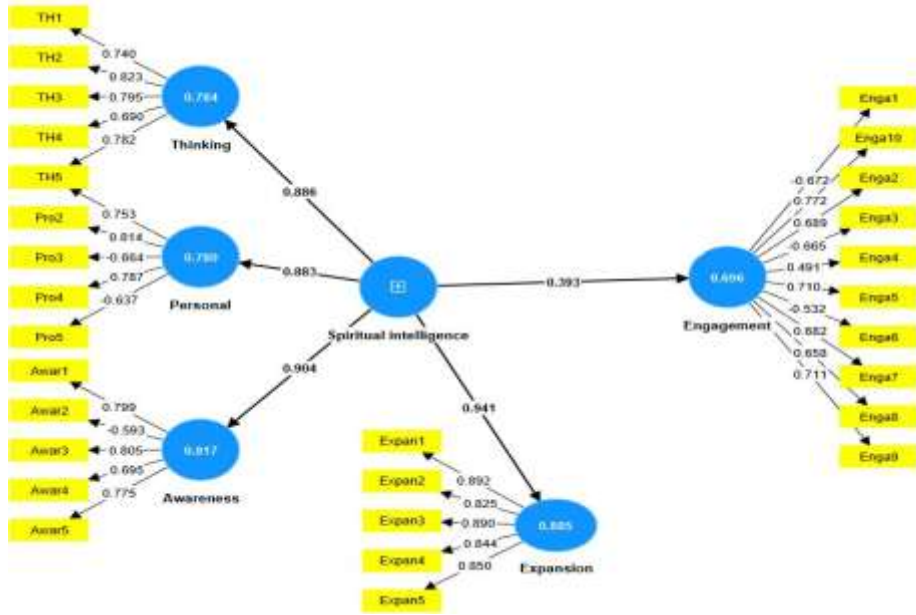


Figure (1): Measurement Model for the proposed study model before the development

Source: Smart PLS results

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The following table shows factor loading items after their development :

Table (3) :

Factor loading items after their development.

	“Critical Existential Thinking”	“Personal Meaning Production”	“Transcendental Awareness”	“Conscious State Expansion”	“Teachers’ Engagement”
TH 1	0.741				
TH 2	0.819				
TH 3	0.796				
TH 4	0.690				
TH 5	0.784				
Pro 1		0.818			
Pro 2		0.847			
Pro 4		0.826			
Awar 1			0.792		
Awar 3			0.818		
Awar 4			0.730		
Awar 5			0.786		
Expa 1				0.892	
Expa 2				0.825	
Expa 3				0.890	
Expa 4				0.845	
Expa 5				0.850	
Enga10					0.813
Enga2					0.676
Enga4					0.538
Enga5					0.740
Enga7					0.707
Enga8					0.678
Enga9					0.753

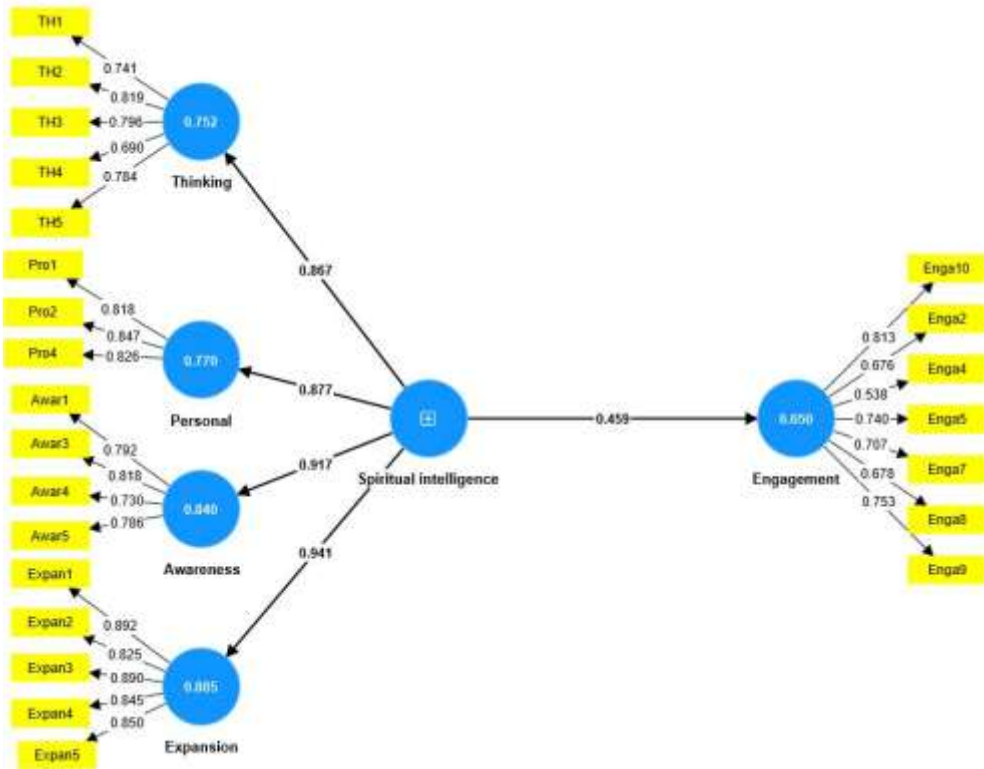


Figure (2): Measurement Model for the proposed study model after the development

Source: Smart PLS results

The following table shows that the values of Cronbach's alpha, Rho_A and CR are greater than 0.7, which confirms high internal consistency between questionnaire items of the dimensions. The average variance extracted (AVE) indicates that the variables are highly consistent, as all values are greater than 0.5

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Table (4) :

Reliability and Convergent Validity.

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	Rho_A	CR	AVE
“Critical Existential Thinking”	0.825	0.831	0.877	0.589
“Personal Meaning Production”	0.776	0.778	0.870	0.690
“Transcendental Awareness”	0.788	0.790	0.863	0.612
“Conscious State Expansion”	0.912	0.914	0.935	0.741
“Teachers’ Engagement”	0.829	0.840	0.872	0.503

Discussion and Findings:

Afterwards, the hypothesis and its four sub-hypotheses are tested using path analysis technique :

- H₁: Spiritual intelligence has a significant and positive impact on teachers' engagement.

Table (5):

The first hypothesis result.

H	Path analysis	Beta	T statistics	P values	Accepted / Rejected
H1	Spiritual Intelligence -> Teachers' Engagement	0.46	10.60	0.000***	Accepted

*** Significance level less than 0.001, confidence greater than 99.9%. ** Significance level less than 0.01, confidence greater than 99%. * Significance level less than 0.05, confidence greater than 95%.

It is discovered that there is a positive impact of “spiritual intelligence” on “teachers' engagement” : the value of ($\beta = 46$; $P < 0.001$). This means that “spiritual intelligence” (by achieving “critical existential thinking”, “personal meaning production”,

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“transcendental awareness” and “conscious state expansion” altogether) contributes to improving “teachers' engagement” by “46 %”, at a significant level of less than “0.001”. The value of “T” exceeds “1.96”, which reflects the confidence level in the research results at a significant level of “95%”, and therefore the main hypothesis is accepted.

- H_{1a}: Critical existential thinking has a significant and positive impact on teachers' engagement.
- H_{1b}: Personal meaning production has a significant and positive impact on teachers' engagement.
- H_{1c}: Transcendental awareness has a significant and positive impact on teachers' engagement.
- H_{1d}: Conscious state expansion has a significant and positive impact on teachers' engagement

Table (6):

Path analysis for sub-hypotheses of the first hypothesis.

H	Path analysis	Beta	T statistics	P values	Accepted /Rejected
H _{1a}	Critical Existential Thinking - > Teachers' Engagement	0.200	3.708	0.000	Accepted
H _{1b}	Personal Meaning Production - > Teachers' Engagement	0.117	1.486	0.137	Rejected
H _{1c}	Transcendental Awareness -> Teachers' Engagement	0.027	0.362	0.717	Rejected
H _{1d}	Conscious State Expansion -> Teachers' Engagement	0.181	2.156	0.031	Accepted

It is clear from the table above that there is a positive impact of “critical existential thinking” and “conscious state expansion” on “teachers' engagement” at a significant level of less than “0.001”. This means that “critical existential thinking” contributes to improving “teachers' engagement” by “20%”, at a significant level of less than “0.001” and “conscious state expansion” contributes to improving “teachers' engagement” by “18 %”, at a significant level of less than “0.001”. Thus, both “critical existential thinking” and “conscious state expansion” contribute to improving “teachers' engagement”. Thus, the first and the fourth sub-hypotheses are accepted.

However, it is noticeable that there is a direct positive impact of “personal meaning production” on “teachers' engagement”, but it is not significant as the value of ($\beta = 12, P > 0.05$), therefore the second sub-hypothesis (H_{1b}) is rejected. It is also noticeable that there is a direct positive impact of “transcendental awareness” on “teachers' engagement”, but it is not significant as the value of ($\beta = 3, P > 0.05$), therefore the second and the third sub-hypotheses are rejected.

Conclusion, Recommendations and Future Research :

There is a dearth of empirical research that deals with the green curriculum. No research has yet examined how the talent of spiritual intelligence can be utilized to get teachers willingly and completely engaged in teaching the green curriculum. To improve

teachers' engagement at workplace, it is important to reconsider the redeeming features of spiritual intelligence. Teachers eagerly need to assimilate that they work in an environment where they are not only aligned to its principles, but also become advocates for it. By focusing on spiritual intelligence at workplace, schools guarantee that teachers will find purpose and consequently get retained. Sanjeev *et al* (2022)

Findings of the research proved that spiritual intelligence and two of its dimensions : “critical existential thinking” and “conscious state expansion” have a significant and positive impact on teachers' engagement. However, the other two dimensions: “personal meaning production” and “transcendental awareness” do not boost teachers' engagement, which means that special attention must be directed to design special programs to promote these two dimensions. This helps teachers secure purposes, be more and more familiar with spiritual resources for solving work and personal life problems. This also facilitates dealing with daily issues and achieving objectives as well as enhancing the spiritual relief of knowing to boost spiritual cleverness, not to mention offering a variety of mental proficiency that involves individual understanding, serious contemplating, along with the regarding meaning. Officials and school managers should continuously ask teachers to expand and develop their abilities to stress the importance of having a definite purpose to be able to make their own decisions, become

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innovative and indulge in teaching the green curriculum preparing them for forthcoming challenges. Bibi *et al* (2022)

It is advisable that Human Resource Development professionals and officials in Egypt and all developing countries should achieve predetermined educational goals, develop and apply spiritual intelligence training modules tailored according to the needs of teachers to fight depression, lack of administrative support, avoidance, destructive feedback, heavy workload, unstable policy and system, lack of autonomy, pedagogical knowledge, lack of professional commitment, interpersonal relationship problems, mismatch, over-qualification, irrelevant and unconnected assignments, limited career development, unstable employment and emotional exhaustion to increase teachers' engagement. Sahito *et al* (2020)

HR policy makers in Egypt and other developing countries can – through using the model of the current research - understand how to adopt a healthy lifestyle based on sustainability to achieve distinction in a commodity market. Great efforts should be exerted to display the model of the current research to the ministry of education so that it can fix a huge budget for schools to get them ready for “Go Green Initiative” launched by president Abdel Fattah Elsis. Classrooms and study halls must be well equipped with computers and Internet. The ministry of education should also depend on high salaries instead of low salaries to raise teachers' standard of living.

The current research is restricted to the teachers of secondary stage in governmental public schools in Alexandria governorate only. So the researcher suggests that other research should be applied on different stages in other governorates in public, private and language schools in Egypt to assess the levels of “spiritual intelligence” and “engagement” of teachers as well as their impact on their performance to determine the possibility of discussing with the officials the application of sustainability infused curriculum in all Egyptian schools.

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