

DISCUSSION**SPIRITUAL, EXISTENTIAL OR BOTH?
THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS ON THE NATURE OF
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Abstract: The paper deals with the nature of intelligence related to the existential and spiritual dimension of individuals. Authors' considerations are introduced by a review of approach to intelligence in the spiritual area postulated by H. Gardner who suggests it be included under the designation existential intelligence. They further outline relations between spirituality and thinking and review the most commonly known theories of spiritual intelligence. They also point out a lack of empirical investigation in this area and discuss possible measurements of spiritual intelligence through specific subscales of spirituality measures. To conceptualize existential intelligence, the authors start from existential thinking in psychology. As meaning in life is a central concept of existential psychology, they suggest that existential intelligence could be understood as an ability to find and realize adequate life meaning. In the conclusion, they argue for an understanding of spiritual and existential intelligence as non-identical, however, mutually related and overlapping constructs.

Key words: spirituality, spiritual intelligence, existential intelligence, meaning in life

It is generally known that the term "intelligence" is being extensively used in current psychology. In the last decades, this term has reached different areas of human experiencing, e.g. emotional, moral, etc. According to D. Kováč (2004), it is not a way of underestimating understanding, prudence and comprehension, but a means how to take into account those dimensions that are also responsible for acceptable behavior. Recently, intelligence has also been related to the ultimate human questions and to an individual's ability to transcend himself and relate to "higher" values. The increased attention to psycho-

logical aspects of spirituality (for a review see Piedmont, 1999, 2001; Reich, 2000; Říčan, 2003; Stríženec, 2001a, 2004) has also brought interest to spiritual abilities which in turn has led to the emergence of works on spiritual intelligence (e.g., Zohar, Marshall, 2003; Emmons, 1999; Stríženec, 2001b). Similarly, several authors have mentioned the possibility of existential intelligence (Gardner, 1999, 2000; Halama, 2003). Although one could discuss on the justification of these terms and their usefulness in psychology, the concept of spiritual intelligence in particular, has received a considerable amount of attention. However, there is a controversy over outlining and specifying the nature of these

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types of intelligence. A question has arisen, whether these kinds of intelligence are identical or more or less touch different areas of human psyche. This paper intends to be a contribution to the problem of relationship between spiritual and existential intelligence on the basis of their theoretical analysis.

Problem of Spiritual vs. Existential Intelligence in H. Gardner's Work

The author of the multiple intelligences theory Howard Gardner was, as shown by his recent works (1999, 2000), the first to suggest the possibility of existential intelligence. In his earlier works, he defined seven types of intelligences (linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal, and intrapersonal); however, he admitted that there are additional intelligences. To evaluate different adepts for additional independent intelligence, he proposed eight criteria which any additional intelligence should meet in order to be added to the list. These criteria include potential isolation through brain damage, evolutionary history and plausibility, an identifiable core operation or set of operations, susceptibility to encoding in symbol system, a distinct developmental history, the existence of idiot savants, prodigies and other exceptional people, and support from experimental psychological tasks as well as psychometric findings.

Since that time, several candidates have appeared with claims for addition to the list. Gardner fully accepted only one - naturalist intelligence, which he defined as an ability to recognize and classify the numerous species (both flora and fauna) in an individual's environment. According to him, this type of intelligence fully meets the established criteria.

Spiritual intelligence is another form of intelligence considered by Gardner, however, it has a considerably more difficult position. In his considerations, Gardner accepts an existence of spiritual matters (spiritual life, spiritual capacity, spiritual feeling, mysticism, etc.), although he notices its controversy within the sciences. He emphasizes that there is no reason to exclude the spiritual realm from a study of intelligence. However, when approaching this area, one should not focus on traditional, organized forms of religion but concentrate on a more personal, idiosyncratic and creative manner.

He proposes three manifestations of spiritual intelligence. The first one includes concern with cosmic or existential issues. It involves understanding of ultimate questions, mysteries and meanings of life: Who we are? Where do we come from? Why do we exist?, etc. The second one is achievement of spiritual states of being. In many communities, there are recognized people with better skills at meditating, achieving trance states, being in touch with spiritual and noetic phenomena, etc. However, these include not a "gymnastic" aspect of controlling minds, but should lead to a deeper encounter with higher truth and better locating him- or herself with respect to the cosmos and the infinitesimal. The third manifestation of spiritual intelligence is effect on others in the area of spirituality. Certain types of people are spiritually so potent, as to be able to drive others toward exploring cosmic issues or lead them toward enhanced relation with the transcendent.

When considering spiritual intelligence, Gardner is struck by the problematic nature of its "content". Spirituality as such is often related to religiosity and therefore to some privileged truth. Gardner rejects such

an understanding of spirituality and tries to cope with these problems by searching for an alternative designation. He puts aside the term spiritual with its problematic connotation and proposes a broader one - "existential intelligence". According to him, existential intelligence explores the nature of existence in its multifarious guises. Concern with spiritual or religious matter is a variation of this existential intelligence.

Existential intelligence is then defined as a capacity to locate oneself with respect to the furthest reaches of the cosmos - the infinite and the infinitesimal - and a related capacity to locate oneself with respect to such existential features of the human condition as significance of life, meaning of death, ultimate fate of the physical and psychological worlds and such profound experiences as love of another person or total immersion in work and art. When he tests existential intelligence according to the proposed eight criteria, he finds that it scores reasonably well on them. However, despite this, he hesitates to add existential intelligence to the list, chiefly because of a lack of convincing evidence of brain structure and processes related to this realm of intelligence. Therefore, he prefers to abide by the "holding pattern" and to speak of "eight and half intelligences" (Gardner, 1999, 2000).

To conclude, Gardner's decision to speak of existential intelligence instead of spiritual intelligence, has to do with semantic aspects of the problem. Conception of spiritual intelligence emphasizing the sacred is not very appropriate due to ambiguity and there is no independent ground for separating the sacred and the profane. Reflecting on these problems, the concept of existential intelligence including also the spiritual realm, seems to be more appropriate to him.

Spirituality in Relation to Thinking

The question of spiritual intelligence has, despite Gardner's not too positive attitude, shown an increase of interest in the psychological community. This question is set within a broader context of philosophical and theological thinking which will have to be taken into account in discussions on this topic.

From the domain of Slovak philosophy, mention may be made of V. Černík, J. Vicieník and E. Višňovský (2002), in whose opinion the present-day global crisis in thinking leads toward the post-classical type of rationality. The world is looked upon as a network of organic units which thus permits man's goals to be more satisfactorily achieved. Thinking is understood not solely as a purely mental process, but also as an objective intellectual creation, influenced by social memory and functioning in human activity as analogy of practice. Human thinking is a differentiated whole made up of interactive components: reason, will and emotions. This permits the function of human intellect in the cognitive, ethical and aesthetic domain of culture to be more deeply understood.

D.E. Bunker (1991) deals with the relationship between thinking and personality and in this connection he also pursues the question of spiritual intelligence. In relation with an analysis of Jungian functions of personality, he states that coming to the foreground in the thinking type are order, justice and objective truth. As illustration, he mentions life of prayer which, in this type, has been built on ideas and theology (logically construed statements of faith). In prayer, emphasis lies on a sense of meaning and aim, not on emotions. The thinking type does not feel at home in religious communities where feelings prevail over

thinking. Recognition of individual differences permits people to be more flexible in their expressions of spirituality.

According to K.H. Reich (2000, 2001), developed spirituality leads to, among others, a greater clarity of thinking. At the same time, more credit is given to experience obtained through intuition than to that acquired through purely intellectual analysis. As to intellectual components also occurring in "nonreligious" forms of spirituality, these may include, in the view of this author, insight and understanding, sense of context, awareness of mutual relations among things. In connection with instruments for evaluating one's own spirituality, the author mentions the "Spiritual Health Scale". The latter includes 5 dimensions from which only the second one is of interest to us here in relation to spiritual intelligence, viz. spiritual wisdom (one of its "factors" is knowledge of one's religion and attitude toward it). Concerning research of spirituality, the author recommends the method of interview.

The fact that spirituality is in some measure related to thinking and the intellect is hinted at in several concepts. For instance, from among factors of spirituality, also mentioned by L.L. Lapierre (1994) and relating to spiritual intelligence, are especially "the way" (a search for a goal, direction during life), and also "meeting with the transcendent" (belief in the existence of a transcendental dimension of life). An understanding of spirituality as a search for a specific object of meaning - the sacred, also mentioned by K.J. Pargament (1999), implies that the intellectual component is also implicitly included here. P. Říčan (2003) mentions the views of some authors who include in spirituality, e.g. insight and understanding, sense of context and perspective, awareness of a mutual connection among items, or unity within disparity.

On the other hand, views are heard that go counter to a rather unduly eager combination of spirituality with thinking. T. Moore (1997) points out the one-sided orientation of present-day spirituality to the intellect, theories and evident truths. This author gives precedence to spirituality oriented to the soul and involving such qualities as gentleness, complexity, maturing incompleteness, ambiguity, surprise. In our view, several of these qualities are also connected with spiritual intelligence.

Review of Opinions on Spiritual Intelligence

We commented (Striženec, 2001b) the well-known work of R.A. Emmons (2000) and the relevant discussion on this topic published in the same issue of the International Journal for the Psychology of Religion - (taking part in the discussions were e.g., H. Gardner, J.D. Mayer). According to R.A. Emmons (2000), spiritual intelligence enables men to be sensitive to transcendent realities which may, but need not, embody the supernatural. This refers to the orientation of the ultimate concerns. Emmons (1999) specifies the core components of spiritual intelligence. They are:

- 1) capacity to transcend the physical and material;
- 2) ability to experience heightened states of consciousness;
- 3) ability to sanctify everyday experience;
- 4) ability to utilize spiritual resources to solve problems;
- 5) capacity to be virtuous.

In our commentary we stated that the question of existence of spiritual intelligence as a specific dimension of intelligence will, for the time being, remain open; nonetheless, an elucidation of this

issue may lead to a deeper insight into intelligence.

The approach adopted by D. Zohar and I. Marshall (2003) deserves a more detailed comment. They distinguish three basic categories of intelligence: rational, emotional and spiritual. They define the last one as an ability with the help of which we solve issues of meaning and values; it helps to give our lives a broader and more meaningful context. These authors consider the seven types of intelligence described by H. Gardner to be alterations of their own three categories. In their view, signs of highly developed spiritual intelligence are flexibility, a high degree of consciousness of self, ability to face suffering and pain (to process, overcome them), inspiration through values and visions, avoiding doing wrong to others (except in unavoidable cases), holistic thinking (seeing connections among various objects), searching for answers to the most intricate questions, independence of the milieu, resisting conventions. They go so far as to see a nervous foundation of unifying intelligence of a higher order - spiritual intelligence - in synchronized neuron oscillations of a frequency of 40 Hz. These oscillations mediate a conscious information processing among serial and parallel nervous processes in the brain and thus permit a connection between rational and emotional intelligence. As regards origin of thought, consciousness, they state that mind and matter emerge from protoconsciousness and the transition from the latter to developed consciousness may be explained by the quantum theory of consciousness (this derives from the physical field of quantum theory). Insofar as the relation of spiritual intelligence to religion is concerned, these authors see no necessary connection between them, nonetheless, religious experience and faith give

man a certain evolutionary advantage (connect us with the world of meaning and values). What a spiritually intelligent Christian values most in his religion is that it expresses the deepest appreciation of the potential of the universe as a beautiful form which God can take on Himself. They cite a research by the Oxford University on 5000 persons where it was found that 70% of these had had spiritual experiences. The investigators assigned them into two basic categories. In the case of the "mystic", religious content was rare - with a sense of deep meaning, immense bliss, unity of all things being in the foreground. In this type, a connection with extraordinary creative abilities was found. In the case of the "numinous" type, the majority of respondents had had a religious background, and a religious figure called them to her and advised them to set out along a definite road of life. Atheists described extra-sensory perception, telepathy, an altered state of consciousness, floating over their own bodies, e.g. during an operation. In contrast to descriptions by healthy people, those by psychotic patients of similar spiritual experiences are much more negative, restless and bizarre. The latter find it far more difficult to integrate spiritual experiences into their current life.

In D. Zohar's and I. Marshall's view regarding perfecting spiritual intelligence, six ways of life connected with personality type may be distinguished, viz. way of 1) duty (conventional type), 2) solicitude (social type), 3) cognition (investigatory type), 4) personal alteration (artistic type), 5) brotherhood (realistic type), 6) serving leadership (enterprising type). The authors have taken over these personality types from J.L. Holland's concept originally designed for a choice of career. Practical steps leading to an improvement of spiritu-

al intelligence embody reflection of one's own experiences, endeavor to change oneself, knowledge of one's own motivation, removal of obstacles, scrutinizing all possible means of progressing, maximum exploitation of a given situation, recognition of other ways and people who decided to follow them.

D. Fontana comments upon these views in his study (2003) in which, in the chapter on spirituality and the brain, he mentions D. Zohar's and I. Marshall's opinion (2003) that under spiritual intelligence is understood the ability to be creative, to alter the frontiers of current thinking and situations, create a new context of experiences, approach the problem of good and evil, search for a new meaning of life, alter self and life situations in a positive sense. He underlines that some researchers even consider spiritual intelligence to be a complement to a cognitive and an emotive intelligence quotient (SQ). D. Fontana comes out against the reductionist approach consisting of an endeavor to derive various expressions of spirituality from a common set of neurological processes. As a matter of fact, there is no evidence that thoughts and other non-corporeal processes of thought originate in electrochemical activity of the brain. The author quotes statements by W. Penfield to the effect that science has no answer to the question whether there exists communication between man and God and whether thought can receive energy after death from an external source. It is up to each individual to resolve these questions for himself.

From among further approaches to definition of spiritual intelligence, mention may be made of those by Paloutzian et al. (1999) who, in concordance with R.A. Emmons, hold that a man with a high degree of spiritual intelligence is capable

to discern various roles and plans of an intermediate level as relating to the "ultimate concerns" or as being a part of them. That might be a basis for a view of life from a long-term range, for a long-term motivation, but also in support of terrestrial behavior as part of a set of spiritual goals.

Reflecting on spiritual intelligence, M.M. Piechowski (2000) speaks of the concept of spiritual talent. K.D. Noble (2000) thinks of spiritual intelligence as an inborn human ability, recognition of a multidimensional reality. And at the same time, spiritual growth manifests itself through, e.g. a cognition and utilization of inner resources and a better discernment of dissimilarities. L.J. Pascual (1999) supposes creative-spiritual intelligence to lead to the emergence of an ultra-self, a controlling center totally separated from interpersonal self. J.L. Bowling (1999) concretized spiritual intelligence as knowledge of the sacred. He points to the relationship between spirituality and intelligence in selected texts from Jewish and early-Christian writings.

M. Sinetar (2000) looks upon spiritual intelligence as inspired thinking. He analyzes it within the general context of creative talent. In children, it leads to an "early awakening", i.e. an early understanding of self. As characteristic features of spiritual intelligence he considers to be intuitive authority, inspired being, promotion of reconciliation and wholeness. He also describes the characteristics of spiritually intelligent children.

A contribution to the topic of spiritual intelligence has also been made by F. Machovec (2002) who analyzed it within the terms of a broad cross-cultural context. An integration of spiritual intelligence into Gardner's concept of multiple intelligence led him to create a unified theory of per-

sonality. He considers spiritual intelligence to be a universal sign of personality and he compared the characteristics of the traditional with those of a spiritual IQ.

From the domain of application of spiritual intelligence, we may underline its significance to the person of the therapist and this in his discernment of various phenomena (area of spiritual experiences) of clients with disordered personality (Vodáčková et al., 2004).

Despite the interest on the part of psychologists in spiritual intelligence, its empirical investigation cannot be said to be widespread. At the present time, only subscales (or individual items) from accessible scales of spirituality are available for use. (For more details, see Stríženec, 2001).

R.L. Piedmont (1999) defines spiritual transcendence as the ability of an individual to view life from a broader, a more objective perspective than is an immediate experience of time and space. The author included these three subscales in his scale of spiritual transcendence: Filling with prayer, Universality, Connection. A view of reality set within a wider context, as also the second and third subscales embody a striking intellectual component. As a further characteristic of spiritual intelligence, the author mentions tolerance of paradoxes (judging things not as black-white, but in terms of also-also). From the items listed in the subscales, such as the following, refer to spiritual intelligence: "I meditate (pray) that I might achieve a higher spiritual level of consciousness"; "There exists a higher level of consciousness or spirituality that connects all people"; "The order in the universe surpasses human thinking".

One of the five dimensions touches more specifically upon the cognitive aspect, viz. "Expressions of Spirituality Inventory" (ESI) - author of which is D.A. MacDo-

nald (2002) - COS, i.e. Cognitive Orientation to Spirituality. According to the author, it comprises cognitive-perceptual manifestations, beliefs and attitudes relating to the essence and the significance of spirituality, as also perception of the specific importance of spirituality. It contains these items:

1. Spirituality is an important part of who I am as person.
2. Spirituality is an essential part of human existence.
3. I am more aware of lifestyle choices because of my spirituality.
4. I try to consider all elements of a problem including its spiritual aspects, before I make a decision.
5. My life is benefited from my spirituality.
6. I believe that attention to one's spiritual growth is important.

It is to be noted that the author, in his original 98-item "Expressions of Spirituality Inventory", took 48 items altogether into his COS subscale. Those that failed to be included in the shortened 6-item COS version referred to e.g., importance of the elements of experience for an acquisition of knowledge about the world, life orientation, the spiritual consequences of decisions, coping with difficult situations.

Existential Dimension of the Human Being and Its Relation to Thinking

Existential intelligence has not received as much interest and attention as spiritual intelligence. Papers dealing with existential intelligence are very rare and excepting Gardner's study, no serious attempts have been made to define and operationalize existential intelligence. Also, a lack of theoretical foundations has restrained attempts at a serious research of this construct. Only occasional research has been

done in this area, based on simple self-estimation according to Gardner's understanding of existential intelligence (Furnham et al., 2001, 2002). We think that further operationalization of existential intelligence could be helpful in promoting research as well as in analyzing the relationship between existential and spiritual intelligence. Therefore, we suggest a way how existential intelligence could be approached and operationalized. We considered it useful to draw on existential thinking in psychology which could provide a base for delineating existentially intelligent behavior.

The main feature of human existence from the existentialist point of view is the fact that a man was thrown into the world, and into conditions he did not choose. Hand in hand with this, an individual experiences his or her own freedom, potentiality and responsibility for creating his or her own life. This doctrine of existential philosophy has also been accepted and implemented by existential psychologists (e.g., L. Biswanger, I.D. Yalom, J. Bugental). An individual is located in the world which has no defined meaning and he or she is facing an unknown world, his or her limits as well as potentialities. I.D. Yalom (1980) has brought the idea of existential givens, which accompany human life and every individual has to challenge them. These givens are death, freedom, isolation and meaninglessness. He also proposes a concept of existential dynamics, which is based on the idea of internal drive conflict, where a drive generates anxiety and anxiety triggers defense mechanisms. In existential dynamics, anxiety is caused by awareness of existential givens. This anxiety, in Yalom's dynamics called *existential anxiety*, causes an attempt to come through it. Existential anxiety is a core feature of human experiencing and every individual

has to cope with it. According to Yalom, a way out of this human dilemma is to create personal meaning in life and value system, which his or her life can be led toward. Lack of meaning causes distress and allows existential anxiety to be overcasting. To cope with existential anxiety, an individual has to commit himself to meaning and try to fulfill it.

The importance of meaning in life was emphasized by another existentialist, V.E. Frankl (e.g., 1996, 1997). This survivor of a Nazi concentration camp, and developer of logotherapy and existential analysis, formulated a concept of will to meaning, a motivation power which leads an individual to find and fulfill meaning in his or her life. Inability to fulfill this need leads to a lack of meaning in life, a state called existential frustration which can be the source of a specific kind of psychopathology like noetic neurosis or noetic depression. Finding meaning is important especially in difficult life situations such as loss, trauma, etc. In these circumstances, strong meaning in life can be a source of positive coping and can help toward positive interpretation of the situation (Park, Folkman, 1997).

These days, meaning in life is a central concept in existential psychology, and increased interest in this phenomenon has been evident in recent years (see, Wong, Fry, 1998; Reker, Chamberlain, 2000, for a review of current approaches). Therefore, it seems appropriate to serve as a base for conceptualization of existential intelligence. A question arises, how *meaning in life could be related to thinking and intelligence*. An answer to this question was suggested in Frankl's work (e.g., Frankl, 1997) who proposed relatedness of will to meaning to the gestalt concept of organization of elements to a meaningful unit. He starts from the opinion of Crumbaugh and

Maholick who consider will to meaning as will to perceive and recognize meaning in the world, to interpret, understand, and relate individual stimuli and in this way determine an individual's personal life and life circumstances as meaningful.

An important role in this process is played by a cognitive framework which enables organizing of information from the external world into a meaningful unit. A significant contribution to this topic was made by J. Piaget (e.g., 1970) who described the process how an individual develops cognitive structures or schemes serving in integrating individual cognition of the world. These structures actively form the external reality, change it, give it an organization and in this way make it meaningful. Although Piaget formulated his theory mainly in relation to children, it is also applicable to adults. Similarly as a child understands external stimuli according to its own cognitive framework, so also an adult tries to grasp and organize the external world which, with regard to the development of abstract thinking, raises a question about the meaning of life, death, suffering, etc. The ability to give answers to these questions is conditioned by the ability to organize information and stimuli of this kind into a meaningful unit, and the ability to incorporate them into a personal cognitive structure.

Personal theories of reality, value systems, life philosophies or whatever different ways they are named, are the bases of the cognitive structure which operates on the level of existential understanding. A basic unit of this structure is *belief* which could be defined as a preferred evaluative cognitive content, cognition essentially influencing perception (Kondáš, Kordačová, 2000). The cognitive structure is an organization of beliefs, a system of subjective opinions. This system contains

clusters of beliefs concerning the same or related aspects of the world organized in a hierarchical way. The central or topmost parts of this system are a special kind of beliefs, in psychology called core beliefs, basic beliefs or fundamental assumptions, which serve to integrate individual beliefs into a system (Epstein, 1990; Janoff-Bulman, 1999). In psychological terminology, these systems have different names, e.g. personal theories of reality (Epstein, 1990), worldview (Simon et al., 1998), or personal ideology (de St. Aubin, 1999), in every case with emphasis on the special features of this system.

Authors trying to define the nature of experiencing meaning in life reflect this cognitive framework in their theories of meaning. As an example, we cite a three-component model of personal meaning provided by G. Reker and P. Wong (Reker, Wong, 1988; Wong, 1998; Reker, 2000). The authors assume that meaning in life has three components. *Cognitive component* provides meaningful interpretation and understanding of life and it includes beliefs that form life philosophy, worldview and personal value system. *Motivational component* contains personal goals, aims and also involves investment of energy and commitment to these goals. *Affective component* concerns feelings of satisfaction, fulfillment and happiness reflecting meaningfulness of personal life. The cognitive component is considered as the cornerstone of this model, because it primarily influences the other two components. Beliefs about which objects and states are desirable, give a basis for personal goals. Positive beliefs about the nature of the world and self can enhance an individual's feelings of satisfaction and happiness. Therefore, the cognitive component plays a key role in the process of experiencing meaning in life.

*Conceptualization of Existential
Intelligence through Meaning in Life*

An important step in our consideration is the fact that people differ in their ability to find meaning in their lives. This difference concerns the ability to develop a strong and powerful meaning in life, ability to restore and recover their meaning in specific situations of loss, life transition or other changes, etc. In previous sections, we related this ability to a cognitive system or framework, which should provide meaningful interpretation of life and life situations. Cognitive therapists in particular (e.g., A. Beck, A. Ellis) have described malfunctions of cognitive structures based on beliefs which do not adequately reflect the outside reality. Due to different reasons, applying these structures to the outside reality does not permit a meaningful interpretation of self in the world, and if it does, this is very soon ruined by a sequence of real events. This inability is associated with irrational beliefs, defined directly as cognitive mistakes or errors. This allows us to imagine meaningful interpretation as an act of intelligence. One can solve the problem of meaning in one's specific situation by making an adequate interpretation and setting an appropriate goal, or one can make mistakes by generating unworkable interpretations and setting non-viable and unsatisfying goals.

We think the term "existential intelligence" should be associated with this ability. In this sense, existential intelligence can be understood as ability to develop such a system of beliefs and values which makes an individual capable to recognize workable existential meaning in his or her whole life, as well as in a particular life situation.

Existential intelligence as a construct describing individual differences in ability to solve existential problems, should be characterized by some specific abilities which could help to better understand what is existential intelligence and stimulate possible research in this area. As recognizing existential meaning is the main existential accomplishment to eliminate existential anxiety, we can say that an existential problem is always one of meaning. Therefore, to describe manifestations of existential intelligence, abilities related to long-term experience of meaning in life could be used. In a recent study by the first author (Halama, 2003), four manifestations of existentially intelligent behavior were proposed, which are still under consideration and development.

The first one is an ability *to see adequate value possibilities in concrete situations*. These include various daily events as well as difficult life situations such as loss, suffering, illness, etc., which challenge individuals to find new meaning and reinterpretation of life. To see an adequate value in all of these situations and thus to perceive them as meaningful can lead to setting goals, trying to fulfill them and, as a result, maintaining or restoring experience of meaning in life. However, perception of the values should be adequate to reality. If the cognitive structure changes reality in a substantial way, it means that perception of the values does not reflect the true possibilities. Fulfilling personal goals based on such an interpretation could be frustrating and therefore not contributing to experience of meaningfulness.

Ability to form adequate hierarchy of values and goals is related to the organization of a belief system. There are many descriptions of negative consequences of the case where the dominant value in life is not adequate to serve as an integrating

value, e.g. because of its specificity, shallowness, etc. K. Popielski (1987) calls this value absolutization value and mentions that, due to its quality, it is not able to be a base for the whole system. Existential intelligence includes ability to form such a value system which organizes values in their proper hierarchy. This causes resistance of the system and experience of meaningfulness especially against frustration coming from failure in specific goals.

Ability to manage goal achievement in the proper way is related to assessment of goal and value substantiality. Sometimes, it is of importance to give up a goal, because it is not possible to achieve it or it has lost its previous value. Long-term commitment to non-satisfying and non-rewarding goals and activities could lead to frustration and meaninglessness. On the other hand, giving up a goal or value too early could lead to a failure to fulfill experiences and gratification. Many examples from literature call for adequate endurance in pursuing goals, and many show self-destruction when persisting in frustrating activities. An existentially intelligent person is able to recognize whether he or she should intensify his/her efforts, or transfer his/her energy into other things. Although goal pursuit is considered to be a part of motivational component, we relate this ability to the cognitive area, because it is concerned with estimation of the situation, more concretely with interpreting meaningful values and goals in this situation.

Inspired by Gardner, we can also add a fourth ability which is not directly related to long-termed maintaining meaning in life. It is *an ability to influence other people in the area of life meaning*. That is, a person with high existential intelligence is able to help people in finding meaning in life and purposeful value, or inspire them with a positive, life affirming interpreta-

tion of their situation. This ability is related to those described above, because one could not help others to see meaning if he or she is not able to see adequate value possibilities in concrete situations.

One of Gardner's criteria to be met by candidates for independent intelligence implies that an existence of exceptional persons supports the validity of such intelligence. We think that some books could provide such examples. We would like to mention the case of V.E. Frankl, founder of existential analysis and logotherapy and survivor of a Nazi camp, who described his experiences from the camp in the book "Man's searching for meaning" (Frankl, 1998). In this book, he described the extreme conditions of life in the camp, loss of personal dignity and status, harmful physical conditions which were thwarting all meaningful existence. However, face to face with these conditions, he was able to maintain his meaning, find value in his suffering and experiences, set new goals adequate to these situations, and what is even more, to uphold other people in this area. His book is a testimony how meaning can be found even in the worst circumstances. We think this to be a case of exceptionally high existential intelligence, although Frankl would probably not state it in these terms.

Spiritual, Existential or Both?

On the basis of what has just been said, we would like to answer a question included in the title of this contribution. Should we speak about spiritual intelligence, or rather existential intelligence, or even use both terms? To answer this question, we can suggest three ways how existential and spiritual intelligence could be related. They are represented in graphic form in Figure 1.

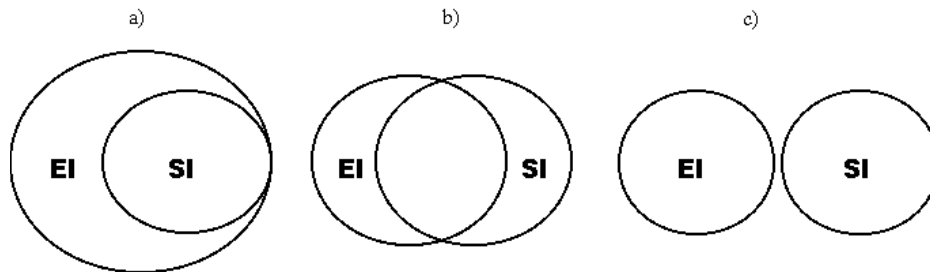


Figure 1. Three ways how existential and spiritual intelligence could be related (EI - existential intelligence, SI - spiritual intelligence)

In this figure, existential and spiritual intelligences are designed as circles. In figure a), existential intelligence is overlying and superior to spiritual intelligence. This implies that spiritual intelligence is one of the abilities forming the nature of existential intelligence. In this way, spiritual intelligence does not include any manifestations that are not a part of existential intelligence. This view seems to correspond to H. Gardner's considerations on the nature of these two kinds of intelligence. In figure b), both existential and spiritual intelligences are understood as related and overlapping constructs having some common aspects, as well as unrelated areas. Figure c) suggests that existential and spiritual intelligences are mutually unrelated and independent abilities.

We would like to discuss the third model first. While comparing various opinions and conceptualizations of spiritual intelligence, we could see that there were several common features with our understanding of existential intelligence. For example, D. Zohar's and J. Marshall's (2003) definition suggests that spiritual intelligence is an ability to solve problems of meaning and values. Splitting existential and spiritual intelligence into two unrelated areas

would not correspond with Gardner's original outlining of either of them. When we consider some delineations of spirituality which emphasize spirituality as dealing with problems of meaning and ultimate questions, we can hardly accept the idea presented in part c). In our opinion, the main overlap between existential and spiritual intelligence is ability to cope with stress in a specific way. This coping is related to giving meaning to life events or situations which are difficult and stressful. Sanctifying daily experiences as well as using spiritual sources for solving problems (Emmons, 1999) are special ways of attributing meaning, in this case, spiritual meaning. Also Zohar's and Marshall's (2003) aspects of spiritual intelligence as reflections of self, holistic thinking, refusals of conventions can be related to an ability to find meaning, especially when we take into consideration practical steps for improving spiritual intelligence suggested by these authors. Such are, for example, reflection of personal experiences, recognizing all possibilities, awareness of many life courses, etc.

When considering the common features of existential and spiritual intelligence from this point of view, the question arises,

whether the first model fits best to their relationship. However, starting from the delineations provided earlier, we think that such a conclusion would be inadequate. There are several aspects of spiritual intelligence which could hardly be included in existential intelligence. These aspects include, for example, ability to experience higher states of consciousness (Emmons, 1999) or ability to meditate, etc. We do not think that these aspects of spiritual intelligence could be fully explained by existential intelligence. To a certain extent, a person could be existentially intelligent and not spiritually intelligent. On the other hand, the opposite is also possible. Therefore, we are inclined to accept the second model - an existential and a spiritual intelligence as related and overlapping constructs with some common, as well as unrelated aspects.

Discussions on the nature of existential and spiritual intelligence are only in their beginning, and we consider it useful to focus attention on their common and independent aspects. Our attempt to analyze relationships between existential and spiritual intelligence should be considered as an effort to stimulate further discussion on this topic and especially on research in this area. In our view, it is not very important whether there are nine or ten intelligences, but there is the necessity to investigate these issues, neglected until now in psychology. Especially empirical research in this area could contribute to recognizing these concepts as useful and substantial or superfluous and needless.

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SPIRITUÁLNA, EXISTENCIÁLNA, ALEBO OBOJE? TEORETICKÉ ÚVAHY O POVAHE "VYŠŠÍCH" INTELIGENCIÍ

P. H a l a m a, M. S t r í ž e n e c

Súhrn: Príspevok sa zaoberá povahou inteligencie súvisiacej s existenciálnou a spirituálnou dimenziou človeka. Úvahy autorov sú uvedené prehľadom názorov H. Gardnera, ktorý zahŕňa inteligenciu súvisiacu so spirituálnou oblasťou pod názov existenciálna inteligencia. Autori ďalej načrtávajú vzťah medzi spiritualitou a myslením a intelektom, a podávajú prehľad najznámejších teórií spirituálnej inteligencie. Tiež konštatujú nedostatok empirického výskumu v tejto oblasti a diskutujú možné meranie spirituálnej inteligencie prostredníctvom špecifických subškál dotazníkov na meranie spirituality. V súvislosti s konceptualizáciou existenciálnej inteligencie, autori čerpajú z existenciálneho myslenia v psychológii. Na základe toho, že zmysel života je centrálnym konceptom existenciálnej psychológie, ponúkajú chápanie existenciálnej inteligencie ako schopnosti nájsť a realizovať adekvátny zmysel života. V závere argumentujú v prospech chápania spirituálnej a existenciálnej inteligencie ako nie totožných, avšak vzájomne súvisiacich a prekrývajúcich sa konštruktov.