CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION AND EMPIRICAL VALIDATION
OF THE SPIRITUAL SENSITIVITY SCALE

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Abstract
In this study, we extend the Multiple Intelligence Profile Questionnaire (Tirri and Komulainen, 2002) based on Gardner’s (1983) MI theory with spiritual intelligence (SQ). The operationalization of SQ was tested with an empirical sample of Finnish preadolescents, adolescents and adults (N = 496). First, we studied if 20 spiritual intelligence items reflect the categories of spiritual sensitivity (Hay, 1998; Bradford, 1995). The categories are: Awareness sensing, Mystery sensing, Value sensing, and Community sensing. Second, we optimized the number of items to create the eighth component to the MIPQ. The results of confirmatory factor analysis show good generalizability characteristics of the scales.

Key Words: spiritual intelligence, multiple intelligence, spiritual sensitivity.

INTRODUCTION
In this study, we extend the Multiple Intelligence Profile Questionnaire (MIPQ: Tirri & Komulainen, 2002) with spiritual intelligence (SQ). We have earlier operationalized Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence theory (1983; 1991; 1995; 1999) into MIPQ. First version of the MIPQ contained the first seven intelligences, namely (1) Linguistic, (2) Logical-mathematical, (3) Musical, (4) Spatial, (5) Bodily-kinesthetic, (6) Interpersonal, and (7) Intrapersonal intelligence (Tirri & Komulainen, 2002). The eighth dimension of the MIPQ, spiritual intelligence, is based on Hay’s (1998) and Bradford’s (1995) definitions of spirituality. The Spiritual intelligence scale applied to the MIPQ is based on the Spiritual sensitivity scale consisting of following four dimensions: (1) Awareness sensing, (2) Mystery sensing, (3) Value sensing and (4) Community sensing.

Sternberg (1991) identifies Gardner’s MI theory as a systems approach similar to his own triarchic theory (Sternberg, 1985). Although he likes Gardner’s assessments at a theoretical level, he believes them to be a
psychometric nightmare (Sternberg, 1991). The biggest challenge for the advocates of Gardner’s approach is to demonstrate the psychometric soundness of their instrument. Sternberg is calling for hard data that would show that the theory works operationally in a way that will satisfy scientists as well as teachers. The psychometric properties of the first seven dimensions of the MIPQ have been validated with an empirical sample ($N = 256$) of Finnish university students (Tirri et al., 2002; 2003).

In this paper, we evaluate with an empirical sample of Finnish preadolescents, adolescents and adults ($N = 496$) if the operationalization of the spiritual dimension reflects the categories of spiritual sensitivity based on the empirical studies by Hay (1998) and Bradford (1995). In addition, we reduce the number of items measuring spiritual sensitivity to four, in order to meet the needs of the MIPQ.

1 Theoretical Framework

1.1 Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences

Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences builds on a concept of “intelligence”, which he defines as “the ability to solve problems or to create products that are valued within one or more cultural settings” (Gardner, 1983, x). Considering this definition, Gardner lists seven intelligences (IQ) that meet his criteria for intelligence. These intelligences are (1) Linguistic, (2) Logical-mathematical, (3) Musical, (4) Spatial, (5) Bodily-kinesthetic, (6) Interpersonal and (7) Intrapersonal (Gardner, 1983, xi).

Gardner differs from the other pluralists in his attempt to base his MI theory upon neurological, evolutionary, and cross-cultural evidence (Gardner, 1983, xii). In the first edition of his MI theory, over twenty years ago, Gardner adopted a very individualistic point of view in exploring various intelligences (Gardner, 1983). In his newest edition of the MI theory, Gardner emphasizes more cultural and contextual factors in the development of seven intelligences (Gardner, 1999). Gardner has retained the original seven intelligences presented earlier, but he acknowledges the possibility of adding new intelligences to the list. He has worked on naturalistic, spiritual and existential intelligences to be included in his list of multiple intelligences. According to Gardner (1999, 52), the naturalistic intelligence merits the addition to the list of the original seven intelligences.