

EXISTENTIAL INTELLIGENCE INFLUENCES ADVERSITY QUOTIENT AMONG YOUTH IN BECOMING LIFE SMART LEARNER

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DOI: 10.47750/pnr.2022.13.509.716

Abstract

The whole world has been knocked down by the Pandemic COVID-19 crisis which had impacted people's health globally, including death among people mostly with comorbidity. Some even lost their loved ones. Huge number of people lost jobs due to economic depression that incurred due to restricted movement control orders imposed globally. Whole pandemic events culminated into affecting physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual well-being. On the flip side, these have been indicated as essential mechanisms to cope up with the current adaptation during this crisis. Role of Existential Intelligence's (Ex I) in influencing Adversity Quotient (AQ) while handling crisis is still immature. The connection between Ex I and AQ is able to provide a bigger picture to stakeholders namely customers, employees, investors, suppliers and vendors, communities, and government in improving the current situation, especially during the post-crisis recovery period. In the present paper, an attempt is made to unravel Ex I adaptation and its contribution towards high AQ in various scenarios. There is no precise test developed pertaining to Ex I as a full-fledged intelligence. However, certain characteristics of Ex I are interconnected to spiritual or religious aspects. Certain degrees of relation are identified between Intelligence Quotient (IQ), Emotional Quotient (EQ), Spiritual Quotient (SQ), and Adversity Quotient (AQ) as foundation for intrapersonal competencies. Therefore, existentialism creates self-realization while handling crisis such as Pandemic COVID-19, appreciating every life moment which is deep rooted in the spiritual and religious teachings. Further in-depth research is needed to better appreciate or understand the contribution of Ex I on AQ for overall well-being of the society in the challenging global environment.

Keywords: Existential Intelligence, Adversity Quotient, Pandemic Covid-19.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In 1999, Professor Howard Gardner described Existential Intelligence (Ex I) as one of the modalities in Theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI) [1]. Ex I engage cognitive capacity about 'big questions' as whole regarding love, life, death, and showdown between desirable and undesirable in our existence, also known as Spiritual, Moral,

Cosmic or Life Smart Intelligence. Till to date, nine modalities of MI, namely, (1) Linguistic, (2) Logical-Mathematical, (3) Spatial, (4) Bodily Kinaesthetic, (5) Musical, (6) Interpersonal, (7) Intrapersonal, (8) Naturalistic, and (9) Ex I are being applied throughout our daily life, as described in the **Table 1**. Human ability in exhibiting all the MI types is complex. Therefore, it is imperative to focus on the dominant types of intelligences [2]. These should be identified for human capital development through physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual uplift. There is a need for individuals to explore and create their own dominant intelligence profile for career and interest identification.

Table 1: The characteristics of nine modalities of Multiple Intelligences [1]

No.	Types of MI	Abilities and Perceptions	General Characteristics	General Profiles
1	Verbal-linguistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Express effectively through writing and speaking - Learn languages - Achieve goals using linguistic skills - IQ tests (Least tested) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remember phrases or quotes easily - Interested in debates - Easy to learn languages - Like reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Writers - Lawyers - Politicians - Religious Leaders - Poets
2	Logical-mathematical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quick logical reasoning and mathematical problem solving - IQ tests (Heavily tested) - Numbers and logic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make budgets - Logical games (Sudokus) - Mental calculations - Analyze consequences when facing problems or new challenges - Memorize phone numbers easily 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scientists - Economists - Academics - Engineers - Mathematicians - Accountants
3	Spatial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mental 3D model on image and space - Observe the world and objects from multiple angles - Graphically represent ideas - IQ tests (least tested) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interpret graphics and flowcharts - Recognize places from childhood - Scrawl while focused - Imagine objects seen from different perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sculptors - Architects - Artists - Photographers - Designers - Publicists - Scientists

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seeing images clearly when closing eyes - Read map easily - Get oriented in new place 	
4	Musical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perceive, distinguish, transform and express musical sounds' timbre, pitch and rhythm - Express through musical forms and appreciation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Singing in any musical gender - Playing an instrument with perfection - Directing an orchestra - Listen and judge - Like variety of music styles - Identify sounds without reading them - Have background in music 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instrumentalists - Composers - Musicians - Singers - Musical critics
5	Bodily-kinaesthetic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Control and coordinate body moves and express feelings with it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Body control over objects - Effective dominion to mentally measure the physical space - Dance - Play a sport - Good at darts or frisbee - Extreme sports when experiencing adrenaline rush 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Athletes - Artisans - Surgeons - Dancers - Modern Police Forces - Special Forces Recruits - Defence personnel
6	Interpersonal (Social)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand other people's emotion emphatically - Determines the choice of partner, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Very important in daily life - Understanding and working with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales agents - Politicians - Teachers

		friends and success at work or studies		- Therapists
7	Intrapersonal (Emotional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding of oneself - Access own emotional life and feelings range (thoughts) - Self-consciousness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-reflection - Self-perception - Meditate - Personality tests - Enjoy individual sports more than collective sports - Set goals for the future - Enjoy spending time alone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Psychologists - Philosophers - Mature Individuals with deep self-knowledge
8	Naturalistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distinguish, classify and use environmental elements, objects, animals or plants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Urban as well as suburban or rural environment - Observe, experiment, reflect and question surroundings - Like nature and the countryside - Have pets - Like going to the zoo or natural wildlife sanctuaries - Distinguish different kinds of trees by looking at their leaves - Enjoy taking care of your garden - Learn about nature and often watch documentaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Biologists - Botanists - Zoologists - Ecologists - Environmentalists - Country people
9	Existential (Life-Smart/ Spiritual)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify the real purpose of life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dedicate to transcendence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All job positions

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Connects energy and matter - Ethics, life value, and religion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aspiration to sacred and virtuous behaviours - Feeling of we all need each other - Practice forgiveness, gratitude, humility and compassion - Practice spirituality/religion - Part of a charity, be a volunteer, donate to people in need - Being sensitive about inequality 	
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Lifestyle during Pandemic Covid-19 pushed the unplanned society to respond to the crisis due to mental and emotional health being affected. Many lost their livelihood and security due to multiple lockdowns, businesses closure, bankruptcy and loss of jobs [3,4,5]. Impaired mental health escalated suicide attempts due to physical, mental, and emotional distress, changes in work environment and fear about safety [6,7,8]. Infectious pandemic caused a huge number of fatalities globally [9].

Attention was provided towards Ex I by relating it to the current worldly crisis in anticipating how the people would react during Pandemic Covid-19 [10]. Some doubtfully portrayed that Ex I could be coincidence or integration with spiritual or religious intelligence. Skills required for Ex I are reflective, deep thinking and designing abstract theories through analysing past and present experiences in knowing the happenings in the future. Nostradamus, a French astrologer and physician who predicted various real-life events further ahead than his existence period is one of the indications of Ex I dominance [11]. The following **Table 2** further highlights legends with high Ex I [12], among them are scientists, psychologists, philosophers, authors, educators, motivational speakers, and others.

Table 2: Legends with Existential Intelligence [12]

Legends	Contributions	Connection with Ex I
Socrates	Greek philosopher, Socratic Method	Asking ever-deeper questions for the truth understanding
Plato	Greek philosopher, Abstract truth	Higher and more complete truth that we witness in the real life

St. Augustine	Christian theologian, adapt Plato's teachings	Life pursuing through abstract truth
Friedrich Nietzsche	German philosopher and philologist	Forerunner of existentialism movement
Soren Kierkegaard	Danish philosopher, theologian and cultural critic	How one lives truth of life through being prime creation, major influence in existentialism
Martin Heidegger	German philosopher, diverse influence on architecture, contemporary art, social, political theory, psychotherapy, psychiatry and theology field	Study of being through phenomenological analysis of human existence
Karl Jaspers	German philosopher	Man's direct concern with own existence
Jean-Paul Sartre	French philosopher, novelist and playwright	Existentialism is a Humanism
Albert Camus	French author	Questions meaning of life in the face of death with immediate and personal experiences
Simone de Beauvoir	French writer	Relates phenomenological-existential arguments
Wayne Dyer	American author and speaker	Spiritual aspects of human experience and potential to live an extraordinary life

Paul Stoltz introduced Adversity Quotient (AQ) in 1997 [13]. Adversity Quotient was defined as turning obstacles into opportunities of how people are able to work through uncertain, volatile, ambiguous, complex, intense, and high-risk situations into opportunities to excel and succeed [14]. In other words, the ability of a person to withstand a crisis by responding positively to all difficult situations tends to result in higher optimism levels. A major emphasis was given to Intelligence Quotient (IQ) and Emotional Quotient (EQ) and not to Adversity Quotient (AQ), until nature pushed us to experience the Pandemic Covid-19 crisis. Paul Stoltz highlighted secrets to engage in daily life successfully can be obtained by practicing CORE, stating C for Control, O for Ownership, R for Reach and E for Endurance [13]. Control is needed by oneself to analyse and aware what could happen next and how one would be able to influence the situation. Then, one must take ownership by being responsible and accountable during a particular situation in making positive changes. Particularly, while one reaches to minimize risks and negative outcomes, must focus on maximizing the potential positive outcome. Endurance related to how immediate responses can be adapted in saving oneself from the situation. Application of CORE elements can be identified by Stoltz's AQ Profile, which can make one aware while responding to adversity in the present and future crisis.

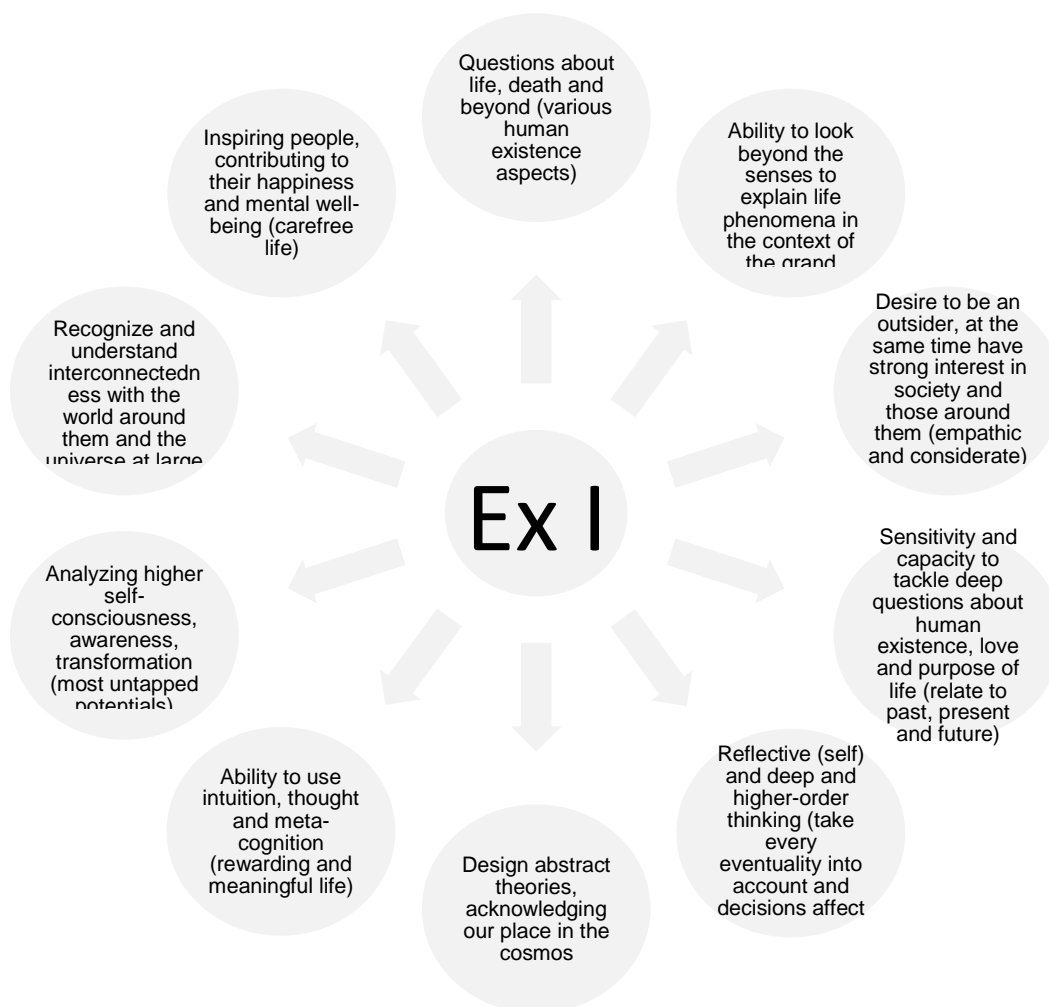
As AQ has connections with IQ, EQ and SQ, the role of Ex I with AQ needs to be studied further. There are several researches that have contributed towards identification of the connection between EQ and AQ. However, very little research is available that unravelled the connection between Ex I and AQ. Therefore, this paper aims to dissect out the current knowledge on the role of Ex I in multiple intelligences, including AQ in various scenarios. In this context, an attempt is made to describe Ex I adaptation and its contribution towards high AQ, and further suggest research areas that need to be focused in explaining integration between Ex I and AQ, especially during crisis situations.

2.0 OVERVIEW

2.1 Role of Existential Intelligence (Ex I)

Existentialism term was uncovered in relation to the meaning human provides for existence and the absence of it will create existential frustration or existential crisis which will eventually affect the mental health of oneself [15]. Intuition is being related to values and meanings in engaging towards responsibilities and uniqueness of oneself finding individual experiences of purpose in life. The lack of purpose in life is related to failure in goal attainment, bodily energies imbalances, causing emotional disturbances and depression eventually [15]. In this context, the characteristics of individuals with dominant Ex I are illustrated in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Characteristics of individuals with dominant Existential Intelligence [Own]



2.1.1 Ex I in Children

Multiple Intelligence identification among children is essential in flexible curriculum development [16]. Although nine MIs do exist in accordance with Theory of Multiple Intelligences, very little focus was given on Ex I. **Figure 1** highlights the characteristics of Ex I about ‘big questions’ on one’s existence in the universe, life smart approaches and related matters. Educational curriculum frequently emphasized on eight MIs compared to inclusion of Ex I as well. Hereby, Ex I should be included in the educational curriculum to strengthen children’s life purpose with self-development progression. As the intellectual activities can be exposed to children from a very young age, MI influences education the most. By understanding about their own MIs, a child will be able to enhance self-confidence, self-esteem, self-perception, and self-value while engaging in Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic learning activities.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has an impact on meaningful existential strategy formation among higher educational institutional students; strong connection exists in developing meaning-existential strategy [17]. Self-development with adequate emphasis on EI provides future significant life directions. Taking charges on one’s life by being aware of surrounding situations, reflecting on life events, motivating oneself, being empathy and evaluating oneself in recognizing one's own and other people’s emotions contribute towards formation of meaning-existential strategies in educational contexts from a young age.

Gender differences and Ex I influence self-estimated multiple intelligences among secondary school students. Shahzada et al. [18] found that students aged between 14 to 16 year’s old possessed high self-estimated existential intelligence, which strengthened other dimensions of intelligence. Both female and male students have deeper human life curiosity and ‘big questions’, knowing meaning of life, capable in identifying one’s role in the universe, relation with the creator, relation of human to human, including between body and soul in larger context.

2.1.2 Ex I in Adult

During adulthood, heroic intelligence emerges with existentialism as an evolutionary cycle towards phenomenological domain through risk-taking incidences. Ex I enhances awareness by making one to realize trans-rational, transcendental, peak experiences, self-actualization, and acceptance of death [19]. Enhancing Ex I is able to mould oneself to subsequently engage in sense-making and channel down the energy to cellular level. Figure 2 illustrates the attributes in an individual’s willingness to act.

Figure 2: Individual’s attributes in willingness to act [19 & 20]

Instinct	Pre-conscious	Autopoiesis	Archetypal person
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Sense and stimuli- Emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Thoughts those are readily accessible- Not being actively thinking about (part of long-term memory) [19]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Self-maintenance- Self-organization- Self-regulation [20]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Universal- Role model- Realist

Connection is identified between Ex I and AQ when the heroic journey is undertaken through transformation by varying degrees of consciousness [20]. This invariably results in either a deeply heart-breaking experience or enlightening towards becoming a legend. Heroic individuals have lived through experience and always perform actions through intrinsic motivation while developing resilience, especially during challenging moments of the current Pandemic COVID-19 crisis.

2.1.3 Ex I in Education

Ex I in students was interpreted as seeing ‘big picture’ through realization, questioning existence, and meaning of life as spiritual intelligence. By relating the lessons learned in English as Foreign Language (EFL) class with their daily life experiences through adaptation, it was found that Ex I is significantly connected with kinaesthetic intelligence as dominant contributor, followed by interpersonal intelligence in language learning strategy [21]. Creative art through writing is essential by analysing and accessing, expressing, discovering, and questioning feelings about one. One has to know about oneself before questioning broad perspective of ultimate life issues. Therefore, Ex I is integrated in planning activities in EFL writing classes.

EI and Ex I play important roles in school counselling and guidance practices. Ex I and humanistic approach contributes towards strong EI among children [22]. Children’s nature in handling life experiences is connected directly with their energy spent for learning. Apart from developing self-awareness, responsibility, freedom and ability to control their anxiety, children tend to engage well in teaching and learning processes when meaning is created in accordance with their potential. Therefore, they are able to build higher levels of self-confidence, self-esteem and have positive self-existence perspectives.

Ex I dimension among graduate students is often ignored at the higher learning institutions. For an example, at the World Islamic Sciences University in Jordan, it was identified that students with Ex I are sharp and have better understanding of their ideas through their own experiences relating to Existence in the Universe [23]. Ex I scale developed by Zubi et. al (2015) deriving from Shearer’s (2005) was adapted in this study. It was found that Ex I was at medium level in the context of education, merely due to lack of focus, interest, exposure and support provided by all stakeholders towards developing this intelligence dimension.

2.1.4 Ex I in Leadership Ability and Personal Values (Can add on about Ex I among youth learners)

Model of Existential and Motivational Analysis (EMotiAn) identifies the creation, experience, and reframe something in a meaningful daily-life context with leadership ability and personal values [24]. Young people tend to fulfil lower-order needs, whereas matured adults focus on self-esteem and self-actualization, based on Maslow’s Theory of Motivation [25]. Maturity, due to experiencing meaningful events in daily-life, promotes the need for engaging in meaningful work environments as a part of leadership skill enhancement with value actualization. Thus, leadership development by engaging in analysis, evaluation and nourishing existential meaning of oneself would support values-oriented learning.

2.1.5 Ex I in Current Practices

Existentialism is connected to the meaningful lived experiences discovered by human beings [26]. Existentialism is integrated in artificial intelligence development, as being adapted by consumers when making purchases by experiencing, feeling, imagining, remembering and making decisions rationally. In these contexts, human experiences can be reflected and disregarded, guided through intuition and insight. Direct meaningful experience engaging in purchases explores further the need in embedding existential phenomenology while conducting consumer experiences research.

Web-based collaborative learning using Stufflebeam’s CIPP evaluation model is supported by multiple intelligences. They had classified Ex I in the introspective domain along with intrapersonal and spatial

intelligences to promote imagination and understanding. Web-based collaborative learning content matches with the domain emphasized in mental imaging and deeper-meaning understanding by engaging students in acquisition, questioning, practice and case-study related activities [27]. Designing simulations with real life situations made students learning experiences meaningful, enhanced satisfaction, and moved towards goal attainment. **Figure 3** highlights some of the approaches to improve Ex I.

Figure 3: Approaches to improve Existential Intelligence [27]

Spend time exploring a philosophical or spiritual path of personal interest

- Read, delve deeper while engaging in daily life situations
- Study deeper Eastern and Western philosophy or spiritual aspects

Decision-making

- Take time to consider all the possible outcomes and their effects
- Right decision with greater multiple perspectives analysis for all parties

Start a journal to record thoughts

- Everyday life engagement and experiences
- Join philosophical, spiritual or environmental group

Take a break from constant business and screen time so you can really think

- Take a walk-in nature
- Try a short meditation
- Get in touch with yourself

Engaging in group tasks

- Discussions
- Charity and community services activities

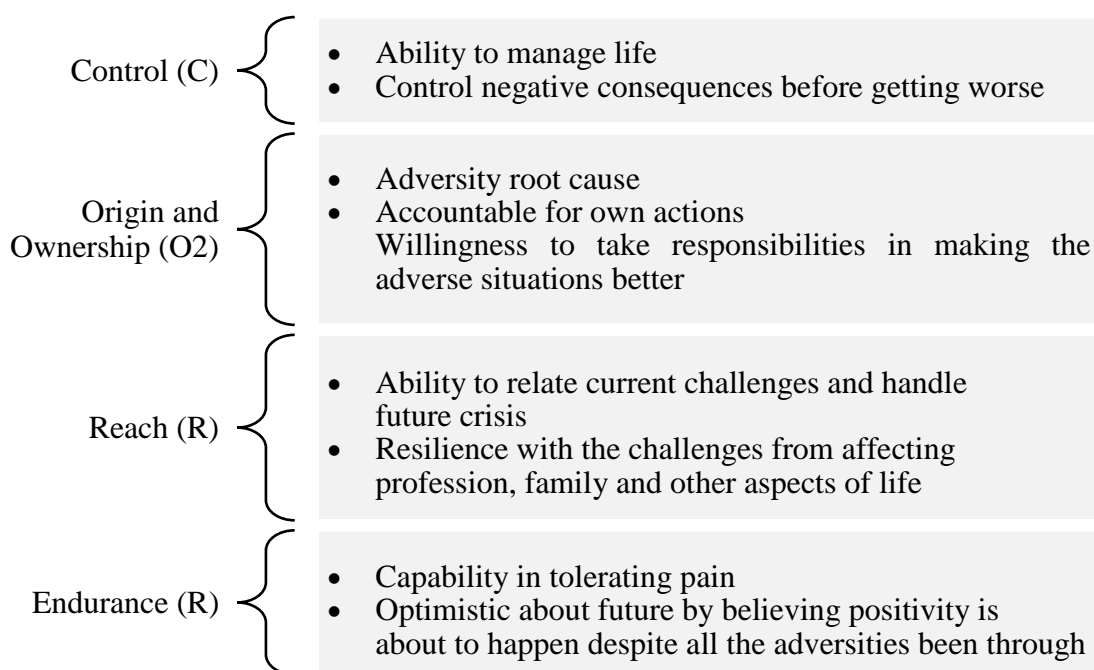
Travel

- Personal space and time
- Explore and in touch with new environment

2.2 Role of Adversity Quotient (AQ)

Career success is in accordance with IQ, EQ and AQ of a person [28]. Individuals with high AQ performs efficiently, productively and creatively in the organization. Education system would be able to culture AQ, as young as possible among children. The **Figure 4** highlights five main CO2RE dimensions of AQ which eventually lead towards achievement of one's self in career and life advancement [29, 30].

Figure 4: Five main CO2RE dimensions of Adversity Quotient [29 & 30]



Education system needs to be reframed to bring dynamic changes in adapting AQ for building positive mental health and engagement of students while handling crisis situations [31]. Students, from a young age need to be nurtured with abilities, exposed with adversity, and honed with skills that are crucial in surviving during the 21st century. Awareness should be increased by all stakeholders by exposing students with high levels of adverse situations for effective decision making in handling risky situations. Students with high and low AQ, engaged with experiential learning, will be able to improve their problem-solving ability, provided, practical participation is implemented in preparing them to face real-life work [32].

Employers identified AQ as the stability, power and strength of an individual in handling crisis situations, by being persistent and resilient [33]. Interestingly, AQ is gaining more attention nowadays as ability in handling the Pandemic COVID-19 crisis in daily life and the workplace. Children possessing high AQ levels who are actively engaging in life situational problem solving, recognize the experiences constructively at all times, manage to gain and maintain positive attention and outlook, which at times, even an adult fails to adapt. Thus, AQ is age-irrelevant and is inclusive of key factors such as the individual's happiness, health, wealth and strong mental capabilities. Coping up with automation, technological advancement, innovation and uncertainty, AQ is able to make an individual highly adaptable and flexible in accepting fluctuating moments and overcoming fear [34].

Great leaders possess high AQ compared to good IQ and EQ, as there is a major shift happening in handling uncertain and risky situations as in COVID-19 era [35]. However, effective leaders are unable to be resilient without the combination of IQ, EQ and AQ to cope up with crisis and change. Ability to think out of box, adapt quickly to adverse situations with necessary remedies enable the leader, team, organization, society and nation survive any obstacles. Hereby, an individual with high Ex I can also be a capable leader who is able to transform challenges to opportunities for survival, by envisioning future directions, and never quits despite multiple failure attempts [36].

AQ has a connection with Spiritual Quotient (SQ) in improving well-being of an individual [36]. Being a resilient individual, mental health will be taken care of in handling stressful daily life situations. Responding to life events, especially challenging ones without giving up enhances the AQ level day by day. Feedback is essential in improving AQ level gradually. It can be from own self or others by being aware about situation one is handling,

to mould and shine to develop better coping mechanism when one would face greater crisis or challenges in the future, with significant work-life balance [37].

2.3 Connection between Ex I and AQ

Ex I and SQ are interconnected to each other. Certain degree of relation is identified between IQ, EQ, SQ and AQ as foundation for intrapersonal competencies [38]. Another study also identified AQ has positive and significant influence with teachers' SQ and their performance [39]. The teachers are playing impactful roles in carrying out heavy tasks and responsibilities while delivering the best successful learning approaches. Yet another study indicated that high achievers are possessing high AQ level, compared to poor achievers [40]. However, AQ's development by providing meaning to life events in the Universe through Ex I is still immature and requires further interventions, especially in education.

2.4 Barriers to Ex I

Although Ex I identified by Howard Gardner, only eight distinct intelligences qualify with the significance signs of intelligence, namely Spatial, Bodily-Kinaesthetic, Musical, Linguistic, Logical-Mathematical, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, and Naturalistic [41]. Howard Gardner emphasized on the attention and interest on Ex I escalated during the COVID-19 Pandemic crisis, due to life and death issues with uncertain livelihood. Hereby, Ex I was explained as cognitive capacity in raising and pondering "big questions" about love, evil, life, death, nature and quality of existence, which are frequently of philosophers' and religious leaders' art and literature work [10].

2.5 Barriers to AQ

Individuals with high AQ able to create an organization with greater resilient, agile and high-performance by being adaptive and responding to changes that takes place due to various internal and external conditions [42]. Younger generation's problem-solving ability is declining when parents are frequently available to resolve their life-related critical issues, known as helicopter parenting. Besides, high screen occupation increases anxiety, depression and psychological distress [43]. This trend is exceptionally high during Movement Control Order during COVID-19 Pandemic crisis. Besides that, in our opinion, victimizing oneself due to discouraging situations, constant failures, emotional drain, toxic relationship issues, physical ailments, unpleasant environment and many other factors may contribute towards developing greater AQ.

3.0 CONCLUSION

The present review unravelled the connection between Ex I and AQ. Many studies were support the relationships among IQ, EQ, SQ and AQ. However, only scanty information is available related to SQ that can be contributing towards development of AQ. We suggest, since SQ and Ex I are interrelated, AQ ability can be developed in accordance with Ex I dimension as well. In this context, further research needs to be conducted in measuring Ex I and its impact in various disciplines. Such undertaking would make sure all stakeholders will be providing attention to this intelligence dimension as well, alongside with other eight MI. The need of acting with Ex I while handling crisis moments has positive handling signs when an individual is able to predict the upcoming events before it happens [44].

Speculation on possibility of Ex I to be accepted as full-fledged intelligence is still being researched, as this capability is related to connection with brain or neurological basis. The author highlighted there is no precise test were developed pertaining to Ex I as a full-fledged intelligence. However, certain characteristics of Ex I are interconnected to spiritual or religious aspects, and source of existentialism can be found in writings by legendries as indicated in Table 2 [10]. Therefore, existentialism creates self-realization while handling crisis during

Pandemic COVID-19, appreciating every life moment which is deep rooted to the spiritual aspects and religion teachings in the challenging global environment.

High levels of Ex I and AQ are able to train an individual engaged in challenging moments overcoming through conscious, preconscious and unconscious actions. The individual is able to be more productive, possess a high level of skills, capabilities and performance with high AQ level [45]. Besides, innovation, creativity, critical problem-solving methods applications, committed to morale and ethical practices can be seen in a person with high Ex I and AQ. An individual is able to understand core self, rationalize life events and integrate religion practices with spiritualism to serve as means to the end. In addition, certain degrees of relation are identified between IQ, EQ, SQ and AQ as foundation for intrapersonal competencies. The connection between Ex I and AQ need to be identified through further research as the direct connections between these two are currently unavailable.

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