

SPIRITUAL-EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AS A SUBJECT OF PEDAGOGICAL RESEARCH: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND EDUCATIONAL POTENTIAL**Elena Pavlovna Navruzova**

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Abstract

Modern education increasingly prioritizes not only cognitive development but also the formation of learners' emotional, moral, and value-oriented capacities (UNESCO, 2021). In this context, the concepts of emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence have become significant interdisciplinary constructs in psychology and pedagogy (Mayer et al., 2000; Goleman, 1995; Zohar & Marshall, 2000). However, these categories are often studied separately, which limits the development of holistic educational models aimed at the integrated formation of personality. This article conceptualizes spiritual-emotional intelligence (SEI) as an integrative pedagogical construct that combines emotional responsiveness, value-based reflection, moral reasoning, and personal meaning-making. The study aims to analyze the theoretical foundations of emotional and spiritual intelligence, identify their pedagogical interrelation, and substantiate the relevance of spiritual-emotional intelligence within literary education (Navruzova, 2021). Using theoretical analysis, comparative synthesis, and pedagogical interpretation of psychological concepts, the article demonstrates that literary education provides unique opportunities for developing students' capacity for emotionally meaningful engagement with literary texts, moral reflection, and spiritual comprehension (Vygotsky, 1978; Rosenblatt, 1978). The findings indicate that SEI can be considered a significant educational outcome that supports students' moral development, empathy, and reflective competence. The study concludes that integrating emotional and spiritual dimensions into pedagogical methodology offers a promising framework for contemporary educational practice.

Keywords

emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence, spiritual-emotional intelligence, pedagogy, literary education, moral development, value-based education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary educational paradigms increasingly extend beyond the traditional transmission of subject knowledge and cognitive competencies toward the comprehensive development of learners' personalities (Biesta, 2020). Modern schools are expected to cultivate emotional maturity, moral responsibility, empathy, and value-based orientations alongside academic achievement (OECD, 2019). This shift reflects broader global transformations emphasizing holistic education as a means of preparing individuals for complex social, ethical, and intercultural realities.

Within this context, emotional intelligence (EI) and spiritual intelligence (SI) have emerged as important theoretical constructs. Emotional intelligence, initially introduced by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and later popularized by Goleman (1995), refers to the capacity to perceive, understand, regulate, and utilize emotions effectively in personal and social functioning (Mayer et al., 2000). In educational settings, emotional intelligence has been associated with academic success, social adaptation, empathy development, and communicative competence (Brackett et al., 2011).

Spiritual intelligence, conceptualized by Zohar and Marshall (2000), expands the understanding of intelligence by incorporating existential reflection, moral awareness, meaning-making, and the ability to align personal behavior with higher values (Wigglesworth, 2012). Unlike emotional intelligence, which primarily concerns emotional regulation and interpersonal understanding, spiritual intelligence focuses on value orientation, ethical judgment, and existential coherence.

Despite the growing scholarly interest in both concepts, contemporary pedagogical research rarely addresses their integrated development. Emotional and spiritual dimensions are often explored independently, resulting in fragmented educational approaches. This theoretical gap becomes particularly significant in literary education, where students encounter emotionally rich narratives, moral dilemmas, and existential questions that simultaneously engage both emotional and spiritual dimensions (Rosenblatt, 1978; Navruzova, 2021).

Therefore, this study introduces the concept of spiritual-emotional intelligence (SEI) as an integrative pedagogical construct that unites emotional sensitivity with spiritual and moral reflection. The purpose of this article is to substantiate SEI as a subject of pedagogical research and to identify its educational potential in the context of literature instruction.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Emotional Intelligence in Psychological and Pedagogical Research

The concept of emotional intelligence was first systematically formulated by Salovey and Mayer (1990), who defined it as the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, discriminate among them, and use emotional information to guide thinking and action (Mayer et al., 2000). Their ability model positioned EI as a measurable set of cognitive-emotional capacities.

Goleman (1995) significantly broadened this framework by introducing a mixed model that included motivation, persistence, empathy, and social competence. In educational contexts, emotional intelligence has been widely recognized as essential for communication, self-regulation, social adaptation, and academic resilience (Brackett et al., 2011).

Russian scholars such as Lyusin (2006) further emphasized intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions of EI, highlighting emotional awareness and regulation as key components of successful personality development.

2.2 Spiritual Intelligence as a Value-Oriented Construct

Spiritual intelligence emerged later as an attempt to incorporate meaning, ethics, and transcendence into models of intelligence. Zohar and Marshall (2020) defined SI as the capacity to address questions of meaning and value, to place behavior within broader existential contexts, and to act in accordance with deeply held principles.

Wigglesworth (2012) expanded this understanding by emphasizing compassion, wisdom, internal balance, and ethical action. In pedagogical discourse, spiritual intelligence correlates with moral education, value formation, and the development of personal responsibility.

2.3 Research Gap

Although both EI and SI have demonstrated educational significance, there remains insufficient research on their pedagogical integration. Existing studies frequently examine moral education, emotional literacy, or literary empathy separately, without conceptualizing them as interconnected components of a unified developmental construct (Navruzova, 2021). This gap highlights the need for a new pedagogical category - spiritual-emotional intelligence.

3. METHODS

This study employs a theoretical and methodological design based on:

- comparative analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature (Mayer et al., 2000; Goleman, 1995; Zohar & Marshall, 2000);
- conceptual synthesis of emotional and spiritual intelligence theories;
- pedagogical modeling;
- interpretation of literary education as a developmental environment (Rosenblatt, 1978; Navruzova, 2021).

The methodological foundation is interdisciplinary, combining pedagogy, developmental psychology, axiology, and literary didactics.

The study focuses specifically on literary education because literary texts function as a unique pedagogical medium that activates emotional empathy, moral interpretation, and reflective dialogue (Vygotsky, 1978).

4. RESULTS

The theoretical and comparative analysis of psychological, pedagogical, and literary-educational studies made it possible to conceptualize spiritual-emotional intelligence (SEI) as an independent pedagogical construct that integrates emotional responsiveness with spiritual, moral, and value-oriented reflection. (Mayer et al., 2000; Zohar & Marshall, 2000; Navruzova, 2021).

4.1 Definition of Spiritual-Emotional Intelligence

Within the framework of this study, spiritual-emotional intelligence is defined as an integrative personal formation that develops through educational activity and is manifested in the learner's ability to emotionally respond to morally and spiritually significant situations, comprehend value-based meanings, correlate literary and personal experiences, and apply internalized values through reflective and communicative practice. This understanding corresponds with Navruzova's (2021) pedagogical interpretation of spiritual-emotional intelligence as a developmental outcome of literary education, where emotional responsiveness becomes interconnected with moral reflection and spiritual comprehension.

This definition expands existing models of intelligence by combining emotional sensitivity with moral consciousness and meaning-making, thereby positioning SEI as both a developmental and educational outcome.

4.2. Structural Components of Spiritual-Emotional Intelligence

The analysis allowed the identification of four interrelated structural components that collectively form spiritual-emotional intelligence. These components are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Structural Components of Spiritual-Emotional Intelligence

Component	Core Characteristics	Pedagogical Manifestation in Literary Education
Emotional Component	Empathy, emotional responsiveness, emotional self-awareness	Emotional engagement with literary characters, events, and conflicts
Spiritual-Value Component	Moral reflection, value orientation, meaning-making, ethical self-determination	Comprehension of spiritual, moral, and ethical meanings within literary texts
Interpretive Component	Ethical interpretation, moral analysis, cultural understanding	Analysis of literary conflicts, value dilemmas, and existential questions

Reflexive-Practical Component	Self-reflection, conscious evaluation, behavioral application	Transfer of literary and moral understanding into personal, communicative, and social behavior
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Source: Developed by the author based on Mayer et al. (2000), Zohar and Marshall (2000), and Navruzova (2021).

As shown in **Table 1**, spiritual-emotional intelligence is not limited to emotional responsiveness alone but represents a multidimensional educational construct integrating affective, moral, interpretive, and practical dimensions. The emotional component provides the learner's initial empathetic engagement, while the spiritual-value component ensures value-based comprehension. The interpretive component transforms literary experience into moral and existential understanding, whereas the reflexive-practical component connects educational experience with real-life behavior and self-development.

4.3 Pedagogical Conditions for the Formation of Spiritual-Emotional Intelligence

The study identified several pedagogical conditions necessary for the effective formation of SEI in school education. These conditions are summarized in **Table 2**. and correspond to Navruzova's (2021) conclusion that dialogic literary analysis and reflective engagement with literary text are central mechanisms for developing students' emotional and spiritual capacities.

Table 2. Pedagogical Conditions for SEI Formation

Pedagogical Condition	Educational Function
Dialogical literary analysis	Develops interpretive thinking and moral reflection
Emotionally reflective discussion	Strengthens emotional awareness and empathy
Interpretation of moral dilemmas	Forms ethical judgment and value orientation
Creative response practices (essays, reflective writing, dialogue)	Encourages personal meaning-making and self-expression
Supportive and trust-based educational environment	Facilitates emotional openness and reflective participation
Teacher-guided value reflection	Integrates emotional, moral, and spiritual development

Source: Developed by the author based on Navruzova (2021).

These pedagogical conditions position the teacher not merely as a transmitter of knowledge, but as a facilitator of emotional, moral, and spiritual growth. The educational process thereby becomes a developmental environment in which literary study contributes directly to holistic personality formation.

4.4 Conceptual Model of SEI Formation in Literary Education

Based on the conducted analysis, the following pedagogical model is proposed:

Literary text - Emotional engagement - Moral reflection - Spiritual comprehension - Spiritual-emotional intelligence formation (Navruzova, 2021).

This sequence reflects Navruzova's (2021) methodological perspective that literary education serves as a pedagogical space in which emotional perception of artistic texts becomes the foundation for spiritual and moral self-development.

4.5 Scientific Novelty of the Study

The primary scientific result of this research lies in:

- introducing spiritual-emotional intelligence as a pedagogical category;
- identifying its structural components;
- substantiating its role in literary education;
- systematizing Navruzova's (2021) pedagogical insights within a broader interdisciplinary framework;
- demonstrating the interrelation between emotional, moral, and spiritual dimensions of personality development;
- proposing a conceptual framework for its formation in school curricula.

Thus, the findings suggest that spiritual-emotional intelligence should be regarded not only as a psychological construct but also as an important educational objective that expands the methodological boundaries of contemporary pedagogy.

5. DISCUSSION

The integration of emotional and spiritual dimensions represents a significant expansion of personality-oriented pedagogy. While emotional intelligence enables students to understand and regulate emotions, spiritual intelligence provides value-based direction for these emotional capacities. Their synthesis creates conditions for holistic development.

Literary education is particularly effective in this regard because fiction immerses learners in emotionally saturated and morally complex contexts (Rosenblatt, 1978). Through engagement with literary texts, students not only develop empathy but also confront ethical choices, existential questions, and cultural ideals (Navruzova, 2021).

Thus, SEI should not be reduced to a psychological trait alone; rather, it should be considered an educational objective that connects cognition, emotion, morality, and self-awareness.

6. CONCLUSION

Spiritual-emotional intelligence constitutes a promising pedagogical construct that addresses contemporary educational demands for holistic personality formation (OECD, 2019). By integrating emotional responsiveness with spiritual and moral reflection, SEI expands traditional models of learner development and provides a methodological basis for value-centered education.

The study demonstrates that literary education offers substantial opportunities for cultivating SEI through emotionally meaningful and ethically reflective pedagogical practices (Navruzova, 2021). Future research should focus on developing diagnostic tools, empirical validation, and practical instructional models for implementing SEI formation in school curricula.

In conclusion, spiritual-emotional intelligence may serve as a theoretical and methodological bridge between emotional literacy and moral education, thereby contributing to the advancement of contemporary pedagogical science.

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