The Healthy Resilient Individual: The relationship between spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence, mindfulness and Flourishing.

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Abstract

In positive psychology, research into the field of *Flourishing* is concerned with optimum wellbeing and happiness. This study explores the relationship between spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence, mindfulness, and flourishing. Drawing on data from 111 participates who completed four validated surveys; The Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory (SISRI), Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT), Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MASS) and the Flourishing Sale (FS). Regression analysis was conducted to suggest predictors of perceived levels of levels of flourishing among the sample. All variables were predictors of flourishing with emotional intelligence being the strongest. The study also advances our understanding of these variables with consideration to their subscales. Results showed that the subscale of Personal Meaning Production from the Spiritual intelligence survey was the strongest predictor of flourishing amongst all of the subscale variables. Regression analysis was also conducted to assess the difference in levels of flourishing between those living in the UK and the USA. The results suggest that as spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence and mindfulness are significant predictors of flourishing and are seen as abilities that can be improved upon over time. Implications drawn from the present study suggest that further research could consider that an individuals level of flourishing can be improved by mindfulness or spiritual based practice.

Introduction

In positive psychology, research into the field of *Flourishing* is concerned with optimum wellbeing and happiness. The benefits of flourishing are strongly associated with positive mental health and perceived reduction in levels of stress.

The research explored to what extent spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence and mindfulness act as predictors of flourishing. In particular it looked at This research looks at which elements of emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence and mindfulness are better predictor of flourishing, and whether emotional intelligence or spiritual intelligence mediates the relationship between mindfulness and flourishing.

Positive psychology research into the field of flourishing is concerned with resilience, growth, happiness and overall life wellbeing (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005) and acts as a measure of one's overall purpose, meaning and happiness (Horwitz, 2002). High levels of flourishing are associated with competence, emotional stability, engagement, optimism and the ability to maintain positive relationships (Fredrickson , B. & Losada, 2005) and those with higher levels of flourishing are more likely to be successful in various areas of life, such as marriage, income, work performance and health (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005).

The foremost methodological approach within this field focuses on the relationship between flourishing and positive mental health. Until the mainstream introduction of positive psychology in 1998 the field of flourishing and optimum well-being had not been widely considered. Alternatively psychologists had been strongly focused on the diagnosis and cure of mental illness accepting the hypothesis that "well-being would prevail when pathology was absent" (Huppert & So, 2013, p. 838). However, early research in the field of positive psychology argued that positive

mental health is far more than just the absence of mental illness (Horwitz, 2002). This argument was further supported by the introduction of Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions that acted as a key piece of research in the positive psychology movement as it highlighted the enduring effects of positive emotion including higher levels of resilience. Keyes (2002) further rejected the hypothesis that adults who remain free from mental illness are, by default, mentally healthy and productive. He further argued that though the majority of Americans were not mental ill they were still emotionally unhealthy and not 'flourishing'. Keyes created an operationalization for measuring mental health as a series of symptoms of positive feelings and positive functioning creating a symptomology for positive well-being. More recently Keyes (2010) addressed this further specifically looking at flourishing levels in American teenagers by noting that although it is clear that teenagers who suffer from depression are not mentally healthy it is dubious to assume that those who do not suffer from a mental illness are automatically considered mentally healthy.

Interest in how one can increase their levels of well-being has become a strong area of interest amongst mental health research (Keyes, 2007). Research, such as that stated above, highlights the vast amount of positive effects associated with an individual's capacity to experience positive emotions and how well-being can be cultivated as opposed to how poor mental health can be decreased. This suggests that the best an individual can do in life is not only avoid misery and mental illness but to go beyond the mere absence of mental illness and into a realm of optimum well-being, fulfilment, purpose, meaning and contentment (Horwitz, 2002) known as flourishing.

A model for measuring levels of well-being was created by Seligman (2010) which highlights five components of a individual experiencing optimum well-being; Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationship, Meaning and Accomplishment and has been transformed into a profiler known as the PERMA-profiler to measure wellbeing. However, in his book *Flourish*, Seligman (2011) builds upon well-being theory stating, "the goal of positive psychology in well-being theory is to measure and build human flourishing"(p.29). Consequently additional features of the PERMA model has been supplemented to create a further distinguish flourishing; these qualities include self-esteem, optimism, vitality and self-determination (p. 27) . Other models for measuring well-being to a degree of flourishing include the 14-item Mental Health Continuum Short-Form (MHC-SF; Keyes, 2005) and the European Social Survey (ESS; Jowell & The Central Co-ordinating Team, 2003). However flourishing can be measured reliably by a measure known as the flourishing Scale which will be used in this research. The following table identifies eight qualities strongly associated with flourishing and the indicating item according to the Flourishing Scale. (Diener et al., 2010). It is necessary to understand the following table as it I based on this the scale in question was created.

Whist research has been conducted that shows the benefits of flourishing such as positive mental health an increased likelihood that an individual will be successful in certain social areas of life such as marriage, finances and relationships (Lyubomirsky et al, 2005), ways in which an individual can flourish requires further research.

A parallel field of burgeoning research concerned with human flourishing are that of; *spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence* and *mindfulness*.

The growing popularity of study areas such as mindfulness and emotional intelligence is palpable. Goldman's 2006 bestselling book *Emotional Intelligence* gave the concept of non-academic intelligence mainstream attention. Furthermore, mindfulness has received both clinical and mainstream notoriety. Clinically, mindfulness is a popular and commonly used tool in clinical therapy including addiction recovery and ADHD treatment (Tang, Roon & Kwan, 2015; McClintock, Anderson, & Cranston, 2015: Soamya, & Singh, 2015), and an *amazon.co.uk* search for 'mindfulness' books reveals over 13,000 titles highlighting the mainstream consumer demand for mindfulness based practice. This can also be found with a search for 'spiritual' book returning over 260,000 titles and 'Emotional Intelligence' showing over 19,000 titles.

The variables that were used in this study were spiritual intelligence, mindfulness and emotional intelligence. These variables have been previously grouped together in previous studies (e.g Kaur, Sambasivan & Kumar, 2014; Schutte, & Malouff, 2011: Snowden, Stenhouse, Young, Carver, Carver, & Brown, 2015). Furthermore the variables used in this study and their correlations with flourishing have been assessed in previous studies by looking at the domains individually or in pairs such as that by Gieseke (2014) whom looked at the correlations between spiritually intelligence, mindfulness and transformational leadership. Furthermore, a recent study by Schutte (2014) showed the positive correlations between emotional intelligence and workplace flourishing. A positive relationship has been found between the field of spiritual intelligence and that of mindfulness (Gieseke, 2014) and as links between mindfulness and emotional intelligence have been found, and Emotional intelligence has been related to flourishing, this is why Emotional intelligence was included as a variable of interest in this research.

Defining the methodology

The data-collection phase of this research collected self-report measures form 111 participants to gather what extent they viewed themselves in the categories of spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence, mindfulness and flourishing. These questionnaires were available on Bristol Online Surveys and advertised vua facebook.com. Data analysis examined the correlations between high mindfulness scores and high human flourishing scores and will also examine the same amongst high spiritual intelligence scores and high emotional intelligence scores. Additionally, the data shows, which, if, spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence or mindfulness is a greater accurate predictor of flourishing.

Outline of this dissertation

This dissertation presents the research that was carried out and the findings across five chapters including this introduction. *Chapter 2*, the literature review situates this project into the ever emerging filed of positive psychology. The chapter is split into six subsections; trait vs ability, spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence, mindfulness, flourishing & the relationship between variables. These themes have emerged from the literature and an exploration of them in tern was necessary to inform the methodology and understand the results. This chapter address the rationale for this study as well as presenting the four main hypothesis of this study.

Chapter 3, is concerned with the methodological process undertaken for this study. The chapter details the participants demographics, the measures which were sued in the study and the procedure of analysis. *Chapter 4*, then details the results of

crombach alpha scores, descriptive statistics, the difference between UK and USA responses and the multiple regression analysis that was conducted. Having presented the results *Chapter 5* acts as a discussion. The primary focus of this chapter was to address the results in relation to each hypothesis. By means of a conclusion *Chapter 6* outlines the significance of the research in particular this final chapter draws out the key findings before suggesting future research.

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Literature Review

Multiple Intelligence Theory

As this study will address spiritual intelligence and emotional intelligence which are both seen as non-conventional forms of intelligence, it is of utmost importance to refer to the work of Howard Garner and Multiple Intelligence Theory (1983). Howard Gardner's 'Multiple Intelligence Theory' proposes that each individual has a unique blend of all eight intelligences domains: Linguistic, Logical/Mathematical, Spatial, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Musical, Bodily-Kinaesthetic and Naturalistic. Garner opposes the idea that an individual should be labelled to a specific type of intelligence. However, in more recent studies it has been shown that a general 'g' factor can be detected supporting arguments that despite an individual being able to possess multiple intelligences - it likely that they will exhibit a single dominate intelligence (Visser, Ashton, & Vernon, 2006). Gardner argues that IQ tests only measure linguists and logic abilities and thus is not a true measure of intelligence. Gardner (2000) continues his work and proposes that intelligence can be viewed in three ways; an ability to offer a product or service which is valued by a particular culture, an ability to solve problems and an ability to gather information and knowledge to find solutions to difficulties. Though each intelligence categorised by Gardner demonstrates a different set of cognitive abilities it is argued that they all stand-alone as a unique form of intelligence.

Multiple Intelligence Theory has proven extremely popular in the education setting and research has shown that there are common trends in creating links between an individual's intelligence type and learning. Creating standardized scores or *norms* within intelligence tests are a popular, if not obligatory component of creating an

intelligence test. For example The Wechsler Tests implement an average score of 100 and thus an individual's level of intelligence is measured by how far they deviate from that score either positively or negatively. However, this has caused controversy due to the inconsistence use of intelligence testing as they are often used to assess IQ exclusively as oppose to detecting giftedness and talent. Gardner's multiple intelligences theory argues that there are eight multiple intelligences and that a person's strengths or talents in one area does not predict a strength or talent in another area. For example, though an individual may demonstrate a high aptitude for musical abilities this will not predict individual's mathematical, interpersonal or linguistic abilities. Such theories are very popular and are praised to have more real world value than exclusive IQ testing (Sternberg, 2012). Such theories make way for the consideration of an individual's nature, traits and talents in their quotient measure.

Trait vs Ability

Before reviewing each variable individually it is important to consider if they are seen as either traits or abilities. In psychology it is a widely held view that a *trait* is generally considered to be a static attribute or consistent pattern of behaviour that makes an individual somewhat distinguishable. An individual whom possess a supposed trait would be expected to display certain characteristics is relevant situations; for example, one who poses the trait of shyness would be expected to act introverted in certain situations. An *ability,* however, is seen as something that can be more freely improved upon over time and does not belong to an individual's character. An individual's ability in a certain area showcases their competence to perform a certain function. For example the function of traveling from one location to another in a car requires an ability to drive, however, this ability cannot be reflected in

one's personality or character. In psychology a *cognitive ability* is seen as an ability to perform certain functions involved in cognition and are often referred to as *intelligences.* Though the trait vs state debate is prominent when looking at multiple intelligence in psychology some recent studies have shown that in the fields of non-conventional intelligences (such as emotional intelligence) both traits and abilities can be improved upon through intervention initiatives (Qualter, P., Gardner, K. J., Pope, D. J., Hutchinson, J. M., & Whiteley, H. E. (2012).

The field in which the trait vs ability debate has led to most research is that of emotional intelligence. The field of emotional intelligence has been looked at through the lens of both trait and ability separating emotional intelligence into two constructs that are now sometimes disguised in scientific literature as 'Ability EI' and 'Trait EI'. Ability EI is seen as a cognitive ability and is not correlated with an individual's personality (Brannick, Wahi, Arce, Johnson, Nazian, & Goldin, 2009). Ability EI has been considered harder to measure due to its influence of emotional experience in life causing a subjective result (Matthews, Zeidner, &Roberts, 2007 ; Robinson &Clore, 2002), however, other researchers in the field view ability EI measures more promising (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey 2000). Ability EI cannot be measured by self-report methods and is often tested by assessing an individual's performance. Conversely, Trait EI is considered a personality trait and is concerned with emotional self-perceptions in personality characteristics which is usually measured by self-report techniques. Nonetheless bringing research into both ability and trait EI together has been a generally popular area of research. Overall however, though emotional intelligence is seen as a trait, as it is also considered a form of intelligence which lends itself to the belief that it can be improved upon with age and experience

(Salovy & Mayer, 1999). Furthermore, recent studies by Davis & Humphrey (2015) have indicated that ability EI and trait EI work in tandem because ability EI is dependent on trait EI in order for an individual to perceive their own competency and realise beneficial situations. Additionally, results from a recent 5 yearlong study suggests that both trait and ability EI can be developed and increased (Qualter *et al.*, 2012).

The popular field of mindfulness has too proposed both an ability and trait construct however is more commonly referred to as either 'Trait Mindfulness' or 'State Mindfulness' (Gehart, 2012). Trait mindfulness is viewed as a set of abilities and techniques that are unique to a person's character and generally long lasting. An individual who has the trait of mindfulness would have an inclination to enter into more mindful state with ease. Conversely state mindfulness is seen as a psychological state (Brown, Ryan& Creswell, 2007) that can be achieved through mindfulness training and practice. State mindfulness is seen as an ability that can be improved upon over time due to increase results. Furthermore, Black (2009) extended the literature of mindfulness introducing a third domains of *practice*, highlighting that the practice of mindfulness itself and whom choses to practice is its own separate ability and trait.

The literature reviewed for this paper only discussed Spiritual Intelligence as an ability highlighting the capacities and abilities involved for one to be considered spiritually intelligent. Gieseke (2014) refers to spiritual intelligence as "a biological ability that can be improved upon over time and can be used with purpose and utility"(p.39). Furthermore Spiritual Intelligence is seen as something that can be experienced by practice and awareness (Zohar and Marshall, 2012) thus lending itself more to an ability model of intelligence. In psychology only self-report measures for

spiritual intelligence have been identified. For the purpose of this study mindfulness and spiritual intelligence is viewed through the lens of abilities and emotional intelligence is viewed through the lens of a trait. However, though emotional intelligence is being viewed as a trait it was still considered as something that can be improved upon over time adopting the theory that a trait is a consistent pattern of behaviour and not a static quality.

Spiritual Intelligence

The term 'spiritual intelligence' came about at the turn of the new millennium with intent to act as a scientific model to measure the otherwise intangible nature of spirituality (Emmons, 2000b). Spiritual Intelligence is widely considered to be the field of psychological study associated with the integration of inner life of mind and spirit with external living and work (Vaughan, 2002). It refers to a process of psycho-spiritual development that is person specific (Kass, 2007) and is seen as a necessary intelligence for making discriminatory 'spiritual' choices that have positive effects to ones wellbeing (Vaughan, 2002). Defining the term *spirituality* has not been a task that has been approached lightly in previous research. De Jagar *et al*. (2010) highlighted how defining spirituality in a way that reflects an individual's own personal relationship with the transcendental is not a straightforward task and that as a result, the term spirituality has often been described in 'vague terms' throughout research. It has however, been consequently defined by De Jager as 'one's striving for and experience of connection with oneself, connectedness with others and nature and connectedness with the transcendent' (p.338). For the purpose of this study this definition presented by De Jager is what will be used to demarcate the notion of spirituality.

Spiritualty *per se* is seen as boarder concept than the subdomain of spiritual intelligence (Emmons, 2000a) however, the notion of spiritual intelligence provides an approach to measuring the concept of spirituality in an empirical way (Emmons, 2000b). Considering spirituality as a form of intelligence has however been an area of psychological debate. Whilst spirituality has been proposed as intelligence by psychological researches (Emmons, 2000b; King, 2008), other research argues that that though spirituality has many characteristics of intelligence it does not meet all of the necessary criteria of an intelligence (Gardner, 2004; Hyde, 2004; Edwards 2003). Yet, even without validation from certain researches including Howard Garner (see above), spiritual intelligence is a developing body of literature deemed as a useful notion which can be measured empirically (Gieske, 2014).

In a scientific sense spiritual intelligence is seen as something that can be experienced and improved upon over time (Ronel, 2008) and so it is feasible to assume that it may act as predictor of flourishing due to its high level of positive attributes such as the ability to enable day-to-day decisions that are linked to solving problems and achieving ones goals (Emmons, 2000). Likewise, spirituality and its links to well-being is not an overlooked area of study making it a desirable domain to research regarding predictors of flourishing. In fact publications on the topic of spirituality and wellbeing have increased by 688% between 1986-2006 (Weaver, Pargament, Flannelly& Oppenheimer, 2006). As stated by Gomez and Fisher (2003) it is important to note that spirituality and spiritual well-being are not limited to religious experiences. Instead for Gomez and Fisher, spiritual wellbeing is more concerned with an affirmation of life and a relationship with a ‘transcendental other’ (National Interfaith Coalition on Aging, 1975).

Spiritual intelligence has also been researched to show a positive effect on mental health and quality of life (Pant, 2014) and research by Jafari *et al*. (2010) concludes that spiritual well-being is strongly associated with positive mental health and has a 'protective' effect against stress. Given the previous research is it likely to assume that spiritual intelligence would be a predictor of flourishing. Whereas, measuring ones levels of spirituality, spiritual well-being and spiritual experiences is not new within psychology with various reliable measures and scales available. For example, The Spiritual Tendencies Scale (Piedmont, 1999) and the Prague Spirituality Questionnaire (Rican & Janosova, 2005). However, research by Meezenbroek et al. (2012) showed particular preference to the Spiritual Well-being questionnaire (SWBQ) from Gomez and Fisher (2003) due to its overall validity and reliability, items being appropriately formulated and high levels of psychometric qualities, however, despite such scales measuring spiritual intelligence specifically was not developed until 2008 by King, and later refined in 2010 (King & DeCicco, 2010).

King (2008) introduced four components/ abilities of Spiritual Intelligence; (1) *the ability think critically and existentially,(2) the ability to become transcendentally aware,(3) the ability to expand your conscious state and (4) the ability to produce personal meaning in life*. Looking specifically at the latter, the ability to produce meaning in life is referred to as Personal Meaning Production throughout Kings work is defined as "the ability to construct personal meaning and purpose in all physical and mental experiences, including the capacity to create and master a life purpose" King, 2010;p.3).

Spiritual Intelligence and flourishing. Within the literature spiritual intelligence has not previously been looked at as a possible predictor of flourishing, however, due to the high amount positive aspects associated with spiritual intelligence

(which can be measured empirically) it is important to assess what aspects of spiritual intelligence, if any, are significant predictors of flourishing. As mentioned previously spirituality has been considered a strong predictor of well-being, however, looking at the subdomain of spirituality intelligence is an area of research which is still to be considered. Additionally, the subscale of personal meaning production within spiritual intelligence is a particularly interesting area of study as it is reasonable to assume that one's level of flourishing will be affected by ones level of personal meaning production. Though the notion that 'meaning' is a positive component of well-being is not a new one, the idea that one's ability to find and create meaning is something which can be internally produced means that flourishing levels could be altered due to ones level of personal meaning.

Emotional Intelligence

The term 'emotional intelligence' was coined by Salovy and Mayer (1990) and was initially seen as a social skill which involved the ability to monitor your own others emotions. This shaped the definition of emotional intelligence as a set of skills that promote accurate expression and regulation of emotions, as well as encouraging motivation and accomplishment. By 1999 the term emotional intelligence had become seen as meeting all of the standard criteria for a traditional intelligence (Salovy & Mayer 1999) such as (1) it being able to operationalize as a set if abilities, (2) it was strongly correlated with pre-existing forms of intelligence and (3) it is possible to develop with age and experience. Though some scientists belong to the school of thought that emotional intelligence is not a form of intelligence but instead a set of abilities and skills (e.g Brody, 2004), within scientific empirical research there is not debate about referring to emotional intelligence as an intelligence and treating it as such. While emotional intelligence has been subject of much research since Salovy

and Mayers findings are still important. Within the literature emotional intelligence is only seen to be a positive attribute and people with high levels of emotional intelligence are seen to be able to code and decode their own and others emotions and feelings (Gunkel, Schlahel, Engle, 2014).

Three main models for emotional intelligence has been proposed; ability model (Salovey & Mayer, 1989), trait model (Petrides & Furnham, 20010) and a mixed model (Goleman, 1998). The first model to receive acclaim was the ability-based model The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test, MSCEIT (2003). This test consists of 141 items and considers emotional intelligence to be divided into four aspects; perceiving emotions, facilitating emotions, understanding emotions and managing emotions. Despite its popularity recent tests by Fiori and Antonakis (2012) showed that the MSCEIT did not predict emotionally intelligent behaviour relating to an individual's ability to spontaneously process emotional information. Favour has been shown towards looking at emotional intelligence through the lens of a trait model and a screened and valid measure for assessing one's emotional intelligence in this way is the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT; Schutte, 1998). This scale consists of four components making-up optimum emotional intelligence; Perception of Emotion, Managing Own Emotions, Managing Others Emotions, Utilisation of Emotions. This model has received acclaim and is an important model when considering empirical ways to measure emotional intelligence and in recent cross-cultural studies the scale has received validity and reliability among a sample of Arabic media students (Naeem, N & Muijtjens, 2015).

The notion of a mixed model of emotional intelligence can be attributed to Daniel Goleman. When speaking of the notion of emotional intelligence it is crucial to refer to work of Daniel Goleman who authored the bestselling book *'Emotional*

Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ' (1996) who is praised with bringing mainstream attention to this area of psychological research. Goleman (1998) attributes emotional intelligence for responsible for 67% of the qualities necessary for a thriving individual and thus his work has become one of the 'hottest words in Corporate America' (Perks, 2009). In relation to this study, Goleman (1998) views emotional intelligence a mixed model of both ability and trait with five components (1) self-awareness, (2) self-regulation, (3) social skills, (4) empathy, and (5) motivation. Goleman's work in the field of emotional intelligence is also responsible for two popular measures of emotional intelligence including The Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI; Boyatzis & Sala, 2004) and the Emotional Intelligence Appraisal (EIA: cited in Van Bentem, 2014).

Emotional Intelligence and Flourishing. Studies looking at the relationship between emotional intelligence and wellbeing have seen a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and life-satisfaction (Austin, Saklofake and Egan, 2005). Recent studies in the field of emotional intelligence have, also, shown its ability to mediate the relationship between mindfulness and subjective wellbeing (Schutte & Malouff, 2011).which suggests that emotional intelligence may be a predictor flourishing in an individual. King, Mara and Decicco (2012) also found correlations among key measures by using the Spiritual Intelligence Self Report Scale and Multi-Dimensional Emotional Empathy Scale (EES; Caruso & Mayer, 1998: cited in King, Mara & Decicco, 2012). Emotional intelligence in seen scientifically as a form of intelligence and meets all the standard criteria for such (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 1999).

Mindfulness

The term mindfulness is generally understood as the process involved in bringing a certain quality of attention to moment-by-moment experiences, or more simply it is used to describe paying attention on purpose (Kabat-Zin & Hanh, 2009) or, as living in the 'now' (Hoffman & Todgham, 2010). Though the term mindfulness is often used in a therapeutic sense today, the term has strong eastern religious origins (Dhinman, 2009) and has been referred to as a modern conversation between Buddhism and Clinical psychology (Kang, 2010). The field of mindfulness is the area of psychological study that is concerned with changing the way one thinks about experiences with an aim to reduce stress and anxiety (Chiesa and Malinowski, 2011). For example, adopting the belief that one's preoccupation with memories, fantasies future plans and worries will cause undue stress and evoke automatic behaviours (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Mindfulness is seen as a practice and process that is traditionally executed through standard meditation techniques. In a clinical setting a client would generally sit with upright posture and begin the endeavour of maintaining a single focus – most commonly their own breath. The process of mindfulness is for an individual to notice when their attention is wandering without attaching meaning or a need for action to their thoughts - thus returning to a single focus. This process is repeated for every wandering thought (Segal, Willians and Teasdale, 2012). Seven qualities of mindfulness have been outlined by Kabet-Zinn (2011) drawing conclusions that *patience, non-judgement, trust, non-striving, acceptance and letting go* are the foundations of mindfulness practice.

Ongoing debates surrounding mindfulness as trait or ability are palpable and this field has also proposed both an ability and trait construct. As above these terms are more commonly referred to as either Trait Mindfulness or State Mindfulness (Gehart, 2012). Trait mindfulness is viewed as a set of abilities and techniques that

are unique to a person's character and are generally long lasting attributes. An individual who has the trait of mindfulness would have an inclination to enter into more mindful state with ease. Conversely state mindfulness is seen as a psychological state (Brown, Ryan& Creswell, 2007) that can be achieved through mindfulness training and practice. State mindfulness is seen as an ability that can be improved upon over time due to increase results. Furthermore, Black (2009) extended the literature of mindfulness introducing a third domains of 'Practice Mindfulness' highlighting that the practice of mindfulness itself is its own separate ability and trait. Like spiritual intelligence much support has been given to looking at mindfulness through the lens of an ability with scholars stating that is not a static quality that an individual either does or does not possess but instead is something that all people possess in varying capacities (Dane, 2010; Kabat-Zinn, 2005).

In order to study mindfulness and assess its benefits empirically popular measures for each an ability and trait model have been devised. The Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills (Baer, Smith, & Allen. 2004) looks at mindfulness as a trait and consists of questions that assess mindfulness abilities such as observing, describing, acceptance and acting without judgement. The model which has received a generous amount of attention is Mindfulness attention awareness scale (MAAS; Brown & Ryan, 2003) which look at mindfulness as an ability. Though the Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills model is deemed as valid and reliable, this study is concerned with viewing mindfulness as an ability and therefore alternative measures were chosen. For the purpose of this study mindfulness will be looked at through the ability paradigm adopting the belief that mindfulness is a capacity that can be evoked and developed through mediation techniques (Hanh, 1976: cited in Linehan and

Wilks, 2015). Consequently the MASS will be the scale used to measure this empirically.

Mindfulness and flourishing. Potential correlations between mindfulness and flourishing are found in the literature and throughout the literature only *benefits* to being mindful are discussed and it is seen to attribute to well-being immensely (Brown and Ryan, 2003). Research has shown that mindfulness is associated with positive self-regulating behaviour and optimism (Brown & Ryan, 2003) as well as rational coping among college students (Palmer & Roger, 2009). The field of mindfulness has become a key area of interest to clinicians due to the introduction of mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR; Kabat-Zinn, Lipworth, Burney and Sellers, 1987). Mindfulness has, also, received much clinical support (e.g Baer, 2005; Morone, 2008; Decker, 2015) and holds a strong place as a clinical therapy amongst National Health Care (Marx, 2014; Marx, 2013). Previous findings have suggested that mindfulness based interventions may be helpful in the treatment of mental health problems and improving psychological wellbeing (Baer, 2003). Also, the use of mindfulness based interventions, such as mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (Kabat-Zinn, 1998), has shown the clinical relevance of this field. mindfulness has also been shown to have a strong role in flourishing when previous studies tested the role of mindfulness in psychical and psychological health (Prazak, 2012).

Flourishing

As stated above, flourishing is the field of psychological research concerned with optimum well-being and overall life satisfaction. In psychology, the term flourishing is generally understood to mean good mental, physical and social wellbeing and to be in a state full of vitality free from illnesses and anguish (Keyes & Lopez, 2009).

Fundamentally flourishing is about achieving a state of consistent positive mental health. Flourishing is an extension of the PERMA model (Seligman, 2010) has been coined as the 'new positive psychology' (pg. 3). Consequently flourishing is the current pinnacle of positive psychology research. The goal of flourishing is to improve the amount of happiness in one's life and in practice aims to measure and build levels of flourishing in individuals (Seligman, 2011). Diagnostic criteria for flourishing have been devised to aid measuring the term both empirically and quantitatively. Such criteria include that an individual must not have had a major depressive episode in the past year and must have a high level of self-acceptance as well being accepted socially (Keyes & Lopez, 2009: Fredrickson & Losada, 2005).

Flourishing is reported by self-measure with individuals usually being asked about their emotions and feeling and thus can be a subjective state of well-being. Keyes (2002) states that flourishing is seen as something that will manifest internally rather than externally. Measures of flourishing include the Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHC-SF; Keyes, 2002) that measures the six dimensions of Ryff's (1989) model of psychological well-being as well as 15 items that measure Keyes (1998) model of social well-being and this measure has shown excellent validity in previous research (Lamers, 2010). The European Social Survey (ESS: Jowell & The Central Co-ordinating Team, 2003) has also been used to measure flouring in previous studies (Hone, Jarden, Schofield and Duncan, 2014), however the most popular and validated measure that currently exists is argued to be the Flourishing Scale (FS: Diener, Wirtz, Tov, Kim-Prieto, Choi, Oishi, and Biswas-Diener,2010) as psychometric support and cross-cultural use of this scale is growing rapidly (Hone, et al., 2014).

Table 1: Components of Flourishing and Indicating Item according to the Flourishing Scale

Component of flourishing	Indicating Item according to the FS
Purpose & Meaning	I live a purposeful and meaningful life.
Positive relationships	My social relationships are supportive and rewarding
Engagement	I am engaged and interested in my daily activities
Social contribution	I actively contribute to the happiness and wellbeing of others
Competence	I am competent and capable in the activities that are important
Self-respect	I am a good person and live a good life
Optimism	I am optimistic about my future
Social relationships	People Respect Me

Predictors of flourishing Predictors of flourishing have been recently researched by considering possible external attributes that aid flourishing among college students and results showed that access to resources (such as text books and libraries and on-campus accommodation) contributed to high levels of flourishing (Fink 2014). However, looking at predictors of flourishing through the lens of abilities that can be improved upon over time is an area that has been scarcely researched. As discussed, within the literature, there are possible correlations between spiritual intelligence, mindfulness, emotional intelligence and flourishing and as these domains are not presented as static qualities that a person either does or not possesses but instead as abilities that can be improved upon over time it is reasonable to assume that ones level of flourishing is able to improved upon by cultivating the independent variables

in question. . This suggests that human flourishing can be improved upon by spiritual and mindful practice if spiritual intelligence and mindfulness are significant predictors of Flourishing. This makes spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence and mindfulness particularly useful concepts in human flourishing literature because they represent the potential to improve human flourishing through self-practice and development.

***Flourishing as a social desirable state*.** Flourishing is sometimes discussed within the context of social psychology. Firstly, though it may be no new phenomena that people's behaviours and thoughts are influenced by the presence, or perceived presence, of others (Hogg & Vaughan, 2008) it has been researched that an individual will find it more difficult to flourish in the company of languishing people (Keyes, Fredrickson and Park, 2012). Moreover, within a social psychological context flourishing is seen as an aspirational state and research has suggested that social status can be strongly associated with subjective well-being (Anderson, Kraus, Galinsky, & Keltner, 2012). Thus it can be argued that flourishing is somewhat of a status symbol and Social Psychology has demonstrated various ways in which humans are naturally schematic about their social status (Simpson and Kendrick, 2013; Kennedy and Kray, 2014). It can be argued that an attainment of a state of flourishing is definitely a desirable state.

With this is mind it is worth noting that as social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) and upward social comparison (Collins, 1996) theorise that people evaluate themselves by comparison with others and are prone to compare themselves with those seen as 'better' than them, perceived levels of flourishing are subjective to one's environment and social circles. For this study flourishing id used as a dependent variable as flourishing is seen as the highest level of well-being that can be achieved.

Comparing the USA and the UK

This study also analysed the cross-cultural differences in flourishing scores identifying the USA and UK. Early research by Carballo (1999, cited in de Jagar et al., 2010) showed that whilst 83% of Americans consider a higher transcendental force as important in their lives, only 43% of Western Europeans considered the same. Fuller (2001) also suggested that the USA was *once* the most religious nation on earth, however, is now becoming a nation of people who are 'spiritual but not religious'. De Jagar et al., (2010) state that this same 'spiritual but not religious' pattern can been found in Western European citizens due to the large growth in personal development, yoga and meditation books. Given this information it is reasonable to assume that those living in the USA will exhibit higher scores on the spiritual intelligence survey, however, from this it would appear that there is less evidence to suggest that people living in the USA would score higher in the other categories.

Rationale for study

This study uses spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence and mindfulness as independent variables and flourishing as the dependent variable. As discussed above the concepts of spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence and mindfulness are often grouped together and are all popular 'self-help' topics that are available to masses in various forms. As flourishing is seen as the highest level of well-being that an induvial can attain in the field of positive psychology it is important to study possible predictors of flourishing. The research detailed in this chapter has demonstrated the

positive benefits of all three variables. Additionally the current ways in which they can be measured have also been identified. The review has also explored that all three variables can be viewed as either a trait or an ability but for this study those literatures that understanding these variables as an ability are favourable.

This research addresses a gap in the existing body of literature by examining whether or not spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence and mindfulness are predictors of flourishing in participants. To the authors knowledge this is the first study n flourishing which brings these variables together. Based on a review of previous research, four main hypothesis were predicted:

Hypotheses

1. Spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence and mindfulness are positively correlated with Flourishing.

2. Compared to mindfulness, spiritual intelligence and emotional intelligence will be strongest predictor of Flourishing.

3. There will be a difference in levels of flourishing between those living in the USA and UK.

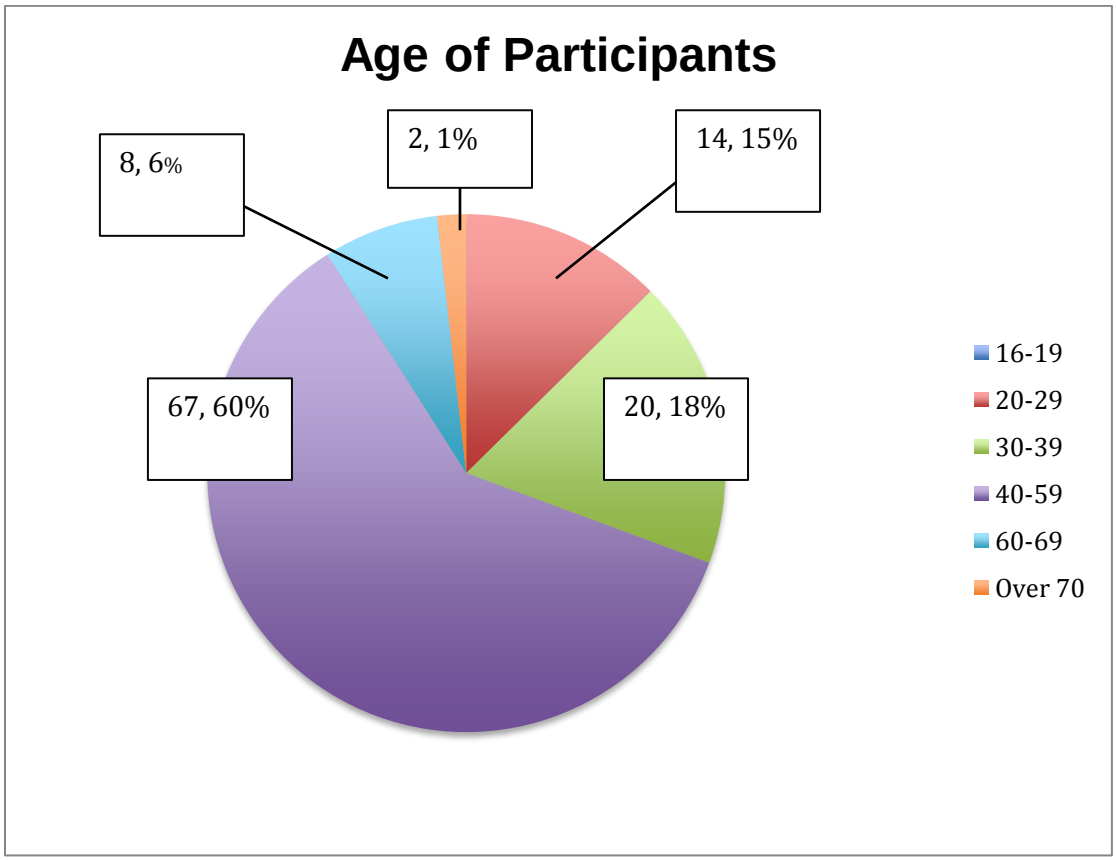
Method

Participants

A total of 111 adults (N=111) participated in this study, recruited via social media particularly the 'self-help' and 'spiritual' pages 'That Guy Who Loves The Universe' (see appendix A), a social media page which belongs to the researcher. The majority (84%) were female and the highest percentage (60%) of participants were aged 40-59. The highest proportion of participants (45%) was, also, from the United States. This reflects the recruitment of participants as the outreach of the facebook page 'That Guy Who Loves The Universe' goes out to a majority US audience. The study was carried out in accordance with BPS ethical guidelines. The voluntary nature of participation was highlighted and participants were informed that their completion of the questionnaire will be taken as their informed consent (See Appendix B for participant information sheet). All participants contributed aware that the data will be collected, processed, reported and stored anonymously. Participants were fully debriefed on the nature of the experiment. Despite the option n for this being made available, no participant indicated that they wished to withdraw their data.

Figure 1 shows the breakdown of particulates by age and percentage.

Figure 1: Pie Chart showing age of Participants



See results for full breakdown.

Measures

Participants completed a questionnaire comprising of five sections including a demographics survey and four standardised questionnaires (See appendix C).

(1) Demographics Including Age, Gender and Base.

(2) Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory

King (2008) introduced four components/ abilities of Spiritual Intelligence; (1) *the ability think critically and existentially,(2) the ability to become transcendentally aware,(3) the ability to expand your conscious state and (4) the ability to produce personal meaning in life*. Table 2 highlights the components of Spiritual intelligence as seen by the Spiritual Intelligence Self Report Scale.

Table 2: Components of Spiritual Intelligence and their definition according to the Spiritual Intelligence Scale (King, 2008)

Component of Spiritual Intelligence	Definition
Critical Existential Thinking	The capacity to critically contemplate meaning, purpose, and other existential/metaphysical issues (e.g., existence, reality, death, the universe); to come to original existential conclusions or philosophies; and to contemplate non-existential issues in relation to one's existence (i.e., from an existential perspective).
Personal Meaning Production	The ability to derive personal meaning and purpose from all physical & mental experiences, including the capacity to create and master (i.e., live according to) a life purpose.

Transcendental Awareness	The capacity to identify transcendent dimensions/patterns of the self (i.e., a transpersonal or transcendent self), of others, and of the physical world (e.g., holism, nonmaterialism) during normal states of consciousness, accompanied by the capacity to identify their relationship to one's self and to the physical world.
Conscious State Expansion	The ability to enter and exit higher/spiritual states of consciousness (e.g. pure consciousness, cosmic consciousness, unity, oneness) at one's own discretion (as in deep contemplation or reflection, meditation, prayer, etc.).

(3)Mindful attention awareness scale (MAAS) This 15-item inventory was developed by Brown and Ryan (2003) designed to access core characteristics of mindfulness. Brown and Ryan (2003) indicate that mindfulness is a unique quality of being conscious which relates to well-being constructs and, thus, the scale makes it possible to distinguish those who practice mindfulness and those who don't. The scale uses a measure of 1-6 to indicate the frequency or infrequency of which an individual has 'mindful' experiences such as noticing feeling, rushing through activities and remembering people's names. The high reliability of this scale made it a desirable choice for this study.

(4) The Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT). The SSEIT includes a 33-item self-report using a 1 to 5 scale for responses (strongly agree - strongly disagree). The scale uses four sub-scales; emotion perception, utilizing emotions, managing self- relevant emotions, and managing others' emotions. This scale has been shown to be highly reliable in previous studies (including cross cultural studies) and as it is a trait model it is seen as being a highly valid measure of emotional intelligence.

(5)Flourishing Scale. The 8-item Flourishing inventory, developed by Diener et al. (2010) as a measure of positive psychological wellbeing was used. The 7-point Likert scale answers range from 1-"strongly disagree" to 7-"strongly agree." Examples of items include "I am a good person and live a good life" and "My social relationships are supportive and rewarding". Recent studies such as that by Silva and Caetano (2013) show that the measure is accurate a can be used by researchers who want to carry out a research on psychological well-being.

Procedure

Data were collected by means of setting up an on-line survey through Bristol Online Survey. The research was advertised on facebook.com via a spiritual community page called That Guy Who Loves The Universe where potential participant could requests a link to the on-line survey. Participates whom contacted the research directly where then given a link to the surveys. Data was collected over a two-month period. Collected data was analysed with the help of SPSS software. Firstly missing values were removed and scoring instructions for each questionnaire were used to reverse-score any necessary items. Crombach Alpha results were computed to ensure that the scales had been reliable during the study. Boxplots were conducted to decide

which regression analysis would be used and it was decided to use both persons correlation and spearman's rho in this study. Regression analysis then showed which scales have a positive correlation with flourishing.

Results

The main aim of the present study was to investigate the extent to which spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence and mindfulness act as predictors of flourishing. In addition, differences by gender and between UK and US participants were also explored. The data were prepared for analysis by checking for data entry errors and removing any missing values. only, between 1 and 1.8% of data were missing, these values were replaced using the series mean replacement method. Any 'prefer not to answer' responses were removed. Scoring instructions for each questionnaire were used to reverse-score any necessary items. (See Appendix D for SPPS data output).

Crombach Alpha Score, mean & standard deviations for each scale.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores for each Scale

	Mean	**SD**	**Crombach's Alpha**
Flourishing	49.22	7.0	α= .91
Spiritual Intelligence	72.71	13.39	α= .91
CET	22.10	4.21	α = .69
PMP	15.6	3.52	α = .86
TA	23.29	3.78	α= .78
CSE	11.71	4.93	α= .98
Emotional Intelligence	136.01	12.60	α= .92
Perception of Emotion	39.87	6.42	α= .86
Managing of Emotions	36.76	5.32	α= .84
Managing others Emotions	33.31	4.31	α= .78
Utilization of Emotions	25.15	3.48	α= .79
Mindfulness	60.68	13.11	α= .90

Difference Between UK & US

This study examined cultural differences. Removing the data for those living outside of the United Sates and the United Kingdom results showed that participants living in the United States (US) Scored higher than those living in the United Kingdom in every category excluding Conscious State Expansion. Table 4 shows the means and

Standard Deviations for each scale and subscale used, by UK versus USA participants only.

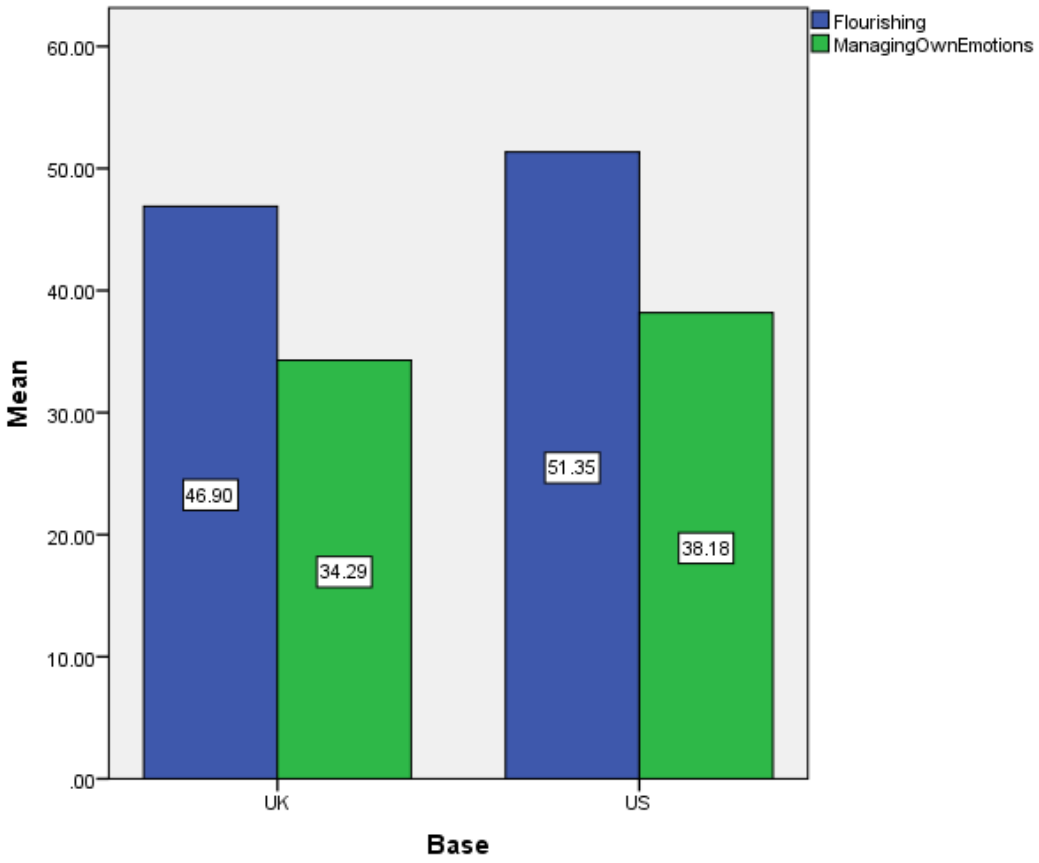
Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores for UK & US Participants

	UK		**USA**	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Total Spiritual Intelligence	72.20	11.64	75.53	12.55
CET	21.78	4.36	23.42	3.56
PMP	15.22	3.64	16.24	2.98
TA	23.19	2.90	24.02	3.71
CSE	12.00	4.77	11.83	4.98
Total EQ Score	132.16	22.14	138.24	11.22
Perception of Emotion	40.32	7.52	40.38	5.07
Managing Own Emotions	34.29	6.71	38.18	3.96
Managing Others Emotions	32.54	5.47	33.83	3.56
Utilisation of Emotions	25.00	4.22	25.83	2.71
Mindfulness Score	58.30	13.18	61.63	11.61
Flourishing	46.90	9.36	51.34	
4.17				

Using levels of flourishing as a dependent variable, a series of independent t-tests were carried out to look at the differences in scores between people living in the UK (N=31) and people living in the US (N=49). Results showed that those living in the US had significantly higher scores for Managing Own Emotions than those living in

the UK;Managing Own Emotions (t=-2.92, df=43.39, p=.006). They also showed that those in the US had significantly higher levels of flourishing, compared to those in the UK (t=-2.49, df=37.62, p=.017. This is illustrated in Figure 2.).

Figure 2: Graph showing significant results only from independent sample t-tests



Predictor Analysis.

In order to decide which variables should be entered into the model to find predictors of Flourshing, a series of correlations were carried out. Results showed that all three varaibles has a relationship with flourising.

Figure 3: Scatterplot showing the positive correlation between and Emotional Intelligence

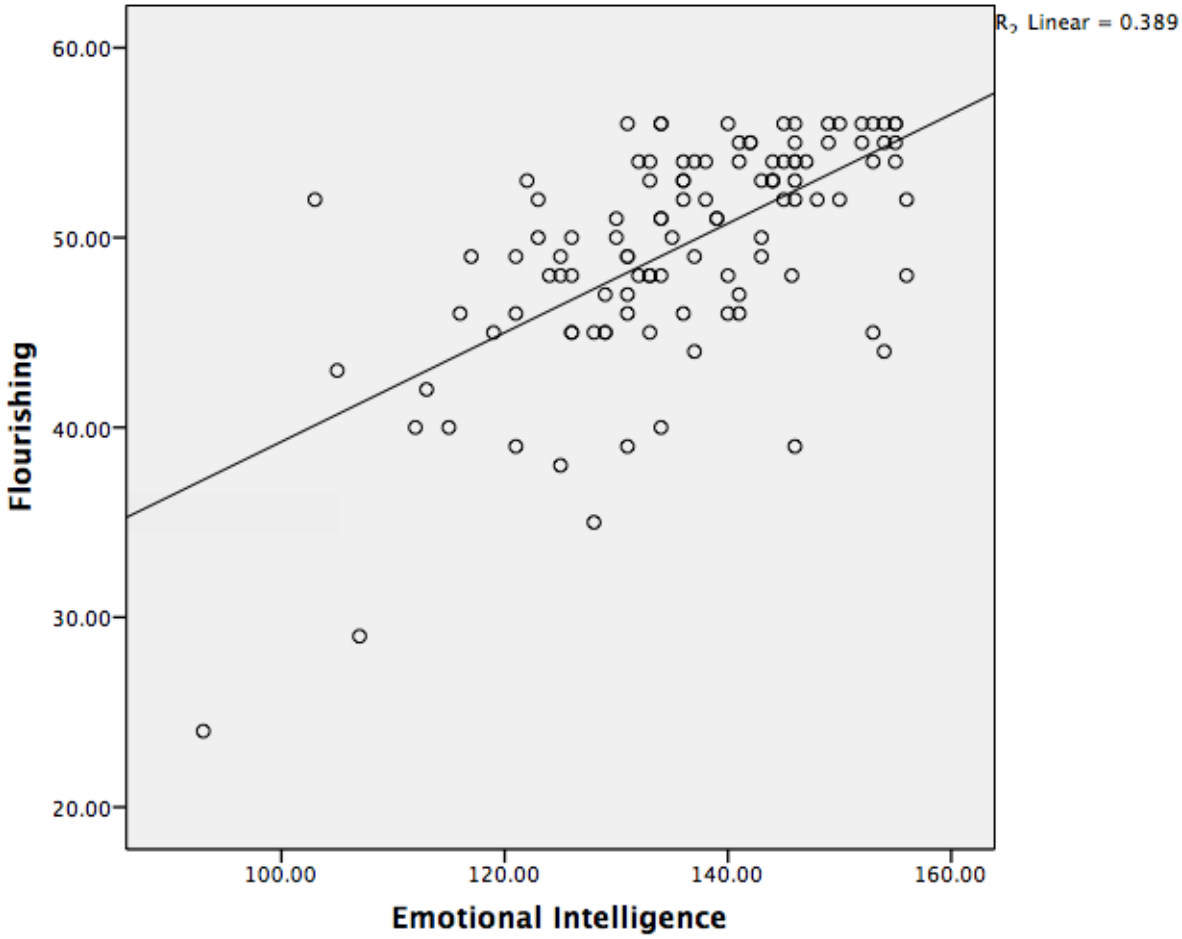


Figure 4: Scatterplot showing the positive correlation between Flourishing and Spiritual Intelligence

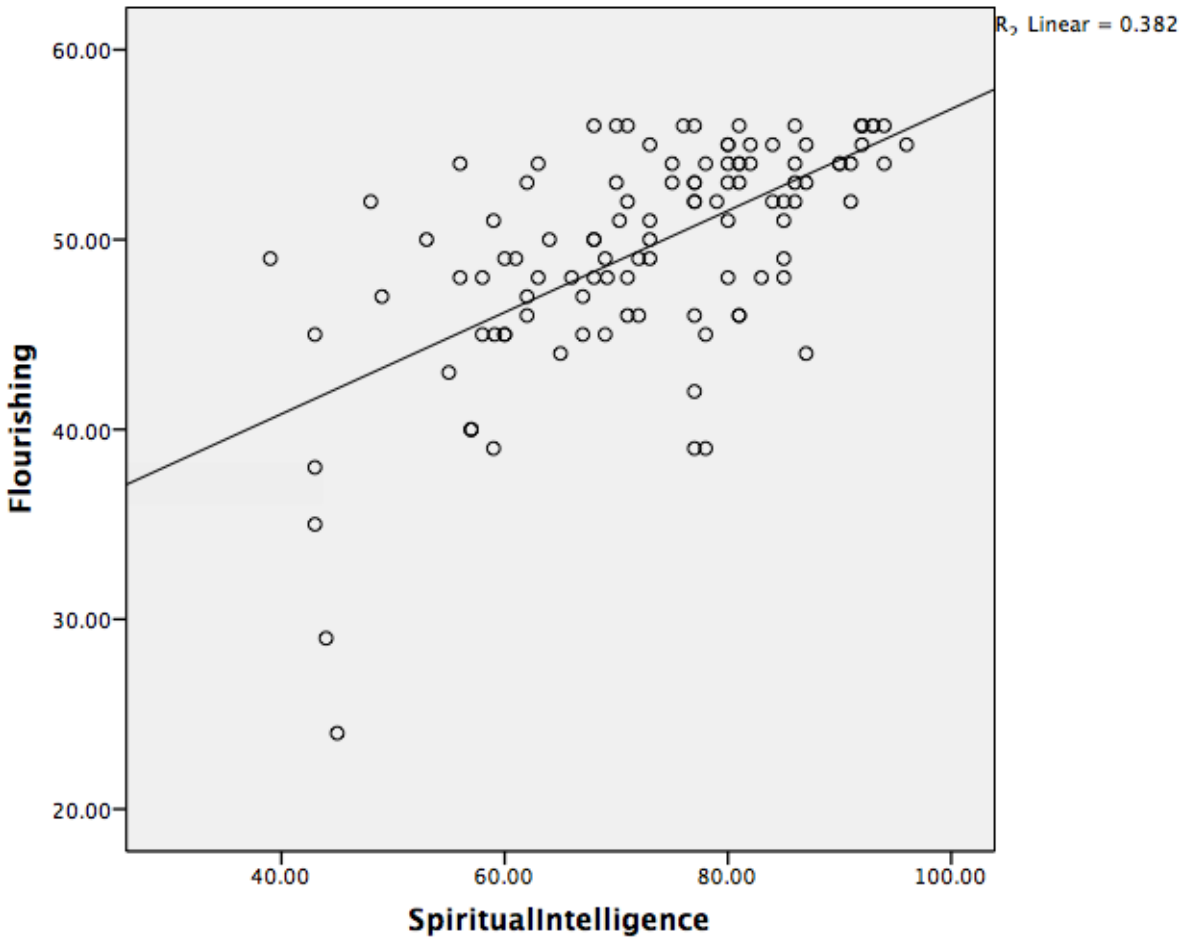
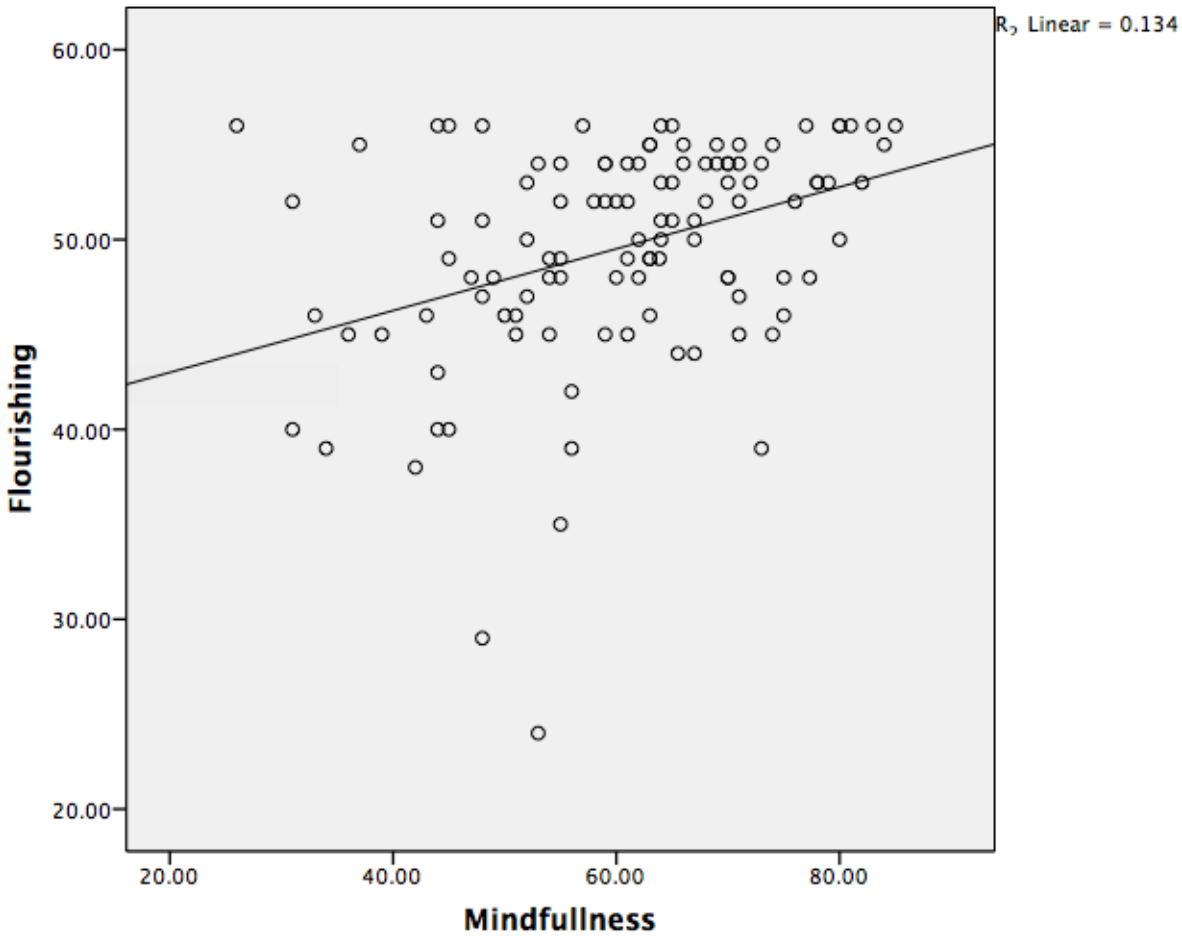


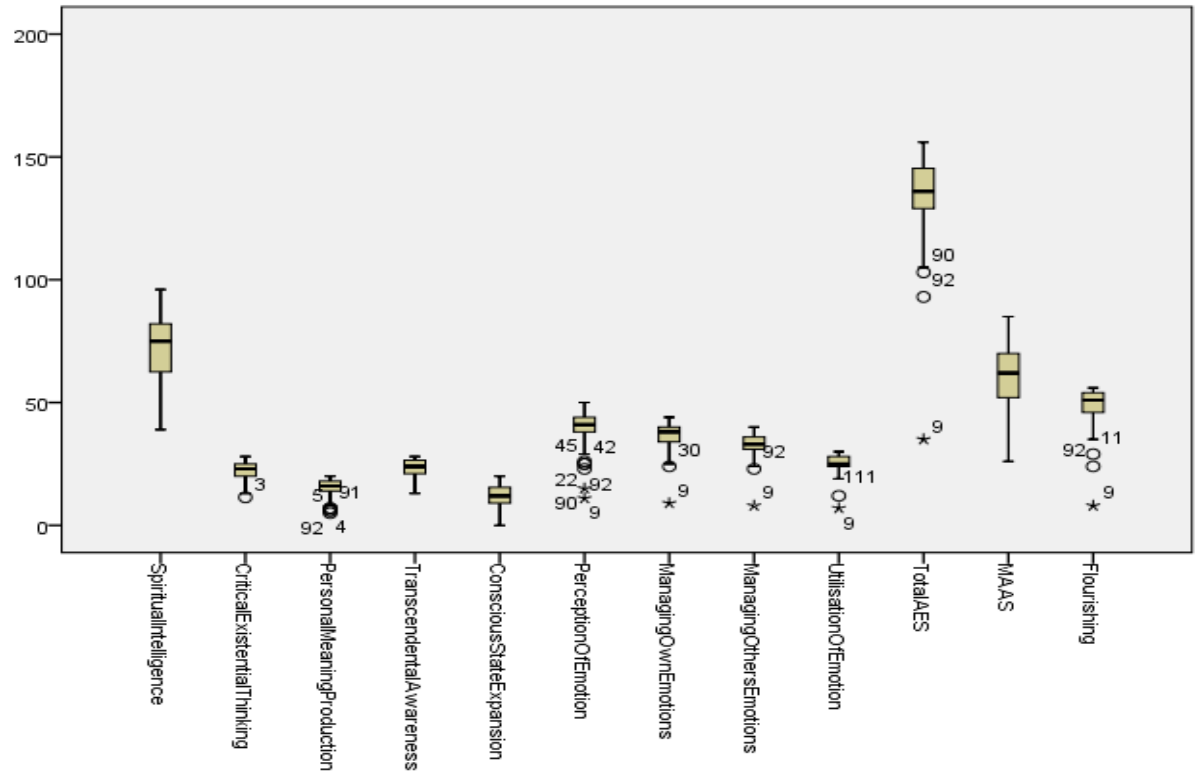
Figure 5: Scatterplot showing the positive correlation between Flourishing and Mindfulness.



In addition to looking at the total scores for EI, SI and mindfulness as predictors of flourishing, a MR was also conducted looking at predictors of flourishing using the subscale scores.

Boxplots were conducted to look at distribution of data. As shown in the below figures one particular participant (no.9) had extreme values for flourishing & emotional intelligence scales so it was decided to exclude that person from the analysis.

Figure 6: Boxplot showing distribution of data with participant number 9 included.



Consequently a 2-tailed Pearson's Correlation was used to analyse the relationship between all of the questionnaires with each other apart from the emotions intelligence subscale Utilization of Emotion and the Flourishing Scale that was analysed using Spearmen's Rho. Looking at predictors of flourishing through total scale scores were generated through using a Pearson Correlation Coefficient on the sample (N=110). This showed the correlation coefficient between all of the variables

total scores. A series of Pearson;s correlation coefficients was computed to assess the relationships between flourishing and, each of the following: emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence and Mindfulness. As shown in Table 6, the results showed that all three variables were significantly and positive related to flourishing. Namely, with higher levels of EI related to higher levels of: flourishing (r= .623, p=<.001); spiritual intelligence (r=.618, p=<.001); and mindfulness (r=.366, p=<.001). Results also showed a significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and emotional intelligence (r=.585, p=<001) and spiritual intelligence and mindfulness (r=.288, p=<.001).

Table 5 shows the significant correlations identified by computing a Pearsons Correlation Analysis.

Table 5: Pearson's correlations of test variables (N=110).

	SQ	**CET**	**PMP**	**TA**	**CSE**	**EQ**	**PoE**	**MoE**	**MotE**	**UoE**	**MAAS**	**F**
SQ		.79**	.73**	.88**	.83**	.58**	.41**	.55**	.37**	.35**	.27**	.61**
CET			.39**	.64**	.51**	45**	.32**	.43**	.29**	.25**	.13	42**
PMP				.62**	.45**	.62**	41**	.60**	.42**	.38**	.32**	.71**
TA					.64**	.52**	.42**	.43*	.33**	.31**	.23**	.51**
CSE						.35**	.22*	.35**	.21*	.23*	.22*	.41**
EQ							.77**	.77**	.77**	.57**	.20*	.62**
PoE								.37**	.44**	.20*	.27**	.39**
MoE									.533**	.35**	.23**	.61**
MotE										.39**	.02	.52**
UoE											-.06	.29**
MAAS												.36*

Table 6 shows the significant correlations identified by computing a Spearman's Rho Correlation Analysis.

Table 6: Spearman's rho correlations for Utilization of Emotions & Flourishing

		SQ	CET	PMP	TA	CSE	EQ	PoE	MoE	MotE	UoE	MAAS	F
UoE		.41**	.32**	.43**	.37**	.28**	.66**	.29**	.42**	.42**	1	-.02	.30**
Flourishing	.60**	.43**	.67**	.53**	.44**	.59**	.38**	.60**	.46**	.30**	.37**	1	

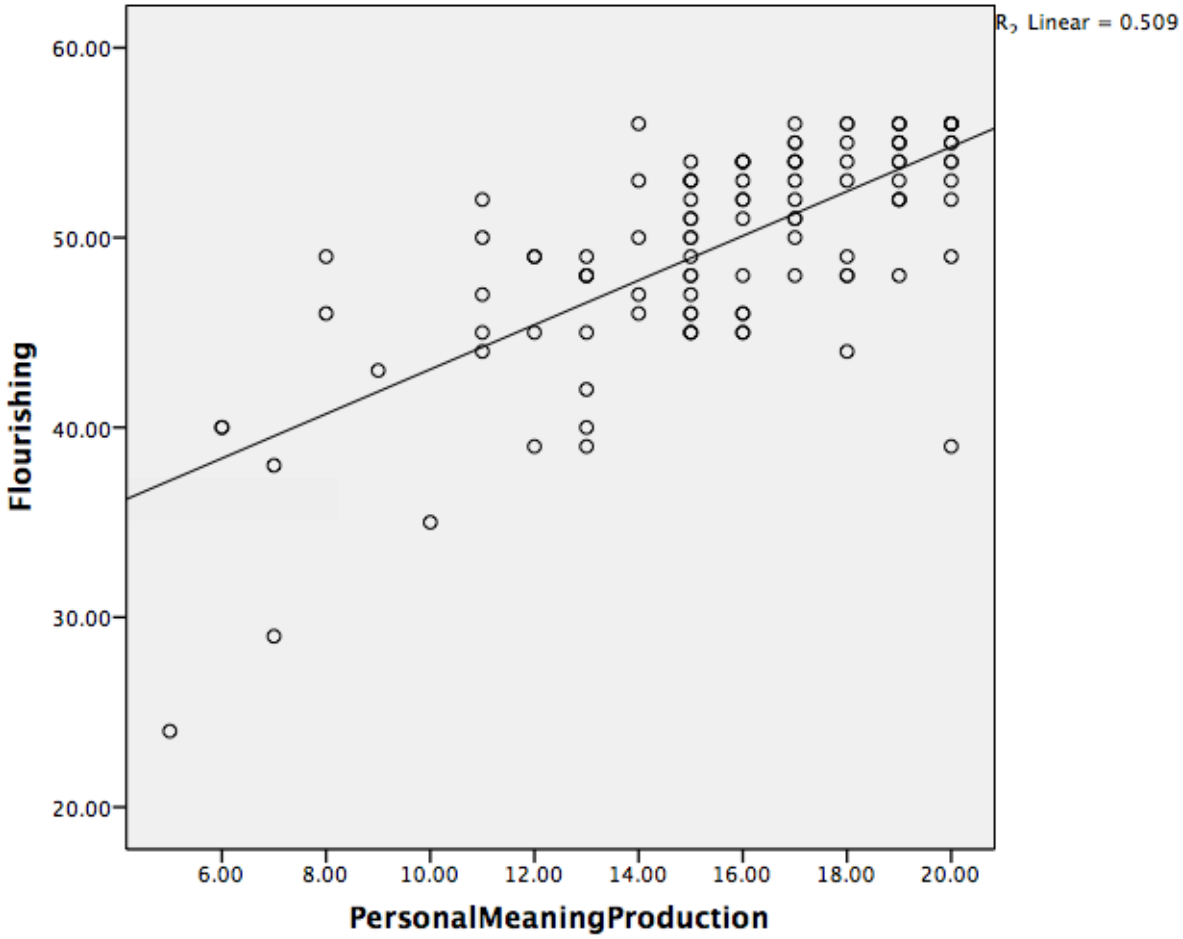
Having identified significant relationships between all of the variables with flourishing, a standard multiple regression analysis was carried out including the total scale scores for spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence and mindfulness.. The results of the regression indicated that all three variables explained 50.5% of the variance (R^2= .519, F(3,106)=38.11, *p* >.001). Emotional intelligence explained the highest level of variance in flourishing scores (β=.388, p <.001), followed by spiritual intelligence β=.337, p <.001) and, finally, mindfulness (β=.189, p <.001).

A persons correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationships between flourishing and, each of the following: PMP, CET, TA, CE, Perception of Emotions, Managing Own Emotions, Managing Others Emotions, Utilization of Emotions and mindfulness. Results showed that all three variables were positively related to flourishing. Namely, with higher levels of Personal Meaning Production being related to higher levels of flourishing (r=.713, p <.001), as well as Managing Own Emotions (r=.613, p <.001). Multiple regression analysis was used to test if the participants' spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence and mindfulness scores (including subscale scores) significantly predicted their level of flourishing. Spiritual intelligence and its subscales explained 51.2% of the variance (R^2= .53, F (4,105)=29.56, *p* >.001). The addition of emotional intelligence explained 56.7% of the variance (R^2= .59, F (8,101)=18.87, *p* >.001). However, the results of the regression using all subscale scores explained 58.7% of the variance indicating that it is a better model to include all of the subscale scores (R^2= .621, F (9,100)=18.23, *p* >.001). It was found that Personal Meaning Productions (PMP) from the spiritual

intelligence Questionnaire significantly predicts flourishing (β=.436, p <.001), as did Managing Others Emotions from the emotional intelligence Questionnaire (β=.243, p <.001).

The final regression shows that the best individual predictor of Flourishing is Personal Meaning Production from the Spiritual Intelligence Scale.

Figure7: Scatterplot showing the positive correlation between Flourishing and Personal Meaning Production



Discussion

This study aimed to explore the relationships between spiritual Intelligence, emotional intelligence, mindfulness and flourishing, and looked at which of the variables was the best predictor of flourishing. This study also looked at cultural differences in levels of flourishing between individuals from the UK and USA. Based on the literature it was identified that all of the variables were associated with a vast amount of positive aspects and thus the following question was proposed; to what extent do the characteristics of spiritual intelligence, mindfulness and emotional intelligence predict perceived levels of flourishing? The results of this study have been categorized based on the initial three hypothesis proposed.

Hypothesis 1. Spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence and mindfulness are positively correlated with Flourishing.

To date, there is a growing body of literature that aims to explore predictors of flourishing such as to that of Gieseke (2014) which looked at the positive relationship between spiritual intelligence, mindfulness and transformational leadership among public profile education leaders. Additionally due to the high amount of positive attributes associated with all three variables a positive correlation was expected and thus, it was predicted that a positive correlation would be found between spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence, mindfulness and flourishing. Pearson's and Spearman's Rho were used to determine a correlation and as predicted a positive correlation was detected. Results indicated that higher levels of Emotional Intelligence related to higher levels of: flourishing, spiritual intelligence and

mindfulness. Results also showed a significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence and mindfulness. When studying the correlations, emotional intelligence was the principal predictor of flourishing as the highest correlation was found between these two domains. A positive correlation between emotional intelligence and flourishing was expected as previous studies have detected a relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction (Austin, Saklofake and Egan, 2005). As discussed in the literature review emotional intelligence is seen through the lens of both ability and trait. The measure used in this study was a trait model and measured an individual's level of emotional intelligence by means of self-report. In light of the results of this study arguments for viewing emotional intelligence as a trait (and measured by self-report) are supported as the role of one's own subjectivity in regards to their emotional well-being is important. Thus, the benefits of looking at emotional intelligence through a trait model are that this model acknowledges the inherent subjectively of emotional experiences (Petrides, 2010). This is relevant to the field of flourishing as Keyes (2002) states that flourishing is seen as something that will manifest internally rather than externally. Additionally as discussed in the literature review recent studies in the field of emotional intelligence have shown its ability to mediate the relationship between mindfulness and subjective wellbeing (Schutte & Malouff, 2011).

This high correlation between emotional intelligence and flourishing suggest that it may be important to observe the field of emotional intelligence and its relationship to flouring in further detail. As discussed in the literature review there are many various reliable measures available for gauging one's level of emotional intelligence and it would be beneficial to assess which other of these scales also show a high correlation between emotional intelligence and flourishing.

Spiritual intelligence fell behind emotional intelligence by just 1% in the correlation analysis. It was expected that a positive relationship would be detected between the spiritual intelligence and flourishing due to the high amount positive aspects associated with spiritual intelligence that can be measured empirically. Furthermore, as spirituality has been considered to be a strong predictor of well-being in previous studies and flourishing is considered an optimum level of well-being it was not a huge leap to predict that the subdomain of spiritual intelligence would therefore predict flourishing. The hypothesis was also supported as mindfulness was also found to be a significant predictor of flourishing – though it was the lowest amongst all three variables.

Looking closer at predictors of flourishing, subscale correlations from each measure were also studied and the highest correlation found was that of personal meaning production from the Spiritual Intelligence Self Report Inventory. Previous research into the area of life meaning and its relation to optimum well being is not a recent area of study and thus in hindsight this result is not surprising. When discussing the importance of personal meaning and its relationship to well being it is significant to refer to the work of psychiatrist Viktor Frankl (1985) and his bestselling *Man's Search For Meaning* in which Frankl discuses the strength of human possibly attached to internal meaning. Additionally an array of studies have been conducted which strongly agree with the premise that meaning in one's life is strongly correlated with subjective well-being (e.g Reker, Peacock & Wong, 1987: McGregor & Little,1998: Zika& Chamberlain, 1992: Steger & Frazier, 2005: King, 2012). Results also indicated that a higher degree of variance was detected in the results when the subscales were imputed into the data as opposed to only using the total sores of each scale for analysis. This shows that by using the measures with subscales you can

identify more specifically which aspects of the variables are more predictive. Therefore this high correlation between personal meaning production and flourishing suggest that it may be important to observe this component of spiritual intelligence solely when looking into the field of flourishing.

Hypothesis 2. Compared to mindfulness, spiritual intelligence and emotional intelligence will be the strongest predictor of flourishing.

As discussed above the hypothesis was supported as mindfulness was also found to be a significant predictor of flourishing. This correlation reflects how mindfulness is described in the literature. Firstly, mindfulness is a useful tool in the treatment of mental health problems and improving psychological wellbeing (Baer, 2003) and stress reduction (Kabat-Zinn, 1998). Secondly, only benefits to being mindful are discussed in the literature and it is noted that it is seen to attribute to well being immensely (Brown and Ryan, 2003) including positive self-regulating behaviour (Brown & Ryan, 2003) and rational coping mechanisms. (Palmer & Roger, 2009).

As noted above, mindfulness is seen through the lens of both a trait and as ability and the scale used to measure one's level mindfulness in this study was the ability based Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale. The benefit of looking at mindfulness though the lens of ability is that it lends itself to the school of thought that one's level of mindfulness can be improved upon with time and practice. Looking at mindfulness as a psychological state that can be achieved through mindfulness training and practice gives reason as to why mindfulness has found such strong uses in the clinical setting.

However, though a positive correlation was found between mindfulness and

flourishing, as predicted, compared to spiritual intelligence and emotional intelligence it was the lowest amongst all three variables. Suggestions as to why this was found in the results could be explained in several ways. Primarily, as discussed in the literature review the term mindfulness is generally understood as the process involved in bringing attention to moment-by-moment experiences (Kabat-Zin and Hanh, 2009). In other words mindfulness is seen as a verb and something that one *does*. Though all three variables to some extent can be seen through the lens of a verb, mindfulness most lends itself to being an act and practice (Black, 2009). Therefore capturing the experience of mindfulness and correlating it with flourishing could be seen as more difficult than that of spiritual intelligence and emotional intelligence. Though this study does not show this *per se* it is a possible explanation as to why mindfulness scores were correlated with flourishing less than spiritual intelligence and emotional intelligence. Secondly, as previous findings have suggested mindfulness is a useful tool in the treatment of mental health problems and improving psychological wellbeing (Baer, 2003), yet research in the field of mindfulness is still strongly routed in the cure of mental illness and not the cultivation of flourishing.

Consequently when looking at the field of mindfulness and its relationship to flourishing it is noteworthy to refer to the early foundations positive psychology is built upon – the notion that flourishing is concerned with optimum well being and not just the absence of mental illness. As disused in the introduction until the introduction of positive psychology psychologists had been strongly focused on the diagnosis and cure of mental illness (Huppert & So, 2013, p. 838) however, positive psychology argued that positive mental health is far more than just the absence of mental illness (Horwitz, 2002). As noted in the literature review the field of mindfulness in it's current western direction has grown to have strong routes in the clinical setting and is

concerned with the cure and treatment of mental illness. Therefore it may be considered somewhat optimistic to expect mindfulness to be a primary predictor of flourishing. However, according to the results mindfulness is still shown to be a predictor of flourishing and thus can be considered in future studies as tool that aids flourishing in an individual.

Hypothesis 3. There will be a difference in levels of flourishing between those living in the USA and UK.

It is important to note the USA is a highly spiritual nation and once argued to be the most religious nation on earth (Fuller, 2001). The prominence of such strong religious roots was predicted to shape the results between participants from the USA and the UK. Furthermore, as shown in the literature research presented that whilst 83% of Americans consider spirituality as important in their lives whilst only 43% of Western Europeans considered the same. Given this information it was reasonable to predict that the results would show that those living in the USA would exhibit higher scores on the spiritual intelligence than those living in the UK. As it was also predicted that those with higher levels of spiritual intelligence would have higher levels of flourishing the hypothesis was put forward that those living in the USA would have higher flourishing scores than those living in the UK. In the current sample results indicated that individuals living in the USA had higher scores in Flourishing than those living in the United Kingdom. Evidence may suggest that those living in the USA are more open to the presence of spirituality in their lives and results found in this study reflect this proposal. As mentioned in the literature defining the term spirituality is very important when measuring ones level of spiritual well being or spiritual intelligence as the term is very open to misinterpretation. Though the term

spirituality was defined for the purpose of this study study as ‘one’s striving for and experience of connection with oneself, connectedness with others and nature and connectedness with the transcendent’ (De Jager *et al*, 2010: p.338), this definition was not relayed to the participants who were completing the surveys. This may have been problematic as the term spiritual is often inundated with religious connotations and with many people in both the UK and USA are currently defining themselves as ‘spiritual but not religious’ the possible misinterpretation of the terms in this study could have shaped the results.

Strengths and Limitations

1. Self Report strengths and limitations

The greatest limitation to this study is the use of self-report measures as self-report requires an individual to answer questions truthfully and accurately about themselves. This causes obstacles due to self-report bias and though self-report measures are seen as a valid way to gather data previous research has suggested that they should not be used a sole measure (Adams, Soumerai, Lomas & Ross-Degnan, 1999). Furthermore, even if an individual is completely honest whilst completing the surveys accurate results also depend on the participant’s introspective abilities and it is possible that some of the participants do not view themselves in the same light as other view them. For example; if an individual is unable to make a consistent differentiation between past behavior, current behavior and desired future behavior their self-report is open to the possibility of not reflecting typical behavior (Pryor, Gibbons, Wicklund, Fazio & Hood, 1977). This is particularly relevant to this study as discussed in the literature flourishing can be seen as a socially desirable state. As noted, flourishing is sometimes discussed within the context of social psychology and within this context

flourishing is seen as an aspirational state and research has suggested that social status can be strongly associated with subjective well-being (Anderson, Kraus, Galinsky, and Keltner, 2012). Thus as upward social comparison (Collins, 1996) states that individuals evaluate themselves by comparison with others perceived levels of flourishing are therefore subjective. However, as disused above, flourishing is seen as a concept that will manifest internally and therefore a perceived level of flourishing can be argued to be more important that an external view of flourishing. Furthermore studies such as that by Taylor and Brown (1994) noted that people ordinarily overestimate their positive aspects; such self-optimistic views and self-enhancement motives

Considering the strengths of self-report are also of importance for this study. All of the measures in question have been previous tested for reliability and results from the Cromach Alpha in this study were no exception to the measures validity. Further strengths of using self-report measures in this study enabled the costs to be kept low and allowed this study to reach a worldwide sample. Despite the possibility of self-report biases, this piece of research can still be seen as a positive step in the direction of understanding spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence, mindfulness and flourishing. Additionally, though performance based measures are seen to be more reliable than self-reporting measures they were not available for this study as no performance-based measure of Spiritual Intelligence currently exists due to the small level of current understanding in the area (King, Mara, & DeCicco, 2012).

2. Recruitment of participants

A second, possible, limitation is the way participants were recruited via Facebook groups and fan pages associated with spirituality and personal development. As such,

it is likely that the participants already had an active interest in the topic and, thus, this lends itself to selection bias (Fraenkel, Wallen & hyun, 2012) and the possibility of shaping the results. Future research would benefit from the survey being completed by a random sample through Surveymoneky.com, SOMA or other online survey platforms. Nonetheless, this study was still a positive step n understanding the variables in question as whilst participants may be considered likeminded the relationships between the variables have still been addressed.

3. Flourishing as the dependent variable

Flourishing was chosen as the depend variable for this study as it is seen as the new positive psychology and ultimate level of well-being that one can achieve. A substantial amount of research documenting high levels of mental well being associated with flourishing can be easily found, however, other trials in the field of flourishing have indicated that though an individual may be flourishing they are not necessarily satisfied (Clark & Senik, 2011). This, somewhat, mirrors early work in the field of positive psychology that assumed if an individual was not suffering from a mental illness then they would automatically be considered mentally healthy and raises the question that if an individual is flourishing can we assume that thy are satisfied and happy? Though the variable of flourishing is a strong domain future correlation between perceived levels of flourishing and well being should be explored to ensure that they are perceived as one in the same by the participant.

Suggestions for future research

1. Expanding on performance-based measures.

Further Research efforts are needed to develop a possible performance based measure for spiritual intelligence and expand on current performance based measures for emotional intelligence. Though all of the self-report measures used in this study are of good reliability further understand of the variables and their relationship to flourishing would bee aided by the creation of further measures that may be more accurate.

2. A further understanding is spiritual intelligence

A deeper understanding of the field of spiritual intelligence is needed, as it is still limited. As discussed above throughout the literature emotional intelligence meets all of the standard criteria for intelligence and is seen this way by scientists, however, spiritual intelligence is yet to prove itself in the way emotional intelligence has. A deeper understanding of this phenomenon would aid scientists to view spiritual intelligence as a scientific concept.

3. A closer look as Personal Meaning Production

The subscale of personal meaning production was the most strongly correlated domain to flourishing in the entire study. This should not be overlooked in future research and this could be explored further by addressing the questions; does personal meaning production alone predict flourishing? And is personal meaning production intelligence within itself?

4. Cross cultural research

As results showed that those living in the USA had higher levels of flourishing than those living in the UK future cross-cultural studies could assess this difference in further detail. As this study only hypothesises that the difference in levels of

flourishing is caused by the USA being a more ‘spiritual’ nation than the UK, future research could explore in more depth the reasons for the perceived difference in levels of flourishing and could expand into possible social and political causes for this finding.

5. Mindfulness as a flourishing tool

Using mindfulness as a tool to cultivate flourishing and not just to intervene in mental illness would be a useful area of future research. Unarguably, mindfulness has seen mainstream and clinical success and may be the most widely used tool amongst the variables. If the vast amount of knowledge around this concept could be redirected towards the cultivation of optimum well-being and not toward the prevention of mental illness questions could be addressed such as; does mindfulness practice cause variance in perceived levels of flourishing?

6. If flourishing an ability?

As discussed throughout the research all of the variables are seen through the lens of both ability and trait models, however, flourishing is yet to be examined as either an ability of a trait. If flourishing is shown to be more an ability than a trait it would open up the doors to research surrounding an individuals ability to improve their levels of flourishing through practice.

Conclusion – The Meaningful Life.

Among all of the variables the greatest predictor of flourishing was personal meaning production taken from the spiritual intelligence self report suggesting. This subscale suggests that an individuals ability to ‘derive personal meaning and purpose from all

physical & mental experiences' was the great isolated component in ensuring levels of flourishing.

Martin Seligman, author of the book *Flourish* and perceived 'father' of positive psychology suggests three types of happy lives in a recent TED talk;

1. **The pleasant life –** this notion is what most people are referring to when talking about happiness. A life associated with minimum stresses and sadness. Virtues associated with this life are peace, contentment and non-striving.

2. **The good Life-** this notion is concerned with a life lived absorbed in the moment or 'living in the now'. Virtues associated with this this life include flow, focus and presence.

3. **The meaningful life-** finally, Seligman proposes that a life well lived can be achieved through the pursuit of meaning. This is highlighted in the results of this study as personal meaning production was the highest predictor of flourishing among all of the variables and subscales. A meaningful life is associated vestures of spiritual intelligence such as service to something higher than oneself.

In conclusion, having high levels of emotional intelligence as well as being able to derive personal meaning from life experiences is the most likely way to assure a flourishing life.

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