

# ENHANCING SERVICE PERSONNEL'S EMOTIONAL LABOUR TECHNIQUES: AN EMPIRICAL CASE FOR SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE

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**Abstract:** The paper aims to examine the relationship between emotional labour (EL) techniques of surface acting (SA) and deep acting (DA) with spiritual intelligence (SQ). Building on Multiple Intelligence Theory (MI), 373 service personnel, mainly teachers, were drawn through a list-based simple random sampling, from 30 secondary schools around Peninsular Malaysia. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to test the hypotheses, and the proposed model was assessed through renowned model fit indices. Findings revealed that SQ buffers EL costs, as both SA and DA routine became positively related to SQ. Proposed model had reasonable fit indices with  $\chi^2 / df$  ratio (1002.288 / 336) = 2.983, RMSEA (0.078) and CFI (0.931). Providing empirical support to the hypotheses that EL performance tends resonate well with spiritual intelligent service personnel. The adequacy of this paper's findings is vital as it cut across all Faiths. Practically, it tends to stimulate service personnel towards a higher degree of self-awareness and imbue them with the capacity to be flexible, face and transcend pain and suffering. Socially, it sustains a friendly and cordial interpersonal relationship with others (customers). Policy wise, it informs organizations to re-align HR strategies to capture 'Type B' personalities. Theoretically, it stirs more research on SQ as it affects service personnel's organizational behaviours. The paper is cross-sectional and limited to one group of service personnel (teachers). Future study may consider other groups to ascertain the generalizability of these findings. While augmenting body of knowledge on organizational behaviour, the study is pioneered as the first to propose SQ to buffer EL costs, in order to enhance SA and DA techniques.

**Keywords:** Spiritual intelligence (SQ), emotional labour (EL), surface acting (SA), deep acting (DA), service personnel, task performance

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## INTRODUCTION

Emotional labour is a critical issue for service-based organisations. Since its introduction over three decades ago (Hochschild,1983), research has looked at its advantages and disadvantages for organisations and service personnel (Andrews et al., 2016; Cropanzano et al., 2003). To date, there is very little research on the relationship between both surface acting (SA) and deep acting (DA) techniques of emotional labour (EL) and spiritual intelligence (SQ) of service personnel. Service personnel in this context are group of front line employees considered as "face of the organization" who must reveal certain emotions and suppress others" (Walsh & Bartikowski, 2013 p.46).

This is a significant omission in literature considering that, in a service-based organization, customers will perceive the quality of the organisation based on the service

interaction with front-line employees (Gabriel et al., 2015; Richard et al., 2016; Ruppel et al., 2013). So, service personnel who learn to manage their emotions become better employees (Christoforou & Ashforth, 2015; Liu & Cho, 2018; Richard & Converse, 2016). This omission is also striking given the growing concern for employees' well-being (Fry et al., 2016). Brotheridge and Lee (2003 p. 366) argued that "EL is a multidimensional construct that could have differential impact on employees' outcomes".

Previous literature documented that prolonged SA and DA techniques have been linked with a number of negative outcomes (Firuzjaeyan et al., 2015; Hofmann & Stokburger-Sauer, 2017), such as denial of authentic self and poor self-esteem (Santos et al., 2015), and mental health issues (Kaur & Malodia, 2017). Possibly, because service jobs require that employees interact with all kinds people, including those who are courteous, disorderly, or rude (Ling, 2017; Richard et al., 2016). Irrespective of the person, employees need to control their emotional disposition, maintain calmness and provide proficient interactive service (Hochschild, 1983; 2012). If they do not, the consequences can include getting query letter, suspension, transfer, dismissal, revocation of licence, lawsuits and so forth.

In practice though, putting an end to SA and DA techniques is seemingly unlikely by service-based organizations (Putnam & Mumby, 1993). Against this backdrop, scholars have found that spiritual intelligence can have a positive impact on emotional state, thoughts, wellbeing and behaviours at work (Conor et al., 2011; Fontaine, 2018; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010; Mahmood et al., 2018; Osman-Gani & Hassan, 2018; Sisk, 2015). This potentially brings spiritual intelligence into the field of emotional labour.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Human Emotions**

Emotions are expression of distinctive feelings and dispositions, drawn upon perception, occurring through the process of internal bodily signals (Critchley & Garfinkel, 2017), usually directed towards someone (e.g., co-worker, supervisor or customers) or something (e.g., unethical attitude, query letter or job promotion) (Schermerhorn et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2017). Contemporary psychologists and philosophers grouped emotions into six basic types - anger, fear, sadness, happiness, disgust and surprise (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Most service jobs require suppressing negative emotions (e.g., anger) for positive emotions (e.g., joy), regardless of the emotional state of service personnel (Gabriel et al., 2015). Hence, their engagement in EL process.

### **Emotional Labour**

Emotional labour is "the process of managing feelings and expression to fulfil the emotional requirements of a job, such that displayed emotion will enhance expected performance" Hochschild (1983 p. 7). Such emotional requirements would normally consist of "behavioural expectations about which emotions ought to be expressed and which ought to be hidden" (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987 p.27). So, EL serves as a form of diplomatic route between organizations' expected emotions and organizational outcomes such as productivity, improved sales, enhanced performance, customer retention and so forth.

Some organizations use handbook, personal briefings, billboards or classes; others provide staff training on feelings allowable to be expressed and which to be suppressed (Christoforou & Ashforth, 2015; Diefendorff et al., 2011; Hochschild, 2012; Liu & Cho, 2018) to enhance good customer experiences and boost service performances. Against this backdrop, researchers have attempted to offer different definitions to the concept of emotional labour. Table 1 gives a summary view of some definitions on emotional labour.

Table 1: Summary View of Some Definitions on Emotional Labour

Authors	Definitions
Brotheridge and Lee (2003 p.365)	Employees' effort to regulate their emotional display in an attempt to meet organizationally based expectations specific to their roles.
Prentice (2014 p. 188)	As managing emotions through surface or deep acting by following organisational display rules in return for a wage.
Gabriel et al., (2015 p. 863 )	The regulation of emotions to conform to display rules, and actual emotional expressions to customers.
Richard et al., (2016 p.118)	The extent to which employees regulate their emotional displays at work in response to display rules or standards for appropriate emotional expression at work.
Zou and Dahling, 2017 p.1)	This is a process of managing emotions as part of a work role.
H. J. Lee (2018 p.4)	Occurs as service workers manage their own emotions (and especially the facial and bodily expressions of those emotions) to comply with organizational rules and to promote customer satisfaction.
Current Authors (n. d) <sup>1</sup>	EL is a diplomatic medium to conveying organizations' desires, through the employees, to meet customers' expectations.

Source: (Authors' Compilation)

With the foregoing discussion, irrespective of what situation presents itself, service personnel would usually be expected to follow the *HAND (Have A Nice Day)* rule by simple *taking a deep breathe, look the customers in the eyes and offer a generous smile* (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003; Mann, 1997). So, to induce emotions that are absent and must be expressed (Becker & Cropanzano, 2015), engagement in EL techniques is necessarily required (Hagenauer & Volet, 2014).

## Emotional Labour Techniques

### Surface Acting (SA)

Surface acting is otherwise referred to as fake or facade acting (Andrews et al., 2016) or the "ability to maintain emotional display even when felt emotions are different" (Zapf, 2002 p.246). For instance, an expression of pleasantry by frontline service personnel may not necessarily mean they cherish a customer / client. Studies have proven that people from time to time presents facial expressions that doesn't echo their felt emotions (Mann, 1997; Mark, 2010). So, surfacing acting is simply about evoking emotional display that doesn't represent their feelings or even when no emotion is felt (Okabe, 2020; Walsh et al., 2019).

<sup>1</sup> Operational definition by authors of the current paper

## **Deep Acting (DA)**

Deep acting relates to “changing one’s feelings regarding an interaction so that emotional expressions naturally fall in line with expectations” (Grandey et al., 2013 p. 207). So, rather than mere faking unfelt feelings, service personnel may actively alter inner feelings to express the emotion they wish to display (Nauman et al., 2019; Pillay et al., 2019). Possibly, by either “directly exhorting the feelings or indirectly experiencing it through trained imagination” (Hochschild, 1983 p. 38). Then, service personnel would have profoundly manipulated the entire emotional states (Mann & Cowburn, 2005; Walsh & Bartikowski, 2013; Yu-Shan & Tom, 2016) to seamlessly feel, think and act organizationally desired emotions (Addison, 2017; Schirmer & Adolphs, 2017).

## **Dysfunctions of Emotional Labour (EL) Techniques**

Though, conforming to SA and DA techniques can ease employees-clients’ interaction (Richard & Converse, 2016; Roth et al., 2014), aid task accomplishment (Diefendorff et al., 201; Yin et al., 2017), encourage customer retention (Chen et al., 2012) or boost business success (Zou & Dahling, 2017). Still, they can be “psychologically demanding” (Becker and Cropanzano, 2015 p. 198) for service personnel. Organizational expectations in this regard are in contrast to other jobs whose labour requirements are fixated on physical and mental capability, like factory machine operators. Service personnel require additional labour (e.g., emotion) to augment both physical and mental labour for effective service delivery. For this reason, researchers (e.g., Gabriel et al., 2015; Grandey & Sayre, 2019; Prentice, 2014; Richard et al., 2016) argued that service personal is a form of labour.

In this connection, fulfilling the emotional requirements of a job presumes that the “acts of emotion management are not simply a private affair” (Hochschild, 1983 p.18) but that of the organization. Researchers (e.g., Grandey & Sayre, 2019; Ogunsola, Fontaine, & Jan, 2020) assent that, at this instance, emotion management is presumed to have been commoditised. Perhaps, in exchange for service payment, customers’ satisfaction, increased revenue to service companies, retention of customers / clients and so forth.

So, if SA and DA techniques are for “exchange-value, exploitative, and alienating” (Kwok, 2011 p.1315), then, they may portend some costs to the actors the actors (i.e., service personnel). These costs may be categorised into three: health, performance cost and social-economic costs.

## **Health Cost**

Service personnel are susceptible to experience emotional imbalance (Richard & Converse, 2016), which often increases their risk of emotive dissonance (Lee, 2017). Possibly, because EL techniques are known to alter expressive behaviours (outward emotions), but most times, not the inner self (Grandey et al., 2015; Mann & Cowburn, 2005). Emotive dissonance is the “persistent structural discrepancy between displayed emotions and what is felt” (Yagil, 2015 p.158).

Faking or inducing unfelt feelings commonly lead to self-denial, poor self-esteem or estrangement from self (Dunbar & Baker, 2014; Prentice, 2014; Rafeali, 1987; Yin et al., 2017). These are health-risk related problems that can cause depression, exhaustion and mental distress (Indregard et al, 2018) in service personnel. Other studies mentioned that these forms of denial causes certain “pernicious psychological effects” (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993 p.89) which are detrimental to wellbeing (Kim & Han, 2009).

## Performance Cost

Rather than facilitating task performance, the techniques may become counter-productive (Kinman et al., 2011). Threatening service personnel's psychological resources, particularly, when work demands exceed their coping mechanisms (Chen et al., 2012; Karatepe & Olugbade, 2009). For instance, when drained emotionally, service performance can become reduced or the employees become redundant (Y. H. Lee, 2017; Yilmaz et al., 2015). Mostly, this prompts service personnel to sometimes seek leave of absence, opt for voluntary resignation, arbitrary absenteeism, and so on (Mafukata & Mudau, 2016; Mariesa & Rockoff, 2012).

## Social-Economic Costs

When quantified, SA and DA are usually undercompensated (Hülshager et al., 2015) because acting cheery, pleasant or smiling are intrinsically motivated performances at the expense of the actors (service personnel). Often, this could lead to reduced sense of belongingness. Grandey et al., (2015) argued that sometimes, they are faced with interactional injustice (i.e., disrespected by customers), and attempt to revolt might lead to punitive measures such as job loss, pay cut, reprimand, suspension or dismissal (Dahling, 2016; Hagenauer & Volet, 2014; Richard et al., 2016; Yagil, 2015).

Taken together, it can be argued that SA and DA deplete service personnel psychological resources (Kinman et al., 2011), affects their wellness (Mishra & Kumar, 2016) and consequently, hinders optimal performance. Ironically, fear of being chastised or mortified makes the acts never-ending. Besides, organizations consider the acts as beneficial to bottom lines. To this end, considering variables like spiritual intelligence may tend to buffer SA and DA costs, and complement their performance by service personnel.

## Spiritual Intelligence

Consideration for "spiritual intelligence may have stemmed out from earlier claims for existential intelligence" (King 2008 p. 30). Based on MI theory, Gardner (1993, 1995) argued for "*existential intelligence* as the domain of human intelligence" (i.e., the brain portion) responsible for solving problems with spiritual instincts. Suggesting that SQ relates to the set of skills involving the use of collective values and intuition to understand others and the world around them (Nasel, 2004; Sisk, 2015; Vaughan, 2002).

Researchers offered different definitions for SQ (see, Bhullar, 2015; Emmons, 2000b; King, 2008; Mahmood et al., 2018; Osman-Gani et al., 2017; Sisk, 2015; Zohar & Marshall, 2000). Concisely, Fontaine (2018) defined SQ as "harnessing spiritual resources to solve problems (p. 2). Hence, it is ability to behave with compassion and wisdom while maintaining inner and outer peace (equanimity) regardless of the circumstances (Wigglesworth, 2006). This signals that SQ is an intelligence of the soul, which service personnel may adopt to nourish the inner self, in order to develop a deep sense of meaning towards environmental exigencies (Awais et al., 2015; Kumari & Chahal, 2017; Ogunsola et al., 2020a; Soha et al., 2016).

Emmons (2000a) posit that SQ represents a "passion for the infinite" (p. 4), whose inspiration is unparallel to any other form of human motivation for goals achievement (Khaliq & Ogunsola, 2011; King & DeCicco, 2009; Osman-Gani & Hassan, 2018). Such

passion aids personal search for meaning, purpose, wholeness and the realization of the core of human existence, which results in both psychological and physical wellness (Djafri & Noordin, 2017; Fashi, 2017; Milliman & Bradley-geist, 2017; Naik & Jabeen, 2019). So, for service personnel, SQ may better buffers EL infinite costs and reinvigorate in them a better performance of SA and DA.

In Burrow's (2005 p. 78) remarks, SQ components are transformative in nature, such that, they “shift individuals from a state of acting from lower motivations (e.g. greed, anger, fear and self-assertion) to one of an acting, from higher motivations (e.g. cooperation, higher service, exploration).” The current study used SISRI-24 components to profile the respondents. For SISR-24 detailed review, see King and DeCicco's (2009).

### **Emotional Labour Costs and Spiritual Intelligence**

There are indications that using coping mechanisms may cushion EL costs (Faribors et al., 2010;; M. J. Kim & Han, 2009) (Jung and Yoon (2016), hence, proposing SQ is not confounding for service personnel. SQ has been applied in work setting as mechanism to motivate employees' commitment (Kulshrestha & Singhal, 2017, Upadhyay, 2017)) and provide non-religious atmosphere to address workplace-related issues (George, 2006; Roof et al., 2017).

The study of Rahman and Shah (2015) revealed that SQ plays an effective mediating role in demanding jobs such that it stimulates employees towards spiritual path, which tends to help them cope with painful circumstances, by re-aligning their perception beyond materialism. Baharuddin and Ismail (2015) argued that SQ provide proficient and skilful way of understanding and applying reasonable knowledge to manipulate events towards psychological and physical well-being. Suggesting that SQ is capable of pulling employees through ego, pain and suffering associated with task engagement (Ogunsola, 2018; Othman & Abas, 2017). Thereby, would lead to minimal or no emotion-related costs.

In other remarks, several dimensions of SQ when integrated into the work practice (e.g., SA & DA) can greatly benefit employees in terms of emotional stability, personal well-being, creativity, organizational harmony, and long-term business relationship (e.g., job security). These benefits are ultimate values and are optimally important for human development (Bhullar, 2015; Butts, 1999; Vaughan, 2002). In this connection, Ramachandran (2017) established a positive link between service workers effectiveness and spiritual intelligence. (Yahyazadeh & Fatemeh, 2012) found a significant positive relationship between job fulfilment and spiritual intelligence

Keeping the foregoing discussion in perspective, (Emmons, 2000a) posit that SQ has been “associated with a wide variety of success in living (real) life such as physical health, psychological well-being, marital satisfaction and stability” (p. 4). So, it may play a better role in guiding service personnel reasoning, moral, thoughts, emotions, and pro-social behaviours. The current study seeks to explore some of these possibilities. Therefore, it was hypothesized that:

*H1*: Surface acting relates significantly positive with spiritual intelligence

*H2*: Deep acting relates significantly positive with spiritual intelligence.

## METHOD

### Study Participants

A group of service personnel, mainly teachers in the Peninsular Malaysia, were profiled. Through a list-based simple random sampling technique, 30 private secondary schools were randomly selected using research randomizer software. Apart from the initial covering letter, the researchers personally met with the school heads to brief them about the purpose of the study and the procedures for the survey.

### Sample Size

15 teachers were randomly selected from each of the schools. Hence, 450 teachers were expected to respond to the survey questionnaire. Researchers (e.g., Frost et al., 2007; Hair et al., 2010; Tsang et al., 2017) recommended at least five times the number of items in a questionnaire. 33 items were being scaled. Therefore, the adequacy of the sample size is appropriate for statistical analysis.

### Measure (instruments)

*SA and DA techniques:* Brotheridge and Lee's (2003) Emotional labour scale (ELS) with 3 items each for SA and DA was adapted. To justify the rule of thumb, which specify at least four items for construct (Hair, et al., 2010), relevant items were sourced from Näring et al., (2007) D-QEL<sup>2</sup> scale. Bringing SA and DA to 5 and 4 items respectively, anchored on a Likert-type scale of (1 = 'never' and 5 = 'always'). Item example include: "*I pretend to have the emotions that I am not actually feelings*".

*Spiritual Intelligence:* King and DeCicco's (2009) Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory (SISRI-24) items was adapted. It is tapped on a five-point Likert-type scale of (0 = 'not at all true of me' and 4 = 'completely true of me') to measure various behaviours, thought processes and mental characteristics of individuals. Sub-divided into 4 components: Critical Existential Thinking (CET – 7 items), Personal Meaning Production (PMP – 5 items), Transcendental Awareness (TA – 7 items) and Conscious State Expansion (CSE – 5 items). Item example include: "*My ability to find meaning and purpose in life helps me adapt to stressful situations*".

### Data Collection

For confidentiality in data collection, survey instrument was administered electronically through Google forms. Antunes et al., (2017) argued that such means "guaranteed informed consent and data confidentiality" (p.5). Besides, "more reliable data are likely to result since the respondents can go back and forth, and easily change a response." Sekaran (2003 p. 250). The data were collected between May and August 2019.

### Statistical Analysis

IBM SPSS 24.0 software was used for demography frequencies and EFA. AMOS 24.0 software was used for CFA data validation and SEM hypotheses testing.

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<sup>2</sup> D-QEL : Dutch Questionnaire on Emotional Labour

## RESULT

### Response Rate

From 450 expected responses, 35 respondents participated in the pilot study instrument adaptation stage. Main study had 415 participants, out of which 389 responses were received, giving a response rate of 93.74%. 16 responses were invalidated with respect to Ron et al., (2015) recommendations. As a result, only a total valid 373 usable responses were finally analysed, giving a usable response rate of 89.88%. The high response rate was due to several follow-up measures (e.g., phone calls, emails, visitations). Besides, prior to beginning the survey, consultations were made with the heads of each school to pre-inform them on the intent of the survey. The convenience of the responding to an electronic questionnaire also contributed to the high response rate.

### Social - Demographic Characteristics (Main Study)

Participants are mostly aged between 30 and 45 years ( $M = 2.35$ ;  $SD = 1.02$ ). With respects of male, 52 (14.0%) and 167 (44.8%) females have master's and bachelor's degree respectively, 122 (32.7%) female have spent over 10 years in the teaching profession, while 176 (47.2%) were married. The social-demographic table (not shown due to space) demonstrates an unequal representation of gender as teachers. It can be inferred that there are more female teachers than their male counterpart. This outcome is not confounding given Ministry of Education (2018 p. 26)<sup>3</sup> report which revealed that there are more females than males in the Malaysian education system generally.

### Questionnaire Characteristics

From Table 2, the aggregate average score shows that respondents from time to time practice SA ( $M = 2.57$ ;  $SD = 1.26$ ) and periodically use DA ( $M = 3.16$ ;  $SD = 1.12$ ).

Table 2: Average Mean, Standard Deviations and Reliability

Constructs	Items	Mean	SD	Alpha
Surface Acting (SA)	5	2.57	1.26	0.904
Deep Acting (DA)	4	3.16	1.12	0.807
Spiritual Intelligence (SQ)	24	3.05	0.87	0.929

Source: SPSS Output Table (2020).

The internal reliability scores for each construct suggested existence of a strong internal consistency amongst all questionnaire items. Hence, each item actually measures what it intends to measure. Values of skewness and kurtosis (not shown here due to space) revealed that most questionnaire items fell within the acceptable value range of  $z = \pm 1.96$  ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Pallant, 2007). Supporting that data are normally distributed.

<sup>3</sup> Education Planning and Research Division. Private Education Division, Ministry of Education (2018, January 31). Retrieved from: <https://www.moe.gov.my/index.php/menumedia/media-cetak/penerbitan/terbitan/buku-informasi/1587-quick-facts-2018-malaysia-educational-statistics-1/file>



## Psychometric validation report: Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA):

Because all constructs were adapted, they were subjected to principal component analysis (PCA). Prior to performing PCA, the suitability of data for factor analysis was assessed. Inspection of correlation matrix revealed the presence of coefficients 0.3 and above. The Kaiser-Meyer-Okin value was 0.877 and 0.890 for EL techniques and SQ respectively, exceeding the recommended value 0.6 (Kaiser, 1974), and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ( $p < 0.05$ ) reached statistical significance (Bartlett, 1954; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. The adequacy of the data was equally proven with items having communalities values above recommended 0.3 threshold (Antunes et al., 2017; Pallant, 2007).

Varimax normalised rotated component matrix retained a two-factor solution for EL techniques: SA – 5 items ( $\alpha = 0.94$ ) and DA – 4 items ( $\alpha = 80$ ). SQ maintained its four-factor solution but with 20 items: CET – 6 items ( $\alpha = 0.84$ ), PMP – 5 items ( $\alpha = 0.83$ ), TA – 5 items ( $\alpha = 84$ ) and CSE – 4 items ( $\alpha = 0.73$ ). The factored solution demonstrated acceptable measurement properties (Guillemin et al., 1993; Nunnally, 1978). Supporting further statistical engagement (Cronbach, 1951).

## Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Validation of the factored solution measurement model through Maximum Likelihood Method (Bentler, 1983; Zainudin, 2014), using renowned fit indices revealed  $\chi^2 / df$  ratio ( $722.260 / 335$ ) = 2.156, RMSEA (0.071) and CFI (0.939). Results provided evidence for a reasonable good model fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Hair et al., 2010; Marsh & Hocevar, 1985).

Table 3: Reliability, Validity and Pearson's Bivariate Correlation

	CR	AVE	( $\alpha$ )	SA	DA	SQ
SA	0.92	0.70	0.94	1	0.28**	0.15**
DA	0.91	0.71	0.80	0.53*	1	0.47**
SQ	0.95	0.52	0.92	0.39*	0.69*	1
			<b>Threshold</b>		<b>Remarks</b>	
Construct Reliability (CR)			$CR \geq 0.70$		Supported	
Average Variance Extracted (AVE)			$AVE \geq 0.50$		Supported	
Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ )			$\alpha > 0.60$		Supported	
<b>Convergent Validity</b>			$CR > AVE$		Supported	
<b>Discriminant Validity</b>			$MSV < AVE$		Supported	

Significance Level: \*0.01 (2-tailed) = correlation estimates among constructs.

\*\*Maximum Shared Variance (MSV) = values above the diagonal are squared correlations.

SA = surface acting, DA = deep acting, SQ = spiritual intelligence.

Examination of the model construct validity through convergent validity, discriminate validity, construct (or composite) reliability and average variance extracted (AVE), also supported the proposed (See Table 3). Standardised loadings were above 0.5 and  $\leq 0.94$ . All values are within stipulated acceptable ranges to support construct validity (Byrne, 2010; Kline, 2011; Schumacker & Lomax, 2012).

## Structural Equation modelling (SEM)

Having established the construct validity, the structural model was assessed in order to provide empirical justifications for its hypotheses. Renowned fit indices yielded good fit indices with  $\chi^2 / df$  ratio  $(1002.288 / 336) = 2.983$ , RMSEA (0.078) and CFI (0.931). All indices fulfilled the recommended thresholds (Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 2010; Kline, 2011), indicating that the hypothesized model represented the sampled population.

From Table 3, all constructs correlated positively with each other at SA and SQ ( $r = 0.39$ ), also, DA ( $r = 0.69$ ). Parameters estimates of the relationship between these constructs is that SA ( $H_1: \beta = 0.38, p < 0.05$ ) and DA ( $H_2: \beta = 0.46, p < 0.05$ ) have positive significant relationship with SQ. Such that a spirited service personnel tends to cope well EL cost and performs SA and DA techniques effectively. Therefore, all proposed hypotheses are accepted.

## DISCUSSION

This study has examined the relationship between SA, DA and SQ. Spiritual intelligence was proposed as a remedy to buffer EL costs, in order to enhance effective compliance with SA and DA techniques. So, the hypothesized model fitted the data collected. In general, SQ is used to denote intelligence capacity that integrates the functions of IQ (i.e., intelligence quotient for logical and reasoning) (Upadhyay, 2017) and EQ (i.e., emotional intelligence which helps to interact with people) (Anwar et al., 2017) to achieve superior functions such as maintaining inner balance with life realities (Mamman & Zakaria, 2016; Ramachandaran et al., 2017). This suggests that spiritual intelligence “is the central and most fundamental of all intelligences, because it becomes the source of guidance for the others” (Covey, 2004 p.53).

The findings of the study are consistent with earlier study which found that SQ is a better management of work ethics and behaviour among employees (Fontaine, 2018). Upadhyay (2017) argued that SQ relates with higher performance. Vaughan’s (2002) equally discussed that SQ is a path that leads from ‘fear and defensiveness’ to ‘love and compassion’ and from ‘ignorance and confusion’ to ‘wisdom and understanding’. This implies that, spiritual intelligent service personnel tend to cushion fear associated with hardship (EL costs) by confronting them with patience. Thus, building in them a greater sense of commitment, integrity, and empathy towards things around them (people or environment).

In other studies (e.g., Baharuddin & Ismail, 2015; Bhatti et al., 2016; Osman-Gani & Hassan, 2018; Pant & Srivastava, 2017), SQ was linked to a proficient and skilful way of understanding and applying reasonable knowledge to manipulate events towards psychological and physical well-being. Therefore, it tends to serve as shield in resisting work-related challenges arising such as EL costs. The study of Houston (2014) found that SQ influences employees’ interpersonal knowledge of business policy (display rules) and interaction with colleagues and customers.

Suggesting that service personnel imbued with components of SQ (see, King and DeCicco 1999) tends to cope with EL exigencies. The components provide service personnel with four forms of well-being (Fry et al., 2016; Ghadi, 2017). They are emotional, psychological, social and spiritual well-being. Maslow (1943) argued that once the needs of employees are met, they tend to display their full commitment to work. So, taken together, the results of the present hypothesized model support that SQ tends to buffer EL costs, such

that it enhances the performance of SA and DA techniques with minimal or no effects on the actors (i.e., service personnel).

## CONCLUSION

The current study investigated the role of SQ as a variable necessarily needed by service personnel to buffer EL costs in order to put up the techniques of SA and DA effectively. SQ as discussed, is a multi-dimensional construct, which seeks to improve the wellbeing and role functioning of employees. SQ brings into fusion multiple intelligences; physical intelligence – (PQ for the body), intelligence quotient (IQ for cognitive reasoning); emotional Intelligence (EQ for emotional feelings) and spiritual intelligence (SQ for soul transcendence); in order to withstand workplace-customers' inequities. So, SQ is an intelligent consent under the sphere of faith, thrusting the sincerity to engage in charity work under the domain of morality.

## Implication

SQ is posited as a universal variable which cuts across all faiths. Findings are promising, such that, theoretically, the study would stir more research on SQ as it affects service personnel's organizational behaviours such as workplace deviance, turnover intention, job satisfaction and so forth. Practically, spirited service personnel tend to have a higher degree of self-awareness, imbued with the capacity to be flexible, face and transcend pain and suffering. By, implication, they are able to come to terms that SA and DA techniques are for greater benefits beyond pay cheque. Policy wise, organizations may better re-align their HR strategies to capture more of personalities with 'Type B' virtues (e.g., empathy) within the workforce to enhance their bottom lines. Organizations may also have to include spiritual training programmes within their HR practices.

## Limitations and Future Areas of Research

Besides the study being cross-sectional, it is limited by the sampled population. Teachers are the only group of service personnel examined. Subsequent study may include other service jobs to determine if the study outcome is generalizable. Also, the moderating role of personality may be examined to see if such influences SQ.

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