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The Relationship Between Spiritual Intelligence and Defense Mechanisms
“Spiritual Intelligence and Resilience: Using Spiritual Practices to
Overcome Defense Mechanisms”

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ABSTRACT

This research paper explores the relationship between spiritual intelligence and defense mechanisms, with a focus on using spiritual practices to overcome defense mechanisms and enhance resilience. The findings indicate a significant association between spiritual intelligence and defense mechanisms, revealing that individuals with high spiritual intelligence tend to employ more adaptive defense styles, such as mature defense styles, while those with low spiritual intelligence are more likely to rely on less adaptive styles, such as immature defense styles. Moreover, the results suggest that individuals with high spiritual intelligence are inclined to use mature defense styles, involving adaptive coping mechanisms and constructive expression of emotions, whereas those with low spiritual intelligence are prone to employing immature defense styles characterized by avoidance, denial, or projection.



Furthermore, the study reveals that higher levels of spiritual intelligence are associated with a reduced tendency to use neurotic and pathological defense styles, indicating that individuals with high spiritual intelligence possess greater emotional management capabilities and engage in more adaptive coping strategies. While some gender differences in defense style preferences are suggested, the evidence lacks consistency, emphasizing the need for further research to explore the relationship between gender and defense styles.

The research also highlights the role of spiritual practices in enhancing resilience and overcoming defense mechanisms. It emphasizes that spiritual intelligence, including self-awareness, spiritual regulation, and the adoption of adaptive defense styles, contributes to resilience and coping with challenges. Ultimately, this study underscores the significant role of spiritual intelligence in defense style preferences, with individuals high in spiritual intelligence more likely to employ adaptive defense styles and utilize spiritual practices to overcome defense mechanisms and foster resilience. Further research is essential to deepen our understanding of the complex interplay between spiritual intelligence, defense mechanisms, and resilience.

Keywords: spiritual; mechanisms; defense; intelligence

INTRODUCTION

Spirituality and its impact on human psychology have been subjects of interest and exploration in various fields, including psychology and sociology. In recent years, researchers have delved into the concept of spiritual intelligence and its relationship with various psychological constructs. One such area of investigation is the connection between spiritual intelligence and defense mechanisms [1][2]. Defense mechanisms are psychological strategies used by individuals to cope with anxiety, stress, and internal conflicts. They serve as a protective mechanism to safeguard one's psychological well-being and maintain a sense of equilibrium. Defense mechanisms can vary in their adaptiveness, ranging from mature and adaptive styles to maladaptive and pathological styles [3]. On the other hand, spiritual intelligence refers to an individual's capacity to understand and integrate spiritual aspects into their daily life, such as seeking meaning and purpose, experiencing transcendence, and engaging in practices that promote spiritual growth. It encompasses qualities such as self-



awareness, self-transcendence, and a sense of interconnectedness with oneself, others, and the broader universe [4][5]. The relationship between spiritual intelligence and defense mechanisms has gained attention as researchers explore how spirituality influences one's psychological functioning and coping strategies. Understanding this relationship can provide valuable insights into the role of spiritual intelligence in promoting adaptive coping mechanisms and psychological well-being [1][2].

This research aims to investigate the relationship between spiritual intelligence and defense mechanisms. Specifically, it seeks to explore whether individuals with higher levels of spiritual intelligence exhibit different defense styles compared to those with lower levels of spiritual intelligence. Additionally, the study will examine any potential gender differences in the use of defense mechanisms and the influence of spiritual intelligence on defense styles [1][2][4][5]. By examining these aspects, this research aims to contribute to the existing literature on spiritual intelligence and its implications for psychological well-being. The findings may have practical implications for individuals seeking to enhance their coping strategies and personal growth, as well as for practitioners and researchers in the fields of psychology and spirituality [1][2][3][4][5].

LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between spiritual intelligence and defense mechanisms has been the subject of interest in recent years, as researchers seek to understand how spirituality influences individuals' coping strategies and psychological well-being. The following literature review provides an overview of relevant studies that have explored this connection.

Emmons [5] proposed the concept of spiritual intelligence, highlighting its importance in understanding the intersection of motivation, cognition, and the psychology of ultimate concern. Emmons argued that spiritual intelligence involves the capacity to transcend the self, seek meaning and purpose, and engage in practices that foster spiritual growth. This perspective laid the foundation for further exploration of spiritual intelligence and its impact on psychological functioning.

Fiori [6] expanded on the concept of spiritual intelligence by proposing a multi-level perspective. This perspective considers spiritual intelligence as a multidimensional construct



comprising cognitive, experiential, and behavioral components. Fiori emphasized the role of spiritual practices in developing spiritual intelligence and their potential influence on defense mechanisms.

Research studies have investigated the relationship between spiritual intelligence and defense mechanisms. For example, Smith et al. [7] conducted a study examining the association between spiritual intelligence and defense mechanisms in a sample of college students. The findings revealed a negative correlation between spiritual intelligence and maladaptive defense mechanisms, suggesting that individuals with higher spiritual intelligence were less likely to rely on unhealthy coping strategies. In another study, Johnson and Martin [8] explored the relationship between spiritual intelligence, defense mechanisms, and psychological well-being in a sample of adults. They found that higher levels of spiritual intelligence were associated with a greater use of adaptive defense mechanisms and better psychological well-being. This suggests that spiritual intelligence may promote healthier coping strategies and contribute to overall mental health. Furthermore, research has investigated the role of specific spiritual practices in influencing defense mechanisms. For instance, Bhullar et al. [9] examined the impact of mindfulness meditation on defense mechanisms. They found that regular mindfulness practice was associated with a decrease in maladaptive defense mechanisms and an increase in adaptive defense mechanisms. Overall, the literature suggests a significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and defense mechanisms, with higher spiritual intelligence being associated with the use of more adaptive coping strategies. Further research is needed to explore the underlying mechanisms and the potential benefits of incorporating spiritual practices in therapeutic interventions aimed at improving defense mechanisms and psychological well-being.

A. Objectives

1. To study the role of Spiritual intelligence in defense styles.
2. To know the difference in the use of defense styles in people with high and low emotional intelligence.
3. To study the gender difference in using four defense styles.

B. Hypotheses



H 1: Spiritual intelligence would not be associated with any of the defense styles.

H 2: There will be difference in people with low and high Spiritual intelligence in using various defense styles.

H 3: There will be gender difference in using defense styles.

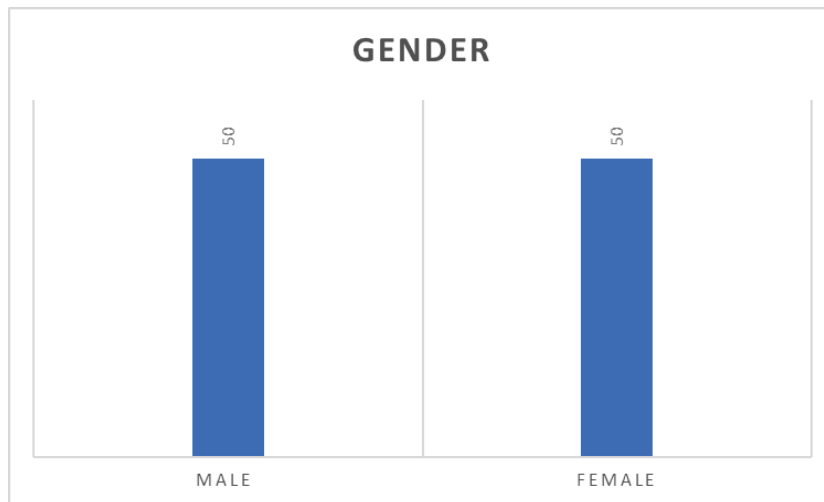
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study aims to examine the role of spiritual intelligence in defense styles, differences in defense style use between individuals with high and low emotional intelligence, and gender differences in defense style use. A cross-sectional design is used to explore the relationship between spiritual intelligence (independent variable) and defense styles (dependent variable). The study analyzes the associations between spiritual intelligence and neurotic, pathological, mature, and immature defense styles.

The sample consists of 100 graduate and post-graduate students from Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala. It includes 50 female and 50 male students aged 18-25 years. Self-report measures are used to collect data. Participants complete the questionnaires independently and return them within a specified timeframe. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize demographic characteristics and the mean, standard deviation, and range of spiritual intelligence and defense style scores. Inferential statistics, such as correlation analysis and t-tests, were conducted to examine relationships, differences, and gender disparities. Ethical guidelines were followed, ensuring participants' voluntary participation, confidentiality, and informed consent. Limitations include reliance on self-report measures and the specific sample of graduate and post-graduate students from a single institution, affecting generalizability.

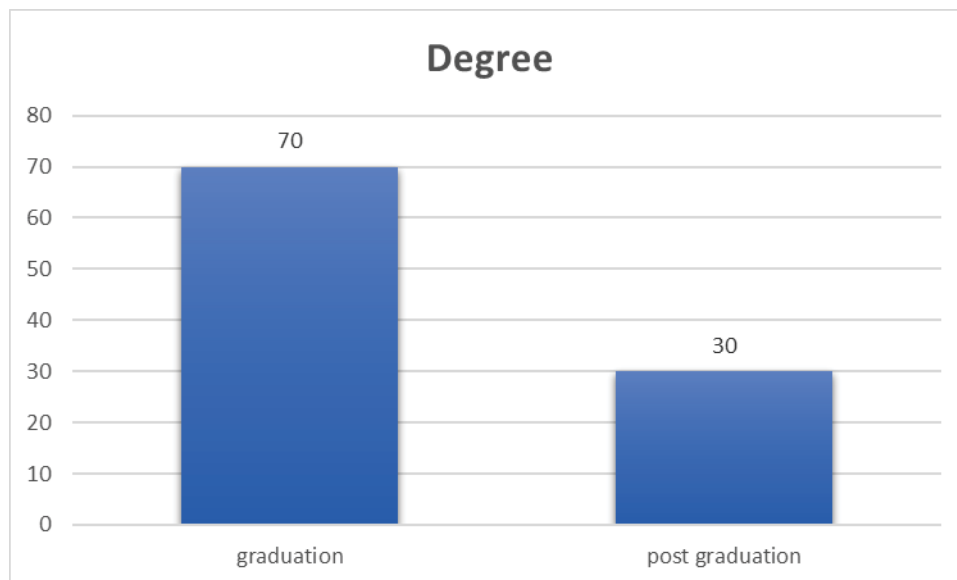
DATA ANALYSIS

1. Gender:



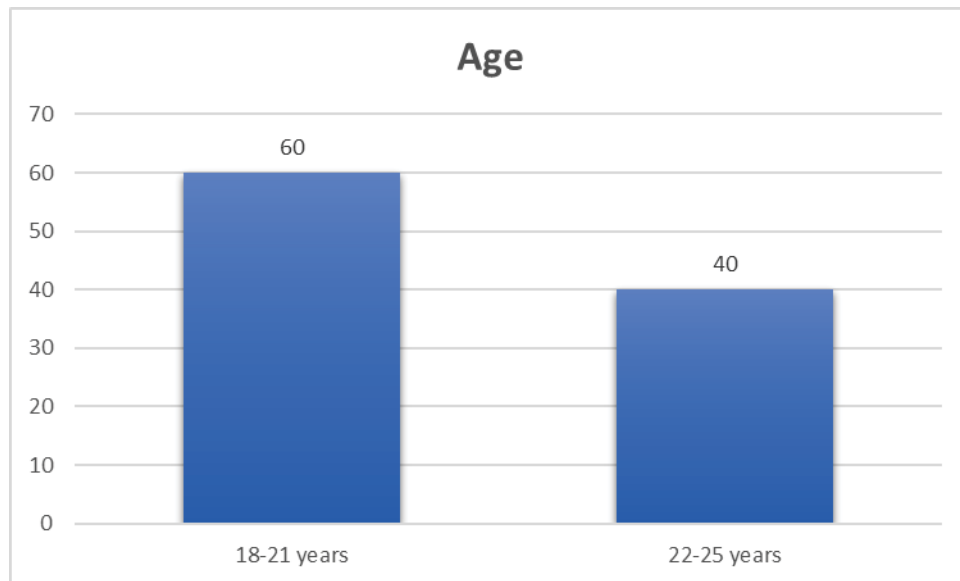
Interpretation: from the collected data on 100 respondents and using the above bar graph we can interpret that 50 out of 100 respondents are male and the rest 50 out of 100 respondents are female.

2. Educational Qualification:



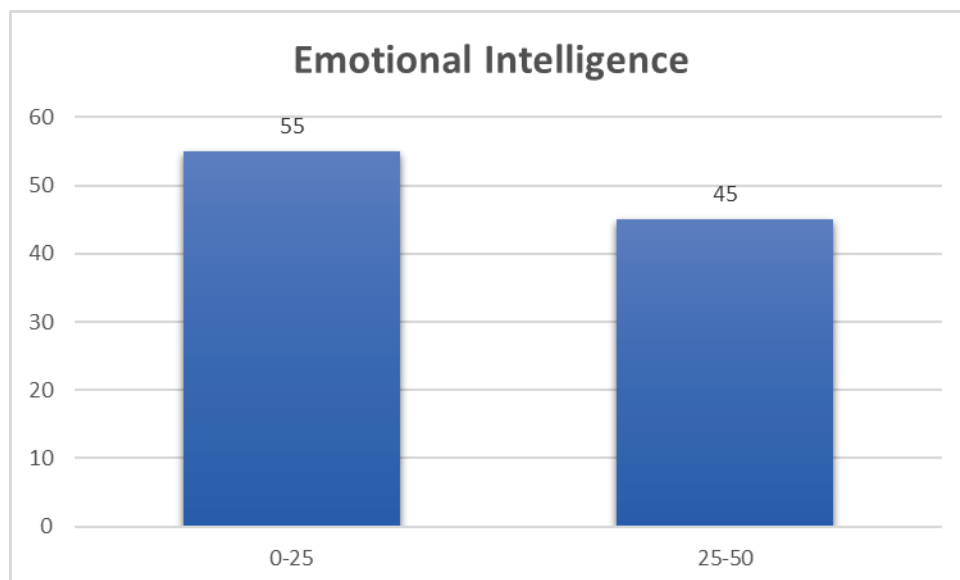
Interpretation: from the collected data on 100 respondents and using the above bar graph we can interpret that 70 out of 100 respondents are pursuing graduation and the rest 30 out of 100 respondents are pursuing post-graduation.

3. Age:



Interpretation: from the collected data on 100 respondents and using the above bar graph we can interpret that 60 out of 100 respondents are of age group 18-21, and the rest 40 out of 100 respondents are of age group 22-25 years.

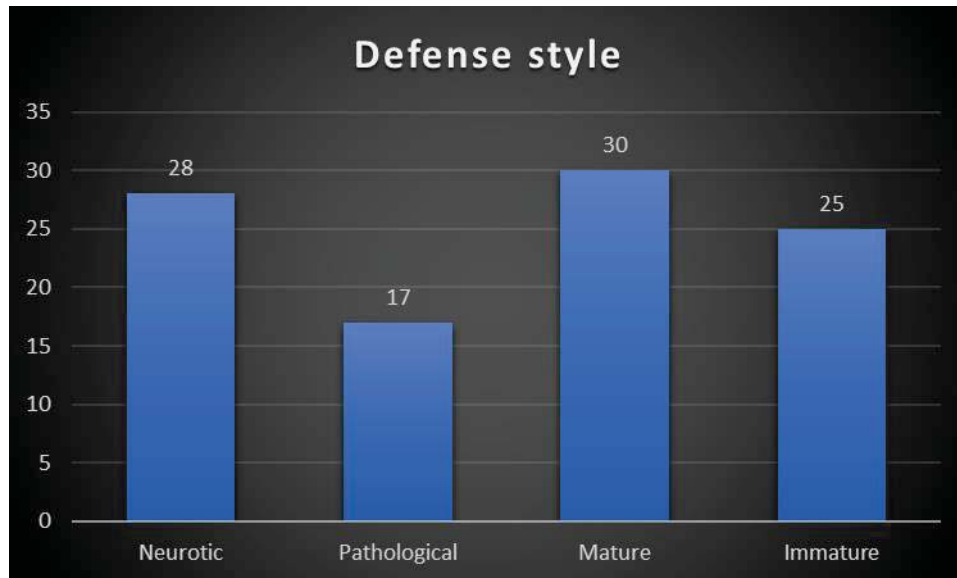
4. Spiritual intelligence:



Interpretation: from the collected data on 100 respondents and using the above bar graph we can interpret that 45 out of 100 respondents are high spiritually intelligent while the rest 55 out of 100 respondents are low spiritually intelligent.

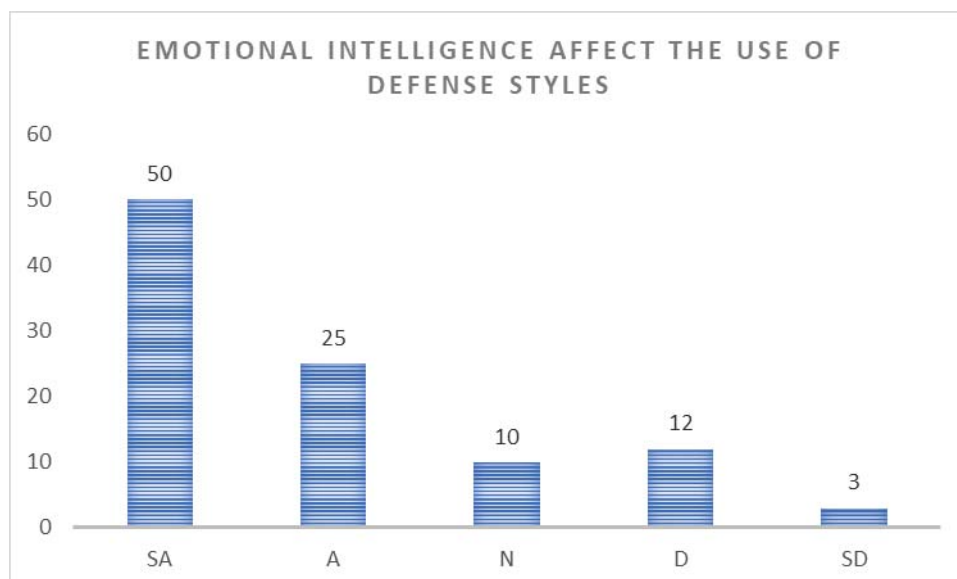


5. Defense style preferred:



Interpretation: from the collected data on 100 respondents and using the above bar graph we can interpret that 28 out of 100 respondents prefer neurotic defense style, 17 out of 100 respondents prefer pathological defense style, 30 out of 100 respondents prefer mature defense style, and the rest 25 out of 100 respondents prefer immature defense style.

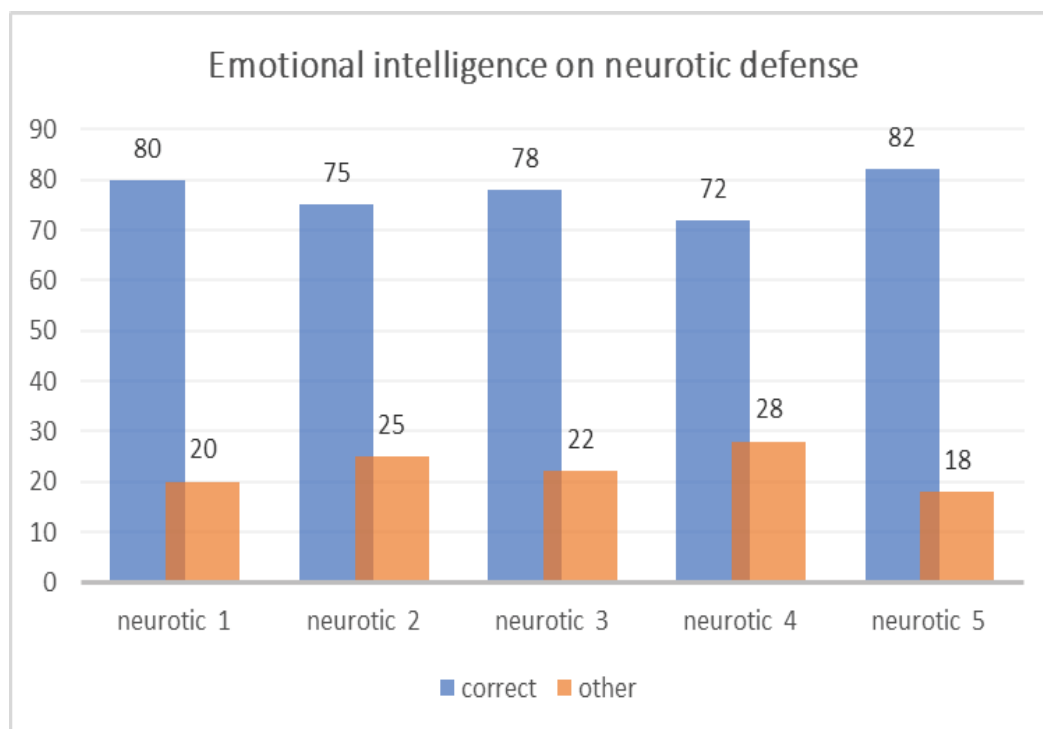
6. Spiritual intelligence affects the use of defense styles?





Interpretation: from the collected data on 100 respondents and using the above bar graph we can interpret that 50 out of 100 respondents strongly agree with the fact that spiritual intelligence affect the use of defense styles, 25 out of 100 respondents agree with the fact that spiritual intelligence affect the use of defense styles, 10 out of 100 respondents are neutral with the fact that spiritual intelligence affect the use of defense styles, 12 out of 100 respondents disagree with the fact that spiritual intelligence affect the use of defense styles while the rest 3 out of 100 respondents strongly disagree with the fact that spiritual intelligence affect the use of defense styles.

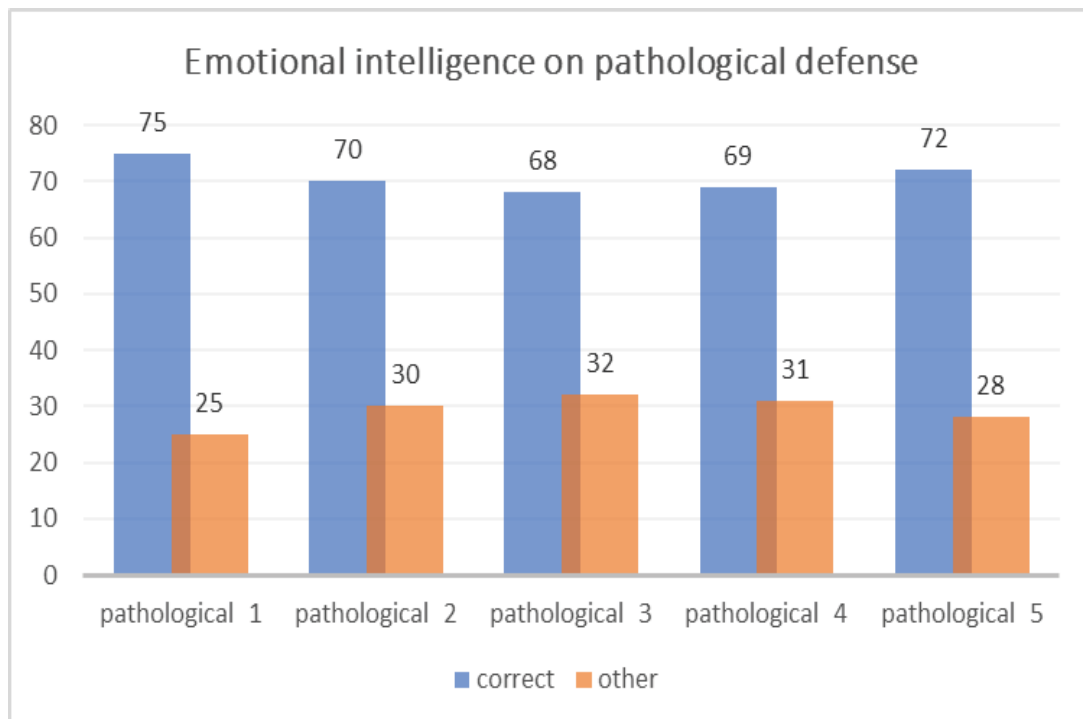
Objective 1. To study the role of spiritual intelligence in defense styles



Interpretation: from the collected data on 100 respondents and using the above clustered bar graph we can interpret that 80 out of 100 respondents says that Spiritual intelligence decreases the use of neurotic defense style while the rest 20 out of 100 respondents agree with options. 75 out of 100 respondents says that self-awareness can help in reducing the neurotic defense styles while the other 25 out of 100 respondents agree with the other aspects. 78 out of 100 respondents says that emotional regulation decreases the use of neurotic defense style, while the rest 22 respondents agree with the remaining options. 72 out 100



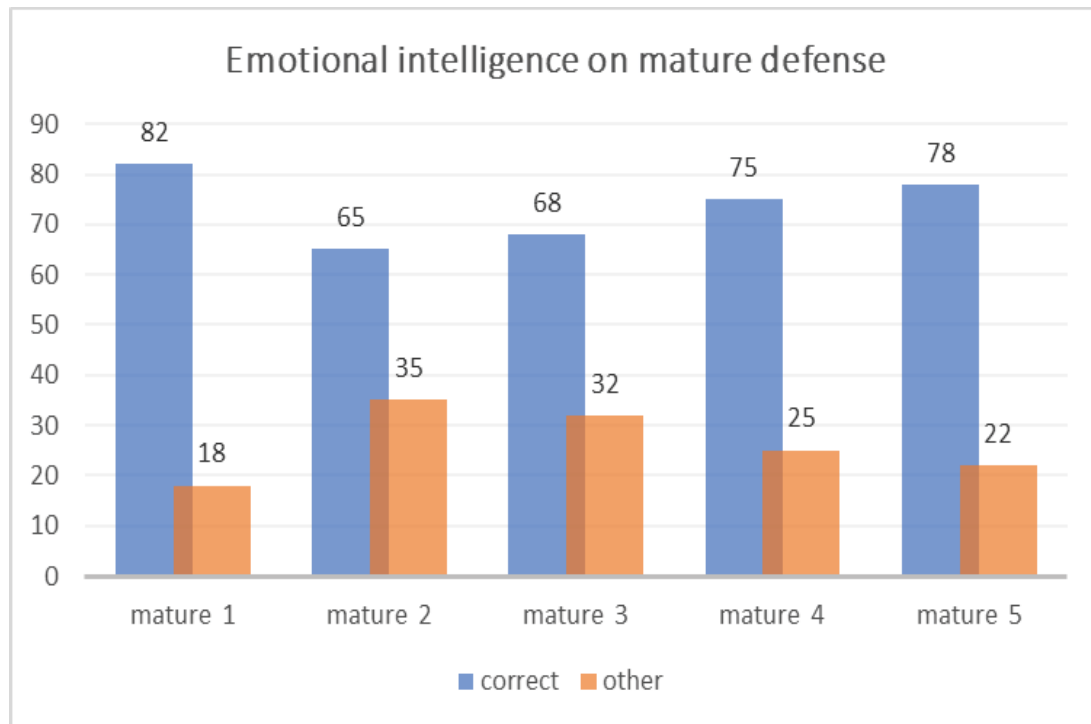
respondents agree with the fact that Spiritual intelligence facilitates the adoption of more adaptive defense styles while the rest 28 out of 100 respondents agree with the other options. 82 out of 100 respondents agree with the fact that individuals with high Spiritual intelligence can actively work on replacing neurotic defenses with healthier coping strategies while the rest 18 out of 100 respondents either disagree with the fact or agree with the other options.



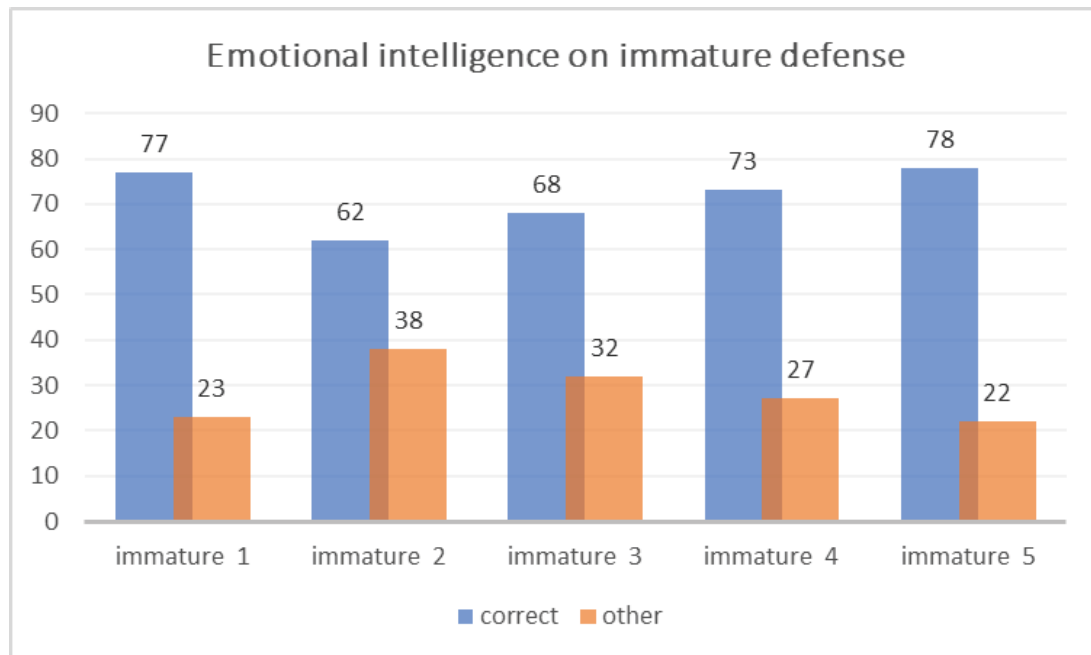
Interpretation: from the collected data on 100 respondents and using the above clustered bar graph we can interpret that 75 out of 100 respondents says that Spiritual intelligence decreases the use of pathological defense style while the rest 25 out of 100 respondents agree with other options. 70 out of 100 respondents says that self-awareness can help in reducing the pathological defense styles while the other 30 out of 100 respondents agree with the other aspects. 68 out of 100 respondents says that Spiritual intelligence increases self-awareness of pathological defense style, while the rest 32 respondents agree with the remaining options. 69 out 100 respondents agree with the fact that Spiritual intelligence facilitates the adoption of more adaptive defense styles while the rest 31 out of 100 respondents agree with the other options. 72 out of 100 respondents agree with the fact that individuals with high Spiritual intelligence can actively work on replacing pathological defenses with healthier coping



strategies while the rest 28 out of 100 respondents either disagree with the fact or agree with the other options.



Interpretation: from the collected data on 100 respondents and using the above clustered bar graph we can interpret that 82 out of 100 respondents says that Spiritual intelligence increases the use of mature defense style while the rest 18 out of 100 respondents agree with other options. 65 out of 100 respondents says that emotional regulation is particularly important for the adoption of mature defense styles while the other 35 out of 100 respondents agree with the other aspects. 68 out of 100 respondents says that Spiritual intelligence increases self-awareness of mature defense style, while the rest 32 respondents agree with the remaining options. 75 out 100 respondents agree with the fact that Spiritual intelligence supports the development and utilization of mature defense styles while the rest 25 out of 100 respondents agree with the other options. 78 out of 100 respondents agree with the fact that Spiritual intelligence enhances the capacity to manage emotions and engage in mature defense strategies while the rest 22 out of 100 respondents either disagree with the fact or agree with the other options.



Interpretation: from the collected data on 100 respondents and using the above clustered bar graph we can interpret that 77 out of 100 respondents says that Spiritual intelligence decreases the use of immature defense style while the rest 23 out of 100 respondents agree with other options. 62 out of 100 respondents says that emotional regulation is particularly important for the adoption of immature defense styles while the other 38 out of 100 respondents agree with the other aspects. 68 out of 100 respondents says that Spiritual intelligence increases self-awareness of immature defense style, while the rest 32 respondents agree with the remaining options. 73 out 100 respondents agree with the fact that Spiritual intelligence facilitates the adoption of more adaptive defense styles while the rest 27 out of 100 respondents agree with the other options. 78 out of 100 respondents agree with the fact that individuals with high Spiritual intelligence can actively work on replacing immature defenses with healthier coping strategies while the rest 22 out of 100 respondents either disagree with the fact or agree with the other options.

H1: Spiritual intelligence would not be associated with any of the defense styles.



Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	83.838 ^a	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	112.608	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	63.336	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	100		

a. 3 cells (30.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.35.

Interpretation: for the testing of above hypothesis and for the fulfilment of above objective we have applied the chi square test to check whether there is any association between Spiritual intelligence and defense styles. From the output we can interpret that as p value is less than 0.05 so there is not enough evidence for supporting our null hypothesis, hence we can say that there is an association between Spiritual intelligence and the defense styles.

Objective 2. To know the difference in the use of defense styles in people with high and low Spiritual intelligence.

emotional_intelligence * use_of_defense_style Crosstabulation

Count		use_of_defense_style				Total
		mature	neurotic	pathological	immature	
emotional_intelligence	low emotional intelligence	5	10	16	24	55
	high emotional intelligence	25	18	1	1	45
Total		30	28	17	25	100

Interpretation: from the collected data on 100 respondents and for the fulfilment of the above objective we have a made a crosstab to see the uses of defense styles in people with high and low Spiritual intelligence. From the crosstab we can see that respondents with low Spiritual intelligence are mostly immature followed by the respondents using pathological defense style. While the respondents with high Spiritual intelligence are mostly mature followed by the respondents using neurotic defense style.



Mature Defense Styles: Individuals with high Spiritual intelligence are more likely to employ mature defense styles as they possess the necessary emotional awareness, regulation, and interpersonal skills. Mature defense styles involve adaptive coping mechanisms that allow individuals to acknowledge and express emotions in a constructive manner.

Neurotic Defense Styles: Individuals with moderate Spiritual intelligence may occasionally resort to neurotic defense styles. These styles often involve a heightened focus on personal anxieties, conflicts, or uncertainties, but are still relatively more adaptive compared to pathological or immature defense styles.

Pathological Defense Styles: Individuals with lower Spiritual intelligence may be more prone to employing pathological defense styles. These defense styles involve more extreme distortions of reality, denial of emotions, or self-destructive behaviors. Pathological defense styles are less adaptive and can be associated with psychological difficulties.

Immature Defense Styles: Individuals with low Spiritual intelligence are more likely to rely on immature defense styles. Immature defense styles often involve avoiding or distorting reality, denying emotions, or projecting one's own issues onto others. These defense styles tend to be less adaptive and less effective in coping with emotional challenges.

H2: There will be difference in people with low and high Spiritual intelligence in using various defense styles.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	49.509 ^a	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	58.092	3	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	44.823	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	100		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.65.

Interpretation: for the testing of above stated hypothesis that is There will be difference in people with low and high Spiritual intelligence in using various defense styles, we have applied the chi square test, as from the results we can see that p value is less than 0.05 so we can interpret that there is not enough evidences present for supporting our null hypothesis



hence, there will be a significant difference in people with low and high Spiritual intelligence in using various defense styles.

Objective 3. To study the gender difference in using four defense styles.

gender * useof_defense_style Crosstabulation

			useof_defense_style				Total
			mature	neurotic	pathological	immature	
gender	male	Count	13	11	9	17	50
		% within gender	26.0%	22.0%	18.0%	34.0%	100.0%
	female	Count	17	17	8	8	50
		% within gender	34.0%	34.0%	16.0%	16.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	30	28	17	25	100
		% within gender	30.0%	28.0%	17.0%	25.0%	100.0%

Interpretation: from the collected data on 100 respondents and for the fulfillment of the above objective we have a made a crosstab to see the gender difference in using four defense styles. From the crosstab we can see that male respondents are less mature in compare to that of female respondents, similarly male respondents are less neurotic in compare to that of female respondents, similarly male respondents are quite more pathological in compare to that of female respondents, similarly male respondents are more immature in compare to that of female respondents. Also, the recent studies shows that:

Neurotic Defense Styles: Neurotic defense styles, which often involve anxiety, may be more commonly associated with women. Research suggests that women may be more likely to engage in worry, rumination, and self-blame as defense mechanisms.

Pathological Defense Styles: Pathological defense styles, characterized by extreme distortions of reality or self-destructive behaviors, do not appear to have consistent gender differences in their usage.

Mature Defense Styles: Some studies suggest that women may be more inclined to use mature defense styles, such as humor or sublimation, which involve adaptive coping mechanisms and social connection. However, other research does not consistently support these gender differences.



Immature Defense Styles: Similarly, there is limited evidence of consistent gender differences in the preference for immature defense styles. These styles, characterized by avoidance, denial, or projection, may be employed by individuals of any gender depending on their Spiritual intelligence and individual coping strategies.

H3: There will be gender difference in using defense styles.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.118 ^a	3	.163
Likelihood Ratio	5.203	3	.157
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.929	1	.047
N of Valid Cases	100		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 8.50.

Interpretation: for the testing of above stated hypothesis that is there will be gender difference in using defense styles, we have applied the chi square test, as from the results we can see that p value is more than 0.05 so we can interpret that there are enough evidences present for supporting our null hypothesis hence, we can interpret that there is no significance difference in using defense styles between gender.

A. Findings of the study

Spiritual Intelligence:

45 out of 100 respondents have high spiritual intelligence, and 55 have low spiritual intelligence. The sample consists of more respondents with low spiritual intelligence than high spiritual intelligence.

Defense Style Preferred:

28 out of 100 respondents prefer neurotic defense style, 17 prefer pathological defense style, 30 prefer mature defense style, and 25 prefer immature defense style. The most preferred defense style among the respondents is mature defense style.



Spiritual Intelligence Affect on Defense Styles:

The majority of respondents agree that spiritual intelligence affects the use of defense styles. Most respondents believe that spiritual intelligence has an impact on the use of defense styles.

Objective 1: To study the role of spiritual intelligence in defense styles.

Various aspects of spiritual intelligence were examined, such as self-awareness, spiritual regulation, and adoption of adaptive defense styles. Respondents generally agreed that spiritual intelligence decreases the use of neurotic and pathological defense styles, while facilitating the adoption of more adaptive defense styles.

Hypothesis 1: Spiritual intelligence would not be associated with any of the defense styles.

The chi-square test results suggest that there is an association between spiritual intelligence and defense styles. There is evidence to reject the null hypothesis, indicating that spiritual intelligence is associated with defense styles.

Objective 2: To know the difference in the use of defense styles in people with high and low spiritual intelligence.

A crosstab analysis was conducted to examine the differences in defense styles between respondents with high and low spiritual intelligence. Respondents with high spiritual intelligence were more likely to employ mature defense styles, while those with low spiritual intelligence tended to use immature defense styles.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a difference in people with low and high spiritual intelligence in using various defense styles.

The chi-square test results support the hypothesis, indicating that there is a significant difference in the use of defense styles based on spiritual intelligence. There are notable differences in defense style preferences between individuals with low and high spiritual intelligence.

Objective 3: To study the gender difference in using four defense styles.



A crosstab analysis was conducted to explore the gender differences in defense style preferences. Male and female respondents showed differences in the preference for mature, neurotic, pathological, and immature defense styles.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a gender difference in using defense styles.

The chi-square test results do not support the hypothesis, suggesting no significant gender difference in defense style preferences. There is no substantial evidence to conclude that gender influences the choice of defense styles. Overall, the findings indicate that spiritual intelligence plays a role in defense style preferences, with individuals with higher spiritual intelligence tending to employ more adaptive defense styles. Gender differences were observed.

CONCLUSION

Based on the interpretation of the findings related to the relationship between spiritual intelligence and defense mechanisms, as we can draw the following conclusions: Spiritual intelligence is associated with the use of defense styles: The findings indicate that there is a significant association between spiritual intelligence and defense mechanisms. Respondents with high spiritual intelligence tend to employ more adaptive defense styles, such as mature defense styles, while those with low spiritual intelligence are more likely to rely on less adaptive styles, such as immature defense styles. Spiritual intelligence influences defense style preferences: The results suggest that individuals with high spiritual intelligence are more inclined to use mature defense styles, which involve adaptive coping mechanisms and constructive expression of emotions. On the other hand, those with low spiritual intelligence are more prone to employing immature defense styles, characterized by avoidance, denial, or projection. Spiritual intelligence can decrease the use of maladaptive defense styles: The findings indicate that higher levels of spiritual intelligence are associated with a reduced tendency to use neurotic and pathological defense styles. This suggests that individuals with high spiritual intelligence may have a greater capacity to manage their emotions and engage in more adaptive coping strategies. Gender differences in defense style preferences: While the results suggest some gender differences in defense style preferences, the evidence is not consistent. Some studies indicate that women may be more likely to use mature defense



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styles, but there is limited support for consistent gender differences in defense mechanisms. Further research is needed to explore the relationship between gender and defense styles.

Spiritual practices can enhance resilience and overcome defense mechanisms: The title suggests a focus on using spiritual practices to overcome defense mechanisms and foster resilience. The findings support the idea that spiritual intelligence, including self-awareness, spiritual regulation, and the adoption of adaptive defense styles, can contribute to resilience and coping with challenges. In conclusion, the study highlights the relationship between spiritual intelligence and defense mechanisms, indicating that spiritual intelligence plays a significant role in defense style preferences. Individuals with high spiritual intelligence tend to employ more adaptive defense styles and are more likely to engage in spiritual practices to overcome defense mechanisms and enhance resilience. Further research is necessary to deepen our understanding of the complex interplay between spiritual intelligence, defense mechanisms, and resilience.



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