

## Exploring Spiritual Quotient (SQ) Implementation at the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Studies

Uqbatul Khoir Rambe\*<sup>1</sup>, Husna Sari Siregar<sup>2</sup>

Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara<sup>1,2</sup>

Email: [uqbatulkhoir@gmail.com](mailto:uqbatulkhoir@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>, [husna01sari@gmail.com](mailto:husna01sari@gmail.com)<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

The concept of Spiritual Quotient (SQ) emphasizes the integration of intellectual and spiritual intelligence to cultivate individuals of high character and integrity. While previous research has explored SQ's definition and its impact on personal performance, the application of SQ within educational institutions remains underexplored. This study aims to address this gap by investigating the implementation and development of SQ in academic settings, focusing on the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Studies (FUSI) at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UIN SU). Using a qualitative approach, primary data was collected through interviews with credible academics, supported by secondary sources, including academic articles and institutional documents. The research employs content analysis to explore the fundamental aspects of SQ and its potential application in enhancing institutional dynamics. The findings reveal that SQ fosters open-mindedness, resilience, and empathy among individuals, which are critical for addressing challenges in a diverse academic environment. Moreover, integrating SQ within FUSI involves restructuring leadership principles to prioritize non-political, integrity-driven academic management and encouraging students to explore their talents while developing resilience and spiritual depth. These measures not only improve individual character but also strengthen institutional cohesion. The study highlights SQ as a strategic tool for resolving campus conflicts, fostering harmony, and aligning with the institution's broader vision of holistic education. The results underscore the importance of SQ in shaping inclusive academic cultures and preparing individuals to address both local and global challenges, offering valuable insights for advancing the discourse on spiritual intelligence in education.

**Keywords:** *spiritual quotient, educational institutions, UIN Sumatera Utara, Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Thought*

### Abstrak

Konsep Kecerdasan Spiritual Spiritual Quotient (SQ) menekankan integrasi antara kecerdasan intelektual dan spiritual untuk membentuk individu yang berkarakter dan berintegritas tinggi. Meskipun penelitian sebelumnya telah mengeksplorasi definisi SQ dan dampaknya pada kinerja individu, penerapan SQ dalam institusi pendidikan masih jarang dibahas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengisi kekosongan tersebut dengan mengkaji implementasi dan pengembangan SQ dalam lingkungan akademik,

khususnya di Fakultas Ushuluddin dan Studi Islam (FUSI) Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara (UIN SU). Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, data primer dikumpulkan melalui wawancara dengan akademisi terpercaya, didukung oleh sumber sekunder berupa artikel akademik dan dokumen institusional. Analisis isi digunakan untuk menggali aspek mendasar dari SQ serta potensinya dalam meningkatkan dinamika institusional. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa SQ mendorong keterbukaan, ketahanan, dan empati pada individu, yang sangat penting untuk mengatasi tantangan di lingkungan akademik yang beragam. Selain itu, integrasi SQ di FUSI melibatkan restrukturisasi prinsip kepemimpinan untuk memprioritaskan manajemen akademik yang netral dan berintegritas, serta mendorong mahasiswa mengeksplorasi bakat mereka sambil mengembangkan ketahanan dan kedalaman spiritual. Langkah-langkah ini tidak hanya meningkatkan karakter individu tetapi juga memperkuat kohesi institusi. Penelitian ini menyoroti SQ sebagai alat strategis untuk menyelesaikan konflik kampus, memupuk harmoni, dan sejalan dengan visi institusi dalam pendidikan holistik. Hasil ini menegaskan pentingnya SQ dalam membentuk budaya akademik yang inklusif dan mempersiapkan individu untuk menghadapi tantangan lokal dan global, memberikan wawasan berharga bagi pengembangan diskursus tentang kecerdasan spiritual dalam pendidikan.

**Kata Kunci:** *Spiritual quotient, lembaga pendidikan, UIN Sumatera Utara, Fakultas Ushuluddin dan Pemikiran Islam.*

## INTRODUCTION

Spiritual Quotient (SQ) aims to cultivate individuals with inner and outer intelligence and noble character (Afif & P, 2022, p. 260; Simarmata & Nursamsiyah, 2018, p. 74). This concept can be effectively developed through its application in educational institutions. These institutions should not merely serve as places of learning but must foster openness in discourse and innovation to shape a better future for education (Umar & Sofiah, 2024, p. 1). Innovation in educational institutions is a key indicator of success in educational management (MZ et al., 2024, p. 17; Santika et al., 2023, p. 39). Such innovation ensures that the ideas and concepts are coherent and aligned, enabling them to address existing educational challenges (Aryanto et al., 2021, p. 1434). Implementing the SQ concept in educational settings enhances the quality of education and prepares future generations to contribute positively to building a harmonious and cultured society. Therefore, SQ is not merely a theoretical construct but also a strategic practice in addressing both global and local challenges within and beyond the realm of education.

Studies on the concept of Spiritual Quotient (SQ) conducted by previous researchers have not fully explored the fundamental spectrum of the SQ conception itself. The existing research can be categorized into two main areas. First, there are studies that investigate the understanding and meaning of the concept of Spiritual Quotient (Afif & P, 2022; Pandi et al., 2023; Rus'an, 2013). Rus'an explains that SQ is an alternative approach to understanding various contemporary phenomena, providing deeper insights into modern life (Rus'an, 2013, p. 99). Second, there is research exploring the influence of Spiritual Quotient on individual development and performance (Radhiana, 2020; Simarmata & Nursamsiyah, 2018; Widyanoro, 2015). Radhiana noted that SQ has significant potential to enhance individual performance (Radhiana, 2020, p. 42). However, in the context of educational institutions, the development and application of the SQ concept have rarely been studied in depth and have not been comprehensively explored by previous researchers.

This research aims to address the gap in understanding and applying the Spiritual Quotient (SQ) concept within educational institutions, an area not fully explored by previous researchers. The primary focus is to investigate and develop new methods for expanding and effectively implementing the concept of SQ in an academic environment, specifically within the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Studies (FUSI) at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UIN SU). By examining how the concept of SQ can be broadened and applied, this research will explore its potential to enrich and optimize the educational and learning experiences at FUSI UIN SU. Through this approach, the study will significantly contribute to advancing the academic discourse on the importance of SQ in character building and holistic intelligence of students and addressing the complex challenges faced in higher education today.

This research is based on the premise that the concept of Spiritual Quotient (SQ) can foster individuals with spiritual intelligence and promote educational institutions' growth and development. This conceptualization is grounded in the original intent of the SQ concept, which allows access to deep meaning, fundamental values, and life goals that shape cognitive processes (Ali, 2013, p. 2). Emmons explains that spiritual intelligence is a means to solve everyday problems and achieve desired goals. Furthermore, Kumar and

Pragadeeswaran (Emmons, 2000, p. 3). Moreover, Kumar and Pragadeeswaran assert that spiritual intelligence is part of the mechanisms individuals can use to enhance their overall quality of life (Kumar & Pragadeeswaran, 2011, p. 288). Therefore, strengthening the spiritual intelligence of individuals, who are the foundational components of an educational institution, through applying SQ can have positive implications for the institution's progress. This research will explore how the application of SQ at the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Studies (FUSI) of the State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UIN SU) can significantly contribute to shaping individuals with high character and integrity while also encouraging the holistic development of educational institutions.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

Spiritual Quotient has become an essential concept in individual development, encompassing intellectual intelligence and spiritual intelligence, which lies at the heart of this concept. This research aims to explore the development of the Spiritual Quotient concept within the context of educational institutions. It seeks to explain how academic institutions can integrate Spiritual Quotient as a foundational element in their organizational structure and among students, thereby positively impacting the development of these institutions.

This study employs a qualitative approach, emphasizing that social phenomena cannot be separated from their social context. The proposal to apply Spiritual Quotient in educational institutions is a response to the dynamic changes and concerns occurring on campuses. The research data is divided into two categories: primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through an interview with Drs. Abu Syahrin, M.A., an academic at UIN North Sumatra. He was selected as an interviewee due to his high academic credibility, demonstrated by his extensive experience as a lecturer at UIN SU. Additionally, his involvement in a tarekat enhances the relevance of his spiritual experience, making him an authoritative source for discussing this theme. Secondary data includes theses, dissertations, articles, and other relevant materials. The data analysis method used is content analysis, chosen to

uncover deeper meanings related to the object of study, allowing for a detailed and comprehensive exploration.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Spiritual Quotient: A Concise Introduction**

Spiritual Quotient (SQ) is a term that describes the spiritual intelligence inherent in an individual. Etymologically, SQ is a combination of two words: Spiritual and Quotient. The word "Spiritual" originates from the root word "spirit," which means spirit, soul, and essence (Echols & Shadily, 2005, p. 546). The term "spirit" also refers to the inherent spirit within humans, manifested as the soul or essence that is inner, spiritual, and religious (Masduki & Warsah, 2020, p. 80). "Quotient," etymologically, can be interpreted as a certain level or amount of something (University, 1999). In the context of this article, "Quotient" is defined as intelligence, stemming from the idea that humans possess a power that complements human reasoning (Uno, 2008, p. 58). Thus, etymologically, SQ can be interpreted as a significant power contained within humans, which is abstract and universal. This power can serve as a primary and fundamental source of human knowledge.

Historically, Spiritual Quotient (SQ) emerged from research conducted by Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall (Simarmata & Nursamsiyah, 2018, p. 79). Zohar and Marshall explain that SQ is a form of intelligence used to address and solve problems of meaning and value, place actions and life in a meaningful context, and assess what is more meaningful, serving as the foundation for the functions of IQ and EQ (Zohar & Marshall, 2000, pp. 3–4). Ramyulis, as cited by Radhiana, explains that spiritual intelligence (SQ) is the intelligence of the heart related to the inner dimension of the individual, shaping all aspects of humanity to achieve noble values beyond the reach of the human mind (Radhiana, 2020, p. 34). Therefore, SQ can be understood as acting appropriately, empathizing, and using intelligence to maintain internal and external freedom regardless of conditions (Nachiappan et al., 2014, p. 894; Selman et al., 2005, p. 24).

Rus'an, referencing research by Husni Tanra, outlines at least five indicators of individuals with high SQ: the desire to do good, a humble

attitude, respect for each individual, a high level of empathy, and an attitude of gratitude for one's capacities (Rus'an, 2013, p. 98). Simarmata, based on Ary's study, describes various benefits of spiritual intelligence, such as increasing creativity, broadening and deepening thinking, solving fundamental problems, serving as an intelligence tool in a religious context, and guiding personal development towards a better direction (Simarmata & Nursamsiyah, 2018, pp. 79–80). From this explanation, it can be understood that spiritual intelligence is an inherent aspect of every individual, offering significant benefits for self-development.

### **Profile of the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Thought (FUSI), State Islamic University of North Sumatra**

Islamic universities in Indonesia have a long history that dates back to the Dutch colonial era. This history originates from the thoughts of M. Natsir, as outlined in his book *Capita Selecta*, which expresses the spirit of Muslims to establish Islamic universities (Ramli & Rama, 2024, p. 45). The foundation for Islamic universities began to emerge during the Japanese colonial period through the MASYUMI organization (Majelis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia). MASYUMI, which had close ties with the Japanese government during the final period of its rule, leveraged these connections to become intensely involved with political organs, facilitating the establishment of the STI (Islamic College) (Nurhidaya et al., 2022, p. 27). The establishment of this STI was realized through a session attended by leaders of other Islamic organizations who were members of MASYUMI, held in Jakarta in April 1945. The outcome of the session was the formation of the STI planning committee, led by Moh. Hatta and his secretary M. Natsir (Amiruddin, 2017, p. 103). STI was officially opened on July 8, 1945, in Jakarta, held in the Central Immigration office building in Gondangdia, Jakarta, and followed the curriculum used by the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Al-Azhar University, Cairo (Amiruddin, 2017, p. 103; M, 2015, p. 3).

In 1946, the Central Government of the Republic of Indonesia moved to Yogyakarta, prompting STI to relocate there on April 10, 1946. In 1947, a committee was formed to improve STI, resulting in its transformation into

Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII) (Afrizal, 2022, p. 21). UII was subsequently transformed into a State Islamic University (PTAIN) through Regulation No. 34 of 1950. This transformation occurred because the extensive scope of Islamic religious knowledge could not be adequately taught within a single faculty (Ramli & Rama, 2024, p. 45). On August 24, 1960, the State Islamic Institute (IAIN) was officially established, combining PTAIN in Yogyakarta and the Academy of Religious Sciences (ADIA) in Jakarta (Pulungan & Dalimunthe, 2022, p. 61). PTKIN gradually developed towards becoming a university, reflecting the founders' ideals for Islamic universities to progress. This evolution led to the establishment of State Islamic Universities (UIN), which are higher education institutions in the form of universities (Pulungan & Dalimunthe, 2022, p. 61; Ramli & Rama, 2024, p. 53). The transition to UIN represents the scientific spirit in religious education, allowing it to respond to global developments and ensuring that religious education is not solely oriented towards moral aspects (Amiruddin, 2017, p. 108). This transformation enables the integration of general disciplines with the tradition of Islamic studies (Arifudin & Rosyad, 2021, p. 24). This transformation also took place at IAIN North Sumatra, which became UIN North Sumatra in October 2014.

The State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UIN SU) in Medan is recognized as one of the top public Islamic universities in North Sumatra. Its intellectual history and dynamics trace back to its origins as the North Sumatra State Islamic Institute (IAIN). The transformation of IAIN North Sumatra into a university was marked by the official charter reading by the Minister of Religious Affairs, Prof. Dr. H. Mukti Ali, on November 19, 1973. Under the leadership of Rector Prof. Nur A. Fadhil Lubis, MA, UIN SU underwent further transformation into its current status on October 16, 2014. This change significantly influenced the academic landscape of UIN SU, transitioning from a mono-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary approach to an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary one (Utara, n.d.). One of the notable faculties at UIN North Sumatra is the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Studies.

Minister of Religious Affairs through Decree Number 193 of 1970. This decree marked the transition of the status of the Faculty of Ushuluddin from the branch of IAIN Imam Bonjol Padang Sidempuan to becoming part of IAIN

North Sumatra. On September 24, 1970, the Faculty of Ushuluddin was officially endorsed alongside the Faculty of Sharia and the Faculty of Tarbiyah, branches of IAIN Ar-Raniry, as a prerequisite for the establishment of IAIN North Sumatra. This effort culminated in the issuance of Ministerial Decree Number 97 of 1973 on September 19, 1973, when IAIN North Sumatra was inaugurated by the Minister of Religious Affairs, Prof. Mukti Ali, M.A. Subsequently, the three faculties were relocated to Medan based on Ministerial Decree Number 9 of 1974 on February 18, 1974. Initially comprising three departments, the Faculty of Ushuluddin expanded to five departments after its transformation into UIN SU. Along with this expansion, the faculty's name was changed to the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Studies (FUSI) (FUSI, 2023).

#### **Application and Development of Spiritual Quotient (SQ) at FUSI UIN North Sumatera**

Based on the interview with Abu Syahrin, the application of Spiritual Quotient (SQ) in the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Studies (FUSI) at UIN North Sumatra can be elucidated through three aspects. First, SQ entails understanding problems using the human heart, emphasizing self-actualization beyond mere rational comprehension. This approach avoids fixation solely on rational understanding. Moreover, the actualization of SQ is closely tied to the concept of *qada* and *qadar*. Individuals with high SQ not only process problems rationally but also delve into their deeper meanings and significance, aiming not merely to resign to fate but to actively engage with it. Furthermore, SQ involves a person's ability to choose, evaluate, and execute appropriate actions across past, present, and future contexts. This capacity to discern among issues helps identify essential priorities and optimal choices among good alternatives. This ability draws deeply from one's internal resources, which are considered sacred. It relies not only on cognitive intelligence but also on mindfulness, particularly in seeking the best outcomes for oneself. These insights underscore how SQ integrates spiritual intelligence with practical decision-making, contributing to a holistic approach within educational contexts like FUSI at UIN North Sumatra (interview, May 17, 2023).

Second, according to Syahrin, developing Spiritual Quotient (SQ) in the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Studies (FUSI) at North Sumatra State Islamic University (UIN SU) faces significant practical challenges due to heterogeneity in the university's leadership structure. This diversity creates distinct divisions between different groups, resulting in barriers and gaps that hinder effective communication and collaboration. Consequently, this environment may not be conducive to the effective development of SQ. Despite these challenges, Syahrin believes that implementing SQ is feasible, particularly within the organizational framework of institutions at both campus and faculty levels. This can be achieved if each level of the organizational hierarchy adheres to essential principles such as non-political campus management and an academic leadership model. Syahrin argues that by applying these principles through the lens of SQ, it is possible to foster a more thriving campus environment. This approach aims to mitigate factionalism, placing individuals based on their competencies rather than group affiliations. Incorporating SQ into campus leadership and management practices is expected to promote holistic progress, break down social barriers, and enhance performance and harmony within the academic environment (interview, May 17, 2023).

Third, According to Syahrin, the application of Spiritual Quotient (SQ) among students at the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Studies (FUSI) of North Sumatra State Islamic University (UIN SU) should focus on several crucial aspects. Firstly, institutions should guide students to explore themselves beyond the goal of becoming mere employees. Syahrin emphasizes that this exploration is essential to prevent students from fixating solely on career goals, which can hinder the development of both intellectual and spiritual intelligence. It also helps in avoiding the belief in external supports apart from God, leading students to attribute their success solely to personal efforts and recognition from superiors. Secondly, institutions need to actively encourage students to discover and develop their individual talents. This approach aims to help students recognize and explore their potentials, enabling them to achieve personal goals and contribute meaningfully to society. Lastly, the cultivation of SQ involves instilling in students a resilient attitude, encouraging them not to easily give up in the face of challenges. This mindset is crucial as it

helps students develop mental fortitude and wisdom through the trials presented by God. Syahrin believes that enduring these trials with patience will ultimately lead to personal growth and maturity. By integrating these aspects into student education and development at FUSI UIN SU, the aim is to nurture well-rounded individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, and emotionally equipped to navigate life's challenges and make positive contributions to society (interview, May 17, 2023).

### **Spiritual Quotient (SQ) as a Conceptual Offer of Understanding**

This research demonstrates that Spiritual Quotient (SQ) can be effectively applied not only to individuals but also within institutions through necessary adjustments. At the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Studies (FUSI) of the State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UIN SU), it is essential for every individual involved to first cultivate awareness and knowledge of SQ as a foundational principle. This SQ awareness and knowledge, integrated into the character of each individual, fosters open-mindedness, thereby minimizing barriers that separate groups. Moreover, the open-mindedness cultivated through SQ awareness also shapes individuals to be wiser and more prudent, which aligns with the primary objective of SQ application. Implementing SQ is particularly crucial in a diverse academic institution like FUSI UIN SU, where cooperation and collaboration between groups are essential to achieving shared goals. Therefore, the application of SQ not only positively impacts individual development but also enhances the dynamics and overall success of the institution as a cohesive whole.

The implementation of Spiritual Quotient (SQ) in the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Studies (FUSI) at North Sumatra State Islamic University (UIN SU) is urgently needed, addressing both the institution's organizational structure and its members. This urgency is driven by concerns over recent campus incidents, including student conflicts during the Introduction to Academic Culture (PBAK) event instigated by a clash between a Student Activity Unit (UKM) and the PBAK committee. Additionally, there have been instances of violence between faculties resulting in five hospitalized students. Moreover, the existing heterogeneity in the leadership structure

exacerbates divisions among individuals. These occurrences underscore the critical need for SQ implementation across the campus community, particularly within FUSI UIN SU.

The integration of Spiritual Quotient (SQ) within each individual at the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Studies (FUSI) of North Sumatra State Islamic University (UIN SU) aims to elevate awareness, wisdom, and intellectualism towards achieving noble values that encompass both rationality and conscientious considerations. SQ is anticipated to mitigate conflicts and strengthen intergroup relationships by enhancing empathy, communication skills, and the capacity to resolve conflicts peacefully. In the complex and diverse academic milieu of FUSI UIN SU, SQ serves as a cornerstone for fostering a more inclusive and harmonious cultural environment, supporting the holistic development of individuals, and advancing the overall success of the institution. The application of SQ not only addresses current challenges but also strategically aligns with the broader vision and mission of the institution (Radhiana, 2020, p. 34). Furthermore, SQ implementation aligns with UIN's interdisciplinary approach to addressing global issues (Amiruddin, 2017, p. 108; Arifudin & Rosyad, 2021, p. 24). This paradigmatic shift is also consistent with UIN SU's commitment to "Wahdatul Ulum," which mandates each faculty's adherence and implementation.

The implementation of Spiritual Quotient (SQ) within institutions, aimed at enhancing harmony between organizational hierarchy and its application among students, represents a significant proposition. The essence of SQ lies not only in relying on rational intelligence but also in embracing universal actions stemming from emotional intelligence, thereby shaping the character of individuals within the institution. This aspect constitutes a novel contribution in this research. Existing studies on SQ have primarily focused on defining Spiritual Quotient (Afif & P, 2022; Pandi et al., 2023; Rus'an, 2013; Selman et al., 2005) and exploring its impact on individual performance (Muttaqiyathun, 2010; Radhiana, 2020; Widiantoro, 2015). The broader application of SQ as a framework for developing individual character is a significant proposition in this study that warrants further discussion and debate.

This research focuses on expanding the concept of Spiritual Quotient (SQ) within institutional settings, highlighting its significance by proposing several strategies to enhance organizational structures and individual quality. Key mechanisms for fostering SQ in the institutional environment include: first, removing political influences in institutional management to cultivate a neutral and professional atmosphere. Second, prioritizing academic management that emphasizes integrity and educational quality. Third, encouraging students to explore their talents beyond conventional employment-centric roles, fostering innovation and independence. Fourth, guiding and motivating individuals to persevere and develop resilience, thereby nurturing strong character traits. These strategies aim to strengthen institutional cohesion, foster harmonious environments, and support the achievement of institutional goals, particularly at the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Studies (FUSI), North Sumatra State Islamic University (UIN SU). This holistic implementation of SQ is expected not only to enhance organizational effectiveness but also to cultivate individuals with heightened emotional and spiritual intelligence, crucial for addressing future global challenges.

## CONCLUSION

This research underscores the importance of applying Spiritual Quotient (SQ) within the campus environment. As a hub for dialogue and discourse among both structural leaders and students, campuses require spiritual intelligence to achieve balance. This ensures that ideas generated are not solely influenced by rationality but also by inner wisdom. Developing SQ within campus institutions, particularly at the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Studies (FUSI) at UIN North Sumatra (UIN SU), involves several key steps. First, managing the campus in a non-political manner; second, appointing structural roles based on academic competence; third, shifting student mindsets away from merely aiming for employment towards exploring and developing their talents; and fourth, enhancing student motivation to diligently pursue their aspirations. By implementing these measures, the effective development of SQ on campus is expected to positively impact the growth of educational institutions.

However, this research is constrained by limited time and resources, which has resulted in a narrow scope of data and analysis. Being a qualitative study, it is also susceptible to the researcher's subjectivity, potentially influencing the interpretation of the data based on personal experiences. Interviews were conducted solely with Drs. Abu Syahrin, M.A., who, while highly credible, may not fully represent the diverse range of perspectives at UIN North Sumatera. Therefore, there is ample opportunity for further research to explore the broader impact of Spiritual Quotient on educational institutions using more varied approaches and theories.

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