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Expanding the debate: A comparative exploration of physical and spiritual ways of knowing, methods and measures.

Abstract

The current exploration and inclusion of spirituality across disciplines has, up to this point, focused largely on defining spirituality and creating practice and assessment tools. Little has been done in building the foundational structures at the level of paradigm, theory, methods, measures and research methodology. This paper presents a section of findings resulting from a comprehensive qualitative research program using the process of meta-triangulation, which explored spiritual perspectives from paradigm to practice. The results of this research begin to address gaps at these levels through the articulation of spiritual ways of knowing and the methods and measures that stem from them. Once articulated, it was possible to explore the parallels and differences between spiritual and physical ways of knowing, their methods and measures. It is acknowledged that such research may be resisted by some factions as they attempt to maintain positions of power and privilege. Thus, this article presents the research within this contested and turbulent landscape.

Introduction

Research can be considered an exercise in ‘truth’ discovery. The discovery of truth, although often presented as an objective process by the dominant quantitative paradigm is far from objective and a point of contention. The qualitative paradigm that has emerged as a response to the dominant perspective, argues that truth, and the methods and measures used to discover truth, is contestable. Critical and constructivist perspectives have emphasized that the methods and measures used to discover ‘truth’ are subjective constructions, steeped in paradigmatic and ideological values and assumptions. In recent history, the scientific positivist approach has held a position of power and influence, and has actively sought to delegitimize and exclude other ways of knowing, in order to maintain power and privilege, including those of the spiritual.

Recently there has been a resurgence amongst those who ascribe to different ways of knowing and perceptions of truth. These factions have come together under the banner of qualitativism and have slowly retaken ground in the battle zone of truth. More

recently, spiritual perspectives have joined this resistance, with their path to acknowledgement paralleling that already traversed by the qualitative. The qualitative is not only in a position to support this movement, it has been a safe haven in the beginning stages as this approach is that most in line with the values and approaches of The Spiritual. It is proposed that The Spiritual has a long tradition of 'researching' the truth and with that comes well developed tried and 'tested' methods and measures to guide the discovery of truth, which have been excluded and oppressed by the dominant paradigm. This article presents a section of findings from a comprehensive qualitative research project that explored spiritual approaches from paradigm to practice. That presented in this article focuses on findings relating different ways of knowing and the methods and measures that stem from them.

Inclusion of spirituality

Over the last three decades or so, spirituality has become a growing focus across disciplines. The exploration of spirituality crosses a wide range of disciplines, such as nursing (Baumann, 2010; Brown, 2007), education (Alchin, 2006; Osterhold, Rubiano, & Nicol, 2007), social work (Graham & Sheir, 2009; Holloway, 2007), psychology (Hall, Fujikawa, Halcrow, Hill, & Delaney, 2009; Mijares, 2003), psychiatry (Culliford, 2011; Koenig, 2008), medicine (Kiltzman & Daya, 2005; McMullen, 2003), management (Bennet & Bennet, 2007; Steingard, 2005), politics (Elshtain, 2003), administration (Lowery, 2005), hard sciences (Talbot, 1991; Zajonc, 2006) and the social sciences (McKnight, 2005; Wallerstein, 1999, 2001). It has been suggested that spirituality is being put forward as an answer to failings (Brenner & Homonoff, 2004; Heffern, 2001; Hodge, 2001, 2004, 2005; Ife, 1997; Lindsay, 2002) within the current secular approach. Interestingly, the call for exploration into the inclusion of spirituality is also present within humanist camps, (Clark, 2002; Vaughan, 2002) although the secular humanist movement is predominantly responsible for the exclusion of spirituality (Hodge, 2009). They, too, appear to acknowledge that 'something' is missing and have taken steps to explore ways to include spirituality within humanist values (Clark, 2002; Vaughan, 2002).

Although much work has been done across disciplines in defining spirituality (Tacey, 2000; Holloway & Moss, 2010; la Cour & Hvidt, 2010) and developing practice approaches or assessment tools (Brenner & Homonoff, 2004; Culliford, 2011; Hodge,

2001, 2004, 2005; Koenig, 2008; Mann, 1998), little has been done to build the foundational structures at the level of paradigm, theory, methods, measures and research methodology. Current literature is now beginning to call for explorations at the ontological and epistemological levels (Birnbaum & Birnbaum, 2008; Gidley, 2006; Steingard, 2005; Wilshire, 2006) and for the exploration into spiritual research methods (Anthony, 2009; Heaton, Schmidt-Wilk & Travis, 2004; Vaughan, 2002). Exploration across disciplines is highlighted as an important component of this 'spiritual movement' as it allows for development and discoveries to be shared, ensuring greater advancement in knowledge as the various disciplines approach this journey from different perspectives.

The framing of spirituality

Spirituality is often framed or defined as 'fuzzy' (la Cour & Hvidt, 2010), 'nebulous' (Hodge & Derezotes, 2008), 'subjective' (Ellingson, 2001) 'individual experience' (Ellingson, 2001), 'mystery' (Tacey, 2000) or based in 'Faith' (Poole and Higgs, 2011). Framing spirituality in this way may help to keep it in the position of 'other' and allow the dominant secular discourse to strengthen its position as valid authorities and 'owners' of the 'truth' (Hodge, 2009). Spirituality is then seen as an invalid way of knowing that cannot be evidenced, unlike science, as demonstrated in the following excerpt from Poole and Higgs (2011)

'Faith is part of religion because, of necessity, the existence of the supernatural and the transcendent is not supported by evidence that is convincing to the uncommitted. Indeed, for the most part, religious ideas lack prima facie plausibility to the non-believer. The scientific method, on the other hand, relies on reproducible evidence and on theories that allow testing and accurate prediction' (p. 26). As mentioned earlier, this struggle for legitimacy, validation and acknowledgement can be compared to that of qualitative versus quantitative. Further correlations can be drawn between the spiritual struggle and that of the indigenous struggle to decolonize research methodologies (Smith, 1999).

To address critiques from the secular scientific community, those working towards the inclusion of spirituality tend to attempt to validate spirituality by using secular scientific approaches. This leads to a situation where, not only are physical

research approaches being imposed on The Spiritual, requiring that it meet physical measures of evidence before it can be accepted, but The Physical is predominantly using physical research approaches within The Physical to understand that of The Spiritual (Behrman & Tebb, 2009; Canda & Furman, 1999; Graham & Shier, 2009; Hall et al., 2009; Heaton et al., 2004; Kane & Jacobs, 2010; Rothman, 2009; Sheridan, 2009). Heaton et al. (2004) are a prime example of this, as they endeavour to quantify spiritual indicators and variables in attempts objectively to research 'pure spirituality'. To do this they teased out three distinct aspects, 'pure spirituality', 'applied spirituality' and 'spiritual development' (Heaton et al., 2004). While they suggest either personal or qualitative inquiry to explore pure spirituality, it is the applied and spiritual development that they argue can be objectively measured (Heaton et al., 2004). However, such an approach raises issues of authenticity and ethics in the research process. Such an approach may be likened to the use of qualitative methods and measures to produce quantifiable results, or vice versa.

Spiritual authors such as Yogananda (1975), Yukteswar (1990), Vaughan-Lee (2000), and Zukav (1990), on the other hand, would argue that spirituality is not 'fuzzy' and, in fact follows spiritual laws, just as The Physical follows physical laws. Yogananda argued that '...all the results of scientific investigation are definite and are connected by reason...Yoga is definite and scientific. Yoga means union of soul and God, through step-by-step methods with specific and known results...The experiences I have told you about are scientifically attainable. If you follow the spiritual laws, the result is certain...Science gives you definiteness and certainty' (Yogananda, 1975, pp. 48-52). This suggests that there may be approaches to research that are informed by spiritual theory. The research presented in this paper attempted to explore The Spiritual from a spiritual perspective in order to learn/discover such processes.

Clarification of terms

It is important at this stage to clarify terms used within this paper. The key terms that require definition are those of 'The Physical' and 'The Spiritual'. In order to allow for the full scope of exploration of the inclusion and integration of spirituality, the dualities of The Spiritual and The Physical needed to be discussed as concrete and separate realities. However, it is acknowledged that this is an artificial separation in order to aid communication. The definitions used within the research and this paper were taken

from spiritual literature (Dyer, 2004; Yogananda, 1975; Yukteswar, 1990, Zukav, 1990) and are as follows.

The Physical: Relates to all that is associated with the temporal manifested world/reality. This includes the paradigmatic worldviews pertaining to the existence of a physical reality, the disciplines that enact these worldviews and includes the methods and measures applied to the exploration of truth. It also includes the physical form, mind, ego/personality, emotions and use of the five sensory perceptions. The Physical is often called the Maya.

The Spiritual: Relates to all that is associated with the spiritual beyond, in and within manifest reality. This includes the paradigmatic worldviews pertaining to the existence of a spiritual reality, the ideologies or spiritual and religious paths that enact these worldviews and includes the methods and measures applied to the exploration of truth. In addition to the inclusion of the physical form, mind, ego/personality, emotions and use of the five sensory perceptions, it includes the inner, the spirit or soul, intuition, and the use of multisensory perceptions.

The other term that needs clarification is that of 'spirituality'. This research took an empathic stance, rather than imposing a definition constructed within The Physical, the definition for spirituality used was adopted from the spiritual perspective.

Spirituality: The recognition of spiritual laws and the practice of methods produced through these spiritual laws. Spirituality is not dogmatic religious rule but the following of natural universal laws (Dyer, 2004; Yogananda, 1975; Zukav, 1990).

Methodological Background

The theory for truth and ways of knowing presented in this paper emerged as a by-product of research further exploring and authenticating proposed spiritual paradigms and the Integrated Spiritual Practice Framework (ISPF). The spiritual paradigms being studied were spiritual positivism, spiritual constructivism, conscious spiritual and integrated spiritual as articulated in Carrington (2010). The development of the original spiritual paradigms was guided by the spiritual law of reflection, which states, that which is in the physical is a reflection of the spiritual. A deductive process was

engaged in using the physical paradigms of positivism, constructivism and critical theory to postulate which spiritual paradigms may exist and what paradigmatic assumption informed these. The preliminary research authenticated the postulated spiritual paradigms (Carrington; 2010a).

A second stage of research was undertaken further to develop the understanding of the articulated spiritual paradigms through the process of meta-triangulation and Integrated Spiritual Research Model (ISRM) (Carrington, 2010b). Three spiritual ideologies of Satyananda - Hinduism, Truc Lam - Buddhism and Ansari – Sufism, were employed to scrutinize the articulated spiritual paradigms, with data collected through the process of immersion and semi-structured interviews. The fourth ideology employed was that of the integrated spiritual, with data collection occurring through the process of immersion and a literature survey of ten texts (see reference list, Chopra, 2004; Dyer, 1995; Holden, 2007; Hollick, 2006; Moore, 2004; Ruiz, 1997; Tolle, 2005; Wilber, 2006; Wolf, 1999; Zukav, 1990).

In the first three ideologies, immersion was achieved by staying with spiritual practitioners, and following their tuition from within each ideology, for a period of 5-6 days with each. In addition to receiving tuition and living within each ideology, three semi-structure interviews, structured around the research brackets, were conducted within each ideology. To achieve immersion in the integrated spiritual, the practices present in the text were followed for the duration of two months. In addition, data collected from within the text was guided by the research brackets.

Data were explored through the identified research brackets as follows:
Research brackets for the spiritual paradigms drawn from Neuman (2000), Sarantakos (1993) and Carrington (2007) Reality is, Human beings are, Science is, Purpose of research, Nature of social reality, Role of common sense, Theory looks like, An explanation that is true, Good evidence, Place for values, Who or what is responsible for creation, What is the relationship with/to that creator.

Research brackets for the ISPF drawn from Carrington (2007) were Triadic whole, Operational sectors, Level of vibrational energy and consciousness (LOVEC), 'Ultimate truth', Dualism, Spiritual, Physical, Masculine, Feminine,

Masculine/Spiritual, Androgynous/Spiritual, Feminine/Spiritual, Masculine/Physical, Androgynous/Physical, Feminine/Physical, Physical, Emotional, Mental, Heart, Communicational, Celestial, Ketheric.

Themes common across ideologies outside the research brackets were recorded and explored through the analysis and theory building stage. It was through this process that the unexpected emergence of the theory for truth, ways of knowing and methods and measures presented.

Theory for truth

Across all ideologies explored, the difference between the concepts of 'knowledge' and 'wisdom' became a predominant theme. Each had a slightly different way of expressing or explaining this difference but the sense was that knowledge was of The Physical or personality and wisdom was of The Spiritual or soul. Through the exploration of these concepts, which were outside the research brackets, the understanding of the theory for truth emerged simultaneously with the diagrams used here to explore and articulate the theory for truth. However, some minor changes have been made to the original diagrams in order more clearly to convey the concepts being explored. The following quotations from the three participants, and the integrated texts, have been included here to provide a sense of these concepts and others used in the development of the theory for truth and methods and measures. The excerpts from the data help to demonstrate how the different concepts were interpreted from the various ideologies. The theory for truth which emerged from this process is then presented, before the presentation of how this understanding answered questions raised in the meta-analysis in relation to the types of evidence and measurements required by all ideologies both physical and spiritual.

Sufi

Science is an explanation of the physical world and science comes from the Latin word gnosis, which means knowing a certain kind of knowledge that you gather from your interaction with the physical world... There are so many Sufi stories... throughout history, through thousands of years of Sufi's trying to just you know... just giving up in the academic world for example... Rumi was an academic and he was a judge, he knew all the laws and everything and this guy, Shams-i Tabrizi came and it all went nutty he realized ooh, knowledge is not wisdom.

Three things this is to me, when they are all working together, the mind connected with knowledge and wisdom is one apex, another is...heart, mercy and compassion on another and discrimination and intelligence on the other and they go in motion...There's an attempt for balance through using the heart as well as intelligence and wisdom...What we say is you need two wings to fly, the inner and the outer, the physical and the spiritual but they have to be in balance.

In these excerpts from the Sufi data one can see clearly the reference to the three different aspects of knowing. When explaining these concepts to me, the three different aspects were drawn on the apexes of a triangle and this was adapted in the conceptualization of the diagrammatical representation of the theory for truth resulting from this research (see Figures 1-6). The other key features present in these excerpts are that there is a need for balance in order to access truth and there is a difference between knowledge and wisdom, that difference being that knowledge is of the physical and wisdom is of the spiritual.

Hindu

... [it] is like true knowledge verses wrong knowledge. You know it is based on that observation and that's what the whole witness thing is on about...the body, mind and speech the three components of what we really are... there is internal and external observation ... if you start watching yourself externally, you will definitely have more awareness of your internal truth that then become your external actions and if you observe yourself from the outside definitely those external actions can become your internal truth...The intuitive nature gives us a wider vision and it gives right knowledge verses so called wrong knowledge.

... [it] has to come from head, heart and hands, this whole combination you know. It's not just a heart thing. Wisdom has [to] be applied to the heart for it to become love, giving service...has to be this combination of these three aspects for the heart space to be utilized in the way that is beyond conditioned aspects.

In these excerpts from within Hinduism, again we see reference to the three different aspects or ways of knowing. The other key feature of balance, and a difference between physical knowledge and spiritual wisdom, is also present. Additionally, we see the inclusion of the concept of each approach leading to the other or ultimate truth given the opportunity.

Buddhism

There is both ultimate reality and historical reality or daily reality and they are like a swinging door or reverse sides of the same coin. Ultimately reality...or nirvana is what people aim for but it is...only accessible through a relative reality and you can't ignore relative reality...the teaching is that nirvana, or the absolute realm, is not separate from Samsara or...this realm and, of course, awakening is found here, not found in some sort of...super above everything else kind of realm

But there is also a very strong place for intuition in all of this, you know, like direct knowing and direct perceiving, that is beyond the capacity to investigate with words... you also have to employ observation and understanding...It depends on what mind you're knowing it with. If we use our everyday logical mind that may never be clear to us. But if...our mind opens up and it becomes free of attachment and aversion and all of those things, our pure mind that we have, it's not like we don't have that mind, it is there all the time but we forget it's there. So if we're able to think with the Buddha mind, then we just know what we know is true and real but if we forget, if we come back to the everyday mind, the discursive mind, then we're always going to be uncertain...

In these excerpts from within Buddhism, we see once again the presence of the concept that there is a physical way of knowing and a spiritual way of knowing and that the spiritual is the ultimate. However, it is also stressed that this is not abstract and must be accessed in the physical. The three components are represented in Buddha mind, logical mind and intuition or direct knowing. The other key component to be focused on here is the idea of different levels of truth and the possibility of accessing limited views of the truth.

Integrated

In other words, from the point of view of the multisensory human, the discoveries of science illuminate both inner and outer experiences, physical and nonphysical dynamics...The multisensory personality sees the same relationships, each reflecting the same world, wherever it looks. The five-sensory personality cannot see in this way, and, therefore, its logics and understandings are not as comprehensive. (Zukav, 1990, pp. 67-69)

In a world of five-sensory humans that understand power as external, intuitive knowledge is not regarded as knowledge, and, therefore, it is not processed. It is not submitted to the intellect. It is not expanded or studied or made technical and disciplined. Just as we were taught to develop and employ cognition – to think things through – so, too, can we learn to develop and employ intuition – to ask for guidance and receive it. Just as there are technologies to discipline the mind, such as analytical thinking,

studying, repetition, and respect for the mechanism, so, too, are there techniques to engage and discipline the intuition. (Zukav, 1990, p. 84)

These excerpts were selected from the integrated perspective to highlight the process within the theory for truth and the methods and measure that stem from them. They demonstrate the ideological tensions between the physical and spiritual ways of knowing and doing. They also demonstrate that both the physical and spiritual methods are learned and that there is choice as to which methods or positions we choose to adopt.

Figure 1 presents my interpretation of the theory for truth, as developed through the process of analysis and theory building using the data from across all ideologies of which the preceding excerpts are but an example. Within the exploration of the data in relation to knowledge versus wisdom, a number of key themes or aspects became apparent. Those were, inner knowledge, outer knowledge, experience, relative truth, eternal truth and balance. The data indicated that to attain truth required a balance between all of the ways of knowing: inner, outer and experience.

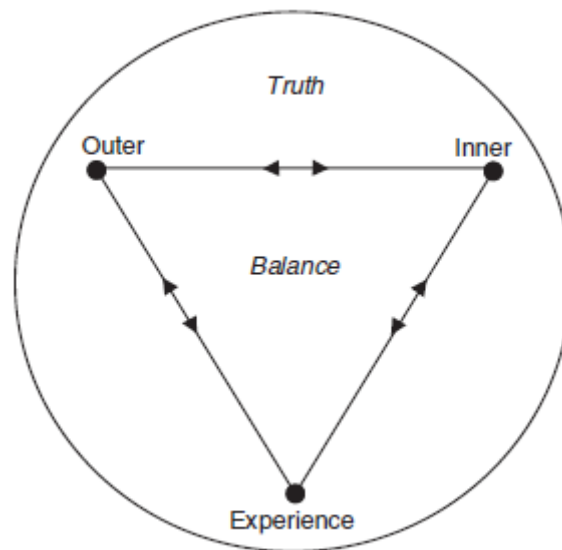


Figure 1 The theory for truth

A number of other aspects or themes were also present in the data across ideologies that further informed the understanding of the theory for truth, those being, that there is a distinction between relative truth and eternal truth; relative truth pertains to The Physical and eternal truth pertains to The Spiritual. The relative truth of The

Physical draws only from the physical world, what can be seen and experienced by the five senses, and, therefore, can only lead to knowledge of one aspect of the Ultimate Truth. The Eternal Truth of The Spiritual draws from the physical senses but also uses ‘multisensory perception’ (Zukav, 1990). As it draws from both The Physical and The Spiritual and uses all the senses, it can lead to wisdom and Eternal Truth. The basic components or processes of the theory for truth are, therefore, the same for The Spiritual or The Physical, only the positioning or perception dictates what form of truth can be known. Figure 2 illustrates this point including both The Physical and The Spiritual within the theory of truth, italics has been used to indicate the components relevant to The Physical.

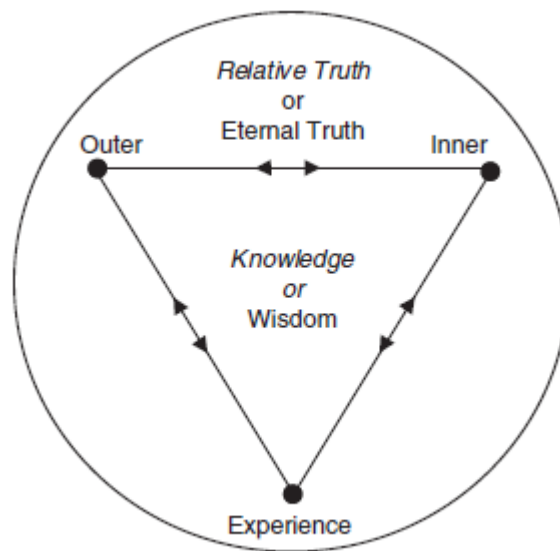


Figure 2 *The Physical = relative truth* – The Spiritual = eternal truth

The last aspect or component that needs to be discussed in relation to the theory for truth is balance. Across ideologies there was consensus that to find the truth one needed balance and to draw from all ways of knowing. Therefore, lack of balance within the theory for truth, whether being applied from The Physical or The Spiritual, leads to the distortion of the available truth. Within The Physical, this produces a gap in knowledge and an absence of the available relative truth (see Figure 3). Therefore, if one only draws information from the outer, then there is an absence of available relative truth. This leads to a gap in knowledge. It could be suggested that many of the physical paradigms are inclined to be located in this situation. The dominant paradigm of Positivism or science may be particularly vulnerable to this process, predominantly

valuing only that which can be explored within external reality. There would also be an absence of relative truth if the focus were only on the apexes of the inner or experience.

If balance is not present within The Spiritual, it results in a distortion of the eternal truth, leading to gaps in wisdom (see Figure 3). Therefore, if one only draws information from the outer, there is an absence of eternal truth. This then leads to a gap in wisdom. In my experience within The Spiritual, there are many cautions relating to the dangers of a sole focus on the outer, as it can lead to a situation where one is caught in the dogma and ritual of spirituality, losing the meaning and understanding that the inner offers. There are also cautions with regard to the dangers of focusing solely on the inner where one might lose oneself with little grounding and/or ability to function and survive in the physical world. As with the physical process, there would also be an absence of eternal truth if the focus was only on the apexes of the inner, experience or the outer. These understandings have been captured in Figure 3 illustrating both The Physical and The Spiritual within the theory of truth, italics has been used to indicate the components relevant to The Physical.

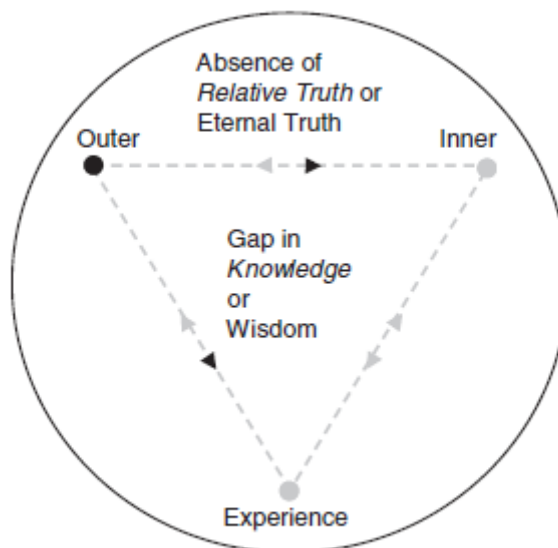


Figure 3 Focus on Outer = gap in *knowledge*/wisdom = absence of *relative* or eternal truth

To further illustrate the need for balance, as dictated by the theory for truth, Figure 4 demonstrates that even if two apexes are present, it still does not close the gap

or complete the triangle sealing in, if you will, the full extent of wisdom/eternal truth or knowledge/relative truth available.

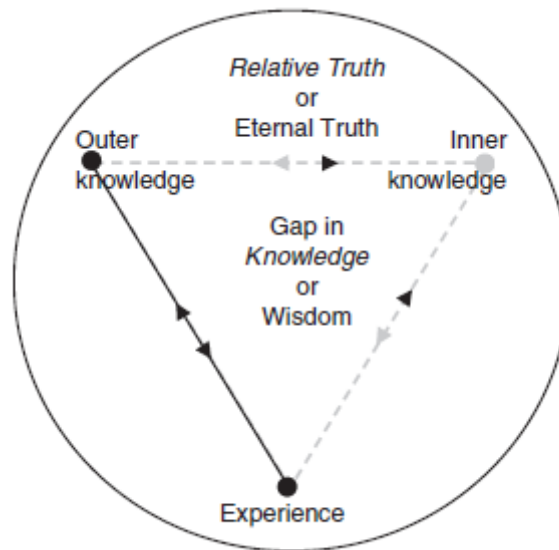


Figure 4 Focus on experience and the outer = Gap in *knowledge/wisdom* = absence of *relative* or eternal truth

Through the above exploration into wisdom and knowledge, one finds that the theory for truth is the same but it is either carried out from The Physical – knowledge – arriving at relative truth, or through The Spiritual – wisdom – arriving at eternal truth. However, ultimately achieving eternal truth requires both knowledge and wisdom and a balance between both The Physical and The Spiritual processes of knowing.

The physical and spiritual paradigms, although following the same process of knowing, have different experiences and different conclusions because they start from a different position. Each of the aspects of this, the theory for truth, has a different interpretation depending on whether it is being utilized by The Spiritual or The Physical. Table 1 explores the different interpretations of ‘truth’ and the ways of knowing from the physical and the spiritual perspectives.

Table 1 Process of knowing as interpreted by spiritual and physical perspectives

	<i>Physical Perspective</i>	<i>Spiritual Perspective</i>
External knowledge	The Physical sees external as only reality.	The Spiritual sees external as a part of, or a reflection of, the internal, it is not separate.
Internal knowledge	The Physical sees internal as an accidental by-product of the external. Is not valued. Only viewed in terms of psychology, personality, limited views of consciousness and imagination.	The Spiritual sees internal as ultimate reality of which the external is a reflection or extension. Viewed beyond that of psychology etc. to include the spirit, soul, intuition and direct communion with the source/God.
Experience	Experience for The Physical is limited to that which has been deemed to be real, such as, what can be experienced through the five senses.	Experience for The Spiritual means bringing the internal into the external and experiencing both simultaneously within the eternal moment. Reality experienced through multisensory perception.
Wisdom/ Knowledge	What The Physical would refer to as wisdom is in fact what The Spiritual would call knowledge. That which comes from the observation of the external world and the mind/intellect.	Within The Spiritual, wisdom is obtained when all aspects of the knowing formula are used. There is no separation or exclusion of the various aspects of knowledge or reality.
Truth	Relative. For The Physical, truth is limited to only that which can be known through the five senses and that which is “out there”.	Eternal. For The Spiritual, truth can only come from personal experience of wisdom. Applying wisdom in each moment allows for the ultimate truth to be known and experienced.

Through the exploration into the differences between the physical and spiritual perspectives, the concepts within the theory for truth and the different ways of knowing, it becomes apparent that not only do The Spiritual and The Physical have different perspectives of reality but they have a different purpose when seeking knowledge or wisdom. Therefore, not only are the ways of knowing different but the methods and measures for seeking truth are different. In the succeeding section, these differences will be discussed.

Methods and measures

Reviewing the raw data, and in particular the data collected within the brackets of ontology, epistemology, methodology, purpose of research, an explanation that is true and good evidence, I began to explore specific criteria for evidence and measurement in

relation to the spiritual ideologies. The presence of a trinity within the theory for truth encouraged me to explore how the triadic whole, a concept and layer from within the ISPF, might inform the methods, measures and evidence required in each paradigm.

Across ideologies I found there were similar ways of discussing the trinity at different levels. In order to negate the language barriers across ideologies in this section, I chose to use one that is well known in social work (social work being the discipline within which the research was conducted), that being head, heart and hands (from Kelly & Sewell, 1988), as this was a similar thread to that which ran across ideologies with only minor changes in the language used but representing the same or similar concept. This language then not only assists in bridging barriers across the spiritual ideologies but also in bridging to the physical by using language of The Physical, in this case one also used in social work. For example, within the Hindu data, it was referred to as body, mind and speech or head, heart and hands (see Hindu excerpts); within the Sufi data it was referred to as mind connected with knowledge, heart, mercy and compassion and discrimination and intelligence (see Sufi excerpts); within Buddhism it was referred to as signs, absences of signs and then the resolution of

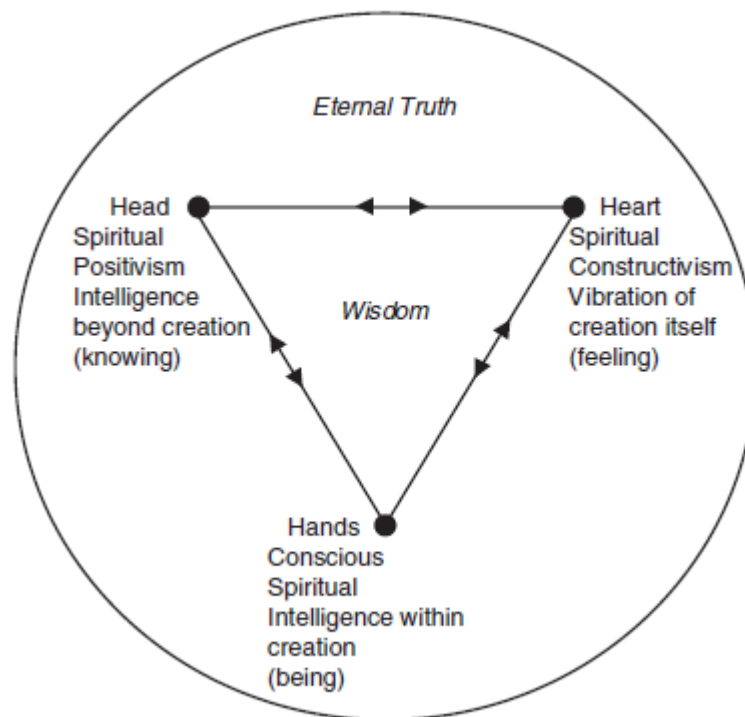


Figure 5 Theory for truth – The Spiritual informed by the triadic whole

signs or signlessness (see Buddhist excerpts); and from within the integrated, an example is life energy, form and formlessness (Tolle, 2005). This new understanding is discussed and illustrated in Figures 5 and 6.

The understandings gained in this exploration led to the development of Figure 5, which shows the various ways of knowing on each apex, all dependent upon each other and when in balance leading to the acquisition of wisdom from which one can then access eternal truth.

Before exploring how this dynamic influences the methods undertaken and requirements for measurement within the spiritual paradigms, it is important to reiterate that the overarching approach or way of knowing is through multi-sensory perception. Multi-sensory perception goes beyond the five senses used to interpret The Physical and includes such things as intuition and astral senses (astral touch, taste, smell, sight and sound). Further to this, it is relevant to remind the reader that in the exploration of the spiritual paradigms, it was found there was fluidity, with each possessing some aspects of the others within it.

Head – spiritual positivism or knowing: This method is through direct communion with God through pure intelligence, where one extends their consciousness beyond reality.

- Pure rational
- Knowing
- Intuition guided by pure consciousness

Due to the fluidity and inclusion of all other aspects within the spiritual paradigms these central methods are supported by those from the other spiritual paradigms.

Supported by:

- | | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| • Sensing | • Being |
| • Feeling | • Contemplation |
| • Intuiting | • Experiential |

This is reflective of the methodology which is to ask a question and then test to see if it is true, or 'test' previously discovered Cosmic Laws (through personal

experience) (Carrington, 2010). In summary, the methods and measures are objective and can be replicated.

Heart – spiritual constructivism or feeling: This method is through direct communion with God through pure feeling or intuition, by taking one’s consciousness deep within internal reality.

- Sensing
- Feeling
- Intuiting

As above this is supported by the methods from within the other spiritual paradigms.

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| • Being | • Pure rational |
| • Contemplation | • Knowing |
| • Experiential | • Intuition guided by pure consciousness |

This is reflective of the methodology where the aim is to increase the level of vibrational energy or consciousness, bringing greater understanding, wisdom and spiritual evolution to self and the collective (Carrington, 2010). The methods and measures are experienced intimately and personally, with the outer manifest being used as a way to gain further understanding of the internal.

Hands – conscious spiritual or being: This method is through direct experience of the unfolding Universe through presence and awareness, where one brings full consciousness into present reality.

- Being
- Contemplation
- Experiential

As above, this is supported by the methods from within the other spiritual paradigms.

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| • Pure rational | • Intuition guided by pure consciousness |
| • Knowing | • Sensing |

- Feeling

- Intuiting

This is reflective of the methodology where the purpose of life requires the seeker to challenge the confines, ignorance and oppression of physical realities or mind concepts held to discover the spiritual truth (Carrington, 2010a). The methods and measures undertake a process of observation, dissolution and resolution.

Whilst each spiritual paradigm has its own methods and measures, they share the overarching method and measure of triangulation, where each spiritual paradigm utilizes the methods and measures of the others to authenticate and validate the truth gained from within their own position. Further to this, they also share the common measures used to evidence, validate and authenticate the methods and measures of all the paradigms, through the absence or presence of spiritual indicators of eternal truth. These have been drawn from across the ideological data and are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Overarching measures of the spiritual paradigms (abridged version)

<i>Presence of... (spiritual indicators)</i>	<i>Absence of... (physical indicators)</i>
Light	Darkness
Love	Fear
Peace	Chaos
Clarity	Confusion
Expansion of consciousness	Contraction of consciousness
Joy	Pleasure/pain
Harmony	Competition
Silence	Noise/distraction
Awareness	Unawareness

Before moving on to the physical ways of knowing or methods, there is one last spiritual paradigm to look at, the integrated spiritual paradigm. It has been placed here as it is the paradigm that draws from both The Physical and The Spiritual, although, valuing the spiritual methods outlined above over the physical methods. However, it does recognize that the use of the physical methods outlined below have their place in the investigation and understanding of reality. It recognizes that, at times, it is

important to draw from The Physical in order to assist in bridging the gap between the two perspectives. Hence, the integrated spiritual paradigm does not have its own particular methods to outline here, rather it is a combination of all, and the methods used will be determined by the phenomenon of interest, the purpose of the individual research project and the original paradigmatic positioning of the researcher.

Transferring the understanding gained from the theory for truth, ways of knowing and the triadic whole to the physical paradigms results in the framing of the methods as shown below. Information relating to the physical paradigms was gathered and adapted from Miles and Huberman (1994), Neuman (2000), Neuman and Kreuger (2003), and Sarantakos (1993). The physical paradigms explore truth through the overarching approach of the five senses, that which is considered tangible and measurable within physical reality. This, then, produces a result of relative truth through the acquisition of knowledge rather than eternal truth acquired through wisdom. As mentioned earlier, it is less likely to find all three apexes included in processes carried out from within physical paradigms, as they tend to be more concrete and rigid.

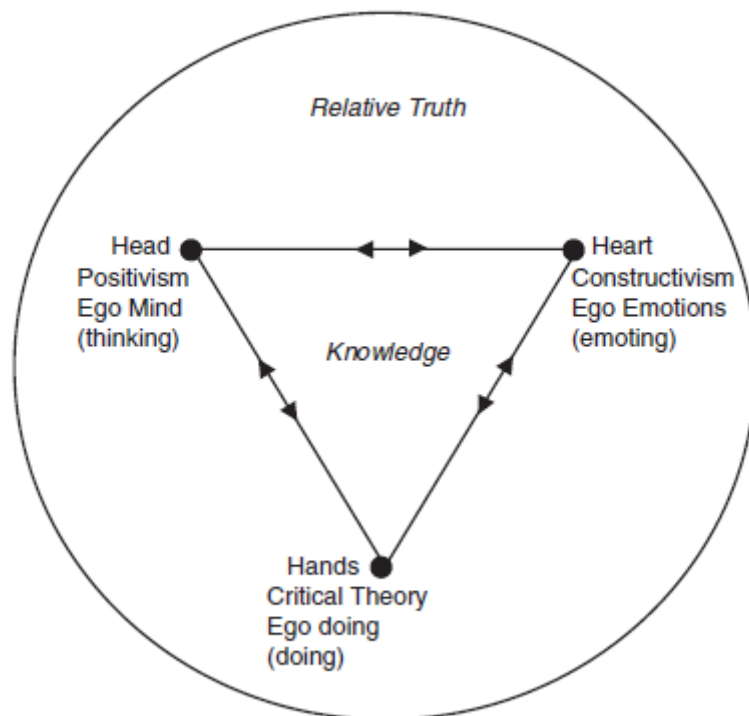


Figure 6 Theory for truth – The Physical informed by the triadic whole

This process influences the methods undertaken and requirements for measurement within the physical paradigms in the following ways.

Head – positivism or mind – The method is through objective logical scientific inquiry, where one extends their intellectual understanding in the exploration of external reality.

- Intellect/thinking
- Logic
- Objective

This is reflective of the methodology where the researcher states a hypothesis or question as a proposition, then tests the proposition to see if it is true. In contrast to the spiritual paradigms, the physical paradigms are more rigid and hence tend not to include or validate the methods and measure of the other paradigms.

Heart – constructivism or emotion – The method is through subjective internal understanding, where one seeks to understand the meaning and lived experience of those in the physical world.

- Meaning
- Understanding
- Subjective

This is reflective of the methodology where the aim is to build a consensus understanding that is more sophisticated than the previous understanding. As above, the physical paradigms are less likely to draw from other paradigm to support their methods.

Hands – critical theory or doing – The method is through the use of intellect and meaning, where one observes a phenomenon and then takes action.

- Questioning
- Deconstruction
- Action/Observation

This is reflective of the methodology where the transactional nature of research requires a dialogue between the investigator and the subjects of inquiry. The purpose of this research is to transform ignorance and oppression into informed understanding and collective action. Methods must be participative and dialogical.

Implications for research

This research demonstrated that the spiritual paradigms explored had clear processes from ways of knowing to methods and measures that paralleled those of the physical paradigms. Therefore it is possible to engage in the exploration/examination of The Spiritual in the same way that academia engages in the exploration/examination of The Physical. The barrier, then, is not whether such processes and knowledge exist but that spiritual or alternative perspectives of truth and ways of knowing have been deliberately rejected and excluded by the dominant secular humanistic perspective (Hodge, 2009). These structures, processes, methods and measures do not require The Physical to embark upon an exercise of reinvention or construction as, not only do they exist, they have been in practice for centuries. As The Physical endeavours to incorporate The Spiritual, all that is required is for The Physical to take the position of acceptance and openness and to allow The Spiritual to guide the way – its way – as surely it is the expert of that which is spiritual? Further to this, it highlights that to explore spirituality ‘physically’ is obviously flawed, as it is constructing its own version rather than going to the source, as this research attempted to do. Supporting this point, Hodge, Wolfer, Limb, and Nadir (2009), drew attention to such gaps when they called for a move to have research of The Spiritual conducted by ‘spiritual insiders’.

As discussed previously, current research into the topic of spirituality is predominantly being conducted using physical research approaches and methodologies and focuses on exploring how The Physical is implementing The Spiritual (Behrman & Tebb, 2009; Canda & Furman, 1999; Graham & Shier, 2009; Hodge, 2006; Kane & Jacobs, 2010; Rothman, 2009; Sheridan, 2009). If The Physical is to include The Spiritual authentically and ethically, then this trend needs to change. The exploration needs to focus on The Spiritual, using spiritual approaches and methods, before these insights and understandings can be adapted for discipline specific practice. This sentiment is beginning to emerge across disciplines with authors focusing on the various

components of research, such as ontological and epistemological inquiry, and exploration into methods and measures (Alchin, 2006; Awbrey et al., 2006; Heaton et al., 2004; Hodge et al., 2009; Osterhold et al., 2007; Shahjahan, 2004; Steingard, 2005; Wright, 2000; Vaughan, 2002). Ultimately, I would suggest, as do Birnbaum and Birnbaum (2008), that ‘traditional research methodology is insufficient, we need new methods of collecting information about a different, more complex, even more multi-dimensional reality’ (p. 88). It is calls such as this to which this research is responding.

This study has demonstrated, spiritual research approaches do exist and the paradigmatic view and methodologies used ultimately change the outcome. For this reason, if The Physical is fully and authentically to understand spirituality, it must begin to use the spiritual’s approaches and seek the answers to spiritual questions from The Spiritual. If one wants to know about the laws of gravity, one does not ask a botanist. The same principle is true in the exploration of spiritual laws and understandings. Although there may be resistance from some factions in order to maintain positions of privilege, it may be argued the only ethical option is to support and allow a space for The Spiritual to show the way.

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