

The relationship between spiritual intelligence with psychological well-being and purpose in life of nurses

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ABSTRACT

Background: Spiritual intelligence is defined as the human capacity to ask questions about the ultimate meaning of life and the integrated relationship between us and the world in which we live. It results in an increase in psychological well-being of individuals as well as having a goal in their life. This study was conducted to investigate the relationship between spiritual intelligence with purpose in life and psychological well-being among the nurses.

Materials and Methods: The study was a descriptive correlation study. In this study, 270 nurses were selected from some hospitals of Tehran University through convenient sampling. Data were collected through a four-section questionnaire including demographic characteristics, a 24-item questionnaire of spiritual intelligence and its four components, psychological well-being questionnaire with six subscales and 84 questions, and the questionnaire of purpose in life with 20 questions. The data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed through SPSS software.

Results: The results showed that there was a significant relationship between spiritual intelligence with psychological well-being and having a purpose in life. Furthermore, there was a significant association between the components of spiritual intelligence including conscious state expansion, personal meaning production, transcendental awareness, and critical existential thinking with psychological well-being.

Conclusion: High level of spiritual intelligence in nurses helps them to improve their psychological well-being and have a purpose in life, which can lead to the health provision of them and their patients.

Key words: Intelligence, Iran, nurses, psychological adaptation, quality of life, spirituality

INTRODUCTION

Intelligence was suggested as a cognitive ability by Alfred Bine in the early 20th century, but in two recent decades the concept of intelligence has been expanded to other domains as natural intelligence, existence intelligence, and spiritual intelligence.

Salovey indicated human intelligence not only as a collection of limited cognitive abilities, but having an emotional aspect as well. Intelligence quotient (IQ) is generally known as mathematical analysis intelligence or lingui-cognitive intelligence.^[1,2] Nursing profession is a profession tightly associated with individuals' health, and defined by some sorts of clinical nursing care including interpersonal and inter-group communications as well as other various activities. Everyday nurses face numerous stressors in their working environment which can threaten their health and

result in losing their motivation to work.^[3] One of the most important models conceptualizing psychological well-being is multi-dimensional Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-being. Ryff interprets psychological well-being as individuals' struggle to fulfill their potential true abilities. This model has been developed and formed through combination of various personal growth theories and adaptive functions.^[4] Some researchers conceptualize psychological well-being through some components or specific processes such as emotional process. Some emphasize on physical processes and indicate that there is an association between perfect physical health and high quality of life.

Some researchers also describe psychological well-being as a cognitive process with life satisfaction as its indicator. A few researchers, in description of psychological intelligence, emphasize on the role of spiritual processes such as having a target in life to access optimum function. Finally, some other researchers, in this regard, point to personal and social processes such as having a self-focused attention, self-control, and meaningful relationships with others.^[5]

Having a definition and goal in life is among the most important theological, managerial, philosophical, and psychological issues. Parallel researches have been conducted

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on the goal in life. WHO, based on formerly conducted researches, officially announced that theological potentials and abilities should be utilized to promote individuals' mental health.^[6] In a study conducted on spiritual intelligence and its association with the level of happiness among the students in Avicenna University of Medical Sciences in Hamedan by Yaghoubi, the findings showed that there was a significant difference between mean scores of happiness among various students and their spiritual intelligence ($P < 0.05$). It was observed that increase of spiritual intelligence of the students increased their happiness.^[7]

In another study on the association of spiritual intelligence and emotional intelligence with elderly life satisfaction, conducted by Naderi *et al.* in Ahvaz, the findings showed a significant association between spiritual intelligence and life satisfaction ($P < 0.05$). The results of data analysis in their study showed that variables of spiritual intelligence and emotional intelligence were the predictors for life satisfaction, respectively.^[8] The nurses, with no idea why they selected nursing as a profession, impair their relationship with their clients, colleagues, and even their family members. With regard to the formerly conducted researches in Iran as well as other countries on spiritual intelligence and its association with other factors as well as the role of nurses in patients' health, and health and treatment system, the researchers decided to conduct a study to define the association between spiritual intelligence, psychological well-being and its components, and the goal of life among nurses working in hospitals affiliated to Tehran University.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is a descriptive correlation study on 270 subjects selected through convenient sampling from the nurses working in selected hospitals affiliated to Tehran University of Medical Sciences in order to investigate the association between psychological well-being and goal of life (criterion) with spiritual intelligence (predictor) among nurses. Inclusion criteria were age between 22 and 50 years, having a nursing degree of bachelor or higher, and working in any of Imam Khomeini, Rouzbeh, and Baharlou hospitals. Data collection tool included four questionnaires: Demographic characteristics including age, sex, marital status, work experience, educational level, and the ward they were working in were included in the self-assessment questionnaire of spiritual intelligence prepared by Aghababae *et al.*, containing four components of 24 items (critical existential thinking, personal meaning production, transcendental awareness, and developing higher consciousness) which were scored 0-4.^[9] Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-being included six components of self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy,

environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth, which were scored in a Likert 6-point scale from agree to disagree. Forty questions out of 84 were inversely scored.

The questionnaire of goal of life has 20 items in a 7-point Likert scale whose validity and reliability have already been confirmed by Cheraghi *et al.* and is scored 20-140. In order to confirm the validity of purpose in life questionnaire, face and content validities were checked through forward translation and expert panel back-translation by Cheraghi *et al.* A positive significant correlation between purpose in life questionnaire with life satisfaction, happiness, and positive emotions, as well as a negative significant correlation between the scores of this questionnaire with negative emotion were observed indicating convergent and divergent validity of purpose in life questionnaire.^[10]

Validity of spiritual intelligence questionnaire was confirmed through correlation of spiritual intelligence with test of religious orientation ($P < 0.01$, $r = 0.35$), spiritual self-assessment scale ($P < 0.01$, $r = 0.45$), convergent validity, and comparison of the students with students of theology.^[9]

With regard to checking psychological well-being validity, significant correlation between Ryff Psychological Well-being Scales and life satisfaction questionnaires of satisfactions, happiness, and self-esteem confirm the validity of the test. Bayani *et al.* have also assessed the correlation between its scales and its general correlation in order to check the validity of this test.^[11]

Cronbach alpha and split test were used to check the reliability of purpose in life questionnaire by Cheraghi *et al.* Except for question 15, the correlation of all other questions with total score of the questionnaire is notable ($r > 0.3$). Split test was also adopted to recheck reliability. Alpha calculated for the first and the second halves were 0.87 and 0.82, respectively (total alpha of 0.91).^[10] Reliability of spiritual intelligence in the questionnaire of Aghababae *et al.* was 0.88.^[9] Bayani *et al.* checked the reliability of Ryff psychological well-being questionnaire in a sample size of 145 students. Reliability index with retest method of Ryff Psychological Well-being Scales was 0.82, and for the subscales of self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth, it was 0.71, 0.77, 0.78, 0.70, 0.77, and 0.78, respectively (significant).^[11] Questionnaires of spiritual intelligence, psychological well-being and purpose in life, and personal characteristics were distributed among the nurses in the morning, evening, and night shifts in July-Aug 2011. The subjects were explained about the questions, and after 24 h, the questionnaires were collected. The data were analyzed by descriptive statistical tests (concrete

and relative frequency distribution, mean and SD) and inferential statistical tests (Pearson correlation coefficient) through SPSS.

RESULTS

The findings showed that 37.4% of the subjects were in the age group of 30-35 years, 30% in 25-30 years age group, 23% in 35-40 years age group, 8.1% in 40-45 years age group, and 1.5% were in the age group of 20-24 years.

With regard to subjects' gender, 68.5% were females and 31.5% were males. With regard to subjects' work location, 21.1% worked in internal diseases ward, 20.7% in emergency ward, 12.2% in surgical ward, 11.9% in psychiatric diseases ward, 8.1% in emergency psychiatric diseases ward, 7.8% in CCU, 7% in ICU, 5.2% in pediatric diseases ward, 4.1% in post CCU, 1.5% in hemodialysis, and 0.4% worked in labor. The results showed that the mean scores were as follows: Purpose in life 97.45, psychological well-being 319.95, and spiritual intelligence 59.1. The optimum scores were as follows: Purpose in life 126, psychological well-being 409, and spiritual intelligence 76. Mean scores of the components in spiritual intelligence were: 15.04 for developing higher consciousness, 15.62 for personal meaning production, 13.15 for transcendental awareness, and 15.18 for critical existential thinking.

Optimum score of conscious state expansion was 22, personal meaning production 22, transcendental awareness 20, and critical existential thinking was 21. With regard to mean scores of psychological well-being, the mean score of self-acceptance was 53.01, positive relations with others 52.51, autonomy 51.86, environmental mastery 52.68, purpose of life 54.45, and the mean score of personal growth was 55.31.

The optimum score for self-acceptance was 75, positive relations with others 75, autonomy 71, environmental mastery 67, purpose in life 75, and the mean score of personal growth was 78.

Pearson correlation coefficient between spiritual intelligence and psychological well-being was 0.48 ($P = 0.001$) [Table 1]. Pearson correlation coefficient between spiritual intelligence and purpose in life was 0.53 ($P = 0.001$) [Table 2].

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In the present study, no significant association was found between spiritual intelligence and demographic characteristics such as age, sex, nurses' working location, and their work experience, which is consistent with the results of Bagheri *et al.*,^[12] as well as those of Yang (2006)

Table 1: Correlation coefficient between spiritual intelligence and psychological well-being

Variables	No.	r	P
Spiritual intelligence and psychological well-being	270	0.48	0.001
Conscious state expansion and psychological well-being	270	0.48	0.001
Personal meaning production and psychological well-being	270	0.51	0.001
Transcendental consciousness and psychological well-being	270	0.38	0.03
Critical existential thinking and psychological well-being	270	0.43	0.001

Table 2: Correlation coefficient between spiritual intelligence and purpose in life

Variables	No.	r	P
Spiritual intelligence and purpose in life	270	0.53	0.001
Conscious state expansion and purpose in life	270	0.38	0.001
Personal meaning production and purpose in life	270	0.42	0.001
Transcendental consciousness and purpose in life	270	0.31	0.02
Critical existential thinking and purpose in life	270	0.29	0.001

and Yang and Moab (2007), who conducted studies on Taiwanese and Chinese nurses, respectively, to investigate the association between spiritual intelligence with demographic characteristics.^[13,14]

With regard to the association between spiritual intelligence with psychological well-being, Pearson correlation coefficient was 0.48 ($P = 0.001$) indicating their association. With regard to the association of each component of spiritual intelligence with psychological well-being, Pearson correlation coefficient was 0.48 ($P = 0.001$) for conscious state expansion, 0.51 ($P = 0.001$) for personal meaning production, 0.38 ($P = 0.03$) for transcendental awareness, and 0.43 ($P = 0.001$) for critical existential thinking [Table 1]. Word intelligence is applied to subjective mental processes and/or a collection of intelligent behaviors. One of the basic indicators of intelligence is the ability to solve problems in a realistic and practical way.

Spiritual intelligence is the ultimate intelligence reflecting values and meanings, covering mental adaptation capacities and leading to non-materialistic and non-obligatory aspects. It contains spiritual sources, values, and specifications which enhance individuals' daily function and health. Individuals with high score of spiritual intelligence go beyond the body and material, experience the optimum level of

consciousness, utilize spiritual sources to solve problems, and are ultimately characterized by modesty, forgiveness, justice, and compassion.^[12]

The results of the present study concord with those of Naderi *et al.* investigating the association between spiritual intelligence and emotional intelligence with life satisfaction of the elderly, which reported the association between spiritual intelligence with purpose in life, for which the Pearson correlation coefficient was 0.53 ($P = 0.001$). For the component of conscious state expansion and its association with purpose in life, Pearson correlation coefficient was 0.38 ($P = 0.001$); for personal meaning production, it was 0.42 (0.001); and for transcendental awareness, it was 0.31 ($P = 0.02$); for critical existential thinking, it was 0.29 ($P = 0.001$) [Table 2]. The results of the present study showed that spiritual intelligence and its components are associated with psychological well-being and purpose in life so that an increase in spiritual growth can act as a base for a better and more coordinated life of individuals.

Living with no pressure, concern, fear, and anxiety, as well as increase of spiritual growth makes individuals stronger and brings about opportunities to take part in innovative activities and do their jobs more clearly meaningfully and purposefully. Spiritual intelligence helps individuals to fight with the fear of a change as the fear of any change originates from individuals' own mind and not from their surrounding environment. Development of spiritual intelligence brings about a growth in individuals' ability to perceive the emotions and to help the others to control their emotions in a deeper way.^[15]

Education of skills related to spiritual intelligence in all levels and for all individuals notably affects fulfillment of transcendentalism and meaningfulness of the society.

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