

INVESTIGATING THE SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG THE EMPLOYEES OF COOPERATION, LABOR AND SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICES OF SEMNAN PROVINCE

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ABSTRACT

The present study was aimed to identify the spiritual intelligence components among the employees of cooperation, labor and social welfare of Semnan province working in 2013. The sample size was selected as 103 by Morgan formula and data collection instrument is Linda Hildebrant standard questionnaire with 5-item Likert scale and its reliability is achieved by Cronbach's alpha method. The study method is survey-descriptive and the data analysis is done by descriptive statistics methods (Frequency, charter, central indices and dispersion indices) and inference statistics is (single-sample t-test, two-sample and multi-sample) and kolmogorovsmirnov test was used to investigate the normality of components distribution in population and to prioritize spiritual intelligence components, Friedman test is used in terms of rank mean. The results of the study showed that the important factors in employees' spiritual intelligence are 1personal meaning production, 2- critical existential thinking, 3- conscious state expansionand 4- transcendental awareness.

KEYWORDS: Conscious state expansion, Critical existential thinking personal meaning production, Spiritual intelligence, transcendental awareness

INTRODUCTION

In information and communication era, people are the greatest capitals of any organization. Most of the scientists of management knowledge consider human capitals as the unique sustainable source of competitive advantage of organizations. It seems that to keep their function and continuance, organizations need deep and new intelligence employees by which they can act effectively and besides improving the responsiveness, the fulfillment of goals of each organization is defined.

Spirituality is the great concern of a person. After scientific and industrial revolution in the west, religion and spirituality were ignored as it seem religion is declining but recently, it is proved religion and spirituality are taken into consideration of communities. As one of the dimensions of humanity, spirituality includes awareness and self-knowledge. Bilota believed that spirituality is the need of going beyond self in routine life and being integrated with others. This awareness leads to an experience beyond se lf (Ghabaribanab *et al.*, 2007).

Spiritual intelligence is one of the applied aspects of spirituality. Indeed, spiritual intelligence is using spiritual abilities and resources as people can take significant decisions. Also, they can thinking about existential issues and attempt to solve their routine problems. Thus, spiritual intelligence combines subjective and intangible aspects of spirituality with actions in objective and tangible world (Zohar & Marshall, 2000).

King presented four dimensions of spiritual intelligence: critical existential thinking regarding the world, personal meaning production, conscious state expansion and transcendental awareness (King, 2008).

Research Goals

General purpose: The identification of spiritual intelligence condition among the employees of cooperation, labor and social welfare offices of Semnan province

Sub purposes

- 1- Identification of critical existential thinking among employees of cooperation, labor and social welfare offices of Semnan province
- 2- Identification of personal meaning productionamong employees of cooperation, labor and social welfare offices of Semnan province

- 3- Identification of transcendental awareness among employees of cooperation, labor and social welfare offices of Semnan province
- 4- Identification of conscious state expansion among employees of cooperation, labor and social welfare offices of Semnan province

Literature Review

- 1- A study “the relationship between spiritual intelligence, happiness and demographic variables among the nurses of Fateme Al-Zahra hospital and Bentolhoda of Bushehr town” was conducted on study population working in Fateme Al-Zahra and Bentolhoda hospitals with sample size 125 people and they were selected by random stratified sampling method (Baezat et al., 2012). Spiritual intelligence is defined as human being capacity to ask final questions about life meaning and experiences and uniform relation between us and the world we live and it is possible to lead into happiness and wellbeing in life. The present study investigated the relationship between spiritual intelligence and happiness among the nurses of Fateme Al-Zahra and Bentolhoda hospitals of Bushehr town. The study results showed that it is a cross section descriptive-analytical study design. The study results showed that there is a linear significant association between spiritual intelligence and happiness, transcendental awareness and spiritual experiences and patience and with total score of spiritual intelligence and happiness of nurses. Improving spiritual intelligence of nurses help them to achieve sustainable happiness and by happy life improve their own and patients health.
- 2- A study “ the investigation of spiritual intelligence and services quality” was conducted. The effect of spiritual information on services quality was investigated by HadisJavaheri, Hassan Safarnia and Ali Molahosseini. The present study aimed to determine the relationship between spiritual information and services quality. Spiritual information enables people to live with deep goals and follow a meaning beyond the physical requirements and a low-level life in their work activities. The study showed that spiritual information is one of the aspects of organizational information and it has important effect on personal and work achievements of people. The results of study on 45 employees of consulting center in Tehran showed that spiritual information of employees had positive effect on service giving quality in this center. Also, the results showed that individual productivity and information development as some factors of spiritual information had great effect on service giving quality. Spiritual information is used to solve the problems of life goals and values. Some questions like “does my job improve my life” and “ Do I have a good view of people?” are answered by it. Indeed, information is mostly about asking questions not answering them. Such questions create some behaviors based on spirituality, intelligence, honesty and deep communication with surrounding people. Those with high spiritual information can see the hidden meaning of physical and materialistic objects in their work and finding this concept helps them not to lose their hope in hard work conditions or give services to customers with a good morale. It is proposed to the managers to consider spiritual tests benefits during labor force employment. The results of the studies showed that one of the helpful factors for the organizations to achieve their goals is using managers, supervisors and employees with high spiritual information. Also, he can participate in stabilization of spiritual information of employees via internal practices based on spirituality development methods in personal life and in working life in company.

A study “the impact of spiritual intelligence on work performance, case studies in government hospitals of East coast of Malaysia” was conducted by Rani et al. (2013), human sciences center and industrial sciences and technology school of Malaysia. In this study, the causal relationship of spiritual intelligence is defined in work and among nurses of three regions Pahang, Terengganu and Kelantan in Malaysia. Questionnaires were developed and distributed to staff at the selected Government Hospitals which involved 506 female respondents in the age of 20-45 years old. The data collected was analysed using confirmatory factor analytic (CFA) approach structural equation modeling (SEM) in order to test the hypothesized model of the impact of Spiritual Intelligence on work performance. In addition, invariance analysis was also conducted on the demographic moderator such as age and tenure. From the result, it can be found that work performance is influenced by spiritual information. Also, the moderating factor of age and tenure is not significant that the model is applicable to all hospitals involved. This finding may pave the way forward for empowering spiritual intelligence in nursing school and training to promote nurse’s work performance.

In this spiritual intelligence influence on work performance is confirmed. There was a positive relationship between Spiritual intelligence and work performance. In other words, when nurses apply spiritual intelligence in work, their

performance increases. The fit structural model of SIWP, which is from the development of Spiritual intelligence study and work performance study. The significant value from the spiritual intelligence construct to work performance construct suggested that the spiritual intelligence should be applied by the nurses and should be implemented in the planning policies and training in government hospitals. Therefore this paper from conceptual aspects is managed to further extend and strengthen the theoretical issues on the spiritual intelligence in particular by empirically illustrating the extent of its relationship with work performance. Nurses who use their spiritual intelligence are able to motivate, enable, empower, and provide a hope as they feel connected to God or a higher spiritual consciousness. Nurses who have high spiritual information work with satisfaction and can give a meaning to it. Therefore they will carry out their nursing practice, health care, wellness, healing and solve their stress and problems well.

4-A study is conducted "The Seven Dimensions of Spiritual Intelligence" by Yosi & Dryer (2007). This paper develops an ecumenical grounded theory of spiritual information based on thematic analysis of 71 cases conducted with subjects designated as spiritually intelligent by their co-workers. Spiritual information is defined as the ability to apply and embody spiritual resources and a factor to enhance daily functioning and wellbeing. Participants generally identify themselves within most of the major spiritual traditions, including: Buddhism, Christianity, Hindu, Islam, Jewish, Non-Dual, Shamanic/Earth, Taoism, and Yoga. 7 major themes of SI emerged as nearly universal across the traditions and participants. They are: (1) Consciousness: Developed refined awareness and self-knowledge; (2) Grace: Living in alignment with the sacred manifesting love for and trust in life; (3) Meaning: Experiencing significance in daily activities through a sense of purpose and a call for service, including in the face of pain and suffering; (4) Transcendence: Going beyond the separate egoic self into an interconnected wholeness (5) Truth: Living in open acceptance, curiosity, and love for all creation; (6) peaceful surrender to self (Truth, God, Absolute, true nature); and (7) Inner-directedness: inner-freedom aligned in responsible wise action.

These seven factors are consistent with the teaching of most spiritual traditions and are consistent with them. They are interconnected with the beliefs of all followers. In contrast to the perennial philosophy which includes a unifying cosmology across spiritual traditions, an ecumenical theory of SI does not necessitate such unified cosmology. It does suggest that most spiritual and wisdom traditions promote a universal set of qualities that are adaptive and increase functioning and wellbeing. For example, a Christian may align with the sacred through Jesus, while a Jew may do so through the Torah, and the Shaman by sitting under a tree. But the capacity to align with the sacred may be universally adaptive, like spiritual information. In fact, participants in this study regularly apply their spiritual abilities to solve specific problems by resorting to particular SI capabilities such as using their intuition, transcending sequential thinking through synthesis of paradoxes, or by taking a global systems perspective to solve problems more spiritually. In addition, followers apply spiritual intelligence in every moment of daily life to experience greater meaning and wellbeing by practicing qualities such as mindfulness, presence, and compassion, even in the face of pain and suffering. In this regard, an ecumenical theory of spiritual information holds an expanded view of human abilities. In this theory, people are capable of experiencing existential meaning, developing refined consciousness, living in grace, respect for life, being curious and open to truth, and attaining peacefulness, wholeness, and inner-directed freedom.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study is a descriptive-survey method and investigates the spiritual intelligence of employees of cooperative, labor and social welfare of Semnan province.

Study population

The study population is all employees of cooperative, labor, social welfare of Semnan province working in 2013 and in accordance to labor statistics of Semnan province, they were 156 people.

Sample size

To determine sample size by Morgan Table, 110 people were selected and the researcher distributed the questionnaires among 156 people, of which 103 questionnaires were returned and the sample size was 103 people.

Data collection measure

To collect data and study variables evaluation, Linda Hildebrand standard questionnaire (2011) was used as data collection measure. This questionnaire is about spiritual intelligence dimensions with 24 questions in four dimensions of critical existential thinking, personal meaning production, conscious state expansion and transcendental awareness.

The questions of this questionnaire are packed and the questions are designed based on four-item Likert scale ranging (strongly agree, agree, not agree, not disagree, disagree, strongly disagree) scored from 5 to 1 (Table 1).

Table 1. Coding the questions of the questionnaire based on five-item Likert scale

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not agree not disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

This questionnaire measures spiritual intelligence components including critical existential thinking, personal meaning production, conscious state expansion and transcendental awareness.

To evaluate reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha coefficient is used and spiritual intelligence questionnaire with Cronbach's alpha coefficient 90% was calculated and coefficient above 7% showed that the questionnaire has high reliability.

Study hypotheses

- 1- Critical existential thinking is important in spiritual intelligence of the employees of cooperative, labor and social welfare offices of Semnan province.
- 2- Personal meaning production is important in spiritual intelligence of the employees of cooperative, labor and social welfare offices of Semnan province.
- 3- Awareness is important in spiritual intelligence of the employees of cooperative, labor and social welfare offices of Semnan province.
- 4- Conscious state expansion is important in spiritual intelligence of the employees of cooperative, labor and social welfare offices of Semnan province.

RESULTS

Frequency distribution of respondents based on age and gender, service years, education and marital status

The descriptive results of data showed that of total 103 respondents, 13 people (12.6%) aged 20-29 years and 41 people (39.8%) aged 30-39 and 35 people (34%) aged 40-49 years and 14 people (13.6%) aged above 50 years old. Of total 103 respondents, there were 35 people (34%) women and 68 people (66%) men. Of total 103 people, 24 (23.3%) had work experience ranging 1-5 years and 15 people (14.6%) experience of 6-10 years and 20(19.4%) experience of 11-15 years and 24 (23.3%) experience of 16-20 years and 15 people (14.6%) experience of 21-25 and 5 people (4.9%) experience of 26 and above. Of total 103 respondents, 6(5.8%) had below diploma and 19(18.4%) Diploma and 10 (9.7%) associate and 50 people (48.5%) BA and 18 (17.5%) MA and above and of total 103 people, 11 (10.7%) were single and 92(89.3%) married.

Description of spiritual intelligence components

Table 2. Descriptive statistics (spiritual intelligence components)

Components	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Critical existential thinking	103	3.9013	.48867	.04815
Personal meaning production	103	4.0696	.46823	.04614
Transcended awareness	103	3.8204	.46130	.04545
Conscious state expansion	103	3.8285	.46410	.04573

The mean and standard deviation of spiritual intelligence components are shown separately and the highest mean is dedicated to personal meaning production as 4.0696 and the lowest mean is about awareness component as 3.8204.

Identification of the condition of personal barriers of creativity

Table 3. Identification of spiritual intelligence components

Components	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Critical existential thinking	18.718	102	.000	.90129	.8058	.9968
Personal meaning production	23.183	102	.000	1.06958	.9781	1.1611
Transcended awareness	18.049	102	.000	.82039	.7302	.9105
Conscious state expansion	18.117	102	.000	.82848	.7378	.9192

Table 1-3 shows the sig of all spiritual intelligence components less than 0.05. Thus, critical existential thinking, personal meaning production, conscious state expansion and transcendental awareness are important in spiritual intelligence. Thus, with confidence interval 95%, H1 is supported. Prioritization of spiritual intelligence components.

Table 4: Rank mean of spiritual intelligence components

Components	Rank mean
Critical existential thinking	2.49
Personal meaning production	3.13
Transcended awareness	2.18
Conscious state expansion	2.20

Table 5. The results of Friedman test

Number	103
Chi-square	42.397
Degree of freedom	3
Significance level	.000
a. Friedman Test	

According to the results of Table 4 and the results of Table 5, sig of the components is less than 5% and there is a difference among the studied components in terms of rank mean and priority of this ranking based on rank mean is as followings.

- 1- Personal meaning production, 2- critical existential thinking, 3- conscious state expansion 4-transcendental awareness.

DISCUSSION

According to the results, four components of critical existential thinking, Personal meaning production, conscious state expansion and transcendental awareness were important in spiritual intelligence of the employees of cooperative, labor and social welfare offices of Semnan province. These components were not difference among various groups of demographic variables. The results of the present study conducted in offices of cooperative, labor and social welfare of Semnan province showed that more consideration on personal meaning production can increase spiritual intelligence of employees. As it was said, in the initial analysis model of the study in the first chapter, four factors are presented as important in spiritual intelligence of employees. Based on the results of study hypotheses and their statistical analysis, the final analysis of the study is drawn and four factors are important in spiritual intelligence of employees. Personal meaning production had the first rank in terms of rank mean and critical existential thinking and conscious state expansion were in the next ranks and transcendental awareness was in the fourth rank.

CONCLUSION

Based on the constituent components of spiritual intelligence, some recommendations are presented to improve these factors to managers of cooperative, labor and social welfare offices of Semnan province.

- 1- According to the first hypothesis that critical existential thinking was important in spiritual intelligence of employees, it is proposed to hold self-assessment sessions to make employees familiar with multiple human dimensions and great human position. Also, an encouragement system in organization can be used for creative proposition and presenting better solutions in organizational processes in organization.
- 2- Based on hypothesis 2, personal meaning production was important in spiritual intelligence of employees. It is proposed that employees' vision is increased and their views can be changed to individual and organizational life and transcendental goals can be defined for employees and it should be helped to achieve these goals. They should consider meaningful work and life for employees in long-run plans.
- 3- According to third hypothesis showing awareness is important in spiritual intelligence of employees, it is proposed the relevant and continuous workshops and trainings are held for more recognition of the position of trust in God in organization. Also, employees can be familiar with the spiritual resources that are not informed of them to solve their personal and work life.
- 4- According to fourth hypothesis, Conscious state expansion is important in spiritual intelligence of employees, it is proposed to develop values and behaviors like forgiveness, charity and humbleness and this requires designing a model in organization of which all can follow. Also, positive feeling can be suggested in organization and a type of goal setting mechanism for individual and organizational goals can be established.

Some recommendations for further study

- 1- The culture of any country can have general effect on spiritual intelligence of the people, namely most issues considered in spiritual intelligence, philosophy and eastern mysticism are as wisdom signs. The investigation of the effect of Iranian culture on spiritual intelligence of people is proposed as a study subject.
- 2- Various models are made for spiritual intelligence and King and Hildebrant questionnaire was used in this study. Other researchers are proposed to investigate other models.
- 3- Conducting a study "The investigation of the role of spiritual intelligence on performance of employees in organization".
- 4- Conducting a study "the role of social, economic and cultural variables in spiritual intelligence of employees of various organizations.

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