COMPARISON OF RELATION BETWEEN BODY IMAGE AND SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS

Forough Jafari\textsuperscript{1} and Somayyeh Esmaeili\textsuperscript{2}
Department of Psychology, Islamshahr Branch, Islamic Azad University (IAU), Islamshahr, Iran. email address: \textsuperscript{1}forough_jafary@yahoo.com
\textsuperscript{2}esmaeili.s1360@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT
The purpose of this research is to analyze the relation between body image and spiritual intelligence in Iranian male and female students. The sample includes 376 students at Islamic Azad University, Islamshahr branch which were selected in the stratified and randomly sampling from colleges. The tools include Fisher's body image test and spiritual intelligent SSI-29 questionnaire. The data were analyzed by t test, Pearson correlation and Fisher’s Z test.
The relation between spiritual intelligence and Reliance on Internal Core with body image is significant in both genders ($p \leq 0.05$). the results show that Understanding and Communication with the Source of Existence in women is higher than men. However, the relation between Understanding and Communication with the Source of Existence with body image in male is significant ($p \leq 0.05$) while it is not significant in female students. There are no significant difference between females’ and males’ scores in body image and spiritual intelligence. According to the result, with increasing spiritual intelligence can induce high level of self-awareness and deeper relation with source of existence. As a result, body image can be improved as the important components of mental health.

KEYWORDS: body image, spiritual intelligence & male and female students

INTRODUCTION
Body image was defined as “a person’s perceptions, thoughts, and feelings about his or her body” by Grogan (Grogan, 2008) and it depends on various factors: psychological components and socio-cultural influences such as family, peers, and ethnicity (Gualdi-Russo et al, 2012) . No less important are the mass media which generate aesthetic ideals influencing the perception of one’s image and leading to a tortuous search for the ideal body: this creates real pressure that leads to internalization of a beauty ideal and to an inevitable desire to conform to it (Stefanile et al, 2009). A large body of research exists indicating that the effects of body image on individuals’ well-being and functioning are significant. Furthermore, it is well-known that media, friendship cliques, and other social environments impact body image (Curtis, 2008). Social acceptance or approval from parents and peers would affect one’s body image perception (Gan et al, 2011) Individuals may perceive pressures pertaining to their body image from Family and friends, and therefore tend to have overvaluation of appearance. Influence of family and the roles that parents play in development will extend into adolescent and until the early adult years, which include university life (Khan, Khalid and Khan, 2011) Besides, increasing evidence show that friends are important contributors to the development of an individual’s body image perception, through the cultivation of appearance culture among friends (Jones, Vigfusdottir and Lee, 2004). Research suggests that scrutinizing one’s self in comparison to those who are less attractive positively affects self-perceptions. Conversely, comparing oneself to those who are more attractive negatively affects self-perceptions (Morrison et al., 2004).

Body dissatisfaction and body shame are also associated with higher levels of depression and anxiety, lower self-esteem, poorer quality of life, decreased physical activity and other unhealthy behaviors such as smoking (King et al.2005). The evidence indicates that during the last few decades, there has been a spread of dissatisfaction about body image among teenage and adolescent girls has increased. The results of a study in the United States indicated that dissatisfaction has been seen inclose 60 percent of girls and 30 percent of boys (Princiel et al, 2004) the studies of Maosa; Marshal, al-Doomi and Gabriell (2010) on 326 teenage girls also indicate that 22.2 percent of the participants are dissatisfied with their body image. These experiences can be the beginning of hypothesis about dysfunction of physical appearances as normal and implied allusions about personality, self-worth and acceptance (Rosen, Reiter, &
Poor body image can affect one’s confidence to achieve their goals and negatively impact the happiness in life. Self-concept, in general, and body image specially are of a high importance in interpersonal relations, setting goals, believing in being qualified for reaching goals, selection of careers and the individual’s feeling of efficacy for facing academic challenges. Also, emotional disturbances in connection with negative body image components have an extreme effect on all dimensions of life. One of the effective factors on body image can be an individual’s spiritual intelligence. Spiritual intelligence is the ability to use and the show spiritual values as such that it will elevate an individual's daily output and his/her physical and emotional health (Amram, 2009). In fact, spiritual intelligence is a collection of activities that in addition to tolerance and flexibility in the behavior, it will result in the individual's self-awareness and deep thinking about life and setting goals as such that goals will be set beyond the world of materialism (Abedi and Sorkhi, 2009).

Spiritual intelligence goes beyond an individual's physical and cognitive relations with the environment around him/her and enters the intuitive dimension and transcendental view of life. Individual can use this intelligence for frame working and re-interpretation of his experiences. This process, also can give the individual's experiences and events more meaning and value (Nasel, 2004). Based on gender, there are different religious trends from different pints of view. The results of researches conducted by Loewenthal et al. (2000) indicated that Christian women are more active than men are while among the Jews and Moslems, it is vice versa. These researchers, ultimately, concluded that religious differences are peculiarities of a special religion and in this aspect because of different views of men and women in different religions (for example, Islam and Judaism persuade women to mostly deal with raising children and doing chores around the house) the differences are not similar. Other different results have also been suggested in connection with gender and religion. For example, in relation to gender and religion, Ayzenk (1975) Jan-Bozorgi and Mahfoozi (1998) (quoting Gharaii et al., 2008) have stated that women believe in religion more than men do. The reason for this claim is not quite obvious, but Biabani et al. (2008) have not reported the differences in religious orientation of men and women as significant. Most of the researches conducted in Iran contrary to foreign researches indicate that there are not significant differences between the two genders (Ariyan, 1999; Jalilvand, 2001; Hadiyanfard, 2001, quoted by Najafi et al., 1999).

People with a negative body image consider physical attraction as one of the most important effective elements in satisfaction, success and progress in life. When it comes to being acknowledged, and respected, the probability of being selected as a spouse, finding a job and job promotion, people pay too much attention to physical attraction and are constantly affected by scrutinizing criteria about their body. Consequently, approval of their appearance by others has a lot of effect on their mental health and peace of mind. In contrast, when someone who enjoys a high level of spiritual intelligence, he/she creates a deeper connection and experience with the superior power of creation and life and his/her beliefs and thoughts will get in shape as a result of existential thinking, therefore, considering the increase in awareness and creation of holistic view of the world and the ability of using his/her emotional and physical experiences for the purpose of creating a personal meaning and purpose in life, his/her judgment and reaction about himself/herself (including the body) and others will have a more positive specifications. The results of researches conducted by Jafari et al, (2011) indicate that the meaning in life has a direct and significant relation with body satisfaction. In addition, the meaning of life through self-efficiency, indirectly, has an effect on body satisfaction. In fact, when people feel valued and goal-oriented, they will have more belief in their ability facing different hardships and this will create a positive view of all dimensions of life including a positive evaluation of their body image. Esmaeili, Pakdaman and shahbizehdeh (2012) have shown in their researches that increasing happiness among women is possible by spiritual intelligence (Compounent of reliance on internal core). Therefore, it seems that among women the internal religious
values will elevate happiness only by the creation of Understanding and Communication with the source of existence and reliance on the internal core, which indicates the importance of the component of emotional relation with God and the power of environmental discovery because of trust in God for the creation of happiness. In men, however, the amount of religious involvement, praying and attending to religious rituals can lead to mental health and consequently their happiness and this is because of gender difference and women's needs for God's support dealing with mishaps in life.

Also, the result of research conducted by Jafari et al. (2013) indicates that spirituality therapy can lead to the improvement of body image and hope in life for women. Results suggested that participants from the secular university exhibited significantly higher body satisfaction ratings than those from the Christian college, though this difference disappeared when all non-Caucasian subjects were removed from the analysis. However, actual body mass index (BMI) had less effect on the body satisfaction ratings of the Christian college women than on the secular university women. It was also observed that the Christian college women had significantly higher BMIs than their counterparts and that the more easily the subjects were able to forgive themselves, the higher they scored in body satisfaction (Curtis, 2008). Homan and Cavanaugh (2013) showed that relationship with God has positive effect on body image. Meanwhile, Smith et al. (2003) stated that enhancing patients’ spiritual well-being was positively related to “eating attitudes, less body shape concerns, and positive psychological and social functioning” (p. 24). Also, Forthun et al. (2003) revealed a correlation between prevalence of spirituality in family upbringing and risk of disordered eating in adult women. Spirituality has been viewed as a correlate of eating disorders, but some suggest that spirituality should now be considered as a factor in eating disorder treatments (Forthun et al., 2003; Smith et al., 2003).

Negative body image can affect other dimensions of an individual's life and student life is one of the most important times for identifying the abilities for getting ready to enter the vast areas of adult life. Therefore, identification of effective factors in the elevation of this component is highly important. Therefore, the current research was conducted to answer the following questions:

- What are the differences between body image and spiritual intelligence in male and female students?
- What is the relation between body image and spiritual intelligence in male and female students (both in general and by gender)?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The current research, as far as the method of collecting the data is concerned is a descriptive research and among all types of researches in this group is one of survey research. The statistical sample of this research is all the students at IAU Islamshahr branch, totaling 18825 who are studying in six colleges of basic sciences, human sciences, physical education, psychology and educational sciences, technical/ engineering sciences, management and accounting. After conducting the necessary statistical calculations based on Cochran’s sampling formula, 376 students were selected. Since the total number of female students is 57% and the number of male students is 43%, taking these numbers into consideration, the number of female students will be 220 and male students will be 160. The volume of the samples for the research was selected based on stratified and randomly sampling method. It was done as such that is the first stage; three colleges (technical/ engineering sciences, psychology and educational sciences, basic sciences) were selected out of six colleges and in the next stage, two majors were randomly selected out of different majors in every college. Ultimately, the sample was randomly selected from the students among these majors.

Research tools:

Spiritual intelligence questionnaire (SSI-29): This test has been prepared by Abdollahzadeh et al. (2009) and normed on students in this case. The normative group was 280 people; of these groups, 184 ones were female and 96 people male. The related questionnaire has 29 options.
The reliability and validity of the questionnaire: Abdollahzadeh et al. (2009) reported the validity of the questionnaire 0.89 in the final step. The factorial analysis was applied to evaluate the reliability and the correlation of the whole questions was higher 0.3.

It has two dimensions of “Understanding and Communication with the Source of Existence” and “Spiritual Life, Reliance on Internal Core”. It consists of 29 questions in a five-degree Likert scale.

Fisher's body image test was conducted in 1970 by Fisher. It has 46 articles. Each article has a value between 1 to 5 (1 = very dissatisfied, 2 = dissatisfied, 3 = moderate, 4 = satisfied, 5 = very satisfied). The grade 46 of test scores indicate disorder and higher than 46 (max 230) showed no abnormalities. Domains measured by this test includes 12 articles for head and face, upper limbs involve 10 articles and lower limbs involved 6 articles of female body. Also other 18 articles measure the subjects' attitudes towards the overall characteristics of body.

The reliability of this test by Yazdanju (2000) was analyzed in Iran. In order to determine the reliability of this questionnaire, 99 students in a period 10-day interval were studied by test-re-test method. Taking into account the obtained correlation coefficient (84%) in both tests and the significant level of these coefficients (P>0.0001) with an accuracy rate of 99%, we can accept that between the final scores as a result of conducting the first questionnaire and final scores of the second questionnaire, there is a significant correlation.

In order to analysis of data SPSS-18 was used. In descriptive statistics analysis mean and standard deviation were calculated and in inferential statistics the results were analyzed using T test, Pearson correlation test and Z fisher.

RESULTS

First question: is there any significant difference in perception of body image based on the student’s gender?

To analyze the above-mentioned question, the t test of independent groups was utilized.

According to obtained results in table 1, the analysis of significant difference between body image indicates that there is not any significant difference in body image of two groups. Therefore, it can be stated that there is no significant differences between body image in male and female students.

second question: is there a significant difference spiritual intelligence based on the student’s gender?

In order to analyze the above-mentioned question, the t test in the independent groups was used. In the top table, the difference between the spiritual intelligence and its components were analyzed in both groups of male and female students. According to the information included in the table, the scores of spiritual intelligence and the reliability on internal core component, there is no significant difference in both groups. As far as the understanding and communication with source of existence component is concerned, the attained mean among females is higher than the one in men and attained t at p<0.101 is significant. Therefore, we can claim with a 99% certainly that the female participation in the current research have, significantly, more relation with the understanding and communication with source of existence component.

third question: Is there a significant relation between spiritual intelligence and body image?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>mean</th>
<th>Levene’s test</th>
<th>T test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F value</td>
<td>Sig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>body image</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reliability and validity of the questionnaire: Abdollahzadeh et al. (2009) reported the validity of the questionnaire 0.89 in the final step. The factorial analysis was applied to evaluate the reliability and the correlation of the whole questions was higher 0.3.
To analyze the above question, Pearson correlation test has been used.

Table 2. Comparison of spiritual intelligence including the separation by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>mean</th>
<th>Levene’s test</th>
<th>T test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F value</td>
<td>Sig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spiritual intelligence</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>117.72</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>120.46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication with source of existence</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50.75</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>53.32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reliance on internal core</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>66.96</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>67.26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The correlation coefficient between spiritual intelligence and Body image is equal to 0.18 which is significant at the p<0.01. Therefore, the higher rate of spiritual intelligence, the higher rate of Body image will be.

The analysis of the relation between two components of spiritual intelligence with body image indicates that the relation between communication with source of existence and Body image indicates that there is not any significant relation, on the other side, the relation between reliance on internal core and body image is equal 0.19 which is significant at the p<0.01. Therefore, when it comes to spiritual intelligence the higher the rate of reliance on internal core in students, the higher rate of body image will be.

Fourth question: are there a significant difference in correlations of critical thinking and its components, with spiritual intelligence in both genders?

Table 4. The correlation coefficient of spiritual intelligence and its components with body image when genders are separated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Female Correlation (R)</th>
<th>Female Sig</th>
<th>Male Correlation (R)</th>
<th>Male Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>spiritual intelligence</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication with source of existence</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reliance on internal core</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Separate analysis of the correlation between spiritual intelligence and its components with the body image in both genders show that there is a significant correlation between spiritual intelligence and body image but in male students is higher compared female students.

The comparison of correlation of two groups was conducted using the significant correlation test for both independent groups (Z fisher). The observed Z was calculated using the following formula:

\[
z = \frac{z_{r1} - z_{r2}}{\sqrt{\frac{1}{n_1 - 3} + \frac{1}{n_2 - 3}}}
\]

Z in the sample group is equal to 1 which is less than the amount of critical Z (1.64) with α= 0.05. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the correlation of both groups. There is no significant correlation between communication with source of existence and body image in women while this is significant men. Comparing the correlation of two groups using Z fisher shows that the obtained Z in sample group is equal to 1.72 which is higher than the amount of critical Z (1.64) with α= 0.05. Therefore, there are significant differences between two variables in two groups. So, correlations communication with source of existence and body image in men is significantly higher than women.

There is significant correlation between variable of reliance on internal core and body image but it is more powerful in men. Comparison the correlation in two groups by using Z fisher test shows that the obtained Z in sample group is equal to 0.35 which is less than the amount of critical Z (1.64) with α= 0.05 so there is no significant difference between the correlation of variables in two groups.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The results indicate that although the relation between spiritual intelligence and reliance on internal core with body image is significant, the relation between understanding and communication with the source of existence with body image in female students is not significant. The results show that however the relation between spiritual intelligence and Reliance on Internal Core with body image is significant; but, the relation between Understanding and Communication with the Source of Existence is not significant in female students.

The results of a research conducted by Homan and Cavanaugh (2013), courtis (2008), Smith (2003), Fortune (2003), Richard (1997) and Jafari (2013) indicate the significant effect on spirituality on body image. Spiritual intelligence can facilitate the connection between intelligence and a higher power or a holly being or increase it (Sisik and Tourance, 2004). Reliance on internal core means considering internal believes as important and respecting the individual’s satisfaction of the ways of thinking, living and emotions based on personal standards. Female students who experience lower spiritual intelligence, enjoy the external source of control more (Therefore, cultural and social factors are more effective on them) (quoted by jafari, 2013). Based on this, if people look for other people's approval, try to make sure others like their actions and behaviors, they, therefore, cannot gain the confirmation or approval of all of them. As a result, they will become confused in regards to their body image. Spirituality causes the creation of positive emotional experiences in an individual and his achievement of feeling acceptance and harmonically relation with the world, other people and himself/herself including his/her physical dimension. The enjoyable mystical and emotional experiences that spiritual people, in their relations with the supreme power; experience (in saying prayers, worshiping God and reaching climax) a feeling full of satisfaction and fulfillment. Consequently, this situation elevates both an individual’s emotions and also his/her perception view of himself or herself as a valuable person (including the emotional and physical parts).

The results indicate that in the component Understanding and Communication with the Source of Existence, the mean in women’s group was higher than in men. However, no significant relation was shown between the Understanding and Communication with the Source of Existence and body image among female students. In this direction, Esmaeeli, Pakdaman and Shahabizadeh, (2012) have shown that women's relations with the source of existence are stronger than in men. Shojaei's research (2007) has been used to as the clarification of the result of this research. He declares that humans’ spiritual needs are compatible with Maslow's hierarchy of needs in five categories (human needs, spiritual needs, love, self-actualization, self-esteem and being close to God). People's spiritual needs might, based on their age and gender, change. Human’s spiritual needs have been treated correspondent with Mazlov’s needs pyramid in the form of 5 classes namely” existence needs”, “ spiritual safety needs”, “need of love and friendship with God”, “need of self- esteem” and “ need of self- actualization and approach to God”. Anthropologists and socialists believe that
Men's domination causes women to become more dependent. In many societies, women are assumed as being homemakers and child raisers. Since women's positions are weaker than men’s are, because of cultural reasons they should attach themselves to more assuring concepts such as religion. In other words, it is expected that they would face pressures and hardships of a conservative living (Miller and Haufman, 1995). Religion is probably more useful for women than men. There is evidence to prove this assertion (Pargament, 1997). Therefore, women in order to gain safety and protection, have a stronger relation with the source of existence so that they can have more trust and peace when they face difficulties by depending on a supreme power named God. Despite everything mentioned, body image has its place in the third category of Maslow's hierarchy of needs namely self-esteem because it contains an individual's own view of self which can be effective in his/her self-worth. Therefore, if relation with the source of existence is mainly for increasing the feeling of an individual's security and not closeness to Him (Disconnection with materialistic possession and blossoming his/her high spiritual existence (Shojai, 2007) might not have much of any effect on body image. The results of the current research indicate that there is no significant difference between male and female students as far as body image is concerned. The obtained result is unlike both two groups of researchers: first group such as Prybock(2000) and Abell and Richards (1996) who believe women experience higher body dissatisfaction than men and the other studies (Gutgesell, Moreau and Thompson,2003) have shown that women are at greater risk of body dissatisfaction and disordered eating than men. Based on the results despite the dissatisfaction of body image by both genders, there is not a significant difference. Based on the obtained results, in spite of body dissatisfaction in both gender, there is not a significant difference between them. Based on the results, there is not a significant difference between the male and female students' spiritual intelligence and the sub-scale reliance on internal core. Researchers conducted by (Aryan, 1999; Jalilavand, 2001; Hadianfard, 2001 quoted by Najafi et al.,1999) have indicated that there is not a difference between men and women's spiritual intelligence.

For the explanation of the attained results, we can assert that spiritual intelligence could be related to body image in two ways. Individuals who enjoy a higher capacity of spiritual intelligence for communication with the supreme power, a portion of their energy, concentration and thinking will be absorbed from physical dimension and body image to metaphysical and transcendental dimension. Therefore, they do not have a constant and stern assessment in regards to their appearance. Secondly, people with a high spiritual intelligence consider whatever comes on their paths as a blessing from God and thank Him for it and believe that they should be trustworthy caregivers of what God has offered them. They believe that God has created them in the best shape and form that they could be and their dissatisfaction of their body is ingratitude. One of the restrictions of the research was the lack of interest by the participants to fill out the questionnaires and conducting a research at just one university. Since the relation between understanding and communication with the source of existence and body image among women is lower than men's, cultural and social reasons of this issue are suggested to be paid by future researchers. According to obtained results, through increasing spirituality in counseling sessions, professions can improve body image. Also, more studies need to be conducted to get a better understanding of effective factors in body image Iranian students. Future research is also necessary to find the mediate variables between these two variables such as optimistic and goal orientation.

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