

The Relationship between Spiritual Intelligence and Happiness in Students of Bam University of Medical Sciences

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Abstract

Introduction: Spiritual intelligence as the basis of individual beliefs plays a fundamental role in various fields of human life, especially the provision and promotion of mental health. On the other hand, the role of happiness in mental health, physical health, and effective social participation is considered very important. This study was attempted to determine the relationship between spiritual intelligence and happiness among students of Bam University of Medical Sciences. **Methods:** In this descriptive-analytical study, 272 students from three different departments' of Bam University of Medical Sciences (Health Department, Nursing and Midwifery Department, and Medicine Department) participated. To determine the sample size, the Cochran formula was used. For data collection, Spiritual Intelligence Self-Assessment Inventory and Oxford Happiness Questionnaire were used in the present study. The data were analyzed by using SPSS (version 23) and running Pearson correlation coefficient and independent t-test. **Results:** Having compared the relationship between spiritual intelligence and happiness, it was discovered that there was a significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and happiness ($P < 0.05$), in a way that the increase of each one led to increase of the other one. Mean scores of happiness and spiritual intelligence did not have any significant relationship with sex, marital status, and age. However, different fields of academic disciplines had significant difference with respect to mean score of happiness. We discovered that surgery students got the highest happiness mean score (P -value < 0.05). There was a significant relationship between the mean score of spiritual intelligence and different fields of academic disciplines (P -value = 0.044), but the mean score of spiritual intelligence could not lead to significant difference among different fields of academic disciplines. **Conclusion:** Higher spiritual intelligence was associated with higher levels happiness among university students. It seems that promotion of spiritual intelligence can lead to a cheerful mood and thus can improve the quality of provided care.

Key words: Spiritual Intelligence, Happiness, University students.

Introduction

One has always faced with the question of what makes him feel happy and joyfulness in life (Heydari, Korosh Nia and Hoseini, 2015). Happiness and joyfulness are one of the essential needs of human, and one of the most influential factors in human life. joyfulness is a kind of life meaning or can give life meaning. Happiness comes from human judgment about how life is spent. This kind of judgment is not imposed from the outside; it is an internal affair that affects the positive emotions. joyfulness is the level of self-worth in each individual (Amin Por, 2016). Azarbaijani (2010), quoting Aristotle, and presents three types of happiness. At the lowest level, Aristotle considers happiness as enjoyment. At the higher level, happiness is the same as success and prosperity, and the third type of happiness is the one derived from spirituality. He believes that true happiness is not derived from satisfaction of desires, but from doing something ethically worth doing, that is, manifestation of virtue (Azarbayejani and Mohammadi, 2010). Some theorists assume that it is possible to achieve happiness by paying attention to spiritual values and goals and comprehending meaningfulness of life (Amini Javid, Zandi Por and Karami, 2015). From sociologists' point of view, happiness has comprehensive effect on all of social, political, cultural, and

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educational dimensions. Happiness has many advantages for all members of the community, but university students are more concerned since they are the young and future forcework of each society (Shojaei et al., 2012). Medical students experience a lot of job stresses, endangering their mental and physical health. Under such conditions, spirituality can help them (Bagheri, Akbarizadeh and Hatami, 2011). Spirituality means role of life or a way for being and experiencing, which comes about by becoming aware of an immaterial dimension, and it is determined by recognizable values (Yaghobi, 2010). Spiritual attitude helps people make sense over their problems, hope for their future, and be optimistic (Amini Javid, Zandi Por and Karami, 2015). Intelligence, including spiritual intelligence, represents a set of skills and abilities appearing in social and historical contexts with different forms. Spiritual intelligence is a combination of intelligence and spirituality (Zamirinejad et al., 2014). Spiritual intelligence is a deep self-awareness that makes the person more aware of his inner aspects, allows him/her to shift from focusing merely on body to focusing on thoughts, body, and soul simultaneously (Sisk, 2008), helps him/her solve problems related to meaning of life and values (Heravi-Karimooi, Rejeh and Sharif Nia, 2014).

Spiritual intelligence is the awareness of the facts, values, credentials, and ethics (Dodman and Branch, 2015). In other words, it is a kind of ultimate intelligence that reveals semantic and value issues and incorporates psychological compatibility capacities (Heydari, Korosh Nia and Hoseini, 2015). Jan Bozorgi et al., (2008) investigated the relationship between happiness with religious orientation and psychological happiness and reported a significant and positive relationship between these variables (Janbozorge and Alimohammed, 2008). The results Siyamiyan et al.'s study (2011) revealed no significant relationship between gender and happiness (Siamian et al., 2011). Zamirinejad et al. (2014) showed that spiritual intelligence could significantly predict happiness in university students (Zamirinejad et al., 2014). Selman et al. (2008) introduced spiritual intelligence as a predictor of happiness, high self-esteem, and balanced and affectionate relationships (Selman et al., 2005). The research of Raisi et al. (2013) on students of Qom University of Medical Sciences demonstrated that the mean score of total spiritual intelligence had a direct and significant relationship with the mean score of total happiness (Raisi et al., 2013). Bagheri et al. (2011) aimed to determine the relationship between spiritual intelligence, happiness, and demographic variables among nurses of Fatemeh Alzahra hospital and Bentol al-Hoda hospital in Bushehr. They indicated a linear and significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and happiness (Bagheri, Akbarizadeh and Hatami 2011). Raisi et al., (2013) also investigated the relationship between spiritual intelligence, happiness, and academic achievement among students of Qom University of Medical Sciences. They discovered a significant relationship between mean score of happiness and that of spiritual intelligence among university students with different economic statuses, fields of study, and educational levels. They also found that the mean scores of happiness and spiritual intelligence were higher among midwifery students compared to nursing and general medical students (King DB, DeCicco, 2009). Happiness and spiritual intelligence are the foundations of a healthy and developing society. Young people, especially university students as the future makers of the community, are the human capital of each country, requiring higher levels of spiritual intelligence and happiness. On the other hand, investigating spiritual intelligence and happiness in university students with the aim of eliminating shortcomings can improve the quality of their lives and, as a result, promote students' academic achievements and academic level of universities. Given that such a study has not been carried out in Bam so far, it seems necessary to study the relationship between spiritual intelligence and happiness among students of Bam University of Medical Sciences. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the relationship between spiritual intelligence and happiness among this population.

Material and Method:

The data of this analytical cross-sectional study was collected in 2019 using one step. To determine the sample size, the Cochran formula was used. According to this formula, 272 questionnaires were distributed among students of Health Department, Nursing and Midwifery Department, and Medicine Department. Out of 272 distributed questionnaires, 245 ones were completed (9 questionnaires were incomplete and 18 questionnaires were not filled out at all) (response rate=90%). All the students studying at one of these departments in Bam University of Medical Sciences, Iran, were included in the present study. All the questionnaires, which were not answered thoroughly, were excluded. For data collection, Spiritual Intelligence Self-Assessment Inventory and Oxford Happiness Questionnaire were used in the present study.

Spiritual Intelligence Self- Assessment Inventory:

This questionnaire was developed by King to measure the mental abilities of spiritual intelligence. The questionnaire assesses abilities related to spiritual intelligence and has 24 questions, divided in to four main dimensions. The dimensions are critical existential thinking, the production of personal meaning, transcendental awareness, and the development of higher consciousness. The items are evaluated based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Not at all characteristic of me" to "entirely characteristic of me". The score 5 means "I fully agree", 4 "I agree", 3 "not agree not disagree", 2 "I disagree", and 1 "I totally disagree". The score of this questionnaire ranged from 24 to 120. King and DeCicco reported Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this test (0.92), and of its subscales as follows: existential critical thinking = 0.78, production of personal meaning = 0.78, transcendental consciousness = 0.87, and development of higher consciousness = 0.91 (16). Aghababai et al., showed that the total reliability of this test is 88% (Aghababai, Farahani and Rahimi Nejad 2010).

Oxford Happiness Questionnaire:

The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire has 29 items, each containing four statements. The items are scored on a 1–4 scale. Therefore, the participants' scores range from 0 and 87, where a higher score indicates more happiness. This questionnaire has high validity and reliability. Argyle et al. reported an alpha coefficient of 0.9 for this test (Argyle and Maryanne, 1989).

After collecting data and determining its normality, the data were analyzed by using SPSS (version 23) and running Pearson correlation coefficient and independent t-test.

Results:

In this study, 60% of the participants were female and 91.4% of the participants were single. The mean age of the participants was 20.67 ± 1.6 years old. No significant relationship was found between mean scores of happiness and spiritual intelligence and participants' age, sex, or marital status (Table 1). The highest and lowest mean scores of happiness were obtained by operating room students (1.87 ± 0.31) and students of environmental health (1.49 ± 0.44), respectively. On the other hand, surgery students (3.54 ± 0.64) and students of public health (3.12 ± 0.52) allocated the highest and lowest mean scores of spiritual intelligence to themselves, respectively. The results of ANOVA test showed a significant difference between the mean score of happiness and different fields of study ($p < 0.05$). Post hoc test showed that there was a significant difference between mean score of happiness gained by surgery students and that gained by public health students (p -value = 0.04), environmental health students (p -value = 0.01), occupational health students (p -value = 0.03), midwifery students (p -value = 0.02), nursing students (p -value = 0.03), and medical students (p -value = 0.01). It should be noted that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of happiness gained by medical emergencies students and environmental health students (p -value = 0.02). Despite a significant relationship/difference between the total mean score of spiritual intelligence and different fields of study, post hoc test did not show a significant difference between various fields of study and the mean score of spiritual intelligence (Table 2). Having investigated the relationship between mean scores of happiness and spiritual intelligence, a significant relationship between these scores (p -value = 0.01) was discovered. In other words, we found that the increase of each one led to increase of the other one ($R = 0.34$).

Table 1: The relationship between the mean scores of happiness and spiritual intelligence and demographic characteristics

Variable	Happiness	Spiritual Intelligence	
Age	P-value=0.92 F=0.08	P-value =0.14 F=1.99	
			17 to 21
			22 to 26
Sex	P-value =0.07 T =-1.81	P-value =0.39 T =0.87	
Marital status	P-value =0.32 T =-1.02	P-value =0.19 T=1.32	

Table 2: Frequency of fields of study and mean scores of happiness and spiritual intelligence

Major	Abundance	Percentage	Average happiness score	Mean score of spiritual intelligence
Public health	19	7.8	1.38 ± 0.43	3.12 ± 0.52
Environmental Health	17	6.9	1.19 ± 0.44	2.95 ± 0.49
Health Professional	23	9.4	Percentage	3.34 ± 0.48
Management	21	8.6	1.54 ± 0.47	2.97 ± 0.50
Nursing	44	18	1.43 ± 0.36	3.19 ± 0.48
Midwifery	20	8.2	1.35 ± 0.37	3.17 ± 0.40
Operating Room	10	4.1	1.87 ± 0.31	3.54 ± 0.64
Medical Emergencies	10	8.2	1.63 ± 0.49	3.20 ± 0.59
Medicine	53	21.6	1.40 ± 0.40	3.32 ± 0.60
Laboratory Sciences	18	7.3	1.50 ± 0.38	3.37 ± 0.69
Total	245	100	1.44 ± 0.41	3.21 ± 0.55

Discussion

The results of this study showed no significant difference between spiritual intelligence and gender. Similar results were reported by Karimov et al. (2014) who studied 320 university students, of whom 56.6% were females and 43.4% were males (Heravi-Karimoi,

Rejeh and Sharif Nia, 2014). The reason for this similarity can be due almost same gender ratio in both studies. However, our findings were not consistent with Husseini's research (2016), who investigated the relationship between spiritual intelligence and happiness among university students (Hosseini, Salehi and Shanazi, 2016). Part of this difference, according to Raghieb et al., (2008), can be due to equal opportunities for men and women in society, enabling them to achieve a high level of spiritual intelligence (Raghieb, Ahmadi and Siadat, 2008). Similar to Karimooi's study (2014), we discovered no relationship between spiritual intelligence and age or marital status (Heravi-Karimooi, Rejeh and Sharif Nia, 2014). Based on Karimooi's statistical results, the mean age of the participants was 21.5 years old, which was close to that of ours. Nevertheless, this result was not consistent with that of Wolman (2001), which can be due to lower mean age of the participants in our study, since with the increase of age and one's experience, her/his spiritual intelligence also increases according to Wolman (2001). In addition, the high ratio of single people to married in the above studies could contribute to the lack of relationship between spiritual intelligence and marital status, which needs further studies to be proved. We discovered significant relationship neither between happiness and gender nor between happiness and age, which was consistent with the results revealed by Reisi et al., (2013) and Bagheri et al., (2010). However, in terms of gender, our result was in contrast with that of Tankamani et al.'s study (2017), who indicated that happiness was significantly higher among men than women (Tankamani and Shahidi2017 ,). This discrepancy can be caused by the similarity of participants' educational courses in Tankamani et al.'s study. The other reasons can be the difference in the number of participants and higher participants' mean age (24.5 years old) in Tankamani et al.'s research. Similar to most of previous studies, we found no relation between happiness and marital status either (Bagheri, Akbarizadeh and Hatami, 2010; Ebadi et al., 2016). There was no statistically significant relationship between field of study and happiness, but the findings showed that the level of happiness was different among different fields of study, in a way that happiness level was higher in surgery students than in other majors. Since some of the studied characteristics are regarded as values in our society, people try to pretend that they have these characteristics (Sheikh Moonesi et al., 2013), so it is possible that our participants pretended to have these values. However, this level was lower in students of environmental health. According to findings yielded by Zohor (2003), there was a significant positive correlation between hope for future job prospect and the happiness of university students. Therefore, the low level of hope for future job prospect may be the reason for the decline in happiness among environmental health students. Reisi et al., (2013) did not yield any significant relationships between academic discipline and happiness. In this study, it was demonstrated that the operating room students had the highest spiritual intelligence, but public health students had the lowest spiritual intelligence. This difference can be due to this fact that students of different majors face with work and study in various working and educational environments (Barati et al., 2015).

However, a definitive conclusion is not possible and there is a need for further research in this field in order to obtain more precise results. However, in line with results of studies conducted by Reisi et al.'s, we discovered no significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and field of study (Raisi et al., 2013; Barati et al., 2015). Consistent with the results of studies performed by Babanzari (2012), Amirian (2016), and Abdullah Poor (2018), a significant correlation between spiritual intelligence and happiness was found in the present study. Shaw believes that since immediate pleasures are transitory, humans have always been looking for more sustainable pleasures. The activities that people do to seek spirituality can bring them happiness (Shaw et al., 2008). In happiness, the assessment of individuals and their lives can include cognitive aspects such as judgment about the pleasures of life and emotional aspects such as emotions created in response to life events. Therefore, considering that spiritual intelligence is associated with people's attitudes and values and creates high levels of positive framework and valuable structures in individuals, people can better understand themselves, feelings, facts, events, and relationships that are based on positive values, providing calmness and happiness in individuals (Ansari et al., 2016). Furthermore, considering that spiritual intelligence is an experienced ability that allows people to gain more knowledge and understanding, it can provide the opportunity for achieving perfection and advancement in life, people with high spiritual intelligence have a high mental health, and happiness has a significant role in promoting individuals' mental health and life satisfaction, it can be concluded that people with high spiritual intelligence will benefit from a higher level of happiness (Yaghoobi, 2010).

Conclusion

In this study, it was determined that age, gender, and marital status did not have any effects on happiness and spiritual intelligence. However, the impact of field of study on the level of happiness and spiritual intelligence was notable (significant) and we also found that surgery students obtained the highest scores for these two variables. Spiritual intelligence and happiness had positive and direct relationship with each other, so that with the increase of spiritual intelligence, the level of happiness increased in university students. Accordingly, happiness can be increased among university students through enhancing spiritual intelligence.

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