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Predicting Students' Subjective Well-Being and Its Subscales Based on Spiritual Intelligence

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This study aimed to investigate the relationship between spiritual intelligence with students' subjective well-being and its subscales. Spiritual intelligence has a significant influence on the well-being and it has been understood that youth is a sensitive period, which requires specific training to make a brighter future and be exposed to the difficulties. The research method was descriptive– correlational type. For this purpose, 220 students from the University of Mazandaran were selected through the multistage cluster sampling method. Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory Questionnaire (King, 2008) and Subjective Well-Being questionnaire (Keyes and Magyar-Moe, 2003) have been used to assess variables. Data analysis was performed by SPSS 22 software and regression analysis stepwise. Regression analysis results demonstrated the predictive capability of subjective well-being through spiritual intelligence ($p<$ .01). The component of personal meaning production predicted 22% of changes in subjective well-being, 17% in psychological well-being and18% in social well-being. In addition, by 7% of the variances in emotional well-being can be explained by component of transcendental awareness. Spiritual intelligence could be called as superior intelligence and it paves the way for perfection and well-being. Therefore, it seems that proper training for promotion of spiritual intelligence can be an important step for satisfaction and a positive assessment for self and life.

Keywords: spiritual intelligence, subjective well-being

Spirituality is one of the human basic and inner needs which originated from man's depths of mind. In Zohar and Marshall (2000) point of view, the spiritual experiences create profound insight that opens some novel and fresh perspectives to life. This novel insight and perspective enable the person to run his affaires well and find some new solutions for his life problems. Spiritual Intelligence (SI) is one of the human abilities that distinct human from the other beings (Gardner, 2000). According to Amram (2009), spiritual intelligence is a kind of ability that causes self-consciousness, self-control, profound understanding of life meaning, purposefulness, increases in peace, the ability to communicate effectively with others and mental health. Spiritual intelligence does not refer to a specific religious orientation.

Vaughan (2003) defined SI as the ability to give meaning which is based on deep understanding and the awareness of existential questions; also the ability to use multiple levels of consciousness in problem solving. Using Gardner's definition of intelligence, Emmons (2000) argued that spirituality is a form of intelligence. He claimed that spirituality predicts functioning and adaptation as it has been demonstrated by correlations of spirituality with improved health or well-being. McSherry, Draper & Kendrick (2002) emphasized that spiritual intelligence is the foundation of the individual's beliefs so that the person's beliefs affect his performance and shape the real form of his life. Spiritual intelligence has led to an increase flexibility and consciousness, so that they have more tolerance and patience in the face of difficulties and hardships of life. In fact, spiritual intelligence is the capacity for inspiration and looks for answers based on intuitions and a holistic approach to the universe, to the

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fundamental questions of life and criticism of traditions and customs.

Spiritual intelligence provides human access to meaning and value, also use of them in thinking and decision making; spiritual intelligence gives integrity and grants unity and integration to human. In the Wigglesworth (2002) point of view, spiritual intelligence was the ability to behave with compassion and kindness and wisdom to inner and outer quietness, no attention to circumstances. In Emmons' (2000) and Suan Chin, Anantharaman, and Kin Tongs' (2011) point of view, SI is the ability to use spiritual concepts to solve life problems and the process of achieving goal. They have proposed five components for SI as the following:

1- Capacity excellence, pass from the physical world, material and exalt it.

2- The ability of entering to spiritual states from consciousness.

3- The ability to decorate the daily life activities, events and relationships with a holiness feeling.

4- The ability to use spiritual resources to solve the problems of life.

5- The ability for virtuous behaviors such as generosity, gratitude, humility and compassion feeling.

Nobel (2001) also believed that spiritual intelligence is an intrinsic talent for human. He agreed with Emmons' basic abilities for spiritual intelligence and added two other components to them:

1) Consciously recognizing of this issue: the physical reality is the inner part of a larger and multidimensional reality which we interact with it moment by moment consciously or unconsciously.

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2) Consciously following for psychological health, not only for ourselves but also for the international community.

Generally, the emergence of spiritual intelligence structure can be considered as application of capacities and spiritual resources in practical situations and contexts.

Peoples use spiritual intelligence to being able to use their spiritual capacities and resources for important decisions and ideas on matters of existence or trying to resolve their daily problems (Zohar & Marshall 2000; Emmons, 2000). In addition, they can benefit from spiritual intelligence to promote and achieve the highest levels of well-being and achieve self-actualization or growth orientation.

Well-being is an integrated and overall concept that refers to cognitive and emotional perception of person from his life. In the traditional view, well-being was only associated with physical health and income, whereas now, well-being attends to the deeper and greater aspects of "being" that makes human life valuable and meaningful (George, 2000).

To assess different dimensions of well-being, Keyes and Magyar-Moe (2003) examined the structural components of well-being in terms of emotional, psychological and social well-being. They called people who had a sense of high well-being and optimal as grown or flourish, and those who had lower well-being, were referred to languish or not grown (abortive).

Ryff (1989) presented a multidimensional model of psychological well-being, which was expressed six psychological components to increase mental health. Each component of psychological well-being was represented challenges and efforts that people encountered with the min the quest for performance and positive interaction. These dimensions encompass a breadth of wellness that includes positive evaluations of oneself and one's

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past life (self-acceptance), a sense of continued growth and development as a person (personal growth), the belief that one's life is purposeful and meaningful (purpose in life), the possession of quality relations with others (positive relations with others), the capacity to manage one's life effectively and surrounding world (environmental mastery), and a sense of self-determination (autonomy).

Except for psychological processes, there are social interventionists such as actions and social performance in the form of individuals, organizations and institutions with positive thinking that Ryff (1989) mentioned it as social well-being. Social well-being includes five components of popularity and social acceptance, social realism, social participation, social cohesion and social integrity and correlation. Emotional well-being is one component of well-being with three-dimensional structures containing life satisfaction, positive affect and negative emotion that have been demonstrated in several studies (Lucas, Diener & Suh, 1996; Buss, 2000; Keyes & Magyar-Moe, 2003).

In the researches, the relationship between spirituality, life purpose and satisfaction, mental health and well-being was studied (George, Larson, Koening & McCullough, 2000; Kass, Friedman, Leserman, Caudill, Zuttermeister, et al, 1991; Elmer, Macdonald & Friedman, 2003; Assarroudi, Jalilvand, Oudi & Akaberi, 2012; Shahbazirad, Ghazanfari, Abbasi & Mohammadi, 2015). Researchers conducted that spiritual experience makes less disease and longer life span. People with high spiritual experience, respond to medical intervention better when dealing with injuries and have less depression.

In this study, spiritual intelligence of students has been evaluated based on King and DeCecco's Model (2009). In this model, spiritual intelligence is a set of flexible mental capabilities

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based on non-mental and transcendence aspects of reality and it is in relation with the person's essence, personal significance, transcendence and consciousness state expansion.

According to King & DeCecco (2009), spiritual intelligence components include items such as: 1) critical existential thinking: the ability to think critically about issues such as meaningful and objective issues beyond existence (reality, death, and the universe), the ability to face with the main conclusions or philosophies of existence. 2) Personal meaning production: the ability to conduct personal life issues meaningfully and have a purpose in all material and physical experiences.3) Transcendental awareness: the ability to recognize the transcendent dimension and functionality of self (inner and outer transformation), others and the material world (holism and metaphysical).4) Conscious state expansion: the ability to enter the steps of high-level of spirituality such as consciousness, cosmic consciousness, solidarity, unity and integrity (King & DeCecco, 2009).

Since spirituality is one of human intrinsic needs and some authorities consider it is consisting of the highest levels of cognitive, moral development contexts and human continuous effort to give meaning to life and to answer life riddles and as the foundation of the person's beliefs and in other side, spiritual intelligence is the cornerstone of person's beliefs which has been played a major role in a variety of areas, particularly human subjective well-being; by evaluating previous research in Iran, it was found that there have not been any research in this area; thus arises the necessity of this research. Paying attention to students' feeling decisive of well-being and its relation with spirituality is essential and it has a role in their success.

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Therefore, the main subject of this study is enrichment of research literature of spiritual intelligence; also, it purposes to find out which element of spiritual intelligence affect more on the well-being of students? So that counselors or teachers could utilize the results of the studies to add to or further improve their existing strategies for individuals or groups consultation when dealing with well-being problems in students. It is hoped that these findings provide a base of knowledge for health administrators and healthcare providers at national and regional levels for the development of spiritual policies which have been related to students' well-being problems.

Research Hypothesis

There is a significant relationship between the components of spiritual intelligence (critical existential thinking, personal meaning production, transcendental awareness and conscious state expansion) and subjective well-being (emotional, psychological and social).

Method

The research method was descriptive–correlational type. Statistical population consisted of all undergraduate students in Mazandaran University, who were from collegiate of human sciences in 2015. The sample size included 220 students (their average age was 22.78 years) who were selected through the multistage cluster sampling method. In this study, the clusters identified were all faculties of law and political sciences, humanities and social sciences and economics and administrative sciences from Mazandaran University. Using the cluster random sampling method, five of the departments were randomly selected (accounting, Persian language and literature, geography and

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urban planning, history and psychology). By selecting 5 departments with 10 classes from each department, the total sample size was 220. Finally, the Pearson correlation tests and simultaneous multivariate regression were used to analyze the findings.

Instruments

Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory Questionnaire (SISRI-24 questions) was used with reliability coefficient of .95. This tool was based on Likert's six-questionnaire. It consists of four subscales: critical existential thinking, personal meaning production, transcendental awareness and conscious state expansion (King & DeCecco, 2009). The score of this scale can be varied between 0 and 96.

Subjective Well-Being questionnaire (SWB-45)

The questionnaire was designed by Keyes and Magyar-Moe (2003) that includes three sub-scales: emotional well-being (12 items), psychological well-being (18 items) and social well-being (15 questions). Items refer to all of the various types of evaluations, both positive and negative, that people make about their lives. It includes reflective cognitive evaluations, such as life satisfaction and work satisfaction, interest and engagement, and affective reactions to life events, such as joy and sadness. This questionnaire was performed and validated on 57 subjects by Golestanibakht (2007). The correlation of subjective well-being questionnaire with happiness questionnaire of Lyubomirsky and Lepper (1999) was equal to .78 and its sub-scales which include emotional well-being, psychological well-being and social well-being were respectively equal to .76, .64 and .76. Internal consistency of the questionnaire based on Cronbach's alpha

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coefficient was equal to .80 and those of its sub-scales were respectively, equal to .86, .80 and .61 (Tamannaeifar & Motaghedifard, 2014).

Results

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in order to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics included means and standard deviations of the variables and the Pearson's correlation and stepwise regression analysis were used in inferential statistics.

As seen, mean and standard deviation of variables are presented in Table 1. The results of the correlation analyses showed that spiritual intelligence had the highest correlation with subjective, social, psychological and emotional well-being (P<.01). According to the data in Table 1; there wasn't relationship between the critical existential thinking, personal meaning production, conscious state expansion and emotional well-being (P<.05).

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Table 1

Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlation Matrix of Variables

Variables	M±SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1-critical existential thinking	15.64±4.46	1								
2-personal meaning production	12.69±3.61	.49**	1							
3- transcendental awareness	13.82±3.95	.62**	.54**	1						
4- conscious state expansion	10.94±3.72	.48**	.74**	.53**	1					
5- emotional well-being	34.07±3.81	.05	-.00	.17**	.06	1				
6- psychological well-being	89.43±10.76	.18**	.41**	.26**	.32**	-.11	1			
7- social well-being	67.27±12.02	.24**	.42**	.23**	.36**	-.10	.48**	1		
8- subjective well-being	191.32±19.80	.25**	.47**	.32**	.40**	.08**	.82**	.85**	1	
9- spiritual intelligence	53.18±12.77	.80**	.82**	.81**	.82**	.13**	.34**	.36**	.42**	1

Table 2

Results of Stepwise Regression Analysis for Predicting Emotional Well-Being Based on Components of Spiritual Intelligence

Predictive Variables	B	SEB	Beta	T	Sig
Critical existential thinking	-.11	.08	-1.43	-.13	.15
Personal meaning production	.11	.11	-1.48	-.16	.13
Transcendental awareness	.34	.90	.34	3.43	.00
Conscious state expansion	.12	.11	1.03	.11	.30

In Table 2, the predictive regression coefficient demonstrates that the transcendental awareness component can explain the students' emotional well-being significantly ($p < .01$).

In Table 3, personal meaning production component can explain the students' psychological. Beta value in Table 3, identified personal meaning production was a predictor of (Beta =.38, $p < .00$). It means further increase and efficiency of the personal meaning production component results in the individual's increased psychological well-being.

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Table 3

Results of Stepwise Regression Analysis for Predicting Psychological Well-Being Based on Components of Spiritual Intelligence

Predictive Variables	B	SEB	Beta	T	Sig
Critical existential thinking	-.22	.22	-.09	-.99	.32
Personal meaning production	1.09	.33	.38	3.29	.00
Transcendental awareness	.35	.27	.12	1.27	.20
Conscious state expansion	-.02	.33	-.00	-.07	.93

Table 4

Results of Stepwise Regression Analysis for Predicting Social Well-Being Based on Components of Spiritual Intelligence

Predictive Variables	B	SEB	Beta	T	Sig
Critical existential thinking	.20	.24	.07	.85	.39
Personal meaning production	1.18	.36	.34	3.29	.00
Transcendental awareness	-.27	.30	-.08	-.90	.36
Conscious state expansion	.40	.35	.12	1.15	.25

In Table 4, personal meaning production component can explain the students' social well-being. Beta value in Table 4, identified personal meaning production was a predictor of (Beta =.34, p <.00). It means further increase and efficiency of the personal

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meaning production component results in the individual's increased social well-being.

Discussion

Spirituality can be viewed as a form of intelligence because it predicts functioning and adaptation and offers capabilities that enable people to solve problems and attain goals. Conceiving spirituality as a sort of intelligence extends the psychologist's conception of spirituality and allows its association with the rational cognitive processes like goal achievement and problem solving. The present results showed that the component of personal meaning production has meaningful contribution in explaining subjective well-being and its sub-scales. The component of transcendental awareness is more effective in explaining and predicting emotional well-being. This finding is consistent with the results of Hosseini, Krauss & Aishah, (2010); Poorkiani, Sheikhalipour & Jourkesh, (2017); Wong (2016); George (2006); Moghaddampour & Rastegar (2013); Graham and Crown (2014) and we propose that meaning-seeking and self-transcendence provide a useful conceptual framework for life and death education.

Frankl (1985) often appealed the intrinsic value of life in order to rescue patients from their suicidal ideation. Often when patients learn about their prognosis of being a terminal case or the verdict that they are paralyzed for life, the typical reaction is to declare that there is no more meaning in their lives and there is no point in living an undignified existence without hope for recovery. Frankl had to convince them that their suffering, actually gave them a rare opportunity for human achievement. He argued that, in spite of their physical limitations and their need to depend on others to take care of them, they can still live with

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dignity as long as they take a heroic stance and maintain an attitude of freedom and responsibility for their own happiness.

Personal meaning production help students develop their immediate ego selves and get beyond those deeper layers of capability which lies hidden within them. It provides them with the opportunity to live a life which has a deeper level of meaning. And eventually, they may apply their spiritual intelligence to deal with life problems and death, problems of good and evil as well as the prime roots of human suffering and at times despair. We usually attempt to rationalize such problems and run away from them; otherwise we will be emotionally conquered or despaired by them. To come in to full possession of our spiritual intelligence we have some time to have seen the face of hell, to have known the possibility of despair, pain deep suffering and loss, and to have made our peace with these (Hosseini et al, 2010).

On the other hand, there is a positive relationship between transcendental awareness and emotional well-being. Empirical evidence will be presented to support the hypothesis that most psychological disorders result from failing to meet our basic spiritual need for meaning, as a result of pursuing happiness and success egotistically based on misguided values. Paradoxically, healing and well-being, to a large extent, require a shift away from attachment to materialistic pursuits to the spiritual realm of self-detachment and self-transcendence (Wong, 2016).

However, the other spiritual intelligence components such as critical existential thinking and conscious state expansion are not the appropriate predictors for the students' subjective well-being. These results are in line with those which have been obtained by Nosrat-abadi, Joshanlou, Mohammadi and Shah-Mohammadi (2010) based on this fact that only 16% of the students have achieved high levels of subjective well-being or mental health.

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Considering these findings, it seems that the individuals with high levels of spiritual intelligence have the capability to get to high mental well-being or optimal growth. According to Keyes and Magyar-Moe (2003) view, the individuals with feelings of high and optimal well-being are termed as gown or developed and the individuals who are experiencing low well-being are called dejected or undeveloped. Thus with respect to the findings, it appears that the students have reached some of the spiritual intelligence components such as transcendental awareness but they haven't reached the required levels about the other components of spiritual intelligence.

The present study showed that there is a positive relationship between components of spiritual intelligence and social well-being. It should be referred to George (2006), Moghaddampour and Rastegar (2013), to interpret this finding that people with higher spiritual intelligence are highly skilled in communication, interpersonal understanding, empathy, and respect. On the other hand, Graham and Crown (2014) argued there is a positive relation between religion and evaluative, Wellbeing is more important for respondents with lower levels of agency, while the positive relation with hedonic wellbeing holds across the board. The social dimension of religion is most important for the least social respondents, while the religiosity component of religion is most important for the happiest respondents, regardless of religious affiliation or service attendance. As such, it seems that the happiest are most likely to seek social purpose in religion, the poorest are most likely to seek social insurance in religion, and the least social are the most likely to seek social time in religion.

The studies show the variability of society variables and demography in diverse aspects of psychological well-being. Ryff and Marshall (1999) and Golestanibakht (2009) argued

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psychological well-being which is connected to life styles and its experiences like parental roles, social displacements and health changes. It seems that the considered students could only achieve personal meaning ability development regarding the existing effective demography and sociology variables for spiritual life and well-being and the other components have had no contribution to explain psychological well-being.

Although the nature of spirituality is one of the factors which is influencing mental health and multiple studies have confirmed this discussion that it is not able to bring mental health. It seemed that there are important and powerful factors which have been involved in the occurrence or non-occurrence of mental disorders. In this regard, the device must be devised to minimize the destructive impact of these factors and as a result we see a healthy and dynamic academic community, young people and promote general health and psychological university and society.

One important limitation of this study was the use of only one tool (questionnaire) for spiritual intelligence assessment. For achieving better conclusion, another assessment system should be provided which is containing multiple data collection tools such as oral or written structured interview (with document review). The other limitation was participants' misunderstanding of spiritual intelligence concepts.

Mankind needs to spiritual quotient to have knowledge about what we are and what things mean to us, and how things give a place to others and their meanings in our own world.

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