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The study of the relationship between spiritual intelligence and self-actualization and self-esteem of Pol Dokhtar students

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the relationship between spiritual intelligence and self-actualization and self-esteem of students in Pol Dokhtar. The method of this research was descriptive of correlational type. To this end, 322 people were selected by the cluster-stage sampling method. King Spiritual Intelligence Questionnaire (2008), Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (1989; quoted by Nourbala and Alipour, 1999), and Eisenhower Self-Esteem Questionnaire (1976; quoted by Biabangard, 1992) were used to collect the data. Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation coefficient and regression statistics were employed to analyze the data. The results revealed a significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and happiness and the self-esteem of students. Furthermore, this model can predict 76.1% of the variance of self-esteem of students in the sample group based on the elements of spiritual intelligence ($p < 0.01$).

Keywords: Spiritual Intelligence, self-actualization, Self-Esteem

INTRODUCTION

Self-esteem is among the concepts influencing all stages of life and psychological and personality-related variables and activities. This concept is critical in making a person act effectively and be diligent and persistent in their work. Those with lower self-esteem are much easier to give up on their ideals and set foot on the path others decide for them (Ellis, 1991). This concept is an ongoing evaluation one has of self-worth and a sort of personal judgment of existential value (Shamloo, 1990). Self-esteem is based on the assessments and judgments one person has about their features and refers to their adverse or positive feelings about themselves. This concept is a personal judgment about being valuable and is described in terms of one's attitude towards oneself (Smith, 1967). In fact, no value judgment is more critical than one's judgment of themselves. A person's self-esteem is the most decisive factor in their mental development. Therefore, one's self-image is implicitly mirrored in all of one's value reactions (Branden, 2000).

It appears that one's self-esteem is connected to their self-actualization level. That is, self-actualization implies the need for a person to demonstrate their conceivable possibilities and abilities. Self-actualization mirror the optimal mental state for human beings and is almost defined as an endogenous endeavor to maximize the abilities or fulfillment of one's talents and can be considered a personal growth element (Beumont, 2009).

Self-actualized people accept themselves with human nature and being fallible. They are safe, do not need defensive behaviors, and are not easily threatened. They are sensitive and aware of their surroundings and stimuli, their control is more internal than external, and thus, they are

independent and liberated and form their value system. Further, they can build proper interpersonal relationships and have approval, respect, and empathy for others (Paterson, 1985). Given the significance of self-actualization and self-esteem, their predictors should be learned. It seems that one of these predictors is spiritual intelligence. According to Emonse (1999), this concept is a collection of skills and competencies that are the basis of cognition and wisdom.

Spiritual intelligence exceeds the physical and cognitive relationships of the individual with the environment and enters the intuitive and transcendent domain of one's perspective of life, answering questions such as "What's essential?" And "Why am I here?" And "Who am I?" for man to eventually help himself and others by finding the hidden sources of love and pleasure somehow hidden in everyday stressful life (Ghobari Bonab, 2007). Spiritual intelligence is the ability to act wisely and emotionally while one is at peace with themselves and their surroundings and can offer their love to those around and themselves irrespective of the circumstances (Wigglesworth, 2006). This concept is related to the inner life of the mind and soul and its connection to the universe, and, thus, is more than an individual mental ability and exceeding normal psychological development. Accordingly, this concept encloses awareness of the connection with the transcendent being, other people, the earth, and all beings (Vegan, 2003). King (2008) describes this idea as a collection of psychic adaptation capabilities based on the intangible and transcendent elements of reality, particularly those connected to the nature of existence, personal meaning, excellency, and higher levels of consciousness. When these abilities are involved, the unique ability to solve problems, abstract thinking, and deal with troubles is facilitated (quoted by Alavi, Abedi, and Niknejad, 2011). In several studies, including Jamali (2015), Raisi et al. (2013), Zamirinejad et al. (2013), Yaghoubi (2010), Sanen (2009), Ommundsen (2009), and Hall & Borer (2016), the relationship between spiritual intelligence and self-actualization is stated. Furthermore, the result of Khaniki's (2011) study demonstrated a significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and self-esteem in students. The results of Denis & Wings (2013) Yu, Matsu, and Lerox (2015), Scott & Kelli (2015), Kaplan (2017), and Danil (2018) revealed a positive and significant relationship between self-esteem and self-actualization.

In this respect, the significance and necessity of presenting the issue of spirituality, particularly spiritual intelligence, is felt in various ways in the new era. This need is so grand that the World Health Organization has newly defined man as a biological, mental, social, and spiritual being. Another need for raising this matter is the resurface of spiritual attraction and the search for a clearer comprehension of faith and its application in everyday life. The findings of this study, while making experts aware of the relationship between spiritual intelligence with self-actualization and self-esteem, aid administrators in planning to cultivate and maintain these variables in educational environments. This research studies the predictive function of individual spiritual intelligence concerning self-actualization and self-esteem. Thus this study tries to answer the question: "Is there a multiple and significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and the level of self-actualization and self-esteem of students at Payame Noor University in Pol Dokhtar?"

Methodology

Given that in this study, the simple and combined relationship between spiritual intelligence and self-actualization, and self-esteem among students of Payame Noor Pol Dokhtar University has



been studied, the research method is descriptive-correlational. The statistical population of this study consisted of all students of Payame Noor Pol Dokhtar University in the academic year 2022 with a volume of 2000 students (associate, bachelor). According to Krejcie Morgan's (1970) table and the size of the statistical population, the sample of this study (322 undergraduate and associate students of Payame Noor University Pol Dokhtar) was selected using cluster-step sampling. King and Desico's (2008) Spiritual Intelligence Self-Assessment Questionnaire was used to evaluate spiritual intelligence. This questionnaire measures the mental ability of spiritual intelligence with 24 phrases. Abilities related to spiritual intelligence are assessed in four principal dimensions: critical existential thinking, production of personal meaning, transcendent awareness, and expansion of consciousness (Ghorbani, 2010). Critical existential thinking has 7 questions, and its total score is between 0 and 28. The questions of this subscale are 1-3-5-9-13-17-21. The production of personal meaning has 5 questions, and its total score is between 0 and 20. The questions of this subscale are 7-11-15-19-23. Transcendent consciousness has 7 questions, and its total score is between 0 and 28. The questions of this subscale are 2-6-10-14-18-20-22. Consciousness expansion has 5 questions, and its total score is between 0 and 20.

The questions of this subscale are 4-8-12-12-14-24. The subject should indicate how much he or she agrees or disagrees with each of the test terms on a five-point Likert scale (completely, very, very little, and not at all). To get the overall test score, the scores of each of the 24 statements must be added together. Equation 6 is scored in reverse. King and Desico (2009) calculated the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the whole test as 0.92 and examined the face and content validity of this scale based on the convergence validity (quoted by Hadizadeh Moghadam and Hosseini, 2008). Zahed Babalan and Begian (2012) in a study calculated Cronbach's alpha through a retest in a sample of 70 people, 0.88. To measure self-actualization, Regail and Lou questionnaire (1989; quoted by Nourbala and Alipour, 1999) was used, which includes 29 items. This questionnaire covers five areas: satisfaction (11 items), positive mood (8 items), health (6 items), efficiency (4 items), and self-esteem (2 items). Also, among these questions, Article 8 in the subscales of satisfaction and health and Article 4 in the subscales of positive satisfaction and mood are calculated jointly. The scales of this questionnaire are prepared in the form of a Likert. A score of 0 is given to the "absolutely" option, a score of 1 to the "low" option, a score of 2 to the "medium" option, and a score of 3 to the "high" option. In addition, the minimum and maximum of the above questionnaire vary between 0 and 87. Plus, higher scores in this questionnaire mean more self-actualization, and lower scores indicate less self-actualization. To check the validity of this questionnaire, "judgments about friends" was employed. Argyle and Martin (1989; quoted by Karimi, 2002) asked students to rate their friends on a ten-point Self-actualization scale. The correlation between this grading and the Oxford Self-actualization Questionnaire was 0.43 which was significant. Valliant (1993; quoting Nourbala and Alipour, 1999) also reported a correlation of 0.64 and 0.49 between friends' grading and the score of this questionnaire in two stages. The correlation coefficients of the Oxford Self-actualization Questionnaire with the Brad Bourne "Positive Emotion" scales, Argil's "Life Satisfaction", Fleming "Social Support", and Beck "Depression" scales were 32.0, 0.57, 0.65, and 0.52. All these coefficients were significant.

In Iran, you will be consulted by 100 psychologists and psychiatrists to check the content and face validity of the Oxford Self-actualization Questionnaire. All of them approved the high ability of this questionnaire to assess the Self-actualization of individuals. Also, to evaluate the



factor validity, which is a form of structural validity, the factor analysis method was used using principal component analysis (varimax rotation) and specific values higher than 1. In this study, 5 factors that together explain 0.57 of the total variance of the questionnaire were obtained (Nourbala and Alipour, 1999).

Argyle and Lowe (1992; quoting Nourbala and Alipour, 1999) Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the Oxford Self-actualization Questionnaire was 0.90 for 347 people. Also, Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the Farenham & Browing questionnaire (1990; quoted by Karimi, 2002) on 101 people was 0.87. Also, Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the Noor questionnaire (1993) on 180 people was 0.84. Also, Cronbach's alpha coefficient of Francis Questionnaire (1998) on 240 people was 0.92.

To measure self-esteem, the Eysenck (1976; self-esteem questionnaire), which has 30 items, was used. To answer each item, the subject must choose one of three options: "Yes", "No" or "?" To choose. In this questionnaire, the lowest score is 0 and the highest score is 30. Hormozinejad (2001) in a research on students of Shahid Chamran in Ahvaz, reported the structural validity of this test as 0.74 for female students and 0.79 for male students. He furthermore conducted the Eizenk Self-Esteem Test and the Ahvaz Self-Esteem Scale on two samples of male and female students of the Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz simultaneously. The calculated validity coefficients were reported to be $r = 0.79$ for the female sample and $r = 0.74$ for the male sample, both of which are significant at the $p < 0.001$ level. According to the title, goals, and hypotheses of the study, other than descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum), inferential statistics (Pearson correlation coefficient, multiple regression) were employed to test the hypotheses.

Findings

After gathering the scores of the sample students in the study variables, the central tendency indices (mean) and the dispersion indices (amplitude of change and standard deviation) were calculated first for the predictor variables and then the criterion variable and reported in the following tables. First, in Table (1), the indicators related to the predictor variable of spiritual intelligence and its elements are given.

Table 1. Descriptive results related to the scores of the sample group in the variables of spiritual intelligence and components

Variables	Average	S D	The minimum grade	The maximum grade
The component of critical existential thinking	14.03	6.55	9	24
The component of producing personal meaning	11.96	6.41	7	21
The component of transcendent consciousness	16.71	5.82	10	26
Consciousness expansion component	12.91	7.63	8	18
Total score of spiritual intelligence	55.69	11.18	37	79

According to Table (1), the average of the component "critical existential thinking" is 14.03. According to the average score for this component, which is 14, it can be said that the scores of the sample group for this component are almost the average of the society. About the component "production of personal meaning", the observed average is 11.96, which is higher than the average of this component, which is 10. Furthermore, the average of the component "transcendent awareness" is 16.71, which is higher than the average of this component, which is 14. Eventually, the average of the component "expansion of consciousness" is 12.91, which is higher than the average score of this component, which is 10. About the total score of the spiritual intelligence scale, the average observed is 55.69, which is higher than the average score of the scale, which is 48. It can be said that spiritual intelligence of the sample group is higher than average.

Moving on, we examine the central tendency indices (mean) and dispersion indices (amplitude of change and standard deviation) of the criterion variables in this research and Table (2).

Table 2. Descriptive results related to the scores of the sample group to the research criterion variables

Variables	Average	S D	The minimum grade	The maximum grade
Total Self-actualization score	51.12	12.05	26	86
Total self-esteem score	16.41	8.83	9	27

According to Table (2), the average total score of the variable "Feeling Self-actualization" in the sample group is 51.12. Given the theoretical average of the questionnaire (44), this value is above average. The range of theoretical changes in the questionnaire is between 0 and 87. In this study, the score range of this variable was between 26 and 86. In the other case, the average of the dependent variable, ie "self-esteem", is 16.41. According to the theoretical average of the questionnaire, which is 15, the self-esteem of the students in the sample group is narrowly higher than average. The possible range of scores in this variable is between 0 and 30, and in this study, this range was between 9 and 27. According to the degree of standard deviation obtained for these two variables, the scatter of the degree of self-actualization and self-esteem can be observed.

There are significant multiple relationships between spiritual intelligence and the amount of self-actualization and self-esteem of students of Payame Noor University in Pol Dokhtar.

The simultaneous entry regression method was used to test these two hypotheses. In this method, the score of four components of spiritual intelligence is entered into the regression equation as predictor variables. Eventually, their multiple correlation coefficients are examined individually and compared with the self-actualization and self-esteem of the students in the sample group. First, the results of studying the connection between multiple components of spiritual intelligence and the amount of self-actualization were listed in Table (4-10).

Table 3. Results of Simultaneous Regression Analysis to Investigate the Multiple Relationship between Spiritual Intelligence Components and the Self-actualization Amount of Sample Students (n = 322)

Predictors	F	R	R ²	B	β	t	Significance level



constant number	6.637*	0.278	0.077	34.585	~	9.098	0.001
Critical Existential Thinking				0.233	0.086	1.139	0.256
Generate personal meaning				0.543	0.149	2.192	0.029
Transcendent consciousness				0.019	0.006	0.087	0.931
Expansion of consciousness				0.529	0.13	1.782	0.076
							P<0.01*

The regression model formed based on the value of F (6.637) was significant ($p < 0.001$). This model can predict 7.7% of the variance in the amount of self-actualization of students in the sample group based on the components of spiritual intelligence. According to the standard values of β , it was found that the value of β (0.149) was only significant in the production of personal meaning ($p < 0.05$) and played a role in the model. However, the value of β was not significant for critical existential thinking (0.086), transcendent awareness (0.006) and expansion of consciousness (0.113) and had no role in this model.

In the following and in table (4), the sample relationship of the components of spiritual intelligence with self-esteem of the students of the sample group is listed.

Table 4. Results of simultaneous regression analysis to investigate the multiple relationship of spiritual intelligence components with self-esteem of students in the sample group (n = 322)

Predictors	F	R	R ²	B	β	t	Significance level
constant number	98.752*	0.846	0.716	4.608	~	5.533	0.001
Critical Existential Thinking				0.850	0.799	19.144	0.001
Generate personal meaning				0.259	0.182	4.824	0.001
Transcendent consciousness				0.241	0.191	5.117	0.001
Expansion of consciousness				0.064	0.035	0.994	0.321
							P<0.01*

The regression model formed based on the value of F (98.752) was significant ($p < 0.001$). This model can predict 71.6% of the variance in the amount of self-actualization of students in the sample group based on the components of spiritual intelligence. According to the standard values of β , it was found that the value of β (0.035) was not significant only for the Expansion of consciousness ($p > 0.05$) and had no part in the model. But the value of β was significant for critical existential thinking (0.799), production of personal meaning (0.182) and transcendent awareness (0.191) ($p < 0.01$).

Discussion and conclusion

As mentioned, the first hypothesis of the study claims that there is a relationship between spiritual intelligence and happiness. It seems there is a significant relationship between the total score of spiritual intelligence and the total score of students' self-actualization at the 0.01 significance level ($r = 0.257$). Furthermore, the relationship between critical existential thinking score ($r = 0.216$), personal meaning production score ($r = 0.243$), transcendent consciousness score ($r = 0.137$), and consciousness expansion score ($r = 0.206$) with the students' self-actualization ($p < 0.01$) is significant. Accordingly, it can be acknowledged that the first principal hypothesis and the ones derived from it are all approved. The findings of this hypothesis are in line with the findings of researchers such as Amoshahi (2017), Jamali (1394), Raisi et al. (2013), Kelly (2015), and Hall and Burrow (2016).

In presenting these discoveries, the connection between spiritual intelligence and self-actualization, citing the verse "Be aware that hearts are calmed by the remembrance of God", one can say that one of the outcomes of faith in God Almighty and acting under this Faith is internal peace and self-actualization and delight. Furthermore, spiritual intelligence, as the ultimate intelligence that delivers semantic and value issues and encloses the capacities of psychological adaptation, is based on supernatural and non-coercive aspects. And this idea includes spiritual resources, values, and features that boost daily performance and health. People with high spiritual intelligence exceed the body and matter, experience peak states of consciousness, and employ spiritual resources to overcome problems. Qualities such as humility, forgiveness, appreciation, and compassion can also be noticed in them. With these characteristics and a positive perspective of the world, these people are pleased with their lives and seek to improve them and achieve self-actualization. That is, spiritual intelligence is an experienced ability that lets people acquire more knowledge and comprehension and supplies the basis for perfection and progress in life. This situation forms happiness in the individual, which itself has an influential part in enhancing and increasing physical and mental health, and induces a feeling of security and satisfaction in life and a higher participation spirit. Those with spiritual lives are certainly psychologically healthy people.

So it can be stated that people with high spiritual intelligence enjoy greater happiness. Happiness is also one of the proven matters in life. Self-actualization and positive mood positively affect people, granting more reflection, better communication quality, altruism, better job performance, and better problem-solving ability. People with higher spiritual intelligence scores also achieve greater self-actualization. Because instantaneous pleasures are brief and human beings have always aimed for more enduring pleasures, activities that people do in search of spirituality, such as helping others, can bring about self-actualization for them (Keshtakaran, 2010). In fact, with the increase in spiritual intelligence, the amount of self-actualization of students increases as well. This finding is in line with the results of some research (Diner, Lokai, Oishi 2002; quoted by Hadianfard, 2005) that indicate that people with spirituality have more self-actualization. Spiritual intelligence is an experienced ability that lets people acquire more knowledge and understanding and supplies the basis for perfection and progress in life (Argyle, 2006). And the results of Meyer's (2001) and Peterson's (2000) research indicate that happiness has an essential function in enhancing and increasing physical and mental health and provokes a feeling of security and satisfaction in life and a higher participation spirit.



And people with spiritual lives are psychologically healthy. So it can be stated that people with high spiritual intelligence will enjoy a higher level of happiness. Because both components are very closely connected to mental health, this explanation is consistent with the findings of research by Yaghoubi et al. (2008) that showed a significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and mental health in students. On the other hand, Dekman (1990) alludes to the favorable effect of spiritual intelligence on mental health. According to Peterson (2000), happy people tend to see themselves and others positively and interpret events with positivity. Happiness studies have also revealed that happy people have greater individual, family, educational, and social productivity (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, Schkade, 2005). Furthermore, the findings of this study are in line with other studies conducted on spiritual intelligence and delight. Pollner (1989) discovered that constant social support, a sense of closeness to God, and a friendly image of God were connected with happiness. Ellison (1991) demonstrated that after continued social support, strong faith yields happiness. And Genia (1996) discovered that spiritual health is associated with an inward tendency toward religion, a serious commitment to religion merely could be the highest purpose, and having a goal in life positively correlated with happiness.

Considering the outcomes of the second question, it appears that there is a significant relationship between the total score of spiritual intelligence and students' self-esteem score at a significance level of 0.01 ($r = 0.707$). On this basis, it can be acknowledged that the second chief hypothesis and the ones derived from it are all approved. The results of this research are in line with the studies of Zamiri Nejad et al. (2013), Yaghoubi (2010), Pekhaniki (2011), and Yu, Matsu and Leroux (2015).

One of the essential factors in the different aspects of development is the country's education system, which imposes very high costs for the upbringing and education of the new generation - costs that are directly or indirectly borne by the people. If the country's education system is efficient and practical, material and spiritual earnings will be the income of the people and society in return for the expenditures incurred. And if the education system does not have the required efficiency, costs will be squandered, and students' talents and abilities that society requires will not be fulfilled. In education, the high school period is critical. During this time, on the one hand, students are going through puberty and are likely to be concerned with the resulting stress, and on the other hand, changing students' education, different teaching strategies, and more importantly the topic of choosing a field, resuming education, and career and life in the future, all bring stresses that influence the progress or decline of students' education. Furthermore, one of the essential matters in education is the students' academic accomplishment. Ashouri (1997) found that parental behavior affects adolescents' self-esteem. In other words, the children of democratic parents had higher self-esteem. Considering the theories and outcomes obtained as well as the findings of this hypothesis that there is a strong relationship between students' spiritual intelligence and self-esteem, it can be assumed that the presence of elements of spiritual intelligence, especially the component of belief thinking and the ability to deal with problems and self-awareness among students, improves their self-esteem.

In fact, by boosting students' spiritual intelligence, their self-esteem and self-control increase, and their academic performance improves. Biabangard (2005) acknowledges that the closer the



ideal self is to the self, the higher the self-esteem and the more balanced the personality. Those with high self-esteem evaluate themselves positively and have a good attitude towards themselves and others. Self-esteem is one of the essential factors in improving academic motivation. In fact, by affecting the individual, self-esteem can cause academic motivation if it is high and cause academic frustration if it is low. People with high self-esteem have more resistance to life problems and troubles and have more endurance, and as a result, their chances of triumph are higher (Nejat, Fatemi, and Nowruzi, 2014). Some researchers hold that there is a direct correlation between self-esteem and academic accomplishment in school students because, in this era, competence is often restricted to obtaining better grades. But while the campus is an educational environment, it is also a social setting with its own set of issues - including dormitory living, a lack of interest in the field of study, and concerns about the future careers, all of which diminish the role of academic achievement in promoting students' self-esteem (compared to schoolchildren) (Farihi, Mirzaei and Sharifi, 2015). For instance, the outcomes of a study by Masoudifar et al. (2014) revealed that girls are weaker than boys in different dimensions of self-esteem, and those with low self-esteem are particularly more depression-prone. Low self-esteem yields behaviors such as decreased performance, feelings of inadequacy and loneliness, drug abuse, dissociation from reality, and self-destructive conduct. It is needless to say that any research is associated with restrictions and problems that display in the research process - especially if the study is about human issues, the limitations and problems are less predictable. This research is of a correlational type, and no causal results can be acquired from it. Further, the results of this university can not be generalized to other ones. The subjects pointed out the non-use of research results by managers and relevant officials. For this reason, many participants either delivered the questionnaires blank or incomplete or were very unwilling to fill out the questionnaire. Since the number of questions was relatively large, people may not be concentrated enough when answering and have not chosen the correct answers. Control of this issue has been beyond the power of the researcher. Students' adverse and conservative thinking and mindsets toward doing research at university did not easily allow the researcher to do study. According to the research findings, it can be suggested that the development of spiritual intelligence and strengthening of the self-esteem behavior of students in universities highly depends on the performance of professors. Thus, professors need to be leaders themselves with high spiritual intelligence and a symbol of self-esteem behavior. Consequently, this critical principle should be considered in choosing and appointing professors. It is recommended to hold fit classes and workshops on the principles of self-esteem behavior and self-actualization for students to boost the spirit of altruism, tolerance, respect, conscientiousness, and social etiquette. It is further recommended that, given the importance and impact of spiritual intelligence and spirituality and the profound effect of true faith in the transcendent intelligence on all-round growth and development (whether material or supernatural) throughout life, from administrators and counselors to graduate professors, in the first place, pay attention to self-improvement and increase their knowledge and information, and research in the field of spirituality, and in the second place, for the proper transfer and growth of this intelligence and spirituality, take time scientifically and accurately to witness the collective development of the spiritual intelligence of our society so that in the light of this spiritual growth that will yield the purity of mind and intention, we will witness new designs and ideas that are the result of the emission of these pure and creative minds.



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