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The Role of Spiritual Intelligence on Organizational Commitment in Employees of Universities in Tehran Province, Iran

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Abstract

Introduction: Spiritual intelligence is the mind's capacity to handle substantial and spiritual aspects of life. According to previous studies, spiritual intelligence can be effective in the promotion of different variables. One such variable is organizational commitment. Organizational commitment may have potentially serious effects on an organization's function and can be a major influence on its effectiveness. This study explores the relationship between spiritual intelligence and organizational commitment in staff of universities from Tehran Province, Iran. **Methods:** The study population included all staff of universities in Tehran Province during 2012-13. From this population we chose a random sample of 200 staff (111 males and 89 females). Data collection was performed by the completion of two spiritual intelligence self-evaluation questionnaires (2008) and the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire by Allen and Meyer (1997). **Conclusion:** According to our analysis the results showed a difference in the amount of spiritual intelligence and organizational commitment between males and females, both of which were higher in males. A definite correlation existed between spiritual intelligence and organizational commitment among staff. Higher spiritual intelligence corresponded to higher organizational commitment, which was proven for both males and females. Additionally, a correlation existed between spiritual intelligence and the continuous subscale. This correlation was also evident in the spiritual intelligence of males and in the affective and normative subscales.

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1. Introduction

Here The concept of spiritual intelligence was proposed in 1996 by Stevens, followed by Emmons in 1999. Spiritual intelligence is defined as the conformity application of spiritual information that aims to facilitate solving daily issues and attainment of goals (Emmons, 2000). In another definition, King (2008) believes spiritual
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intelligence to be a collection of mental capacities based on unsubstantial and exalted aspects of life such as personal understanding, deep existential thinking, and expansion of meaning. In his opinion, spiritual intelligence comprises the four components of critical existential thinking, production of personal meaning, transcendental awareness, and expansion of conscious states. According to *Bowell (2004)* spiritual intelligence includes seven steps: awareness, meaning, evaluation, being centered, vision, projection, and mission. Spiritual intelligence as defined by *Wigglesworth (2006)* is the ability to behave with wisdom and clemency as long as internal and external peace is maintained taking into consideration the conditions (equanimity).

The results of a study on the relation between spiritual intelligence and amount of students' happiness concluded that increased in spiritual intelligence corresponded with increased happiness (*Yaghubi, 2010*). According to *Chin et al.*, spiritual intelligence in addition to engendering success, honesty and hope also enabled entrepreneurs to be realistic and conscious of their environment. They have concluded that the presence of spiritual intelligence is one of the major reasons why some entrepreneurs are more successful than others (*Chin, raman, Yeow, & Eze, 2012*).

Wigglesworth (2006) defines a mature leader as one who considers specific solutions for increasing problems faced by humans. She views this kind of consideration as an enhanced grade of leadership and believes that a mature personality character benefits from this type of union. This high level of growth and personal maturity is correlated with the development of spiritual intelligence, which leads to the development of leadership skills.

Organizational commitment is construed as an individual's identification and involvement with a particular organization. It is defined by "(a) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values; (b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and (c) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization" (*Hart & Willower, 2001*).

Organizational commitment is the ability of an individual employed in an organization and is separate from occupational satisfaction. Instead, it is an effective response to the whole organization, whereas occupation satisfaction is a positive response to particular aspects of a job (*Williams and Hazer, 1986*).

Meyer and Allen (1998) divide organizational commitment into three separate positions: affective, continuance, and normative. Affective commitment refers to identification, participation, and affective attachment to an organization, meaning that staff that have strong affective commitment remain because they want to keep their jobs. Continuance commitment refers to a commitment based on the staffs' awareness of the loss that they incur if they leave. Therefore, the staff remains in the company with a strong commitment either by force or due to personal sacrifices related to leaving the organization. Normative commitment is based on sense of commitment to the organization. Employees with strong normative commitment who remain in the organization feel obligated to stay. Those with a stronger affective commitment accept changes in instances where these changes would not alter the organization's goals, but rather benefit the organization (*Viljoen & Rothmann, 2009*).

Tafreshi and Darbayegan (2011) have shown the presence of a meaningful relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment, job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behavior, as well as organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior. The results of their study showed multiple relations between job satisfaction and organizational commitment with organizational citizenship behavior. A total of 21% of the variance in organizational citizenship behavior was predicted by job satisfaction and organizational commitment from which the role of organizational commitment ranked higher in this prediction.

Padala (2011) studied occupation satisfaction and organizational commitment in an Indian fertilizer and chemical material production company. The study indicated that age, education, type of job, hours worked, and income negatively impacted job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

According to one study, meaningful relationships existed between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction, emotional intelligence and organizational commitment, and job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Emotional intelligence predicted 16% of job satisfaction and 14% of organizational commitment (*Ostovar and Khatunigar 2009*).

A model that evaluated the relationship between occupation stresses, occupation satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior was presented in another study. The results showed a meaningful, negative relationship between the variables of occupational stress, occupation satisfaction and organizational commitment. Satisfaction with occupation positively and meaningfully affected organizational citizenship behavior and organizational commitment (*Ansari, Mirahmadi, & Zabihzadeh, 2011*).

Despite the importance of spiritual intelligence and its necessity throughout various organizations and institutions, in Iran, little research exists in this area. Akbarizadeh et al.(2012)have studied the relationship between spiritual intelligence, strong-willed characteristics and general health among nurses. The results showed a meaningful, positive relationship between spiritual intelligence and strong-willed characteristics, spiritual intelligence and general health, and strong-willed characteristics and general health. The promotion of spiritual intelligence and encouragement of strong-willed characteristics in individuals could help increase nurses' general health.

As previously mentioned, spiritual intelligence is the mental capacity of each individual according to unsubstantial and spiritual aspects of life. Research has shown that spiritual intelligence can impact and promote different variables. One of the variables examined in this research is organizational commitment. According to given definitions, organizational commitment is the employment of an individual in an organization and the convergence of that organization's purposes and values upon that individual.

Organizational commitment may potentially have a serious impact on an organization's function and can be a major influence in its effectiveness. Therefore, this study explores the relationship between spiritual intelligence and organizational commitment of staff from universities in Tehran Province, Iran. It examined the positive effects of this relationship in the promotion of the effectiveness of these universities and the effects on individual development of each staff member.

2. Material and Methods

2.1. Research Design

This was a descriptive research study that used correlation and regression for statistical analysis. The study population comprised all staff from universities in Tehran Province employed during 2012-13. In this research there were 200 staff randomly chosen from the study population. Participants comprised 111 males and 89 females.

Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory

The Spiritual Intelligence Self-report Inventory (SISRI-24) designed by King (2008) includes 24 questions in a five-item Likert Scale. This scale evaluates the mental ability of spiritual intelligence and related abilities in four major aspects of critical existential thinking, transcendental awareness, personal meaning production, and conscious state expansion (Mousavi, Talebzadeh, & Shams, 2012).

Mousavi (2012) et al reported the Cronbach's alpha for critical thinking, personal meaning production, transcendental awareness, conscious state expansion, and total spiritual intelligence in the following order: 0.59, 0.51, 0.74, 0.68, and 0.73. The present research determined Cronbach's alpha coefficients for total spiritual intelligence (0.864)in addition to spiritual intelligence of males(0.839) and females(0.873).

Organizational Commitment Questionnaire

This questionnaire (Allen and Meyer 1997) is used to assess and measure three aspects of organizational commitment (affective, continuance, and normative). This questionnaire consists of 24 close-ended questions according to the Likert scale. Each response is assigned a number for scoring purposes, where's strongly agree'=5 and 'strongly disagree'=1.

2.2. Descriptive Statistics

Table1. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Cronbach's alpha

		Mean(average)	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Alpha
spiritual Intelligence	Men	67,88	10,358	32	86	.839
	Women	63,75	11,785	34	90	.873
	Total	65,59	11,334	32	90	.864
Organizational	Men	58,99	8,839	39	85	.658

Commitment	Women	55,80	7,436	37	73	.568
	Total	57,22	8,224	37	85	.622
Continuance Subscale	Men	8,53	2,175	1	5	.115
	Women	7,05	2,157	1	5	.205
	Total	7,71	2,281	1	5	.226
Normative Subscale	Men	6,28	1,865	3	12	.206
	Women	6,45	1,953	3	12	.529
	Total	6,38	1,911	3	12	.219

The highest total mean value was 65.59 for spiritual intelligence whereas the lowest mean was the normative subscales which were 6.38. In all variables, with the exception of the normative subscales, males had a higher average compared to females. The average for spiritual intelligence among males was 67.88, compared to the average value of 6.38 for females. Among males, the organizational commitment score was 58.99, which was higher than seen in females (55.80). The continuance subscale value for males was 7.71. Females scored 6.38. The only exception was observed for the normative subscales, where females scored 6.45 compared to 6.28 for males. The higher standard deviation also belonged to the score for spiritual intelligence in females, which were 11.785. The lowest standard deviation was in the normative subscale for males (1.865). The minimum score observed was 1 for the continuance subscale and the maximum score was 90, which was the total score for spiritual intelligence among females (Table 2).

2.3. Inferential Statistics

The results showed a difference in the amount of spiritual intelligence between males and females. Males scored higher in terms of emotional intelligence. Therefore, the following hypothesis was approved: “Emotional intelligence is different between male and female employees” (df=130,p=0.120,t=-1.180). The standard deviation and average for organizational commitment is shown in Table 3 for males and females. The average organizational commitment for males was 58.99 which was higher than observed in females(55.80). The standard deviation was 8.398 for males and the standard deviation for females were 7.436. According to the results, the amount of organizational commitment differed between males and females, with a higher total score for organizational commitment observed in males. Hence, the following hypothesis is approved: “Organizational commitment is different between males and females” (df=130,p=0.120,t=-1.180).

Table 2. The independent t-test as a comparison of spiritual intelligence and organizational commitment in males and females

Variable	group	M±SD	T	Sig(1-tailed)
Spiritual Intelligence	Women n = 111	M=63/78 Sd=11/78	81,83	0.00
	Men n = 89	M=67/88 Sd=10/358		
Organizational Commitment	Women n = 111	M=55/80 Sd=7/436	98,40	0.00
	Men n = 89	M=58/99 Sd=8/839		

Table 3. Correlation between spiritual intelligence and organizational commitment

variable	Total (n = 200)		Men (n = 89)		Women (n = 111)	
	r	p	r	p	r	p
Spiritual Intelligence and Organizational Commitment	.148.	.037	.151	.158	.343	.00
Spiritual Intelligence and Continuance Subscale	.037	.604	-0,138	0,198	0,169	0,76
Spiritual Intelligence and Normative Subscale	0,026	.714	-0,144	0,177	0,043	0,656
Spiritual Intelligence and Affective Subscale	-,061	.389	-0,042	0,693	-0,176	0,065

According to the data (Table 3), the total correlation between spiritual intelligence and organizational commitment was 0.148. Considering the fact that 0.037 is less than 0.5 and that it is a meaningful coefficient, hence there is a meaningful relationship between them. Therefore, the following hypothesis was approved: "There is a meaningful relation between spiritual intelligence and organizational commitment of the staff". Increased spiritual intelligence corresponded with increased organizational commitment within an individual [Pearson's $r(132) = -0.25, p < 0.05$].

The correlation among males was 0.151. Due to the fact that the coefficient of 0.158 is less than 0.5, the relationship was meaningful. The following hypothesis was approved: "There is a meaningful relation between spiritual intelligence and organizational commitment of male employees". In males, higher spiritual intelligence corresponded to higher organizational commitment [Pearson's $r(132) = -0.25, p < 0.05$].

The correlation of this relationship was 0.343 among females. Due to the fact that 0.00 is less than 0.5, therefore the relationship was meaningful. The following hypothesis was approved: "There is a meaningful relation between spiritual intelligence and organizational commitment of female employees". The higher spiritual intelligence in females corresponded with higher organizational commitment [Pearson's $r(132) = -0.25, p < 0.05$].

The correlation between spiritual intelligence and the continuance subscale

The total correlation between spiritual intelligence and the continuance subscale was 0.037; according to the score of 0.604 which is more than 0.5, there was no meaningful relationship, therefore the hypothesis was rejected.

The meaningful coefficient correlation was 0.76 among females and more than 0.5. This correlation was not meaningful in females and the following hypothesis was rejected: "There is a meaningful relation between female spiritual intelligence and the affective subscale".

According to the coefficient correlation of 0.198, the following hypothesis was approved in males and the correlation was meaningful. "There is a meaningful relationship between spiritual intelligence and the affective subscale" [Pearson's $r(132) = -0.25, p < 0.05$].

The correlation between spiritual intelligence and the normative subscale

The total correlation between spiritual intelligence and the normative subscale was 0.026. The coefficient correlation was 0.714 and greater than 0.5. Therefore, the relationship was not meaningful. The following hypothesis was rejected: "There is a relation between spiritual intelligence and the normative subscale".

A meaningful coefficient of 0.177 was observed among males. The correlation was meaningful and the following hypothesis approved: "There is a relation between spiritual intelligence in males and the normative subscale" [Pearson's $r(132) = -0.25, p < 0.05$].

However in females, there was a meaningful coefficient of 0.656. Therefore this correlation was greater than 0.05 and not meaningful. Hence the following hypothesis was rejected: "There is a relation between spiritual intelligence and the normative subscale".

The correlation between spiritual intelligence and affective subscale

The total correlation between spiritual intelligence and the affective subscale was 0.061. The meaningful coefficient was 0.389 and less than 0.5. The relationship was meaningful and the following hypothesis approved: "There is a relation between spiritual intelligence and the continuance subscale" [Pearson's $r(132) = -0.25, p < 0.05$].

In addition, the meaningful coefficient of the correlation is 0.76 in females, which was more than 0.5. Thus, the correlation was not meaningful among females and the following hypothesis was rejected: "There is meaningful relation between spiritual intelligence and the continuance subscale".

The correlation coefficient among males was 0.693, more than 0.5. As a result the correlation was not meaningful among males and the following hypothesis was rejected: "There is a relation between spiritual intelligence and the continuance subscale".

3. Conclusion

This research studied the relationship between spiritual intelligence and organizational commitment of staff from universities in Tehran Province, Iran. The positive effects of spiritual intelligence in the promotion of an organization's effectiveness and the individual growth of employees were considered in this study. The results indicated that the amount of spiritual intelligence and organizational commitment varied between males and females. In the current study, males achieved a higher score in both variables. A meaningful relationship has been shown to exist between spiritual intelligence and organizational commitment of an organization's employees. When an individual's spiritual intelligence increases, the organizational commitment also increases. This relationship has been separately proven in both males and females.

King (2008) has defined spiritual intelligence as a collection of mental capacities based on unsubstantial and exalted aspects of life such as personal understanding, deep existential thinking, and expansion of meaning. The present research showed a relationship between spiritual intelligence and organizational commitment. Malik and Naeem (2011) concluded that dimensions of spiritual intelligence had a positive relationship with organizational commitment of university scientific board members.

In addition, spiritual intelligence has a relationship with effective leadership components such as organizational commitment (Amram, 2009). Because commitment, creativity and innovation are currently important topics, it is necessary for managers and organizational leaders to have moral values such as liking other people, forgiveness, and honesty. The presence of these values assists in better management of employees to be the best (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004). According to Farhangi et al (2009) both affective intelligence and spiritual intelligence have a significant effect on a type of leadership.

Samadi and Mahdavihui (2009) determined that three different dimensions of organizational commitment (duty, affective, and continuance) were meaningful at different levels of moral management. They studied the effect of moral management on organizational commitment of employees at a Tax General Office in Hamedan Province. The results showed that increased moral management also increased the amount of organizational commitment. The results of the current study supported their findings between spiritual intelligence and organizational commitment.

Limitations of this study included the lack of control over the amount of cooperation and motivation of the participants to complete the questionnaire. Participants were not comfortable being evaluated, although they received some explanations. Therefore, in areas such as job safety, participants stated that safety was better than in reality.

Emotional intelligence that includes job components is a new topic. There are a limited number of studies in this field, thus the need exists for additional research. Future studies should research the effect of spiritual intelligence on organizational functioning, the relationship between spiritual intelligence and organizational expansion, and the role of spiritual intelligence in the improvement of affective commitment in an assumed organization.

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