The effect of spiritual intelligence on the mental health of the employees

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Abstract:
The present investigation was aimed to study the effect of spiritual intelligence on the mental health of the employees of Modarres hospital in Saveh city in 2013. The population consisted of 299 individuals of the employees among whom 168 individuals were chosen as a sample size using Cochran formula and simple random sampling method. The data collection method were based on two questionnaires of King (SISRI-24) spiritual intelligence and Goldberg mental health (GHQ-28, 1979). After distributing and collecting questionnaires, the data analysis and hypotheses testing were carried out by using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and Smart PLS 2.0 software. Technical features of the questionnaire including reliability, convergent validity and divergent validity were evaluated in the first part and necessary reforms were applied. In the next part, significance coefficients of the software were used in order to check the research hypothesis. The findings demonstrated that spiritual intelligence and its dimensions have effect on mental health.

Keywords: spiritual intelligence, mental health, self-awareness, existential critical thinking

1. Introduction

Growing concerns of human beings in the present century over changing his lifestyle and improving it in order to improve the welfare and life expectancy, and develop and maintain physical and mental health lead to the formation of an exploratory view in order to find the factors that the the direction could be passed better and faster relying on them. This exploratory perspective put a bright prospect in front of the human beings by presenting different factors. In the meantime, spirituality has a special place and has an important role in the improvement of our life and health. Indeed, spirituality is based on capabilities and characteristics in which valuable results and issues are presented (Goudarzi et al., 2010). Investigations show the relationship of these issues with life goals, satisfaction with life, health and welfare (George, Larson, Koenig and Mc. Culloug, 2000; Kass, Leserman, Zuttermeister and Benson, 1991; Veah and Chappel, 1992, quoted by King, 2008; Madhu and Purohit, 2006). In this regard, King (2008) stated that spirituality have positive and significant relationship with mental health, increasing self-confidence, decreasing stress, personal and professional adaptability.

Parallel to the investigation of the relationship between spirituality and physical and mental health, researchers were intent on determining and explaining new concepts in relation with spirituality. Spiritual intelligence is one of those concepts that were the result of researcher’s attention to this field of study (Goudarzi et al., 2010). King (2008) defined spiritual intelligence as a set of mental capacity that is based on immaterial and transcendent aspects of existence such as understanding the self, deep existential thought and development of meaning. According to him, spiritual intelligence has four components: 1-existential critical thinking; 2-personal meaning-creation; 3- transcendental awareness and 4-development of self-awareness. Existential critical thinking refers to the ability to think critically of existence, universe, time, death and other supernatural or existential issues. According to Gardner (1993), this component reflects the intelligence of big questions. Personal meaning-creation is the ability to make personal purpose and existed goal in all mental and physical experiences including life goal creation and life goal domination. Transcendental awareness is the ability to the realization of self; others and the physical world’s superior and transcendent dimensions at the
time of awareness. Awareness development is the ability to entering spiritual and ultra-consciousness states and levels and exit from them with individual willing. The role of spiritual intelligence in existential problem solving, finding meaning and purpose in applying and events of everyday life and answering to questions arise from activities is emphasized in its definitions (Zohar and Marshal, 2000). Generally, spiritual intelligence is a set of activities, capacities and spiritual sources that using them in personal and professional everyday life lead to consistency and adaptability increase, problem-solving ability, finding meaning and purpose in life events, health maintenance, inner and outer peace, and dynamism and vitality (Mousavi et al., 2011).

The importance of spiritual intelligence and spirituality caused the World Health Organization (WHO) to know hygiene including physical, mental, social and spiritual dimensions (Sohrabi, 2007). In line with this spiritual orientation and parallel to investigate the relationship between religion and spirituality and other psychological components such as mental health, a group is seeking to define a new concept in relation to religion and spirituality. For instance, spiritual health is added to the academic literature in psychology in the third millennium. Mental disorders and diseases have significantly increased similar to physical problems with the development of industry and new technologies and problems related to them (Moalemi et al., 2010).

The WHO defined mental health as an individual’s ability to communicate with others harmoniously, his ability to change the social environment and appropriate and reasonable resolution of his emotional conflict and personal desires. On other words, mental health is a special case of psyche that leads to improvement, development and perfection of human character and helps the individual to be compatible with him and others.

The main objective of mental health is helping individuals to achieve perfect, happier, more harmonious life, widespread recognition and prevention of mood, behavioral and emotional disorders (Mohammad Amini, 2007). Moreover, Adler defined mental health as owning specified objectives, desirable social and familial relationships, helping humankind and controlling emotion. Rogers’s pattern of healthy personality and mental health is an efficient human being with a perfect interaction and functioning who take advantage of all his abilities and talents and own characteristics such as preparation for gaining experience, feel free, creativity and creativeness (Verdi, 2001).

There are some conducted researches in relation with the variables of spiritual intelligence and mental health such as Akbarizadeh et al. (2012) who found in their investigation that there is relationship between spiritual intelligence and mental health and hardiness in nurses. Goudarzi et al. (2010) also found in their investigation that spiritual intelligence and teaching life skills separately affect student’s mental health. In addition, Mitchell et al. (2006), Walt and Alletta (2006), Mc. Ewan (2004), Wong (2010) and Yang (2006) demonstrated that individuals who own spiritual orientations respond better while dealing with damages, handle positions associated with pressure better and own better health.

The occupations of individuals who work in hospitals are in close relationship with people. Occupations in this group of workers is such that they face with several stressors such as excess work, interpersonal conflicts, shift work, dealing with death, lack of mental support, conflict with physicians and ambiguity in authority levels. These factors can affect the mental health of employees in hospitals. On the other hand, we stated in the definition of the WHO that spirituality is one of the most important factors in health. Therefore, according to what has been said and the importance of it, the effect of spiritual intelligence on the mental health of the employees of Modarres hospital in Saveh city is studied in the present investigation. In this regard, the research hypotheses are mentioned in the following.

The main hypothesis (H1): spiritual intelligence affects the mental health of the employees of Modarres hospital in Saveh city.

The first sub-hypothesis (H11): existential critical thinking affects the mental health of the employees of Modarres hospital in Saveh city.

The second sub-hypothesis (H12): personal meaning-creation affects the mental health of the employees of Modarres hospital in Saveh city.

The third sub-hypothesis (H13): transcendental awareness affects the mental health of the employees of Modarres hospital in Saveh city.

The fourth sub-hypothesis (H14): development of self-awareness affects the mental health of the employees of Modarres hospital in Saveh city.

Eventually, the conceptual model of the research is presented in figure 1.
2. Methodology

The present investigation is functional in terms of objective, a descriptive-casual one in terms of data collection and quantitative in terms of the type of data collected. In this regard, questionnaires were distributed among the employees of Modarres hospital in Saveh city and the results were recorded. Since a casual relationship is studied in the present investigation, the research method is causal in terms of the relationships between the variables, which Structural Equation Model (SEM) is employed in order to check the conceptual model of the research comprehensively. Mental health, and spiritual intelligence are the two main hidden variables and their dimensions are observed variables.

The population consisted of all students of employees of Modarres hospital in Saveh city, which 168 individuals were chosen as the sample size based on simple random sampling method and by using Cochran formula.

King (SISRI-24) spiritual intelligence questionnaire with 24 questions and dimensions of existential critical thinking, personal meaning-creation, transcendental awareness and development of self-awareness, and Goldberg mental health (GHQ-28, 1979) questionnaire with 28 questions (quoted by Taghavi, 2001) and dimensions of physical symptoms, anxiety and insomnia, social insufficient interaction and depression were used in the present study in order to collect data.

According to the collected data and using Smart PLS 2.0 software, the reliability of the questionnaires was calculated. In the PLS method, the reliability is measured using Cronbach’s alpha and Composite Reliability (CR), which the reliability is acceptable when the values are more than 0.7 (Hulland, 1999). The results are reported in table 1. As it is obvious, all the values are more than 0.7 and this demonstrates a good reliability of the questionnaires.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable dimension</th>
<th>Existential critical thinking</th>
<th>Personal meaning-creation</th>
<th>Transcendental awareness</th>
<th>Development of self-awareness</th>
<th>Physical symptoms</th>
<th>Anxiety and insomnia</th>
<th>Social insufficient interaction</th>
<th>depression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s alpha</td>
<td>0.712</td>
<td>0.803</td>
<td>0.763</td>
<td>0.810</td>
<td>0.912</td>
<td>0.871</td>
<td>0.851</td>
<td>0.890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR</td>
<td>0.701</td>
<td>0.792</td>
<td>0.781</td>
<td>0.807</td>
<td>0.929</td>
<td>0.909</td>
<td>0.895</td>
<td>0.901</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The validity of the questionnaire was checked through two criteria of divergent and convergent validity, which are specifically for structural equation modelling. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was used in convergent validity. The criterion for acceptable level of AVE is 0.5 (Hulland, 1999). According to the findings, all the values of AVE for the constructs are more than 0.5 and this depicts the acceptable convergent validity for
the research questionnaires. The differences between the indices of a construct and the indices of the other constructs are compared in the divergent validity. This is done by comparing the square root of AVE for each construct with the values of correlation coefficients between the constructs. A matrix should be formed for this reason, which the values of the main diagonal of the matrix are the square root of AVE for each construct and the bottom and top values of the main diagonal are the correlation coefficients between each construct with other constructs. The findings showed that the square root of the AVE for each construct is more than the correlation coefficient of the construct with other constructs. This indicates the acceptability of divergent validity in the constructs.

3. Findings

In this section, the casual relationship between spiritual intelligence and mental health in the form of structural model is measured. As it is obvious from figure 2, the effect of spiritual intelligence and its dimensions on mental health is positive and significant. The standard coefficients are also mentioned in figure 2.

Figure 2. Standard coefficients of the model

The output of the PLS proved the research hypotheses and are shown in table 2. Since all the t-values are more than 1.96, all the hypotheses are confirmed.

Table 2. The results of the research hypotheses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Standardized coefficients</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual intelligence ➔ Mental health</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>13.46</td>
<td>Confirmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existential critical thinking ➔ Mental health</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>17.98</td>
<td>Confirmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal meaning-creation ➔ Mental health</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>15.81</td>
<td>Confirmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcendental awareness ➔ Mental health</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>16.23</td>
<td>Confirmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of self-awareness ➔ Mental health</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>Confirmed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Conclusion
Considering that mental and spiritual health of the employees of hospitals have relationship with the quality of their performance in taking care of patients and clients, the existence of healthy work environment in all organizations such as Modarres hospital is very important and significant. While the employees of a hospital own a high spiritual intelligence, their need might be met through the work environment and mental health could be provided.

The present investigation was aimed to study the effect of spiritual intelligence on mental health. The results demonstrated that spiritual intelligence and its dimensions including personal meaning-creation, transcendental awareness, development of self-awareness and existential critical thinking have significant and positive effect on mental health of the employees of Modarres hospital in Saveh city. Therefore, employees with higher spiritual health own better mental health. In fact, spiritual intelligence plays an important role in strengthening and improving mental health in employees because of creating and strengthening capabilities such as flexibility, high level of self-awareness, adaptive applications, tranquility creation, etc. Spiritual intelligence represents a set of spiritual capabilities, abilities and resources that its employment leads to increasing adaptability and as a result, mental health in employees (King, 2008; Zohar and Marshall, 2000). When we mention to spiritual intelligence, it means a kind of intelligence that solves our semantic problems, signifies our activities and life at a wider and stronger level and someone’s meaning of life and life path can be measured by it (Emmons, 2000).

Spiritual intelligence is an improved and more efficient version of intellectual intelligence and emotional intelligence (Zohar and Marshall, 2000). According to Vaughan (2002), spiritual intelligence integrates inner and spiritual life with outer life and work environment. Spiritual experience, which may effective in the development of spiritual intelligence, depends to one’s life environment and texture. According to Vaughan, spiritual intelligence is necessary for identifying choices that play important roles in human being’s psychological well-being and health.

Spiritual intelligence leads to a new insight into self and increasing self-confidence. It also helps to own a stable self, increase anxiety and concerns and communicate with others more deeply (King, 2008). The results are in harmony with the findings of Akbarizadeh et al. (2012), Goudarzi et al. (2010), Mitchell et al. (2006), Walt and Alletta (2006), Wang (2010) and Yang (2006).

References