

THE MEDIATING ROLE OF MENTAL HEALTH IN THE EFFECT OF SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE ON INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

In today's highly competitive environments, improving performance is one of the fundamental objectives of the leading organizations. This study examines the impact of spiritual intelligence on the performance of individual employees and the mediating role of mental health. The research method is the quantitative, applied and descriptive-survey. The population or interest consists of the managers and staff of a service organization in Tehran among whom 155 persons have been chosen randomly. Data collection has been standard questionnaire. In order to analyze the data, structural equation modeling through Lisrel software has been applied. The findings of the research indicated that four dimensions of spiritual intelligence have been effective in improving individual performance through mental health. Accordingly, a number of suggestions have been presented for improving individual performance through the strengthening spiritual intelligence.

Keywords: Spirituality, Spiritual Intelligence, Individual Performance, Mental Health

INTRODUCTION

In today competitive world, many companies believe that in order to survive in the cycle of competition, it is essential to dedicate more attention to the staff's performance; as the performance and interest of the organization is dependent upon the individual performance of the staff (Yua, 2009). This indicates that staffs are considered worthy asset of the organization. Individual performance could be defined as individual's potentials, skills and endeavors under specific circumstances (Lover and Porter, 1974). The significant point arises here is that how it would be possible to improve the staff's performance in order to guarantee the survival of the organization. The valuable and purposeful work in terms of staff and effectiveness guidance of staff with strengthen the sense of usefulness and valuable work could be improved employee performance. This could be achieved by reinforcing the staff's spirit and spiritual beliefs. Spirituality provides a sensation of meaning and objective for the staff and managers at the workplace (Karakas, 2010). It could be considered as a kind of intelligence; as it explains required proceedings and compatibility and proposes people's potential in solving issues and achieving goals (Hosseini, Elias, Krows and Aysheh, 2010). Spirituality is mostly experimental; however, spiritual intelligence mostly consists of 3 combinational aspects including "sensational", "rational" and "contemplation" and refers to acquired potentials for predicting performance and compatibility (Imonz, 2000); however, spiritual intelligence has been defined as an intelligence that assists us in solving hardships of life and perceiving our proceedings in life (Seybold and Hill, 2001). Spiritual beliefs and actions and commitments associated with performance results and whenever people have a higher spiritual intelligence, will be more willing to participate in the organization. Spiritual intelligence enables one to live purposeful and spiritual intelligence can also be opportunistic and opportunities finder (Seybold and Hill, 2001). Considering the fact that staff's spiritual requirements and mental aspects are mostly being ignored, it is essential to study its significant role in improving staff's performance at the organization and its effectiveness would be assessed in the form of mediator variables. Hence, this study is to investigate the influence of spiritual intelligence on individual performance directly and mental health as well as the mediator in this test.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Theoretical Background

Performance

Performance is among the fundamental objectives of the organization. Performance is defined as the expected value of organizations from the behavioral events of individuals in a period of time (Motovidlo, 2003). Performance goes back to the features of people's individual

achievements in their jobs (Alkahtani, 2013). Performance is often assessed with calculating the level of the staff's output including the amount of the sale and production or assessment of the achievement level and comparing it with the expectations of the organization (Kazemi and Abbas, 2003). Staff's performance is the result of proceedings performed for achieving intended objectives (Alkahtani, 2013). It could be defined as a multi-dimensional concept which represents individual perfunctorily that concentrates upon proficiency, applying skill, creativities and resources application (Rotman and Kurtz, 2003). Rivayi (2006) defines performance as the result of something performed by an individual or a group of staff at the organization along with specified authorities and responsibility in order to achieve the objectives of the organization legally and not unethically. According to Krishna Kumar and Nick (2002), reinforcing spirituality at the organization could improve creativity, honesty and personal affairs and eventually lead to increment of the organization performance.

Spirituality

Spirituality is being aware of life; it enables us to think about life, the fact that who we are, where we come from (Mc Ewan, 2004). Based on this definition, spirituality in touch a perfect individual, others and the universe. Howard (2002) recognizes spirituality as a collection of quadruplet associations: being associated with self, nature or environment and the superior power (Alvani, Memarzadeh, Alborzi and Kazemi, 2013). In a survey study regarding Gal and Due's (2004) opinions Karakas (2010) perceived that spirituality in the organization leads to reinforcement of meaningfulness and identity at the workplace and makes the staff work with more creativity. Based on a survey research that has been performed by Elmer, Mc Donald and Freedman (2003), spirituality has a significant role in decreasing diseases and increasing longevity (Hosseini and colleagues, 2010). In daily life, spirituality could assist individuals in developing their wellbeing and peacefulness as well; as a result it is considered as a kind of intelligence (spiritual intelligence) (Dilman, 2004).

Spiritual Intelligence

Sisik (2008) defines spiritual intelligence as a capacity for utilizing multiple sensations (intuition, insight and thinking) in order to achieve inner knowledge for solving universal affairs; according to him spiritual intelligence includes awareness of the existence of relationship between the individuals and the others, society, world and the superior world. King (2008) defines spiritual intelligence as the following: a collection of mental capacities that assists awareness, consistency and compatibility through spiritual aspects that are superior to material things and also, existence of the human being which eventually leads to results including profound

contemplation regarding life, reinforcement of the meaning and recognizing the superior world. He considers four components for spiritual intelligence including: critical existential thinking, representing personal concept, transcendental awareness and developing vigilance state. Spiritual intelligence is one that we use it to achieve the most profound level of the significance, value, aims and transcendental motivation. The mentioned intelligence helps us respond to some states in thinking processes, decisions that we make and affairs that we think be worth doing. Vogan (2002) and Volman (2001) present the viewpoint that spiritual intelligence emphasizes upon meanings, values and the nature of being (quoted from Aysha, Sity and Shabani, 2013). To sum up, it could be stated that the concept of spiritual intelligence and its connection with the concept of individual provides a novel mental personality and a new kind of intelligence (Davidson, 2002). One of the characteristics of spiritual intelligence is improving self-awareness and mindfulness (Hosseini and colleagues). According to their findings spiritual intelligence could be developed through instruction.

Mental Health

Mental health is one of the most significant factors effective in human being's evolution and improvement (Khaledian, Hasanvand and Nosrati, 2013). Considering World Health Organization's definition, mental health is the competence of communicating with others harmoniously, developing individual and social environment, resolving disagreements and rational personal insight (Abbas, Panah Anbari, Kamkar and Bagherizadeh, 2001).

According to Yousefi, Baratali and Erfan (2001) having a healthy mind is one of the most significant simplifier factors in being privileged with the ability of dealing with daily hardships, close communication with others and a stable life. Since the mental health includes one's ability for playing social, mental and physical role, it is considerably significant.

Empirical Background

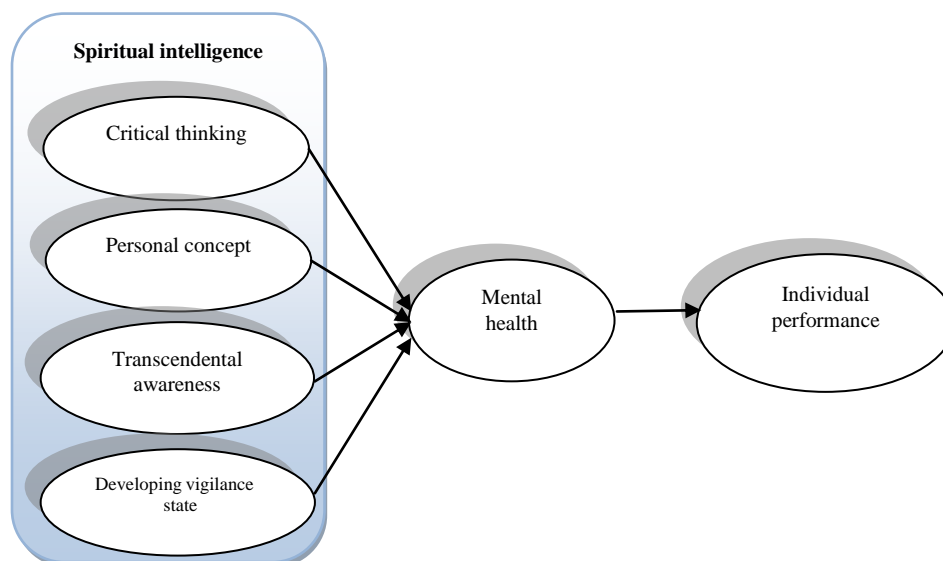
Spirituality and its consequences have been considered by many researchers during recent years. In their assessments entitled the connection between health and professional performance in navy staff, Saber, Torkman and Hejazifar (2012) perceived that there is a significant relation between the components of general health and professional performance. Some of the researchers have found positive relation between spiritual intelligence and general health as well (Baldochino, 2008; Chang and Vang, 2006). Other researchers found out that spiritual intelligence has a positive relation with general health and those who are privileged with a high spiritual intelligence tend to be more health (Saad and colleagues, 2010, Bahar and colleagues, 2005, Bell and Cohen, 1996). Howley (1993) found out that those who feel that their

organization represent them with a powerful sensation of dependence and a true sense of having an aim, are more creative and experience more personal growth. Spiritual intelligence is one of the fundamental factors for determining success in life, it is a final intelligence that bestows worth and meaning to our lives (Augustine, 2005). Imonz (2000), Vist (2004) and Shabani (2011) have found a significant relation between spiritual intelligence and mental health as well. Elmer, Mc Donald and Freedman's findings have indicated that spirituality affects health and assists decrement of illnesses and increase longevity. Based on Moalemi, Raghibi and Salari's findings there is a significant relation between spiritual intelligence and mental health. According to Imonz (2000) other empirical studies have confirmed the relation between spirituality and health. Significant relationship between mental health and professional performance with teachers' personality traits has been confirmed as well. Hamid and Dehghanizadeh found out that there is a significant relation between general health and professional performance.

Conceptual Model of the Research

Based on the surveyed theoretical and empirical background, the conceptual model of the research has been outlined as guidance for assessing the predicted relations among the desired variables. In the mentioned model, the four components of spiritual intelligence have been considered based on the model suggested by King (2008). The effect of spiritual intelligence on individual performance has been assumed based on Abdolrani, Emadeldin and Rashid's (2013) research. Furthermore, the intermediary role of the variable of mental health has been assumed based on the research performed by Saber et. al (2012).

Figure 1: Conceptual Model of the Research



Considering mentioned issues and conceptual model of research about the hypothesized relations among stimulators of impulsive buyer, the hypotheses developed are as follow:

1. Mental health has a mediating role in the effect of critical thinking on individual performance.
2. Mental health has a mediating role in the effect of Personal concept on individual performance.
3. Mental health has a mediating role in the effect of transcendental awareness on individual performance.
4. Mental health has a mediating role in the effect of developing vigilance state on individual performance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Typology

The method of the research is the quantitative, applied and descriptive-survey in terms of purpose, time dimension, type of data and data collection method respectively.

Population & Sample

The study population consisted of the managers and staff of a service organization in Tehran among whom 155 have been chosen randomly.

Data Collection Tools

The data collection tool utilizes in the research is a standardized questionnaire containing 26 measures. For spiritual intelligence variable, King (2008) has been used. Goldberg (1997) questionnaire has been used for mental health and eventually, Patterson (1922) questionnaire has been used for individual performance questionnaire. Data analysis method is structural equations model using Lisrel software. In order to assess reliability of the questionnaire, the pre-test was taken from 30 people of the population of the interest and using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha. These results confirm high reliability of the questionnaire (Table 1).

Table 1: Introducing the Data Collection Tools

Variables	The number of questions	Source	Reliability
critical thinking	4	King (2008)	0.78
Personal concept	4		0.79
Transcendental awareness	4		0.71
Developing vigilance state	4		0.75
Mental health	5	Goldberg (1997)	0.81
Individual performance	5	Patterson (1922)	0.79

Data Analysis Approach

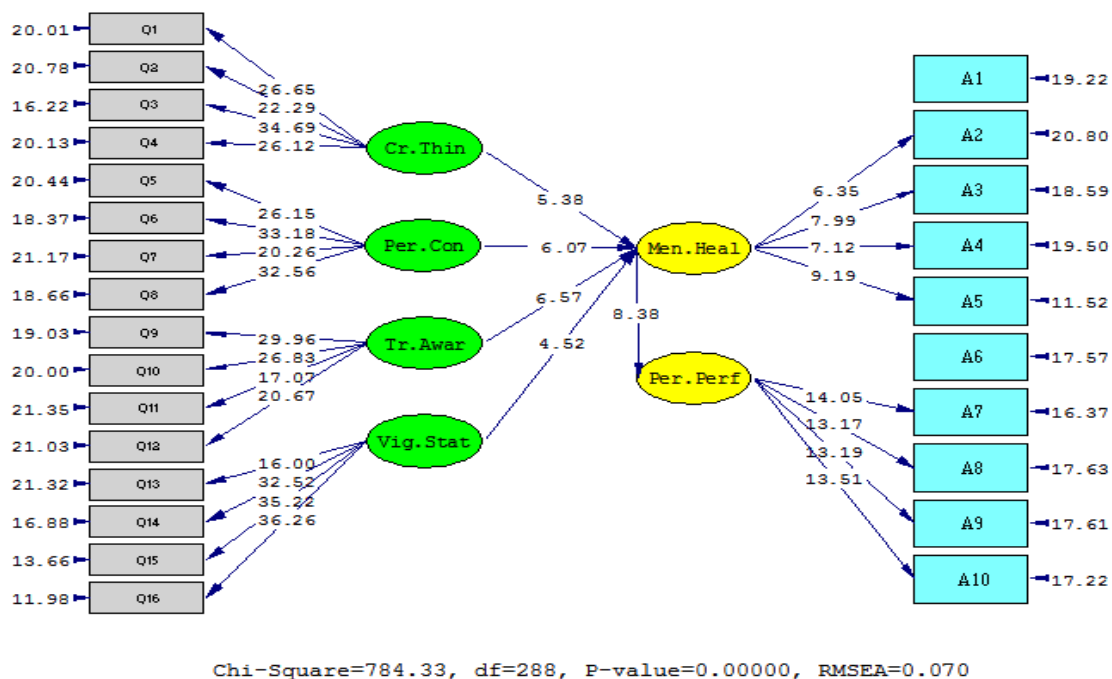
In order to analyze the collected data from samples and examine the relation among the concepts being studied in following research and their dimensions of confirmatory factor analysis and assess the assumptions of the research, structural equations modeling have been applied.

Structural equations modeling have been utilized in order to analyze the data. In the mentioned model, we want to identify whether the relations among the hidden adjectives that have been extracted based on the theory would be confirmed considering the aggregated data of the sample or not (Kalantari, 2009). There are 26 apparent and 6 latent variables in this model. In order to assess significance of the predicted relations in the assumptions significant model and in order to assess the amount of effectiveness of this effect standard model has been applied.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

In order to investigate the relationship expressed in the hypotheses, first significance of each predicted relationship will be studied using significance model and then using standard model, quality and extend of impact of each relationship will be evaluated. Figure2 shows the significance of predicted relationships in the model.

Figure 2: Significance of the Model of Studied Predictors of Personal Performance



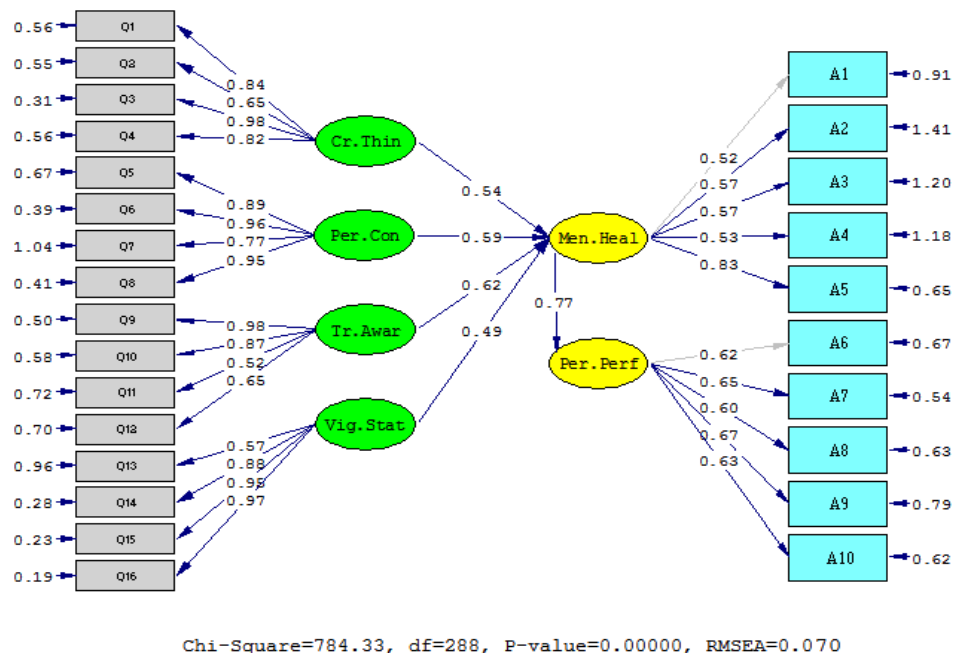
Based on the indexes of following table we can judge about fitness of the model of studied predictors of personal performance.

Table 2: Fitness Indexes of the Model of Studied Predictors of Performance

Indexes	Allowed value	Result	Assessment
Ration of chi square to degree of freedom	$\chi^2/df < 3$	2.72	Good fitness
P-value	p-value < .05	0.000	Good fitness
RMSEA	.05 < RMSEA < .08	0.07	Good fitness

Fitness indexes show the appropriateness model of measuring variables because the ratio of chi square to degree of freedom equals 2.57 and is less than 3, RMSEA (0.07) is more than 0.05 and p-value (0.0000) is less than 0.05. Based on this model, the impact of predicted relationships in all hypotheses are significant because their amount for the hypotheses are 5.38, 6.07, 6.57 and 4.52 respectively and all are greater than 1.96. Using the standard model also we can study the impact of relationships in this model whose significance have been approved.

Figure 3: Studied Predictors of Personal Performance in Standard State



In the standard status, the model indicates that the investigated relations among studied variables are confirmable. As a result, based on the results acquired from significant and standard models, the results could be summarized in table 3.

Table 3: Results Acquired from Investigating the Hypothesizes

Hypothesizes	Route: the mediating role mental health in the effect of	Standard Ratio	Significance Numbers	Results
1	critical thinking on individual performance.	$R^2 = 0.17$	5.38 and 8.38	confirmed
2	Personal concept on individual performance.	$R^2 = 0.05$	6.07 and 8.38	confirmed
3	transcendental awareness on individual performance.	$R^2 = 0.05$	6.57 and 8.38	confirmed
4	developing vigilance state on individual performance.	$R^2 = 0.05$	4.52 and 8.38	confirmed

Figure 3 represents the structural equation model related to the hypothesis of the research in the state of standard estimation. As it is clear, the acquired standard ratio for the relation between the critical thinking and mental health equals 0.54 which indicates significant correlation between these two variables. The acquired (R^2) equals 0.29 which indicates that the critical thinking determines 29% of the alterations of the mental health. In addition, the acquired ratio for the relation between mental health and individual performance is positive and equals 0.77 which indicates positive and significant relation between these two variables. The acquired (R^2) equals 0.59 which indicates that mental health determines 59% of the alternations of individual performance. As a result, considering the mediating role of mental health, the indirect effect of critical thinking on individual performance is equal to 0.17. Similarly, the indirect relationship between other dimensions of spiritual intelligence (Personal concept, transcendental awareness and developing vigilance state) with personal performance with considering the mediating role of mental health could be explained whose results has been presented in table 3.

CONCLUSION

In the current research, the effect of spiritual intelligence on the staff's performance and the role of mental health regarding it have been studied. The results indicated that spiritual intelligence has a positive and significant effect on individual intelligence and the mediator role of mental health is significant here as well; consequently, it could be expected that those staff that are privileged with a higher spiritual intelligence, perform better. Considering the findings of the previous researches, spiritual intelligence could be improved through instruction (Hosseini and colleagues, 2010). The mentioned finding is compatible with the results of Tisuan Chin and colleagues (2010) which confirm the relation between these two variables. One of the other findings of the research was the fact that spiritual intelligence has a positive and significant

effect on mental health. The mentioned finding is compatible with numerous researches that confirmed this effect (Bahar and colleagues, 2005; Vang and colleagues, 2008).

The current research has added new findings in the field of existing knowledge regarding spirituality at the organization in such a way that the role of spirituality in individual performance of the staff has been confirmed and the role of one of the intermediary factors of this relation which is mental health has been recognized. Furthermore, most of the previous researches have assessed the role of spirituality in improving organizational performance (Komala and Ganesh, 2007; Miles et al., 2005); however, the current research has concentrated on individual performance and all of its under-assessment variables have been in the level of individual analysis. Based on this, it could be stated that those managers who endeavor to change their staff's attitude in order to improve their performance would be able to consider spirituality as one of the fundamental motivations of performance. Considering acquired results regarding direct and indirect effect of spirituality on the organization individual performance it is suggested that human resources' managers proceed to improve staff's spirituality using material and spiritual motivators. Considering the fact that peoples' spiritual intelligence could be improved through instruction, it is suggested that the indexes of spiritual intelligence would be improved among the staff and researchers by holding appropriate and appealing instructional courses. Propagation of religious beliefs and spiritual-oriented culture could be effective regarding this. Reinforcing religious beliefs, holding liberal meetings and discussions could be effective regarding this. Dedicating meaning and identity to what individuals do at the organization, reinforcing goal-orientation and self-worth and communication among the researchers and organization, explanation of human being's munificence and encouraging being effective at the organization are among the factors that could reinforce spirituality at the organization.

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Execution of the current research has been along with a number of limitations. One of the limitations of the current research is the fact that it has not assessed modifying variables such as age, level of education, income and record of service which could be effective on individual performance. Measuring independent, dependent and intermediary variables of a single group of participants in the form of self-report is one of the other limitations of the research; thus, it is suggested that modifier variables and other intermediary variables, using other data collection tools and particularly, results different from previous researches would be considered in future studies.

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