

Investigation Role of personality traits in spiritual intelligence (Case study in Iranian private Co.)

Roghayeh Abdali¹, Leila Hooshmand^{2*}, Zahra Hooshmand³

¹ Department of Public Management, Faculty of Management and Economics, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran

² Department of Public Management, Faculty of Management, Tehran University, Tehran, Iran

³ Department of Public Management, Faculty of Management and Accounting, Allameh Tabatabaie University, Tehran, Iran

hooshmandleila@gmail.com

Abstract: The present study aimed to assess a) the relationship between personality traits and spiritual intelligence and b) the relationship between demographic characteristics of the respondents and spiritual intelligence. In this correlation research, 311 employees (168 females and 143 males) in some Iranian private companies completed personality traits questionnaire NO-FFI (Costa & McCrae, 1992) and spiritual intelligence scale (King, 2008). Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficient, independent-samples T test and one-way ANOVA by means of SPSS version 18. The results show that there is a positive and significant relationship between extroversion and conscientiousness as personality traits and spiritual intelligence, but the other three, Neuroticism, openness to experience and agreeableness don't have a significant relation with spiritual intelligence. The other finding of this research is that except one of demographic variable (education level); there is no significant relationship between the demographic variables and spiritual intelligence. The main contribution of the paper is to provide empirical evidence about the relationship between spiritual intelligence and personality traits that was considered partially. The Implications of these findings and suggestions for future research are also discussed.

[Roghayeh Abdali, Leila Hooshmand, Zahra Hooshmand. **Investigation Role of personality traits in spiritual intelligence (Case study in Iranian private Co.)**. *Researcher* 2015;7(5):14-18]. (ISSN: 1553-9865). <http://www.sciencepub.net/researcher>. 3

Key words: personality traits, spiritual intelligence, private organizations

1. Introduction

In an age where speed and changes is the modern god, where many organizations are renewing their approach and strategies by necessity and where choice and flexibility are the urgency of retention, it seems that a new and deeper intelligence is needed to help the personnel to work better and more effectively (George, 2006). This intelligence is called spiritual intelligence.

Spiritual Intelligence which has been pioneered in recent years by many authors (e.g., Luckcock 2008; Zohar and Marshall, 2000; King, 2008; Levin, 2001; Pava and Primeaux, 2004; Howell, 2004), as Vaughan (2002) expressed, is concerned with spirit and the inner life of mind and its relationship to a man identity. "Spiritual intelligence implies a capacity for a deep understanding of existential questions and insight into multiple levels of consciousness. It also implies awareness of spirit as the ground of being or as the creative life force of evolution (Vaughan, 2002, p.18).

Organizations are not spiritual but the people working in them are, and spirituality is experienced by persons inherently (Konz and Ryan, 1999; Gibbons, 1999). To quote Ashforth and Pratt (2003), Tombaugh et al. (2011) asserted, "Spirituality is necessarily about the individual and the locus of spirituality resides in

the individual". Clearly, different people have different abilities and skills in spiritual intelligence in light of variations in personality features, spiritual tendencies, religious backgrounds, and the religious practices and activities they follow (Hosseini et al., 2010). So, probably we can say that the personality traits are concerned with personal differences in organizing and expressing spiritual intelligence (Emmons, 2000; Wolman, 2001).

Different researchers have expressed different opinions about personality and spiritual intelligence. Hosseini et al. (2010) proposed that spiritual intelligence can, in part, indicate combination of intelligence-associated processing and personality parameters. Allport's (1950) postulates that spirituality must be hypothesized as a prospect/face of the structure of the individual's personality. MacHovec (2002) has likewise expressed that spiritual intelligence may be considered as a personality attribute that differs among individuals in strength and nature of expressing. He has contended that some personality traits are more in accordance with the spiritual intelligence characteristics than others. From different point of views, Piedmont (1999) has claimed that spirituality may show a separate attribute of personality (Hosseini et al. 2010).

Hosseini et al. (2010) in their article reported in an effort to examine various personality theories, the characteristics of emotional stability, agreeableness and openness to experience as personality traits seem to express the spiritual intelligence commonly. Sinetar (2000) contended that (in line with Piedmont's (1999) thought) the spiritual intelligence may present a combination of personality factors and the very concept can be expanded.

Nasel (2004) claimed that "spiritual intelligence involves not only cognitive components, but also components related to experience and personality, exceeding intelligence criteria like many before him (e.g., Wolman, 2001)" (pp.46-47). In an effort to examine the relationship between personality traits and spiritual intelligence among university students in Iran, Amrai et al. (2011) resulted that there is a negative relationship between neuroticism and spiritual intelligence and positive relation among conscientiousness, agreeableness and extroversion accordingly. Openness had no relationship with spiritual intelligence.

Then, it is clear that the concept of spiritual intelligence has not been properly improved yet and further studies are required to demonstrate the relationship between spiritual intelligence and personality (Amram and Dryer, 2008; Hosseini et al., 2010; Amrai et al., 2011). While many inquiries have been done on relationship among different types of intelligence with personality (Dawda & Hart, 2000; Davies et al, 1998; Newsome et al., 2000; Palmer et al, 2002; Furnham et al, 1998; Moutafi et al, 2003; Ackermann & Heggstad, 1997; Kyllonen, 1997; Austin et al, 2002; Chamorro et al, 2005), there is a little investigation in spiritual subject. So the current study aims at investigating relationship between personality traits and spiritual intelligence in Iranian private companies.

Method

In this correlation research, 311 employees of Iranian private companies were chosen using random sampling. The NEO-Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) developed by Costa and McCrae (1992) was used in the study. This inventory is a short form of the NEO-Personality Inventory. Each of the five factors was measured using 12 items for a total of 60 items. Costa and McCrae (1992) have verified the existence of five independent personality factors with coefficient alpha of .70 or higher for the items measuring each of the factors. Self-report scale for spiritual intelligence was made by King (2008). Its Cronbach's Alpha turned out to be 0.95 and its validity 0.84 through halving. A five-point Likert scale was used ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. Data were analyzed through applying Pearson correlation coefficient, independent-samples T test and one-way ANOVA.

Results

A total of 311 employees (168 females and 143 males) in Iranian private companies participated in filling the questionnaires, which is a response rate of 95%. Anonymity and confidential treatment of the responses were assured. Respondents were requested to provide demographic information as element of the self-report questionnaire, for example, gender, age, education level, and years of work in this organization. Most of the respondents (95%) are 40 years old or younger. 61% of them have worked for the company for five to ten years; almost 71% hold a university degree.

1. Relationship between the personality traits and spiritual intelligence

Data were analyzed through applying Pearson correlation coefficient. Table 1 presents Correlation matrix between personality traits and spiritual intelligence.

Table 1- Correlation Matrix between personality traits and spiritual intelligence

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Neuroticism	1					
2. Extroversion	-.187**	1				
3. Openness	-.059	.619**	1			
4. Agreeableness	.280**	.202**	.096	1		
5. Conscientiousness	-.289**	.488**	.384**	.058	1	
6. Spiritual intelligence	-.001	.439**	.071	-.012	.141*	1

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 shows that the highest level of correlation belongs to extroversion and spiritual intelligence ($P < 0/01$, $r = 0.439$), also there is a significant

relationship between conscientiousness and personality traits ($P < 0/05$, $r = 0.141$) while it does not have any significant relationship with Neuroticism, openness to

experience and Agreeableness.

2. Relationship between spiritual intelligence and demographic characteristics

For clarifying the relationship between gender and spiritual intelligence, independent-samples T test was used. The result of this test showed that there is not a significant relationship between gender and spiritual intelligence (F=1.927 and sig=.166). For examining the relationship among education levels, age and level of seniority and the dependant variable of spiritual

intelligence, one-way ANOVA and then LSD and Scheffe tests were applied. The results show age (F=1.222 and sig=.296) and level of seniority (F=2.203 and sig=.088) do not have a significant relationship with spiritual intelligence, but education level has a significant relationship with spiritual intelligence. Table 2 presents the results of one-way ANOVA. According to these results (F=11.897 and sig=.00), there are a significant relationship between education level and spiritual intelligence.

Table 2- the results of one-way ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	9.871	2	4.935	11.897	.000
Within Groups	127.768	308	.415		
Total	137.639	310			

For determining which group of education level is different from others, LSD and Scheffe tests were used. As shown in table 3, the employees who do not have any academic degree have higher level of spiritual intelligence.

Table3- the results of Scheffe and LSD tests

	(I) education	(J) education	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Scheffe	Diploma	Bs	.56628*	.12356	.000
		≤MSc	.65094*	.14246	.000
	Bs	Diploma	-.56628*	.12356	.000
		≤MSc	.08466	.09381	.666
	≤MSc	diploma	-.65094*	.14246	.000
		Bs	-.08466	.09381	.666
LSD	Diploma	Bs	.56628*	.12356	.000
		≤MSc	.65094*	.14246	.000
	Bs	Diploma	-.56628*	.12356	.000
		≤MSc	.08466	.09381	.367
	≤MSc	diploma	-.65094*	.14246	.000
		Bs	-.08466	.09381	.367

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Discussion

This article concentrated on examining the relationship between personality traits and spiritual intelligence in Iranian private companies. The main contribution of the paper is to provide empirical evidence about the relationship between personality traits and spiritual intelligence that was considered partially. The results of data analysis show that there is a positive and significant relationship between extroversion and conscientiousness as personality traits and spiritual intelligence. This result is in line with the studies related to general intelligence (Austin et al, 2002) and emotional intelligence (Palmer et al, 2002; Dawda & Hart, 2000; Davies et al, 1998; Newsome et al., 2000). But the other three, neuroticism, openness to experience (in line with Amrai et al., 2011) and agreeableness do not have a

significant relationship with spiritual intelligence.

The other finding of this research is that there is no significant relationship between the demographic variables and spiritual intelligence. This result does not approve the finding of king (2008) that observed a significant positive correlation between spiritual intelligence and age. But the variable of education level has a significant relationship with spiritual intelligence (in line with King, 2008). After doing LSD and Scheffe tests, it was found that those who with academic degree have lower level of spiritual intelligence.

The private organizations seeking competitive advantages try to employ the persons who have an academic degree. As the research results show, almost 71% of personnel hold a university degree. Rainey and Bozeman (2000) cited that private-sector

employees place higher value on money and high income as ultimate ends in work and in life. They are more likely to choose "high income" as the most important aspect of their jobs, and consistently less likely to choose "a feeling of accomplishment" as the most important aspect of a job. Nowadays, it is clear that besides the physical/material components of life, such as money, property and objects, spirituality is an essential factor to stay calm and focused in the face of crisis and chaos, and to obtain a more selfless and altruistic attitude toward others and more enlightened and relaxed perspective on life. So, it is necessary that policy makers and managers of human resources in the private organizations notice employee's spiritual intelligence when recruiting new personnel. Also it is an important sign for Iranian higher education system that determines suitable educational topics for promoting the student's spirituality.

Some research limitations may restrict the conclusions drawn from this study. One of the limitations of this study is the self-evaluation of the questionnaires, that is, some of the respondents of the study could not understand the questions regarding the spiritual intelligence fully, which was not meaningful to them. Another limitation of this study was the unavailability of other studies on relationship between personality traits and spiritual intelligence for comparison. Future research may be conducted to find out the relationship between personality traits and spiritual intelligence in public companies and compare the results with the present research results. Also, this research can be implemented in other countries to explore the status of knowledge sharing in those countries. Moreover, as King (2008) suggested, additional studies are needed in order to clarify the relationship between the demographic variables and spiritual intelligence.

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5/4/2015