



## Relationship between spiritual intelligence and social intelligence with job stress among teachers of Marivan County, Iran

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### Original Article

#### Abstract

**BACKGROUND:** A teacher's job stress is a teacher's experience of negative and unpleasant feelings such as discomfort, anxiety, depression, and anger that are caused by some aspects of a teacher's work, and has unpleasant consequences. This study aimed to determine the relationship between spiritual intelligence and social intelligence with job stress in teachers of Marivan County, Iran, in 2016.

**METHODS:** This was a cross-sectional descriptive-analytical study. The population of this study was education teachers of Marivan County; using a sample size formula, 443 of them were randomly selected. Data collection tools were Osipow Job Stress Scale, Spiritual Intelligence Scale, and Social Intelligence Scale. The data were collected in autumn and winter and were analyzed using SPSS software.

**RESULTS:** 70.2% of the samples were men and the others were women. The mean of the teachers' job stress score was  $165.43 \pm 25.67$  (total score of the questionnaire: 300). This score indicates that the occupational stress level of the samples is higher than the average. The mean score of spiritual intelligence of the teachers was  $100.70 \pm 11.63$  out of 116, the total score of the questionnaire. Of the social intelligence total score (36), the mean score of social intelligence was  $21.29 \pm 4.72$ , which was higher than the average.

**CONCLUSION:** The results of the study indicated that the occupational stress of teachers was higher than average, and this stress could have different reasons. Educational leaders and planners should look for reasons and factors that affect teachers' job stress.

**KEYWORDS:** Job Stress; Social Intelligence; Intelligence; Teacher; Education

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### Introduction

Teacher's work stress is the teacher's experience of negative and unpleasant emotions such as discomfort, anxiety, depression, and anger caused by some aspects

of a teacher's work which leads to unpleasant consequences that can be attributed to issues such as reduced teacher morale, discouragement, classroom abuse, and health disturbances.<sup>1,2</sup> Kyriacou and Sutcliffe identified factors affecting occupational stress such as high workload, lack of professional growth, social disparities, inadequate relationships between staff, factors related to

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the number and academic achievement of students, and quantitative factors of salary and benefits.<sup>3,4</sup> Teachers' job stress as a global problem has given many studies in different countries, and current theoretical models emphasize the nature of the interaction of teachers' work stress; in these patterns, the role of mediator and moderator variables is also mentioned. These variables include organizational characteristics such as the organization's size and organizational dynamics, environmental factors such as the number of students in the classroom, the type of manager's management in the school and the support of teachers, the amount of salary received, occupational safety, and individual characteristics such as age, gender, resources and methods of coping, skill level in work, personality type A and source of control (internal and external), etc.<sup>5</sup> Spiritual intelligence is a kind of intelligence through which we can solve issues of meaning and value, enriching life and activities in a wider context and helping us understand what action is more meaningful.<sup>6-8</sup> Moallem et al. stated that there was a positive correlation between mental health and spiritual intelligence. There was also a negative relationship between spiritual intelligence and depression, hostility, anxiety, aggression, and self-affirmation.<sup>9</sup> Lucker et al. suggested that internally-oriented teachers had lower job stress than externally-oriented teachers and teachers with high occupational stress had more religious coping behaviors compared to those who had lower job stress.<sup>10</sup> Padmanabhan suggested that internal control and job satisfaction played an important role in stress levels experienced. People who feel they can control their external environment experience less stress.<sup>11</sup> In another study, Habibi et al. have shown that occupational stress threatens the mental health of teachers.<sup>12</sup> Social intelligence is the other variable studied in this research. Social intelligence was introduced in 1920. It is

defined as the ability to recognize individuals and the ability to act creatively in human relationships.<sup>13</sup> Nijholt et al. defined social intelligence as an essential ability for individuals to communicate, understand, and interact effectively with others.<sup>14</sup> Sells showed that social intelligence was widely defined as a kind of intelligence behind interactions and behaviors.<sup>15</sup> Wallenius et al. defined social intelligence as a better understanding of the relationships between human beings, feelings, thoughts, and behaviors.<sup>16</sup> Since attention to teachers is one of the key pillars of education, it requires special sensitivity and the secretaries of the organization are implementing educational programs at the front of the system; the realization of the bulk of the goals of the organization is in their hands and disregarding the problem of mental health and occupational stress of teachers will hurt the students and the educational system.<sup>17-20</sup>

Based on this, it is necessary to study the level of job stress of teachers and its relationship with spiritual intelligence to determine whether there is a relationship between teachers' spiritual intelligence and their job stress. The secretaries of the organization are implementing educational programs at the forefront of the organization and they are implementing a major part of the organization's goals. The lack of attention to the issue of mental health and the occupational stress of teachers has left school students and the educational system in a hurry. Based on this, it is necessary to study the level of job stress of teachers and its relationship with spiritual intelligence to determine whether there is a relationship between teachers' spiritual intelligence and their job stress. Therefore, the present study was designed to determine the relationship between spiritual intelligence and social intelligence with job stress.

## Methods

This was a cross-sectional study performed in

Marivan City, Kurdistan Province, Iran, in 2016. The population was all teachers in Marivan County. Based on the following formula ( $P = 0.5$ ,  $z = 1.96$ ,  $d = 0.05$ ), 443 cases were randomly selected.

$$n = \frac{Z^2(p * q)^2}{d^2}$$

Before starting the research, the correspondence was issued with the Marivan Education Authority, and the license was issued by the administration. The data were collected using 3 questionnaires including the Osipow Job Stress Scale with 60 items in 6 domains with a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (never) to 5 (always). The reliability of this questionnaire in Iran was reviewed by Khatoni et al., through a re-test method. Accordingly, the correlation coefficient of the questionnaire is 90% and shows the correlation of the questions.<sup>21</sup> Spiritual Intelligence Questionnaire includes 29 items in 4 domains with a 4-point Likert scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 4 (completely agree). The Cronbach's alpha for the total scale has been calculated as 0.88.<sup>22</sup> Tet's Social Intelligence Questionnaire includes 36 items with 1 (correct) and 0 (wrong). The Cronbach's alpha of this questionnaire is also reported as 0.85.<sup>23</sup> In our study, the Cronbach's alpha of the questionnaires was more than 0.89.

SPSS software (version 20, IBM Corporation, Armonk, NY, USA) was used to

analyze the data. For descriptive purposes, descriptive statistics [including frequency, ratio, mean and standard deviation (SD)] and for analytical purposes, t-test, correlation coefficient tests (examining the relationship between job stress and binary variables such as sex), and analysis of variance (ANOVA) (study of the relationship between job stress variable and more than two variables such as educational level, the field of study) were used. The ethics code was 83.1395.

## Results

Four hundred and forty-three (100%) of the samples completed the questionnaires correctly. Three hundred and eleven (70.2%) of them were men and 371 cases (83.7%) of them were married. Sixty-four (14.4%) of them had associate's degree, 286 (64.6%) had bachelor's degree, and others (21%) had master's and PhD degrees. The mean scores of job stress, spiritual intelligence, and social intelligence were  $165.43 \pm 25.70$  [confidence interval (CI): 163.03-167.83],  $100.70 \pm 11.63$  (CI: 99.61-101.79), and  $21.19 \pm 4.72$  (CI: 20.75-21.63), respectively. The highest and lowest means of job stress, 175.26 and 161.25, were observed in women and men, respectively. Table 1 shows that there is a relationship between job stress and gender ( $P < 0.001$ ), job stress and teaching course ( $P < 0.001$ ), and job stress with a degree of education ( $P = 0.012$ ).

**Table 1. The relationship between job stress and demographic variables in teachers of Marivan County, Iran**

Variables	Categories	Mean $\pm$ SD	Test statistics	df	P
Gender	Men	161.25 $\pm$ 25.72	t = -5.411	441	< 0.001
	Women	175.26 $\pm$ 22.89			
Teaching course	Elementary	171.66 $\pm$ 26.98	F = 6.995	-	< 0.001
	Middle school	162.99 $\pm$ 25.73			
	High school	161.74 $\pm$ 23.70			
Teaching place	Urban	165.23 $\pm$ 25.00	t = -0.248	441	0.804
	Rural	165.90 $\pm$ 27.41			
Marital status	Single	166.65 $\pm$ 23.80	F = 0.543	-	0.581
	Married	165.39 $\pm$ 26.22			
Degree of education	Associate	175.06 $\pm$ 25.43	F = 3.722	-	0.012
	Bachelor	163.76 $\pm$ 25.06			
	Master	163.47 $\pm$ 27.04			
	PhD	170.67 $\pm$ 19.85			

df: Degree of freedom; SD: Standard deviation

**Table 2. The relationship between social intelligence and demographic variables in teachers of Marivan County, Iran**

Variables	Categories	Mean $\pm$ SD	Test statistics	df	P
Gender	Men	21.13 $\pm$ 4.73	t = -0.432	364	0.670
	Women	21.34 $\pm$ 4.72			
Teaching course	Elementary	22.04 $\pm$ 4.91	F = 4.603	-	0.011
	Middle school	20.29 $\pm$ 4.90			
	High school	21.03 $\pm$ 4.35			
Teaching place	Urban	21.87 $\pm$ 4.89	t = 5.380	304*	< 0.001
	Rural	19.53 $\pm$ 3.81			
Marital status	Single	20.60 $\pm$ 4.65	F = 0.989	-	0.373
	Married	21.26 $\pm$ 4.76			
Degree of education	Associate	20.91 $\pm$ 3.56	F = 1.282	-	0.280
	Bachelor	20.99 $\pm$ 4.74			
	Master	21.94 $\pm$ 5.44			
	PhD	23.00 $\pm$ 2.37			

\*According to the Levene's test, the assumption of variance in two groups was rejected.  
df: Degree of freedom; SD: Standard deviation

The highest and lowest means of social intelligence, 23 and 19.53, were observed in teachers with a PhD degree and rural school teachers, respectively (Table 2). The highest and lowest means of spiritual intelligence, 110.33 and 97.20, were observed in teachers with a PhD degree and single teachers (Table 1).

The results of Tukey's post-hoc test showed that the stress of the elementary teachers had a significant difference with the middle school teachers, and the stress of the elementary teachers had a significant difference with the high school teachers, but the stress of the middle

school teachers with the high school group did not have a significant difference (Table 2).

The results showed that the difference in social intelligence in different educational levels was significant. This difference was due to the difference between the associate's degree and bachelor's degree and the difference between the other groups was not significant. Besides, social intelligence in people with different teaching places had a significant difference in the way that teachers in the village group had lower social intelligence (Table 3).

**Table 3. The relationship between spiritual intelligence and demographic variables in teachers of Marivan County, Iran\***

Variables	Categories	Mean	Median	Mean ratings	Test statistics	df	P
Gender	Men	99.62	101.0	210.87	-2.810	-	0.005
	Women	103.25	106.0	248.22			
Teaching course	Elementary	100.07	100.0	211.58	2.180	2	0.336
	Middle school	102.10	106.0	235.33			
	High school	100.40	103.5	222.73			
Teaching place	Urban	100.69	102.0	221.15	-0.218	-	0.830
	Rural	100.73	105.0	224.07			
Marital status	Single	97.20	99.0	188.48	5.463	2	0.065
	Married	101.25	104.0	227.33			
Degree of education	Associate	100.17	101.0	222.09	6.139	3	0.105
	Bachelor	100.96	104.0	222.84			
	Master	99.56	100.0	210.77			
	PhD	110.33	111.0	344.00			

\*Regarding the fact that the distribution of spiritual intelligence was not normal, nonparametric tests were used.  
df: Degree of freedom

**Table 4. The relationship between job stress, spiritual intelligence, and social intelligence with age and years of work in teachers of Marivan County, Iran**

Variables	Job stress	Spiritual intelligence	Social intelligence	Significance type
Age	-0.028	0.064	0.079	r
	0.557	0.178	0.096	P
Years of work	-0.030	0.052	-0.103	r
	0.523	0.273	0.035*	P

\*Significant at the level of 0.05

The results showed that there was only a relationship between spiritual intelligence and gender ( $P = 0.005$ ); spiritual intelligence in women was higher than in men, and differences in other groups were not significant. The Spearman correlation coefficient was used to investigate the relationship between job stress, spiritual intelligence, and social intelligence with age and years of work (Table 4).

Table 4 shows that only the relationship between years of work and social intelligence is significant ( $r = -0.103$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ), which indicates an inverse relationship between the two variables, although this relationship is not very strong. The correlation coefficient was used to investigate the relationship between job stress, spiritual intelligence, and social intelligence. The results showed that the relationship between job stress and spiritual intelligence and the relationship between job stress and social intelligence were significant, but the relationship between spiritual intelligence and social intelligence was not significant (Table 5).

## Discussion

This study which investigated the relationship between spiritual intelligence and social intelligence with job stress in teachers of

Marivan County showed that the mean score of job stress among teachers was  $165.43 \pm 25.70$  (out of 300, total score of the questionnaire). This finding can be alarming and shows that teachers are suffering from job stress, which can contribute to their effectiveness and success in teaching. The results of the study indicated that the occupational stress of women was higher than men's job stress and this difference was significant. Elementary teachers had higher job stress than teachers in other educational levels and this difference was significant. Single teachers had higher job stress than other teachers, but this difference was not significant. The results of the study also indicated that teachers with an associate degree had higher occupational stress than other teachers, and this difference was statistically significant.

In this regard, Moradmand and Karimi indicated that the studied teachers had a high job stress score and there was a significant statistical relationship between the studied variables and their job stress.<sup>24</sup> Jin et al. in research among teachers in Hong Kong, China, have shown that there is the greatest correlation between job stress and variables such as student issues, high workload, and lack of needed information.<sup>25</sup>

**Table 5. The relationship between job stress, spiritual intelligence, and social intelligence in teachers of Marivan County, Iran**

Variables	Job stress	Spiritual intelligence	Social intelligence	Significance type
Job stress	-	0.155**	0.138*	r
	-	0.001	0.004	P
Spiritual intelligence	0.155**	-	0.063**	r
	0.001	-	0.184	P
Social intelligence	0.138*	0.063**	-	r
	0.004	0.184	-	P

\*Pearson correlation coefficient; \*\*Spearman correlation coefficient

Nasurdin et al. focused on the relationship between job stress and attention.<sup>26</sup> Of the social intelligence total score (= 36), the mean score of social intelligence was  $21.19 \pm 4.27$ , which was higher than the average. The results of the study showed that the mean score of social intelligence of male and female teachers did not differ significantly, and both groups had mean scores above average. Elementary school teachers had a higher social intelligence score than the other teachers, and this difference was statistically significant. The results also showed that teachers who taught in the city had higher social intelligence scores than the other teachers, and this difference was statistically significant. Married teachers had a higher social intelligence score than unmarried teachers. Teachers with a PhD degree had a higher social intelligence score than the other teachers.

In the field of social intelligence, Allameh and Abassi Rostami research has shown that social intelligence has a direct and positive effect on the leadership style of directors.<sup>27</sup> Since social intelligence has a positive relationship with human capabilities, it can also play a role in controlling occupational stress, and people with higher social intelligence are expected to be less stressed. The findings of this study also show a significant relationship between social intelligence and job stress. One of the other findings of this study is that the mean score of spiritual intelligence of the surveyed teachers was  $100.70 \pm 11.63$  out of 116, the total score of the questionnaire. This finding suggests that the studied teachers have a high spiritual intelligence score, which reflects their strong spirits and their close and good relationship with the universe and the creator of this universe. The results of the study showed that the mean score of spiritual intelligence in women was higher than in men, and this difference was statistically significant. The average spiritual intelligence score of middle school teachers was higher than the other teachers, but this difference was not

statistically significant. The results also showed that the spiritual intelligence score of rural teachers, married teachers, and teachers with a PhD degree was higher than the other teachers, but this difference was not statistically significant. The correlation coefficient test showed that there was a reverse relationship between age and job experience with job stress, which means that the level of job stress in teachers decreased with increasing age and years of work. Less experienced teachers seem to have job stress, and this suggests that acquiring skills and experience is one of the factors of success in teachers and can play a key role in using teachers with more teaching backgrounds in schools and this group of teachers can work more successfully and harder in teaching lessons. The results of the correlation coefficient test showed that there was a positive relationship between age and years of work with spiritual intelligence and social intelligence. Although this relationship was significant only about years of work and social intelligence, an inverse relationship was observed between social intelligence and years of work. This finding suggests that their social intelligence has been reduced by increase of years of work and this could be a hazard that disturbs the educational system; therefore, education managers need to use younger and more capable teachers at some critical educational levels. The results of the correlation coefficient test showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between job stress with spiritual intelligence and social intelligence, which means that with increasing job stress, their spiritual intelligence and their social intelligence also increased. In this regard, Baezzat and Sharifzadeh indicated that there was a reverse and significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and job stress among the employees of Mazandaran University, Iran.<sup>28</sup>

This finding is not consistent with the results of this study. Spiritual intelligence is a

set of activities that affects the softness and flexibility of behavior, and leads to self-awareness and a deep insight into life and purposefulness of one's life, in such a way that goals are transcended beyond materialism and this process has led to a person's adaptation to the workplace for the satisfaction and pleasure of others. Employees who have experienced spiritual life can develop themselves and their organizations with methods that are consistent with organizational goals. Therefore, with the growth and development of spirituality in the organizations, creativity, honesty and trust, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, job participation, conscientiousness, and the level of motivation of employees can be increased, all of which directly improve the performance and effectiveness of the organization. The findings of the present study also show a positive relationship between spiritual intelligence and social intelligence; however, this relationship is not significant.

### Conclusion

The results of the study indicated that the job stress of teachers was higher than the average, and this stress could have different reasons. Educational leaders and planners should look for reasons to discover the factors involved in teachers' job stress. The results of the study showed that there was a significant statistical relationship between job stress and spiritual intelligence. This relationship can help managers to better and more accurately plan for higher spiritual intelligence of teachers and subsequently reduce their job stress.

### Conflict of Interests

Authors have no conflict of interests.

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