



Correlation of Spiritual Well-being Psychological Capital among University Students-Iran

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Abstract

Psychological capital is one of the new concepts raised in positivism in psychology, which can play a major role in increasing one's ability in different aspects of life, especially in spiritual well-being. Therefore, the present study aimed to investigate the relationship between the components of spiritual well-being and psychological capital of students at Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences, Iran in 2017. In this descriptive-correlational study, the statistical population consisted of 400 students at Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences, who were selected through cluster sampling. To collect the required data, a demographic questionnaire, the spiritual well-being scale (SWB) by Paloutzian & Ellison and the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) by Luthans were used. In addition, the data were analyzed using the SPSS Statistics Software Version 23.0. The results of the present study revealed that the mean scores of students' spiritual well-being and psychological capital measured 3.60 ± 0.49 and 3.55 ± 0.44 , respectively. Further, the results of Pearson correlation coefficient indicated that the students' spiritual well-being and psychological capital positively and significantly correlated ($r=0.42$). According to the findings of the present study, the students' spiritual well-being affects their psychological capital. So, it can be concluded that religious orientation and spirituality can promote the psychological capital of individuals, and this approach can be used to provide services relating to mental well-being.

Keywords: Spiritual well-being, Psychological Capital, University Students.

1. Introduction

Psychological capital is one of the indexes of positivism in psychology, which is defined with characteristics such as belief in one's ability to succeed, perseverance in pursuing goals, creating positive attributes, and bearing problems [1]. Psychological capital, derived from positive organizational behavior, is a new concept that has recently been introduced by Luthans. This concept consists of factors such as hope, optimism, and self-efficacy [2, 3]. Self-efficacy means one's belief and confidence in one's ability to succeed in performing tasks [4-6]. Resilience is a toughness indicator, which means how constructively one works under hard circumstances. Those with high resilience are able to keep on trying and coping with situations effectively in the face of unpleasant and stressful situations and events towards success [7-9]. In addition, optimistic people associate positive events in life with permanent and personal factors, and vice versa [10, 11]. Hope is also a state whereby one is able to identify real, challenging, attractive, accessible, and predictable goals for himself/herself, thereby encouraging them to achieve their desired goals [12, 13].

On the other hand, alongside the psychological capital, spiritual well-being conceptually goes back to the fact that one is able to interact inwardly with himself/herself and the creator of the universe who is the source of the truth and continues to function purposefully with the meanings and values in which he/she believes [14-16]. In fact, spiritual well-being is the newest

dimension of well-being, along with other well-being issues such as physical, psychological, and social well-being [17-19]. Spiritual well-being has two aspects: religious and existential. Religious well-being reflects one's relationship with God or an absolute power, whereas existential well-being also includes one's relationship with oneself, others, and the environment. In general, it can be understood as the ability to integrate different aspects of existence and to have different choices [15, 20]. In fact, it seems that one's enjoyment of spiritual well-being, especially the youth, will equip him/her with beliefs and attitudes, thereby leading to positive outcomes for the person, such as psychological capital [21-23].

In a study performed by Golparvar [24], the results indicated that psychological capital laid the groundwork for spiritual well-being and the establishment of coherence and consistency in meaning, purpose and supreme values of the world in the life of nurses. Culbertson et al. [25] expressed that more satisfaction, vitality and well-being were reported by university students with higher psychological capitals. The results of a study conducted by Bayrami and Movahedi [26] showed that social skills training affected all components of psychological capital. In addition, Golparvar [24] reported that psychological capital significantly and positively correlated with spiritual well-being. Similarly, it was shown that there was a positive and significant relationship between psychological capital and each of spiritual well-being and mindfulness. Taheri Kharamah et al. [27] revealed that there was a significant correlation between spiritual-religious well-being and mental well-being.

Additionally, as for the role of spiritual well-being in optimism and hope, research has that in the face of hardships, such as chronic illnesses or in the aging period, one is able to keep on with life happily provided that he/she is equipped with spiritual well-being [28, 29].

Since students are considered the main pillars of human resources in any country, and given the importance of the role of students in the development of societies, it is natural that the study of the factors affecting the growth, satisfaction of psychological needs and physical and psychological well-being of this stratum is of particular importance [30, 31]. On the one hand, entrance to university is seen as a major event in the lives of efficient and active young people in any country, which is often accompanied by a lot of changes in their social and individual relationships [32, 33]. Therefore, due to the significance of the issue of spiritual well-being and psychological capital in students and considering that there was no study on the students of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences, the present study aimed to investigate the relationship between the components of spiritual well-being and psychological capital of students at Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences, Iran in 2017.

2. Method

In this descriptive-correlational study, the statistical population consisted of 400 students studying at Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences in 2017, who were selected through cluster sampling. To collect the required data, a demographic questionnaire, the spiritual well-being scale (SWB) by Paloutzian & Ellison and the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) by Luthans were used. In addition, the inclusion criteria were agreement to participate in the research and studying in the second semester of the academic year 2017, whereas the incomplete questionnaires were excluded from the study.

Demographic Questionnaire: The first part of the instrument dealt with the demographics and comprised questions on gender, age, marital status, mode of residence, faculty, and education.

Spiritual Well-being Scale (SWB): The second part was the 20-item spiritual well-being scale developed by Paloutzian & Ellison [34]. The scale comprised two parts: religious and existential, with 10 questions in each part on six-point Likert scale, attracting a score in the range of 10 to 60. More to the point, for the positively worded questions, the numerical scoring scale run as follows: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=somewhat agree, 5=agree, 6=strongly agree. Conversely, for negatively worded questions, the reverse scoring was employed as follows: 1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=somewhat agree, 4=somewhat disagree, 5=disagree, 6=strongly disagree. The total score of the total spiritual well-being ranges from 20 to 120. In sum, the status of spiritual well-being was categorized as follows: low (20-40), average (41-99), and high (100-120) [35]. This questionnaire has been used in various studies both inside and outside Iran, and its reliability and validity have been confirmed [36, 37].

Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ): The third part was the psychological capital scale developed by Luthans [2] with 24 questions in each part on a six-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree,... 6=strongly agree). The questionnaire comprised four subscales: self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism. Self-efficacy means one's belief in one's ability to succeed in performing tasks (Questions 1-6), whereas hope is also a state whereby one is able to identify real, challenging, attractive, accessible, and predictable goals for himself/herself, thereby encouraging them to achieve their desired goals (Questions 7-12). Additionally, resilience is indicative of one's hardiness in hard conditions and functioning constructively.

Those with high resilience are able to keep on trying and coping with situations effectively in the face of unpleasant and stressful situations and events towards success (Questions 13-18). In addition, optimistic people associate positive events in life with permanent and personal factors, and vice versa (Questions 19-24). Moreover, a high score in this questionnaire denotes more psychological capital. As for the reliability of this scale, a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.79 was reported in a study performed by Shakrmi et al. [7].

3. Findings

Of the total of 400 subjects in the present study, 200 students (50%) were male and 200 (50%) were female. The average age of the subjects was 22.90 ± 3.17 , and the majority of subjects were aged between 19 and 22 (57%). In terms of marital status, 371 of the participants (92.8%) were single. In addition, the majority of students were studying bachelor (253 students or 63.2%). The number of students at each faculty was similar (25%). Further, the majority of students were living in dormitories (233 students or 58.3%) (Table 1).

Findings showed that the mean and standard deviation of the total spiritual well-being of university students were 3.60 ± 0.49 . As for the dimensions of students' spiritual well-being, the results revealed that the dimensions of religious and existential well-being had the highest and lowest means (3.75 ± 0.77 and 3.45 ± 0.47 , respectively) (Table 2).

Findings also showed that the mean and standard deviation of the psychological capital of university students measured 3.55 ± 0.44 . As for the dimensions of students' psychological capital, the results indicated that hope and resilience had the highest and lowest means (3.81 ± 0.57 and 3.37 ± 0.63 , respectively) (Table 2). In addition, the results indicated that all of the components of psychological capital significantly and positively correlated with students' spiritual well-being ($p < 0.01$). In this regard, the results of Pearson correlation coefficient revealed that spiritual well-being had a significant correlation with each of self-efficacy, resilience, optimism, hope and the total score of psychological capital with correlation coefficients of 0.15, 0.19, 0.38, 0.29 and 0.42, respectively (Table 3)

Table 1: The Participants' Demographic Characteristics (N=400)

Variables	Groups	Number (%)
Gender	Female	200 (50%)
	Male	200 (50%)
Age, y	19-22	228(57%)
	23-26	105(26.3%)
	27-30	67(16.8)
Marital Status	Single	371(92.8%)
	Married	29(7.2%)
Education	Associate Degree	42(10.5%)
	Bachelor's degree	253(63.2%)
	Master's degree	39(9.8%)
	PhD	66(16.5)
Faculty	Medicine	100(25%)

Mode of Residence	Paramedics	100(25%)
	Nursing and Midwifery	100(25%)
	Well-being	100(25%)
	Dormitory	233(58.3%)
	Rental	78(19.5%)
	Living with family	89(22.3%)

Table 2.: The Mean and SD of the Research Variables

Statistical Indexes		Mean± SD
Scales	Subscales	
Spiritual well-being	Religious Well-being	3.75±0.77
	Existential Well-being	3.45±0.47
	Total Spiritual well-being	3.60±0.49
Psychological Capital	Hope	3.81±0.57
	Optimism	3.60±0.62
	Self-Efficacy	3.39±0.69
	Resilience	3.37±0.63
	Total Psychological Capital	3.55±0.44

Table 3.: The Correlation Coefficients between the Research Variables

Variable	Self-efficacy	Resilience	Optimism	Hope	Psychological Capital	Spiritual Well-being
Self-efficacy	1					
Resilience	0.46**	1				
Optimism	0.48**	0.57**	1			
Hope	0.33**	0.26**	0.43**	1		
Psychological Capital	0.75**	0.56**	0.33**	0.59**	1	
Spiritual well-being	0.15**	0.19**	0.38**	0.29**	0.42**	1

**P<0.01

4. Discussion

The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between the components of spiritual well-being and psychological capital of students at Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences, Iran in 2017. The results of the present study demonstrated that there was a positive and significant relationship between the students' spiritual well-being and psychological capital. It can be said that the higher levels of spiritual well-being in students leads to a rise in their psychological capital. Also, spiritual well-being is a good predictor of psychological capital. These findings were consistent with the results of studies performed by Ghasemi-Jobaneh et al., [38] and Womble et al. [39]. The results of a study conducted by Golparvar [24] showed that psychological capital could significantly predict the spiritual well-being in nurses. Additionally, the results of a study by Culbertson et al. [25] revealed that students with higher levels of psychological capital would experience more satisfaction, vitality, and well-being. The results of a study conducted by Ghasemi-Jobaneh et al. [38] revealed that spiritual well-being and mindfulness had a positive and significant relationship with psychological capital. Moreover, Gnanaprakash study [40] reported that spiritual well-being directly correlated with reducing the perceived stress, increasing the effective coping styles, and consequently increasing the level of resilience in students. Fisher [41] expressed that there was a positive relationship between spirituality and each of well-being, happiness and inner satisfaction, which can be much affected by individuals' spiritual and mental atmosphere. Furthermore, Sessanna et al. [42] also pointed out that spirituality can be a key factor in increasing self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and consequently well-being. On the other hand, according to Bandura, individuals with high perceived self-efficacy trust their ability to overcome problems and achieve goals. Students who believe in their abilities can better address the challenges of the school environment [43, 44]. At the same time, in the introduction of the components of psychological capital, especially in the field of self-efficacy and hope, such factors as purposefulness and the tendency to flourish one's abilities have been mentioned, and in the field of resilience and optimism (positive orientation to life), purposeful effort and perseverance have been mentioned [45-47].

These suggestions indicate that both spirituality and psychological capital have positive orientation.

To further explicate the relationship between the spiritual well-being and psychological capital, when one is optimistic, self-efficient and psychologically hopeful, he/she will be more capable of coherence and consistency in meaning, purpose, and value. In other words, psychological capital will place them in a more favorable position in terms of spiritual well-being through increasing the level of individuals' psychological empowerment, thereby leading to the link between psychological capital and spiritual well-being

5. Limitation

The main limitation of the present study was data collection using a self-report method, which may affect the accuracy of the results. In addition, the personal differences of the samples may also affect the generalizability of the research findings.

6. Conclusion

According to the findings of the present study, the students' spiritual well-being affects their psychological capital. So, it can be concluded that religious orientation and spirituality can promote the psychological capital of individuals, and this approach can be used to provide services relating to mental well-being.

Conflict of Interests: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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