

# A Review on the role of Spiritual Intelligence in Job Burnout among Teachers

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## ABSTRACT

*Spiritual intelligence appears to be an important part in our life as well as work environment which is one of the major reason for the success of the educational organizations and finally for the professional life of the teacher and the role of teachers in society and work. Also, teaching in today's society is very stressful and hard. Work-related stress can cause teacher burnout, dissatisfaction and which is a significant problem in education today. Job burnout is a factor that impact on teacher function in workplace .burnout in the workplace has a direct effect on teachers' job satisfaction and in success on teaching. In addition, this, in turn, may affect the health, happiness and function of the teachers in class (Wood & McCarthy 2002). Bakker and Schaufeli (2000) found that teachers' burnout is likely when teachers are susceptible to emotions of others and when teachers talk about work and student problem .Burnout in teaching is a matter that has received considerable attention in researches and is responsible for the loss of many teachers from the profession (Friedman, 1995) . A study on burnout among teachers can be important because of its two-sided impact on the performance of teachers in schools. Ghorbani (2004)stated Job burnout is a danger that threatens mental health of workforce. Loose of efficient human labor for any organization is danger. To this goal, the present paper tries to investigate the role spiritual intelligence in job satisfaction among teachers.*

**KEY WORDS:** spiritual intelligence; job burnout; teachers

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## INTRODUCTION

It is very important to realize how we perceive the environment, how we understand the background and meaning of events, and that we certainly have the ability to imagine new steps and new possibilities. "Spiritual intelligence is the strongest predictor our cognitive achievements, as well as our school and academic performance" (Musek & Maravič, 2004, p. 5).Spiritual intelligence defines as the adaptive use of spiritual information to solve individual problems and the process of accepting the goals (Emmons , 2000). Emmons also said that spiritual intelligence can be described as an intellect giving meaning and value to problem solving and through which life and actions can be applied to a context that is deeper in term of meaning and it can be assessed that way of life is more efficient, effective, and meaningful than different ways (Sohrabi, 2008). Many studies have been done about spirituality in job environment recently. Researches admit that encouraging spirituality in working environment can lead to advantages such as increased sense of self-accomplishment, increased creativity, honesty, increased organizational commitment, improved staff behavior such as increased job satisfaction, and decreased workplace leaving motives, increased job consciousness, more motivation, and finally higher performance and higher efficiency and decrease job burnout (Ghobaribanab et al. ,2007) . Thus, teachers must have high spiritual intelligence which will be the highest guidance to them to do their functions as educators with the highest regards

and as noble as possible. This is because a teacher is regarded as someone very high in society. Moreover, to encourage spirituality to grow in workplace, it is important to make teachers' spiritual intelligence (Bowel 2004). Noble (2001) believed that spiritual intelligence mixes the qualities of flexibility and emotional resilience, which play a role in psychological health and behavior. A study on burnout among teachers can be important because of its two sided impact on the performance of educational institutions. It can affect the teachers as well as students of the institution in which they work. Burnout can also affect the economic performance of the institution by the loss of teaching time and increased cost of replacing teachers (Wilson, 2001). However, a person having high spiritual score experiences less stress that may further have some positive consequences at schools.

#### **DEFINITION OF SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE:**

The term of spiritual intelligence was firstly proposed by Stevens in 1996 and later expanded by Emmons in 1999. Emmons (2000) defines it as the adaptive use of spiritual information to solve everyday problems and the process of achieving the goals. In other research, spiritual intelligence is defined as a set of mental capacities, which contribute to the understanding, integration, and adaptive application of the nonmaterial and transcendent aspects of person's existence, leading to outcomes as deep existential reflection, enhancement of meaning, recognition of the transcendent personal, and mastery of spiritual states (King, 2008). Also, spiritual intelligence is a controversial concept that attempts to bridge the rational to the divine. It is defined as the innate ability to access spiritual resources to solve problems and improve one's daily life (Amram, 2007).

#### **DEFINITION OF JOB BURNOUT:**

Freudenberger (1975), a mental health coordinator, was one of the first to write about burnout and identified one sign of burnout as a feeling of exhaustion and fatigue. He described burnout of a dedicated and committed worker as resulting from taking on "too much, for too long, and too intensely" (p. 74). Topping (1998) stated job burnout is an arrangement in which individuals consider the amount, level, cast, worth, quality of success of the products or outcomes of learning of peers of similar status. job burnout is described as an emotional action to some factors that is stressors such as role ambiguity, absence of autonomy and absence of rewards or work overload. (Shropshire & J. Kadlec, 2012). Maslach, Jackson and Leiter (1996), some of the well-known researchers of burnout, stated burnout as a combination of three components: Emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishment, and depersonalization. "Emotional exhaustion" is the emotional lassitude an individual experiences when they are fatigued and frustrated. "Personal accomplishment" is the person's self-evaluation of his or her own work. The final component, "depersonalization," is when individuals have a tendency to isolate themselves from others.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE**

Spiritual intelligence concept consists of a kind of adaptability and problem solving behavior, which involves the highest levels of growth in different cognitive, ethical, and interpersonal fields and aids the individual to coordinate with their surrounding phenomena and obtaining internal and external integration. Spiritual intelligence gives individuals a general insight on life and all of their experiences and events and enables them to configure and re-describe their experiences and deepen their recognition (Esmaili, 2014).

According to Abdullah's study of 2012, spiritual intelligence integrates all the dimensions of human life and helps them to live a meaningful life. Spiritual intelligence is the ability to find purpose and value in our lives and job, connecting our actions and lives to a wider and richer meaning giving context (Alex & Ajawani, 2011). In a 2011 research, Suan Chin et al. stated, "spiritual intelligence is the set of abilities that people use to apply, manifest and embody spiritual resources, values and qualities in methods that improve their daily functioning ". Furthermore, spirituality can be viewed as a form of intelligence because it enables people to solve problems and achieve their goals (Hosseini et al., 2010).

Sisk (2008) stated that spiritual intelligence, by using a multisensory approach to access one's inner knowledge to solve problems, could be an integrating theme to create global awareness among teachers and students. High consciousness, wholeness and inner directedness as components of spiritual intelligence considered important for the workplace. On the role of spiritual intelligence, Amram & Dryer (2007) mentioned that spirituality has an effect

on career decision-making. Studies are indicator of that having spiritual intelligence in individuals will increase their resiliency to disease and are effective in decreasing mental symptoms, problems regarding the health, anxiety. Emmons (2000) draws a definition of intelligence and argues that spirituality can be showed as a form of intelligence because it predicts function and adaptation and offers capability that enables people to solve problems and attain goals.

At the same time, on other study by Zohar and Marshall (2000) who describe spiritual intelligence as intelligence which individuals solve problems of meaning and value, place their reactions and live their life meaningfully. Zohar and Marshall (2000) believed that spiritual intelligence is an innate talent, which we use it for solving intellectual problem, and put the life in a wide state of richness and meaning. They defined the characteristics of developed spiritual intelligence as follow:

1. A higher degree of self- awareness
2. Having the capacity of flexibility
3. Having the capacity of dealing with pains and its development
4. Tend to ask questions of why or how, and search for key answers
5. Getting inspire of the imaginations and values.
6. The tendency to see the links between different things (being holistic)
7. Unwillingness to injure
8. Getting away from the context that facilitates unconventional activity (quotes Esmili et al.,2014).

## **JOB BURNOUT**

In the mid-1970s, the United States began the first inquiries about the feelings and of people, which identify, showed and record the burnout. Early research focused on health professionals. Investigations initiated by the observation that after a while individual “emptied” of emotions and lose motivation and dedication. Then, there were the first description of the job burnout. The first period of investigations of the burnout had two main directions: the mental health and social axis (Schaufeli, 2004).

Originally, burnout was identified by Freudenberger's (1974) with in an article entitled Staff Burnout as a particular psychological condition in which people suffer mental exhaustion, experience a lack of personal accomplishment, and tend to depersonalize others. He described burnout as "the extinction of motivation or incentive, especially when one's devotion to a cause or relationship fails to produce the desired results" (in Scott, 2006). Maslach et al. (1996) updated this definition stating that burnout is “a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with other people in some capacity”.

Subsequently, Maslach (2001) defined burnout as job related and “a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job”. Emotional exhaustion can occur when, “people resources are depleted and people feel that they are no able to give themselves at a psychological level in working” (Maslach et al., 1996). Maslach and Jackson (1986) identified three burnout dimensions: -emotional exhaustion, feelings of being emotionally over extended and exhausted by one's job, depersonalization, an unfeeling of impersonal response toward students; and a decrease sense of personal accomplishment, a loss of personal self-efficacy. The most common definition of job burnout is physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion that results from long-term working in intolerable situation (Maslach, 2001).

Burnout’ has been defined as a reaction to demanding events (Snyder, 1991). In addition, as an experience that places tough choices in front of the individual (Kahn et al., 1964), as an environmental character which poses a risk to the person (Caplan et al., 1975) and as an apprehension by the individual that he/she might not be able to deliver results as expected out of him/her Luthans, 1966; 1971). In particular, within a work environment, occupational stress refers to “any affect-laden negative experience that is caused by an imbalance between job demands and the

response capability of the workers. When job demands are too high to cope with, stress reactions are likely to occur” (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998).

Job burnout is a syndrome of excessive emotional exhaustion, which occurs after involving and commitment to job and individual for long years (Shropshire & Kadlec, 2012). Moreover, Gudwin et al. (2010) described job burnout as an emotional reaction to some stressors such as role ambiguity and the absence of rewards or work overload. In another definition of job burnout, a teacher’s “idealism and excitement” in their preliminary years of teaching can be a precursor for the condition of burn-out. Researchers have found that burnout is most often connected with situations in which employees feel overworked; underappreciated; confused about expectations and priorities; concerned about job security; overcommitted with responsibilities; and resentful about duties that are not commensurate with pay (Scott, 2010). Job burnout is literally defined as losing mental faculties that sometimes along with depression and originates from mental pressures (Scott, 2010).

In other words, job burnout is physical, emotional, and mental feeling followed by term exposure to hard working situation. Job burnout is a state in which individuals’ power, willingness, and desire to job will be decreased (Farber, 1983). Job burnout is defined as losing mental faculties that sometimes along with depression and originates from mental pressures (Poorafkari, 2001). Job burnout is a syndrome of excessive emotional exhaustion, which occurs after involving and commitment to work and people for long years (Sarason, 1991). In other words, job burnout is physical, emotional, and mental fatigue followed by long-term exposure to hard working situation. This syndrome is a state in which individuals’ power and willingness and desire to work will be decreased (Pearson. & Moomaw, 2005).

#### **PREVIOUS STUDIES ON SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE AND JOB BURNOUT**

Shorabadi (2015) stated that there is a significant negative Correlation between the spiritual intelligence and occupational burnout in the staff of Imam Reza hospital. In addition, it indicated Systems’ managers could identify and improve the components of spiritual intelligence of their staff through various approaches such as improving the training systems as well as providing the contexts in which the spiritual intelligence of their staff can be developed. The spiritual intelligence has a significant effect on job burnout. Regarding the results, spirituality can lead to a decrease in employees’ burnout if it can be improved ( Shorabadi, 2015).

In a research Tabarsa et al ,( 2014 ) investigated the relationship between Spiritual Intelligence and Burn out of Information Technology staffs. Four dimensions of spiritual intelligence by King (2008), namely, aspects of critical existential thinking, personal meaning production, transcendental awareness, and conscious state expansion are being studied in this study. Structural equation modeling analysis of survey data from a group of 131 information Technology personnel revealed that Spiritual Intelligence has a strong direct effect on job Burn Out.

Marzabadi et al. (2013) studied the relationship between organizational spirituality and spiritual intelligence with job burnout among a military university staffs. The research population included all the personnel working in a military university in Tehran, Iran. The inclusion criteria were for the personnel to be officially employed, to have at least Diploma, and to have 1 to 25 years of experience. The population included 4,100 male and female respondents from among whom 352 personnel were selected This research showed There was a significant negative correlation between job stress and organizational spirituality. There was no significant difference between male and female participants in organizational spirituality. In addition, education could not cause any significant difference in organizational spirituality. However, experience could cause a significant difference among groups in their organizational spirituality except for the 2 groups of 4-7 and 8-15 years of experience.

Kumar (2014) studied Influence of Spirituality on Burnout and Job Satisfaction in Oman. The study was based on a survey conducted on expatriate lecturers working in a college of technology in Oman. The sample was drawn randomly from the list of academic staff available on the official website of the selected college. Findings of the research indicated that increase in total burnout, and its two factors namely emotional exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishment reduced job satisfaction. However, the third factor of burnout, i.e., ‘depersonalization’ had positive association with job satisfaction. High spirituality results in high job satisfaction and low burnout; moreover, it affected all the three factors of burnout negatively. Findings did not record moderating effect of spirituality on the relationship between burnout and job satisfaction.

Tasharofi et al.(2013) reviewed the relationship between spiritual intelligence, resilience and spiritual well-being with occupational burnout among nurses in 2012. This study was a descriptive-correlation type of study. The statistical community of the study included the whole nurses working in Shafa Yahyaiyan Hospital, Tehran children and Tehran heart center.. There was found a significant positive relationship between the spiritual intelligence and dimensions of burnout and the existentialism well-being and also, there is a positive relationship between the spiritual intelligence, resilience, spiritual well-being welfare and its two dimensions of the religious well-being and the existentialism well-being with the personal function but this relationship is negative with the personality metamorphosis. In addition, there is a negative relationship between the spiritual intelligence, resilience, spiritual well-being and its one of dimension with occupational burnout.

Refahi et al. (2014) described Evaluation of Spiritual Intelligence and Some Demographic Variables Associated with Job Burnout in Police Staff. This descriptive study – correlation has been done on the 350 personnel of police staff in Sistan-o Baluchestan. They were selected by convenience sampling method. For gathering information, Spiritual Intelligence questionnaire and Mazlash job Burnout questionnaire (1981) with three main areas (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, a feeling of personal accomplishment) were used. The results showed Having high level of spiritual intelligence could improve job burnout so this fact suggests to managers to have an eye concern about education and improving spiritual intelligence in staff.

Abadi et al.( 2014) explored the relationship between spiritual intelligence and job burnout among female teachers. To collect data in this study, standard questionnaires: a) a standard questionnaire to measure spiritual intelligence by Abdollahzade (2009); b) a standard questionnaire to measure job burnout by Maslach(1997). The sample was drawn randomly among teachers. The result indicates that there is positive relationship between spiritual intelligence and job-burnout among teachers.

Rani et al. (2013) studied the relationship among spiritual intelligence and reducing job stress, the study was accomplished with lecturers of University of East Coast of Malaysia. This study exposed that when employees practice spiritual activities or they are in place of work in their own way then they experiences profound sensations and overcome the stress, dissatisfaction and peer problems. This attitude builds up a better organizational performance. Their results showed that there are five indicators (appropriate spirituality activities in workplace, work attitudes, employee comprehension of spirituality in work place, employee’s practices and stress management) of practicing spirituality in place of work.

Tabarsa and Jalaei (2015) studied the relationship between spiritual intelligence and burnout and mental health staffs of rural cooperatives organization of Golestan province. This study was an applied research and descriptive correlational survey.. The findings showed that a positive correlation between spiritual intelligence and mental health and there is a significant and negative correlation between spiritual intelligence and depression and there is a significant job.

## CONCLUSION

The results indicate that spiritual intelligence plays an important role in work environment. Most of researchers believe that spiritual intelligence is the most important intelligence and have the power to change our life, society, world, work environment, and our history. People with higher spiritual intelligence have wider view of life. Wide view means a vast picture of life, which results in more extended picture of objectives and statue in the world. In addition, in today’s global, dynamic and competitive work, environment professionals experience high demand for work performance under limited time. Individuals work in extended hours, ignoring the fact that such overload can cause exhaustion, fatigue and in subsequent stages stress and burnout. These factors will further lead to poor performance, and low level of job satisfaction. Creativity and innovation at workplace require peaceful mind and satisfaction with what one does, burnout constrains this. As spirituality reduces burnout, it can be utilized to overcome the negative effects of workload and demanding conditions.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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