Original Article

Can Spiritual Intelligence Affect Professionalism in Medical Faculty Members?

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Abstract

Introduction: Regarding to the importance of spiritual intelligence and professionalism in faculty development, this study aimed to determine the level of spiritual intelligence, the level of professional development and leadership, and performance of professional responsibilities as two components of professionalism, and the relationship between spiritual intelligence and professionalism.

Methods: This is a correlation cross-sectional study with 160 medical faculty members as subjects, which was defined base on stratified probability sampling in one of the medical universities in Iran. King's modified spiritual intelligence questionnaire and teaching competency self assessment instrument of Alabama University were used. Statistical tests such as t-test, two-way ANOVA, Mann-Whitney, Kruskal–Wallis, spearman and regressions were applied to analyze. P-value <0.05 was considered significant.

Results: The results showed that the mean score of spiritual intelligence was 63±1.2, which classifies as moderate. The median score of professional development and leadership was 9 with range between 4 and 12; and the median score of performance of professional responsibilities was 17 with range between 5 and 20. There was a significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and performance of professional responsibilities (r_s=0.23, p=0.003). There was no significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and professional development and leadership (r_s=0.13, p=0.11).

Conclusion: We found a significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and self assessed professionalism components in performance of professional responsibilities dimension, indicating that spiritual intelligence can be the basis for professional promotion.

Keywords: Spiritual intelligence, Professional autonomy, Faculty members

Introduction

Universities, directly and indirectly, influence the community (1). Faculty members need special competencies to perform tasks (2, 3). Regarding to Alabama Quality Teaching Standards (AQTS) these competencies are: preparation for instruction, presentation of organized instruction, assessment of student performance, classroom management, positive learning climate, communication, professional development and leadership, and performance of professional responsibilities (4). In this article we focus on the two last competencies as professionalism. Professional behavior is the value guideline that a professional must follow in order to remain registered as a member of the profession (5).

Teachers' competencies can help students' development physically, mentally, emotionally, socially and spiritually (6). Knowledge on the teachers' competencies such as professionalism reveals the current situation and provides improvement planning. As a competency, professionalism is using of technical and communication skills, knowledge, reasoning, emotions and values in the environment wisely and constantly (7). Teachers' competencies development such as professionalism, can promote the overall excellence of the universities and students (8). There are several ways of identifying and deciding for improving faculty members' professionalism (9). Teachers' performance improvement and creation of a suitable role model for the students need to find and apply each factor affecting the ability of teachers. Nowadays, for education and training, besides scientific predomination, the other knowledge is needed such as knowledge of psychology and knowledge of professional behavior (10).

American Medical Education Committee considers the process of achieving the educational performance capabilities as the part of accreditation (11). In Iran in recent years, the necessity of competency is intended (12). According to research in Malaysia (2009), if considered to be balanced in promoting of all types of intelligence education, trained capable people (13).

Professionalism is one of the "AQTS" The main components of professionalism in this study are "professional development and leadership" and "performance of professional responsibilities" (4). The professional teachers are aware of his individual responsibility in making professional decisions (5).

Since the beginning of the 20th century, the WHO focuses on the human beings as biological, psychological, social and spiritual ones (14). Spiritual Intelligence/quotient (SQ) is defined as, "The intelligence with which we address and solve problems of meaning and value, can place our actions and our lives in a wider, richer, meaning-giving context, can assess that one course of action or one life-path that is more meaningful than any other." SQ essentially integrates IQ (the traditional Intelligence Quotient) and EQ (Emotional Quotient). SQ helps us extend and change the boundaries, question our assumptions and formulate new meaning (15). Then, SQ enables people finding solutions for life issues (16). Those with higher SQ, have better relationships with others, which will improve the quality of educational life (17, 18). Emmons the psychologist defines SQ as a framework for identifying and organizing skills and abilities (19). Spiritual values in addition to improving the quality of working life of the employees, improve the efficiency of the whole organization (20).

King (2008), at Trent University, introduces SQ as the mental capacities of people which are getting involved with knowledge, integrity, and application of transcendental and spiritual aspects. His model includes four main components of SQ: critical existential thinking, personal meaning production, transcendental awareness, conscious state expansion (21). Little research documents the value of SQ effects on professionalism. Our aims in this study include measuring the level of SQ, the level of "professional development and leadership", and "performance of professional responsibilities" as two components of professionalism, and to analyze the probable relationship between SQ and professional development and leadership, and the relationship between SQ and performance in medical faculty members in Iran.

Methods

This applied research is a correlation cross-sectional study with 160 medical faculty members (32 basic science faculty members, 128 clinical science faculty members) as subjects which was defined base on stratified probability sampling among the 427 faculties in one of the medical universities in Iran. First of all, a pilot study were done for sample size determination, then we find ($r_= 0.3$); after code change, we reach to the main sample size and with considering to the downfall of samples, 160 were applied. All of the 160 faculties participate in our study and filled the questionnaire completely.

There are varieties of instruments for SQ assessment. We used King's modified SQ questionnaire because of its reliability and validity has already established in Iran. Naseri formulated the questionnaire for his

Masters' thesis, based on the belief and all behavior practices of the community had been affected by the Islamic principles and Koran values. Scoring is based on Likert scale with four options including: "almost always", "often", "seldom" and "never". At the end of each questionnaire, sum of the scores show SQ level i.e., $0<SQ<24$=Low, $24<SQ<48$=Lower than moderate, $48<SQ<72$= moderate, $72<SQ<96$=higher than moderate. In Naseri's study; validity and reliability of this instrument was evaluated with Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Its reliability coefficient was 0.95 (22).

Self assessment is one of the best ways to assess the teaching competency. Professionalism was self assessed with an inventory which was a selection of Alabama's teaching competency self assessment instrument and translated, back translated, edited and validated with more than 10 specialists in education and research issue. Also pilot study was done with 30 subjects except research participants. Its validity and reliability was evaluated with Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Its reliability coefficient was 0.86, and its internal validity of factors was 0.7. This questionnaire is a short form of the competencies that was used in Alabama's University instrument. The scale includes 29 items and each item is presented in four incremental levels numbered from 1 to 4, (1=unsatisfactory), (2=needs improvement), (3=area of strength), (4=demonstrates excellence). Eight items of this instrument (two dimensions of teaching competency) are about professionalism. First dimension is professional development and leadership" that includes: Improves professional knowledge and skills, takes a leadership role in improving education, and second is "performance of professional responsibilities" that includes: Completes Job Requirements According to Established Timelines, Adheres to Written Local and State Board Policies and Federal Laws and Regulations, Exhibits Professionalism with Peers, Administrators, Parents /Guardians, Promotes Cooperation with Parents /Guardians and between School and Community (4).

The data was analyzed with SPSS 11. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques such as t-test for the comparison of the faculties' SQ mean scores, Mann-Whitney for the comparison of faculties' competencies scores, two-way ANOVA for the comparison of qualitative multidimensional variables related to faculty members' SQ scores, Spearman for the correlation between SQ and professionalism components and regressions for controlling the confounders were applied to analyze. Assumptions for each statistical measure were met and an alpha level of 0.05 was established.

Results

a) *The level of medical faculty members' SQ:*
Results showed that the total mean score of SQ was moderate (63 ± 1.2). Minimum score of SQ was 28 and maximum of it was 87. There was no significant difference between SQ scores of basic and clinical faculty members ($p=0.7$; $t=0.4$).

b) *The level of professional development and leadership, and the level of performance of professional responsibilities:*
We found the median score of professional development and leadership was 9 with the minimum of 4 and maximum of 12 and the median score of performance of professional responsibilities was 17 with the minimum of 5 and maximum of 20. There was no significant difference between competency scores of basic and clinical faculty members (P-value=0.05) (table 1).

c) *The relationship between SQ and professional development and leadership, and the relationship between SQ and performance of professional responsibilities:*
Correlation coefficient was applied to examine among SQ and components of professionalism. The results showed that there was a significant relationship between SQ and performance of professional responsibilities ($r_s=0.23$; $p=0.003$) (Figure 1). There was no significant relationship between SQ and Professional development and leadership ($r_s=0.13$; $p=0.11$) (Figure 2).

Table 1: Description of faculty members' professionalism components

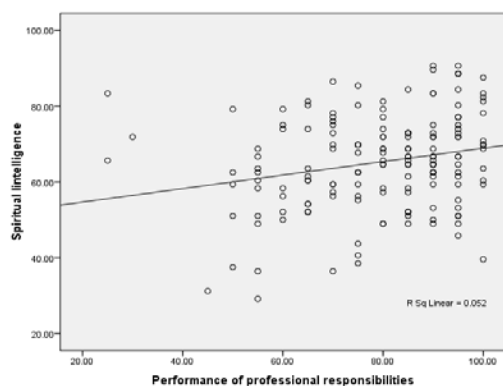| Components of professionalism	Median (range) of basic sciences	Median (range) of clinic sciences	Median (range) of total	Mann-Whitney P	z
Professional development and leadership	9(5-12)	8(4-12)	9(4-12)	0.2	1.4
Performance of professional responsibilities	17.5(5-20)	16(5-20)	17(5-20)	0.4	0.8

Figure 1: Relationship of SQ and performance of professional responsibilities among faculty members.
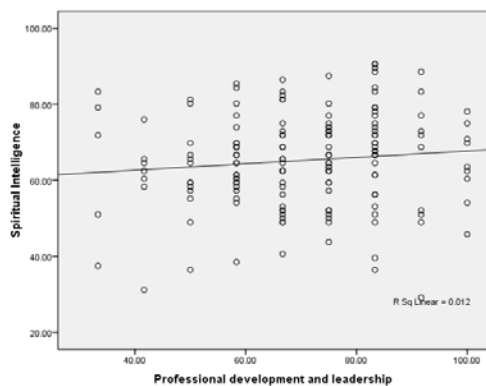

Figure 2: Relationship of SQ and professional development and leadership among faculty members.

Discussion

The results of this study show that SQ level of faculty members are at moderate. George et al. (2000) found that employees with maximum score of SQ have better performance in their work environment, and provide better service. In other words, employees who seek a higher meaning in their work, typically will have a positive attitude and less influenced with severe environmental stress (24). Because of its positive effects and its attainment nature, we can promote it with proper educational planning.

The level of "professional development and leadership" and the level of "performance of professional responsibilities" as two components of professionalism were shown in this study. In "Pennsylvania Adult Teacher Competencies Guide", performance of professional responsibilities is considered as one of main standards of teaching. We believed that performance of professional responsibilities is the total topic for a list of professional competencies (25).

The positive correlation between SQ and performance of professional responsibilities was shown and teachers with higher SQ are more powerful in performance of professional responsibilities. Based on the findings of Amram (2009), there is a high correlation between SQ and effective professional leadership. SQ has been referred as key of success in business and leadership in many references (26). It seems that with promotion of SQ in faculty members, promotion of professionalism automatically occurred. This will empowered faculty members as competent problem solvers. Promoting the SQ of faculty members can help them achieve communication and other professional skills, provide positive climate for learning, and totally teach better.

There was no significant relationship between SQ and professional development and leadership in study. Accordingly, because of the limited research in this field; to achieve more accurate results, further researches in this area is felt.

According to social cognitive theory of Bandura (2009), individuals' beliefs or judgments of their own capabilities have an impact on responsibilities performance (27). Then self assessment is a very suitable method and is great help for teachers understanding about their capabilities.

One important limitation of this study was using of only one instrument (questionnaire) for professionalism assessment. The other was medical faculty members' misunderstanding of SQ meaning.

We suggested that for better conclusion, the performance assessment systems for teachers should contain multiple data collection instruments, such as oral or written structured interview, supervisor's review form, classroom observation record, management observation, portfolios and surveys. The "Professional Development Plan" is also need to determine a score for the professional development and leadership competency for all faculty members.

In reality, all faculty members are working to improve students' achievement. Competencies assessment identifies educator practices deficiencies that have been shown to have impact on student achievement (4). Effective faculty members seek to grow in professional knowledge and skills, seek ways to become leaders in improving profession, perform their responsibilities in an efficient and timely manner, complete tasks on time; adhere to laws, policies, and regulations; and consistently exhibit professionalism and cooperative behavior. All of these definitions are called professionalism and finally we can say based on this research that because we found a significant relationship between SQ and self assessed professionalism components in performance of professional responsibilities dimension,

maybe spirituality is a basis for faculty development. Factors that affected this relationship also need further study.

We conclude that; SQ proper training programs can be a shorter pathway for the professional improvement, among all of the educational planning programs. Spiritual persons, contributed to the flourishing of individuals in educational systems. Such individual are likely to be of significant benefit to their organizations (28).

Then SQ is in association with professionalism, maybe with provision of the background for excellence. Besides professional competencies achievements in faculty development process, learning and doing professional behavior can complete an individual professional needs and defined as professionalism.

Acknowledgments

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