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The impact of interpersonal trust on employee performance: The mediation role of spiritual intelligence

Seyedeht Niloufar Tavakoli Lahijani^{*1}, Seyed Ahmad Mahmoudian

*Master of Organizational Behaviour management, Payame Noor University, Tehran, Iran
Associate Prof., Internal Medicine Specialist, Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Isfahan, Iran*

ABSTRACT

The aim of the current research is to investigate the mediating role of spiritual intelligence in the relationship between interpersonal trust and employee performance. The present research method is a descriptive survey. Also, the current research falls under the category of applied research in terms of purpose. The statistical population for the research was 145 hospital medical staff. The method of data collection is library and field. A questionnaire was used to collect research data. A structural equation test was used in the Smart-PLS software to analyze research hypotheses. The results of the research hypothesis test showed that spiritual intelligence has a mediating role in the relationship between interpersonal trust and employee performance.

Keywords: spiritual intelligence; interpersonal trust; task performance; trust; performance

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1. INTRODUCTION

In this research, the mediating role of spiritual intelligence in the relationship between interpersonal trust and employee performance is investigated. In the continuation of the research, we will examine the theoretical foundations in relation to each of the variables: spiritual intelligence, interpersonal trust, task performance, research methodology, research method, research data collection method, research data collection tool, research data analysis method, The society, the statistical sample of the research, and the examination of the research hypotheses are discussed.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Task performance

Task performance is a set of behaviors that people show in relation to their jobs. Task performance, as an important dimension of job performance, is a set of tasks that the employees of a job perform officially as part of the job, forms the technical core of the organization, and is part of the performance (Becton, 2017). The definition of task performance emphasizes the instrumentality of performance for organizational goals. It refers to those consequences and behaviors that directly serve the organization's goals. It involves meeting company goals, delivering effective sales, and varies between jobs within the same organization. In the role of performance behaviors, they directly or

* Corresponding author.

1-E-mail address: niloufar_tl@yahoo.com

2.2 Interpersonal trust

indirectly contribute to individual and organizational performance (Kim, 2004; Bonache and Noethen, 2014; Bhardwaj and Kalam, 2021). Interpersonal trust is one of the types of trust in an organization; the absence or lack of it can have negative consequences (Hassan et al., 2012). Deutsch (1960) points out that interpersonal trust has two components: belief in the ability and intention to communicate. Mayer et al. (1995) and Rousseau (1998) argue that interpersonal beliefs are psychological states that involve choosing to accept vulnerability to the actions of others based on the expectation that the other will take certain actions regardless of their ability to monitor or control them. On the other hand, according to Wang et al. (2011), trusts created by related parties are called interpersonal beliefs. Pearson and Raeke (2000), Rotter (1980), and Evans and Revelle (2008) define interpersonal trust as a trust built through repeated interactions that test expectations about the behavior of trusted individuals over time. This source of interpersonal trust comes from the individual's experience and personality (Sulistiyani et al., 2021).

2.3 Spiritual intelligence

Gardner (2004) emphasized that spiritual intelligence is the basis of a person's beliefs, which affect his performance. Spiritual intelligence combines the factors of spirituality and intelligence within a new structure. Spirituality is related to the search and experience of sacred elements, meaning, and transcendence, while spiritual intelligence requires the ability to use these capacities and spiritual resources in practical situations. In other words, spiritual intelligence is the background of all the things we believe in and the activities we undertake; it plays the role of beliefs, norms, opinions, and values. Elkins and Cavendish (2004) believe that the domain of spiritual intelligence causes a person to try harder to find a solution. In fact, spiritual intelligence is an inherent human intelligence that can be developed like any other intelligence. In the sense that it can be described and measured (Gardner, 2004). Spiritual intelligence has four main indicators: transcendental self-awareness, spiritual experiences, forgiveness, and patience. Researchers have conceptualized spiritual intelligence based on a series of dimensions by reviewing the theoretical texts of the subject and especially the spiritual intelligence model (Amram, 2022).

Crook et al. (2021) expressed the dimensions of spiritual intelligence based on the five main dimensions of self-awareness, trust, holism, spiritual experiences, and peace. Bruce Litchfield suggests the indicators of spiritual intelligence as follows: awareness of difference, sense of the supernatural, wisdom and self-awareness and foresight, calmness during contradiction and turmoil, commitment and sacrifice and faith, alert awareness and adaptation to life's events and experiences, and cultivating self-awareness (Crook et al., 2021). Emmons (1999) states eight components as the main components of spiritual intelligence, which are: 1) patience; 2) spiritual and religious beliefs and actions; 3) meaning and purpose in life; 4) divinity; 5) inner peace; 6) spiritual experiences; 7) knowing oneself and others; and 8) forgiveness. Also, Emmons (2000) states five characteristics for spiritual intelligence, which are: capacity for excellence; the ability to enter into intense spiritual states of conscience; the ability to invest in activities, events, and relationships with religious feeling; the ability to use spiritual resources to solve life problems; capacity and ability to engage in pious behavior and be pious (Walker et al., 2015).

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The present research method is a descriptive survey. Also, the current research falls under the category of applied research in terms of purpose. The statistical population includes 145 hospital medical staff. Considering the size of the population, the sample size was determined using Cochran's formula with a known population of 106 people. The random sampling method is simple. The method of data collection is library and field. A questionnaire was used to collect research data. A structural equation test was used in Smart-PLS software to analyze research hypotheses.

4. FININGS

4.1 Inferential findings

In this section, firstly, the analysis method intended in this research (structural equation modeling) has been explained, and then the research hypothesis has been examined and tested using this method.

4.2 Validity and reliability of the measurement model

To verify the validity of the measurement tool, face validity, construct validity, convergent validity, and divergent validity have been examined. Face validity is established by ensuring consistency between measurement indicators and existing literature; this validity was achieved by surveying professors. Construct validity is used to check the accuracy and importance of selected indicators, which shows whether the indicators provide suitable factor structures to measure the studied structures in the research model. If the value of the factor load is more than 0.4, it can be concluded at a confidence level of 0.95 that the indicators provide a suitable factor structure to measure the studied structures in the research model. Confirmatory factor analysis has been used to check the construct's validity. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis are shown in the table below. Table (1) shows results of confirmatory factor analysis of variables.

Table (1): Results of confirmatory factor analysis of variables

Variables	Questions	Factor analysis
Task performance	Q1	0.780
	Q2	0.801
	Q3	0.836
	Q4	0.838
Interpersonal trust	Q5	0.696
	Q6	0.735
	Q7	0.726
	Q8	0.785
Spiritual intelligence	Q9	0.744
	Q10	0.882
	Q11	0.784
	Q12	0.872

Based on the results of the above table, it has been determined that all indicators of the studied structures have the necessary importance for measuring their structures due to the fact that the values of factor loadings are greater than 0.4. Therefore, the construct validity, which was chosen to check the accuracy and importance of the indicators, shows that the indicators provide suitable factor structures to measure the dimensions studied in the research model.

Convergent validity: In addition to construct validity, the convergent validity index has been used to confirm the validity of the measuring instrument. The AVE criterion was used for convergence validity. The value of this coefficient varies from 0 to 1, and values higher than 0.5 are accepted. This value guarantees that at least 50% of the variance of a structure is defined by its indicators. In the following, the results of the convergent validity analysis in the present study are presented. Table (2) illustrates the convergence validity results.

Table (2): Convergence validity results

Variables	AVE
Task performance	0.714
Interpersonal trust	0.662
Spiritual intelligence	0.542

According to the results of the above table, it can be concluded that the convergence validity is favorable.

4.3 Reliability of the research questionnaire

The reliability of the measurement tool is the degree to which the obtained results can be obtained from repeated measurements. Constructs have reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.7 or more. Cronbach's alpha test was used to test the reliability of the questionnaire. Based on this method, with a preliminary study on 30 people from the statistical sample and using Smart-PLS statistical software, the reliability of the questions was determined. Cronbach's alpha coefficient and composite reliability for each of the questionnaires are obtained in Table (3).

Table (3): Cronbach's alpha coefficient and composite reliability

Variables	Cronbach alpha	Composite reliability
Task performance	0.867	0.909
Interpersonal trust	0.830	0.887
Spiritual intelligence	0.718	0.825

4.4 Questions related to variables and the reliability coefficient of questionnaires

Considering that Cronbach's alpha coefficients obtained for the research questionnaires are more than 0.7, it can be said that the reliability of the questionnaires is optimal.

4.5 Testing research hypotheses

Figures (1) and (2) show research models related to research hypotheses. The coefficients in these charts are divided into two categories.

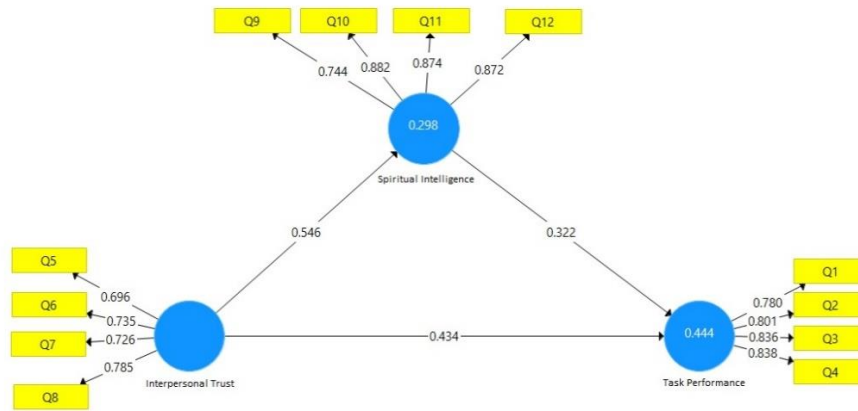


Figure (1): Values of path coefficients and factor loadings of effectiveness

Figure (1) shows the path coefficients and factor load of the research model. The factor loadings of each item are shown in Table (1). The numbers written between the blue circles on the arrow are the path coefficients of the research variables and indicate how much each of the research variables influences each other. In other words, standardized path coefficients are used to determine the effect of each independent variable on the corresponding dependent variable. Therefore, the larger the absolute value of the path coefficient, the greater its effect, and the sign of the path coefficient tells the type of effect (direct or inverse).

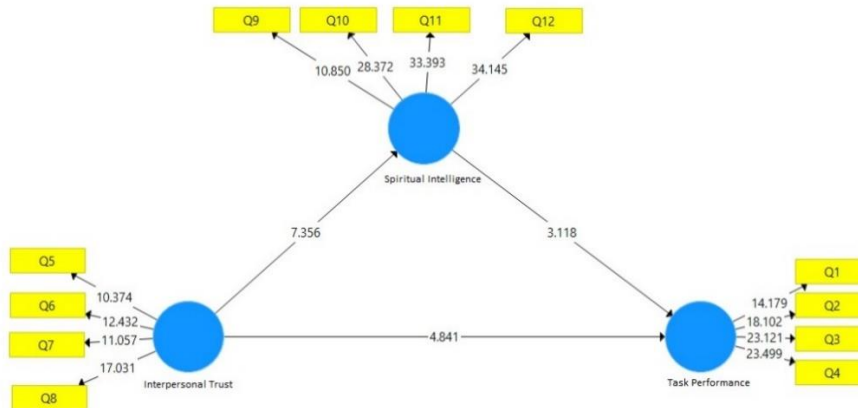


Figure (2): T statistic values of significant coefficients

As you can see in figure (2), this diagram shows the results of the t test of the research model. The yellow rectangles are the items or questions of the research, by means of which we measure the implicit or hidden variables of the research. Blue circles are research variables. Numbers written on arrows drawn from blue circles to rectangles, or research questions the t-statistics of each item are shown in Table (1). And finally, the numbers written between the blue circles on the arrow are the t-statistics of the research variables.

4.6 Coefficient of determination and model fit index

The predictive power of the designed model is analyzed using the amount of explained variance for the dependent variables. Coefficient of determination analysis helps to understand how much of the variance of the dependent variable can be determined by sets of predictors. The coefficient of determination fluctuates between zero and one, and it is justified that if it is equal to zero, it means that the regression line has never been able to relate the changes of the function variable to the changes of the independent variable. If the coefficient of determination is equal to one, it means that the regression line has been able to precisely Relate the dependent variable to changes in the independent variable. The coefficient of determination of task performance is 0.444, which shows that this model has identified and tested more than 40% of factors affecting task performance. The coefficient of determination of spiritual intelligence is 0.298, which shows that this model has identified and tested more than 20% of factors affecting spiritual intelligence. Table (4) shows coefficient of determination of research variables

Table (4): Coefficient of determination of research variables

Variables	Coefficient
Task performance	0.444
Spiritual intelligence	0.298

In order to measure the model and its suitability, the model suitability indices are examined. The meaning of model fit is to what extent the model is consistent with the relevant data. In the analysis of the structural equations, following the estimation of the parameters and before their interpretation, the appropriateness of the model should be ensured. The general criterion of GOF fit can be obtained by calculating the geometric mean of the shared mean and R^2 .

$$GOF = \text{Average} (AVE * R^2)$$

The GOF index in the PLS model is a practical solution for this problem of checking the overall fit of the model. It works like fit indices in covariance-based methods, and it can be used to check the validity or quality of the PLS model in general. The value of this index is between zero and one, and values close to one indicate the appropriate quality of the model. Table (5) shows overall model fit values.

Table (5): Overall model fit values

Fit index	Recommended cut-off value	Scores
R^2	≥ 0.36	0.37
AVE	≥ 0.5	0.64
GOF	≥ 0.36	0.49

According to the confirmation of the fit of the model, in the next part, the relevant hypotheses are tested and checked using the confirmed dimensions.

According to the Baron and Kenny (1986) method, in order to calculate the role of the mediator variable, the significance of interpersonal trust and spiritual intelligence, as well as spiritual intelligence and the performance of employees, are checked. According to the confirmation of both hypotheses, it can be said that the mediating role of the spiritual intelligence variable has been confirmed. This path, which is called the secondary path, shows the confirmation of the proposed hypothesis. The effect of the side path is equal to the product.

The path coefficients are interpersonal trust and spiritual intelligence, as well as the path of spiritual intelligence and the task performance of employees. whose value is 0.176.

5. CONCLUSION

The purpose of the present study is to examine the mediating role of spiritual intelligence in the relationship between interpersonal trust and employee performance. In line with this goal of the research, a hypothesis has been proposed. The results of the research hypothesis test showed that spiritual intelligence has a mediating role in the relationship between interpersonal trust and employee performance. The results of this research hypothesis agree with the theoretical foundations of the research. It is believed that interpersonal trust is an important aspect in the performance of employees' duties, or, in fact, it is better to say that it is their duty performance. Interpersonal trust can lead to improved quality of decisions and, thus, improved performance. Interdependence in organizations requires a high level of trust within groups to perform tasks and support organizational goals. One of the significant contributions of trust is to increase individual performance because such faith motivates employees. The results of this research show that interpersonal trust has a positive and significant effect on task performance.

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