

Investigating the Relationship between Spiritual Intelligence and Job Satisfaction of Employees: Case of a Female University

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Abstract

Purpose: This research was to investigate the relationship between spiritual intelligence and job satisfaction of female employees of Al-Zahra University in Iran.

Methods: Correlation method was carried out to analyze data collected. Statistical population included 307 full time female employees of the University during the summer 2024. Based on Morgan's table and Cochran's formula, a sample size of 171 was selected through simple random sampling method. Instrumentations to collect data were Abdullazadeh's spiritual intelligence (2008) and Minnesota's job satisfaction (1969) questionnaires. Reliability of the instruments was calculated through Cronbach's alpha, which was 0.748 and 0.833, respectively.

Findings: Research findings showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and its dimensions with job satisfaction. Based on the results of regression analysis, the variable of spiritual intelligence predicts 58.2% of the variance of employees' job satisfaction.

Values: By increasing the level of spiritual intelligence of employees, it is possible to increase the level of job satisfaction in the workplace. Job satisfaction will influence motivation among employees and will hopefully lead to productivity of the organization.

Keywords: Al-Zahra University, female employees, job satisfaction, spiritual intelligence

1. INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction is one of the important concepts that on the one hand has brought a lot of attention in theoretical and fundamental efforts for the purpose of improving the products of human resources of organizations. It has, therefore, received considerable attention in organizational behavior and management literature. Job satisfaction is a positive emotional state that is created as a result of the evaluation of environmental conditions, characteristics and job needs, and examines what a person has versus what he wants. It is created and improved by several factors such as social support, progress, work situation, individual development, nature of work, fair reward system, job promotion of colleagues and favorable working conditions (Gol Pervar 2015 quoted in Ghaderzadeh2020).

Job satisfaction is an organizational variable that is effective in physical, mental health and psychological well-being of employees. It improves the quality of work life and the efficiency of the organization as well (Lee and Huang, 2017). It is considered an important factor in organizational results and in the range of job performance. It causes Employees' health and continuity of work. It is an attitudinal variable that expresses people's feelings about their job. In a simple term, it is the level of people's interest in their job (Spector, 2006 p. 237). As the most practical definition of job satisfaction, Saari and Judge (2004) define it as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from job evaluation or job experiences. Cotton and Tuttle (1986) also refer to job satisfaction as a person's

emotional response to certain aspects of the job (Kumar et al, 2018). Studies in this field show that this variable is one of the important factors to increase productivity, compassion of employees towards the organization, their belongings and attachment to the work environment, increasing the quantity and quality of work, establishing good and human relations at the workplace, establishing correct communication, raising spirit, love and interest in work (Homan, 2011, pp. 2-4).

According to Mitrov and Denton (1999), "spirituality in the workplace" includes searching and finding the ultimate goal in a person for working life and establishing a strong relationship between the person and his colleagues, and the compatibility between the basic beliefs and beliefs of a person with the values of his organization. Also, spirituality in work is an effort to create sensitivity towards intra-personal, interpersonal and extra-personal communication in work life in order to grow a person to achieve human excellence.

Giacolone and Jurkiewics (2010) suggested that workplace spirituality is a framework of values followed by a significant organization in its culture that promotes employee satisfaction through excellence in the work process, as well as the employee's sense of connection which provides facilitating emotions for others. Educational institutions tend to maintain their competitive advantage in order to attract more qualified students and staff. Therefore, there is a need to make the faculties more willing to work with their colleagues. Although infusing and promoting spirituality does not solve all the problems they face, it gives them peace and makes a difference in their professional and personal lives. According to Brochaj and Karchi (2013), at the present time, the need to provide a spiritual environment for students and employees in higher education institutions is felt, because nowadays people are more motivated when they feel satisfaction and connection with the work they do. (Sapra et al. 2022)

Studies show that logical intelligence predicts 20 to 30 percent of professional success (Hedlund and Sternberg, 2000, quoted by Hodhodi et al., 2021). Researchers consider a concept beyond this intelligence necessary. Considering the theories of researchers in the field of multiple intelligences, it seems that one type of the intelligence that can be used in the complex environment of today's organizations, especially in educational organizations, is spiritual intelligence; It is an emerging phenomenon that has attracted the attention of many experts and managers of organizations (Seify, A., & Vayseh, s. m. (2021). Spiritual intelligence is a new paradigm that has emerged after Gardner's multiple intelligences in 1983 and followed by the theoretical evolution of the concept of emotional intelligence introduced by Pine in 1985 and then presented as social intelligence (Adib Kia, 2021). This term was introduced by Zohar and Marshall, professors of Oxford University, combining psychology, physics, philosophy and religion, which is the result of a series of studies provided by psychology, neurology, anthropology and cognitive sciences. Spiritual intelligence combines the constructs of spirituality and intelligence into a new construct and requires the ability to use spiritual issues to match responsiveness and effectiveness (Emmons, 2000). They state that neither IQ nor emotional intelligence, either separately or in combination, can explain the complexity of the human soul. They believe that spiritual intelligence combines all types of intelligence and makes humans completely rational, emotional and spiritual creatures. Basically, these three main intelligences go together and support each other, and at the same time, each one has its own ability and acts independently. According to them, spiritual intelligence is an intelligence that faces questions, meanings, and values. It places the characteristics and way of life of a person in a richer and wider environment and they have defined it as follows: "This intelligence makes a person gain deep insight into the events of life and not be afraid of hardships and with patience and thinking to deal with them and find logical solutions to problems" (Zohar and Marshall, 2017, p. 17). It helps a person understanding which actions or which path is more meaningful than another (Zohar and Marshall, 2000).

Spiritual intelligence is the special ability of humans to experience superior states of consciousness and transcendence at the cognitive, sensory, intellectual and intuitive levels, the capacity for existential critical thinking and understanding and creating meaning, rediscovering the transcendent self, perceiving the presence of the transcendent being in existence and communicating.

It can deepen a person's relationship with himself, with others, and with the universe in daily activities (Khodayari fard et al., 2018). It is also able to facilitate or increase the awareness or sense of connection with a higher power or a sacred being (Sisk and Torrance 2001).

As much as a person combines his life experiences with superior intelligence (SQ), he achieves a position of wisdom and awareness that can intuitively understand what to do in any situation. In this case, it will be more successful by creating a balance between life experiences, knowledge, awareness and superior wisdom (Alexander, 2016, pp. 76-75). Santos (2006) believes that spiritual intelligence is about communication with the creator of the world.

The ultimate success of a large organization, therefor, depends on the spiritual intelligence of its managers and employees. Since employees are one of the most effective human resources in a university to achieve its goals, it is very important to find factors that create a sense of satisfaction among employees and consequently improve the performance and quality of higher education.

Despite the research conducted on spiritual intelligence and spirituality with job satisfaction in available studies, little research has been done in higher education and universities in Iran. In educational organizations, especially universities, the cultivation of committed human resources and ethical and paying attention to the growth of spirituality and benefiting from spiritual intelligence is of great importance. It is necessary that educational organizations pay more attention and sensitivity to the management of people and pay attention to the attitudes and behavior of employees in the organization. Several studies have stated that spiritual intelligence correlates with positive outcomes. Persons with high levels of spiritual intelligence are reported to be more productive and have high psychosocial well-being (Yang, 2006). A myriad of positive employee behavioral outcomes has also been positively linked to high spiritual intelligence; some of these variables include job commitment, leadership effectiveness, job satisfaction, job performance and organizational citizenship behavior. The development of spiritual intelligence in the university environment and the deeper impact of this intelligence on the character of employees gives them the ability to gain an integrated vision in their life horizons and connect their work, educational and personal life with spirituality and improve it. Their job attitude increases job satisfaction, work conscience, motivation, performance and productivity (Oyewunmi et al 2024).

Due to the existing shortage of research among female employees at universities, we intend to investigate the relationship between spiritual intelligence and job satisfaction of female employees of Al-Zahra University in the form of a scientific and coherent research, and at the same time explain the relationship between the dimensions of spiritual intelligence and job satisfaction of female employees of Al-Zahra University and the prediction of job satisfaction through the dimensions of spiritual intelligence.

2. PREVIOUS STUDIES

Wem et al. (2024) in their article entitled “Spiritual intelligence and teachers' intention to quit: the mechanism roles of sanctification of work and job satisfaction” investigated this issue. The results suggest that spiritual intelligence does not significantly influence teachers' turnover intention, while sanctification of work and job satisfaction mediate the relationship between spiritual intelligence and teachers' turnover intention.

Raikar and Sivaraman (2022) conducted research entitled “Spiritual Intelligence, Job Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment among Executive-Level Management Employees”. The findings of the study showed that spiritual intelligence was negatively correlated with job satisfaction and positively correlated with organizational commitment.

Osmani and Hasan (2022), investigated "Effect of Spiritual Intelligence on Job Satisfaction of Social Welfare Officers in Pakistan". The research findings show that spiritual intelligence directly and indirectly affects the job satisfaction of social welfare officers in Pakistan.

Abdulrahman et al. (2022), investigated the effect of spiritual intelligence and emotional intelligence on job satisfaction and their effect on the performance of teachers in a high school in the city of Palo (located in Indonesia). The results showed: 1. Spiritual intelligence has a negative and insignificant effect on teachers' job satisfaction. 2. Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on teachers' performance.

Farhadinia and Abdulshah (2022), in the research among employees of Ansar Bank” of Iran showed that emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence have a significant effect on job satisfaction.

The results of a research by Shahidi and Jafarian Yasar (2021) indicated that there was a positive and significant correlation between spiritual intelligence and basic psychological needs with the job satisfaction among primary school teachers in Iran.

Findings of a research by Sahebi et al. (2021) showed that there was a significant correlation between spiritual, moral and emotional intelligence with teachers' job satisfaction.

Mehdian (2021), in his research, investigated the relationship between spiritual intelligence and job satisfaction of municipal employees in Central Province of Iran. The research findings showed that there was a significant relationship between all dimensions of spiritual intelligence and job satisfaction.

Maghsadi and Ghasemi (2021), in their article entitled "prediction of primary teachers' job satisfaction based on progress motivation and spiritual intelligence" examined these variables. The research findings showed that there was a significant relationship between job satisfaction and teachers' spiritual intelligence.

Kayani and Ebrahimpour (2021), in their research with the aim of "predicting job satisfaction based on teachers' spiritual intelligence and psychological toughness" investigated the relationship between these variables. The results showed that teachers' job satisfaction could be predicted by spiritual intelligence and psychological toughness in teachers.

In their article entitled "Exploring the Impact of Emotional and Spiritual Intelligence on Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention" Korankye and Amakvewaa (2021) show that emotional and spiritual intelligence has a positive effect on job satisfaction and intention to leave the job of employees.

The findings of Mohammad et al. (2020), on "the effect of emotional intelligence, social intelligence and spiritual intelligence on the job satisfaction of employees in a high-risk country showed that emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence had a small but positive effect on job satisfaction.

Masitoh and Sudharma (2019), investigated the "Effect of emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence on job satisfaction with employee performance as intervening variables". The results showed that emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence had a positive and significant effect on employee performance and job satisfaction.

Qadirzadeh (2019), in his research, investigated the effect of emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence on the job satisfaction of employees of the finance department of Tehran Province. Results showed that spiritual intelligence had a significant effect on job satisfaction (0.622) among employees.

Arbabi Kalati et al. (2018), in their article entitled "Study on the relationship between spiritual intelligence and job satisfaction of faculty members of Zahedan University of Medical Sciences" showed that there was no significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and job satisfaction in the population in question.

Findings of a research conducted by Ghazi and Shahamat (2016) entitled "Relationship between spiritual intelligence and job satisfaction of female counselors of education district of Isfahan city", indicate that there is a significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and job satisfaction.

Naqvi et al. (2015) conducted research with the aim of "investigating the relationship between spiritual intelligence, organizational commitment and job satisfaction of the employees of the General Department of Sports and Youth in the selected province". The results showed that there was a significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and job satisfaction. The research also showed that spiritual intelligence predicts 27% of the variance of job satisfaction.

Alizadeh and Momeni (2015) investigated the relationship between personality traits and spiritual intelligence with job satisfaction of elementary school employees in Mahmood Abad city. The results showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and its dimensions with job satisfaction of employees.

In their study, Awais et al. (2015) showed that there was a significant positive relationship among spiritual intelligence and job satisfaction. There was an indirect relation occurs among organizational commitment and spiritual intelligence that is mediated with job satisfaction.

Findings of a research by Omrani Fard (2013), showed that there is a positive and significant correlation between spiritual intelligence and its components with teachers' job satisfaction and life satisfaction in female public high schools in Islamshahr.

With regard to the results of a number of researches conducted on the effect of spiritual intelligence on various organizational and managerial variables including the job satisfaction of employees, it can be concluded that one of the most basic and fundamental approaches in the field of organizational psychology and in the field of management, the re-emergence of spirituality and the introduction of conceptual structures related to such categories as organizational spirituality and spirituality at work, spiritual intelligence has a significant effect on the job satisfaction of employees and therefor increasing the productivity of organizations.

3. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

- There is a direct and significant relationship between the dimensions of spiritual intelligence and job satisfaction of female employees.
- The components of spiritual intelligence are able to predict job satisfaction.

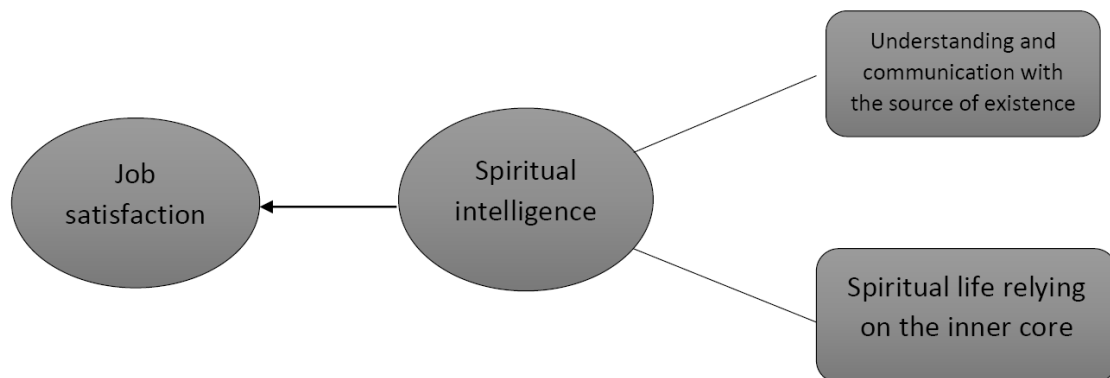


Figure 1. *Conceptual model of research*

4. RESEARCH METHOD

The current research was conducted using descriptive and correlational methods. in nature. The statistical population of this research includes 307 female employees of Al-Zahra University, including official, contract and contractual employment status. To determine the sample size. By using Morgan table and Cochran's formula are 171 people (a 5% error level) were which selected by simple random sampling method.

Standard questionnaires of spiritual intelligence of Abdulzadeh et al. (2008) and job satisfaction of Minnesota (1969) were used as instruments to collect data.,

Spiritual intelligence questionnaire contains 29 items with 12 items about "understanding and connection with the source of existence" and 17 items about "spiritual life relying on the inner core".

Minnesota's standard job satisfaction questionnaire has 19 items and its purpose is to examine the six dimensions of job satisfaction such as payment system, job type, advancement opportunities, organizational atmosphere, leadership style and physical conditions.

People's responses for both questionnaires are determined based on the Likert scale from 1 (completely "disagree") to 5 (completely "agree"), with a reliability of 0.748 and 0.86 for spiritual intelligence and job satisfaction questionnaires relatively.

5. FINDINGS

Descriptive findings related to the description of demographic variables (age, education, work history, marital status) are shown in Table 1. The findings of the research show that most of the employees have a master's degree; That is, about 55% of the respondents to the questionnaires had postgraduate education. The employees who are in the age group of 36 to 40 years and also 46 to 50 years have had the highest percentage with 21.1%. Employees who have 21 years of work experience and above have

the highest percentage with 36.8% in terms of work experience, and married people have the highest share with a frequency of more than 72%

Table 1. *Description of demographic variables*

Variable	categories	frequency	percentage
Age	25-30	13	7.6%
	31-35	26	15.2%
	36-40	36	21.1%
	41-45	25	14.6%
	46-50	36	21.1%
	51-55	25	14.6%
	56-60	10	5.8%
Education	Diploma	6	3.5%
	Post graduate	5	3.9%
	Bachelor	50	29.2%
	Master's degree	94	55%
	Ph.D	16	9.4%
Work history	Less than 5 years	23	13.5%
	5-10	42	24.6%
	11-15	10	5.8%
	16-20	33	19.3%
	21 and above	63	36.8%
Marital status	single	47	27.5%
	Married	124	72.5%

The Kolmogorov Smirnov test was used to determine the normality of the data. As in Table 2 shows, the normality of data distribution is confirmed with a significance level greater than 0.05 ($P > 0.05$). And due to the fact that the research data had an interval scale and normal distribution, parametric methods were then used to analyze data.

Table 2. *Kolmogorov Smirnov test results*

Variable	Kolmogorov Smirnov	level of significance
Understanding and communication With the source of existence	1.160	0.053
Spiritual life	1.052	0.253
Spiritual intelligence	1.078	0.124
Job satisfaction	1.136	0.097

In the analysis of the first sub-hypothesis of the research according to Table 3, it can be said that there is a positive and meaningful relationship between the dimensions of spiritual intelligence and job satisfaction. Therefore, the first sub-hypothesis of the research that there is a direct and meaningful relationship between the dimensions of spiritual intelligence and the job satisfaction of female employees is confirmed.

Table 3. *Determining the correlation coefficient of spiritual intelligence components with job satisfaction*

Research variables	Correlation coefficient	the significance level of two domains
Understanding and communication With the source of existence	0.180 *	0.019
Spiritual life	0.280 **	0.000
Spiritual intelligence	0.263 **	0.000

Significance at the 0.01 level (two domains)**

Significance at the 0.05 level (two domains)*

For the analysis related to the second sub-hypothesis of the research that the components of spiritual intelligence are able to predict job satisfaction, Table 4 shows the regression model of predicting employees' job satisfaction by the components of spiritual intelligence. The components of spiritual life factor and the factor of understanding and connection with the source of existence have entered the

equation at the same time. With the inclusion of these two variables, the correlation coefficient has reached 0.582. That is, the components of spiritual intelligence have explained 58.2% of the variance of their job satisfaction. Therefore, the second sub-hypothesis of the research is confirmed.

Table 4. *Regression model*

Model	Correlation coefficient	Coefficient of determination	Adjusted coefficient of determination	Standard errors
1	0.582	0.339	0.336	0.57823
Predictors (fixed): spiritual life and understanding and connection with the source of existence				

The results on Table 5 show that the F value calculated for the regression analysis is significant. Therefore, the regression equation is statistically significant.

Table 5. *Analysis of variance test*

Source of change	sum of squares	degree of freedom	F valu	level of significance
Regression	4.981	2	7.449	0.001
Remaining	56.170	168	0.334	
The whole	61.151	170		
Predictors (fixed): spiritual life and understanding and connection with the source of existence Dependent variable: job satisfaction				

6. DISCUSSION

The present study was conducted with the purpose of investigating the relationship between spiritual intelligence and job satisfaction of female employees of Al-Zahra University. The results of data analysis showed that there was a positive and meaningful relationship between spiritual intelligence and job satisfaction of employees. The results were consistent with the research findings of Masitoh and Sodharma (2019), Farhadinia and Abdul Shah (2022), Korankye and Amakvewaa (2021) and Awais et al. (2015) that spiritual intelligence has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. But this research is in line with the research of Arbabi Kalati et al. (2018), based on the fact that there is no significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and job satisfaction of faculty members of Zahedan University of Medical Sciences, and with the research of Abdurrahman et al. (2022), based on the fact that spiritual intelligence has a negative effect. And it has little effect on teachers' job satisfaction, and with the research of Raikar and Sivaraman (2022) that spiritual intelligence has a negative correlation with job satisfaction among executive management employees, it was not aligned. Another result of the current study is a positive and meaningful relationship between the dimensions of spiritual intelligence and job satisfaction. This relationship was measured with the first sub-hypothesis of the research that there is a direct and meaningful relationship between the dimensions of spiritual intelligence and the job satisfaction of female employees, and the results confirmed the correctness of the above hypothesis. This result is in agreement with the results of the studies of Maghsadi and Ghasemi (2021), Mahdian (2021), Ghaderzadeh (2020), Ghazi and Shahamat (2017), Alizadeh and Momeni (2016), Naqavi et al. (2016), Usmani and Hassan (2022), and Masitoh and Sudharma (2019).

Another result of this research was the prediction of job satisfaction through the dimensions of spiritual intelligence, which confirms the second sub-hypothesis of the current research. The results of this research are consistent with the researches of Maghsadi and Ghasemi (2021), Kiyani and Ebrahimpour (2021), Naqavi et al. In explaining the findings, it can be said that one of the strategic plans of organizations is the meaningful development of the personal and organizational life of employees. Meaningfulness has a deep attitude towards life and reviews all aspects of life. Considering that most employees seek practical benefits and physical comfort in organizations as well as spiritual growth and broadening of mind (Karakas, 2010; McLaughlin, 2005), researchers state that an organization should help employees to discover the value of work (Jeon & Choi 2021). In order to know the meaning of life and have a spiritual life, in addition to emotional and logical intelligence, an intelligence beyond the two mentioned intelligences is needed, which is called spiritual intelligence.

The effect of spiritual intelligence on management variables, including motivation, performance and job satisfaction, has caused it to be raised as an important issue in management and organization. Spiritual intelligence causes the working life activities of the employees to be accompanied by a sense of awareness and the presence of the heart, and revives the sense of holiness and understanding of the

connection with the source of existence in them. Employees always feel the presence of that holy being in their work and personal life, and this causes their work activities and duties to be accompanied by an understanding of the value and meaning of life, and increases honesty, truthfulness, trust, organizational commitment, participation, job satisfaction and Job performance. According to Meyer and Maltin (2010), employees who have meaning in their work have a sense of belonging and are more aware of themselves in their organization and are psychologically more attached to their organization, which leads to increase of their satisfaction (Jeon & Choi 2021).

7. CONCLUSION

Spiritual intelligence and spirituality in the workplace changes the nature of work, empowers people in their work, and allows them to be in touch with God at every moment of their lives. Employees become people who are looking for purposeful, meaningful and promising work and want to balance their material and spiritual life. Spiritual intelligence is considered as a factor predicting the results of the organization and it is able to predict the job attitude of employees including their job satisfaction. Spiritual intelligence training can, therefore, have an effect on the organizational behavior of employees. Since universities and higher education institutions have duties in the field of education and research, and university employees are in constant contact with the young, creative and dynamic student force, therefore, improving the satisfaction of employees makes providing educational and research services to students in an efficient manner. In addition to factors such as organizational climate, leadership style, physical conditions of the work environment, creating opportunities for advancement, improving the payment system and the type of job that are effective in the job satisfaction of employees, the promotion of spiritual intelligence and the design and implementation of intervention programs for this purpose increases motivation in employees and reduces anxiety and stress and ultimately increases their job satisfaction.

Since no research is free of limitations, this research is also not exempt from limitations, which include the non-response of a number of employees due to busy work, the possibility of not fully matching people's perceptions and feelings with the reality of the subject due to the inherent limitations of the questionnaire. Caution is advised in generalizing the results to male employees due to the uniqueness of the research to female employees. Therefore, in future studies, it is suggested that similar research be carried out and investigated in the statistical population of other governmental and non-governmental higher education centers with an equal number of male and female employees, and due to the inherent limitations of questionnaires, other tools such as interviews and observations, be used to measure spiritual intelligence and job satisfaction. It is suggested that the managers and officials of the university should have a special look at spiritual intelligence in order to improve the job satisfaction of employees, and in the macro planning of the university and by holding educational workshops, to train and create solutions to increase the spiritual intelligence of the employees in the work environment, which will lead to the integration and integration of the spiritual life. Employees can pay attention by playing their organizational role. Also, solutions should be considered to create a positive feeling in the organization and among the employees and to increase the level of insight and their job attitude. In order to develop concepts and structures in the field of spirituality as a new paradigm such as organizational spirituality, spirituality at work, spiritual intelligence, leadership.

Considering that employees with higher spiritual intelligence have more responsibility and commitment and are tolerant and patient with problems and also use more of their creativity, emotions, awareness and wisdom in the organization, it is suggested that these people be titled strategic positions in their organization.

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