Self-efficacy and Resilience as Mediators in the Relationship between Test Anxiety and Spiritual Intelligence among High School Students in Qom

Mohammad Ali Jamshidi[1], Malihe Fadaei Moghadam[2], Sakineh Ghorbani[3], Mohammad Farhoush[4*]

1- Department of Health psychology, Faculty of psychology, Edalat university, Tehran, Iran.
2- Department of Psychology, Faculty of psychology, Islamic Azad University of Naein, Naein, Iran.
3- Department of Psychology, Faculty of humanities, Kashan University, Kashan, Iran.
4- Department of Counselling and guidance, Faculty of education, Ethics and Education University, Qom, Iran.
*Correspondence should be addressed to Mr. Mohammad Farhoush; Email: Farhoush.mohammad@gmail.com

Abstract

Background and Objective: Spiritual intelligence is effective in reducing test anxiety which hinders academic performance. Discovering mediating variables in the relationship between spiritual intelligence and test anxiety paves the way for developing suitable training packages in order to reduce test anxiety. The aim of this study was to investigate the mediating role of self-efficacy and resilience in the relationship between spiritual intelligence and test anxiety.

Method: This descriptive study was of correlational type and its research population was all high school students in Qom in 1395 and 1396. Random cluster sampling was used. To do so, three female and three male schools were randomly selected and 380 questionnaires were distributed in some classes and then collected. 269 questionnaires (127 boys and 142 girls) were acceptable. The participants completed test anxiety questionnaire (Sarason, 1997), SQ (Abdollahzadeh, 2009) and Efficacy (Sherer, 1982) and Resiliency (Connor & Davidson, 2003). As for data analysis, Pearson correlation and path analysis based on Baron and Kenny model were used. In this study, the ethical issues were all considered and the authors declared no conflict of interest.

Results: Pearson correlation analysis showed that test anxiety and spiritual intelligence (0/267), efficacy (-0/475) and resilience (-0/330) have a significant relationship (P<0/01). Moreover, the results of path analysis indicated that efficacy (0/17) and resilience (0/09) completely mediate the relationship between spiritual intelligence and test anxiety.

Conclusion: Based on the findings, spiritual intelligence reduces test anxiety through self-efficacy and resilience. Thus, it is proposed that spiritual intelligence training packages with an emphasis on raising students' self-efficacy and resilience be developed to reduce test anxiety.

Summary

Background and Objective: Test anxiety is an important and common educational problem among students and university students, which also affects their health and psychological well-being, apart from negative impacts on self-concept, academic performance and motivation for progress (1-5). The test anxiety is a series of unpleasant physiological, psychological and behavioral responses, such as increased respiratory rate, heart rate, blood pressure, which is apparent when preparing for an exam (6).

Due to the negative consequences of this anxiety, psychologists have always sought to identify appropriate psychological treatments and coping strategies for this anxiety. Some of these therapies and ways of coping with test anxiety include: cognitive-behavioral therapy, metacognition, multifaceted Lazarus treatment, Ellis's rational-emotional therapy,

regular desensitization and self-relaxation and time management (7-9).

In recent years, the ability of spiritual resources to solve life problems and confront problems has been specially emphasized. Studies have indicated a significant and negative relationship between spiritual intelligence and test anxiety (10,11).

Spiritual intelligence is the skills and abilities that use spirituality to adapt, adjust, and act more effectively (12-14), Spiritual intelligence is a cognitive-motivational construct which enables the individuals to solve problems and adapt more effectively by secondary spiritual interpretation of the situations, thus having more positive and targeted attitude toward life and its events and more health and psychological well-being (15).

Research has shown a significant and negative relationship between spiritual intelligence and exam anxiety (10,11,16-19), in contrast to those studies claiming spiritual practices such as religious attestations and religious adherence have no significant relationship with test anxiety (20,21). Therefore, it seems that spiritual intelligence with a specific mechanism reduces the test anxiety and some spiritual skills are more effective in reducing the test anxiety and the discovery of intermediary variables in the relationship between spiritual intelligence and test anxiety provides the basis for developing better suited educational packages for spiritual intelligence to reduce the test anxiety.

Browsing the related literature shows that although research on mediator or moderating variables in the relationship between spiritual intelligence and test anxiety has not been found, there is evidence on the relationship between resilience as well as self-efficacy and exam anxiety (22-25). Also, studies have confirmed the relationship of self-efficacy and resilience to spiritual intelligence (26-28). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the role of self-efficacy and resilience mediators in the relationship between spiritual intelligence and test anxiety.

Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as a person's perception of his abilities. In his view, human belief is effective in its ability to function (29). Resilience means the skills and abilities that enable a person to adapt to the hardships, problems and challenges. Resilience is the ability to successfully adapt to stressors (30).

Some of the important Islamic teachings are believing in God, speaking with him and praying when problems occur. God, in the Holy Qur'an, promises to help believers, giving them the privilege of praying and peace (31-34). A faithful student who has high spiritual intelligence will pay more attention to these religious and spiritual teachings during the test. He is not only in the hope of God's help, feeling empowered and self-sufficient, but he also feels calm with speaking with God, and as a result, his anxiety is lowered.

Method: The present research is a descriptive-correlational study based on path analysis. Spiritual intelligence is an exogenous variable, self-efficacy and resilience are mediator variables, and exam anxiety is an intrinsic variables.

The research population of this study included all high school students (n=38000) in Qom in the academic year of 1395-1396. Three female and three male schools were randomly selected and 380 questionnaires were distributed in some classes and then collected. 269 questionnaires (127 boys and 142 girls) were acceptable.

The participants completed test anxiety questionnaire (Sarason, 1997), SQ (Abdollahzadeh, 2009) and Efficacy (Sherer, 1982) and Resiliency (Connor & Davidson, 2003).

In data analysis, correlation, path analysis based on Baron and Kenny model, and Amos 24 were used.

Results: The results of correlation analysis showed that test anxiety and spiritual intelligence (-27.2), self-efficacy (-0.46) and resilience (-0.33) have a significant relationship (P <0.001). Moreover, the results of path analysis indicated that efficacy (0/17) and resilience (0/09) completely mediate the relationship between spiritual intelligence and test anxiety and self-efficacy has a more effective role in this relationship. As a result, spiritual intelligence through self-efficacy and resilience reduces the test anxiety. Therefore, in order to reduce the anxiety of students' examination, spiritual intelligence training packages with emphasis on increasing self-efficacy and resilience of students are suggested.

Conclusion: The results of this research are consistent with studies showing a positive relationship between spiritual intelligence and self-efficacy and resilience, and also confirming studies that indicate the positive role of self-efficacy and resilience in reducing test anxiety (10, 35-44).

Self-efficacy and resilience, in addition to reducing exam anxiety, also play a role in mental health and enhancing academic performance (45,46).

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