

## The Impact of Spiritual Intelligence on Aggressive Behavior, Considering the Mediating Role of Professional Ethics: A Case Study of Nurses of Imam Ali (pbuh) Hospital in Alborz, Iran

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### Abstract

**Background and Objective:** Employees' intelligence is an important variable in an organization's environment. Managers of organizations want employees who have higher intelligence. One of the types of intelligence that has recently been the focus of attention of the world scientific community is spiritual intelligence. In addition, due to the specific circumstances of the hospital environment, professional ethics plays an important role in the emergence of positive behaviors and non-destructive behaviors in the hospital environment. One of the destructive behaviors of the hospital environment, especially for nurses who directly provide services, is aggressive behaviors. Therefore, after reviewing the research background, the present study aims to investigate the effect of spiritual intelligence on aggressive behaviors with the mediating role of professional ethics in Imam Ali Hospital in Alborz province in 2019.

**Methods:** This is a descriptive correlational study. For this purpose, standard questionnaires of spiritual intelligence, professional ethics, and aggressive behaviors after evaluating their validity (content and construct validity) and reliability (Cronbach's alpha method) were used to collect the required data from 1100 nurses of Imam Ali (AS) Hospital in Alborz, Iran. The collected data were analyzed by one sample t-test and structural equation modeling. In the present study, all the ethical considerations were observed and the authors declared no conflict of interests.

**Results:** The results of the mean test indicated that nurses in Imam Ali Hospital in Alborz had acceptable an level of spiritual intelligence and professional ethics. In addition, nurses in the hospital exhibit low aggressive behaviors. Meanwhile, the results of structural equation modeling indicate that spiritual intelligence has a positive and significant effect on nurses' professional ethics. Both spiritual intelligence and professional ethics have negative but significant effects on aggressive behaviors of nurses; ultimately, the mediating role of professional ethics in the relationship between spiritual intelligence and aggressive behaviors has been confirmed.

**Conclusion:** Improving the spiritual intelligence indicators and variable is effective in promoting professional ethics and decrease the incidence of aggressive behaviors in hospitals. Further, nurses' professional ethics facilitate the impact of spiritual intelligence on reducing aggressive behaviors and act as a mediating factor.

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## Summary

### Background and Objective

Spiritual intelligence in human beings can be fully nurtured, and its culmination leads to inner purity, as a result of which the organization will achieve more success; Therefore, paying attention to this point will solve many issues in today's organizations. On the other hand, organizations in which employees follow professional ethics bring a lot of positive feedback to their organization. They do not seek individual financial gain, mafia does not make sense to them, and there is no corruption among those organizations (1). Previous studies have shown that nurses in the public sector are relatively aggressive due to their stressful job conditions and the type of client, which has led to customer dissatisfaction and, of course, mental and physical injuries to hospital staff. Serious attention to employees' behavior in order to satisfy clients of service providers has become one of the serious concerns of managers nowadays. Hospitals are also part of this service providing body. Today, respect for the client and respect for civil rights is considered as a human duty and a competitive advantage in organizations and has led to the growth of organizations. Achieving this valuable capital requires that each organization recognize its shortcomings in its implementation and provide the necessary training to promote respect for civil rights. Surveys conducted in hospitals sometimes show that a certain percentage of clients are dissatisfied with the way nurses treat them, especially in public hospitals. Therefore, with superficial studies in the field of human resources working in hospitals, it is clear that if the belief in professional ethics becomes a human value and an intrinsic duty of each employee, the level of aggression among them will definitely decrease significantly. Piedmont introduces spirituality as the inner core of the "self" that gives man peace, especially in stressful situations, and connects him/her to the supreme power in the universe.

These days, the most important and major concern of organizational managers is the need for employees to pay attention to the ethical charter; Because the ethical charter is a commitment that leads to the continuous growth and survival of morale, dignity, employee cohesion, on the one hand, and public satisfaction, on the other hand, hospitals are no exception to this rule due to patient and client service and professional ethics. It has become one of the most important demands

of a manager from employees (2). In fact, spiritual intelligence is the foundation of every person's beliefs affecting his performance and increasing people's resilience to hardships and problems (3). These days, hospitals are increasingly embroiled in issues that they consider as an ethical mystery. In order to stay competitive in today's dynamic world and to consolidate survival, hospitals must require their managers and staff to adhere to ethical principles and learn ethical intelligence because observing ethics is encouraging to employees and, therefore, increases the quality of services and ultimately satisfies clients and strengthens the survival of hospitals (4).

After reviewing similar studies, in the present study, we decided to consider the effect of spiritual intelligence on aggressive behaviors with the mediating role of professional ethics in Imam Ali Hospital in Alborz province in 2019. Therefore, the research model is presented along with the research statements.

### Methods

**Compliance with ethical guidelines:** In order to adhere to research ethics and to protect the rights of the subjects, all subjects were briefed on the purpose of the study and how it was implemented. They were also assured that their personal information obtained would be kept confidential and that the data released would be analyzed in a collective manner, with the privacy of the individual being kept.

The present study is applied in terms of purpose and descriptive survey-based in terms of data collection. The statistical population of the present study includes 1100 nurses of Imam Ali Hospital in Alborz province. According to Krejcie and Morgan Table (5), the minimum sample size for this study was 285 people. After distributing 500 questionnaires by simple random sampling among the statistical population, 490 appropriately filled in questionnaires were identified and the remaining questionnaires were excluded from analysis. To assess spiritual intelligence, King questionnaire (6) including 15 items, to assess professional ethics, Maanipour's 15-item questionnaire (7), and for measuring aggressive behaviors Buss and Perry's 18-item (8) questionnaire were used.

In the present study, in all questionnaires, a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree=1 to strongly agree=5, was used. Then, using the data obtained from these questionnaires, the reliability coefficient of Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this instrument was calculated and found to be 0.75. Given the larger value of 0.7, the

reliability of this tool was confirmed. Furthermore, the validity of these questionnaires was confirmed by content and construct validity.

### Results

In the present study, the mean test was used to assess the current status of each of the research variables in the study population. The results indicate that the study population had good spiritual intelligence and professional ethics. In addition, aggressive behaviors were less than average in the statistical population. The results of structural equations also indicated that spiritual intelligence had a positive and significant relationship with professional ethics and, on the other hand, spiritual intelligence and professional ethics have a negative and significant relationship with aggressive behaviors.

### Conclusion

By contemplating on the results of testing the related hypotheses and analyzing the results of the present study, it can be concluded that the nurses of Imam Ali (AS) Hospital in Alborz province have an appropriate level of spiritual intelligence. This can be the reason for the high level of professional ethics in the hospital and also the low level of aggressive behaviors in this hospital. The results of testing the hypotheses in the present study are in line with the results of Ronaghi and Feizi (9), Tarmas Hafshjani and Ahmadi (10), Ghorbani (11), Dehghanan et al. (12), Behrouzi et al. (13), Hosseini et al. (14), Jamal Nekouei (15), Rahim Nahal (16), and Mohammadi et al. (17). However, according to the results of the mean test of the indicators corresponding to the research variables, hospital managers can improve the overall level of spiritual intelligence of employees by focusing on indicators that have received lower values, and according to the results of the structural equation model, increase professional ethics and reduce the level of aggressive behaviors in the organization to benefit from its positive individual and organizational results.

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### Ethical considerations

According to the authors, this research is obtained from the master's thesis of the first author of the article with the same title, approved by the management department of Takestan University.

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### Conflict of interest

The authors declared no conflict of interest.

### Authors' contribution

Fieldwork and data collection: first author;  
Research methods and results: second author;  
Literature and theoretical framework of research: third author.

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