

## ARTICLE

# INVESTIGATING THE CONVERGENCE BETWEEN SPIRITUAL HEALTH AND WORK ETHIC OF NURSES WORKING IN HOSPITALS AFFILIATED TO JAHROM UNIVERSITY OF MEDICAL SCIENCES IN 2015

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Spiritual health is a unique that coordinates physical, psychological and social dimensions. Work ethic is a factor that creates discipline and sense of duty in the individuals. As a result, the present study aim at investigating the convergence between spiritual health and work ethic of nurses working in hospitals affiliated to Jahrom University of Medical Sciences in 2015. **Materials and methods:** This study was a cross-sectional and analysis study in which 97 nurses working in training hospitals of Jahrom University of Medical Sciences participated. Data tools included Spiritual Health of Academy of Medical Sciences questionnaire and Costa and Mac Kray Work Ethic questionnaire. Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 16 and using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation and percent) test, Pearson correlation and regression analysis. **Results:** The results of the Spearman correlation coefficient show that there is a significant convergence between spiritual health and work ethic among nurses ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $r = 0.0347$ ). This means that with work ethic increases in nurses with an increase in spiritual health. The results of the multivariable regression show that, of the dimensions of spiritual health, only behavior and performance of nurses are predictors of their work ethic ( $p < 0.05$ ). **Conclusion:** There was a significant convergence between spiritual health and work ethic in nurses in a way that nurses' work ethic enhances with an increase in spiritual health.

## INTRODUCTION

Spiritual health is one of the important aspects of human health that provides a unified relationship between human internal forces and is determined by characteristics such as stability in life, balance and harmony, feeling close relationship with self, God, society and the environment. Spiritual health provides the integrity of an individual [1].

Spiritual health is an important dimension that reinforces the individual's psychological operation and compatibility and will promote other aspects of health. In times of crisis, spirituality is a powerful resource that creates a serious obstacle in the face of psychological stress and depression. Also, by encouraging the individual to sanitary behaviors, it improves the overall health [2]. Spiritual health is a unique that coordinates physical, psychological and social dimensions [3]. When one's spiritual health is seriously compromised, the individual may experience mental disorders such as loss of sense, depression and loneliness in life [6,7]. Work ethic is a factor that creates discipline and sense of duty in the individuals. Paying attention to the concept of work ethic in organizations equals to considering ethics and human relations, because ethics creates commitment and will make individuals to be sensitive to their duties and their job conduct in the best way, without external control. Work ethic in an organization leads to increasing productivity, achieving sustainable development, human cultural metamorphosis, management stability and economic order. Several factors affect work ethic [4]. Work ethic is a cultural norm that gives positive spiritual values to decent and appropriate work in the community and believes that the work itself has an intrinsic value [5]. Work ethic is the internal commitment to comply with requirements that were agreed in connection with work. In other words, work ethic is whole-hearted satisfaction, commitment and practical adherence to tasks that an individual is supposed to do; so that even there are no inspectors and monitors over his activity he will do his task completely. If we can nurture the spirit of spirituality and faith in the hearts of the staff so that they believe that: "God knows the secrets of the heart and the reality of minds" [Surah Mumen, verse 19], then the problem of monitoring is solved by itself. In verses 72-73 of Surah Ahzab, it is noted that all available facilities and opportunities are divine assets and human, as the successor of God, should consider it as a divine asset and take advantage of it in predetermined and legible cases. As the largest and most important human resource for health care organizations, nurses play an important role in enhancing organizational productivity and health. The main goal of any organization is to achieve optimal productivity. The job performance of nurses, as one of the most important human resource hospitals, is affected by several factors including spirituality, work ethic and public health and leads to further commitment, enhancing service quality and productivity. Conscience is the basis of

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being right and wrong that govern a person's thoughts and can act as the viewer and the judge of past actions and as a reference and guidance for future actions [8]. Conscience is the protection of the nurse's individual integrity, beliefs and values. The nurse who refrains from doing certain actions the basis of conscience tries to prevent from damaging his integrity [9].

Conflicts of conscience lead to the loss of personal integrity. Obliging nurses to engage in an activity that is incompatible with their conscience easily makes them to leave the nursing profession. Otherwise, for not following the conscience, they will experience qualm, guilt and shame [10]. Many studies indicate the relationship between spirituality, physical and mental health and enhancing disease compatibility. There are several studies that support the hypothesis that spiritual health can improve psychological functioning and compatibility. In a study entitled "nurses' experiences of the factors leading to commit unconscionable acts", it has been stated that individual, institutional, human, factors and those associated with the context can make nurses do unconscionable actions [12]. In another study entitled "relation between Organizational Health and Spirituality with Organizational Entrepreneurship", it has been stated that spirituality in the workplace can be a powerful positive force in the lives of individuals, because they make their work more enjoyable, more balanced and more meaningful by combining and integrating their spiritual life and work through which they foster their spirits [13]. The results of O'Brien's study showed that when the individual's spiritual health is seriously compromised, he may experience mental disorders such as loneliness, depression and loss of meaning in life [11]. In general, research conducted on the connection between spiritual health and spirituality and factors affecting job performance has concluded that spiritual health can affect better and more effective job performance. Spiritual health is one of the important aspects of human health that provides a unified relationship between human internal forces and is determined by characteristics such as stability in life, balance and harmony, feeling close relationship with self, God, society and the environment. Spiritual health provides the integrity of an individual [1]. Spiritual health is a unique that coordinates physical, psychological and social dimensions. When one's spiritual health is seriously compromised, the individual may experience mental disorders such as loss of sense, depression and loneliness in life [6,7]. Work ethic is a factor that creates discipline and sense of duty in the individuals. Paying attention to the concept of work ethic in organizations equals to considering ethics and human relations, because ethics creates commitment and will make individuals to be sensitive to their duties and their job conduct in the best way, without external control. Work ethic in an organization leads to increasing productivity, achieving sustainable development, human cultural metamorphosis, management stability and economic order. Several factors affect work ethic [4]. As one of the largest and most important human resources in hospitals, nurses are under the influence of several factors such as spirituality, work ethic and public health that lead to further commitment and enhancing service quality and productivity. Given the very valuable and important role of nurses in the area of treatment, paying attention to the factors that increase their commitment to work is very valuable. According to what was said the present study aim at investigating the convergence between spiritual health and work ethic of nurses working in hospitals affiliated to Jahrom University of Medical Sciences in 2015.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was a cross-sectional and analysis study that investigated the relationship between spiritual health and work ethic of nurses working in hospitals affiliated to Jahrom University of Medical Sciences in 2015. Data gathering tools in this study included two questionnaires. Having received the approval of the Ethics and Research Council of Jahrom University of Medical Sciences, the researcher, after justifying and explaining the objectives of the study, completed the questionnaires used with the help of nurses. The questionnaires were distributed after the presentation of a letter of introduction from Jahrom University of Medical Sciences. Azizi spiritual health questionnaire had 48 questions. Questions number 1 to 28 in the questionnaire assessed the individuals' insights and trends over the past year with questions about the purpose of creation, life after death, reward and punishment in the hereafter, purpose of life, faith and relationship with God. And questions number 29 to 48 explored the individual's performance over the past year with questions about evaluating one's life, doing "enjoining good and forbidding wrong" etc. This questionnaire will be a five-item Likert scale [strongly agree = 4, almost agree = 3, no comment = 2, almost disagree = 1, strongly disagree = 0]. The designed tools are in the form of three scales of insight, attitude and behavior including questions that are indicative of Muslims' spiritual health in cognitive / emotional and behavior fields. If the scores of five-item Likert scale are standardized and converted into 0 to 100, then the score of the spiritual health status variable and its dimensions are divided [insight, attitude and behavior] to four levels of very low [25-0], low [50-25], medium [75-50] and high [100-75].

Score out of 100	Score	Statements	Component
100-0	4-0	Questions 1-12	Insight
100-0	4-0	Questions 13-28	Trend
100-0	4-0	Questions 29-48	Behavior

"The reliability and convergence" and reliability of this questionnaire was proved by Azizi and colleagues with Cronbach's alpha of 79%. Costa and Mac Kray Work Ethic questionnaire, 1992, contains 16 questions from Costa and McCrae five-factor personality questionnaire; 8 questions from this questionnaire (questions 8-1) are about the reliability sub-scale (for example, I am a very competent and efficient person) and other eight questions (questions 16-9) measure the success-oriented sub-scale (for example, I am working hard to achieve my goals). This questionnaire is of a five-scale Likert type in which (score 4) is given to answer "fully agree", (score 3) to "agree", (score 2) to "no comment", (score 1) to "disagree" and (zero) to "strongly disagree". Questions 1 -2- 4 6 9 11-13 are

scored in reverse. The minimum possible score will be 0 and the maximum possible score will be 64. The score between 0 and 21 is weak work ethic. The score between 21 and 32 is moderate work ethic. Any score higher than 32 is a strong work ethic. The questionnaire is standard and it has been used in many studies. In all the research that has been mentioned below, the validity has been approved. Glaty and Irivinl (2001) have reported the validity of the questionnaire 0.76. Ezheii and colleagues (2009) have translated the questionnaire. They have gained Cronbach's alpha for the main character's conscience dimension in the Five-Factor Inventory (BFI) in the Iranian sample 0.72. Alirezaee and colleagues (1392) have also reported 0.7 alpha for this study. Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 16 and descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation and percent) Pearson correlation test and regression analysis.

## RESULTS

In this study, 97 nurses were studied. The mean score of spiritual health variable was  $90.91 \pm 86.26$ . [Fig. 1] shows the mean score of spiritual health variable and its dimensions. The insight dimension of nurses had the highest average and the lowest average was related to behavior.



Fig. 1: Score of spiritual health variable and its dimensions

According to the findings of this study, 85.6 percent of the medical staff (nurses) took advantage of a highly spiritual health. The majority of nurses were at a high level in dimensions like insight, attitude and behavior. The behavior of the nurses was lower than other components [Table 1].

Table 1: Mental health level and its components in nurses

	Low (25-50)	Moderate (50-75)	High (75-100)
	Percent	Percent	Percent
Insight level	0/0	10/3	89/7
Trend level	2/1	15/5	82/5
Behavior level	1/0	32/0	67/0
Spiritual health level	0/0	14/4	85/6
Work ethic level	0/0	6/2	93/8

The average score of work ethic variable was  $6.16 \pm 41.24$ . The work ethic in 93.8 percent of nurses was at a high level and in 2.6% of them was at an average level [Table 2].

Table 2: The level of work ethic in nursing

	Low (0-21)	Moderate (22-32)	High (33-64)
	Percent	Percent	Percent
Work ethic level	0/0%	6/2%	93/8%

The results the Spearman correlation coefficient show that there is a significant convergence between spiritual health and work ethic in nurses [ $r = 0.0347$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ]. This means that nurses' work ethic enhances with an increase in spiritual health. The results of the multivariable regression show that, of the dimensions of spiritual health, only behavior and performance of nurses are predictors of their work ethic [ $p < 0.05$ ]. This means that with an increase of one unit in nurses' behavior and performance, work ethic increases as much as 12.5% [Table 3]. The impact of insight and trend dimensions on nurses' work ethic is not meaningful.

Table 3: Regression coefficients convergence between spiritual health and work ethic in nursing

p-value	T	Beta	S.E	b	R	R <sup>2</sup>	independent variable
0/001	3/596	-	5/445	19/581	0/409	0/167	Constant
0/417	0/815	0/109	0/078	0/064			Insight

0/416	0/818	0/122	0/079	0/064			Trend
0/032	2/175	0/253	0/057	0/125			Behavior

## DISCUSSION

Nurses' attitude towards and knowledge of spiritual care, and the factors affecting it, can satisfy the spiritual needs of patients. The nurse is able to provide a suitable and compatible environment to facilitate patients' inner healing power. For believers, religious beliefs may help to treat them in harsh conditions. Nurses' spiritual care is beyond the physical needs and is mixed with all human dimensions [physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual] [14]. The results showed that there is a significant convergence between spiritual health and work ethic in the medical staff [nurses]. This means that work ethic enhances in medical staff [nurses] with an increase in spiritual health. Searching the resources, we failed to find any article that had measured the relationship between these two components. In their study, Rahimi and colleagues concluded that spiritual health and attitude to spirituality and spiritual care are at the intermediate level in nursing and midwifery students and that there was a relationship between spiritual health and attitude to spirituality and spiritual care that are consistent with the results of the present study [15]. In a descriptive study in 2011, Ergul and colleagues examined nurses' perception of spirituality and spiritual care and explored its relationship with demographic factors. Results showed that nurses do not have a clear understanding of spirituality and spiritual care and that some factors such as level of education, their religious beliefs and hospitals in which they worked have had a positive impact on their understanding of spirituality and spiritual care that is inconsistent with the results of the present study [16]. This study showed that nurses' spiritual health is high. In their study, Pesut and Hsiao showed that nurses' spiritual health was at moderate to good level. The results of these studies are consistent with those of the present study [18-17]. Obliging nurses to engage in an activity that is incompatible with their conscience easily makes them to leave the nursing profession [19]. Otherwise, for not following the conscience, they will experience qualm, guilt and shame [20]. Moral challenge of nurses and internal medicine in oncology, surgery, elderly and intensive care units has been investigated. [21] Conscience turbulence or qualm, such as guilt in nurses, is experienced when they are not satisfied with the type of care they provide to the patients. The nurse's dissatisfaction can be due to the tasks dictated to him by himself or by others [patients, managers and institutions] or to having been forced to do something contrary to his conscience so that they spend a little time with patients. [22] Lack of time, as well as hard work, has been identified as the most common causes of stress among nurses. Other environmental stresses and those causing conscientious tension include: problems related to management and leadership, professional conflicts, emotional needs of care, work shift and lack of reward [23]. In a study entitled "nurses' experiences of the factors leading to commit unconscionable acts", it has been stated that individual, institutional, human, factors and those associated with the context can make nurses do unconscionable actions, which is inconsistent with the results of the present study [12].

## CONCLUSION

There was a significant convergence between spiritual health and work ethic in nurses in a way that nurses' work ethic enhances with an increase in spiritual health. Furthermore, of the dimensions of spiritual health, only behavior and performance of nurses are predictors of their work ethic.

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest.

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### FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

None

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