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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE AND JOB SATISFACTION OF IT PROFESSIONALS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO IT COMPANIES IN SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on identifying the relationship between spiritual intelligence and job satisfaction of IT professionals in Sri Lanka. The growing realization factor of job satisfaction as an ever-growing concern in contemporary organizations and the limited number of studies on the effect of spiritual intelligence on job satisfaction in both local and international IT contexts reveals the prominence of this research. Accordingly, a cross-sectional study was carried out among 383 IT professionals in Sri Lanka, considering spiritual intelligence as the independent variable and job satisfaction as the dependent variable. Primary data was collected via a self-administered structured standard questionnaire developed as a Google form and was analysed using SPSS. The results showed that job satisfaction and spiritual intelligence have a linear relationship demonstrating a positive correlation in the regression model. The findings have important policy implications for IT company employers who want to improve the spiritual intelligence of their workers and create a satisfied workforce. These findings are especially significant for IT company employees who should pay close attention to the substance of spiritual intelligence and strategies to develop it so they may have a fulfilling career that promotes their mental health and happiness.

Keywords: IT Companies, IT Professionals, Job Satisfaction, Spiritual Intelligence

1. Introduction

Human resource can be acknowledged as one of the key resources within any organization to ensure its operations and continuous survival. As a result, it is essential to keep the workforce satisfied to thrive towards many successful organizational outcomes along with sustainable results. Recently many contemporary employers have been found out to be constantly struggling in achieving employee satisfaction towards their job (Taziki et al., 2016). According to Qazi and Kaur (2017), Job Satisfaction (JS) involves how an individual perceive their job role to perform it well. It is a subjective fact to each individual as they have different expectations with their job. As evident in empirical studies the level of employee satisfaction can be significantly impacted by several determinants as employee empowerment, workplace environment, job loyalty, rewards, leadership, work-life balance, occupational stress, working environment, culture etc (Ahmad et al., 2017; Javed et al., 2014). Among many determinants, Spiritual Intelligence (SI) has become one of the coeval and demanding factors in the present era that affecting on employee JS.

As an individual concept, SI has gained popularity among many researchers with its relatedness to many positive consequences (Mohamed, Singh, & Subramaniam, 2020). This concept involves identifying one-self and a positive learning and it may or may not be affected by religious orientation (Cheema & Bhardwaj, 2020). Through SI an individual can recognize his or herself and the meaning of life better. Ultimately it leads to their understanding with rationality which helps to develop connection with others as well. Evidence support that spiritually intelligent employees tend to act effectively in their workplace in highly eloquent and optimistic manner. It leads to improve employee performance through enhancing their JS (Kulshrestha & Singhal, 2017). Employees with higher level of SI tend to adopt their workplace changes and knowledge requirements quickly. They can effectively address organizational problems consciously.

JS remains as a highly attention paid yet key and complex issue faced by employers in any context. The everlasting significance of this concept can be understood with its relatedness to many workforce consequences such as lessened job stress, lessened employee turnover, increased dedication to work, employee excitement, enthusiasm, and eagerness to produce high-quality output etc (Houman, 2002). In recent fast-paced lifestyle intensifying cases of innovations, connectivity, consumerism, presence of high-octane electronic media and technological advancement worldwide, employees try hard to satisfy and find meaning of their personal and work life (Singh, et al., 2022). Thereby out of many JS determinants SI stands out with its contemporary importance. SI simply looks for a person's inner status that affects their level of pleasure with the work they are doing, regardless of the industry or sector, and that helps them to live a life that go beyond just meeting their necessities. Previous studies have shown a substantial link between SI and JS, yet covers a small number of occupations, including psychology, nursing, and teaching (Meghana Mohan, 2020; Kulshretha, 2017; Jeloudar & Goodarzi, 2012).

Information Technology (IT) industry is one of the economy's emerging sectors, and having a healthy, thankful, and happy workforce is vital for the sector's progress

(Dhanshetti, 2021). In the Sri Lankan context, IT industry has grown significantly during past few years and over 600 IT companies employ around 80000 workforces are operating within the country to serve worldwide customers and organizations (ICTA, 2019). JS has become a most concerning area in this industry with higher turnover rates. IT employees should have a proper spirituality for undertaking their job effectively. In this context, mere emotive and intellect abilities are not sufficient and need to have a good SI (Cherati, Mahdavi & Rezacian, 2013). According to the studies of Mallawaarachchi (2009), although the relevance of JS has been proven to have significant benefits on employee stress, staff attrition, and absenteeism, the Sri Lankan IT sector is still learning about its value. The research by Hettiarachchi (2022) claims that JS had an impact on the work output of IT specialists in Sri Lankan IT organizations. The significance of JS training for IT workers in the Sri Lankan environment has previously been studied by researchers (Mallawaarachchi, 2009). The relationship between SI and JS, however, has yet to be fully understood. Thereby the significance of SI on JS of IT professionals is still unexplored in Sri Lanka. Since the recent IT education in Sri Lanka has been producing an adequate quantity of high-calibre pupils considering IT as a main and fast developing industries in Sri Lankan economy it will probably increase the potential IT labour in Future Sri Lankan workforce (Gunawardena, 2017). Based on these findings, researcher recognized an empirical gap for a study in relationship between SI and JS of IT professionals in Sri Lankan IT companies.

The research questions are those generated from the research problem of the study. In this context, the research question of this study is,

- What is the relationship between SI and JS of IT professionals in Sri Lankan IT companies?

Based on the research problem, the objective of this study is, to examine the relationship between SI and JS of IT professionals in Sri Lankan IT companies.

2. Literature Review

JS has been differently defined by many scholars and there is no standard agreement on the meaning of it. In one perspective, it can be identified as a type of favorable emotional expression that is assessed following an accurate assessment of the finished task (Luthans, 2007). Further, Liu et al., (2016) explains it as a favourable emotional response from assessing individual work experience. Similarly, Korankye and Amakyewaa (2021) agree that JS involves employees interpretation of how well their requirements are taken care of. Considering all these ideologies JS can be an employee's positive and negative thoughts about their work as well as the level of enjoyment they experience because of their jobs. According to Kamal and Lukman (2017), it's important to consider JS to ensure if employees feel free to discuss their jobs and whether their needs and the demands of their jobs are compatible. One of the key factors influencing a company's effectiveness and success is said to be employee JS. Indeed, a clear indication of the importance of JS in contemporary firms is the new management paradigm, which stresses the need to treat employees as individuals with their own goals and objectives (Aziri, 2011).

Khorshidi & Ebaadi (2012) explained SI as a novel idea in the workplace that has attracted the attention of managers and industry professionals more than other concepts. According to Mohan (2020), the capacity to solve issues and construct models or systems that successfully accomplish goals and objectives is identified as SI. Further, Alenzi (2016) indicated that the development of a person's personality and attitude is influenced by a current, popular idea called SI. Moreover, when an individual is SI, he is able to act wisely along with the proper sense of meaning with adaptive use of spiritual information according to the situation (Kulshrestha & Singhal, 2017). Consequently, same individual is able to rationalize and understand conditions as well as other individuals which make them best in creating connections with others. Similarly, King (2008) comments that, SI is the result of one's existence that a set of adaptive mental capacities based on non-material and transcendent aspects of reality have emerged, particularly those that are based on assistance with awareness, integration, and adaptability application of the transcendent and non-material qualities of profound existential crises. According to the studies of King (2008), author has recognized four constructs in his study for SI as critical existential thinking, personal meaning production, transcendental awareness, and conscious state expansion. As overall being spiritually intelligent can be stated as acting compassionate and intellectual regardless of the circumstance.

In considering Sri Lankan context, SI is still not a particularly well-known term despite the fact that JS of employees is a prominent idea in most sectors and HR departments of the firms are focused on it in order to gain a greater productivity from their staff (Khorshidi & Ebaadi, 2012). With the ability of SI to deal with change, stabilize, and regulate the activities with the spirituality of the mind, they believe it to be one of the most essential sustainable sources for the organizations that keeps them strong in trying times and gives strength to resolve traumatic situations and discrepancies. Many fundamental ideas are necessary for the development of SI in humans, whether it is by making good choices or exerting influence on people's hearts, developing skills, shifting their convictions, or elevating their intellectual processes. A survey study conducted among 320 banking industry workers discovered a substantial link between employees' JS and SI (Ravikumar & Dhamodaran, 2014). Consequently, it is found that employees who practice workplace spirituality are found with better ability to achieve their goals with a creative mind while handling difficult situations with wisdom (Altaf & Awan, 2011). According to these findings it can be stated that SI can affect for the thinking pattern and decision making of individuals as it influences the way they are prioritizing their goals and aims in life and the way they find meaning for the purposes of their lives. Also, it influences the way of making choices and taking the better decisions in their workplace which can affect for the individual productivity of the organization.

Many past researchers found a connection between SI and JS. This is evident in the results of studies by Awais, Malik and Qaisar (2015); Van Der Walt & De Klerk (2014); Diharma & Lakshmi (2014) which confirmed that SI was a positive predictor of JS. The findings of research studies for SI and JS relationship done by Kauor (2013) on high school teachers, also the study of Soleiman & Fatemah (2012) on MBA teachers are evident that the relationship between two factors is positive. Similarly, Peter & Susan (2016) study on IT professionals agrees the same argument as above authors. Therefore,

it can be seen that majority of the studies expresses the significant positive relationship of the said factors.

Based on the above empirical literature it demonstrates that SI impact for many favorable employee outcomes (Rani et al., 2013). Specifically, it's relatedness to adaptability, facing different circumstances, ability to connect with others and compassionateness ultimately strengthen the satisfaction of employees by enabling them to generate positive emotional state regarding their work. Thereby a fertile ground has been created for the relationship between these factors and the identified inconsistent results and gap in the local IT sector leads for further investigations for the link between SI and JS.

Conceptual Framework

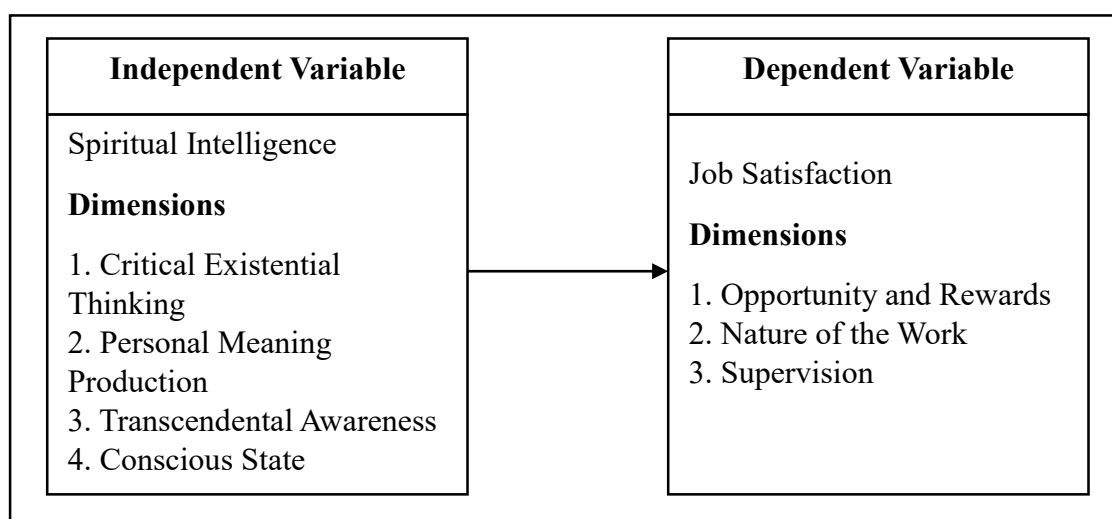


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Source: Author developed (2021) based on the prior knowledge of (King, 2008; Schmidt, 2004).

The following hypothesis have been developed in light of the dependent and independent variables of the study in order to ascertain the relationship between SI and JS of IT professionals in Sri Lankan IT organizations.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between SI and JS of IT professionals

3. Methodology

Data gathered through the questionnaire is converted into a numerical platform. The researchers intend to convert the gathered information into numerical form in the study when evaluating the relationship of SI on JS of IT professionals in Sri Lankan IT companies. The quantitative method was used as a result. The study was conducted using a deductive methodology to test the hypothesis and investigate the relationship between SI and JS among IT professionals. In order to incorporate this strategy into the study, researchers created and disseminated a questionnaire to a sample of individuals who are proportionately chosen from a population of IT professionals in Sri Lanka. The

corona outbreak has had a significant influence on all activities, making the use of questionnaires to gather data the most appropriate strategy for this study.

The questionnaire only contains closed-ended questions to save the time required to complete the replies. The closed-ended questions were graded using anchor points of 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree) on a 5-point scale. Every district in Sri Lanka was intended to get the questionnaire, which was designed to be delivered to experts working for Sri Lankan IT companies. The first segment includes demographic data, the second section probes the SI of IT professionals, and the third section includes a likert scale to probe respondents JS. Sections of the research questionnaire were designed for gathering background data and quantifying each variable. The four dimensions of SI produced by King (2008), and the three dimensional of JS items were elaborated by Schmidt (2004), used in the development of the research questionnaire that was given to the respondents. There are 81,741 IT professionals employed by IT companies in Sri Lanka which make up the population of this study, according to the National IT-BPM Workforce Survey 2019, which was conducted by the Information and Communication Technology Agency (ICTA) of Sri Lanka. The researcher will employ a sample size of 383 Sri Lankan IT experts in accordance with the Morgan's sampling theory (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970).

In this investigation, a non-probability sampling method was used. Probability sampling is frequently employed in quantitative research. However, non-probability sampling can be used in the absence of a quantitative research. Convenience sampling was employed as the sample method in a quantitative study that examined workplace stress and satisfaction with work-life balance in Indonesia during the pandemic season (Irawanto, Novianti and Roz, 2021). Another quantitative study on the work-life balance of the employed people was conducted in Latvia during COVID-19, and the sampling method used was the snowball effect (Lonska et al., 2021). Due to the lack of a sample frame, the sample population cannot be differentiated as individuals; therefore, the researchers utilized the snowball sampling approach based on the results to select respondents. The survey questions were sent to some of the identified IT professionals via email from the researchers, and these identified IT professionals then forwarded them to their peers. The current study used the SPSS statistical analysis tool to validate the measurement and evaluate the hypotheses. The valid data was tabulated and analyzed using SPSS version 26. Prior to analysis, the reliability and validity of the data was measured and also a demographic analysis was undertaken. In order to ascertain their relationship, a correlation analysis was performed using JS as the dependent variable and SI as the independent variable.

4. Results and Discussion

The researchers have drawn 383 IT employees as a sample from the population. When Google forms were first distributed to IT experts, 383 of them were returned which means a 100% response rate. The relationship between independent and dependent variables were assessed using likert scales based on the consensus of the authors and a review of the existing research. The survey was made available online as a Google form and sent to IT experts in each province of Sri Lanka.

The demographic data of the respondent was acquired in one section of the questionnaire. The sample of respondent's distribution by gender shows that, 117 respondents are female, leaving 276 more male respondents in the study's sample. As a result, the bulk of the sample responses closely reflect the views of the organizations' male IT workers. According to the sample of respondents' age distribution, the results show that there are 255 more replies in the age group of 20 to 29, 122 in the group of 30 to 39, and 16 in the group of 40 to 49, but there are none in the group of above 50.

The reliability test was conducted using SPSS and the Cronbach's alpha value. The questionnaire's total Cronbach's alpha score was 0.934. The questionnaire's validity had been confirmed because the number was higher than 0.6. Researchers determined the Cronbach's alpha values of the items under each dimension to examine the reliability of each one independently after analysing the reliability of the full questionnaire. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test (KMO) evaluates if sampling was done appropriately for each variable in a model. Whether or not data are suitable for factor analysis is determined by this. It may be argued that the KMO and Bartlett's test is a trustworthy measure of the research's efficacy because all of the aspects in this study yielded values larger than 0.5. The total KMO score for the survey was 0.949. Through a correlation study, researchers evaluated the relationship between IT professional's JS and SI. From a sample of 383 IT workers working in Sri Lankan IT companies, the researchers used a correlation analysis to find the relationship between SI and JS. Using mean values, the researchers arrived at their conclusions. The dependent variable, JS, is a combination of three dimensions, whereas the independent variable, SI, was deemed to be a combination of four dimensions. The results showed that the JS variable had a mean of 4.1812 while the SI variable had a mean of 4.0399. The majority of responders to the questionnaire for both SI and JS agreed with the embedded remarks, according to the researchers, and the means of these two variables both moving around 4.

Table 1: Pearson Correlation Matrix for JS and SI

		Spiritual Intelligence (SI)	Job Satisfaction(JS)
SI	Pearson Correlation	1	.574**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	383	383
JS	Pearson Correlation	.574**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	383	383

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: SPSS Output of Correlation Results

The Pearson correlation between SI and JS was found to be $r=0.574$, which denotes a favourable association. This leads to the conclusion that as SI expands, employee JS will as well. The correlation is significant at the level of 0.01 in the above Pearson correlation analysis, and the analysis's p value is 0.000, which is less than 0.01. ($p<0.01$). As a

consequence, the tested association is present and significant in the population of interest. As a consequence, the findings supported hypothesis 1 ($r=0.574$, $p<0.01$), which denotes a moderate positive relationship between the variables. Therefore the researchers identified that the correlation between SI and JS are statistically significant. The results show that there is a linear relationship between JS and SI, demonstrating that there is a positive correlation in the regression model with JS as the dependent variable and SI as the independent variable. Thus the researcher accept H_1 since there is a significant relationship between SI and JS of IT professionals in Sri Lankan IT companies. The relationship between SI and JS has been shown in the literature in specific contexts and on specific platforms. The findings of research studies for SI and JS relationship done by Kauor (2013), Jelodar & Goodarzi (2012), and Peter & Susan (2016) communicates the similar finding on the positive relationship of these two variables.

5. Conclusion and Implications

The findings of the study have important implications for both the management and employees of IT organizations. As a consequence, managers at IT firms will be able to look into the essential elements that affect employees' JS. Based on the key finding of this study, they may successfully use novel ideas and techniques to enhance employee JS.

Additionally, the study will establish the framework for more research into the interaction between SI and JS. It will also assist management in determining the most effective ways to engage and satisfy workers at an IT firm. They can also put novel concepts into action to enhance SI's positive relationship with JS. The results of this study highlight the need for managers to strengthen their efforts in fostering employee spirituality in order to create a values-driven workplace where SI plays a significant part in fostering individual value creation to increase employee JS. Also the researchers make several suggestions for future researchers to follow in order to stay one step ahead of testing based on the previous restrictions. Future research might, unlike this one, broaden the study's population to include additional IT enterprises in Sri Lanka. Otherwise, they can evaluate related factors in other professional fields like education, healthcare, tourism, and telecommunications for prospective studies with a high time value in the future.

In light of the demographics of the professional fields and job roles, experts suggest future studies to focus more on this topic and further categorize it. The study's sampling method, according to the researchers, is not highly generalizable. The results will have a wider application if probability sampling is utilized. This has provided a broad outline of the research project that was carried out in accordance with the study's stated research objectives. The study includes recommendations for improved future concepts and ways to enhance employee JS, as well as management implications for future researchers to detect possible study gaps and undertake extensive investigation.

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