

THE ROLE OF SPIRITUAL CURRICULUM IN MENTAL HEALTH OF THE STUDENTS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EDUCATIONAL TEACHERS OF THE SARI TOWN (RESERCH ARTICLE)

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ABSTRACT

Accompanied by increasing changes of the technology, the role of educational places which were just places to learn has been evolved into places for training talents and spirituality and also for mental flourishing. In the spiritual education and curriculum, education is performed by the spirit and its result is mental health and it also gives meaning to the individual, society and life and finally it leads to prosperity. Current study aimed to investigate the role of spiritual curriculum in mental health of the students of secondary schools. This study was descriptive-analytical and its sample included 52 individuals which were selected by the stratified random sampling. In order to collect data, a 30-question questionnaire was provided with the reliability coefficient of $\alpha=0.79$. After collecting and coding data, they were input of SPSS software; and relevant statistical tests like average and T-test were used to analyze the data. The results showed that spiritual curriculum was effective on relevant attitudes of student toward themselves and other students and also their lives and finally their mental health ($p\text{-value}\leq 0.000$). Generally it could be concluded that the effect of spiritual curriculum on students' attitudes toward themselves and other students and their lives is positive and it contributes mental health of student and gives meaning to the individual, society and life..

Keywords: *Spiritual Curriculum, Mental Health, Students*

INTRODUCTION

Accompanied by the increasing changes of the technology and science of the contemporary world, the traditional role of educational places which were just places to learn has been evolved into places for training talents and also for mental and spiritual flourishing. In the contemporary world, the philosophy of education means meeting mental, physical and social demands of the learners in addition to education. Furthermore the role of teachers and instructors is to reform maladaptive behaviors and supply intellectual maturity and mental health of the learners in addition to prior responsibilities. This fact that an Iranian child enters the school in 6 and exits it in adulthood would increase the importance of effect of educational places on health especially mental health. Human being in the contemporary world is entangled in the greatest crises. In addition to external crises, human beings are entangled in internal crises which are more important and disastrous. One of the crises which is resulted by the unfamiliarity of human being with his nature is the crisis of spiritual cognition. Nowadays in the human culture, technology and science are powerful in the terms of technology and communication and they are poor in the terms of meaning and aim. Spirituality is a mental quality which is beyond the religious belief. It motivates human being and makes individuals feel the greatness of the God and respect to the creation (Mehrmohammady 2011). One of the solutions to decrease the mental pressures and stress and in the whole provides mental health is the spirituality. Spiritual curriculum emphasizes on human's conscience, religion, life, history and experience besides using modern technologies. Spiritual curriculum is the education by the means of spirit and its results are mental health and giving meaning to the individual,

Research Article

society and life and finally it is prosperity. The main goal of mental health is providing mental and intellectual sanity of the individuals in the society.

Schools provide a very suitable opportunity for the many of children and teenagers to improve their life. Besides nations' activities for public education, the role of schools in offering services like mental health services in the educational affairs is of increasing importance. Today, regarding family and society support, schools are the best places for comprehensive mental health programs; since almost all the children go to school in a specific period of their lives.

Spiritual preparation in the curriculum of secondary schools is of special importance. It is expected from curriculum to meet internal demands of students in the different fields and answer their questions. It also should provide the condition of creating quality development in the education, internal and external maturity for landing productive jobs, and improving and developing science and technology in the society (Maleky 2001).

Spiritual curriculum is a kind of curriculum in which through appropriate studies individual learns that spirituality is paying attention to the emotional and intellectual issues by the means of right hemisphere. Thomas Merton believes that spirituality contributes centralization. In other word consciousness is produced by the means of spirituality (Ghadery 2001).

Spiritual curriculum is a kind of curriculum which aims to reach higher levels of consciousness and gives meaning to the life. Slattery (1999) considers curriculums beyond a goal. He indicates that "teachers should avoid curriculums which hold materialistic dimensions, external knowledge, maturity for the uncertain future and suffering from an irreligious world." We should create an interconnected and liberation curriculum in the spirituality which is full of excitement, questions, efforts and collaborations and its goal is a process which is holistic instead of final production. Spirituality is a superior feeling that increases enthusiasm of human's act and tendency for justice. It provides a kind of conformity and unity with itself and whole the world.

In the age of postmodern and metacognition, we should mix the science-oriented mind with soothing spirit in the form of spiritual curriculum in order to take happiness back to the educational sturdy books and exams and also to create confident heart and internal peace (Ghourchian 2008). A curriculum with spiritual approach, in addition to recognizing internal life, considers it as a priority. This program aims to make balance and dependency between internal and external life of the students. Current approaches have been become unbalanced in the terms of focusing on behavior, rational and quantitative thinking, controlling and predicting and emphasizing largely on technology and measurement. Iannone & Obenauf (1995) consider two fields of "curriculum" and "teaching" as the appropriate platform to implement spiritual thoughts. They also consider the term "spiritual curriculum" as a complementation for the education programs in schools.

Families, schools, friends and Peers, society, inheritance, religious faith, and even in utero times are factors which could be effective on mental health of the individuals. They could play a determinant role in creating mental health or lack of it. Undoubtedly several factors affect the mental health. It is difficult to mention all of them. However obtained findings from the researches in the fields of biology and social sciences have extended our knowledge about the factors which are probable to affect the mental health.

Spiritual curriculum in this research means applying religious books, educational courses, training programs and religious ceremonies in the educational programs of the student. Canadian community of mental health has defined sanity health in three parts: first part is attitudes toward oneself, second part is attitudes toward others (being comfortable with others), and the third part is attitudes toward the life (facing the necessities of the life). Attitudes related to oneself include controlling one's excitements, awareness of one's weaknesses, satisfaction from simple pleasures and being interested in long term and intimate friendship. Attitudes related to others include taking responsibilities, being responsible for the human and material environment, Sense of belonging to a group. Attitudes related to the life includes the competency of making personal decisions, enthusiasm of working well, and enthusiasm of developing facilities and interests (Ganjy 2001).

Research Article

Therefore regarding the necessity of knowing the role of spirituality and spiritual curriculum in the current virtual and technologic world in giving meanings to the life, effort and mental health of human being, current research has been performed to study the role of spiritual curriculum in mental health of the students.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research method was descriptive-analytical and the statistical society was educational teachers of Sari. 52 individuals were selected by the stratified random sampling by the means of Cochran table. In order to collect data, a 30-question questionnaire which was five-item Likert was provided which aimed to study the role of spiritual curriculum in mental health regarding three parts of attitudes related to one self, attitudes related to other students and attitudes related to the lives of the students. It was confirmed by the masters and experts of this field and its reliability was measured by Cronbach's alpha α -0.79. Then questionnaires were distributed between samples. After collecting questionnaires and coding them, they were entered in SPSS software. The methods of descriptive statistics (Frequency distribution of mean and standard deviation and error of deviation from mean)and inferential statistics (one-variable T-test) were used to analyze the data of questionnaires.

RESULTS

Regarding the goals of the research which were determining the role of spiritual curriculum in mental health of the students of secondary schools, the role of spiritual curriculum in the attitudes toward one self, attitude towards other students and attitude towards the lives of the students from the perspective of the teachers, following results are obtained:

Hypothesis one: spiritual curriculum is effective on the attitudes related to one self (students) in the secondary schools.

Table 1: Determining the role of spiritual curriculum in the attitudes related to one self (students)

Table t	Calculated t	Degree of freedom	α	p-value
1.82	42.82	51	0.05	0.000

As it is seen in the above table, the amount of p-value is smaller than $\alpha = 0.05$ and calculated t (42.82) is larger than table t (1.82). Thus with 95% confidence, spiritual curriculum is effective on the attitudes related to one self (students of secondary schools) from the perspective of educational teachers. (p-value \leq 0.000)

Hypothesis two: spiritual curriculum is effective on the attitudes related to other students of secondary schools.

Table 2: Determining the role of spiritual curriculum in the attitudes related to other students

Table t	Calculated t	Degree of freedom	α	p-value
1.82	40.72	51	0.05	0.000

As it is seen in the above table the amount of p-value is smaller than $\alpha = 0.05$ and calculated t (40.72) is larger than table t (1.82). Thus with 95% confidence,spiritual curriculum is effective on the attitudes related to other students of secondary schools from the perspective of educational teachers. (p-value \leq 0.000)

Hypothesis three: Spiritual curriculum is effective on the attitudes related to the lives of the students of secondary schools.

Research Article

Table 3: Determining the role of spiritual curriculum in the attitudes related to the lives of the students

Table t	Calculated t	Degree of freedom	α	p-value
1.82	39.72	51	0.05	0.000

As it is seen in the above table the amount of p-value is smaller than $\alpha = 0.05$ and calculated t (39.72) is larger than table t (1.82). Thus with 95% confidence, spiritual curriculum is effective on the attitudes related to the family of the students of secondary schools from the perspective of educational teachers. (p-value ≤ 0.000)

Main hypothesis: spiritual curriculum is effective on the mental health of the students of secondary schools.

Table 4: Determining the role of spiritual curriculum in the mental health of students

Table t	Calculated t	Degree of freedom	α	p-value
1.82	42.82	51	0.05	0.000

As it is seen in the above table, the amount of p-value is smaller than $\alpha = 0.05$ and calculated t (42.82) is larger than table t (1.82). Thus with 95% confidence, spiritual curriculum is effective on the mental health of the students from the perspective of the educational teachers. (p-value ≤ 0.000).

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

The obtained results of the finding showed that spiritual curriculum is positively effective on the attitudes of the students toward themselves and other students and their lives. Thus it can be said that spiritual curriculum causes mental health of the students and gives meaning to the individual, society and life. The results of the research performed by Safaei Rad (2010) in studying the relation between spiritual welfare and mental health among the students showed that spiritual welfare and mental health are correlated to each other significantly. The results of the research performed by the Ajdaryard (2010) in studying the effect of moral and spiritual education on the mental health of the students of third stage of female high school in the region 13 of Tehran in the academic year of 2007-2008 showed that moral and spiritual education is effective on increasing the mental health and improving the physical and social performance and also decreasing the anxiety and depression of the students. Furthermore Izady (2009) in studying the components of the hidden curriculum with emphasis on the role of dominant social structure in secondary schools of Mazandaran province, showed that about the half of students and staff had stated that the role of hidden curriculum of the schools in Strengthening national identity was high and very high. The results of a research performed by Ghobary (2009) in explaining the relation between different dimensions of spirituality and anxiety and depression among the students of Tehran university showed that there was a negative correlation between the amount of anxiety and dimensions of spirituality (meaning of the life and relation with God); and there was a negative correlation between the amount of depression and meaning of the life, relation with God and spiritual flourishing among the students. Bahramy Dashtaky (2006) in her research entitled determining the effect of group spiritual education on decreasing depression of the students showed that spiritual affairs like praying, forgiveness, Transcendental Meditation, meanings decreased depression of female students. Sura et al (2008) in his research confirmed the role of spirituality in mental health and depression decrease. Desrosiers, & Miller, (2007) in their research entitled "Relational spirituality and depression in adolescent girls" showed that daily spiritual experiences and forgiveness decrease depression and there is a significance and reverse relation between spiritual experiences and depression.

Daaleman & Kaufman (2006) concluded that the amount of spirituality of primary care out patients who visit the family doctor is in reverse relation with depressive symptoms. Dalamia (2006) studied the

Research Article

relation between spirituality and depression and showed that individuals who were of higher spirituality had less depressive symptoms. All the results of mentioned researches are in the same line and consistent with the results of our research. Therefore it can be said that spiritual curriculum filled with spiritual solutions causes brightness of the soul and spirit of the human being; since these curriculums consider the spiritual learning situations and make the human being closer to the resurrection and origin. It awakens the hope in the heart of human being. This makes the human being remove the faults of the life, think about the future hopefully, decrease his faults and get on well with his friends. Generally the results of this research showed that spiritual curriculum has increased the mental health of the students. Thus regarding the results it is recommended that educational teachers of the schools should use spiritual curriculum regularly in order to increase the mental peace of the students, decrease the anxiety stemmed from the educational problems and also increase the enthusiasm of the students for the education. It is also recommended that a standard test should be provided to measure the relation between mental health or sanity and spiritual curriculum in Iran and this research should be performed in other provinces and in extended dimensions by the other researchers.

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Research Article

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