



## Original Article

# The Relationship Between Spiritual Intelligence and Resilience in Rehabilitation Students

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Providing services and support to individuals with disabilities requires a high level of adaptability and resilience. Spiritual intelligence is considered an important dimension of human health that may contribute to greater adaptation and improved quality of life. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the relationship between spiritual intelligence and resilience among students at the School of Rehabilitation of Hamadan University of Medical Sciences.

**Methods:** This cross-sectional study was conducted among students of Hamadan University of Medical Sciences (including physiotherapy, audiology, speech therapy, occupational therapy, and orthotics and prosthetics) during the 2024–2025 academic year. The participants had a mean age of  $21.35 \pm 1.90$  years. A convenience sampling method was used, and 200 students completed the spiritual intelligence and resilience questionnaires. Data were analyzed using SPSS software version 24.

**Results:** No statistically significant differences in spiritual intelligence or resilience were found among students by gender, age, field of study, marital status, parents' occupation, or parents' educational level. However, a significant positive relationship was found between spiritual intelligence and resilience among rehabilitation students ( $P < 0.05$ ).

**Conclusion:** Higher levels of spiritual intelligence are associated with greater resilience among rehabilitation students. Therefore, incorporating spiritual intelligence-related concepts into rehabilitation students' educational curricula may help enhance their resilience.

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## Introduction

Individuals with disabilities represent the largest minority group worldwide [1]. Approximately 1.3 billion people, accounting for 16% of the global population, currently experience significant disabilities [2]. The World Health Organization (WHO) has also identified disability as a major global health and public health concern [3]. It is estimated that at least one in every three individuals worldwide will require rehabilitation at some point during an illness or injury. This estimate challenges the common perception that rehabilitation services are needed by only a limited proportion of the population [4].

People with disabilities require access to comprehensive rehabilitation services. Rehabilitation is considered a philosophy that provides the intellectual foundation for healthcare delivery. It is not merely a component of healthcare services but a fundamental pillar of the health system in its broader context. Rehabilitation encompasses a wide range of services across different levels and dimensions, including prevention, empowerment, medical care, education, social support, and vocational rehabilitation [5].

Professionals working in rehabilitation fields contribute directly to the health and functioning of individuals and communities. Their performance not only influences their own well-being but also directly affects the quality of care provided to others. Delivering optimal rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities and vulnerable populations requires rehabilitation professionals to possess strong mental health and high levels of resilience [6].

Resilience refers to the dynamic process of positive adaptation in response to stressful, adverse, and challenging experiences [7]. It has also been described as “stress resistance” [8] and “post-traumatic growth” [9]. Thus, resilience extends beyond merely enduring life’s stresses and difficulties [10]; it involves positive growth, adaptability, and achieving a new level of balance following disruption of a previous state of equilibrium [11].

Resilient individuals are characterized by traits such as being good-natured, religious, and optimistic [12], the ability to recover and improve, flexible thinking skills, viewing challenges as opportunities for learning and growth, and possessing problem-solving and conflict-resolution abilities [13]. Enhancing resilience can reduce psychological harm among the general population, patients, and healthcare professionals [14]. Studies have indicated that spiritual intelligence may significantly influence the level of resilience [15].

Religion appears to function as a protective factor for individuals and is associated with a wide range of positive psychological outcomes [16]. One concept that has attracted considerable attention among researchers in the psychology of religion is spiritual intelligence [17]. Spiritual intelligence is regarded as the foundation of other forms of intelligence [18] and is considered a distinctive human capacity.

Spiritual intelligence consists of four components: general thinking and belief dimensions, the ability to confront and cope with problems, attention to ethical issues and self-awareness, and love and interest [19]. It represents a form of adaptive and problem-solving capacity that involves the ability to find meaning, value, and purpose in life and to apply spiritual values to improve daily functioning and enhance physical and psychological health [20]. Spiritual intelligence has also been shown to be positively and significantly associated with psychological well-being [21], life satisfaction [22], and the development of positive relationships with others [23].

Individuals with high spiritual intelligence can cope with stress and suffering by attributing meaning and value to their experiences. They can accept hardships and demonstrate resilience in facing adversity [24]. Spirituality enhances individuals’ ability to tolerate life stressors and motivates them to seek solutions to challenges [13]. In clinical settings, spiritual intelligence can also facilitate effective communication between therapists and patients [25].

Since spiritual intelligence can be cultivated and developed [26], enhancing it may contribute to restoring inner balance and purity, thereby promoting professional ethics [27] and improving adaptability and effectiveness within organizations. Healthcare professionals with higher levels of spiritual intelligence are more likely to adhere to professional ethical principles and achieve positive outcomes for both themselves and their patients [28].

Therefore, spirituality is particularly important for students in rehabilitation fields, including audiology, speech therapy, orthotics and prosthetics, occupational therapy, and physiotherapy. These students require critical thinking, spirituality, and transcendent awareness as essential competencies to perform their professional responsibilities effectively. They frequently interact with patients who require considerable emotional and psychological support; therefore, they need to be mentally and spiritually prepared to fulfill this role competently and confidently.

Accordingly, the present study aimed to investigate the relationship between spiritual intelligence and resilience among students of the School of Rehabilitation at Hamadan University of Medical Sciences.

## Methods

### Study Design

This cross-sectional study was conducted after obtaining ethical approval from the Ethics Committee of Hamadan University of Medical Sciences, Hamadan, Iran (IR.UMSHA.REC.1404.199).

### Participants

The study population included all students majoring in audiology, physiotherapy, occupational therapy,

speech therapy, and orthotics and prosthetics at the School of Rehabilitation of Hamadan University of Medical Sciences during the 2024–2025 academic year. A total of 200 students were recruited using a convenience sampling method. All participants identified as Muslim.

Before participation, written informed consent was obtained from all students. Data were collected using two standard questionnaires, which were distributed electronically to the participants.

### **Instruments**

**Badi' et al.'s Spiritual Intelligence Questionnaire:**

The Spiritual Intelligence Questionnaire, developed and validated by Badi' et al. (2010), was used to assess spiritual intelligence. This questionnaire consists of 42 items categorized into four factors: general thoughts and beliefs (12 items), the ability to confront and interact with problems (15 items), attention to ethical issues (8 items), and self-consciousness, love, and interest (7 items).

Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Items in the second factor are scored inversely. The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and Tansif coefficients, with overall reliability coefficients of 0.85 and 0.78, respectively, indicating acceptable reliability. The validity of the questionnaire was supported by a significant positive correlation between questionnaire scores and the criterion question score ( $r = 0.55$ ,  $p = 0.0001$ ), confirming its validity [19].

**Resilience Questionnaire:**

The Resilience Questionnaire, developed by Connor and Davidson (2003), consists of 25 items designed to assess resilience. Each item is rated on a 5-point scale ranging from completely false (1) to always true (5) [29].

Samani et al. (2007) reported a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.87 for this scale among students, indicating acceptable internal consistency [30]. In the study by Akbari et al., the reliability of the questionnaire was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.83. To assess validity, the correlation between each item and the total questionnaire score was examined. The results showed that all items had a significant correlation with the total score ( $p < 0.001$ ), with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.34 to 0.71 [31].

### **Procedure**

In this study, electronic links to the spiritual intelligence and resilience questionnaires were distributed among students. Participants were instructed to indicate their level of agreement with each item using the specified Likert-scale response options. The questionnaire instructions emphasized that all collected information would remain anonymous and

confidential.

### **Data Analysis**

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 24. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, relative frequencies, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize the data. Inferential statistical tests, including the independent samples t-test, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and Pearson's correlation coefficient, were applied to examine relationships between study variables. A significance level of  $p < 0.05$  was considered statistically significant.

### **Results**

In this study, descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were performed to analyze the collected data. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were used to summarize participants' characteristics and study variables. Inferential analyses included the Spearman correlation coefficient, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and Kruskal–Wallis test.

#### **Descriptive Statistics**

A total of 200 students participated in this study. Among them, 60% were female, and 40% were male. The mean age of participants was 21.35 years ( $SD = 1.90$ ). Most participants (97.5%) were single, and all participants identified as Muslim.

The demographic characteristics of the participants, including gender, distribution across academic disciplines, marital status, parents' educational level, and parents' occupation, are presented in Table 1.

#### **Inferential Statistics**

The results of the ANOVA and Kruskal–Wallis tests indicated no statistically significant differences in spiritual intelligence or resilience across academic fields, gender, marital status, parents' education level, or parents' occupation. These findings suggest that the examined demographic characteristics did not significantly influence participants' levels of spiritual intelligence or resilience (Table 2).

The Spearman correlation coefficient test was used to examine the relationship between spiritual intelligence and resilience scores, as well as the associations between their respective subscales. The results demonstrated a positive and statistically significant correlation between spiritual intelligence (mean =  $146.6 \pm 18.868$ ) and resilience (mean =  $62.32 \pm 11.661$ ) among rehabilitation students ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Furthermore, all components of spiritual intelligence showed significant correlations with all resilience subscales ( $p < 0.05$ ). These findings indicate that higher levels of spiritual intelligence are associated with greater resilience among students. The strongest correlation was observed between resilience and personal competence ( $r = 0.912$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) (Table 3).

**Table 1:** Frequency and Percentage of Participants' Demographic Information

| Variable                   | Levels                    | Number | Percent |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|--------|---------|
| <b>Gender</b>              | Male                      | 80     | 40      |
|                            | Female                    | 120    | 60      |
| <b>Marital status</b>      | Single                    | 195    | 97.5    |
|                            | Married                   | 5      | 2.5     |
| <b>Field of study</b>      | Orthotics and prosthetics | 17     | 8.5     |
|                            | Audiology                 | 60     | 30.0    |
|                            | Physiotherapy             | 37     | 18.5    |
|                            | Occupational therapy      | 46     | 23.0    |
|                            | Speech therapy            | 40     | 20.0    |
| <b>Father's education</b>  | Below High School Diploma | 28     | 14.0    |
|                            | High School Diploma       | 56     | 28.0    |
|                            | Bachelor's Degree         | 76     | 38.0    |
|                            | Master's & Doctorate      | 40     | 20.0    |
| <b>Mother's education</b>  | Below High School Diploma | 30     | 15.0    |
|                            | High School Diploma       | 74     | 37.0    |
|                            | Bachelor's Degree         | 61     | 30.5    |
|                            | Master's & Doctorate      | 35     | 17.5    |
| <b>Father's occupation</b> | Self-employed             | 110    | 55.0    |
|                            | Employee (Office Worker)  | 90     | 45.0    |
| <b>Mother's occupation</b> | Self-employed             | 123    | 61.5    |
|                            | Employee (Office Worker)  | 77     | 38.5    |

**Table 2:** Descriptive Statistics and Comparison of Spiritual Intelligence and Resilience based on Demographic Characteristics

| Variable                   | Spiritual Mean (SD) | Intelligence P-value | Resilience Mean (SD) | P-value |
|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------|
| <b>Gender</b>              |                     |                      |                      |         |
| Female                     | 144.81 (17.144)     | .06                  | 62.36 (10.849)       | .961    |
| Male                       | 139.61 (19.695)     |                      | 62.28 (12.857)       |         |
| <b>Field of Study</b>      |                     |                      |                      |         |
| Orthotics and Prosthetics  | 148.71 (17.098)     | .310                 | 63.53 (11.954)       | .620    |
| Audiology                  | 144.00 (16.948)     |                      | 62.25 (10.904)       |         |
| Physiotherapy              | 138.70 (19.314)     |                      | 61.41 (11.924)       |         |
| Occupational Therapy       | 143.61 (19.000)     |                      | 64.28 (11.684)       |         |
| Speech Therapy             | 141.00 (19.052)     |                      | 60.53 (12.545)       |         |
| <b>Marital Status</b>      |                     |                      |                      |         |
| Single                     | 142.78 (18.437)     | .812                 | 62.33 (11.768)       | .950    |
| Married                    | 140.80 (15.418)     |                      | 62.00 (7.000)        |         |
| <b>Father's Education</b>  |                     |                      |                      |         |
| Below High School Diploma  | 140.18 (14.376)     | .651                 | 62.04 (9.961)        | .322    |
| High School Diploma        | 145.12 (17.610)     |                      | 63.07 (12.928)       |         |
| Bachelor's Degree          | 141.64 (20.068)     |                      | 61.09 (11.509)       |         |
| Master's & Doctorate       | 143.23 (18.585)     |                      | 63.83 (11.345)       |         |
| <b>Mother's Education</b>  |                     |                      |                      |         |
| Below High School Diploma  | 146.03 (15.921)     | .681                 | 63.47 (12.985)       | .925    |
| High School Diploma        | 141.57 (18.793)     |                      | 62.30 (10.803)       |         |
| Bachelor's Degree          | 143.03 (19.119)     |                      | 61.69 (11.942)       |         |
| Master's & Doctorate       | 141.83 (18.301)     |                      | 62.51 (12.166)       |         |
| <b>Father's Occupation</b> |                     |                      |                      |         |
| Self-employed              | 142.18 (18.026)     | .469                 | 62.56 (11.421)       | .750    |
| Employee (Office Worker)   | 143.40 (18.790)     |                      | 62.03 (12.007)       |         |
| <b>Mother's Occupation</b> |                     |                      |                      |         |
| Self-employed              | 142.33 (17.644)     | .246                 | 62.25 (10.792)       | .911    |
| Employee (Office Worker)   | 143.38 (19.494)     |                      | 62.44 (13.005)       |         |

**Table 3:** Spearman Correlation Coefficients Between Spiritual Intelligence and Resilience and Their Components Among Rehabilitation Students

|           | 1      | 2      | 3      | 4      | 5      | 6      | 7      | 8      | 9      | 10     | 11 |
|-----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----|
| <b>1</b>  | 1      |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |    |
| <b>2</b>  | .778** | 1      |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |    |
| <b>3</b>  | .787** | .599** | 1      |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |    |
| <b>4</b>  | .669** | .490** | .248** | 1      |        |        |        |        |        |        |    |
| <b>5</b>  | .755** | .599** | .556** | .328** | 1      |        |        |        |        |        |    |
| <b>6</b>  | .780** | .658** | .563** | .377** | .554** | 1      |        |        |        |        |    |
| <b>7</b>  | .670** | .912** | .498** | .445** | .511** | .575** | 1      |        |        |        |    |
| <b>8</b>  | .523** | .755** | .364** | .364** | .465** | .414** | .655** | 1      |        |        |    |
| <b>9</b>  | .561** | .757** | .408** | .345** | .419** | .534** | .604** | .428** | 1      |        |    |
| <b>10</b> | .615** | .788** | .482** | .370** | .419** | .558** | .732** | .430** | .546** | 1      |    |
| <b>11</b> | .574** | .464** | .594** | .309** | .384** | .421** | .276** | .154*  | .300** | .367** | 1  |

**Note:** **1** = Spiritual Intelligence; **2** = Resilience; **3** = General Thoughts & Belief Aspects; **4** = Ability to Confront & Interact with Problems; **5** = Self-consciousness, Love & Interest; **6** = Attend to Ethical Issues; **7** = Personal Competence, High Standards & Tenacity; **8** = Trust in One's Instincts, Tolerance of Negative Affect & Strengthening Effects of Stress; **9** = Positive Acceptance of Change & Secure Relationships; **10** = Control; **11** = Spiritual Influences. \*\*. P-Value < 0.01, \*. P-Value < 0.05.

## Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrated a significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and resilience. A strong and statistically significant positive correlation was observed between spiritual intelligence and resilience, as indicated by the Spearman correlation coefficient ( $\rho = 0.778$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), underscoring the practical importance of this association.

Spiritual intelligence refers to the ability to achieve deeper understanding and insight, which facilitates personal growth and fulfillment. It also enhances problem-solving abilities, psychological adaptability, and effective stress management. These capacities may contribute to greater self-awareness, a stronger sense of purpose, and a broader perspective on life [32]. A clear understanding of God, along with a sense of meaning and purpose in life, is considered a fundamental component of spiritual intelligence. Spiritual factors and influences have been identified as important contributors to the development of resilience, as a sense of meaning and purpose can serve as a foundation for resilience and successful adaptation to life's challenges [33]. Furthermore, spirituality plays an important role in adapting to stressful conditions, particularly those associated with chronic illnesses [34].

Moreover, the repeated application of spiritual experiences alongside other therapeutic approaches appears to have beneficial therapeutic effects [35]. Previous research has shown that spiritual intelligence training can enhance resilience and psychological well-being among adolescents with high-risk behaviors [36].

Mehregan et al., in a review study involving undergraduate students at Islamic Azad University of Rasht, reported that lower levels of negative religious coping and higher levels of resilience can act as protective factors against stressful life circumstances and challenges. This protective effect may facilitate more effective coping strategies and greater hopefulness in managing mental health difficulties [37].

Healthcare professionals with higher levels of spiritual intelligence may demonstrate greater self-awareness, a deeper understanding of others, clearer goal orientation, and a stronger sense of purpose in their professional roles. These characteristics may contribute to the development of important professional values, including responsibility, compassion, and emotional regulation.

Therefore, individuals with higher levels of spiritual intelligence may be expected to experience an improved quality of life [38]. This finding is consistent with the results of Nouri et al., who investigated the relationship between spiritual intelligence and improved quality of life among female nurses working in hospitals in Ahvaz [39].

The application of spiritual intelligence in the workplace offers several potential benefits, including: (1) fostering a sense of inner peace, which can enhance individual effectiveness; (2) reducing interpersonal conflicts and promoting mutual understanding; and (3)

facilitating change management and overcoming organizational barriers [40]. Furthermore, spiritual intelligence has been shown to play an important role in promoting mental health and reducing occupational stress [21, 41].

Spirituality is also associated with behavioral characteristics such as honesty, compassion, empathy, and forgiveness. Individuals with a strong sense of spirituality often adopt a holistic perspective, approach challenges with greater openness, and demonstrate enhanced emotional flexibility [42].

Sangol et al. conducted a study involving 590 graduate nursing students from five universities across different regions of Turkey. Their findings demonstrated a significant relationship between spirituality and moral sensitivity [43]. Similarly, Sommaya Khan et al., in a study involving students from various universities in Peshawar, Pakistan, reported that spiritual intelligence was associated with higher levels of resilience among students [44].

Furthermore, Laura O'Sullivan et al. investigated 214 students in New Zealand and found that spiritual intelligence was significantly associated with increased resilience. Their findings indicated that resilience fully mediated the relationship between spiritual intelligence and mental health, suggesting that spiritual intelligence may reduce depression and stress indirectly through enhancing resilience [45].

Mikaeili et al. investigated the relationship between spiritual intelligence, resilience, and happiness among students at Lorestan University. Their findings showed that higher levels of spiritual intelligence were associated with increased happiness and resilience among students [46].

Students with greater spiritual intelligence are more likely to preserve their motivation and emotional well-being when facing academic, family, and personal challenges. They may also demonstrate more reflective and adaptive approaches to problem-solving and decision-making. These characteristics can play an important role in promoting psychological well-being and mental health [47].

The findings of the present study are consistent with previous research [43-47]. Spiritual intelligence appears to play a significant role in enhancing students' resilience and may serve as an effective resource for promoting mental health and coping with academic and occupational stress.

In today's increasingly stressful and challenging environment, particularly for rehabilitation students who frequently interact with individuals with disabilities and other vulnerable populations, possessing psychological resources such as spiritual intelligence may contribute to greater resilience and more effective coping strategies. Since spiritual intelligence can be enhanced through education and training [48, 49], universities are encouraged to develop and implement educational programs and workshops to strengthen students' spiritual intelligence.

These findings are particularly relevant to students at this university. One limitation of this study was the reluctance of some students to participate, which may

have affected the sample's representativeness. Furthermore, factors such as personality traits, psychological characteristics, and variations in life experiences, cultural background, and social conditions were not examined, although these factors may influence spiritual intelligence and resilience.

Future studies are recommended to investigate the relationship between spiritual intelligence and resilience among students in other health-related disciplines. Such research could help determine the generalizability of the findings and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of spiritual intelligence in promoting resilience across different healthcare professions.

## Conclusion

This study demonstrated that spiritual intelligence is positively and significantly associated with resilience among rehabilitation students across all dimensions of resilience. Rehabilitation students, both during their academic training and in their future professional practice, frequently interact with older adults and individuals with disabilities. Effective rehabilitation of these populations requires adaptability, problem-solving skills, responsibility, and psychological well-being.

Given that both resilience and spiritual intelligence contribute to strengthening these essential competencies and help reduce occupational stress and promote professional ethical standards, incorporating educational programs focused on these two domains into rehabilitation curricula may have significant and lasting benefits for students' personal development and professional performance.

## Author contributions

N. Gohari and M. Tarashi Bonab developed the study design. H. Naderifar and M. Tarashi Bonab conducted data collection. R. Najafi-Vosough performed the statistical analysis, and data interpretation was conducted collaboratively by all authors. The manuscript was prepared according to established academic standards by N. Gohari and M. Tarashi Bonab, with contributions from all researchers. N. Gohari performed the final revision of the manuscript.

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