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The Relationship Among Iranian EFL Teachers' Spiritual Intelligence, Performance and Happiness: The Moderating Role of Psychological Well-being

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Abstract

Many significant psychological antecedents accompany second/foreign language (L2) teachers in the classrooms. Most recent studies show that spiritual intelligence, happiness, job performance, and psychological well-being are among these antecedents; however, the relationship between these constructs is still underexplored in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Therefore, this research aimed to explore the relationship among EFL teachers' spiritual intelligence, happiness, and job performance considering the moderating role of psychological well-being. This study applied a correlational design. Iranian EFL teachers (n:103) were invited to participate in this study through convenience sampling. They were requested to fill out four questionnaires at work. The structural equation modeling (SEM) method was used through PLS software to analyze the collected data. Therefore, it was concluded that both spiritual intelligence and happiness positively influence EFL teachers' job performance with psychological well-being only moderating the latter association. The findings of this study contribute to the knowledge on the teacher antecedents influencing their performance which can consequently result in enhancing the teachers' job performance.

Key words: Happiness, Iranian EFL teachers, Job Performance, Psychological Well-being, Spiritual Intelligence.

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1. Introduction

In educational settings, one of the integral objectives is to improve the suitability of educational goals. To achieve this end, the psychological needs of not only the learners but also the teachers should be logically encompassed (Steyn, 1999). In fact, considering learner aspects without a focus on teacher aspects would be incomplete, as teachers are mostly defining and crucial factors, especially in language learning environments (De Costa et al., 2020; De Dios Martínez Agudo, 2018; Mercer & Kostoulas, 2018).

Given the important role of EFL teachers in the second language learning process and the critical need to understand underlying factors to their effectiveness and well-being, this study aims to fill the aforementioned gap in the literature (Goker, 2012; Mansfield et al., 2016). By exploring the relationships between EFL teachers' spiritual intelligence, happiness, and job performance, along with the moderating role of teacher psychological well-being, this research endeavor tries contribute evidence-based results that can inform the development of targeted interventions and support systems for this vital professional group (Hosseini & Khalili, 2018; Jenaabadi et al., 2016).

By understanding the complex interplay between these psychological constructs, educational stakeholders can better support EFL teachers in facing the challenges of their profession, fostering their overall well-being, and ultimately enhancing their effectiveness in facilitating student learning and success (Argaes & Khorasgani, 2018; Moè et al., 2010). This holistic approach to understanding and supporting EFL teachers is in line with the current increasing attention on the importance of teacher well-being and its impact on educational outcomes (Acton & Glasgow, 2015).

Furthermore, according to a research, students' emotions are necessarily affected by context (Mercer, 2016; Ushioda, 2015) of which the teachers are integral parts. Therefore, the teachers' indispensability to the learning process has been acknowledged, and there is an agreement that teacher psychology "is equally if not more important than learner psychology in the language classroom" (Mercer et al., 2016, p. 215).

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The literature indicates that Second/Foreign Language (L2) teachers enter the classrooms with some unique psychological antecedents including spiritual intelligence (Awasthi, 2020; Azadi et al., 2022; Wigglesworth, 2012), happiness (Bajorek et al., 2014; Mercer et al., 2016; Mercer & Kostoulas, 2018), job performance (Jacob et al., 2018; Kartini et al., 2020), and psychological well-being (Han, 2022) that are of paramount importance and significance.

Nevertheless, it is believed that the field of Foreign Language Acquisition (FLA) has remarkably underexplored the teacher psychology (Mercer & Kostoulas, 2018; Williams et al., 2015), and there is still an urge to investigate this criterion. More specifically, there is a need to investigate the relationship between various constructs of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in the domain of teacher psychology, as well as the moderating role they might play in this regard. It is also highlighted that some important factors like teaching effectiveness, job burnout, teaching style, and emotional intelligence have a significant relationship with demographic variables like teaching experiences. It also indicates that there is complicated relationship between psychological factors and professional performance (Akbari & Tavassoli, 2011).

This study aimed to explore the relationship among Iranian EFL teachers' spiritual intelligence, happiness and job performance, considering the moderating role of psychological well-being. Initially, the relationship between the Iranian EFL teachers' spiritual intelligence and their job performance, as well as the relationship between the participants' happiness and their job performance were examined. After that, it was investigated whether psychological well-being could moderate the relationship between teachers' spiritual intelligence and job performance, as well as the relationship between their happiness and job performance.

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2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical framework

2.1.1. Social Cognitive Theory

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), developed by Albert Bandura, offers another important theoretical framework for understanding the factors that influence teachers' job performance (Bandura, 1986). At the heart of this theory is the idea that human behavior, including job performance, is the result of a

dynamic and reciprocal interaction between personal factors (e.g., beliefs, self-efficacy), environmental factors (e.g., social influences, organizational support), and behavioral factors (e.g., teaching practices, classroom management).

Having a teaching perspective, SCT suggests that teachers' beliefs about their own capabilities (self-efficacy), their idea about the school environment, and the feedback and support they receive from their students, colleagues, and administrators, can all contribute to the improvement of their teaching skills, the quality of their instructional practices, and finally their job performance (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; Klassen & Tze, 2014). For instance, teachers with a strong sense of self-efficacy, or a belief in their ability to effectively facilitate student learning and manage their classrooms, are more inclined to persist in the face of challenges, experiment with new teaching strategies, and ultimately, achieve higher levels of success in the classroom (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; Klassen & Tze, 2014).

2.1.2. Conservation of Resources Theory

The Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, advanced by Stevan Hobfoll, offers another theoretical perspective on the factors that influence teachers' job performance (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001). This theory indicates that people try to acquire, maintain, and protect the resources they value, including personal characteristics, social support, and material possessions, and that the loss or threat of these resources can lead to increased stress, burnout, and diminished performance. Applied to the context of teaching, COR Theory suggests that teachers' job performance is heavily influenced by their ability to access and maintain the resources necessary to effectively carry out their responsibilities (Yin et al., 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018). These resources may include access to instructional materials and technology, opportunities for professional development, administrative support, and positive interpersonal relationships with colleagues and students.

When teachers are faced with resource depletion or a lack of access to the resources they need, they may experience increased levels of stress, emotional exhaustion, and a diminished sense of personal accomplishment – all of which can negatively impact their job performance (Yin et al., 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018). Conversely, teachers who can maintain and replenish their personal and organizational resources are more likely to exhibit higher levels of engagement, job satisfaction, and overall effectiveness in the classroom.

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COR Theory also emphasizes the importance of resource investment, wherein individuals use their existing resources to acquire new resources or to protect against resource loss. In the context of teaching, this may involve teachers investing their time and energy into developing their pedagogical skills, building collaborative relationships with colleagues, or advocating for additional resources and support from school leaders (Hobfoll, 2001; Yin et al., 2016). By understanding the critical role that resource acquisition, maintenance, and investment play in shaping teachers' job performance, educational leaders and policymakers can develop strategies and interventions aimed at creating more resource-rich environments that help teachers to thrive and excel in their roles.

2.1.3. Job Demands-Resources Model

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model is another influential theoretical framework that has been widely applied to the study of teachers' job performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). This model posits that job performance happens due to the interplay between the demands placed on employees (e.g., workload, emotional demands) and the resources available to them (e.g., autonomy, social support, professional development opportunities).

Within the educational context, the JD-R Model suggests that teachers' job performance is influenced by the balance between the various demands they face, such as managing student behavior, targeting diverse learning needs of their students, and navigating administrative tasks, and the resources available to them, such as instructional support, collaborative opportunities, and access to professional development (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). When the demands assigned to teachers outweigh the resources available to them, they may experience increased levels of stress, burnout, and a diminished sense of job satisfaction, all of which can negatively impact their job performance (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018; Yin et al., 2016). On the other hand, when teachers have access to a robust set of resources that enable them to effectively manage the demands of their work, they are more likely to exhibit higher levels of engagement, motivation, and overall effectiveness in the classroom.

The JD-R Model also highlights the role of personal resources, such as self-efficacy, resilience, and emotional intelligence, in shaping teachers' ability to navigate the demands of their work and maintain high levels of job performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Teachers

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who possess these personal resources may be better equipped to cope with stress, maintain a positive outlook, and adapt to the evolving needs of their students and the broader educational context.

2.1.4. Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a well-established theoretical framework that has been widely applied to the study of teachers' job performance (Deci & Ryan, 1985). At the core of this theory is the idea that individuals have three fundamental psychological needs – the need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness - and the extent to which these needs are met can have a profound impact on their motivation, well-being, and overall performance.

In the context of teaching, SDT posits that teachers who experience a high degree of autonomy in their work, feel competent in their abilities to effectively facilitate student learning, and develop strong, supportive relationships with their students and colleagues, are more likely to exhibit higher levels of intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, and overall job performance (Roth et al., 2007).

Numerous studies have provided empirical support for this theoretical perspective, demonstrating that teachers who feel a greater sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in their work environment tend to exhibit higher levels of engagement, commitment, and persistence in the classroom, which can ultimately contribute to improved student outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011).

Conversely, teachers who experience a perceived insufficiency of autonomy, a sense of incompetence, or poor interpersonal relationships within the school context may exhibit lower levels of intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction, potentially leading to increased burnout, absenteeism, and a diminished focus on effective instructional practices (Roth et al., 2007; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018). By understanding the role of these fundamental psychological needs in shaping teachers' job performance, educational leaders and policymakers can develop targeted interventions and strategies to foster more supportive and empowering work environments, ultimately enhancing the educational system effectiveness.

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2.1.5. Spiritual Intelligence

The notion of spiritual intelligence has emerged as a distinct and increasingly recognized construct within the broader landscape of human intelligence and well-being. As researchers and scholars delve into the complexities of the human experience, there has been an increasing interest in understanding the role of spirituality and its relationship to various cognitive, emotional, and behavioral domains.

Additionally, the relationship between spiritual intelligence and employee well-being has also been the subject of considerable research and exploration within the organizational context. As organizations increasingly recognize the importance of fostering a holistic and supportive work environment, the role of spiritual intelligence has become an area of growing interest and investment. Frequent studies have mentioned that employees with higher levels of spiritual intelligence tend to exhibit greater levels of job satisfaction, engagement, and overall well-being (Pawar, 2016; Subramaniam & Panchanatham, 2015). This relationship can be attributed to several key factors, including the capacity for self-awareness, meaning-making, and the cultivation of a sense of purpose and connection within the workplace. It is also highlighted by Khalili and Moradkhan (2023) that there is a positive relationship between levels of reflective teaching and learners' evaluations of their teachers' effectiveness among Iranian EFL teachers. It is also hilighted by the study that teachers' self-awareness that is a key component related to spiritual intelligence can help the teachers to enhance their job performance and happiness, besides, psychological well-being may have potential effects on these relationships.

Moreover, the relationship between spiritual intelligence and organizational performance has been the subject of growing interest and investigation, as scholars and practitioners seek to understand the potential impact of this construct on the overall effectiveness and success of organizations. Existing research has suggested that organizations that foster a culture and environment that are supportive of spiritual intelligence can experience a range of positive outcomes, including enhanced innovation, creativity, and adaptability (Karakas, 2010). This can be attributed to the ways in which spiritual intelligence can enable individuals and teams to engage in more holistic, integrative, and transcendent forms of problem-solving and decision-making.

As the field of organizational research continues to explore the multifaceted role of spiritual intelligence, the potential benefits of cultivating this construct within the workplace, from individual well-being to organizational performance and societal impact, will likely continue to emerge as a critical area of inquiry and investment. It also dares to be mentioned that a number of abilities such as perceiving,

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understanding, managing, and using emotions in oneself and others are related to emotional intelligence. These abilities are used in order to help and guide people in the way they behave or think and were described by the models presented by Mayer and Salovey (1990). It included some skills like self-awareness, emotion regulation, empathy, motivation, and a number of social skills. On the other hand, issues like existential reflection, meaning-making skills, awareness and more specifically transcendental awareness, and making use of consciousness to face challenges are related and covered by spiritual intelligence (Emmons, 2000). So, it can be said that emotional intelligence, being focused on humans' emotional-social functioning, is related to issues like social adaptation, academic performance, and well-being, while the latter one includes cognition and its different dimensions like existential and value-based.

2.1.6. Happiness

Happiness is a multifaceted and complex construct that has been the central theme in research and philosophical discourse across various disciplines, including psychology, sociology, and the social sciences. Defining happiness has proven to be a challenging endeavor, as it encompasses a wide range of subjective experiences, emotional states, and psychological processes (Diener, 2000). At its core, happiness can be understood as a positive emotional state known by feelings of contentment, joy, gratification, satisfaction, and well-being. However, the conception of happiness extends beyond just the subjective experience of positive emotions. Researchers have proposed several theoretical frameworks and perspectives to capture the nuances and complexities of this elusive concept (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005).

Happiness can also be conceptualized from two distinct philosophical perspectives: the hedonic and the eudaimonic. The hedonic perspective defines happiness as the presence of positive emotions and the absence of negative emotions, emphasizing the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain (Kahneman et al., 1999). This view suggests that happiness is primarily a subjective experience of feeling good and deriving enjoyment from various sources, such as material possessions, experiences, or interpersonal relationships. In contrast, the eudaimonic perspective on happiness focuses on the pursuit of meaning, self-realization, and the actualization of one's true potential (Ryff, 1989). From this perspective, happiness is not just about feeling good, but also about engaging in activities and pursuing goals that are intrinsically meaningful and that contribute to the development of one's unique talents and

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abilities. Eudaimonic well-being is associated with a sense of purpose, personal growth, and the feeling of living in accordance with one's deeply held values and beliefs (Waterman, 1993).

While the hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives on happiness are distinct, they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Research suggests that both hedonic and eudaimonic well-being contribute to an individual's overall happiness and psychological functioning (Ryan & Deci, 2001). For example, individuals may experience happiness through the pursuit of pleasurable activities (hedonic) as well as through the engagement in meaningful and self-actualizing pursuits (eudaimonic). Furthermore, the relative importance of hedonic and eudaimonic well-being may vary across individuals and cultural contexts. Some cultures or societies may place a greater emphasis on the pursuit of pleasure and positive emotions, while others may value the understanding of one's potential and the cultivation of a sense of purpose (Diener & Suh, 1999).

One of the key approaches to defining happiness is the concept of subjective well-being (SWB), which is often used interchangeably with happiness. The relationship between happiness and personal well-being has been a subject of extensive research and discussion in the field of psychology and the social sciences. Happiness, often conceptualized as a state of positive emotions, life satisfaction, and overall subjective well-being, has been shown to have a profound impact on various aspects of an individual's personal well-being, including physical health, psychological functioning, and the experience of positive emotions.

Moreover, happiness and employee engagement are closely linked, as individuals who experience higher levels of happiness are more inclined to take part in their work and committed to the organization's success. Happiness can foster a sense of energy, dedication, and absorption in one's work, leading to greater levels of employee engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). The well-being of teachers is another pivotal aspect of the happiness-education nexus. Teachers play a critical role in shaping the educational experiences of students, and their own levels of happiness and well-being can bring a wide range of consequences for the quality of instruction, the classroom environment, and the overall functioning of educational institutions. Existing research has consistently emphasized the positive relationship between teacher happiness and a range of desirable outcomes.

The factors that shape teacher happiness are multifaceted and often intertwined with the broader educational context. Aspects such as the quality of leadership, the availability of professional development opportunities, the level of administrative support, and the overall school climate can all

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influence teachers' levels of happiness and well-being (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014). Moreover, personal factors, like teachers' sense of autonomy, their perceived self-efficacy, and their work-life balance, can also contribute to their happiness and job satisfaction (Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Pearce & Morrison, 2011).

2.1.7. Teachers' Job Performance

Teachers' job performance is a complicated and multifaceted construct that encompasses a wide range of behaviors, skills, and outcomes related to the various responsibilities and expectations related to the teaching profession (Jamil et al., 2012; Stronge et al., 2011). While there is no single, universally accepted definition of teachers' job performance, researchers have proposed various conceptualizations that attempt to capture its diverse components.

One commonly used definition describes teachers' job performance as the extent to which a teacher effectively facilitates student learning and development, as well as the degree to which they fulfill their professional responsibilities and contribute to the overall functioning of the school (Danielson, 2013; Goe et al., 2008). This perspective put emphasis on the dual role of teachers as both instructional leaders and organizational members, whose performance is evaluated based on their ability to promote student achievement and to contribute a range of professional activities that support the school community.

2.1.8. Psychological Well-being of Teachers

Teachers play a vital role in the education system, and their psychological well-being has significant consequences for their own personal and professional lives, as well as the well-being and academic outcomes of their students. Psychological well-being should not be seen as just the absence of mental illness or distress; it is a positive state of being that reflects an individual's optimal functioning and self-realization (Ryan & Deci, 2001). It encompasses various aspects of an individual's life, like their sense of purpose, personal growth, positive relationships, autonomy, environmental mastery, and self-acceptance (Ryff, 1989). On the other hand, subjective well-being refers to people's cognitive and affective perception of their life, including both the presence of positive emotions and the absence of negative emotions (Diener et al., 1999). This multidimensional construct encompasses various aspects of an individual's life, such as life satisfaction, positive affect, and the absence of negative affect.

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Research has consistently shown that teachers face a high risk of experiencing stress, burnout, and other mental health challenges, which can have detrimental effects on their overall well-being (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018). Factors like heavy workloads, lack of support, and emotional demands of the profession can contribute to the deterioration of teachers' psychological well-being (McCarthy et al., 2016; Harmsen et al., 2018).

Burnout, a state of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment, is a significant concern among teachers (Maslach et al., 2001). Teachers who experience burnout are more inclined to report lower job satisfaction, decreased commitment to the profession, and increased absenteeism, which can ultimately impact the quality of their teaching and the learning experiences of their students (Høigaard et al., 2012; Shen et al., 2015). Interventions aimed at enhancing teachers' psychological well-being have demonstrated positive outcomes, such as reduced burnout, improved job satisfaction, and increased resilience (Dunlop & Macdonald, 2004; Jennings et al., 2011). Through emphasizing the well-being of teachers, educational institutions can create a more supportive and thriving environment for both educators and their students.

2.2. Empirical Studies

Derakhshan et al. (2024) investigated the relationship among apprehension, resilience, organizational mattering, and psychological well-being of 411 Indonesian and 285 Iranian English language teachers. The structural equation modeling (SEM) analyses revealed that while the language teachers' apprehension was weakly correlated with the other factors, the other variables were strongly correlated. Furthermore, the results showed that resilience and organizational mattering were strong predictors of teachers' overall well-being.

Raheja et al. (2024) explored the association between spiritual intelligence, happiness, and academic achievement among the students of the University of Delhi. The results show that the Spiritual Intelligence and Happiness of the students are positively and significantly related to one another.

Soleimani et al. (2024) examined the potential benefits of integrating Multiple Intelligences (MI)-based approaches into teacher training programs for enhancing English language teaching (EFL) in Iran. The experimental group receiving the MI-based training demonstrated larger effect sizes for academic optimism and psychological wellbeing.

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Vem et al. (2024) analyzed the effect of spiritual intelligence (SI) based on its four dimensions on teachers' turnover intention (TI) through sanctification of work (SoW) and job satisfaction (JS) in Nigeria. The results suggest that SoW and JS are significant mechanisms through which SI predicts teachers' TI.

Zheng et al. (2024) explored the complicated dynamics among gratitude, job crafting, teacher psychological well-being, and teacher-student relationships within the context of Chinese EFL teachers. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) demonstrated that gratitude and job crafting affect teacher psychological well-being directly, and teacher-student relationships were identified as a mediator in these relationships.

Han (2022) investigated the association between Chinese EFL teachers' job satisfaction, resilience, and their psychological well-being. The findings revealed that resilience and job satisfaction together predicted a significant portion of the variance in the teachers' psychological well-being, with job satisfaction being a better predictor.

Soodmand Afshar and Doosti (2016) investigated the effect of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction on Iranian secondary school EFL teachers' job performance. The results showed that the job performance of satisfied teachers was significantly better than that of dissatisfied teachers.

Jalali and Heidari (2015) investigated the relationship between primary school teachers' happiness, job performance, and subjective well-being in Iran. Their study, which surveyed 330 randomly selected teachers, revealed a significant and positive relationship between these variables.

Similarly, McInerney et al. (2015) examined the relationship between teachers' psychological well-being and their commitment in the workplace. The findings revealed that two aspects of commitment, normative and affective commitment, positively predicted psychological well-being in the workplace: thriving at the workplace, interpersonal fit at the workplace, feeling of competency, desire for involvement at the workplace, job satisfaction, and perceived recognition at the workplace.

Ilgan et al. (2014), investigated the relationship between teachers' psychological well-being and the quality of school work life in Turkey. The participants were 784 teachers from 120 public-schools, and the findings indicated that the participants rated the level of their psychological well-being higher than the level of their quality of school work life, which was moderately rated by them. Furthermore,

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stepwise linear regression showed that the teachers' psychological well-being was described by their quality of school work life rating.

Overall, the reviewed studies have provided a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationships between teachers' personal and professional characteristics, including happiness, well-being, job performance, and various psychological factors. The newer studies further expand this knowledge by exploring the role of cross-cultural differences, specific teacher-related constructs (e.g., spiritual intelligence, apprehension, job crafting), and the implications for teacher training and development. These findings have important implications for supporting teachers' overall well-being and effectiveness in the classroom**,** ultimately benefiting student outcomes.

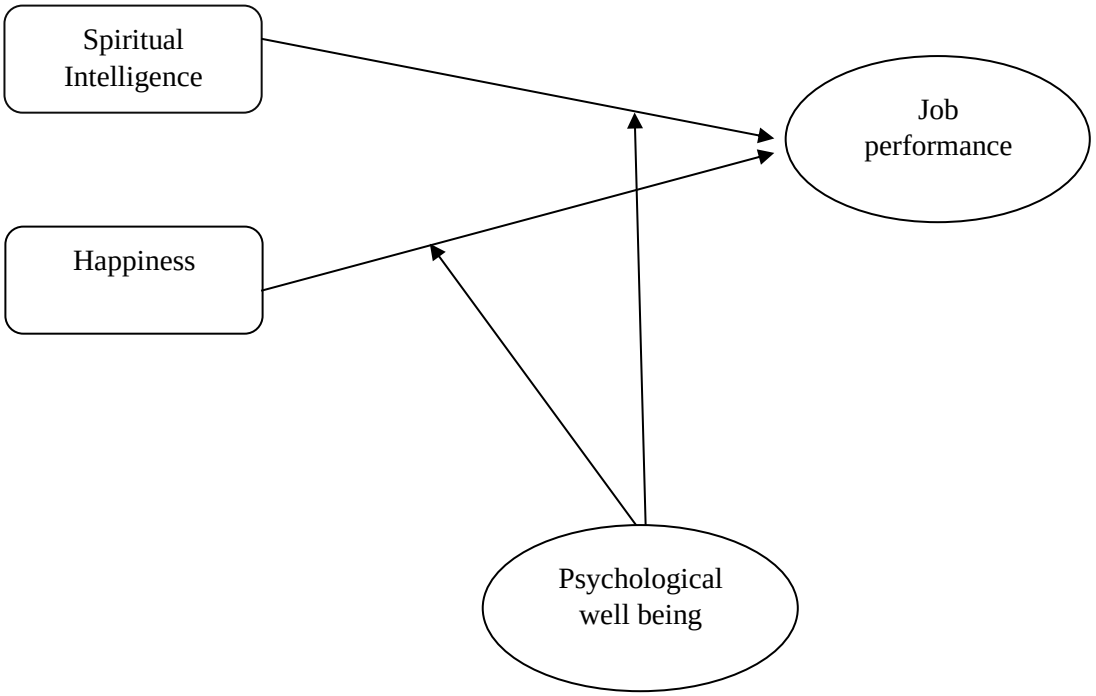


Figure 1

Conceptual Model of Relationships Among Spiritual Intelligence, Happiness, and Job Performance with Moderating Role of Psychological Well-being (Marescaux et al., 2019)

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This figure illustrates the conceptual framework for exploring how spiritual intelligence and happiness correlates job performance among Iranian EFL teachers, with a focus on the moderating role of psychological well-being. This model helps clarify how individual differences in spiritual intelligence and happiness might contribute to job performance and how psychological well-being can enhance or alter these effects.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The participants of this study included 103 Iranian EFL teachers who were recruited from various cities in the Golestan Province. The sample comprised 69 females and 34 males, with an age range of 25 to 55 years (M = 37.5, SD = 6.2). All participants had completed university degrees in English-related majors, including English Language Translation, English Language Literature, Linguistics, and TEFL. The teachers' teaching experience ranged from 3 to 18 years (M = 9.7, SD = 3.6), with 37 teachers having less than 5 years of experience, 46 teachers having 5-10 years of experience, and 20 teachers having more than 10 years of experience. The sample was selected using a convenience sampling strategy, and the participants volunteered to take part in the study. That is a nonprobability method in which the participants are selected based on availability and accessibility to the researchers. This method of sampling is used due to its practicality, although it may limit the generalizability of the findings and potential bias should be considered (Mackey & Gass, 2016).

The researchers assured the participants that the collected data would be kept confidential. First, they explained to the participants that their personal information and responses would not be shared publicly or with anyone outside of the research team. The researchers likely emphasized that the data would be anonymized and aggregated so that individual participants could not be identified. Additionally, the researchers provided written assurances of confidentiality, either through an informed consent form or other documentation, that the participants reviewed and signed before participating in the study. This would have legally bound the researchers to protect the confidentiality of the data.

The researchers also described the specific measures that would be taken to keep the data secure, such as storing it in a password-protected or encrypted database, limiting access only to the research team, and following institutional policies for data management and protection. Finally, the researchers

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reassured participants that their decision to participate or not participate would have no impact on their employment or relationship with their institution. This would have helped participants feel comfortable providing honest responses without fear of repercussions. These confidentiality assurances were likely an important factor in encouraging the Iranian EFL teachers to volunteer for this study, given the personal nature of the data being collected. Maintaining participant trust and privacy is a critical ethical obligation for researchers.

3.2. Instruments

To account for the research questions of this study, the following instruments were utilized:

3.2.1. Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory

The Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory (SISRI) was developed by King (2008) to measure individuals' spiritual intelligence. The SISRI is a 4-item self-report questionnaire that assesses spiritual intelligence. Participants respond to the items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 ("not at all true of me") to 4 ("completely true of me"), with higher scores indicating higher levels of spiritual intelligence. The internal consistency reliability of the SISRI was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The result is presented in the table below:

Table 1

The Internal Consistency Reliability of the SISRI

Scale/Subscale	Cronbach's Alpha
Total Spiritual Intelligence (4 items)	0.92

The Cronbach's alpha values for the scale (0.92) indicates excellent internal consistency reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). These results suggest that the items within the scale are measuring the same underlying construct and are highly correlated with one another.

The content validity of the SISRI was established through a thorough review of the relevant literature and consultation with a panel of five experts. The content validity of the SISRI was established through a thorough review of the relevant literature and consultation with a panel of five experts.

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3.2.2. Oxford Happiness Questionnaire

The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) was developed by Hills and Argyle (2002) as a more compact version of the Oxford Happiness Inventory (OHI) created by Argyle et al. (1989). The OHQ is a 10-item self-report questionnaire that measures an individual's overall level of happiness. The items include both positively (e.g., "I feel that life is very rewarding") and negatively (e.g., "I don't feel particularly pleased with the way I am") worded statements. Participants respond to the items on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The negatively worded items are reverse-scored, and the sum of all item scores provides an overall measure of happiness, with higher scores indicating greater happiness. The internal consistency reliability of the OHQ was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The results are presented in the table below:

Table 2

The Internal Consistency Reliability of the OHQ

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha
Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (10 items)	0.91

The Cronbach's alpha value for the overall OHQ scale (0.91) indicates excellent internal consistency reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). This suggests that the items within the questionnaire are highly correlated and measure the same underlying construct of happiness.

The content validity of the OHQ was established through a comprehensive review of the relevant literature on happiness and well-being, as well as consultation with a panel of five experts (Hills & Argyle, 2002). The experts evaluated the relevance, representativeness, and clarity of the items to ensure they adequately captured the conceptual domain of happiness.

3.2.3. EFL Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire

This research utilized the EFL Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (ETJPQ) developed and validated by Pishghadam and Moafian (2009). The ETJPQ comprises 8 items that assess various dimensions of EFL teachers' job performance, including interpersonal relationships, examination, teaching accountability, attention to all students, dynamism, commitment, class attendance, learning

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boosters, empathy, physical and emotional acceptance, teaching boosters, and creating a sense of competence. Participants responded to the items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "completely disagree" (1) to "completely agree" (5).

The internal consistency reliability of the ETJPQ was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The results are presented in the table below:

Table 3

The Internal Consistency Reliability of the ETJPQ

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha
EFL Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (8 items)	0.94

The Cronbach's alpha value for the overall ETJPQ (0.94) indicates excellent internal consistency reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). This suggests that the items within the questionnaire are highly correlated and measure the same underlying construct of job performance.

The content validity of the ETJPQ was established through a comprehensive review of the relevant literature on teacher job performance and consultation with a panel of five experts (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; Stronge, 2018). The experts evaluated the relevance, representativeness, and clarity of the items to ensure they adequately captured the conceptual domain of EFL teachers' job performance.

3.2.4. The Index of Psychological Well-Being at Work

The Index of Psychological Well-Being at Work (IPWW) was designed and validated by Dagenais-Desmarais and Savoie (2012) to measure employees' psychological well-being in the workplace. The IPWW consists of 5 items. Participants respond to the items on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Disagree) to 6 (Strongly Agree). The internal consistency reliability of the Index of IPWW was assessed using Cronbach's alpha for the overall scale and each subscale. The results are presented in the table below:

The Cronbach's alpha values for the overall scale (0.94) indicate excellent internal consistency reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). These results suggest that the items within the scale are measuring the same underlying constructs and are highly correlated with one another.

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Table 4

The Internal Consistency Reliability of IPWW

Scale/Subscale	Cronbach's Alpha
Total Psychological Well-Being at Work (5 items)	0.94

The content validity of the IPWW was established through a comprehensive review of the relevant literature on workplace well-being and consultation with a panel of five experts (Warr, 1990; Page & Vella-Brodrick, 2009). The experts evaluated the relevance, representativeness, and clarity of the items to ensure they adequately captured the conceptual domain of psychological well-being at work.

3.3. Design of the Study

The rationale for selecting this research design is twofold. First, the study aimed to explore the complex interplay between the constructs of spiritual intelligence, happiness, psychological well-being, and job performance, which are inherent characteristics of the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). A correlational design enables the researchers to assess the strength and direction of the relationships between these variables without introducing any interventions (Festing & Schäfer, 2014). Second, the researchers wanted to understand the potential moderating effect of psychological well-being on the relationships among the other variables (Baron & Kenny, 1986). This type of analysis is well-suited to a non-experimental, correlational approach, as it allows for the examination of how a third variable (psychological well-being) influences the associations between the predictor and outcome variables (Holmbeck, 1997).

4. Testing the hypotheses of the research

In this part the researchers examined the research hypotheses by PLS software.

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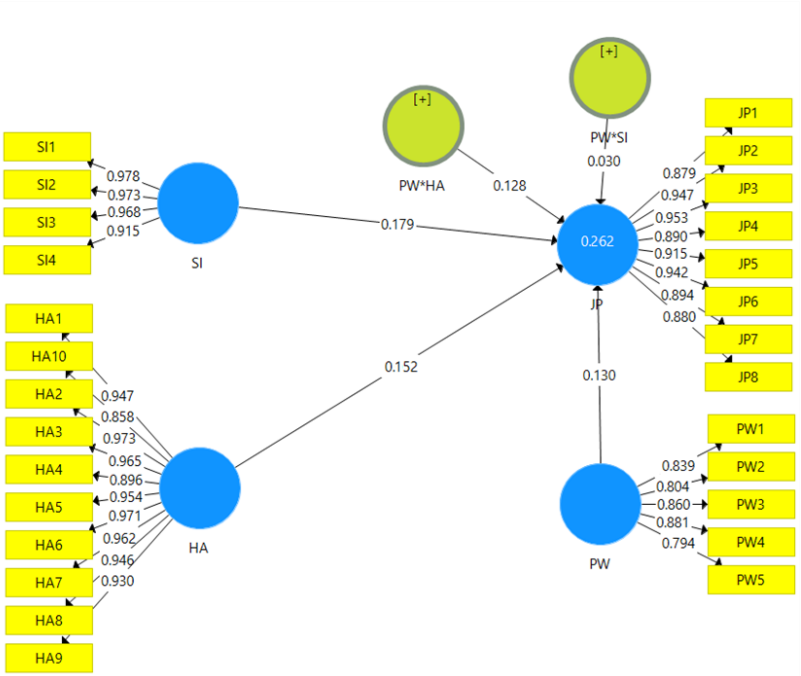


Figure 2

The Structural Model of the Research Hypothesis along with Factor Loading Coefficients

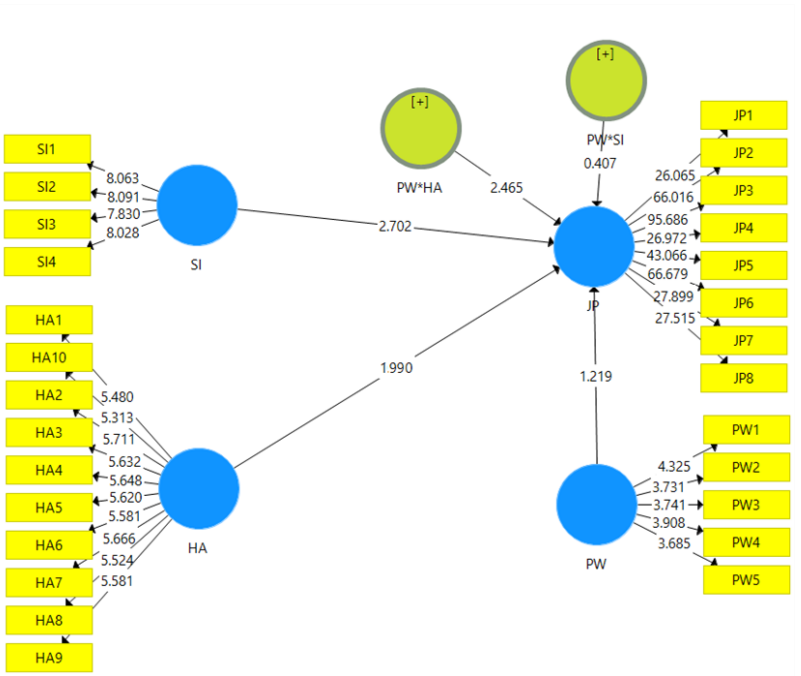


Figure 3

The Structural Model of the Research Hypothesis along with the Significant Coefficients

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4.1. Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) Criterion

The Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) criterion is used to assess the overall fit of the model. Three benchmark values are commonly used for GOF: 0.01 for poor fit, 0.25 for moderate fit, and 0.36 for strong fit.

This criterion is calculated using the following formula:

$$GOF = \sqrt{\overline{communalities} \times \overline{R^2}}$$

$\overline{Communalities}$ is derived from the average shared values of the latent variables in the research.

Table 5

Communality and R2 of research variables

Latent variables	Abbreviation	Communality	R2
Spiritual intelligence	SI	0.919	0.000
Happiness	HA	0.885	0.000
Job performance	JP	0.833	0.262
Psychological well-being	PW	0.699	0.000

Table 6

Results of the Overall Model Fit

Metric	Value
Communality $\overline{()}$	0.834
R^2 $\overline{()}$	0.262
Goodness of Fit (GOF)	0.467

Given the obtained GOF value of 0.467, the overall model fit is confirmed to be excellent.

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Table 7

Results of Direct Relationship and the Significant Coefficients of the Sub-Hypotheses of the Research Model

Hypothesis	Causal Relationships	Abbreviation	Path Coefficient (β)	Significance (T-Value)	Test Result
First	Spiritual Intelligence → Job Performance	SI → JP	0.179	2.702	Supported
Second	Happiness → Job Performance	HA → JP	0.152	1.990	Supported
Third	Moderator (PW*SI) → Job Performance	PW*SI → JP	0.030	0.407	Rejected
Fourth	Moderator (PW*HA) → Job Performance	PW*HA → JP	0.128	2.465	Supported

4.2. The research hypotheses revisited:

Hypothesis 1:

H0: There is no significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and job performance.

H1: There is a significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and job performance.

Based on Figures 4-1 and 4-2, the standardized coefficient (path coefficient) between spiritual intelligence and job performance is β = 0.179. The t-statistic for this relationship is t = 2.702, which is greater than the absolute value of 1.96, indicating that the relationship is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected, and the hypothesis H1 is supported. This implies that there is a significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and job performance, thus confirming the first hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2:

H0: There is no significant relationship between happiness and job performance.

H1: There is a significant relationship between happiness and job performance.

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Based on Figures 4-1 and 4-2, it can be said that the standardized coefficient (path coefficient) between happiness and job performance is $\beta = 0.152$. The t-statistic for this relationship is $t = 1.990$, which is greater than the absolute value of 1.96, indicating that it is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected, and the hypothesis H1 is supported. This implies that there is a significant relationship between happiness and job performance, thus confirming the second hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3:

H0: Psychological well-being does not moderate the relationship between spiritual intelligence and job performance.

H1: Psychological well-being moderates the relationship between spiritual intelligence and job performance.

The significance coefficient Z related to the PW*SI variable, which is arrowed towards the job performance variable, is 0.990. Since this value is less than 1.96, at the 95% confidence level, we cannot confirm the moderating effect of spiritual intelligence. In other words, at the 95% confidence level, we can conclude that psychological well-being does not moderate the relationship between spiritual intelligence and job performance. Therefore, the third hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 4:

H0: Psychological well-being does not moderate the relationship between happiness and job performance.

H1: Psychological well-being moderates the relationship between happiness and job performance.

The significance coefficient Z related to the PW*HA variable, which is arrowed towards the job performance variable, is 2.465. Since this value is greater than 1.96, at the 95% confidence level, we can confirm the moderating effect of psychological well-being. In other words, at the 95% confidence level, we can conclude that psychological well-being moderates the relationship between happiness and job performance. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is supported.

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5. Discussion

Investigating the relationship between these factors is of great importance because it helps us to understand the way that inner personal resources like spiritual intelligence and happiness can influence job performance, moreover, it may help organizations foster more productive and satisfied employees. It is also suggested by prior studies that there is a relationship between emotional and spiritual factors and work outcomes (Amram, 2009; King, 2008), although the role of psychological well-being considered as a moderating factor still remains less clear, justifying its inclusion in the current model. Due to these facts, the research hypotheses are made to analyze the effects (direct and moderating) and also it helps us to provide a more comprehensive view of the interplay of these psychological constructs in the workplace setting. The statistical findings indicated significant relationships and moderating effects (or lack thereof) and empirical support is provided to advance theory and practice not only in organizational psychology but also in human resources management.

The findings of the current study were aligned with those of Roohani and Darvishy (2015), who also found a positive and significant relationship between EFL teachers' spiritual intelligence and their pedagogical success. As the researcher, it seems that this suggests that teachers who are more spiritually intelligent may be better equipped to foster a positive, supportive learning environment, engage students effectively, and navigate the inherent challenges of the teaching profession (Keramati et al., 2019). From a theoretical perspective, the link between spiritual intelligence and job performance can be understood through the lens of self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000). It posits that individuals are intrinsically motivated when their basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met. It seems that, spiritually intelligent individuals may be better able to fulfill these needs, as they tend to have a stronger sense of purpose, a greater capacity for self-regulation, and a heightened awareness of their interconnectedness with others (Amram, 2007).

Additionally, the findings of this study contribute to the growing body of literature on the role of positive psychological constructs in workplace outcomes. Spiritual intelligence, as a form of advanced human development, may enhance an individual's ability to cope with job-related stress, foster positive relationships with colleagues, and maintain a sense of meaning and fulfillment in their work (Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Reave, 2005). From my perspective, the practical implications of this research are significant. By understanding the relationship between spiritual intelligence and job performance, educational institutions and policymakers can develop targeted interventions and professional

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development programs to foster the growth of spiritual intelligence among EFL teachers. This could lead to a range of positive outcomes, including improved student learning, increased job satisfaction and retention, and enhanced organizational effectiveness (Emmons, 2000; Keramati et al., 2019).

The significant and positive relationship between happiness and job performance among EFL teachers suggests that the happier teachers are, the higher their overall job performance tends to be. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by Jalali and Heidari (2015), who revealed a similar relationship between teacher happiness, job performance, and well-being. It seems that the link between happiness and job performance can be understood through the lens of several well-established theories in positive psychology and organizational behavior.

The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions, proposed by Fredrickson (2001), posits that positive emotions, such as happiness, can broaden an individual's thought-action repertoire and build enduring personal resources, including intellectual, social, and psychological resources. It seems that, these resources, in turn, can contribute to enhanced job performance by enabling teachers to better navigate the challenges of the profession, engage students more effectively, and maintain a high level of motivation and job satisfaction (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Additionally, the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) suggests that individuals are intrinsically motivated when their basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met. As the researcher sees it, happy teachers may be better equipped to fulfill these needs, as they tend to have a greater sense of control over their work, a stronger belief in their abilities, and a deeper connection with their students and colleagues (Seligman, 2011). This, in turn, can lead to enhanced job performance and overall well-being.

This finding suggests that the relationship between spiritual intelligence and job performance in this context is relatively robust and independent of the teachers' overall psychological well-being. While one might expect psychological well-being to play a significant role in shaping the impact of spiritual intelligence on job-related outcomes, the data from the current study indicate that this is not the case. From our perspective as the researchers, this outcome can be understood through the lens of the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989).

COR theory posits that individuals strive to obtain, retain, and protect resources that are valuable to them, and that the loss or threat of these resources can lead to stress and diminished well-being. In the context of the current study, it is possible that EFL teachers' spiritual intelligence represents a crucial personal resource that directly contributes to their job performance, regardless of their overall

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psychological well-being. It seems that, the practical implications of this finding are noteworthy. It suggests that efforts to enhance EFL teachers' job performance should not solely focus on improving their psychological well-being, but should also consider the development and nurturing of their spiritual intelligence. This may involve implementing professional development programs and interventions that specifically target the various components of spiritual intelligence, such as self-awareness, meaning-making, and transcendence (Zohar & Marshall, 2000).

The final finding of this study revealed that EFL teachers' psychological well-being moderated the relationship between their happiness and job performance. This suggests that the previously established positive association between teachers' happiness and job performance can be further enhanced by their overall psychological well-being. This finding can be supported by the work of Wright et al. (2007), who reported that psychological well-being can moderate the relationship between job performance and job satisfaction. Their research indicates that an individual's level of psychological well-being, which encompasses factors such as life satisfaction, positive affect, and low levels of negative affect, can influence the strength of the link between their job-related attitudes and behaviors. In the context of the current study, this implies that EFL teachers who experience higher levels of psychological well-being may be better able to translate their happiness into tangible improvements in job performance. This could be due to a variety of factors, such as enhanced coping mechanisms, greater emotional regulation, and a stronger sense of personal resources and resilience (Diener et al., 2018; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). The practical implications of this finding are significant. By understanding the crucial role of psychological well-being in shaping the relationship between happiness and job performance among EFL teachers, educational institutions and policymakers can develop targeted interventions and support programs to promote the overall well-being of educators.

6. Conclusion

From the results of this study, several findings can be concluded. First, there was a significant and positive relationship between EFL teachers' spiritual intelligence and their job performance, thereby the higher the teachers' spiritual intelligence, the higher their job performance. Second, there was a significant and positive relationship between EFL teachers' happiness and their job performance, thereby the happier they are, the higher their job performance. Third, EFL teachers' psychological well-being did not moderate the relationship between their spiritual intelligence and job performance, thereby no

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moderating effect of teachers' psychological well-being on the mentioned teacher-related factors. Finally, EFL teachers' psychological well-being moderated the relationship between their happiness and job performance, thereby proving the existence of a moderating role of psychological well-being on the above-mentioned teacher-related variables.

The findings of this study highlight the important role of spiritual intelligence and happiness in enhancing the job performance of EFL teachers. This suggests that educational institutions and language centers should prioritize the development and nurturing of these psychological constructs among their teaching staff. The findings imply that EFL teacher recruitment and selection processes should not only focus on academic qualifications and teaching skills but also consider the candidates' levels of spiritual intelligence and overall well-being. This can help ensure a better fit between the teacher and the demands of the profession.

The study's results underscore the need for educational policymakers and administrators to develop comprehensive support systems and interventions that target the multifaceted psychological needs of EFL teachers. This can include mentoring programs, counseling services, and opportunities for professional and personal growth. The insights gained from this research can inform the development of targeted interventions and support systems that address the unique needs of EFL teachers. By prioritizing the enhancement of spiritual intelligence, happiness, and psychological well-being, educational institutions can foster a more engaged, fulfilled, and high-performing teaching workforce.

The study's emphasis on the moderating role of psychological well-being highlights the importance of addressing the mental health and emotional needs of EFL teachers. This calls for the integration of mental health support and wellness programs within the professional development frameworks for language educators. The findings suggest that educational leaders and policymakers should consider the cultivation of spiritual intelligence and happiness as key components in their strategies for improving the overall quality of language education. This can involve incorporating relevant training, workshops, and support structures within the broader educational system.

7. Limitations

This study is subject to certain limitations that are beyond the control of the researchers. First, the use of self-report questionnaires to measure the constructs under investigation (spiritual intelligence, happiness,

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job performance, and psychological well-being) may introduce biases such as social desirability bias and inaccuracies in self-perception (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Despite efforts to assure confidentiality and encourage honesty, these inherent limitations of self-report measures could affect the validity of the data. Additionally, the study's sample was recruited using a convenience sampling strategy, which may reduce the generalizability of the findings to broader populations (Etikan et al., 2016). While the sample size of 103 teachers provides sufficient statistical power for the analyses conducted, it may not fully represent the diversity of Iranian EFL teachers across different provinces or educational contexts.

Geographical constraints also limit the scope of the study. The participants were exclusively from cities in Golestan Province, Iran, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to other cultural or regional contexts. Variations in educational systems, cultural norms, and teaching practices in other regions or countries may yield different results (Shadish et al., 2002). Furthermore, the study's cross-sectional design means that the data were collected at a single point in time, making it impossible to infer causal relationships between the variables (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). Longitudinal studies could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamic relationships among the variables over time. Finally, while online data collection through Google Forms allowed for efficient distribution of the surveys, it may have inadvertently excluded participants with limited access to technology or lower digital literacy, further impacting the representativeness of the sample (Evans & Mathur, 2018).

8. Suggestions for Further Studies

Some suggestions are proposed in this part for future research on this topic. First, according to the limitations discussed, the current study did not enjoy a balanced sample in terms of gender; in other words, the number of female participants of this study was much more than that of the male participants. As such imbalanced sample might impact the findings of this study, further research is needed to examine this topic with consideration of gender.

Next, this study was small-scale research that comprised only 103 participants. As the outcome of small-scale research is not generalizable, there is also a need for further larger-scale studies in order to confirm the results found here. Furthermore, the sample of this study were selected non-randomly, further studies are recommended to randomly select their participants, thereby enhancing the generalizability of their findings.

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