RESEARCH ON CORRELATION BETWEEN THE LIFE ATTITUDE AND WELL-BEING—WITH SPIRITUAL HEALTH AS THE MEDIATOR

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the mediator's correlation between the teacher's life attitude, spiritual health, and well-being. In accordance with the results of literature analysis, the hypothesis model with the mediator, spiritual health, was proposed. Among the samples of 533 teachers in Taiwan with age $M=42.05$, $SD=5.13$, and 109 (20.4%) were males, and 424 were females (79.6%), tested with 3 questionnaires--Questionnaire of Life Attitude, Questionnaire of Spiritual Health, and Questionnaire of Well-being. After analyzing with structural equation modeling(SEM), it is found that significantly positive correlation exists among life attitude, spiritual health, and well-being. Next, spiritual health is the complete mediator of life attitude and well-being.

Keywords: Life attitude, spiritual Health, well-being.

INTRODUCTION

Life attitude, spiritual health, and well-being are extremely important to human beings. First, life attitude signifies the comprehensive value and viewpoint the individual holds for living and life, old age, sickness, and death (Frankl, 2006). Holding positive life attitude can make people feel that life is meaningful (King, Hicks, Krull, & Del Gaiso, 2006), resist stress (Mascaro & Rosen, 2006), and even generates courage to face their psychological trauma (Krause, 2005) or cancer (Prince-Paul, 2008). In short, as in Kato, Zweig, Schechter, Barzilai, & Atzmon's (2015) study shows, positive life attitude indeed has protective effects on psychological health.

Next, spiritual health can also be termed as wellness spirituality, spiritual wellness, and the like (McGregor & Little, 1998), which refers to the state of spirit that integrated into physiology, psychology, emotions, and occupation (Fisher, 2010). Or, as Banks, Poehler and Russell (1984) implied, it is not only a kind of intensified and consolidate value and faith system, but also a kind of state that can connect the individual's dimensions of mind and body, society, intelligence and ability, and health, that fosters the individual to certify his/her life attitude and goal, and establish the interactive relationship between man and the self, others and the external environment. Actually, such state helps man to find out the meaning of life and the purpose of living (Fryback & Reinert, 1999), and it can further reduce our
irritation (Lee & Lee, 2015), prevent suicide, and maintain healthy behaviors (Ortabag, Ozdemir, Bakir, & Tosun, 2011).

Lastly, well-being indicates that man experiences his/her own living with positive approaches (Diener, 2009). Additionally, well-being is created to complement the existing economic and social indicators that reflect the quality of life in nations (Diener, 2000). It is the indicator of one's psychological health (Carruthers & Deyell-Hood, 2004) that contributes to longevity (Diener & Chan, 2011), leads to the employee's engagement in and commitment to the organization, and thereby affects the turnover intentions (Brunetto, Teo, Shacklock, & Farr-Wharton, 2012).

From the abovementioned, we can understand the importance of life attitude, spiritual health, and well-being. However, on the basis of literature, life attitude, spiritual health, and well-being are correlative to one another, as explained below:

**Life attitude affects well-being**

The content of life attitude includes life purpose, existential vacuum, life control, death acceptance, will to meaning, goal seeking, and future meaning to fulfill (Reker & Peacock, 1981). From such content, it is observed that the issue that life attitude concerns is existence, which has profound relationship with Frankl’s logo therapy, which focuses on the "meaning of man's existence" and "man's pursuit of such meaning of existence"(Frankl,2006 ). As Frankl (1967, 1969) pointed out, if man does not make efforts to pursue the meaning of life, he/she will lose well-being. At this point, Reker, Peacock, and Wong’s (1987) study with 300 adults as the subject, and results show that the more positive one's life attitude is, the more definite his/her purpose of it will be. He/she will not feel vanity of existence; rather, he/she will pursue the goal of life with all he/she can, accept frustrations peacefully, and be filled with love and caring. Naturally, those who have such performance is healthy psychologically, and their well-being is enhanced as well. In this sense, life attitude influences well-being.

**THE MEDIATING FUNCTION OF SPIRITUAL HEALTH BETWEEN LIFE ATTITUDE AND WELL-BEING**

(I) Life attitude influences spiritual health

Life attitude proposed by Reker and Peacock (1981) means the perceptions of life purpose, existential vacuum, life control, death acceptance, future meaning to fulfill and the like that make man feels that he/she can possess spirituality as long as he/she endeavors to seek for life meaning (Pava, 2003).

In addition, the more positive viewpoints man holds for life attitude, the easier he/she will make efforts for self-transcendence, which relates what Hawley (1993) proposed about faith and values of self-transcendence and life meaning. Or, to view from Maslow's (1969) hierarchy of needs, the highest level is self fulfillment, and it will be spirituality after transcending this level, which proves that spirituality is a feeling of self-transcendence.

Moreover, Lee and Chang (2008) employed 1058 senior high school students in Taiwan as the research subject, and found that life attitude can predict spiritual health. In spite of senior high school as the research subject, prediction should also be made based on the analysis mentioned above.
To sum up, correlation between life attitude and spiritual health is like what proposed by Reed (1991) that life attitude is a kind of communication ability that connects the individual and the inner self to achieve life seeking for level spirituality. In short, life attitude influences spiritual health.

(II) Spiritual health influences well-being

Gawain (2000) considered that most people that grow up in the world nowadays feel living vanity, sense of insecurity, and latent feelings without meanings due to sense alienation and lack in the deepest spirituality. Spirituality has the function of settling down and purifying the mind. Therefore, as if the individual can settle down and purify his/her mind in the state of calm and harmony, Mitroff (2003) mentioned, through spiritual guidance, the individual will be able to solve the problems in living and life, and find the balance point and direction in life.

On the other hand, Buck (2006) also indicated that spirituality involves the experience to transcend the self, and connect with others, nature, and/or God. Coward (1990) claimed that transcendence breaks through death and emotional pains, and is thus new promise for life purpose and the condition of acceptance of the inevitability. In Frankl's (2006) perspective, transcendence breaks through physiological and psychological limitation to enter into spirit. In the mean time, the indicator of the self's transcend the state of living comfort (Le & Levenson, 2005) can enhance the individual’s psychological health (Carpenter, Brockopp, & Andrykowski, 1999), make life generate more sense of coherence, and raise the comforting state of self-esteem, hope, and emotions (Coward, 1996). In this way, by raising such psychological functions, more well-being is perceived.

Moreover, connection refers to good interpersonal interaction, under which influences health and well-being, because social support (George, Ellison, & Larson, 2002) and intimate relationship are obtained from interaction with others (Brelsford, Marinelli, Ciarrochi, & Dylliacco, 2009), forgiveness (Lawler-Row, 2010). To step further, connection can improve marriage quality (Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar, & Swank, 2008), reduce suppression of emotions (Hames, Hagan, & Joiner, 2013), or decrease the occurrence of cardiovascular disease (Smith, Uchino, Berg, & Florsheim, 2012).

To sum up, people who own spiritual health can obtain better living quality (Purdy & Dupey, 2005). Additionally, some studies support this argument, like Dolan, Peasgood, & White (2008). They indicated the various factors that affect well-being, including degree of spirituality. As for Wilding (2007), he approached two community mental health centers in rural Australia and asked case managers to invite patients who were willing to talk about their experiences of spirituality to participate in the study. Six people volunteered to participate — three men and three women, aged between 35 and 55 years. The results show that spirituality saves from death and provides meaning to life, and helps a person cope with mental illness. Since spirituality can help the individual to find the meaning of life and enhance psychological health, he/she will have better well-being.

To conclude the analysis above, life attitude influences well-being, so we adopted life attitude as the extraneous variable, and WB as the endogenous variable. In addition, the literature analysis results show that life attitude influences spiritual health, while spiritual health affects well-being. Therefore, it is likely that spiritual health has mediation effect between life
attitude and well-being. Consequently, this study aims to verify whether spiritual health is the mediator between attitude and well-being.

**RESEARCH DESIGN**

**Research Samples**

This study adopted 533 Taiwan teachers as its subject, and the distribution of the sample's background is as the following: For gender, there are 109 males (20.4%) and 424 females (79.6%). For marital status, 125 persons were unmarried (23.4%), 408 persons were married (76.6%). In regard of the school level, there were 48 kindergarten teachers, occupying 20.4%; 245 elementary school teachers, occupying 46.0%; 109 junior high school teachers, and 80 senior high school teachers (15.0%); and 51 college/university teachers (9.5%); Age \( M=42.05, SD=5.13 \).

**Research Tools**

In this study, we homemade Life Attitude Scale, Spiritual Health Scale, and Well-being Scale. After consulting relative literature, explorative factor analysis was employed to proceed pretest with three procedures: 1. Item analysis--take items with decision value more than 3; 2. Factor analysis: select factor loading more than .30 with principal axis method and Promax method.3. Reliability analysis: Adopt dimensions with \( \alpha \) value more than .60, and integrity .80. Additionally, all items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from very low (rated 1) to very high (rated 5). The results are illustrated as below:

**Teacher’s Life Attitude Scale**

Since there are still no Teacher’s Life Attitude Scales in Taiwan, we referred to Reker & Peacock’s (1981) LAP, and generated three dimensions after the pretest: 1. Life Direction and Aims: with the correct attitudes, the individual seeks for the meaningful life direction and aims. The items include "I am courageous to pursue the life aims I desire for"; 2. Attitude to Death: signifies the attitude of the individual holds towards death, and the items are like "I know that someday my relatives and friends will leave me, in time I will accept it calmly without fear"; 3. Life Experience: It means that the individual accepts life process, face life experiences, and the attitude towards dealing with life encounters. The items are like "I take the difficulty I encounter as the chance to face challenges grow in life".

The three factors' loading ranges between.59-.86, and the eigenvalue between 1.36-7.01. After promax, it is divided into three factors; that is, Life Direction and Aims (5 items), Attitude to Death (4 items), and Life Experience (5 items). The total explanation amount is 68.23%, the reliability are .90, .79, .88, respectively, and the total reliability is .92.

**Teacher’s Spiritual Health Scale**

In the West, there are plentiful of spirituality related scales, such as Fisher’s (1998) Spiritual Health in 4 Domains Index and is divided into Personalist, Communalists, Environmentalists, Religionists, Existentialists, and Globalists; Delaney’s (2005) Spirituality Scale divided into Self-discovery, Relationships, Eco-awareness, and etc.; Dhar, Chaturvedi, & Nandan's (2011) Spiritual Health Scale 2011 classified into Self-evolution, Self-actualization, and Transcendence. On the basis of such scales, we have learned that the
dimensions of spirituality are deviant. Consequently, after consulting them, we homemade Teacher's Spiritual Health Scale, and concluded three factors for the results of the pretest: (1) Transcend Adversity: refers to that when the individual is facing difficulty, he/she breaks through the physical and psychological limitation with correct attitude to achieve self transcendence and self enhancement. The items are like "I can learn the self value and inter potential from the process of dealing with frustrations". (2) Uniting to Others: refers to the individual identifies the value and meaning of the self and others simultaneously, and values and endeavors to establishment of interpersonal relationship and living attitude. The items are like "I have relatives and friends with whom I can trust and talk everything". (3) Appreciate Nature: refers to the individual possesses awe and gratitude to Nature, and coexists with Nature with positive thinking and the feedback attitude. The items are like "under the starry sky, in the midst of the wild or mountain, or river, I often perceive the sacredness and wonder of life".

The three factor loadings range between .57~.80, with the eigenvalue between 1.00~9.57, and, after Promax, the total explanation amount of transcend adversity (5 items), Connecting to Others (5 items), and Appreciate Nature (7 items) is 71.31%, with the reliability .89, .88, and .93, respectively; and the total reliability .95.

**Teacher's Well-being Scale**

In this study, we referred to Lu and Shin's (1997) Chinese Happiness Inventory, which adopted the community residents in Kaohsiung City, Taiwan as our subject, while in this study, the teachers were our subject. In Taiwan, the teachers' wage, work duration, and the pension system are all protected by laws. On the other side, teachers in Taiwan are in high socio-economic status, they enjoy high prestige, and their job is a kind of highly valued "elite-cultivated work, which is divergent from the community residents. Therefore, we homemade Teacher's Well-being Scale, and extracted four factors after the pretest: (1) Self Affirmation refers to the individual approves his/her own value and confidence, and can control his/her own ability of dealing with matters and solving problems in daily life. The items are like "I think I am attractive". (2) Life Satisfactions refers to the individual's cognitive feelings for the whole living, with the items like "I have good health condition". (3) Physiological and Psychological Health refers to the healthy and comfortable state or extent, and the items are like "I have good health condition. (4) Positive Emotion refers to for people, things, and issues in life, the individual's emotional reaction or attitude involving acceptance, affirmation, and fondness. The items are like "I think the surrounding environment is kind and full of love".

The factor loading of the four factors ranges from .48 to .81, and eigenvalue from 1.00 to 8.01. After Promax, the total explanation amount for Self Affirmation (3 items), Life Satisfactions (4 items), Physiological and Psychological Health (4 items), and Positive Emotion (6 items) is 68.00%, while the reliability values are .78, .84, .76, and 89, respectively, with the total reliability at .93.

**Data Process**

In this study, SEM was adopted to handle with mediation effect of the three latent variables--life attitude, spiritual health, and well-being. Amos 7.0 software, Analysis of Moment Structures 7.0, was utilized for analysis. As for the indices, we exerted minimum fit function
chi-square ($\chi^2$), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), goodness of fit index (GFI), normed fit index (NFI), relative fit index (RFI), incremental fit index (IFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and comparative fit index (CFI).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

I. Correlation and descriptive data related to the teachers' life attitude, spiritual health, and well-being

To view from Pearson's correlation, the relative coefficient ranges between .21-.75-- with the highest Life Experience and Transcend Adversity ($r=.75$, $p=.000$), and the lowest Physiological and Psychological Health ($r=.21$, $p=.000$).

Table 1 Descriptive analysis of teacher's life attitude, spiritual health, and well-being

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<td>9. Physiological and Psychological Health</td>
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<td>10. Positive Emotion</td>
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Note: 1. $N=533$. 2. All relative coefficients achieve the significant standard, .000.

II. Analysis of the Mediator

(I) The hypothetical model's goodness-of-fit analysis

According to the results of the overall goodness-of-fit analysis, $\chi^2 = 186.77$, reached the level of significance. This might resulted from the overly large sample. Secondly, RMSEA = .09, larger than standard value .08. GFI = .93, NFI = .94, RFI = .91, IFI = .95, TLI = .93, CFI = .95, and the standard value is .90.

Furthermore, we processed a preliminary evaluation for basic fitness, the results reveal that 1) in the element of matrix $\Theta$, the tolerant variance value ranges from $\varepsilon_{10}$ to $\varepsilon_{12}$ are all positive. 2). standard errors range from .04 to .17, there is not a big one. 3.) Latent variables and the factor loading $\lambda_1-\lambda_{12}$. Among the measured indicators, the range is from .63 to .87, meeting the standard more than .50 and less than .95. 4) The $t$ value of all error variances falls between 3.03-17.91, and all reaches the significant standard of .01. The test result has met the assumption, meaning that the basic fitness is a good one. To conclude, there is no offending estimation (means all output data are in an acceptable range).

The results of the overall fit index analysis and preliminary evaluation show that the data in this study are appropriate.
(II) Direct effect and indirect effect of the hypothetical model

In Baron and Kenny's research (1986), it indicates that the mediation effect involves that the independent variable, the mediator, and the independent variable have significant correlation at first, but the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable declines or even insignificant after the mediator is added. Consequently, for these three latent variables, SEM was used to conduct paired correlation, which results show that the path coefficient of life attitude to spiritual health is .95 (estimate = 1.16, SE = .05, t = 22.29, p < .001); that of life attitude to well-being is .83 (estimate = .59, SE = .04, t = 15.91, p < .001), .87(estimate = .54, SE = .03, t = 16.91, p < .001). It proves the standard of mediation effect proposed by Baron and Kenny, so we further analyzed the mediation effect.

To view from both the direct and indirect effect, life attitude's direct effect on well-being is .02, not reaching significant standard. Life attitude's direct effect on spiritual health is .95, reaching significant standard. Spiritual health's direct effect on well-being is .85, reaching significant standard. If we multiply γ₁ and β, all indirect effect values are .81 (.95×.85), demonstrating that indirect effect is larger than direct effect.
As for life attitude's direct effect on well-being not reading significant standard, it implies that spiritual health generates complete mediation effect. Meanwhile, bootstrapping with confidence intervals was used to examine significance of indirect effects, and the result showed $p=.01$, which means that the mediating effect of gratitude reaches significant level.

**III. Comprehensive Discussion**

From the viewpoint of Pearson Correlation, significantly positive correlation existed between life attitude and well-being. Similarly, to view from SEM analysis with only two latent variables--life attitude and well-being, significant correlation also existed between life attitude and well-being. Nevertheless, after spiritual health intervened, the two's relationship converted from positive correlation to not significantly positive correlation, presenting that spiritual health was the complete mediator of the two.

The evidences described above asset that significantly positive correlation exists between life attitude and well-being, which is consistent with studies of Rekeret al (1987), Reker and Peacock (1981), and Reker and Wong (1984). However, when SH intervened, correlation between life attitude and well-being become insignificant; in other words, SH had complete mediation effect at this step. It may come from the teacher's positive life attitude, signifying that the teachers hold positive perception for life direction and aims, attitude to death, and experience of life. It corresponds to what claimed by Wass (1995), Morgan (1997), Corr, Nabe, & Corr (2000) that when man has positive understanding of death and the related matters, the meaning of life will be raised; that is, raise of spirituality. To make a step further, this is also similar with Reed's (1991) proposal that life attitude is a kind of communication ability connecting the individual and the inner self in order to achieve pursuit of life in the spiritual level.

Secondly, since spiritual health is enhanced, it further influences well-being. In this study, spiritual health means the positive perception of transcending adversity, connecting to others, and appreciating nature. The famous psychologist Maslow (1969) considered that spirituality is a kind of feelings involving with self transcendence. For the teacher, self transcendence can serve as dynamics for concentrating on work (Bullough, 2010), decreasing emotional exhaustion(Tomić, Evers, & Brouwers, 2004), fostering the values like universalism and benevolence (Yilmaz & Dilmac, 2011). Or, self transcendence can transcend the relationship of self and others; the former refers to overcoming the greedy idea of seeking one's own profit, and benevolence will flow from the teacher only when he/she transcend "others". Consequently, in facing the difficult situation, the teacher can employ correct attitude to break through physical and mental limitation, and further affect well-being.

In addition, the so-called connecting to Others in this research means the individual's identification with the meaning and value of existence of Self and Others when he/she interacts with Others. The individual puts an emphasis on interpersonal relationship, and he/she endeavors to establishing interpersonal relationship and developing living attitude, so sense of connection is synonymous with setting up interpersonal relationship. Just as Ryff and Keyes (1995) claims that having good interpersonal relationships is fundamental for personal wellbeing, in this study, it also shows that teachers perceive positively in connecting to Others, which further affects well-being.

To make a step further, "appreciate nature" refers to that man has to awe and gratify when he/she encounters Nature, and coexists with Nature with attitudes of positive thinking and
feedback. Since the teacher is the model of the students' behaviors, as global warming leads to destruction of natural ecology currently, the teachers must take more responsibilities of maintaining Nature. In this study, the results show that the teacher also has positive perception in appreciating nature, which can further influence well-being.

To conclude, when man holds positive perception for life attitude, and further foster growth of spirituality, such as transcending Self, connection with Others, Nature, and/or God, he/she will find the spiritual realm of life meaning and life purpose (Buck, 2006). Under such premise, spiritual health is achieved, leading to well-being as the perspective of Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003) that to increase the employee's experiences of self transcendence, and foster connection between the Self and Others, can obtain sense of connection, and be situated in the feeling of soundness and happiness. As Fehring, Miller, & Shaw (1997) claimed, the one who implements spirituality will be a happy man.

Research limitation

As far as this study is concerned, there are three limitations. First, according to the literature, it is deducted that life attitude affects spiritual health. However, unlike the augment mentioned just now, this research found that it is adopted survey, it is correlational with nature. Take Hungelmann, Kenkei-Rossi, Klassen, and Stollenwerk (1985) as example. Their study exerted 31 elder people aged from 65 to 68 years old as the research subject. Meanwhile, Litwinczuk and Groh (2007) took 46 HIV positive as well. Both studies found that spirituality significantly correlates with life attitude, meaning that other research designs are required to determine the causality, i.e. experiments.

Second, religion influences spiritual health as well, so some spirituality scales include religion related dimensions, like "The transcendence" in Gornez and Fisher's (2005) Spiritual Well-Being Scale (items: developing a personal relationship with the Divine/God”, “developing worship of the Creator”, “developing oneness with God”) However, the concept of spirituality is more religion-oriented (Narayanasamy, 1999). It needs to be considered beyond the realms of religions and one promising perspective is that of modern empirical research into spiritual awareness. It will be uneasy for people to make clarification(Burkhart & Solari-Twadell , 2001). The problem is, if the spirituality scale intends to conduct measurement inclined to dimension of religion, the important spiritual element will be neglected. Hatch, Burg, Naberhaus, and Hellmich (1998) also held that if measurement of the spirituality scale values assessing spiritual faith, it will lack action power. In this sense, Kellehear (2000) considered that it is not necessary to confine spirituality to religious doctrines, neither does it always relates to theology of God. Furthermore, Hsiao, Chien, Wu, Chiang, and Huang (2010) indicated that Taiwan is a diversified religious society with at least 25 religions, among which atheists occupy 63% of Taiwan population, so teachers without religious faith cannot answer items related to "religion sustenance".

Finally, Taiwan teachers are adopted as the research subject in this study, with the background variable such as gender, marital status, and age. The background variables may influence WB, so those background variables' influence cannot be ignored. In the structural equation model, if several control variables or extraneous variables are added at the same time, not only the model's complexity will increase, making the tested model even harder to converge, but also the relationship between the extraneous and control variables will become more complicated. Most importantly, such result may lead to the research model's failure to
converge or demonstrate the mediating effect emphasized in this research, so the background variables are not controlled.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

In this research, it is found that life attitude and well-being were significantly positive correlative originally. However, after spiritual health intervened, it converted from significantly positive correlation to not significantly positive correlation, showing that spiritual health is the complete mediator of life attitude and well-being. In other words, life attitude leads to well-being through spiritual health. Consequently, in practice, the teachers must hold positive life attitude in the first place, followed by valuing raise of spiritual health, so that they can obtain well-being.

For studies in the future, since this study sampled teachers in kindergarten, elementary school, junior high school, senior high school, and college/university, among which there were 48 kindergarten teachers and 51 college/university teachers. Although such number is already large sample, it is incomparable with that in elementary school, junior high school, and senior high school. As a result, it is suggested that the future studies can explore whether spiritual health has mediation effect between life attitude and well-being on the basis of the two subject groups.

REFERENCE


