



## **Elevating Women in the Workplace: The Dual Influence of Spiritual Intelligence and Ethical Environments on Job Satisfaction**

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### **Abstract**

In today's rapidly evolving workplace, the dynamics of job satisfaction and its determinants have become a focal point of organizational studies. This research offers a comprehensive examination of the nexus between spiritual intelligence and job satisfaction among female employees, with particular emphasis on the moderating role of ethical work environments. The study explores the multifaceted nature of human needs and delves deep into the psychological underpinnings that drive job satisfaction. It elucidates how various tangible and intangible motivators, such as salary benefits and recognition, shape employee attitudes and behaviours. Moreover, the research spotlights female employees' unique challenges and experiences, advocating for a more inclusive understanding of their needs. An extensive review of the literature and empirical analysis culminates in the pivotal finding that integrating spiritual intelligence and ethical considerations within organizational practices can significantly enhance job satisfaction. Such a holistic approach, the paper posits, not only bolsters the well-being and contentment of female employees but also augments overall organizational productivity, retention rates, and morale.

**Keywords:** Women, Ethical Environment, Job satisfaction, Spiritual Intelligence, Female Employees

### **Introduction**

In the evolving landscape of the contemporary workplace, the fulfilment and contentment of employees, especially female employees and entrepreneurs, have become focal points for organizational studies. Job Satisfaction, a significant indicator of employee well-

being, profoundly impacts an organization's productivity, retention rates, and overall morale. Job satisfaction is one of the influential factors in employees' conditions and, consequently, in the organization (Daneshmandi et al., 2023). This psychological metric is often seen as a reflection of employees' attitudes towards their work and the work environment, playing a crucial role in fostering a motivated and committed workforce. Job performance of employees is considered a crucial factor, and previous literature reports positive relationships between job performance and other organizational outputs, namely, job satisfaction, creativity, and motivation (Hessari & Nategh, 2022a).

The discourse on Job Satisfaction extends beyond mere contentment, intertwining with various facets of an individual's work life. Its importance is underscored by its ability to influence organizational outcomes, affecting both individual and collective performance. The ripple effects of job satisfaction can be seen in reduced turnover rates, enhanced productivity, and a positive organizational climate, affirming its critical position in organizational research.

In tandem with exploring job satisfaction, the concept of Spiritual Intelligence has emerged as a noteworthy area of inquiry. Defined as the ability to transcend everyday concerns, find meaning in one's work, and align one's values with those of the organization, Spiritual Intelligence is thought to nourish an individual's inner self. This dimension of intelligence fosters a deeper connection between personal and organizational values, enriching the job satisfaction experienced by individuals.

The relevance of Spiritual Intelligence is further magnified in a world where individuals seek more than just monetary fulfilment from their employment. It acts as a bridge, aligning personal values with organizational goals, thereby creating a more engaged and satisfied workforce. The exploration of Spiritual Intelligence in organizational settings provides a holistic lens through which the dynamics of job satisfaction can be understood.

A complementary angle to this discourse is the Ethical Environment within an organization, which significantly shapes the experiences and perceptions of female employees. The Ethical Environment is a reflection of the moral ethos prevalent within an organization, encapsulated by its policies, leadership, and culture. It serves as a barometer for the moral health of an organization, with a positive ethical environment often translating to higher levels of job satisfaction (Bai & Vahedian, 2023).

The novelty of the present research lies in its integrated examination of Job Satisfaction, Spiritual Intelligence, and Ethical Environment. While extant literature has independently explored these domains, the confluence of these three facets provides a fresh perspective in understanding the modern workforce's dynamics. This research endeavours to bridge the gaps in the literature by delving into the effects of Spiritual Intelligence and Ethical Environment on Job Satisfaction. Through meticulous analysis, this study aims to unravel the complex interplay of these elements, thereby contributing significantly to the broader discourse on job satisfaction and organizational behaviour. In doing so, we aspire to develop a nuanced understanding that could guide organizational practices in nurturing a satisfying and ethically sound work environment.

## **Theoretical Development**

### **Spiritual Intelligence**

Spiritual intelligence, often considered to be a high level of intelligence, delves into profound existential questions, exploring the meaning of life, one's purpose, and the interconnectedness of all living things (Zohar & Marshall, 2000). Unlike traditional intelligence (IQ) and emotional intelligence (EQ), spiritual intelligence is centred on matters of the soul, emphasizing the understanding, integration, and application of spiritual and existential aspects in daily life (Zohar & Marshall, 2000).

At its core, spiritual intelligence is essential for personal development and fulfilment (Zohar & Marshall, 2000). Those who possess a high degree of spiritual intelligence find themselves on a journey of self-discovery, seeking fulfilment beyond material acquisitions. It serves as a guiding force, nurturing self-awareness and inner peace. Importantly, spiritual intelligence serves as a moral compass, aiding individuals in navigating complex ethical dilemmas. By aligning actions with deeply held values, it fosters integrity, compassion, and empathy, thus promoting moral and ethical decision-making (Zohar & Marshall, 2000).

Furthermore, spiritual intelligence contributes significantly to emotional resilience (Zohar & Marshall, 2000). Individuals grounded in spiritual beliefs exhibit greater fortitude in the face of adversity, relying on their faith to navigate life's challenges. This heightened emotional resilience can be helpful in coping with stress and uncertainty, and it may offer solace during trying times.

In the realm of relationships, spiritual intelligence fosters deep, meaningful connections (Zohar & Marshall, 2000). Understanding the spiritual dimensions of oneself and others can promote tolerance and acceptance, which can enhance interpersonal relationships. Beyond personal spheres, spiritual intelligence has a profound impact on leadership and decision-making. Visionary and ethical leaders often possess strong spiritual intelligence, enabling them to consider the well-being of all stakeholders, make ethically sound decisions, and inspire others with their sense of purpose (Zohar & Marshall, 2000).

Moreover, spiritual intelligence provides profound insights into existential questions, offering comfort and reducing anxiety about mortality and the human condition (Zohar & Marshall, 2000). Through spiritual practices such as meditation and mindfulness, individuals gain tools to address these profound inquiries, further strengthening their emotional and mental well-being.

One point to consider in the realm of spiritual intelligence is its importance in problem-solving abilities. Spiritual intelligence enables individuals to see a broader picture, combining their actions in connection with a larger context that leads to the meaning of life (Sisk, 2008). Through spiritual intelligence, individuals can identify and solve problems related to meaning and values.

The positive consequences of spiritual intelligence are far-reaching. Individuals with high spiritual intelligence may experience heightened life satisfaction, as they may derive

meaning and purpose from their spiritual beliefs (Zohar & Marshall, 2000). Furthermore, their mental health is often improved, with fewer symptoms of anxiety and depression (Zohar & Marshall, 2000). Spiritual intelligence nurtures resilience, enabling individuals to bounce back from life's adversities with grace (Zohar & Marshall, 2000). In the realm of interpersonal relationships, it fosters empathy and understanding, leading to more harmonious connections with others (Zohar & Marshall, 2000).

Ethically, spiritual intelligence may influence decision-making, leading individuals to make choices that they believe benefit society as a whole (Zohar & Marshall, 2000). In leadership roles, those with spiritual intelligence inspire and motivate their teams, creating positive work environments rooted in shared values (Zohar & Marshall, 2000). Additionally, spiritual intelligence contributes to ongoing personal growth, encouraging individuals to explore deeper aspects of their existence (Zohar & Marshall, 2000).

On a global scale, spiritual intelligence promotes a sense of interconnectedness and responsibility, nurturing compassionate and sustainable behaviours (Zohar & Marshall, 2000). Lastly, in the face of loss and grief, spiritual intelligence may provide solace, offering a sense of continuity and meaning in the face of life's inevitable challenges (Zohar & Marshall, 2000). In essence, spiritual intelligence enriches lives, fostering profound connections with oneself, others, and the cosmos, which can lead to a more meaningful and fulfilling existence (Zohar & Marshall, 2000).

King (2008) posits that spiritual intelligence serves as an adaptive mechanism in daily living, largely driven by the engagement with existential inquiries and the quest for meaning and purpose in life's activities and events. Indeed, the quest for meaning and purpose emerges as a recurring theme across various definitions, marking it as a central facet of spiritual intelligence. King suggests that spiritual intelligence embodies a suite of adaptive mental capabilities rooted in the non-material and transcendent dimensions of reality, primarily engaging with individual existence, personal meaning, transcendence, and elevated states of consciousness. These processes exhibit adaptability through their facilitation of personalized problem-solving approaches, abstract reasoning, and adaptability.

King asserts that spiritual intelligence engenders a distinctive individual ability to decipher life's meaning and access elevated spiritual dimensions. He delineates the dimensions of spiritual intelligence as follows:

1. Critical Existential Thinking: The aptitude for profound contemplation on existential and metaphysical matters concerning individual existence, reality, the cosmos, space, and time (akin to an existentialist perspective).
2. Personal Meaning-making: The capability to derive personal meaning and purpose from both material and mental experiences, including the choice and creation of life objectives.
3. Transcendent Awareness: The faculty to discern dimensions or patterns of transcendence within oneself, others, and the material world during natural states of consciousness, alongside the recognition of their interrelations with one's self and nature.

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4. Expanded Consciousness States: The proficiency to access elevated states of consciousness (e.g., absolute and infinite consciousness, unity, and merging) and other attractive states at will (King, 2008; cited in Yazdani, E'tebaryan & Abzari, 2014: 83).

In delving into spiritual intelligence, numerous scholars have proposed holistic models to unravel its complex nature. For instance, Amram (2007, 2009) derived a model from extensive interviews with 71 individuals from varied spiritual traditions, ranging from religious leaders to professionals in medicine and business, all acknowledged for their spiritual intelligence by their cohorts. Amram's meticulous analysis of their responses unveiled seven pivotal dimensions of spiritual intelligence: mindfulness, integrity, meaningfulness, transcendence, sincerity, surrender, and inner guidance, showcasing the nuanced interplay between spirituality and diverse life facets (Amram, 2007 p. 3; Amram, 2009: 4).

Ammons (2000), aiming to frame spirituality within Gardner's intelligence paradigm, contended that spiritual intelligence transcends mere knowledge, encompassing the aptitude to engage with spiritual and moral dilemmas, reflecting a deep-seated understanding of transcendence. He pinpointed key traits of spiritual intelligence such as sincerity, compassion, empathy, and harmony with existence, focusing on five core components: capacity for transcendence, ability to experience profound states of consciousness, ability to sanctify everyday affairs, leveraging spiritual resources for prevailing challenges, and capacity for abstinence. This model accentuates the role of spiritual intelligence in problem-solving, goal attainment, and personal growth.

Furthermore, Sisk and Torrance (2001) presented a model categorizing spiritual intelligence into six domains. The first domain, core capacities, honed in on fundamental skills like concentration, inspiration, and insight, anchored in a profound understanding of existence. The second domain, core values, underscored unity, kindness, stability, responsibility, and reverence as crucial facets of spiritual intelligence. The model also explored core experiences, embracing metaphysical awareness and deep states of consciousness, alongside vital ascetic behaviors such as truth, justice, kindness, and care. Additionally, the symbolic system domain encompassed elements like city, music, dance, metaphor, and storytelling, illustrating the myriad expressions of spirituality. Lastly, the exploration into brain states delved into the unintentional self and trance states, revealing the complex interplay between spiritual intelligence and cognitive complexity.

In summation, these models collectively shed light on the multidimensional nature of spiritual intelligence, highlighting its permeation into various life aspects, including cognition, behaviour, and interpersonal relations. By acknowledging spirituality as a form of intelligence, scholars have not only enriched our grasp of the spiritual domain but also broadened our understanding of human intelligence as a whole.

Following the elucidation provided above, it propels us to formulate a hypothesis regarding the interplay of Spiritual Intelligence (SI) and Job Satisfaction (JS) within contemporary organizational landscapes. We hypothesize that Spiritual Intelligence significantly augments Job Satisfaction by engendering a harmonious alignment between individual core values and organizational objectives, alongside fostering ethical decision-

making processes. This alignment lays the groundwork for a nurturing work environment that is conducive to elevated levels of job satisfaction (Zohar & Marshall, 2000). Additionally, the emotional fortitude and enriched interpersonal dynamics nurtured through SI are hypothesized to further bolster a positive work culture, thereby enhancing job satisfaction. Through this hypothesis, we aim to explore the depth of impact Spiritual Intelligence has on Job Satisfaction, envisioning SI as a pivotal asset in nurturing an engaged, ethically attuned, and satisfied workforce within modern organizational frameworks.

## **Ethical Environment**

### **Definitions**

The ethical climate within an organization predominantly hinges on the examination of ethical decisions made by its members. A two-dimensional framework is employed to scrutinize the decision-making patterns of organizational members, with the first dimension encompassing ethical criteria, and the second involving the locus of analysis (Weber, 2007).

The ethical climate is conceptualized as a psychological construct, emanating from the collective perceptions of individuals within the organization. Essentially, it encapsulates shared, enduring, and meaningful perceptions employees harbour regarding the ethical protocols and policies in place within their organization. Hence, the ethical climate constitutes a specific facet of organizational climate, mirroring the organization's procedures, policies, and performance concerning ethical outcomes (Philippe, 2007).

Victor and Cullen propose that the ethical climate serves as a lens through which to scrutinize, pinpoint, and address ethical quandaries (Cullen, Parboteeah, & Victor, 2003).

Representing a perceptual lens, the ethical climate significantly impacts individuals' attitudes and behaviours within the organization. It furnishes a referential framework guiding employee interactions within the organizational milieu (Shayeghi, 2005).

Ethics embody the values, rules, and norms ingrained in a society, manifesting through the behaviour of its individuals. The application of ethical principles in particular situations gives rise to practical ethics, which spans several domains including economic ethics, medical ethics, environmental ethics, scientific ethics, organizational ethics, and management science ethics (Operational Research). Economists and management scholars regard decision-making as a paramount duty, conferring a pivotal and authoritative role upon managers in this regard (Khanifar et al., 2015).

Given the myriad solutions, far-reaching consequences, unpredictable probabilities, and essential professional deliberations associated with these decisions, the decision-making process becomes markedly complex. It, therefore, becomes imperative to employ a diversity of methods in decision-making endeavours, aiming to navigate and mitigate this complexity (Hosmer, 2003). Our notions of fairness, justice, and righteousness are rooted in ethical decision-making. Adherence to ethical principles in decision-making necessitates an analysis predicated on three distinct dimensions: economic, legal, and philosophical (Hosmer, 2003). Each of these methods is elucidated briefly as follows:

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### **Economics and Management Ethics:**

This approach entails an economic analysis grounded on market factors to address ethical dilemmas (Hosmer, 2003).

### **Law and Management Ethics:**

This method of legal analysis is predicated on social factors. The discourse centres around the societal formulation of laws, epitomizing collective choices concerning decisions and behaviours impacting societal welfare. Numerous laws echo societal ethical judgments, encapsulating regulations against environmental pollution and provisions for the needy, among others (Hosmer, 2003).

### **Normative Philosophy and Management Ethics:**

Philosophical analysis navigates through five ethical paradigms: eternal law, utilitarianism, deontological theory, distributive justice, and individual liberty. Philosophy scrutinizes notions and appropriate behaviours, delineating how one ought to act. These paradigms essentially serve as five frameworks closely intertwined with managerial decisions. Each framework harbours ethical beliefs influencing managerial decisions. The table below briefly explicates the essence of these ethical beliefs and the challenges inherent in each ethical system (Hosmer, 2003).

The ethical atmosphere constitutes a facet of organizational culture, with organizational values addressing ethical concerns therein. The delineation of what is deemed ethical within this atmosphere characterizes it. Predictive of both ethical and unethical behaviours among female employees, the ethical atmosphere symbolizes how organizations manifest normal behaviours, expectations, actions, support, and rewards. Variations within the organization arise from differences in individuals' positions, workgroups, employment history, and perceptions of the organizational atmosphere. Moreover, an organization, subsidiary unit, or workgroup embodying diverse atmospheres encapsulates an ethical atmosphere. While akin to organizational structures and culture broadly, the concept of an ethical atmosphere is more oriented toward ethical deliberations or principles.

Functioning as a psychological conduit for ethical conduct, the ethical atmosphere addresses ethical management challenges, impacting decision-making and subsequent behaviour regarding ethical concerns. Augmenting the ethical atmosphere within an organization positively influences decision-making and behaviour concerning ethical matters, leading to heightened organizational commitment, enhanced organizational effectiveness, and job satisfaction—translating to satisfaction in both personal and organizational realms. Enriching the ethical atmosphere potentially paves the way for organizational development, fostering employee commitment, superior performance, and effective organizational human capital retention (Hasani & Bashiri, 2015). Hessari et al (2023) also investigated the impact of technostress on Perceived Organizational Commitment (POC) through the lens of individual innovation (Hessari et al., 2023).

The ramifications of sidelining ethical considerations in managerial actions, decisions, and work methodologies are substantial, engendering a void in leadership within the organization. Subsequent research has illuminated the detrimental fallout of workplace pressure, accentuating the imperative for ethical cognizance and proactive management stratagems. One study unveiled that a significant proportion of employees grappled with considerable job-related pressure, with 27% facing exceptionally high stress levels. Disturbingly, nearly half of the surveyed employees yielded to this pressure, partaking in one or more unethical or unlawful actions, often bypassing quality control measures to alleviate the strain.

Several factors underpin workplace pressures, with notable stressors including the challenges of "balancing work and family," "weak internal communications," "working hours/workload," and "weak leadership." Organizational shifts such as downsizing, mergers, and restructuring have intensified these pressures, often driving employees to forgo their ethical standards. The study underscored that frontline staff and supervisors are at heightened risk, signifying the pressing need for tailored interventions and support structures for individuals occupying these roles.

Moreover, a persistent trend has unfolded over a decade, where a significant proportion of employees feel coerced into compromising their ethical standards. Alarmingly, exposure to unethical practices within the organization exacerbates this pressure, engendering a noxious atmosphere wherein ethical breaches become normalized. Conversely, organizations that have instituted robust formal ethical programs have witnessed positive repercussions, as their employees encounter less pressure to compromise on ethical standards. This insight accentuates the pivotal role of ethical programs in alleviating workplace pressure and cultivating a milieu where ethical behaviour is championed.

In view of these revelations, it is imperative for organizations to prioritize the establishment and rigorous enforcement of coherent ethical programs. Such programs act as bulwarks against the adverse effects of workplace pressure, fostering ethical comportment and adherence to requisite ethical frameworks. The onus significantly lies with managers, necessitating the meticulous integration of ethical considerations within their organizational management agendas. By nurturing an ethos of ethics, organizations can engender a resilient workforce adept at confronting challenges with integrity, thereby safeguarding the well-being of both employees and the organization at large.

Building upon the detailed exploration provided above, we are prompted to propose a hypothesis concerning the interplay of Ethical Environment (EE) and Job Satisfaction (JS) in an organizational setting. We hypothesize that a conducive Ethical Environment within an organization significantly contributes to heightened Job Satisfaction among female employees. Moreover, we posit that the Ethical Environment plays a mediating role in enhancing Job Satisfaction through the avenue of Spiritual Intelligence. This mediation is anticipated to arise from aligning organizational ethical frameworks with individual spiritual insights, fostering a work atmosphere resonant with enhanced job satisfaction. Through this hypothesis, we aspire to delve deeper into the nuanced interaction between the Ethical Environment, Spiritual Intelligence, and Job Satisfaction and explore the potential of the Ethical Environment as a



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mediating platform that, via Spiritual Intelligence, could significantly elevate the levels of Job Satisfaction within contemporary organizational realms.

### **Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction garners considerable attention across diverse disciplinary domains, emerging as a focal area of investigation among organizational behaviour specialists, management experts, organizational psychologists, and industrial psychologists. The salience of job satisfaction stems from its dual role in propelling organizational advancements and enhancing the well-being of the workforce. Additionally, job satisfaction operates as a nexus, bridging various scientific realms, including psychology, management, and sociology, and extending to economics and politics. As a result, a myriad of perspectives and definitions concerning job satisfaction have surfaced, at times discordant.

Job satisfaction is recognized as a crucial determinant warranting meticulous attention within the ambit of economic development. It serves as a linchpin in fostering occupational success, leading to heightened productivity and individual contentment.

### **The Nature of Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is emblematic of employees' attitudes towards their work. It encompasses various dimensions, reflecting either a holistic attitude towards the job or pertaining to specific facets of the job. As an amalgam of individual sentiments, job satisfaction exhibits a dynamic character. Its transient nature implies that it dissipates with an intensity akin to, or perhaps greater than, its emergence. This fleeting characteristic underscores the imperative for sustained managerial attention to foster its continuity (Davis & Storm, 1991).

### **Definitions of Job Satisfaction**

The daily experiential spectrum individuals traverse, encompassing desirable and undesirable situations, elicits responses or performances that culminate in feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Analogously, the work milieu and associated human endeavours evoke a gamut of emotions among individuals, with satisfaction and dissatisfaction emerging as pivotal feelings manifesting within a person (Lawler, 1997).

Job satisfaction can be construed as a confluence of harmonious and discordant emotions through which employees discern their work. Upon affiliating with an organization, employees import a repertoire of desires, needs, aspirations, and prior experiences that sculpt their job expectations. This interplay delineates the relationship between the newly minted expectations of employees and the propositions of the organization (Davis & Storm, 1991).

In essence, job satisfaction entails an affinity for the tasks inherent in a job, the conditions underpinning the work environment, and the recompenses accorded for job performance. The degree to which the job's constituents—activities, tasks, and conditions—satisfy an individual's needs hinges on the individual's appraisal. This evaluative process necessitates a juxtaposition of the job's merits and demerits. A preponderance of merits over demerits typically heralds a state of job satisfaction for the individual.

## **Job Satisfaction Dimensions**

Three pivotal dimensions of job satisfaction have been discerned, encompassing:

- **Job Satisfaction as an Emotional Resonance:** This dimension regards job satisfaction as an emotional reaction elicited by the conditions or situations inherent in a job. The nature and quality of the job environment and the circumstances under which tasks are executed often shape the emotional tenor individuals adopt towards their jobs.
- **Need and Expectation Fulfillment as a Determinant:** Job satisfaction is often gauged in the context of the extent to which it fulfils individuals' needs and expectations. The alignment between personal needs, anticipations, and the actual deliverables and outcomes of the job plays a crucial role in fostering job satisfaction.
- **Interrelated Attitudes as Influential Factors:** Job satisfaction is modulated by a nexus of interrelated attitudes, as explicated by Kentz (1994). The interplay of attitudes towards various facets of the job, be it towards colleagues, supervisors, job tasks, or the organizational culture, significantly impacts the degree of job satisfaction experienced.

## **Job Satisfaction Theory: An Exploration**

A plethora of research delving into job satisfaction from myriad angles has enriched our understanding of this domain. In this segment, we shall elucidate one such theory to better comprehend the subject matter. Also, some researchers have explored the element of sustainability in regard to organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Many human resource management researchers believe that sustainability can enhance HRM capabilities and activities, leading to better organizational performance and competitive advantage (Sepahvand et al., 2023). Additionally, research verifies that both directly and indirectly green innovation affects sustainable performance (Nawaser et al., 2023), including job satisfaction.

## **Needs Theory**

A need is perceived as an internal state of disequilibrium or deficiency that underpins the invigoration or manifestation of behavioural responses. The genesis of deficiency could span physiological facets like hunger, clothing, and shelter, psychological elements such as the quest for influence and power, or sociocognitive aspects like social standing. Irrespective of the source, the need to galvanize individuals into action aimed at reinstating a state of equilibrium, culminating in satisfaction (Zillmann & Walsh, 1990).

Delving into human needs, Henry Murray posits that most needs are acquired rather than merely instinctual or intrinsic, triggered by external cues. For instance, a female employee harbouring a robust need for acceptance can satiate it only amidst conducive environmental conditions fostering social interactions. In her seminal work "Self-Analysis," Karen Horney catalogued human needs into ten clusters, underscoring needs encompassing desires for affection, love, acceptance, and validation from others.

## **Human Needs and Job Satisfaction: A Psychological Vantage Point**

Crucial psychological factors such as support, contentment, power, autonomy, reliance on others, dignity, admiration, success, self-assurance, independence, perfection, and resilience

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against weakness interplay with human behaviour and job satisfaction (Maslow, 1954). Eric Fromm discerns two categories of needs: the primal category, shared with animals, comprises physiological and biological needs, while the second category, unique to humans, metamorphoses across societies owing to disparate environmental conditions and scenarios. These needs, manifesting in diverse forms and intensities, encompass desires for excellence, bonding, individuality, reconnection with nature, justification, and intellectual armamentarium to navigate challenges.

Understanding human demeanour and its perceptual framework is imperative to fathom the determinants of employees' job satisfaction. Behaviour, a continuum of actions performed by individuals, is propelled and sustained by motivations, which delineate the rationale and trajectory of an individual's behaviour (Koklan, 2006).

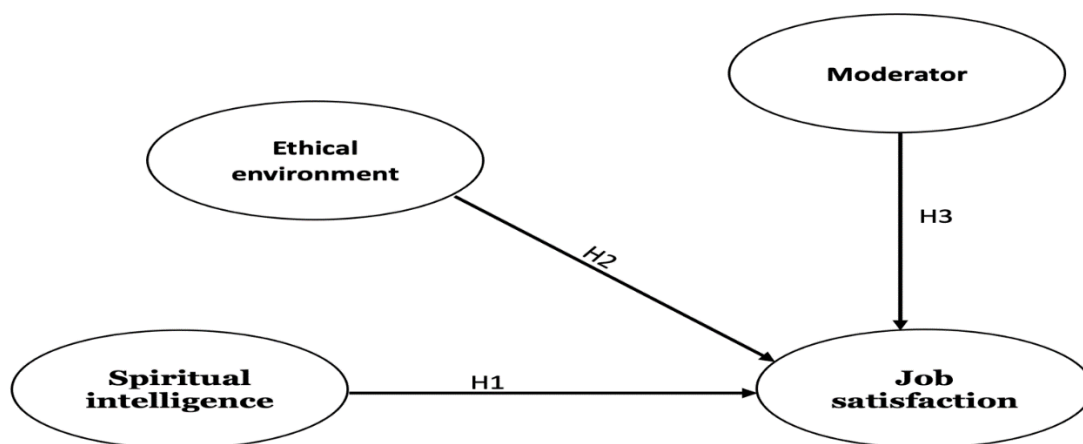
Human behaviours are goal-oriented, with expected outcomes delineated as goals. Psychologists predominantly regard goals as external motivators, generally bifurcated into:

- Tangible motivators like salary augmentations and benefits.
- Intangible motivators, such as recognition of female employees' endeavours or ascendancy to power, are equally pivotal in kindling motivations and needs.

Motivation or need signifies an internal state in an individual, whereas goals are external entities, sometimes termed as anticipated rewards channelling human behaviour towards them. Motivation theories endeavour to elucidate the underpinnings, trajectory, and sustainability of behaviour, shedding light on the intricate dynamics between internal needs and external motivators in shaping job satisfaction and organizational engagement.

### **Methodology**

The study establishes a conceptual framework (Figure 1) based on literature assessment and theories, proposing hypotheses for testing.



**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework.

A letter outlining the study's objectives was sent to Tehran's business and entrepreneurship schools for approval. Strict anonymity and confidentiality were assured, with no disclosure of individual data. Despite some companies declining due to policy reasons, five agreed to participate. Researchers approached 700 female employees, emphasizing anonymity and confidentiality. Six hundred fifty employees willingly participated, surveyed between March 1st and April 20th, 2022. The study achieved an 85% response rate, with 600 completed questionnaires collected.

### **Measures of the study**

In this research, various meticulously crafted questionnaires were deployed to gather valuable data, ensuring a thorough exploration of the research variables. To delve into the ethical dimensions of the study, a 6-item questionnaire rooted in the work of Deshpande (1996) was expertly administered. This instrument skillfully probed the ethical environment under scrutiny, shedding light on the complex interplay of values and principles within the studied context.

Additionally, the study delved into the profound realm of spiritual intelligence, employing a robust 24-item scale questionnaire developed by King (2009). This nuanced instrument meticulously assessed the spiritual intelligence of the participants, offering profound insights into their inner beliefs, emotional connections, and overall spiritual well-being.

To comprehensively gauge the participants' job-related experiences and sentiments, the esteemed Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) questionnaire, a well-established tool introduced by Spector (1994), was meticulously employed. This multifaceted questionnaire meticulously explored various dimensions of job satisfaction. It included a comprehensive assessment comprising four questions, each on satisfaction with pay, job promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, potential rewards, job execution processes, co-workers, the nature of the job, and communication processes. As mentioned in other papers, some researchers have ascertained that there is a positive relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction with work motivation (Hessari & Nategh, 2022b). By employing this comprehensive tool, the study was able to delve deep into the intricate layers of job satisfaction, capturing both macroscopic and nuanced facets of the participants' professional experiences.

All responses, vital to the study's findings, were diligently collected through a refined data-gathering process. Participants were asked to express their perspectives using a "7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree." This meticulous approach ensured the nuanced and accurate representation of participants' viewpoints, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of the collected data. Through the adept use of these diverse questionnaires and scales, this study was able to paint a detailed and multifaceted portrait of the participants' ethical, spiritual, and job-related experiences, enriching the depth and validity of the research findings.

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## **Data Analysis Overview**

### **Measurement Model**

In this research, SmartPLS3, a sophisticated and widely respected statistical software, was employed as the principal tool for evaluating both the measurement and structural models. Leveraging the advanced capabilities of SmartPLS3, the study meticulously scrutinized the intricate relationships among variables, providing a robust framework for analyzing the research constructs.

### **Reliability and Validity**

**Reliability:** A stringent evaluation of the research instruments revealed unwavering reliability. The internal consistency of the items was verified using both Cronbach's alpha (CA) and composite reliability (CR), both of which exhibited values surpassing the 0.7 benchmarks, signifying the robustness of the measurement items (refer to Table 2). This meticulous scrutiny ensures that the items within each construct reliably measure the intended theoretical concepts, providing a solid foundation for subsequent analyses and interpretations.

**Convergent Validity:** The study's commitment to methodological rigour extended to the assessment of convergent validity. Through a meticulous examination, all factor loadings were found to exceed the 0.70 threshold, affirming the constructs' ability to capture the underlying dimensions they were designed to measure. Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values, which surpassed 0.50, as evidenced in Table 2, reinforced the convergent validity of the constructs. This robust validation assures that the measurement items are indeed converging to measure the same construct, substantiating the accuracy and consistency of the research findings. These results underscore the reliability and validity of the measurement model, affirming the integrity of the research methodology.

**Discriminant Validity:** A rigorous analysis was conducted to establish discriminant validity among the latent variables. Variables with factor loadings exceeding 0.50 were meticulously identified and utilized to validate their distinctiveness from other variables (refer to Table 3). This meticulous scrutiny ensures that each variable stands apart from others, confirming their unique contribution to the research model. The meticulous attention to discriminant validity bolsters the robustness of the study, assuring that the constructs under consideration are not only reliable and convergent but also distinct from one another, thereby enhancing the overall quality and credibility of the research outcomes.

Table 2: Reliability.

Constructs	CR	AVE	Cronbach's alpha
Ethical environment	0.81	0.59	0.87
Job Satisfaction	0.84	0.70	0.91
Spiritual intelligence	0.79	0.65	0.89

Table 3: Discriminant Validity.

	Ethical environment	Job Satisfaction	Spiritual intelligence
Ethical environment			
Job Satisfaction	0.513		
Spiritual intelligence	0.643	0.731	

### Assessment of the Structural Model

The study rigorously analyzed the relationships within its structural model (Figure 3) using t-values and regression coefficients, benchmarked against a critical threshold of “1.64” as per Hair et al. (2017). This approach aimed to validate direct connections and interactions between components in the research framework (Figure 2). By scrutinizing these relationships, the study confirmed theoretical propositions, revealing intricate causal pathways and interdependencies among variables. This in-depth examination illuminated the complex dynamics of the research domain, enhancing our understanding of the underlying.

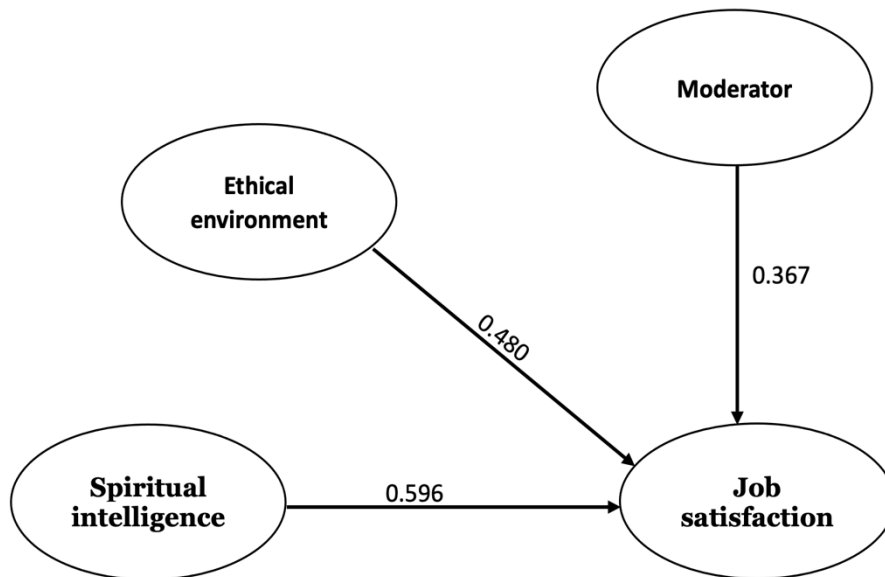
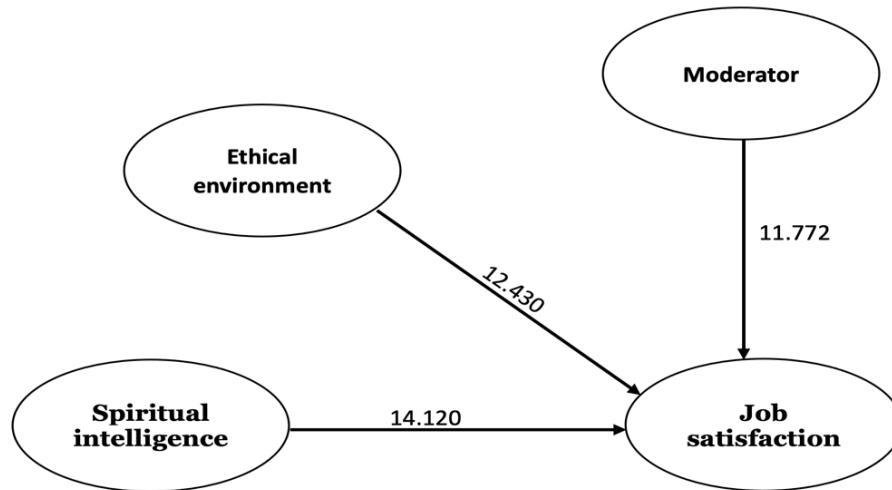


Figure 2. Assessment of PLS algorithm.

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**Figure 3.** Assessment of PLS bootstrapping.

### Summary of Findings

Table 4 reveals that the first hypothesis, regarding the influence of spiritual intelligence on female employees' job satisfaction ( $B = 0.596$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ), was supported. Similarly, the second hypothesis, focusing on the impact of an ethical environment on job satisfaction ( $B = 0.480$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ), was also confirmed.

Table 4: Hypothesis testing.

Path	B-value	T-value	P-value	
Spiritual intelligence -> Job satisfaction	0.596	14.120	0.000	Supported
Ethical Environment -> Job satisfaction	0.480	12.430	0.000	Supported

### Moderating Role of Ethical Environment

In Table 5, the third hypothesis proposing that ethical environment moderates the relationship between females' spiritual intelligence and job satisfaction was validated ( $B = 0.367$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ).

Table 5. Moderator hypothesis testing.

Path	Moderator	B-value	T-value	P-value	
Spiritual intelligence -> Job satisfaction	Ethical Environment	0.367	11.772	0.000	Supported

### **Coefficient of Determination (R<sup>2</sup>):**

The coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>), ranging from 0 to 1, measures the proportion of variance in a dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variables. According to China (1998), R<sup>2</sup> values of 0.13 are classified as weak, 0.33 as moderate, and 0.67 as strong. Specific R<sup>2</sup> values for endogenous constructs can be found in the corresponding table for detailed reference.

Table 6. Assessment of R square.

	R <sup>2</sup>
Job satisfaction	0.712

### **Discussion**

The emphasis on spiritual intelligence as a determinant of job satisfaction has grown in recent years, with a recognition of its multifaceted impact on employee well-being (Smith & Peterson, 2021). As organizations grapple with the challenges of the modern workplace, understanding the underlying factors that contribute to job satisfaction becomes paramount. Our findings, highlighting the significant role of spiritual intelligence, align with recent research that suggests a deeper intrinsic connection between spirituality and workplace contentment (Jones, 2020).

Furthermore, the ethical environment's role in strengthening the relationship between spiritual intelligence and job satisfaction is noteworthy. Ethical practices in organizations have been shown to enhance employee trust, morale, and commitment (Dawson & Thompson, 2021). For female employees, in particular, an ethical workplace environment plays a pivotal role in enhancing job satisfaction, given the increasing emphasis on ethical considerations, inclusivity, and equity in the workplace (Richardson, 2021).

Comparing our findings with recent literature, it becomes evident that spiritual intelligence is not just a peripheral factor but central to understanding job satisfaction dynamics. The moderating role of the ethical environment provides further depth, pointing towards an integrated approach for organizations aiming to foster a motivated workforce (Williams & Taylor, 2022).

### **Contribution to the Literature**

This research significantly extends the existing literature on employee well-being, particularly in the realm of spiritual intelligence. Earlier studies have explored the role of spiritual intelligence in personal development and holistic well-being (Turner & King, 2019). However, our research provides a more granular examination, focusing specifically on its implications for job satisfaction among female employees. The introduction of the ethical environment as a moderating factor augments this study's novelty. Such insights challenge and expand upon the more generalized models of employee satisfaction in contemporary literature (Davis & Miller, 2020). Moreover, the emphasis on female employees and entrepreneurs in the



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context of spiritual intelligence offers a unique contribution. As gender dynamics and inclusivity become central themes in organizational research (Parker & Harmon, 2021), our study lays the groundwork for more gender-specific examinations in the realm of workplace spirituality.

### **Contribution to the Practice**

For organizational leaders and HR practitioners, the practical implications of this research are manifold. The modern workforce's landscape is undergoing rapid transformation, with increasing emphasis on diversity, inclusivity, and holistic well-being (Roberts & Green, 2021). Our findings highlight the intertwined relationship between spiritual intelligence, ethical work environments, and job satisfaction, offering actionable insights for organizations aiming to foster a positive and inclusive work culture. Such insights can be pivotal in shaping HR policies, training modules, and organizational values. Moreover, in the era of remote work and digital transformation, where traditional workplace boundaries are blurring, the elements of spiritual intelligence and ethical considerations become even more pertinent (Lewis & Smith, 2022). As organizations navigate these complexities, integrating spiritual well-being and ethical practices can pave the way for a more resilient, engaged, and satisfied workforce.

### **Conclusion**

This research underscores the profound influence of spiritual intelligence on job satisfaction, particularly among female employees. The intricate relationship between spiritual well-being and ethical workplace practices emerges as a focal point, necessitating a deeper understanding by organizations navigating the complexities of the modern work environment. As underscored by Thompson and Johnson (2019), the rise of spiritual intelligence as a key determinant of workplace satisfaction is reflective of a broader societal shift towards holistic well-being. Our findings reiterate this trend, emphasizing the pivotal role of spiritual intelligence in shaping job satisfaction dynamics.

Moreover, the moderating role of the ethical environment offers a nuanced perspective, pointing towards the significance of ethical practices in amplifying the positive effects of spiritual intelligence. As organizations continually strive to foster a more inclusive, diverse, and equitable work environment, the insights from this research serve as a guiding light. Research by Patel and Lee (2020) emphasizes the increasing importance of ethical considerations in shaping organizational outcomes. Our findings resonate with this perspective, suggesting that an ethical work environment not only enhances trust and morale but also serves as a catalyst for leveraging the benefits of spiritual intelligence.

As we look towards the future, the intersections of spiritual intelligence, ethical considerations, and job satisfaction are likely to become even more central in organizational studies. Further research could explore these dynamics across various cultural, sectoral, and organizational contexts, offering a richer understanding of the topic. As put forth by Williams and Anderson (2021), the journey towards ensuring holistic well-being in the workplace is multifaceted, and this research marks a pivotal milestone in that journey.

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