



AN INVESTIGATION OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP STYLE WITH ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AMONG TEHRAN UNIVERSITY OF MEDICAL SCIENCES STAFFS



Dargahi H^{1†} --- Nasrollahzaedeh Abdochalli K² ---- Rahmani H³

¹Professor of Health Care Management, Health Information Management Research Center, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran

²MSc. In Health Care Management, Iran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran

³Assistant Professor, School of Allied Medicine, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Spiritual Leadership is essential due to various issues among leaders. To meet the changing and challenging demands of their environment in the twenty – first century. This research was aimed to determine the relationship between spiritual leadership and organizational commitment of staffs in the headquarter sections of Tehran University of Medical Sciences (TUMS). Methods: The present research was cross sectional, descriptive and analytical study which was induced at 2015. The sample size of this study consisted of 150 staffs. Data collected using the questionnaires of Fry spiritual leadership and organizational commitment assessment by Meyer and Allen and analyzed by SPSS software. Findings: There was a significant relationship between spiritual leadership with organizational commitment. Conclusion: Spiritual leadership brings about organizational commitment in order to satisfy staffs' needs and expectations, and reveal their potential abilities by attempting to achieve organizational goals.

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Keywords: Spiritual leadership, Organizational, Commitment, Staffs, TUMS, Tehran, Iran

Received: 29 August 2016/ Revised: 3 October 2016/ Accepted: 27 October 2016/ Published: 8 November 2016

Contribution/ Originality

This study contributes in the existing literature is to add the body of knowledge about organizational behavior, specially organizational commitment of the staffs. This study documents the spiritual leadership is an important factor for improvement of organizational commitment of staffs, but it is not the only way.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, effective leadership is often seen as an unparallel principle for organizational success. Modern organizations emphasize on leadership development more than before. Increasingly, leadership is defined as a process generated as a result of relations which focus on interaction and collaboration rather than just focusing on leadership capabilities (Fry, 2005). There is no possibility of moving toward higher than normal levels of leadership as long as power is the dominant thought in leadership program. In fact, service should be at the core of leadership. Although, power accompanies leadership (Humphreys and Einstein, 2003).

In the preliminary investigations, leadership studies were paid attention from the personality perspective. Personality perspective claim that particular human have leadership characteristics and are born by these traits. Unlike, process perspective states that leadership is a process that can be learned by everyone and is accessible to all.

But individual studies did not reach clear results therefore, leadership theories concentrated on leaders' behaviors (Fry, 2008).

Following these efforts in recent decades, numerous leadership theories have been presented. One theory that proposed by Fry explains spiritual leadership is a motivation model included vision, altruistic love, and hope/faith. In this model, spiritual leadership contains the behaviors and attitudes necessary for motivating of staffs attaining the goals (Freeman, 2011). There is a similarity between spirituality and servant leadership theories. Both them are motivating factors to induce a sense of meaning and purpose, and make effort to create a collaborative workplace. On the other hand, the issue which matters is that creating fundamental changes make staffs no longer have trust in the organization and its structure, and not have the ability to achieve a sense of belonging between themselves and workplace. Consequently, organizations need change and organizational commitment, and both of them is so important for them (Sendjaya and Pekreti, 2010).

Spiritual leadership models are effective tools to release staffs from traditional environment and exert control by leaders (Greenleaf and Spears, 2002). Spiritual leadership is made practical through six elements, including have a lot of value and developing the staffs, creating unity, showing confidence, and providing and sharing leadership. Since spiritual leadership ideas are under development, judgment about its function and consequences have some uncertainties (Fry *et al.*, 2010). Spiritual leaders can perfectly lead the organizations which respond to the vast and important cultural needs (King, 2008). The theoretical framework created in figure 1 is based on spiritual leadership conceptual model. This study believes that the components of spiritual leadership (organizational vision, hope, altruistic love, faith in work, meaningfulness, religiosity, and organizational membership) each have considerable effect on organizational commitment. Spiritual leadership is a concept that is predicted based on value – oriented leadership (Reave, 2005).

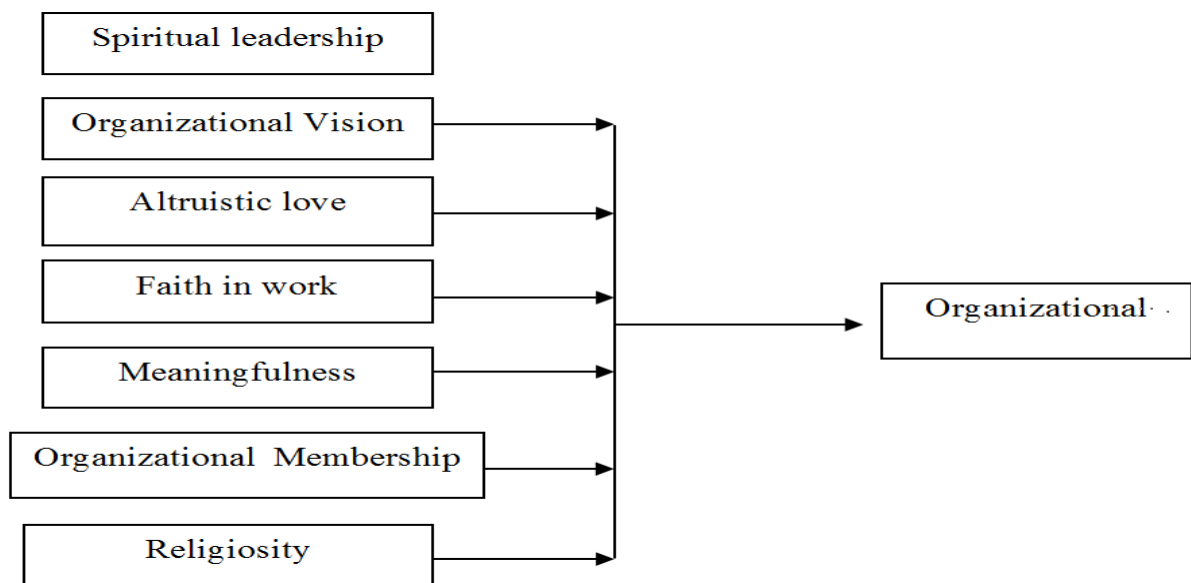


Figure-1. Research theoretical framework

Spiritual leadership is a style which has positive correlation with job satisfaction (Fry, 2008). Spiritual leaders prioritize needs of the staffs first, and as a result attains an unbelievable power throughout the organization. An organization that directs by spiritual leadership can induce a more dynamic relationship between the leaders and the staffs (Nardon and Steers, 2008).

Efficiency, effectiveness and performance improvement are regarded as the most important goals of an organization, and each organization attempts to strengthen these goals in various ways. To achieve the above goals, amplifying factors must be identified and analysed toward strengthening them. Organizational commitment is one of

these factors that have received much attention during recent years, since it affects many variables, such as job satisfaction, absenteeism, job turnover and job conflict (Naderi and Hoveida, 2013).

If organizations want to strength occupational behaviors of staffs by minimizing absenteeism and turnover, they must know how to develop the right type of commitment (Ansari *et al.*, 2013). According to the foregoing thoughts and other evidence that suggest the superiority of spiritual leadership over other traditional approaches effects on important organizational variables including organizational commitment. Therefore, this research was aimed to determine the relationship between spiritual leadership with organizational commitment of staffs in the headquarters sections of Tehran University of Medical Sciences (TUMS).

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research was a cross sectional, descriptive and analytical study was induced at 2015. The study population included all staffs in the headquarters sections of Tehran University of Medical Science which was a total of 1890. The sample size was 150 staffs selected by Cochran formula.

The questionnaires were distributed among the staffs by cluster proportionate systematic sampling to each sections of the headquarters department. The research tools were two questionnaire. The first section included demographic information of the staffs such as sex, marital status, and years of experiences, age, and educational qualifications. The first questionnaire was spiritual leadership reported by Fry *et al.* (2010). This questionnaire consists of 39 questions about leadership dimensions and is designed based on five points Likert scale where 1 means strongly disagree and 5 equals to strongly agree. This questionnaire validated by "Ziaee et al.", and its cronbch's alpha coefficient was reprted 89% (Nardon and Steers, 2008). The second questionnaire was organizational commitment which was produced by Allen and Meyer (1997). This questionnaire consists of 16 questions that assess the attitudes of respondants in two areas of emotional commitment (Greenleaf and Spears, 2002; Humphreys and Einstein, 2003; Fry, 2005; Fry, 2008; Fry *et al.*, 2010; Sendjaya and Pekreti, 2010; Freeman, 2011) continued commitment (Allen and Meyer, 1997; Korac- Kakabadse *et al.*, 2002; Reave, 2005; Nardon and Steers, 2008; Shojaie, 2011; Ansari *et al.*, 2013; Naderi and Hoveida, 2013; Piri and Fazelian, 2013) based on five points Likert scale. The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by a expert panel and the reliability of spiritual leadership questionnaire was 0.78 and the organizational commitment was 0.78 calculated by Alpha cronbach.

Overall alpha chronbach value, Half split technique tested by Intra Class Correlation(ICC) and Gutmann split half coefficient were 0.84 and 0.92 for spiritual leadership questionnaire , and were 0.72 and 0.92 for organizational commitment questionnaire, retrospectively. To maximize the response rate, face to face or interviewed questionnaire approach was followed to fill the questionnaires through the researchers. Twelve to fifteen minutes was the time required to fill out the questionnaires, and data collection lasted from june to March 2015. This study was approved by the Ethical Research Committee in Tehran University of Medical Sciences. Responding to the questionnaires was voluntary, and all answers were de-identified to maintain confidentiality and placed into the researchers' close closet. The data was analyzed by SPSS version 20. Descriptive statistics presented by percentage, mean and standard deviation, and used T-test, Anova, and Pearson correlation methods for analytical statistics.

3. FINDINGS

Most (38.7%) of staffs were between the ages of 31 to 40 years old, and 32% of them had work experiences between 1 to 5 years. It is worth mentioning that 50.7% of the staffs had a bachelor's degree. Moreover, 70.7% of them was married, retrospectively.

Table-1. Mean and standard deviation of spiritual leadership and organizational commitment dimensions

Descriptive statistics – Dimensions	The least	The most	Average	Standard deviation
Organizational	1	5	3.01	0.76
Altruistic love	1.71	3.86	2.85	0.41
Faith in work	1	5	3.40	0.62
Meaningfulness in work	1.17	4	2.74	0.65
Organizational membership	1	5	2.97	1.03
Religiosity	1.14	5	2.94	0.80
Spiritual leadership	1.64	4.18	2.96	0.52
Emotional commitment	1	5	2.68	0.86
Continuous commitment	1.33	5	2.81	0.59
Organizational commitment	1.38	4.19	2.75	0.46

Table 1 showed that most average of spiritual leadership dimensions belonged to faith in work (3.40 + 0.65), and the least of them related to two dimensions of meaningfulness in work (2.74) and religiosity (2.74). The average of spiritual leadership and organizational commitment were 2.96 and 2.75 respectively.

According to T-test and Anova test, there were no significant relationship between the spiritual leadership and organizational dimensions with sex, age, and educational degrees of the staffs. Although, there was a significant relationship between organizational membership with marital status of the staffs such a way that the average of single staffs in this dimension was more than of married ones ($p=0.04$). Moreover, by the use of one-way ANOVA test, a significant relationship was revealed between meaningfulness in work with staffs' years of work experience ($p=0.004$).

Pearson correlation test showed the significant relationship between all dimensions of spiritual dimension with each other. Although we found no significant relationship between altruistic love with religiosity. Also, this significant relationship was found between organizational commitment dimensions with each other.

Moreover, There was positive significant correlation between spiritual leadership with organizational commitment from view of TUMS headquarters staffs. Also, continuous commitment only showed significant correlation with organizational vision ($p=0.004$), and organizational membership ($p=0.008$) of spiritual leadership [Table 2].

Table-2. The relationship between spiritual leadership and its dimensions with the dimensions of organizational commitment

		Organizational vision	Altruistic love	Faith in work	Meaningfulness in work	Organizational membership	Religiosity	Spiritual leadership	Emotional commitment	Continuous commitment	Organizational commitment
Organizational vision	Correlation coefficient	1	0.207	0.425	0.505	0.580	0.604	0.783	-0.565	0.233	-0.373
	Significance level	-	0.011	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.000
Altruistic love	Correlation coefficient	0.207	1	0.320	0.283	0.240	0.037	0.393	-0.233	0.005	-0.211
	Significance level	0.11	-	0.000	0.000	0.003	0.654	0.000	0.004	0.947	0.009
Faith in work	Correlation coefficient	0.425	0.320	1	0.459	0.563	0.436	0.733	-0.517	0.141	-0.387
	Significance level	0.000	0.000	-	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.086	0.000
Meaningfulness in work	Correlation coefficient	0.505	0.283	0.459	1	0.584	0.424	0.736	-0.473	0.038	-0.413
	Significance level	0.000	0.000	0.000	-	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.644	0.000
Organizational membership	Correlation coefficient	0.580	0.240	0.563	0.584	1	0.579	0.859	-0.761	0.215	-0.565
	Significance level	0.000	0.003	0.000	0.000	-	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.008	0.000
Religiosity	Correlation coefficient	0.604	0.037	0.436	0.424	0.579	1	0.766	-0.523	0.216	-0.345
	Significance level	0.000	0.645	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.008	0.000
Spiritual leadership	Correlation coefficient	0.783	0.393	0.733	0.736	0.859	0.766	1	-0.736	0.215	-0.542
	Significance level	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	-	0.000	0.008	0.000
Emotional commitment	Correlation coefficient	0.565	0.233	-0.517	-0.473	0.761	-0.523	0.736	1	-0.22	0.781
	Significance level	0.000	0.004	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	-	0.006	0.006
Continuous commitment	Correlation coefficient	0.233	0.005	0.141	0.038	0.215	0.216	0.215	-0.223	1	0.435
	Significance level	-0.004	0.947	0.086	0.644	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.006	-	0.000
Organizational commitment	Correlation coefficient	-0.373	-0.211	-0.387	-0.413	-0.565	-0.345	-0.542	0.781	0.435	1
	Significance level	0.000	0.009	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	-

4. DISCUSSION

With paying attention to spirituality in the field of organization and management as the twenty-first century challenges, managers and leaders must necessarily deal with this new phenomenon. The role of spiritual leaders is to motivate staffs to educate spiritual vision and create cultural context and human values with high productivity, commitment and motivation (Korac- Kakabadse *et al.*, 2002).

This study was conducted by determination of relationship between spiritual leadership with organizational commitment of staffs in Tehran University of Medical Sciences as the best and highest medical university in Iran. The results of this study showed that faith in work had the most average (3.40 ± 0.65), and the least average was related to meaningfulness in work (2.74 ± 0.65). Also, total average and standard deviation of spiritual leadership was 2.96 ± 0.72 , respectively.

Shojaie & Khazaie stated that most average of spiritual leadership was related to altruistic love ($3.22 + 1.29$) among the staffs of Qazvin University of Medical Sciences (QUMS) (Shojaie, 2011) which is not similar to the result of current study. The total average to spiritual leadership in QUMS was about 2.5 that was lower than TUMS (2.96).

In current study we reported that there were significant correlation between spiritual leadership dimensions with each other ($p=0.000$). Shojaie & Khazaie declared that there was significant correlation between spiritual leadership with organizational vision ($p=0.006$), altruistic love, ($p=0.000$) faith in work ($p=0.006$), and organizational membership ($p=0.000$) (Shojaie, 2011).

The main result of current study was the positive relationship between spiritual leadership with organizational commitment ($P=0.000$). Several studies stated this relationship between two above variables was positive among the staffs (Rastegar *et al.*, 2012; Naderi and Hoveida, 2013; Piri and Fazelian, 2013).

Spiritual leadership causes formation of spiritual beliefs and work faith and this, as an internal stimulant in staffs, results in their development and helps them to perform the best responsibilities and performances. These issues correspond with the findings obtained from "Fry *et al.*", Karadag, "Strack *et al.*" studies where in there is an emphasis on the important role of work faith in organization. They believe that work faith is a notion more than simply the wish to have something, and is based on values, attitudes and desirable behaviors that are expected to be realized (Stark and Finke, 2000; Nardon and Steers, 2008; Karadag, 2009). Work faith has been introduced as an important source for achieving goals and corporate vision (Monograph on the Internet, 2014).

On the other hand, Gibbons' studies emphasizes such relationship and state that spiritual leadership helps staffs to understand the real meaning of their job (Gibbons, 2000). Ashmos and Duchon describe spirituality in the workplace cause staffs development, and can be strengthened by meaningfulness in work (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000). Pfeffer treats sense of meaningfulness at work as the characteristics of an occupation and believes that occupation of staffs is valuable and even necessary for them (Pfeiffer, 2003).

By confirming this issue, Ashmos and Duchon have stated that staffs always attempts to have a meaningful work life in which spirituality include this topic (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000). "Fry *et al.*" studies are also consistent with the above results and point out that organizational membership recognition and inclusion of an individual personality in a network of social relationships makes the staffs to promote more and find himself meaningful in relation with organization (Fry, 2005).

The result of current study showed that total average of organizational commitment was 2.75, and also emotional commitment 2.68, and continuous commitment 2.81, retrospectively. Dargahi and Tehrani (2014) reported that most of the staffs of headquarters of TUMS had a high level of organizational commitment (Dargahi and Tehrani, 2014). Moreover, the similar study by "Dargahi & Shaham" in headquarters of TUMS in 2015 showed that most of the staffs had moderate level of organizational commitment (Dargahi and Shaham, 2015). It seems, during the last three years up to 2016, the organizational commitment of TUMS staffs had been high and moderate, and had been never low.

Ultimately, spiritual leadership makes staffs to feel loyal and devoted to organization through creating organizational commitment. Spiritual leadership makes a condition wherein staffs to be loyal to the organization and wishes to attain the organizational goal (Raei *et al.*, 2012).

According to the current studies, we could not prove the relationship between spiritual leadership with demographic details of TUMS staffs. This is also expressed by Harriri and Zarinabad among the staffs of public librarians in Isfahan, Iran (Hariri and Zarrinabadi, 2012). Although, Sayer could prove the relationship between spirituality and gender (Sayar, 2008). Moreover, we did not indicated the significant correlation between organizational commitment of TUMS staffs with their demographic details. This is compatible with Salami's study (Salami, 2008). However, "Yuen Chen et al." and Ghahremani showed that there was significant correlation between staff's organizational commitment with their years of work and age (Ghahramani, 2013; Yuen *et al.*, 2015). It seems, the similarity or unsimilarity of mentioned results with each other is depends on kind of research society, organizational culture, and internal environment of each country and organization.

The most remarkable limitation of the present study was using self-assessment questionnaires landed to headquarters of Tehran University of Medical Sciences. Second, this study was induced cross-sectional in 2015. Therefore, the kind of correlation between two mentioned variables may be different in similar studies. Third, our research only studied the relationship between spiritual leadership with organizational commitment of the staffs, but there may be other factors influencing the organizational commitment of the staffs.

5. CONCLUSION

The current research findings showed that spiritual leadership dimensions could motivate the staffs' organizational commitment. Recognizing spiritual leadership style as the best way for attaining the organizational goals by leaders, can increase the chance of their success, and provide motivation for themselves and the ground for their staffs. Therefore, the staffs of TUMS believe that they prefer the spiritual leadership style perform by their managers, and express that this type of leadership is the best strategy for improvement of organizational commitment.

According to the mentioned conclusion, we recommended establishment of training workshops for the managers to acknowledge the philosophy of spiritual leadership determination of pre-employment criteria for selection of the managers, based on having high spiritual quotient and using organizational psychologists in order to educate their experiences to mongers and staffs.

5.1. Ethical Consideration

Ethical issues such as plagiarism, informed consent, abuse, forgery or falsification of information and dissemination, are fully respected by the authors.

Funding: This study received no specific financial support.

Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Contributors/Acknowledgement: This study was supported as a grant by vice chancellorship of research in Tehran University of Medical Sciences. The authors like to thank all staffs and managers of TUMS headquarters sections. The authors declare no conflicts of interest to the research, authorship, and publication of this study. Keivan Nasrollahzadeh was the main investigator who developed of research protocol, and implementation of the research. Hossein Dargahi drafted the research protocol, and supervised the research plan and rewrite and revision the manuscript. Hojjat Rahmani was the advisor of this research protocol. All authors lave read and approved of the final manuscript.

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