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## Inquiry of the Relationship between Organizational Culture and Spiritual Leadership in Governmental Organizations in “Mazandaran”

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### ABSTRACT

The goal of this research is to identify the relationship between Spiritual leadership and its aspects and personnel organizational culture in governmental organizations of Mazandaran city. This research is a descriptive – survey one. Regarding goal we used applied method. To collect the data; the standard questionnaire of Spiritual leadership was used. Applying Cochran's formula; statistical sample was 111. Sampling method is random – stratified. According to expert opinions; the questionnaire validity is verified. Based on Cronbach's alpha level; the questionnaire reliability is 0.948 estimated by SPSS software. Overall; analyzing the questionnaire collected from 111 subjects and seven research hypotheses; all hypotheses were supported. Accordingly; Spiritual leadership paves the way for personnel to meet their goals and needs and fulfill their potential as trying to achieve organizational culture goals.

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## INTRODUCTION

After many years of research and experience, organizations now go towards spirituality which is a new destination for organizations. Therefore, the new goal should be support for spiritual development of employees and other beneficiaries and this can be facilitated by SL which aims to stimulate employees using spiritual prospects and formation of cultural platforms based on human values (Akbari, H.K., 2010).

The present research tries to investigate relationship between OC and SL in public organizations so that the results can be used in public and private organizations by managers and leaders (Hosseini, F., 2010).

### *Statement of the problem:*

Introduction of spirituality to organizations is a challenge and managers must deal with it. The role of spiritual leaders is stimulation of employees using spiritual prospects and cultural platforms based on human values such that employees are trained which have working conscience and high productivity, commitment and motivation.

Attention to human and his existence dimensions have increased in management and the age of classic and instrumental view towards management is over. Consequently, decisions related to organizational behavior are now more important and OC and SL have been propounded.

Today, one of the duties of managers is SL in organizational management. Educational organizations need to such leaders so that they create organizational culture among employees and organizations (Lok, P., J. Crawford, 2004).

Transformational leadership theory matches the abilities of leaders in application of subordinates' capabilities with today's changing world and looks at leadership from a new viewpoint and believes that different dimensions of SL are combinations of organizational vision, belief in goals fulfillment, altruistic love, meaningfulness at work, membership in organization, OC and leader performance (Rabinz, Stephen P., 1999).

The present research tries to answer the question "whether there is any relationship between managers' SL dimensions and OC?" in other words, whether incorporation of more spirituality in an organization by managers leads to higher quality level and employees' work quantity?

*Importance and necessity of the subject:*

In the present era (ICT age), leadership has undergone many changes just like commerce and business. Therefore, leaders also must lead in the present conditions (Salmani, D., N. Moeenian, 2010).

Need to management and leadership is very vital and essential in all social activities. This need has a lot of importance in large organizations, because it brings working conscience which is a kind of heart satisfaction and adherence towards individual duties and individuals do their duties best without control system (Salmani, D., N. Moeenian, 2010).

Various dimensions of SL and ethical leadership can influence on OC and team spirit. One of the outcomes of SL is employees who are mainly motivated from inside rather than outside and are motivated to act and think independently and take part in organizational success direction actively.

Therefore, considering the fact that leadership is very important in educational organizations and has many direct and indirect benefits for society and other organizations, it can be claimed that the type of managers' performance play important role in formation of working culture in organizations, a culture in which employees are interested in implementation of duties and avoid negligence in implementation of duties (Sheikhi Nejad, F., 2009).

The importance of the present research is that it tries to provide some recommendations for improvement of managers' leadership and also increase of team morale in organizational employees and relationship and correlation between these two variables and propounds some points for improvement of human resource performance.

*Research goals:*

The main goal of this research is determination of relationship between various dimensions of managers' SL and OC in public organizations of Mazandaran City, Iran. The subsidiary goals are as follows:

1. Determination of relationship between organizational vision of managers' SL and OC in public organizations
2. Determination of relationship between belief in fulfillment of managers' SL goals and OC in public organizations.
3. Determination of relationship between altruistic love of managers' SL and OC in public organizations.
4. Determination of relationship between meaningfulness at work and OC in public organizations
5. Determination of relationship between membership in organization and OC in public organizations
6. Determination of relationship between organizational commitment and OC in public organizations
7. Determination of relationship between leaders' performance at work and OC in public organizations
8. Determination of difference between various dimensions of managers' SL and OC in public organizations considering their demographic characteristics (age, gender, experience, and education).

*Theoretical fundamentals and research background:*

In the present era, organizations face many challenges and many of these challenges have made the organizations to renew structure, re-engineer and shrink their structures. The present environment of organizations has become more challenging and complicated and leaders have unpredictable problems. This requires a high level of flexibility in removal of problems and dealing with the complicated environment (Korac-Kakabadse, N., 2002). Moreover, some organizations do not have enough concordance between beliefs, values and infrastructure of organization and leaders and this may cause some problems like low commitment of employees to their organization and therefore weak performance, absence at work and leaving their jobs. Therefore, utilization of an appropriate leadership style is necessary for improvement of employees' commitment.

A review of studies conducted on fields like SL, transformational leadership, OC, organizational commitment reveals that most studies have dealt with mutual relationships between these variables. For example, Khaef Elahi (2010) investigated the influence of spirituality on organization and the reasons for using it in various styles of leadership in his paper titled "SL components in an organization". He concluded that if a leader uses spirituality indices in his/her leadership, he/she can increase his/her popularity and success possibility.

Salmani (2010) in his paper titled "relationship between spirituality and transformational leadership (case study: IRI Central Bank)", concluded that brokerage relationship with god and interactive relationship with god and transformational leadership have significant relationship.

Zarei Matin *et al* (2012), in their paper titled: "investigation of SL dimensions on organizational learning capability in University Research Center", concluded that SL is of great importance for contemporary organizations and spiritual leaders take actions like creation of common prospect for employees, attempt to establish organizational culture based on human values and contribute to improvement of learning atmosphere within organizations and improve organizational flexibility in competitive atmosphere.

Ziayee *et al* (2007) conducted a research titled " the role of leadership in Tehran University employees' empowerment" and concluded that: there is significant relationship between SL dimensions (prospect, altruistic

love, faith, meaningfulness at work and membership in organization) and employees' empowerment and there is no causal relationship between OC and employees' empowerment and finally, there is a reverse causal relationship between leader's performance feedback and employees' empowerment.

Aidin and Seilan (2009) investigated 578 people of employees of a metal workshop in a research titled "the influence of SL on organizational learning capability" and concluded that there is positive significant correlation between SL dimensions and organizational learning capability.

Hosseini *et al* (2010) conducted a research titled "investigation of relationship between OC and transformational leadership style and leader-follower exchange" and concluded that: group culture influences on leader-follower exchange and developmental culture has positive and significant influence on both transformational leadership and leader-follower exchange but hierarchical culture has negative influence on both leadership styles.

Yazde Khasti (2009) conducted a research titled "relationship between the type of OC and leadership" and concluded that there is positive and significant relationship between group culture and hierarchical leadership, and rational culture and leadership; but there is no significant relationship between developmental culture and leadership. In fact, leadership theories have changed a lot from World War II onwards and several theories have been introduced in the field of subordinates' motivation like path-goal theory, charismatic leadership, transformational leadership and interactive leadership. The present research tries to investigate relationship between SL and OC; an approach which is different from previous studies.

#### *Definition and history of spirituality:*

Various types of spirituality schools can be found which show specific cultural interpretations of various religious traditions (Orosla, 1997). In fact, in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, spirituality was propounded in Europe and USA and Canada and it was believed that all social systems have something in common which is called "spirituality" and although people belong to different religions, they all have spirituality in common. In spite of this, tendency to spirituality is traced back to Christians who differentiated between various spirituality schools like Spanish mystics or Flanderimystic's spirituality, or for example Russian Orthodox. In fact, some western authors believe that spirituality has been used in the recent years. However, this word had been used in social comparisons in 19<sup>th</sup> century when Hindu reformers like "Anan Swami Vyrkannd" compared western materialism with Indian spirituality and claimed that India has a treasure of spirituality and West must look for it for years.

Authors have looked at spirituality from different viewpoints and have presented various definitions for it and it can be said that there is no unanimously-accepted definition for spirituality.

#### *Some of the definitions are:*

Ander Hil, in his book titled "spiritual life", discusses spirituality sensitivity:

While we have to avoid ambiguity and abstraction, we have to avoid rash definitions because there is no appropriate and correct word for spiritual realities (Cameron, K.S., R.E. Quinn, 2006).

However, another definition for spirituality which seems more comprehensive than other definitions is: an attempt at improving sensitivity to oneself, others, nature and metaphysics, in order to unite these sensitivities and moving towards Complete Man (Cameron, K.S., R.E. Quinn, 2006).

Incidentally, it must be mentioned that definition of spirituality is different from spirituality at work.

Therefore, spirituality at work is a motivating and inspiring force which directs towards finding meaning and goal in working life, understanding work value, life, cosmos breadth, creatures and personal belief system deeply (Bishop, J., 2006).

#### *Spiritual leadership:*

In spite of the fact that many studies have been conducted in the field of leadership, this concept is still ambiguous due to its complicated nature. Excellent leaders; signs seem to be formed in followers. Max Di Perry in his book titled "leadership as an art" has referred to this. He also states that the first responsibility of a leader is description and explanation of reality and the last duty is thanking followers. In between these two leaders have a servant and is indebted to the Max Di Perry calls this "spiritual leadership" (Bayshoub, 2006). In fact, SL movement includes leadership serving, employees' involvement and their empowerment models and it is based on servant leadership philosophy. It is a kind of leadership style which emphasizes on serving others, general approach to work, individual development and common decision-making (Kakabades and Kouzmin, 2002). Spiritual leaders express faith, enthusiasm and their works results and John Wesley believes that these three are the main characteristics and symbol of SL (Quinn, R.E., J.A. Rohrbaugh, 1983).

A spiritual leader is a person who provides spiritual conservation of organization members using values, attitudes and behaviors which are necessary for their and others motivation. He/she does this in two steps: 1. when each of the leaders and followers in an organization feel that they have an important and significant job

through other colleagues, a spiritual leader creates a common prospect. 2. A spiritual leader establishes organizational/social culture based on human values and inspires motivation in employees and employees will regard their colleagues' job as important and will respect them (Limsila, K., S.O. Ogunlana, 2007). In fact, spiritual leader provides organization members with sensitivity to themselves, others, metaphysics and nature and inspires enthusiasm in them and motivates them to carry out their duties and guarantees their spiritual conservation.

#### *Spiritual leadership dimensions:*

SL theory is a scientific theory for organizational change and which has been developed in order to make a learning and internally-motivated organization. Considering transformational leadership theory, this theory also enables leaders to make use of their subordinates' capabilities in today's environment and looks at leadership from a new viewpoint. SL theory has been developed based on internal motivation model which is a combination of prospect, faith to fulfillment of goals, altruistic love, meaningfulness at work, membership in organization, organizational commitment and leader's performance feedback (Fray, 2003). Therefore, SL goal is attention to subordinates' basic needs so that their empowerment and spiritual leadership will be facilitated. These dimensions are:

Prospect, organizational commitment, membership, altruistic love, faith, meaningfulness, performance feedback (Bayshoub, 2006).

#### *Organizational culture:*

OC was first introduced in 1979 in a paper titled "study of organizational cultures" by Andre W. Petigrouin management literature. Petigrou stated that culture is a group concept and includes symbols, language, ideology, beliefs, religions and myths. Symbols are considered as visual tools which are used by organizations and groups for definition of themselves. Examples for these tools include: a particular language or accent, design of structures, religion or customs.

In 1990s and 1980s, OC was developed as a theoretical concept. Edgar Shaindefines OC as: it is a pattern of fundamental assumptions which have been created, discovered by a particular group in order to adapt to external environment and achieve integration and internal integrity. A pattern which has a good function and is valid and can be used as an acceptable way by organizational members, such that they can think and feel in that framework.

Common aspects of all definitions for OC are as follows:

1. Dominant behavioral pattern;
2. The fact of being systematic;
3. A set of beliefs and values;
4. Values and norms being shared and supported by organization members;
5. Differentiation between organizations.

A concept which is very similar to OC is organizational atmosphere; unfortunately these two concepts are used instead of each other. Cameron and Queen (2006) state that organizational atmosphere refers to attitudes, feelings and temporary perceptions of a group of people. One of the characteristics of culture is its steadiness and small changes while organizational atmosphere can change rapidly because it is based upon attitudes. Culture refers to implicit and unobservable aspects of an organization but organizational atmosphere refers to explicit and observable characteristics of an organization. Culture includes main values and common interpretations of the quality of objects but organizational atmosphere includes individual aspects which are reformed and adjusted several times due to change in conditions and confrontation with new information.

Various classifications have been presented for identification of OC. For example, Denison (1990) presented the classification of mission/procedure steadiness/participation/adaptability and Queen and Roherbach (1983) presented the classification tribe/entrepreneurship/market/hierarchical. A classification provided by Valach (1983) was used to investigate relationship between SL and OC. According to Valach's opinion, an organization's culture can be a combination of three types of bureaucratic culture, innovative culture and supportive culture with different degrees.

Bureaucratic culture is a hierarchical, systematic culture which includes separate parts each having clear lines of responsibility and authority. Innovative culture refers to creative, challenging and servant leadership environment. A supportive culture describes a working environment with characteristics like team work, humanitarianism, encouragement and trust.

#### *Spiritual leadership and Organizational culture:*

Some researchers stated that leadership behavior is different in cultures (Lock *et al*, 2004). Statistically, it has been proved that national culture has considerable mediating role in outcomes, subordinates' performance, expectations, organizational commitment and job satisfaction due to leadership and the reason is cultural differences in countries. Therefore, leadership seems to be able to influence on organizational concepts like

employees' commitment through cultural mechanisms. Maintenance of organizational culture is difficult; but changing culture is more difficult than keeping it in deep and static structures. Spirituality also changes difficultly due to its deep link with OC. The main key for maintaining OC is the philosophy and values of organizational leaders. Leaders' values show their concentration on their decisions and performance. Leaders' spirituality is the main key for maintenance of spirituality in organizations. Leaders' spirituality must be representative of what they do and what they act.

In fact, a spiritual leader is a person who facilitates spiritual conservation of organization members using values, attitudes, and behaviors which are necessary for internal motivation of them and others. He/she does this in two steps:

1. When each of the leaders and followers in an organization feel that they have an important and significant job through other colleagues, a spiritual leader creates a common prospect. 2. A spiritual leader establishes organizational/social culture based on human values and inspires motivation in employees and employees will regard their colleagues' job as important and will respect them (Limsila, K., S.O. Ogunlana, 2007). In fact, spiritual leader provides organization members with sensitivity to themselves, others, metaphysics and nature and inspires enthusiasm in them and motivates them to carry out their duties and guarantees their spiritual conservation.

Smearish (1983) identified two approaches in investigation of culture in organizations: culture as an organizational variable, in this approach, culture is considered as a concept which can be manipulated and interpreted. In this approach, nature, direction and influence of this interpretation depends on leaders' skill and abilities. In other words, this is leader who influences on culture. In the second approach, OC is viewed as an inseparable part of an organization and the thoughts, feelings and actions of the leader are influenced by that.

#### *Development of hypotheses and conceptual model:*

In fact, SL theory is a causal theory for organizational transformation which has been formed in order to create a learning and internally-motivated organization. Transformational leadership theory matches the abilities of leaders in application of subordinates' capabilities with today's changing world and looks at leadership from a new viewpoint and believes that different dimensions of SL are combinations of organizational vision, belief in goals fulfillment, altruistic love, meaningfulness at work, membership in organization, OC and leader performance

Therefore, SL aims to pay attention to subordinates' basic needs so that their empowerment and spiritual conservation is facilitated. There is a relationship depicted in the following model between SL and OC:

Therefore, the main hypothesis of the research is:

there is significant relationship between managers' SL dimensions and OC in public organizations. Furthermore, since SL is a combination of dimensions, the subsidiary hypotheses will be as follows:

1. there is relationship between managers' organizational vision and OC in public organizations.
2. there is relationship between managers' faith in fulfillment of goals and OC in public organizations.
3. there is relationship between managers' altruistic love and OC in public organizations.
4. there is relationship between managers' meaningfulness at work and OC in public organizations.
5. there is relationship between managers' membership in organization and OC in public organizations.
6. there is relationship between managers' organizational commitment and OC in public organizations.
7. there is relationship between managers' leadership performance feedback and OC in public organizations.
8. there is difference between different dimensions of SL of managers and OC in public organizations considering their demographic characteristics (age, gender, experience, education level).

Conceptual model of the research will be as follows according to research hypotheses



**Fig. 1: Research conceptual model.**

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research is a descriptive survey and it is an applied research in terms of its goal. Standard questionnaire of SL and Fry (2003) quality questionnaire were used to collect data. Statistical population included all employees of public organizations of Mazandaran city. Cochran's formula was used to calculate sample size (111 people). Sampling method was random stratified method. Validity of the questionnaires was verified by experts. Cronbach's alpha was used to calculate reliability of the questionnaire (0.948) by SPSS software. Furthermore, descriptive and inference analyses were conducted by means of SPSS software and Spearman test.

### Data analysis:

**Table 1:** Distribution of means, standard deviation, and SL point and its dimensions in Mazandaran city public organizations employees.

Title	Total point	mean	Standard deviation
Organizational vision	15	12/32	1/917
Altruistic love	30	21/59	5/606
Faith	15	11/76	2/124
Meaningfulness	15	12/83	2/304
Membership	15	10/19	2/623
Organizational commitment	20	15/16	3/118
Performance feedback	15	11/74	2/390

According to table 1, mean of SL is 97.28 out of total point (125). Furthermore, meaningfulness at work has the highest mean (12.83) out of 15 and organizational membership has the least mean (10.19 out of 15).

**Table 2:** Results of statistical test of SL and its dimensions with OC in Mazandaran city public organizations.

Title	Correlation coefficient	Significance level of p	First type error	Test result
Organizational vision	0/365	0/001	0/01	verified
Altruistic love	0/502	0/001	0/01	verified
Faith	0/458	0/001	0/01	verified
Meaningfulness	0/341	0/001	0/01	verified
Membership	0/477	0/001	0/01	verified
Organizational commitment	0/528	0/001	0/01	verified
Performance feedback	0/315	0/001	0/01	verified
SL	0/539	0/001	0/01	verified

According to table 2, results of correlation test show that there is a positive and significant relationship between SL and OC ( $r=0.539$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Moreover, there is significant and positive relationship between all dimensions of SL and OC ( $p<0.001$ ).

The greatest correlation coefficient belongs to OC ( $r=0.528$ ) and the least correlation coefficient belongs to performance feedback ( $r=0.315$ ).

### Conclusion:

Spirituality at work and SL can be regarded as small and preliminary parts of organizational development process. Studies have shown that SL theory should be used widely as a model of occupational/organizational development in systematic changes. Supporters of spirituality at work believe that all individuals who enter an organization have unique characteristics but all of them look for spiritual excellence at work. Spiritual leaders have the role of motivation and stimulation of employees using spiritual prospect and formation of cultural platforms based on human values such that active, high-productivity, committed and motivated employees are trained.

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