The Relationship between Spiritual Leadership and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

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Abstract

The aim of the present study was to investigate the relationship between spiritual leadership and organizational citizenship behavior. Although employees’ discretionary behaviors are not included in their official tasks and are not rewarded directly by the organization’s official reward system, such behaviors can play an important role in advancing the organizational goals. As such, this study plays a significant role in this regard by exploring the impact of components of spiritual leadership on organizational citizenship behavior. The research population consisted of all 146 employees working at Fars Payam Noor University, of whom 95 employees were included in the research sample. The data were collected through administration of the questionnaires and were analyzed by SPSS and LISREL. The results showed that all components of spiritual leadership affect organizational citizenship behavior.

Keywords: spiritual leadership, leadership, organizational citizenship behavior, spirituality

Introduction

Leadership has been considered by thinkers for many years. However, practical research started in this area since the twentieth century. Although, many studies have addressed leadership, it has remained an ambiguous concept due to its highly complex nature. A reflection on the evolution of leadership studies shows that many different studies have addressed leadership’s physical, mental, and emotional characteristics. However, an issue which has received great attention during the recent years is characteristics possessed by spiritual leaders and how it is possible to improve organizational health, employees’ motivation and organizational citizenship behavior by resorting to spirituality (Fry & Matherly, 2006). Today, organizations are in the need of leaders who focus on another aspect of human life which is beyond normal leader-follower relations, i.e. leaders who emphasize insight in affairs rather than intervention, trust rather than control, independence rather than imposing restriction, and humility rather than arrogance and affectation. In fact, the introduction of concepts such as ethics, truth, God with a supreme power, seeking meaning in work, and altruism into research and management and business affairs were all indicative of the emergence of a new paradigm (Ziaee et al., 2008: 68). Accordingly, spiritual leadership theory was proposed as platform for leadership theory, research, and action (Fry, Vitucci, & Cedillo, 2005: 858). Spiritual leadership can be seen as a research area in the wider context of spirituality in the workplace (Blackaby, 2001). Goertzen and Barbuto (2001) stated that spiritual leadership ensures some important features for the organization such as self-actualization and meaning in life (Aydin & Ceylan, 2009: 185). Spiritual leadership promotes spiritual wellbeing and thus positively affects employee satisfaction with life, organizational responsibility, organizational commitment, productivity and financial performance, and organizational citizenship behavior (Fry, Matherly, & Ouimet, 2010: 291). On the other
hand, the concept of organizational citizenship behavior was first proposed by Bateman and Organ in the early 1980s. The primary studies conducted on organizational citizenship behavior aimed to identify responsibilities or behaviors of employees which are often disregarded. Although these behaviors were inadequately measured or sometimes ignored in traditional job performance assessments, they were effective in improving organizational effectiveness (Binstok & Others, 2003: 360).

**Spiritual leadership**

A spiritual leader is a person who contributes to the spiritual survival of members of the organization through values, approaches, and behaviors intrinsically motivating himself and others. He does so in two stages. In the first stage where each leader or follower in the organization feels they have an important and meaningful job, the spiritual leader creates a common vision. In the second stage, the spiritual leader establishes the organizational culture based on human values and makes employees feel that they are interested in each other and acknowledge that other employees are also significant and they should be appreciated for the job they do (Fry et al., 2005). The spiritual leader can affect factors such as organizational development, loyalty, job satisfaction, organizational integration, coordination, interaction among members, organizational health, motivation, productivity, organizational efficiency, and effectiveness (Polat, 2011). To perform his role more effectively, the spiritual leader must abandon models of human leadership which have been formed based on personal interests. Pervious leadership models focused on given values such as power, wealth, and prestige. In addition, spiritual leaders do not reject personal values and they emphasize moral values such as honesty, truthfulness, freedom, and justice which originate form religious teachings. In addition, spiritual leaders polish their followers, create a deep commitment in them, and establish a link between internal and external work ethics and employees’ social interactions (Korac & Kouzman, 2002).

Fry (2003) has proposed seven dimensions for spiritual leadership as follows:

1. Vision: It reflects the goals and ideals of the organizations, gives meaning to works, and encourages hope and faith. Vision refers to an interpretation of the future along with a clear interpretation of why people try to create such a future (Rastgar et al., 2012).

2. Altruistic love: It refers to help one’s colleagues to perform their tasks (Hossieni and Danaee-Fard, 2012).

3. Hope/faith: Hope is the feeling that something desired will happen. Faith helps hope to come true. People with faith and hope have a clear vision of the goals they are pursuing and how to achieve the, and they encounter hardship and difficulties when trying to reach their goals (Shojaee and Khazaee, 2011).

4. Membership: It includes social and cultural structures surrounding us. Membership is a feeling originating mainly from interactions and relations through social interactions and membership in groups (Rastgar et al., 2012).

5. Meaning: It refers to the correspondence between role and job requirements, on one hand, and beliefs, values, and behaviors, on the other hand (Ziaee et al., 2009).

6. Organizational commitment: It is defined as a psychological link between employees and the organization which reduces the possibility that employee leave the organization voluntarily (Sadat Kazemi & Arizi, 2010).

7. Productivity and continuous improvement: Productivity is the intelligent and optimal use of resources in order to gain profit. Continuous improvement means it is not possible to reach ultimate productivity and we can always find new ways to increase productivity through innovation (Rastgar et al., 2012).

**Organizational citizenship behavior**

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) was proposed first by Organ and his colleague in 1983 (Bateman & Organ, 1983). This concept was developed from Bernard’s (1938) writings about willingness to cooperate and Katz’s (1964, 1966, 1978) studies about performance and spontaneous and innovative behaviors. One of the early definitions accepted by most researchers was proposed by Organ...
(1988): “Organizational citizenship behavior refers to employees’ discretionary behaviors are not included in their official tasks and are not rewarded directly by the organization’s official reward system, but they improve the total organizational effectiveness (Organ, 1988). The word discretionary suggests organizational citizenship behavior does not include those behaviors done by a person to meet role requirements or job description (Caster et al., 2004). In another definition, Organ states organizational citizenship behavior refers to those behaviors committed by employees which promote their performance regardless of their goals for personal interests (Cameo et al., 2005). Organizational citizenship behavior was also defined as a constant and voluntary commitment to goals, approaches, and ultimately organizational success and an organization which is founded based on employees’ participation and actions benefits from such behaviors (Brightman, 2004).

The key elements of organizational citizenship behavior are stated as follows:
- Behaviors that are beyond what is officially defined by the organization
- A group of unspecified behaviors
- Behaviors that are not directly rewarded and are not recognized by the organization’s official structures
- Behaviors that are vital for the organization’s performance, effectiveness, and successful operations (Castro et al., 2004)

**Literature Review**

Fry et al., (2005) studied the relationship between spiritual leadership and organizational change and found that the prevalence of a culture of altruism in the organization make people have a strong focus on themselves and their past life and establish good relationships with others, leading to the formation of an effective communication network between people (Fry et al., 2005). KhaefElahi et al., (2010) examined the components of spiritual leadership and found if the spiritual leader uses the spirituality indicators in his leadership style, he can increase his popularity among his followers and also the possibility of the success of the organization in achieving its goals. They also stated that another reason for the use of spirituality factors is related to its motivational aspect. In other words, when the leader uses spirituality elements in the organization or in the group he is intrinsically motivated and helps his followers to enhance their intrinsic motivation [KhaefElahi et al., 2010]. In his dissertation, “Spirituality at workplace: Pre-theoretical overview at the University of London”, Gibbons (2007) addressed leadership in terms of philosophical perspectives proposed by thinkers such as Max Weber, Hegel, and Marx. He stressed that although the spiritual leadership is of the utmost importance; its history goes back to the ideas of Plato. Yilmaz and Cokluk (2008) examined the relationship between organizational citizenship behavior and organizational commitment. According to them, it is very useful for an organization to be aware of the factors that will have an impact on employee commitment. Besides, such awareness is more crucial for educational organizations that need their employees’ extra role behaviors. Finally, they concluded that since the frequency of extra roles behaviors goes beyond employees’ normal behavior in proportion to the increased level of commitment, employee commitment level should be increased. Duff (2007) studied the relationship between organizational climate, personality traits, and organizational citizenship behavior in academia. The aim of this study was to assess the effects of organizational climate and personality on the two types of organizational citizenship behaviors; one directly related to individuals and one directly related to the organization. The participants were 649 members of staff. The study was conducted electronically by means of questionnaires. Results showed that organizational citizenship behavior is evident in the behaviors done by individuals and organizations. Besides, personality factors show people’s behavior and organizational climate factors that are related to a pert of organizational citizenship behavior. In a case study, Abbasi et al., (2006) explored the impact of employee–organization fit on organizational citizenship behavior among 252 faculty members of Isfahan University. The results showed reasonable level of fitness among faculty members and the university under study. Finally, the impact of employee–organization fit on organizational citizenship behavior among faculty members was confirmed at the error level of 95%. This shows that the degree of employee–organization fit can be a good predictor of organizational citizenship behavior among faculty members and finally the human resources in the organization.
Khodabakhsh (2008) conducted a study and measured organizational citizenship behavior among professors at Tehran University. They distributed 420 questionnaires among students from different schools of Tehran University and the results showed that on the average Tehran University professor possessed a good level of organizational citizenship behavior.

**The conceptual model of the study**

In this study, Fry’s spiritual leadership model and organizational citizenship behavior model (Organ & Canosky, 1996) were used as the conceptual model of the study, as shown in Fig. 1:

![Conceptual Model of the Study](image)

**Research hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were developed and tested in this study:

*The main hypothesis*

- Spiritual leadership affects organizational citizenship behavior.

*Sub-hypotheses:*

- Organizational vision affects organizational citizenship behavior.
- Altruistic love affects organizational citizenship behavior.
- Hope and faith affect organizational citizenship behavior.
- Meaning affects organizational citizenship behavior.
- Membership affects organizational citizenship behavior.
- Organizational commitment affects organizational citizenship behavior.
- Productivity and continuous improvement affects organizational citizenship behavior.

**Methodology**

The aim of all sciences is to understand the world around us as accurately as possible. To determine the issues and problems of the world around us, scientific methods have changed substantially. These trends and changes have led to the employment of scientific methods to explore different human-related fields (Irannejad Parizi, 2003, p. 9). One of the important features of any scientific study that aims to find truth is the use of an appropriate research method. Choosing an appropriate research method depends mainly on research objectives, the nature and subject of study, facilities to conduct the study. Besides, the aim of any study is the easy access to answer to the research questions (Khaki, 2010, pp. 143-142). Accordingly, it is stated that "Research methodology refers to a set of valid (reliable) and systematic rules, tools and methods to search for truth, discover the unknown, and find solutions to problems" (Khaki, 1999, p. 201). Various research methods are divided mainly into two categories
depending on the type of use (basic research, applied research, and development research) and the method used to collect data (historical research, descriptive research, survey research, field research, theoretical-applied research …) (Sarmad et al., 2003, p. 82). The present study is an applied research in terms of the objectives it follows and a descriptive-survey research as it used descriptive (non-experimental) data.

**Population and sample**

As stated by most researchers, the research population refers to all members, real or imagined, to whom the researcher is interested in generalizing the research findings and they have in at least one attribute in common (Delavar, 2005, p. 120). The population in the present study included all 146 staffs of Payam Noor University, Fars Province. An ideal example is large to the extent that it can be accurately representative of the population to which the researcher aims to generalize research findings and is small to the extent that it is easily accessible. To estimate the sample size accurately, there is no fixed number or a fixed percentage of members of the target population (IrannejadParizi, 2000). In this study, the sample size including 95 respondents was determined using the following formula. Besides, the respondents in the sample were selected using simple random sampling:

\[
n = \frac{N \times (Z_{\alpha/2})^2 \times (P \times (1 - P))}{(N - 1) \times \varepsilon^2 + (Z_{\alpha/2})^2 \times (P \times (1 - P))}
\]

\[
= \frac{146 \times 3.8416 \times 0.25}{(146 - 1) \times 0.0036 + (3.8416 \times 0.25)} = 95
\]

**Results**

This section presents the results of the study and discusses them.

**Assessing the conceptual model fit**

In order to investigate the impact of jihadi management on organizational agility and test the research hypotheses, confirmatory factor analysis and path analysis were used through LISREL software. The conceptual model of the study was assessed using significance values and standard estimation as shown in figures 2 and 3:

![Figure 2. Conceptual model in terms of standard estimates](image-url)
Before testing the hypotheses, the total model fit must be assessed. The best indicator of the model fit in LISREL software is $X^2$ (Chi-Square value) divided by degree of freedom (df). The smaller the resulting value, the fitter will be the model. The value of $X^2$ in for the model under study was 2.54, showing a good fit of the model. The other index is RMSEA (root mean square of approximation) which is estimated based on the errors made in the model. When the value of this index is less than 0.05, it shows that the model is a good fit. If the same value is 0.05-0.08, the model fit is acceptable. If it varies between 0.08 and 0.1, the model is of a medium fit. However, when this value is greater than 0.1, the model is of a weak fit. The value of RMSEA for the model used in this study was 0.461, showing an acceptable model fit. Concerning P-value, some believe it should be greater than 0.5 and some say it should be less than 0.5. However, there is no consensus in this regard.

Table 2: Results from path analysis (SEM)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Standard coefficient</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main hypothesis</td>
<td>Spiritual leadership</td>
<td>OCB</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>OCB</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>Altruistic love</td>
<td>OCB</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>Hope and faith</td>
<td>OCB</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>OCB</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5</td>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>OCB</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6</td>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>OCB</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H7</td>
<td>Productivity and continuous improvement</td>
<td>OCB</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standard coefficients and significance values were used to test the research hypotheses. The significance number in LISREL is the same as significance level in SPSS with the difference that the significance value should be greater than 1.96 or less than -1.96 so that it can be considered significant and it is used to confirm or reject hypotheses. When the significance value is greater than 1.96, it shows that the independent variable has greater impact on the dependent variable. In addition, the standard coefficient shows the correlation between two variables. Again, the higher values show the greater effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Table 2 shows the significance values and standard coefficients for the model under study. As it can be seen, the research hypotheses are confirmed at confidence level of 0.95, so it can be suggested that spiritual leadership and its components affect organizational citizenship behavior.
Rating spiritual leadership components
Since spiritual leadership was used in this study as the independent variable with seven components, they were rated in the view of the respondents using the Friedman test and through the following hypotheses:

H0: Spiritual leadership components are ranked equally.
H1: Spiritual leadership components are not ranked equally.

Table 3: Friedman test output

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square</td>
<td>24.598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Df</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig.</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the significance level in the above table is less than 0.05, it can be suggested that spiritual leadership components were not ranked equally in the view of the respondents. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is confirmed. Table 4 shows how spiritual leadership components were rated in this study:

Table 4: Ratings of spiritual leadership components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>4.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altruistic love</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope/faith</td>
<td>3.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>3.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>4.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>3.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productivity</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it can be seen, vision, productivity and continuous improvement, meaning, altruistic love, hope/faith, commitment, and membership were rated respectively in a descending order of priority by the respondents in this study.

Conclusion
The results of the study showed that there is a significant relationship between organizational vision and organizational citizenship behavior. As such, employees with an awareness of the organization’s mission and goals can move in the same direction and respond more effectively to changes in the organization and overcome uncertainties. Clarification of the organization’s goals and vision enables employees to have a positive image of their own and the organization’s future success. Given the significance of this issue in terms of citizenship behaviors, today’s organizations less likely to provide a clear vision to employees who directly engaged in citizenship behaviors and thus the organizations’ vision is often focused on official jobs and tasks. According to some researchers, a possible explanation is that employees’ overemphasis on performing extra-role behaviors makes them to ignore performing their official organizational tasks and thus they are engaged inextra-role behaviors rather than their assigned tasks. However, the purpose behind the encouragement of citizenship behaviors is to promote collaborative behaviors along with official organizational tasks. Therefore, organizations must remember that to encourage citizenship behaviors, they have to set their vision at the group level rather than at the individual level. By doing so, they remind their employees that they appreciate and reward group works as their benefits are enjoyed by the organization as a whole. Our findings also supported a significant relationship between altruistic love and organizational citizenship behavior. This shows that altruistic love affects individuals’ willingness to perform organizational citizenship behavior. Informal communicatin networks can be established in the organization through promoting the altruism culture and improve the sense of participation and responsibility among people. This in turn helps to enrich the workplace and increase the employee satisfaction. However, it should be noted that altruism is one of the components of organizational
citizenship behavior and so there is considerable overlap between spiritual leadership and organizational citizenship behavior. The results of the study also suggested that there is a significant relationship between hope/faith and organizational citizenship behavior. It was noted that hope/faith affects organizational citizenship behavior. Hope is the feeling that something desired will happen. Besides, faith helps hope to come true. Faithful people have hope and belief in their goals and have a clear vision of how to achieve them and thus they are ready to confront hardship and difficulties. Faith is much beyond hoping to reach something and it is based on desired values, attitudes, and behaviors that are expected to occur. Having hope for the organization’s future enables employees to have a positive attitude towards the organization and this positive attitude makes employees more willing to perform extra-role behaviors. It was found that having meaning in work can influence organizational citizenship behavior. Meaningfulness includes the match between role requirements on one hand, and beliefs, values, and behaviors, on the other hand. Meaningfulness in work is one of the well-defined features of a profession and people value their professions and it is through their profession that they feel pride as a member of the community. If a task assigned to an employee is not related to his/her expertise and if it is not generally meaningful for him/her, they will be dissatisfied with the organization. One of them was to make the assigned tasks meaningful for employees to engage them in the organizational decision-making process. Nothing is effective as engaging someone in decision-making in increasing his satisfaction and the quality of his works. It is naturally important for people to know that they are directly influencing the quality of works they perform or products and services the offer. This creates a sense of responsibility and a feeling of attachment to the organization (Sadeghi-Fard & Naghavi, p. 48). The development of informal mechanisms such as the participatory culture plays a central role in reinforcing organizational citizenship behavior in the workplace. However, it is worth mentioning that promoting the participatory culture is possible through socialization; a process by which the organization’s new members learn the accepted norms and values by other members and they also participate in some training courses in this regard. Therefore, focusing on socialization in the organization can reinforce organizational citizenship behavior (Eslami & Sayyar, 2007). A significant correlation was also found in this study between membership and organizational citizenship behavior. Membership covers social and cultural structures that are surrounding us. Membership can be defined as a feeling arising mainly from social interactions and relations and being member in groups. When employees feel that they can play a role in setting goals for their businesses and the activities done by them in the organization are valued by the organization managers and leaders, this feeling shows their membership in the organization and it increases their motivation and enables them to engage in organizational citizenship behavior. Furthermore, a significant relationship was found between organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior. Organizational commitment refers to a psychological link between employees and the organization which reduces the possibility that employee leave the organization voluntarily (Sadat Kazemi & Arizi, 2010). Organizational commitment increases employees’ loyalty to the organization in a way that employees regard the organization’s goals the same as their own goals and advancement in these goals makes them happy and their failure makes them unhappy. Besides, when employees feel that they are committed towards the organization, they focus their attention on it. Employees who have commitment to the organization, they certainly make harder attempts to realize organizational goals and this bring about competitive advantage for the organization and helps employees to engage in extra-role behaviors. A positive significant relationship was also found between productivity and continuous improvement and organizational citizenship behavior. Productivity is defined as intelligent work and the optimal use of resources to gain profit. Continuous improvement means it is not possible to reach ultimate productivity and we can always find new ways to increase productivity through innovation. Continuous productivity enables employees to make optimal use of resources, changes, and time so that the organization can reach a higher position in competing with other organizations. Concerning continuous improvement, it must be noted that productivity should not be confined to only a given period but employees must always take actions to improve productivity. Employees in productive and progressive organizations have higher levels of motivation as they are more assured of the organization’s future.
References