

## Studying the relationship between spiritual leadership and job satisfaction

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**Abstract:** Nowadays, the most important resource for organizations is human resource. Employing, maintaining and supporting employees are the key task or organizations' leaders. So providing their job satisfaction helps managers to get organizational goals and objectives. The purpose of writing this paper is to survey the relationship between spiritual leadership and employees' job satisfaction. To measure the research variable two separated questionnaires were designed and after providing their validity and reliability distributed among 447 people of Iran Aerology organization. The results of using Spearman test show that there are positive and meaningful relationship between spiritual leadership and its dimensions with job satisfaction; meanwhile feedback was the most important criteria. No relationship between employees' demographic characteristics and their job satisfaction was found by applying Chi-square test. Finally the results of Binomial test illustrated all variables apart from "altruism" and "faith" were placed in appropriate levels.

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**Keywords:** spirituality, spiritual leadership, job satisfaction.

### Introduction and problem statement

We are in the midst of a crisis of confidence in the leadership spearheading many of our domestic and global institutions. It is manifested in a spate of corporate frauds, a sense of betrayal engendered by downsizing, reengineering, new technologies, economic recession with growing unemployment, and increasing economic inequity within and among nations. Expanding threats and counter-threats of war by nations together with domestic and international terrorism, distrust of the enacted values of elected leaders, and sexual abuse scandals involving the clergy are other manifestations of this disquiet. In the context of this broad disenchantment with leadership, this study explores spiritual leadership processes demonstrated by ten globally renowned "meta-leaders" of social movements who pioneered social innovations in different cultures and historical periods (Parameshwar, 2005).

Societal and business turbulence witnessed in recent years is leading employees to search for spiritual solutions to ameliorate the resulting tensions. The emergence of the concept of spiritual leadership has helped them to surface spiritually-based themes which were formerly recessed in the management and leadership discourses (Parameshwar, 2005).

From the other side, one of the most important affecting factors on organizations' productivity is human resource. Definitely thriving and flourishing of each society is related to human resource productivity and growth; so nowadays the managers are attending to their employees' development. One of the concepts which has been discussed about human resource productivity, is job satisfaction. Not only job satisfaction is not an old concept, but also it is considered as one of the newest methods in motivating employees.

Quick changes, technologic improvement and apparent and hidden competitiveness, has revealed human resource importance and necessity more than before. Therefore lots of researchers play up the role of spiritual leadership on job satisfaction. In this paper, we are trying to survey the relationship between spiritual leadership and employees' job satisfaction in Aerology organization in Iran. So the main question of this research is considered as:

Is there any relationship between spiritual leadership and employees' job satisfaction in Aerology organization?

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### **Spirituality: definitions and concepts**

There are a lot of definitions about spirituality in organizations (Mohammad et al, 2001). Spirituality is an individual and person-oriented concept and from the other side every one can describe it in base of his or her mentality, defining spirituality in organizations is very difficult. So definitions of spirituality are absolutely various and different which some of them are (Dent et al, 2005):

1. Spirituality is beauty.
2. Spirituality is like a ship in which spirits are placed.
3. Spirituality is every thing.
4. Spirituality is a multidimensional concept includes believe in sanctifies, transformation and union.

At year 2000, more than 20 transformed leaders were interviewed in which they believed that spirituality a god himself and source of values and meanings, human consciousness and/or a path for modulating a person's aspects (Strack et al, 2002).

Fry (2003) found that spirituality consists of two essential factors in a person's life: (a) transcendence of self, manifesting in a sense of calling or fate, and (b) belief that one's activities have meanings and values beyond economic benefits or self-gratification. A sense of calling and higher meaning fosters the growth of certain values, including vision (includes defining the fate, reflecting high ideals, and encouraging hope/faith), altruism (includes forgiveness, kindness, integrity, empathy, honesty, patience, courage, trust, and humility), and hope/faith (includes endurance, perseverance, and expectation of reward/victory) (Freeman, 2011).

Also Goertzen & Barbuto (2001) found that spirituality is addressed through several paradigms: self-actualization and spirituality, purpose and meaning in life and spirituality, health and wellness as outcomes of spirituality, spirituality in the workplace, and spirituality and leadership (Dent et al, 2005).

These lines of study suggest the spiritual domain as an integral part of leadership and put forth spirituality as one variable of an integrated leadership development model (Cook Greuter, 2002; Sander et al, 2003). The premise of this integrated model is that as development occurs there is a transcending of worldviews and a shift to higher levels of internal locus of control (Sanders et al., 2003), and human development is gained through the interplay of person, community, and environment. At the higher stages of development, leaders are deepening their intuition and inner knowing through a shared consciousness with a higher power or transcendent (Wilber, 2000).

### **Spiritual leadership**

In the present internet era, people are looking for better one, more ethical to lead them to ride chaotic waves of trend changes in the complex business world. So, search for a better style of leadership has become a main priority for organizations that realize its impact in a long run. The style that must be embedded and instilled in the leaders, intangible and profess within inner self of the leader. It is a spirit in the leaders which guide them to act for good of others and organizations as a whole. As the literature of spiritual leadership showed, this concept is actually answering the people's calls for someone which is able to help them in their spiritual survival. The spiritual leadership is about creating value for the organization, through the people (Fry, 2003).

Spiritual leadership taps into the fundamental needs of both leaders and followers for spiritual survival so they become more organizationally committed and productive. Spiritual leadership can be defined as comprising the values, attitudes, and behaviors which are necessary to intrinsically motivate one's self and others so that they have a sense of spiritual survival through calling/meaning and membership. This entails

1. Creating a vision wherein organization members experience a sense of calling in which their life has meaning and makes a difference;
2. Establishing a social/organizational culture based on altruism whereby leaders and followers have genuine care, concern, and appreciation for both self and others, thereby producing a sense of membership and being understood and cooperated (Fry, 2003).

Spiritual leadership includes servant leadership models, employees' participation and empowerment which has been based on servant leadership philosophy. It is a kind of leadership style which focused on servicing to employees, overall attitude to work, individual development and common decision making (Korac-Kakabadse and Kouzmin, 2002). In fact, spiritual leaders shows their faith, enthusiasm and work results which are 3 most important components of spiritual leadership symbol (Bishop and Schol, 2006).

### **Spiritual leadership characteristics**

Different theories about spiritual leadership categorized it into various dimensions. Most of researches are common in 5 dimensions: vision, faith/hope, altruistic love/ altruism, meaning/ calling and membership.

But in our research, we considered 7 dimensions for measuring spiritual leadership; 5 of them are the same one above, commitment and feedback.

In continue, all dimensions will be described:

**Vision:** Leaders' high attention to organizations' future, competitiveness globally, technology improvement, organizations' changes in terms of organizational formulated strategies lead to "vision" in 1980 decade changed into one of the most important literature titles (Conger and Kanugo, 1998). Vision explains an image of organizations' future that all employees are trying to reach it (Kotter, 1996). It includes 3 criteria: "change", "facilitating macro-decision makings process" and "help to more cooperation" (Daft & Lengel, 1998; Nanus, 1992).

**Altruism:** explains scholarship, integration and love which are created by care, encouragement and deal with others. It is important to mention people will have favorite and pleasant feelings to others through self-love (Fry, 2003).

**Faith:** illustrates people tendency to organizations' fulfillment which is accompanied with "hope". Faith reflects an organization's belief to some problems which no written evidence exist for them (Mac Arthur, 1998).

**Meaning:** refers to employees' right perception of their job. Meaning causes that employees know their job more and more (Ziaei et al, 2008).

**Membership:** means employees' concern feeling to their organization and try to access organizational goals and includes social and cultural structures (James, 2002).

**Organizational commitment:** consists of employees' identity, loyalty and dependency feeling to organization. Commitment creates a mode in people in which they know their organization as their representative and wish to maintain in organization (Ziaei et al, 2008).

**Feedback:** means presenting employees' daily informal performance to them and periodic formal visits (Ziaei et al, 2008).

### Job satisfaction

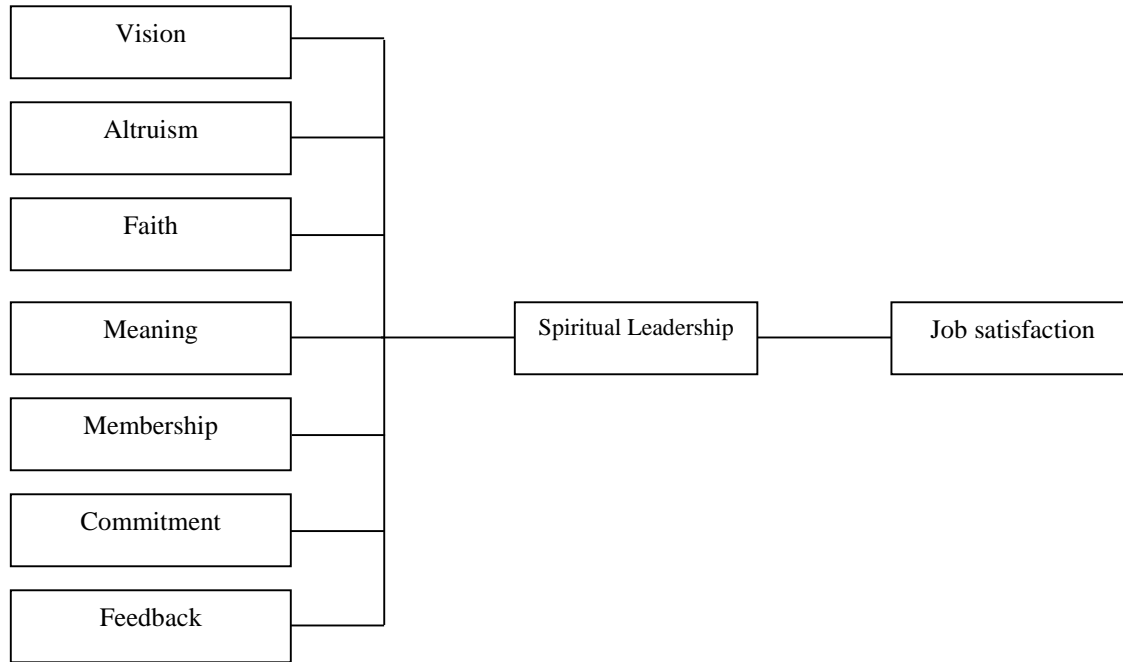
Job Satisfaction is a general expression of workers' overall attitudes about their jobs. Employees maintain an attitude towards their jobs as a result of diverse features of their job, social status which they have achieved about their jobs. This attitude can be also negative towards work. If the economic benefits, the social status, the job's own specific characteristics and the job expectation employees hoped, are appropriate for employees' desires and wants, there is job satisfaction (Celik, 2011).

Job satisfaction illustrates individuals' feelings regarding their work and has been found to affect many operations within the organizations. If the level of satisfaction is low, the impact on the organization may be negative. On the other hand, when employees' level of satisfaction is high, they are willing to try their best to achieve organizational goals, feel that the level of internal work motivation is high, organizational and professional commitment is strong, while the management observes significant decreases of turnovers (Chatzoglou et al, 2011).

Job satisfaction is a employees' sense of achievement and success on their job. It is generally perceived to be directly related to productivity as well as to personal well-being. Job satisfaction illustrates doing a job one enjoys, doing it well and being rewarded for one's efforts. Job satisfaction further implies enthusiasm and happiness with one's work. Job satisfaction is the key component which leads to recognition, income, promotion, and the achievement of other goals (Aziri, 2011).

### Conceptual framework of research

The chart below which is modulated Ziaei et al (2008) and Asadi (2008) models, shows that the relationship between spiritual leadership and job satisfaction in Aerology organization in Iran. In this model spiritual leadership and its dimensions are considered as independent variables and job satisfaction is dependent variable.



Conceptual framework of research (Ziaei et al, 2008; Asadi, 2008)

### Hypotheses

1. There are positive and meaningful relationship between spiritual leadership and employees' job satisfaction.

1.1. There are positive and meaningful relationship between vision and employees' job satisfaction.

1.2. There are positive and meaningful relationship between altruism and employees' job satisfaction.

1.3. There are positive and meaningful relationship between faith and employees' job satisfaction.

1.4. There are positive and meaningful relationship between meaning and employees' job satisfaction.

1.5. There are positive and meaningful relationship between membership and employees' job satisfaction.

1.6. There are positive and meaningful relationship between commitment and employees' job satisfaction.

1.7. There are positive and meaningful relationship between feedback and employees' job satisfaction.

### Research methodology

The study was done in a society involving 447 employees of Iran Aerology organization. For achieving more accurate results, no sampling strategy was applied.

The current research can be considered as a descriptive survey if to view from data collection aspect and as an applied research if to investigate the goals of the research. To collect the data library method (to refer to books, articles, libraries, etc...) and fieldworks (questionnaire) was being utilized.

For gathering data, 2 questionnaires were designed.

The first one was about spiritual leadership includes 25 questions with 5 point likert scale. Distribution of each dimension is presented in table 1:

**Table 1: distribution of each spiritual leadership dimension questions**

Spiritual Leadership	
SL dimension	Questions
Vision	1-3
Altruism	4-9
Faith	10-12
Meaningful	13-15
Membership	16-18
Commitment	19-22
Feedback	23-25

To measure job satisfaction, 4 main dimensions were considered: work itself, payment, promotion and coworkers.

So the other questionnaire includes 18 questions with 5 point likert scale too. Distribution of each commitment dimension is presented in table 2:

**Table 2: distribution of each job satisfaction dimension questions**

Job satisfaction	
Job satisfaction dimension	Questions
Work itself	1-5
Payment	6-9
Promotion	10-13
Coworkers	14-18

To analyze the data SPSS 17 and Spearman, Friedman, Chi-square and Binomial tests were utilized.

The management experts were being asked to evaluate the validity of questionnaires. For this mean, the questionnaires were given to some professors and experts in management, and after their modifications

were being utilized and they confirmed it, the questionnaires were given to the participants.

To determine the questionnaires' reliability, the 'Cronbach Alpha technique' was utilized. For this purpose, 30 people were selected by random (from the statistical samples) and the questionnaires were given to them. The 'Cronbach Alpha' values for all variables were calculated:

**Table 3: the results of reliability**

Variables	Cronbach Alpha
Spiritual leadership	0.89
Job satisfaction	0.86

These values support the reliability of questionnaires, because the calculated results for Cronbach's alpha are more than (0.7).

#### 4. Data Analysis

##### 4.1. Spearman test

To investigate the relationship between spiritual leadership and its indices with job satisfaction, this test was applied. The results are shown in table 4:

**Table 4: the results of using Spearman test**

Path	Spearman r	Sig	Result
spiritual leadership	0.785	0.000	Positive relationship
Vision	0.625	0.000	Positive relationship
Altruism	0.461	0.000	Positive relationship
Faith	0.573	0.000	Positive relationship
Meaning	0.735	0.000	Positive relationship
Membership	0.689	0.000	Positive relationship
Commitment	0.591	0.000	Positive relationship
Feedback	0.495	0.000	Positive relationship

As table 4 shows, there are positive and meaningful between spiritual leadership and its dimensions with employees' job satisfaction (sig<0.05).

##### 4.2. Friedman test

To prioritize spiritual leadership dimensions, Friedman test was applied. The results are presented in table 5:

**Table 5: results of using Friedman test**

variables	Mean Rank
Vision	4.32
Altruism	5.12
Faith	5.31
Meaningful	4.76
Membership	4.89
Commitment	3.96
Feedback	3.72

N= 447,  $\chi^2= 219.767$ , d.f= 4, Sig= 0.000

As table 5 shows, feedback is the most important dimension of spiritual leadership and commitment and vision were chosen in second and third places. Meanwhile faith and altruism were the last ones.

##### 4.3. Chi-square

To survey the relationship between employees' demographic characteristics and their job satisfaction, Chi-square test was utilized as:

**Table 6: the results of using Chi-square test**

Demographic characteristics	Standard error	Sig	Result
Age	0.05	0.117	Positive relationship
Gender	0.05	0.229	Positive relationship
Educational level	0.05	0.145	Positive relationship
Job experience	0.05	0.079	Positive relationship

Table 6 shows that there are no meaningful relationships between demographic characteristics – includes age, gender, educational level and job experience- with employees’ job satisfaction.

#### 4.4. Binomial test

Binomial test has been utilized to measure the “job satisfaction”, “spiritual leadership” and its dimensions in statistical society. The results are shown in table 7:

**Table 7: The results of applying Binomial test**

Variables	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Sig	Result
Spiritual leadership	0.8			Favorable level
Vision	0.8			Favorable level
Altruism	0.2			Unfavorable level
Faith	0.2			Unfavorable level
Meaning	0.7	0.6	0.000	Favorable level
Membership	0.8			Favorable level
Commitment	0.5			Favorable level
Feedback	0.7			Favorable level
Job satisfaction	0.8			Favorable level

As table 7 shows, all variables apart from altruism and faith are placed in favorable places.

## 5. Conclusion and suggestions

The purpose of writing the current paper is studying the effect of spiritual leadership on people’s job satisfaction in Aerology organization includes 447 employees.

Spiritual leadership was measured in 7 dimensions containing vision, altruism, faith, meaning, membership, commitment and feedback; meanwhile employees’ job satisfaction was measured in 4 dimensions of work itself, payment, promotion and coworkers.

After designing two questionnaires about spiritual leadership and job satisfaction and providing their validity and reliability, some tests were used for data analyzing.

### 5.1. Spearman test

The results of using Spearman test show that there are positive and meaningful relationship between spiritual leadership and its dimensions with job satisfaction.

The positive relationship between spiritual leadership and job satisfaction in the current paper is consistent with Yusof (2011) research.

### 5.2. Friedman test

Also the results of applying Friedman test show that among spiritual leadership dimensions “feedback”, “commitment” and “vision” were selected as the top indices; meanwhile “faith” was posed in the last place.

### 5.3. Binomial test

Also results of applying binomial test show that all variables except “altruism” and “faith” were placed in favorable levels.

### 5.4. Chi-square test

Finally by utilizing Chi-square test the relationships between demographic characteristics with employees’ commitment were surveyed in which no relationships were gotten.



### 5.5. Applicable suggestions

The results show that there are positive and meaningful correlations between spiritual leadership indices and job satisfaction.

So the managers are advised by utilizing spirituality-based culture, make employees to believe god as a superior power and do their work fairly. When employees believe god, so they will do everything in terms of their values, beliefs, credence and faith. Attending to positive relationship between spiritual leadership and job satisfaction, we can claim that utilizing spiritual leadership style will tend to employees' job satisfaction.

Also as "feedback" was selected as the top criteria, so the leaders are suggested to emphasis on this item dramatically.

To achieve more job satisfaction some suggestions are presented as:

- Designating employees in the jobs in terms of their skills, expertise, experience and interests.
- Paying fairly payment and rewards to all employees.
- Paying the rewards in terms of their abilities and talents.
- Applying fairly rules and laws for promoting people; and
- Participating employees in decision making processes.

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