Original Article: The Spiritual Status and Organizational Commitment of Elementary School Teachers

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted with the aim of investigating the spiritual status and organizational commitment of elementary school teachers. It was an applied survey study and its statistical population included all elementary school teachers of district 1 in Kerman City with a total of 1050 subjects. Simple random sampling was used in this study and the sample size was 285 subjects. Two questionnaires were used for data collection: A researcher-made spirituality questionnaire that included 13 questions with a Likert Scale of 5 which was an extraction of Kenda and Foreman's (2010) questionnaire and Allen and Mayer's organizational commitment questionnaire (1993) which included 18 questions with a Likert Scale of 5. The content validity and reliability of the questionnaires were estimated by Cronbach's alpha. Descriptive and inferential statistics including one sample t –test and regression test were used for data analysis. The results of the one sample t-test showed that the teachers had a high level of spirituality and organizational commitment. In addition, the results of the regression test showed that spirituality to predicted 0.91 of the teachers' organizational commitment.

Introduction

Nowadays, educational organizations are considered one of the most important social systems in any community and are regarded as indispensable parts of this system (Alaqheh band, 2011). These systems aim to educate and train generations for the future, a future that will be much more advanced, complicated, and comprehensive than the prevailing circumstances. The individual (human) element is one of the most fundamental elements of educational systems. Teachers and instructors are also considered the most important factors and play a leading role in educational systems' efficiency and effectiveness. "Since the role of teachers is sensitive and significant in matters such as education of students' potential talents, transmission of community culture, religious and spiritual education, assisting to identify, spiritual enhancement, teaching the way of living and in brief humanization and education of the next generation; consequently, this group is continuously under pressure (quoted by

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Ashrafi Sultan Ahmadi *et al*., 2010: 2)". It is anticipated that these factors, simultaneously with other stressors such as the absence of satisfactory welfare facilities, inadequate salaries, and benefits, etc., cause fatigue, burnout, deficient, disqualification, stress, and ultimately lack of organizational commitment among teachers. In total, this issue can have many consequences on the organization, the most important of which are reduced productivity, reduced capacities, reduced commitment and loyalty, and leaving the co-operation in the organization. It appears that spirituality can be regarded as a factor to resolve and improve such issues among important and influential groups of teachers. Spirituality is raised as a particular subject in the social and natural sciences. This type of developing professional tendencies has coincided with the increasing predominance and importance of spirituality among the general public (Bahrami Dashtaki *et al*., 2006). According to theorists and conducted research, not paying attention to the spiritual dimension and self-knowledge/self-scrutiny in life prevents the growth and prosperity of human beings (Elkins, 1999; Fisher 3, 2000; Kelley & Miller, 2007; Hay & Morisy, 1987). Although the current evidence indicates the significance of spirituality and spiritual affairs in promoting the soul, psyche, and health of human beings and society, it will also be important to study this issue in an acknowledged way and emphasize the status of spirituality and organizational commitment to a specific example. The rich Islamic and religious teachings are as an important source of improving human excellence and can fill the current gaps in the field of experimental research in spirituality and religion. Consequently, according to the mentioned cases and also the fact that organizational commitment and spirituality are among organizational and individual factors that influence organizational performance and productivity, we intended to examine the status of organizational commitment and spirituality between a sensitive and influential group of society; hence, we attempted to answer the following question:

What is the teachers' state in spirituality and organizational commitment?

Theoretical Principles and Research Background

Spirituality

Spirituality is an ontological concept that refers to humans and their evolution. In other words, humanity is human's dependence on their spiritual being; hence, it can be said that spirituality is rooted in evolution and biological fields (Samadi, 2006, quoted by Etrat Doost, 2010: 106). According to Danesh (1999), we try to achieve the highest and most distinguished level of self through spirituality. Spirituality in a Moein dictionary has been defined as "inner, real, as opposed to material, apparent, formal" (Moien, 2002).

Mitroff and Denton (1999) define spirituality as the desire to seek the ultimate goal in life and living according to this objective. According to them, spirituality creates a deep feeling in a person about the complete connection of a person with himself, others, and the whole world. According to Emblen (1992), spirituality is the principle of the individual's life, which drives them to a superior life in relation to God or being in relationship with God. Oliveira (2004) and Larson *et al.* (1998) believe that spirituality includes the process of creating meaning in life and in the relationship with God. Dehler and Welsh (1994) have defined spirituality as a specific form a sense of action that empowers action and increases energy. According to Canda and Furman (2010), spirituality refers to a way or ways that you experience a significant life that includes beliefs about God or any supernatural and fantastic aspect of the world. Also, Bude (2009) states that many studies have proved spirituality as a strong predictor for features like hope, happiness, and to feel satisfied with life and health. It is now accepted as an indispensable part of society's health. According to the perspective belonged to Fallah et al. (2011), spirituality is an important element that has shifted increasingly popular among the people. According to them, spirituality and belief in God can help people in different fields. As

Matloobahmed et al. 9 (2011) state, despite the variety of definitions that are available in the field of spirituality, all of them are common in some characteristics, which can usually refer to a relationship between a supernatural power or force, which is outside the physiological, psychological, and the understanding human sciences and experiment. This spiritual relationship may be expressed as divinity, a superior force, divinity, ultimate reality, God, or divinity. In general, spirituality has been defined as a dimension of human beings that gives people a sense of being with qualities such as nature, capacity for inner knowledge, and a source of reinforcement, experiences of holy mind, the transcendence of the individual towards the capacity for greater love and knowledge, the unification with the whole shadow of the life and finding the meaning for the presence of the individual that is the axis of every-being. Spirituality has also been known as a collection of values, attitudes, and hopes that is related to a higher being and guides a person's life, and in particular, it is related to life experiences that direct a person to the threshold of uncertainty (Mazaheri *et al*., 2008).

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is one of the important organizational variables. The concept of organizational commitment has a long history in organizational literature (Becker, 1960; Luthans, 2008). It is possible to understand from the definitions of various scientists (Bogler & Somech, 2004; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1984; Reichers, 1985; Stebbins, 1970; Wright & Kehoe, 2007) that organizational commitment is very important and covers a variety of concepts. According to Wright and Kehoe (2007), organizational commitment is a sense in which people consider themselves members of the organization and try to achieve the organization's purposes and achieve success. Porter *et al.* (1974) define organizational commitment as the approval of organizational objectives and values and the intense desire of individuals to continue working as key members of the organization. According to Meyer and Allen (2001), organizational commitment has been classified as an emotional and psychological dependence on the organization, commitment as understanding the costs of leaving the organization and commitment as a task to stay in the organization as emotional commitment, continuous commitment, and obligation or normative commitment. According to Cook and Wall (1980), the concept of organizational commitment refers to the individual's effective reactions based on working characteristics in organizations. They state that organizational commitment includes the sense of individuals achieving organizational goals and values and the role they play in the organization. Crasswell (2006) believes that individuals' commitment is related to their profession and the individual's values and beliefs and is located within the individual (quoted by Mostafavi Rad *et al*., 2010: 54). Organizational commitment is a kind of career attitude. It is a state in which a member of the organization considers the organization's goals as his/her agent and wishes to remain a member of the organization, so, he/she does his/her best to realize the objectives of the organization (Robbins, 1999). In general, it can be inferred by paying attention to the concepts related to an organizational commitment employed by scientists (Buchanan, 1974; Hrebiniak & Alutto, 1972; Sikorska, 2005; Steers 4; 1977; Tamini *et al*., 2011; Testa, 2001; Tonks & Nelson, 2008), organizational commitment has an effective and positive relationship with human resources in the organization; hence, it is unavoidable to pay attention to it in any organization.

The results obtained from the research conducted by Khanifar et al. (2010) on the relationship between spirituality and organizational commitment explained that there is a significant relationship between spirituality in the workplace and organizational commitment. Moreover, according to them, the increasing organizational commitment will promote the quality of people's performance. Setivawati and Abdul Rahman (2005) examined the relationship between spirituality and organizational citizenship behavior and showed that there is a significant and positive relationship between spirituality and

organizational commitment as one of the dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior. On the relationship between organizational commitment and career satisfaction, Yousef (2001) stated there is a significant relationship between spirituality and organizational commitment. Yazdani *et al.* (2010) examined the role of spirituality in the relationship between organizational justice dimensions and the consequences of spirituality while pronouncing the significance of spirituality in the organization and reported that there is a positive and significant correlation between spirituality and organizational commitment.

Karimi Thani and Ahyaie (2011) delved into the relationship between spirituality and organizational commitment among university personnel in a study and concluded that there is a significant and positive relationship between spirituality and organizational commitment. Furthermore, the results achieved by his study revealed that spirituality is able to foretell organizational commitment. Nadi and Golparvar (2011) investigated the relationship between spirituality and loyalty in the workplace and came to conclusion that there is a significant and positive relationship between spirituality and loyalty in the workplace. According to his research, spirituality can also predict career loyalty. Lavasani *et al.* (2007) studied the spirituality, career stress, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction in nurses in Tehran in a study. Highlighting the importance of spirituality, they held that there is a significant and positive relationship between spirituality and organizational commitment. Further, nurses had an average and above-average organizational commitment and also an above-average spiritual sense. Ya Chen (2006) examined the relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction and concluded that job alienation is decreased in the organization by increasing organizational commitment. Pesut (2002) focused on nursing students' spirituality and reported that nursing students possess a high level of spirituality. Tamini *et al.* (2011) scrutinized the relationship between organizational commitment and job

satisfaction in India and Sistan and Baluchestan universities and declared that there is a significant and positive relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction. In a study, Al Aameri (2000) investigated organizational commitment and job satisfaction. According to him, there is a positive relationship between them.

Research questions

The current study tried to answer the following questions:
1. What is the status of teachers in spirituality and organizational commitment?
2. To what extent spirituality is able to predict the teacher's organizational commitment?

Research methodology

Deciding on the research method depends on the objective of the research and the nature of the studied problem. Accordingly, the research method should be selected according to the studied problem (Bast, 1990: 29). According to the research questions, this study was survey research and can be considered applied in terms of subjects in the research group.

Statistical population, sampling method, and sample size

The statistical population included all primary teachers in District 1 of Kerman, as many as 1050. A simple random sampling method was used in this study. Based on Morgan's standard table, out of 1050 people, 285 people were included, and a number of incomplete questionnaires were removed (11 copies). The data were analyzed based on 274 questionnaires related to 131 male teachers and 143 female teachers.

Instruments

In this study, two questionnaires were used to collect data. The Spirituality Researcher- Made Questionnaire, which includes 13 questions with a 5-option Likert scale (from very high to very low) adapted from Kenda and Foreman (2010) and the Allen and Meyer Organizational

Commitment Questionnaire (2014), which includes 18 questions with 5-option Likert scale (From very high to very low). The scoring of the questions is such that if the subject prefers a very high option, he/she gains a score of 5, a high option gains a score of 4, a medium option gains a score of 3, a low option gains a score of 2, and if he/she adopts a very low option gains a score of 1. The data were analyzed with SPSS software version 19.

Validity and reliability

This study used the content validity method to determine the validity of the questionnaires. Accordingly, research questionnaires were referred to several professors and experts in educational sciences, and they approved them after the examination. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to calculate and determine the reliability of the questionnaires. The reliability of the spirituality questionnaire was equal to 0.94, and the reliability of the organizational commitment questionnaire was equal to 0.79.

Results

Table 1 shows that 52.2% of the respondents were male teachers, and 47.8% were female teachers.

Table 2 shows that 29.2% of teachers had postgraduate education and 70.8% held bachelor's degrees and higher.

Table 3 demonstrates that 17.5% of teachers had work experience of 1-5 years, 28.8% with 6-10 years, 36.1% with 11-15 years, and 17.5% of teachers had 16 years or more about work experience.

Table 1. Results of frequency distribution in terms of the teacher's gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	۱۴۳	۵۲/۲
Female	۱۳۱	۴۷/۸
Total	۲۷۴	۱۰۰

Table 2. Frequency distribution results according to teachers' education

Education level	Frequency	Percentage
Associate Degree	۸۰	۲۹/۲
Bachelor and higher	۱۹۴	۷۰/۸
Total	۲۷۴	۱۰۰

Table 3. Frequency distribution results according to teachers' experience

Teacher's experience	Frequency	Percentage
۱-۵ years	۴۸	۱۷/۵
۶-۱۰ years	۷۹	۲۸/۸
۱۱-۱۵ years	۹۹	۳۶/۱
۱۶ years and higher	۴۸	۱۷/۵
Total	۲۷۴	۱۰۰

The first research question: What is the status of teachers in spirituality and organizational commitment?

A One-group t-test was used to answer this question, and Tables 4 and 5 show the results.

The results of Table 4 show that the mean and standard deviation of primary teachers' spirituality are respectively equal to 51.79 and 5.53, which is higher than the mean of test 39 and this difference with t = 38.28 and df = 273 and Sig = 0.00 is significant at 99% level (p <0.01). Consequently, it can be said that the primary teachers of District 1 of Kerman had an average spirituality higher compared with the average level. In other words, the spiritual state of teachers was desirable.

Table 4. Results of one-group t-test concerning teachers' spirituality N = 274

Variable	Mean	Standard	Test-Value	t	df	Sig

	deviation					
Spirituality	۵۱/۷۹	۵/۵۳	۳۹	۳۸/۲۸	۲۷۳	۰/۰۰

Table 5. Results of one-group t-test concerning teachers' organizational commitment N = 274

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	test-value	t	df	sig
Organizational commitment	۷۱/۹۱	۶/۶۲	۵۴	۴۴/۷۴	۲۷۳	۰/۰۰

The results of Table 5 reveal that the mean and standard deviation of organizational commitment of primary teachers are 71.91 and 6.62, respectively, which is higher than the mean of test 54 and this difference with t = 44.74 and df = 273 and sig = 0.00 is significant at 99% level (p <0.01).

Consequently, it can be stated that primary teachers in District 1 of Kerman had an organizational commitment higher than a mean rate. In other words, the state of teachers' organizational commitment was desirable.

The second research question: To what extent has spirituality been able to predict the teacher's organizational commitment?

A regression test was used to answer this question, and Table 6 shows the results.

Table 6. Summary of regression of organizational spirituality and commitment

Variable	R	R² modified	F	B Standard	t	Significant level	Durbin-Watson
spirituality	۰/۹۵	۰/۹۱	۲۸۹۵/۲۷	۰/۹۵	۱۱/۳۳	۰/۰۰	۱/۹۵

The results of Table 6 show that spirituality is able to predict the variable of organizational commitment. The coefficient of determination of 0.91 between the two variables of criterion and predictor shows that spirituality describes 91% of organizational commitment (criterion variable). The relationship between spirituality and teachers' organizational commitment is significant at the level of 0.99, and the calculated beta value is 0.95.

Conclusion

As mentioned earlier, theoretical and empirical evidence has shown that people's perceptions about spirituality in the workplace will help expand their level of organizational commitment, which in turn drives people to work harder for their job and consequently helps to organizational performance. This study examined the spirituality and organizational commitment of primary school teachers in District 1 of Kerman. The results showed all primary school teachers had a mean of spirituality and organizational commitment higher than the mean level. In other words, it can be said that the primary teachers had both high spirituality and great organizational commitment. These results are in agreement with those of Pesut (2002) and Lavasani *et al.*

(2007). Furthermore, the results related to the second question of the research employing regression analysis test revealed that spirituality is able to predict organizational commitment, which is in agreement with the results of the research conducted by Nadi and Golparvar (2011), Karimi Thani and Ahyaei (2011), Khanifar *et al.* (2010), Setivawati and Abdul Rahman (2005) and Yazdani *et al.* (2010). According to the research results, it is recommended that the importance of spirituality and spiritual matters and its influence on the teacher's lives be elucidated, and especially the effects of spirituality should be examined and considered on improving the quality and educational-organizational performance in special educational programs during individual and group meetings in the form of formal and informal educational working groups.

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