

## Identification of spiritual leadership factors and indicators in secondary schools

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** The goal of the present research is detecting spiritual leadership factors and indicators at high schools of education system regarding interview with informants. **Methodology:** the current research has applied goal. The research population includes all of high school teachers of Ministry of Education in Saveh in 2017-2018 totaling 905. The research sample was based on Kerjci and Morgan Table including 270 subjects using purposeful and snowball sampling. Data gathering tool was semi-structured interview. In this paper, at first based on theoretical and research literature detecting factors and indicators and their informants were rated on 5-scale Lickert based on significance and also proposed some answers to the open question. Data analysis was performed using mono sample t-test and the results of qualitative data were analyzed by MAXQDA software. For data analysis, average and standard deviation indexes and in deductive section discovering factor was used for detecting elements of spiritual leadership with structural equation techniques. **Findings:** The findings of current paper were detected from the perspective of informants and opinion makers of effective factors on spiritual leadership at high schools in 4 factors and 14 indicators. The results of mono sample t-test showed error level of  $\alpha=0.05$  indicating meaningful level in all factors and indicators was obtained less than error rate ( $\alpha>\text{sig}=0.05$ ). So with 95 percentage ensuring all factors and indicators were confirmed from the perspective of this research informants. **Conclusion:** Spiritual mangers due to virtues like bravery, justice, humanity, foresight, correct judgment, modesty in mood, behavior, perspective develop their skill and proficiency to consider constant and long-term educational activities and cause basic changes at schools.

### Keywords:

Spiritual Leadership, High Schools, Management

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## 1. Introduction

Nowadays the development of organizations depends on optimal usage of their human forces. Considering this huge resource in the realm of Human Resource Management and regarding personnel needs and problems in organizations are among the effective factors in success and advancement of each organization (Schimmel, 2009).

Virtue is defined as a personal character including cognitive, affective, volitional and behavioral features (Peterson, 2003). There is another perspective that virtue is psychological strength or volitional force. This force increases the person's ability in facing with challenges (Bomister & Exline, 2000). Spirituality is a newly emergent in organizations, as one of the positivist organizational research elements. Virtue means strength or excellence (Cameron et al, 2003). Spirituality in organization is related to people's behavior. In positive psychology, there is increasing literature about spirituality (Sligman and Kiznet Miali, 2000).

Virtues provide better workplace for employees and boost the relations between people. Respecting virtues is a basis of homogeneity of values and goals of employees (IP, 2002). Sprituality improves total organization performance (Rego et al, 2011: 524; Cameron, 2011).

Spiritual behaviors are along with desirable organizational consequences. For example, honesty, consideration, appreciation, hope, sympathy, affection and forgiveness among other virtues have more positive effects on organizational consequences. As an example they have positive effect on people's commitment, satisfaction, motivation, feelings, attempt, physical well-being and mental health (Anderson et al, 2007; Cameron and Casa 2004). Spiritualism can raise and develop education. When our managers have spiritual leadership, their spiritual, ethical and affective gaps of teachers are filled and self-organizing, self-growth, self-leading and self-management emerge in them and they will be transformed and would be different from the past. These leaders can run and guide the organization with their craft, tact and authority that its effect can be seen on educational progress of students and finally community (Sarlak, 2011).

On the other hand, one of the increasing factors in effectiveness and efficiency of educational organizations especially schools is that managers and teachers in addition to reciprocal interactions and focusing on ethical-humanistic virtues, concentrate on constant learning for upgrading skills and proficiencies. Wang (2011) and Yokel (2010) as virtual leaders can inspire the employees internally and improve their learning and so boost the effectiveness and performance of the employees. Koy insists that spiritual leaders not only improve organizational consequences, but also direct the employees to noble positions. In this respect, school teachers and principals can use spiritual leadership elements; improve organizational learning and organizational performance of the teachers. This successful process can improve these activities: innovation, gaining knowledge and new data about teaching methods, learning and using critical skills, trying to solve educational problems, improving teachers' proficiency in managing classes, making the students interested in learning, developing teacher's eagerness to educational affairs, growth of ideas and teaching skills, correct evaluation based on learning-teaching standards, transfer and distribution of new knowledge among co-workers, increasing eagerness to growth and job development among teachers and principals of schools.

Eskandari et al (2017) in a research titled the effect of spiritual leadership of school managers on improving organizational performance of teachers by intermediation of organizational learning concluded that teachers and principals of schools can improve performance function of organization of teachers using spiritual leadership dimensions and use organizational learning for facilitating this process. In other words, teachers and principals of schools by using organizational learning principles can develop reciprocal interactions, improve scientific cooperation and participation, consider creativity and innovation at schools, facilitate interacting with environmental knowledge, become flexible in educational activities , raise the valuable feeling at school, use group decision making, share educational liability, create

atmosphere of support and trust-based contribution, learn and try new teaching methods, participate constantly in relearning courses, and prioritize the educational transformation at the top of their goals. Teachers and principals of schools by using these mechanisms can do educational tasks successfully and desirably and finally support development and realization of noble educational goals. Wang et al (2019) showed in a research that spiritual leadership has positive relation with employee function. Wang et al (2017) concluded that spiritual leadership is a unique approach for preserving organizational resources and reduces the error rate among staff.

Abubakar et al (2018) gained results about spiritual leadership and stated that spiritual leadership has direct effect on employee tasks and organizing them and is responsible for organizational commitment for the relation between spiritual leadership and employee performance. Kafash and Zameni (2018) obtained results about spiritual leadership and stated that about organizational nobility, spiritual leadership has the highest dimensions and in the society, function and labor process of employee indicate desirable results. The main problem of this paper is detecting main factors of spiritual leadership for developing and expanding it in high school organizations. Of course according to performed research so far in the realm of spiritual leadership, there is no research like this at high school. So the main problem in this paper is detecting factors and indicators of spiritual leadership at high schools.

## 2. Methodology

As in this paper the semi structure interview was used, this paper has qualitative design with case study and descriptive-discovering approach. The research population of the research included informant and opinion makers in the realm of management and leadership especially spiritual leadership and all principals of schools of Saveh in 2017-2018. The sampling methods in this paper were purposeful and snowball. In this research 8 experts and faculty member and 12 principals of schools in Saveh were interviewed. In this step, the opinion of informants and principals about detected factors was examined based on 5-scale Lickert. For questionnaire validity the factor analysis was used. For detecting validity of questionnaire, the factor analysis method was used. The results of exploratory factor analysis by main element analysis on subjects indicated that the rate of Kaiser-Meyer Test (Sampling quality indicator) was 0.815, the rate of Bartkett Test was 14175/094 with degree of freedom 2278 and meaningful level of 0/000. The reliability of research questionnaire was detected by using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The rate of obtained alpha coefficient for all variables and also total questionnaire was estimated higher than 0/70.

**Table1.**table of factors and indicators in spiritual leadership

Element	Factors	Indicator	Resource
spiritual leadership	Managerial factors	Harmony	Tyach & Hansot (1982), Li (2009), Wang & Hacket (2016)
		Organizing	
		Leadership	
	Behavioral factors	Human relation of management and employees	Pearce et al (2014), Palanski et al (2015), Flynn (2008)
		Commitment to organization, controlling human resources and management	
	structural factors	Applying	
		Controlling	Cameron (2011), Manz (2008)
		Equipping	
		Commanding process	
		Planning	
	Contextual factors	Organizational atmosphere	Manz (2008), Caldwell et al (2015)
		Environment and relations in organization	
		organizational culture	

For data analysis, average and standard deviation indicators and for deduction exploratory factor analysis was used to detect spiritual leadership elements applying structural equation technique.

### 3. Findings

For examining factors and indicators of spiritual leadership at high schools, ideas of informants and school principals about detected factors based on 5-scale Likert were examined. The answers of informants and school principals to detected factors were tested by mono sample t-test.

**Table2.** the results of mono sample t-test about factors and indicators of spiritual leadership from the informants' perspective

Element	Factors	Indicator	No	Ave	SD	t	sig
spiritual leadership	Managerial factors	Harmony	20	36/4	31/0	25/19	0001/0
		Organizing	20	28/4	31/0	49/18	0001/0
		Leadership	20	11/4	24/0	69/20	0001/0
		Human relation of management and employees	20	44/3	14/0	65/13	0001/0
	Behavioral factors	Commitment to organization, controlling	20	45/3	19/0	60/10	0001/0
		human resources and management	20	44/3	16/0	39/12	0001/0
		Applying	20	49/3	30/0	12/7	0001/0
	structural factors	Controlling	20	42/3	23/0	05/8	0001/0
		Equipping	20	43/3	17/0	05/11	0001/0
		Commanding process	20	48/3	58/0	68/3	0001/0
	Contextual factors	Planning	20	49/3	51/0	32/4	0001/0
		Organizational atmosphere	20	44/3	28/0	86/6	0001/0
		Environment and relations in organization	20	54/3	39/0	16/6	0001/0
		organizational culture	20	88/3	59/0	63/6	0001/0

The results of mono sample t-test in error rate of  $\alpha=0.05$  indicate that meaningful level in all factors and indexes has been obtained from less error rate ( $\alpha>\text{sig}=0.05$ ).

In other words, the obtained t value in all factors and indicators is more than critical value of table (1/96) so all factors and indexes have been obtained with 95 percent accuracy from the perspective of informants.

Descriptive indexes of dimensions and extracted elements including average and standard deviation have been presented in table 3.

**Table3.** Descriptive indexes of effective factors on spiritual leadership (n=270)

Factors	Min	Max	Ave	SD	Skewing	stretch
Harmony	1.00	5.00	2.82	0.53	-0.013	0.021
Organizing	1.00	5.00	3.02	0.57	-0.017	0.048
Leadership	1.00	5.00	3.13	0.63	-0.009-	-0.126
Management factor	1.00	5.00	2.99	0.47	0.284	0.165
Human relation of management and employees	1.00	5.00	3.28	0.73	-0.066	-0.201
Commitment to organization, controlling	1.00	5.00	3.61	0.77	-0.098	-0.346
human resources and management	1.00	5.00	3.67	0.68	-0.053-	-0.288

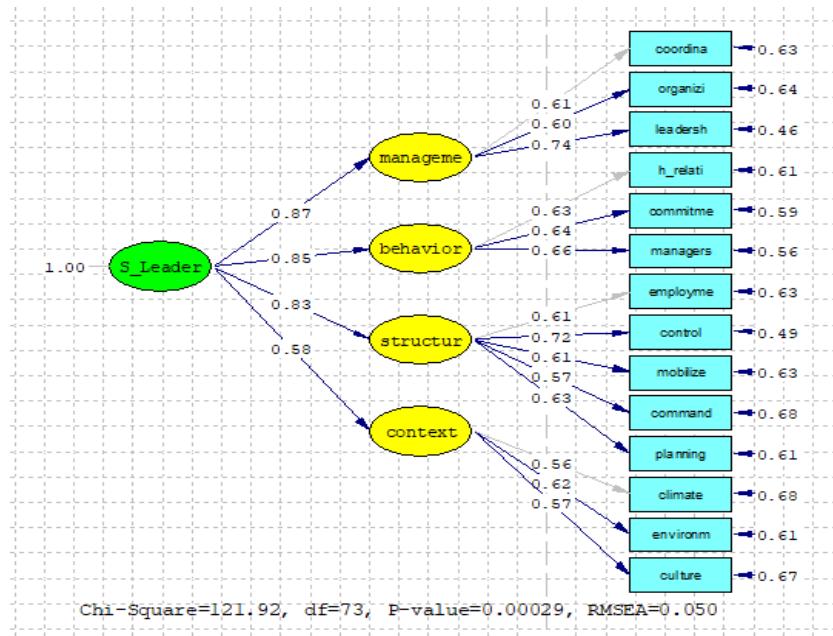
Behavioral factor	1.00	5.00	3.52	0.67	0.067	0.025
Applying	1.00	5.00	3.65	0.75	-0.071	-0.299-
Controlling	1.00	5.00	3.29	0.77	-0.039	-0.043
Equipping	1.00	5.00	3.26	0.76	-0.011	-0.229
Commanding process	1.00	5.00	3.37	0.68	0.232	-0.194
Planning	1.00	5.00	3.25	0.71	-0.034	-0.109
Structural factor	1.00	5.00	3.37	0.65	0.242	0.557
Organizational atmosphere	1.00	5.00	3.17	0.74	-0.057	-0.178
Environment and relations in organization	1.00	5.00	3.27	0.77	0.069-	-0.113
organizational culture	1.00	5.00	3.33	0.75	-0.017	-0.191
contextual factor	1.00	5.00	3.25	0.68	0.183	0.282

The results of table 3 indicate that in all factors and micro variables, data follow the rule of normality. KMO measurements and Bartlett test results was 0/821 approximately 1. Also meaningful level of Bartlett test was zero less than 0/05 and indicates that it is statistically meaningful. So, on the basis of both criteria we can conclude that factor analysis test based on correlational matrix in studied group was justifiable.

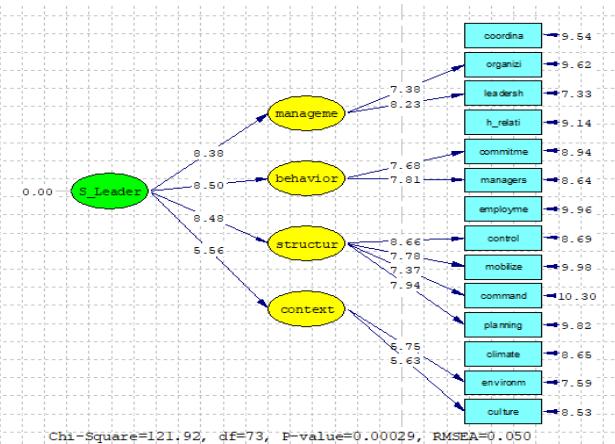
**Table4.** factors and indicators of spiritual leadership

Factors	Indicators
Leadership	Items 12-18
Mangers and human resource	Items 31-36
Harmony	Items 1-6
Commitment to organization and management	Items 25 and 27-30
Planning	Items 54-60
Organizational atmosphere	Items 61-64
Organizing	Items 8-11
Management human resources and employees	Items 19-23
Applying	Items 37-40
Control	Items 42-45
Equipping	Items 46-50
Organizational culture	Items 7-12
Environment and relations in organization	Items 65-68
Commanding process	Items 69-72

According to the results of exploratory factor analysis on questionnaire, we can consider factors and elements of table 4 for spiritual leadership.

**Figure1.** Total model for spiritual leadership in standard evaluation

As it is clear in figure 1, “management factor” with factor rate of 0/87 has the most shares and “contextual factor” with factor rate of 0/58 has the least shares in measuring spiritual management. Among the “management factor” elements, the most factor rate is related to “leadership” (0.74) and the least factor rate is related to “organizing” (0/60). Among the “contextual factor” elements, the most factor rate is related to “Environment and relations in organization” (0.62) and the least factor rate is related to “organization atmosphere” (0/56).

**Figure2.** General model of spiritual leadership in meaningful coefficient

The model in meaningful mode of figure (2) indicates that calculated amounts of t for each factor loads are higher than 1/96. So all factor loads are in ensuring level of 95 percent. Therefore, as all the coefficients are meaningful, individual presented dimensions are considered dimensions and elements of spiritual leadership.

**Table5.** Fit indexes of whole model

Index name	Estimations	Limited amount
k-square $\chi^2$	73/128= $\chi^2$ 73=df 000/0=P	P>0/05
K-square on freedom rate	76/1	5less than
RMSEA	050/0	0/08 less than
GFI	94/0	0/9 Higher than
AGFI	91/0	0/9 Higher than
NFI	94/0	0/9 Higher than
NNFI	97/0	0/9 Higher than
SRMR	048/0	0/05 less than
CFI	97/0	0/9 Higher than

SRMR for this model was estimated at 0/048 that values less than 0/05 indicate rather appropriate covariance. Other indexes should be higher than 0/9 that in research model this condition has been met. Totally we can say that the proposed model is suitable and empirical data are fit with it.

#### 4. Discussion

Regarding research findings about effective factors on spiritual leadership at high schools from perspective of informants and experts, 4 factors and 14 indexes were detected. These factors and indexes are: 1. Management factor with indexes of harmony, organizing and leadership, 2. Structural factor with human relation indexes in management and personnel, organization commitment, management, managers and human force, 3. behavioral with indexes of applying, control, equipping, command process and planning and 4- Contextual factor (environmental) with organizational atmosphere, environment and relations in organization and organizational culture. The results and findings of this paper are compatible with findings of other researchers. For example, Margaret (2003) indicated that the last trend in leadership is focusing on spiritual leadership. Cameron and Casa (2002) believe that spiritual leaders can improve the organization. Cowell, Hassan and Smith (2015) defined spiritual leadership as following: a pattern of ethical association that produces long-term assets for optimization of people, organizations and society. These experts focus that spiritual leaders have unusual level in employee commitment, customers, shareholders and generally society. Basically the concept of spiritual leadership includes three elements: leader virtues, virtual traits of leader and contexts (determinant special conditions of spiritual behaviors of leader). In addition, spiritual leadership includes two basic processes: 1. Cognitive process that considers followers of a leader based on their functions as spiritual individuals 2. Patterning process that followers change their behaviors to emulate the leader (Wang, 2011). Experts argue that organizational leadership, especially spiritual leaders can improve organizational learning in organizations and facilitate the process of innovation, division, development, applying and distributing new information and knowledge (Pearce, Kessigzen Mihali 2014, Dishina et al 2013, Zagorch et al 2009).

Wang (2011) and Yokel (2010) argued that organizational leaders can present internal and external bonuses and encourage followers' learning. Of course the effect of internal and external bonuses on encourage followers' learning can be considerable. Wang and Hacket (2015) in their research indicated that spiritual leadership by affecting leader and internal functions can have positive role about followers. Pearce, Kessigzen Mihali (2014) noted in a paper that spiritual leadership has positive effect on organizational learning. Findings of Bello (2012) indicated that ethical leaders can improve their professional function. Samp (2012) in his doctoral thesis found that predictions of organizational learning include leadership, empowerment and organizational culture and its most significant consequence is organizational function. Wang (2011) indicted in his doctoral thesis that spiritual leadership with variables

like leader, and ethical follower, leader's satisfaction and follower, intraoral and extra role performances have positive and meaningful relationships.

Zagorch et al (2009) found that leadership has positive effects on organizational learning and modification of culture. Wang and Hacket (2015) and Wang (2011) argue that spiritual leaders are effective and can raise the intrarole and extra role performances of followers. Dishina et al (2013) argue that leaders focus on organizational learning and can positive, efficient and satisfactory effect like double effect. Samp (2012) argues that the most important prediction of organizational learning is leadership and the most significant performance is spiritual leadership. Siyola (2004) argues that spiritual individuals can perform their job tasks optimally as they are highly competent. The theory of spiritual leadership has been proposed in recent years as one of the new patterns of leadership and organizational behavior. This pattern focuses on virtues, graces, ethical values, good manners and honorable acts of leaders and managers. According to spiritual leadership, school leaders and managers should develop traits like bravery, justice, humanity, foresight, correct judgment, moderate manner, prospects, skill and competencies so that they can: innovate facing environmental risks, respect personal ideas of teachers, consider constant and long-term educational activities, resolve the tensions between teachers, try to optimize educational activities, provide educational resources for teachers and students, assess correctly the urgent needs of schools, have just judgments, appreciate worries of teachers and students, appreciate slight success of teachers, consider personal interests of teachers and prioritize honesty at their manners. Among the limitations of the current research we can point to lack of available scientific resources, lack of access to scientific resources, very limited resources of spiritual leadership, limited access to experts in spiritual leadership for participation in qualitative part. Finally it is suggested that the effect of different factors of spiritual leadership on variables like the performance of educational motivation, creativity and ... of students should be examined.

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