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The Relationship between Organizational Spirituality, Organizational Commitment, and Organizational Ethics among Elementary School Managers

Fatemeh Alipour[1]✉ | **Zahra Aghaali**[2]

1. Corresponding author, Department of Educational Sciences, Farhangian University, PO Box 14665-889, Tehran, Iran. E-mail: alipoor@cfu.ac.ir
2. Master's Degree in Educational Management, Qom province, Qom, Iran. E-mail: zzahraaghaali@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between organizational spirituality, organizational commitment, and organizational ethics among male elementary school managers in Qom city in 2022.

Methods: This study is applied in terms of its objective and correlational in terms of the method used. The statistical population of the research includes all male managers at the elementary level in Qom city, totaling 360 individuals. Using multi-stage sampling, a sample of 81 individuals was selected. They were evaluated using Milliman et al.'s (2003) Organizational Spirituality Questionnaire, Allen and Meyer's Organizational Commitment Questionnaire, and Hunt et al.'s Organizational Ethics Questionnaire. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods (multiple regression) were employed for data analysis.

Results: The results indicate a significant positive relationship between organizational spirituality, organizational commitment, and organizational ethics among the managers. Moreover, each dimension of organizational spirituality has a positive and significant relationship with organizational commitment and organizational ethics.

Conclusions: Confirming the relationship between organizational spirituality, organizational commitment, and organizational ethics suggests that managers' attitudes towards spirituality can help improve employees' commitment and ethical conduct, consequently leading to overall organizational performance enhancement. Therefore, serious attention should be paid to the concept of organizational spirituality, and efforts should be made to enhance it.

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Introduction

Today, the primary focus of human concern revolves around the realm of spirituality, encompassing its various forms. Thus, from the standpoint of structuralism and phenomenology, spirituality holds immense significance in integrating with the theoretical frameworks and scholarly discourse on human and organizational behavior. Consequently, the contemporary paradigm of organizational and management research has shifted towards the examination and explication of the dimensions and indicators of organizational spirituality, as well as the factors that influence or are influenced by it (Karakas, 2010).

Conversely, in light of the pivotal role played by education and training, organizational commitment assumes great importance in cultivating a workforce that is dedicated to the organization. Organizational commitment refers to individuals' positive or negative attitudes towards the entire organization, rather than just their specific job within it (Allen, 2007). In essence, organizational commitment entails a profound sense of loyalty towards the organization, which fosters a deep identification with it. This mental state signifies a desire, necessity, and obligation to continue working within the organization, comprising emotional commitment, continuous commitment, and normative commitment (Allen and Mayer, 1990). In this regard, organizations require a set of moral and value-based guidelines, in addition to organizational and legal criteria, to guide their administrative behaviors and practices, thereby ensuring coordination and unity of action. These guidelines facilitate progress towards the desired collective and public objectives. The moral climate, an influential factor in intra-organizational communication and employee conditions, significantly impacts organizational productivity (Elci & Alpkan, 2009).

Furthermore, Hansen (2001) asserts that the needs of employees have undergone a transformation in terms of type and magnitude, and contemporary organizations can achieve success by fully addressing the biological, social, psychological, and spiritual needs of their employees. Certain scholars consider spirituality as the novel paradigm for effectively responding to the future challenges of management, positing that the fulfillment of employees' transcendental needs can be pursued through spirituality-oriented models (Kennedy, 2010). Given that the modern-day human concern perpetually revolves around spirituality, structuralism and phenomenology advocate for the inclusion of spirituality in the conceptual frameworks and literature on human and organizational behavior. Consequently, the new paradigm in organizational and management

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research is centered around investigating and elucidating the dimensions and indicators of organizational spirituality, as well as the factors that influence it or are influenced by it (Carakas, 2010).

The issue of spirituality has gained significant prominence within contemporary business organizations. Sundland (2003) goes so far as to assert that all organizational theories can be considered as theories of organizational spirituality, thereby exemplifying an ardent perspective on the matter. The fulfillment of spiritual needs within the workplace is contingent upon the application of principles rooted in spirituality, ethics, and values. Consequently, these principles manifest in individuals' decisions and actions (Koolivand, 2020). Our desired spirituality can be cultivated in both secular and religious settings. Spirituality in the workplace constitutes a framework of organizational values, and its manifestation lies in the presence of a culture that transcends mere work processes and enhances employees' comprehension of interpersonal communication, thereby fostering a sense of gratification.

Organizational ethics has been a subject of concern for managers and organizational designers over the past four decades. Historically, researchers and managers alike have emphasized that the design of an appropriate organizational structure, coupled with the establishment and adherence to rules and regulations, can propel an organization towards success. However, it has become increasingly evident that organizational structure and the establishment of sound regulations are insufficient for effective organizational management. When top-level managers discover that they possess the ability to make personal decisions regarding their salaries and benefits within the confines of regulations, it is highly likely that they will opt for the highest possible remuneration. Nevertheless, adherence to ethical principles can serve as an unwritten law that curbs aberrant behavior in the absence of external oversight. Adhering to organizational ethics facilitates smoother organizational actions and work procedures, enabling certain tasks to achieve the desired outcomes without the need for external observation. Consequently, a comprehensive understanding of the concept of organizational ethics can yield significant improvements in organizational activities.

According to Ching Fuchen (2006), organizational commitment denotes a positive and constructive response from employees towards all aspects and dimensions of the organization. The manager of an organization bears the responsibility for shaping employees' commitment to official

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values, dictating both the extent and nature of such commitment (Kazemi Haqit, 2018). Spirituality in the workplace involves recognizing that mutual connections, respect, and acknowledgement extend beyond ourselves and our personal sphere, encompassing all individuals with whom we collaborate, be it on a regular or informal basis. Not only does this foster more favorable working conditions, but it also yields greater returns on capital. In the majority of literature, spirituality at work is deemed successful when initiated by organizational leaders. Terms such as spiritual leadership, ethical leadership, and trustworthy leadership all denote strategies that are perceived as the leader's responsibility to create an intellectual and spiritual milieu in the workplace (Marques et al., 2005).

A study carried out by Yazdani et al. (2018) investigated the mediating role of spirituality in the relationship between organizational justice dimensions and the outcomes of spirituality among 335 employees of the Water and Sewerage Department in Tehran. The results indicated that spirituality had a positive influence on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior.

In research focused on the association between family functioning, spirituality, and organizational commitment among employees of the Islamic Azad University of Shabastar Branch, consisting of 305 individuals, Karimi Thani and and Ahyaei (2011) revealed that spirituality alone exhibited a significant correlation with organizational commitment. Furthermore, they demonstrated that the interaction between spirituality and family functioning, as well as its subscales, displayed a significant relationship with organizational commitment, particularly emotional organizational commitment.

Hossein-Pour (2013) conducted a study titled "Investigating the Relationship Between Spirituality at Work and Organizational Commitment of Employees of the General Road and Transport Department of Semnan Province." This research examined the relationship between spirituality and organizational commitment within the General Department of Road and Transport of Semnan Province. The study involved the distribution of standard questionnaires on organizational spirituality and organizational commitment to a sample of 15 managers and employees of the General Directorate of Roads and Transport. Confirmatory factor analysis and correlation were employed to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed that the presence of spirituality in the work environment had a positive impact on the organizational commitment of managers and employees.

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In a study conducted by Medeiros and Albuquerque (2005) titled "The Relationship Between Spirituality in the Workplace and Organizational Performance in Two Health Service Centers," it was found that the performance of the organization was influenced by spirituality in the workplace. The study demonstrated that a sense of solidarity and meaningful work can serve as predictors of organizational performance. Additionally, the presence of spirituality in the work environment and the sense of solidarity were identified as mediators in the relationship between the work group and organizational performance.

Soha et al. (2016) examined the relationship between the impact of work, social sense, and individual spirituality on organizational performance in a research study conducted among high school teachers in the northern region of Malaysia. The study aimed to identify the individual factors within the organization that affected organizational performance. By considering work, social sense, and individual spirituality as independent variables, the researchers investigated the influence of these factors on the organizational performance of secondary school teachers. The data for this research were collected from 55 randomly selected respondents through a questionnaire. Statistical software (SPSS) was utilized for data analysis, including descriptive analysis, reliability analysis, and multiple regression analysis. The findings indicated that work factors significantly influenced organizational performance among high school teachers in the northern region of Malaysia.

Pio and Tampi (2018) conducted a study to examine the impact of spiritual leadership on quality of life, work, job satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behavior. The research results revealed that spiritual leadership had a 29% effect on organizational citizenship behavior, with a significance coefficient value of less than 0.05.

In a research study conducted by Rego and Pina (2008) titled "The Effect of the Relationship Between Spirituality at Work and Organizational Commitment," it was found that the five dimensions of organizational spirituality accounted for 16.48% and 7% of the variance in predicting the three dimensions of organizational commitment (emotional, continuous, normative). The research findings indicated that individuals who experience spirituality at work feel a strong connection to their organization and exhibit a sense of interest and loyalty towards it. Furthermore, the perception of being viewed as a mere tool by the organization diminishes among individuals who experience spirituality at work.

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The Education organization, responsible for training human resources, holds a prominent and influential position in today's world. As such, the managers of this organization play a distinct role among their counterparts in other organizations. These managers enter the organization with diverse spiritual aspirations and possess the ability to exert influence over their superiors through their chosen approach. It is evident that the spiritual inclinations and conduct of these managers can either enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization or alter the attainment of its objectives. Conversely, the managers of this organization serve as exemplary figures for the recipients of its services. Their dedication to the organization's goals can serve as a behavioral guide, inspiring students to take action and strive for success. Consequently, the examination of the correlation between spirituality in the work environment and organizational commitment and ethics holds significant importance within this organization. Accordingly, the objective of this current research was to investigate the connection between organizational commitment and ethics, alongside spirituality at work, among the principals of boys' primary schools in the city of Qom.

Materials and Methods

The current research is descriptive of the correlation type. The statistical population in this research is all the male principals of primary school in Qom, whose number is 360. Using multi-stage random sampling, out of the four districts of Qom, districts 1 and 2 were selected according to the population of managers in each district. The sample size was calculated using the variance formula, 81 people. The following questionnaires were used to collect data:

Organizational Spirituality Questionnaire: The organizational spirituality questionnaire was designed by adapting two scales of spirituality in the workplace from Milliman and his colleagues (2003). It measures the organization's values and has a total of 20 questions. This questionnaire is designed based on the Likert scale and is scored from completely disagree (1) to completely agree (5). In the research (Abazari Mahmudabad, 2014) the validity of content and form of this questionnaire has been evaluated. Cronbach's alpha coefficient calculated in the research (Abazari Mahmudabad, 2014) for this questionnaire was estimated to be above 0.7. The reliability estimated using Cronbach's alpha in this research is 0.70.

Organizational Commitment Questionnaire: In this study, the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire of Allen and Mayer (1990) was used to measure the level of organizational

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commitment of male elementary school managers, which is a three-component questionnaire with emotional, continuous and It is normative and 24 items. This questionnaire is scored based on a seven-point Likert scale (from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7)). In a study conducted by Ahmadipour in Iran in 2018, with emphasis on Cronbach's alpha coefficient method, the validity of each of the subscales of the questionnaire was obtained and it was determined that the validity coefficients of emotional commitment were equal to 0.77. , the credit coefficients of continuous commitment are equal to 0.79 and the credit coefficients of normative commitment are also equal to 0.61. The reliability coefficients obtained by emphasizing the psychometric characteristics of the questionnaire are favorable and placed at an acceptable level (Saatchi et al., 2019). The reliability estimated using Cronbach's alpha in this research is 0.72.

Organizational Ethics Questionnaire: In this study, Hunt et al.'s Organizational Ethics Questionnaire (1989) was used to measure the level of organizational ethics of male elementary school managers. This questionnaire has 5 items. It is used to measure ethics in the organization. The scoring of the questionnaire is on a 7-point Likert scale. The validity (validity) of this questionnaire has been re-examined and confirmed by experts, and therefore it has the necessary validity (validity). For the reliability of the questionnaire, the results showed a high Cronbach's alpha for all questions. The reliability of the organizational ethics questionnaire was obtained by Karam Dokht (2013) and Mahdavi (2013) using Cronbach's alpha of 0.70. The reliability estimated using Cronbach's alpha in this research is 0.70.

Method of collecting information: In the first part of the research, the theoretical foundations of the research variables were studied through a library. Then, a letter of introduction was obtained for the education organization of Qom province to carry out the research. After examining the subject and the questionnaires by the security of the general organization, a letter was obtained to introduce the number of schools and male principals of each district to the primary education of the desired districts, according to the size of the statistical population and using the variance formula. The number of managers participating in this research was determined and selected by multi-stage random sampling and included in the research, and the questionnaires were distributed among them. Finally, after completing the questionnaire, data was extracted for statistical analysis by the target sample, and finally, it was analyzed using statistical methods. Regression analysis

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was used to analyze the data. After collecting the data, it was analyzed using SPSS version 26 software.

Results

Descriptive statistics including mean, standard deviation and normality of variables are reported in Table 1. Table 1 shows the statistics related to measuring the normal distribution of research variables with alpha accuracy greater than 0.05. Based on the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, all the variables studied in this research except the variable (organizational ethics scale); have a normal distribution.

Table 1. Statistical description of research variables

Variable	Mean	SD	K-S	p
Organizational ethics	75.81	6.11	1.19	0.11
Organizational commitment	15.90	1.87	0.72	0.66
Spirituality at work	77.79	7.12	1.95	0.001

The main hypothesis of the research states that there is a relationship between organizational commitment, organizational ethics and spirituality at work. Multiple regression test was used to check this hypothesis. Table 2 shows the correlation matrix between the scales of organizational commitment, organizational ethics and spirituality at work.

Table 2. Correlation matrix between scales of organizational commitment, organizational ethics and spirituality at work

Variable	Statistic	Organizational commitment	Organizational ethics	Spirituality at work
Organizational commitment	R	1	0.39	0.33
	p		0.001	0.002
	N	81	81	81
Organizational ethics	R	0.39	1	0.35
	p	0.001		0.001
	N	81	81	81
Spirituality at work	R	0.33	0.35	1
	p	0.002	0.001	
	N	81	81	81

The data in the table 2 shows the correlation matrix between the scales of organizational commitment, organizational ethics and spirituality in the work of managers. Based on the results obtained; There is a significant relationship between the organizational commitment scale and the organizational ethics scale at 0.391; There is a significant relationship between the scale of organizational commitment and the scale of spirituality at work at the rate of 0.334, and there is a

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significant relationship between the scale of organizational ethics and the scale of spirituality at work at the rate of 0.355. Table 3 shows the regression results for predicting organizational spirituality based on organizational commitment and organizational ethics.

Table 3. Regression results for predicting organizational spirituality based on organizational commitment and organizational ethics

Variable	Beta	T value	p	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F value	p
Organizational commitment	0.23	2.05	0.04	0.41	0.17	0.15	8.05	0.001
Organizational ethics	0.26	2.36	0.02					

The data in Table 3 shows the multiple correlation, coefficient of determination and F statistic of the scales of organizational commitment, organizational ethics and spirituality in the work of managers. Based on the results obtained there is a multiple and significant correlation between the scales of organizational commitment, organizational ethics and spirituality in the work of managers to the extent of 0.41. Based on the obtained coefficient of determination, more than 17% of the changes in the scale of organizational commitment and scale of organizational ethics are caused by the scale of spirituality at work. Based on the obtained F statistic, the regression model is significant with 99% confidence and we can rely on the changes in the scales of organizational commitment, organizational ethics and spirituality in the work of managers. Also, based on the results obtained from the beta coefficients of the regression model, the effect of the spirituality at work scale on the organizational commitment scale with a beta of 0.23, and the effect of the spirituality at work scale on the organizational ethics scale with a beta of 0.26 has been significant.

Discussion

One of the primary objectives of this investigation is to scrutinize the correlation between workplace spirituality and both organizational commitment and organizational ethics. The findings derived from the data analysis revealed a positive and substantial association between spirituality at work and organizational commitment as well as organizational ethics. This discovery aligns with numerous prior investigations in this particular domain. The outcomes of this study are consistent with the results obtained from studies conducted by other researchers in this field, which also establish the positive and significant link between spirituality at work, organizational commitment, and organizational ethics. Notably, the research conducted by Kolivand (2019), which explored the relationship between spirituality at work, professional ethics, and organizational commitment, is in agreement with these findings. The presence of a connection

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between organizational spirituality and both organizational commitment and organizational ethics can be attributed to the fact that spiritual individuals possess their own set of values and are dedicated to upholding those values. Consequently, it is not surprising that they exhibit higher levels of organizational or job commitment.

The findings of the current investigation indicate a noteworthy correlation between spirituality in the workplace and both organizational commitment and organizational ethics among principals of boys' elementary schools in the city of Qom. Principals play a crucial role in achieving the objectives of educational organizations. Considering the extensive managerial interactions with teachers, students, and parents, these principals serve as the pivotal link in the organizational hierarchy within the field of education and exert a significant guiding influence. Hence, the objective of the present study is to examine the relationship between spirituality and organizational commitment and organizational ethics among school administrators. By testing this hypothesis, the study endeavors to enhance and optimize the effectiveness of this particular group of organization employees. Based on the confirmation of the proposed hypotheses in this research, it appears that enhancing spirituality, fostering solidarity and meaning within the work environment, and aligning employees with the organization's values can yield positive organizational outcomes in terms of organizational commitment and organizational ethics. Consequently, this can lead to increased employee satisfaction and improved organizational effectiveness in the realm of education.

Research Limitations

Due to time constraints, only the questionnaire was employed as a research instrument, while other methods such as observation and interviews were not utilized. Additionally, some respondents exhibited a positive mindset, while others held a negative mindset. Moreover, the accuracy of the responses to the questions varied due to various reasons.

Research Suggestions

Considering that the tool employed to measure spirituality at work (the research questionnaire) solely relied on Western sources, it is recommended that future studies develop a research questionnaire based on religious texts. Given the confirmation of the correlation between spirituality in the workplace and organizational commitment and ethics, it can be recognized that the outlook of education managers towards spirituality in the workplace can contribute to

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enhancing the commitment and ethics of employees, resulting in an improvement in overall organizational performance. Consequently, education managers should devote considerable attention to the discourse surrounding spirituality in the workplace and strive to enhance it. Organizations that make an effort to foster the spiritual growth of their members have reported increased levels of creativity, satisfaction, team performance, as well as organizational commitment and ethics. The collection of patterns that constitute organizational culture plays a significant role in cultivating the awareness of managers and employees within an organization. Therefore, it is imperative for managers in organizations, particularly in developing countries, to adopt a combination of organizational culture patterns in order to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization and achieve strategic objectives.

As the correlation between spirituality in the workplace and organizational commitment and ethics is confirmed, it can be acknowledged that managers' perspective on spirituality can contribute to improving employees' commitment and, in turn, enhance the overall performance of the organization. Therefore, it is crucial to pay considerable attention to spirituality and strive to enhance it. Embracing religious principles and philosophies leads to commitment in work and employment, as well as loyalty to agreements and stipulations.

Given that one of the aspects of spirituality in the workplace that should be taken into account is the sense of unity, it is recommended to create a collaborative and cooperative environment instead of a competitive one. This will reduce employees' stress levels and foster social capital within the organization. Consequently, it will foster a sense of unity and harmony among employees. Providing a coherent elucidation of the organization's mission and vision to the workforce, conducting employee surveys to gauge organizational values, and attentively addressing the well-being, morale, and living conditions of employees can all contribute to a greater acceptance of the organization's objectives and values. As a result, it is imperative for managers to prioritize the spiritual needs of employees and establish a dynamic and motivating organizational atmosphere. Consequently, considering the substantiation of the correlation between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment and ethics, it is plausible to anticipate that implementing such measures will engender a sense of fulfillment among employees in carrying out their duties within the organization, thereby fostering heightened levels of organizational commitment and ethics.

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It is recommended to establish the spiritual support groups aimed at cultivating individual and organizational spirituality among school principals, provide the adequate and apt training programs to acquaint managers with the fundamental principles and underpinnings of organizational commitment, creation a suitable platform for managers to harness all available organizational resources in order to bolster organizational commitment and establishment of scholarly associations to enhance the development of ethical standards within the field of education.

Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Ethics statement

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by ethics committee of Farhangian University. The patients/participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

Author contributions

Z.A and F.A contributed to the study conception and design, material preparation, data collection and analysis. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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