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Conceptualization and Validation of Components and Characteristics of Spiritual Leadership in Northeastern Universities of Iran

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is exploring the components of spiritual leadership in northeastern universities in Iran. The method of this research is a Mix Method of exploratory. The statistical population was the faculty members of the northeastern universities of Iran. qualitative sample was using of purposeful sampling and 33 faculty members with a history of leadership or teaching leadership was selected. Quantitative sample was 271 faculty members of northeastern universities of Iran. they were selected through cluster random sampling. The interviewing method was used to collect the data in the qualitative section and in the quantitative section the questionnaire was used. The components of spiritual leadership were extracted using MAXQDA software and data content analysis method. Factor validation and AMOS software were used to measure and fit the components. In order to study the components, the factors were calculated and verified. The results of the research indicate that the leader of the native Iran's universities has an appropriate theoretical structure. The results of this research, which led to the identification of the components and sub-components of spiritual leadership, consist of 11 components and 38 sub-components. These results can not only be used as a tool for introducing the characteristics of spiritual leadership in universities, but also attempt to create patterns in the field of leadership for university administrators in an effective way through the use of spiritual leadership and create a spiritual working environment and improve interactions in the structure of the universities.

Introduction

One of the concerns of today's organizations, especially universities, is the spiritual problems and issues in the workplace. Spiritual leaders encourage their followers to think beyond themselves and consider the concerns of the society. For example, spiritual leadership results in employee empathy and the representation of organizational citizenship behavior. A spiritual leader tends to pursue a broader goal of life, meaning of the work, transcendence, belief, and feeling of the society. This process potentially has more harmonious feelings between organizational spirituality and personal spirituality, and the meaning of semantic, selfishness, and solidarity enhancement. Therefore, spiritual leadership affects the followers' perception of spirituality in the workplace (Afsar, Badir, and Kiani, 2016: 81). Representations such as escape from workplace, lack of motivation, wasting time at work, low productivity, low hours of useful work, wandering the clients in referring to organizations and offices, flattery and non-standard behaviors, show the weakness of spirituality in the organization and the university. Some believe that through the pursuit of spiritual leadership processes, the authorities of the organizations can increase the perceived inner values of leaders that may control cognition, feelings, and inspirational behavior (Tkaczynski & Arli, 2018: 81). This issue has been underestimated in Iranian universities with a special cultural context and values. Given the existence of the problem, the importance of research, the research gap in the studied community, indigenous neglect of the spiritual leadership in universities, the implications of these leaders for the fate of the students, the success of the university, and the organizations in which these fostered and educated graduates of these universities will work, the research seeks out to answer the question that what spiritual attributes and traits do the spiritual leaders in northeastern universities of Iran have? By reviewing these traits, they can be enhanced.

Theoretical framework

The purpose of the spiritual leader is to meet the followers' spiritual needs for the survival of spirituality and spiritual welfare through the sense of membership and meaning in the work with the creation of insight, vision and value consistency in individual, team, and organizational levels, leading to the development of moral and psychological health and commitment and productivity in the organization (Gholami, Siadat and Erfan, 2012: 5). The theory of spiritual leadership outlines a great vision in the organization and describes how leaders can encourage and motivate spirituality in the workplace (Weinberg and Locander, 2014: 395). The theory of spiritual leadership suggests hope, vision, and altruism and ethical communication with each other (Krishnakumar, Houghton, Neck and Ellison, 2015: 4). For example, hope and faith, an attempt to follow the organization's perspective in harmony with the values, attitudes and behavior of its leaders reflect love, altruism and loyalty. Both leaders and followers gain experience because they care about the interests

of their stakeholders and their members and because they are appreciated and concerned about each other (Fry et al., 2016: 4).

Methodology

The philosophy of this research is pragmatism, its method is mixed-exploratory, its approach is inductive-deductive, and its strategy in the qualitative part is phenomenology and in the quantitative part is descriptive-survey. The analysis method in the qualitative section is qualitative content analysis, and in the quantitative part is confirmatory factor analysis. The statistical population of the study includes 1334 faculty members of Mashhad Ferdowsi, Birjand and Hakim Sabzevari universities. Interviews were conducted with 32 faculty members who had the required qualities. In the quantitative part, a questionnaire was distributed using cluster sampling.

Discussion and Results

Based on the findings of the interviews with the sample members, a total of 11 components and 38 sub-components were obtained. These components include transformation, psychological integrity, meaningfulness, performance feedback, organizational commitment, membership, faith, the love for altruism, vision, value-orientation, and a model as social capital. In the quantitative part, the factor load of some items is less than 0.05 despite the significance. Therefore, to be more reliable, the values of CR and AVE indices of the convergent validity of the model were examined for all variables and components. Both of the values for all variables and components are more than 0.7 and 0.5, respectively. Accordingly, and considering the obtained results, convergent validity of the questionnaire can be ensured.

Conclusion

Spiritual leaders plan in terms of transformation according to the circumstances in the organization climate. As a result, the spiritual leader understands the transformation in advancing the goals of the organization. They have psychological integrity. This concept is introduced in the field of psychology as the concept of the fundamental factor of the unity of human behavior and emphasizes the organized and integrated aspects of personality act. They love their counterparts. The spiritual leader creates altruism by creating a sense of peace, alignment, and through caring and appreciating others. In the same vein, Fry et al. stated that one of the main goals of leaders is living in accordance with the positive or altruistic values, so that these values can be shared by members of the group and become a part of the organization (Fry et al. 2011: 4). In sum, to be more successful, spiritual leaders try to observe transformation, psychological integrity, meaningfulness, performance feedback, organizational commitment, membership, faith, the love for altruism, vision, value-orientation, and a model as social capital.

Keywords: spiritual leadership, psychological integrity, observe transformation, value-orientation