

# The Effect of Spiritual Leadership on Spiritual Health as Mediated by Organizational Support

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## Abstract


**Background and Objective:** Spiritual health is a basic dimension of well-being and overall health that coordinates other aspects of health. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of spiritual leadership on spiritual health with mediation of organizational support.

**Methods:** This study is an applied and correlational research based on structural equation modeling. The statistical population included the primary school teachers of Mirjaveh out of whom 215 teachers were selected by stratified random sampling method. Three questionnaires including spiritual leadership, spiritual health and organizational support were used for data collection. For data analysis the Pearson correlation coefficient was used. In this study, all the ethical considerations have been observed and no conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

**Results:** The mean scored for spiritual health, spiritual leadership and organizational support was  $215.22 \pm 18.65$ ,  $122.03 \pm 17.92$  and  $49.71 \pm 11.56$ , respectively. There was a significant correlation between spiritual leadership and spiritual health ( $r=0.228$ ,  $P<0.01$ ), spiritual leadership and organizational support ( $r=0.257$ ,  $P<0.01$ ), and organizational support and spiritual health ( $r=0.241$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). The direct effect of spiritual leadership on spiritual health ( $\beta=0.41$ ,  $t=4.72$ ), direct effect of spiritual leadership on organizational support ( $\beta=0.29$ ,  $t=3.02$ ) and direct effect of organizational support on spiritual health ( $\beta=0.23$ ,  $t=2.68$ ) was found to be significant. The indirect effect of spiritual leadership on spiritual health was also significant with the mediating role of organizational support ( $\beta=0.0667$ ).

**Conclusion:** Therefore, managers of organizations can improve the spiritual health of employees by employing a spiritual leadership style and organizational support.



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## Summary

### Background and Objective

Spiritual health refers to having a sense of acceptance, positive senses, morality, and sense of positive mutual relationship with a sacred sovereign and supreme power, with others and self which is produced by a dynamic and coordinated cognitive, emotional, active, and consequential process (1). Without spiritual

health, other biological, psychological, and social dimensions fail to improve (2). Thus, it is important to study the factors affecting spiritual health. The present study aims to investigate the role of spiritual leadership and perceived organizational support. The theory of spiritual leadership is based on hope, faith, and friendship and aims to create perspective and congruent values at individual, team, and organizational levels, and, finally, strengthens higher levels of organizational commitment and productivity (3).

Perceived organizational support depends on employees' perceptions regarding the importance of their welfare, comfort, and level of participation in the organization's success (4). Teachers face stressful challenges due to daily interactions with students, colleagues, and constant, continuous, and disintegrated demands of teaching and exhausting pressures. Constant job stress in the workplace has some physiological, psychological, and behavioral consequences including fatigue, depression, and indifference to work. Most teachers are suffering from psychological fatigue and experience significant mental desperation and exhaustion (5). Thus, it is important to identify the factors influencing teachers' health. During the recent years, investigating the status of physical, psychological, and social health of teachers has attracted researchers' attention. All researchers try to assess the status and work conditions of teachers to identify vulnerabilities and solve their problems to reach effective education. However, few studies have investigated teachers' spiritual health and its influential factors. Thus, identifying the factors related to teachers' spiritual health is essential for finding the strategies required for programmers and executive managers. Applying these strategies influences teachers' and, subsequently, the society's spiritual health. Teachers' spiritual health may be under the influence of leadership style of school managers and the extent of organizational support. Thus, studying these dimensions of the workplace and the related findings in this regard can be highly useful in programming, and determining and modifying the strategies for increasing teachers' spiritual health. The present study seeks to investigate the effect of spiritual leadership on teachers' spiritual health as mediated by perceived organizational support.

## Methods

**Compliance with ethical guidelines:** In carrying out this study, ethical considerations were taken into account; before distributing the questionnaires, the participants were informed about the subject and purpose of the study. They were completely free to quit the study and were assured that their information would be kept confidential. The participants answered the items of the questionnaires individually and the maximum time for completing the questionnaire was 25 minutes.

The present study is a correlational study. The sample population included 485 elementary school teachers in Mirjaveh during 2018-19, out

of whom 215 teachers were selected based on stratified sampling method and were given spiritual health, spiritual leadership and perceived organizational support questionnaires. Finally, Pearson correlation coefficient and structural equation modeling was used for data analysis.

## Results

Based on the results, the mean score related to spiritual health, spiritual leadership and organizational support was  $215.22 \pm 18.65$ ,  $122.03 \pm 17.92$  and  $49.71 \pm 11.56$ , respectively. There was a significant correlation between spiritual leadership and spiritual health ( $r=0.228$ ,  $P<0.01$ ), spiritual leadership and organizational support ( $r=0.257$ ,  $P<0.01$ ), and organizational support and spiritual health ( $r=0.241$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). Furthermore, the direct effect of spiritual leadership on spiritual health ( $\beta=0.41$ ,  $t=4.72$ ), direct effect of spiritual leadership on organizational support ( $\beta=0.29$ ,  $t=3.02$ ) and direct effect of organizational support on spiritual health ( $\beta=0.23$ ,  $t=2.68$ ) was found to be significant. The indirect effect of spiritual leadership on spiritual health was also significant with the mediating role of organizational support ( $\beta=0.0667$ ).

## Conclusion

Based on the findings, spiritual leadership has a positive and significant effect on teachers' spiritual health both directly and indirectly as mediated by perceived organizational support. It should be noted that spiritual leadership includes leadership service models, employee engagement and empowerment, and is based on the philosophy of service leadership, the type of leadership that emphasizes providing services to others, a general outlook on work, personal development, and joint decision-making (6). Certainly employees will feel organizational support and spiritual health when working with spiritual leaders. Such employees in the organization feel that they are fully supported by management and the organization, and that organizational support can affect their mental health (7-9). Thus, organization leaders can improve employees' spiritual health by adopting spiritual leadership style and through integrating honesty, humility, respecting others, equality, motivating others, praising others, and behavioral fairness in their leadership style. In addition, organization leaders can guarantee full health of employees by improving their status, providing organizational support, and allowing them to declare and propose freely without fear and by adopting fair procedures in organization and clarifying and informing the employees.

One of the limitations of this study was exclusive use of questionnaires for measuring spiritual health, spiritual leadership, and organizational support and limiting the population to one city and province. Thus, researchers should use a larger population in sampling and use complementary tools for measuring spiritual health, spiritual leadership, and organizational support.

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### Ethical considerations

This article is an excerpt from the master's thesis in the field of educational sciences of the first author of the article approved by the Graduate Council of Sistan and Baluchestan University, with No. 290, and dated 2/20/2017.

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### Conflict of interest

The authors reported no conflict of interest.

### Author's contributions

Distribution and collection of questionnaires: first author; and data collection, analysis and writing of the article: second author

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