Presenting a Practical Model of Reinforcing Spiritual Leadership in Educational Institutes (A Case Study)

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Abstract

The present study seeks to identify the relation between the components of spiritual leadership and to present a practical model to reinforce the spiritual leadership in Tabriz Branch, Islamic Azad University. The research is of descriptive type, and the statistical population consists of all the official personnel of Tabriz Branch. The research sample, with regard to the limited size of the population, has been calculated 70 through the use of the sampling formula for limited populations as well as the application of simple random sampling technique. In order to collect data, the researchers have used a standard questionnaire. For data analysis, the statistical t-test, the interpretative structural modeling (ISM) technique, and MICMAC analysis have been used. The results of examining the dimensions of spiritual leadership indicate that each of the mentioned dimensions is higher than average. Also, the results of interpretative structural modeling technique and MICMAC analysis show that the components of organizational vision, organizational commitment, and hope/faith are the most effective among the components of spiritual leadership.

Keywords: spiritual leadership, interpretative structural modeling, MICMAC

1. Introduction

Nowadays the most important factor in the productivity of organizations and, accordingly, in the whole society is the human resource. It goes without saying that the flourishing of each society lies within the improvement and training of its human resource; thus, in the recent years the subject that has drawn a lot of attention has been the characteristic features of spiritual leaders as well as the question of how it is possible to achieve the individual and organizational well-being of the personnel through resorting to spirituality (Fry & Matherly, 2006, p. 89). Also, in the recent years, the status of spirituality within the organizations has increasingly attracted the attention of the managers, supervisors, employers, and researchers as a necessity for the interactions between organizations and their personnel as well as the society (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000, p. 134). In other words, the term spirituality in leadership has been the focus of attention in the last decade (Gibson, 2000, p. 845). Several scholars have also inquired into the concept of spirituality in the science of leadership. The subject of spirituality in the organization is becoming significant in organizational behavior (Robbins, 2003, p. 15). Today's organizations attend to the spiritual need of their personnel, for it has been experienced that not meeting these needs will considerably decrease the individuals' performance and efficiency, will cause them to feel fed up with their jobs, and will reduce their willingness to do their work. Thus, the leader should influence his followers so that their power and ability to realize the organization's goals will increase. In such conditions, the leader pays special attention to various aspects of the followers such as mind (thought), heart (feelings, emotions), and soul besides their physical aspect, though in the past years leadership theories focused their most attention on the personnel's physical, emotional, and mental factors and neglected spirituality (Fry, 2003, p. 693).

Due to the fact that the term spirituality is used in various fields, it is difficult to define it. Hill, in his book "Spiritual Life", comments on the subtlety of defining spirituality, "While on the one hand we have to avoid ambiguity and abstraction, we should on the other hand, prevent hard and hasty definitions, for almost no term in our human language is accurate or suitable concerning spiritual realities". From Hill's point of view, indescribability of spirituality prevents giving a definition for it, yet others have attempted to define and specify spirituality. In a relatively comprehensive and accurate definition, spirituality has been considered as "an attempt

to create sensitivity toward others' egos, transcendental creatures and God, or as an enquiry into what is needed to become read humans, and as a quest to reach perfect humanity". It seems that this definition is of importance both theoretically and practically. On the one hand, it refers to the four dimensions of human relations, whose presence at every moment at least in one dimension is inevitable, and on the other hand, it suggests creating sensitivity toward establishing the four types of effective relationship to reach perfect humanity (Hinnells, 1445). Graber and Janson (2001) studied the rationality of the spiritual dimension in organizational life. They also concluded that the realization of spiritual growth should not be detached from work, and that this challenge is of interest to organizations due to equalizing the individual, internal, and involuntary factors of people's experience with the rationality of the efficiency and self-sacrifice. Beckham (1996) claims that when spirituality is developed in the work environment, creative energy is released. According to another definition, leadership must also have the spirituality dimension. As a result, these issues became expanded, and characterization of leadership succeeded in developing the work life that would benefit the members of the organization and the society (Oliveria, 2004, p. 17).

The first responsibility of the leader is to define and describe reality, and the last one is to thank the followers. In between the two responsibilities, the leader must be a servitor and indebtor, which is defined by Max D. Perry as spiritual leadership (Bishop & School, 2006, p. 851). In fact, the leadership movement comprises serving models of leadership, involving the personnel and empowering them, and it is based on the philosophy of serving leadership. It is a kind of leadership which emphasizes serving others, general viewpoint on work, individual growth, and collective decision making (Kakabadse & Kouzmin, 2002). In other words, the spiritual leader is one who, by drawing on the values, interpretations, and behaviors necessary for his as well as others' motivation, will provide the spiritual survival of the organization members. To put it in other words, the spiritual leader, by creating sensitivity toward himself, others, and metaphysics within the organization members, makes them interested in their jobs and careers; then he motivates them to perform their job duties, and finally causes their spiritual survival. To sum up, spiritual leadership is a causal theory of organizational transformation which has come into being in order to create a learning organization with an intrinsic stimulus. With regard to the transformational leadership theory, spiritual leadership theory, too, harmonizes their leaders' ability to utilize the followers' capabilities in today's changing environment and looks at leadership from a new point of view (Fry et al., 2005).

The spiritual leader, with his unique characteristics, creates a vision of the organization's future and influences the personnel in such a way that they believe in the realization of the organization's vision and become hopeful about the organization's future; therefore, he increases the personnel's intrinsic motivation for additional endeavor. On the other hand, by propagating altruistic culture among the members of the organization, he causes them to think deeply about themselves and their past lives, and to establish desirable relations with others. The spiritual leader is one who, by utilizing the values, interpretations, and behaviors needed for his as well as others' motivation, will bring about the spiritual survival of the organization members. He does this in two stages:

- While each of the leaders and followers feels that he/she has an important and significant job, the spiritual leader proceeds to create a common vision.

- Spiritual leadership by establishing organizational/social culture based on human values, causes the personnel to show a special interest in themselves and others and feel that others are also of importance and should be appreciated for the jobs they do (Fry, 2003, p. 71).

Generally, the leadership theory, which indeed shows the causal model of spiritual leadership, has been devised by Fry (2003). Spiritual leadership theory is a causal theory for organizational transformation which has come into existence in order to create a learning organization with an intrinsic stimulus. Spiritual leadership theory has been developed on the basis of intrinsic motivation model, which combines vision, hope/faith in the realization of the goal, altruistic love, and spiritual survival. The goal of spiritual leadership is to pay attention to the followers' basic needs so that it might bring about their spiritual survival. Such a leader will cause the personnel to realize the true meaning of their jobs and to value the jobs they do (meaning/calling). Furthermore, they have the feeling that their job is of importance to the organization and their colleagues (membership). These leaders create common vision and values for the personnel and bring about their team and organizational empowerment, which will ultimately increase the level of the personnel's well-being, safety, and health as well as their productivity and organizational commitment. In short, the components of spiritual leadership, according to Fry, are: vision, hope/faith, altruistic love, meaning/calling, membership, organizational commitment, and performance feedback.

In addition to the above-mentioned theoretical discussions, regarding the importance of spiritual leadership,

various studies have been done in this field, some of which will be cited below.

Shojaei and Khazei (2013) in a research entitled "Correlation between spiritual leadership and the quality of working life in employees of Qazvin University of Medical Sciences (2011)" have come to the conclusion that there were significant correlations between the spiritual leadership and its dimensions including the institutional vision, altruism, faith in work ,membership in organizations, organizational commitment, and performance feedback and the quality of working life in the employees of Qazvin University of Medical Sciences. No significant correlation between the meaningful work and the employees' quality of working life was found. In general, there was a significant correlation between the spiritual leadership and the employees' quality of working life.

Fry et al. (2011), by using structural equation modeling(SEM) in a study under the title of "Impact of spiritual leadership on unit performance", revealed a positive and significant relationship between spiritual leadership and several unit-level outcomes, including organizational commitment and four measures of performance. These relationships were explained or mediated by spiritual well-being. Implications for research and practice are discussed.

Faith (2010), in their investigation "Lessons in spiritual leadership from Kenyan women", found that beneficence, courage, and hope are comparable to existing Western conceptualizations, whereas ubuntu is unique to the African context.

Fry and Cohen (2009) in an article entitled "Spiritual Leadership as a Paradigm for Organizational Transformation and Recovery from Extended Work Hours Cultures" suggested spiritual leadership as a paradigm for organizational transformation and recovery from the negative aspects of EWHC to enhance employee well-being and corporate social responsibility without sacrificing profitability, revenue growth, and other indicators of financial performance.

Fry et al. (2005) in their article "Spiritual leadership and army transformation: Theory, measurement, and establishing a baseline " concluded that spiritual leadership theory offers promise as a springboard for a new paradigm for leadership theory, research, and practice given that it (1) incorporates and extends transformational and charismatic theories as well as ethics- and values-based theories (e.g., authentic and servant leadership) and (2) avoids the pitfalls of measurement model misspecification.

Fry and Matherly (2006) in a research entitled "Spiritual Leadership and Organizational Performance: An Exploratory Study" found that their results (% of variation explained) provide additional support for SLT as a significant and important driver of organizational commitment (80%) and productivity (56%) as well as sales growth (13%).

Burke (2006) in his study "Leadership and spirituality" came to the conclusion that effective leadership is multi-disciplinary, involving not only those disciplines of sociology, psychology and technology, but that of spirituality as well. This new approach is effective because of the different ways it offers for gaining deeper insights into a leader's own spiritual self, but also beyond this to others with whom the leader interacts, and those who are affected by the results of their leadership

Rio (2005) in a research investigated the role of leadership and spirituality in the efficiency and effectiveness of leadership and organization. He has introduced spirituality as an effective factor in the enhancement of leaders' efficiency. Fry (2003) has investigated spiritual leadership and its role in creating motivation in members of the organization. He believes that one of the most important but neglected factors of motivation theories is spiritual leadership. Biberman et al. (1999) have looked at spiritual leadership from a structural viewpoint and have considered it as ethics and values in the organization, management of emotions, and other theories such as charismatic leadership, participant leadership, transformational leadership, conversion leadership, and servant leadership. However, distinguishing these structures from one another is difficult and needs special scrutiny.

With regard to the foregoing points, nowadays recognizing the status of spiritual leadership in the organization as well as reinforcing it is considered a positive and constructive activity. In the present article, too, the aim is to identify the status of Islamic Azad University, Tabriz Branch, from the standpoint of the rate of attention paid to spiritual leadership as well as to present a practical model to reinforce spiritual leadership. On these grounds, the following research questions have been posed:

- What is the status of each of the components of spiritual leadership in Islamic Azad University, Tabriz Branch?
- What is the reinforcing model of spiritual leadership like in Islamic Azad University, Tabriz Branch?

- Of the spiritual leadership components, which one is the most effective on the other components in Islamic Azad University, Tabriz Branch?

2. Methodology and Measurement Tools

This research is an applied one regarding its objective, and from the viewpoint of method, it is a descriptive study. The statistical population includes all the official personnel of Islamic Azad University, Tabriz Branch, totaling 150. The research sample size has been 70, obtained through the use of the sample size formula (equation (1)). In this formula, with the use of the upper and lower limits of the alternatives of each item, the following values have been obtained: σ =0.67, $Z_{0.025}$=1.96 and e=0.15

$$n = \frac{NZ_{\alpha/2}^2 \bar{\sigma}_x^2}{e^2(N-1) + Z_{\alpha/2}^2 \bar{\sigma}_x^2} \tag{1}$$

In order to select the research samples, the researchers have used simple random sampling technique. To examine the research questions, Fry's model has been utilized. For this purpose, Fry's standard questionnaire (2003) was distributed among the subjects, and the necessary data were gathered. Since the questionnaire used is a standard one, there was no need to test its validity or reliability. After identifying the status of the statistical population from the viewpoint of spiritual leadership structure, the researchers used paired comparisons questionnaire to determine the diagraph of the relations between the different components of spiritual leadership. Ultimately, through the use of ISM technique, they formulated the practical model of spiritual leadership. Also, through the use of MICMAC analysis, the leading power and the dependence power of the components were determined.

In this paper, the components are as follows:

A: Vision

B: Hope/Faith

C: Altruistic Love

D: Meaning /Calling

E: Membership

F: Organizational Commitment

G: Performance feedback

3. Findings

Initially, the data were gathered and summarized, and then, their normality was examined. In order to test the normality of the data obtained for the research variables, we used Kolmogorov-Smirnoff test. In the data normality test, the null hypothesis states that the distribution of the data is based on normal distribution, and the alternative hypothesis states the opposite. Regarding table (1), the significance level (sig) of all the variables was higher than 0.05. Thus, it can be said that the distribution of the data obtained from the research questionnaires was normal. For this reason, the statistical t-test was used to evaluate the research questions. In order to use t-test, due to the fact that each item had 5 choices, the test value was considered 3. Therefore, we can write:

$$\begin{cases} H_0 : \mu \leq 3 \\ H_1 : \mu > 3 \end{cases}$$

Ultimately, the results obtained from SPSS analysis came as Table 1 below.

Table1. Results obtained from testing research questions

Spiritual leadership dimensions	Results of k-S test			Result of t-test			95% Interval Difference	Confidence of the
	N	K-S	Sig	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Lower	Upper
Vision	70	1.321	.061	7.875	69	.000	.4075	.6840
Hope/Faith	70	1.341	.055	16.337	69	.000	.9331	1.1926
Altruistic Love	70	.815	.520	.653	69	.516	-.1089	.2150
Meaning /Calling	70	1.539	.018	13.828	69	.000	.8354	1.1170
Membership	70	1.188	.119	5.076	69	.000	.2861	.6567
Organizational Commitment	70	1.391	.042	11.618	69	.000	.6804	.9625
Performance feedback	70	1.055	.216	2.932	69	.005	.0898	.4721

The obtained results indicate that the indices organizational vision, hope/faith, meaning/calling, membership, organizational commitment, and performance feedback are higher than average in the statistical population under study. On the whole, regarding Table (1), it can be concluded that the value of (sig) for altruistic love is higher than 5%; thus, the null hypothesis (H_0) is not rejected and the index altruistic love is not significant; i.e., the obtained mean for altruistic love cannot be generalized to the statistical population.

Finally, in order to present a model of reinforcing spiritual leadership in Islamic Azad University, Tabriz Branch, the researchers used ISM technique (Warfield, 1974; Kannan, 2008). For this purpose, in the present research, in order to identify the relationship between the variables, we made use of expert judgment system (Delphi's Method). Therefore, a questionnaire was distributed among a group of experts with the aim of investigating the reciprocal effects of pairs of spiritual leadership dimensions from the viewpoint of effectiveness and being affected. Through the use of the questionnaire and Delphi's Method, all the paired relations possible among the spiritual leadership components were enquired from the experts, and after collecting the data, the majority of votes was obtained from the relation $[\frac{n}{2}+1] = \frac{70}{2}+1=36$ and was determined as the collective judgment criterion for the relationship between pairs of components. After collecting the questionnaires, we obtained the primary diagraph from the relationships between the indices of the system (Figure 1)
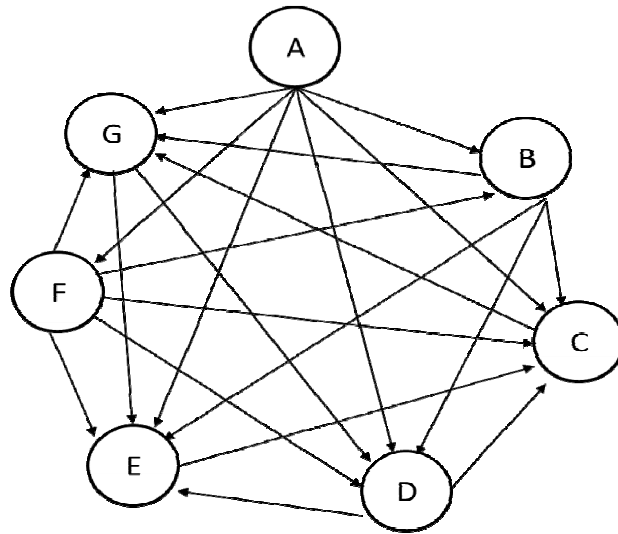
Figure1. Primary diagraph of the relations among spiritual leadership dimension

Based on the diagraph of relations, the relations between pairs of indices have been entered into adjacency relations table (Table 2), and the conceptual relations matrix among the variables (D_{ij}) has been formulated. All the direct relations between the pairs of indices in D_{ij} matrix are clearly shown in Table 2. For instance, number 1 in line two (hope/faith dimension) and column three (altruistic love dimension) indicates the effectiveness of hope/faith on altruistic love. From the diagraph of relations, too, all the possible reachability relations have been obtained through expanding Dij matrix (Table 3). This table is called modified reachability table.

Table 2. Adjacency relations (D_{ij})

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
A	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
B	0	0	1	1	1	0	1
C	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
D	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
E	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
F	0	1	1	1	1	0	1
G	0	0	0	1	1	0	0

In order to obtain all the direct and indirect relations between pairs of indices (nodes), we first added the identification matrix and D_{ij} matrix, and then empowered the resulting matrix to the exponent of (n-1), in which n represents the apices on the route. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Modified reachability table (Ultimate reachability matrix T_{ij})

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
A	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
B	0	1	1	1	1	0	1
C	0	0	1	1	1	0	1
D	0	0	1	1	1	0	1
E	0	0	1	1	1	0	1
F	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
G	0	0	1	1	1	0	1

Table 3 has been used for the ranking of the components. For this purpose, through the use of Table 3, the reachability and antecedent sets have been specified for each of the components. For instance, in the line related to membership, all the compartments whose corresponding indices have number one are considered as the reachability set of membership dimension; also, in the column related to the membership dimension, all the compartments whose corresponding indices have number one are considered as the antecedent sets. The combination of the reachability and antecedent sets makes up the intersection. The indices in which the reachability set and antecedent set are one and the same are known as level one index (Table 4).

Table 4. Stage one: determining the level of effect in ISM technique

Index	Reachability set	Antecedent set	Intersection	Output indices
A:	A, B, C, D, E, F, G	A	A	-
B:	B, C, D, E, G	A, B, F	B	-
C:	C, D, E, G	A, B, C, D, E, F, G	C, D, E, G	C, D, E, G
D:	C, D, E, G	A, B, C, D, E, F, G	C, D, E, G	C, D, E, G
E:	C, D, E, G	A, B, C, D, E, F, G	C, D, E, G	C, D, E, G
F:	B, C, D, E, F, G	A, F	F	-
G:	C, D, E, G	A, B, C, D, E, F, G	C, D, E, G	-

In calculating the output of Table 4, first of all by using the numbers common between the reachability set and antecedent set, we obtain the intersection set. Then, in the line where the intersection set and the reachability set are equal, the output indices make up the stage. Therefore, the output of ISM technique for level one is: L1={C, D, E, and G}. Next, after deleting lines and columns of C, D, E, G, we formulate Table 5 in the same way as the above stages.

Table 5. Stage two: determining the level of effect in ISM technique

Index	Reachability set	Antecedent set	Intersection	Output indices
A:	A, B, F	A	A	-
B:	B	A, B, F	B	B
C:	B, F	A, F	F	-

The output of ISM technique for level two is: L_2= {B}. In Tables 6 and 7, too, the output of levels three and four have been obtained in the aforementioned way.

Table 6. Stage three: determining the level of effect in ISM technique

Index	Reachability set	Antecedent set	Intersection	Output indices
A:	A, F	A	A	-
F:	F	A, F	F	F

The ISM technique output for level three is: $L_3 = \{F\}$.

Table 7. Stage four: determining the level of effect in ISM technique

Index	Reachability set	Antecedent set	Intersection	Output indices
A:	A	A	A	A

The ISM technique output for level four is: $L_{4=} \{A\}$.

After the relations and levels of variables have been determined, they can be drawn as a model. As has been shown in Figure 2, the variables are arranged from top to bottom according to their levels. In the present research, the variables have been placed on four levels (figure 2). On level one, the components "C, D, E, G" are placed, which indicates the high dependence rate of these four variables in the said system and shows their importance in the system. Also, on levels two and three, the components "F" and "B" have direct effect on level one. On the lowest level lies the component "A", which has direct influence on levels two and three. This indicates that reinforcing this index will promote and improve the other indices of spiritual leadership and will ultimately cause the reinforcement of spiritual leadership in Islamic Azad University, Tabriz Branch.
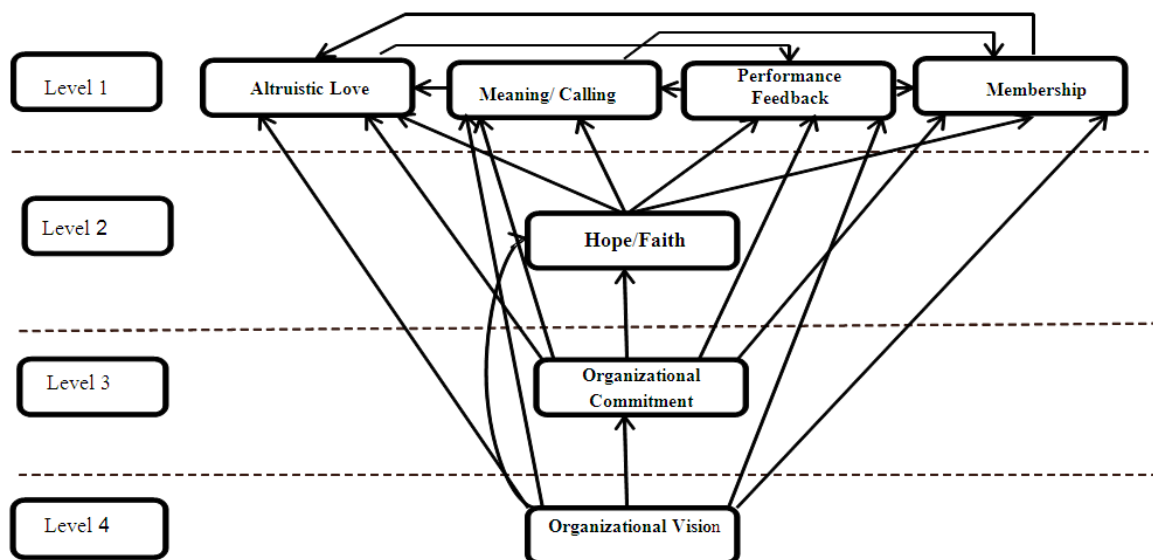

Figure 2. Model of internal relations among spiritual leadership dimensions

The obtained model indicates that the component organizational vision is the most effective one in reinforcing spiritual leadership. Also, each of the components on the lower levels affects the higher level components. For instance, the component organizational vision affects all the other components of spiritual leadership.

For the analysis of the obtained model, cross-impact matrix multiplication applied to classification (MICMAC) analysis method can be used.

In MICMAC analysis, the variables are classified into four groups according to power of leading and power of dependence. For this analysis, the leading power and dependence power of each component are calculated based on Table 3; that is, the sum of ones corresponding to each component in the relevant line makes up the leading

power, and in the relevant column, it makes up the dependence power of that component. The results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Leading power and dependence power

Components	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Leading power	7	5	4	4	4	6	4
Dependence power	1	3	7	7	7	2	7

From Table 8, it is possible to draw the diagram of the dimensions of spiritual leadership from the viewpoint of leading power and dependence power (Figure 3).
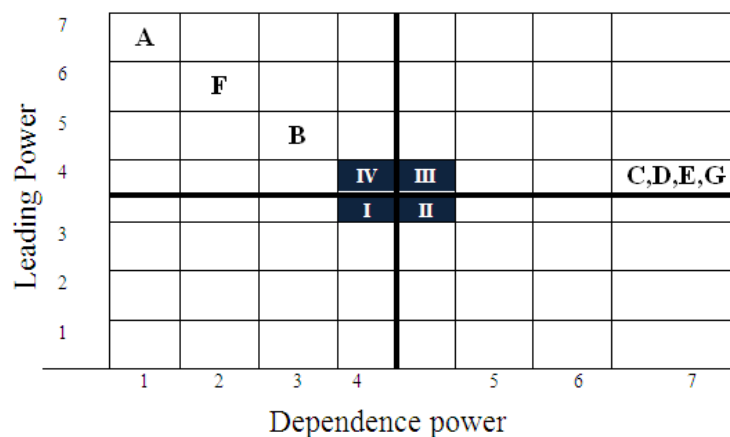

Figure 3. Classification of spiritual leadership dimensions from the viewpoint of leading power and dependence power

The groups present in Figure 3 are defined as follows:

Group one: These are the variables that have weak leading power and weak dependence power. They are almost detached from the system because they have weak links to the system (In the sample under study, no variable has been placed in this group).

Group two: These are the variables that have weak leading power but strong dependence power (In the sample under study, no variable has been placed in this group, either).

Group three: These are the variables that possess strong leading power and strong dependence power (In the sample under study, the components organizational commitment (F), membership (E), meaning/calling (D), and altruistic love (C) have been placed in this group).

Group four: These are the variables that have strong leading power but weak dependence power. In this research, the components organizational vision (A), hope/faith (B), and organizational commitment (F) are in this group. In the analysis of the system of leading power and dependence power, these components act as the structural cornerstone of the system; as a result, in initiating a fundamental change and transformation in the performance of the system, these components should be emphasized in the first step (Karbasian et al., 2011, p. 127).

4. Conclusion

The success or failure of organizations depends, to a great extent, on the quality of their leadership. Leaders draw on special skills and characteristics in order to attain the organization's goals. In today's world, not only do the survival, growth, and development of organizations depend on their spiritual leadership, but the survival of the society is also directly related to the role of leadership in the organizations. Thus, it can be said that spiritual leadership is the most important principle for productivity and economic competitions as well as the development of social well-being, and with regard to the principle that human resources of each organization are among the most important instruments in attaining the goals and objectives of that organization, the quality of

their performance plays a significant role in gaining the clients' satisfaction. For this purpose, in the present study, the researchers have first investigated the dimensions of spiritual leadership based on Fry's model in Islamic Azad University, Tabriz Branch. The results indicate that in the sample under study, all the components of spiritual leadership are higher than average (number 3). The results obtained from t-test also indicate that the results of data analysis concerning all the components except the component "altruistic love" can be generalized to the research population. In order to present the model of reinforcing spiritual leadership in the organization under study, too, the researchers have made use of ISM technique. The results show that the components "organizational vision", "organizational commitment", and "hope/faith" have a higher status from the viewpoint of leading power. Among these components, too, the component "organizational vision" is the foundation of the other components; that is, reinforcing this component will cause the reinforcement of spiritual leadership in Islamic Azad University, Tabriz Branch. Finally, through the use of MICMAC analysis, the researchers have specified the leading power and dependence power of each component. The component "organizational vision" has the highest rate of leading power and the lowest rate of dependence power. The results obtained from MICMAC analysis also indicate the direct and indirect effect of the component organizational vision on the other components of spiritual leadership.

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