

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY AND THE QUALITY OF WORKING
LIFE
CASE STUDY: RAZAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Hassan Hojjati

Department of Management and Accounting, Qazvin Branch, Islamic Azad University, Qazvin, Iran

Dr. Naser Hamidi

Corresponding Author: nhamidi1344@gmail.com

Department of Management and Accounting, Qazvin Branch, Islamic Azad University, Qazvin, Iran

Abstract

This study aims to investigate the relationship between workplace spirituality and the quality of working life in Razan Department of Education .The present study is a descriptive-survey Study, In terms of the nature of the study, it is a correlational study which investigates the relationship between workplace spirituality and the quality of working life. Also, in terms of the objective, it is an applied study .The study population consists of all staffs in Razan Department of Education that were 1,000 subjects among which 278 ones were selected as the study sample through relatively stratified random sampling. Data collection was done in a field method and by questionnaire. To assess spirituality in the workplace and quality of working life, consolidated questionnaire of Milliman (2007) and Walton (1975) was applied .In order to analyze the data, regression analysis was used. Finally, the results obtained from the study indicated that workplace spirituality has a significant and positive relationship with the quality of work life.

Key words: Workplace spirituality, Quality of working life, Razan Department of Education, Regression analysis

1. Introduction

In a new look at human ,emphasis can be seen on ideal as well as excellence human. The needs of such man will become higher and his research will focus on satisfying the needs at higher levels .Spirituality in an organization that is today slowly penetrating to business meets this need and involves attempt to search and find the ultimate goal in a person for working life in order to establish a strong relationship between individual , his colleagues, and others who somehow participate in the work with him and also, compatibility or unity between fundamental beliefs of a person and values of his organization .Today, the intervention of spirituality in the fields of organizational studies whether in the form of instrumental rationality or beyond is

Inevitable .Also, nowadays ,in contemporary management, the concept of quality of working life has become a major social issue in the world and requires the effort of organization manager to formulate protectionist policies of human resources .Measures such as amenities, health facilities, job security, job design, importance of job, career advancement and development, education, and improvement leads to improve the quality of life of staffs.

Spirituality

Since this term is used in various fields ,it is difficult to be defined. Underhill (1937) believes that “while on the one hand, we have to avoid ambiguity and abstraction, on the other hand ,we should prevent hard and hasty definitions because no word in our human language is appropriate on spiritual realities” (AbediJafar and Rastgar 2007, 104).From the perspective of some people such as Underehill, ineffability of spirituality prevents to define it while others have attempted to define and describe it in detail. Today, spirituality has a growing range that involves various doctrinal systems and a variety of doctrines .Spirituality was sometimes considered as an aspect of religion but, now, religion is seen as one of the spiritual ways (Rastegar, 2006: 42).

Here, we give some definitions of spirituality proposed in recent studies:

1- Spirituality is energy, meaning, objective, and consciousness in life (Cavanagh, 1999: 189). These definitions refer to energy or inspirational force that leads people toward a certain objective. The life-giving force gives their lives a special meaning and concept.

2- Spirituality is a constant search for finding the meaning and objective of life, deep understanding of the value of life, the extent of the universe, the available natural forces, and system of personal beliefs (Myers, 1990).

3- Spirituality is an attempt to foster sensitivity to self, others, inhuman creatures, and superior force (God), or search for what is needed for being human and achieving perfect humanity (Hinnells, 1995 cited by AbediJafari and Rastgar, 2007: 104).

Milliman et al (2003) also provided three levels for spirituality including individual ,group, and organizational levels. At the individual level, spirituality is an attempt to find meaning and objective in working life. In the group level, it is the strong relationship between colleagues and those who somehow participate in the work, and finally, at the organizational level, it is the proportion of main beliefs of individuals and values of the organization (Gibbons, 1999).

The quality of working life

The quality of working is to satisfy the different needs of staffs including social needs ,the need to respect, and the need to use skills .Lawler defines the quality of working life based on job attributes and working conditions .He stated that the main dimension of the quality of working life in an organization is to improve the productivity and health of staffs. The main action related to the improvement of productivity and health of staffs is job design .Nevertheless, he accepts the fact that the quality of working life is a complex concept because it is comprised of mental and physical health of staffs .From the perspective of Akdere, Mesut, the quality of working life is as a method or approach using certain methods and techniques to improve and modify the work. The quality of working life in an organization is estimated through the measurement of satisfaction, low absenteeism, and high motivation of staffs.

A bulk of studies has been conducted in this regard .Sarlak et al (2012) conducted a study entitled “Designing the Spirituality-Oriented Model in Higher Education in Iran” that aimed to achieve a comprehensive model for higher education in Iran with spirituality-oriented organizational approach .They concluded that organizational, individual, and environmental factors affected the creation of spirituality-oriented organization through the spiritual atmosphere of organization and the spiritual atmosphere of organization influenced the creation of spirituality oriented

organization. Mirkamali and Narenjisani (2008) conducted a study entitled “Investigation of the Relationship between Quality of Working Life and Job Satisfaction” between faculty members in Tehran University and Sharif University in which the obtained results indicated that there is a positive relationship between quality of work life and job satisfaction .There is also no significant difference between quality of work life and job satisfaction in professors of the mentioned universities. There is only a slight difference in terms of social integration and cohesion considered as dimensions of the quality of work life; in other words, the faculty members in Sharif University has more social integration and cohesion compared to the professors in Tehran University.

In a study entitled “model of workplace spirituality which leads to a spiritual organization”, Ropria (2010) stated that spirituality means philosophical orientation that expresses nothing is real unless spirit .However, in the workplace, the definition of spirituality cannot be experienced in this way because it is very abstract and complicated .Also, it is emphasized that workplace spirituality is defined using seven principles :creativity, communication, respect, insight, partnership, energy and flexibility and it is claimed that the seven principles are interrelated and important. This study proposes a perceptual influence of spirituality and workplace spirituality leading to the emergence of spiritual organizations.(gilania 2013a) the quality of work life is very important for employes. ,Yavari et al (2009) conducted a study entitled “Comparison of Quality of Working Life and its Subscales among Faculty Members in Departments and Educational Groups of Physical Education at Public Universities” in which the results study showed that the mean quality of working life is 51.78% in departments of physical education and 49.46% in the educational groups .According to the results of this study ,no significant difference in the quality of working life has been observed between departments and independent educational groups of physical education and there was only a significant difference in the dimension of development of human capabilities .There was a significant relationship between age and teaching experience of the faculty members with quality of working life and some of its dimensions(gilania,2013) and in the dimension of social dependence of working life, there have been differences between men and women .There has been no significant difference between the quality of working life and its dimensions in relation to marital status.

2. Conceptual model of the study:

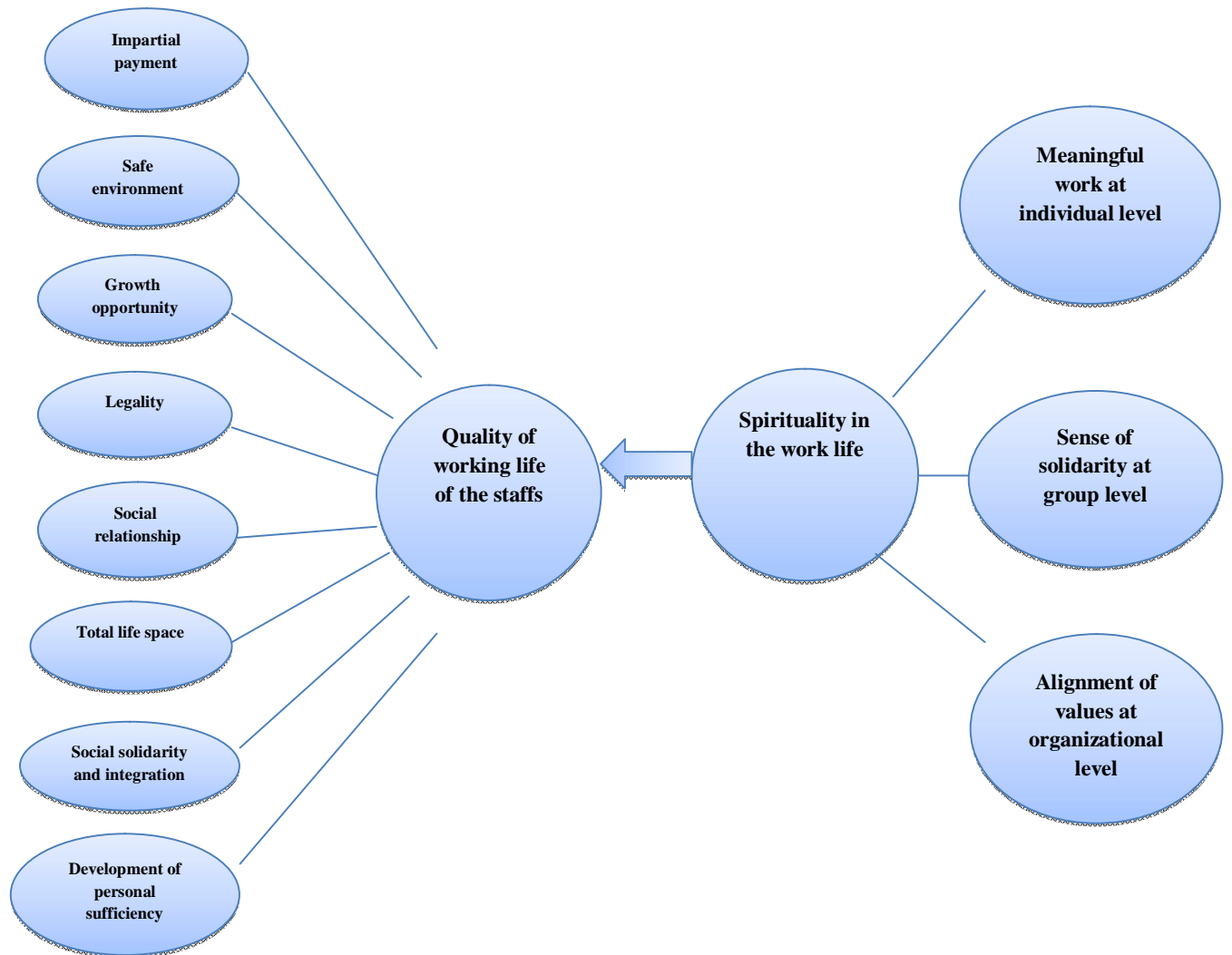


Figure 1: Conceptual model of the study based on the studies by Milliman et al (2003) and Walton (1975)

As a final point ,it should be added that Department of Education is one of the most important educational institutions in the country which plays a large role in training the next generation and specialist human resource .Therefore, improving the quality of working life of staffs and teachers in the organization can influence their work .But for many reasons such as a lot of work and monotonous workplace, staffs feel no good satisfaction with their workplace and this occurs issues such as leaving the job, asking early retirement, etc. In this regard, Department of Education has done many measurements to create an appropriate workplace one of which is to make it spiritual .The issue in the Department of Education is that despite measures required by authorities and managers of the organization, withdrawal of staffs from and discontent with the organization are still observed .Now, the question which occupies the researcher's mind is whether or not there is a relationship between workplace spirituality and the quality of working life of staffs in Department of Education. And which dimensions of quality of work life has

relationship with workplace spirituality? To answer these questions, this study intends to investigate the relationship between quality of work life and dimensions of quality of work life of staffs in Razan Department of Education.

3. The Study Hypotheses

Main hypothesis

There is a significant relationship between workplace and quality of work life of the staffs.

Sub-hypotheses

- There is a significant relationship between meaningful work at individual level and quality of working life of the staffs.
- There is a significant relationship between sense of solidarity at group level and quality of working life of the staffs.
- There is a significant relationship between the alignments of values at organizational level and quality of working life of the staffs.

4. Methodology

This is a descriptive study which is applied in terms of the objective. Also, in terms of the nature, the study is a correlational study, and in terms of data collection, it is a field one. Also, the instrument to collect the data is questionnaire.

Instrument for data collection

The questionnaire used in this study is the consolidated questionnaire of work place spirituality (Milliman, 2003) and the quality of working life (Walton, 1975) including 46 items. To determine the content validity in the study, referring to the standard questionnaires in books, available questionnaires, and various theses, the researcher selected standard Milliman and Walton questionnaire. Then, by referring to professors and experts, the desired changes and modifications were applied and the final questionnaire was formulated. To calculate the reliability of the questionnaires, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used and all items in the questionnaire had coefficient higher than 0.7 and the reliability of all items was also approved.

Statistical population and sample and sampling method

The population consists of all the staffs in Razan Department of Education that were 1,000 cases including 915 teachers and 85 employees. Given the size of the population, to determine the size of the sample, random stratified sampling method was used in which 278 ones were determined.

5. Results

Table1: Result of Spearman correlation test

Variable	Statistics	Meaningful work	Correlation	Alignment of values	Quality of working life
Meaningful work	Correlation coefficient	1.000	0.991**	0.990**	0.993**

	Significance	-	0.000	0.000	0.000
Correlation	Correlation coefficient	0.991**	1.000	0.989	0.996**
	Significance	0.000	-	0.000	0.000
Alignment of values	Correlation coefficient	0.990**	0.989**	1.000	0.996**
	Significance	0.000	0.000	-	0.000
Quality of working life	Correlation coefficient	0.993**	0.996**	0.996**	1.000
	Significance	0.000	0.000	0.000	-

The value of the significance of correlation test is less than 0.05 in all the defined relations which indicates that the null hypothesis. The lack of correlation between variables at the level of confidence of 95% is rejected. As a result, it can be said that there is a strong correlation among the variables, thus, the definition of a regression equation seems logical among them.

Table2: Result from fitting Regression model to observations

Model	Independent variable	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Durbin-Watson
1	Alignment of values	0.994 ^a	0.989	0.989	1.710
2	Correlation	0.994 ^b	0.994	0.994	
	Alignment of values				
3	Meaningful work	0.997 ^c	0.995	0.995	
	Correlation				
	Alignment of values				

According to the variables defined in the above tables and their effect on the dependent variable, three models can be fitted to the data. In model 1, the independent variable includes the alignment of values and the dependent variable is the quality of working life. The value of the goodness of R² is equal to 0.989 which reflects that 99% of the error variance of the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable. Since the value of the goodness of fitting is close to 1, it can be concluded that the fitting of the model to data is logic.

In model 2, the independent variable includes correlation and alignment of values and the dependent variable contains quality of working life and in Model 3, the independent variable is meaningful work, correlation, and alignment of values and the dependent variable contains quality of working life. The value of goodness of fitting R² is 0.994 and 995 in Models 2 and 3 which represents that 99% of the error variance of the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable. Since value of the goodness of fitting is close to 1, it can be concluded that fitting of the model to data is logic. The Since camera-Watson statistics is close to 2, it can be said that probably, the model of data fitted to observations is not faced with difficulty that is the

assumption of independency of the variance of the errors that is one of sale of fitting regression model is established.

Table3: Results of the analysis of variance for the investigation of significance in the model

Model	Error	Sum of squares	Df	Mean of squares	F statistic	Significance
1	Regression	17.776	1	17.776	2.422E4	0.000 ^a
	Remainder	0.203	276	0.001		
	Total	17.978	277			
2	Regression	17.870	2	8.935	2.270E4	0.000 ^b
	Remainder	0.108	275	0.000		
	Total	17.978	277			
3	Regression	17.883	3	5.961	1.711E4	0.000 ^c
	Remainder	0.095	274	0.000		
	Total	17.978	277			

The results of ANOVA are given in the above table .In this test, the null hypothesis of all regression coefficients was tested against the zero of at least one of the regression coefficients .Since the value of significance of the test is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected against being zero regression coefficient sat significance level of 0.05.Thus, with 95% of confidence, it can be said that all models fitted to observations are significant.

Table4: Estimated coefficients and their Significance

Model	Independent variable	Standard regression coefficient	T	Significance
1	Fixed		146/.098	0.000
	Alignment of values	0.994	155.632	0.000
2	Fixed		170.694	0.000
	Correlation	0.550	18.899	0.000
	Alignment of values	0.450	15.482	0.000
3	Fixed		164.226	0.000
	Correlation	0.473	15.677	0.000
	Alignment of values	0.338	10.238	0.000
	Meaningful work	0.190	6.052	0.000

The results listed in the above tables also indicate that the regression coefficients are significant in all models .The models fitted show that all correlation, alignment of values, and meaningful work has a positive impact on the quality of working life. In model 1, the value of significance for the alignment of values is less than 0.05 and that regression coefficient is positive. As a result, with the confidence of 0.095, it can be said that the alignment of values has a positive impact on the quality of working life .In model 2, the value of significance of correlation, alignment of values is less than 0.05 and the value of regression coefficient is positive which implies that correlation, alignment of values have a positive impact on the quality of working life .In Model 3, the value of significance of correlation, alignment of values and meaningful work is less than 0.05 and the value of regression coefficient is positive which implies that correlation, alignment of values, and meaningful work have a positive impact on the quality of working life.

The first sub-hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between meaningful work and quality of working life.

To investigate these hypotheses, the regression model was used in which the dependent variable including the quality of working life and the independent variables including meaningful work at the individual level, correlation at the group level, and alignment of values at the organizational level were used. To fit the model, the stepwise method was used. Therefore, the models fitted to the observations were separated into three models that in one, the independent variable was the alignment with values and in another, correlation and alignment with values and in the last model, was correlation, alignment with values, and meaningful work. The significant value of meaningful work was less than 0.05 in the defined model and the value of regression coefficient was 0.190 for this variable and indicates that meaningful work has a positive and significant impact on the quality of working life. According to the obtained results, it can be said that the first hypothesis is accepted.

The second sub-hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between correlation and quality of working life.

The significant value of correlation was less than 0.05 in the two defined models and the value of regression coefficient was 0.550 and 0.473 in the second and third models and indicates that meaningful work has a positive and significant relationship with the quality of working life. According to the obtained results, it can be said that the second hypothesis is accepted.

The third sub-hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between the alignment of values and quality of working life.

The significant value of the alignment of values was less than 0.05 in the defined models and the value of regression coefficient was equal to 0.994 in the first model; 0.450 in the second model; and 0.338 in the third model and indicates that the alignment of values has a positive and significant relationship with the quality of working life. According to the obtained results, it can be said that the third hypothesis is accepted.

The main hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between spirituality and quality of working life.

According to the obtained results on the significant impact of meaningful work, correlation, and alignment with values on quality of working life, it can be said that spirituality has a significant relationship with the quality of working life. Since all regression coefficients are positive, it can be said that spirituality has a significant and positive relationship with the quality of working life.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

In the theoretical literatures of the study, spirituality is defined as an attempt to find ultimate goal in persons for working life in order to establish a strong relationship between the individual and colleagues and others who is in one way involved in his work (Gibbons, 1999, cited by Mousavi, 2008: 64). Also, given that the quality of working life of staffs can affect their work and thus, the effectiveness of the organization, the improvement of the quality of working life of staffs is very important in the way that through which the working conditions of staffs will be improved and problems such as quitting the job, asking for early retirement etc. will be avoided.

The results of the present study also confirm the theoretical literatures of the study because the results indicate a significant and positive relationship among all aspects of spirituality in the

Workplace from the perspective of Milliman and according to the quality of working life .So, those who have more spirituality in the workplace, have a higher quality of working life. Therefore, with respect to the hypotheses of the study, the following recommendations are offered: Given the first hypothesis and that when people have a sense of meaning in their work, the quality of their working life rises; the chairmen of the department of education are recommended to do the following measures:

1. Workplace may be provided so that individuals feel useful in the society. In so doing, managers indicate the amount of individuals' competence to them through creating valuation system for them.
2. Concept and importance of working is clarified for individuals. In so doing, by holding multiple sessions for staff, the type of their jobs and the amount of impact of jobson the success of organization are described for them.
3. Possibility of statement of staff's comments is provided .In so doing, feedback system is embedded in the organization and managers consults with staffs in doing organizational affairs.
4. Let people to play their other social roles in the personal life.

Regarding the second hypothesis and given the relationship between group correlation and quality of working life of staffs, the following suggestions are offered to managers of the department of education:

- 1- Organization' managers embed working space so that there will be on going cooperation among the staffs.
- 2-Organization' managers create a friendly atmosphere and informal groups in organizations.
- 3- In the department of education, working teams are formed for teachers so that they can share their experiences and knowledge with each other.

Finally, given that there is a significant relationship between the alignment of values at the organizational level and quality of working life of staffs, according to the third hypothesis, the managers are suggested to make organization's staff consistent with the organization by the following actions:

1. Individuals' salary are paid on time
2. The system for payment in the organization is adapted to the payment in other jobs
3. Working hours are considered fair and appropriate
4. The possibility of applying skills learned in individuals 'job is provided
5. The possibility of growing potential capacity and ability for people is provided
6. The behavior of the director and deputies with organization's staffs is fair

References

1. Rastegar A. A, (2006), Motivational Model of Spirituality : A Case Study of Tehran University, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Tehran, Faculty of Management
2. Mirkamali S.M and Narenji sani F, (2008), An Investigation into the Relationship between Quality of Working Life and job satisfaction between faculty members in Tehran University and Sharif University, Research and Schematization in Excellent Instruction, (2008:77-78)
3. AbediJafari H. and Rastegar AA, (2007), The Emergence of Spirituality in Organizations: Concepts, Definitions, Presumptions and Conceptual Model, Iranian journal of management sciences, Volume 2, No.5, PP.99-121
4. Ashmos, D.P. and D. Duchon. (2000). 'Spirituality at Work: A Conceptualization and Measure', Journal of management

5. Cavanagh G. (1999). Spirituality for managers: context and critique .Journal of organization change management vol 12, no.3. Clark, w,h
6. Hinnells John, r, (1995). A new dictionary of religions Blackwell. Jams, (1999) psychotherapy and spirituality: crossing the line between therapy and religion, holder and Stoughton new handbook of living religions.pp.667-681.
7. Miliman j czaplewski j and Ferguson j., (2003), workplace spirituality and employee work Attitudes, an exploratory empirical assessment, Journal of organizational change management 16(4):426-447
8. Mitroff I Denton a (1999).a study of spirituality in the workplace. Sloan management review.40 (4):3-5
9. Myers, J.e.(1990). Wellness throughout the life's pan .guidepost may.
10. Underehill E (1993). The spiritual life: create spiritual truths for everyday life. Oxford press.
11. Lawler, E. E (١٩٨٣). Strategies for improving the quality of work life. American psychologist, 37, 2005, 486-493.
12. Case, P. Gosling, J. (2010). The spiritual organization: critical reflections on the instrumentality of workplace spirituality. Journal of Management. 7 (4): 257–282.
13. Gibbons, P. (2002). Spirituality at Work: A Pre-Theoretical Overview. MSc Thesis. Birnbeck College: University of London.
14. Elkins, D.N., Hedstrom, L.J.,Hughes, L.L.,Leaf, J.A.& Saunders, C (1988). Toward a humanistic phenomenological spirituality Definition, description, and measurement. Journal of Humanistic psychology, 28(4), 5-18.
15. Walton, R. E. (1975) Criteria for Quality of Working Life, in The quality of working life (Eds.) L. E. Davis and A. B. Cherns, The Free Press, New York, pp. 99-104.
- 16- Gilaninia S, Delafrooz N Tohidi, R(2013)Effect of Technologies-Based Service Quality Dimensions on Customer Loyalty International Journal of Business and Behavioral sciences. Third Years, 43-49
- 17- Gilaninia S, Ganjinia H, Karimi K(2013a)The Relationship between Organizational Learning and Competitive Strategies and Its Impact on Performance of Business and Customer satisfaction.