

CASE STUDY

The Effect of spirituality in the workplace on organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior

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ABSTRACT: Spirituality by creating an atmosphere of trust in the workplace increases the commitment. This commitment includes an employee's commitment to the organization and the organization's commitment to its employees and customers. In organizations with high levels of spirituality, employees have more positive attitudes and organizational commitment compared to organizations lacking the same values. The present study tries to investigate the relationship of spirituality in the workplace with the organizational commitment and the organizational citizenship behavior among the employees. Structured questionnaire is used for data collection and significance of the relationship between the research variables and the hypothesis are determined through LISREL software and the Structural Equation Modeling. The sample size, using the formula of sampling from a limited society, is 166 employees from total of 472 workers. The results of this study revealed that there is a significant and positive relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior. Moreover the Organizational Commitment has a positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior too. This study has been performed in District 9 of Tehran Municipality in 2015.

KEYWORDS: *Organizational citizenship behavior; Organizational commitment; Spirituality; Structural equation modeling; Workplace*

INTRODUCTION

In the last two decades, many of the organizational measures for change and improvement, such as miniaturization, re-engineering, suspension, dismissal from work have weekend staff morale, causing spiritual confusion. Presence of spirituality in the workplace leads to insight and intuition, which this in turn, leads to creativity. When the employees have the opportunity to use their spiritual values while performing their tasks, they would become more creative and this leads them to be happy and with more satisfaction in their workplace (Cook, 2008; Knight and Haslam, 2010; Robertson *et al.*, 2012). This will eventually lead productivity and financial success in

the organizations. Neck and Milliman (1994) in their study revealed that spirituality positively affects organizational performances. Organizations that promote spirituality will increase creativity, satisfaction, team performance and also organizational commitment (Litzsey, 2006; Luis Daniel, 2010). Turner (1999) believes that this is conducive to promote spirituality in order to bring out the inner feelings of perfection and excellence of the employees when they deal with their job. Barack (1999) believes that spirituality by creating an atmosphere of trust in the workplace, could be a tool to increase employee's commitment. This commitment includes employee commitment to the organization and the organization's commitment to employee and its customer. Other researchers also

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mention their interest about spirituality being used as an executive tool to administer employees (Mirvis, 1997; Cavanagh and Bandsuch, 2002; Fernando, 2005). This research has tried to examine the effect of spirituality in the work environment on the organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior of the employees of District 9 in Tehran Municipality.

Spirituality in the workplace

In recent years, a lot of articles on spirituality and its relationship with business have been published. The growing trend in spirituality research has an emphasis on spirituality in the workplace. Empirical and theoretical research on this issue and how spirituality works, affects the individual outcomes of the staff and organizational implications are extensively increasing (Badrinarayanan and Madhavaram, 2008).

Spirituality in the workplace, is an effort to make sense for transpersonal, intrapersonal, and interpersonal, relationship in the working life and personal development in order to achieve human excellence (Abedi Jafari and Rasegar 2007). In another definition by Khasawneh (2011), spirituality in the workplace is defined as a framework of organizational values in the culture of the organization which promote employees experience excellence through work process and facilitation of a sense of solidarity with others and their job.

The dimensions of spirituality in the workplace

Miliman and his colleagues (2003), presented one of the most important divisions of dimensions of spirituality in the workplace. They have included three dimensions or aspects of spirituality in the workplace: Meaningful work or the aim of the work (individual level), having a sense of solidarity

(group level), in line with the values and mission of the organization (organizational level), Fig.1 shows Conceptualizations of spirituality in the workplace with these dimensions.

I) Meaningful Work

This principle that people are looking for meaning in their work is the first dimension of spirituality in the workplace. This dimension of the spirituality in the workplace shows, that's how the employees interact with their routine jobs. Spirituality in the workplace includes the assumption, that every person have their own motives and desires and tends to be engaged in the activities that give more meaning to his and others lives (Neal and Bennett, 2002; Marques, 2007).

II) Sense of Solidarity

Sense of Solidarity is an important spiritual aspect in the workplace which includes having a deep relationship with others. This spiritual or dimension of the spirituality occurs at the group level of human behavior in the workplace and is related to the interactions between employees and their colleagues. Solidarity in work relies on the belief that people have, seeing themselves connected and belonged to each other and also to some kind of inner relationship between people at work. Neal and Bennett (2000) believe that this level of spirituality in the workplace includes, mental affiliation, emotional and spiritual relationships between employees in terms of teams or groups in the organization. Foundation of solidarity includes a deep sense of communication and belonging to individuals which consists of support, freedom of expression and care and attention to each other (Neal and Bennett (2000).

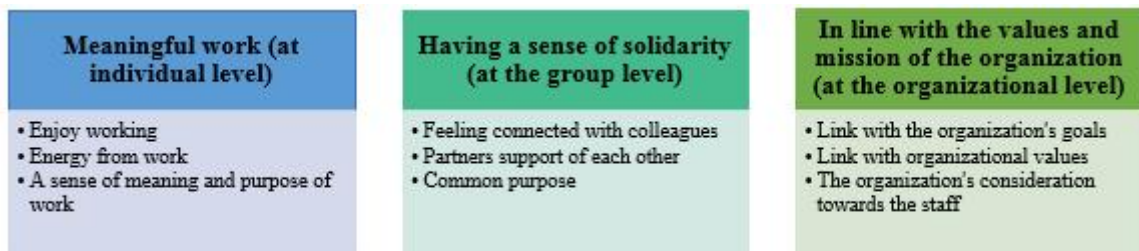


Fig. 1: The dimensions of spirituality in the workplace (Milliman et al., 2003)

III) Alignment with organization's Values and Mission

The third aspect of spirituality occurs when the employees experience a strong sense of convergence between their own values and the values and missions of their organization. This element of spirituality in the workplace involves engaging employees with a larger organizational purpose. Conformity with the values of the organization is related to this assumption that each person's goal is greater than the individual's own goal and should help others or the community. Convergence with values also means that the employees believe that the managers and other employees in their organization have appropriate and good values with strong conscience, and watch out for the welfare of their employees and their community (Milliman *et al.*, 2003; Carroll and Shabana, 2010).

Organizational commitment

The subject of organizational commitment has attracted much attention as a variable with many positive consequences. Many studies support this issue that high level of organizational commitment leads to fewer job quit, more effort in higher job performances, increasing Organizational Citizenship Behaviors, and improve partnerships and productivity. Some researchers also believe that organizational commitment is one of the key indicators of organizational effectiveness and gaining benefits for the organizations (Datta *et al.*, 2005; Morgan, 2011; Chen *et al.*, 2012). In the other words, Organizational commitment is the power to feel the identity of an individual and his participation in an organization (Cho and Huang, 2012).

I) Types of organizational commitment

Organizational commitment has been conceptualized as a multi-dimensional variable. Meyer and Allen (1991) and Dunham and colleagues (1994), have identified three types of commitment: Affective Commitment; Continuance Commitment and Normative Commitment. Normative commitment is relatively new aspect of organizational commitment. Affective commitment as belonging and attachment, sense of identity is a positive clash that an employee has with an organization and the organization's goals (Tatlah, 2011). According to the Social Exchange Theory, staff will have a more emotional commitment to the organization when the organizations meet their

expectations, according to their individual needs (Newman and Sheikh, 2012). Continuous commitment is the amount of commitment that a person feels towards the organization and this commitment is when a person examines the costs of leaving the organization (Anari, 2012). The employee evaluates the costs of leaving the organization and if this costs (Loss of wages, seniority, social aspects, benefits, etc.) would seem too high, then the employee's organizational commitment increases (Holcomb, 2009). Normative commitment is an obligation that a person has towards his organization or the feeling of attachment to his work environment (Tatlah, 2011). Marsh and Mannari (1997) reference to this element as a lifelong commitment. The person feels morally obligated to the organization, because the organization has given him his job (Holcomb, 2009).

Organizational citizenship behavior

Until the early 1990s, researchers in their studies, mostly focused on the In-Role function of the employees to study the relationship between occupational behaviors and organizational effectiveness. In-Role function refers to the employee's occupational behaviors expressed in the official duties of the organization. Extra-Role function of occupational behaviors goes beyond the existing role expectations of employees that are optional and usually do not have the official rewards (Nasurudin *et al.*, 2013). Later the researchers differentiated between In-Role function and Extra- Roll function. The effect of Extra-Role performance on organizational effectiveness is high (Combs *et al.*, 2006).

One of the most popular conceptualization about Extra-Role behavior is the Organizational citizenship behavior (Gholipour *et al.*, 2010). Organizational citizenship behavior is the useful organizational behaviors that are not imposed on employees by formal job commitments and in the contract, it is not rewarded (Oplatka and Stundi, 2011). In other words, it is an optional behavior that is not expressed or explicitly recognized by the official reward system and in general, it improves the organization's effective functioning. Optional behavior in the definition of citizenship behavior means that this behavior is not compulsory Component role or a description of a job which is specifically mentioned in the employment contract of the individual; this behavior, is more a personal choice and leaving it generally does not result in punishment

(Oplatka, 2009). As described above, the behavioral citizenship behavior is not prescribed by the organization, but desirable by the organization. By combining the various definitions of organizational citizenship behavior, it can be stated, that this behavior includes the following elements:

- Voluntary and optional, beyond what is required in official job behaviors,
- Behaviors based on personal choices,
- Behaviors directed towards (for the benefit) of others and the organization, and
- Avoid behaviors that are harmful to the organization (Oplatka, 2009).

To date, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, quickly has become one of the most extensive study topics in psychology and organizational studies. More than four decades ago, Katz (1964) poses that organizations can not only succeed by relying on the functions specified in the official job descriptions, but the effectiveness of organizations is conditional upon voluntary efforts by employees to take actions and initiatives to help colleagues, submit suggestions and supporting the organization. Organ (1988) and other scholars also conceptualized these optional behaviors as the citizenship behaviors which benefits other people and the organizations. In the past two decades, extensive studies have shown that organizational citizenship behavior contributes significantly to the effectiveness of individuals, groups and organizations. The Organizational citizenship behavior is especially important in the context of organizational environments, which have more uncertainty and dependency. In these environments, since formalizing roles are difficult, organizations often need staffing efforts to take initiatives to provide organizational citizenship behaviors (Bowler *et al.*, 2010).

1) Dimensions of Organizational Citizenship Behavior

One of the most famous classifications of dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior has been done by Organ (1988). He divides organizational citizenship behavior into five main dimensions:

· *Altruism*: Is a voluntary behavior which includes helping people who are faced with a business

problem.

Altruism is also related to how to help the others. For example, what an experienced manager does introduce the rules of work to a new manager, is considered altruistic behavior, as this is not part of the duties and the definition of his job (Yilmaz and Tasdan, 2009).

· *Conscientiousness*: Represents certain behaviors of the role which is represented by the staff beyond what is expected of them. In other words, conscientiousness is a sincerity of self-sacrifice for the organization, and attention to the rules of the organization is beyond the requirements. An employee who cuts his phone conversation just to prevent any inconvenient for his colleagues, is considered a precise example of conscientiousness (Yilmaz and Tasdan, 2009).

· *Sportsmanship*: Refers to enduring the inconveniences that are inevitable in organizations. Organ (1988) states that sportsmanship behavior by eliminating the need to change the focus from effective activities, like planning and problem solving, will strengtillizes the organization. He points out that this behavior reduces managerial workload, because people who avoid complaints increase the organization's efficiency and well-being. Sitter (2004) points out that when the employees complain, they cause the managers to shift their focus from more efficient tasks and activities which that results in excessive consumption of resources and energy.

· *Curtsey*: Expresses the avoidance of problems arising from working relationships. An example of this behavior is encouraging the colleagues when they are disappointed with their career development (Gonzalez and Garazo, 2006).

· *Civic Virtue*: Expresses responsible participation in the life of the organization. Examples of this behavior include: Participate in meetings and programs that are not necessary but help the organization, being in line with the changes in the organization and creating initiatives to improve procedures in the organization (Gonzalez and Garazo, 2006).

Conceptual model and research framework

In this research, the following conceptual model is used to investigate the effect of spirituality in the workplace on organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior of the

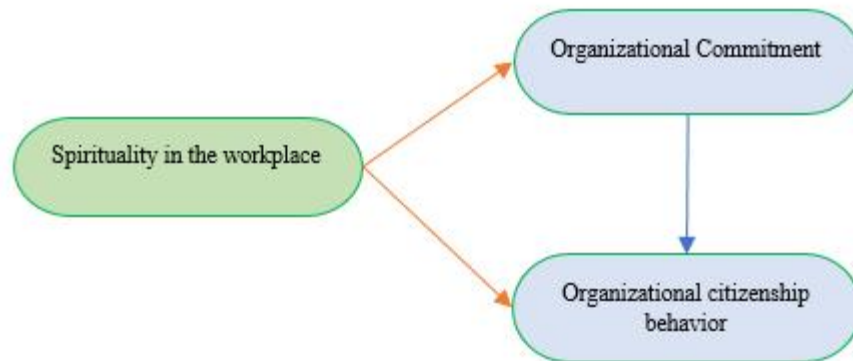


Fig. 2: Conceptual model and framework of research

employees in the District 9 of the Municipality of Tehran. The conceptual framework is shown in Fig. 2.

Research objectives

1- Study of the effect of Spirituality in the workplace of Organizational Commitment and Organizational citizenship behavior of Employees in District 9 of Tehran Municipality.

2- Study of the effect of Organizational Commitment on Organizational citizenship behavior of Employees in District 9 of Tehran Municipality.

Research hypotheses

1- Spirituality in the work environment, positively affects employees' Organizational Commitment.

2- Spirituality in the workplace, positively affects the Organizational citizenship behavior of the employees.

3- Organizational commitment, positively affects the Organizational citizenship behavior of employees.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research in terms of purpose is practical and from the data collection point of view is a descriptive-survey research. The statistical population of the research is 427 people, including the total staff of the municipality of district 9 of Tehran. Using the sampling formula of the limited community, the obtained number of sample size was 166 people. Research questionnaire designed according to standard questionnaires, so, to a

great extent, had a sense of validity. Using Cronbach's alpha, the reliability of the research tool was tested, which is shown in Table 1. As it is clear, the research questionnaire has an acceptable reliability.

In order to investigate the research hypotheses, the structural equation model was used. Also, to evaluate the construct validity (The degree of clarity of each variable by indexes or related questions (confirmatory factor analysis model was also used and the results are described in Table 2. In Table 2, the standardized coefficient (factor load), the explained variance and the meaningful number of each of the variables and related questions are stated.

Based on Table 2, the factor load of all the questions has a significant number (more than 1.96). Also, according to the variance explained by each factor, the relative importance of the observed factors as an indicator for measuring each variable can be found. As seen in Table 2, indicator 4 (The value of having collaborative work with others) has a more important role in assessing the variables of spirituality in the workplace than other indicators. Indicator 13 (No objection to the organization) has a more important role in assessing the variable of Organizational citizenship behavior than other indicators. Index 21 (Talking to friends about the organization as a big organization for work) has a more important role in measuring the variable of organizational commitment than other indicators.

Table 1: Variables and coefficient of their reliability

| Variables | Relating questions | Number of questions | Cranbach alpha coefficient |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Spirituality in the workplace | 1-9 | 9 | 0.916 |
| Organizational Citizenship Behavior | 10-19 | 10 | 0.920 |
| Organizational commitment | 20-26 | 7 | 0.890 |

Table 2: Indicators related to each variable and their factor load

| Variables | Indicators | Standardized coefficient (Load factor) | The Variance explained | Meaningfulness (T value) |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Spirituality in the workplace | 1- Significance of occupational activities | 0.73 | 0.53 | 10.66 |
| | 2- The importance of the job | 0.75 | 0.56 | 11.08 |
| | 3- Occupational activity's importance | 0.72 | 0.52 | 10.34 |
| | 4 The value of having collaborative work with others | 0.83 | 0.69 | 12.93 |
| | 5- Feeling of being part of an organization | 0.76 | 0.58 | 11.16 |
| | 6- people support of each other in the organization | 0.64 | 0.41 | 8.97 |
| | 7- The alignment of the values of the individual and organization | 0.68 | 0.46 | 9.56 |
| | 8- The alignment of the values of the individual and the employees | 0.60 | 0.36 | 8.30 |
| | 9- Reflection of values and personality by values of the organization | 0.76 | 0.58 | 11.25 |
| Organizational citizenship behavior | 10-Following rules and regulations of the organization | 0.68 | 0.46 | 9.68 |
| | 11- Presence higher than normal at work | 0.74 | 0.55 | 8.76 |
| | 12-Spend little time for complaining about minor issues | 0.77 | 0.59 | 8.99 |
| | 13- No objection to the organization | 0.78 | 0.61 | 9.12 |
| | 14- Take action to help the image of the organization | 0.70 | 0.49 | 8.34 |
| | 15- Knowledge of organization's declarations and regulations | 0.75 | 0.56 | 8.85 |
| | 16- Avoid causing problems with others | 0.72 | 0.52 | 8.54 |
| | 17- Avoid causing problems with colleagues | 0.74 | 0.55 | 8.68 |
| | 18- Helping colleagues with a lot of workload | 0.73 | 0.53 | 8.65 |
| 19- Helping alike colleagues | 0.66 | 0.44 | 7.80 | |
| organizational commitment | 20- Going beyond the usual limits for an organization to succeed | 0.74 | 0.55 | 10.81 |
| | 21- Talking to friends about the organization as a great organization for work | 0.79 | 0.62 | 10.05 |
| | 22- Accepting any kind of mission | 0.74 | 0.55 | 9.45 |
| | 23- Feel proud of being a member of the organization | 0.71 | 0.50 | 8.95 |
| | 24- Being happy with the cooperation with this organization | 0.67 | 0.45 | 8.44 |
| | 25- Being interested in the future of the organization | 0.71 | 0.50 | 8.98 |
| | 26- A sense of happiness and satisfaction with working in the organization | 0.72 | 0.52 | 9.20 |

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to test the hypothesis of the research, structural equation modeling method has been used. Structural equation modeling is one of the statistical models for studying the linear relationships between the hidden variables (not observed) and the obvious variables (observed). Through these techniques, researchers can reject the hypothetical structures, which in general are called the causal models and confirm or refuse to approve them with non-experimental data (Hooman, 2005). When the sample group data are converted into a correlation matrix or covariance, after describing them in the regression equations, in order to examine its fit in the society in which the sample emerged, that model can be analyzed using one of several existing computer programs. The

results provide estimates of the parameters of that model and several sizes to fit into the sample (Hooman, 2005). In Figs. 3 and 4, Structural Equation Model for the research hypotheses using the obtained Lysere software, is shown.

As shown in Fig. 3, there are three hidden variables (Spirituality, Organizational Commitment and Organizational Citizenship Behavior) and their measurement indicators are clearly shown.

In this section, the significance of the obtained numbers of the model is examined; in relation to the numbers meaningfulness and testing the hypothesis at the confidence level of 0.95 or an error of 0.05, thus for the t test, the numbers larger than -1.96 and +1/96 are significant. This means that it would be meaningless if the t-test had a value of between -1. 96 and +1.96. In

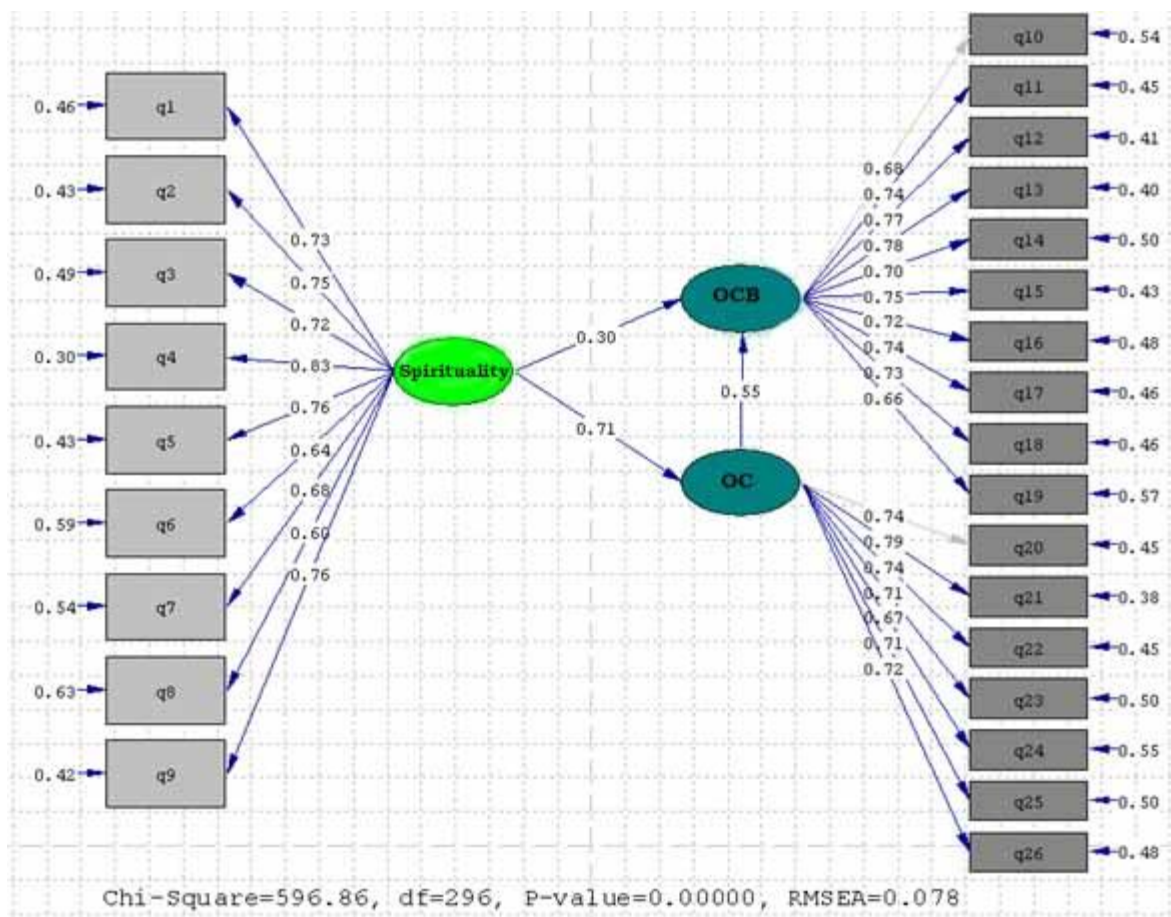


Fig. 3: Structural equation model (standard coefficients)

the following model (Fig. 4), the numbers obtained for the t test are shown to examine the causal relations of the variables.

Considering the model in the case of meaningful numbers (Fig. 4) and the standard estimation model (Fig. 3), the research hypotheses are examined.

Hypothesis 1: Spirituality in the workplace positively affects employees' organizational commitment.

Assumption H_0 : Spirituality in the workplace does not affect the Organizational Commitment of employees.

Assumption H_1 : Spirituality in the workplace affects the Organizational Commitment of employees.

The standardized coefficient between the two variables is 0.71 and the meaningful coefficient of these two variables was 7.94 (more than 1.96) which shows

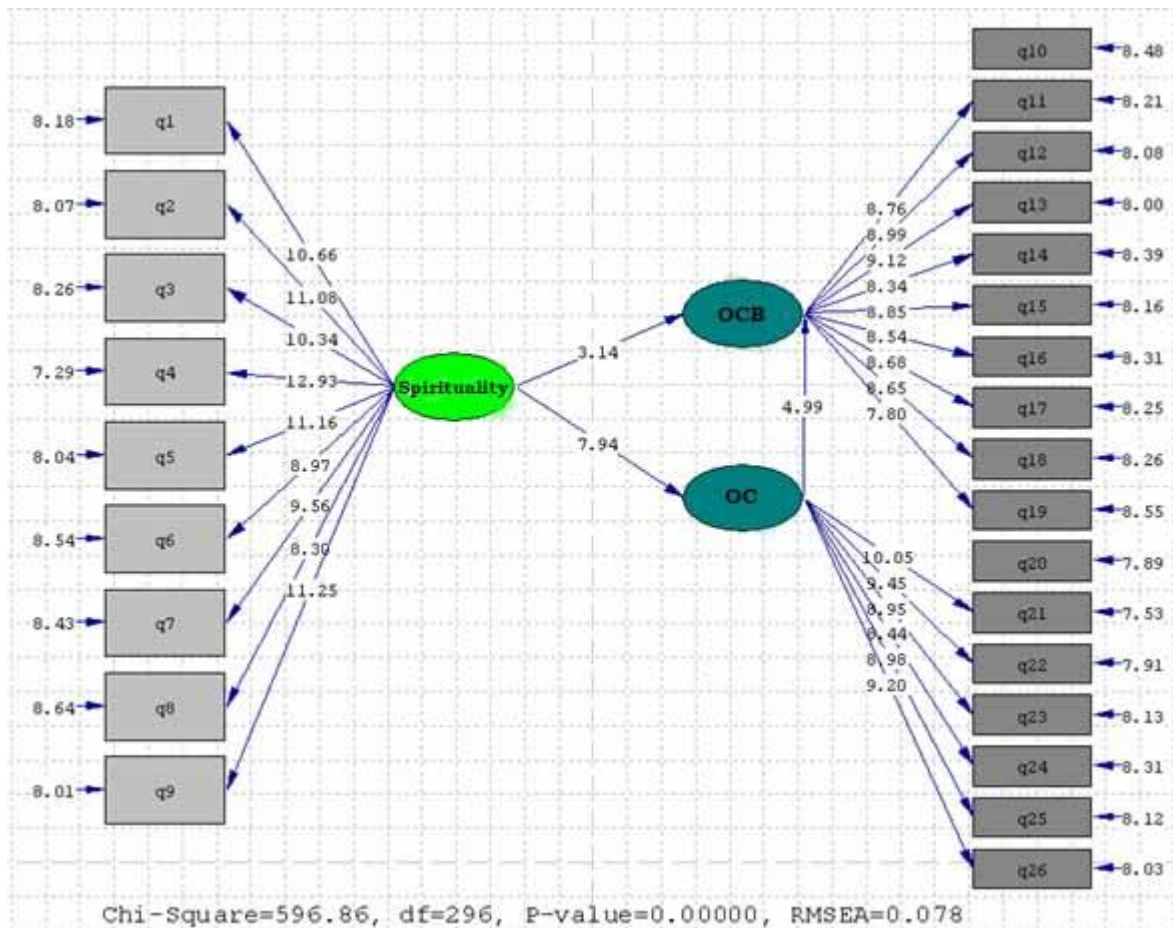
that this relation is meaningful. Therefore, the assumption zero is rejected and assumption one is confirmed. That means spirituality in the workplace positively affects employees' Organizational Commitment.

Hypothesis 2: Spirituality in the workplace positively affects employees Organizational Citizenship Behavior.

Assumption H_0 : Spirituality in the workplace does not affect the Organizational Citizenship Behavior.

Assumption H_1 : Spirituality in the workplace affects the Organizational Citizenship Behavior.

The standardized coefficient between the two variables is 0.30. The significant correlation between these two variables shows 3.14 (more than 1.96) which indicates that this relationship is significant. Therefore, assumption zero is rejected and assumption one is



confirmed. That means workplace spirituality, positively affects employees' Organizational Citizenship Behavior.

Hypothesis 3: organizational commitment positively affects employees' Organizational Citizenship Behavior. Assumption 1: Organizational Commitment does not affect the Organizational citizenship behavior of employees.

Assumption 2: Organizational Commitment affects employees' Organizational Citizenship Behavior.

The standardized coefficient between two variables is 0.55. The significant difference between these two variables shows 4.99 (more than 1.96) which indicates that this relationship is significant. Therefore, the zero assumption is rejected and assumed 1 is confirmed. In that sense, Organizational Commitment positively affects the Organizational citizenship behavior of employees. The summary of the results of the structural equation model is presented in Table 3.

As seen in Table 3, standard coefficients for each of the three research hypotheses, had the necessary significant numbers (more than 1.96), therefore all three research hypotheses are confirmed.

CONCLUSION

Spirituality by creating a trust-based atmosphere at work, increases the employee's commitment. This commitment includes the commitment of employees to the organization and the organization's commitment is for employees and customers. In organizations that have high levels of spirituality, compared to organizations that do not have such values, employees have more positive attitudes and more support for the organization and also more commitment.

The results of the hypothesis test of this research showed that spirituality in the workplace, positively affects Organizational Commitment and Organizational citizenship behavior of the employees. Besides

Organizational Commitment also positively affects the Organizational citizenship behavior of the employees. Encouragement and promotion of spirituality can be examined at two levels of individual and organizational in the work environment. At the organizational level it is believed that spirituality should be applied throughout the organization and the organization as a whole must be spiritual. Since there are a lot of differences between the preferences, interests, and attitudes of individuals, spirituality must be promoted at the organizational level by considering the organization as a whole instead of individual level. At the individual level, emphasis is also placed on encouraging individual spirituality. In this case, the organization does not have a specific spiritual or religious orientation anymore and instead the attention is paid to encouraging or fulfilling the spiritual needs of individuals. At this level, it's assumed that organization is a collection of individuals that each of which has a different spiritual perspective and organizational leaders must understand and accept the religious diversity of individuals and provide the flourishing field of this diversity. Therefore, at this level encouragement and promotion of spirituality in the workplace instead of the entire organization, must begin with people begin. Thus, at the individual level the spirituality is created through encouraging people to speak freely about their spiritual views and helping them to link their point of views with the values of the organization. The suggestion for the managers is both at the individual level and at the organizational level try for promotion of the spirituality. Managers can with actions such as job rotation, occupational enrichment and empowering employees and paying attention to the enjoyment of work improve the employee's perception of the sense of meaning in the workplace.

Table 3: Results of standard coefficients and significant numbers (confirmation or rejection of assumptions)

| From | To | Standardized coefficient | Significant numbers (T values) | Confirm or Reject the hypothesis |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Spirituality in the workplace | Organizational commitment | 0.71 | 7.94 | Confirm |
| Spirituality in the workplace | Organizational Citizenship Behavior | 0.30 | 3.14 | Confirm |
| Organizational Commitment | Organizational Citizenship Behavior | 0.55 | 4.99 | Confirm |

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