Investigating the Relationship Between Spiritual Leadership and Employees Psychological Empowerment in Khozestan Utility

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Abstract: Despite increasing attention on the topic of empowerment, understanding of the construct and its underlying processes remains limited. For this that how empowerment process happens and what kinds of psychology process can frame employees empowerment. But many writers have emphasised on important role of leadership in empowerment process. With entrance spirituality to management and organization field, as 21st century challenge, organization's leaders especially spiritual leaders with use of spiritual vision and establishment of cultural context to foster empowered and motivated employees. The purpose of this research was to investigate the relationship between spiritual leadership and employees psychological empowerment in Khozestan utility. In this research, the statistical population includes 1200 employees of Khozestan utility. Sample size was calculated using a sample group of 291 employees. For this research, two standard questionnaires in the field of spiritual leadership and psychological empowerment were used. In order to analyze the hypothesis, using the software SPSS, Pearson correlation test was used to measure the correlation between variables. The research results indicated a strong significant positive correlation between spiritual leadership (vision, faith, altruistic love, meaningfulness, membership, productivity and organizational commitment) with employees psychological empowerment in Khozestan utility.

Key words: Spirituality, spiritual leaders, dimensions of spiritual leadership, psychological empowerment, membership

INTRODUCTION

The growth of science and technology in different parts made vast developments and changes in the present century. In this respect, management is one of the results of this trend in today world. After the new changes and the start of development in intellectual, social, cultural and economical parts of the world, leadership and its patterns and methods attracted scholars and scientists because it is a social issue that is very essential in the world (Nourbakhsh and Mohammadi, 2004). In fact with the appearance of these transactions, most organizations focused on organizational leaders and with particular courage try to make fundamental changes inside organizations because leadership deals with making change (Wax, 2005). Human science scholars discussed the concept of leadership from different aspects with traditional and modern trend (Nourbakhsh and Mohammadi, 2004). The lack of success in some traditional trends in offering a complete solution, once more attracted the attention of scientists to the new styles of leadership and the individual features of the leader (Bass, 1999). In fact, there is a change in the development of leadership theories after 2nd World War that offered

some theories in evolution disciple that includes the theory of path goal, charismatic leadership, transactional leadership (Fry, 2003). With the appearance of concepts such as ethics, reality, trust in God or the best power, looking for meaning in work, benevolence, researches and management measures, all show signs of a new paradigm. As most of researchers think, this new paradigm of work condition that is taken from Quantum Physics, Cybernetics Science, Disorder Theory, Cognitive Science, Religions and Eastern and Western Customs, in fact is a reaction to the dead and mechanical paradigm. This is called spiritual paradigm (Wax, 2005). The term spiritual in leadership in recent decades has attracted a lot of people to it (Gibbons, 2000). If carefully think about evolution path in leadership studies, it could be find that so far there has been various researches about physical, mental and emotional features of leaders but the thing that has been interesting during the past years is the characteristics of spiritual leaders and that how can we fulfill the individual, organizational health and makes employees more powerful by spiritual leadership (Fry and Matherly, 2006). Spiritual leadership has been developed by intrinsic motivation model that is a combination of vision, faith, altruistic love, meaningfulness, membership, organizational commitment

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and productivity of leader (Fry *et al.*, 2005; Fry, 2003). Fast changes, technological developments and competitions in the world has made empowering more important than before thus the role of leader in this respect is of great importance. Employees empowerment is a new issue in the development of human resources that has a huge literature (Littrell, 2007). The scholars and researchers of management before 1990's considered the empowerment of human resources as delegate authority to lower ranks of organization (Bowen and Edward, 1995). After 1990's, they looked at human resource empowerment as a multidimensional concept according to the beliefs and emotions of employees and name it psychological empowerment (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). It has five dimensions including competence, self determination (right to choose), impact, meaning and trust (Abdollahi, 2005). The result of researches shows a connection between new styles of leadership like spiritual leadership with employees empowerment (Fry, 2003). According to the discussion, this study is about the connection of spiritual leadership and psychological empowerment of the employees of Khozestan utility.

Theoretical background
The history and definition of spirituality: It has been for a few years that a new trend has been found in management and organization literature and it is called spirituality. From the second half of 19th century in Europe and West Canada and America, this issue has been appeared and it is believed that all social systems share the same things called spirituality. And although, they belong to different religions, all have this part in common (Fry, 2003). Since, the term spirituality is used in various parts, it is hard to define it (Farhangi and Rastegar, 2006).

As Hill in his book named spiritual life talks about the importance of the defining of spirituality. While we must avoid too much indefiniteness and abstraction on one hand, we must also avoid hard and fast definitions on the other hand. For no words in the human language are adequate or accurate when applied to spiritual realities (Underhill, 1997). Spirituality has been defined as the quality or condition of being spiritual; attachment to or regard for things of the spirit as opposed to material or worldly interests' (Fernando, 2007). A definition of spirituality that theoretically and practically is wider other definitions is that: An attempt towards being more sensitive to ourselves, others, natural environment and metaphysics (beyond nature) and this effort is to unify these sensitivities happiness (Hinnells, 1995).

Spiritual leadership: Despite all the studies about leadership, still this concept is unknown due to its complicated nature. The sign of outstanding leadership appear primarily among the followers, said Max De Pree is his book; leadership is an art. He also added the first responsibility of a leader is to define reality, the last is to say thank you. In between the two, the leader must become a servant and a debtor, even though he is writing primarily to secular leaders, Max De Pree is describing spiritual leadership (John, 2006).

Spiritual leadership focuses on transformation of oneself, others and the team. It involves the heart and mind, spiritual values, intellectual skills, inner certainty, the essence of oneself and the basis of comfort, strength and happiness (Fairholm and Fairholm, 2009). Spiritual leaders that follow values direct followers and their actions in the group or organization by connecting them to the inner values and increase their motivation, commitment and energy in the organization (Khae'ef-Elahi *et al.*, 2010). Spiritual leadership is also demonstrated through behavior, whether in individual reflective practice or in the ethical compassionate and respectful treatment of others (Reave, 2005). Spiritual leaders create vision and same values for employees empower them individually and also in the team and organization and ultimately the level in comfort and health would be increased (Fry, 2003). Alternatively, spiritual leadership has also been described as occurring when a person in a leadership position embodies spiritual values such as integrity, honestly and humility, creating the oneself as admired (Brown and Trevino, 2006). Spiritual leadership as comprising the values, attitudes and behaviors that are necessary to intrinsically motivate ones self and others so that they have a sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership. This entails:

- Creating a vision wherein organization members experience a sense of calling in that their life has meaning and makes a difference
- Establishing a social/organizational culture based on altruistic love whereby leaders and followers have genuine care, concern and appreciation for both self and others, thereby producing a sense of membership and feel understood and appreciated (Fry *et al.*, 2005; Fry, 2003)

Different writers and researchers discussed about the factors and elements of spiritual leadership (Reave, 2005; Fry and Matherly, 2006). In this study, the dimensions of spiritual leadership has been the framework according to the way that Fry (2003) introduced it. These dimensions are included: Vision, altruistic love, meaningfulness,

membership, organizational commitment and productivity. Thus, these dimensions will describe in this study.

Vision: Spiritual leaders must have vision; in this respect spiritual leaders have three things to do:

- They honor the reality of the current situation
- They prepare the situation to achieve the vision
- They align everything to achieve the vision (John, 2006)

The vision describes the organization's journey and why the leaders and followers are taking it. It must energize people, give meaning to work and garner commitment. It also should establish a standard of excellence. In mobilizing people, it should have broad appeal, define the vision's destination and journey and reflect high ideals (Daft and Lengel, 1998; Nanus, 1992).

Faith: The dictionary defines faith as the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Faith is more than hope or the expectation of something desired. It is the conviction that a thing unproved by physical evidence is true (Fry, 2003). Spiritual leadership in organization forms the spiritual beliefs and faith to work in employees and this element acts like an internal motivation and makes employees to improve and fulfill their duties in the best possible way. Finally, it increases the power of taking responsibility (Ziaee *et al.*, 2010).

Alitruistic love: It is a term that often used synonymously with charity, altruistic love and the values comprising it is manifested through unconditional, unselfish, loyal and benevolent care, concern and appreciation for both self and others. For spiritual leadership theory, altruistic love is defined as a sense of wholeness, harmony and well-being produced through care, concern and appreciation for both self and others (Fry, 2003). It also produces loyalty and commitment to the individuals and social networks (organizations) from which it is received. Altruistic love and spiritual survival include joy, peace and serenity. These outcomes also are the sources of high organization commitment, productivity and reduced stress levels that are the goals of most managers and organizations (Romain, 1997). Spiritual leadership results from altruistic love in organizations and this makes people deeply care about themselves and their past life and makes them to have good relationship with others (Sangari, 2009).

Meaningfulness: Through spiritual leadership, employees can understand the real concept of their job and give importance to it. Having this point of view by employees makes them know their job better, analyze the present and future condition of the organizations and ultimately prepares them to take higher responsibilities (Ziaee *et al.*, 2010).

Membership: Applying spiritual leadership in the organization makes employees to feel that their job is very important for the organization and for other colleagues as well, therefore they feel having membership in this organization. This feeling of being important helps employees to boost trust and cordiality for themselves as well as others, facilitates the connection between leaders and employees and ultimately employees feel responsible in making decisions of the organization and they can be helpful to their leaders and colleagues (Ziaee *et al.*, 2010).

Organizational commitment: Spiritual leaders by creating organizational commitment in employees makes them feel having identity, loyalty and dependent on the organization. Thus, they know the organization as a reference for themselves and like to stay here forever (Sangari, 2009). Therefore, they work hard toward solving the problems in the organization. Ultimately if leaders rely on them; they can have more participation in the organization (Ziaee *et al.*, 2010).

Productivity: People who have hope/faith in the organization's vision and who experience calling and membership will; do what it takes, in pursuit of the vision to continuously improve and be more productive (Fry, 2003).

The concept of empowerment: To understand the importance of empowerment, it is crucial to care about the new conditions inside the organization. Environment changes like technological progress, the movement of organizations toward becoming flat and omission the middle layers of management because of the need to use the maximum capacity of persons by reducing manpower, empowering would take more attention also. The trend to increasing global competition and increasing the changes has caused to attention of the organizations to empower employees (Etebarian *et al.*, 2010). In recent years, empowerment attracted the attention of a lot of researches, in public and private sections. Although, organizational theorists defined the concept of empowerment in various methods, there are two general definitions (Hasanpour *et al.*, 2011):

Power share in empowerment: Many theorists define empowerment as the participation of employees in their work place. The participation of employees in their work

place. The participation of employees is a process by that the power can be shared among people (Lawler, 1994). Schoell and his co-workers define empowerment as delegate authority to employees to take decisions without the need of higher authorities to certify them (Schoell *et al.*, 1993). According to this approach, Bowen and Edward (1995) define empowerment as sharing with front-line employees in four organizational elements: Information, knowledge, rewards, power. Unfortunately defining of empowerment in this way has got some downside including:

- According to this definition, in organizational system power is fixed so it is like a game of trade
- According to this definition, the power of managers for empowerment is sufficient (Hasanpour *et al.*, 2011)

The cognitive and motivation concept of empowerment: From this point of view, empowerment is like an inner element in people and has a direct connection with the way of attitude, feeling, perception from the workplace. To conceptualize empowerment in motivational terms, empowerment refers to a process whereby an individual's belief in his or her self-efficacy is enhanced (Robbins *et al.*, 2002). According to Conger and Kanungo (1988), empowerment stems from motivational needs. This attitude is like a new motivational element in creating more tendency for employees in their job. Conger and Kanungo (1988), Thomas and Velthouse (1990), Spreitzer *et al.* (1997) and Spreitzer (1995) are some of the researchers in this part (Littrell, 2007). The characteristics of cognitive and motivational element include:

- To power is to energies
- The basis of empowerment in individuals is the person and his/her perception
- The emphasis on inner commitment in job, simple control, risk and innovation
- The process of making inner job motivation by preparing environment for the more self-influence
- Ascending empowerment in the organization (Menon, 2001)

For the 1st time, Thomas and Velthouse (1990) introduced the concept of psychological empowerment in management literature. They believe this can not be defined through one dimension. They think empowerment is defined as increased intrinsic task motivation and and subsequent model indentifies four cognitions (task assessments) as the basis for employee empowerment including sense of impact, competence, meaningfulness and choice (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). Whetten and

Kim (1998) certified the four dimensions of empowerment by Thomas and Velthouse (1990) and Spreitzer (1995) Spreitzer *et al.* (1997) and later added the trust dimension according to the trust pattern of Spreitzer and Mishra (1997). Thus, the dimension of psychological empowerment include competence, self-determination (choice), meaningfulness, impact and trust (Abdollahi, 2005).

Due to the importance of research done by Whetten and Kim (1998) especially the general model of empowerment among other psychological models, this model is the basis for the evaluation of psychological empowerment in this study, therefore the dimensions of empowerment according to the said model will be described in this study.

Competence: This assessment refers to the degree to which a person can perform task activities skillfully when he or she tries (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). Competence refers to self-efficacy specie to work, a belief in ones capability to perform work activities with skill (Gist, 1987).

Self-determination (choice): Self-determination means experiencing the sense of choice at the start of actions and regulate personal activities (Niehoff *et al.*, 2001). Self-determination refers to having freedom and autonomy to specify the right activities to perform duties in job (Khunalizade *et al.*, 2010). The competent people feel self-determined. Self-determination reflects autonomy over the initiation and continuation of work behavior and processes (Spreitzer, 1995).

Meaningfulness: Meaningfulness is the opportunity you feel to pursue a worthy task purpose. The feeling of meaningfulness is the feeling that you are on a path that is worth your time and energy (Appelbaum and Honeggar, 1998). Meaningfulness concerns to the value of the task goal or purpose, judged in relation to the individuals own ideals or standards. In other words, it involves the individuals intrinsic caring about a given task (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). Meaningfulness involves a fit between the requirements of a work role and a persons beliefs, values and behaviors (Spreitzer, 1995).

Impact: This assessment refers to the degree to which behavior is seen as making a difference in terms of accomplishing the purpose of the task, that is producing intended effects in one's task environment (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). Impact is the degree to which a person can influence strategic, administrative or operating outcomes at work (Ashforth, 1989). The notion of impact

has been studied implicitly in research on learned helplessness. Impact is opposed with incapability (Martinko and Gardner, 1982). The competent people believe that they can make a change by influencing the work environment or the outcomes of their job (Hasanpour *et al.*, 2011).

Trust: It refers to the connection of superior and inferior (trust of manager to employee and vice versa). Trust includes a concern for others, interest, competence, openness and reliability (Spreitzer and Mishra, 1997). Trust means feeling safety (Amirkhani, 2008). Whetten and Kim (1998) pointed out that competent people feel trust and are sure they will be behaved fairly. Trust means safety. Trust implies that people spot themselves in a dangerous situation. As a result, the competent people believe that they won't get any harm because of their reliance (Amirkhani, 2008).

The connection of spiritual leadership and empowerment of employees: This is the duty of the leaders to empower people to fulfill this some important elements should be developed and managers and employees have a role in this development. These elements are the basis of decision making according to empowerment. The leader should be the source of empowerment of employees, analyze outcomes and give importance to achievements. Some more researchers emphasize the importance of leadership on empowerment (Conger, 1989; Dohety and Danychuk, 1996). But just few studies analyzed leadership and empowerment one of these studies is the research done by Parker, Price, Color and Danswer. They concluded that supportive managers bring up competent employees (Thomas and Tymon, 1994; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). Apart from the studies have mentioned, some other researchers tried to recognize empowering leadership behaviors most of these writers believed empowerment is possible through the increase in employees self-competence. Some of these writers include Conger and Kanungo (1988) and Conger (1989). Anyway empirical and theoretical evidence recommend that spiritual leadership behaviors may have a positive effect on empowerment of employees (Korac-Kakabadse *et al.*, 2002; Fry, 2003).

Empowerment is of great importance in spiritual organizations. Economical operations and making benefit is not the only aim of organizations, spiritual development is one of their goals as well (Konz and Ryan, 1999). In this study, researchers tried to analyze the connection between spiritual leadership and psychological empowerment of employees.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Main question: Is there a meaningful connection between spiritual leadership and psychological empowerment of Khouzestan utility employees?

The first sub-question: Is there a meaningful connection between vision and psychological empowerment of Khouzestan utility employees?

The second sub-question: Is there a meaningful connection between faith and psychological empowerment of Khouzestan utility employees?

The third sub-question: Is there a meaningful connection between altruistic love and psychological empowerment of Khouzestan utility employees?

The fourth sub-question: Is there a reasonable connection between meaningfulness at work and psychological empowerment of Khouzestan utility employees?

The fifth sub-question: Is there a meaningful connection between membership and psychological empowerment of Khouzestan utility employees?

The sixth sub-question: Is there a meaningful connection between organizational commitment and psychological empowerment of Khouzestan utility employees?

The seventh sub-question: Is there a meaningful connection between productivity and psychological empowerment of Khouzestan utility employees?

According to the questions and theories of the survey and the analysis of the data, the present study is from the correlation type. The statistics of this study include the employees of Khouzestan utility in ahvaz that was studied for two group of managers (Managers in all stages) and official employees of Khouzestan utility (that have a degree higher than diploma). Thus, this statistical part includes 1200 member of khouzestan utility. The amount of symbol was measured 291 person in group testing. The needed data was collected through questionnaire. The questionnaire in this study had three parts of population questions, spiritual leadership questions and psychological empowerment questions. The questions of population section were about: Gender, marital status, age, work experience and education. For the testing of spiritual leadership, they used seven dimensions including; vision, faith, altruistic love,

meaningfulness, membership, organizational commitment and productivity, these items were taken from the questionnaire of Fry *et al.* (2005). For evaluating of psychological empowerment in employees, they used four dimensions including meaningfulness, competence, self determination, impact from Spreitzer (1995)'s questionnaire. Since, later the element of trust was added to the elements of psychological empowerment by Whetten and Kim (1998), for evaluating the relevant questions to trust, they used Mishra questionnaire. For analyzing data in this survey, deductive and descriptive statistics were used. For testing hypothesis, Pearson correlation test was used, they used the software, SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) to analyze data. To check the external of the questionnaire, it was handed to some management experts, then performed some reforms on it. To certify the validity of the questionnaire of spiritual leadership and psychological empowerment, Cronbach alpha coefficient, internal part of spiritual leadership questionnaire 0.9514 and psychological empowerment 0.8855 was certified.

RESULTS

Pearson correlation test through with SPSS software were used to evaluate the correlation between variables and connection between them. The results were shown in Table 1.

Main question: According to the SPSS output, Pearson's correlation coefficient is 0.706 between these two variables. The meaningful number (sig.) was 0.000 that is less than the standard meaningful level (0.05), so according to the hypothesis that says, there is not a connection between two variables, it can not be certified 95% since the correlation coefficient of these two variables is positive, the meaningful connection between spiritual leadership and psychological empowerment for Khouzestan utility is possible. The results were shown in Table 2.

The first sub-question: According to the SPSS output, Pearson's correlation coefficient is 0.585 between these two variables. The meaningful number (sig.) was 0.000 that is less than the standard meaningful level (0.05), so according to the hypothesis that says, there is not a connection between two variables, it can not be certified 95% since the correlation coefficient of these two variables is positive, the meaningful connection between vision and psychological empowerment for khouzestan utility is possible. The results were shown in Table 3.

The second sub-question: According to the SPSS output, Pearson's correlation coefficient is 0.594 between these two variables. The meaningful number (sig.) was 0.000 that is less than the standard meaningful level (0.05), so according to the hypothesis that says, there is not a connection between two variables, it can not be certified 95% since the correlation coefficient of these two variables is positive, the meaningful connection between faith and psychological empowerment for Khouzestan utility is possible. The results were shown in Table 4.

The third sub-question: According to the SPSS output, Pearson's correlation coefficient is 0.474 between these two variables. The meaningful number (sig.) was 0.000 that is less than the standard meaningful level (0.05), so

Table 1: The results of Pearson correlation test between spiritual leadership dimensions and psychological empowerment of employees

Questions	Correlation coefficient	Meaningful number (sig.)	Results
Main question	0.706	0	To certify the connection
The first sub-question	0.585	0	To certify the connection
The second sub-question	0.594	0	To certify the connection
The third sub-question	0.474	0	To certify the connection
The fourth sub-question	0.655	0	To certify the connection
The fifth sub-question	0.544	0	To certify the connection
The sixth sub-question	0.673	0	To certify the connection
The seventh sub-question	0.408	0	To certify the connection

Table 2: The statistics of Pearson correlation test about the connection between spiritual leadership and psychological empowerment of employees

	Psychological empowerment					
	Pearson					
Variable	Correlation coefficient	Meaningful	No.	Existence of connection	Type of connection	R^2
Spiritual leadership	0.706	0.000	291	There is a connection	Direct	0.498

Table 3: The statistics of Pearson correlation test about the connection between vision and psychological empowerment of employees

	Psychological empowerment					
	Pearson					
Variable	Correlation coefficient	Meaningful	No.	Existence of connection	Type of connection	R^2
Vision	0.585	0.000	291	There is a connection	Direct	0.342

Table 4: The statistics of Pearson correlation test about the connection between faith and psychological empowerment of employees

	Psychological empowerment					
	Pearson					
Variable	Correlation coefficient	Meaningful	No.	Existence of connection	Type of connection	R^2
Faith	0.594	0.000	291	There is a connection	Direct	0.353

Table 5: The statistics of Pearson correlation test about the connection between altruistic love and psychological empowerment of employees

	Psychological empowerment					
	Pearson					
Variable	Correlation coefficient	Meaningful	No.	Existence of connection	Type of connection	R^2
Altruistic love	0.474	0.000	291	There is a connection	Direct	0.225

Table 6: The statistics of Pearson correlation test about the connection between meaniningfulness and psychological empowerment of employees

	Psychological empowerment					
	Pearson					
Variable	Correlation coefficient	Meaningful	No.	Existence of connection	Type of connection	R^2
Meanining fulness	0.655	0.000	291	There is a connection	Direct	0.430

Table 7: The statistics of Pearson correlation test about the connection between membership and psychological empowerment of employees

	Psychological empowerment					
	Pearson					
Variable	Correlation coefficient	Meaningful	No.	Existence of connection	Type of connection	R^2
Member-ship	0.544	0.000	291	There is a connection	Direct	0.296

according to the hypothesis that says, there is not a connection between two variables, it can not be certified 95% since the correlation coefficient of these two variables is positive, the meaningful connection between altruistic love and psychological empowerment for Khouzestan utility is possible. The results were shown in Table 5.

The fourth sub-question: According to the SPSS output, Pearson's correlation coefficient is 0.655 between these two variables. The meaningful number (sig.) was 0.000 that is less than the standard meaningful level (0.05), so according to the hypothesis that says, there is not a connection between two variables, it can not be certified 95% since the correlation coefficient of these two variables is positive, the meaningful connection between meaningfulness and psychological empowerment for khouzestan utility is possible. The results were shown in Table 6.

The fifth sub-question: According to the SPSS output, Pearson's correlation coefficient is 0.544 between these

Table 8: The statistics of Pearson correlation test about the connection between organizational commitment and psychological empowerment of employees

	Psychological empowerment					
	Pearson					
Variable	Correlation coefficient	Meaningful	No.	Existence of connection	Type of connection	R^2
Organizational commitment	0.673	0.000	291	There is a connection	Direct	0.453

Table 9: The statistics of Pearson correlation test about the connection between productivity and psychological empowerment of employees

	Psychological empowerment					
	Pearson					
Variable	Correlation coefficient	Meaningful	No.	Existence of connection	Type of connection	R^2
Productivity	0.408	0.000	291	There is a connection	Direct	0.167

two variables. The meaningful number (sig.) was 0.000 that is less than the standard meaningful level (0.05), so according to the hypothesis that says, there is not a connection between two variables, it can not be certified 95% since the correlation coefficient of these two variables is positive, the meaningful connection between membership and psychological empowerment for Khouzestan utility is possible. The results were shown in Table 7.

The sixth sub-question: According to the SPSS output, Pearson's correlation coefficient is 0.673 between these two variables. The meaningful number (sig.) was 0.000 that is less than the standard meaningful level (0.05), so according to the hypothesis that says, there is not a connection between two variables, it can not be certified 95% since the correlation coefficient of these two variables is positive, the meaningful connection between organizational commitment and psychological empowerment for Khouzestan utility is possible. The results were shown in Table 8.

The seventh sub-question: According to the SPSS output, Pearson's correlation coefficient is 0.408 between these two variables. The meaningful number (sig.) was 0.000 that is less than the standard meaningful level (0.05); so, according to the hypothesis that says, there is not a connection between two variables, it can not be certified 95% since the correlation coefficient of these two variables is positive, the meaningful connection between productivity and psychological empowerment for khouzestan utility is possible. The results were shown in Table 9.

DISCUSSION

The general belief is that leader play a significant role in forming perceptions from work environment. Many researchers such as Ruy, Block, Benis, Serivastara and Bartor have analyzed the importance of leadership and its effects on empowerment. The purpose of spiritual leadership is to create vision and value congruence across the strategic, empowered team and individual levels and ultimately, to foster higher levels of organizational commitment and productivity (Fry, 2003). Spiritual leadership creates cultures where followers can function freely with the leader and within their work group, subject only to broad accountability. It is redefining the leader's role in servant and steward terms (Fairholm and Fairholm, 2009). Many researchers believe spiritual leadership connects to empowerment and empowers the employees. Some surveys support the connection of hypothesis in the present research. For instance some researchers offer some evidence that spiritual leadership. Result in empowerment (Ziaee *et al.*, 2010). Fry (2003) suggested that spiritual leadership connects to empowerment of follower.

This study aims to find out if spiritual leadership connects to psychological empowerment of the employees of Khouzestan utility?

Results show that spiritual leadership (Vision, faith, altruistic love, meaningfulness, membership, commitment and productivity) has a positive and meaningful connection with psychological empowerment of employees of Khouzestan utility. Organizations that have spiritual leadership can make motivation in employees, delegate authority and help them to share in decisions of organization, this makes them to empower. In other words, spiritual leadership prepares the good condition and supports employees and proves them, it is possible to work hard and fulfill organizations need as well theirs and show their potential abilities.

Organizational vision also connects to psychological empowerment. Spiritual leadership clears the future of the organization through making prospect. Thus, employees have more motivation for hard work, they can find more meaning and aim and commitment towards organization and shows them sublime standards and through which empowers them. Faith in work connects to empowerment. Spiritual beliefs make people to perform their duties in the best way and develop in their job.

Altruistic love also connects to empowerment. Spiritual leadership helps employees have good relationship with others through developing the culture of benevolence. This makes network between employees. As a result it makes them to be more active and take more

responsibility. Meaningfulness in job make employees to be able to analyze the present and future condition better, so that they can take higher responsibility and makes their attempts more meaningful. Therefore, meaningfulness empowers employees.

When people feel leaders give importance to their job, they are more helpful to the future of the organization and can perform better. Thus membership in organization connects to the psychological empowerment of employees. If employees truly understand the goals and values of the organization, they try much harder than they should and they like to stay in the organization, this shows their loyalty and dependence on the organization in a way that they try to solve the problems of the organization. Thus, organizational commitment connects to the psychological empowerment of employees.

Finally, it is clear that productivity connects to psychological empowerment of employees. Productivity helps them to have better procedure towards different affairs and recognize strong and weak points. And ultimately through the gained information from leaders attempt to improve organization.

The knowledge of the present study helps to managers to consider empowerment programs according to leadership behaviors in the organization. Since, organization seek higher function with less resources, leadership behaviors should be focused to be an encouragement for empowerment of employees. One the other hand, this study reminds us the dynamic role of spiritual leadership at work to the managers and organizations.

CONCLUSION

The results of the research show that there is a meaningful connection between spiritual leadership and psychological empowerment, thus it can be referred that spiritual leadership connects to psychological empowerment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- To increase the psychological empowerment in employees and the connection of leaders and employees it is recommended to consider the productivity and increase their partnership in organization
- Concerning the connection of spiritual leadership and psychological empowerment of employees, leaders should persuade them to work willingly and accept decisions and trust on the organization. This makes them ready to take higher responsibilities, in future

- Leader must sympathize employees and understand their problems and empower their capabilities
- Leaders should make good connection with employees and share them in the organization, make them to understand this crucial role. It helps them to empower. Trust in the organization have cordiality and be responsible
- It is recommended for leaders to be grateful to their employees and by this empower them in the organization
- If employees have more commitment to the organization and understand aims and values, they like to keep working with the organization even more than what they should do according to their contract. This shows their loyalty and dependence on the organization that it contributes to the psychological empowerment of the employees
- Spiritual leaders is not necessarily a complete factor of psychological empowerment, however some other factors can be effective in the empowerment of employees that will be discussed in future researches
- Since, spiritual leadership in a new concept. More research would be helpful to identify the effective elements and theoretical scope of it will be increased
- Leadership has various styles, so it would be possible to analyze and compare different styles to find their effect on the empowerment of employees

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