



# The Effect of Organizational Structure Dimensions on the Spirituality in the Workplace

Ebrahim Javaheri Zadeh<sup>1</sup>, Saeed Nosratabadi<sup>2</sup>, Parvaneh Bahrami<sup>1</sup>, Mohammad Reza Fathi<sup>3\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Management, Faculty of Management and Accounting, Allameh Tabatabaee University, Tehran, Iran

<sup>2</sup>Institute of Business Studies, Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, Szent István University, Budapest, Hungary

<sup>3</sup>Department of Management and Accounting, College of Farabi, University of Tehran, Qom, Iran

## Abstract

**Introduction:** In past research, spirituality is associated with several organisational behaviours, but the factors that generate and bolster spirituality in the workplace are rarely studied. To make the organisation and its staff spiritual, it is necessary to provide a set of conditions in which the employees can play their role peacefully and they can be in utmost alignment with organisational goals. The current research intends to investigate the effect of organisational structure on workplace spirituality. In other words, the main objective of this research is to examine the effect of organisational structure's dimensions on the spirituality at Qom University of Medical Sciences.

**Methods:** It is an applied cross-sectional research where organisational structure is the independent variable and spirituality in the workplace is the dependent variable. All the employees of Qom University of Medical Sciences, Qom, Iran, formed the population of the study and the whole population was studied. The main instrument of data collection was a questionnaire evaluating both independent and dependent variables.

**Results:** The results highlighted that parameters like complexity and formalization (two organisational structure dimensions) had significant effects on workplace spirituality, while no relationship was observed between centralisation (another dimension of organisational structure) and workplace spirituality. According to the results, the organizational structure is an effective variable assisting the managers in creating a spiritual workplace.

**Conclusion:** It is recommended that the organisations should encourage their employees to express spirituality, so as to benefit from advantages of spiritual employees and identify the remedy in their organisational structure.

**Keywords:** Spirituality, Organizational Structure, Structural Equation Modeling, SmartPLS.

## Article History:

Received: 23 September 2020

Accepted: 20 December 2020

## Please cite this paper as:

Javaheri Zadeh E, Nosratabadi S, Bahrami P, Fathi MR. The Effect of Organizational Structure Dimensions on the Spirituality in the Workplace. J Health Man & Info. 2020; 7(4): 240-251.

## \*Correspondence to:

Mohammad Reza Fathi  
Department of Management and Accounting, College of Farabi, University of Tehran, Qom, Iran  
Email: Reza.fathi@ut.ac.ir

## Introduction

One of the most important factors in maximising the performance of human resource is developing spirituality in the job environment. It is also predicted that spirituality in the workplace will become one of the prominent trends of the 21st century. Hence, the researchers have found spirituality as a stable source of the organisation, which helps the organisation during turbulent and troubled times. Spirituality is a powerful force in the life of an individual which is not stressed enough in the management literature. Organisational spirituality has opened a new window in the sector of research that is being done in organisational behaviours, and every day it seems to attract a wider group of enthusiasts as today's

organizations invest money to generate a spiritual environment (1). The observations reveal that the inclination of the Iranian society towards morality and spirituality is greater than the world average and it has thereby doubled the responsibility of the management researchers to take advantage of this economical tool to solve the organisational problems (2). In the literature, spirituality is mostly considered as an independent variable and its effect on other variables are the subject of many studies. According to these studies, spirituality in the workplace is able to improve productivity and increase performance (3-6), reduce displacement and turnover (5, 7), reduce stress (4), increase creativity (6, 4, 8), empower positive affect (9), increase job satisfaction (7, 4, 10) and improve work-wellness (11). It is also a proven

fact that spirituality affects honesty (6, 4), trust (4, 6, 8), commitment (4, 6), and self-esteem (7) in the organisation.

As seen from previous research, spirituality is associated with several organisational behaviours, but the factors that generate and bolster spirituality in the workplace are rarely studied. To make the organisation and its staff spiritual, it is necessary to provide a set of conditions in which the employees can play their role peacefully and they can be in utmost alignment with organisational goals.

One of the predisposing factors is the organisational structure. Understanding the structure of the organisation is the beginning of the utilisation of resources, offering new combinations of the existing resources and, ultimately, paving the way for development and growth. Numerous factors are considered for analysing the organisational structure, of which formalisation, centralisation and complexity are the most important ones. The main objective of this research is to study the relationship between the organisation's structural dimensions and spirituality at workplace. Spirituality at the workplace is an inevitable requirement for service organisations, especially organisations such as Qom University of Medical Sciences. Qom University of Medical Sciences continually endeavours to provide all the prerequisites and spirituality engendering factors at the workplace, and the structure of the organisation is one of the contributing variables. Therefore, this study aimed to find out whether organizational structure affects spirituality in the workplace in Qom University of Medical Sciences.

### *Literature Review*

#### *Spirituality and Its Components in the Workplace*

Some of the scientists believe that the paradigms of humanitarian sciences, management science and management theories have been changed over the last two decades. These changes comprise a shift of focus from the economic benefit to an emphasis on striking a balance among the quality of life and benefit, spirituality, and social responsibility. It further includes transitions from being self-centred to creating a bond with others, from individualism to friendship and finally from materialism to spirituality.

The new pattern that is seen to appear in organisations is called "spirituality movement". Spirituality emphasizes the importance of employees as human beings rather than the assets in the workplace and is indeed a result of human interaction which has been happening in the organisations for

a long time. This movement further highlights the need to understand the motivation of employees at work and stresses on the needs and characteristics of the surrounding environment (which assists the employees to realise their potential) and the importance of understanding the meaning and implications of workplace spirituality (3, 12).

In this regard, Howard considers increasing interest in spirituality as a new dimension to the process of the administration management existing since the 1950s. Wagner-Marsh & Conley (13) consider spirituality-based organisations as the fourth wave of corporate arena, after Toffler's third technologic wave (13). Evidence shows that since the beginning of 1992, the number of books, conferences, and workshops on 'Workplace spirituality' have increased greatly. In addition, in the year 1999, the Academy of Management formed a new expert group entitled 'Management, Spirituality and Religion' (MSR); they provided the legitimacy and support for research and teaching in this new field. Moreover, the Journal of Organizational Change Management and Journal of Management Psychology also published special issues related to this topic.

Since spirituality is used in various fields, it is not so easy to be described. According to Andre Hill we have to prevent ambiguity, secession and abstractness; on the other hand, we should prevent hard and hasty definitions because there is almost no suitable and right word in our language to define spiritual concepts. Hence, there is the possibility of confusing the concept of spirituality with other concepts and it is also difficult to apply it. Moreover, in the opinion of some, if something cannot be measured, it is not there'. Therefore, it is difficult to define spirituality because of its subjective property. However, some authors have attempted to provide definitions of spirituality, of which few have been described below.

Spirituality is rooted in the Latin word "Spiritus" or "Spiritualis" which means breathing, fragrances, air and wind. Spirituality is, indeed, a vitaliser that gives life to physical organisms. Although there are more than seventy definitions of spirituality at workplace and there is no consensus on a widely accepted definition yet, it seems that a consensus is emerging, stating that spirituality is a multi-faceted structure and it is to find a relationship with what is meaningful, which transcends our ordinary lives (4). In the current study, different definitions of spirituality are shown in Table 1.

Spirituality, historically, is deeply rooted in religion. However, today, many people are of the opinion that spirituality in workplaces is not a result

**Table 1:** Definitions of spirituality in the workplace

Row	Author	Definition of spirituality in the workplace
1	(14)	Meaning in work and sense of coherence
2	(15)	Inner consciousness that manifests itself as a sense of harmony, interconnectedness, and unity.
3	(14, 15)	The basic sense of bonding with oneself, others, and the whole world (this idea is similar to the idea of inner life). In the workplace, spirituality refers to the attempts of an individual to find the ultimate goal in life, to improve communication with colleagues and other people at workplaces, and to create a reconciliation between the inner beliefs and organizational values.
4	(16)	Sense of community, meaningful work, and inner life: Spirituality in the workplace is the cognition that employees have of inner life and reinforce and strengthen the meaningful work that forms in the context of the community.
5	(6)	Inner consciousness and searching for meaning
6	(7)	Sense of community and meaningful work, alignment with the organization values.
7	(14)	Inner power, interconnection with those involved in the process of work, sense of purpose in the workplace
8	(17)	Interesting work (meaningful work), sense of cohesion and spiritual connection (inner life).

of religion, but it is based on human values and philosophies. It is important to note that for some people, spirituality at work is a kind of religious connection, while for others it does not have such a meaning. Researchers believe that since spirituality in the workplace does not mean to organise religious rituals, it is not merely about God or theology, while others explain that spirituality was once an aspect of religion and religion should be seen as one of the possible spiritual paths. Formerly, spirituality was a path of deepening one’s bond with God, but now for many, God is not the only target in their spiritual search, but it is also a way of bonding with many other lofty concepts (2).

Sanei and Hasanpour (18) categorize the relationship between religion and spirituality based on two major views. The first view considers that there are three possible modes: 1) some believe that spirituality and religion are inseparable, 2) some believe that spirituality consists of religion and its realm is more than religion, and finally 3) some consider religion encapsulates spirituality where the domain of its realm is wider. The second view emphasizes that there is no relationship between spirituality and religion (18). Hungelmann et al. (19) presents the best category of spirituality, which includes metaphysics (communication with God), interpersonal (communication with friends, family, etc.), and intrapersonal communication (with the inner self) (19). Spirituality is a personal, pervasive, non-sectarian and a universal human feeling that does not refer to the beliefs and practices of a particular tradition or an organized religious institution. In other words, spirituality is not necessarily related to a particular religion’s tradition, but it can be based on personal philosophy and values. Besides, Polley, Vora, & SubbaNarasimha (20) believe that implementation of spirituality in the workplace imposes dilemmas, costs and outright negative effects to an organization.

They recommend that to implement spirituality in the workplace successfully the organizational decision makers have to consider the six following factors: net economic cost of implementation, potential for worker exploitation, replacement or substitution of the community’s function or role in spirituality, inappropriate practice of spirituality in the workplace, potential for competitive disadvantage, and increased groupthink (20).

The literature review of spirituality in the workplace revealed that the key concepts that had been proposed were inner life, meaningful work, and a sense of community which are explained as follows:

Inner life: refers to the employees’ needs, such as physical needs, emotional cognitive needs, and spiritual needs and further reminds that these needs are not limited to their homes but are significant even at work. Inner life or spiritual identity is a sense of oneness with others and the whole world.

Meaningful work: embodies the idea that people are looking for a deeper sense of meaning and purpose in their work. This is the way people interact with their daily work at an individual level.

Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (21) state that the meaningful work not only gives the staff contentment by enabling them to perform cognitive tasks, but also generates a sense of joy that binds the employees to the important things in life.

Sense of community: has a deeper relationship with others in the surrounding environment, including sharing of ideas, mutual obligations and commitments that binds people to one another. This dimension of working spirituality is shaped in the group-level of human behaviour and it covers the interaction between the staff and colleagues. The sense of community is based on the idea that spiritual people live in solidarity with other people (22).

Ashmos and Duchon (16) considered seven components of spirituality in work using Principal

Component Analysis (16). Milliman, Czaplewski and Ferguson (7), in their influential article, conceptualized only three of these dimensions in three separate levels: individual level, group level, and organizational level because, firstly, these dimensions are known as the most important dimensions in studies. Secondly, it should be noted that spirituality in the workplace has many components and complexities, but the focus is on the aspects that are positively related to the job behaviours. Finally, focusing on a three aspect model allows them to do their study in a more concise and precise manner.

*Individual level, meaningful work:* Having a purpose and a sense of meaning to the work being done are the most important aspects of spirituality in the workplace. This factor shows how employees interact with their daily work at an individual level. In terms of spirituality, the work should not only be attractive and challenging, but also should include searching for deeper purpose and meaning, realising the dreams and expressing needs of the inner life by searching for meaningful work and secondly by helping others. The meaningful work factor comprises the following dimensions: 1) enjoy work, 2) get energized by work, and 3) create personal meaning and purpose through work.

*Group level sense of community:* This aspect concerns a deep bond with others. Community means that all the individuals have deep connections with their colleagues and consider themselves associated with others. The nature of a community is a deeper sense of connection between people, including protection, freedom of expression, and real attention. The factor of sense of community contains the following dimensions: 1) having a sense of connection with the co-workers, 2) supporting each other, and 3) being linked by a common purpose.

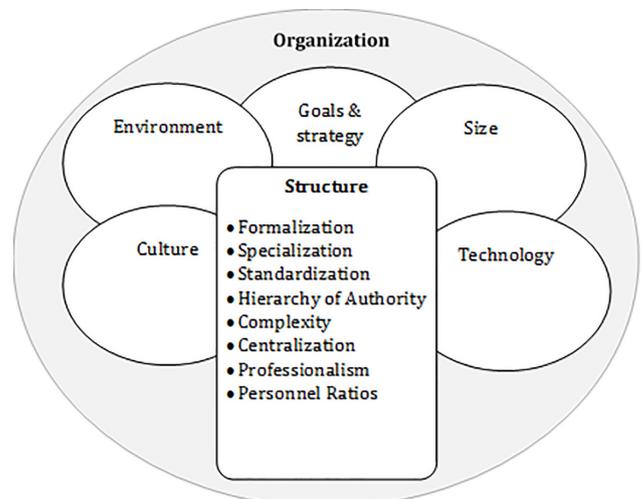
The organisational level alignment with the organisational values: The third dimension of spirituality occurs at the workplace in which the employees feel that their personal values are aligned with the values and goals of the organization. This dimension of spirituality in the workplace includes the employees' relatability with the larger goals of the organization. Alignment means people believe that the managers and the employees in their organization have competent values, possess a strong conscience, and are also concerned about the welfare of their employees and their communities. Alignment with organizational values includes: 1) The employees have a connection with the organization's goals, 2) They recognize the organisation's mission and values, and 3) The organisation cares about its employees

(7). The proposed model of Milliman, Czaplewski, and Ferguson (7), due to its inclusiveness and comprehensiveness, is admitted as the framework used in the current study to evaluate the spirituality in the workplace. Torabi et al. (23) tested an exploratory model by investigating the mediating effect of the organization engagement in the relationship between perceived supervisor support and intention to leave. The proposed direct link between the supervisor's support and intention to leave was not proven significant. Nafchi et al. (24) investigated the role of the employee's perceptions of job characteristics and work environment and person-organizations fit elements in creating a tendency toward turnover among the staff in Shiraz University of Medical Sciences. SEM revealed that all job characteristic variables, except for the importance of job variable, significantly affected the turnover intention.

### *The Dimensions of Organisational Structural*

In the present sophisticated and multi-faceted society, the reason behind the creation of organisations is to generate a way to realize the desires and achieve goals that humankind cannot reach alone (25). Many variables are marked as organizational dimensions, but in general, the organizational dimensions are divided into the two main groups of Structural and Content (26). According to Figure 1, the content dimensions are the representative of the entire organization (the dimensions such as the size of the organisation, the type of technology, the environment and its goals). Structural dimensions represent the internal characteristics of an organization and are a basis for measuring and comparing organizations with one another.

Wherever an organization is created, firstly, its structure is constructed, and then human



**Figure 1:** Interaction of the structural and content dimensions of the organization (27)

resources are provided. Human resources, using the existing form and structure, lead the organization towards its predetermined goals (28). Therefore, the organization’s structure influences the human resource variables. From the perspective of a structuralist, the societies in which we are living, and the institutions and organizations that we belong to form the structure of our life by providing us with roles and developing interactions. Based on the theory of structure, the organizational structure facilitates and restricts the interaction of people. Therefore, this idea is called the *duality of structure and agency*, according to which the agents of the organization are facilitated and limited by structures, procedures and expectations (29). Among the organizational structural variables, the three factors of complexity, formalization and centralization can be considered as the pivot points of each structure and the severity or weakness of each of these three dimensions affect the overall formation of the organizational structure. Complexity is measured considering the extent of specialization of the occupations within the organization and also by the number of places where the organisation is located, the number of occupations and organizational positions and the levels of hierarchy (30). Formalization represents the degree of bureaucracy, the diversity of laws and regulations and the communication practices in the organization (31). Lastly, centralization in each organization determines who the decision makers are in the organisation (30). In Table 2, the evaluation criteria of each of three structural dimensions

are provided.

*Conceptual Model and the Hypotheses*

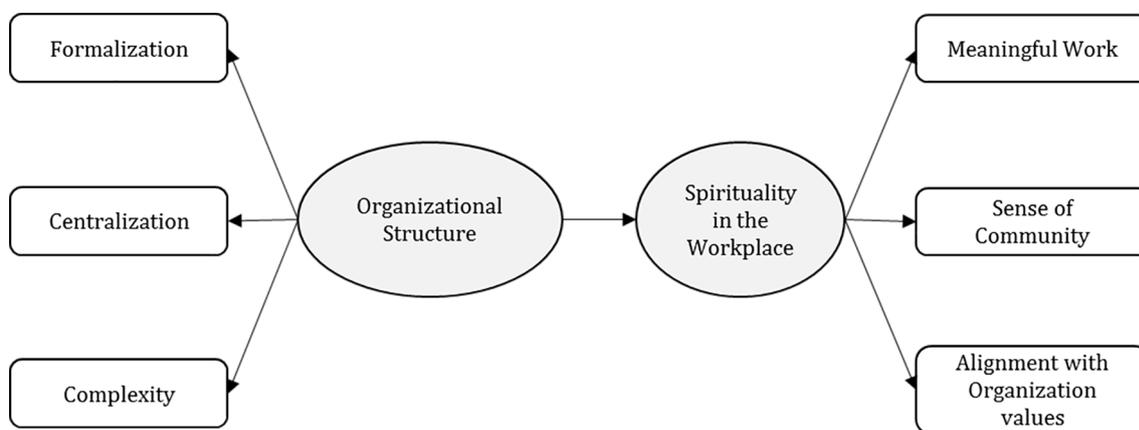
In this research, the Robbins’s scale which evaluates the three variables of “formalization”, “complexity” and “centralisation,” is used to examine the organizational structure. Having identified the indicators from the research literature, the spirituality in the workplace is measured using the three dimensions of ‘meaningful work’, ‘sense of community’, and ‘alignment with the organization values’. According to the above-mentioned parameters, the conceptual model of the current study is proposed in Figure 2.

Figure 2 shows the conceptual model of the research. This model is based on the logic of structural equation modelling, in which the organisational structure is considered as a hidden variable. In this study, this variable is measured using the variables of formalization, centralization and complexity. The variable of spirituality in the workplace is also measured using the variables of meaningful work, sense of community and alignment with the organization values. For this reason, the arrows have been drawn from the variable of spirituality in the workplace towards the observable variables.

According to the conceptual model of the research, formalization can control or direct the behaviour of employees. The rules and the regulations, job descriptions, and how the employees have been controlled by the control tools have the potential to influence the employee’s perception of the richness

**Table 2:** The valuation criteria of formalization, complexity, and centralization in the organization structure

Formalization (the Rules)	Complexity (Separation)	Centralization (Authority)
1. Terms and conditions	1. Horizontal Separation Criterion (Posts)	1. Operations Managers’ Authorities
2. Job description and job standards	2. Vertical separation criterion (levels and hierarchy)	2. The level of control of decisions by the high authorities
3. The amount of staff control by supervisors	3. Geographical separation criterion (unit number, unit distance, number of personnel)	3. The level of intervention by authorities in collecting and interpreting information



**Figure 2:** Conceptual Model of the Research

and meaning of his/her jobs. Also, formalization can restrict or facilitate the relationships among the employees. Formalization indicates the importance of the level of familiarity of the employees with the values and missions of the organization and the level of attention given by the organization to its employees. According to the conceptual model of the research in Figure 2, the research hypotheses are:

Hypothesis 1: Formalization has a significant effect on meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment with the organizational values.

Centralization in the organization determines the extent to which employees and operational managers are authorized to make the decisions. Centralization, according to the theory of occupational enrichment, affects the employees' concern towards their jobs, alters the degree of independence and enhances the perception of the richness and meaning of their jobs. Centralization can limit the horizontal or diagonal communication channels of the organization and affects the level of support the employees extend towards one another. Additionally, centralization can influence the judgment of employees in context to the goals and values of the organization. Therefore, the inference leads to the creation of Hypothesis 2 which states: Centralisation has a significant effect on meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment with the organizational values.

Complexity illustrates the horizontal, vertical, and geographical separation in an organization. The degree of separation can affect the level of communication the employees have along with the employee's perception of work. Hence, Hypothesis 3 was formulated which states: Organisational complexity has a significant effect on meaningful work, sense of community and alignment with the organization values.

## Methods

This is an applied research, in terms of the objective and it is also descriptive (non-experimental) in terms of method of data collection. In this research, organizational structure is considered as an independent variable and spirituality in the workplace is considered as the dependent variable. The population of the research are all the employees of Qom University of Medical Sciences. An attempt to study the whole population at the organization implies that the sample size is equal to the population and it is 120. After distributing and collecting the data, 92 questionnaires were found to be suitable for analysis. The main instrument of data collection was a questionnaire. In order to measure organisational

structure, we used Robbins's scale, which analyzes the three variables of "formalization", "complexity", and "centralization". To measure spirituality in the workplace, we employed the questionnaire of Milliman, Czaplewski and Ferguson (7), which evaluates three variables of 'meaningful work', 'sense of community', and 'alignment with the organization values'. The experts and academic professors' opinions were used to test the validity. In order to determine the reliability of the questionnaire, we used Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the questionnaire about organizational structure with 24 questions was 0.72, and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the questionnaire of spirituality in the workplace with 21 questions was 0.922, which indicate the reliability of the whole questionnaire.

## Data Analysis and Research Findings

15 percent of the respondents were female, 65 percent were male, and the remaining did not specify their gender. The mean age of the respondents was 38, and on average they had 14 years of work experience. Meanwhile, 10% of the respondents had a diploma (of finishing high school), 16.2% of them had an associate degree, 45.7% had a bachelor's degree, 14.1% had a master's degree, and 5% of the respondents had a doctoral degree.

## The Conceptual Model Testing

To test the research hypothesis, we performed structural equation modelling using SmartPLS . In fact, the analysis is incomplete unless the explorer expresses the model which is related to the relationships between the variables. After expressing the model, the next step is to obtain the estimation of free parameters from a set of observed data. Repeated measurements of data such as Maximum likelihood or Generalised last square or Partial least squares can be used to estimate the model. The Partial least squares method, which is an introduced PLS in regression modelling, is one of the multivariate statistical methods that is able to model one or more response variables simultaneously for several explanatory variables, despite some limitations such as the uncertainty of the distribution of the response variable, the presence of a small number of observations or the existence of a strong correlation between the explanatory variables. Therefore, to analyse the data and test the research hypothesis, the PLS method was used in this study because of the low sample size and the non-normal distribution of the response variable.

**How to Test**

According to Figures 3, 4 and 5, the numbers inside the ovals are R<sup>2</sup> coefficient of determination. R<sup>2</sup> determines what percentage of the variance of a dependent variable is explained by the independent

variable(s). Therefore, it is natural that this value is equal to zero for the independent variable and is greater than zero for the dependent variable. The higher the rate, the more effective the independent variables are on the dependent variables. According to the coefficients

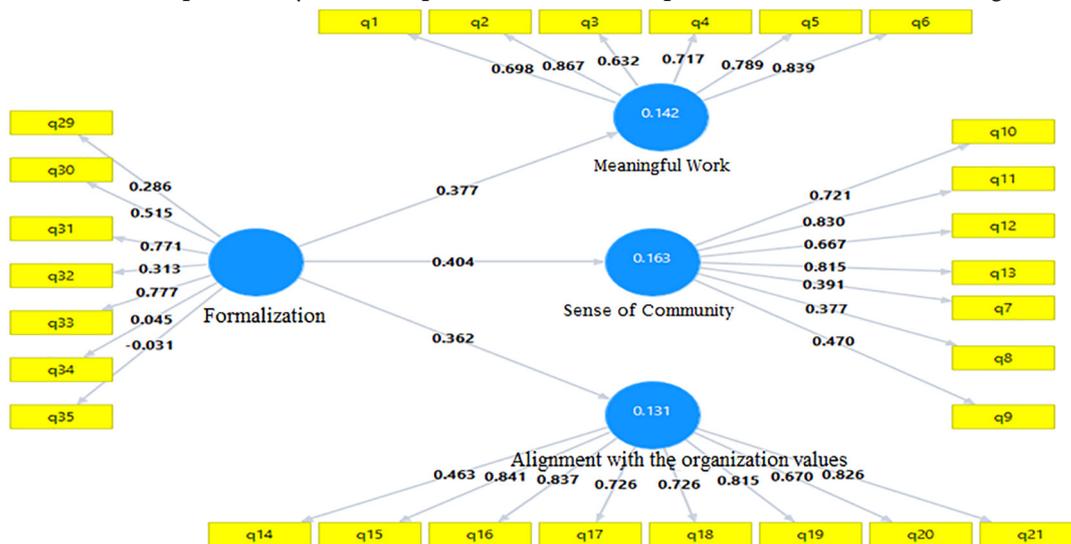


Figure 3: The model of the effect of formalization on spirituality's dimensions in the estimation of standard coefficients

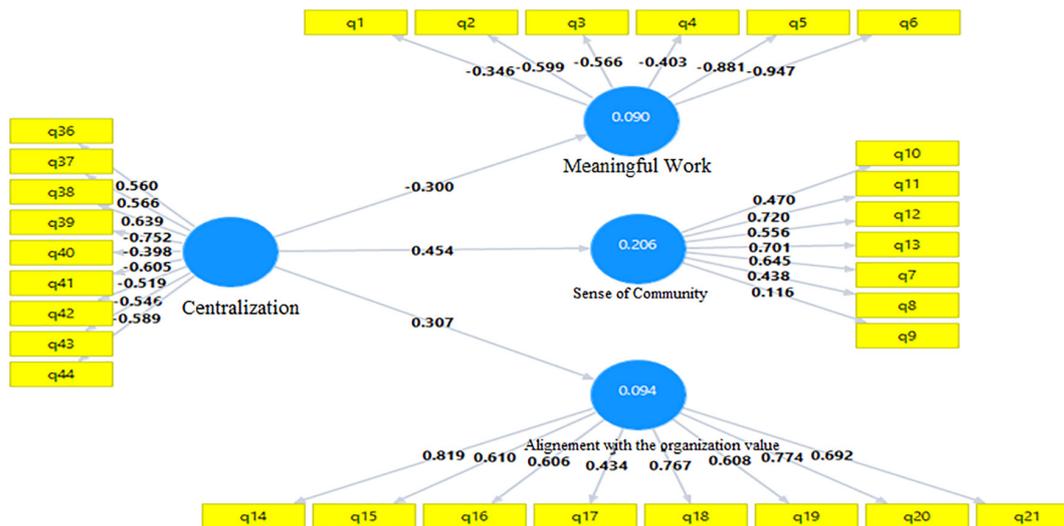


Figure 4: The model of the effect of centralization on spirituality's dimensions in the estimation of standard coefficients

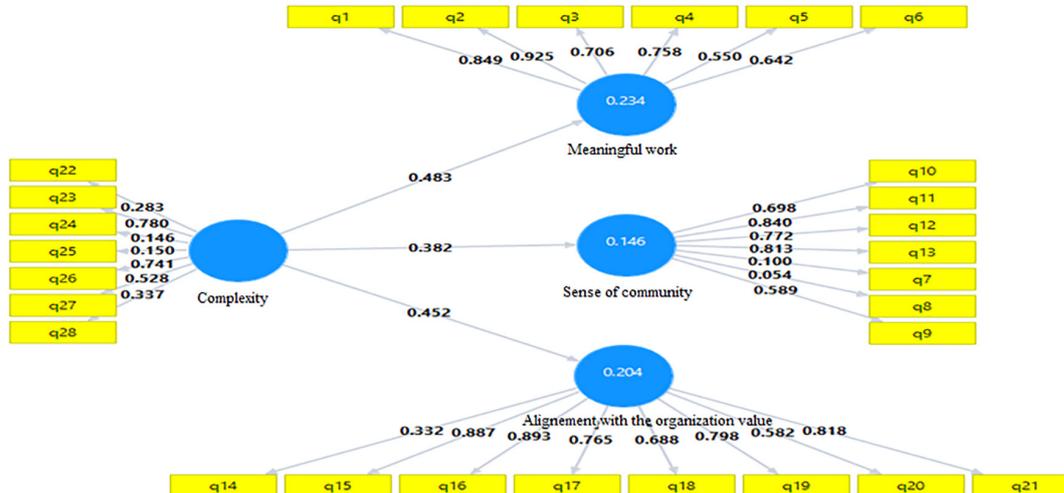


Figure 5: The model of the effect of complexity on spirituality dimensions in the estimation of standard coefficients

of determination of the model, it can be said that the complexity explains 0.58%, the formalisation explains 0.43%, and the centralisation explains 0.39% of the variance of the dimensions of spirituality in the workplace (meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment with the organization values).

## Result

The first hypothesis: Formalization has a significant effect on meaningful work, sense of community and alignment with the organizational values.

H0: Formalization does not have a significant effect on meaningful work, sense of community and alignment with the organizational values.

H1: Formalization has a significant effect on meaningful work, sense of community and alignment with the organizational values.

According to the results obtained from the path coefficient and the t statistic, which is shown in Table 3 and Figure 3, formalization has a significant effect, at 99% confidence level, on the variables of meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment with the organizational values –because the t statistic is set out of the range of -2.58 to +2.85.

Given the fact that the standard path coefficient is positive, the type of relationship between the two variables is direct and in the same direction. Therefore, increases in the organization formalization lead to increases in the spirituality at the workplace; also, lesser formalization in the organization reduces meaningful work, the sense of community and alignment with the organizational values.

The second hypothesis: Centralization has a significant effect on meaningful work, sense of

community and alignment with the organisational values.

H0: Centralization does not have a significant effect on meaningful work, sense of community and alignment with the organizational values.

H1: Centralization has a significant effect on meaningful work, sense of community and alignment with the organizational values.

According to the results obtained from the path coefficient and t statistic shown in Table 4, and in Figure 4, centralization, at 99% confidence level, did not have a significant effect on the variables of meaningful work, sense of community and alignment with the organization values. As a result, the second hypothesis of the research is not confirmed.

The third hypothesis: Complexity has a significant effect on meaningful work, sense of community and alignment with the organizational values.

H0: Complexity does not have a significant effect on meaningful work, sense of community and alignment with the organizational values.

H1: Complexity has a significant effect on meaningful work, sense of community and alignment with the organizational values.

According to the results obtained from the path coefficient and t statistic shown in Table 5, and in Figure 5, complexity, at 99% confidence level, had a significant effect on the variables of sense of community and alignment with the organization values –because t statistic is set out of the range of -2.58 to +2.85. However, there was not enough evidence to prove any relationship between the complexity of the organizational structure and meaningful work. Hence, as complexity increased in the organization,

**Table 3:** Direct effects, t statistic and outcome of the first hypothesis of research

The Hypotheses		$\beta$ coefficient	t-value	P value	Result	
Formalization	→	Meaningful Work	0.337	2.861	0.004	Confirmed
Formalization	→	Sense of Community	0.404	4.728	0.000	Confirmed
Formalization	→	Alignment with the organization values	0.362	3.250	0.001	Confirmed

**Table 4:** Direct effects, t statistic and outcome of the second hypothesis of research

The Hypotheses		$\beta$ coefficient	t-value	P value	Result	
Centralization	→	Meaningful Work	-0.300	0.821	0.412	Rejected
Centralization	→	Sense of Community	0.454	1.083	0.279	Rejected
Centralization	→	Alignment with the organization values	0.307	0.770	0.442	Rejected

**Table 5:** Direct effects, t statistic and outcome of the third hypothesis of research

The Hypotheses		$\beta$ coefficient	t-value	P value	Result	
Complexity	→	Meaningful Work	0.483	3.704	0.000	Confirmed
Complexity	→	Sense of Community	0.382	1.345	0.179	Rejected
Complexity	→	Alignment with the organization values	0.452	4.008	0.000	Confirmed

the sense of community and alignment with the organization values also increased in a positive direction, and as the complexity decreased, the variables of sense of community and alignment with the organization values decreased.

### Discussion

Based on the research hypothesis, having an appropriate organizational structure is primitive in developing spirituality in the workplace. In a number of studies, the relationship between organizational structure and strategies, organizational learning (32) and organizational variables such as human resource motivation (28), knowledge management (25, 33), organisational entrepreneurship (34), entrepreneurial culture (35) and performance improvement was proved (36).

According to the results, the first and third hypotheses of the research (except for the relationship between complexity and meaningful work) have been confirmed and a significant positive relationship was observed among formalization, complexity and spirituality in the workplace, but no relationship between centralization and spirituality in workplace could be demonstrated; therefore, the second hypothesis of the study was rejected. Therefore, the higher the complexity and formalization in the organization, the higher the spirituality in the workplace. Meanwhile, the correlation coefficient of formalization is more than complexity and a linear relationship between formalization and spirituality in the workplace is established, which shows that the impact of formalization on spirituality in the workplace is more than complexity.

The results also reveal that, contrary to the existing perceptions, reduction in complexity or formalization does not necessarily lead to desirable results. The results of other researches, including that of Rahman Sarsht (25), have also not reported a relationship between complexity and knowledge management (25). Based on the results, and to increase spirituality in the workplace, the following solutions are suggested.

According to the first hypothesis, there is a significant and positive relationship between complexity and spirituality in the workplace; hence, it is proposed that the horizontal segregation (posts) and vertical segregation (hierarchies) should be done transparently in order to avoid any ambiguity in the employees' thoughts.

The results of the research show that formalization and spirituality in the workplace have a significant and positive relationship, and that, there is a linear

relationship between them. Therefore, it is suggested that the organization's formalization should be developed through laws and regulations, job descriptions and job standards, so that each employee can better associate with his/her job and can identify communication channels with others. As a result, understanding the meaningful work and sense of community increases and it leads to spirituality in the workplace.

Based on the results, the organizational spirituality in the studied population was reported less than personal and group spirituality. It is suggested that, in order to increase the level of spirituality at the organisational level, the organisations should pay more attention to the needs of the employees and should focus more on the values and the missions of the organization to create a sense of association with organizational goals. And finally, organizations should try to increase trust among the employees in order to establish effective and interconnected communication among the members to increase the group-level spirituality.

### Conclusion

The organizations always emphasize spirituality in the workplace in order to improve productivity (37) because, employees with spirituality support their colleagues, seek quality, and do good work (37). According to the literature, spirituality in the workplace provides a new culture in the organization in which individuals feel happier and show a higher performance. A culture stabilizing the organization, providing clear objectives, augmenting commitment, and clarifying hoped-for work behaviour. Spirituality provides meaning in work and it causes employees feel they are belonging to a work community. The organizations desire to introduce themselves as worthy where they imply a higher sense of objective. Workplace spirituality arms the organizations with an environment constituting an actual integration of individual spiritual experiences at work. It highlights the importance of focusing on individuals for the organisational decision makers because individuals take their spiritual values, needs and preferences to their workplace.

There is evidence in the literature that the research findings recommend the organizational decision makers to create a spiritually oriented workplace in which the employees express their spirituality. Tombaugh, Mayfield and Durand (9), for instance, recommend that the managers, aiding the creation of "spiritually based" subcultures, stimulate the employees to express spirituality (9). Lips-Wierma and

Mills (38) also argue that the organizational decisions should be able to enhance trust and openness among the employees so as to facilitate spiritual expression of the individuals (38).

The results of the current study, in accordance with those of the existing studies, confirm the role of organization and organizational characteristics in the improvement and development of spirituality in the workplace. In other words, the contribution of the study is investigating the effect of organizational structure on the workplace spirituality. According to the results, the structure of an organization is also a determinant factor in creation a spiritual workplace. The result showed that organizational spirituality in the studied population was lower than individual spirituality and group spirituality. Therefore, the organization not only failed to achieve synergy in the spirituality, but also the spirituality of the organization was less than the level of spirituality of each member. According to the results, it is recommended that Qom University of Medical Sciences should unleash this potential and reconsider its organizational structure, specially the complexity level and formalization level of its structure. Since this research was done in an organization in Iran, it cannot be claimed that the results can be generalized to other organizations even in Iran. That is why it renders scope for future studies and research in the same arena in different environments to compare the results obtained.

Confirming the effect of organizational structure on the spirituality in the workplace provides an evidence that organizational variables can affect the workplace spirituality. Future research can be conducted to replicate the findings across diverse samples. Meanwhile, both quantitative and qualitative aspects are needed for cross-validation of the findings. On the other hand, research is needed to compare different organizational structures to determine which structure has been more effective in creating a spiritual workplace. For example, research to compare the effects of matrix structure and bureaucratic structure (or other organizational structure types) can provide valuable results. In addition, measuring the effect of other organizational variables on the workplace spirituality is recommended to create a comprehensive picture illustrating how the organizations can maximize the expression of spirituality among the employees. For example, studying the effect of organizational size, industry type, ethical climate, or other organizational variables is recommended to compare the results. Finally, creating a spiritual workplace is a decision which should be made by the managers. Hence,

studying the effect of different leadership styles and temperament is the suggested potential research question for the future research.

**Conflict of Interest:** None declared.

## References

1. Klenke K. Introducing spirituality. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*. 2005;13(1):4-7. doi: 10.1108/eb028994.
2. Moghimi SM, Rahbar AH, Eslami H. Organizational Spirituality and its Effect on the Staff's Creativity: An Adaptive Approach. *Faslnameh Akhlagh dar Oloum Fanavari*. 2007;2(3-4):89-98. Persian.
3. Charoensukmongkol P, Daniel JL, Chatelain-Jardon R. Enhancing workplace spirituality through emotional intelligence. *Journal of Applied Management and Entrepreneurship*. 2013;18(4):3. doi: 10.9774/gleaf.3709.2013.oc.00003.
4. Petchsawang P, Duchon D. Workplace spirituality, meditation, and work performance. *Journal of management, spirituality & religion*. 2012;9(2):189-208. doi: 10.1080/14766086.2012.688623.
5. Winston B. Spirituality at workplace. *International Journal on Spirituality and Organization Leadership*. 2013;21-32.
6. Krishnakumar S, Neck CP. The "what", "why" and "how" of spirituality in the workplace. *Journal of managerial psychology*. 2002;17(3):153-64. doi: 10.1108/02683940210423060.
7. Milliman J, Czaplewski AJ, Ferguson J. Workplace spirituality and employee work attitudes: An exploratory empirical assessment. *Journal of organizational change management*. 2003;16(4):426-47. doi: 10.1108/09534810310484172.
8. Daniel JL. The effect of workplace spirituality on team effectiveness. *Journal of management development*. 2010;29(5):442-56. doi: 10.1108/02621711011039213.
9. Tombaugh JR, Mayfield C, Durand R. Spiritual expression at work: exploring the active voice of workplace spirituality. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*. 2011;19(2):146-70. doi: 10.1108/19348831111135083.
10. Fanggidae RE, Suryana Y, Efendi N. Effect of a spirituality workplace on organizational commitment and job satisfaction (study on the lecturer of private Universities in the Kupang city-Indonesia). *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*. 2016;219:639-46. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.05.045.

11. De Klerk JJ. Spirituality, meaning in life, and work wellness: A research agenda. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*. 2005;13(1):64-8. doi: 10.1108/eb028998.
12. Williams WA, Brandon R-S, Hayek M, Haden SP, Atinc G. Servant leadership and followership creativity. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*. 2017;38(2):178-93. doi: 10.1108/LODJ-02-2015-0019.
13. Wagner-Marsh F, Conley J. The fourth wave: the spiritually-based firm. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*. 1999;12(4):292-302. doi: 10.1108/09534819910282135.
14. Mirvis PH. Crossroads—"soul work" in organizations. *Organization Science*. 1997;8(2):192-206. doi: 10.1287/orsc.8.2.192.
15. Guillory JA, Sowell R, Moneyham L, Seals B. An exploration of the meaning and use of spirituality among women with HIV/AIDS. *Alternative therapies in health and medicine*. 1997;3(5):55-60.
16. Ashmos DP, Duchon D. Spirituality at work: A conceptualization and measure. *Journal of management inquiry*. 2000;9(2):134-45. doi: 10.1177/105649260092008.
17. Kinjerski V, Skrypnik BJ. A human ecological model of spirit at work. *Journal of management, Spirituality & religion*. 2006;3(3):231-41. doi: 10.1080/14766080609518627.
18. Saneei M, Hasanpour A. The Basic Solution of Raising Spirituality in Organizations. *Akhlagh dar Oloum va Fanavary*. 2012;2(7):1-10. Persian.
19. Hungelmann J, Kenkel-Rossi E, Klassen L, Stollenwerk RM. Spiritual well-being in older adults: Harmonious interconnectedness. *J Relig Health*. 1985;24(2):147-53. doi: 10.1007/BF01532258.
20. Polley D, Vora J, SubbaNarasimha P. Paying the devil his due: Limits and liabilities of workplace spirituality. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*. 2005; 3(1):50-62. doi: 10.1108/eb028997.
21. Giacalone R, Jurkiewicz C. Toward a Science of Workplace Spirituality. *Handbook of Workplace*, 2003.
22. Chawla V, Guda S. Individual spirituality at work and its relationship with job satisfaction, propensity to leave and job commitment: An exploratory study among sales professionals. *Journal of Human values*. 2010;16(2):157-67. doi: 10.1177/097168581001600203.
23. Torabi M, Ghochani MM, Zohoorian Nadali I, Fathi MR. The Mediating Role of Organization Engagement on Perceived Supervisor Support and Intention to Leave (Case study: Faghihi Hospital in Shiraz). *Journal of Health Management & Informatics*. 2019;6(4):138-44.
24. Raeesi Nafchi S, Fathi MR, Boroomand M. The Role of Employee Perceptions of Job Characteristics, Work Environment, Person-Organizations Fit Elements and in Creating Tendency toward Turnover. *Journal of Health Management & Informatics*. 2020;7(1):17-23.
25. Rahmanseresht H. Theories of Organization and Management; from Modernism to Postmodernism. Tehran: Nashr Doran; 2013. Persian.
26. Giau D. Report on Results of the Study Tour on Public Administration Reform in China. Singapore and South Korea: Proceedings of Social Government Conference, 2004.
27. Daft R. Organization Theory and Design. Tehran: Cultural Research Office; 2006.
28. Shahidi M. Investigating the Relationship between Organizational Structure and Human Resource Motivation. *Danesh Modiriati*. 1998;43(11):100-25. Persian.
29. Hatch MJ. Organization theory: Modern, symbolic, and postmodern perspectives. Oxford: Oxford university press; 2012.
30. Fry LW, Slocum Jr JW. Technology, structure, and workgroup effectiveness: A test of a contingency model. *Academy of management journal*. 1984;27(2):221-46. doi: 10.5465/255923.
31. Marsh RM, Mannari H. Technology and size as determinants of the organizational structure of Japanese factories. *Administrative science quarterly*. 1981:33-57.
32. Martínez-León IM, Martínez-García JA. The influence of organizational structure on organizational learning. *International Journal of Manpower*. 2011.
33. Monavarian A, Kheirandish M, Asgari N. Development of Organizational Structural Dimensions in Accordance with Knowledge Management Approach. *Modiriati Fanavari Etelaat*. 2011;7(3):133-50. Persian.
34. Yadollahi Farsi J, Azizi Ziarat A, Khastar H. Investigating the Relationship between Organizational Structure and Entrepreneurship Case Study: Private Banks of Tehran. Tehran: Toseh Karafarini; 2009. Persian.
35. Kordnaeij A, Moghimi S, Yazdani H. Investigating the Relationship Between the Elements of Organizational Structure and Entrepreneurial Culture in Tehran University. Tehran: Nasherie Modiriati Dolati; 2009. Persian.

- 
36. Majidi A, Mohammadi Moghaddam Y, Ghasemi F. The Effect of Organizational Structure on Improving the Performance of the Vice-Chancellor of Education in the University of Oloum Entezami. *Faslnameh Toseeh Modiriat Manabe Ensani*. 2011;21(6);201-20. Persian.
  37. Garcia-Zamor JC. Workplace spirituality and organizational performance. *Public administration review*. 2003;63(3):355-63.
  38. Lips-Wiersma M, Mills C. Coming out of the closet: Negotiating spiritual expression in the workplace. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*. 2002. 17(3), 183-202. doi: 10.1108/02683940210423097.