

THE IMPACT OF SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP DIMENSIONS ON TURNOVER INTENTION THROUGH EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

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ABSTRACT

Spiritual leadership theory (SLT) is a causal leadership theory for organizational transformation designed to create an intrinsically motivated, learning organization. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the dimensions of spiritual leadership on turnover intention through employee empowerment of Guilan province Tax office. The population includes all of Guilan province Tax office personnel who were 790 people and among them, 259 people were selected as the study sample by using Cochran's formula and simple random sampling method. For data analysis and hypothesis testing, used path analysis by LISREL 8.53 software. The Results show that there is a significant positive relationship between all dimensions of spiritual leadership except the hope/faith (vision, Altruistic love, meaning/calling, membership, organizational commitment and performance feedback) and employee empowerment of Guilan province Tax office. Also there is a significant negative relationship between employee empowerment of Guilan province Tax office and their turnover intention.

Keywords: *Spiritual Leadership, Employee Empowerment, Turnover Intention, Tax Office*

INTRODUCTION

It is a fact that employees are the most strategic resource of any organization. As contrast to technologies, product and processes, the knowledge, skills and abilities of the employees cannot be imitated by their competitors. As such, retaining its most valuable assets while utilizing the employees' individual capacity to improve and enhance organizational performance is a daunting task for any organization (Choudhury & Giri, 2013). Turnover intentions have been one of the major concerns for business practitioners and research scholars (Siddiqi, 2013). Employee turnover is ubiquitous in organizational life, even in the midst of severe economic recessions where jobless rates are higher than normal (Soltis *et al.*, 2013). Turnover intention is reflecting the interest of employees to leave the organization and search for alternative employment (Golparvar & Arizi, 2008). Turnover intention is considered detrimental to the organization in terms of replacement cost and work disruption. An employee's decision to quit an organization is an undesirable outcome for the organization and the employee as it affects both of them in many ways. That is why it is considered very important to understand its predictors in order to minimize its negative impact on organization's performance (Rahman & Nas, 2013). Turnover is costly and despite recent economic downturns, the worldwide have emphasized the importance of retaining key employees for organizational success (Flint *et al.*, 2013). For organizations, employee turnover intention takes a heavy toll, increasing costs both directly (through recruitment, selection, training, etc.) and indirectly (in the form of lost knowledge and reduced productivity). The causes of employee turnover are multiple and complex (Biron & Boon, 2013).

Actually money is not everything for preservation expert human resource and managers think that employee do not quit organization if they pay money (Kaveh *et al.*, 2011). Leadership plays an important role in voluntary employee turnover decisions (Elanain, 2014). Especially spiritual leaders with a sense of hope / faith, friendship can empower employees and reduce employee turnover intentions (Amirkhani *et al.*, 2013).

According to the critical role of tax office among other organizations and the role of determinants of development and economic cycle prosperity at country, its change is very important (Azizi, 2011). In organizations such as tax office, Because of its specialized and specific performance, it is claimed that Individuals with expertise and special conditions can provide satisfactory performance (Mahdianrad &

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Fazli, 2011). When employees choose to leave organizations, their experience, knowledge and talent leave with them resulting in output delays caused by their vacancy, which can lead to organizational dysfunction (Wells & Peachey, 2011). Also because of the tax office is as one of the important elements in creating a balance in the distribution of wealth in country, its guiding and sustaining human resources that can play a critical role in governing. Select a field of view in the sense that tax office is existence of other organizations is very important.

Theoretical Framework

Organizations have long sought ways to improve the performance of workers. there is much variation among these scholarly theories, the consensus is that leadership practices are vital and that they can improve the performance of workers by taking advantage of the right mix of motivators (Caillier, 2014). The style of leader is competitive advantage (Sahaya, 2012). As regards employees are able to perform well provided that they enjoy spiritual health (Barzegar *et al.*, 2012), Employees coping with pressures and challenges through spiritual learning and growth. The purpose for organizations to develop spirituality at workplaces is to link spirituality and ethics, which echoes the organizational culture and improves organizational productivity (Chen & Sheng, 2013). Spirituality in the workplace, including the values of compassion, altruism, honesty, respect, responsibility and trust that reduces organizational deviant behaviors (Vaibhav, 2014). Over the past two decades, researchers have proposed many new leadership theories (Debbie & Robert, 2014). In the academic world it is believed that leaders must be virtuous, otherwise they cannot inspire trust and have true followers. Based on this belief researchers have developed models of spiritual leadership, very popular in this field of study (Silva *et al.*, 2014). Spiritual leadership theory combines the motivationbased perspectives in some previous leadership theories (e.g., the emphases on intrinsic motivation of transformational and charismatic leadership) with the religious-based perspective (e.g., religions and spirituality place great emphasis on giving care and love toward others), the ethicbased perspective (e.g., treating organizational stakeholders or customers with service and responsible attitudes), and the value-based perspective (e.g., fostering an organizational culture that values employees' meaning of work and friendly interpersonal relationships) (Cheng & Yang, 2012). Spiritual leadership positively influences spiritual well-being as group members model the values of altruistic love to one another. They jointly develop a common vision, which generates hope/faith and a willingness to “do what it takes” in pursuit of a vision of transcend ent service to key stakeholders. This in turn produces a sense of calling which gives one a sense that one's life has meaning, purpose and makes a difference. Concurrently, as leaders and followers engage in this process and gain a sense of mutual care and concern, members gain a sense of membership and feel understood and appreciated in organization (Fachrunnisa *et al.*, 2014).

From a psychological perspective, empowerment is a motivational construct akin to a state of mind or a set of cognitions. Empowerment is heightened belief in the ability to perform, echoing notion of a self-efficacy expectation. Empowerment is a heightened level of intrinsic task motivation or internalized commitment (Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2013). In this view, the “psychological state of a subordinate” is the major force behind feelings of empowerment. This conceptualization is also known as psychological empowerment, which is defined as an experience of being empowered and as a process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organizational members through the identification of conditions that foster powerlessness and through their removal by formal organizational and informal techniques of providing efficacy information (Gazzoli *et al.*, 2012). Spreitzer's model of psychological empowerment is a set of antecedents—locus of control, self-esteem, access to information, and rewards—that are said to influence the four cognitions evincing empowerment. Spreitzer has suggested that for psychological empowerment to occur, some of the ingredients from Bowen and Lawler's empowerment approach—including providing information about organizational goals and performance, granting discretion, and offering rewards based on performance—must take place first (Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2011).

Turnover intention: Turnover intention has been defined as the conscious and deliberate willingness to leave an organization (Chang *et al.*, 2013). Turnover intention is a set to which thinking of quitting and intent to search for alternative employment also belongs (Nahas *et al.*, 2013). Turnover intentions are an

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indicator of turnover; when individuals exhibit strong turnover intentions, they are likely to leave an organization (Yang *et al.*, 2014). Turnover intention is the cognitive process of thinking about quitting one's job, planning on leaving, or feeling the desire to leave. A phenomenon with significant practical implications, turnover imposes costs on organizations in terms of hiring, training, and the loss of institutional memory, and generally turnover is understood as negatively related to performance in both the private due to lost human and social capital. Also a number of demographic variables contributed to the intention to leave the organization, including minority status, household size, age and agency experience (Campbell, 2014; Soltis *et al.*, 2013).

Employee turnover can results voluntary turnover. Voluntary turnover can then be delineated into functional or dysfunctional dimensions. Dysfunctional turnover is often detrimental to an enterprise, since it frequently includes the departure of an organization's high performers or the departure of minority groups. The exit of either of these key groups causes the erosion of crucial organizational knowledge and diversity, which eventually leads to high replacement costs (Strojilova & Rafferty, 2013). However, when employees intend to leave the organization permanently, they are no longer dependent on the organization for pay, a sense of worth, etc. In essence, the relational psychological contract between the employee and the organization is null and void (Christian & Ellis, 2014).

Foreman expressed three categories of causes of employee turnover. They are (1) work-related factors (for example, job satisfaction, pay, performance, organizational commitment); (2) individual factors (for example, age, education, sex, job tenure); and (3) external factors (for example, unemployment rates, employment perceptions, union presence) (Foreman, 2009). Lee *et al.*, also identified two kinds of factors: controllable and uncontrollable. Controllable factors include work environment and leadership style, while uncontrollable factors are organizational structure, external opportunities, and shortage of labor force (Lee *et al.*, 2010).

Spiritual leadership: Spiritual leadership theory (SLT) is a causal leadership theory for organizational transformation designed to create an intrinsically motivated, learning organization (Fry *et al.*, 2005). This type of leadership by spirituality is seeking to achieve specific goals such as increasing the productivity and profitability of the business (Ayranci & Semercioz, 2011). Spirituality includes two essential elements in a person's life: (a) transcendence of self, manifesting in a sense of calling or destiny, and (b) belief that one's activities have meaning and value beyond economic benefits or self-gratification. A sense of calling and higher meaning fosters the development of certain values, including vision (i.e., defining the destination, reflecting high ideals, and encouraging hope/faith), altruistic love (i.e., forgiveness, kindness, integrity, empathy, honesty, patience, courage, trust, and humility), and hope/faith (i.e., endurance, perseverance, and expectation of reward/victory) (Freeman, 2011). Spiritual leadership is defined comprising the values, attitudes, and behaviors that are necessary to intrinsically motivate one's self and others so that they have a sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership (Nicolae *et al.*, 2013; Crossman, 2011).

Spiritual leadership theory was formed in accordance to inner motivation model that encompasses vision (insight), hope / faith and altruistic love, workplace spirituality theories and spiritual survival through calling and belonging. Spiritual leadership purpose is to create vision (Katiliene & Bakanauskiene, 2012). Altruistic love is coupled with deep caring and concern for group members' development and promoting their well-being, this helps leaders foster trust and enhance employee motivation to perform (Sweeney & Fry, 2012). Calling is as a way to create greater meaning and identity in the workplace (Nwibere & Emecheta, 2012). Membership is a degree of attachment or similarities between individual vision and organizational vision (Fachrunnisa *et al.*, 2014). Commitment is the relative strength of the identification of a person and connecting to a specific organization (Nasir *et al.*, 2014). Also Performance feedback is rooted in knowledge of performance or knowledge of results (Seevers *et al.*, 2014).

Employee Empowerment: There are two distinct theoretical perspectives in the literature about employee empowerment: a psychological and a managerial one (Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2013). Structural empowerment is considered in the literature as a power delegation concept as it engages entrusting decision-making authority down the organizational hierarchy. Psychological empowerment belongs to

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motivational approach of empowerment and is defines as a practice of enhancing employees self efficacy and a condition of increased intrinsic motivation. Psychological empowerment is defines in four dimensions: meaning, competence, self determination and impact (Malik *et al.*, 2013). Meaning is defines the value of a work task. In addition, when employees perceive meaning in working on tasks, they concentrate on their tasks, which also enhance task performance (Kim & Kim, 2013, p.157). Competence, or self-efficacy, is ‘an individual’s belief in his or her capability to perform work role activities with skill’ (Gkorezis & Petridou, 2012, p.3597). Self-determination is defines the autonomy and freedom of performing a task, and Self-determination produces high interest and motivation to succeed in job activities because employees tend to value being granted the power to decide when and how to complete work tasks. Impact is defines the degree to which individuals can influence the outcome and work. Also, when employees believe they have an impact on others in the organization, they put more efforts in performing their jobs (Kim & Kim, 2013, p.157).

The spiritual leaders to incite and encourage employees by the spiritual vision and to create a culture based on human values are seeking to empower employees (Ziaee *et al.*, 2007, p.1). Also, by creating a sense of hope/faith, friendship and altruistic love, empower employees (Amirkhani *et al.*, 2013, p.1013). Meaning is a way to create greater meaning and identity in the workplace and to encourage Individual talents and abilities of employees (Nwibere & Emecheta, 2012, p.118). Spiritual leadership devotes followers to the organization through calling and membership and to strive for ethical and spiritual well-being, feel socially responsible and seek for the company goals (Katiliene & Bakanauskiene, 2012, p.66).

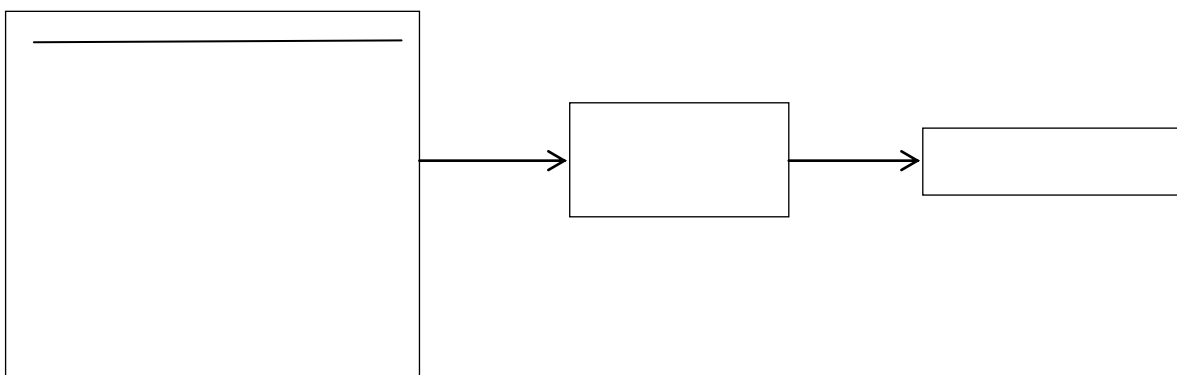


Figure 1: Research model

In addition, committed employees contribute greatly to organizations since they perform and behave on achieving organizational goals and have more motivation rather than other employees (Nasir *et al.*, 2014, p.185). Employees by using performance feedback, reflect on their previous behaviors, modify them, and apply them to the next situations (Rakestraw & Youngstown, 2014, p.42). Therefore, the research hypotheses are formed:

- H1: vision empowers employees.
- H2: Faith to work empowers employees.
- H3: Altruistic love empowers employees.
- H4: Feeling meaningful empowers employees
- H5: Membership empowers employees.
- H6: Organizational commitment empowers employees.
- H7: Performance feedback empowers employees.

Also, the employee empowerment contains practices design to increase employee participation, access, voice in the organization and reducing the distance between the employee and the organization (Selden *et al.*, 2013, p.304). That increase employee participation can reduce the turnover intention (Norman *et al.*, 2014, p.51). Autonomy as a result of empowerment, promotes positive motivation, performance,

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satisfaction, and reduces absenteeism and turnover intention (Choudhury & Giri, 2013, p.635). Psychological empowerment has been demonstrated to directly enhance employee attachment to their organizations. When feeling empowered, individuals appreciate the intrinsic meaning, personal choice, and impact of their work, which further leads to reciprocation by being more willing to stay at their jobs (Liu *et al.*, 2011, p.1308). Therefore:

H8: Employee empowerment reduces turnover intention.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Methods

This research is an applied and descriptive study in terms of the purpose and type of research, respectively. The population includes all of Guilan province Tax office personnel who were 790 people and among them, 259 people were selected as the study sample by using Cochran's formula and simple random sampling method.

In this study, were used from library studies in order to codify theoretical principles and the questionnaire to gather the required data. The indicators for the turnover intention measure were adjusted according to Liu Questionnaire (2013) adopted from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire that includes three indicators. Questions assessing dimensions of spiritual leadership were derived from Louise Fry *et al.*, (2005) questionnaire.

The questions which measure the spiritual leadership are 33 "vision (5questions), altruistic love (7 questions), faith/hope (5 questions), meaning (4 questions), membership (5 questions), commitment (4 questions) and performance feedback (3 questions). Questions assessing employee empowerment were derived from Sprietzer (1995) questionnaire that includes 16 indicators. Their adjustment and five – point Likert scale include 1=strongly disagree, to 5= strongly agree. Finally, 310 questionnaires were distributed which 265 questionnaires were collected as the complete and assessable ones.

Since the standard questionnaires and aforementioned scientists' ideas have been used in this study, the questionnaire validity is supported.

Also, it can be concluded that the questionnaire has the enough validity to assess the variables, because many researchers have frequently used it in different years. This questionnaire was distributed after studying the questionnaires of studies for this research and the others, being confirmed by the professors, experts and management experts and removing its weaknesses.

Cronbach's alpha technique was used to estimate the reliability of the questionnaires.

Cronbach's alpha for turnover intention was 0.91 and for spiritual leadership was 0.90(vision 0.91, altruistic love 0.87, faith/hope 0.80, meaning 0.83, membership 0.86, commitment 0.89 and performance feedback 0.84) and for employee empowerment was 0.91.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

According to Table 1, all dimensions of spiritual leadership and employee empowerment have the average more than expected (3).

In other words, they are in good condition in the research society. But these variables should be improved in the research society because they are so far from ideal. Therefore, it can be said that the spiritual leadership is in good condition in Guilan province Tax office in terms of dimensions (i.e. vision, faith, altruistic love, meaning, membership, organizational commitment and performance feedback) but it needs to be improved.

Also, the mean of turnover intention variable is less than 3, This means that the personnel of Guilan province Tax office tend to be stayed there.

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Table 1: Summary of the analysis of research variables

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation	Variance
Vision	2	5	3.6521	0.59251	0.351
Faith	2	5	3.9079	0.55811	0.311
Altruistic love	1.57	4.86	3.3935	0.52951	0.28
Meaning	1.75	5	3.8733	0.55106	0.304
Membership	1.8	5	3.5826	0.53555	0.287
Organizational commitment	2	5	3.722	0.59541	0.355
Performance feedback	2	5	3.4541	0.54635	0.298
Employee empowerment	2.13	4.93	3.7084	0.50524	0.255
Turnover intention	1	4.67	2.044	0.82836	0.686

Also, model fit examined by Lisrel 8.53 software. Table2 shows fit and meaning indexes.

Table 2: Fit and meaning indexes

	Index	Fit condition	Calculated value	Result
Meaning indexes	RMSEA	Less than 0.1	0.076	✓
	χ^2	Equal or less than 5	2.54	✓
	d_f			
Fit indexes	GFI	More than 0.8	0.88	✓
	NNFI	More than 0.8	0.97	✓
	NFI	More than 0.8	0.95	✓
	CFI	More than 0.8	0.98	✓
	IFI	More than 0.8	0.98	✓

According to Table 2, the model fit is acceptable. After model fit exam, was used methods of structural equation modeling, in order to test the research hypotheses. Table 3 shows the results of the structural equation modeling.

Table 3: Results of the structural equation modeling

Path	Standard coefficient	T-Value	Result
Vision→employee empowerment	0.17	2.08	✓
faith →employee empowerment	0.08	0.78	×
Altruistic love →employee empowerment	0.33	3.20	✓
Meaning →employee empowerment	0.16	2.03	✓
Membership →employee empowerment	0.25	2.29	✓
Organizational commitment →employee empowerment	0.55	3.41	✓
Performance feedback →employee empowerment	0.19	2.59	✓
employee empowerment →Turnover intention	-0.76	-8.92	✓

Since, if the value is outside the range (-1.96 and 1.96), it will be significant and With respect to Standard coefficient, there is a significant positive relationship between all dimensions of spiritual leadership except the hope/faith (vision, Altruistic love, meaning/calling, membership, organizational commitment and performance feedback) and employee empowerment of Guilan province tax office. Also there is a

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significant negative relationship between employee empowerment of Guilan province tax office and their turnover intention. Therefore, all of the hypotheses of the study except H2 have been confirmed.

Discussion

As said in results part, the model fit is acceptable. Also, the spiritual leadership is in good condition in Guilan province Tax office in terms of the dimensions (i.e. vision, faith, altruistic love, meaning, membership, organizational commitment and performance feedback) but it needs to be improved yet. Also, the mean of turnover intention is less than 3. This means that the personnel of Guilan province Tax office tend to be stayed there. On the other hand, results of the structural equation modeling show that there is a significant positive relationship between all dimensions of spiritual leadership except the hope/faith (vision, Altruistic love, meaning/calling, membership, organizational commitment and performance feedback) and employee empowerment of Guilan's tax office. This means that necessarily faith to work or organization, do not empower employees. Because likely person with faith to work or organization, lack sufficient expertise to perform the duties. Also, organization commitment (0.55) has the greatest impact on employee empowerment and consequently on turnover intention. Results of this research (except the result of the second hypothesis) with research results of Ziaee *et al.*, (2007), Shabanibahar *et al.*, (2012), Khoshpanjeh *et al.*, (2012), Esfahani & Ghoreyshian(2013), Chamaniazar(2014), Salmanpour *et al.*, (2014), Doaei *et al.*, (2009), Liu *et al.*, (2011), Gardner *et al.*, (2011), Bhatnagar *et al.*, (2012) and Rondeau & Wagar(2012) is same. The results indicate that leaders and managers can create a positive image of future successes in the personnel's mind by clearing organizational purposes and perspective in an obvious, attractive and inspiration (inspiratory) manner. They can propagate the altruistic love culture and create a meaningful sense by paying attention to the employee, being kind, considerate, confidant, loyal and honest with them. This means that the employee feel that they are doing something important and valuable, perceive the true meaning of their job and pay attention to it. Also, managers should provide a ground where personnel feel that themselves and their works are perceived and praised by the organization. In addition, the employee should feel that they are concerned by the leaders and managers, imagine themselves as a member of a family, be happy to spend the rest of their working life in the organization and do their best efforts. Thus, this leads to empower employee and consequently to reduce turnover intention. One of the major limitations of this research is the exclusive use of closed questionnaire and more assessment tools such as open questionnaire and interview were not employed. Also, the questionnaire for assessment of spiritual leadership dimensions was just distributed among the personnel, and managers and leaders' perception of spiritual leadership dimensions were not assessed. With respect to the factors affecting the turnover intention and employee empowerment, just one of the related factors (i.e. spiritual leadership) was investigated in this study. Therefore, it is recommended to the future researchers to investigate the other factors affecting the turnover intention including organizational culture, job stress, role conflict, human resource practices, job design method, career path and the other leadership styles. Also, it is suggested that they conduct a comparative study on the role of spiritual leadership in the turnover intention and employee empowerment in the societies with different religions.

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