The Level of Faculty Members' Spiritual Leadership (SL) Qualities Display According To Students in Faculty of Education

Soner Polat a *

aKocaeli University, Education Faculty, Department of Elementary Education İzmit-Kocaeli, Turkey.

Abstract

Leadership is a process directing to a target of which followers, the participators are shared. For this reason leadership has an important effect on succeeding organizational targets. More importance is given to the leadership studies in order to increase organizational success each day. One of the leadership researches that attracts attention recently is spiritual leadership. Spiritual leadership (SL) is important for imposing ideal to the followers and giving meaning to the works they do. Focusing on SL that has recently taken its place in leadership literature, this study looks into what extend faculty members teaching at Faculty of Education display SL qualities. The study is in descriptive scanning model. 1819 students studying at Kocaeli University Faculty of Education in 2009-2010 academic year constitute the universe of the study. Observing leadership qualities takes long time. Therefore, the sample of the study is determined by deliberate sampling method and includes 432 students studying at the last year of the faculty. Data regarding faculty members' SL qualities were collected using a questionnaire adapted from Fry's (2003) 'Spiritual Leadership Scale'. Consequently, university students think that academic stuff shows the features of SL and its sub dimensions in a medium level. According to students, academicians show attitudes related to altruistic love rather than faith and vision. It is found that faculty members couldn't display leadership qualities enough according to the students at the end of the study.

Keywords: Spiritual leadership, leadership, faculty members;

1. Introduction

In recent years, the organization members have often started to face problems such as spiritual emptiness, psychological problems, depression, loneliness, absurdity, being egocentric, uncertainty. Management science to solve these problems began to rediscover the importance of universal human values. The leaders of the 21st century try to represent and put efforts to make audience to witness them by living them by themselves. so that humanistic values such as sincerity, trust, love, affection, generosity, collaboration compassion, peace, honesty, mercifulness, altruism can grow.

Meaning and value make the basic elements of the spiritualism make leadership more effective (Paloutzian and Ellison, 1982). Therefore some researchers (Conger, 1998; Fry, 2003, 2005b; Kanungo & Mendonca, 1996; Marcic,
SL deals with moral, transformational and ethical leadership and morality, kindness, righteousness, working in a team, knowing congruence, completeness, correspondence are supported by spiritual leadership. As it is seen leadership is more extensive than a religious form (Zellers & Perrewe, 2003). According to Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003) organizational spirituality is the organizational values which reveal themselves with organizational cultures, encourage the transcendence experience of the individuals through work processes, moreover helps mercy and happiness occur by giving the individuals the sense of interconnection.

A leader can facilitate spiritualism by explaining it and accepting themselves and also by creating a comfortable environment where audience can explain the things they need for spiritualism (Konz & Ryan, 1999). Thus, spirituality organization, employees who perform in the context of the social life of the adoption of meaningful inner life should be accomplished in the organization (Asmos & Duchon, 2000; Duchon & Plowman, 2005; Kubicek, 2005). Although an increasing interest in the subject of spirituality in organizations and on the availability of comprehensive critiques of spirituality in organizations exist, most of the modern organizations lack of a spiritual base and an opportunity where the employees can express themselves spiritually by their work (Gul and Doh , 2004; Fry, Vitucci, & Cedillo, 2005; Giacalone, Jurkiewicz & Fry, 2005; Malone & Fry, 2003).

Finding the life purpose and meaning of organizational spirituality paradigm of the person helps to manage the environment effectively, increase their ability to follow the inner thoughts and provides a continuous development towards self-realization (Fry, 2005b).

Mental organizations are characterized as places which have a higher purpose, humanitarian concerns and incorporate the results(Giacalone, Jurkiewicz & Fry, 2005). Spiritual leadership, by uncovering the best in people, organization, makes the ever-evolving and learning institution (Fairholm, 1998). Organizational spiritualism and organization satisfaction which were developed thanks to SL create a work love which results in higher organizational faithfulness, and productivity (Fry, 2003). Fairholm (1997, 1998, 2001) explain that thanks to inspiring vision and mission developed by spiritual leaderships, a culture occur where factors like trust, collaboration, mutual interest, commitment to team, organizational effectiveness are developed.

Meeting the spiritual needs in an organization affects human psychology and health in a positive way. Because the leaders who apply the spiritual values succeed to create motivation sneakingly. The teachers who emphasize spiritual values, can create a positive ethical environment, give trust, encourage positive relationships, and can motivate their students by their applications reach the organizational goals more easily (Reave, 2005).

Spiritual values and applications help to accomplish increasing the productivity of the leaders, turnovers in low levels, a better sustainability, improving the health employee (Reave, 2005). Organizational spiritualism makes positive affects on organizational faithfulness, work satisfaction, variables of adopting the work (Milliman, Ferguson et al., 1999). When individual development is thought with reaching the organizational goals, it also affects the identification of the employees with the organization (Pratt, 1998). Leadership is crucial in achieving higher levels during development (Sanders, Hopkins & Geroy, 2003). When it comes to ongoing development process, by using spiritual leadership, development of the organizations can be increased. All these finally, affect the performance of employee and the organization in a positive way (Neck & Milliman, 1994).

Not only paying attention to the intelligence of the individuals in the organizations but also dealing with their hearts and feelings organizational success can be increased more. In other words, the organizations who care for their employees feelings can achieve a better organization performance by increasing the motivation and faithfulness of the employees (Milliman, Ferguson, Trickett & Condemin, 1999).

Making a learning organization paradigm which includes innate motivation institutional requires being critical to leadership of the organizational transformation effort with the help of spiritual leadership (Fry, 2003).The leaders of the faculty members must be responsible of the conditions of the students such physical, material, mental, spiritual conditions. The leaders also encourage the students to achieve a higher sense of being invited and membership. While doing this, they should also bring the organizational and leadership organization of a learning organization.
In the last decade importance has given to spirituality in the workplace (Gibbons, 2000). Value-added organizations can be created by SL (Aydın & Ceylan 2009). Despite the fact that spiritual leaders tend to apply values such as love, harmony, unity, compassion, peace, truth or honesty, they usually receive greed, cynicism, arrogance, impatience, self-doubt, envy, and moral decline (Korac-Kakabadse, Kouzmin, & Kakabadse, 2002).

Spiritual leaders usually adopt features like harmony, love, compassion, unity, peace, truth or honesty. Spiritual environment encourages the members to collaborate more willingly with the help of these values which results in making the leader’s role easier. Consequently, harmful features like cynicism, impatience, greed, envy or moral decline will vanish in the organizations. In order to create a better working environment, all these values are adopted in the workplace for the sake of the peace there (Korac-Kakabadse, Kouzmin, & Kakabadse, 2002). If we would like to define SL generally, we can say that SL is a mixture of treatments, values and attitudes which opens the doors of spiritual freedom through organizational membership (Maddock and Fulton, 1998). According to Fry, Vitucci and Cedillo (2005), SL concept is created in a motivation modal where leader and follower values are included (Like vision, hope, faith, altruistic love, meaningfulness and being a loyal member of the organization.).

Thanks to spiritual leaders, a different atmosphere develops and this atmosphere is made of the coherent relationship between the leader and the followers. This argument suggests that the followers are highly encouraged by the spiritual leaders (Fry, Vitucci, & Cedillo, 2005).

SL concept is created in a motivation modal where leader and follower values like, hope or faith, and altruistic love, theories of workplace spirituality, and spiritual survival are included and in this model meaning and membership form the spiritual freedom variables (Fry, Vitucci, & Cedillo, 2005). Consequently, the followers are highly encouraged by the spiritual leaders. Thanks to spiritual leaders, a different atmosphere develops and this atmosphere is made of the coherent relationship between the leader and the followers which has a positive effect on the working environment. Functionally, SL consists of the key features which are required to motivate one self’s and others so that they can have a spiritual freedom through meaning and membership which requires forming a vision where the leaders and the followers go through a calling in a life which is believed to be meaningful and different, founding a understanding based on thoughtful love so that the leaders and followers have a sense of belonging, feel secure, appreciated, possess intensive care, interest for everyone (Fry, Vitucci, & Cedillo, 2005). Thanks to these terms, we focus on SL which deals with vision, hope/faith, altruistic love, meaning/calling and membership.

Fry, Matherly & Vitucci, (2006), underlines SL theory to point out the different features in positive human health and psychological peace for willing and non willing workaholics. Later he discusses that SL concept can be a way of getting rid of negative effects of workaholism (Fry, 2003, 2005a).

If we would like to summarize, SL which develops thanks to organization spiritualism affects variables such as organizational development, loyalty, commitment, job satisfaction, adopting the job, organizational integration, identification, harmony, positive climate, morale, interaction and affinity between members, individual and organizational health, work place peace, ethical environment, trust, collaboration, satisfaction, motivation, productivity, success, performance, efficiency directly or indirectly. SL which affects many and significant outputs has a vital importance in terms of the effectiveness of the faculties of education and teaching.

1.1. The definition of spiritual leadership, its characteristics and dimensions

Fry (2003) defines SL as “the values, attitudes, and behaviors necessary to intrinsically motivate one’s self and others so that they have a sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership”. SL consists of approaches which are religious, ethical and value based (Fry, 2003). Korac-Kakabadse, Kouzmin and Kakabadse (2002) defines spiritual leader as people who give importance to values related to spiritualism which are used to guide others.

Spiritual leaders are the people who facilitate development of their followers by creating common visions, values and meanings. These kind of leaders have strong senses, they know the importance of the service and they focus on transformation continuously. The individuals who apply SL and their followers possess big respect to their and their past lives (Korac-Kakabadse, Kouzmin, & Kakabadse, 2002). Moreover, these people have good relationships with others. Instead of fear, spiritual leaders act with love. Spiritual leaders are inspiring to their followers with a convincing vision, hope and belief in so that they can do their best and when it is necessary, they challenge them
(Draft, 2005). According to Reave (2005), spiritual leaders create trustful and appreciated individuals who represent values such as honesty, modesty etc. Spiritual leaders make their followers gain visibility through ethical, merciful and respectful behaviours.

The three key dimensions of Fry’s (2003) SL theory are vision/mission, hope/faith, and altruistic love (Figure 1).

**Vision:** It is about an appealing future of organization and its role is to encourage. It represents future not present. The leader has to create and inspect it and the leader is an intermediate between present and the future. Shortly, vision composes of showing high expectations, creating standards of perfection and being charming to stakeholders.

**Altruistic Love:** It is all about accepting and loving everyone the way they are. In this dimension people have the sorrow instead of others. Their basic components can be trust, being forgiving, grateful, honest, brave, modest, merciful.

**Hope/Faith:** It helps the followers to be positive about future, put efforts as they have desire and positive expectations. The key features of it are perseverance, trying to do the best, putting achievable goals, perfection and building expectations about reward and victory.

### 1.2. Aim

Our purpose is to sharpen the focus on these issues through the lens of Fry’s (2003, 2005) recent work on SL theory to gain further insight into the nature, process, and development of faculty members’ transformation. This study is to determine students’ perceptions of faculty members’ level of SL usage.

### 2. Methodology

This study is designed in descriptive model to determine faculty members’ level of spiritual leadership.
2.1. Scales

The scale items of “Spiritual Leadership Scale” (29 item) have been obtained from Fry (2003) scales were used to gather data. The data was collected using Turkish version of Fry’s (2003) “Spiritual Leadership Scale” which has been translated and adapted by Polat, Tulubas and Çìcek (2009). The factor analysis, it was determined that the dimensions of the adapted scale were the same as in the original scale. The subscales were named as in the original I. vision, II. altruistic love, III. hope/fait. Alpha reliability coefficient of SL Scale is .94, which indicates the scale is highly reliable. In the survey, the respondents have filled the statements in -liker response categories ranging from 1 to 5, which (1) is strongly disagree and (5) is strongly agree. Also there are 4 descriptive items for the first type of questions.

2.2. Universe and Sample

The universe of this study comprises 1819 students at Kocaeli University Faculty of Education. The sample of the study was selected deliberate and included 432 students (senior students). A total of more than 387 surveys returned, however, about 40 of them had excessive missing values and were excluded from the analysis. Finally, the valid responses have reached to 347.

2.3. Data analysis

In the research to determine the levels of faculty members’ SL qualities display according to students in faculty of education, arithmetic means has been taken into consideration. When the arithmetic means are interpreted, the gaps have been valued as: 1.00 – 1.79 “very low”, 1.80 – 2.59 “low”, 2. 60 – 3, 39 “medium”, 3.40 – 4.19 “high”, 4.20 – 5.00 “very high”. To examine the relation between dimension of SL qualities correlation analysis has been made. When the correlation coefficients are assessed, if the correlation coefficient is between 0.70 and 1.00, it has been interpreted as “high”, between 0.69 and 0.30 it has been interpreted as “medium”, and if it is 0.29 and below it has been interpreted as related to “low” level (Büyükoztürk, 2005) and when it gets closer to 0.00, it has been interpreted as irrelevant.

3. Findings and Comments

The arithmetic means related to the levels of faculty members’ SL qualities display according to students in faculty of education are given in Table 1. Students perceive faculty members level of SL to be moderate level (\(\bar{x}=2.85\)). According to students, faculty members show SL qualities at a moderate level in altruistic love (\(\bar{x}=2.96\)), vision (\(\bar{x}=2.77\)) and hope/fait (\(\bar{x}=2.75\)) dimensions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>(\bar{x})</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Altruistic Love</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope/Fait</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Leadership</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students’ perceptions regarding faculty members’ level of SL didn’t change significantly according to gender (\(t=-1.763; p>.05\)) and while their perceptions didn’t change significantly according to their type of education(\(t=1.774; p>.05\)). However while type of education variable created meaningful difference in the sub dimensions of SL which are vision (\(t=-2.283; p<.05\)) and hope / faith (\(t=-2.514; p<.05\), it did not create meaningful difference in the altruistic love variable (\(t=-.456; p>.05\)). More than day students(\(\bar{x}=2.71\)), evening education students (\(\bar{x}=2.87\)) think that educational stuff displays features related to vision dimension of spiritual leadership.
Similar situation also occurs in hope/faith dimension. More than day students (\(\bar{x}=2.71\)), evening education students (\(\bar{x}=2.87\)) think that educational stuff displays features related to hope/faith dimension.

In ANOVA test which was used to test whether educational’s staff perception of showing SL changes as per departments of the students variable, it was seen that departments of the students variable did not make meaningful change in educational’s staff perception of showing SL (\(F=1.157; p>.05\)). However departments of the students variable only created meaningful difference in the vision (\(F=2.181; p<.05\)) sub dimension of spiritual leadership. A meaningful differentiation was observed between English Language Teaching students’ views and primary maths teaching students’ views and classroom teaching students’ views so that academicians could show the features of the vision sub dimension of spiritual leadership.

Table 2. Educational staff’s level of showing their features of spiritual leadership.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branches</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>(\bar{x})</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Source of variance</th>
<th>Sum of squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Different groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 English profession of teaching</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>2.96a</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>4,230</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.846</td>
<td>2.181</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>1-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Pre-school profession of teaching</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>132,266</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>.388</td>
<td>.167</td>
<td>.687</td>
<td>3-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Class profession of teaching</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>2.80b</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>136,496</td>
<td>346</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Science profession of teaching</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Turkish profession of teaching</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Primary school maths profession of teaching</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>2.58a,b</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*There is a meaningful differentiation between the groups with the same letter.

It has been seen that the maths profession of teaching students’ meaningfully differentiate from the English and class profession of teaching students’ compared to English and class profession of teaching students, maths profession of teaching students think that the academicians show the characteristics at the vision dimension of SL in a lower level. This situation shows that the academicians from different branches have different capabilities of representing their spiritual leadership. When we look to the averages, compared to the students of maths and science classes in which there are more numerical lessons, English, pre-school and class profession of teaching students think that the academicians show the characteristics at the vision dimension of SL more.

Table 3. Educational staff’s level of showing their features of SL as per success level variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Success Level</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>(\bar{x})</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Source of variance</th>
<th>Sum of squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Different groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2.99 and below mark group</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>2.65a</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2,187</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,094</td>
<td>2.645</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 3.00-3.49 mark group</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>129,833</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>.413</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 3.50-4.00 mark group</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2.90a</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>132,021</td>
<td>316</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*There is a meaningful differentiation between the groups with the same letter.

In the ANOVA test which is made to examine if the perception of representing the characteristics of SL of teachers changes according to students’ success level or not, it is indicated that the success level factor has no meaningful influence on perception of representing the characteristics of SL of teachers. However students’ success
level factor has just created a difference in vision dimension which is a lower dimension of spiritual leadership. In terms of the academicians represent the vision dimension characteristics of SL differentiation is observed between the opinions of students who got “2,99 and under” and who got “3,50-4,00”. Students think that the academicians show their characteristics at vision dimension of SL more when their success increases.

Many researchers emphasizes that when SL attitude is shown, organizational and individual productivity, performance, efficiency, and success will increase (Neck and Milliman, 1994; Fairholm, 1998; Fry, 2003; Malone & Fry, 2003; Sanders, Hopkins & Geroy, 2003; Reave, 2005; Fry, Vitucci, & Cedillo, 2005; Giacalone, Jurkiewicz & Fry, 2005). Therefore the thoughts which defend that students with high academic records think that academic stuff shows SL more support these theoretic information.

When the coefficients of the relationship between SL and its sub dimensions are examined, vision (r=.82) and altruistic love (r=.81) are more associated with SL rather than faith (r=.77). Moreover when the relationships between spiritual relationships, while between vision and faith a very high level meaningful relationship (r=.76) was observed, between vision and altruistic love (r=.64) and between faith and altruistic love (r=.64) a medium level meaningful relationship was observed.

According to Fry’s (2003) SL modal while between vision and altruistic love a mutual relationship is present, between altruistic love and faith and between faith and vision there is a one way relationship. While altruistic love affects faith, faith affects vision. As it is seen, the findings of the research match with the modal developed by Fry (2003).

4. Conclusions and Implications

Consequently, university students think that academic stuff shows the features of SL and its sub dimensions in a medium level. According to students, academicians show attitudes related to altruistic love rather than faith and vision. Gender and education type variables didn’t create differentiation in the students the perception of academician’s showing the features of SL and its dimensions. However the students’ departments variable showed meaningful differentiation in the students’ perception of academicians’ showing the features of vision dimension. This situation can be interpreted as some academicians display the features of vision dimension of SL more than others do. Another finding of the research is that while students’ academical record didn’t create any differentiation in students’ perception of academicians’ showing features of spiritual leadership, it created meaningful differentiation in the vision dimension. When it is viewed generally, when the success of the students increase, the perception of academicians’ showing the features of spiritual leadership. Following this, we can say that there is a relationship between students’ success and spiritual leadership. It was found out that all the sub dimensions of the SL had a high level relationship with SL behaviours. Similarly, the sub dimensions are related to each other.

As it was discussed in the theoretical part, SL affect many individual and organizational outputs positively. In the education faculties where teachers of the future are trained this situation becomes more important as educational organizations have a bigger social impact than others. When the academicians which work in education faculties reflect the SL features to the students by developing them, teaching will become meaningful to the students, their success and productivity will increase, they will like their professions and their commitment to their profession will increase. Consequently each academian try to become a spiritual leader and reflect these features to their students.

Academicians’ showing way related to future, putting high, achievable targets, creating perfection standards, giving hope and belief to their students in order to achieve these will make their features of spiritual leadership’s vision dimension more visible.

Academicians’ effort to create a trust environment by displaying a trustworthy character, accepting the students the way they are, being merciful and forgiving, showing coherent, and honest behaviours, encouraging their students, being modest and friendly in their relationships with the students, building empathy, being patient and facing all the difficulties will make their features of spiritual leadership’s altruistic love dimension more visible.
Academics’ search to find perfection, focusing on success, being constant and eager, trying so hard, their efforts, expectations, rewarding success will make their features of spiritual leadership’s hope/faith dimension more visible.

At the end of the research, it was found that SL and its sub-dimensions affected each other. While one incapability in one of the sub dimensions affected the others in a negative way, one superiority in one dimension affected the other in a positive way. Therefore academics’ showing the behaviours of all dimensions of the SL holds importance to reach the positive outputs of spiritual leadership.

References


