Spiritual Leadership and Organizational Implications: A Synthesis

Dr. Divya Shukla¹

Abstract

The article has attempted to search the leadership ideologies with respect to spiritual presentation of behavioral outcome and its respective influence on organizational ideologies and functional implications. This ideology of spiritual leadership is to perform for the betterment of individual, organization and society as whole. The current study reveals that spiritual leadership is very practical phenomenon which is earnest in the modern parlance to resolve several problems which are drawn out as ill effects of materialistic ideologies. An extensive study of literature has been performed to understand and explore the underlying ideologies of spiritual leadership and its varied and distinguished consequences on organizational functional implications. The current article would explore the philosophies and ideologies attached with the spiritual leadership theory and strongly recommend that spiritual leadership can be an effective mode to transform the organizational entity. This may elevates the journey of productive performance, futile to fertile, deplete to complete and materialistic to post materialistic. The current article would further propagate the importance of spiritual leadership on organizational effective implications. This has also studied the various dimensions of spiritual leaderships meeting pointedly to the organizational performances.

Keywords: spiritual leadership, performance, organizational effectiveness.

¹ Lecturer, Faculty of Business Administration, St. Theresa International College, Thailand. Mobile No: +66 616602858. Email: divyashukla13@gmail.com
INTRODUCTION

Leaders play an important role in transforming the world, nations, and organizations. In the globalized era where humanitarian tragedies such as poverty, starvation, inadequate education, and the lack of basic amenities have emerged from materialistic concerns. Can we firmly say today that current leaders are focused on these humanitarian tragedies and are more prudent in facilitating the required change? Perhaps the response to this question may say that many of today’s leaders are profit-centric with more materialistic concerns resulting in various organizational issues such as high rates of attrition, demands for extending work hours, financial discrepancies, devastating and detrimental effectiveness of functions, operations, human interest, and joy in working. These effects are causing attention and seeking answers to the questions such as; Are we practicing right? Is there something needed to be checked to ensure ethical, moral, and functional congruencies? What approach should be achieved to resolve the issues such as economic recession, stagnant growth rates, etc.? Thus, the need for effective ideology is quite prominent which may lead to the change and disseminate effective functioning at every level wherever this applies to.

Over a period of time, several distinguished and eminent leadership theories have emerged, with various empirical and descriptive researches having been performed which have revolved around the traits, power dimensions, personalities, or charismatic effects (Conger and Kaneungo, 1998), motivating perspectives (House, 1996; House and Mitchell, 1974), leaders or follower chemistry i.e. transactional and transformational leadership (Bass, 1985, 1998). Human growth in a true sense may be achieved through the holistic interaction between individual, community, and environment i.e. to bring the shared consciousness in the thought process with higher power or transcendence. This may be done by applying transformational leadership with the incorporation of spiritual values and practices in work culture and functional performance.
Spiritual leadership is 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 (Listening Souls’ Voice) and membership (social connectivity) (Fry, 2003).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Spirituality at workplace ……a divine manifestation!
Workplace sometime depicts with people’s spending time in eating, dating, chatting with friends or even nap, this contribute the shallow performances on the account of effective productivity. The longer working schedule, procedural and functional chaos, behavioral inadequacies not only encompasses the excessive leisure at work but also contributes to the employees’ lost interest towards the work. To resolve these issues the current leadership ideology has evolved with paradigm shift eventually gave the birth to the spiritual leadership. This has power to lead the change and proven its effects with organizational and personal resultants such as joy in work, peace, serenity, job satisfaction and commitment, improved productivity and reduced absenteeism and employee turnovers. (Giacalone and Jurliewicz, 2003). Workplace spirituality may be proven as competitive advantage to the management, leadership and organization as a whole (Mitroff and Denton, 1999). The Giacalone and Jurliewicz defines the operational definitions of workplace and spirituality as
“A framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promotes employees’ experience of transcendences through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected in a way that provides feeling of compassion and joy.”
Fleischman 1994, given transcendence, calling or being called (Vocationally) and a need for social connection or membership as two essential dimensions of spiritual survival. These two elements are interlocked, universal and common to the human experience.
There are evidences in literature that shows that organization has started performing after the incorporation of the spirituality at workplace (McKee et al, 2011).
In summarizing this, three distinguished concepts of workplace spirituality have been initiated; these are inner life, meaningful work and community (Dehlor 2003). These three components are prepositions of spirituality at work in which inner life, meaningful work, connectivity relate to human self concept and work content and working context respectively.

**Spiritual Leader…… a man with spiritual values!**

(Fry 2003) defines spiritual leadership as “the value, attitudes and behavior necessary to build intrinsic motivation of the one’s self and other so that they have sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership. “Calling” as the experience of transcendence or how one make a difference through service to others and in doing so derives meaning and purpose in life. Calling refers here as a “call” from the inner soul or from the esteemed higher power. Where as “membership” is to establishing a social/organizational culture based on altruistic love where by leaders and followers have genuine care, concerns and appreciation for both self and others, there by producing the sense of membership and being understood and appreciated. Sarkar’s work on “Microvita” has disseminated understanding on spirituality. An Indian Philosopher has connoted the word in his series of lectures during 1986. Microvita is the entities that exist between conception (mental realities) and perception (physical realities). Scientist promoting with prolonger studies that brain contains the “God Spot” though which human minds may connect to the extreme power and realizes the “true-self “. Therefore humans are having senses to realize the spirituality in deep within based on their attention and interest towards the spiritual gains and contending joy of life.
Spiritual leadership asks the questions such as, what is means to be human? What we really mean by growth and what values and power distributions are needed to enhance both organizations and society as a whole (Burke, 2006).

Fry, 2003 strongly recommends three concepts in the theory of spiritual leadership (Figure 1):

1. Creating a vision where in organization members experience a sense of calling in that their life has meaning and makes a difference. “Vision refers to a picture of the future with some implicit or explicit commentary on why people should strive to create that future” (Kotter, 1996).

This decides the organization journey from inception to destination and actively involves leaders and followers to have energy, meaning.
in work, more sense of commitment. In mobilizing people spiritual Leaders puts broad appeal, define the holistic vision, the destination of organization’s journey, reflects highly influencing behaviors and encourages hope and faith (Daft and Lengel, 1998). He vividly described the desired to perform the future expectations.

2. Altruistic Love: A form of selfless love manifested with unconditional, benevolent care, genuine concerns, compassion and appreciation to self and others. Love has power to overcome the destructive influence of four main group of destructive emotions (Allen.1972, Jane 1995, key, 1990; Seligman and Cikszen Tmihalyi,2000; Synder and Ingram, 2000): Fear (anxiety, worry and apprehensions ), Anger (including hostility, resentment, envy, jealously and hatred), Sense of Failure (including such thing as discouragement, depressed moods, various guilt feelings that lead to self- destruction), Pride (including prejudice, selfishness, self-conscious and conceit). If the leader possess the genuine concerns for the causes and give care and continuity to employees’ happiness, and facilitates more appreciation and admiration, this would certainly contribute to the mutual goodness.

3. Hope /Faith: Hope is yearning for something and faith is unquenchable believe of having that thing. Faith adds certainty to the hope (Fry, 2003). Firm belief on something where no proof is required. In running the race of faith, people must race to win, exercise self-control and always strive for excellence to exceed their personal best. The race of faith is marathon not a sprint; it requires endurance, perseverance and willingness “to do what it take” to do one’s personal best and maximize one potential. It requires setting challenging, stretch, yet achievable goals and laying a side encumbrance and distraction in pursuing the vision of the preparations, running and ultimate victory of race. (Mac Arthur, 1998). The qualities of spiritual leaderships along with the values have been depicted in the table 1. This has elucidated the three components vividly.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Table 1: Qualities of Spiritual Leaders:</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Vision:</strong></td>
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<td>- Broad appeal to key stakeholders</td>
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<td>- Defines the destination and journey</td>
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<td>- Reflects high ideals</td>
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<td>- Encourages Hope/Faith</td>
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<td>- Establishes a standard of excellence</td>
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<td><strong>Altruistic Love:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Forgiveness</td>
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<td>- Kindness</td>
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<td>- Integrity</td>
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<td>- Empathy/Compassion</td>
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<td>- Honesty</td>
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<td>- Patience</td>
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<td>- Courage</td>
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<td>- Trust and Loyalty</td>
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<td>- Humility</td>
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<td><strong>Hope/Faith:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Endurance</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Perseverance</td>
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<td>- Do what it takes</td>
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<td>- Stretch goals</td>
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<td>- Expectation of reward/ Victory.</td>
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<td><strong>B. by Values:</strong></td>
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<td>1. Trust/loyalty</td>
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<td>2. Forgiveness/acceptance/gratitude</td>
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<td>7. Kindness</td>
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<td>8. Empathy/Compassion</td>
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<td>9. Patience/meekness/endurance</td>
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<td>10. Excellence</td>
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<td>11. Fun</td>
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Source: Fry, 2003
Organizational Implications

In modern context the chagrin applies to individual leaders how to demonstrate performance management (rational analyses) and at the same time put his into the context of purpose and meaning attribution (Bruke, 2006). A living organization without inspiration or micro vita does not last with employee burnout, fatigue, loss of purpose. Microvita are mysterious ingredient that helps to move the organization from data to information to knowledge to wisdom Most importantly they act as a trigger to create an organization in which members can experience transcendence (Inayatullah, 2005)

Reave 2005 Recommends that there spiritual values and practices are related to leadership effectiveness and that of organizations have higher level of employee commitments and productivity and customer satisfaction where employee relates more to themselves and then organization core ideologies. This reveals more of spirituality influence more productive and fertile functioning of organization. The perceived implications of spiritual leadership on organization effectiveness can be:

1. Organizational commitment: Employee with a sense of calling and membership will become attached, loyal to what they say and do in organization that have cultures based on the values of altruistic love. The affective and cognitive commitment would lead to strong virtues of effective outcomes resulting in holistic performances in individual, organizational level.

2. Productivity and continuous improvement: Performance is the outcome of multiplication between ability, motive and resources facilitations. Spiritual leader guides mentor and provide intrinsic motivation focusing on potential development with facilitating resources. Connection to work enhances the contentment with the work and commences the feeling of joy in what one is doing. Eventually this enhances the productivity with consistently growing and persistently giving focus to learning and development. Recently business week magazine reported on recent research by Mckinsey and Company in Australia has found that productivity improves and employee turnover is
greatly reduced when companies engage in programs that use spiritual techniques for their employees.

3. *Improved IR and Team work:* Spiritual leaders often lead by showing the same what he expects to others and thereby setting examples. The modern parlance of functioning would be quite smooth if the leaders understand the followers need and facilitate strong sense of connectivity and take him to common goal. This would leads to better cohesiveness and true sense of team work can be vitalized with the enduring influence on the reformations, creativity and holistic development. This has beautifully illustrated with the example in which Aaron Feurenstein, CEO of Malden Mills in Lawrence, MA, which produces popular Polartec fabrics, believes labor is the best asset a company has. He says a company has an equal responsibility to its community and to itself and since his town has high unemployment; he kept all 3000 employees on his payroll after a major fire destroyed three out of its four factory buildings. Workers repaid his generosity with a 25% increase in productivity and 66% drop in quality defects.

4. *Vision congruencies on executing functional performances:* The important component of the spiritual leadership model is that holistic vision is being practiced meticulously with care and compassion in each walk of the performances. Employer and employees will more relating to the organization’s core purpose and hence organizational learning and development can be assured in operational and functional performances’ and respective strategic execution. Jeff Bezos the CEO of amazon.com has portrayed his vision to his employees and listens and here the complain of the customer directly on his public email and reverts the same to the employee with one edition i.e. sign of question mark. Which make all the employee to resolve the issues. Jeff has not assured awards and ranking in pioneers platforms but credited to bring the revolutionary change in the e-commerce.
5. **Holistic growth and revenue generation**: This reflects the consistency among the effective performance and outcome impression of spiritual leaders on organizational productivity, functional competitive advantage, and thereby ensuring desired result in each work lead to ensuring desired result in each walk of the journey organizational learning graph. Consistency in performance will lead the chances of organizational learning capacity. This not only facilitates the revenue generations and profit but a holistic growth spreading the purpose of each level of human behavior.

6. **Less resistance and more adoptive culture**: The intrinsic values of spiritual leaders show caring (offering support, affection, praise and protection, warmth, acceptance, genuineness, and concern), Meaning Attribution (exploring, clarifying, interpreting, providing a cognitive framework for change, translating feelings and experience into ideas) (Yolom, 1995) are more likely to give first impression to the follower that “leader is ethical and there is nothing harm to adopt any new thing conveyed by him for the self and organizational betterment”.

7. **Capacity to build effective decision making**: The leader today has moral accountability to think, act, and react ethically to each conflicting issues. Discretion based on ethical grounds and moral accounts are more likely to handle the situation effectively with applying rational, emotional, and spiritual intelligence and showing humanity, honesty, and empathic concerns. These all lead to the effective consequences of decisions on intentions, work performances, and organizational gains.

8. **Agility of the systems**: The practices of spirituality have less evidences of illness, mental withdrawals, or attrition at work. This facilitates more agile and smooth functioning with consistency in growing and persistency in performances. This not only helps to identify the causes of effects but reduces and minimizes the effects of effects.
9. **Reduces cost of retention:** More intrinsically motivated work will enjoy the working concerns and would be loyal to the leaders’ actions and there by organizational virtues. Hence the cost associated with several employees’ retention practices will reduced.

10. **Three dimensional growth:** Organization often been notified with imposed contribution on social and community reformations and associated social responsibilities. This usually results into ineffective contributions with scattering and feeble effects on the concern and causes. Spiritual leadership may give holistic three dimensional growth regime.

*Individual:* as more sense of true self and connecting to the purpose:

*Organizations:* as more ethically driven entity connecting with core ideologies, employees emotions and nation’s accountability

*Environment:* Sustainable and peaceful with inbuilt implications of ethical and moral execution of functional and operational performances.

The Spiritual leadership is depicting the various understanding, the approach need to be adopted and executed in action, thought and process. Hence the below mentioned acronyms may help to gain the ideology.

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CEO

LEADERSHIP

GROWTH

Leading to

LEADERSHIP: Lets employee adopt development that are ethically responsible sustaining hope inspiration and purpose.

Leading to

GROWTH: Greed reduction therefore opportunities are widened which in triumphing humanity.
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**Source:** Robert Burke, 2006
CONCLUSION

New leadership paradigm names as spiritual leader ask the leader to be the one who can show what it means to be human, what it means to be authentic and how by modeling behavior that sees other humans (Bruke, 2006). The spiritual leaders through vision, hope/faith, and altruistic love provides the basis for strong intrinsic motivation with the task involvement and goal identification because it meets the higher order needs of individual such as self-efficacy, and provide sense of autonomy, competence and relatedness (Deci and Ryan, 2000). The current philosophies found to be well congruent with the Maslow’s higher level needs i.e. self actualizations. Though the modern era is full with tech-enabled, quite vulnerable and volatile this provokes human behavior to give prompt and mocking reactions. Hence need of belief, faith and power of empathic personalities are earnest and quite depicting. This ideology need to admire and adopt the phenomenon in wider approachable context. Spiritual leaders lead people through intellect discourse and dialogue and believe that people, when they are involved and properly informed can make intelligent decision affects their lives (Power 1979). He more or less acts like a friend where employees feel comfort to talk, share his feeling willingly and perform in desired expectations. This gives direct influence to the organizational receptivity, longevity and effectiveness in operational and functional streams. As a future course of discussion researchers may seek to operationalize the concept of spiritual leadership in more concrete and core behavioral outcomes which may execute and redefine spiritual leadership as a significant tool for effective organizational transformations.
References


Books, Book Chapters and Web Articles


