

Effect of Organizational Support in the Relationship between Spiritual Leadership and Performance

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Abstract:

Nowadays, in organizations, the greatest difficulty leaders face is the problem of ensuring a holistic and ethical business model that encompasses ethical leadership, moral behavior, and employee wellbeing at time same time. Inspired by positive psychology, spiritual leadership has the potential to give birth to a meaningful and pleasing work atmosphere, and it has the necessary capacity for eliminating the vacancy felt by modern workers regarding the search for meaning at work and feelings of emptiness and loneliness in the workplace. Empowering followers and setting high standards for achievement, it will probably be effective with regard to both financial and qualitative performance and perceived organizational support felt by followers may have a mediator effect on the relationship between spiritual leadership behavior and organizational performance. In order to explore these relationships, face-to-face surveys with white-collar workers from Turkish companies were conducted and the data analyzed with a structural equation model.

Key words: Business Administration, Management, Organizational Behavior, Spiritual Leadership, Perceived Organizational Support

Introduction

In the 21st century, change in all segments of life has become more prominent (Fry, 2003). In this challenging and changing environment, the need for ethical values, leadership, and trust have become key issues confronting executives (Fry & Slocum, 2008). In this context, the need for spirituality has become more and more significant. Spirituality in this context signifies a connection with a higher order power, accepting its superiority, and needing this power as psychological support. Of course, there are many definitions of spirituality. For example, Como (2007) has defined spirituality as the core of an individual that gives meaning to his life and sets goals for him. Murray and Zentner (1989) have described spirituality as something beyond believing in a God and beyond being committed to a religion. In addition, they have claimed that spirituality helps people to find meaning in a higher power. Similarly, Surbone and Baider (2010) have illustrated spirituality as a life giving hymn energy that is not necessarily stemming from Godlike entities.

Because of the fact that the nature of the concept is highly abstract, there is not a consensus on a certain generally acknowledged definition. Since up to now it has been widely used in religious terminology and religious texts, it is still confused with religion (Yılmaz, 2011). According to Zinnbauer, Pargament, and Scott (1999), while religion is often associated with institutional religion, spirituality is about the inner feelings of individuals, proximity to God and interconnectedness with the outer world. Nowadays, big players in the business world have adopted a more modern version of spirituality and they have embraced workplace spirituality, which has brought about a new kind of leadership style—spiritual leadership—which integrates the four main components of human existence: body, mind, heart, and spirit (Moxley, 2000).

In this way, those companies have grabbed the chance to benefit from more excellent and transcendent souls in the workplace (Fry, 2003; Mitroff & Denton, 1999; O'Reilly & Pfeffer, 2000; Weinberg & Locander, 2014).

1. Conceptual Framework

1.1 Spiritual Leadership

The spiritual leadership literature follows the emerging paradigm of spirituality at work due to the shift toward a concern for wholeness and spiritual values (Weinberg & Locander, 2014). Spirituality is a way to recapture the trust between the employer and the employee, allegedly lost on account of the alienation generated by the dehumanized practices of the modern business world (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004).

According to proponents of workplace spirituality, employees have both spiritual and physical needs and they cannot leave them at the door when they come to work. They bring to work the values and attitudes that are the driving forces of their behavior (Fry & Slocum, 2008). Advocates of workplace spirituality propose that when people bring unique competencies to the workplace, they experience a sense of transcendence and community in and that this is a highly motivating factor for them. Workplace spirituality incorporates values leading to a sense of transcendence and interconnectedness and, as a result, employees experience personal fulfillment regarding their work. In this context, transcendence means having a calling through one's work (vocationally) and interconnectedness is the need for membership, which provides the foundation for a theory of workplace spirituality (Fry & Slocum, 2008).

An inner life of integrity and wholeness of soul can be ensured by workplace spirituality, and spiritual leadership provides an opportunity for followers to live their inner life and meet their spiritual needs at work (Dushon & Plowman, 2005). In fact, spirituality is a psychological pattern that involves embracing a meaningful life, wholeness, and interconnectedness with other people and entities (Zinnbauer, Pargament, & Scott, 1999), and, in another meaning, it is a search for a vision that encompasses service to others, humility, charity, and veracity. Workplace spirituality consists of three main sub dimensions: an intimate relationship with the individual's own self, their own inner world, and their own values (Fairholm, 1997); meaning and purpose resulting from a transcendental practice of one's own work or proficiency (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003), and a need for connectedness (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003). According to Maddock and Fulton (1998) workplace spirituality involves two important components—a calling and a need for connectedness. These components are mutually connected and highly universal (Fry, 2003). A calling encompasses creating a vision that makes it possible for employees to experience a sense of calling through their work. Membership ensures an organizational culture based on altruistic love in which leaders and followers genuinely care and appreciate each other (Fry, 2003).

Spiritual leadership draws from spiritual practice and an increased importance given to an inner life that promotes values and behaviors that are significant for intrinsically motivating the leader him/ herself and his or her followers in order to have a sense of spiritual well-being (Fry & Cohen, 2009). Spiritual leadership involves motivating and inspiring workers through a transcendent vision and a corporate culture based on altruistic values that produce a highly motivated, committed, and productive workforce (Fry & Slocum, 2008).

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, having a sense of calling through one's work and establishing a proper baseline for social connections at work is central to spiritual leadership. The key processes that ensure this baseline in spiritual leadership are: (1) creating a vision through which leaders and followers experience a sense of calling in their jobs, so that their lives have meaning; and, (2) establishing a culture based on altruistic love whereby leaders and followers have a sense of membership, such that they feel understood and appreciated and care for each other (Luthans & Slocum, 2008).

And followers respond to spiritual leadership in two ways: by feeling calling towards their jobs and feeling a sense of membership with their organizations. In this context, a calling is a need for service to an ideal or service to God, and comes from a higher power or from one's inner space (Reave, 2005). And membership is the power that makes followers experience meaning in their lives and feel that they have an ability to make a difference, to be understood, and be appreciated by their leaders (Fry, Vitucci, & Cedillo, 2005). In fact, Fry's (2005) spiritual leadership theory—which is the most well known and prominent spiritual leadership theory—is extended by investigating the concepts concerning psychological and ethical issues stemming from recent developments in workplace spirituality, ethics, and positive psychology and positive leadership.

According to Fry and Cohen (2008), these areas have reached a consensus on the attitudes and behaviors necessary for the development of positive human health, psychological well-being, life satisfaction, and corporate social responsibility, and the purpose of spiritual leadership is to meet the needs of leaders and followers for spiritual survival/well-being through a sense of calling and membership, to create vision and value congruence, empower the team, and to foster not only psychological well-being and positive human health but also organizational commitment and productivity (Fry, 2003, 2005).

When analyzed in detail, it can be seen that Fry's (2003) spiritual leadership model demonstrates a cause and effect relationship involving three spiritual leadership dimensions mediated by two follower characteristics, contributing to superior organizational outcomes. The mentioned leadership components are: (1) vision (passion for an appealing future, which creates high level of performance standards); (2) hope/faith (a reservoir for the belief that the organization has the capacity and ability to be successful, and that it with a high probability will be successful) (Fry, 2003); and the last leadership component is altruistic love (wholeness, integration, congruence, and well-being resulting from intimate care, concern, and appreciation). And, as mentioned earlier, the two followers' characteristics are: meaning/calling, the experience of transcendence through service to others, and deriving meaning and purpose in life in this way; and membership, belonging to a group and feeling that one is being understood and appreciated in that specific group (Chen, Yang & Li, 2012).

Under spiritual leadership, the clear, compelling vision of the organization and spiritual leader produces a sense of calling—the part of spiritual well-being that gives one a sense of making a difference, which gives meaning. Vision serves to clarify the general direction of change, simplifies hundreds or thousands of more detailed decisions, and helps to coordinate the actions of many different people, energizes people and establishes a standard of excellence, reflects high ideals, and encourages hope and faith (Fry, 2003).

Moreover, spiritual leadership promotes hope/faith in the organization's vision, which keeps the followers looking forward to the future—and this necessitates an organizational culture based on values of altruistic love. In spiritual leadership theory, altruistic love is described as a sense of wholeness, harmony, and well-being, produced through care, concern, and appreciation for both the self and others (Fry, 2003). Patience, humility, kindness, forgiveness, self-control, trust, loyalty, lack of envy, and truthfulness are the underlying values of spiritual leadership theory's altruistic love concept. Altruistic love and spiritual survival results in joy, peace, and serenity in individuals (Fry, 2003), and these feelings are the sources of high organizational commitment, productivity, and reduced stress levels, which most organizations aim to achieve. According to spiritual leadership theory, altruistic love should be demonstrated through the leaders' attitudes and behaviors, and produces a sense of membership—which fosters a sense of being understood and appreciated (Fry & Slocum, 2008). However, according to Fry (2003), hope is a desire and expectation of fulfillment, whereas faith is a firm belief in something for which there is no proof, adding certainty to hope. People with hope/faith have a vision of where they are going and how to get there, and it acts as the source for the conviction that the organization's vision/purpose/mission will be fulfilled (Fry, 2003).

To sum up, in Fry's (2003) spiritual leadership model, faith in a clear, compelling vision produces a sense of calling and hope/faith adds belief and motivates the action to perform. In order to reach the vision, it encourages higher levels of performance through intrinsic motivation. Moreover, altruistic love is mutually transformed between the organization and its members in pursuit of a common vision. This feeling, namely, altruistic love, drives out and removes the fears associated with worry, jealousy, selfishness, failure, anger, and guilt. Altruistic love is given unconditionally upon being accepted into the organization (Fry, 2003). It contributes to a sense of membership, which results in an awareness of being understood and appreciated. This intrinsic motivation cycle, stemming from spiritual leadership, which is based on vision (performance), altruistic love (reward), and hope/faith (effort) results in an increase in one's sense of spiritual survival (e.g., calling and membership), and ultimately contributes to positive organizational outcomes, such as increased organizational commitment and productivity (Fairholm, 1997)

Spiritual leadership creates a work environment in which individuals love each other and become committed to their work, resulting in higher organizational faithfulness and productivity (Fry, 2003). Spiritual leaders have a focus on the importance of the individual; in spiritually led organizations, every member feels empowered and responsible for the reputation of the company (Fry & Slocum, 2008). Spiritual leaders are long-term oriented, challenging leaders, obsessed with excellence, and their followers are also committed to meeting the performance levels required to reach the preferred and envisioned future (Fry & Slocum, 2008).

1.2. Perceived Organizational Support

Following Eisenberger's work on POS (Eisenberger et al., 1986), in our study we defined perceived organizational support (POS) as employees' perceptions about the degree to which the organization cares about their well-being and values their contribution. It is a key concept of organizational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986). According to this theory, employees prone to believe that their organization has a general positive or negative feeling about their contribution to the organization and their organization will show the necessary care and concern when they deserve (Eisenberger et al., 2002).

Organizational support theory has its roots in the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960). According to the norm of reciprocity, when employees receive favorable treatment from their organizations, they feel an obligation towards their organization that they should care about its well-being and contribute to its successes by working hard (Gouldner, 1960). The norm of reciprocity does not involve any bargain. It encourages helping behavior, and a favor made by one party is the result of a previous favor made by other party (Molm, 1994).

Social exchange theorists, who exercise an important influence on organizational support theorists, argue that resources received from other people are more highly valued when they are based on voluntary choice rather than compulsory circumstances that are beyond the control of the donor (Gouldner, 1960; Blau, 1964; Cotterell, Eisenberger & Speicher, 1992). Organizational rewards, benefits and favorable job conditions, such as increase in pay, promotions, job enrichment, etc., contribute to higher levels of perceived organizational support when the organization's members believe that those benefits resulted from the organization's discretionary actions rather than outer compulsions, constraints, and obligations (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Shore & Shore, 1995).

The two main ways that social exchange that take place in the management literature are a global exchange relationship between employees and the organization and a more focused, dyadic relationship between subordinates and their superiors (Settoon, Bennet & Liden, 1996). At the global level, employees adopt a global belief concerning the degree to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger, 1986), and this situation is called perceived organizational support. High levels of perceived organizational support are associated with feelings of an obligation to repay the organization (Settoon, Bennet & Liden, 1996). At the micro level, employees attach importance to the meaning of the behavior of their superiors in shaping their own perceptions regarding their organization, and the perceived appraisal of their behavior and performance in the organization.

From the viewpoint of organizational support theory, the development of perceived organizational support is the result of employees' tendency to assign humanlike characteristics to the organization they work for (Eisenberger et al., 1986), and to consider the actions taken by agents of the organization as indications of the organization's intent rather than to attribute them solely to the agents' personal motives (Levinson, 1965). According to Eisenberger et al., (2001), employees attach importance to a meaningful balance between the value scribed to them by their organization and the essence of their behavior towards the organization; and when a meaningful balance occurs they start to trust in their organization and in its tendency to appreciate their congruent behavior and success (Eisenberger et al., 2001).

2. Evaluation and Results

2.1 Hypothesis and Research Model

Spiritual Leadership vs. Performance

In our study, we advocate that a powerful ethical leadership style such as spiritual leadership can have a positive effect on financial performance. When organizations promote hope and happiness, employees are better able to deal with stressors in the work environment (Edwards & Cooper, 1988; Simmons & Nelson, 2001), further contributing to organizational performance. Spiritual leaders nourish identification and a sense of membership that supports open communication, the empowerment of followers, a powerful vision and compelling goals, which result in high levels of performance. These leaders work with true people with true methods and attain their goals and visionary objectives through high levels of performance (Fry & Slocum, 2008). There are some important points behind spiritual leadership's positive effect on organizational performance. First of all, spiritual leadership increases the consciousness levels of individuals, and these results in higher levels of managerial capabilities (Vaughan, 1989; Agor, 1989).

A second factor is the fact that spiritual leadership has a tendency to set compelling goals and an attractive vision that makes followers fight for that vision (Hawley, 1993; Neck & Milliman, 1996). Another important factor that effects spiritual leadership's effect on performance is the fact that spiritually-based goals create a service-based focus that results in a higher levels of performance, nourished from altruistic love (Hawley, 1993). Another important factor is the bond established by demanding spiritual goals between employees and the company, and the fact that it contributes to teamwork and organizational commitment. Spirituality-based management ensures that employees create their own spiritual visions, and by doing this contributes to the general vision of their organization. According to Jurkiewicz and Giacalone (2004), the workplace spirituality and performance relationship can be described by a triangle composed of motivation, commitment, and adaptation. In organizations led by high levels of spirituality, employees tend to experience higher levels of motivation and do their best to reach organizational goals.

In the extant literature there are a meaningful number of studies regarding the spiritual leadership and performance relationship. Duchon and Plowman's (2005) study, which was applied on 6 different work units, with the aim of exploring the relationship between the levels of openness to spirituality and levels of unit performance, showed that work units with higher levels of openness to spirituality had consistently higher levels of performance when compared with other units. In Fry et al.'s (2011) study, conducted in the US on 62 military students, the relationship between spiritual leadership and organizational productivity is explored. In the study, the outcomes for followers generated by spiritual leadership, such as experiencing a sense of calling and membership, and their effects on productivity are investigated. As a result of the study, the mediating effect of experiencing a sense of calling and membership, in relation to the relationship between spiritual leadership and productivity, has been proven.

Moreover, in Salehzadeh et al.'s (2015) study on 207 Iranian hotel workers, the effect of spiritual leadership on organizational performance is investigated. As a result of the study, spiritual leadership's positive effects on experiencing a sense of calling and membership have been confirmed and their positive effects on organizational performance have been proven. Fry and Slocum's (2008) study on a spiritually led organization has also shown that in organizations showing high levels of spiritual leadership, organizational commitment, the sense of membership, productivity and sales growth rates are higher compared to organizations showing lower levels of spiritual leadership behavior.

Based on the results of other researches, it can be deduced that spiritual leadership has a positive effect on organizational performance (Duchon & Plowman, 2005; Fry & Matherly, 2006; Fry et al., 2011; Chen & Li, 2013) and the intimate care and attention given to members in spiritual leadership leads to higher levels of organizational performance (Fry and Matherly, 2006; Fry & Slocum, 2008; Fry et al., 2005).

Being inspired by the extant literature, we hypothesized that:

H1: Spiritual leadership has a positive effect on the qualitative performance of an organization

H2: Spiritual leadership has a positive effect on the financial performance of an organization

Spiritual Leadership vs. Perceived Organizational Support

According to organizational support theory, attributing humanlike properties to the organization forms the basis of perceived organizational support (Eisenberger et al., 1986). The personalization of the organization appears in the norms, regulations, culture, roles and power exposed in the followers and it is the result of both the positive and negative conduct of the organization towards its followers. As mentioned earlier, perceived organizational support has its roots in social exchange theory. According to this theory, people value and pay back good deeds and gracious kindnesses when these are done deliberately and not arbitrarily (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Some of the basic tenets of spiritual leadership are compatible with the formation of perceived organizational support. For example, a vision that designates high order goals, authentic and internally consistent leadership behaviors, is in the service of the followers, and empowers followers and nourishes followers' perceptions regarding organizational support (Ferguson & Milliman, 2008). Spiritual leader's authentic behavior ensures the necessary baseline for long term relationships based on trust and faith, which often ends up in perceived organizational support (Ferguson & Milliman, 2008). Fairholm (1996) has also emphasized the supportive and empowering style of spiritual leaders, which contributes to a sense of perceived organizational support. Another point that spiritual leadership can contribute to perceived organizational support is the fact that it encourages reciprocal positive relationships and contributes to a sense of membership.

Leader's attention and concern for both the interior and exterior environment contributes to a high level of concern for his or her followers (Greenleaf, 1977; Cavanagh, 1999) and this supports self-confidence on the part of followers (Milliman et al., 2001). Mutual obligations and goals, and an environment that appreciates followers' contributions to these goals, contribute to perceived organizational support and provides a comfortable workplace for followers (Friedman et al., 1998). In the extant literature, although it is very restricted in number, there are some studies supporting the relationship between spiritual leadership and perceived organizational support. For example, in Rhoades and Eisenberger's (2002) meta-analysis regarding the antecedents of perceived organizational support, 73 studies were analyzed and authenticity, morality, trustworthiness, perceived supervisor support, job security, training and development, and supportive HR applications were determined to be the processors of POS. Similarly, in spiritual leadership theory, corresponding values have been accepted as the result of managing with this kind of leadership. Authenticity, empowerment, and the development of followers, being service focused, and attaching importance to training and development are among the main values of spiritual leadership (Fairholm, 1996; Fry, 2003; Fry et al., 2005).

In another study, Allen, Deborah, Armstrong, Margaret and Cynthia's (2008) study, multiple potential antecedents of the POS of public sector IT employees were investigated. In the hierarchical regression, they found that the need for challenging work, a manageable workload, pay-for-performance, and career mentoring—which are also main objectives of spiritual leadership in creating meaningful work, namely vocational calling—explained POS. Moreover, in Allen et al.'s (2003) study on 215 sales agents and 197 insurance agents, the results showed that, as in the case with spiritual leadership, participative management, equitable pay, supporting the development of followers, and moral leadership contributes to perceived organizational support.

Thus, being inspired by the extant literature, in our study we wanted to see the relationship between spiritual leadership and perceived organizational support. Thus, we hypothesized:

H3: Spiritual Leadership has a positive effect on perceived organizational support.

Mediating effect of Perceived Organizational Support

According to the organizational support literature, with a leader's help and supportive behavior, employees can be made to feel safer, more comfortable, and less stressed. And thus they end up in performing at a higher and more qualified level (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Spiritual leaders empower their followers and contribute to the sense of meaning (Fairholm, 1996; Fry, 2003). When employees feel good about their jobs, they are more prone to recognize the meaning of their work and are more prone to show higher levels of performance (Laden et al., 2000; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Many researchers have noted that psychological empowerment correlates significantly with job performance (Kirkman & Rosen, 1999; Liden, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2000). All spiritual paths emphasize that expressing support and concern for others is an important practice (Reave, 2005). Many employees attach importance to the fact that leaders demonstrate caring and concern. The Walker Information surveys (Walker Information, Inc., 2001a, b, c) found that, after fairness, employees named care and concern for employees as their second most important priority.

Spirituality expresses itself in the embodiment of spiritual values such as integrity and expressing caring and concern (Reave, 2005), respect, fairness and appreciation (Reave, 2005). Similarly, according to Fry (2003), spiritual leaders contribute to the feelings of being understood and appreciated, and thus produce a feeling of being supported by the organization. Just as with individual spirituality, leaders and organizations often embrace spirituality because they need help. And often they get the help they were seeking. They become more energized, more joy-filled, more productive, and more profitable, when they have embraced spirituality. At the same time, starting down a spiritual path, if leaders and organizations are open to it, will take the leader and organization to unexpected places (Benefiel, 2005).

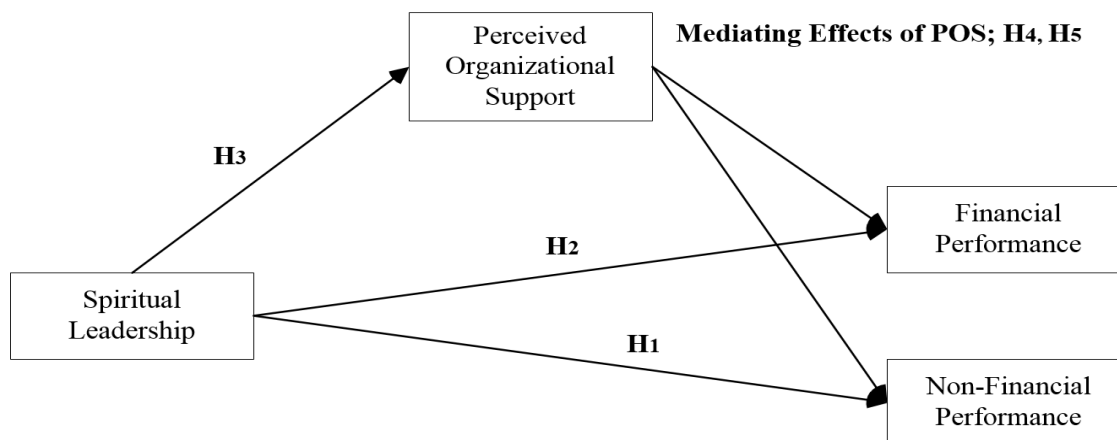
An organization that values spirituality engenders a source of intrinsic meaning for their employees—emphasizing employee development, emphasizing the cultural values of trust and honesty, offering employee empowerment, and giving employees opportunities to express opinions (Chen, Yang and Li, 2012), and thus making their followers feel empowered and supported. As mentioned earlier, according to the norm of reciprocity, employees who are treated favorably by others feel a sense of indebtedness to the exchange partner and are motivated to repay the partner (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960). Likewise in spiritual leadership, employees who perceive high levels of organizational support feel a sense of indebtedness to their leader and reciprocate this feeling in terms of attitudes and behaviors that benefit their organization.

According to many employees, a spiritual leader has an obligation to promote feelings of organizational support and intimate care that reflect a stronger sense of transcendence of self-interests (Afsar&Rehman, 2015). In parallel with that view, Cable and Parsons (2001) suggest that when organizations support and treat employees fairly, the employees show better congruence with the organizational values, goals, aspirations, and climate, and that this often results in higher levels of performance. Thus, perceived organizational support seems to be an empowering factor in the relationship between spiritual leadership and organizational performance. While previous studies have shed light on the connections between POS and employee job performance, the connection between spiritual leadership and employees has been relatively neglected; little is known about the unique connections between the three concepts, and unfortunately there have not been any studies regarding the possible mediator effect of perceived organizational support in the relationship between spiritual leadership and employee performance. Although there are not enough studies on the mediator effect of perceived organizational support in the relationship between spiritual leadership and performance, there are some studies that have looked at similar issues. For example, in Afsarand Rehman (2015) study, the results showed that there is a positive relationship between spiritual leadership and workplace spirituality, and that this effect becomes stronger when the subordinates' perceptions of organizational support and care are higher. Employees experience higher levels of perceived organizational support when they are exposed to workplace spirituality where they can experience "whole" selves in work, and feel connected with the holistic and collective identity in higher levels (Afsarand Rehman 2015). Inspired by the extant literature and encouraged by the gap regarding the mediator effect of perceived organizational support in the relationship between spiritual leadership and performance, we hypothesized that perceived organizational support acts as a mediator in the relationship between spiritual leadership and performance.

H4: Perceived organizational support acts as a mediator in the relationship between spiritual leadership and the qualitative performance of the organization.

H5: Perceived organizational support acts as a mediator in the relationship between spiritual leadership and the financial performance of the organization.

Figure 1: Research Model



2.2 Research Methodology

In this study, in order to collect data, a face-to-face survey method was used. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were conducted to see if the observed variables were loaded together and to evaluate the construct, convergent, discriminate validity and reliability values. Afterwards, the research model and the related hypotheses were investigated using the Structural Equation Modeling technique.

Measurement instrument and sample

In this study, employee performance was measured combining Fuentes, Saez & Montes (2004) and Rahman and Bullock's (2005) 6-item employee performance measure and four items have been borrowed from the role-performance measure of Welbourne (1998).

Psychological capital was measured by Luthans et al., (2007) 24-item Psychological Capital scale, which is composed of four main sub dimensions, which are: hope, optimism, resiliency and, self-efficacy.

Lastly, spiritual leadership, the independent variable of our model, was measured using Fry's (2003) spiritual leadership scale, which has three dimensions—vision, hope/faith and altruism—and 17 items.

Table 1 Demographic Variables

	Frequency	Valid Percent		Frequency	Valid Percent
Firm Owner	41	5.6	Primary School	5	.7
High-level executive	197	26.8	High School	56	7.3
Mid-level Executive	117	15.9	Vocational School	35	4.6
Executive	309	42.0	University	459	59.7
White Collar Worker	72	9.8	GraduateSchool	207	26.9
			Doctorate	7	.9

Reliability and validity of the constructs

Using Principal Component Analysis with Premix rotation, an EFA was performed to see if the observed variables loaded together as expected and were adequately correlated. In order to test the adequacy of the data set for factor analysis, we used the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) sample adequacy test and Bartlett's test of sphericity. As a result of the analysis, the KMO value was found to be 0.966, which is below the desired level of 0.50, and the Bartlett test result showed a 0.001 significance level. Moreover, the diagonal values in the anti-image correlation matrix were investigated, and those values were shown to be above the desired level of 0.5; thus it was concluded that the sample data was good enough for factor analysis.

Lower level of factor loadings have been accepted as 0.5 (Hair et al., 2010). Community values of all dimensions have been above the 0.5 level. In measuring the interior validity of the factors, Cronbach's Alpha values were investigated and Cronbach's Alpha values of all factors were found to be above 0.7. And the interior validity of the factor values was proved. EFA results of the sample are summarized in Table 2.

With the aim of verifying the EFA results, the Maximum Likelihood method was used for confirmatory factor analysis, in order to measure the reliability and validity of the measures. Also, modification indices were investigated and error values that had high modification indices in the same factor were covaried. In this situation, the values of fit indexes ended up being $X^2/df = 2.405$, $GFI=0.926$, $TLI=0.968$, $CFI=0.972$, $PNFI=0.831$, $RMSEA=0.042$. As a result, the fit indexes were shown to be at the desired levels (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Schumacker & Lomax, 2012).

As all factor loadings are in the expected levels (Bagozzi, Yi, & Lynn, 1991), and the average of the factor loadings was found to be above 0.7 (Hair et al., 2010), and since model goodness fit indexes are at satisfactory levels, unidimensionality (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) was ensured. In order to test the reliability of the factor structures, AVE (Average Variance Extracted) (Fornell & Larcker 1981) and SCR (Scale Composite Reliability) (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988) were used. When the AVE value is above the level of 0.5 and the CR value is above the level of 0.7 we can talk about the availability of reliability and validity of factors (Bagozzi & Yi 1988). With respect to our study, the AVE and SCR values of factors are summarized in table 2. And it has been proved that the reliability and validities of factors are all at the desired levels.

Table 2 Factor Analyses and Scale Reliability and Validity Values

Construct	Items	Factor Loading		Scale Reliability		
		EFA	CFA			
Vision	Vision_1	0.742	0.766	Cronbach α ; 0.925 SCR; 0.928 AVE; 0.720		
	Vision_2	0.853	0.826			
	Vision_3	0.818	0.851			
	Vision_4	0.705	0.906			
	Vision_5	0.643	0.887			
Hope/ Faith	Hope/Faith_1	0.676	0.904	Cronbach α ; 0.933 SCR; 0.936 AVE; 0.745		
	Hope/Faith_2	0.853	0.895			
	Hope/Faith_3	0.803	0.855			
	Hope/Faith_4	0.898	0.808			
	Hope/Faith_5	0.796	0.851			
Altruism	Altruism_1	0.763	0.836	Cronbach α ; 0.931 SCR; 0.926 AVE; 0.676		
	Altruism_2	0.826	0.835			
	Altruism_3	0.903	0.84			
	Altruism_4	0.876	0.851			
	Altruism_6	0.681	0.75			
	Altruism_7	0.773	0.816			
	Altruism_8	0.773	0.816			
Perceived Organizational support	Pr. Org. Sup_1	0.847	0.848	Cronbach α ; 0.929 SCR; 0.929 AVE; 0.622		
	Pr. Org. Sup_2	0.776	0.864			
	Pr. Org. Sup_3	0.848	0.893			
	Pr. Org. Sup_4	0.750	0.843			
	Pr. Org. Sup_5	0.752	0.676			
	Pr. Org. Sup_8	0.827	0.727			
	Pr. Org. Sup_9	0.805	0.704			
	Pr. Org. Sup_10	0.756	0.722			
	Financial Performance	finperf_1	0.872		0.802	Cronbach α ; 0.785 SCR; 0.791 AVE; 0.558
		finperf_2	0.837		0.719	
finperf_3		0.790	0.717			
Qualitative Performance	qulperf_1	0.572	0.754	Cronbach α ; 0.810 SCR; 0.814 AVE; 0.593		
	qulperf_3	0.698	0.744			
	qulperf_4	0.935	0.811			
	qulperf_4	0.935	0.811			
Notes;	(i) Principal Component Analysis with Promax Rotation (ii) KMO =0.966. Bartlett Test; p<0.001 (iii) Total Variance Explained (%); 73.820 (iv) All CFA Paths are statistically significant at p < 0.001					
CFA Model Fit	X2/df = 2.405, GFI=0.926, TLI=0.968, CFI=0.972, PNFI=0.831, RMSEA=0.042					

In Table 3, the discriminant validity have been analyzed by comparing the square root of AVE and the correlation coefficients of the horizontal and vertical axis. Since for each factor the square root of AVE is higher than the correlation coefficients of the horizontal-vertical axis, we can talk about the availability of the discriminant validity of the factors (Hair et al., 2010).

Table 3 Correlations and Discriminate Validity

Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6
Financial Performance	0.747					
Perceived Org. Support	0.393	0.789				
Hope	0.376	0.582	0.863			
Altruism	0.413	0.784	0.742	0.822		
Vision	0.411	0.696	0.841	0.813	0.849	
Qualitative Perf.	0.707	0.699	0.593	0.706	0.687	0.770

All correlations are statistically significant at $p < 0.001$.

Squared AVE values are represented in diagonals for Discriminate Validity

2.2 Results

According to the results of path analysis spiritual leadership has a statistically meaningful effect on perceived organizational support (β ;0.706. $p < 0.001$). Qualitative performance (β ;0.356. $p < 0.001$) and financial performance (β ;0.127. $p < 0.001$).

Table 4 Test of the research model

		Model 1	Model 2			
Spiritual Leadership	□	Financial Performance	0.384 (11.648)***			
Spiritual Leadership	□	Financial Performance	0.636 (23.068)***			
Spiritual Leadership	□	Per. Org. Sup	0.706 (27.901)***	Indirect Effect		
Per. Org. Sup.	□	Financial Perf.	0.127 (2.737)**	Estimate	Confidence Intervals	
Per. Org. Sup.	□	Qualitative Perf.	0.356 (9.667)***		Lower	Upper
Spiritual Leadership	□	Financial Perf.	0.295 (6.359)***	0.089*	0.011	0.171
Spiritual Leadership	□	Qualitative Perf.	0.385 (10.463)***	0.251***	0.182	0.320

Model fit indices is not calculated because of just identified model

Standardized coefficient are reported with t-values in parentheses

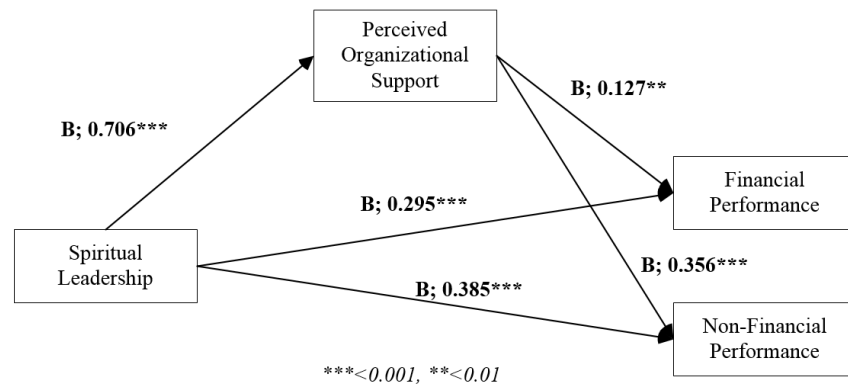
a; 5000 Bootstrap Samples, %95 Confidence Interval, *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$

We examined the mediating effect of perceived organizational support by following the analyzing strategies of Baron and Kenny (1986) and Preacher and Hayes (2008), implemented through a series of structural equation models reported in Table 4. Model 1 suggests that spiritual leadership significantly affects financial performance (β ; 0.384, $p < 0.001$) and qualitative performance (β ; 0.636, $p < 0.001$). According to the findings of Model 2, the paths linking spiritual leadership to perceived organizational support and perceived organizational support to performance were both statistically significant, but the relationship between spiritual leadership and financial performance (β ; 0.295, $p < 0.001$) and qualitative performance (β ; 0.385, $p < 0.001$) was weaker in this model. In this model our aim was to see whether perceived organizational support has a mediator effect or not.

In order to measure the mediator effect, we used the “Bootstrap” method in 5000 sample level (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). We explored the effect of perceived organizational support in the relationships between spiritual leadership and financial and qualitative performance.

At 95% confidence level, because of the availability of a meaningful mediator effect, we can talk about the availability of perceived organizational support's mediating role in the relationship between spiritual leadership and qualitative and financial performance. According to the results of our analysis, perceived organizational support has a partial mediator effect in the relationship between spiritual leadership and the two kinds of performance dimensions. Thus, H4 and H5 were supported.

Figure 2: Results



3. Discussion

As mentioned earlier, spirituality in organizations creates a work environment that encompasses positive emotions towards one's organization and job, which results in higher organizational faithfulness and productivity (Fry, 2003). In our study, a new framework for deeply exploring the effects of spiritual leadership on firm performance was developed, taking into consideration the effects of spiritual leadership on perceived organizational support and the mediating effect of perceived organizational support in the spiritual leadership performance relationship. In parallel to Rhoades and Eisenberger's (2002) and Allen et al.'s (2013) studies, which support that antecedents of perceived organizational support coincides with outputs of spiritual leadership style, our results confirmed that spiritual leadership positively affects the organizational support perceptions of an organization's members. In the extant literature, we have come across many studies that have results that are consistent with our study regarding the positive effects of spiritual leadership on performance. For example, in relation to Fry's (2003) spiritual leadership theory, Fry (2005) established a framework for testing the effects of spiritual leadership on followers, measuring the meaning and membership dimensions, and tried to find support for the expected organizational results, such as organizational commitment and efficiency, and tested that model on the American air force. As a result of the study, the positive effects of spiritual leadership on organizational commitment and efficiency were proven. In the following years, Chen and Yang (2012) explored the above mentioned relationships on 28 company and 466 white collar workers and confirmed that spiritual leadership is effective when it comes to building a sense of attachment to the organization, namely, membership, and is helpful with respect to giving meaning to an employee's job. It increases inner motivation, and thus leads to higher levels of organizational commitment and contributes to higher levels of organizational citizenship behavior. Duchon and Plowman (2005) also applied a similar study on six business units in a hospital and investigated the relationship between openness to spirituality and level of unit performance. As a result of the study, it was shown that in business units where membership consciousness is high the tendency to attribute meaning to one's job and performance results are higher compared to other business units. Later Fry et al. (2011) conducted another study at an American military academy on 62 students, where he explored the effects of spiritual leadership on attributing meaning to a job and feeling more motivated on membership, and where wanted to see whether this relationship resulted in superior productivity. As expected, in the study it was proven that spiritual leadership has a positive effect on both meaning and membership and that it makes a meaningful contribution to the productivity of the organization. Furthermore, Salehzadeh et al. (2015) conducted a study in Iran on 207 hotel employees to see whether spiritual leadership has an effect on organizational performance. The results confirmed that spiritual leadership has a positive effect on organizational performance, and that the calling and membership dimensions act as mediators in this relationship.

4. Conclusion

Our study aims to make a meaningful contribution to the modern leadership and perceived organizational support literature, specifically, by explaining the relationship between spiritual leadership, perceived organizational support, and firm performance. In the extant literature there is a scarcity of studies regarding the relationship between spiritual leadership and employee performance, and unfortunately there are no studies exploring the mediating effect of perceived organizational support in this relationship or distinct studies exploring the effect of spiritual leadership on perceived organizational support. This study is the first attempt to try to understand all these three factors with a holistic approach embracing all these dimensions and endeavoring to explain the relationship between spiritual leadership, perceived organizational support, and firm performance. Furthermore, this study represents an important milestone in explaining employee behavior and leadership attitudes by combining a spiritual leadership point of view and an organizational support theory point of view in the same pot.

5. Recommendations

The survey was applied to a meaningful number of samples, but, nevertheless, the limitations of the study should be taken into consideration when looking at the results. First of all, our sample was limited, with a limited number of sectors sampled, such as the finance, banking and service sectors. Secondly, the study was conducted in a limited geographical area, in Marmara and the Black Sea regions of Turkey. A more holistic approach would necessitate covering all Turkish firms, from all regions. Thirdly, we explored our research question among white-collar workers; different results might be obtained if blue-collar workers are surveyed. We propose that, although our study is a milestone in the spiritual leadership and perceived organizational support literature, it will be meaningful to make further research in different sectors, with different groups of employees from different parts of Turkey.

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