

Organizational Spirituality and Its Impact on Consumption Model of Employees in Governmental Organizations in Iran (Case Study)

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Abstract

Organizational Spirituality is one of the new windows opened in the area of organizational behavior which attracts and absorbs more adherents every day. On the other hand, spirituality capability of Iranian society makes Iranian managers to use this low-cost tool in solving organizational problems, increasing efficiency, improving human resources utilization and productivity by employees. It is believed that encouraging spirituality in workplace has so many privileges; Privileges by applying which the organization moves towards increasing productivity and performance and improvement of its financial index. Historically, major attention to spirituality is originated from religions. Although for many people spirituality at work is not related to any religion, but religion is the best way to reinforce spiritual dimensions of people to the extent in which spirituality will not reach its maturity without religiosity. In a country like Iran in which 95% of people have a single religion and majority of people are committed to religious mottoes. No other tool or instrument can be more effective than religion in spreading spirituality. One of the effective ways in solving financial problems in current organizations is to modify and improve consumption of the organization financial resources by employees because considering the strong connection between spirituality and avoiding dissipation, being committed to religion and spirituality might be helpful and life-saving. Applying this approach, all organizations' managers and employees, especially governmental institutes which are provided by public resources, will consider consumption model improvement as a moral act and religious duty rather than an administrative duty.

Keywords: Spirituality, Islamic spirituality, Spirituality in workplace, Spirituality in organization, Consumption model improvement, Dissipation

1. Introduction

A glance at Iran economics in both micro and macro levels shows that despite having natural and human resources, Iran's national economics does not show a defensible operation. Examining the aspects of this matter from different perspectives will provide various results. However, it is agreed that resultant of all aforementioned problems will lead to dissipation and waste of national resources and inefficient use of limited resources and facilities in production and consumption; hence necessity to consumption model development arises. (Chamber of Industries and Mines, 2009). It's been a while Iranian society has faced problems as a result of misuse of facilities and resources as statistics show consumption rate has not been systematic nor in individual level neither national level. Although experts and officials have presented many reasons for the causes of dissipation but among all the reasons, they have most emphasized on authorities' behavior and lack of a comprehensive consumption model. According to authorities, consumption of resources and facilities is beyond the usual limit in our country and we have not been able to achieve an appropriate consumption model yet. Consumption model is one the most important and systematic ways to avoid dissipation and to spread saving and appropriate and reasonable usage of facilities and resources. Country officials and authorities must act in a way to turn saving into a value in the society. An economist has known the government as one of the major and essential consumers

in national economic and has declared that the government is the consumer of a large part of facilities, saving and correct use in which can have positive effects in country's economic structure. Therefore, the first step in improving consumption model must be taken in government and governmental organizations. In addition to creating an appropriate consumption Model and having influence on national economics, government can also play its role as an ideal model for other people in the society. (Matlabi Khah 1998). Obviously a great amount of resources and budget of country's capital and investment, is consuming in organizations and agencies by governmental employees every year. A major share of financial resources is also available for governmental institutions in order to use for administrative and executive affairs. Thus, right usage of all these public assets is of great importance and it must be controlled and performed based on an appropriate model. In an Islamic society, religious teachings and educations have undeniable influence on different aspects of people's life. Among these teachings, Economic issues regarding consumption are major parts of economic discussions and that is the reason for its importance in the field of economics. Meanwhile the certain attitude of Islam regarding the relationship between the two worlds and consumption is clearly seen in Quran verses and hadith. From the perspective of Islam, belief in resurrection (Hereafter) and its originality builds a consumption framework for the Muslim person which will be considered as his/her consumption model. (Baharvandi, 2007). Recently the area of management and organization both theoretically and practically is very much influenced by a powerful force known as "spirituality" which is capable enough to turn into the most helpful partner in social and vocational fields if properly directed and managed (Neal 1997). Researches show that the necessity of presenting a new paradigm of working in organizations based on an approach which combines personal life and vocational life is increasing. (Griffin, 1998; Rifkin, 1995)

Researchers believe that spirituality in organization has many benefits; benefits by applying which the organization will achieve increase in its benefits and operations and improvement in its financial index (Moghimi 2007).

Any type of economic activity including production, distribution and consumption must be done based on moderation. Holy Quran has also paid special attention to the issues of moderation and contentment and it is clearly stated that dissipation must be strictly avoided in any kind of possession and consumption of resources. From Islamic perspective, ideal consumption is the sufficient consumption which is consumption for living and supplying needs to be formed in a logical and reasonable manner based on available facilities, to respect the rights of others and not to damage the environment of human being and other creatures. Therefore, this article is going to introduce organizational spirituality both individual spirituality and spirituality at work as effective factors in balancing and improving consumption of organizational resources by employees.

Recently done researches demonstrate that spirituality in workplace is the reflection of employees' experiences regarding meaningful performance, communication and solidarity and sublimity of employees in workplace. Some researches in this field emphasizes on defining and practicing organizational spirituality while some other have focused on identifying research parts and providing guidelines for researches on organizational spirituality. Some other researches are also done on investigating organizational spirituality references and indicators and outcomes resulted by applying spirituality such as vocational positive attitudes, organizational productivity and better performance. (Shankar Pawar, 2009)

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Consumption Model

Consumption has an important role in determining the type, amount and form of productivity and distribution in every society and is by itself under influence of amount resources. In a society where people are encouraged to consume more, a huge amount of that society's resources will be devoted for consumption and this definitely increases vulnerability of that society. There's no absolute abundance in any societies and producers are always faced with constraints and comparative scarcity. Dominated consumption model in a society can help to optimized allocation of resources and usage of resources. (Khalilian 1-2)

Islamic economics was formed into an academic major in 1975 and after three decades growth and development, it is moving towards its perfection. Perhaps it's the time for Islamic economic to have contribution in different areas and have an active role in representing and defining issues which is faced with in this world of rapid changes. In fact this attitude is made to pay attention to teaching Islamic economics instead of educating economics in the school of Islam. What Islamic economics is dealt with as the theory of consumption is generally a sequence of human needs or the same thing which adjust consumer behavior in their satisfactory process within available resources. Researchers believe that consumption range is an area in which allocation of

resources must be encouraged due to people's purchasing ability not their need (Zobeir Hassan, 2005). Consumerism can be defined as follow:

"A social system which adjusts the relationship between routine life culture (Style) with social resources. It can also be said the relationship between meaningful and valuable life styles and symbolic and material resources." Consumerism is an inseparable part of modernity; meaning that the world is no longer under dominance of traditions but in shadow of ongoing changes it is ruled by social actors who believe are acting freely and wisely (Slater 2000, 8-9). Consumerism defines an economic in which values are derived from material satisfaction of needs and requests and the priority is with the symbolic value of goods (Baudrillard, 1996). In consumer culture, there is a tendency to jealousy, imitation, competition and comparing and it's usually along with an abundant passion for diversification and individualism. These factors facilitate rapid change and turnover in productions. Therefore, these dynamics prove the necessity of existence of an objective social engineering on market, media and people (Packard, 1957; even, 1976; Williams, 1982) and this social engineering must be varied from the roots and fundamentals of life style to all aspects of social life (Simmel, 1997; Featherstone, 1991). Choosing an appropriate, reasonable consumption model will lead to many individual and social effects; in individual level, the main requirement of material prosperity which is peace of mind and mental relaxation will not be achieved without avoiding unnecessary expenses and luxury and making balance between income and expenditure, and in macro level economic independence, dignity and pride will not be achieved unless facilities of a society is not proportional and appropriate with the needs and demands of its individuals. Consumption model in every society has a determining role in allocation of production resources, type of productive goods and type of distribution; because optimal allocation of resources for production and services in order to obtain the society vital and basic needs and to eliminate poverty and deprivation, requires identifying the right and appropriate consumption model and to the correct application of it and this matter is based on wise and reasonable guidance of beliefs, traditions, customs, society's values and people's culture, in general. (Khalilian 37-26)

2.2 Dissipation

One of the major damage to both individuals and society is dissipation and overuse which will cause negative and dangerous consequences in economic and ethics. Dissipation means to overrun the balance. Prodigality means to divide and separate something. Metaphorical meaning of the word is to perish and wasting money and its slang meaning is to splurge. If a person overruns or overuses the given resources and facilities, and exceed to use more than the required amount, will be considered as prodigal and there will be consequences for that person as a result of this attitude. This matter does not only relate to individual life of people but in macro level too, a society must adjust its needs and its consumption with respect to accurate planned programs and according to its income and domestic production rates in order to be able to reinforce its economic and political independence. Holy Quran has explicitly prohibited mankind from dissipation and has introduced prodigals, people of hell (fire) and brothers to devil. The term dissipation, literary means exceeding limit and whatever that exceeds its limits in terms of quality and quantity is known as dissipation, even when something is used in a way other than obedience of God, is known lavish and dissipation. Therefore, using goods and facilities more than needed, using them without having logical and rational benefits and not making an optimal usage of them are all examples of dissipation. Prodigal is a kind of dissipation and squander which is accompanied by loss of money and wealth. In other words, prodigal is squander in spending a wealth which is not worthy while dissipation is using resources which is worthy but more than required (Khalilian; P33). Islam does not admire people who consume less than required and those do not use facilities and resources which God has given them, but calls people to use God's blessings. On the other hand, one's attitude towards world and his/her ideology and insight, affect his/her level of expectation and quality of consumption. A religious Muslim, basically, avoids all sorts of dissipation and squander and thinks about God's contentment in all his/her actions. Thematic restrictions ordered by Islam in eating, drinking, clothing and housing and other consumption issues, has been effective in individuals consumption manner and balances people's personal consumption. (Mahdavi, 1998; 8)

2.3 Organizational Spirituality

Territory of management and organization is both theoretically and practically under the influence of a powerful force named spirituality which is capable enough to be a cooperative partner in professional fields and in improving humanity to its perfection if it is properly managed and directed (Neal, 1997). This powerful force has influenced the principles of management and business and theories of business in a way that is known as an essential improvement and effective change in the field of management and business (Wanger & Conley 1999). Judith Neal who is one of the pioneers spirituality in organization, believe that recent research challenges that are emerged as results of individual, organizational and social changes, will have an increasing growth in the realm of management and organization and it is believed that the direction of this change and development is set up by

spiritual perspectives on management and organization processes and theories (Neal & Bannet, 2000). Spirituality in organization, enable the employees to have a more integrated and united perspective towards their organization and their community. Spirituality has several dimensions. Based on an outstanding view, spirituality is “What encourages people to attempt to change the existence power in life and this is exactly individuals’ motivation and attraction towards excellence and perfection. A common view in this area is that work spirituality represents our wish and ideal to search for and find purpose and meaning in our lives (Dale, E.S., 1991; Neck & Milliman, 1994). Spirituality in workplace is the insight and knowledge that employees have an internal life which is strengthened from meaningful work and strengthens it and this meaningful work is done within a community (Ashmus & Duchon, 2000). Mitroff (1998) has defined this concept in his articles as: “Tendency to find the ultimate and final goal in life and effort for a life based on that goal (Cavangah, 1999).

2.4 Levels of Spirituality in Organization

Before describing the levels of spirituality in organization, it is required to distinguish between spirituality in work and spirituality in workplace. These two terms are usually used for each other, but they have some differences. Spirituality in work implies individual aspects while spirituality in workplace implies its organizational aspects. Spirituality in work is mostly seen at individual level while spirituality in workplace is seen at organizational level. In some publications, the term “Spirit in work” is used to refer to spirituality in work which is the individual level and the term “Spirit in Workplace” is used to refer to spirituality in workplace in organizational level (Kinjersky & SkryPnek, 2004). In analysis of spirituality in organization, the levels provided by Milliman, et al (2003) links between three levels of organizational behavior which are individual level, group level and organizational level, as seen below. Although spirituality at organization has many profound philosophical and individual meanings, but in almost all the definitions provided by scientific and academic institutes, spirituality includes concepts of integrity, perfection and solidarity in workplace and profound values in work. Therefore, individual level of spirituality in organization is effort to find meaning and goal in working life, the group level is the strong relationship between the employees and the people who have any kind of cooperation and the organizational level is coordination between organization’s beliefs, faiths and values (Milliman & et al, 2003, cited from Jafari & Rastgar, 2007).

2.5 Spirituality in Work

Life has no sense without work (job), and a work without spirit depraves and kills one’s life (Kumar & Neak 2002). The major dimension of spirituality is work meaningfulness, what numerous number of organizations’ employees attempt to achieve. In fact, a philosophical perspective declares that work is one of the most profound ways to feel the presence of perfection in universe; feeling and realizing spirituality (Neck & Milliman, 1994). People are interested to experience spirituality not only in their personal affairs but also in work and other parts of their lives (Neal J & Biberman, 2003). It seems that employees seek for something beyond material allowances in their workplace. They seek for meaningful and promising work and they want to uplift their lives. The organizations will not have fresh and mature employees unless they set for a meaningful and targeted work. Employees will feel spirituality in work when their work is satisfactory with an eminent goal. Experiencing spirituality in work will be linked with increasing of creativity, honesty, trust and commitment at work and employees’ feeling of perfection and evolution (Kinjersky & Shrypnek, 2001). Numerous researches have investigated the impacts of spirituality in business, but none of them has applied same conceptual models in their analysis. Each has viewed spirituality from a different perspective and they have rarely measured or evaluated spirituality quantitatively (Moghimi & et al, 2007). Spirituality in work does not necessarily mean commitment to one specific religion but it is based on people’s philosophy and values. Spirituality is related to employees who consider themselves in spiritual conditions, as spiritual affection and spirit need to be strengthened and to those employees who feel meaningfulness and targeted in themselves and the solidarity with others in their workplace (Mitroff and Denton, 1999; Ashmos and Duchon 2000; Harrington et al, 2001, Milliman et al, 2003). Religion will separate its followers from others via its specific beliefs and emphasis on its formal structure; while spirituality is a universal, liberal and intellectual phenomenon (Mitroff, 2003). Mitroff and Denton state that organizational sciences cannot avoid considering organizational research, perception and attitude as a spiritual existence. By improving the spiritual environment in organization, managers are able to increase organizational commitments and therefore, to increase individual and organizational outcome. One reason is that people react positively towards an organization which meet their spiritual needs and provide them a sense of mental security and give the employees with the feeling of being considered valuable and deserved respectful behavior (Arme Nio, 2007)

Recent studies show that spirituality of workplace is a reflection of employees experiences based on doing meaningful job, employees’ relationship and solidarity and perfection in the workplace. Some of the researches

in this field have emphasized on defining and practicing organizational spirituality and some others have focused on identifying the investigating sections and providing guidelines for research on spirituality. There have also been investigations on organizational spirituality referrers and also the results of spirituality such as positive work attitudes, organizational efficiency and better operation (Shankar Pawar, 2009).

2.6 Individual Spirituality

There are witnesses to show that a great change is due to happen in majority of organizations which is named Spirituality Movement. Those organizations being supervised systematically for a long period are focused to move towards creating an environment for spirituality. Aspects which are less dealt with rules and regulations and are more related to meaningfulness, targeted and solidarity (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000) spirituality is an essential part of all human beings, but despite this fact, it is not allowed to be presented by organizations (Laabs, 1995, P.61). Despite the religious imagination of spirituality, it is not always related to a specific religious or school of thought but it is about employees who consider themselves spiritual people and seek their spiritual motivations in their work. In this case, spirituality means having a feeling of meaningfulness and targeted apart from its cliché meaning (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). For many people, religious is intertwined with spirituality. Moreover, religious can strengthen and regularize spirituality, therefore it can make spirituality firm, stable and appropriate. Spirituality brings many benefits to the organization, such as cooperation, motivation and efficiency (Cavangah and Bandsuch, 2002). Although there is a close, profound relationship between religion and spirituality, they also have differences. Historically, spirituality might be rooted in religion but its common applications might not be accompanied by a specific religious tradition. The root of this difference goes back to late nineteenth century and early twenty century. In distinguishing between spirituality and religion, some claim superiority (Excellency) of spirituality, and some other claim superiority of religion. Andrehil, in "Spiritual Life" book, consider spirituality the heart of any religion, and knows spiritual life a perfect, noble life which, humanity is created for (Jafari and Rastgar, 2007).

Spiritual people are intended to think and explore in spiritual life and are interested to move in spiritual path of their life. However, spirituality does not always lead to isolation of people, but to people's effort to achieve better opportunities in work and to perfume their physical and mental duties. Spirituality originates from the fact that people have both inner and outer life; strengthening the inner part of life leads to strength of the outer side (Fax, 1994). Identifying spirituality in organization means, investigating organization as a set of people who have both wisdom and affection and to believe that improving mentality and spirits is as important as improvement of wisdom. Spreading spirit and spirituality in work will conclude in beneficial results (Ashmos & Duchon 2000). Many employees take benefit of strengthening spirituality in work, to increase faith and improvement of morality and spirit.

Conger (conger, 1994) describes the inner dimension of life more accurately as:

"Spirituality grants us something which exist inside us. Spirituality is accompanied by a sense and a power which originate from deep inside and with respect to the most profound awareness of universe which is venerable to everyone and goes with heart insight." For many people, spiritual life is an attempt to discover the unknown and divine power and how to use this divine power for more satisfaction in life. In their Studies, Giacalone and Jurkievicz have elaborated 10 factor and key values relating to individual spirituality. These factors and values include: type of friendship or showing kindness to others and caring about others; procreator, with respect to long time influence of one's actions; moral behavior or behaving respectfully with others, honesty and truthfulness, commitment to a ethical system; justice or impartial behavior with others, interchange or identifying cooperation value of an individual within a whole system; adaptability and having intellectual tendency, respect others; ability to meet the deadlines, trustfulness in a way that others have a steady trust on that person (Giacalone & Jurkievicz, 2003).

Employed people usually consider spirituality as a tool to increase perfection, motivation and occupation satisfaction. Religion also helps the continuity of spirituality although it can separate people from each other. Ability of spirituality to encourage good and moral habits is an appropriate criterion to examine the effect of spirituality in business. Many of successful managers represent spirituality in a way it improves their pleasant ethical habits (Cavangah and Bandsuch, 2002). Recently, combination of spiritual life and employees' organizational life has been the subject to organizational studies and management sciences. Spirituality is an effort to educate a person how to deal with him/herself, with other people and other creature other than human beings, how to relate with God or to explore in a path which is required to become a perfect human and perfection. Therefore, in this dimension, human spiritual dimension relating is defined beyond individual or God, which has a very effective role in increasing meaningfulness, motivation and targeted of the employees (Rastgar

and Vareth, 2008). Motahari in his book named Prophecy states that one should not deny the spiritual power and extraordinary mental talent of human beings, one should not deny the existence of a world beyond this world and should not deny the impact and influence of faith, praying and spirituality (cited from Moghimi et al, 2007;P94)

In general, it must be declared that spirituality has an undeniable impact on people's behavior and performance both in their personal life and their organizational life and their work. Spirituality strengthens what people do and gets strengthened by them in turn. By improving ethical and moral behaviors in individuals, spirituality, creates one's commitment towards organization by which the person will assimilate his/her objectives and values with organization objectives and values. As a result of these impacts, one will feel responsible for his/her actions in organization and will avoid unethical, immoral behaviors. It is also concluded that people will feel committed and responsible for their actions regarding consumption of resources and facilities in the organization and will benefit from them correctly in a way to avoid dissipation and to interdict other from dissipation.

3. Methodology

Since the purpose of the current study is to determine the experimental relationship between organizational spirituality and employees' mode of using resources and facilities and to increase practical knowledge to this field, this study is a field research regarding applied purpose and data collection, and in relation with research variables, is a local research. The present study is a survey and the advantage is the ability to generalize results (Danayifar and others, 2007)

3.1 Research Hypothesis

- 1- Spirituality in workplace has a meaningful and direct relationship with proper consumption of resources and facilities.
- 2- Individual spirituality has a meaningful relationship with employees' proper consumption of organizational resources and facilities.
- 3- Organizational spirituality has a meaningful relationship with employees' proper consumption of organizational resources and facilities.

3.2 Sample Community

Sample community of this study includes some governmental organization in Maragheh town, Iran. Samples include 30 employees of the above mentioned organizations. 80 answer sheets were distributed in selected organizations 58 of which were included in the analysis.

Date Collection

Collection of data was done through answer sheets. 80 answer sheets were distributed and collected in the above said organizations within 10 days. In the first part of the answer sheet, a description was given regarding our purpose to evaluate their (employees) opinions and some particulars of the participants were asked such as, job career background, gender and level of education. 58 of the total distributed answer sheets were collected, 30 of which had spirituality variable which could meet the goal and target of this study, Therefore the analysis was done based on these 30 answer sheets.

3.3 Scale of Measurement

There were 5 questions asked to measure individual spirituality, 5 questions to measure organizational spirituality and 10 questions to evaluate employees' way of consumption. The 5 other questions were combinations of dependant and independent variables in the answer sheet. Questions regarding individual and organizational spirituality were cited from works of Ashmos and Duchon (2000) and questions relating consumption manner were cited from content of literature review. The five given options for each question were as Fully Agree, Agree, No Comment, Disagree and Fully Disagree. Designing the questions of answer sheets was done very accurately in order to be simple and clear. To determine perpetuity of answer sheet, 10 answer sheets were distribute and collected. Answer sheet was included of 25 questions with Cronbach alpha coefficients 87% which represents the reliability of research tool. To test the validity of questions, content validity was used. The questions were given to lecturers and critics and some changes and modifying was done based on their given feedback to make sure that the answer sheet follows the same objectives of research.

4. Analysis and Conclusion

To test the hypothesis of the research, Spearman Correlation Method has been used because of the quantitative variables and rating data. To analyze data, spss software version 15 was used and error level for hypothesis testing was considered %95. The results show that in meaningfulness level of 95%, both individual spirituality and organizational spirituality variables have meaningful relationship with employees' proper consumption and can influence it. According to the obtained diagram from Spearman correlation test, since there's a meaningful

relationship between individual spirituality and improvement of employees' consumption in error level of %5, therefore hypothesis H_{1a} is confirmed. Because of the meaningful relationship between organizational spirituality and employees' consumption in error level %5, minor hypothesis H_{1b} is also confirmed. Therefore, major hypothesis H_1 is accepted and hypothesis H_0 which is opposite of the major hypothesis is rejected. The conclusion is that spirituality has direct and meaningful impact on employees' model of public and organizational facilities and resources consumption.

5. Conclusion

Spirituality influences individual and organizational performance and outcome in different ways positively. First, spirituality can guide people to the best levels of experiencing recognition; therefore it increases their power of insight and intuition. This insight and intuition as a leadership and management skill can in its turn help individual and organizational productivity. Second, spiritual based insight can help employees in developing a targeted organizational perspective which will lead to more creativity; knowing that the organization provides them real and true recognition from the goal and target, they turn into creative employees.

Organizations which provide spiritual vocational goals provide their employees an opportunity to have high understanding of working and to experience the highest level of individual development (Neck and Milliman, 1990). One who moves in the path of spirituality and achieves grand moral virtues, will for sure be an honest, faithful, reliable and trustworthy person. These people will also make proper and moral decisions in their workplace. This kind of spirituality creates and raises valuable morality and nature in a person. By having capabilities, education and experience, these people usually will be conspired typical employees. Spirituality creates moral, superior employees who will be beneficial to their workplace and will be beneficial citizens to their society (Cavangah & Bansuch, 2002). Iran has a special position among other countries in terms of having natural resources. Unfortunately instead of creating advantages for the country, this benefit has caused to the ignorance in proper application and usage of these natural resources. Therefore it seems necessary to make an essential change in consumption model of individuals and organizations in order to achieve the predicted 8% annual economic growth in 20 years. A Muslim consumer attempts to choose a proper, reasonable path in life which guarantees prosperity and happiness in the two worlds by following holy Quran and the lives of prophets and Imams and by commitments to divine virtue and religious orders, therefore in order to choose a proper consumption model, she/he will give the priority to divine rules and limits.

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Table 1. Solidarity relationships between individual variable, organizational variables and employees' consumption model

Correlation

			Individual	Organizational	Consumption
Spearman's rho	Individual	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.387(*)	.404(*)
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.035	.027
		N	30	30	30
	Organizational	Correlation Coefficient	.387(*)	1.000	.403(*)
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.035	.	.027
		N	30	30	30
	Consumption	Correlation Coefficient	.404(*)	.403(*)	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.027	.027	.
		N	30	30	30

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

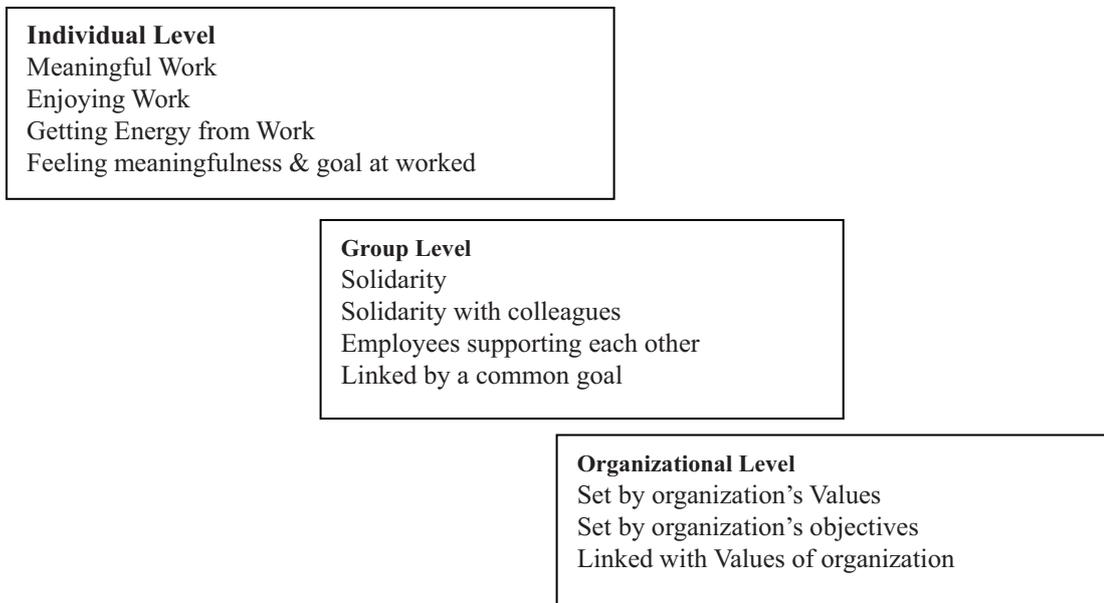


Figure 1. Conceptualizing spirituality at workplace in three levels of individual, group and organization, Milliman & others (2003)