

## Designing a Spirituality-based Work Ethic Model in the Workplace in the Tehran Crisis Management Organization

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### Original Article

#### Abstract

**INTRODUCTION:** One of the factors that can create the necessary commitment among employees for the success of the organization is the prevailing atmosphere of the organization. In other words, a proper atmosphere and favorable moral climate help to improve performance, achieve goals, and maintain communication in the organization and play a vital role in the performance of the organization (in any field of work). Therefore, this study aimed to explain and design a spirituality-based work ethic model in the workplace in the Crisis Management Organization, Tehran, Iran.

**METHODS:** This applied research was conducted based on a mixed methodology. The statistical population of this study in the qualitative part consisted of 128 directors of Tehran Crisis Management Organization in 2020-2021, reaching saturation with 19 people. Moreover, the statistical population of this study in the quantitative part included the staff of Tehran Crisis Management Organization in 2020-2021, among which 250 samples were selected based on Cochran's formula. The samples were chosen using stratified random sampling method and the instruments employed in the qualitative and quantitative parts were an exploratory and semi-structured interview and a researcher-made questionnaire, respectively. The collected data were analyzed in MAXQDA-2020 software and AMOS-26 software in the qualitative and quantitative parts, respectively. The AMOS software was used to measure the structural equation modeling and analyze the model fit indices.

**FINDINGS:** According to the findings, the work ethic model was based on spirituality in the workplace. In this model, ethical commitment, professional commitment, and relationship commitment were considered causal conditions of spirituality-based work ethic in the workplace in the Crisis Management Organization. Moreover, organizational ethical climate, Islamic ethical culture, ethical leadership, and ethical and Islamic education were respectively considered a pivotal phenomenon, interactive strategies, intervening conditions, and contextual variables of spirituality-based work ethic in the workplace in the Crisis Management Organization.

**CONCLUSION:** The results of showed that all the reviewed indices were accepted to evaluate the fit of the modified structural model of the research. Given this, it can be said that the fit of this model was "approved". Furthermore, the total effect values of contextual variables, causal conditions, intervening conditions, strategies and interactions, and pivotal variables on spirituality-based work ethic in the workplace were obtained at 0.40, 0.51, 0.38, 0.65, and 0.61, respectively. The p-value of  $< 0.01$  was considered significant.

**Keywords:** Model; Spirituality; Work Ethic; Work Environment.

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#### Introduction

Operationally, a crisis can be analyzed as a system in which there are two different factors, namely the environment and structure of the system and the factors

causing the crisis. One of the primary tasks of crisis management research is to determine which factors and elements of the system are more vulnerable to crisis. The three important factors

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that play major roles in defining and diagnosing a crisis are a threat, time, and surprise. Different crises are graded according to the severity degree of each of the above three factors into three categories, including severe, moderate, or weak; accordingly, the severity of the threat, shortness of time, and surprise are the characteristics of acute crises (1).

Given that one of the main characteristics of crises is that they usually occur unexpectedly, they make decision-makers feel excited, anxious, and confused. However, under normal circumstances, there are various amenities available for those in charge of affairs to be systematically prepared to deal with possible crises. The Crisis Management Organization is one of the key organizations in the event of a crisis and needs employees and managers who act according to work ethic in order to be able to perform effectively in the face of the crisis and reduce its negative effects.

Ethics and observance of moral issues are essential for human and Islamic life (2). Due to the increasing complexity of life and the growing rate of immoral, illegal, and irresponsible practices in work and social environments, as well as the importance of ethics in social relations, numerous experts have investigated work ethic and ethics management, and the governments have tried to implement programs to improve the work ethic of employees. (3) Work ethic is explicitly defined as an individual difference, which is a set of beliefs and behaviors that reflect the value of the job in the view of the performer. Almost every day, physicians, managers, employees, and all members of an organization are faced with issues in their work that require them to make ethical decisions (4).

Organizations increasingly face ethical issues that create great concern for successful organizational performance and social loss prevention for the growth and survival of the organization; therefore, it is important to consider the ethics of work in organizations (5). The work ethic shows employees' attitudes towards work and the organization they work in (6). Today, managers are highly concerned about the declining importance of work ethic among their employees since an individual's work ethic has the potential to affect organizational functions, including productivity, service compensation, strategic

employment, training, and development, absenteeism, recruitment, and employment (7). To develop work ethic among employees and managers of an organization, an effective factor can be paying attention to spirituality (8).

Spirituality in the workplace involves striving to find the ultimate goal in one's working life to establish a strong connection between the individual and his/her co-workers and other people that are somehow involved in working with him/her, as well as adaptation and unitization between the basic beliefs of an individual and the values of his organization (9). Now, it is important to note that since the creation of the first scales of work ethic, there have been numerous changes in technology, organizational hierarchy and structures, and diversity and economic stability; consequently, the current scales do not fully and comprehensively cover all important indicators.

Given today's hectic lifestyle and changing world, there are likely some aspects of work ethic that although from managers' point of view are effective in achieving organizational goals, they have not been considered in the existing scales (10). Today, spirituality in the organization has become an important issue, and the spiritual gap, especially the lack of attention to the dignity of employees as human beings, has made work environments cold, soulless, and meaningless (11). Managers and leaders of organizations can make the human resource feel that their work is meaningful, purposeful, and challenging by creating spirituality in the workplace and using insight, wisdom, and immaterial tools with innocent handling of human resources. These will lead to growth and development for the organization (12).

Moreover, the creation of spirituality in the workplace makes the human resources generate the feeling that they are members of the organization and work unit, and that employees should support each other in the organization and involve themselves with the goals and mission of the organization. As a result, employees will be creative and innovative in such conditions and work environments and will react to actions and help the organization achieve its goals (13).

In the heavenly religions, especially in the teachings of Islam, it has been emphasized and encouraged to seek to observe human ethics and etiquette in dealing with others, which conveys

the importance of this issue. Officials, managers, and employees should always be humble toward God Almighty, and be a servant to His servants, and observe moral issues according to religious and Islamic standards (14). Therefore, resorting to spirituality is important for the development of work ethic since the moral crisis is the most pervasive crisis that will cover all crises and social harms and will overshadow all aspects of human life (15). Cultural crisis, identity crisis, legitimacy crisis, and other social crises are the product of the weakness or extinction of moral virtues in society, and if a society is adorned with morality and moral standards are the guide and roadmap for its members, they will neither deviate from the right path nor suffer from various social harms (16).

Researchers in various fields pay serious attention to behavior according to work ethic due to the increasing prevalence of this type of behavior (17&18) and the significant cost imposed by such behaviors to organizations (19). Regarding this, the identification of the effective factors in the occurrence of deviant work behavior in employees of organizations, especially in recent years, is highly critical (20). Therefore, the present study investigated work ethic with a focus on the goal of understanding work ethic in the present era and the ethical beliefs supporting high-performance organizations. This study sought to cover the gap between researchers and practitioners by looking at the historical development of work ethic theory and find solutions for societies that try to understand work ethic and discover ways to solve the problem of diminishing work ethic. Consequently, in this study, an attempt was made to create a new work ethic scale based on the managers' point of view and provide a comprehensive scale through revealing unknown aspects in previous scales. Considering the importance of this issue for the managers of the Crisis Management Organization and the research gap in this research, this study was conducted to design a model for the development of spirituality-based work ethic in the workplace in the Crisis Management Organization. As a result, this study is considered important given the above reasons.

### **Research questions**

1) How is the spirituality-based work ethic model in the workplace in the Crisis Management Organization?

2) What is the proportion of the spirituality-based work ethic model in the workplace in the Crisis Management Organization?

### **Methods**

This study aimed to explain and design a spirituality-based work ethic model in the workplace in the Crisis Management Organization, Tehran, Iran. This applied research was conducted based on a mixed methodology. According to the procedure of mixed methodology (quantitative-qualitative), there are two categories of population and statistical sample in the study. Regarding, the statistical population of this study in the qualitative section included all managers of the Crisis Management Organization, 2020-2021, which accounted for 128 individuals. According to the sampling method adopted for qualitative studies, the theoretical saturation method was used in this study to determine the sample size according to theoretical sampling. In other words, sampling of this population continued until reaching saturation in collecting information through the interview form, which finally rendered 19 individuals as a sample in the quality section. On the other hand, the statistical population of this study in the quantitative part consisted of all employees of Crisis Management Organization in Tehran 2020-2021, among whom 250 people were selected as a sample based on Cochran's formula. The samples were chosen using the random sampling method.

The tool employed in the qualitative part to collect the necessary data was exploratory and semi-structured interviews. The reason for selecting this instrument is that in qualitative research, the questions are included in an interview guide, focusing on the issues or areas to be covered and the paths to be followed. The researcher, taking into account this principle, prepares the interview form and distributes it among the samples of the qualitative part to be completed.

In order to determine the validity of the interview questions, the opinions of 10 experts in spirituality-based work ethic were taken into consideration, and then in accordance with the suggestions and views provided by the mentioned individuals, vague points were clarified. Furthermore, corrective actions were taken at any stage of the interviews for the questions requiring

modifications. The validity and reliability of the findings obtained from the interview analysis were accomplished using reviews of the participants, triangulation, and documentation through quotation.

In the quantitative part of this study, a researcher-made questionnaire was used to gather the necessary data. This questionnaire was designed based on the criteria (i.e., interview results) extracted from the qualitative stage of the research and organized into two parts. The first part included the demographic characteristics of the participants, while the second part consisted of questionnaire items (n=34). The responses were rated on a 5-point Likert scale from very high to very low. The components of this questionnaire are shown in Table 1.

The content validity method was used to assess the validity of this questionnaire. To this

end, the questionnaire was distributed among five professors in the Department of Management, Payame Noor University, Tehran, and their opinions were applied in the questionnaire. Afterward, to evaluate the reliability of the questionnaire, the copies of the questionnaire were handed out to 30 sample employees in the quantitative part and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated. The obtained values of Cronbach's alpha test are presented in Table 2 and confirm the reliability of the examined questionnaire.

The process of data analysis in the qualitative part was performed using MAXQDA-2020 software. Accordingly, the researcher performed open, axial, and finally selective coding. In the quantitative part, AMOS-26 statistical software was used to measure the structural equation model and analyze the model fit indices.

**Table 1.** Questionnaire subscales

Row	Subscales	Items
1.	Ethical commitment	1-6
2.	Professional commitment	7-12
3.	Relationship commitment	13-15
4.	Islamic ethics (moral)	16-22
5.	Organizational ethical climate	23-28
6.	Ethical leadership	29, 30
7.	Ethical and Islamic education	31-34

**Table 2.** Reliability of questionnaire subscales

Row	Subscales	Cronbach's alpha
1.	Ethical commitment	0.78
2.	Professional commitment	0.82
3.	Relationship commitment	0.83
4.	Islamic ethics (moral)	0.75
5.	Organizational ethical climate	0.79
6.	Ethical leadership	0.83
7.	Ethical and Islamic education	0.72
8.	Total	0.79

### Findings

To present the model, the interviews were evaluated based on a qualitative method, the results of which are summarized in Table 3.

As can be observed, seven main categories were obtained from the open coding categorization. In the next step, axial coding was performed. Information processing theorists provided the obtained categories in the form of conditions studied in grounded theory methods, including six main categories of causal conditions, pivotal phenomena, interactive

strategies, contextual variables, intervening conditions, and consequences (Table 4).

In this research, six theoretical theorems based on a paradigm model were presented for the selective coding process.

#### *First question*

How is the spirituality-based work ethic model in the workplace in the Crisis Management Organization?

To analyze and answer this question, the mentioned dimensions were examined using confirmatory factor analysis using structural equation modeling.

**Table 3.** Secondary open coding of conducted interviews

Row	Important Notes	Categories
1	Employees' ethical commitment Religious and Islamic rationality Ethical behavior and performance among employees Employees with an ethical commitment Ethical behavioral characteristics of employees Individual spirituality Integrity and perfection in the personality of the organization's employees Employees' respect for themselves and others Creation and expansion of individual spirituality levels Provision of organizational and professional health Effort and seriousness in adhering to ethical principles High and moral goals and aspirations	Ethical commitment
2	Creation of a professional ethic based on impact and success A sense of moral responsibility on the part of the organization Attention to employees' responsibility Attention to professional ethics Work conscience among employees Strive to create a sense of satisfaction and self-fulfillment Strengthening cooperation and expanding communication between staff	Professional commitment
3	Staff's support from each other Ethical organizational communication Protecting the organization's secrets Ethic-based culture in the workplace	Relationship commitment
4	Performance of religious and moral duties in the organization Efforts to strengthen the relationship between spirituality and ethics in the organization Internalization of ethical values in employees Ethical integrity in society and organization Enhancement of honorable behavior Application of work ethic Programs based on ethics and spirituality in the organization Provision of an ethical atmosphere in the organization Idealism of organizational programs Creation of an atmosphere of moral vitality and well-being Attention to the spiritual beliefs of the organization	Islamic ethics (moral)
5	Strengthening the relationship between spirituality in the workplace and employees' work ethic Emphasis on core values in the organization Attention to employees' welfare Inspiration of a sense of value to employees Ethical atmosphere in the organization Development of ethics at the organizational level	Organizational ethical climate
6	Trust in management Existence of ethical models in the managers of the organization Ethics training in group sessions Ethics training to employees	Ethical Leadership
7	Explaining ethics through education Increasing one's knowledge of religious and spiritual concepts Introducing and teaching spiritual concepts in the field of organizational goals Training in the field of occupational positions	Ethical and Islamic education

### **Confirmatory factor analysis using structural equation modeling**

The results in Table 5 confirmed that all model fit indices were at the desirable level.

Consequently, it can be concluded that the factors determined in the qualitative part of the research were accepted using confirmatory factor analysis. According to the results of the model fit indices,

**Table 4.** Axial coding and shaping main categories

Categories	
Ethical commitment	Causal conditions
Professional commitment	
Relationship commitment	
Organizational ethical climate	Pivotal phenomena
Islamic ethics (moral)	
Ethical Leadership	Interactive strategies
Ethical and Islamic education	Intervening conditions
Creating spirituality-based work ethic	Contextual variables
	Consequences

**Table 5.** Structural model fit indices of modified confirmatory factor analysis

Index	TLI	IFI	NFI	CFI	GFI	AGFI	RMR	CMIN/df	RMSEA
Acceptable value	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.90	-	<3	<0.08
Obtained value	0.95	0.91	0.90	0.96	0.90	0.86	0.094	2.715	0.064
Condition	Not rejected	Not rejected	Not rejected	Not rejected	Not rejected	Rejected	-	Not rejected	Not rejected

the factors mentioned in the model could be confirmed as affective dimensions of the spirituality-based work ethic model in the workplace.

Table 6 shows the comparison of the mean scores of factors affecting spirituality-based work ethic in the workplace with the average value (i.e., number 3). It was observed that the obtained t-values for all the dimensions mentioned in the

table were large enough to be are significant at the level of  $p < 0.01$ . Therefore, it is concluded that the mean values of the factors affecting spirituality-based work ethic in the workplace and the total score of spirituality-based work ethic in the workplace in the study sample were higher than the average (optimal level) at the error level of 0.01.

**Table 6.** Comparison of the mean factors affecting spirituality-based work ethic in the workplace with the average value (number 3)

Variable	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	Test value=3		
				T	df	Sig.
Ethical commitment	250	3/628	0.569	17.450	249	0/001
Professional commitment	250	3/915	0.854	16.928	249	0/001
Relationship commitment	250	3/858	0.813	16.676	249	0/001
Organizational ethical climate	250	3/775	0.875	14.007	249	0/001
Islamic ethics (moral)	250	3/889	0.638	22.041	249	0/001
Ethical Leadership	250	3/952	0.789	19.072	249	0/001
Ethical and Islamic education	250	3/489	0.489	13.255	249	0/001
Spirituality-based work ethic	250	3/830	0.830	31.748	249	0/001

**Second question:**

What is the proportion of the spirituality-based work ethic model in the workplace in the Crisis Management Organization?

The correlation coefficients between the factors affecting spirituality-based work ethic in the workplace had already been obtained using the Pearson correlation coefficient.

Table 7 summarizes the correlation coefficients between the factors affecting spirituality-based work ethics in the workplace. Accordingly, the correlation coefficients of

contextual variables, causal conditions, intervening conditions, interactive strategies, and pivotal phenomena with spirituality-based work ethic in the workplace were estimated at 0.494, 0.756, 0.402, 0.643, and 0.613, respectively, and were significant at the level of  $p < 0.01$ . Regarding this, there was a direct and significant relationship among the factors affecting spirituality-based work ethic in the workplace. Afterward, the appropriate model for validating the work ethic model based on spirituality in the workplace was examined using structural equation modeling

analysis.

According to Table 8, all studied indices were accepted to evaluate the fit of the modified structural equation modeling of the research. Regarding this, it can be stated that the fitting of this model was confirmed.

According to Table 9, the total effect values

of contextual variables, causal conditions, intervening conditions, and strategies and interactions on spirituality-based work ethic in the workplace were obtained at 0.40, 0.51, 0.38, and 0.65, respectively. The p-value of  $< 0.01$  was considered significant.

**Table 7.** Correlation coefficients between factors affecting spirituality-based work ethic in the workplace

Variables	Contextual variables	Causal conditions	Intervening conditions	Interactive strategies	Pivotal phenomena
Causal conditions	0.319**				
Intervening conditions	0.701**	0.229**			
Interactive strategies	0.754**	0.449**	0.659**		
Spirituality-based work ethic	0.494**	0.756**	0.402**	0.643**	
Pivotal phenomena	0.712**	0.651**	0.601**	0.761**	0.613**

P < 0.05\*\*      P < 0.01\*

**Table 8.** Structural model fit indices based on the research conceptual model

Index	TLI	IFI	NFI	CFI	GFI	AGFI	RMR	CMIN/df	RMSEA
Acceptable value	$\geq 0.90$	$\geq 0.90$	$\geq 0.90$	$\geq 0.90$	$\geq 0.90$	$\geq 0.90$	-	$< 3$	$< 0.08$
Obtained value	0.93	0.91	0.90	0.91	0.95	0.89	21.349	1.878	0.067
Condition	Not rejected	Not rejecter	Not rejecter	Not rejecter	Not rejecter	Rejected	-	Not rejected	Not rejected

**Table 9.** Direct, indirect, and total standard effects of factors affecting spirituality-based work ethic model in the workplace

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Direct impact	Indirect effect	Total standard effects	Sig.
Contextual variables	Strategies and interactions	0.12	-	0.62	$< 0.01$
Causal conditions	Strategies and interactions	0.99	-	0.79	$< 0.01$
Intervening conditions	Strategies and interactions	0.55	-	0.58	$< 0.01$
Contextual variables	Work ethics	-	0.40	0.40	$< 0.01$
Causal conditions	Work ethics	-	0.51	0.51	$< 0.01$
Intervening conditions	Work ethics	-	0.38	0.38	$< 0.01$
Phenomenon	Work ethics	1.00	-	1.00	$\leq 0.01$
Strategies and interactions	Work ethics	0.65	-	0.65	$< 0.01$

## Discussion and Conclusion

Question 1: How is the spirituality-based work ethic model in the workplace in the Crisis Management Organization?

As mentioned, confirmatory factor analysis using structural equation modeling was applied to analyze and answer this question. Regarding this, the comparison of the mean factors affecting spirituality-based work ethic in the workplace is shown with an average value (number 3). It is observed that the obtained t-values for all the dimensions mentioned in the table were large enough to be significant at the level of  $p < 0.01$ . Therefore, it is concluded that the mean values of the factors affecting spirituality-based work ethic in the workplace in the sample were higher than

the average (optimal value) at the error level of 0.01.

In explaining the results, it can be said that the relationship between religion and ethics as well as the commonalities and differences between fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) and ethics are among the topics that have a history in Islamic thought (8). Regarding the proportion of religion and ethics, it has been stated ethics take precedence over religion (15); in this respect, a society can be religious but not moral; however, the statement that religion cannot be moral is inconsistent with the truth of religion.

As the purpose and necessity of religion is the perfection of human beings and morality has a great effect on accomplishing this goal, religion must necessarily include morality, and a religious

community will certainly be a moral one. Consequently, the use of religious and spiritual principles is effective in creating behaviors based on work ethic (6). Accordingly, the results of the study conducted by Ashrafi et al. (2017) indicated that spirituality-based training could be used to create work ethic in the organization. Salahudin et al. (2016) showed that work ethic in the organization could be formed by strengthening spirituality-based education. Moreover, Dwain and Galyean (2015) and Jung et al. (2011) reported that the level of work ethic could be increased by emphasizing spirituality-based education.

Question 2: What is the proportion of the spirituality-based work ethic model in the workplace in the Crisis Management Organization?

Table 7 summarized the correlation coefficients between the factors affecting spirituality-based work ethic in the workplace. It can be observed that the correlation coefficients of contextual variables, causal conditions, intervening conditions, strategies and interactions, and pivotal phenomena with spirituality-based work ethic in the workplace were estimated at 0.494, 0.756, 0.402, 0.643 and 0.613, respectively, and were significant at the level of  $p < 0.01$ . Consequently, it can be concluded that there was a direct and significant relationship among the factors affecting spirituality-based work ethic in the workplace. Afterward, the appropriate model for validating the work ethic model based on spirituality in the workplace was examined using structural equation modeling analysis.

The structural model based on research concepts was evaluated by estimating standard coefficients and the degree of shared or multiple correlations between dependent and independent variables. Regarding, all reviewed indices were accepted to evaluate the fit of the modified structural equation modeling of the research. Furthermore, the total effect values of contextual variables, causal conditions, intervening conditions, and strategies and interactions on spirituality-based work ethic in the workplace were obtained at 0.40, 0.51, 0.38, and 0.65, respectively. The p-value of  $< 0.01$  was considered significant.

Numerous studies have introduced models of work ethic. To the best of our knowledge, no study has been dedicated to investigate the work

ethic with emphasis on spirituality. Nonetheless, Breakey (2016) designed a model of work ethic in his study and reported the effectiveness of such measures as teaching Islamic culture and developing rationality and spirituality. Moreover, Abdi et al. (2014) indicated the role of relationship commitment and ethical commitment in creating work ethic among the employees of an organization.

Based on the results, it is suggested to adopt the following measures to develop a spirituality-based work ethic in the workplace in the Crisis Management Organization:

- Development of religious and Islamic rationality in the Crisis Management Organization based on education and planning
- Encouragement of the employees on the basis of their activities conducted according to ethical behavior and performance in the Crisis Management Organization
- Respect of employees to themselves and others
- Creation and expansion of individual spirituality levels
- Provision of organizational and professional health

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### Conflict of Interests

Authors declared no conflict of interests regarding the publication of the present study.

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