

Improving of Employees Flourishing and Innovative Work Behavior through Leadership Style and Ethics in the Organization; Case study: General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars Province

Articles in Press

Dehghanizadeh
& Et'al

Abstract

Purpose: The present research was conducted with the purpose of improving of employees flourishing and innovative work behavior through leadership style and ethics in the organization that was done in the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars province. **Method:** The current research was practical in terms of its aim and descriptive-survey in terms of data collection. The statistical population of the present study was all the employees of the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars province (150 people); that sample size of 130 people was selected through available sampling. The data collection tool in this research was standard questionnaires and analysis method used in this research was the structural equation modeling technique. **Results:** The findings of the research showed that the empowering leadership and spirituality at workplace had a positive and significant effect on innovative work behavior both directly and through the mediating variable of employee flourishing; Also, the effect of employee flourishing on innovative work behavior confirmed. Finally, it was found that satisfaction at workplace had a moderating role in the relationship between spirituality at workplace and innovative work behavior. **Conclusion:** The results of the research showed that the factor of leadership style and the factor of spirituality at workplace were among the important factors that influence the innovative work behavior of employees. According to social exchange theory, fair treatment and support of an empowering leadership from followers encourages them to behave innovatively at workplace.

Keywords: Empowering Leadership, Spirituality at Workplace, Employees Flourishing, Innovative Work Behavior, Satisfaction at Workplace.

Introduction

Today, the business environment is uncertain and rapidly changing, and organizations should constantly adapt to the changing landscape through innovation. Since, innovation provides the conditions for creating and implementing new ideas in a dynamic environment and improves performance, while directly contributes to organizational survival; then organizational innovation has attracted the attention of many researchers today (Kang et al., 2022:1) and the increasing emphasis of organizations on organizational innovation has increased the interest of employees in innovative behavior (Baker et al., 2022: 864) and today, the innovative work behavior of employees is considered the foundation of organizations to achieve high performance, maintain survival and competitive advantage (Lecic et al., 2023) and is one of the supporting factors in improving quality (Dehghanizadeh & Ahmadi, 2024). Innovative behavior is creating something new or different, such as creating new products, services, ideas,

procedures and processes that benefit the organization; then it can be said; it is change- based (Sahaming & Sariwulan, 2022: 366). Crant (2000) defines innovative behavior as the active behavior of people to create a new situation instead of passively adapting to the existing situation. Research has shown that innovative behavior is primarily determined due to people's mindset and motivational processes (Kohn, 1993); therefore, predicting the factors that hinder this behavior is difficult and then, it is quite challenging to maintain innovative behavior until reaching the desired result. Thus, organizations should identify and strengthen the factors that cause innovative work behavior in employees. Hammond et al. (2011) acknowledged that the determinants of innovative work behavior can be found in individual and organizational characteristics (Hammond et al., 2011). Among the various factors that have been identified include a range of rewards, human resource development practices, leader-member exchange, quality of working relationships, and employee commitment (Janssen,

2000; Dorenbosch et al., 2005; Garg & Dhar, 2017 ; Carnevale et al., 2017; Nazir et al., 2018).

Leadership style has long been recognized as one of the main factors influencing employees' innovative work behavior (Lecic et al., 2023). Despite the growing body of research on the relationship between leadership and innovative work behavior of employees, the impact of leadership concept, entitled the empowering leadership, has been overlooked by researchers (Guo et al., 2023). However, past researchers have investigated the influence of other leadership styles such as transformational, ethical and authentic leadership on innovative work behavior (Ma et al., 2023; Hoang et al., 2023; Lv et al., 2022). What differentiates empowering leadership from other leadership styles is its aim to create independent and self-directed people, rather than creating dependence that may happen with a transformational leader (Biemann et al., 2015). In addition, this leadership style uses delegation and focuses on a wider range of behaviors, for example, expressing trust in employees, removing

bureaucratic barriers, building employee capabilities (Ahearne et al., 2005) and encouraging their proactive behavior (Martin et al. 2013), which expect will superiorly foster employee's innovative work behavior and according to the social exchange theory, it is reasonable to assume that fair treatment and support due to the behavior of an empowering leadership to followers will encourage them to behave innovatively at workplace (Rao Jada et al., 2019) and the flexibility of an empowering leadership encourages employees to be dynamic in the workplace which creates grounds for innovation at workplace.

Also, studies have shown that an empowering leadership affects flourishing at workplace. the term flourishing is an advanced indicator of a person's socio-psychological flourishing that is rooted in the emerging field of positive psychology to capture the multidimensionality of well-being (Diener, et al., 2018). Flourishing builds on existing measures of subjective (Diener, 1984) and psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989), while also recognizing the impact of social

relationships on individual well-being (Colbert et al., 2016); Therefore, as a multifaceted approach to well-being, flourishing is focusing on the perceived well-being of the individual at workplace in terms of having a purposeful life, includes being involved; being interested and competent in your work; A sense of self-respect and optimism; being respected by others; and social participation related to the happiness of others (Diener et al., 2018). From a social psychological perspective, when employees at workplace believe that their leaders provide them with opportunities for improvement along with providing a happy and healthy work culture, they are likely to be thrive and flourish. Therefore, to the extent that employees believe that their leaders and managers are able to create independence and career-advancing prospects for them, the extent of their flourishing at workplace has been determined. Singh et al. (2022) in their study showed that an empowering leadership affects employees' perceptions of flourishing, how employees view their leaders in terms of fairness and ethical behavior, their

involvement in their job roles, which in turn have important consequences on the flourishing of employees in the workplace (Singh et al., 2022) and flourishing of employees in turn affects the innovative work behavior of employees (Montani et al., 2022).

As stated in this study, employees are increasingly considered as a vital resource to deal with uncertainty and organizational complexities for stimulating organizational competitiveness through innovative work behavior. However, the emphasis on employee productivity and extra-role demands often leaves employees feeling stressed and neglected and previous research findings have shown that this can have a negative impact on the innovative mindset and employees' sense of well-being at workplace (Chen et al., 2019). Therefore, in addition to the challenge of motivating employees' innovative work behavior, the second key challenge facing organizations is the ability to meet the increasing needs of employees for purpose, meaningful work, and enriching relationships with leaders and

coworkers (Singh et al., 2021). In the meantime, spirituality at workplace has been proposed as a structure to help organizations attract the intangible and innovative resources of employees based on the basic assumptions related to meaningful work at workplace (Zhang & Yang, 2021). Spirituality at workplace helps employees to meet their spiritual needs, such as giving meaning and purpose to their work, achieve connection and camaraderie with others in the workplace, while reducing their stress and anxiety (Pawar, 2016). Spirituality at workplace can be conceptualized based on a three-dimensional framework: meaningful work; sense of connection with others; and spiritual life with mutual values (Pfeffer, 2010). This study is guided on a theory based on intangible resources (Hobfoll, 2002) and argues that spirituality at workplace is effective in satisfying the spiritual needs of employees, and In this regard, ways of spirituality at workplace, such as meaningful work experiences; positive social relationships; and supportive workplace evokes positive

emotional responses and helps employees to develop their social-psychological resources (i.e. level of creativity, social bonds and attachments) in the workplace (Colbert et al., 2016) and in turn, these resources strengthen the mental well-being of employees (Zou et al., 2020), which is operationalized in this study under the title of employee flourishing, and employee flourishing considers an improved state of psychological, emotional and social stability (Diener et al., 2010) that contributes to creativity and generating ideas; Thus, strengthening the sense of flourishing, employees are motivated to return the acquired emotional resources to the organization through innovative behaviors such as new ideas, solutions or improvements for the betterment of the organization (Montani et al., 2022).

Also, considering that satisfaction at workplace increases the creativity and innovative behavior of employees (Usmanova et al., 2021); therefore, it is assumed that satisfaction at workplace can strengthen the relationship

between spirituality at workplace and the innovative behavior of employees. Satisfaction at workplace refers to the perceived satisfaction of employees about the experienced workplace, such as overall satisfaction with the current workplace and the desirability of the workplace as a place to perform job tasks (Spector, 1997) and implicit interpersonal and social connections forms the basis of satisfaction at workplace (Zhang, 2020). Satisfaction at workplace can be seen based on Maslow's theory of needs (Maslow, 1943) and social identity theory (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), in which the satisfaction of the workplace is related to how employees identify with their organization or fulfill their desired needs of related staff. Satisfaction at workplace is evaluated by examining various aspects of the workplace and the balance between work and life of employees, such as pay, leadership, control, job opportunities, nature of work, and the overall pleasant workplace (Slack et al., 2010). According to Zhang (2020) workplace spirituality positively affects job satisfaction and extra-

role behaviors of employees based on a sense of collectivism that stimulates mutual interests and motivates people to contribute to the organization. In other words, considering that spirituality at workplace reflects that the leaders of the organization understand, appreciate and care for the employees, while at the same time, their need to work in a satisfactory environment is fulfilled (Zhang, 2020), so it is inferred that employees will express these benefits with showing innovative work behavior according to their level of satisfaction experienced in the workplace.

Therefore, by reviewing the theoretical foundations and the background of the research, the conceptual model of the research was developed in the form of Figure 1, and by analyzing the theoretical gap, it was determined that so far no research in the country and abroad has simultaneously investigated the effect of these variables, therefore, conducting this research. In the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars Province, it is necessary to expand the innovative work

behavior of employees and foster the employees to face and solve problems with their creative thinking and innovative behavior, which has improved the quality of services and the quantitative and qualitative improvement of public sports and championships in this field, and to provide the path of excellence and growth of youth in the field of sports in Fars Province and this research tries to check whether with the help of empowering leadership style and spirituality at workplace, it is possible to increase the innovative work behavior of the employees of the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars province. Also, this research tries to investigate whether it is possible to increase the innovative work behavior of employees with the help of intervention mechanisms such as creating a sense of flourishing and increasing employee satisfaction in this office. Therefore, the main goal of this research is to investigate the role of spirituality at workplace and the empowering leadership on the innovative work behavior of employees through satisfaction at workplace and creating a sense of

flourishing in the employees of the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars Province.

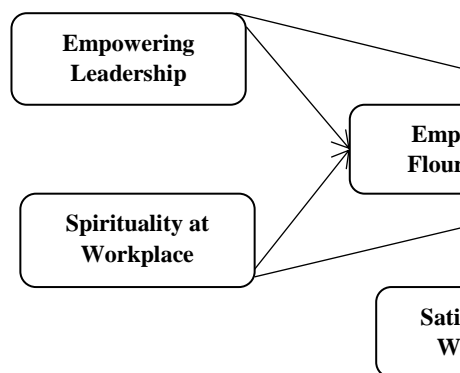


Figure 1. Conceptual model of research

Materials and Methods

Considering that, the present research sought to improving of employees flourishing and innovative work behavior through leadership style and ethics in the organization in the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars Province, therefore, in terms of purpose, practical and in terms of the method of data collection is descriptive-survey type. The statistical population of the research is all the employees of the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars province, that 130 sample were selected among 150 according to Cochran's formula, through simple available sampling. Of course, in

this research, the method of obtaining the number of sample sizes in SmartPLS software, which uses the partial least squares technique, has been also investigated. In this method, the number ten is multiplied by the number of measurement model indicators, which has the most indicators among the measurement models of the main research model (Davari & Rezazadeh, 2014: 75), it should be mentioned that in the current research, the most indicator is related to the empowering leadership variable, which has thirteen items and ten times it becomes 130, so the sample size is sufficient for the research model. The data collection tools in this research are standard questionnaires, including the empowering leadership questionnaire from the study of Arnold et al. (2000) including 13 items; Questionnaire of spirituality at workplace from the study of Milliman et al. (2003) including 13 items; Innovative work behavior questionnaire from the study of Afsar et al. (2019) including 10 items; Employee flourishing questionnaire from the study of Imran et al. (2020) including 7

items; and the questionnaire of satisfaction at workplace from the study of Wong & Ko (2009) includes 9 items. In this research, factor loading, convergent and divergent validity indicators used to measure the validity of the measurement model and reliability has been investigated using two methods, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, and the results of reliability and validity have been presented below.

Table 1. Cronbach's alpha, Composite reliability & Convergent validity test

vari able	Cro nbac h's Alp ha	Co m po sit e Re lia bil ity	A V E
empl oyee flour ishin g	0.90 6	0.9 26	0. 64 3
emp ower ing leade rship	0.92 0	0.9 32	0. 53 4
inno vativ e work beha vior Satis	0.87 1	0.8 98	0. 49 5
	0.73	0.8	0.

facti	4	35	56
on at			2
work			
place			
spirit	0.90	0.9	0.
ualit	6	22	52
y at			1
work			
place			

According to the results of Table 1, all composite reliability values and Cronbach's alpha coefficient are above 0.7, and as a result, reliability confirmed and as can be seen in Table 1, all the average values of extracted variances are higher than 0.5, so the convergent validity confirmed.

Table 2. Fornelle-Larcker criterion analysis

	emp	emp	i	S	s
varia	loye	owe	n	a	p
ble	e	ring	n	ti	i
	flou	lead	o	sf	r
	rish	ersh	v	a	it
	ing	ip	a	c	u
			ti	ti	a
			v	o	li
			e	n	t
			w	a	y
			o	t	a
			r	w	t
			k	o	w
			b	r	o
			e	k	r
			h	p	k
			a	l	p
			v	a	l
			i	c	a
			o	e	c
			r		e
em	0.80				
plo	2				

yee				
flo				
uri				
shi				
ng				
empo	0	0.73		
werin	.	1		
g	3			
leader	8			
ship	5			
innova	0	0.62	0.70	
tive	.	7	4	
work	6			
behavi	0			
or	6			
Satisfa	0	0.27	0.46	0
ction	.	1	4	.
at	4			7
workp	6			5
lace	5			0
spiritu	0	0.47	0.69	0
ality at	.	0	8	.
workp	4			5
lace	9			2
	1			0
				2

It can be seen in Table 2 that, the condition of divergent validity has been also confirmed. In the factor load index, the factor load of the obtained questions should be more than 0.4, as shown in Figure 2, the factor load results are appropriate for the research subjects.

Results

In this research, structural equation modeling technique with partial least squares method

and SmartPLS3 software have been used to investigate the existing relationships between the research variables presented in the conceptual model. Therefore, in the following, the model fit is examined first, and then the hypotheses are tested.

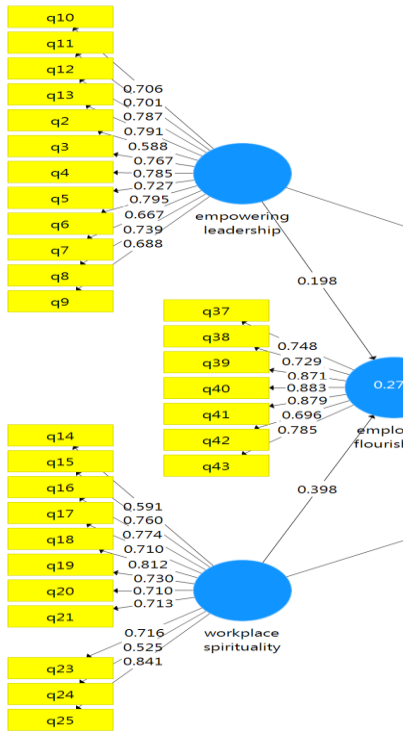


Figure 2. The structural model of corrected path coefficients

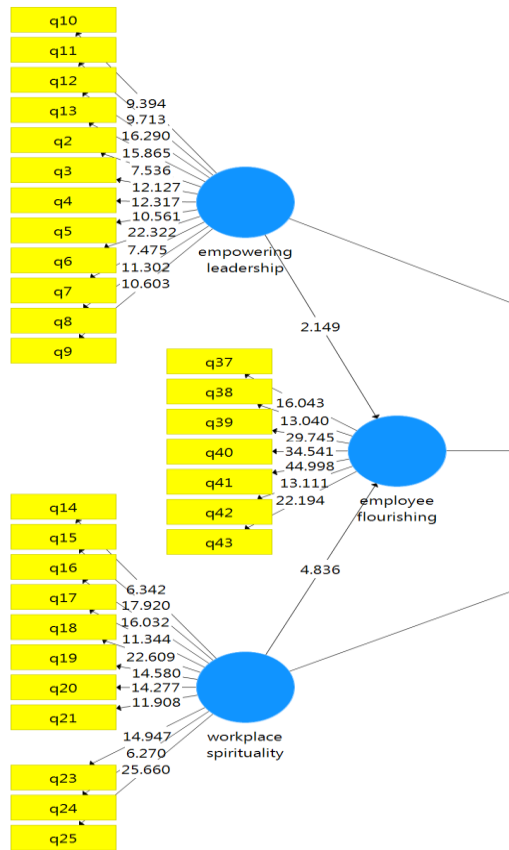


Figure 3. The structural model of significant coefficients

In order to fit the developed model from the R2 criterion; The significance coefficients of t and the fit of the general model have been used. As seen in Figure 2, the coefficient of determination is suitable for endogenous variables and the significant coefficients of t are also suitable

in Figure 3. In order to evaluate the overall fit of the model, which controls both measurement and structural model parts, the goodness of fit (GOF) criterion was used based on the following formula.

$$Gof = \sqrt{communalities \times R^2}$$

Table 3. goodness of fit criterion of the research model

Satisfaction at workplace	innovative work behavior	employee flourishing	spirituality at workplace	empowering leadership
-	0.676	0.271	-	-
0.286	0.370	0.504	0.408	0.424
		0.434		

As can be seen in Table 3, the value of GOF was 0.434, which is higher than 0.36 and indicates the strong suitability of the model (Davari & Rezazadeh, 2014).

As mentioned, structural equation modeling technique has been used to test the hypotheses of this research. Based on this, the results in two standard and significant modes are shown in Figures 2 and 3, and Table 4 summarizes the results of hypothesis testing.

Table 4. Result of hypothesis testing

	path coefficients	Standard estimates	P values	Results
empowering leadership -> employee flourishing workplace spirituality -> employee flourishing	0.198	2.149	0.048	Supported
workplace spirituality -> employee flourishing	0.398	4.836	0.000	Supported

empow	0.3	4.	0.	S
ering	29	17	00	u
leaders		7	0	p
hip ->				p
innovati				or
ve work				te
behavio				d
r				
workpla	0.4	4.	0.	S
ce	09	91	00	u
spiritual		7	0	p
ity ->				p
innovati				or
ve work				te
behavio				d
r				
employ	0.2	4.	0.	S
ee	50	44	00	u
flourish		9	0	p
ing ->				p
innovati				or
ve work				te
behavio				d
r				
workpla	0.1	3.	0.	S
ce	24	12	00	u
satisfact		6	1	p
ion*wo				p
rkplace				or
spiritual				te
ity ->				d
innovati				
ve work				
behavio				
r				
empow	0.0	1.	0.	S
ering	49	88	06	u
leaders		2	0	p
hip ->				p
employ				or
ee				te
flourish				d
ing ->				
innovati				
ve work				
behavio				
r				

workpla	0.0	2.	0.	S
ce	99	86	00	u
spiritual		1	4	p
ity ->				p
employ				or
ee				te
flourish				d
ing ->				
innovati				
ve work				
behavio				
r				

According to the results of Table 4, the significant number at the 90% confidence level is higher than 1.65 for all hypotheses, so all hypotheses have been confirmed.

Discussion

In this research, in order to expand the innovative working behavior of the employees in the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars province, as well as need to innovative behavior of employees for being succeed in this competitive market and create sustainable distinctions in this industry, and foster the employees to face and solve problems with their creative thinking and innovative behavior, was investigated the intervening mechanisms and what factors strengthen the innovative work behavior of employees in the General

Department of Sports and Youth of Fars province.

The findings of the research regarding the first hypothesis showed that, the empowering leadership had a positive and significant effect on employees flourishing. According to this to the path coefficient of this hypothesis, it is concluded that, management support of work groups and creating opportunities for the development and advancement of employees along with a happy and healthy work culture in general increases the employees flourishing of the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars Province. The results of this hypothesis were in line with the results of Thiessen et al. (2019) and Singh et al. (2022).

The findings of the research regarding the second hypothesis showed that, spirituality at workplace had a positive and significant effect on the employees flourishing of the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars Province. So, if the employees of the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars province feel that they are a member of the organization and have a positive feeling towards

the values of the organization and get energy from their work in a spiritual sense in general; Their flourishing increases dramatically and the sources of spirituality at workplace positively strengthen the employees' sense of flourishing. The results of this hypothesis were in line with the research results of Hunsaker (2022) and Jankowski et al. (2022).

The findings of the research regarding the third hypothesis showed that, the empowering leadership had a positive and significant effect on the innovative work behavior of the employees of the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars Province. Therefore, management support of work groups and the flexibility of an empowering leadership encourages employees in general to be dynamic in the workplace, which in turn stimulates innovative behaviors of employees of General Department of Sports and the youth of Fars province. The results of this hypothesis were in line with the research results of Zhu et al. (2019) and Rao Jada et al. (2019).

The findings of the research

regarding the fourth hypothesis showed that spirituality at workplace had a positive and significant effect on the innovative work behavior of the employees of the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars Province. So, if the employees feel that they are an important member of the organization in general and have a positive feeling towards the values of the organization, it will cause more and more innovative work behavior of the employees of the General Department of Sports and Youth of the Fars province. The results of this hypothesis were in line with the research results of Ranasinghe & Samarasinghe (2019) and Zhang & Yang (2021).

The findings of the research regarding the fifth hypothesis showed that, the employees flourishing had a positive and significant effect on the innovative work behavior of the employees of the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars Province and considering that the employee's flourishig depends on their perceived well-being at workplace; Therefore, being interested and feeling competent in your work; a sense

of self-respect and optimism; to be respected; and social participation for the happiness of others causes more and more innovative work behavior of the employees of the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars Province; and since employee flourishing is an improved state of psychological, emotional and social stability of employees; therefore, it helps to increase creativity and innovative behavior of employees. The results of this hypothesis were in line with the research results of West & Sacramento (2006) and Montani et al. (2022).

The findings of the research regarding the sixth hypothesis showed that, satisfaction at workplace had a moderating role in the relationship between spirituality at workplace and innovative work behavior of the employees of the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars province. So, having satisfaction at workplace, such as maintaining a balance between work-family life, leads to strengthening the relationship between spirituality at workplace and innovative work behavior. In other words, it causes Spirituality

at workplace has a stronger effect on the innovative work behavior of the employees of the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars Province.

The findings of the research regarding the seventh hypothesis showed that, the employees flourishing plays a mediating role in the relationship between the empowering leadership and the innovative work behavior of the employees of the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars Province. Therefore, the empowering leadership indirectly had a significant effect on the innovative work behavior of employees through the mediating variable of employee flourishing; however, the intensity of the direct effect of this relationship is greater than the intensity of its indirect effect, and the empowering leadership affects the employees' perception of flourishing, and the level of employee participation in the organization's activities has important consequences for the employees flourishing at workplace and thus causes the emergence of innovative work behavior of the employees of the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars province.

The findings of the research regarding the eighth hypothesis showed that, the employees flourishing has a mediating role in the relationship between spirituality at workplace and innovative work behavior of the employees of the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars Province. So, spirituality at workplace had a significant effect on innovative work behavior of employees indirectly through the mediating variable of employees flourishing in general; however, the intensity of the direct effect of this relationship is greater than the intensity of its indirect effect, and the results of the research showed that the resources of spirituality at workplace in a positive way strengthen the sense of employees flourishing and this in turn helped the employees to meet the innovative job needs by matching their resources to the organization through innovative work behaviors, and with according to these relationships, it is assumed that the innovative work behavior of employees was a reciprocal action of expanded emotional resources or benefits received through the influence of spirituality at workplace on the

employees flourishing of the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars province.

Conclusions

The present study was conducted with the aim of improving of employees flourishing and innovative work behavior through leadership style and ethics in the organization in the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars province. This research tried to identify the factors that increase the innovative work behavior of employees in the General Directorate of Sports and Youth of Fars Province. The research results in this study showed that, the factors of leadership style (empowering leadership) and spirituality at workplace were among the important and influential factors on the innovative work behavior of employees, and according to the social exchange theory, it is reasonable to assume that fair treatment and support due to an empowering leadership encourages followers to engage in innovative behavior at workplace. Also in this study, relying on resource-based theory, intangible resources were

considered as resources that can increase employees' innovative work behavior and It was argued that spirituality at workplace was effective in satisfying the spiritual needs of employees and increases the innovative work behavior of employees. Also, in this research, by examining the intervening mechanisms, it was found that the employees flourishing had a mediating role in the relationship between the empowering leadership and spirituality at workplace, and satisfaction at workplace also strengthened the relationship between spirituality at workplace and innovative work behavior of employees in the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars province.

In this study, it was shown how spirituality at workplace can help the organization to meet the competitive demands for more active behaviors at workplace (such as innovative work behavior) without sacrificing the needs related to the employees flourishing, and by enriching the theory of spirituality at workplace, in this research, it was shown that spirituality at workplace improves the emotional and social states of

employees, and through increasing the sense of employees flourishing increases the innovative work behavior of employees; so, in this regard, it is suggested to the managers of the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars province to create a suitable climate for spirituality at workplace in order to help the employees to achieve their flourishing needs, and this can be achieved through spiritual initiatives at workplace and organizational actions to re-evaluate and align the core values of the organization with the practices of spirituality at workplace, as a way to achieve compatibility between employee beliefs and organizational values; and, in order to match values, measures such as self-reflection and spiritual education should be encouraged in the workplace and this helps employees connect with spiritual values (for example, trust, compassion, gratitude, and respect) and be spiritually energized by their work and value teamwork. In addition, necessary information and training should be given to managers about how there is a strong correlation between leadership style, spirituality at

workplace, flourishing and innovative behavior of employees. Managers should be aware that the type of behavior of leaders helps to promote the innovative work behavior of employees through flourishing intervention. Therefore, it is suggested to the managers of the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars Province that the managers of this organization use the empowering leadership style to encourage the innovative work behavior of the employees; and, the results show that an empowering leadership strengthens self-confidence in followers by sharing power and authority with followers and taking actions such as increasing employee participation, delegating authority, giving more independence to employees and helping to improve employee competence. In this way, employees take risks in performing their duties and try new things, which leads to innovation at workplace. Also, the mutual feeling created by an empowering leadership stimulates the followers to act creatively and provide innovative ideas and suggestions to participate in the development of

the organization.

Also, considering the findings of the research showed that, the employees flourishing provides a more comprehensive explanation of how spirituality at workplace is related to the emotional and cognitive states of employees and enables employees to participate in innovative behaviors; therefore it is suggested to the managers of Department of Sports and Youth of Fars Province to have a greater understanding of the importance of employee flourishing in helping organizations to respond to competitive pressures for continuous innovation and with supporting work groups and creating opportunities for the development and advancement of employees along with a happy and healthy work culture; being interested and feeling competent at work; a sense of self-respect and optimism; to be respected; and social participation for the happiness of others improve the employees flourishing and then, cause the innovative work behavior of the employees of the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars Province, and according to the findings of the research, which showed

spirituality at workplace a framework for the emergence of flourishing and innovative behavior of employees; therefore, it is suggested to the managers of the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars province that with developing spirituality at workplace, employees could better manage various job demands that threaten their sense of flourishing; therefore, the energy of the employees is freed to better contribute to the innovative goals of the organization.

Also, with considering that in this research, it was shown that satisfaction at workplace moderated the relationship between spirituality at workplace and innovative work behavior, and employees who experience high satisfaction at workplace showed higher levels of innovative work behavior; and, according to the findings of this research, the interaction of spirituality and satisfaction at workplace motivates employees to respond positively to the organization and this shows why some employees present innovative behaviors towards others, so it is suggested to the

managers of the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars province that as part of leadership training, leaders and managers should be aware that higher levels of satisfaction at workplace (such as better job opportunities; the nature of work and enjoyable workplace; flexibility in the schedule work; balance between work-family life) and its interaction with spirituality at workplace contribute to higher levels of innovation.

The current research also had limitations; which provides the way for future researches. First, the current research was conducted in the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars Province, and its results cannot be generalized to other organizations, and different results may be obtained in other organizations due to the culture of the organization or other reasons; In this regard, it is suggested that this research be done in other government, service and production organizations as well. Also, in this research, the data was collected using standard questionnaires, Therefore, it is suggested that future researches

expand the research model by conducting interviews with the employees and managers of the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars Province and identifying other variables affecting the innovative behavior of employees, with a qualitative approach of the grounded theory; and also with the interpretive structural modeling method, the effect of each variable on other variables and the relationships of indicators and their leveling can be identified.

Acknowledgement

We are grateful to all employees and managers of the General Department of Sports and Youth of Fars province involved in conducting this study.

References

1. Afsar, B., Masood, M., & Umrani, W. A. (2019). The role of job crafting and knowledge sharing on the effect of transformational leadership on innovative work behavior. *Personnel Review*, 48(4) 1-24.
2. Ahearne, M., Mathieu, J., & Rapp, A. (2005). To empower or not to empower your sales

- force? An empirical examination of the influence of leadership empowerment behavior on customer satisfaction and performance. *Journal of Applied psychology*, 90(5), 945.
3. Arnold, J. A., Arad, S., Rhoades, J. A., & Drasgow, F. (2000). The empowering leadership questionnaire: The construction and validation of a new scale for measuring leader behaviors. *Journal of organizational behavior*, 21(3), 249-269.
 4. Ashforth, B. E., & Mael, F. (1989). Social identity theory and the organization. *Academy of management review*, 14(1), 20-39.
 5. Baker, W. E., Mukherjee, D., & Perin, M. G. (2022). Learning orientation and competitive advantage: A critical synthesis and future directions. *Journal of Business Research*, 144, 863-873.
 6. Biemann, T., Kearney, E., & Marggraf, K. (2015). Empowering leadership and managers' career perceptions: Examining effects at both the individual and the team level. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 26(5), 775-789.
 7. Carmeli, A., Meitar, R., & Weisberg, J. (2006). Self-leadership skills and innovative behavior at work. *International journal of manpower*.
 8. Carnevale, J. B., Huang, L., Crede, M., Harms, P., & Uhl-Bien, M. (2017). Leading to stimulate employees' ideas: A quantitative review of leader-member exchange, employee voice, creativity, and innovative behavior. *Applied Psychology*, 66(4), 517-552.
 9. Chen, S., Jiang, W., Zhang, G., & Chu, F. (2019). Spiritual leadership on proactive workplace behavior: The role of organizational identification and psychological safety. *Frontiers in psychology*, 10, 1206.
 10. Colbert, A. E., Bono, J. E., & Purvanova, R. K. (2016). Flourishing via workplace relationships: Moving beyond instrumental support. *Academy of Management Journal*, 59(4), 1199-1223.
 11. Crant, J. M. (2000). Proactive behavior in organizations.

- Journal of management*, 26(3), 435-462.
12. Davari, A., & Rezazadeh, A. (2014). *Structural equation modeling with PLS software*. Tehran: Academic Jahad Publishing Organization. [In Persian]
 13. Dehghanizadeh, M., & Ahmadi, F. (2024). Antecedents of Employees' Innovative Behavior; Emphasizing the Role of Meaningful Work, Thriving at Workplace and Self-leadership of Employees. *Innovation Management in Defensive Organizations*, 7(1). [in persian]
 14. De Jong, D. D. H., & Hartog, D. N. (2010). Measuring Innovative Work Behaviour, Creativity and Innovative Management. *Journal of Management*, 19, 23-36.
 15. Diener, E. (1984). Subjective well-being. *Psychological bulletin*, 95(3), 542.
 16. Diener, E., Lucas, R. E., & Oishi, S. (2018). Advances and open questions in the science of subjective well-being. *Collabra: Psychology*, 4(1), 1-49.
 17. Diener, E., Wirtz, D., Tov, W., Kim-Prieto, C., Choi, D. W., Oishi, S., & Biswas-Diener, R. (2010). New well-being measures: Short scales to assess flourishing and positive and negative feelings. *Social indicators research*, 97, 143-156.
 18. Dorenbosch, L., Engen, M. L. V., & Verhagen, M. (2005). On-the-job innovation: The impact of job design and human resource management through production ownership. *Creativity and innovation management*, 14(2), 129-141.
 19. Garg, S., & Dhar, R. (2017). Employee service innovative behavior: The roles of leader-member exchange (LMX), work engagement, and job autonomy. *International Journal of Manpower*, 38(2), 242-258.
 20. Guo, Y., Peng, Y., & Zhu, Y. (2023). How does empowering leadership motivate employee innovative behavior: A job characteristics perspective. *Current Psychology*, 42(21), 18280-18290.
 21. Hammond, M. M., Neff, N. L., Farr, J. L., Schwall, A. R.,

- & Zhao, X. (2011). Predictors of individual-level innovation at work: A meta-analysis. *Psychology of aesthetics, creativity, and the arts*, 5(1), 90.
22. Hoang, G., Luu, T. T., Du, T., & Nguyen, T. T. (2023). Can both entrepreneurial and ethical leadership shape employees' service innovative behavior?. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 37(4), 446-463.
23. Hobfoll, S. E. (2002). Social and psychological resources and adaptation. *Review of general psychology*, 6(4), 307-324.
24. Hunsaker, W. D. (2022). Spiritual leadership and employee innovation. *Current Psychology*, 41(8), 5048-5057.
25. Imran, M. Y., Elahi, N. S., Abid, G., Ashfaq, F., & Ilyas, S. (2020). Impact of perceived organizational support on work engagement: Mediating mechanism of thriving and flourishing. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 6(3), 82-99.
26. Jankowski, P. J., Sandage, S. J., Wang, D. C., & Hill, P. (2022). Relational spirituality profiles and flourishing among emerging religious leaders. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 17(5), 665-678.
27. Janssen, O. (2000). Job demands, perceptions of effort-reward fairness and innovative work behaviour. *Journal of Occupational and organizational psychology*, 73(3), 287-302.
28. Kang, H., Song, M., & Li, Y. (2022). Self-Leadership and Innovative Behavior: Mediation of Informal Learning and Moderation of Social Capital. *Behavioral Sciences*, 12(11), 443.
29. Kohn, A. (1993). Why incentive plans cannot work. *Harvard business review*, 71(5), 54-60.
30. Lecic, M. S., Milic, B., Visnjic, R., & Culibrk, J. (2023). Leadership, Innovative Behavior and the Case of Innovative Climate-When the Mediator Becomes the Mediated. *Behavioral Sciences*, 13(1), 40.
31. Lv, M., Jiang, S. M., Chen, H., & Zhang, S. X. (2022). Authentic leadership and

- innovation behaviour among nurses in China: A mediation model of work engagement. *Journal of Nursing Management*.
32. Ma, Y., Chen, M., Guo, H., Fan, W., & Lai, L. (2023). The influence of transformational tutor style on postgraduate students' innovative behavior: the mediating role of creative self-efficacy. *International Journal of Digital Multimedia Broadcasting*, 2023.
33. Martin, S. L., Liao, H., & Campbell, E. M. (2013). Directive versus empowering leadership: A field experiment comparing impacts on task proficiency and proactivity. *Academy of management Journal*, 56(5), 1372-1395.
34. Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological review*, 50(4), 370.
35. Milliman, J., Czaplewski, A. J., & Ferguson, J. (2003). Workplace spirituality and employee work attitudes: An exploratory empirical assessment. *Journal of organizational change management*, 16(4), 426-447.
36. Montani, F., Sommovigo, V., Torres, C., Courcy, F., Ferreira, M. C., Mendonça, H., & Silva, A. J. (2022). When do innovators flourish? The role of interpersonal goals in the relationship between innovative work behavior and flourishing. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 199, 111833.
37. Nazir, S., Qun, W., Hui, L., & Shafi, A. (2018). Influence of social exchange relationships on affective commitment and innovative behavior: Role of perceived organizational support. *Sustainability*, 10(12), 4418.
38. Pawar, B. S. (2016). Workplace spirituality and employee well-being: an empirical examination. *Employee relations*, 38(6), 975-994.
39. Pfeffer, J. (2010). Business and the spirit: Management practices that sustain values. In *Handbook of workplace spirituality and organizational performance* (pp. 43-59). Routledge.
40. Ranasinghe, V. R., & Samarasinghe, S. M. (2019).

- The effect of workplace spirituality on innovative work behavior. . *International Business Research*, 12(12), 29-38.
41. Rao Jada, U., Mukhopadhyay, S., & Titiyal, R. (2019). Empowering leadership and innovative work behavior: a moderated mediation examination. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 23(5), 915-930.
42. Ryff, C. D. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 57(6), 1069.
43. Sahaming, M. H., & Sariwulan, T. (2022). Leader Member-Exchange and Job Involvement Impact on Innovative Work Behavior. *International Journal of Science and Society*, 4(2), 365-374.
44. Singh, N., Bamel, U., & Vohra, V. (2021). The mediating effect of meaningful work between human resource practices and innovative work behavior: a study of emerging market. *Employee Relations: The International Journal*, 43(2), 459-478.
45. Singh, S., Mahapatra, M., & Kumar, N. (2022). Empowering leadership and organizational culture: Collective influence on employee flourishing. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 6(S1), 2983-2993.
46. Slack, F. J., Orife, J. N., & Anderson, F. P. (2010). Effects of commitment to corporate vision on employee satisfaction with their organization: An empirical study in the United States. *International Journal of management*, 27(3), 421.
47. Spector, P. E. (1997). *Job satisfaction: Application, assessment, causes, and consequences* (Vol. 3). Sage.
48. Thiessen, J., Wong, A. C. K., McAlpine, B., & Walker, K. (2019). What is a flourishing congregation? Leader perceptions, definitions, and experiences. *Review of Religious Research*, 61, 13-37.
49. Usmanova, N., Yang, J., Sumarliah, E., Khan, S. U., & Khan, S. Z. (2021). Impact of knowledge sharing on job

- satisfaction and innovative work behavior: the moderating role of motivating language. *VINE Journal of Information and Knowledge Management Systems*, 51(3), 515-532.
50. West, M. A., & Sacramento, C. A. (2006). Flourishing in teams: Developing creativity and innovation. *Creative management and development*, 3, 25-44.
51. Wong, S. C. K., & Ko, A. (2009). Exploratory study of understanding hotel employees' perception on work-life balance issues. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 28(2), 195-203.
52. Zhang, S. (2020). Workplace spirituality and unethical pro-organizational behavior: The mediating effect of job satisfaction. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 161, 687-705.
53. Zhang, Y., & Yang, F. (2021). How and when spiritual leadership enhances employee innovative behavior. *Personnel Review*, 50(2), 596-609.
54. Zhu, J., Yao, J., & Zhang, L. (2019). Linking empowering leadership to innovative behavior in professional learning communities: the role of psychological empowerment and team psychological safety. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 20, 657-671.
55. Zou, W. C., Houghton, J. D., & Li, J. J. (2020). Workplace spirituality as a means of enhancing service employee well-being through emotional labor strategy choice. *Current Psychology*, 41, 5546-5561.
- [1]