# The Relationship between Spiritual Leadership and Organizational Citizenship Behaviors: A Research on School Principals' Behaviors[*]

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## Abstract

This study aimed to examine the relationship between Spiritual Leadership and the dimensions of Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCB) of school principals from the perspectives of primary school teachers. A quantitative survey was performed on a sample of teachers (N = 383) from primary schools to study the influence of spiritual leadership on OCB. The spiritual leadership as an independent variable and organizational citizenship behavior subscales (Altruism, Conscientiousness, Sportsmanship, Courtesy and Civic Virtue) were checked for their inter-correlations. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Linear Regression Analysis techniques were used for the analyses. All the variables are observed to significantly correlate with each other, and it is seen that spiritual leadership predicts all four dimensions of OCB, especially civic virtue. It is understood that spiritual leadership may strongly contribute in forming more solid ground for OCB to pervade in an organization.

Keywords: Spiritual leadership • Spirituality • Organizational citizenship behaviors • School principal • Organization

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**Leadership and Spirituality**

Leadership has been defined and explained differently throughout the ages in various ways. Particularly in this uncertain and rapidly evolving socio-economic world, an understanding of leadership is not only shaped by certain patterns but also by situational dynamics which include variably religious paradigms, belief systems, and inner or personal values. Therefore, there is a need for theories to be developed that help increase the understanding of the broader and often subtle contexts in which effective leadership takes place (Fry & Kriger, 2009).

From this realization has emerged a demand for more holistic leadership that integrates the body (physical), mind (logical/rational thought), heart (emotions, feelings), and spirit; these are the four fundamental areas that define the essence of human existence and pave the way for better performance and self-fulfillment in organization, if they are collectively considered and given respect in workplace (Moxley, 2000). Today, people are more often in the state of pursuit or seeking than they have been in the past, which cannot be solely ascribed to pursuit of financial freedom. In fact, people began to seek more meaning in their job and question the purpose of life and their own works. This need for a spiritual quest is found in almost all people as they purposefully look to discover their potential, an ultimate purpose, and a personal relationship with a higher power (Tart, 1975; Wulff, 1996).

Spirituality is linked to a person's own values such as love, affection, tolerance, satisfaction, responsibility and harmonious feelings toward himself and others. Being restricted to people's personal lives and mindsets, spirituality was not questioned and hardly ever received attention as a necessity in the workplace till some recent studies. A new interest has arisen in favor of spirituality especially in terms of incorporating this into the workplace, management, and daily job practices. Interestingly, this increasing interest into the spiritual side of work is often driven by non-spiritual concerns (Tourish & Pinnington, 2002). The appearance of this notion could possibly be ascribed to increasing pressure from society, globalization and environment, development of the Internet, and supply and demand (Kakabadse, Kouzmin, & Kakabadse, 2002).

Chen and Yang (2012) stated that in an organization where spirituality is valued, the following characteristics are seen: "Visions and goals of the organization engender intrinsic meaning for employees; emphasizing employee development; emphasizing the cultural values of trust and honesty; offering employee empowerment; and giving employees opportunities to express opinions." Kesken and Ünlü (2011) summarized the related literature about spirituality in a few keywords as follows:

- An inner will and power to live.

- Inner motivation and experience that leads people into action and gets them energized.

- Commitment to shared goals and a need for wholeness.

- A will to contribute into development or successes of others.

- Attachment to love, hope, faith, and optimism.

- Developing team spirit.

- Seeking a calling or meaning in life.

In this leadership style, it can be hard to separate leadership from religious faith and eliminate the conflicts concerning it due to many connotations ascribed to religion (Karadağ, 2009). Although spirituality seems to share the same background with religion, these two concepts are different from each other and not synonymous (Veach & Chappell, 1991). Spirituality is a broad term that includes religion and many connected concepts. Mitroff and Denton (1999) defined spirituality as pursuing the ultimate goal in life and abiding by it throughout life. While this ultimate goal means doing the will of the Creator for some, it has a different meaning for others. Spirituality, in this regard, encompasses all belief systems and religions, though each may have different ways and understandings. When compared, spirituality could be expected to be necessary within a religious lifestyle, but not necessarily within a secular lifestyle. However, while a trait like being honest may be attributed as a person's religious duty, it could also be observed in people without any certain belief system or religion.

**Spiritual Leadership, Workplace Spirituality**

Spiritual leadership helps us understand the spiritual life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community and plays an important role in creating spirituality in people and organizations (Duchon & Plowman, 2005). The purpose of spiritual leadership is "tapping into the fundamental needs of both the leader and follower for spiritual survival/well-being through calling and membership, to create vision and value congruence across the individual, empowered team, and organization levels and,

ultimately, to foster higher levels of organizational commitment and productivity" (Fry & Matherly, 2006). In this respect, spiritual leadership guides the processes in which persons or members of an organization seek to find their calling or meaning of life, and express or match the inner voices of people with both the shared goals of the community that they feel part of and their own goals. When examining the factors that prepare the arrival of spiritual leadership and spirituality in workplace, these points should be considered:

- Company mergers and takeovers cause feelings of insecurity among the workers and lead them into a state where they need to have more inner peace and security.

- People of middle age may start to question their life and the goals they have.

- New ages or millenniums cause people to think more as to where humanity was and will be and what role their job will play in people's future.

Spiritual leadership encompasses "spirit, spirituality and its relationship with religion, [and] workplace spirituality" concepts. Workplace spirituality includes spiritual leadership related-practices that are employed in daily job activities (Baloğlu & Karadağ, 2009). Workplace spirituality has been defined as "a framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promote employees' experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy" (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003). People have to meet some of their needs, one of which is spirituality. In places where spirituality is overlooked and not cared for, a significant decline in the levels of motivation, enthusiasm, and finding meaning in a job is seen (Kriger & Seng, 2005). When people see their organization's spirituality, they behave more ethically, are more attached to work, and less likely to worry; this is supported by the related literature in that more humanistic workplaces exhibit more productive, flexible, and creative characteristics (Eisler & Montouori, 2003).

A spiritual leader is someone that prepares a suitable atmosphere for the spiritual needs of his followers in an organization through his decisions and practices, and moves the organization willingly toward its goals by infusing the people around him with workplace happiness, calling, and membership— a sense of wholeness. Leadership in spirituality is related to a person's awareness of the bond between his inner world and outside (Kakabadse et al., 2002). In short,

a person can be recognized as spiritual as long as he is consistent in his feelings that are shown through his actions, and maintains the balance of his inner and outer world. A spiritual leader helps others in the organization maintain their inner life and considers their differing needs in a way so that all members can have genuine care, concern, and appreciation for both themselves and others.

**Spiritual Leadership Theory**

The theory of Fry (2003) defines spiritual leadership as "comprising the values, attitudes, and behaviors that are necessary to intrinsically motivate one's self and others so that they have a sense of spiritual survival through *calling* and *membership*." This leadership entails:

- Creating a vision wherein leaders and followers experience a sense of calling in that their life has meaning and makes a difference, in the sense that calling refers to an experience of transcendence or how one makes a difference through service to others and, in doing so, derives meaning and purpose in life. Thus, calling is a vital step in constructing the vision.

- Producing a sense of membership and feeling of being understood and appreciated through establishing a social/organizational culture based on altruistic love whereby leaders and followers have genuine care, concern, and appreciation for both self and others. This social connection can help members form a sense of being understood and appreciated through interrelationship and connection through social interaction.

Chen and Yang (2012) define spiritual leadership theory as a combination of the motivation-based perspectives from previous leadership theories (e.g., the emphases on intrinsic motivation of transformational and charismatic leadership) with the religious-based perspective (e.g., religions and spirituality place great emphasis on giving care and love toward others), the ethic-based perspective (e.g., treating organizational stakeholders or customers with service and responsible attitudes), and the value-based perspective (e.g., fostering an organizational culture that values employees' meaning of work and friendly interpersonal relationships). Spiritual leadership emerges from the interactions of altruistic love, vision, and hope/faith of organizational members (Fry, Hannah, Noel, & Walumba, 2011). Therefore, in the theory of spiritual leadership, vision, altruistic love, and hope/faith are core to the understanding of spiritual leadership.

**Vision**

Vision is the epitome of the ideal in the minds of doers. Vision defines the attractive future for an organization, which also places it in a motivator role since it aims to bring out the best in the members (Aydın & Ceylan, 2009). Vision serves three important functions by clarifying the general direction of change: telling where to go, simplifying hundreds or thousands of more detailed decisions, and helping to quickly and efficiently coordinates the actions of many different people (Fry, 2003).

**Altruistic Love**

Altruistic love is about accepting and loving everyone the way they are (Polat, 2011), thus creating unconditional, loyal, and benevolent intimacy between a person and others. Altruistic love creates a sense of wholeness, harmony, and well-being in the organization. Altruistic love serves an important mission by removing "(my)self" among people and putting "(our)selves" instead.

**Hope/Faith**

Hope is a desire with expectation of fulfillment; faith adds certainty to hope, which is based on values, attitudes, and behaviors that demonstrate certainty and trust that what is desired and expected will come to pass, though there may not be any empirical evidence (Fry et al., 2011). Faith is critical since the power in this leads individuals and provides the hope that the journey of life is worth to going on (Sweeney, Hannah, & Snider, 2007). Hope/faith makes people more optimistic about life and their expectations, which helps people create their own vision and prepares them for obstacles or hardships.

**Organizational Citizenship Behaviors**

Organizational Citizenship Behaviors, which were studied under the context of organizational behaviors, may be traced back to the 1930s and appeared as an independent notion in the 1980s (Karaaslan, Özler, & Kulaklıoğlu, 2009). Organizational citizenship is a set of effective behaviors that that are not explicitly written in the part of the job/business descriptions, but promotes the health of business subtly. Organ (1988, p. 4) defines OCB as "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization." OCB means that persons will put in a "gladly-done extra effort" that goes beyond the basic requirements of the job and was not forced to by any written rule (Atalay, 2005). In fact, corporations where only written rules and explicit impositions are employed are weak in essence and are not expected to last long during these innovative and dynamic times (Wyss, 2006). To be successful in today's competitive world, OCB helps organizations or corporations accelerate toward innovation and productive measures.

Authorities are unable to force these behaviors as they result from people's own willing preferences and include those behaviors that contribute more to the effectiveness of the organization (Organ, 1997). In addition to the fact that OCB includes willingness, personal preference, and implicit effort, related literature has made important points about OCB throughout the years (Karaaslan et al., 2009, pp. 138-139):

- OCB is not in any direct relationship with a punishment and reward system and does not develop by means of this.

- These behaviors are embedded in organizational activities and are only related to and organization's functioning and its effectiveness.

- OCB is not written in any job's definition and results occur from people's own personal extra effort.

- These behaviors do not only contribute to an organization but also to the doer, himself.

Organizations cannot achieve competitive advantage over others just by offering products or delivering services in which we realize human resource undoubtedly plays a vital role. That is the reason why today many organizations are paying great attention to employee engagement and motivate employees to achieve organizational goals effectively (Mensoor, Danial, Javad, Ashraf, & Shabbir, 2012). It is clear that any organization that does not motivate its members, attempt to meet their expectations, understand their emotions and attitudes, present a good career plans for all workers, and does not prove its sincerity toward it employees with good practices is not expected create a difference over other organizations in the future (Gürbüz, 2006). Hence, OCB helps organizations protect themselves from negative work environments and increases productiveness, cooperation, and visible performance. OCB is closely connected to organizations' learning identities and harmony and commitment among

its members. To promote OCB in an organization, factors effecting OCB should be considered, such as a person's spiritual well-being, character, attitude toward the job, participation level in the decision, needs and also organizational justice, hierarchy or seniority, organizational vision, person-organization integration, organizations as well as leaders' characteristics, and job satisfaction (Yücel & Samancı, 2009)

There are many dimensions connected to OCB. After an extensive literature research, it was found that 30 different citizenship behaviors have been defined and a multidimensional structure of OCB has been examined (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000). However most known taxonomies are laid down by Organ (1997) who listed OCB under five groups: Altruism, Conscientiousness, Sportsmanship, Courtesy and Civic Virtue.

### Altruism

Altruism is all voluntary behaviors, specifically aimed at helping others in an organizationally relevant issue or in relation to problems in the organization (Kamer, 2001). Helping a colleague who has a large workload by working overtime with him or providing relevant information for a new-comer are good examples of altruism.

### Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness relates to the discretionary behaviors that help the organization in general and go beyond the minimum role requirements of the organization (Organ, 1990). Conscientiousness covers the behaviors that reflect the genuine acceptance and adherence of workplace rules, regulations, and procedures in a manner above what is expected (Podsakoff et al., 2000). Conscientiousness is paying attention to organizational rules and procedures, even when no one is watching or nearby.

### Sportsmanship

Sportsmanship means being tolerant in less-than-ideal conditions and avoiding complaining and blowing problems out of proportion. Behaviors included in the sportsmanship dimension are tolerance, respect, and avoidance from nonsense problems/talk (Altınbaş, 2008). Organ, Podsakoff, and MacKenzie (2006) define sportsmanship as an employee's "ability to roll with the punches," even if

they do not like or agree with the changes that are occurring within the organization. Examples of this dimension are avoiding pettiness such as gossip, and not complaining about trivial matters.

### Courtesy

Courtesy is a discretionary behavior that prevents work-related problems with other employees. Informing other parties before the decisions that may affect them is connected to courtesy (Deluga, 1995). Courtesy includes constructive behaviors toward others and getting others' opinions in cases they are likely to be affected. It encompasses being polite and considerate of others to prevent conflict.

### Civic Virtue

Civic virtue is defined as responsibly participating in and having concerns for an organization (Çınar, 2000). It is characterized by behaviors that indicate an employee's deep concerns and active interest in the life of the organization (Law, Wong, & Chen, 2005). People with civic virtue in an organization are expected to be responsible and active, taking part in all practical and political processes for the benefit of all, while also monitoring for possible threats that could harm the well-being of the organization.

### Purpose

This study attempts to define the relationship between school principals' spiritual leadership level(s) and their dimensions of OCB (Altruism, Sportsmanship, Conscientiousness and Civic Virtue) from the perspectives of primary school teachers.

## Method

### Model

A quantitative survey was performed on a sample of teachers from primary schools to study the influence of spiritual leadership on OCB. In this regard, the spiritual leadership as an independent variable and the organizational citizenship behavior subscales: "altruism, sportsmanship, conscientiousness, civic virtue'" were checked for their inter-correlations and subject to regression analysis.

### Study Group

Questionnaires were distributed to 383 randomly selected teachers from seven primary schools in the

city center of Şanlıurfa, which has 19,617 teachers working in government schools. 395 teachers working in these schools agreed to take part in the study group and 12 of the questionnaires were discarded due to not being correctly filled out. The demographic information about the 383 volunteers is given below in Table 1.

Table 1
*The Demographic Situation of the Volunteers*

| Attributes | Variable | No | Per cent (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Woman | 194 | 50.5 |
| | Man | 189 | 49.2 |
| Marital Status | Married | 106 | 27.6 |
| | Single | 278 | 72.4 |
| Years in the profession | 0-5 years | 122 | 31.8 |
| | 6-10 years | 102 | 26.6 |
| | 11-15 years | 78 | 20.3 |
| | 16-20 years | 41 | 10.7 |
| | 21- More years | 40 | 10.4 |
| Education Level | Associate Degree | 30 | 7.8 |
| | Bachelor's Degree | 336 | 87.5 |
| | Master | 17 | 4.4 |
| | PhD | 1 | .3 |
| Years in the school | 0-5 years | 270 | 70.3 |
| | 6-10 years | 87 | 22.7 |
| | 11-15 years | 14 | 3.6 |
| | 16-20 years | 10 | 2.6 |
| | 21- More years | 3 | .8 |
| Branch | Preschool Teacher | 56 | 14.6 |
| | Field Teacher | 185 | 48.2 |
| | Primary School Teacher | 143 | 37.2 |
| Career Level | Trainee Teacher | 47 | 12.2 |
| | Teacher | 296 | 77.1 |
| | Expert Teacher | 40 | 10.4 |
| | Head Teacher | 1 | .3 |

**Instruments**

Data were gathered by two scales, first of which was the Spiritual Leadership Scale (SLS) developed by Fry (2007). The SLS is a five point Likert scale that has nine subscales with forty questions; it was adapted into Turkish by Kurtar (2009). Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient, in this study, was found to be .95. The Organizational Citizenship Scale is based on Organ's (1988) five subscales and later developed by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990), and Moorman (1991). It is a five point Likert scale, with 20 items; the five dimension scale was adapted into Turkish by Polat (2007). Although the original version had five dimensions, varimax indicated the scale were four dimensions in Turkish culture. The Altruism and Courtesy dimensions of the original scale were gathered under the same factor and this was supported by the literature since both dimensions include helping others. The two dimensions were named under one factor as altruism and the other

dimensions stayed as presented in the original version: conscientiousness, civic virtue, and sportsmanship.

**Procedures**

All the related literature was reviewed and questionnaires were distributed to the volunteering study groups in seven schools located at the center of Şanlıurfa province. Responses were exported to SPSS 20 for analysis. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and Stepwise Linear Regression Analysis techniques were used in the analysis processes. Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated to examine the relationships between Spiritual Leadership and each of OCB dimensions. A stepwise regression analysis was applied to predict Spiritual Leadership (dependent variable) using dimensions of OCB as independent variables, which were entered into the analysis along with the dependent variable of Spiritual Leadership.

**Results**

**Descriptive Data and Inter-Correlations**

Descriptive statistics were run for the independent and dependent variables. Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations for the descriptive statistics of the variables that were used.

Table 2
*Mean and Standard Deviation of Spiritual Leadership (SL) and OCB Subscales*

| Variables | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|
| Altruism | 4.22 | .50 |
| Civic virtue | 3.98 | .61 |
| Sportsmanship | 4.12 | .73 |
| Conscientiousness | 4.42 | .60 |
| SL | 4.20 | .41 |

A correlation matrix is provided in Table 3 below. All the variables are inter-correlated. Findings show that there is positive correlation between Spiritual Leadership and the dimensions of OCB.

Table 3
*Correlation matrix between Spiritual Leadership and OCB*

| | 1 | 2 |
|---|---|---|
| 1. SL | - | |
| 2. OCB | .60** | - |

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level.

Stepwise multiple regression analyses for the variables predicting the four OCB subscales are respectively provided below in Tables 4.

Table 4

*Summary of Forward Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis for Variable Predicting OCB Dimensions*

| Variables | B | Standard error of B | β | t |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Step 1 (Altruism) | .35 | .040 | .42 | 9.041 |
| Step 1 (Civic Virtue) SL | .60 | .04 | .57 | 13.737 |
| Step 1 (Conscientiousness) SL | .34 | .049 | .33 | 6.972 |
| Step 1 (Sportsmanship) SL | .43 | .06 | .34 | 6.972 |

$p \leq .05$.

According to the results of the multiple regression analysis summarized in Table 4, SL entered the equation, accounting for 17% of the variance in predicting Altruism ($R^2 = .17$, adjusted $R^2 = .17$, $F(1, 382) = 81.74$, $p < .05$). SL entered the equation, accounting for 33% of the variance in predicting Civic Virtue ($R^2 = .33$, adjusted $R^2 = .32$, $F(1, 382) = 188.643$, $p < .05$). SL entered the equation, accounting for 11% of the variance in predicting Conscientiousness ($R^2 = .11$, adjusted $R^2 = .11$, $F(1, 382) = 48.61$, $p < .05$). SL entered the equation, accounting for 12% of the variance in predicting Sportsmanship ($R^2 = .12$, adjusted $R^2 = .11$, $F(1, 382) = 52.643$, $p < .05$).

**Discussion**

Spiritual Leadership and the dimensions of OCB were tested with regression analysis. All the variables are seen to correlate with each other significantly from moderately to strongly and it is seen that spiritual leadership predicts all four dimensions of OCB, especially civic virtue. This leadership may strongly contribute in forming more solid ground for OCB to pervade in an organization.

When the literature is examined in terms of spiritual leadership, and spirituality in relation to OCB, it has been shown that there is a good relationship between both notions as found in this study. Likewise, Doostar, Chegini, and Pourabbasi (2012) conducted research on whether there is a significant relationship between each of the components of spiritual intelligence and organizational citizenship behavior and found spirituality as a predictor of OCB in their study. According to Rastgar, Zarei, Davoudi, and Farlash (2012) workplace spirituality has a significant positive influence on both organizational citizenship behavior and job performance. Shaw (1999) conducted research that support this idea and that found that workers who are in a positive spiritual mood exhibit higher-level work performances, a fact that may highlight the importance of leadership based in spirituality. Piroozfar (2013) found significant differences between all aspects of workplace spirituality and citizenship behavior, followed by another finding that notes the incidence of organizational citizenship behavior is more in the high levels of spirituality and its dimensions. Raddanipour and Siadat (2013) also found a positive and significant relationship between spiritual leadership and organizational citizenship behavior along with a significant relationship between altruism and courtesy within education. According to the study conducted by Reave (2005) that reviews over 150 studies, there is found to be a clear consistency between spiritual values and practices and effective leadership since values, which have long been considered spiritual ideals such as integrity, honesty, and humility, have been demonstrated to have an effect on leadership success. This effect could be broadened into OCB.

People with a high sense of spiritually or desire to find meaning at work exhibit a high sense of industry and are more indulged in their work. Oginde (2011) stated in his research, "the results, in general, support spirituality as a predictor of OCB, but individuals need a high sense of calling and membership to effectively perform OCB." Likewise, Geh (2010) claimed "spirituality at work leads to desirable behaviors exhibited by employees through influencing their attitudes." A spiritual organization that fosters a sense of meaning and flexible structure can create a happier and more fulfilling place for its members; this allows members to find meaning at work and act in a more engaged manner within their activities, apply their full potential to work, and bring their entire selves to the organization without any rules imposed on them, thus being a good organizational productive member (Baloğlu & Karadağ, 2009; Duchon & Plowman, 2005).

Chen and Yang (2012) found in their study that the intrinsic motivation effects cause facilitated employees to perform excellent OCB when employees experienced meaningful work and a sense of membership toward the organization. They note that, "employees experiencing a sense of membership toward an organization would generate the feeling of an extended family in the organization." So, if employees experience meaningful work and a sense of membership toward the organization, they perform excellent OCB, including the altruism of assisting co-workers and the responsible conscientiousness of individuals. This is in line with the research findings which showed that meaning/calling is a strong predictor of the both conscientiousness and altruism; however, no significant relationship was

found between membership and OCB dimensions.

Within similar studies, it was seen that spiritual leadership is a predictor of OCB. Likewise, Smith, Organ, and Near (1983) found that people having positive spiritual features showed more OCB, and altruistic behaviors were seen to increase when they were prepared in an environment with a positive mood. Brief and Motowidlo (1986) stated that people with spiritual well-being exhibit pro-social behaviors, including OCB more. Since leader emphasis on spiritual needs in the workplace produces beneficial outcomes for the individual and organization, spiritual leadership can foster higher levels of positive effects on employee health, their psychological and spiritual well-being, organizational commitment, productivity, and, ultimately, organizational performance (Fry, 2003, 2005).

Spirituality in the workplace can exist without pressuring individuals since spirituality expresses itself not so much in words or preaching, but in the embodiment of spiritual values such as integrity, honesty, and humility as well as in the demonstration of spiritual behavior including the actions of caring and showing concern (Reave, 2005). This is somewhat similar to a possible interpretation of OCB, willingly performed and helpful acts of persons for the good of organization or other people without being under pressure or any written rule. OCB is not expressed in words, but though willing acts and includes caring and concern for others as in "altruism."

Spiritual leadership is not only directly linked with OCB, but also with many other variables that are related to OCB; Polat (2011) found the relationship among spiritual leadership and other variables such as organizational development, loyalty, commitment, job satisfaction, adopting to the job, organizational integration, identification, harmony, positive climate, morale, interaction and affinity between members, individual and organizational health, workplace peace, ethical environment, trust, collaboration, satisfaction, motivation, productivity, success, performance, efficiency.

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