

## **FUNDAMENTALS OF SPIRITUAL MANAGEMENT ACCORDING TO ISLAM; (CASE STUDY: TOP AND MIDDLE LEVELS MANAGERS OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES OF SHAHRE-KORD CITY)**

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### **Abstract**

The importance of taking into account spiritual management in organizations has attracted experts' attention. Spiritual management is an emerging phenomenon which helps managers in disturbed and turbulent periods as a persistent resource. Managers act to implement spiritual management in their organizations and in first step, managers' familiarity and action according to fundamentals of spiritual management is of primary importance so that they can found their organizational structures in accordance with defined patterns of humanity and moral values. Using religious references in interpretation of these fundamentals is concerned. Taking into account the significance of the principles, after collecting a questionnaire from 189 top and middle levels managers; it was revealed that although many of the managers consider their behavior as positive in accordance with aforesaid fundamentals, they failed in actuating and institutionalizing these principles in organization. Results showed that organizations success in achieving goals is not restricted to the application of motivating tools such as rewards and personnel require something more than such issues which are institutionalized by managers in the form of trustworthy, commitment, piety and etc. as components of spiritual management.

**Keywords:** principles, fundamentals, spiritual management, Islam

### **Introduction**

From the past times, managements have been a frequently used term. Millions years before, early humans went on spent their time. Administration in its present sense has a special place in humanities. For importance of this keyword, thousands of books, paper, research, seminar, conference and so on and written and held to inform human communities that administration is an important as well as difficult issue. In definition, management is prediction of activities necessary for achieving to future goals of the organization (Rezaeian, 1986). Some define management as science, art, coordination of efforts and controlling efforts of organizations members to achieve a certain goal. The era in which we live is named the era of complexity and transformation. In this era, organizations are on the edge and order and disorder and are continually in a paradoxical state. To face such conditions, experts and theorists of management defined various

theories such as learning, holographic and entrepreneur organizations and chaos theory. Spirituality in organization is an emerging concept which attracted a great deal of attention of theorists and organizations in each level. In this way, some of them consider spirituality as a persistent resource for organization which can help them in disturbed conditions, address the disorders of the organization and without rejecting any of them, and utilize each of them in an efficient manner since organizations require a permanent reciprocation between change and stability to have a regular activity in various fields (Gerald, 1999). Organization and management category either theoretical or practical, is affected by a strong force and if it is managed in an appropriate manner, it appears that it has the capability to lead to deepest collaborations not only in professional fields, but also leads to a complete humanity (Neal, 1997)

Managers are increasingly encouraged to combine management and spirituality. This combination brings about the deepest values which are effective in their works and at the same time, will be a sign of more success. For some common interests, managers have constrained themselves to spirituality (Mitroff, 1999). Since spirituality is used in various fields, its definition is difficult. Spirituality is a long lasting concern of the man. However, critical and comparative study of it is an emerging issue. Various religions do not have an exact definition for spirituality. Nevertheless, today, spirituality has found generality and here, some definitions of spirituality are presented:

In a more comprehensive and exact, spirituality is defined as “an effort to develop sensitivity against self, others, non-human creatures and extreme power (god) or a query for what is necessary for being human and a research for becoming a perfect man. (Hinnelles, 1995)”

In Iranian community, spirituality is based on religion; that is, doctrines of the Islam form the spirituality. The origin of Islamic spirituality consists of Quran and Muhammad’s and Imams statements. Islamic languages have various definitions for western term of spirituality. These terms include the following definitions: these terms include the following meanings: inside, right, heaven, gods bless position, moral perfection concept, beauty, spirit and god mentioning. In Muslims’ opinion, spiritual life is based on both fear from god and loving him, both to surrender to his intention and query for understanding him which is the ultimate goal of the creation. Islamic spirituality is related to Islamic discipline which is made up by religion principles. Spirituality gem of the Islam joins monotheism and is the key to understanding its various aspects (Rastegar, 2005).

#### **Problem statement and research importance**

Today, it seems that in organizational environment, something beyond monetary rewards satisfies the personnel. In fact, spirituality in work describes the experience of personnel whose work is satisfying, meaningful and goal-oriented. Moreover, spiritual management is accompanied by increasing creativity, trustworthy, reliability and job commitment (Gibbon, 2001). A high level of spirituality in organization is necessary as a class of job commitment and efficiency (Baldrige, 2005). Since the term of spirituality is used in various fields, its definition is difficult. Spirituality is the long lasting concern of the man. Various religions failed to provide a right definition for spirituality. Nevertheless, today, spirituality has become a general term and is used in different contexts such as energy, goal and awareness in life (Cavana, 1999). Spirituality is continuous exploration to find

life goal and meaning, deep understanding of it, world extent, available natural forces and the system of personal beliefs (Myers, 1990). Interest for spirituality and humanity values is increasing more than ever. Postmodern leaders must acknowledge that the man needs to find life meaning in work path. Spiritual management is an experience of relationship and mutual trust among people who collaborate in a working process which is formed by optimism and personal goodwill, will lead to the development of a motivational organizational culture and performance improvement and finally will bring about human and organization sublimation (Kazemi, 2004).

One of the major problems of state administrative system is unfamiliarity and absence of implementation of principles, fundamentals and criteria arisen from rules and verses which challenges managers and administrative system. Lack of organizational fairness, trustworthy, humility and selfishness of the managers and forgetting poor people will get the society into fall and corruption. Therefore, it is essential that managers, as pilot of the society ship, be themselves familiar with valued principles of management and encourage personnel and society to learn about humanity and valued principles.

#### **Theoretical basics**

Regarding spiritual management, basics and components especially in organizations, various implications from theorists of management point of view and in Muslims' holy script are provided which is briefly discussed below:

#### **Spirituality at work**

Spirituality at work is an experience of communication and mutual trust between persons who collaborate in a work process whereby optimism and personal goodwill is developed and leads to establishment of a motivational organizational culture and overall performance improvement which brings about sustainable sublimation of the organization (Marques, 2006).

Following concepts can be drawn from spirituality:

- Progress and development of the man including mental growth, problem solving and personal learning are basic tools of personal maturity.
- Spiritual development reflects satisfaction of personal needs, especially belonging and high level needs such as sense of success.
- Spirituality at work is strengthened by organization leaders, organizational culture and action plan. Sensitivity and sympathy to personnel must be present in all strategies. Increasing tendency toward development and persistence of spirituality at work results from two commercial development flows. One branch is arisen from technological – economical need. Currently, people are those who make the difference (Burack, 1999). Spiritual management, is awareness about the fact that mutual communications, respect and recognition is not limited to ourselves and our privacy, but also, includes all people with whom we work in an orderly or casual arrangement and not only leads to a more suitable working condition, but also will result in a more investment return. In the main part of the literature, spiritual management is a tendency initiated by organization leaders and implemented successfully. Terms such as spiritual leadership, ethical leadership and trustworthy leadership all illustrate methods which are shown as manager responsibility for development of a mental and spiritual environment at work.

### **Aspects of spirituality**

Burack (1999) introduces three bases for a spiritual work environment as inner, external and combined and divides them into four distinct but highly correlated results.

Inner:

1. Leadership and organization: sympathy to personnel, respect to others, actions adaptation and evident consciousness.
2. Personnel: professional skill and knowledge progress, conformity and continuous activities
3. External qualities: adaptation, environmental awareness and responsibility for society
4. Mutual trust and common responsibilities for common interests

Neck and Milimam (1994) imply to the relationship between inner and external aspects of an environment by emphasizing that creative thought patterns will lead to an improvement in understanding and higher spirituality at work. They persist that: personnel who try to improve their thoughts to a higher level of awareness and change their thought from negative to positive, will be able to improve spirituality in their work. By introducing self-leadership by Neck and Milimam means that by a positive application of self-leadership, personnel will learn to have a better understanding about their external reality in their working environment.

### **Inner aspects**

Following statement can show us the importance of inner aspects (Cash et.al, 2000): for spirituality to be informed of general values, must look at inside. (Robins, 1998): performance of someone is his/her ability to carry out his duty and his/her tendency to do so. (Gafurs, 2001): everyone needs something more than earning money and working in life. When our work is compatible with our tendency and is meaningful for us or if we feel that by means of our services or ideas we can make the difference, our spiritual needs will be satisfied. (Kvvy, 1989): our spiritual dimension and commitment depends on our value system. (Therese, 1999): virtually, all the people have an instructive tendency toward making a difference. According to these statements and other quotations available in literatures, a wide variety of inner qualities which provide spiritual environment are recognized. Some of these qualities are morality, trustworthy, faith, respect and trust.

### **Combined aspects**

In combined aspect, in spiritual management of the working environment, there are two characteristics:

1. Increase people awareness about the presence of spiritual management.
2. This improved awareness changes the method which is applied by believers of spirituality and by which make a communication with others. Some of these issues in professional literature, which show the importance of combined strategy in a spiritual environment, include understanding, trustworthy, team orientation and acceptance. (Ducken and Ashmas, 2000) state that organizations have been rational systems for a long time and they are making a spiritual environment, a dimension which deals less with orders and rules and more with meanings, goals and commitment. (Burack, 1999) implies to management based on people which

includes issues such as recognition of people values, tendency toward a comprehensive working environment based on trust, equity, respect and belief. Someone who controls the affairs is manager. Management is the most important factor in persistence of the success and managers play a vital role in maturity, development and progress of the society. In religious sources, we can find a lot of information about the importance of management and qualified managers (Shafiei et.al, 2006). When managers concentrate on implementation of principles and spiritual values in organizations, their organizations achieve their goals (Forouzandeh, 2007). Institutionalization of human values and principles either in society or organization is one of the responsibilities of the managers. Concepts such as equity, commitment, trustworthy, qualification and other valued characteristics are available in management literature which can be regarded to as spiritual management. Due to the importance of the issue of management and key and vital role of this in society, holy script of Muslims, Quran discussed these terms. What differentiates Islamic management from non-Islamic ones is its basic missions and purpose which are designed for the purpose of being closer to god and these principles are all based on maintenance of human values (Ahmadi, 2007). In this paper, we try to assess the characteristics of a sublimated man from Imam Sajjad's point of view. Humans are differentiated from others by these outstanding characteristics. Therefore, it is important that someone who wants to manage a system has recognized characteristics compared to others so that he/she can step toward humanity development and progress. Manager must be able to adapt themselves with these characteristics since in Islamic management; the purpose of management is to develop humanity. In Quran, it is frequently implied to behavioral specifications of humans. Some of the verses of Quran in which it is implied to human specifications and ordered to perform like that are:

(Al Emran; 159) god notifies prophet about being calm and kind, forgiving, consultation and relying on god upon decision

(Al Emran, 134) god respects donation and considers as an opening for affairs and put a great value on avoiding fury and neglecting others mistakes.

(Bagharwh, 83) god emphasizes on good speaking to people.

(Yousef, 55) emphasize on erudite.

(Ghesas, 26) richness and trustworthy.

(Sharoa, 38) consultation with clever people for decision making.

(Asra, 37) unsuitability of humility and selfishness.

(Taha, 25) tolerance which is one of the most important characteristics of managers in spiritual management.

(Hood, 54) seriousness in accomplishment of jobs.

(Naml, 15) paying attention to knowledge and awareness.

(Anbia, 107) compassion and kindness.

(Baghareh, 247) knowledge and ability to do work as two important characteristics of manager and commander.

(Asra, 53) good behavior and interaction with people.

(Nesa, 8) fairness and trustworthy, managers are trustees of people and must perform with fairness and equity.

Prayers of Imam Sajjad are full of humanity values. In these 54 famous prayers of him, many spiritual implications are included which attracts the attention of the man who is mortal and prone to death. However, what is intended by the author includes principles and basics of spiritual management which are implemented by managers in organizations and society and are implied to in Imam’s prayers.

**Research goals**

1. Analysis of principles and fundamentals of spiritual management from Islamic books
2. The level of behavioral conformity and implementation of principles and fundamentals of Islamic books by top and middle level managers

**Research Methodology**

Research method is applied and is carried out by reviewing library references and case studies using Quran. Questionnaire prepared by researcher was used to test the level of behavioral conformity and implementation of principles by top and middle level managers of one administration of Shahr-e-Kord City. Questionnaire was prepared in YES/NO format and executed according to permanency /86 and tolerance /81 of the test. 189 questionnaires were prepared according to Cochran formula and distributed among participants. Obtained results are presented in following table. Top and middle level managers were asked to answer the questions honestly. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the results of the questionnaire.

According to well documented claims, Imam’s prayers are 54 ones discussing various topics and are considered in classifications of the providers of this valuable collection. Prayers for the time of calamity, holy events such as Ramadan, Eid Fetr, request for rain, excusing for faults and so on are included in his prayers. Some of the prayers of the Imam are selected which describe the characteristics of an outstanding manager from Imam’s point of view. According to classification, Imam has 54 prayers from which prayers 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 20, 21 and 41 imply to principles and fundamentals of spiritual management and consequently, managers must take them into account in their management system.

Principles and fundamentals of spiritual management in Islam

No.	Request according to principles	Prayer no.	Content of the prayer
1	Appoint me to a job which you survey it later	1	Responsibility of managers
2	Spent my lifetime for what you created me for	1	Productivity and opportunities
3	Make hate and agony of haters love for me	1	Kindness and forgiving
4	God! You do what you say and respect your promise	2	Respect to promise
5	Make me famous and guide me to remediate	2	Remediate and foreseeing for jobs
6	Guide me to ability	2	Ability to do jobs
7	Get your fury away from me and don’t get me to fury	5	Avoiding god’s fury

8	Don't test me by looking at rich people's properties	5	Avoiding avarice
9	Don't provide me with visual dignity	6	Badness of pretending
10	Upon forgetting, warn me with your memory	7	Remembering god all the times
11	Help me kill the enmity and trouble	8	Trying for peace
12	Give me a calm and quiet life	8	Avoiding luxury
13	Force me to obey which shows me right way	9	Obey
14	Give me full tendency with no doubt	9	Tendency to act for the sake of god
15	Don't give me unsuitable temper	10	Badness of bad temper
16	Finish my life with forgiveness	10	Forgiveness
17	Train me good behavior	10	Kindness and good behavior
18	Give me sacrificing and donation	10	Sacrifice, forgiveness
19	Don't take to a high level of majesty in people's eyes unless you descend me in my eyes	12	Humility and humbleness
20	Make me needless of others	12	Loss of prestige by need to others
21	Help me hide badness and defects	12	Neglecting others' defects
22	Help me make benefit for others and don't waste it by showing off	13	Avoiding showing off
23	Make indifference of others synergy and sympathy for me	14	Making synergy and sympathy
24	Provide me with pious' ornaments by extending fairness and equity	20	Establishment of fairness and equity
25	Provide me with moderation	20	Moderation and abstention
26	Get me far from absents tell tales and bad telling of a present one	20	Tell tales
27	Improve my honesty	20	Honesty and telling truth
28	Empty my speaking from bad, useless words and oath	20	Avoiding oath and useless words
29	Increase my dignity	23	Grace and dignity
30	Improve my good behaviors	41	Social and communicating skills

Table 1: results obtained by behavioral conformity and managers attempts

No.	Index	Percent of behavioral conformity with principles and fundamentals of Spiritual management	Percent of managers attempts to institutionalize principles and fundamentals in organization and among personnel
1	Managers responsibility to jobs	76	90
2	Productivity system and opportunity taking	62	83

3	Loss of prestige by need to people	75	66
4	Avoiding avarice	82	93
5	Avoiding show off for doing jobs	81	64
6	Humility and humbleness	65	86
7	Badness of pretending	86	88
8	Tendency to work for the sake of god	79	92
9	Avoiding god's fury	79	89
10	Kindness and forgiveness	64	75
11	Badness of bad behavior	63	72
12	Making synergy and sympathy	88	62
13	Establishment of fairness and equity	64	58
14	Attempt to make peace	76	88
15	Neglecting others' defects and faults	59	54
16	Good behavior and kindness	61	85
17	Dignity	79	83
18	Social and communicative skills	81	89
19	Sacrifice and forgiveness	96	85
20	Telling truth	90	91
21	Avoiding oath and useless words	88	91
22	Tell tales	65	80
23	Following and obey	90	86
24	Moderation and abstention	92	95
25	Foreseeing and remediation in works	73	92
26	Avoiding luxury	91	82
27	Ability to accomplish jobs	81	70
28	Kindness and forgiveness	83	76
29	Remembering god all the time	95	68
30	Respecting promise	56	90

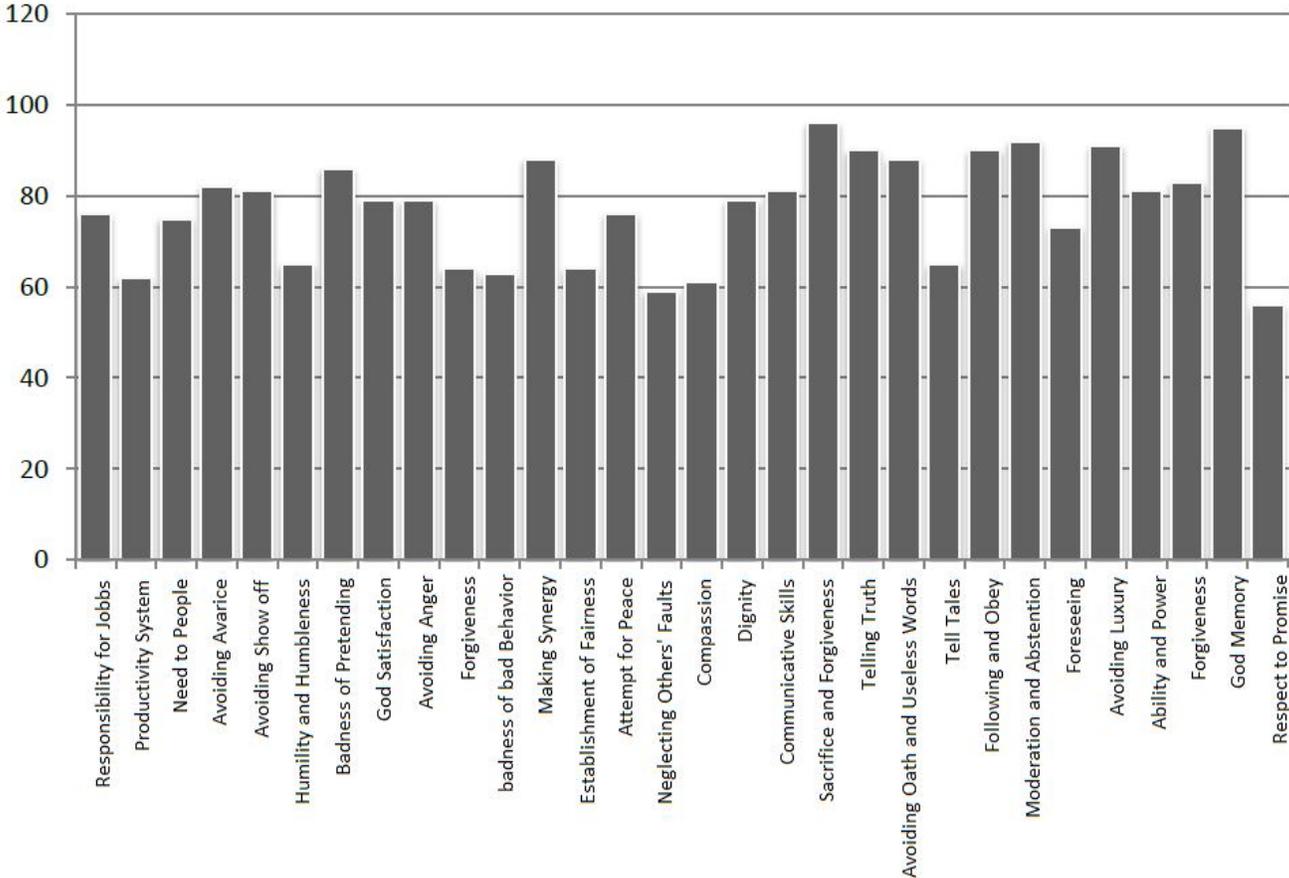


Fig. 1: percent of behavioral conformity with principles and fundamentals of spiritual management

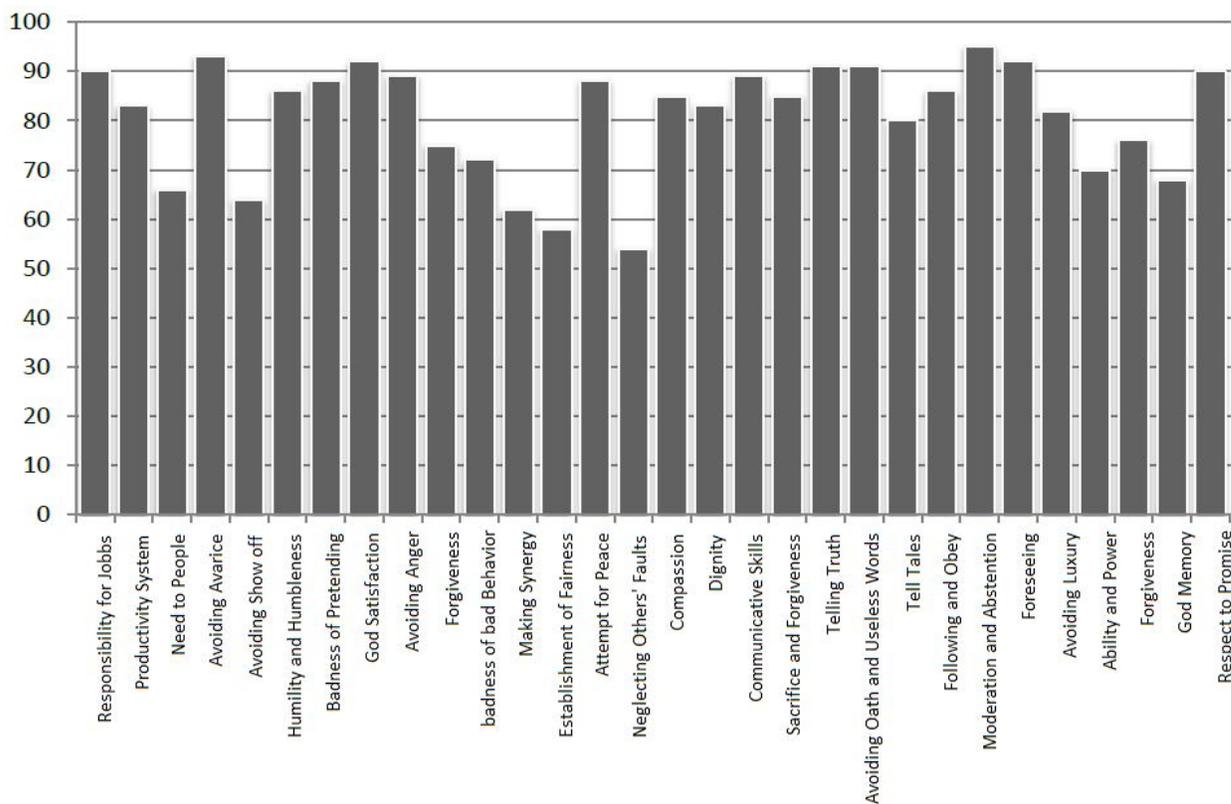


Fig. 2: percent of managers attempts to implement principles and fundamentals of spiritual management

Table 2: abundance of participants according to the number of top and middle level managers

Sex	Top managers	Middle level managers	Total
Female	7	29	36
Male	73	80	153
<b>Total</b>	80	109	189

**Conclusion**

Paying attention to spirituality has long concerned managers. In many researches, the role of spirituality in work is more important than leverages such as rewards and motivational issues and has better results. A right society requires right people; those who are honest, don't treason, are patient and behave away from fury and anger in their social interactions. Managers are responsible to improve such humanity values in society and organizations and besides acting in accordance to these values and principles, try to institutionalize them in organization as well as society. Islamic books are of those valuable references in which the principles and fundamentals of spiritual management are included in Imam's prayers and Imam's words are compatible with values and principles of holy Quran. It can be claimed that Imam's words are god's ones. His criteria are god's and in his opinion,

erudite and great people are recognized by specifications such as honesty, good behavior, respecting promise, avoiding fury and anger, ability to do jobs and so on. Viewpoints of experts such as Myers, Baldrige, Gibbon, Neal, Hinells, Gerdlef and etc. shows the effect of spiritual management on organization and society. Results obtained by these researchers show that success of organizations in better utilization of their personnel and a productivity system depends on valued principles and fundamentals which can help organization in achieving its goals. Results obtained by questionnaire show that a high percent of managers see the principles of spiritual management in their behavioral conformity. However, they were not so good in institutionalizing these principles in their organizations. Results of fig. 1 illustrated that in behavioral conformity of the managers, majority of components correspond to god remembering, sacrifice and forgiveness and making synergy and in fig. 2 moderation, avoiding avarice and god satisfaction earned the highest percent. Therefore, it is important those managers:

1. Try more to improve these principles
2. Attempt to institutionalize them in their organizations specifically among personnel. Obtained results show that in many spiritual management components, managers have low percent but they intend to implement these principles. It seems that managers fail to institutionalize principles of spiritual management in their organizations unless they are not able to have a high level of behavioral conformity.

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