

SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP MODEL(SLM): A CATALYST FOR THE LEARNING ORGANIZATION

Abstract

Learning Organization (LO) is the response to the galloping changes in the work environment. It is a new form of organization which values people and emphasizes on learning to improve performance. Leadership has been identified as one of the most influential factors for the development of learning organization. The LO leader motivates the individuals towards a shared vision, changes the learning model and fosters an environment of learning, and finally, reinforces employees to handle environmental challenges efficiently through empowerment and personal development. This paper explores theoretically how the Spiritual Leadership Model (SLM)(Fry, 2003) enables the LO leader to accomplish their task. In view of the lack of a specific framework on how to transform a traditional organization into a learning organization, this article argues that SLM is a model which can fill in the gap.

Keywords: Learning Organization, Workplace Spirituality, Spiritual Leadership Model

Introduction

The 21st century has been characterized by severe social and economic turbulence that is held responsible for changes in the working landscape. Contemporary firms are knowledge-based and gain competitive advantage through their ability to use, process, analyze and share powerful information and communication technologies at an unprecedented scale and speed. Successful organizations are required to create those organizational conditions, systems and structures that lead to the continual acquisition of and effective application of new knowledge, to become a “learning organization” (Real, Leal and Roldan, 2006). Within the learning organization employees are highly valued and expected to contribute to their company’s success. Workplace spirituality (WS) is the notion that makes this convergence possible. WS can be seen as “a system of interwoven cultural and personal values and changes that impact all aspects of life, including organizational life” (Zinnbauer et al., 1999). The main idea is that a person’s spirit, his animating force, is now welcome within the organization as it helps a person feel more content and complete, it contributes to a harmonious coexistence and cooperation among organizational members and leads to higher employee commitment and productivity (Pfeffer, 2003).

In a similar way, there is emerging evidence that spiritual values and practices are related to leadership effectiveness (Reave, 2005). Organizations have higher levels of employee commitment, productivity, and customer satisfaction when employees’ spiritual needs are met and aligned with organizational vision and values (Duschon & Plowman, 2005; Fry et. al., 2005; Malone & Fry, 2003). Fry (2003) developed a causal spiritual leadership model as an intrinsic-motivation model within the framework of workplace spirituality. Spiritual leadership involves inspiring workers through hope/faith in a vision of service to key stakeholders and a corporate culture based on altruistic love (Fry 2003, 2008).

This article is organized as follows. The first section provides a brief overview of the role of leadership in the learning organization. The second part gives a review of the Spiritual Leadership Model. The section that follows arguments how the SLM contributes to the development of learning organization.

1. The role of Leadership in the Learning Organization

Despite the vast number of studies on LO, there is still considerable disagreement on what a “learning organization” is. Similar to the knowledge-era -of which it is integral part- the LO is an organizational concept that we may still not have attained fully but are approaching, in the same sense as one may be gradually coming closer to an ideal. This fact may explain the reason why up-to-date research on LO is mostly descriptive in nature. In spite of their divergence, there is one syllogism all researchers converge on, though. First premise: In the long run, organizational performance is measured by long-term survival and growth of the firm. Second: In order for organizations to achieve this target, they have to adapt to the environment. This implies that organizations must have the potential to learn and transform themselves (their structures and their intellectual capital) through this learning. And thirdly, in order for this process of organizational learning and adaptability to succeed, three broad factors are essential: a supportive learning environment, concrete learning processes and practices, and leadership behavior that provides reinforcement.

The transition to a learning organization involves change in a complex system (Rijal, 2009). Leadership has been identified as being one of the most important factors that influence the development of learning organization, as the leader motivates the individuals towards a shared vision, changes the mental model and fosters an environment of learning (Johnson, 1998; Prewitt, 2003). Transforming a complex system is difficult without a leader who understands the needs of the situation, the people and the goal and undertakes the necessary action to achieve the transition (Caudron, 1993; Schien, 1993). Kofman and Senge (1993) proposed further that leadership should not be focused in one position or one individual, but it should be a characteristic to be developed in all the members of the organization. Hence, compared to the traditional leadership role, a learning organization calls for a different kind of leadership. Not top-down command and control but leadership that provides a sense of direction to organizational members and facilitates transitions. Senge (1994) suggested that “leaders in learning organizations are responsible for building organizations where individuals continually expand their capabilities to understand complexity, clarify vision, and improve shared mental models, that is, they are responsible for learning”. He identified three leadership roles that are important for building a learning organization. “Leaders as designers” who design the social architecture in which others operate, build a shared vision and foster an

environment where learning can flourish. “Leaders as teachers” who conceptualize and articulate the reality so that followers perform at a higher level of performance. “Leaders as stewards” who develop their sense of purpose and set an example to the followers. Similarly, Marquardt (1996) identified six leadership roles in a learning organization. Like Senge’s role of “teacher”, he considers the role of “instructor”, “coach” and “mentor” as the most important aspect of leadership in learning organization. Marquardt (1996) next identified the role of leader as “knowledge managers”. As “co learners and model for learning”, he considers leaders have to be learners themselves. As “architect and designers”, they are responsible for creating a learning environment. In the role of “coordinator,” leaders bring out the best in followers and motivate them to perform at their best.

The learning organization “will remain a distant vision until leadership capabilities are developed” (Senge, 1990). But how can these capabilities be developed? As most research done on LO is descriptive in nature, this article attempts to cover the implementation gap by proposing a proven model of leadership that encompasses, sustains and develops in the long run the desired LO leadership traits. The model is the Spiritual Leadership Model (SLM)(Fry, 2003). SLM is a causal model of intrinsic motivation developed within the theoretical framework of Workplace Spirituality (WS). Since its development, the SLM has been tested in over 100 organizations ranging in size from a few employees to over 1200, including schools, military units, cities, police, and for profit. These studies have confirmed its reliability and validity. Results to date support a significant positive influence of organizational spiritual leadership on employee and unit performance, life satisfaction, organizational commitment and productivity, and sales growth.

Below follows a description of the SLM model.

2. The Model of Organizational Spiritual Leadership (SLM)

Spiritual Leadership is an emerging paradigm developed within the canvas of the Workplace Spirituality. It has the potential to guide organizational transformation and development of organizations that maximize the triple bottom line: “People, Planet, Profit” (Fry and Slocum, 2008). The purpose of spiritual leadership is to tap into the fundamental needs of both leader and follower for spiritual 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 employee well-being, organizational commitment, financial performance, and social responsibility - the Triple Bottom Line. The model of Organizational Spiritual Leadership (SLM) is composed of four elements: Inner Life, Spiritual Leadership, Spiritual Well-Being and the Triple Bottom Line. (Fig.1)

2.1 Inner Life

Inner life is considered as the source of personal spiritual leadership and the basis for organizational spiritual leadership of groups and organizations (Fry and Cohen, 2009). It is a process of understanding and tapping into one's own divine power, that reflects a common human pursuit to draw strength from a higher power, Supreme Being, or God.

2.2 Spiritual Leadership

Spiritual leadership, with inner life as its source, emerges from the interaction of, hope/faith, vision, and altruistic love. It is described by Fry as an intrinsic motivation process. Intrinsic motivation is defined as interest and enjoyment of an activity for its own sake and is associated with active engagement in tasks that people find interesting and that, in turn, promote growth and satisfy higher order needs. The qualities of Spiritual Leadership are shown in Table 1.

2.2.1 Vision.

Vision refers to a picture of the future with some implicit or explicit commentary on why people should strive to create that future. In order to motivate change, visions serve three important functions; clarifying the general direction of change, simplifying hundreds or thousands of more detailed decisions, and helping to quickly and efficiently coordinate the actions for oneself or group members. A vision defines the journey and why the leaders and followers are taking it. It energizes workers, gives meaning to work, garners commitment, and establishes a standard of excellence. An effective vision has broad appeal, defines the destination and journey, reflects high ideals, and encourages hope and faith (Daft & Lengel, 1998).

2.2.2 Hope/Faith.

Hope is a desire with expectation of fulfillment. Faith adds certainty to hope. Taken together, Hope/Faith is a firm belief in something for which there is no evidence. It is based on values, attitudes, and behaviors that demonstrate absolute certainty and trust that what is desired and

Figure 1. Model of Organizational Spiritual Leadership



expected will come to pass. Individuals with Hope/Faith have a vision of where they are going, and how to get there. They are willing to face opposition and endure hardships and suffering in order to achieve their goals. Hope/Faith is also the source for the conviction that the vision, either personal or organizational, will be fulfilled. Hope/Faith is demonstrated through effort, action or work. In action, Hope/Faith is like a race that has two essential components—the victory (vision) and the joy preparing for the race itself. Both components are necessary and essential elements of Hope/Faith to generate the necessary effort to pursue the vision.

2.2.3 Altruistic Love.

For Spiritual Leadership, altruistic love is defined as “a sense of wholeness, harmony, and well-being produced through care, concern, and appreciation for both self and others (Fry,

2003).” There are great emotional and psychological benefits from separating love, or care and concern for others from need, which is the essence of giving and serving others unconditionally. The fields of medicine and positive psychology have begun to study and confirm that love has the power to overcome the negative influence of destructive emotions such as resentment, worry, fear, and anger. Underlying this definition are the values of integrity, patience, kindness, forgiveness, humility, selflessness, trust, loyalty, and truthfulness. Altruistic love defines the set of key values, assumptions, understandings and ways of thinking considered to be morally right. Spiritual leaders embody and abide in these values through their everyday attitudes and behavior.

2.3 Spiritual Well-Being

The emergence of spiritual leadership then taps into the fundamental needs of both leader and followers for spiritual well-being by positively enhancing their sense of calling and membership. Calling or being called (vocationally) gives a sense of making a difference in the lives of others. Membership gives a sense of belonging or community. These two elements of spiritual well-being are universal and interconnected human needs.

2.3.1 Calling.

Calling refers to how one makes a difference through service to others and, in doing so, finds meaning and purpose in life. Many people seek not only competence and mastery to realize their full potential through their work, but also a sense that work has some social meaning or value (Pfeffer, 2003). The term calling has long been used as one of the defining characteristics of a professional. Professionals in general have expertise in a specialized body of knowledge. They have ethics centered on selfless service to clients/customers, an obligation to maintain quality standards within the profession, a commitment to their vocational field, a dedication to their work, and a strong commitment to their careers. They believe their chosen profession is valuable, even essential to society, and they are proud to be a member of it. The need for calling is satisfied through both personal and organizational spiritual leadership.

2.3.2 Membership.

Membership includes a sense of belonging and community; the cultural and social structures we are immersed in and through which we seek what William James, the founder of modern psychology, called man's most fundamental need – to be understood and appreciated. Having

Table 1. Qualities of Spiritual Leadership (Fry, 2003)

VISION	ALTRUISTIC LOVE	HOPE/FAITH
Broad Appeal to key Stakeholders	Trust/Loyalty	Endurance
Defines the Destination and Journey	Forgiveness/Acceptance/Gratitude	Perseverance
Reflects High Ideals	Integrity, Honesty, Courage	Do What it Takes
Encourages Hope/Faith	Humility, Kindness, Compassion	Stretch Goals
Establishes Standard of Excellence	Patience/Meekness/Endurance	Expectation of Reward/Victory
	Fun	Excellence

a sense of membership is a matter of interrelationships and connection through social interaction. Individuals value their affiliations, being interconnected, and feeling part of a larger community (Pfeffer, 2003). As we devote ourselves to social groups, membership meshes us in a network of social connections that go as far as the group has influence and power, and backwards and forwards in relation to its history.

2.5 Triple Bottom Line

Positive personal and organizational outcomes are generated as a result of satisfying employees' fundamental need for spiritual well being. Socially responsible companies such as the Body Shop, Timberline, Proctor and Gamble (P&G), Weleda, Starbucks, and Ben and Jerry's are widely acknowledged for having vision and values that go beyond short-term profit, while growing a sustainable enterprise that also places great emphasis on employee well-being. These organizations demonstrate the qualities of spiritual leadership that positively influences spiritual well-being and the triple bottom line.

It is beyond the scope of this article to elaborate on the triple bottom line and how the implementation of the SLM affects productivity, profitability, employee well-being and social responsibility. Here we will focus on the SLM leadership qualities that create a common organizational vision and reinforce the establishment of a culture where a LO can thrive.

3. SLM and the Learning Organization

As mentioned above, in order to transform a traditional organization into a learning organization, a leader will have to intervene in three ways. Firstly, by creating a common organizational vision. Secondly, by modeling learning behavior and creating a learning environment and thirdly, by helping employees handle environmental challenges by means of empowerment and personal development. I argue that the SLM leader satisfies all three conditions.

3.1. A common organizational vision

To start with, Fry chooses to define SLM leadership as “the art of mobilizing others to want to struggle for shared aspirations” (Kouzes and Pozner, 1987). “Shared aspirations” refer to common goals or objectives; i.e. “to a picture of the future with some implicit or explicit commentary on why people should strive to create that future” (Kotter, 1996 p.68). “Mobilize” means “motivate”. “Struggle” signifies “persevere” and carries with it the elements of hope/faith. By the choice of the definition, it is explicit that the SLM leader acts as a LO leader. He is a “designer” (Senge, 1990), “steward” (Senge, 1990) and “coordinator” (Marquardt, 1996). A LO leader as “designer” clarifies the general direction of change (Senge, 1990) i.e. “defines the journey” (Fry & Nisiewicz, 2012). As “steward” “develops the followers’ sense of purpose and sets an example to them” (Senge, 1990) i.e. “defines why the leaders and followers are taking this journey” (Fry & Nisiewicz, 2012). Finally, as “coordinator” brings out the best in followers and motivates them to do their best” (Marquardt, 1996). An effective vision energizes workers, gives meaning to work, garners commitment, and establishes a standard of excellence (Fry & Nisiewicz, 2012). The SLM leader creates a collective organizational vision. The vision is powerful because it is intrinsic. It is part of the employees’ personal vision, “calling” or “personal spiritual quest for meaning and purpose” (Korak-Kakabadse et al, 2010). Individuals have a sense of calling when they feel

that their life has meaning and makes a difference not only through competence and mastery but also by contributing to some social meaning or value (Fry 2003).

3.2. Modeling learning behavior and creating a learning environment

Secondly, the LO leader should be a “coach” and “mentor” (Marquardt, 1996) in order to model learning behavior and create a learning environment. For the purpose of assuming this role successfully, the leader should first shift their own habits and ways of working by being themselves a learner (Prewitt, 2003). Once this challenge is met, the leader should enable organization members to understand the environmental complexity and think of new ways of solving problems and develop mechanisms for the transfer of learning from individuals and teams into the organization’s store of knowledge and experience (Sadler, 2003). This attitude, in the long run, can lead to learning-seeking behaviors in individuals and hence, foster a climate of learning in the organization (Garvin, 1993). In this process mistakes are accepted as necessary for learning (Ancona et al., 1999; Bass, 2000; McGill & Slocum, 1992).

An organizational culture which does not punish but celebrates the noble effort of its employees replaces the extrinsic motivation -an outcome of fear and control (Daft, 2001)- with intrinsic motivation resulting from an individual’s basic need for competence, relatedness and autonomy. Intrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985). It has been shown to be associated with better learning, performance and well being (Benware & Deci, 1984; Valas & Slovic, 1993). Intrinsic rewards result from the internal experience one has in performing a task that one feels gives satisfaction through its performance (Fig.2a). In this sense, performance and reward become one and the same. Figure 2b illustrates the components of the Spiritual Leadership intrinsic motivation model. In SLM, the reward is feeling part of the “altruistic love” culture while performing for the accomplishment of a common organizational vision. Examples of such a fusion of reward and performance can be solving a problem at work that benefits other, the fulfillment of a personal mission, being part of a “winning” team, or completion of a complex task that gives a pleasant feeling of accomplishment (Fry, 2003).

Another point that should be clarified when we refer to modeling learning behavior is the definition of a LO leader’s role “as teacher” (Senge, 1990). A “teacher” should help

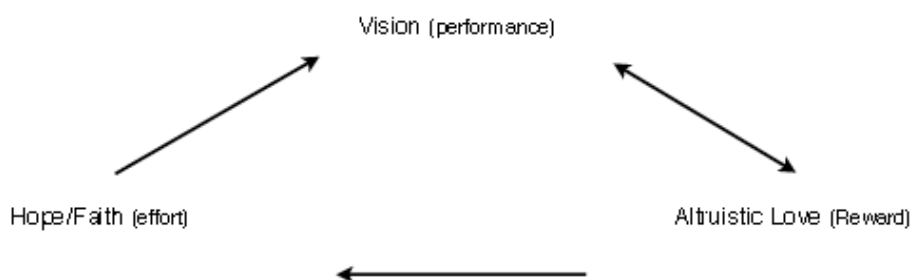
employees deconstruct old paradigms and establish new ones. It is true that the knowledge-based era brought unique changes to the organizational landscape and the employment models- among other. It shifted the focus of production from the machine to the human mind and made knowledge the ‘immediately productive force’ (Stehr 1994 p.185). These profound changes were the result not only of the galloping advances in ICT and globalization but also

Figure 2: Intrinsic Motivation Model

2a. Leadership Model of Intrinsic Motivation



2b. Fry's Causal Spiritual Leadership Model



of the decline of the positivist orthodoxy of Modernism. Despite its promise, Modernism failed to provide an objective understanding of the world that would enable our control of it. In its place emerged Postmodernism in the late 1960s. It holds that the world is not known objectively at all (Boisot & McKelvey, 2010). What is known as “scientific” knowledge is merely the outcome of variegated aims, actions and interactions, and conventions of humans; creation of humankind, shaped by local historical and cultural contexts serving the ideological agenda of powerful elites (Foucault, 1975; Kuhn, 1966). Within this “all-permitting relativist” context, an aspiring LO leader will have to determine first the new ontological and epistemological paradigm on which learning will be modeled. Without a clear and solid

ontological and epistemological foundation, any effort to model new learning patterns will remain limited, artificial and insincere. Authentic transformation presupposes change on individuals' mental patterns. The SLM provides the ontological and epistemological paradigm that the LO leader desperately needs by uniquely combining the postmodern societal perception of personal fulfillment with humanistic cardinal values.

We start by exploring how the SLM satisfies the relativist perception of personal fulfillment. Despite the unprecedented materialistic prosperity that followed the end of World War II (the lowest two levels of Maslow's pyramid of needs "physiological needs" and search for "security" have been met), satisfaction of the needs at the pyramid's pinnacle remains elusive. Individuals still continue to seek esteem and self-actualization, needs that were satisfied in the past by religious and societal norms that provided a "cocooning" framework. Religion in the early 21st century has become another institutional system, and the family and small community nucleus have been replaced by the benevolent state and global IT network communities. Due to the increased time employees spend at work, their personal needs have also been transferred to the workplace. Employees are seeking to merge their personal and professional values, desiring to achieve personal fulfillment through their work (Block, 1993). They depend upon their workplaces for primary links to other people (Jurkiewicz et al., 1998) as well as for their social identity (Cartwright and Cooper, 1997). The postmodern societal perception of personal fulfillment refers mainly to personal growth and less to career development. Pfeffer (2003, p.32) defined "four fundamental dimensions of what employees seek for at the workplace. (1) interesting work that permits them to learn, develop, and have a sense of competence and mastery; (2) meaningful work that provides some feeling of purpose; (3) a sense of connection and positive social relations with their coworkers; and (4) the ability to live an integrated life, so that one's work role does not conflict with his or her essential nature and who the person is as a human being". The first two dimensions are directly related to calling and the second two dimensions to membership of the SLM model. The SLM calling refers to people seeking to develop competence and mastery to realize their full potential through their work (intrinsic motivation). Beyond satisfying that level of personal accomplishment, the SLM taps into the experience of transcendence or how one makes a difference through service to others, and in doing so, derives meaning and purpose in life. Dimensions 3 and 4 are fulfilled by the culture of "altruistic love" which appreciates and

respects the individuality of its employees and supports them to balance work life with personal and family life.

The second contribution of the SLM to the establishment of an ontological and epistemological paradigm for the LO is the embracement of humanistic, universal cardinal values. The SLM is founded on the notion of spirituality. Spirituality is the essence of who we really are once we take off our “clothes” of culture and education. In its very deepest sense, it reflects our relationship with a higher power. This higher power may or may be not called God (Tart, 1975; Wulff, 1996). “Having left behind the metaphysical claim to objectivity, today none should be able to say, ‘God does not exist’ (Geddicks, 1992). In a sense, spirituality is the return of religion in the workplace, but only by adopting these religious images and interpretations that seem relevant and important to that individual (Fuller, 2001). It follows the dethronement of the Christian “fundamentalist” religion of pre-modernity which was based on its self-confident certainty that its knowledge of the Truth justifies the use of government power to persuade all people to submit to it (Troeltsch, 1911). This acknowledgment establishes a culture of inclusion and harmony in the workplace. Once individuals are not classified by their faith denomination -i.e. religion- and are not discriminated against, they can “grow”. They can feel accepted and appreciated for who they really are. In the growing literature on spirituality in the workplace, there is beginning to be an emerging consensus on which spiritual values are primary or core. The emerging consensus is summarized in the following list: Forgiveness, Kindness, Integrity, Compassion/empathy, Honesty/truthfulness, Patience, Courage/inner strength, Trust, Humility. These are all qualities of the “altruistic love” in the SLM model (Table 1).

The existence of these spiritual values in the organizational culture mean that humanistic practices and policies become an integral part of an organization's day-to-day function. This integration cannot be realized -though- if a “spiritual” training program, for example, has a functional aim to reconcile spirituality with a status quo approach of business. The same goes for a LO. Senge (1990) extensively referred to it when he talked about the “generative learning” process which leads to a total reframing of organization's experiences and learning. Bowles (1989) had suggested that any new discourse will change the meaning of work and behavior in organizations only if there is a fundamental change in the relationships in an

organization and the nature of the relationship that people have with work. In our case, authentic spirituality in the workplace has to fundamentally question accepted models of economic growth as the relationships between current global economic structures and systems and issues of environmental degradation and work-life imbalance become more obvious.

This last point draws our attention to two other elements of the LO. Firstly, its fluidity and “becoming” rather than “having” or “being”; and secondly, the interrelation of its component parts. Senge (1990) described both when he analyzed the discipline of “systems thinking” as the cornerstone of the LO. One of the characteristics of systemic thinking is seeing the organization as a dynamic process. Within this process, in order to comprehend and address the “holon” we should not focus on each part separately. Parts are influenced by relationships with the other components within the system and by relationships with other systems. The SLM possesses systemic qualities as it approaches the organization as a whole whose parts are interdependent. As a holistic model of leadership, it advocates integration of the four fundamental arenas that define the essence of human existence -the body (physical), mind (logical/rational thought), heart (emotions, feelings) and spirit (Moxley, 2000). The notion of spirituality -the core of the SLM model- destines the dynamism of the SLM model. Spirituality is not a static condition of being but it is evolvable; in the same way as a LO organization is dynamic. Hence, the term “spiritual development” is used to describe a holistic psychological process of positive transformation of all aspects of the personality through experience of pure spirituality (Wilber, 1999). Additionally, the SLM takes into consideration all parts (internal and external) of an organization and their interrelationships. These “parts” are called stakeholders. The stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) defines a stakeholder as any individual, group or organization that has a stake in the organization’s performance. An organization run by the SLM develops strategies that take into consideration the expectations of a wider circle of stakeholders than companies traditionally do, such as customers, employees, investors, activists, minorities and the sustainability of our planet. The underlying assumption inherent in stakeholder theory is that overall organizational effectiveness (including profits and shareholder value) is a function of meeting or exceeding the expectations of key stakeholders (Byrne, 2002; Fry, 2005). Organizations inspired by a transcendent organizational vision based on service (calling) with employees interconnected

by a culture of altruistic love (membership) function in society as a whole and are fervent supporters of CSR (Paloutzian, Emmons, & Keortge, 2003).

3.3 Help employees handle environmental challenges through empowerment and personal development.

The third way a LO leader is asked to intervene for the creation of the LO organization is by helping employees handle environmental challenges through empowerment and personal development, by being a “steward” (Senge, 1990) -present when their employees need support. Humans thrive when they feel emotionally secure. Empowerment and personal development are two sides of the same coin. An empowered employee is attributed more responsibility, seeking new challenges, having the feeling of self-worth. Through this attitude the person learns -among other things- to “own” their life, find meaning and purpose at work and becomes a self- motivator. For these changes to occur, a LO leader needs to create an organizational environment that is receptive and supportive of each employee’s individuality; where both leaders and followers have genuine care, concern and appreciation for both self and others. This is the culture of the SLM. The organizational culture that the SLM creates is based on the qualities of “altruistic love”(Fig. 2). It is a culture of acceptance and support; a culture where individuals feel “at home”, are not afraid to make mistakes, can count on their coworkers for assistance. The SLM culture is a culture of membership or interconnection.

The LO governance system is structured around empowered teams par excellence. This condition assumes a relatively flat hierarchy and a high proportion of well-educated, highly trusted employees. These employees are named “knowledge workers”. The term was first introduced by Drucker in the 1960s. Purser and Cabana (1998) described them as “people who think for a living rather than simply following directions”. Kofman and Senge (1993) expanded the idea and proposed that leadership in a LO should not be focused in one position or one individual, but it should be a characteristic to be developed in all the members of the organization. This is clearly the notion of leadership that the SLM puts forward. Fry makes a distinction between leadership and leading. Individual leadership focuses not on a positional role (leading and simply holding a role) but on what the leader does. At the collective level, leadership does not concentrate on how leaders influence their followers. Leadership development does not focus either, on individual knowledge, skills and abilities associated

with a formal leadership role, as well as the directional influence of leaders on followers (Day, 2000). Leadership is instead approached as a multi-directional phenomenon, in the sense that followers influence their leader as well as each other (e.g., Dvir & Shamir, 2003; Gardner & Avolio, 1998; Lord, Brown, & Freiberg, 1999; Shamir et al., 1993). In this view leadership involves developing the interpersonal competence to build trust, respect, and ultimately organizational commitment and performance. Each person is then potentially a leader in the right context and the term “follower” is essential to the definition of “leadership” just discussed. In this context, “follower” is defined as someone who voluntarily and actively engages in the leadership process by responding to the leader’s initiative to identify shared purpose, vision, and action toward change (Fry et al., 2005). Both leaders and followers are doing something different while overlapping their efforts and roles within the leadership process.

Conclusion

This article argues that the Spiritual Leadership Model (SLM) (Fry, 2003,2005, 2007) acts as a catalyst for the realization of a Learning Organization. Even though there is no consensus on how to accomplish a “Learning Organization”, it is accepted that leadership’s role is critical for the task. The SLM leader intervenes in three ways during this process. Firstly, he/she creates a collective organizational vision. The vision defines the journey and why both leaders and followers are taking it. Secondly, he/she models learning behavior and creates a learning environment. It replaces the company’s extrinsic motivational source based on fear and hierarchy with intrinsic motivation by demonstrating respect for individuality and acceptance of mistakes as a necessary step in the learning process. As part of this learning process, the SLM also liberates learning from old mental patterns. It proposes-instead- an ontological and epistemological paradigm that appeal to the contemporary organizational and societal needs. Finally, he/she helps employees handle environmental challenges through empowerment and personal development.

At this stage of theory development I believe that further research is necessary to establish a clearer, conceptual relationship between the variables of the SLM and the traits of a LO leader. A great part of this inconsistency is due to the lack of conciseness concerning the fundamental traits of the LO. Future cross-sectional research should refine the fundamental

traits of a LO as well as how the leader contributes to the incorporation of these traits in the firm's strategic and empowered-team organizational level.

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