

Spirituality at the Workplace: A Study Based on Demographic Variables in Academic Institutions

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Abstract

The role of spirituality in the workplace is a relatively new area of inquiry that has emerged from scholarly fields and is not typically associated with the study of the psychology of spirituality. India is following spirituality in various areas from a very long time and it is no surprise that various spiritual theories have been emerged from India. Research on spirituality in various academic institutions is a very new concept and various spheres around this concept are still evolving. Organizations of 21st century want their employees to bring their whole selves to their workplace not only in their physical or mental sense but spiritually too. One important question in the field of workplace spirituality concerns the relationship of this construct with employee work attitudes.

This study is an attempt to make a rigorous empirical examination of the relationship between workplace spirituality and other demographic variables. It assesses the validity and reliability of the measures used and discusses the results of the analysis. While acknowledging that spirituality at work is an abstract concept, this study attempts to prove that there is a positive association between spirituality at work and employee job outcomes. The paper reports the findings of 100 employees working in various academic institutions and how does they connect spirituality with their workplace drawn from an age range of 18 to 65 years. Various factors have been concerned while taking up the data such as place of their origin, place of their workplace, type of organization they are working in, accessibility to their workplace, type of environment they work in, what type of feeling they get while entering their workplace and so on. Sufficient proofs exists that spirituality in a workplace creates a better working environment for its employees and they feel more content and achieves in a better way. Chi Square test has been used to verify whether there is any relationship between spirituality and various factors like age, gender, qualification and native place of employees.

Results of the study show that that spirituality of an employee does not depend on these factors. The paper concludes with a number of implications and research directions for employees working in various academic institutions. Hence spirituality in a workplace takes the organization as well as its employees to the upward spiral of.

Keywords: Spirituality, Organization, Interconnectedness, Performance, Academic Institutions, Experience, Commitment.

Introduction

An important trend in business in the twenty-first century is a focus on employee spirituality in the workplace (Shellenbarger S. , 2000). While Workplace spirituality is considered a highly personal and philosophical construct, nearly all of the academic definitions acknowledge that spirituality involves a sense of wholeness, connectedness at work, and deeper values (Gibbons, 2000). Workplace spirituality involves the effort to find one's ultimate purpose in life, to develop a strong connection to coworkers and other people associated with work, and to have consistency (or alignment) between one's core beliefs and the values of their organization (E.A.Denton & I.A. Mitroff , 1999). Accordingly, workplace spirituality can be defined as "The recognition that employees have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community" (Duchon, D.P & Ashmos D., 2000).

It is important to note that for some people spirituality at work involves a religious connotation while for others it does not

(C.P. Neck & J.F. Milliman, 1994). In fact, historically much of the interest in spirituality has been rooted in religion. However, for many others spirituality at work today does not involve a connection to any specific religious tradition, but rather is based on their own personal values and philosophy (G. Cavanaugh, 1999).

This paper views workplace spirituality as employee's experiences of self-transcendence, meaning, and community in the workplace and it also acknowledges that these experiences could come from various mechanisms including organizational ones. Spirituality is an age old concept prevailing in various sectors of India. The focus of this paper is on a spiritual paradigm, which is a new, emerging paradigm. Several phenomena regarding the understanding of the workplace is incorporated, keeping in mind that 'a focus on positive attributes of people and organizations means looking at organizational behavior in a new light'. The preceding approach poses challenging demands to the working individual and the organization regarding the effective management of human resources, because such an approach emphasizes a shift in the current thinking on organizations and the working environment.

Review of Literature

The term "workplace spirituality" or "spirituality at work" emerged recently. The term "workplace spirituality" can have two interpretations. One interpretation suggests that workplace spirituality involves an organization's facilitation of employee experience of spirituality at work. Consistent with this interpretation, one of the definitions focuses on organizational aspects to specify workplace spirituality as "a framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promotes 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, R.A. and Jurkiewicz, C.L., 2003)

Another interpretation of the term "workplace spirituality" suggests that workplace spirituality involves employee experiences of spirituality at work. Thus, in studying workplace spirituality, focus on employee experiences as they note that workplace spirituality involves an employee's experiencing sense of meaning in work, sense of connectedness with others at work, and an experience of alignment with the organization's mission and purpose. Similarly, Ashmos and Duchon (2000) indicate:

"A workplace where people experience joy and meaning in their work is a place where spirituality is more observable than a place where people do not experience joy and meaning in their work, a workplace in which people see themselves as part of a trusting community, where they experience personal growth as a part of their work community, where they feel valued and supported, would be a workplace in which spirituality thrives."

At the most basic and individual level, workplace spirituality can be viewed as the incorporation of one's own spiritual ideals and

values in the work setting. This conceptualization of workplace spirituality reflects a simple application of "personal spirituality" – the totality of personal spiritual values that an individual brings to the workplace and how such values influence both ethically-related and ethically-unrelated worker interactions and outcomes. Consequently, this view of workplace spirituality presumes that one's personal spiritual values have an effect on worker behavior as well as interpretations of, and responses to, work-related events.

Today, the employees spend most of their waking time at work with their co-workers (Mirvis, 1997). They seek meaning, purpose and fulfillment in their work (E.A. Denton & I.A. Mitroff, 1999) because they partly derive their social identity from work. This shift in consciousness is giving impetus to workplace spirituality. Workplace spirituality has been defined both from the organizational and individual perspective. The former defines it as a "framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promotes 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, R.A. and Jurkiewicz, C.L., 2003). From an individual's point of view workplace spirituality requires finding ultimate purpose in life, developing connection with others and having alignment with organizational values (E.A. Denton & I.A. Mitroff, 1999).

With the ascendancy of the humanistic psychology (specifically the work of Maslow) and the increasing interest in professional counseling and psychedelic culture, spirituality gained popularity in the 1950s and 1960s. The development of corporate interest in spirituality is not only regarded as a trend, but as a movement. Spirituality in the workplace is not a single or one-time-only organized movement. It is a basic movement with a shift in emphasis to the idea of work as being meaningful and having sense. Answers from different disciplines and approaches show that various factors are currently influential in the interest in workplace spirituality.

Some of the works on spirituality at workplace reflect the view that spiritual development undertaken inside an individual employee or the manifestation of spirituality in workplace starts with some change in an individual employee and then the organizational context gets positively influenced by these spiritual changes in an individual employee. (Chakraborty, 1993) Outlines an approach to facilitation of spirituality at workplace that focuses on an individual employee's spiritual transformation as the focal point. This approach focuses on providing various forms of inputs to individual employees, including experiential inputs, with a view to facilitate spiritual transformation in them. Improvement in personal functioning (e.g., improvement in ability to overcome fatigue), interpersonal functioning (e.g., improved conflict handling), and organizational functioning (e.g., improved interdepartmental understanding) are suggested to be some of the organizationally relevant outcomes of individual spiritual

transformation. One of the organizational outcomes sought to be attained through this approach is a positive change in organizational culture. Thus, employee experiences of spirituality at work and resulting benefits for an organization are sought to be attained through individual spiritual transformation and the resulting positive outcomes for individual employees, interpersonal aspects, and organizational aspects. (D.P. Heaton, J. Schmidt-Wilk and F. Travis, 2004) Outline an approach which focuses on an individual and, by implication, on an individual employee at workplace. They divide spirituality into two aspects namely, pure spirituality and applied spirituality. In their work, the term pure spirituality refers to "silent, unbounded, inner experience of pure self-awareness, devoid of customary content of perception, thoughts, and feelings" and the term applied spirituality refers to "the domain of practical applications and measurable outcomes that automatically arise from the inner experience of 'pure spirituality' (Heaton et al., 2004). Further the term 'spiritual development' refers to a holistic process of positive transformation through experience of pure spirituality. This positive transformation reflects growth in all aspects of an individual's personality. Thus, in their approach a positive individual transformation is an outcome of a finer spiritual transformation of an individual. Further, this can also result in positive outcomes for organizations. The applied spirituality can manifest in several outcomes including emotional dimensions of spirituality such as respect, love, humility, and courage. Aspects such as respect, love, and humility are similar to some of the values referred by other researchers (Giacalone, R.A. and Jurkiewicz, C.L., 2003) as spiritual values, or as spiritual values that are part of workplace spirituality. Individual's spiritual development, which is an enhanced experience of pure spirituality, is a source of workplace spirituality and can also have positive outcomes for an organization. (J. Marques, S. Dhiman and R. King, 2005) Developed "an integral model and a comprehensive definition" of workplace spirituality. (J. Marques, S. Dhiman and R. King, 2005) define workplace spirituality as "an experience of interconnectedness, shared by all those involved in the work process, initially triggered by the awareness that each is individually driven by an inner power, which raises and maintains his/her sense of honesty, kindness and courage, consequently leading to the collective creation of an aesthetically motivational environment characterized by a sense of purpose, high ethical standards, acceptance, peace, trust and thus establishing an atmosphere of enhanced team performance and overall harmony. Marques outline the starting point of spirituality at work as asset of internal values of an individual such as honesty, kindness, and courage and note that this set of values typifies the worker that performs at his or her highest level of spiritual awareness. Due to this spiritual awareness and the internal set of values, this worker realizes his or her interconnectedness with the work environment. Marques note that there are three

factors associated with spirituality at work namely internal, external, and integrated factors.

Table 1: Literature Review

Research Studies	Dimensions
Dehler and Welsh (2003)	Search for meaning; deeper self-knowledge and transcendence of self
Ashmos and Duchon (2000) Milliman et al. (2003)	Meaningful work, sense of community and inner life Meaningful work, sense of community and alignment with organizational values
Kinjerski and Skrypnik (2004)	Engaging work, spiritual connection, sense of community and mystical experience
Neck and Milliman (1994)	Meaning and purpose in life, transcendent personal state and positive attitudes and relationships
Ashforth and Pratt (2003) Sheep (2004)	Transcendence of self, holism and harmony and growth Self-workplace integration, meaningful work, transcendence of self and personal growth and development
Moore (2008)	Self-work immersion, interconnectedness and self-actualization

Facilitating Workplace Spirituality lessons From Indian Spiritual Traditions

Some research studies have contributed to the facilitation of spirituality at the workplace from individual and organizational perspective (Pawar, 2008). This study contributes to the facilitation aspect by specifying an integrated framework that specifies facilitation of workplace spirituality through Indian spiritual traditions.

This was done by establishing linkages between the dimensions of workplace spirituality and the related Indian spiritual traditions. The authors established these linkages by way of spending time with people with spiritual propensities, by their own experience and prior knowledge and reading ancient scriptures. Thereafter, the linkages were supported with the extant literature to describe how lessons from these traditions can help to facilitate spirituality at the workplace.

An Emerging Paradigm

The rejection of the rational and mechanistic view of work in which employees were regarded as 'impersonal instruments to achieve material ends' (Duchon, D.P & Ashmos D., 2000) has led to new thinking. Together with this change in mindset, the wider recognition that more than only self-interest and rationality motivate employees has brought about a paradigm shift. The new emerging paradigm is a spiritual paradigm. (J. Biberman & M. Whitty, 1997) Argue that this spiritual paradigm replaces the early-modern paradigm. The modern paradigm holds

the simplistic view that the human being is a rational animal that becomes effective through conditioning. Biberman and Whitty present a framework for this paradigm shift in their article 'A postmodern spiritual future for work'. The modern paradigm assumes that people are motivated by self-interest and competition with co-workers because of the scarcity of resources – an assumption that is expressed by the faith-view 'that preservation of the self, even if it is at the expense of the other, is paramount to survival' (J.Biberman & M.Whitty, 1997). The spiritual paradigm perspective is open to change. It incorporates developments with regard to understanding the workplace – not only as a conglomerate of individuals, but also in terms of group dynamics and interrelationships. An abundance faith-view implies that abundant sources are available to all, with the emphasis on the outcome that competition is unnecessary. The authors (Biberman & Whitty) maintain the view that the spiritual paradigm will develop continuously in future years and that the existing stress that employees are experiencing may actually produce the catalyst for academic institutions spiritual transformation, in ways similar to that in which personal crisis have led to personal spiritual growth and transformation.

Possible Outcomes of A Spiritually Integrated Workplace

Encouraging spirituality within the organizational setup may lead to the strengthening of creativity, honesty, trust, personal fulfillment and commitment, and eventually also to an increase in achievements. Spiritual behavior may lead to excellence in achievement and organizational welfare because of an increase in personal commitment and involvement, and a holistic approach to the working individual (S.Dhiman & J.Marques, 2011). (S.Krishnakumar & C.P.Neck, 2002) are convinced that spiritual workplaces fare better with regard to profitability. In contrast to this outcome, high incidence of absence, high turnover of staff and high stress, which is associated with target dates and depression, are the result of organizations lacking spirituality. The preceding statements are confirmed and strengthened by the following quotation (D.Grant, I.K.O'Niel, L.Stephens, 2004):

The researchers believe that the workplace is one of the most important settings in which people come together daily to accomplish what they cannot do on their own, that is, to realize their full potential as human beings. For organizations to erect walls in the way of everyday spiritual development goes against the grain of deep human needs and puts an intolerable burden on individuals. Unless organizations become more spiritual, the fragmentation and ambivalence felt by individuals cannot be repaired. The key components (such as the working human being that is accepted as a 'whole person' in the workplace, 'interconnected wholeness' with the self, society and the experience of sense with regard to work as well as personal fulfillment) may indeed lead to a positive work experience. These outcome 1 comprises organizations that take advantage of spirituality with regard to greater

employee involvement, higher productivity levels, increased profitability and optimal achievement. It may give rise to the longevity of an organization with improved job security and, in exchange, the organization experiences the advantages of increased commitment and self-esteem of the workers. The results are indeed an upward spiral to the benefit of the working individual and the workplace. There is sufficient proof that spirituality in the workplace is responsible for creating a new organizational culture with happier workers who deliver better achievements. Together with these advantages, employee motivation and meaningfulness of the work experience are increased (J.C.Garcia-Zamor, 2003).

Research Methodology

The nature of the study is empirical. Approach taken for research design is descriptive in nature. The methodology includes publication research, interviews, surveys and other research techniques and also includes both present and historical information. Judgmental Technique is used as a Sampling Technique. A Sample of 100 Employees was taken who are working in various academic institutions and the response rate was 100%.

Statement of The Problem

In light of various researches which outline the significance of workplace spirituality and against the backdrop of required research in the area of workplace spirituality, this article specifies an integrated model of workplace spirituality facilitation. It first draws upon some of the existing research works on spirituality at work and outlines the views contained in them on workplace spirituality facilitation. The differences in the focus of workplace spirituality facilitation in these different views can be noted from these descriptions of these views outlined in this article. This article focuses on need of spirituality in an academic institution and how it takes an institution to higher levels of success.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this paper are:

1. To study the emerging paradigm of workplace spirituality in academic institutions.
2. To analyze the impact of different age on the spirituality.
3. To explore the relationship of qualification and spirituality.
4. To study the workplace spirituality and Gender of an employee independency.
5. To analyze the impact of native place on workplace spirituality.

Hypothesis

H₀₁: Age does not affect the workplace spirituality in an academic institution.

H₀₂ : Workplace spirituality is not affected by Gender of an employee.

H₀₃ :Qualification does not have any impact on workplace spirituality.

H₀₄ :Spirituality is not affected on the basis of native place of an employee.

Data Collection

A survey has been conducted to examine the relationship between workplace spirituality and employees effectiveness. One hundred employees working in various academic institutions have been selected through convenient and purposive sampling. These employees are working in various public and private organizations situated in metro as well as non-metropolitan cities. The academic institutions have been considered because spirituality is considered as an important element in making a positive environment in academic institutions and it helps in building morality and other good traits among the learners, hence it is important to know the level of spirituality among the teachers. One hundred

questionnaires have been personally sent to these employees, and they have been asked various questions regarding spirituality. Variables which were involved in this study are:

Age, Gender, Qualification, Native place and Spiritual or not.

Limitations

The study proposes only few dimensions of workplace spirituality which is not an exhaustive list. These dimensions may be facilitated by a variety of Indian spiritual traditions but this study includes only few of those aspects. Focus is mainly on Employees working in an academic institution only.

Data Analysis

Table 2: H₀₁: Age does not affect the Workplace Spirituality in an Academic Institution.

AGE GROUP (Binned) * SPIRITUAL Cross tabulation					
		SPIRITUAL (1= YES, 2= NO)		Total	
		SPIRITUAL	NON SPIRITUAL		
AGE GROUP (Binned)	20-35	Count	53	18	71
		Expected Count	54.7	16.3	71.0
		Residual	-1.7	1.7	
	35-50	Count	17	4	21
		Expected Count	16.2	4.8	21.0
		Residual	.8	-.8	
	50-65	Count	7	1	8
		Expected Count	6.2	1.8	8.0
		Residual	.8	-.8	
Total		Count	77	23	100
		Expected Count	77.0	23.0	100.0

Table 2(a): H₀₁: Age does not affect the Workplace Spirituality in an Academic Institution.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.905 ^a	2	.636
Likelihood Ratio	.980	2	.613
Linear-by-Linear Association	.896	1	.344
N of Valid Cases	100		

a. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.84.

The null hypothesis is accepted because the significance value is 0.05% and it is lower than the p value 0.636 measured from chi square test. Age and

spirituality are independent to each other, in the other words, age doesn't have any impact on the spirituality.

Table 3 H₀₂ : Workplace Spirituality is not affected by Gender of an Employee.

GENDER (1=FEMALE, 2=MALE) * SPIRITUAL (1= YES, 2= NO) Cross tabulation					
		SPIRITUAL (1= YES, 2= NO)		Total	
		SPIRITUAL	NON SPIRITUAL		
GENDER (1=MALE, 2=FEMALE)	FEMALE	Count	33	9	42
		Expected Count	32.3	9.7	42.0
		Residual	.7	-.7	
	MALE	Count	44	14	58
		Expected Count	44.7	13.3	58.0
		Residual	-.7	.7	
Total		Count	77	23	100
		Expected Count	77.0	23.0	100.0

Table 3(a) H₀₂ : Workplace Spirituality is not affected by Gender of an Employee.

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.101 ^a	1	.751		
Continuity Correction	.006	1	.939		
Likelihood Ratio	.101	1	.750		
Fisher's Exact Test				.813	.472
Linear-by-Linear Association	.100	1	.752		
N of Valid Cases	100				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9.66.
 b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The null hypothesis is accepted because the significance value is 0.05% and it is lower than the p value 0.751 measured from chi square test. Gender and spirituality are independent to each other's; in the other word gender doesn't have any impact on the spirituality.

Table 4 H₀₃ : Qualification does not has any impact on Workplace Spirituality.

QUALIFICATION (1=GRADUATION,2=POSTGRADUATION,3=OTHER S) * SPIRITUAL (1= YES, 2= NO) Cross Tabulation					
			SPIRITUAL (1= YES, 2= NO)		Total
			SPIRITUAL	NON SPIRITUAL	
QUALIFICATION (1=GRADUATION,2=POSTGRADUATION,3=OTHERS)	GRADUATION	Count	17	9	26
		Expected Count	20.0	6.0	26.0
		Residual	-3.0	3.0	
	POST GRADUATION	Count	44	8	52
		Expected Count	40.0	12.0	52.0
		Residual	4.0	-4.0	
	> POST GRADUATION	Count	16	6	22
		Expected Count	16.9	5.1	22.0
		Residual	-.9	.9	
Total		Count	77	23	100
		Expected Count	77.0	23.0	100.0

Table 4 H₀₃ : Qualification does not has any impact on Workplace Spirituality.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.910 ^a	2	.142
Likelihood Ratio	3.882	2	.144
Linear-by-Linear Association	.506	1	.477
N of Valid Cases	100		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.06.
 The null hypothesis is accepted because the significance value is 0.05% and it is lower than the p value 0.142 measured from chi square test. Qualification and spirituality are independent to ach others, in the other words, qualification don't have any impact on the spirituality.

Table 5 H₀₄ : Spirituality is not affected on the basis of native place of an Employee.

QUALIFICATION (1=GRADUATION,2=POSTGRADUATION,3=OTHERS) * SPIRITUAL (1= YES, 2= NO) Cross tabulation					
			SPIRITUAL (1= YES, 2= NO)		Total
			SPIRITUAL	NON SPIRITUAL	
QUALIFICATION (1=GRADUATION,2=POSTGRADUATION,3=OTHER S)	GRADUATION	Count	17	9	26
		Expected Count	20.0	6.0	26.0
		Residual	-3.0	3.0	
	POST GRADUATION	Count	44	8	52
		Expected Count	40.0	12.0	52.0
		Residual	4.0	-4.0	
	> POST GRADUATION	Count	16	6	22
		Expected Count	16.9	5.1	22.0
		Residual	-.9	.9	
Total		Count	77	23	100
		Expected Count	77.0	23.0	100.0

Table 5(a) H₀₄ : Spirituality is not affected on the basis of native place of an Employee.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.910 ^a	2	.142
Likelihood Ratio	3.882	2	.144
Linear-by-Linear Association	.506	1	.477
N of Valid Cases	100		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.06.
 The null hypothesis is accepted because the significance value is 0.05% and it is lower than the p value 0.142 measured from chi square test. Native Place and spirituality are independent to each other's, in the other words; native place of an employee doesn't have any impact on the spirituality.

Conclusion

Generally, employees' effectiveness is considered a core issue in any academic institution this study intends to address this issue by exploring the relationship between workplace spirituality and employees effectiveness in a sample of Indian teachers. The aforementioned results divulge the fact that workplace spirituality can be recognized as a predictor of employees' effectiveness. Moreover, the study also highlights the role of meaningful work, sense of community and alignment of values as critical factors to determine employee effectiveness. Therefore, it is suggested that organizational leaders should try to inject spirituality in organizational vision, mission and policies in such a way that employees can realize true meaning in their jobs, experience community feeling and align their personal values with organizational values, which in turn will lead to better employee performance.

This study concluded that the age, gender, qualification and native place have no impact on the spirituality of the employees of the organization. In other words spirituality is independent from the age, qualification, gender and native place factors. Thus spirituality does not get affected by the age, gender, qualification and native place of the employees.

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