

# Vitality of Workplace Spirituality for Organizations

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## Abstract:

The paper reports a compressive review on workplace spirituality and its dimensions and essence needs for organization and also reported the benefits and its impacts of spirituality in organization. The methodology as followed by published article in selected peer-reviewed international journals collected by using database Scopus, SCI, PubMed and PSYINFO. The paper reports an evaluated 60 key article reported in the domain of workplace spirituality and dimensions of spirituality. This multiple view of spirituality is a positive note for organizations, when managers attempt to understand differing spiritual views and also encourage all views within an organization. In this review paper, the authors shall summarize the different perspectives and dimensions of workplace spirituality, along with the significance and benefit of workplace spirituality in organizations. The author argues that spirituality has to be incorporated in organisation to enhance their performance and Personal satisfaction.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Workplace spirituality is the buzz word in today's corporate world. While there is a growing attention on workplace spirituality, it is essential to understand what exactly this term "spirituality" means. There are multiple views of workplace spirituality. There are different definitions for the word "spirituality" due to the very strong personal nature of the word itself. The movement has developed with individual's search to live in their belief or spiritual ethics. The workplace spirituality has multidimensional concept (Beazley, 1997). The researchers started showing interest in workplace spirituality late in 1990s. In the year 1999 Academy of management launched a new group named "Management Spirituality and Religion" (MSR). Markow and Klenke, (2005) has recognized that though there more than seventy definitions on workplace spirituality but still, there is no single definition that is widely accepted. The word spirituality comes from the Latin word 'spiritus' or 'spiritual' which means breath or wind. Spiritus

means "an animating or vital principle held to give life to physical organisms" (Merriam-Webster). According to Mitroff and Denton (1999) spirituality is defined as "the basic feeling of being connected with one's complete self, others and the entire universe".

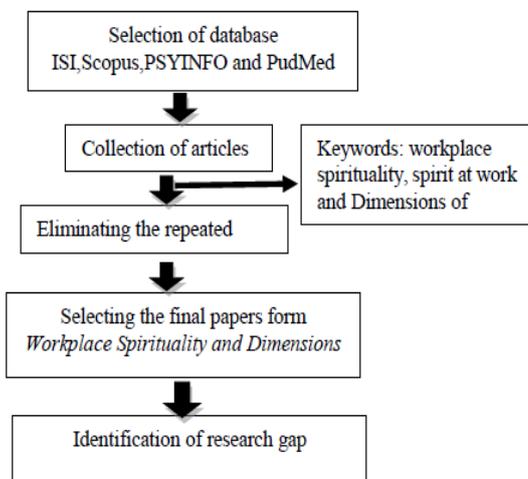
Thompson (2000), stated that "spirit at work" deals with the feeling of an individual about the job. The universal definition of workplace spirituality has come out with three prime dimensions of "inner life, meaningful work and sense of community and connectedness" (Karakas 2010; Chawla and Guda 2013; Benefiel, Fry, and Geigle 2014; Gupta, Kumar, and Singh 2014). Existentialist view of spirituality relates to the search for meaning and purposeful work at the workplace. Workplace spirituality is more intended towards meaningful work, patience, tolerance, purpose and accountability to the task, high productivity and organization values, and building up happiness among the individuals, (Afsar, B., &Rehman, M, 2015) Spirituality is the source to be integrated with

employee efforts as described in many books and articles (Marcic, D, 1977). William J. Harrington (2002), stated spirituality as the most significant source to find a deeper sense and purpose of life. Spirituality at workplace is not a religious belief, rather than it's experiencing the true value, meaning and purpose in work and it is beyond pay bills and job performance (William J. Harrington, 2002).

## II. REVIEW OF METHODOLOGY

Keywords searches are employed to identify in specific management database such as ISI, web of knowledge, SCI index, PubMed, PsycINFO and Scopus initial key word searches are performed using terms such as workplace spirituality, spirit at work, faith at work, dimensions of spirituality and theories of spirituality these searches resulted in 252 articles in Scopus, 123 article in PubMed and 114 articles in PsycINFO . In total 489 articles were identified summary of search results shown in table 1 and review methodology shown in figure 1. In the identified articles few articles that are duplicated in these two data bases are eliminated and finally 380 articles have resulted. Distribution of these articles with respect to journals is given in Table II

Figure:1



## III. DIMENSIONS OF WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY:

Neal and Bennett (2000) has come out with three core dimensions of workplace spirituality. They

are meaningful work, sense of community and alignment with organization values.

### A. Meaningful work

Meaningful work represents an individual level of how employees interact with day to day activities at work. Joanne B Ciulla, (2000), stated that “meaningful work and leisure consisted of activities that aren’t just instrumental but are rewarding or pleasurable in their own right” The concept of meaningful work deeply seeks meaning at work that creates joy, enthusiasm and connecting people between soul and work (Duchon& Plowman, 2005, Asmos&Duchon, 2000). Seeking meaning in work helps to achieve purpose in life (Ishida, 2011). When people find their meaning in workplace, they get more involved in the work and also they become more delightful and emotionally strong in the organization (Giacolone&Jurkiewicz, 2003; moore& Casper, 2006). According to John Milliman (2003), meaningful work is enjoyment and empowerment at work, and finding a purpose and personal meaning in life. In the view of spirituality, meaningful work is not part of gaining monetary value, it is acquiring spiritual benefits (Sajeet Pradhan, 2012).

### B. Sense of community

The sense of community represents the group level and is the second dimension of workplace spirituality. Ashmos and Dunchon, (2000), described sense of community as making a deep network in workplace community and linking relationship with each other. Group work depends on the employees to link with each other in the workplace with a relation between one’s inner self and inner self of others (Maynard, 1992, Miller 1992). Sense of community builds a strong bond between employees in work group (Duchon& Plowman, 2005). Morgan and Naylor (1993), Willimon, Osterberg, (1996), described sense of community as the responsibility of sharing, problem-solving, mutual understanding and decision making and is refined through empowerment, shared visions and feedback.

### C. Alignment with organization values

The third aspect of workplace spirituality is at organization level. Alignment with organization values builds a relationship between individual values and organization values (Milliman et al., 2003). This third dimension relates to employees aligning their individual values with the organization goals, and higher desire of organization (Mitroff and Denton, 1999). The notion of alignment with organization values seeks employees to have a high sense of morale, honesty and commitment to the company

## IV. THEORIES ON WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY

### A. Spiritual Leadership Theory:

The theory of spiritual leadership is developed by Fry (2003, 2005a) and Fry and Matherly (2005) which discusses the implementation process using an intrinsic motivation model that incorporates vision, hope/faith and altruistic love. The need for spiritual leadership is to foster higher levels of organizational commitment and productivity of employees and empower the team for strategic development. The spiritual leadership theory is the predictor of ethical, spiritual well-being as well as corporate social responsibility. According to Giacalone&Jurkiewicz, (2003), ethical and personal outcomes delivers improved productivity, reduced absenteeism and turnover and enhancement in joy, peace, serenity, job satisfaction, and commitment. If the company emphasizes workplace spirituality through people-centered value, then the commitment of employees increases with an organization, (Mitroff& Denton, 1999; Giacalone&Jurkiewicz, 2003; Pfeffer, 2003).

### B. Social Exchange Theory:

Social exchange theory is a psychological theory that attempts to describe the “social factors that influence the individual’s interaction within a reciprocal relationship”. Human (1974), stated that Behavior (profit) = reward of interaction - a cost of interaction. When employees are treated favorably by the organization, then in

response employees will feel obliged to respond in kind, through positive attitudes or behaviors toward the source of the treatment which may be in the form of increased commitment and citizenship behaviour (Blau, 1964). The social exchange theory links spirituality through workplace behaviour attitudes and commitment

### C. Identity Theory:

According to the psychological mechanism identity theory Burke and Reitzes (1991) stated that, there is a link between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment. Commitment moderates the relationship between employee identity and role performance such that the relationship is stronger for the person with higher commitment. Commitment always plays the vital role for connecting the relationship between individual and society.

Table -I Theories on Workplace Spirituality

Theories related on workplace spirituality	Author and Year	Contribution on workplace spirituality
Spiritual Leadership Theory	Louis W.Fry(2003)	To create vision and empower the team and individual levels to foster high level of productivity and organization commitment
Social Exchange theory	Blau(1964)	To meet emotional needs and enhance the organization relationships and employee well being
Social Identity Theory	AshforthB.E(1989)	To identify the workplace perceptions of employees

## V. IMPACT OF WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY IN ORGANIZATION:

### A. Creativity in Organization:

Creativity within group and workplace is the most significant tool in each organization (Mednick, 1962). Spirituality in the organization helps

individual to develop their innermost innovation to expand their limits further leading to improved intuitions and creativity (Guillory, 2000; Cash and Gray, 2000; Harman and Hormann, 1990). The spirituality enrichment in the workplace gives employees happiness and job satisfaction and also helps employees to be more creative (Turner, 1999).

### **B. Employee Commitment**

To survive and prosper in today's turbulent business environment, organizations are in need of committed employees. Committed employees go above and beyond the given job responsibilities and outperform in their job. They give their time and energy for the betterment of the organization about which they are truly passionate.

### **C. Organisation Sustainability,**

The most critical challenge of every organization is engaging the employee in a sustainable process which is the more significant for the collective approach of organizational sustainability (HamedRezapouraghdam, 2018). Sustainability refers to a concept which has deep spiritual roots with complicated and multidimensional values (Stead and Stead 2014). (Carroll 2004; Emerich 2011).

### **D. Organisation Performance:**

Encouraging employees with spiritual practice can experience improving organizational productivity. (Neck and Milliman, 1994; Turner, 1999; Thompson, 2000, Mitroff and Denton, 1999). The organization cannot live for long without spirit and soul. The general qualities that spiritual improvement brings out are honesty, commitment and satisfaction. 86 % of the organizations highly outperform in productivity which maintains spirituality in workplace. Furthermore, similar organizations can grow faster and produce high returns on investment and increase effective and efficient performance, Giacalone, & Jurkiewicz (2003).

### **E. Job Embeddedness**

The Job embeddedness is a collection of factors that influences employee's retention with the organization (Holtom et al., 2008). Job embeddedness has a set of different factors that impact on employee retention such as psychological, social, and financial (Yao, Lee, Mitchell, Burton, & Sablinski, 2004). Job embeddedness is also considered as a retain construct (Cho & Son, 2012). In organization workplace spirituality and job embeddedness are the most significant factors for the success of any organization. The workplace spirituality helps employees to enhance their connection with work and to find purpose and meaning in their work, that influences their retention. Hence the organization must show interest in workplace spirituality which helps to retain their employees in their job (SmithaRajappan 2017).

### **F. Team Effectiveness**

The effective team is most significant part in every organization Hackman (1987). The team effectiveness is measured by the capacity of the team to accomplish the given task/goal or objective. Workplace spirituality is an element of the organizational culture and it has an important effect on team effectiveness. Organizations that encourage workplace spirituality has trust, creativity and respect as highlighted attributes. Hence companies are concerned to incorporate spirituality in their organization to create good environment and build effective team (Jose Luis Daniel, 2010)

## **VI. CONCLUSION:**

Today, we are living in the transition period between the old definition of work as survival and the new definition of work as livelihood. New management techniques and new organizational structures are required to handle this evolving context. Spirituality is recognized as an integral part of work. Workplace spirituality recognizes that people have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community.

In the present scenario, organizations are facing more complexities, competition, and change, hence the need for spirituality is a recurring theme in corporations and businesses (Karakas, 2006). In the 21st century, organizations need to incorporate humanistic and spiritual values into workplaces to enable human hearts, spirits and souls to grow and flourish. Instigating spirituality at the workplace ultimately leads to creativity, honesty, personal fulfillment and commitment. Now a day's corporate sector is facing lot of issues related to emotional burnout, stress and work-life balance. Hence encouraging spirituality at workplace leads to overcoming the issues in work life and also personal life.

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