

WORK-LIFE BALANCE: NEED, CHALLENGES AND MEASURES

“WORK PLACE HARMONY AND SPIRITUALITY-POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES”

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ABSTRACT:

The paper discuss about the factors that undermine harmony and productivity organizations to include leadership behavior, lack of effective communication, work environment, and non-recognition of trade union as a bargaining party. The purpose of this paper is to establish whether work-life balance initiatives and practices can be considered as strategic and improved individual and organizational performance. Workplace spirituality is a renowned topic now-a-days and is gaining gratitude and value among academicians and industrial people. Workplace spirituality (WPS) aims at meaningful work, sense of community, and value of organization. The purpose of the present study is to examine the relationship between workplace spirituality dimensions and work satisfaction by taking trust as a mediator. Although the physical and psychological dimensions of individuals at work have been studied extensively, the spiritual dimension has been neglected for many years. Spirituality at work is not about religious beliefs. Rather, it is about people who perceive themselves as spirited beings, whose spirit needs energizing at work. The objectives of the study is to know the role of spirituality in the workplace affect organizational performance and the benefits related to integrating spirituality into the workplace.

Key Words: Employers, Employees, Harmony, Performance, Balance, Spirituality, Ethical behavior.

INTRODUCTION:

A good and harmonious working environment is one in which all workers are treated with dignity and respect. Maintaining workplace harmony should be a key focus of every organisation. Conflict in the workplace can lead to behaviours such as harassment and discrimination. Staff can lack motivation, fail to work as a team and be generally unhappy. WPS has a significantly positive relationship with trust and trust significantly mediates the impact of workplace spirituality on job satisfaction. In future, new dimensions should be added to workplace spirituality. New moderators should be checked along with the mediator. Creativity in the form of improved communication among the teachers can be generated with the help of the promotion of workplace spirituality.

There are many reasons that contribute to this movement around spirit in the workplace. Employees want more from their organizations and organizations demand more from their employees. With all the corporate downsizing and restructuring, employees who are left tend to work longer hours. As a result, they want to bring more of their outside self to work. As organizations continue to struggle to find and keep talented

employees, they need to offer more than just “a job.” Employees yearn to feel part of a mission, to add value and to contribute in a meaningful way. Previous movements in the 1980’s and 1990’s such as the new age, work/life balance, simplicity and others have paved the way for this one as well as newer ones like the green movement. Workplace spirituality or spirituality in the workplace is a movement that began in the early 1920s. It emerged as a grassroots movement with individuals seeking to live their faith and/or spiritual values in the workplace. Spiritual or spirit-centered leadership is a topic of inquiry frequently associated with the workplace spirituality movement

The movement began primarily as U.S. centric but has become much more international in recent years. Its include:

- International Center for Spirit at Work (ICSW)
- World Business Academy (WBA)
- Spiritual Business Network (SBN)
- Foundation for Workplace Spirituality

The term spirituality means many things to many people. *Webster’s defines spirituality as:* of, relating to, consisting of, or affecting the spirit; of or relating to sacred matters; ecclesiastical rather than lay or temporal; concerned with religious values; of, related to, or joined in spirit.

Spirituality means "the desire to find ultimate purpose in life and to live accordingly". Spirituality is distinct from institutionalized religion. Most of the people leading the spirit-at-work paradigm shift, or at least those nudging it along, say spirituality at work isn’t about believing in a particular religion. For example, the spiritual concepts of balance, trust, harmony, communication, values, mission, honesty and cooperation come from religious traditions, but aren’t the sole by-product of any one of them. Several explanations have been offered as to why spirituality at work has become such an important issue. One explanation was the growing concern for work-life balance prevalent today. Another explanation was that workplaces had become impersonal and even insecure environments due to organizational and societal changes.

COMMON CAUSES OF WORKPLACE:

Organizational or operational changes can cause employees stress and discomfort. These can include changes in management, procedures, duties or position descriptions, redundancies, staff changes and particularly a restructure. The increased stress and pressure on employees may be reflected by an increase in complaints received in the workplace.

The following factors also increase the likelihood of disharmony in the workplace:

1. A lack of communication, whether between co-workers or between management and staff;
2. A failure to share a vision, or a misunderstanding of what the business' goals is,

3. Mistrust or suspicion;
4. Insufficient leadership.
5. Poor communication and consultation
6. Absence of shared vision
7. Lack of emotional intelligence

When conflicts do arise, mediation can be an extremely useful tool. It can facilitate a discussion between employees who are in disagreement and find common ground or a compromise to deal with ongoing issues.

However, mediation should not be used as a band-aid measure to try and resolve ongoing conflicts or when an active grievance is afoot. In this case, prevention by creating a harmonious workplace culture is truly the best cure. Workplace conflict and disharmony cannot be dealt with by a mediation process and an investigation is required in the first instance.

Title VII of The Civil Rights Act of 1964 (as amended) states that you can't discriminate against applicants or employees because of religion, but neither must you accommodate all their religious practices if it would interfere with the normal conduct of the business. Title VII does require is that employers make reasonable efforts to accommodate its employee's religious beliefs. This means, if an employee has to have Saturdays off because his or her religion requires it, you should think twice about making that employee work on a Saturday. In the end, there may not be a single definition of what it means to bring spirituality into the workplace. One way spirituality is finding a voice in the workplace is through workgroups. *Barrett says* he has been re-focusing his own work life from one that is just a job to more of a personal mission. Barrett thinks this spiritual perspective is already causing a shift in workplace values. The shift that he, and others, envisions is the move from fear to cooperation. "Fear is one of the great destroyers of community, particularly community in the workplace. It stops us from becoming all we can be," he says. "We need to design workplaces that eliminate fear." The spirituality movement agree removing fear can help companies achieve peak performance.

The harmony requires that:

1. All management personnel understand their responsibilities and what is required of them, and have the training and authority necessary to discharge such duties and responsibilities efficiently;
2. Duties and responsibilities for each group of employees are stated with clarity and simplicity in organizational structure;
3. Industrial employees or work-groups know their objectives and are regularly kept informed of progress made towards achieving them;
4. There is an effective link in the interchange of information and views between senior management and members of the work-group;

5. Supervisors are briefed about innovation and changes before they occur so they can explain management's policies and intentions to the work-group;
6. Employers cooperate with trade unions in establishing effective procedures for the negotiation of terms and conditions of employment and for the settlement of disputes;
7. Employers encourage the establishment of effective procedures among member organizations for the settlement of grievances and disputes at the level of the establishment or undertaking;
8. Employers take all reasonable steps to ensure the organization observes agreements and agreed upon procedures;
9. And the organization maintains a communication system which secures the interchange of information and views between different levels in the organization and ensures that employees are systematically and regularly appraised.

WORKPLACE POLICIES AND PROCEDURE:

- All organizations who employ staff should have well documented policies and procedures for the following reasons:
- Policies and procedure can fulfill employer's obligations and responsibilities under certain legislation.
- Policies and procedure provide employees with a clear understanding of what is expected of them.
- Policies and procedure provides a fair, predictable and consistent approach to managing the workplace and workplace issues.
- Policies and procedure and a written employment agreement are valuable reference tools in managing workplace issues arising from employee misconduct or inappropriate behavior.

Leadership Behaviour:

Leadership behaviour is a potent tool in managing employee/employer relations in workplace. Employees in the organization need leaders to guide them towards the attainment of the goals and objectives. Leadership is essentially a process in which one individual or sometimes a small group of individuals influence the efforts of others towards the achievement of goals in a given set of circumstance.

Effective Communication:

Communication which involves the transfer or transmission of some information and understanding from one person to another is one of the most requisite functions of management. Communication is vital to any social system as it creates an environment of trust, harmony and proficiency. It is Employers and the Enhancement of Industrial Harmony in Private Sector Organizations essential to worker's involvement so as to boost mutual understanding between management and employees and enhance organizational performance and productivity.

Work Environment:

The physical aspect of work environment consists of noise, toxic substance exposure and heavy lift etc. If workers are dissatisfied with the physical or psychological work environment, especially when it threatens the security and safety of workers, this could provoke grievance that may result to conflict, especially in a unionized workplace. It is suggested that work environment should be properly assessed for its impact on the organizational workforce that will influence employees' perception of work related tasks, as well as affect one's emotional and motivational state.

Workplace Violence:

Violence in the workplace is a serious form of harassment. It includes physical and sexual assault, destruction of property, threats to harm a person or property.

CONCLUSION:

This paper expounded the challenging roles of employers in enhancing harmony in organizations. It took into account the negative consequences of conflictual working environment and its implication on productivity and the economy of the country. While empowerment has been a popular business practice, and has for the most part been successful in bringing more shared power into organizations, applying such spiritual principles as trust and cooperation to the workplace takes empowerment to another level. "Spirituality goes beyond empowerment. It's not just giving people decision-making authority; it's allowing people to live their values at work". The most important perspective that we must develop when working in organizations understands how to see the system as part of a whole.

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