

BRIGHT SIDE OF WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY- A LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT-The purpose of this article is to review the empirical research on workplace spirituality. Evidently a growing body of knowledge concerning spirituality at work is present in the literature. The article documents the workplace spirituality empirical research including defining and measuring workplace spirituality, impact of workplace spirituality on ethical values, impact on performance and employee work attitudes. A large part of the empirical studies exhibit positive effect of WS for the organizations. It is argued that there is need to better define WS constructs in the perspective of organizational behavior, religion and organizational development, which in turn will eventually decide if the movement is a unique body of knowledge or simply a lean-to already existing disciplines. Finally the article suggests how the modern organizations can use WS to enhance performance and exhibit ethical behavior.

Keywords- Workplace spirituality, ethics, performance, attitude.

INTRODUCTION

In this era of Globalization and competition the organizations have realized that if they want their employees to be productive they need to manage their potential by offering them meaning in what they do. There is a paradigm shift happening from monetary and physical needs to psychological needs of job satisfaction in the business world of 21st century. Today's knowledge professional are looking for meaning not only in their personal life but in their professional life too. This profound transformation is backed by several studies which highlight the relationship between spirituality at workplace and organizational outcomes. There has been an exponential increase in the number of management books printed on spirituality over the past 20 years with an equivalent growth in conference proceedings and symposia talk on work place spirituality across continents. The study of spirituality is still in its infancy and there is lot of scope for empirical work. Organizational behaviour literature has examined the emotional and cognitive side of organizational life, there has been little work done to explore the spiritual side of organizational life. Few decades back organizations were unwilling to discuss spirituality at workplace owing to its religious and communal connotation. During the initial phase, researchers attempted to define and identify the various dimensions of the concept of spirituality at the workplace. At the same time there were attempts being made to differentiate between religion and spirituality. There are two problems most of the researchers have faced in this area. First difficulty is defining spirituality, which itself is a challenge (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003). Owing to its subjective nature different researchers have given different definitions. Any single definition of this complex construct is unlikely to satisfy everyone. (Karakas, 2010) suggests that the "fuzziness, ambiguity, and the complexity of the construct makes spirituality a difficult research topic to investigate. Second is the difference between spirituality and religion. People often confuse religion and spirituality, thinking that they are the same thing. In truth, the two are quite different. However one cannot isolate spirituality from religion. Most if not all religious individuals are spiritual (McGhee and Grant, 2008) Spirituality does not depend on religion. In the absence of spirituality, the physically visible world would not sustain for long, whereas in the absence of religion, society could survive on its own.

DEFINING AND MEASURING WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY

Empirical work on workplace spirituality holds its origin in the 1990s. By far regarded as the first large-scale empirical study on WSP, Mitroff and Denton (1999) explored how senior managers and executives view spirituality, religion, and values through face to face interviews and questionnaire. They found that most organizations suffer from spiritual impoverishment, thus reported a yearning for more spiritual openness in workplaces among the executives they interviewed. Their work focussed on the "emergent" definitions of religion and spirituality of managers and executives. They abstained from defining religion and spirituality but instead allowed it to emerge from the respondents. The response from the participants (60%) stated religion primarily as a dogmatic and institutional phenomenon, whereas spirituality was viewed as an individual phenomenon. One need not be religious to be spiritual. Respondents felt spirituality is essential for organization but they had fears attached to it, probably because of the lack of models to foster it. (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000) advanced Mitroff and Denton's (1999) work. They defined WS as "the recognition of an inner life is nourished by meaningful work which takes place in the context of community" and developed a scale to measure it. The sample was drawn from healthcare sector with significant portion being females. Measurement was done at three levels: individual, work unit and organizational. The instrument measured three dimensions significant to spirituality in the workplace: inner life, meaningful work, and a sense of connection and community. While working on better conceptualizing spirituality (Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, 2003) edited the Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance, the major collection of essays on the subject gathered till that time, none of which report empirical work, emphasizing on the necessity of linking workplace spirituality to organizational performance, integrating

psychology, spirituality, and organizational science. They defined Workplace spirituality as “a framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promote 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”. They called various definitions of spirituality elusive in nature and said that there are number of measures that evaluate spirituality at individual level, the call is for measuring it at workplace. Seven years later, a second edition of the handbook was published by (**Giacalone & Jurkiewicz , 2010**). In second edition there was increased sophistication in organizational studies. However, it also reinforced the fundamental need for a scientific and empirical approach to workplace spirituality. Conceptual development is important, but at the same time the study of workplace spirituality also needed to demonstrate outcomes in order to be seen as a legitimate discipline for both scholars and practitioners. Devoid of evidence, this budding paradigm could be at risk of being looked upon as a theoretical and unrealistic pursuit. There could be various approaches to facilitate WS (**Pawar , 2008**) proposed two approaches to workplace spirituality facilitation. According to him the first approach is an organization-focused approach which starts with organizational spiritual values and emphasizes on organizational processes (HRM practices) to facilitate the transmission of these values to facilitate positive employee attitudes and behaviour. The second approach is individual focused approach which seeks to induce higher values through a program for transformation or spiritual development of individual employees (ex: meditation program) which will lead to richness of work life experiences and improved intrapersonal processes.

Conceptualizing spirituality and development of Instruments to measure spirituality was gaining momentum (**Petchsawanga and Duchon , 2009**) came up with development of new scale. After doing extensive literature review they initially proposed that Workplace spirituality consists of five components, but after confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) applied to data collected from employees of a large Thai company it was concluded that four-factor model: compassion, meaningful work, mindfulness and transcendence defines WS, Connection got eliminated. Further (**Karakas, 2009**) after doing in-depth literature review explored how spirituality supports organizational performance. Provided certain recommendations and suggestions on how spirituality can be inculcated. (**Krishna Kumar and Neck ,2002**) gave three viewpoints of spirituality at work which included -the intrinsic-origin view, the religious view and the existentialist perspective, and recommended the potential benefits and outcomes for those organizations that encourage it They held that the intrinsic-origin view of spirituality is that which argues that spirituality is a concept or a principle that has its origin from the inside of an individual and it is something which is beyond the rules of religion. Spirituality implies an inner search for meaning or fulfilment that may be undertaken by anyone regardless of religion. After 11 years (**Krishnakumar and Neck , 2016**) provided a retrospective update and expansion of the Krishnakumar and Neck (2002) “what, why, and how” framework and “spiritual freedom” model. They concluded stating that a number of the potential benefits/outcomes of workplace spirituality (e.g. intuition and creativity, honesty and trust) have not been adequately investigated through empirical research.

After **Krishnakumar and Neck’s (2002)** categorization of definitions within the intrinsic-origin and existentialist perspectives, it was noted that there was the increasing number of definitions of spirituality but there was lack of a single widely accepted definition. However more recently many scholars (e.g. **Karakas 2010; Chawla and Guda 2013; Gupta, Kumar, and Singh 2014**) have noted that it is an extremely personal construct highlighting on inner life, meaningful work, and a sense of connection and community-three dimensions which were originally conceptualized by Ashmos and Duchon (2000) and a common definition of workplace spirituality has emerged around three primary dimensions of the inner life, meaningful and purposeful work, and a sense of community and connectedness. These three dimensions which are originally conceptualized by Ashmos and Duchon (2000) are included within the Krishnakumar and Neck (2002) perspectives. the intrinsic-origin perspective above includes The inner life which is essentially how spiritual a person is (**Chawla and Guda 2013**) and is based on the idea that employees have inner spiritual needs, similar to their physical and emotional needs, that they bring to work with them (Duchon and Plowman 2005). Meaningful and purposeful work is incorporated within the existentialist perspective above. It refers to the idea that people search for meaning in their work and involves creating a sense of joy by fully engaging one’s potential and becoming connected with things that one sees as truly important in life (Ashmos and Duchon 2000, Chawla and Guda 2013, Duchon and Plowman 2005). Finally, a sense of community and connectedness, included within the intrinsic-origin perspective, is based on the idea that, as an expression of their spiritual natures, people seek to live in connection with others through processes of sharing, mutual obligation, and commitment (Chawla and Guda 2013, Duchon and Plowman 2005). Contributing to the theoretical development of workplace spirituality, (**Marques, Dhiman, and King ,2015**) gave a comprehensive definition and a basic model of spirituality according to which applying the spiritual mindset in a workplace should encourage creativity and innovativeness within the workers, which should enhance their productivity, and lead to a better overall performance of the organization. They also laid emphasis on certain practices which can be adopted by leaders to nurture spirituality within organization. Further (**Thakur and Singh ,2016**) explored the present scenario of workplace spirituality in Indian context and developed a conceptual framework for successful implementation of spirituality at work, taking in view both organization as well as individual variables affecting workplace spirituality. (**Pradhan and Jena, 2017**) after examining literature they developed a 30 items instrument for measuring WS in Indian context. Three hundred and sixty one executive respondents employed in manufacturing and service organizations were used as sample. The instrument consists of four dimensions- spiritual orientation, compassion, meaningful work and alignment of values to measure workplace spirituality. Expert views were obtained regarding its dimensions and statements. Rigorous research methods were involved to make it.

WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY AND ETHICAL VALUES

Workplace spirituality percolates down to ethical values, there have been evidences to prove that spirituality leads to developing an ethical mindset, which leads to better decision making and ultimately enhance performance of the organization. (**Giacalone and Jurkiewicz , 2003**) analyzed the relationship between individual spirituality and perceptions of unethical business activities. A sample of 162 employees from across the U.S. was taken. Analysis of relationship indicated that degree of

individual spirituality influences whether an individual perceives a questionable business practice as ethical or unethical. An year later they reviewed and analyzed literature on WS and its influence on organizations (**Jurkiewicz, C.L. and Giacalone, R.A., 2004**). They proposed a framework encompassing several values such as trust, benevolence, integrity and respect for those organizations in which WS is more evident. An organization adopting a culture reflective of these values focuses on ethical decision making which will enhance organizational performance. The area demands for more empirical work. How WS impacts Motivation, commitment and adaptability are the areas of future research. (**McGhee and Grant ,2008**) developed a conceptual model explaining how individual spirituality translates into ethical behaviour. They explored the relation between individual spirituality and ethical behaviour in the workplace. Spiritual people drive themselves according to a regulative ideal (RI) that is made up of certain values and principles which operate as guide for motivation and lead to appropriate behaviour. When these moral values get practiced over time they become relatively stable and transform into Virtues. Spiritual individuals contribute significant benefits to organizations.

WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY –IMPACT ON PERFORMANCE

A large number of studies have shown that WS results in increased productivity and performance in organizations. Whether applying, enabling, or incorporating spirituality practices in organizations result in increase in productivity or profitability is a very complex and controversial issue. Using the scale developed by (Ashmos and Duchon ,2000) (**Duchon and Plowman,2005**) found that work unit performance in five hospitals was associated with spirituality in the units. Performance was evaluated through the satisfaction of patients on the basis of quality and sensitivity. They came up with two propositions: first, the organizations/work units that provide a spiritual friendly environment i.e offer sense of community and meaningful work to their employees will perform better than the organizations/work units that do not. Second, work unit spirituality will depend on the leader's ability to satisfy the spiritual needs of the employees. Leaders in the high performing units had higher spirituality scores than the less performing units. They highlighted that there is similarity between the three dimensions of workplace spirituality and established constructs such as self-concept, job enrichment, and organizational climate, respectively. (**Pandey, et al 2009**) conducted a study in Indian banking industry in two phases. In first phase they designed the questionnaire for measuring spiritual climate. In the second phase they used that questionnaire to evaluate what perception employees have about the spiritual climate in the organization and also evaluated what consumers think about the services provided by the banks. They found that Spiritual climate positively related to customers' experience of employees' service also pointed out that there is a need for service organizations to build on recent developments in WPS research. (**Petchsawanga and Duchon, 2012**) conducted two studies. In study 1 participants were asked if they practiced meditation regularly or not, spirituality was measured on the basis of frequency of meditation. The results showed that people who regularly practiced meditation had higher workplace spirituality scores than people who do not regularly practice meditation. Study 2 reports a quasi-experimental study in which people practiced insight meditation for 8 days. Performance was evaluated by the supervisors before and after the training program. The data did not reveal a direct effect for the meditation, however spirituality does relate to work performance. Moreover, the practice of meditation is also found to partially mediate the relationship between workplace spirituality and work performance.

WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY'S EFFECT ON ATTITUDES

Much of the empirical research in this area concerns the effect of spirituality on employee attitudes. Many researchers have found spirituality to have a positive impact on workers' job satisfaction, commitment, engagement, job involvement, intention to quit and innovative work behaviour. By far regarded as the first study on testing WS for positive outcomes (**Milliman et al. ,2003**) proposed three dimensions of workplace spirituality, meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment with organizational values, and found their relationship with 5 employee work attitudes. Milliman and colleagues used a sample of 167 part time MBA students. The structural equation analysis indicates that the spirituality dimensions were significantly related to the five job attitude dimensions- commitment, satisfaction, job involvement, OBSE(organization based self esteem) and negatively related to intention to quit. The analysis indicates that meaningful work was significantly related to four of the five job attitude variables (the exception being intention to quit), sense of community was significantly related to all five of the outcome variables, and that alignment with organizational values was significantly related to organization commitment and intention to quit. (**Ashar and Mahar ,2004**) conducted study on the concept of success with mid- and senior-level executives in a federal government agency. They expected participants would define success in materialistic terms i.e money, positional power, and status symbols instead they used terms such as being connected, balance, and wholeness to define and describe success. The participants associated the concept of success to spirituality and said that to be successful one needs to develop spirituality as well. A conceptual model of success was proposed which contains four components of both success and spirituality-Sense of accomplishment, Contribution to colleagues, Non work Balance and Contribution to society. (**Rego and Pina e Cunha,2008**) conducted a study using sample of 361 executives from 154 service organizations. They explored the relationship between workplace spirituality and affective, normative, and continuance commitment to study the impact of five dimensions of workplace spirituality (team's sense of community, alignment with organizational values, sense of contribution to society, enjoyment at work, opportunities for inner life) on affective, normative and continuance commitment. They found that people feel higher affective and normative commitment and lower continuance commitment when they perform some meaningful and helpful work with their team members and accompanied by a feeling of community, feel that their values are associated with those of the organization, and consider that the organization gives them opportunities for the satisfaction of their inner lives.

(**Kinjerski and Skrypnik , 2008**) evaluated the effectiveness of a spirit at work program using experimental design. There were two groups made, one underwent the intervention (intervention group) and other was the comparison group. Participants went through a variety of exercises that terminated in the creation of personal action plans to enhance spirit at work. This study proposed that execution of a spirit at work program is a relatively inexpensive way to increase the work satisfaction of employees,

increase their commitment to the organization thereby reducing turnover and absenteeism, and ultimately improve the quality of resident care. (Kolodinsky, Giacalone, and Jurkiewicz , 2008) gave three different conceptual understandings of workplace spirituality. First, at the individual level- Personal spirituality is what values an individual brings to the organization, while organizational spirituality is the individuals perception of the spiritual values within organizational setting. Another conceptualization says that spirituality is an interaction of values of an individual with the values of the organization, which leads to P-O fit.(Badrinarayanan & Madhavaram ,2008) explored the various antecedents and outcomes of workplace spirituality in the context of the selling organization. The problems selling organizations come across include- turnover, employee burnout, employee stress, and employees' ethical behavior, they suggested that workplace spirituality could positively affect the sacralization of work, spiritual well-being, ethical behavior, job commitment, and job satisfaction. Furthermore, they proposed following antecedents for WS--supervisory behavior, organizational values, ethical organizational values, supervisory behavior, ethical climate, and wellness lifestyles. (Chawla and Guda , 2010) explored the relationship between 'individual spirituality at work' and sales professionals' 'job satisfaction', 'propensity to leave' and 'job commitment'. The results demonstrated that sales professionals' spirituality at work is positively related to job satisfaction and job commitment, and negatively related to propensity to leave. Using Correlation analysis it was found that there is a strong positive relationship between sales professionals' spirituality at work and job satisfaction. (Altaf and Awan , 2011) the research was conducted using variables—work overload, workplace spirituality, and job satisfaction. A positive relationship was found between workplace spirituality and job satisfaction while a negative relationship was found between Job overload and job satisfaction. The risks that individuals suffer from overload include exhaustion, insomnia, fatigue, and most important stress. Skills such as creativity, communication, and innovation are results of peaceful mind and satisfaction with what one does. Providing employees with such harsh working conditions may result in poor performance.(Chand and Koul , 2012) Conducted study on IT (Information Technology) professionals in India .Model was designed and tested in which Workplace Spirituality, Organizational Emotional Ownership and Job Satisfaction were used as predictors in Coping with Job Stress. The study concluded that spirituality, organizational emotional ownership and job satisfaction have negative relationship with job stress and workplace spirituality came out as the major predictor to cope up with job stress. (Gupta, kumar and Singh, 2013) explored the impact of the dimensions of spirituality in the workplace on job satisfaction in Insurance sector in India. Through correlation analysis it was found that a strong positive relationship exists between all the dimensions of spirituality in the workplace and job satisfaction. Results show that the dimensions of workplace spirituality have a very significant effect on job satisfaction, with organizational values and a sense of community in the workplace having the greatest effect.

(Alan M. Saks, 2011) developed a conceptual model linking workplace spirituality and employee engagement. He proposed that three dimensions of workplace spirituality (transcendence, community, and spiritual values) could relate to employee engagement through four psychological conditions (meaningfulness in work, meaningfulness at work, safety, and availability). The author argues that workplace spirituality is related to job attitudes and behaviors because of its potential to promote and create high levels of employee engagement.(Khari and Sinha ,2015) Proposed a conceptual model using theory of planned behaviour .According to the model WS with elements (inner spirit, meaningful work, sense of interconnectedness and alignment with organizational values and mission) positively strengthens an individual's knowledge sharing attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural controls (thereby, strengthening their KSI) by affecting the underlying behavioural, normative and control beliefs. The role of transformational leadership (TL) was also taken into account in creating a pro-social working environment, which facilitates knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing would lead to innovative work behavior .To study impact on commitment and engagement (Pradhan and Jena ,2016) examined what role workplace spirituality plays in driving effective employee job behaviour in Indian Manufacturing industry. The findings revealed that factors of workplace spirituality significantly and positively influence job behaviour dimensions. It also reported that workplace spirituality has significant effects on vigour and affective commitment. The meaningful work dimension of workplace spirituality was found to be significant predictors of employee engagement and organizational commitment. In the same year they worked in banking sector (Pradhan and Jena ,2016) and said that Today's banking industry is experiencing a rapid transformation in its working style. It is compelling these institutions to have committed & emotionally matured employee for its growth and development. The study using regression analysis has revealed that emotional intelligence stood as a potential moderator between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment.

WSP also impact teams. It enhances the team learning and make them more productive.(Pandey, Gupta and Kumar ,2016) developed and tested a model using the concept of spiritual climate and its impact on learning in teams. They identified and approved four constructs of workplace spiritual climate for Indian companies: Swadharma, Lokasangraha, authenticity and sense of community. Data was collected from 38 teams in 18 business organizations in India. The two dimensions in team learning were mutuality and collective reflection and experimentation .Results showed that swadharma on mutuality and loksangraha on collective reflection and experimentation had strongest impact on learning. Followed by them (Naval Garg ,2017) explored relationship between workplace spirituality and employee well-being. They related three components of employee well-being-Employee commitment, job satisfaction and work-life balance with spirituality . It was found that workplace spirituality is a 'necessary' condition for employee well-being. This signifies that statistically it is not possible to achieve employee commitment, job satisfaction and work-life balance satisfaction without embracing spirituality at workplace. This study is one of the pioneer studies that made us of necessary condition analysis (NCA) to explore workplace spirituality. There is dearth in literature on studies relating WS with IWB , however the literature lays thrust on creativity and innovative work behaviour as one of the important outcomes of WSP. Two important studies are discussed here (Afsara and Rehmanb , 2015) examined the relationship between workplace spirituality and IWB by focusing on perceived fit as a mediating variable. The research suggests two important conclusions- First-there is a positive link between workplace spirituality and IWB. Results demonstrate that employees who are well thought-out high on spiritual dimensions find meaning and purpose in their work that eventually make them generate

new ideas, think critically and creatively and provide effective solutions to solve problems. Second-Employee with a low level of perceived fit is unable to make strong social connections with co-workers and will not reciprocate with positive attitudes and behaviours due to conflict of personal values with organizational values. (P Kumar Madhan ,2016) examined the impact of work place spirituality on employee individual outcomes Job satisfaction and Innovative work behaviour- with gender as moderator. The research results indicate that workplace spirituality is positively related to Individual outcomes i.e job satisfaction and innovative behaviour.

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study has provided a summarized view of the important empirical work done in the field of workplace spirituality. Earlier considered irrelevant for management today there has been an exponential increase in the number of studies relating WS. It still remains a new field of study showing evidence of many of the issues associated with any new theory development. The issue of defining WS continues to be a subject of concern. Most researchers make difference between religious spirituality and secular spirituality, preferring to define spirituality more as a secular construct rather than a religious construct. Since there is no universally accepted definition of workplace spirituality researchers provide their own definition and measurement instrument resulting in an abundance of definitions and measurement instruments. Workplace spirituality has become buzzword these days and has been empirically tested in many organizations across several countries. Managers can make use of the results of the empirical studies to enhance job engagement, commitment, satisfaction, involvement and performance of their employees. It reduces stress, role ambiguity and makes employees more focused and happy about their work. It can definitely be a tool to bring out creativity among employees. For researchers to make advance progress in empirically testing workplace spirituality there are certain questions that need to be addressed- first is the definitional issues, which needs to evolve depending upon the contextual framework. Another question is - Is it possible to develop spirituality in employees, are they really ready to accept spirituality? If yes how? Additional questions include- if employees are not spiritual do they want their organization to be spiritual and to what extent? And if they are spiritual on one hand and the organization is not spiritual then how should they enhance their own spirituality to handle tough job situations. For now, the empirical research indicates that workplace spirituality appears to be promising as a significant new management paradigm, and there is lot of scope for practitioners to develop spirituality among employees as well as the organization as a whole.

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