

A Review And Critique To Model Of Workplace Spirituality

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Abstract: It's a reality that workplace spirituality has gained importance during the past few decades. Although this study is of abstruseness for the researchers, practitioners, analyst and others whoever attempt to approach this new field of study. This paper aims in understanding the model of workplace spirituality by reviewing the models of previous studies. This paper results a comprehensive model for workplace spirituality which specifies different views from the existing research. The purpose of this paper is to articulate a model of workplace spirituality at different levels (individual, team and organisational level). As most of the researchers talked about the model limited to few factors, this paper attempts to provide a critical review on the model of workplace spirituality.

Particular attention is given to, a review of construction of reliable and valid measurement scale of workplace spirituality proposed by (Pradhan, Jena, & Soto, 2017)⁹. They concluded that workplace spirituality model is considered of four latent variables that are spiritual orientation, compassion, meaningful work and alignments of values. This paper has identified the elements of commonly agreed upon dimensions of workplace spirituality across different measurement scales of workplace spirituality and has theoretically contributed toward the development of workplace spirituality scale at three different levels.

Keywords: Workplace, Spirituality, Model, Critique, Scale development, Spirituality at work.

Introduction:

Workplace is second home in everyone's life. Earlier, were the days when organisation was a place to earn and "work as survival" but now, "work is livelihood". It is very important that every organisation maintain an environment helps in enhancing the performance of the employee's. Work life is so demanding and hectic that everyone is forced to find ways for achieving personal stability from within. We are spending more time at workplaces rather than with their family members and friends. 8-12 hours of work in a day is making employees more stressed due to increase in their workload as everyone want to achieve success. As the ways of working, working hours and technology is changing employees are unable to work properly resulting into fear of failure. (Gautam & Jhajharia, 2015)⁴ "Organisations are having "I win you lose" or "you win I lose" mind set (Marques, 2008)⁶. Time has changed and so the priorities and aspirations. People are looking for success and to achieve it, they need to work harder day out. They are spending their most of the time in their workplaces in order to get fame, wealth and respect from everyone".

"It leads into paradigm shift from strict capitalistic and individualistic mind set to a more socially oriented perspective (Marques, 2008)⁶" (Gautam & Jhajharia, 2015)⁴. Workplace spirituality talks about employee spirituality and organisational spirituality in totality. Organisation that recognize workplace spirituality realize people have an inner life that is they must find meaning in the work and their work must have place in the context of community (McLaughlin)⁷. (Sanders, Hopkins, & Geroy, 2003)¹¹, state that "in order for society and its organisations to meet current and future challenges, it is imperative that they embrace the notion of spirituality".

The Concept of Spirituality and Workplace Spirituality:

Spirituality in the workplace is a motion that began in late 1990s in which individuals used to live with their faith and spiritual values. Employees used to excel with both the vertical and horizontal dimensions of their spirituality at work. It is about both individuals and organizations seeing work as a spiritual path, as an opportunity to grow, to contribute to society in a meaningful way. It is about care, compassion and support of others; about integrity and people being true to them and others.

There are several definitions of spirituality given by different researchers till now. The term 'Spirituality' means different to different people and it is a difficult topic to discuss till date. According to the literature review researchers have identified different components of workplace spirituality as inner life, meaningful work, compassion, feeling of compassion and joy, connection, transcendence, sense of community, meaning and purpose of life, oneness, religion, values, culture and behaviour. (McLaughlin), said "workplace spirituality provides organisational members with a way to counterbalance the demanding and stressful workplace environment". He categorized "workplace spirituality in 3 areas: the first one is meaning and purpose in work which helps to keep employees focused on the same purpose what is expected from them. The second is desire to connect to other people which means it provides an environment that enhance positive relationship with co-employees and make them feel like they are part of a same team that is working towards the same goals. Thirdly,

is the desire to be part of a community, it means organisation makes them aware that their employees are valued members of their community and make “positive contribution to the place they work and live.”

Workplace spirituality was a movement that begun in US in early 1920s and now, Indian organisations are also implementing it so that employees are happy and satisfied while working. This shift is also called as a “Spirituality Movement”, (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000)². They termed it as a “major transformation”. A very popular saying by French Philosopher (Teilhard de Chardin), “We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience”. Spirituality is within. It comprises of inner and deep qualities like love, bliss, purity and peace through our thoughts, actions and attitude. Spirituality in workplace is when we bring spiritual intelligence in our workplaces which create a peaceful environment, work becomes easier and creative and employees are treated as people and not as resources. Workplace spirituality is a most important predictor of engagement maintenance and improving the working conditions. An employee turns to be calm and focused and takes 100% responsibility of his/ her life and is able to solve the problem in a better way (Cahda, 2013)³. Workplace should be a place where employees and employers can be healthy, creative, innovative, compassionate and productive. Spirituality nourishes human connections and enhances sense of community development (Ajala E. M., 2013)¹. It further helps employees being more creative, interactive and communicative (S, Soebyakto, & Bemby, 2012)¹⁰. It is examined that spirituality has two components: vertical and horizontal component. Vertical component is a desire to transcend the individual ego or self-esteem. Like God, spirit, universe or higher power. Examples is meditation time at the beginning of meetings, retreat or spiritual training prayer practice and openly asking question to test if company actions are aligned with higher meaning and purpose. Horizontal component is a desire to be of service to other humans and the planet. In time we seek to make a difference through our actions.

According to (Howden, 1992; Westgate, 1996)¹² spirituality can be defined by highlighting its various dimensions; firstly, meaning and purpose in life which explains the process of making relationship which increases personal significance. Secondly, inner resource defines the inner strength and internal guidance which helps in finding peace with external forces. Thirdly, transcendence means thinking beyond one’s ego and lastly, positive interconnection among the team members. (Wong, 2003)¹⁴, developed a scale consisting of seven dimensions; creativity, communication, respect, vision, partnership, positive energy force and flexibility. Creativity relates with different elements of life like colours, humour and freedom which increases productivity. Communication connects the two different people to work together. Lack of communication results into confusion, anxiety, doubts, lack of trust which results into disrespect and people are not able to open themselves in front of others. As far as vision is considered it is the ability to see the things in a right way and act as a leader. Lastly, the last two dimensions; positive energy brings positive vibes in the surrounding and create an environment of love, trust, and respect among the team mates. Flexibility makes the individual to work in various competitive environment. Earlier (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000)² also classified workplace spirituality in seven different dimensions: conditions of community, work meaningful, personal life, spirituality groups, individual responsibility, and positive relationship with others dimension and self – reflection. Meanwhile, (Milliman, Czaplewski, &

Ferguson, 2002)⁸ selected three dimensions at three different phase from (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000)² seven dimensions. The three dimensions where meaningful work at individual phase, sense of community at group phase and coherent with organizational values at organizational phase. The first dimension meaningful work explains the day to day work which we do. The second one is the complex one as it explains the relations with the co-workers. The last dimension helps to link the goals and values of an individual with organisation values and goals. We can conclude from their studies that we can divide workplace spirituality at three different phase; individual, group and organisational.

Further, (Kinjerski & Skrypnik's, 2006)⁵ conceptualize individual spirituality in three dimensions: meaningful work, sense of community and inner life. They divided the scale at three levels: individual, work unit and organisation.

Various authors or researchers have given different definitions of workplace spirituality pertaining different dimensions or variables explain spirituality.

A Revised Definition of Workplace Spirituality:

Conceptually, workplace spirituality has multiple variables. Although this research built on our earlier grounded definition of workplace spirituality, we are suggesting a definition comprised at three different levels that are individual, team and organisation as given below in (Fig 1).

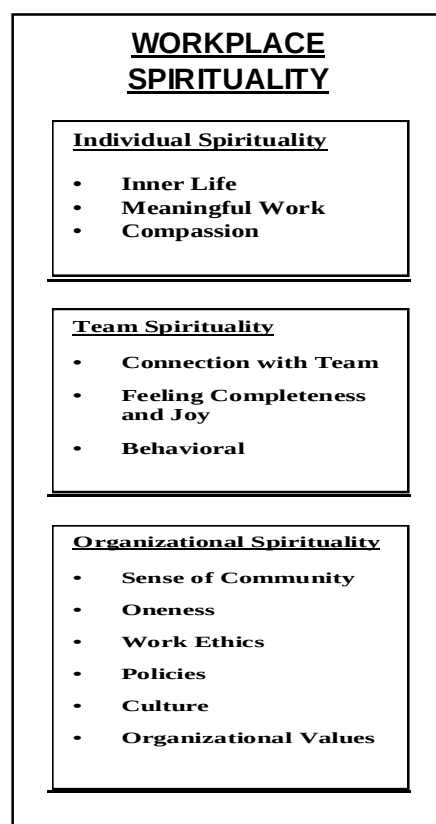


Fig. (1)

As shown above we can see workplace spirituality not only talks about at individual level but also at team and organisation level. We can finally define workplace spirituality as “a journey where the individual effort promotes the feeling of satisfaction through recognition of inner life that is nourished by meaningful work and deep awareness of the needs of others. It connect the talents and energies of co-workers to meaningful goal in particular behaviour in a way that provides completeness and joy in the context of community by deeply held organisational values, policies, ethics and culture”.

A Critique to Workplace Spirituality Model:

As per (Pradhan, Jena, & Soto, 2017)⁹ has developed a model which constituted only four latent variables as per Indian context that are spiritual orientation, compassion, meaningful work and alignment of values. But we need to understand that with changing environment the needs of workplaces and employees are also changing. Workplace spirituality is not only focused to these four variables. We criticize that workplace spirituality is not only as given by them “were work transcends the transactional boundaries to create a spiritual connectedness among employees, experiencing them a meaningful work profile while guiding one’s alignment of values to organisation goals”. There are other variables also that cannot be ignored looking to today’s circumstances in workplaces. The workplace spirituality can be illustrated better if we divide it at three different levels. Workplace spirituality not only talks about at individual level but it also comprises at team and organisation level. This help in giving a clear perspective what exactly workplace spirituality means. Where individual level talks about inner life, meaningful work, compassion and transcendence and team level talks about connection with team, feeling of completeness and joy and behaviour where organisation talks about sense of community, oneness, values, culture, policies and work ethics that are brought in workplaces to bring spirituality.

We have sought in this paper to make a theoretical contribution to the current definition and refinement of workplace spirituality model by positing three different levels for explaining spirituality at workplaces. The model given (Pradhan, Jena, & Soto, 2017)⁹ is highly idiosyncratic in nature which is not reliable in explaining the whole concept in today’s world. To develop a sound and reliable theory on the construct of workplace spirituality the other variables that are shown in (Fig 1 & 2) can be used for future research by researchers.

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