

Determinants of Spirituality at Workplace: Does Demography Matter?

*Ujjal Mukherjee **Jerin Joseph

Most of the researches conducted in the western nations found a relationship between demographics and spirituality. This assumption has been tested empirically in this paper in the Indian scenario. The authors used cross-sectional study design to collect the responses of 259 employees in India. Employees from the 3 manufacturing and 3 service sector companies participated in the study. Judgmental sampling was used for the research. A 20-item instrument designed was used to measure spirituality at work place. The computed internal consistency reliability for this measure was 0.81 using coefficient Alpha. The perception of workplace spirituality is higher among females, managers and employees in the age group of 35-45 years and working in manufacturing sector. The statistical significance of the difference in the means and variance were estimated using T-test and ANOVA. Analysis revealed that perception of the level of workplace spirituality was found to be lower among employees in the service sector. So managers, particularly in the service sector, need to be aware of the existence of "Workplace Spirituality" and should be equipped to develop the same among the employees in the organization. By identifying and then developing employee's spirituality, organizations can help employees to reduce stress, burnout and improve their work life quality. Using a large sample, this study identifies a relationship between gender, age, sector, designation and spirituality in the Indian context.

Introduction:

With a Gross Value Added (GVA) of 73.99 lakh crores at the current prices, service sector is the largest sector in India. This is close to 55 per cent of India's GVA. Manufacturing sector comes a distant second with a contribution of 29 per cent to the overall GVA. So both these sectors have a major contribution in the Indian economy. World Bank (2017) in its latest report has predicted a 7.3 percent growth rate in the Indian economy for the next financial year which is higher than the current growth rate of 7 percent (2017-18). In spite of the disruption during the initial days of the implementation and demonetization, Goods and Service Tax (GST) is expected to add a few units in the growth rate of manufacturing sector.

Given the hype and expectation surrounding the economy, most organizations in India want to avail this opportunity and grow in their business. In order to avail this opportunity, organizations should ideally, among other things concentrate on a couple of things, like develop a good strategy which can help them to uniquely place their products in the market and retain talent. Research has revealed that the later has an influence on the later.

In order to improve on the retention rate and decrease the attrition rate of the talented workforce on whom the organizations spend millions of dollars every year, decision makers should understand the expectation that their employees have out of the work that they do on day to day basis. Employees now a days, have a desire to find meaning and purpose in the work they are performing to earn their living.. Organizations should not overlook this desire of the employees (Fry, 2003). Giacalone & Jurkiewicz (2003) actually underlined the importance work place spirituality in the progress of organization science. The importance of workplace spirituality to the welfare of individuals, organizations and the society has also been explained by Sheep (2006).

Work is no longer an eight hour shift commitment, it is increasingly seen as a tool to fulfil one's destiny. As Aurty (1994) puts that it is wasting far too much of one's life if work cannot provide spiritual and personal growth alongwith financial growth. Organizations are increasingly seen to finding ways which can enrich the mind of the employees, satisfy their souls and also help them to get rewarded financially. Among the several causes of growing

*Assistant Professor, Jain University, Bangalore, Karnataka, E-mail- f15ujjal@mima.ac.in

**Research Trainee, Jain University, Bangalore, Karnataka

inclination towards workplace spirituality, the following can be considered as the most relevant ones:

- mid- life soul searching by the baby- boomers
- the anxiety among employees caused by the ever increasing restructuring and downsizing
- employees quest to find meaning in the work that they are doing daily
- employees search for more holistic living.

Researchers have considered the “explosion” of interest towards spirituality as the most impactful trend since 1950’s (Howard, 2002) and considering Toffler’s (1980) technological wave as the third wave, they considered it as “organizational fourth wave” and termed it as “spirituality based firm”.

Bragues (2006) stated that employees now a days, are not only looking for mere employment but they also expect some value addition. It is not uncommon to find organizations helping employees to find ways in enhancing their work life balance or understanding and developing their potential, without compromising the job in hand. Successful multinationals such as Coca Cola and Intel have incorporated space for workplace spirituality in their culture and strategy. Even organizations such as Boeing and Sears are following this trend.

The focus of management has shifted from:

- an economic concern to quality of life, balance of profits, social responsibility, and spirituality issues (DeFoore and Renesch, 1995),
- service and stewardship from self- interest (Neck and Milliman,1994),
- interconnectedness from self- centeredness (Capra,1993), and
- spiritual orientation from materialistic (DeFoore and Renesch,1995;Fox, 1994).

The aim of these financially rewarding and new developments in the workplace is to create a mind enriching and spirit growing environment in the workplace. This emerging concept is widely called

“the spirituality movement”. This movement is considered as a major transformation, one which adds meaning , purpose and sense of community in the lives of the employees.

Quite a bit of research has taken place in the West in understanding the influence of workplace spirituality on different variables at the individual , group or organization level. But there has not been much work to understand whether the level of spirituality actually varies from person to person due to their age, gender, the place where they are working or the kind of role they are performing. This paper unravels the influence of gender, age, sector and designation in workplace spirituality.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development:

Workplace Spirituality:

The word “spirituality” is derived from the Latin word “spiritus’ or “spiritualis” which means breathing, breath, air or wind (Merriam- Webster). Spiritus can be explained as ‘the principle held to give life to physical organisms”. The construct of workplace spirituality has been found to have two dimensions: definitive and correlated dimensions (Beazley, 1997).The correlated dimension consists of sub dimension such as service to others, humility and honesty. On the contrary, definitive dimension consists of :a continual faithful relationship with the Almighty and engaging in prayer and meditation. The achievement of the later dimension helps in the achievement of the former.

The researchers of workplace spirituality have defined it in different ways. There seems to be no “one’ definition of Workplace Spirituality.

Summing up the numerous definitions of spirituality leads to three dimensions or perspectives of workplace spirituality :

- a. Human resources perspective: Workplace Spirituality augments quality of life and employee well – being ;

- b. Philosophical perspective: Workplace Spirituality gives employees meaning and a feel of purpose at work; and
- c. Interpersonal perspective: Workplace Spirituality gives individuals a feel of community and interconnectedness.

The above perspective is relevant in the modern workplace as the employees spend a major proportion of time in the workplace. Place of work has transformed into a place where people seek meaning for the time spent, make friends and create value for the society (Fairholm, 1996).

Some critics of spirituality have categorized it as a passing FAD. But a separate school of thought suggests that it is much more than a passing FAD (Gotsis and Kortezi, 2008). It has the potential to develop a better understanding of human work, particularly at the workplace.

It has been more than two decades since researchers identified this dimension at work but still there is no commonly agreed definition (Ashforth and Pratt, 2003). The following components have been found to appear most commonly in the literature review of workplace spirituality (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000; Marques et al., 2005, 2007; deKlerk, 2005)

- Feeling of interconnectedness and belonging
- self joy and fulfillment
- meaning and purpose in life

Profits and success of organization have been found to be influenced by the workplace spirituality programs arranged in the organization. (Delbecq, 1999, Mitroff and Denton, 1999b; Dehler and Welsh, 1994; Turner, 1999; Konz and Ryan, 1999).

Spirituality at workplace is seen to be associated with positivity in the workplace (Thomas, 2005), individual performance (Joelle & Coelho, 2017), 360 degree feedback (Das & Panda, 2017), emotional, psychological, social, and spiritual well-being (Pawar, 2016). Harvard Business School researched

10 companies which were considered to have strong corporate culture and 10 companies having weak corporate culture. The results showed that companies where employees experienced more workplace spirituality performed more than 400 percent better than the companies where employees experienced less work place spirituality.

Maria & Arnaldo (2017) concluded that the workplace spirituality influences job resourcefulness and affective commitment. Workplace spirituality has also been reported as an important predictor of employee commitment, work-life balance and job satisfaction. (Garg, 2017). Some researchers debate that workplace spirituality can be considered as an end in itself (Cavanagh and Bandsuch, 2002; Fernando, 2005). This leads to the four hypotheses of this research paper, wherein, spirituality has been considered as an end in itself.

Research Gap:

Developments in the last ten years in India gives the researchers a faint hint that demographic factors such as age, gender, sector and designation can serve as determinant of the level of workplace spirituality experienced by employees. The service sector in India is inducting the younger generation in the workforce of the contrary, the manufacturing sector has failed to attract the younger generation to that extent. This is the reason why the average age in the manufacturing industry is found to be slightly higher as compared to the service sector. Female employees have been reluctant to work in the manufacturing industry for different reasons. Hinds and Andrews (2011) in their research found gender affects the kind of supervision experience. They also found that female supervisors give greater attention to relationship building as compared to male supervisors. Supervisors have a tendency to use different strategies with male and female employees.

Recent experiences among Nigerian workgroup alluded to the fact that personal factors such as workers gender, age, job tenure, management levels and the type of organization are strong determinants of readiness to engage in OCB. Studies on different workplace behaviors have revealed the relationship between the variables and different demographic factors.

So it is worth studying the influence of demographic factors on the experience of workplace spirituality among employees in the Indian scenario.

Objective of the Study:

This study empirically examines the influence of demographic factors such as gender, age, sector and job level on the experience of workplace spirituality among employees working in India.

Hypotheses:

All the above stated assumptions and results of research led to the development of the following hypotheses :

- H₀₁: There is no difference in the level of experience of workplace spirituality among male and female employees in India.
- H₀₂: There is no difference in the level of experience of workplace spirituality among different age group of employees in India.
- H₀₃: There is no difference in the level of experience of workplace spirituality among manufacturing sector and service sector employees in India.
- H₀₄: There is no difference in the level of experience of workplace spirituality among managers and non- manager's employees in India.

Need and Rationale:

The researchers during the review of the literature did not come across any research which explained the influence of demographics on workplace spirituality. Most of the empirical studies on spirituality have been conducted in the western context and limited

attention has been paid to the exploration of this construct in other cultural contexts. The present study attempts to understand the influence of demography on workplace spirituality in the Indian context.

Literature reveals that there is a positive relationship between workplace spirituality and performance of individuals and organizations as against the background of ever fluctuating organizational performance. So it is important to understand the perceived influence of different components of demography on spirituality at workplace. The understanding of the same can help in better understanding of the unit performance.

Research Methodology:

Sampling Design:

Judgmental sampling was used for the research. Employees from the 3 manufacturing and 3 service sector companies participated in the study. Only those respondents were considered who had a minimum of 12 months of work experience. The data was collected from employees working in manufacturing and service sectors in the India. The data was collected in the months of July and August, 2017.

Participation in the study was voluntary; employees were informed that the study was for research and their response would be anonymous. Participants responded to a questionnaire of 20 items on a 5 point Likert scale 1 means strongly disagree, whereas 5 means strongly agree.

The sample size is 259. As far as age is concerned, most samples were less than 35 years (56%). 73% of the respondents were male, 93% of the them were having at least graduates and 75% were married. most of the respondents fall into the category of Non Managers (45%) having less than 5 years' experience (24%).

Methods of Data Collection:

Spirituality at work place was measured using the valid 20-item scale developed by Ashmos & Dunchon (2000). Employees were asked to mark the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statements concerning their behavior. Some of the items are –“I feel part of a community in my immediate workplace (department, unit etc)”, “The work I do is connected to what I think is important in life”, “My supervisor encourages my personal growth” etc. The computed internal consistency reliability for the instrument is 0.81 using coefficient Alpha.

The responses were received in two forms- soft and hard copy. A questionnaire using Google form was prepared for the respondents. Employees who were comfortable filling the online form were sent the soft copy and others were given hard copies. The

questionnaire was distributed to all the employees and the responses were collected from them. It was mentioned that the employees can meet the HR of the organization if they found any difficulty in understanding the questionnaire. There was a personal interaction held with the HR in order to give an idea on what the questions meant so that they can help the employees in need.

Statistics:

Descriptive statistics, t Test and ANOVA were used to test the hypotheses in Microsoft Excel Version 2010 and SPSS Version 17.

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov significance values of Psychological Capital (0.331) are greater than 0.05, indicating that the data is normal and thus ensuring the implementation of parametric tests.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

	Gender	Age	Sector	Designation	Spirituality
Gender	1				
Age	-0.069	1			
Sector	0.017	-0.40	1		
Designation	0.014	-0.25	0.09	1	
Spirituality	0.04	0.29	-0.23	-0.05	1

Table 2: Mean value for the variables wise

	Gender		Sector		Age					Designation	
	Male	Female	Manuf.	Service	<25	25-35	35-45	45-55	55+	Managers	Non Managers
Spirituality	65.67	66.98	70.7	63.5	66.2	65.9	66.0	69.4	69.5	66.9	65.0

Results:

The perception of spirituality at workplace is higher among females (mean=66.98) as compared to males (mean=65.67). But there was no significant difference in the means of the perception of spirituality at workplace among males (M=65.67, SD=6.03) and females (M=66.98, SD=6.3); $t(126) = -0.66, p = 0.50$.

The perception of spirituality at workplace is higher among manufacturing sector (mean=70.7) as compared to service sector (mean=63.53). But there was significant difference in the means of the perception of spirituality at workplace among manufacturing sector (M=70.7) and service sector (M=63.53); $t(126) = 3.27, p = 0.00141$.

The perception of spirituality at workplace is higher among managers (mean=66.97) as compared to non-managers (mean=65.09). But there was no significant difference in the means of the perception of spirituality at workplace among managers (M=66.97) and non-managers (M=65.09); $t(126) = 1.04, p = 0.29$.

There was a significant effect on age on the perception of spirituality at the $p < .05$ level for five conditions (< 25 years, 25-35 years, 35-45 years, 45-55 years, 55+ years) - $F(1,516) = 5039.91, p = 1.9E-268$.

Discussion:

Spirituality at workplace is increasingly accepted as a core construct embedded in an employee's positive developmental state. Researchers argue that organizations should invest in the positive psychological development of their workforce to achieve variable, sustained growth and job satisfaction. Some studies have actually found relationship between the two.

Spirituality helps working professionals to develop a more integrated view on their family, firm, community neighbors, and self. Therefore, organizations are seen to develop a growing interest toward nurturing spirituality at the workplace. This growing interest towards this new concept can be noticed by the increasing number of articles, research paper and books written on this topic.

In this research, it is found that female have higher levels of workplace spirituality as compared to male employees though, the difference was not found to be statistically significant. Indian women in general, probably due to the Indian culture where we still find a lot of joint families, tend to develop a sense of community around themselves. More often than they are the ones in charge of providing services such as cooking, serving food, taking care of the younger ones at home. They start learning this ability of "caring and sharing" very early, probably from the childhood days. This ability actually developed over a period of time helps them probably, to accept the workplace

faster than the men around. Interconnectedness in the workplace is basically, out of the love and care that they spread around in the workplace.

The level of workplace spirituality is found to be significantly higher among the employees working in the manufacturing industry as compared to employees working in the service industry. Organized Service industry is a young industry as compared to the manufacturing industry. In the manufacturing industry, the average age is found to be higher and the attrition rate is lower, which means the employees have spent more number of years working with each other as compared to employees in the service sector. Some of the industries in the service sector like in BPO actually report an attrition rate of 55%. The employees in such organizations are generally young graduates, fresh out of the colleges who want to earn quick money and not really bothered about making a career. These employees hop from one company to another in search of better packages. So, the chance of developing interconnectedness and bonding is not really a top priority of these employees.

With the frequent layoff in the IT industry, the employees are not sure about their existence in the organization in the near future. In such scenario, people are more concerned about saving their jobs and not bothered about developing relationship with the coworkers. Therefore the sense of "feeling good" in the organization is really challenged.

The managers are found to be experiencing higher levels of workplace spirituality as compared to the non-managers. Managers in this study are those employees who are having at least 2 employees reporting to them for their day to day work. These managers can be expected to have higher average age and tenure in the organization. These managers generally take the responsibility of a mentor and guide the team so they have to meet and discuss their day to day operations. These interactions have the potential to develop a rapport between the manager and the employees. The employees

on the other hand, are asked to fulfill targets on an individual basis. Even if they have team goals, they are still evaluated for promotions or increments on individual achievement of targets. So the interconnectedness between employees is challenged by the professional competition that they have among themselves. On the contrary, the Key Responsibility Area's (KRA's) of a line manager is substantially achieved if all the members in his team achieve their individual goals. So the line manager whether he/she wants or not, but for professional reasons develops interconnectedness with his team members.

The level of workplace spirituality is found to be significantly higher among employees in the age of 45 and higher. This is the time when people do not want to change their job. They prefer to settle down in a particular organization. This can be attributed to their restricted physical ability at this age and importantly, their resistance to accept changes which might be the case if they join new organization. The additional causes of such phenomenon is that these senior employees (in terms of age) are generally, at a higher position (managerial) and might have spent substantial amount of time in the organization. As explained above, the managers can be expected to have higher levels of workplace spirituality. Similarly, when employees work longer for a certain organization, they tend to develop a sense of interconnectedness and "feel good" factor on being associated with the organization. Both these dimensions are important to develop, workplace spirituality among employees.

Recommendations:

Empirical research has found that workplace spirituality can be developed and managed successfully. There are organizations in the West which provide emotional and social support to employees in case of some unfortunate incident in their family. Research reveals that this is found to improve on the interconnectedness among employees.

Organizations, now a days provide budgets to departments in order to organise family get-togethers at the workplace. Organizations believe this can actually develop the sense of interconnectedness among employees. Organizations should look into the design of the jobs and make it sure that employees feel a sense of attachment with the job. Several leadership traits can be developed among employees which can enable them to help them to develop the desire to help fellow employees and also to support the development of others. Organizations can develop policies that help development and growth of employees. Top management can also have the philosophy which integrates the values of the organization with the core business values.

Scope for Future Research:

Future research can concentrate on considering demographics such as sector, gender etc as moderators and measure the influence of workplace spirituality on individual behavior. Organization culture and policies can also be considered as moderators explaining the relationship of workplace spirituality with employee behavior such as individual performance.

Workplace spirituality can also be considered as mediators to explain the relationship between individual level variables such as psychological capacities and individual behaviors like job satisfaction. Future researchers can conduct research on the influence of team or the organization level spirituality on the performance or culture of the organization.

Conclusion:

Research reveals spirituality contributes to the wellbeing and quality of life it helps to develop a "feel" of interconnectedness among employees and to sense of purpose and meaning at work. Researchers have indicated that workplace spirituality positively influences organizational commitments. Organizations where employees

secure higher level of workplace spirituality might exhibit high sense of responsibility and loyalty towards the organization. Previous researchers have also said that workplace spirituality influences at the individual level. So it can be safely said that workplace spirituality is an important ingredient in the development of organizational effectiveness and efficiency. Therefore, ways should be found out to develop the same in the organization through bereavement programs, Wellness information displayed and distributed, Employee Assistance Programs., Programs that integrate work/family.

This research suggests that managers, particularly in the service sector have the responsibility of creating an environment wherein, workplace spirituality among the employees can be improved. Due care should be taken to improve it among young employees specially men and non-managers as found in the current research.

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