
INDIVIDUAL SPIRIT AT WORK IN THE NEW BUSINESS PARADIGM

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Abstract

Spirit at work is a discrete subject and it is being nurtured as a potential avenue exhibiting a particular human experience. Spirit at work includes four components namely, cognitive, spiritual, communal and mystical element. It has been a frequent catchword of the media and popular press for the most-recent years. Organizations considered as balanced and rational systems are considering and creating a place for the spiritual factor, which has very less importance to do with rules, conventions rather than to do with need, meaning and interpersonal relationships. This article deals about the individual spirit at work and the study is to test for the multidimensional nature of Spirit at work.

Keywords: *spirit, meaningful work, community, spirit at work*

Introduction

The idea of spirit at work has started to emerge in organizational behaviour textbooks manifesting that it is now being imparted in a conventional method in both graduate and undergraduate institutes and there are quite a few indications of a remarkable raise in significance on spirituality in the midst of both working managers and academics. Numerous articles also have been published in latest years on spirituality and work, spirituality at workplace, spirit at work, and business spirit. Conferences on spirituality at work are plentiful and there is growing evidence that a major change is occurring in many organizations whereby organizations that have long been well thought - out as rational systems are considering to make room for the spiritual dimension, a measure which has less to do with rules and order and much more to do with meaning, purpose and sense of community (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000).

Importance of Spirit at Work

Business has become a spiritual enterprise and not all the themes of the spirituality at the work phenomenon are new. Some bear strong similarity to the prior concepts such as the human relations of the 1930s and the later organizational development

movements. Research on spirituality at workplace "is a complex phenomenon that can no longer be neglected by society and its organizations" (Sanders, Hopkins, & Geroy, 2004). They further state that, "in order for employee and its organizations to meet current and future challenges, it is imperative that they embody the concept of spirituality". The drive of spirit at work is to make clear to the individual psychology with knowledge and dissemination of collective values, ethics, with an invasion of inner happiness and in turn it will stimulate and enrich the personal and work life of the employees. As spirituality, promulgates the spiritual survival that embraces a noticeable and valuable feature in various prospects of organizational behaviour.

Carrette & King (2005) has said that spirituality has turned out to be the 'brand label' for the hunt for meaning, ethics, transcendence, trust and connectedness in this modern scenario. Hence spiritual practices are required for them to reduce perceived job threat stressors on work-life and work balance issues and employee wellbeing. McLaughlin (1998) has confirmed that workplaces which wish to endure in the future have to provide a meaningful and purposeful environment to the employees. In today's extremely competitive global market, organizations seek out the best talent of the individuals who strive to reflect their inner values and provide possibilities for individual development and community service. It is well perceived that organizations which are spiritual provide their employees a meaningful environment, connection and flexibility at work. Spirituality has sprung to the forefront ever since the late 1990's. Spirituality is creeping into the office, reported the June 1995 issue of business week, work environments are spinning inward to hunt for the 'soul' as a means to nurture creativity, to trigger and to inspire the employees.

Spirituality is thus "experiencing of an individual's inner-self and the incorporation of that self with the common world and beyond". This definition to some extent conforms Clark (1958) conceptualization of a religious experience, which he represents as "the inner feel of the individual when he senses a beyond power". Employees now strive for paths and means to relate to each other and to be united for a common vision apart from materialistic motives (Miller, 1998). This makes the aspects of community and connectedness in spirituality experiences very important in this recent community (workplace or organizations). Ashar & Lane Maher (2004) spotlight on the aspect of connectedness, which is the vital aspect of the new business paradigm. There has been a shift and change from a material age to a relational and rational age "which cherishes connectedness and cooperation". If this shift has, in fact, occurred, organizational heads must both admit it and appropriately redesign the ways in which employee necessities are addressed. Spirit at work programs help employees to make the satisfactory relationships they wish for; therefore be priceless tools for these leaders. Spirituality in the Workplace is to develop positive attitudes and relationship of the organization with the corporate world and it is rather a focus effort to accomplish positive attitudes within the employees (Jaichitra & Srinivasan). This research study draws on the 3 components of individual spirit at work namely i) spiritual connection, ii)

meaningful work (grouping of engaging work and mystical experience), and iii) sense of community.

Spirit at Work

An individual's spirit is the animating force customarily conceived to be the intangible, life affirming energy in self and all human beings (Anderson, 2001). The name 'spirit' materializes from the Latin words 'spirare', to breathe and 'spiritus', the breath. In short of breath, we may not be alive. Spirituality dawns from the word 'spirit', which is a part of us that is not just physical; a part that we notice hidden and invisible is named as the spirit. Individuals who are not as much spiritually inclined may call it human nature (Fry, 2003). The spirit at work scale is framed by Kinjerski & Skrypnek (2006) which had four elements, that is i) engaging work ii) mystical experience iii) spiritual connection and iv) sense of community. Tevichapong (2012) used the spirit at work scale in his study and adopted it for UK and Thai samples. He reduced the four-factor model to three factors, particularly i) spiritual connection, ii) meaningful work (combination of engaging work and mystical experience), and iii) sense of community. This research draws on the proportions of individual spirit at work as recognized by Tevichapong (2012).

Stevison et al. (2009) supports the view, that spirit at work is a positive task related characteristic that positively affects work attitudes resulting in positive behavioural outcomes. Stevison et al. (2009) demonstrated conceptual and empirical support for the SAW scale, and Tevichapong (2012) was the first to use the construct in a non western setting. This study sets out to investigate the effect of spirit at work and to comprehend the richness and potency of spirituality, and its implications on attitudes.

Spiritual Connection

This module speaks about that each individual has an association with somewhat larger than self, for example, a higher supremacy, a greater source, a deep connection to humankind or nature that has a positive consequence on his/her job. Csikszentmihalyi (2003) enunciates that "a lasting vision in both job and life derives its power from soul - the energy an individual or organization dedicates to purposes beyond itself". It is in association with this "beyond" that transcendental experience occurs (Willaims, 2013).

Meaningful Work

This is the introductory feature of individual spirit at work and incorporates the cognitive abilities in an individual. An individual knows that his or her work is an important and considerable segment of his existence. The thought of meaningful work is an essential component in self-identity and self-worth and reveals the flourishing significance in the field of positive psychology, which spotlights the need to focus on the positive attitudes of life and work (Seligman, 2002). It is well thought-out that the ideal group of characteristics that makes a working individual feel contented, pleased, and fulfilled (Amabile and Kramer; 2011). They suggest that workplaces should

acknowledge the spiritual aspect and the hunt for meaning will clarify the day-to-day operations of the organization and also address the greater problems of humankind.

Sense of Community

Interpersonal experience is based on the need which each person feels to realize and accomplish organizational and common goals in the organisation. This intimacy with others, combined with a common sense which presents reliability, respect and cause dependency between individuals from which a new success comes. They become part of something bigger and help each other to succeed.(This unity for a common motive brings a spirit of unanimity where individuals work together with solidarity. Workplaces have become the base for the growth of community of the employees. It has become a place individuals spend most of their lives, develop friendships, create value, and make their most significant contributions to humanity (Fairholm, 1997).

Data Analysis

The main focus of this exploratory empirical study is to look into how spirit at work can show the way to certain desirable behaviours by employees within the organization. Hence the following objectives are proposed for this research.

- Conceptualize individual spirit at work and validate a measure for its research.
- Contribute to greater clarity in current and future discussions of spirit at work and to identify opportunities for future research on this relatively new concept.

The instrument along with an introductory letter was utilized to collect data for the present data collection. The instrument has been developed to measure the level of individual spirit at work. This instrument mainly dealt with the individual's meaningfulness in work, interaction with the organization counterparts and also conveyed the feeling of spiritual connection in the workplace. The participants were informed that their answers would be kept confidential, to ensure that participation had no adverse consequences for them or their organizations. Here in this research study, the spirit at work measurement scale is used to measure the individual experiences of spirit at work. Here we are about to check the factor structure of the variable.

Sample Size Determination

Sampling is a systematic technique of choosing part of a population to draw conclusions about the population of a study (Tubey et al., 2015). The current study (Jaichitra, 2016) used a cross sectional survey design. Valid responses have been obtained from 551 respondents. Based on the purpose of the research, the sample for this research was derived from employees from service organizations in Chennai and Bangalore. From the services sector Software and Telecom, industry was identified in view of their manpower intensive nature.

Reliability of the Instrument

Reliability of a tool refers to the degree of consistency among multiple dimensions of variables. It is degree to which any measuring tests give the same end result on any

number of repeated attempts. Reliability was estimated through internal consistency method which is useful to assess the consistency between the variables in a summated scale. In the current study, the Cronbach's Alpha co-efficient of reliability was found based on primary data of the present study and the details are as in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1. Reliability Measures for the study

S. No	Measures	No of items	Alpha
1	Spirit at Work overall measure	12	0.73
2	Spiritual Connection	3	0.78
3	Meaningful Work	6	0.77
4	Sense of Community	3	0.67

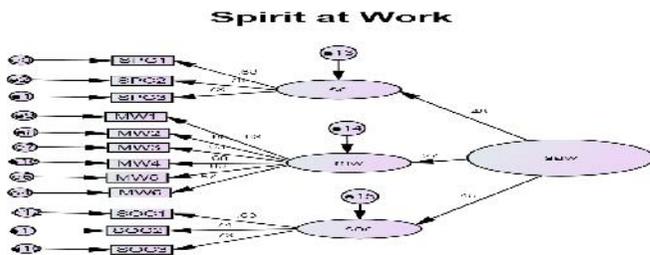
Primarily the validity of data for factor analysis is conducted. The results are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Result of Validity Tests for Factor Analysis

Sl.No.	Tests	Co-efficient	Significance
1.	Kaiser-Meyer-Ohlin (KMO) measure of sampling	0.78	Significant
2.	Bartlett's test of sphericity: chi-square	66	Significant

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.78 which is larger than its minimum threshold of 0.60. The chi-square value is significant at zero per cent level. Moreover, the Bartlett test of sphericity was significant ($p < .000$), demonstrating that the 12- item matrix was considerably different from a matrix of essentially uncorrelated items. Both these results indicate the validity of data for factor analysis. Finally, an analysis of the screen plot also confirmed the selection of three factors.

Figure 1. Spirit at Work



Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed with the instrument by using Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS Version 21) software to verify the factor structure of the variables. The estimation of parameters was

based on the maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) method. Second order confirmatory factor analysis was done for spirit at work. The t values for all the estimates were statistically significant at 0.001 significance level. The loadings exceeded the marginal score of 0.5(Hair et al., 2006) thereby supporting the convergent validity for the scaled items as shown in figure 1. The model fit chi-square to degree of freedom (t^2/ df) is 1.49 and it is significant at 1% level. Chi - square is receptive to larger sample size. As a result, it is recommended to utilize the ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom. Carmines and Mclver (1981) suggested that 2 to 1 or 3 to 1 is indicative of

acceptable model among hypothetical model and sample data. Ratio approximately equal to five or less is considered to be reasonable (Wheaton, Muthen, Alwin and Summers,1977). The goodness of fit index (GFI) is 0.966 of the model, shows reasonably good fit and its adjusted goodness of fit (AGFI) is 0.907. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is 0.30, a smaller value indicates better model, and Cross Validation Index (CVI) is 0.99, which are within the acceptable range representing a better model fit. Thereby the multidimensional nature of Spirit at work was established.

This research work is similar to the studies done by Stevison, Dent and White (2009). Interestingly in their examination in the aerospace community they applied structural equation modeling, established that when administering common factor analysis, the four-factor structure of the SAW construct reduced to three with the sense of community and engaging work factors cutting down to a single factor. They described this as resulting from the definition of the dimensions of SAW, where the alignment of values, beliefs and work in the aerospace community, is intuitively related to a sense of community. In spite of this finding, they spotlighted that the scale demonstrated statistical reliability and validity, and a fit with the overall SAW measurement model.

Conclusion

Individuals work with not merely their hands, but also their hearts (spirit) and while they utilize their hearts or spirit, they retrieve meaning and persistence, a kind of accomplishment i.e., the workplace can be a situation where individuals can manifest their whole or entire selves and be contented. To conclude, spirit at work as an organizational construct is still in its infancy stage, but as demonstrated here, it will be a very important and vital aspect of organizational success as the global business arena continues to grow and change.

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