Intrinsic Spirituality as a Context for Motivation

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The purpose of this study is to determine how spirituality impacts the lives of people who currently have or have had (now retired) full-time work experience. The first step was to review research on the effects of spirituality on organizations, managers, and the workplace. The study methods employed include the results of interviews after interviewees had completed a one-page modified six-item intrinsic spirituality scale. Possible variances between males and females on the questionnaire were tested, potential differences between people of different races were assessed, and possible distinctions between people of different religions were computed. The findings suggest the prominence of intrinsic spirituality in the workplace does indeed function as a person's master motive. An interesting level of significance was discovered between males and females (p = .001257). Females exhibited a much higher level of spirituality.

Keywords: Intrinsic Spirituality, Management, Motivation, Spirituality

SPIRITUALITY, MANAGERS, AND THE WORKPLACE

Workplace spirituality continues to gain traction in academic literature. A number of organizations have embraced spirituality, ethics, values, and first-principle leadership. Two reports indicate 78 percent of Americans feel a need to experience spiritual growth and one-half of those claimed to openly talk about spiritual needs at work; 85 percent replied "yes" to the question of whether a leaders' spirituality influenced the organization (Carroll, 2013, p. 1). Spirituality is thought to benefit societal, organizational, and individual levels of business (Moore & Casper, 2006, p. 109).

The integration of spirituality into the workplace by management offers employees meaning in a turbulent world. Managers who are committed to spirituality share similar concerns and different but common paths (McCormick, 1994, p. 5). They seek meaning that transcends material well-being and focus on basic and deep-rooted human values; they exhibit a relationship with a universal source, power, or divinity (Pruzan, 2004, p. 4). The "metaphysics of management" extends traditional reflections on corporate purpose and focuses on an organizational-existential search for meaning, identity, and success (Mitroff, 1998, pp. 146-148).

There are those who argue an increase in "spiritual talk" is controversial in organizations seeking legitimacy rather than genuine commitment to authentic spirituality (Fernando, 2005). Although "workplace spirituality" may seem a misnomer, they are compatible terms and more than an additional organizational fad. However, while there are pros of spirituality in the workplace—inner satisfaction, self-

growth, embrace changes, helping hands, and pressure handling; and cons of spirituality—religious conflicts between people (Sravani, 2016, pp. 1-2).

Spirituality Defined

What is "spirituality"? A number of broadly and divergently interpretable phenomena have been presented (Marques, 2005, p. 27). It is estimated there are more than 70 definitions but no universally accepted definition (Markow & Klenke, 2005). Clark says spirituality "can be *most characteristically* described as the *inner experience of the individual* when one senses a Beyond, especially as evidence by the effect of this experience on behavior when one actively attempts to harmonize life with the Beyond" (1958, p. 22).

Generically, spirituality emphasizes how one's beliefs are applied day to day on the job (McLaughlin, 2003, p. 2). From a grounded theory perspective on analyzing definitions and applications, the complexity and multiple interpretability of spirituality in the workplace has been demonstrated accordingly (Freshman, 1999, p. 318):

> No one, two, or even three things can be said about spirituality in the workplace that would include the universe of explanations
> There is no one answer to the question, "What is spirituality in the workplace?"
> Definitions and applications of spirituality in the workplace are unique to individuals.
> [There are] many possible ways to understand spirituality in the workplace.

Some suggest that spirituality embodies personal values of honesty, integrity, and good quality work; others say it creates co-workers and employees working responsibly; others propose that spirituality helps socially responsibility by how a business impacts the environment, serves the community, or creates a better world (McLaughlin, 2003, p. 1).

Spirituality and Management

Six characteristics of a spiritual workplace include: emphasizes sustainability, values contribution, prizes creativity, cultivates inclusion, develops principles, and promotes vocation (Rhodes, 2006). Practicing spirituality in the workplace creates a win/win environment for all stakeholders and develops ways to attract a higher energy that fuels positive minds, souls, and spirits (Rahmani, 2009). "Management has an undeniable existential-spiritual dimension" (Zsolnai, 2004, p. 15). The four principal issues of ethical and spiritual well-being to be taken into consideration equally are transcendence, connectedness, completeness, and joy (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2008, p. 592).

Developments in management theory and practice propose "management can be better understood and integrated into personal and organizational behavior via reference to spirituality as the context for purposeful behavior" (Pruzan, 2004, p. 1). Some of the relevant topics that appear in the multicultural workplace and global marketplace include compassion, right livelihood, selfless service, meditative work, and the problem of pluralism (McCormick, 1994, p. 6).

Qualitative research suggests that spiritual organizations have a strong sense of purpose, focus on individual development, encourage trust and openness, promote employee empowerment, and encourage employee expression (Rama, 2010, p. 1). People thrive in a spiritual work environment when: leaders take a personal interest in team development and success, encourage people to be all they can be, appreciate people and are excited by opportunities provided, promote trust and empowerment, participate in collaborative dialog, support and coach employees, place a positive emphasis on relationships, and notice and celebrate successes (Howard, 2003, p. 1). In brief, "work is a spiritual journey for many of us" (Kahnweiler & Otte, 1997, p.171).

Two spiritual approaches are currently shaping today's workplace: a God-centered approach—concentration on spreading faith and helping those in need; an ethical approach—focus on values and exploration of those values that drive current business, life efficiency, material wealth and competition, and cultivating honesty, fairness, respect, and compassion (Carroll, 2013, pp. 1-2). Research on

spirituality has shown it to be linked to ethics, socially responsible business practices, improved productivity, and profitability; it is thought by some to be the ultimate competitive advantage (McLaughlin, 2009, p. 2).

Spirituality is often expressed in the broadest sense as "organizational and personal aspirations and goals, values and ethics; and comments about how the organization should treat people, the environment and the community" (Weston, 2002, p. 28). It involves a sense of completeness, connectedness at work, and deeper values (Gibbons, 2000). It is "a framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promotes employee's experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy" (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003). Or, it might be conceptualized as "the recognition that employees have an inner life nourished by meaningful work, which takes place in the context of community" (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000).

One of the central qualities of organizational spirituality involves the meaning of one's work; it is a way of experiencing the divine presence in the world (Neck & Millman, 1994). There seems to be a *horizontal* spirituality that encompasses a desire to be of service to others, employee commitment, and efficiency and effectiveness; it encompasses a sense of wholeness that goes beyond just a survival instinct (Ajala, 2013, p, 3). Similarly, a *vertical* spirituality is a deep and intense connection with the Spirit, God, or Universe—a letting go of ego or identity in search of a divine state of mind (Sravani, 2016, p. 1). At the *individual* level, spirituality seeks to nurture the creativity, imagination, and intuition besides improving the trust and honesty; at the *organizational* level, it holds out potential to improve organizational performance (Aravamudhan & Krishnaveni, 2014, p. 63).

Quantitative research into workplace spirituality has explored the underlying assumptions, history, and state of current theory and empirical research; described the history of efforts to integrate spirituality and religion; reviewed the major theoretical developments that have established a domain of relevant definitions, constructs, frameworks, and models; and reviewed the empirical research on spirituality in the workplace (Benefiel, Fry, & Geigle, 2014, p. 175). Seven major themes about spirituality in organizations have been identified: factors that encourage spirituality to develop in organizations, the differences between spirituality and religion, the definition/concept of organizational spirituality, the benefits of spirituality for organizations, the dimensions of spirituality in organizations, the values of spirituality in organizations, and ways of identifying/measuring spirituality in organizations (Tecchio, Cunha, & Santos, 2016).

One empirical study of workplace spirituality used structural equation modeling analyses and found that meaningful work was significantly related to organization commitment, intrinsic work satisfaction, job involvement, and organization-based self-esteem (Milliman, et al., 2003, p. 441). Another study used structural equation modeling and discovered a positive and significant relationship between spiritual leadership, spiritual well-being, organizational commitment, and productivity (Fry, et al., 2011, p. 259).

Survey after survey affirms that a majority of people want to find meaning in their work (Schrage, 2000, p. 306). There are at least three popular views of spirituality: (a) the intrinsic-origin view—spirituality originates from the inside of a person, (b) the religious view—spiritual views about work that are specific to particular religions, and (c) the existentialist views—the search for meaning in what we are doing at work (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002, pp. 154-156). Three other dimensions of workplace spirituality are (a) self-work immersion—the ability to bring one's whole self to the workplace, (b) interconnectedness—the feeling of being part of something bigger than the self, and (c) self-actualization—the experience of spiritual and mental growth through work (Moore & Casper, 2006, pp.110-112). Three similar but different critical elements of a people-centered, spiritual organizational culture are affirmation, belonging, and competence (Fawcett, et al., 2008, p. 420).

A review of over 150 studies of spiritual values and practices related to leadership effectiveness found the following skills to be crucial: showing respect for others, demonstrating fair treatment, expressing caring and concern, listening responsively, recognizing the contributions of others, and engaging in reflective practice (Reave, L., 2005, p. 655). An extensive review of literature about workplace spirituality resulted in a list of 19 themes: ethics, truth, belief in God or a higher power, respect, understanding, openness, honesty, being self-motivated, encouraging creativity, giving to others, trust,

kindness, team orientation, few organizational barriers, a sense of peace and harmony, aesthetically pleasing workplace, interconnectedness, encouraging diversity, and acceptance (Marques, Dhiman, & King, 2003, p. 86).

A study of the effects of personal spiritual values, perceptions of organizational spiritual values, and their interaction on both attitudinal and attachment workplace outcomes indicates strong support for an interactive conceptualization of workplace spirituality; however, there is little evidence of an interaction between personal spiritual values and organizational spiritual values for worker consequences (Kolodinsky, et al., 2008, pp. 474-475). Regardless, a deep-seated tension between sensible goals and spiritual contentment haunts workplaces around the world (Schrage, 2000, p.306).

Research has also shown that spiritual values in the workplace can escalate organizational commitment, productivity, and efficiency (Dehaghi, et al., 2012, p. 160). Other research has indicated that a widespread belief that "for companies to survive the 21st century in the face of economic downturn and global competition, it is necessary for leaders and employees to tap into their spiritual resources" (Marschke, et al., p. 33). One venture created a spiritual values-based model to provide an integrated approach for analysis of spirituality in organizations; the components of the model were organizational spiritual values, business and employee plans and goals, HRM practice to reinforce plans/values, and outcomes of organizational performance, employee attitudes, and spirituality (Milliman, et al., 1999, p. 223).

Other research has discovered that when people experience spirituality in the workplace, "they feel more affectively attached to their organizations, experience a sense of obligation/loyalty towards them, and feel less instrumentally committed" (Rego & Cunha, 2008, p. 53). Still another has positioned spirituality as a construct that positively affects work intentions, organizational success, and employee well-being (Soder, 2016, p. vi). Finally, a study that explored the philosophical foundations of workplace spirituality concluded spirituality should not be confined to high performance or profitability but "should be extended to matters of increased physical and mental health, advanced and undistorted personal growth and a higher level of self-esteem, worth and overall life-satisfaction" (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2008, p. 592).

Spirituality as a Motivator

Motivations change over time; however, spirituality might be viewed as a motivator if people are convinced of the correction of such goals in the workplace; they may be moved to act and keep acting to reach spiritual goals regardless of what others do or think. Some people rationally seek inner peace and wisdom from such directions, especially in times of personal crisis. Others may be motivated to go on a quest in order to find a feeling of restoration, "to cross the bridge to the universal, to experience meaning and the feeling of renewal" (Schaub, 2009, p. 1). Events that lead to gains in feelings of satisfaction, competence, or self-determination should increase intrinsic motivation; feelings of dissatisfaction or loss of competence or self-determination typically lead to loss of intrinsic motivation (Pelletier, et al., 1995, p. 37).

A most important psychological concept in organizational life is motivation (Vallerand, et al., 1992, p. 1003). Intrinsic motivation usually denotes doing an activity for itself and deriving pleasure and satisfaction from involvement (Deci, 1975; Deci and Ryan, 1985). Employees might go to the workplace and participate in spiritual activities because they find it interesting and satisfying. A three-way taxonomy of intrinsic motivation has been proposed: intrinsic motivation to know, intrinsic motivation toward accomplishments, and intrinsic motivation to experience stimulation (Vallerand, et al., 1989, pp. 1005-6). Thus, there are many good reasons to study the impact of spirituality on intrinsic motivation and management: "the influence which it has on managerial behavior is one and the prospect of more spiritually meaningful work is another" (McCormick, 1994, p. 7).

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The purpose of this study is to determine how spirituality impacts the lives of people who currently have or have had (now retired) full-time workplace experience. The first step was to review research on

the effects of spirituality on organizations, managers, and the workplace. The techniques employed in this study include the results of interviews after interviewees had completed a one-page intrinsic spirituality scale. Possible effects between males and females on the questionnaire were tested, differences between people of different races were reviewed, and possible variations between people of different religious affiliations were computed.

Questionnaire and Interview Technique Used

The questionnaire chosen for this study was the Intrinsic Spirituality Scale—a one-page modified six-question scale that measures various attributes associated with spirituality (Hodge, 2003, p. 48). The Intrinsic Spirituality Scale was a modification of Allport and Ross' (1967) measure of intrinsic religion to more accurately tap spirituality not only in religious settings but also outside religious settings (e.g., the workplace). The mean validity and reliability coefficients were as follows: unstandardized validity (2.11), measurement error (1.21), and reliability (.80).

The six-item scale used provided incomplete sentence fragments followed by phrases that are linked to a scale ranging from 0 to 10. The phrase completes the sentence fragment and anchors each end of the scale. The 0 to 10 range provides a continuum on which to replay; 0 corresponds to absence or zero amount of the attribute, while 10 corresponds to the maximum amount of the attribute. The end points represent extreme values; a rating of 5 would correspond to a medium or a moderate amount of the attribute. Any number on the scale could be chosen that best reflects the subject's initial feeling. For these six questions, spirituality is defined as one's relationship to God.

To illustrate, item one was phrased accordingly—In terms of the questions I have about life, my spirituality answers … none of my questions (0) to absolutely all my questions (10). Item two: Growing spiritually is … more important than anything else in my life (10) to of no importance to me (0). Item three: When I am faced with an important decision, my spirituality … plays absolutely no role (0) to is always the overriding consideration (10). Item four: Spirituality is … the master motive of my life, directing every other aspect of my life (10) to not part of my life (0). Item five: When I think of the things that help me to grow and mature as a person, my spirituality … has no effect on my personal growth (0) to is absolutely the most important factor in my personal growth (10). Item six: My spiritual beliefs affect … absolutely every aspect of my life (10) to no aspect of my life (0).

The interviewees' level of intrinsic spirituality is indicated by taking the sum of their scores on the six items and dividing by six. A score of 0 indicates spirituality is not operative in that person's life as a motivating factor. At the opposite extreme, a score of ten indicates a person who is motivated by their spirituality to the highest degree possible.

Undergraduate students in a Principles of Management course were instructed to interview a minimum of five people and were provided with suggested questions to use in their interview with people of their own choosing. They could use other questions as the moment presented itself. Their guidelines were to select someone who was currently employed full-time or at one time had been employed full-time but were now retired; the age range was to be 21+. The intent was to discover how the interviewee viewed spirituality as a motivating factor in their life and thereby their career (i.e., the workplace).

Demographics were collected on age, sex, race, marital status, education, employment, religion, and religious affiliation.

Findings

The modified six-item intrinsic spirituality scale was distributed to and returned from 69 males and 31 females, for a total of 100 individuals. Interviews were also conducted with each person who completed a questionnaire. The range of ages was from 21-82 years. The races involved in the study were Africa-Americans, American Indians, Asians, Hispanics, and whites. Educational levels ranged from high school graduation to completion of Ph.D. degrees. The types of religions mentioned were predominantly Christians, but some did identify themselves as Rastafarians, agnostics, atheists, or Muslims. Those who did identify their religious affiliation were Baptists, Catholics, Church of Christ, Life Church, Lutherans, and Methodists. However, 83 people (37%) did not identify a religious affiliation.

A sample of responses to the interview questions follows. The question, "Does your spirituality serve as an intrinsic motivator in your career?" revealed positive responses such as: My spirituality makes me want to do my best, include God in all I do, pray for direction, and be a good role model for my staff. God's plan for my life is influential in directing my career and job changes. Mainly my faith acts out in how I interact with my coworkers. I want to be an encourager, a bright spot for them. What I do is based on helping others and to build/increase their faith. My relationship with Jesus is the most important thing in my life. Because of this all other areas of my life, including my career, stem from this relationship and how I can be living a life that's eternally minded. I want my time spent at work to mean more than just a paycheck so within the context of my career, I'm always looking for ways God can use me in addition to my required job description.

A sample of responses to the question, "How has spirituality had a positive impact on your career?" revealed the following: God has blessed efforts that lead us to the right connections and good decisions to grow personally and in the work force. It has provided me with confidence through uncertain times like corporate layoffs, reassurance when underappreciated, peace in the midst of chaos when schedules and tasks are in abundance and a reminder that I'm doing work for God and not the accolades of man. It has allowed me to enjoy my days more. When you have joy in your heart and people who enjoy your company, you can't help but be happy.

A sample of responses to the question, "When do you think your spirituality is at its highest level of intensity/centrality?" provided the following examples: At highest stress, calling out to God provides confidence He has good plans. I experience tangible evidence that my life is making a difference rather than my work making a difference. Spirituality defines who I am, not what I do. Whenever it is at the forefront of my mind; it doesn't just happen. Reading scripture in the morning and carrying and applying the words through the day keeps it in my heart and thoughts. I am able to spend time in prayer and meditate on His word.

Finally, a sample of responses to the question, "What would you say is the general level of spirituality in your workplace?" provided a mixed level of findings: My workplace is not inherently opposed because leadership would agree that spirituality is a good thing, but don't bring it into work for fear of offending. My bosses are Christians, but a majority of employees are not. Spirituality is not frowned upon, but it isn't forefront. On a scale from 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest, it's a 2. Maybe a tiny glimpse here and there but definitely not supported strongly. The corporate world seems much more driven by personal preference and selfish impulses than anything of a spiritual nature.

Based on the above samples of face-to-face interview results, the prominence of intrinsic, workplace spirituality as a context for motivation reveals that spirituality does indeed function as a person's master motive. The modified six-item intrinsic spirituality scale questionnaires responses were calculated according to the demographics identified above.

A Chi-Square test of significance was computed comparing whites to Asians, whites to American Indians, whites to Hispanics, and whites to African Americans. No significant difference was detected. A Chi-Square test was also calculated comparing Hispanics to American Indians, Asians to American Indians, Hispanics to African Americans, and Asians to African Americans. No significant difference was detected. A Chi-Square test was likewise computed comparing Christians to other religious designations. No significant difference was detected.

However, when a Chi-Square test of significance was calculated comparing all males to all females, an interesting level of significance was discovered ($p = .001257$). Although the females in the study were outnumbered by the males, the females exhibited a much higher level of spirituality (based on the questionnaire findings) than males did. For the females in this study, their spirituality (more than the males) answered more questions about life, was more important than anything else in life, was an overriding consideration in decision making, was a directing motive of life, was the most important factor in growth and maturity, and affected every aspect of life.

Thus, the prominence of intrinsic spirituality as a context for motivation, using the modified six-item intrinsic spirituality scale questionnaire, reveals that spirituality can function as a person's master motive. The modified six-item intrinsic spirituality measure demonstrates good validity and high reliability. It

also provides researchers with an instrument to assess the degree to which spirituality operates as a motivational influence inside the workplace and/or outside in various religious frameworks. Based on the interview results, there appears to be clear consistency between the ideals in both arenas. It might be helpful if future research focused on how the components of the intrinsic spirituality scale could be diagramed as a two-dimensional spiritual values-based model and how it impacts corporate culture.

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