

Spiritual Intelligence of Civil Servants of Punjab and Chandigarh in Relation to their Ethical Behavior

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ABSTRACT

The present research study intends to examine the level of ethical behaviour perceptions and spiritual intelligence among Civil Servants of Punjab and Chandigarh. The effect of spiritual intelligence on ethical behaviour is also one of the objectives of this study. Data has been collected from 272 officers using The Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory (King, 2008) and Ethics Position Questionnaire (Forsyth, 1988). The findings reveal that spiritual intelligence is related to ethical behavior and the effect of former is significant on the latter.

Keywords: Spiritual intelligence, Ethical behavior.

INTRODUCTION:

Ethical behavior is being considered as a key to great performance and for successful organizations. It is important for private as well as public sector. Each and every individual working in the organization (private as well as public) has a specific role to play and is expected to work professionally, conscientiously and ethically. Being ethical is a major concern for all employees at present, irrespective of the position they are in the organization as it is an important factor for the growth of the organization/sector, for promoting team work among colleagues, building confidence and trust. Specifically in the public sector where the civil servants of have to deal with the richest of the rich and poorest of the poor, it is important that officers behave ethically and are capable of doing their best for the society they are a part of. India is known to be a fast growing economy, which the other countries of the world look at with great expectations. India is very rich in the resource of human population and this reserve of efficient and hard working lot can be a blessing for this already growing economy. Education and government expenditure are two major ways where Human Resource strength can be leveraged to make India an economic leader and this calls for attention towards the ethical ways of working on part of the Public Sector for the betterment of our society. Velasquez (1992) has defined Ethics as “the principles of conduct governing an individual or a group; specifically, the standards you use to decide what your conduct should be”. Ethics are continuous efforts of accomplishment to ensure that people, and the institutions they build, live up to the standards that are reasonable and have a solid base of existence (Amundsen, 2009). What is right is considered to be ethical and what is wrong is considered to be unethical.

The link between religion/religiosity and work/jobs is not new. For centuries, people have been trying to interpret their work through religious lenses. Recent times have however witnessed a significant paradigm shift. The current view is that spirituality, being different from religion, is a way better construct to understand the relationship between the individual and modern pluralistic workplaces as spirituality influences organizational outcomes. Organizational fourth wave, or spirituality based firm (Wagner-Marsh & Conley, 1999) is a subject which has become increasingly important in the present scenario of increased globalization owing to its crucial usage and application within the organizational setup. The same has been recognized with its increasing discussion and coverage in commercial media and academic research, conferences, workshops as well as magazine articles (Harrington, Preziosi & Gooden 2002; Biberman 2003; Milliman, Czaplewski & Ferguson 2003).

The word has its origin coming from the Latin word – “spiritus”, meaning vapor, air, breath or wind. Webster defines it as ‘of, relating to, consisting of or affecting the spirit; of relating to sacred matters; concerned with religious values; of, related to, or joint in spirit’. According to Waaijman, the traditional meaning of spirituality is process of re-formation which “aims to recover the original shape of man, the image of God”. Houtman & Aupers (2007) suggest that modern spirituality is a blend of mystical and esoteric traditions, humanistic psychology, and eastern religions. Spirituality is a broader construct in comparison to religion. Spirituality allows the individual to have a sense of the sacred without the institutional practices and limitations that are associated with traditional religion (Zinnbauer et al., 1999). However, spirituality cannot be isolated from religion in any way. Most of the people, who are religious, are spiritual as well. Spirituality might be independent of formalized religion, but it is most probably interdependent with it. For Robert M. Franklin, spirituality refers to “a person’s sense of identity in relation to other people and that which is conceived as ultimate concern”. Spirituality is an interior journey to find the true self with which the conceited, arrogant, intellectualizing, rationalizing ego gets easily confused (Weil, 2002). Spirituality is the actualization of the inherent human capacity. According to Macquarrie (1972) it is all about “becoming a person in the fullest sense” as one authentically quests for his/her ultimate value. There are several evidences that suggest that spirituality is a real thing. While an individual’s spirituality is a personal experience, it is definitely a subjective encounter with the spiritual reality.

Another term that holds importance in this context is “spiritual intelligence”. Spiritual intelligence is composed of two words-spiritual and intelligence. The word spiritual is derived from the Latin word “spiritus”, which means “that gives life or vitality to a system” (Zohar, 1997). The relation between the spiritual and intelligence is what constitutes “spiritual intelligence” which is the factor to well-being of a person and for fulfilling life. Zohar (1997) coined the term ‘Spiritual Intelligence’ and defined it as “It is the intelligence that makes us whole, that gives us our integrity. It is the soul’s intelligence, the intelligence of the deep self.” Zahar & Marshall (2000) defined spiritual intelligence as “the intelligence with which we address and solve problems of meaning and value, the intelligence with which we can place our actions and our lives in a wider, richer, meaning –giving context, the intelligence with which we can assess that one course of action or life-path is more meaningful than another.” According to Emmons (1999) “Spiritual intelligence is a framework for identifying and organizing skills and abilities needed for the adaptive use of spirituality.” Emmons (2000) proposed four components of spiritual intelligence as:

- a) ability to utilize spiritual resources to solve problems;
- b) ability to enter heightened states of consciousness;
- c) Ability to invest everyday experiences;
- d) Capacity for transcendence of physical and material.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

If encouraged and supported by organizations; workplace spirituality has a positive impact on the organizational functioning (Badrinarayanan & Madhavaram, 2008). It is believed and has been continuously proved that allowing and encouraging spirituality at the workplace leads to improved ethical behaviour at personal level and an improved ethical climate or culture at the organizational level. The research literature to date provides some evidence of this link. For example, spiritual individuals in the workplace are more likely to demonstrate greater fairness and kindness (Baiberman & Whitty, 1997), enhanced teamwork (Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Neck & Milliman, 1994), increased trust and honesty within their organisations (Brown, 2003; Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002), increased awareness of needs of colleagues (Cash & Gray, 2000), higher incidences of organizational citizenship behaviour OCB (Nur & Organ, 2006), and expression of more subordinate supervisor behaviour (Beazley & Gemmill, 2006). The spiritual ones are prone to perceive the ethical nature of business issues more clearly (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003b) and are more sensitive to corporate social performance (Giacalone, Paul & Jurkiewicz, 2005).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The objectives of the study are:

1. To find out the level of ethical behavior of civil servants of Punjab and Chandigarh.
2. To find out the level of spiritual intelligence of officers.
3. To establish the relationship between spiritual intelligence and ethical behavior of the officers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Population and Sample:

Out of approximately 1100 officers (population size), data was collected from 272 officers (sample size). Eighty three (30.5%) respondents were between 20 to 30 years. Sixty two (22.8%) were between 30 to 40 years. Eighty five (31.3%) were between 41 to 50 years and forty two (15.4%) were above 50 years. The number of male and female respondents were one hundred seventy seven (65.1%) and ninety five (34.9%) respectively. One hundred thirty (47.8%) respondents were graduates, one hundred twenty seven (46.7%) were post graduates and fifteen (5.5%) were doctorate.

Data Collection:

Data was collected through questionnaires. Questionnaires were sent through mail as well. Convenience sampling technique was adopted to collect data from the respondents.

Measurement of Variables:

The research questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part represented the main research questions and the second part collected demographic information of officers. Demographic questions were about age, gender, and designation and education level.

The Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory (King, 2008):

The Spiritual Intelligence was measured using a 24 item scale developed by D. King (2008). SISRI, a 24-item instrument measured various behaviors, thought processes, and mental characteristics. Items were rated on a 6 point scale (from 0= not at all true of me to 6= completely true of me). Item 7 was negatively worded and its score was reversed for the purpose of analysis.

Ethics Position Questionnaire (Forsyth, 1988):

Donelso R. Forsyth developed the Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ) to measure the level of ethical behavior as well as individual differences in moral thought. EPQ includes 20 items, 10 for each of the idealism and relativism scales. Respondents indicated degree of agreement with each item using a scale that ranged from disagreement (1) to agreement (6).

ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Table 5.1: Descriptive Statistics for Ethical Behavior (EPQ)

| Descriptive statistics | |
|---------------------------------------|--------|
| Ethics Position Questionnaire (N=272) | |
| Minimum | 2.60 |
| Maximum | 5.50 |
| Mean | 4.4042 |
| Standard Deviation | .56303 |

On the Ethics Position Questionnaire, the scores of Officers, that is, Civil Servants ranged between 2.60 and 5.50. The mean score was found to be 4.4042 and the standard deviation was 0.563. The results indicate that the average level of ethical behavior of the officers was well above the mid-level of a 6-point scale with 6 being a total honest and ethical behavior on part of the concerned officers. So it can be concluded over here that the level of ethical behavior among the Civil Servants of Punjab and Chandigarh is quite high, that is, the officers are well aware of what is right and wrong and behave in the most righteous manner to take right decisions for the welfare of the people and the betterment of the society. This is supported by studies conducted by Levine et.al. (1990) and Hunt (1997) in which they have said that public servants respect the rule of law as well as the dignity of individuals in carrying out official responsibilities and hence end up making the most ethical judgments. This is of great importance because in any society Civil servants are expected to maintain and strengthen the public's trust and confidence in government via demonstrating highest standards of professional competence, efficiency and effectiveness, upholding the Constitution and the laws. They seek to advance the public good at all times via effectiveness, efficiency, transparency, integrity, legitimacy, fairness and responsiveness (Whitton, 2001).

Table 5.2: Descriptive statistics for SISRI

| Descriptive statistics | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | Spiritual Intelligence (N=272) |
| Minimum | 1.79 |
| Maximum | 5.88 |
| Mean | 3.9079 |
| Standard Deviation | .70242 |

The table of descriptive statistics above shows that scores for spiritual intelligence ranged between 1.79 and 5.88. The mean was found to be 3.90 and the standard deviation was 0.70. The results indicate that the average level of spiritual intelligence of the officers was well above the mid-level of a 6-point scale with 6 being a totally spiritually awakened person, which implies that the officers in this field are quite spiritually awakened as it is close to 4. This is a fruitful finding for the present research study as many previous research studies have also shown the importance of spirituality/spiritual intelligence in personal as well as professional life. According to Emmons (2000), possession of spiritual orientation about life protects people against non-desirable and non-adaptive behaviors, for example, acting in destructive ways, socially and even personally. The relationship between ethical behavior and spiritual intelligence is discussed below.

Table 5.3: Correlation between spiritual intelligence and ethical behavior

| | Ethics position questionnaire | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|
| Spiritual Intelligence | Pearson Correlation | .430(**) |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | N | 272 |

Table 5.3 above represents correlations ethical behavior and spiritual intelligence. The correlations are positive throughout as are depicted by the 'r' value (0.430) which is positive indicating that spiritual intelligence is positively correlated to ethical behavior. The significant value is 0.000 implying that the correlations are statistically significant and have not occurred due to chance variations. This can be linked by saying that change in the intelligence level of an officer brings change in ethical behavior as well in the same direction. Kumar & Aradya (2017) explained the link between spiritual intelligence and ethical behavior by saying how spiritually virtuous individuals contribute significant benefits to their organization/sector.

Table 5.4 shows the kind of relationship that exists between ethical behavior and spiritual intelligence.

Table 5.4: Regression table for spiritual intelligence and ethical behavior

| Model Summary | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|---------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|----------|-----|-----|---------------|
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Change Statistics | | | | |
| | | | | | R Square Change | F Change | df1 | df2 | Sig. F Change |
| 1 | .430(a) | .185 | .182 | .50937 | .185 | 61.110 | 1 | 270 | .000 |

a Predictors: (Constant), Spiritual Intelligence

The regression table above shows the degree of relationship between ethical behavior and spiritual intelligence. The statistics above show that spiritual intelligence contributes up to 18% in the ethical behavior of the officers that is 100% increase/change in the spiritual intelligence level of the officers can bring up to 18% increase/change in the ethical decision making of the respective officers. These findings are supported by some early studies some of which are mentioned here: Krishnakumar & Neck (2002) & Brown (2003) revealed that spiritual individuals in the workplace are more likely to demonstrate increased honesty and trust within their organizations; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz (2003) revealed that spiritual individuals are prone to perceive the ethical nature of business issues more clearly in comparison to not so spiritual individuals and end up behaving in most ethical manner; Gull and Doh (2004) argued that spirituality can be a guiding light for the ethical conduct in business.

The ANOVA table below shows if the independent variable has any significant effect on the dependent variable.

Table 5.5: ANOVA table for spiritual intelligence and ethical behavior

| ANOVA | | | | | | |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|---------|
| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| 1 | Regression | 15.855 | 1 | 15.855 | 61.110 | .000(a) |
| | Residual | 70.053 | 270 | .259 | | |
| | Total | 85.908 | 271 | | | |

a Predictors: (Constant), Spiritual Intelligence

b Dependent Variable: Ethics position questionnaire

The significant value from the ANOVA table shows that the independent variable that is, spiritual intelligence has a significant effect on the dependent variable Ethical behavior and it contributes towards the ethical behavior of the officers under study.

CONCLUSION:

The results have indicated high level of ethical behavior among the Civil servants of Punjab and Chandigarh which possibly indicates that they are trained and taught in such a way that they understand the importance of their job and follow the rules and regulations as they are and stick to the ethics of their respective jobs in this Public sector.

The results have also shown significant positive relationship existing between spiritual intelligence and ethical behavior. The results support the research (Zohar & Marshall, 2000). When individuals are spiritually intelligent, they are intellectuals and can control behaviors in terms of their emotional experiences and hence up behaving in the most righteous manner for their respective organizations or workplace.

IMPLICATIONS:

This study might provide some preliminary knowledge of the effects of spiritual intelligence of officers in public sector and their relationship with ethical behavior at the workplace. Findings from this study may help in creating awareness and interest about the significance of Spiritual intelligence among officials in terms of recruitment and selection of officers with these capabilities in the public sector, thereby making the officers aware of the proper use and control of their spiritual intelligence or awareness when dealing with public as well as colleagues. This can turn out to be of great importance for public as well as private sector to frame strategies regarding motivation of officers so that they are engaged more in ethically behaving for the betterment of the society. Finally, this study is definitely going to add to the literature on the study of spiritual intelligence and ethical behavior.

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