

Influence of Workplace Spirituality on Job Satisfaction: A study among Employees working in the IT Industry in India

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ABSTRACT

Purpose- This study examines the influence of workplace spirituality and demographic variables on job satisfaction among employees working in the IT industry India.

Design- Using a cross sectional field study design, the researcher collected responses of 255 employees in India. Employees from the 3 IT companies participated in the study. Judgmental sampling was used for the research. Spirituality at work place was measured using the 20-item scale created by Ashmos & Dunchon (2000). The computed internal consistency reliability for this measure was 0.81. 6-item scale by Berson and Linton (2005) was used to measure Job Satisfaction. The computed internal consistency reliability for this measure was 0.85.

Findings- Workplace spirituality, designation and gender are found to be statistically related to workplace spirituality. Workplace spirituality is found to be positively related to job satisfaction which means an improvement in the level of workplace spirituality can improve the levels of job satisfaction.

Research limitations/implications- By conducting the research on a large sample, this study was able to examine the influence of workplace spirituality and demographic variables on Job satisfaction. However, as the data were collected from the same source at one point of time, common method variance is a potential issue.

Practical implications- Managers need to be aware of the existence of “workplace spirituality” and should be equipped to develop the same among the employees in the organization.

Social implications- By identifying and then developing employee's spirituality, organizations can help employees to reduce stress, burnout and improve their work life quality.

Originality/Value- Using a large sample, this study identifies a relationship between workplace spirituality and Job satisfaction in the Indian context.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, Workplace Spirituality, Age, Gender, Designation, Work Experience, Marital Status, Education.

INTRODUCTION:

The IT industry is growing at a rate of 30% annually in India (IBEF,2017) and the predictions suggests that the rate of growth will at least be the same if not less in the next couple of years. It currently contributes 57.9 percent in the overall GDP (Planning Commission, Government of India, 2017). Employees working in the IT industry are considered to be under a lot of stress. The major reasons being the shift timing, work pressure, competition from peers, opportunities outside and continuously changing technology. These are some of the reasons why there is a high attrition rate of around 15% in this industry .

The organizations operating in this industry are still finding answers on how they can retain employees for longer terms. Research reveals that employees experiencing higher levels of job satisfaction have lesser intentions to quit (Maheshwari et al, 2015). Organizations thereby, try to influence the job satisfaction level in a positive manner. Several variables have been found to influence job satisfaction such as employee engagement

(Vorina et al, 2013, Krishnan, 2007), autonomy (Konz & Ryan, 1999), organizational justice (Hao, 2016) etc. A lot of work has been done in the global and Indian scenario on the relationship between Job satisfaction and its antecedents. But to the best of researcher's knowledge, there is no established work considering the influence of workplace spirituality along with the demographic variables of the employee on Job satisfaction in the IT industry. This paper tries to identify the influence of workplace spirituality and the demographic variables on job satisfaction.

Workplace spirituality has been considered as the next "big" wave in the management literature. McGhee & Grant (2017) has stated in his research that it is a wasting far too much of one's life if work fails to provide spiritual and personal growth other than the mandatory financial growth. The concept of spirituality at the workplace encompasses improved quality of life, employee well-being, finding meaning at work and the feeling of inter-connect.

The high attrition rate in the IT industry faintly indicates the lack of attachment of the employees with the organization as well as the interconnect among the employees. The lack of attachment with the organization may be attributed to several reasons. One major reason is the inability of the employees to find meaning in the work that is to be delivered.

The chance of developing good relationship among employees is challenged by several factors in such industry where changing shift slots and high attrition is the norm. So before an employee creates a good working relationship with his/her peer, the shift timing changes or the peer leaves the organization. Studies have revealed that organizations which have been successful in developing interconnect among employees and their work have been more successful than their contemporaries. So it would be worth investigating the levels of workplace spirituality and job satisfaction among employees working in such challenging environment.

Though the operational definition of workplace spirituality is different from religion spirituality but certainly there is an overlap with words such as "inter-connect", "soul searchng", "finding meaning" attached to both of these definitions.

With India being recognised as a "Land of Gods" by people in the West, it is worth exploring whether there is existence and influence of spirituality at the workplace in this country.

The researcher in this study tries to identify the influence of workplace spirituality on job satisfaction of employees in the IT industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT:

Workplace Spirituality:

The term "spirituality" comes from Latin word "spiritus" or "spiritualis" that means breathing, breath, air or wind (Merriam- Webster). Spiritus is defined as 'an animating or vital principle held to give life to physical organisms. According to Beazley (1997) spirituality has two dimensions; definitive dimensions and correlated dimensions. The definitive dimension comprises of two concepts: living a faith relationship with divine and in order to strengthen the bond, engaging in prayer and meditation. While the correlated dimensions comprised honesty, humility, and service to others.

There are numerous definitions of spirituality at work, and there is still no widely accepted definition of spirituality (Markow and Klenke, 2005). Guillory (2000) defined spirituality as one's inner consciousness, a specific form of work feeling that energies action (Delher and Welsh, 1994), "process of self – enlightenment" (Beazley, 1997) and the unique inner search for the fullest personal development through participation into transcendent mystery" (Delbecq, 1999).

Spirituality is considered to be an inner expression, generally reflected by the behavior of an individual. Summing up the definitions, actually 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 at work and a sense of purpose and;
- c. Interpersonal perspective: Workplace Spirituality gives employees a sense of community and interconnectedness.

The above perspective is relevant in the modern workplace as the employees spend a major part of their time in their lives in the workplace. Work places have become the place where people seek meaning for the time spent, make friends and create value for the society.

Several research have identified the relationship between spirituality at work and organizational productivity and performance (Delbecq, 1999; Neal, 1997). Several papers have found significant influence of voluntary spirituality programs on higher profits and success (Dehler and Welsh, 1994).

Spirituality at workplace is seen to associated with positivity in the workplace (Delher and Welsh, 1994) ,

individual performance & 360 degree feedback (Joelle & Coelho, 2017), emotional, psychological, social, and spiritual well-being..

Joelle & 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.

During the literature review, the researcher did not come across any research to explain the influence of demography on workplace spirituality, anyway some scholars argue that spirituality should be seen as an end in itself and should not be used as a managerial tool for increasing financial performance in organizations.

Job Satisfaction:

Job satisfaction is defined as a positive or pleasurable emotional state resulting from an appraisal of one's job experience (Locke, 1976). According to Hulin et al (1985), job satisfaction is multifaceted and includes cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to one's job.

Job satisfaction refers to the individual's attitude toward the job and the various factors associated to it. Job satisfaction is seen to be affected by multiple factors. Artz (2010) found a significant relation between fringe benefits job satisfaction. Artz (2014) regression analysis in the relationship between job satisfaction and training opportunities, skill variety, salaries and benefits, and feedback and support revealed statistically significant relationships. Organizational commitment is also seen to be associated with job satisfaction and internal service quality (Locke, 1976).

Research reveals relationship between demographics and job satisfaction in the private organizations, managers perceive higher levels of job satisfaction in matters related to self-fulfillment. Further, managers having larger span of control perceive higher levels of satisfaction levels for factors in their job environment as compared to managers with smaller span of control (Katz, 1978). Research found difference in perception of job satisfaction among immigrants in Australia and non-English native born (Daddy et al, 2013). Daddy (2013) study found that in retail, employee's job satisfaction is influenced by role ambiguity, perceived organizational support and emotional exhaustion.

There is substantial research which states that Job satisfaction is influenced by personality. For example, lower perception of job satisfaction is perceived by employees having higher levels of neuroticism and greater job satisfaction is perceived by employees having high levels of conscientiousness (Fry, 2003).

As far as relationship between job satisfaction and gender is concerned, Bowen & Cattell (2008) found a significant relationship with job satisfaction and gender. Koustelios (2001) also suggested certain demographic variables such as sex and age were found to influence job satisfaction. Iliopoulos et al (2011) found male employees seem to have greater levels of job satisfaction. In the Indian context also, Mukherjee and Patnaik (2017) found that in the service sector male employees experience higher levels of job satisfaction as compared to female employees. This paper studies the influence of demography on job satisfaction in the Indian Context. Previous studies have examined the influence of spirituality on several job outcomes (Geigle, 2012). Workplace spirituality has been found to be positively related to several of employee's work attitudes (Badrinarayanan & Madhavaram, 2008)). In a research finding, Milliman, et al (2003) have established that all the three dimensions of workplace spirituality proposed by Ashmos and Duchon (2000) are related to organisational behavioural variables like organisation commitment, intrinsic work satisfaction, job involvement, and organisation-based self-esteem. Ashmos and Duchon (2000) in an empirical study also found that workplace spirituality is positively related to job attitudes like job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

The above stated arguments and studies leads the researcher to the following hypothesis:

H₀₁: There is no influence of Workplace Spirituality on Job Satisfaction among IT employees.

H₀₂: There is no influence of Demography on Job Satisfaction among IT employees.

NEED AND RATIONALE:

To the best of researcher's knowledge, there is no research which explores the influence of demography and spirituality on job satisfaction at the workplace in the Indian IT sector.

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.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Sampling Design:

Judgmental sampling was used for the research. Employees from the 3 IT companies participated in the study. Only those respondents were considered who had a minimum of 6 months of work experience. The data was collected from employees working in manufacturing and service sector 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 16 items on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The sample size is 259. In terms of age, 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 20-item scale created by Ashmos & Dunchon (2000). Employees were asked to mark the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statements concerning their behavior on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).The computed internal consistency reliability for this measure was 0.81 using coefficient Alpha.

For the purpose of this study the researcher used only individual measures of satisfaction (Berson & Linton, 2005) . The job satisfaction survey included five items focusing on resources (e.g., 'I feel that I have the resource and time to perform the required tasks'), the extent to which employees have energy to perform ('I feel that I have the energy to continue in this job for the long-term'), general satisfaction with the job ('I am satisfied with my job in the company'), as well as items reflecting the ability to express skills and abilities on the job. The overall satisfaction measure included five items covering common issues, such as 'I would recommend a friend to join the company' or 'If I had to look for a job, I would choose the company again'. The computed internal consistency reliability for this measure was 0.85 using coefficient Alpha.

A questionnaire using Google form was prepared for the respondents, where the views of employees were collected. The questionnaire was distributed to all the employees and the responses were collected from them. There was a personal interaction held with the HR in order to get more clear view.

Statistics:

Descriptive statistics and Multiple Linear regression used to test the hypotheses in SPSS Version 17.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS:

In model 1, job satisfaction(JS) was regressed on only WPS. The model explains 14.1% of the variance in JS. In model 2, WPS, designation and gender are considered as the independent variable.. This model explains 21% variance in JS.

In Model 3, WPS, designation, gender, age, work experience, marital status and education have been considered as independent variable, predicting the variance in JS. This model predicts 22.1% of the variance in JS.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sex	255	1	2	1.26	.441
Age	255	1	5	2.50	1.023
Marital	255	1	2	1.24	.425
Edu	255	2	5	3.44	.636
Work Exp	255	1	5	2.87	1.066
Sector	255	1	2	1.65	.476
Desig	255	1	2	1.45	.499
WPS	255	38	100	65.97	14.378
Job Sat	255	5	25	20.21	3.498

Table 2: Correlations table

	Sex	Age	Marital	Edu	Work Exp	Sector	Desig	WPS	Job Sat
Sex	1								
Age	-0.064	1							
Marital	.194 **	-.452 **	1						
Edu	.194 **	0.113	0.086	1					
Work Exp	-0.053	.836 **	-.471 **	0.089	1				
Desig	-0.004	-.249 **	.259 **	-.150 *	-.238 **	0.094	1		
WPS	0.028	.296 **	-0.066	0.104	.224 **	-.230 **	-0.07	1	
Job Sat	-.199 **	.153 *	-.189 **	-0.014	.143 *	-0.094	-.174 **	.379 **	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
 *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

When we compare the 3 models, we find model 2 to be the best fit considering lower residual sum of squares, least mean squared error and least standard error of estimates. This model is seen to explain 21% of the variance in JS considering 3 independent variable.

The improvement in fit from model 2 to model 3 is neither surprising nor unexpected as explained by Hayes (2009). He explains that adding predictor variable to an OLS regression model will increase the model fit of the measure.

Table 3: Regression statistics for the models

Model	Residual Sum of Squares	Mean Squared Error	Std. Error Of Estimates	R²	Δ R²	Significance F Change
1	2660.68	10.517	3.243	0.141	0.141	0.000 ^b
2	2455.91	9.785	3.128	0.210	0.210	0.000 ^b
3	2419.76	9.797	3.130	0.221	0.219	0.000 ^b

The regression equation for Model 2 is: $JOB\ SATISFACTION = 17.803 * WPS - 0.091 * SEX (M=1,F=2) - 1.040 * Designation (MGR=1, NON MGR=2)$

So we can infer from the equation that one unit change in WPS, keeping gender and designation constant , the job satisfaction will increase by 0.091 units.

During the coding process of the data, WPS was scaled from 1 to 5. As far gender is concerned, male was coded as 1 whereas female was coded as 2. In designation, managers were coded as 1 and non-managers as 2. Using these codings in the equation, we can predict the JS of the employees.

Replacing the coding values in the equation, we can infer that female , non-managers will perceive lesser level of JS as compared to their male counterparts. The difference in the perception of JS and male and female managers will be 1.667 units.

Overall , one can measure from the equation that female employees and non-managers will perceive lower levels of JS as compared to other employees.

Now considering the above mentioned results, organizations should give special attention to the non-managers and female employees. Organization justice is researched as a major predictor of JS and WPS. Organizations should look to improve the equity among employees. They should also make the process of distribution of the resources transparent, this is researched to have influence on JS.

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. However, some studies actually have 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, due to the culture, is found to be more religious and tend to develop a community around themselves. This ability of

interconnectedness is basically, due to their nature of love and care (Chawla & Guda, 2010). 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. 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. Recent reports suggest that there is more layoff in the service sector. Layoffs create a sense of anxiety among the employees because of the fear of losing their job. 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.

The level of workplace spirituality is found to be significantly higher among employees in the age of 45 and higher. The cause of such phenomenon can be attributed to the fact that these employees 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. Mukherjee & Patnaik (2017) also got similar results in their study in the service industry.

Empirical research have found that workplace spirituality can be developed and managed successfully. Program such as Bereavement programs and family get-togethers at the workplace. Leadership styles such as servant leadership, which is the desire to service others first in preference to self and stewardship that is, leadership practice that support the growth and well- being 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.

CONCLUSION:

Spirituality enhances wellbeing and quality of life of employees; it also promotes a sense of connectedness and community and provides a sense of meaning at work. Studies have revealed that spiritual value at work is one of the most important factors that create employee's organizational commitments and the relationship between them are significantly positive. The finding of several researches also indicates that when employees experienced spirituality at work, they feel more effectively closed to their organization, experience a sense of responsibility and loyalty towards them, and feel less materially committed. What seems important is that organizational commitments and increasing productivity had a certain relation with spirituality at work and as a result, manager must improve spirituality climate in order to promote organizational commitments and, thus, employ and organizational performance. The workplace spirituality can be improved by Bereavement programs, Wellness information displayed and distributed, Employee Assistance Programs., Programs that integrate work/family.

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

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