

## Cultivating Organizational Ambience Through Workplace Spirituality and Organisational Commitment

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**Key words:** Implementation profitable, spirituality, remarkable, examination

**Abstract:** The existing literature suggested that in the profitable organizations, workplace spirituality made a remarkable impact. The purpose of this study is to carry out an empirical examination to assess whether the workplace spirituality can enhance organisational commitment. This paper focused on three dimensions of workplace spirituality: Meaning of work, Sense of Community and alignment of values and 3 categories of organizational commitment; effective commitment, continuative commitment and normative commitment. It specified and empirically tested, using a survey design, three hypotheses, each proposing a positive relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment. All three hypotheses were supported indicating that dimensions of workplace spirituality has a positive relationship with affective and continuative commitment. This study, may encourage future research to assess whether various dimensions of workplace spirituality to enhance organisation behaviour. As employee well-being is a matter of social concern, the findings of this study indicating a positive association between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment relevance. To the author's knowledge, this is the first study to examine the relationship between workplace spirituality and four forms of employee well-being, namely; emotional, psychological, social and spiritual well-being. As employee well-being is an important concern for organizations, the contribution of the study findings is that workplace spirituality implementation can simultaneously enhance multiple forms of employee well-being.

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Page No.: 174-178

Volume: 17, Issue 3, 2020

ISSN: 1683-8831

Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences

Copy Right: Medwell Publications

### INTRODUCTION

It is proven empirically that workplace spirituality has a major impact in an organization regardless of whether

the organization is a profitable or non-profitable organization<sup>[1]</sup>. The ability of the organization to adopt and adapt spirituality in the organization can be key factor to increase productivity, innovation, creativity,

performance and pleasure to work organization. On the other hand, workplace spirituality can bring positive impact on the employee because it brings happiness and joyfulness at work which will make the working meaningful place for the employee<sup>[2, 3]</sup>. Many organizations had used workplace spirituality as an enhancement tool to solve human capital the organization and this created a new phenomenon which is very special<sup>[4]</sup>.

Whereas organizational commitment has become a much-researched subject throughout this millennium<sup>[5]</sup>. This interesting part of this organizational behaviour bring goodness in the organization such as increase the output, encourage innovative behaviour increase productivity and enhance quality and efficiency<sup>[6-8]</sup>. An organization that promotes workplace spirituality and organizational commitment can cause marvellous impacts on the overall aspect of an organization.

### Background

**Workplace spirituality:** Workplace spirituality is synonymous with an enjoyable working experience in the workplace that lead to an increase in work productivity. The enjoyable working atmosphere which lead an employee to happiness at work because the working not only merely for the sake for earning income but it is more than that. Employees feel the workplace is a meaningful place that play vital role in their life. According Maslow working for self-satisfaction will bring meaningful consequences in employee and this is positive<sup>[2]</sup>.

Duchon and Plowman<sup>[7]</sup> explore workplace spirituality with seven dimensions which are the inner life as spiritual identity, meaning and purpose in work, a sense of connection and community, block of spirituality, personal responsibility, positive connections with other individual and contemplation. These researchers focus their study in the field of organization behaviour which concentrate more on the psychology, motivation and theology. Whereas Milliman *et al.*<sup>[2]</sup>, made some modification with these dimensions and come up with new set of workplace spirituality dimensions which focuses on psychology and motivation. These researchers come to conclusion that the dimensions of workplace spirituality can categorised into individual level, group level and organization level.

The first dimension proposed by Milliman *et al.*<sup>[4]</sup> is meaningful at work and this particular dimension focuses spirituality at individual level. Even though the first dimension is at individual level but it more about the feeling towards work, workplace and organization. Hence, the meaningful at work can be seen at individual level when employee appreciate their work. They look forward to come to work and they are energized by their work which will lead to the highest contribution to the

organization he or she belongs to. Besides that employee senses a special feeling towards everything related to work, colleagues and his organizations.

The meaningfulness at work behaviour shown by employee will lead to the second dimension which sense of community and this group level. Neal and Bannet gave extra flavour for this particular dimensions by describing it as “esprit de corps”. Esprit de corps can be defined as a show of fidelity and affection to a group with which one identifies. In addition to the fidelity and attachment, esprit de corps could also embody a sense of commitment. The energy generated by esprit de corps may be self-satisfying when it is directed toward oneself in helping to establish an identity. The relationship among co-workers flourish as they treat each other like a family member to perform daily task as a part of working community. The important criteria would be working together to the benefit organization and problem are faced in group as family whether it is job related or personal. The bondage between workers are so close that employee try to bring their own family in the community at work Milliman *et al.*<sup>[4]</sup>.

Meanwhile the third dimensions of workplace spirituality is align with organizational values which is organizational level Milliman *et al.*<sup>[2]</sup>. Every organization has its’ sets of mission, vision, objective and values. The ability of a leader to lead the organization is very crucial because as leader should be able to impart mission, vision, objective and values of the organization and this will be the pillar of the organization. Besides imparting the objectives of the organization, the organization should show concern toward its employees. Caring organization will make organization member to feel connected to organization. Knowing the problem of the organization members, showing concern and helping should be the spirit shown by organization.

**Organizational commitment:** Allen and Meyer<sup>[9]</sup> developed a commitment model, in three forms which are affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment<sup>[10]</sup>. The first form is affective commitment which refers to identification with, involvement and emotional attachment to the organization<sup>[10]</sup>. Employees that shows a strong affective commitment will continue to be a part of the organization because they are enthusiastically feel, so. With this it shows a positive interaction between the individual and the organization because both share the same values<sup>[5, 11]</sup>. Affectively committed employees tend to work longer hours to serve the mission of the organization they feel they belong to.

Meanwhile the second form commitment which is the continuance commitment shows the need by employees to stay with an organization because the cost of leaving is too great or the remuneration factor<sup>[10]</sup>. Allen and

Meyer<sup>[9]</sup>, revealed that employees with strong continuance commitment may not necessarily want to contribute to their employed organization. Indeed, staying with the organization only because of the high cost of leaving may create feelings of frustration which lead to inappropriate behaviours. Since, continued employment is essential for the employee to be with the organization, Allen and Meyer<sup>[9]</sup> indicated a link between continuance commitment and on-the-job behaviour<sup>[10]</sup>. There is thus difficulty in “giving it up” and the unknown “opportunity cost” of leaving the organization or having few or no alternatives<sup>[5]</sup>.

Normative commitment refers to commitment based on a sense of obligation to the organization. Employees with strong normative commitment remain because they feel they ought to do so. As can be seen, all three components of commitment have straightforward implications for staying with (or leaving) an organization but beyond that, are conceptually quite different<sup>[9]</sup>. Research by Munene and Dul showed that normative commitment is not derived from education, pay or age but refers to the feeling of mutual trust that establishes an obligation to stay with the organization<sup>[10]</sup>. Normative commitment might also develop because of the “psychological contract” between an employee and the organization. Normative commitment can increase when an individual feels loyal to his employer or responsible to work for the benefits that he gets from the organization as a result of the desire to compensate the favors received from the institution<sup>[12]</sup>.

#### Hypothesis:

- H<sub>1</sub>: there is significant correlation between dimensions of workplace spirituality and organizational commitment
- H<sub>2</sub>: there is significant relationship between workplace spirituality and normative commitment
- H<sub>3</sub>: there is significant relationship between workplace spirituality and continuative commitment
- H<sub>4</sub>: there is significant relationship between workplace spirituality and affective commitment

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Sample:** Overall 988 Malaysian teachers from 87 public secondary schools in the state of Penang, Malaysia. The sample consisted of 22% (218) males and 78% (771) females. The working experience of the teachers ranged from below 5 years; 14% (141) experience from 6-10 years; 30% (305); experience 11-19 years 44% (415) and experience >20 years 12% (128). Meanwhile, the teachers with PhD qualification are only <1% (4), master degree 11% (107), Bachelor degree 82% (830), diploma 4% (34) and teaching certificate 2% (14).

**Instrument:** The instrument for this research is divided into three parts. The first part of the instrument is the demography which consist information like respondents' gender, working experience, academic qualification, types of school and the gender of respective school principal. Whilst second part questionnaire by Milliman *et al.*<sup>[2]</sup> which was translated to Malay and adapted from Ashmos *et al.*<sup>[3]</sup> that represent workplace spirituality. The actual context of instrument was based on profitable organization but for the sake of these research the instrument was adapted to the school organization has gone through validation process and it is fit to do research. There were 20 items that represented dimension of meaningful at work (6 items), dimension of sense of community (6 items) and dimension organizational values (8 items). The last part of instruments is questionnaire with 24 items that represented organizational commitment. This questionnaire were divided into three type commitment, affective commitment (9 items), continuative commitment (8 items) and normative commitment (7 items). Both the questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale ranging from point strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Findings:** The initial step before analysing critically the items had gone through a reliability test process which the findings shows that the workplace spirituality scale consisted of 17 items ( $\alpha = 0.93$ ) while the first dimension which is meaningful at work consisted of 4 items ( $\alpha = 0.83$ ), sense of community consisted of 6 items ( $\alpha = 0.84$ ) and align with organizational values consisted of 4 items 7 ( $\alpha = 0.83$ ).

Meanwhile, in Table 1 and 2 shows that items for organizational commitment scale consisted of 18 items ( $\alpha = 0.93$ ) while the first subscale affective commitment consisted of 10 items ( $\alpha = 0.93$ ), second sub scale is continuative commitment of 3 items ( $\alpha = 0.77$ ) and the third subscale is normative commitment ( $\alpha = 0.86$ ).

Table 3 and 4 indicates that all level dimensions the of workplace spirituality were quite highly practice

Table 1: Cronbach's alpha value for workplace spirituality

Dimension workplace spirituality	Cronbach's alpha values
Meaningful at work	0.83
Sense of community	0.84
Align with organizational values	0.93
Overall	0.93

Table 2: Cronbach's alpha value for organizational commitment

Organizational commitment	Cronbach's alpha values
Affective commitment	0.93
Continuative commitment	0.77
Normative commitment	0.86
Overall	0.93

Table 3: Intercorrelation between dimensions of workplace spirituality and organizational commitment

	AC	CC	NC	MaW	SoC	OV
AC	-					
CC	53**	-				
NC	0.64**	0.46**	-			
MAW	0.49**	0.27**	0.37**	-		
SOC	0.42**	0.31**	0.33*	0.55*	-	
AOV	0.55**	0.32**	0.42**	0.55*	0.50**	-

\*p>0.05; \*\*p>0.01, AC = Affective Commitment, CC = Continuative Commitment, NC = Normative Commitment, MAW= Meaningful at Work, SOC = Sense of Community and AOV = Align with Organizational Values

Table 4: Level of workplace spirituality

Dimension	Mean	SD	Level
Meaningful at work	3.91	0.63	High
Sense of community	4.46	0.51	High
Alignment of Values	3.68	0.71	High
Overall	4.01	0.51	High

Table 5: Coefficient value of the effect workplace spirituality on organizational commitment

Predictor	Commitment		
	Normative $\beta$	Continuative $\beta$	Affective $\beta$
MAW	0.17**	0.09*	0.27**
SOC	0.09*	0.14**	0.21**
AOV	0.28*	0.21**	0.36*
R values	0.48	0.37	0.62
R <sup>2</sup> values	0.23	0.14	0.39
R <sup>2</sup> coefficient values	0.23	0.14	0.39
F-values	58.80**	31.32**	122.98**

\*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01; MAW = Meaningful at Work; SOC = Sense of Community and AOV = Align with Organizational Values

among the teachers. This also indicates teachers are consider highly spirited when it comes to their profession. Overall the intercorellations are positive and weak except correlation between organization values and affective commitment which positive moderate level. Findings indicate that H<sub>1</sub> is rejected because of weak correlations.

Based on the Table 5, workplace spirituality influence 23% of the change variance of normative commitment. This shows that dimension of meaningful at work ( $\beta = 0.17$ ; p<0.00); dimension of sense of community ( $\beta = 0.09$ ; p<0.01) and dimension of alignment of values ( $\beta = 0.28$ ; p<0.00) significantly influenced normative commitment. The output also shows that the dimension of alignment of values ( $\beta = 0.28$ ; p<0.05) is the best predictor of normative commitment. Findings indicated that H<sub>2</sub> is accepted. The regression analysis shows that workplace spirituality not significantly predicted continuative commitment. The results of the regression indicated the three predictors explained only 14% of the variance ( $R^2 = 0.14$ , F (31.32) = 0.14, p<0.01), so, H<sub>3</sub> is rejected.

Meanwhile the last output workplace spirituality significantly predicted affective commitment. The next

result also shows that workplace spirituality significantly predicted normative commitment. The results of the regression indicated the three predictors explained 23% of the variance ( $R^2 = 0.23$ , F (58.8) = 0.23, p<0.05) and H<sub>4</sub> is accepted.

## CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to examine the relationship between dimensions of workplace spirituality and organizational commitment (affective, continuative and normative commitment). The first finding based on the correlations shows that weak correlations between these variables that indicates dimensions of spirituality are in different form of construct compared to the organizational commitment and this shows it is applicable in research as two different sets of variables. Even though Rego etc used these variables in their research, workplace spirituality instruments that were used had 5 dimensions. Furthermore, the population and sampling were wide range from private sectors and the location were in Brazil and Portugal. Whilst this research focuses only on teachers in Northern Region of Malaysia with bigger sample size, so, this research is a new findings so the findings focuses on the teachers' organizational behaviour at school. Before further discussion, research also shows that the state of workplace spirituality among teachers are high and this indicates teachers are highly spirited when it comes to their profession and school. The dimensions of meaningful at work and sense of community scored the highest level. The findings about meaningful at work shows that teachers feels sense of enjoyment at work, teaching makes them feel happy, teaching is very important part of their life and teachers look forward to teach, these are some of the feelings found through this research. Meaningful at work also foster emotional attachment towards work and organization because the effect was positive in cultivating affective commitment. Because of emotional attachment with the organization teachers feel at home while at their workplace and this increase teacher's retention to leave their school. The responses showed also indicates that teachers feel that their work is interesting and this also the causing factor that make them feel affectively committed to their workplace. Teachers generally are proud with their profession and this element makes them to be passionate with their work at school. Feeling passionate at work make the teachers create effective learning environment, creative, dedicated to achieve good outcomes and able make positive changes in learning environment<sup>[13]</sup>.

Emotionally connected with work will make a teacher happy with the profession and everything related to the school. Another very important part of schooling system is the community. Research findings support that the

teachers do really care about the community in their school and they are team players that create a teaching and learning community. Apart from that the coordination within the group members, this will enhance the group capacity that will lead to new synergistic<sup>[14]</sup>. Another part of workplace spirituality that is alignment with organization values has impact affective commitment and this shows that the organizational goals, objectives, obligations and ideology contributed to affective commitment<sup>[13, 14]</sup>.

The for workplace spirituality predicted that it could boost normative commitment and it means employee feels loyal to his organization or responsible to work for the benefits that he gets from the organization as a result of the desire to compensate the favours received from the organization<sup>[5]</sup>. Teachers feel loyal to their school because of the policy, leadership style and organization values and further supported by alignment with organizational being one of the predictor. Loyalty to the school maybe the one of the factor that keep the teacher attach to the school and workplace spirituality can be factor increasing loyalty among the employee<sup>[5]</sup>.

Overall organizational behaviour among teachers can be improved through cultivation workplace spirituality and organization commitment especially affective and normative commitment. Combination these elements in the human resource management proven in research finding but further research can be done by incorporating other organizational behaviour such as job satisfaction, self-efficacy, perfectionism and others. As a conclusion combination of workplace spirituality and commitment may be the secret recipe in enhancing teachers' organizational behaviour.

### **LIMITATIONS**

This research focused on the teachers in secondary school and these school were located in the northern region of Malaysia. Data analysed cannot represent teachers in Malaysia because the sample was not all over Malaysia. Furthermore, sample for this is only secondary school teachers. These findings don't reflect all level of teachers. Another thing lacking in this research is comparison between types of schools in Malaysia such as private schools, missionary schools, religious schools and other types of school available. Comparison between schools can give better insight related to workplace spirituality and organizational commitment. Collected data were in the form numerical but data can be more meaningful if the research done mix method with qualitative data supporting the findings.

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