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## **WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY, SELF-EMPOWERMENT, AND EFFICIENCY: A RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVE**

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**ABSTRACT.** Workplace spirituality is a construct widely discussed over the past few decades, and it is a much-disputed inquiry field that is gaining the interest of practitioners and scholars. However, some clarifications regarding concepts and definitions are necessary to structure and direct the current debate. This study aims to study the role of workplace spirituality, where many researchers have emphasized its importance for achieving self-empowerment among employees. For that purpose, a total of 200 Questionnaires were distributed to respondents working at the Shrine of Imam Ali (Peace be upon him ), out of which 185 forms that were filled correctly were used for analysis. Research data was collected and analyzed through statistical analysis using a package (SPSS). The findings show that workplace spirituality has a tremendously positive effect on workplace spirituality in employees' self-empowering. Furthermore, the study's results will contribute to the literature by creating awareness concerning the subject not only for organization management but also for its members.

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O17, P31

**Keywords:** workplace spirituality, self-empowerment, Holy Shrine of Imam Ali

### **Introduction**

Spirituality is an old concept that emerged in 1920 as a grassroots movement among working individuals seeking to apply spiritual values. Philosophers and religious scholars have given much intention to this subject (Afsar & Rehman, 2015:335). This movement or philosophy focuses on promoting human emotions at the workplace to achieve employees' self-actualization and inner satisfaction (Soliman et al.,2021:2). Leaders use it to arouse enthusiasm among employees to accomplish tasks assigned to them because they are spiritually associated with work (Asgari et al.,2015:55). The Spirituality-related concepts have proven that they are critical and distinctive sources in organizations' competition at present (Petchsawang & McLean, 2017:218). Those concepts reflect the best results to the organizations.

For this reason, we notice that most researchers are more interested in studying those concepts due to the strategic advantages earned. But in the extant literature, researches and studies are scarce regarding implementing Spirituality and knowing the extent to which it

impacts employees at work (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000:141). Workplace spiritual philosophy promotes several feelings such as love, Altruism, compassion, care, and humanity. The reason for this is employee feels connected spiritually to his work and has the sense that the result is a part of his personality or a complement to it (Rahman et al., 2015:319). Therefore, workplace spirituality is not acted as a fringe idea (Afsar & Rehman, 2015:331). This concept addresses human activities relating to personal development, compassion, meaningfulness, enjoyment at work, honesty, trust, job commitment, and employee well-being, because of its importance in community life, as the employee feels that he is a valuable and essential part of the community (Jena & Pradhan, 2018:382). These spiritual values are considered a significant source of competitive advantage that all organizations endeavor to achieve (Petchsawange & Duchan, 2012:92).

## **1. Literature review**

### ***2.1. Workplace spirituality***

Nowadays, Spirituality has become more predominant in all management areas and organizational studies. As a natural force, it has shown its impact recently on employees, but if it is managed correctly (Zamor, 2003:359). Noticeably, providing support and supervision will lead find a considerable potential to cooperate not only in the professional fields, but also it may go beyond that to reach the humanitarian factors where the individual becomes perfect in his interaction with others (Ahmadi et al., 2014:263). Employees spend most of their waking time with their co-workers at the workplace to accomplish their work objectives, deriving their social identity from work (Harrington et al., 2001:157). The transformation occurring in work-related awareness, which considers the work as a part of individual identity, will participate in its role to give impetus to workplace spirituality (Dehler, & Welsh, 1994:21). Spirituality is different from religion since religion is related to beliefs, rituals, and religious ceremonies (Wolf & Durstmuller, 2018:45). It also represents a personal experience of the fundamental human dimension at the workplace which sounds deep to the employee in a stage of employee's work. That dimension would enable them to reach power eventually (Sorakraikitikul & Siengthai, 2014: 178 ). We can review some definitions of Spirituality presented by researchers. Spirituality is defined as A framework of organizational values evidenced in the individual and organizational culture that encourage employees to assume higher positions through work (Jose, 2015: 30). Also is described as "a framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that encourages employees to attain the desired objectives through work and the extent they harmonize with their work, facilitates their sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of happiness and joy (Rupali et al., 2014:849). Workplace spirituality encompasses three dimensions: inner life, meaningful work, and a sense of community (Isabel et al., 2014: 61-62).

### ***2.2. Self-Empowerment***

Employees who feel empowered tend to find meaningfulness in their work, control the assigned tasks, and possess the necessary ability to implement results (Ma et al., 2021). Also, they are firmly resolved to carry out the roles and tasks assigned to them efficiently and effectively and think they are in a position to influence the final outputs (Namasivayam et al., 2014:76). Furthermore, self-empowerment helps employees be more focused in their works, which will lead to generating creativity at work and achieving the self needs from work requirements (Lana & Chong, 2015:185).

Psychological empowerment is seen as a resource that could enable individual work to be meaningful in their life since the individual is intrinsically linked to it (Steven et al., 2014:379). Also, it is seen as a concept that motivates self-actualization leading to the development and highlighting the self-motivations of perception. This perception is a total of general emotion productivity (Gong et al.,2020), the possibility of being empowered and redirected towards work. Furthermore, individual desires can be directed and played as an incentive to stimulate one's feeling that they can make his work more effective (Avey et al.,2011:575). Empowerment can substantially contribute to the construction of individuals' inner motivation and organize their career despite the difficulties they encounter (Ugwu et al., 2014: 383 ).

The personal Psychological aspect of empowerment emphasizes that a person will feel more empowered if he possesses the skills and abilities to perform the job assigned to him more effectively. A person must have the freedom and authority to make the necessary decisions to perform his tasks and job. (Elnaga& Imran, 2014:17). Empowering employees represents a perception, enhancement of employee's competence and the control on his assigned tasks. Besides empowering employees refers to the symbolic construction of personality, characterized by competence or the skill and ability to perform effectively, control the authority and exert it objectively (Men & Stacks, 2013: 175).

Self-empowerment also refers to the significant and essential motivations formed of meaningfulness of competence, independence (autonomy), and impact. In terms of competence, it means an individual's belief in performing assigned tasks well and free-mistake. Concerning employees' sovereignty, it describes their awareness that there are many independent options at the outset of proceedings regarding work. Influence refers to their ability to create impact in work and direct it towards the set objective (Gardner, 2020). Self-empowerment comprises of four dimensions, which can be stated as follows: competence, impact, meaningfulness, and self-determination (Namasivayam et al., 2014:71).

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### ***3. 1. The Need of the Research***

Nowadays, most organizations seek modern behaviors from which uniqueness, distinction, and global spread can be achieved. Therefore, organization leaderships have become emulating and addressing individuals' underlying emotions because human energies are boundless. Moreover, human capital is seen as the most crucial asset in which organizations can compete. Therefore, when stirring up love feelings, employee Altruism and a sense of belonging to work will stimulate individuals' inner self motivations. Accordingly, it could create a kind of interest at work and interaction with other employees. Consequently, all that would generate harmony and human interaction to achieve inner satisfaction and self-esteem. Also, spiritual connection with work will be present, which will participate in creating competitive superiority.

The primary study problem is poor self-empowerment due to not instilling workplace spirituality. Based upon the study problem, a set of sub-questions have been raised, and they were formulated as follows:

1. *Is there any role of an inner life in self-empowering employees?*
2. *Is meaningful work considered essential for achieving self-empowerment?*
3. *Does the sense of community belonging have a role in employees' self-empowerment at the workplace?*
4. *Does the enhancement of competence, impact, meaningfulness, and self-determination affect employees' self-empowerment at the workplace?*

### **3.2. Study Objectives**

This study aims to understand the concept of workplace spirituality and how it affects the studied organization's ultimate productivity. It also seeks to indicate the role played by workplace spirituality and identify the required competence from employees to achieve his tasks. Finally, it examines the extent to which workplace spirituality contributes to self-determine employees by granting them the right to choose an appropriate work style freely. Workplace spirituality plays a fundamental role in identifying the meaningfulness of work and harmonizes between work requirements and employees' beliefs.

### **3.3. The Importance Of The Study**

Workplace spirituality is considered one of the modern tools used by organizations that research rigorously for behavioral sciences of their members. Those organizations have started to use such concepts for their importance in their lives and members' lives. So, we argue that the essence of Spirituality in the workplace stems from several features. The Spirituality at the workplace creates a form of self-motivation for employees and participating in accomplishing the tasks assigned to them. It establishes a form of work loving for being a part of self-actualization relating to the employees. It also contributes to arousing individuals' emotional feelings and adherence to work. It makes an increase in individual inner satisfaction and self-actualization.

### **3.4. Research Model and Hypotheses**

#### **3.4.1. Research Model**

Based upon the study problem, importance and objectives, the following hypothetical scheme was formulated:

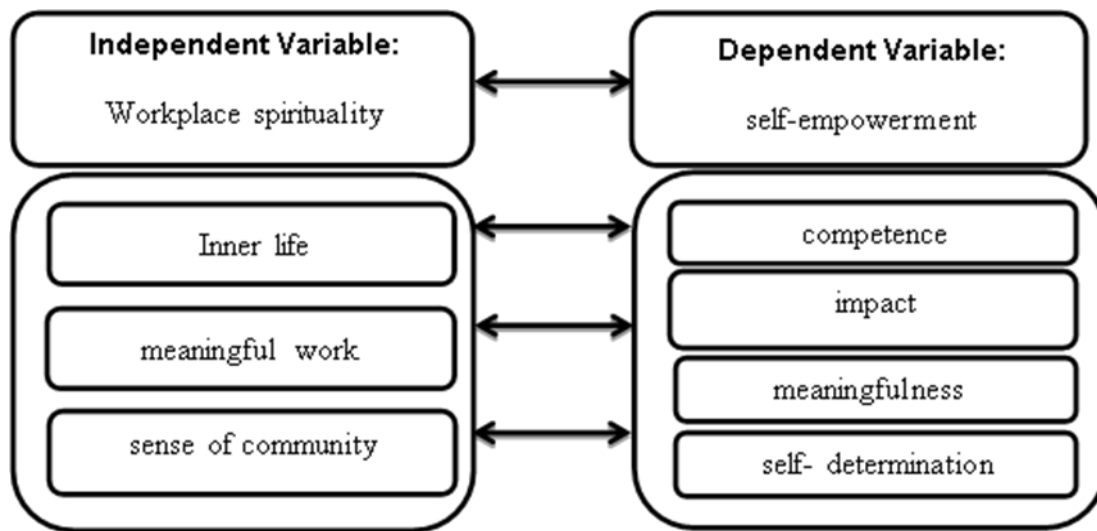


Fig. 1. Research model.

### 3.4.2. Hypotheses of the Research

H1 The central hypothesis is (A statistically significant correlation exists between workplace spirituality and self-empowerment ). The following will be sub hypotheses based on the main one, which is as follows :

H11: There is a statistically significant correlation between inner life at the workplace and self-empowerment.

H12: There is a statistically significant correlation between meaningful work and self-empowerment.

H13: There is a statistically significant correlation between the sense of community and self-empowerment.

## 4. METHOD AND RESEARCH DESIGN

### 4.1. Procedure and Participants

Questionnaires were 200 distributed in the Holy Shrine of Imam Ali ( Peace be upon him ). All employees were requested to participate. The questionnaires were collected, and altogether 185 participated in the study.

### 4.2. Measures

Analyzing the respondents' views and responses concerning the study variables. The following paragraph involves a display of a series of data, information, and analysis shown in the questionnaire form. Pertinently, the collection is based upon analyzing the respondents' opinions and responses to the given subject. However, the Sample study is represented by working individuals at Imam Ali Holy Shrine about the study variables. Fundamentally regarding studying the workplace spirituality and self-empowerment dimensions. Therefore, for this purpose, the researcher has employed a method to collect the necessary information and data for testing the study model and hypotheses, including a questionnaire designed according to a five-point LIKERT scale. The 5- graded scale refers to disparate responses starting from

the first, strongly agree, to the lowest, strongly disagree. Nevertheless, the other three grades can be illustrated: 2- agree 3- neutral 4- disagree.

After filling out the forms by respondents, a table of frequencies distributions of the study variables was formulated. The reason behind that was to be adopted in the statistical analysis to obtain weighted means, standard deviation, and variation coefficient of variables under study.

However, the researcher adopts hypothetical mean (3) as a standard of the measurement and evaluates degree resulting and relating with the sample responses within the verbal estimation of the five-point rating scale. Noticing that hypothetical mean (3) is the highest degree average in the hierarchy, which represents (5) and the lowest degree (1). After processing and analyzing the study sample responses statistically. Weighted means, standard deviations, and coefficients of variation are reached concerning workplace spirituality and self-empowerment dimension levels.

## 5. RESULTS

### 5.1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Analyzing the respondents' views and responses concerning workplace spirituality variable: This paragraph comprises a display and analysis of respondents' answers concerning the self-empowerment variable, under the results of appropriate programmers designed for that purpose, related with the sample responses's the mean, standard deviation, and variation coefficient. Noticeably, table (1) indicates the final results relating to each item of self-empowerment variable items. Furthermore, it concludes the percentages, means, standard deviation, and variation coefficient. Consistency and convergence can be identified within the study sample responses.

Table 1. descriptive statistics

| NO                    | Workplace spirituality  | XW)( | SD   | C . V |
|-----------------------|---|------|------|-------|
| Inner life (A)        |   |      |      |       |
| 1                     | A1  | 3.8  | 2.2  | 57.9  |
| 2                     | A2  | 3.4  | 1.7  | 50    |
| 3                     | A3  | 3.8  | 2.5  | 65.8  |
|                       | Arithmetic means standard deviation and General coefficient of variation. | 3.67 | 0.23 | 6.3   |
| meaningful work(B)    |   |      |      |       |
| 4                     | B1  | 3.8  | 2.7  | 71.1  |
| 5                     | B2  | 4.2  | 3.4  | 80.9  |
| 6                     | B3  | 3.8  | 2.5  | 65.8  |
|                       | Arithmetic means standard deviation and General coefficient of variation. | 3.93 | 0.23 | 5.9   |
| sense of community(C) |   |      |      |       |
| 7                     | C1  | 3.9  | 2.7  | 69.2  |
| 8                     | C2  | 3.7  | 2.04 | 55.1  |
| 9                     | C3  | 3.9  | 2.8  | 71.8  |
| 10                    | C4  | 4.1  | 3.3  | 80.5  |
|                       | Arithmetic means standard deviation and General coefficient of variation. | 3.9  | 0.16 | 4.1   |

### 5.2. Analyzing respondents information

This paragraph includes a display and analysis of respondents' views and responses concerning the self-empowerment variable under the results of appropriate programs designed for that purpose, related to the sample responses mean, standard deviation, and variation coefficient. Noticeably, table ( 2) indicates the final results relating to each item of self-empowerment variable items. Furthermore, it concludes the percentages, means, standard deviation, and difference coefficient. In which consistency and convergence can be identified within the study sample.

Table 2. descriptive statistics - self-empowerment dimensions

| NO | self-empowerment  | XW)( | SD   | C . V |
|----|---|------|------|-------|
|    | Competence(D)   |      |      |       |
| 1  | D1  | 4.1  | 3.6  | 87.8  |
| 2  | D2  | 4.03 | 3.4  | 84.4  |
| 3  | D3  | 4.02 | 3.4  | 84.6  |
| 4  | D4  | 4.05 | 3.5  | 86.4  |
| 5  | D5  | 3.7  | 2.3  | 62.2  |
|    | Arithmetic means standard deviation and General coefficient of variation. | 3.98 | 0.16 | 4.02  |
|    | Impact(E)   |      |      |       |
| 6  | E1  | 4.2  | 3.7  | 88.1  |
| 7  | E2  | 3.9  | 2.9  | 74.4  |
| 8  | E3  | 4.02 | 3.3  | 82.1  |
| 9  | E4  | 3.9  | 3.2  | 82.1  |
| 10 | E5  | 4.02 | 3.3  | 82.1  |
|    | Arithmetic means standard deviation and General coefficient of variation. | 4.01 | 0.12 | 3     |
|    | Meaningfulness(F)   |      |      |       |
| 11 | F1  | 2.9  | 1    | 34.5  |
| 12 | F2  | 3.7  | 2.3  | 62.2  |
| 13 | F3  | 3.7  | 2.3  | 62.2  |
| 14 | F4  | 3.6  | 2.6  | 72.2  |
| 15 | F5  | 3.9  | 3.1  | 79.5  |
|    | Arithmetic means standard deviation and General coefficient of variation. | 3.56 | 0.34 | 9.6   |
|    | self- determination(G)  |      |      |       |
| 16 | G1  | 4.1  | 3.5  | 85.4  |
| 17 | G2  | 4    | 3.2  | 80    |
| 18 | G3  | 3.8  | 2.5  | 65.8  |
| 19 | G4  | 3.9  | 3    | 76.9  |
| 20 | G5  | 4    | 3.1  | 77.5  |
|    | Arithmetic means standard deviation and General coefficient of variation. | 3.96 | 0.11 | 2.8   |

### 5.3. Correlation testing among the study variables.

The paragraph discusses analyzing the correlation between workplace spirituality and self-empowerment dimensions among the study variables. Therefore, the study sample numbered 185 respondents will be adopted to test the correlation between two study variables (workplace spirituality and self-empowerment). That was an attempt from the researcher to reach either acceptability or rejection to the hypothesis related to correlation analysis between the two variables depending upon the following assumption:

*Null hypothesis (H0): The correlation between the two variables does not exist*

*Alternative hypothesis (H1): The correlation between the two variables exists*

Table 3. the results of the correlation

| self-empowerment    |                |        |            |                    | Workplace spirituality |
|---------------------|----------------|--------|------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| self- determination | Meaningfulness | impact | competence |                    |                        |
| 0.61*               | 0.64*          | 0.63*  | 0.67*      | Inner life         |                        |
| 0.60 *              | 0.55*          | 0.65*  | 0.63*      | meaningful work    |                        |
| 0.58 *              | 0.62 *         | 0.67*  | 0.55*      | sense of community |                        |

Table 3 illustrates the correlation between workplace spirituality and self-empowerment items. It shows a positive statistically significant correlation between workplace spirituality and self-empowerment items within significance level (0.05) for each item of both variables. Remarkably, the inner life item was the most potent correlation value. Therefore, it represents evidence which demonstrates a rejection of the null hypothesis, consequently accepting the alternative hypothesis, which states existing correlations between the two variables.

### Conclusions

The paper's primary purpose was to offer a better understanding of the research of workaholism, specifically on the varied profiles of employees and their relative links with the elements of workplace spirituality. It was able to discover a low and positive association between the global scale of workplace spirituality and the workaholism dimensions Work Involvement and Drive, albeit a moderate relationship with the enjoyment of work. Assuming that Spirituality is an internal resource that individuals can turn to, it is possible to take that: the higher the levels of workplace spirituality, the greater the probability of developing some worker profile involving a high Enjoyment of work (Enthusiastic addicts, Work enthusiasts, Alienated professional, or Relaxed Workers, according to Spence and Robbins' typology). Obviously, the bigger an organization seeks to apply Spirituality at the workplace, the more contributions would be made in reaching self-empowerment to its people. It is observed that paying greater attention to meaningful work would self-empower people; in return, it gives an advantage to the business. Employees' strong sense of belonging to a company has a crucial impact on fulfilling their duty quickly and more successfully. 6.2. recommendations based on the initial results, a set of recommendations has been reached: Working on implementing workplace spirituality within the organization for advancing the aims that organizations seek to



obtain. The organization should make additional attempts to achieve meaningful jobs which might make its people self-empowered, subsequently leading to reach its intended aims. Creating a better link between organization management and its members would enhance workers' sense of organization belonging. After that, they will be highly loyal and try their best to attain an organization's aim. The present article has various shortcomings that should be addressed in future investigations. The variables utilized in this study enabled us to assess the workaholic profiles and the correlations with the workplace spirituality characteristics of Portuguese workers. Although we strongly feel that these outputs are favorable and promising, it is vital to include new variables, metrics, and theories to draw a more consistent model. Regarding the sample, we feel that it may be extended to other countries to analyze cultural differences in the future, which would let us see a more extensive range of results. To better evaluate the worker profiles, it would be helpful to undertake a longitudinal investigation to understand the constructs' dynamic better.

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