**Research Paper**

# Workplace Spirituality as a Predictor of Organizational Commitment Among IT Employees

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**ABSTRACT**

The need for exploring and imbibing new management concepts in the workplace is always on the rise. Organizations spend huge financial resources to find out new and efficient ways to manage their workforce. The present study seeks to understand the role of workplace spirituality in determining organizational commitment among IT employees in India. A quantitative approach is adopted by using the Workplace spirituality scale by Petchsawang and Duchon (2009) and Organizational commitment scale by Allen and Meyer (1990). Data collection is then followed up by correlation and regression analysis. The findings indicate a strong positive correlation between the two variables. Furthermore, workplace spirituality is also established as a significant predictor of organizational commitment. The findings of the research enumerate on how the increase of workplace spirituality can increase the rate of organizational commitment among a workforce. Future research in this field, can be a segue for more co relational studies in relation to workplace spirituality and strengthen the idea and its usage in the business environment. It can lead to top managements leading a very reliable and efficient workforce. A workforce that is not only motivated but also dedicated to subscribe and own the values of the organization.

***Keywords:*** *Organizational commitment, Workplace spirituality, IT employees, and Organizational Psychology*

The 21st century workforce exhibits a shift from appreciation for traditional reward systems towards a more self-enhancing work environment. Employees no longer work just for the monetary rewards, and are rather more mindful of their interaction with an organisation. They seek to reach their fuller potential by finding meaning in work and purposefully contributing to the organisation. It has become evident that employees now give more importance to how the organisations build a healthy and growth inducing work environment that elucidates and fosters organisational commitment. This can be quantitatively evaluated by associating the influence of workplace spirituality to organizational commitment. Workplace spirituality can be understood as the recognition that employees have a greater focus on connectedness and compassion which nourishes and in turn is nourished by meaningful work taking place in the context of a community (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). Workplace spirituality is not related to religion but rather talks about the

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values, purpose and connectedness to the community of the workplace within an organisation. The present study focuses on understanding the influence of workplace spirituality and its effect on organizational commitment.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational commitment is a broad concept that talks about employee turnover or if an employee decides to stay or leave an organization. There is another standpoint to organizational commitment that is through behavioral and psychological aspect. This is where the three-component conceptualization of organizational commitment developed by Meyer & Allen (1987a) came into play. The three constituents add up to understand the psychological state of organizational commitment of an employee.

1. Affective organizational commitment refers to an employee's affect (feelings/emotions) towards the organization.
2. Normative organizational commitment refers to the employee's purpose of retaining in an organization and the feeling of wanting to provide for the organization.
3. Continuance organizational commitment refers to the need to stay in the organization by the employee. It talks about how the employee realizes the need of their contribution in the organization.

An employee's commitment is highly dependent upon the organizational policies and practices at large. For instance, green human resource practices are found to have a positive impact upon an employees' organizational commitment (Shoaib et al., 2021). Socially responsible and resource efficient practices strengthen the commitment as employees tend to experience equity and fairness in the flow of work practices.

When employees trust the company, they tend to experience a higher sense of affective commitment (Ndlovu, Quaye & Saini, 2021). This trust is built upon with healthy working relationships and is especially influenced by the line manager communication. Performance appraisal practices are also found to have an influence upon an employees' organizational perception which takes the form of organizational commitment (Rana & Singh, 2021).

Other such research findings elucidate that personal factor like age and gender also effect an employee's affective commitment. It is found that older employees tend to score higher on this component as compared to the younger ones (Rana & Singh, 2021). This also indicates that the tenure of an employee within an organization impacts the level of commitment. It is also found that female employees are comparatively more committed than their male counterparts.

Organizational commitment is said to be positively influenced by self-actualization (Gopinath, 2020). Self-actualization also impacts job involvement and job satisfaction thereby indicating that an employee's perception of their job and work leads to the experience of organizational commitment.

Workplace spirituality, on the other hand, can help an individual expand his mindset and be very connected with his/her work environment. It can help the employee and the organization to highlight the purpose and need of an individual in the organization. According to Pfeffer (2003) human goals which pertain to the needs of people in their workplace are:

1. Work those interests to develop and learn, leading to a sense of mastery.
2. Work that gives meaning and sustains a feeling of purpose.

3. An environment that promotes growth and connection among co workers.

The ability to live a balanced life and to not change the nature of oneself for the work.

In a study conducted to create satisfied employees through workplace spirituality by Gupta, Kumar, & Singh (2014), the authors arrived at four dimensions constituting workplace spirituality. The tool to quantify this was also developed through these dimensions. They are:

1. Meaningful work refers to the feeling of importance towards one's work and the purpose they derive from it. A meaningful job provides opportunities and happiness to the employee.
2. Sense of community in the workplace refers to the relatable feeling an employee feels with his co-workers and the environment of the organization. This can be the feeling of sharing same goals and mindset with other employees of the organization.
3. Organizational Values refers to the level in which the employee feels obligated to follow the standards of the organization.
4. Compassion refers to the feeling of sympathy that seeks to promote growth mindset among employees.

Workplace spirituality, as its nature suggests, is a significant predictor of an employee's mental well-being. Research shows that by engaging in spirituality at the workplace, employees can enhance their mindfulness as well as mental health (Jnaneshwar & Sulphey, 2021) which is essential for consistent, effective on-the-job performance. Workplace spirituality is found to be positively related to occupational stress (Daniel, 2015). Consequently, it is clear that the management must insist on providing meaningful activities in work to control, manage and prevent stress at work. The spiritual values associated with workplace spirituality when incorporated in organizations have a positive impact on work productivity of employees.

Numerous studies have studied and established a relationship between organizational commitment and workplace spirituality. One such study that was focused on workplace spirituality as an intrinsic factor stated that there is a positive relationship between the two variables (Wainaina, Iravo & Waititu, 2014; Utami, Sapta, Verawati & Astakoni, 2020). Upon further probing, it is also found that dimensions of workplace spirituality such as meaningful work, impacts organizational commitment the most. Organizational values in particular also influence the sense of belongingness and commitment an employee has towards the organization (Hisam & Sanyal, 2021).

Another study supports the argument that workplace spirituality can be helped to improve organizational commitment, by establishing that all dimensions of workplace spirituality are predictors of affective and normative commitment (Mydin, Abdullah, & Pitchay, 2018). Additionally, one of the contributors to employees' organizational commitment and workplace spirituality was found to be corporate philanthropy (Rego, Cunha, & M.P. 2008). The overall impact was also found to be affecting employee performance in general. When people experience workplace spirituality, they feel more affectively attached to their organizations, experience a sense of obligation/loyalty towards them, and feel less instrumentally committed (Rego & Cunha, 2007). This implies that employees have a feeling of wanting to be attached to their organization and not just complying with their roles and structure of the organization.

*Study*

There have been a lot of studies conducted on organizational commitment in relation with job satisfaction, organizational citizenship, turnover etc. But there are not many studies understanding the correlation with workplace spirituality in the IT sector. Organizations looking out for more effective ways to provide meaningful work in their work community can venture into the concept of workplace spirituality (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). By establishing a relationship between these variables' organizations can incorporate strategies aligning with the needs of the workforce to enhance retention and performance in general. Such an efficient work environment will also allow the organizations to optimally manage and develop the human resources.

*Hypothesis*

**H1.** There exists no relation between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment among IT employees.
**H2.** Workplace spirituality cannot predict organizational commitment among IT employees.

## METHODOLOGY

*Design*

The research approach is based on a correlation survey research design. The study revolves around gathering data using standardized questionnaires from appropriate sample representative of the population under study. Post data collection, the data is statistically analyzed in order to establish relationship between the two variables.

*Participants*

Purposive sampling is used to approach the target population of the study. The sample of the study includes employees working in the IT department for at least 2 years. The sample under study constituted of 106 working adults of all genders (male, female and other). This is taken into consideration to provide more diverse demographics in the sample population. Contract based employees or those who are part of the IT enabled services are excluded from the study keeping in mind the affective component requirements of the variables under study.

*Procedure*

After Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, based on inclusion and exclusion criteria the sample population is approached. A consolidated questionnaire that consists of scales of workplace spirituality and organizational commitment is circulated using google forms. Based on the participant responses data analysis is carried out further to establish correlation and regression. Statistical findings are then discussed in the organizational context to generate insights.

*Measures*

Two tools have been used to collect data in this study. These are standardized tests that are established for their reliability and validity over due course of time.

- *Workplace spirituality scale (WAS).* Workplace spirituality scale (WAS) developed by Petchsawang and Duchon (2009) is used. It is a standardized 22 item scale which is measured on a 5-point Likert Type scale and ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). There are 4 subscales catering to the dimensions including compassion, meaningful work, transcendence and mindfulness. The r square value of the scale ranges from .12 to .71 thus providing evidence of adequate convergent validity. Cronbach's alpha for the entire scale is .85. (Petchsawang & Duchon, 2009)

- ***Organizational commitment scale (OCS).*** The scale was developed by Allen and Meyer (1990) consisting of 3 dimensions namely Affective Commitment, Normative Commitment, Continuance Commitment. A total of 18 items are used to measure organizational commitment on a 5-point Likert scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The Cronbach's alpha of the instrument is 0.8. (Allen & Meyer, 1990)
- ***Workplace spirituality***. In this context, workplace spirituality is the determination of an employee's level of workplace spirituality. Compassion, meaningful work, transcendence and mindfulness are the different dimensions that are evaluated.
- ***Organizational commitment.*** Organizational commitment is a multidimensional construct comprising of three components: affective, continuance and normative commitment. The evaluation of the scores will depict the level of organizational commitment that one possesses.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Prior to testing the hypothesized model, sample characteristics were evaluated to determine the statistical nature of the data. Table 1 indicates the test results of normality using the Shapiro-Wilk test. The criterion for normality distribution met for workplace spirituality ($p < .05$) but not for organizational commitment ($p > .05$) consequently, non-parametric statistics were found appropriate to analyze the relationship between the said variables.

*Table 1*

| Variable | Statistic | df | p |
|---|---|---|---|
| Workplace Spirituality | .988 | 106 | .444 |
| Organizational Commitment | .958 | 106 | .002 |

*Normality assessment using Shapiro Wilk's test*

### Hypothesis testing

**H1:** There exists no relation between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment among IT employees.

**H2:** Workplace spirituality cannot predict organizational commitment among IT employees. Hypothesis' were analyzed using the Spearman's rank order correlation and further inferences were drawn using regression analysis.

### Correlational Statistics

A series of spearman rank-order correlations were conducted to determine if there were any relation between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment.

*Table 2*

| Correlation matrix | | Workplace spirituality | Organisational commitment |
|---|---|---|---|
| Workplace spirituality | Spearman's r | -- | .529** |
| | p-value | -- | .000 |
| Organisational commitment | Spearman's r | .529** | -- |
| | p-value | .000 | -- |
| **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) | | | |

*Spearman's rank order correlation that shows the relationship of Workplace Spirituality with Organisational Commitment.*

Table 2 indicates the test results of co relational analysis between the two variables. A two-tailed test of significance indicated that there exists a strong positive correlation between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment $r_s(106) = .529$, $p < .01$

*Table 3*

| Model | Variable | ß | t | $R^2$ | F | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | (Constant) | 31.235 | 7.356 | .235 | 31.973 | .000 |
| | WS | .299 | 5.654 | | | .000 |

Dependent variable: Organizational Commitment

*Regression analysis summary for workplace spirituality predicting organizational commitment*

Regression analysis shows that workplace spirituality is a significant predictor of organizational commitment since ANOVA is significant at a .01 level ($p < 0.01$) F $(1,104)$ = 31.973, $p = 0.00$ Coefficient of determination ($R^2 = .235$) indicated that the variance of dependent variable with reference to the changes in the independent variable is 23.5% The slope of regression is moderate at .299 which is significant ($p = .000 < .01$)

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

The statistical analysis for the independent variable – workplace spirituality and dependent variable – organizational commitment reveals that since the value of correlation coefficient is significant at a 0.01 level, the null hypothesis (H1) is rejected and consequently there is sufficient evidence to say that the results are statistically significant. It can be concluded that there exists a strong positive correlation between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment. Since the magnitude of the relation is strong, the direction confirms that with an increase in workplace spirituality there will be an increase in organizational commitment and vice versa.

The regression analysis using workplace spirituality (independent variable) and organizational commitment (dependent variable) was found to be significant. Consequently, it is evident that workplace spirituality is a good predictor of organizational commitment leading to the rejection of null hypothesis H2. The proportion of variance in the dependence variable can be predicted using the independent variable in this case. 23.5% of the variance in organizational commitment can be explained by one's workplace spirituality.

This implies that workplace spirituality will be an indicator to predict an employees' organizational commitment in an organization. Additionally, the higher the workplace spirituality of an employee, the more likely he/she is to be committed to their organization. This provides a different perspective for organizations to look into the ideology and methods of workplace spirituality and imbibing it to create a workforce with high organizational commitment. Thus, making careers a holistic experience for the employees. Organizations can venture into imbibing ideologies and value systems that increase organizational commitment through interventions involving workplace spirituality. Since the result highlights a strong regression, the ROI in interventions can be assured to boost more cost-efficient strategies and competitive advantage in the industry. Thus, the culture of the organization will attract a more dedicated and diverse workforce.

*Limitations*
Owing to the outbreak of the pandemic, it was a challenge to approach the right sample from the population for data collection. The normal course of research was obstructed and virtual sources were relied to collect data. The data collected virtually was not as effective as physical data collection since it was hard to elicit active participation. For the study to have a greater impact, it must be conducted in a larger geographical location with a larger sample size to understand the universal perspective of the highlighted concepts.

*Recommendations*
The use of standardized tools for data collection is a popular and widely accepted practice in psychological studies. However, the incorporation of interviews and observations can help generate more insight. A mix method study would prove to be extremely useful in this context. Additionally, by expanding the scope of this study to others sectors in the industry can further enrich the understanding of the applicability and role of workplace spirituality in the life cycle of an employee in general.

*Future Directions*
The success of the current study indicates the infinite possibilities that can be exploited by combining the different domains of psychology. Researchers must not be afraid to associate psychological phenomenon to the ways of human conduct and be curious to experiment. Particularly in the field of workplace spirituality, an analysis of the sub components can help explain how the phenomenon occurs within an organization. By relating an employee's life cycle to organizational factors new ways of scientific management can be derived which lead the way to a more modernistic way of human resource development.

## CONCLUSION

The present study was aimed at establishing a relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment. The main aim of the study was to use the concepts of positive and integrate them with organizational psychology to facilitate sustainable solutions for organizations to enhance employee productivity and experience. The two variables were correlated and the extent of their relationship was established using a regression analysis.

The statistical findings indicate that there exists a strong positive relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment. This implies that organizations that engage employees in workplace spirituality tend to elicit a higher commitment from them. Consequently, such organizations enable employees to understand the meaningfulness of their contributions to the organization as a whole. Such employees also feel more connected and committed to their work, colleagues, and organizations as well. The positive relationship between the two variables is also supported by numerous other researches (Wainaina, Iravo & Waititu, 2014; Mydin, Abdullah, & Pitchay, 2018)

It is also established that workplace spirituality is a predictor of organizational commitment. As a result, it becomes all the more necessary to understand that engaging in spirituality at the workplace are likely to be more committed to the organization and their colleagues (Rego & Cunha, 2007; Hisam & Sanyal, 2021).

The study supports the applicability and practical implications of workplace spirituality in human capital management. The new generation workforce such as the gen Z's and the millennials will benefit from engaging in workplace spirituality as it enhances employee experience and his/her connection to their organization. The success of this study provides

ground for organizations looking for change and improving efficiency to adopt smarter working practices. It can develop a workplace culture that brings a sense of joy, sense of community and trust among employees. The spiritual development will lead to employees finding meaning in their life and work. When the spiritual needs are satisfied for an employee, it will help the employees to develop their entire self (physical, mental, emotional and spiritual) (Rego and Pina e Cunha, 2007). On a whole this research will stand as an indicator to direct employees and employers into various individual and organizational benefits.

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