

# Spirit at Work & Its Relation with Individual and Organizational Valued States



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**D.Jaichitra**  
**P.T. Srinivasan**  
University of Madras  
(mdjaichitra@gmail.com)

*In the pursuit of achieving higher economic performance and productivity many organisations had begun to notice of a new phenomenon called as Individual Spirit at Work The goal of this paper is to analyze Spirit at Work explore the nexus between spirituality work attitudes and individual and organizational The work attitudes studied are organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction The Outcomes are Vitality, In role Performance Individual Productivity, Organisation Based Self Esteem and Life Satisfaction This research is significant as it highlights the dynamics of the relationship between Spirit at Work, Work Attitudes and Individual and Organisational Outcomes.*

**Keywords:** Spirit at Work, Workplace, Work attitudes, Individual and Organisational Outcomes

## 1. Introduction

Spirituality in organizations is currently a salient issue in both scientific and empirical inquiry. Modern workplace continues to change at a radical pace. Mainly in response to globalization, the last two decades has witnessed a significant increase in mergers and acquisitions alongside the delivering and downsizing of many organizations.. Technocrats and employees experience a feeling of uneasy bouncing back and forth depending on where they are, who they are with, and what time of day it is. Plenty of work in a given targeted time, makes the employee stressed out in his job and as well as the organization. Thus, the motive of the employee is to achieve targets and creativity is diminished within the employees.

In the past, employees were able to manage with their technical and design skills alone. However in today's dynamic and turbulent business setting, technocrats are struggling with changes at work and are vigorously engaged in a reinvention of various practices within the organization. Workplaces are moving from being a situation of survival; to a situation where they earn the bread and butter; to a situation of living. The living during this context means that, the place where employees are absolutely alive and exist. When you are there, absolutely alive, the spirit can unleash itself impeccably. The study of spirituality goes deeply into the heart of every person and extends far beyond the physical world of matter. Spirituality connects a person with the profoundly powerful and divine force that's present in this Universe.

Organisations that promote a spiritual dimension recognize that employees have both a mind and a spirit, seek to find meaning and purpose in their work and desire to connect with other employees and be part of a community. Hence Spirituality is an experience that may give employees with direction, sense, inner wholeness, provide feelings of thoughtfulness, support or connectedness. First, throughout this paper the terms 'Workplace Spirituality', 'Spirituality in the Workplace' and 'Spirit at Work' are used interchangeably so as to denote a route of achieving personal accomplishment or spiritual growth in the workplace. This paper aims to systematically explore the underlying assumptions as well as the rationale of the main trends regarding Spirit at Work by critically discussing their relationship with the mediating effects of Organisational Commitment and Job Satisfaction on the relationship between Individual Spirit at Work and Individual and Organisational Outcomes in Service Sector Organisations.

## 2. Need for the Study

All of us work to earn a livelihood but the purpose of work does not stop there since work offers us a meaning and purpose for living. Our Question is that how does spirituality narrate to the bottom line of a business? In keeping with the view of (Vicari,2003), majority of experts claim that individuals' personal and life at work are powerfully influenced by the spiritual dogmas where spirituality has become an vital and salient issue for the organizational survival within the long run. Spirituality in organisations is at present a salient issue in both scientific and empirical inquiry. In the wordings of Klenke (2005), the growth of interest in this phenomenon is also due to the relevance of subjective factors in organisational settings, such as individual quest for higher level, personal meaning and transcendent values. As Robbins (2003) elaborates, "Organizations that promote a spiritual culture acknowledge that people have both a mind and a spirit, seek to find out meaning and purpose in their work, and desire to bond with other human beings and be part of a community".

Spirituality in the Workplace has emerged as the strongest predictor to cope up with the symptoms caused by work overload and stress and facilitate one to succeed in achieving the targets. In sum, spirituality at workplace is an experience of transcendence, interconnectedness, personal completeness and joy, analyzed in numerous frameworks. A Spiritual employee will demonstrate a higher degree of ethical sensitivity and commitment as well as beneficial personal attributes such as increased joy, love, serenity, consideration, and meaningfulness. The focus of this exploratory empirical study is to look into

how Individual Spirit at Work can lead to the performance of certain desirable behaviors by employees inside the organization. Subsequently, deepened understanding of the phenomenon is derived from tracing into Individual Spirit at Work Scale by Kinjerski and Skrypnik (2006) and particular interest in looking at its relationship with Work Attitudes namely Organisational Commitment and Individual and Organisational Outcomes such as Vitality, In role Performance, Individual Productivity Organisation Based Self Esteem and Life Satisfaction.

### 3. Spirit at Work

Today's productive and profitable workplaces require organizational cultures that integrate humanistic core values with core business policies, judgments, functions, and behaviours, that support the physical, mental, innovative and spiritual well-being of its employees. More and more businesses are helping to create a better world by being more socially responsible in how they treat people and the environment and it is proved that involving spirit may be transforming from within.

A person's spirit is the vital principle or animating force traditionally believed to be the intangible, life affirming force in self and all human beings (Anderson, 2000). The word 'Spirit' comes from the Latin words 'spirare', to breathe and 'spiritus', the breath. Without breath, we might not be alive. Therefore 'Spirit' has something to try and do with the energy or force that offers everyone the reward of life. It is a state of intimate relationship with the inner self of privileged values and morality as well as recognition of the reality of the inner nature of individuals (Fairholm, 1997). Put in forth the spiritual quest is one that emphasizes a dynamic route where individuals decisively seeks to realize their potential, an ultimate purpose, and a personal connection with a higher power or being that may or may not be referred to as God (Wulff, 1996). Hence, Spirit at Work is a means for celebrating the self behaviour of the employees that enables the organization to differ.

Kinjerski & Skrypnik's (2006) in their empirical-grounded work, have given the definition of Spirit at Work as follows, "Spirit at work is a distinct state that is characterised by cognitive, interpersonal, spiritual, and mystical dimensions namely (1) *engaging work* characterised by a profound feeling of well-being, a belief that one is engaged in meaningful work that has a higher purpose, an awareness of alignment between one's values and beliefs and one's work, and a sense of being authentic; (2) a *spiritual connection* characterised by a sense of connection to something larger than self; (3) a *sense of community* characterised by a feeling of connectedness to others and common purpose; and (4) a *mystical experience* characterised by a positive state of energy, a sense of exactness, transcendence, and experiences of joy and bliss".

### 4. Research on Spirit at Work

Undoubtedly, the biggest challenge in each individual's life is not simply to get reward, promotion or great successes, rather the important issue is a way to establish balance among personal, work and spiritual life with success. Creating such balance is regarded as a significant challenge for some individual employees (Atashpour, Aghaei and Kazemi, 2008). At the foremost basic and individual level, spirituality at workplace can be viewed as the incorporation of one's own spiritual ideals and values within the work setting.

In keeping with Ashmos and Duchon (2000), Spirituality in the Workplace is the recognition that employees have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community. The basic aim of Spirituality in the Workplace is to develop positive attitudes and relationship of the organization with the corporate world and it is rather a focus effort to accomplish positive attitudes within the employees. It is not confined with the health, happiness, empowerment, genuineness and relationship of the workers but also with the other co-workers.

While Spirituality at Workplace is considered a highly personal and philosophical construct, nearly all of the academic definitions acknowledge that spirituality involves a sense of wholeness, connectedness at work, and deeper values (Gibbons, 2000). Fry (2005) has identified a set of core values reflecting a state of ethical and spiritual well being experienced by a spiritual employee: honesty, forgiveness, hope, gratitude, humility, compassion and integrity. Spirituality in the Workplace is positively associated with desirable organisational outcomes both at the qualitative and the quantitative level (Heaton et al., 2004).

In Giacalone and Jurkiewicz's (2004) definition of spirituality, the experience of transcendence, connectedness, completeness and joy is an integral part of spirituality at workplace that, in turn, allows for a proper integration of spiritual values to organisational settings. A spiritual employee, who demonstrates a higher degree of ethical sensitivity and commitment as well as beneficial personal attributes - increased joy, compassion, serenity and meaningfulness. Such spirituality concerns within an organisation address higher-order needs of employees, such as the pursuit of the ideal self, self-actualisation and fulfillment, or social needs that enhance the quality of work-life, which in turn influences spiritual well-being and overall life-satisfaction (Lee et al., 2003).

Dehler and Welsh (2003) describes spirituality as "search for meaning, deeper self-knowledge or transcendence to a higher level". Additionally, the sense of meaning and purpose serves as an inner source of energy that is then expressed externally as behavior. Like the research noted above their spirituality definition includes meaning and purpose and transcendence.

According to Gull and Doh (2004), employees who feel connected and meaningful in their workplace will perform better and contribute more enthusiastically toward an enhanced feeling in the workplace. Carrette & King (2005) argue that spirituality has become the 'brand label' for the search for meaning, values, transcendence, hope and connectedness in modern societies. Employees who work for organizations they consider being spiritual are fearless, creative more ethical, satisfied and more committed.

Claude and Zamor (2003) suggested that Workplace Spirituality means that individuals discovered deeper life and work values through self-reflection and work relationships in the workplace, including the relationships with others, realizations of morality, and care for the world. Moreover there is rising evidence that a more humane workplace is more productive, creative, innovative and flexible (Eisler & Montouori, 2003). Giacalone & Jurkiewicz (2003) had examined that workplace spirituality programs not only lead to beneficial personal outcomes such as increased pleasure, peace, satisfaction and commitment, they also deliver improved productivity and profitability and reduced absenteeism and turnover.

The thought of Spirituality in the Workplace has attracted a substantial amount of consideration in the last decade. This article specifies a comprehensive model for spirituality at workplace that integrates various views from the existing research and it outlines the significance of spirituality at workplace. In the last decade, there has been a growing body of literature on Spirituality at Work. However the focus on personal spirituality experiences is essential, it is also important to conduct research which helps us understand the potential positive impact on employee attitudes and Individual and Organisational Outcomes that can occur when an individual involves his Spirit at Work.

## 5. Dimensions of Spirit at Work

The Spirit at Work Scale was originally formulated by Kinjerski & Skrypnik, (2006) which had four factors namely i) Engaging Work ii) Mystical Experience iii) Spiritual Connection and iv) Sense of Community. Tevichapong (2010) used the Spirit at Work scale in his study and adopted it for UK and Thai samples. He reduced the four factor model to three factors, namely 1) Meaningful Work (combination of Engaging Work and Mystical Experience), ii) Spiritual Connection and iii) Sense of Community. This research study draws on the dimensions of individual Spirit at Work as identified by Tevichapong (2010) and fig1. depicts all the three components.

### i) Meaningful Work

This is the fundamental aspect of individual Spirit at Work and involves the cognitive abilities of an individual. The creation of work environment which provides a sense of challenge and meaningfulness for employees has become a priority. The quest for purpose in work primarily involves a sense of being authentic at the workplace, an awareness and alignment between one's values, beliefs and one's work, and a belief that one is engaged in meaningful work that has a higher purpose and it is closely related to concepts of job satisfaction and employee happiness. 'Experienced meaningfulness', according to Duchon and Ashmos (2005) is wherein the employee must perceive her/his work as worthwhile or important by some system of values she/he accepts. Similarly, Moore (1992) observes that work is a vocation and a calling as way to create greater meaning and identity in the workplace. Hence organizations need to deal with and understand the deeper needs of employees by providing meaningful work, in order to hold them and keep them motivated.

### ii) Sense of Community

This dimension reflects the interpersonal characteristics of an individual and it deals with a sense of connection with others. 'Work itself is being re-discovered as a source of spiritual growth and connection to others' (Mirvis, 1997). Community at work is based on the principle that people see themselves as connected to each other and that there is some type of association between one's inner self and the inner self of others (Maynard, 1992). A strong sense of community leads to employees feeling more committed, fulfilling obligations, and performing at their best, which leads to lesser turnover, exceptional organizational performance, and the ability to stay ahead of the competition (Chalofsky, 2005). It concerns about the interaction between employees and their co-workers and the main essence of community is that it involves a deeper sense of connection, trust and confidence among people, genuine sharing and caring among the employees, providing support with one other and freedom of expression and aggregates items related to team spirit, mutuality, caring, sense of community and sense of common purpose.

### iii) A Spiritual Connection

This component involves the assumptions that each person experiences a connection with something larger than self for example a Higher Power, a Greater Source, or a God-within presence and/or a deep connection to humankind or nature that has a positive effect on his/her work. They feel that they are inspired by some higher power at work. The distinguished writer M. Scott Peck (1993) uses and defines the term 'civility' as consciously motivated organisational behaviour that is ethical in submission to a Higher Power". His book helps to guide us to a deeper and richer understanding of our lives within our families, our workplaces and our communities. Soul and spirit can perhaps best be understood in terms of a relatedness to all that is. It matters for the life of the world for us to understand what it means that the human person is spirit. We need to learn to dwell with gratitude on this human capacity to connect with the Mystery that embraces everything. This is a key aspect of spirit at work that previous measures in spirituality have failed to capture.

Several studies have studied and empirically found the correlations between Spirit at Work and several measures namely gratitude, burnout, Religiosity and Spiritual Transcendence, Vitality, Mysticism, Organizational culture, "Big Five" personality dimensions, helping behaviours and voice behaviours. Here in this research, the Spirit at Work measurement scale is used to measure the individual experiences of Spirit at Work with the Outcomes such as Subjective Vitality, the In role Behavior of an individual, Individual Productivity, Organisation Based Self Esteem, Life Satisfaction with the mediating effects of attitudes such as Organisational Commitment and Job Satisfaction.

### **Work Attitudes**

Work-related Attitudes are necessary for any individual within the organization to assess the behavior of the individual. Work Attitudes measured in the proposed model as in fig 1. are Organisational Commitment and Job Satisfaction.

### **Organisational Commitment**

In the management discourse, Commitment is a central variable, given that more committed individuals tend to dedicate higher efforts to work, thus contributing to organisational performance and Productivity. Commitment refers to the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement within the work environment. Jans (1989) has outlined it as the extent that an employee accepts, internalizes, and perceives one's role based on organizational values and goals. Employees become committed to their organization once they own and have conviction relating to the mission and values of the organizations. Individuals are mutually able to exert dedicated efforts in the achievement of their organizational goals and each one should have intense desire to continue serving in their organizations (Robbins, 2003). Commitment can promote a stable self concept and therefore a more predictable and consistent behavior and performance in the organizations.

### **Job Satisfaction**

Job Satisfaction or Employee Satisfaction is one among the foremost used variables in Organizational Behavior and it is an employee's attitudinal response to his or her organization. It is an important key variable which indicates the degree to which individuals like their jobs and which impacts the performance of an organization. As per the wordings of Locke (1978) job satisfaction is "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or his experience at work". According to Andrisani (1978) "Job satisfaction is an employee's overall evaluation of the job or specific components or tasks associated with job." Based on Spector's (1997) definition job satisfaction is simply how individuals feel about their job and the way they perform in a work atmosphere. It is the extent to which individuals like or dislike their jobs. Considering Job Satisfaction from a materialistic or extrinsic perspective is outdated and it is time to move beyond these materialistic factors to more intangible and intrinsic factors (such as spirituality) in order to obtain a better understanding of the meaning of work and how it can influence people's satisfaction level in an organization. An employee with lower level of job satisfaction will exhibit negative symptoms, such as absenteeism, grievance expression, disloyal and low morale. Employees who derive the most meaning from their work, i.e., feel called to their jobs, experience higher job satisfaction. Finally, it has been found that individuals regard work as more than a means to achieve an equitable salary at the end of each month.

### **Individual and Organisational Outcomes**

There are numerous studies which have proceeded to examine the relationship between spirituality at workplace and organizational commitment (Rego & Cunha, 2008; Duchon & Plowman, 2005; Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004; Garcia-Zamor, 2003). They have found that once individuals find meaning in their work and feel involved in richly spiritual organizational environment, they become creative, novel, productive, healthier and more contented, where they act in a more committed manner, become more engaged and able to apply their full potential to work.

### **Vitality**

Vitality is defined as one's conscious experience of possessing energy and aliveness. In other words, it is an ongoing characteristic of individuals that relates positively to self-actualization and self-respect and is related negatively to depression and anxiety. Individuals who possess subjective vitality will ever be enthusiastic, energized and alive. Hence when an individual involves himself at work from his bottom of his heart his vital power increases and makes him to be alive, fully functioning and psychologically well in the workplace. Example of an item includes "I feel alive and vital".

### **Inrole Performance**

The Inrole Performance is the core-task behavior and is outlined as all the behaviors that are necessary for the completion of the responsible duties at work. The Inrole Performance of the employee refers to the gathering of a series of actions of the individual based on his or her role within the organization. This concept was first proposed by Katz and Kahn officially. Inrole behaviours are categorised as how individuals carry out their formally-prescribed job responsibilities. Spirituality can lead individuals to experience themselves at a deeper level from their heart and thereby enhance their creativity and ability to perform well and hence it can affect employee performance.

### **Individual Productivity**

If the employees are at liberty to bring their physical, rational, emotional, intellectual and spiritual attributes to the workplace, they in turn will become more productive, creative and fulfilled in their job. When individuals are more productive, inspired, and personally satisfied, it leads to the direct and close impact on the corporate success, be it financial or non financial. Hence the outcome of a spiritual person with positive employee attitudes will perpetually result in higher levels of productivity.

## **6. Organisation Based Self Esteem**

Organisation Based Self Esteem is defined as 'the degree to which an individual believes him/herself to be capable, important and worthy as a member in the organization. OBSE reflects the self-perceived value that individuals have of themselves as vital, competent and capable. (Pierce and Gardner, 2004). Individuals with high self esteem will develop and

maintain favourable work attitudes, such as job satisfaction and will perform at a high level. Meaningful work successfully executed attracts the respect and admiration of others and thus generates self-esteem, the bedrock condition for having a happy and contented life. Without meaningful work, life is pale. Thus, employees with high OBSE will be motivated to seek opportunities and encouragement to attain positive goals. OBSE is measured by sample items such as, 'I count around here,' 'I am taken seriously around here,' and 'I am an important part of this place.'

### **Life Satisfaction**

An important facet of the today's environmental is the need to better understand life satisfaction and how spirit at work impacts it. Life satisfaction is the cognitive evaluation of life as a whole and is defined as an overall assessment that an individual makes of their life, comparing their outcomes with their expectations. This means that they examine the tangible aspects of their life, weigh up the good and the bad, compare this to a standard or criterion chosen by them, and form a judgement regarding satisfaction with their life. Thus, judgements regarding satisfaction depend upon examining life circumstances against a standard is considered appropriate (Diener et al., 1985). Being satisfied with specific aspects of life, such as relationships, health and work contribute to overall life satisfaction. As a construct, it has been the subject of study in the marketing and organizational literatures (Judge et al. 2005). It is believed to be influenced by situations such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment and personality dispositions. This construct captures the critical role of perceptual context as a determinant of human satisfaction (Frank, 1989).

### **Spirit at Work, Work Attitudes And Individual And Organisational Outcomes**

A few salient studies that have examined the relationship of Spirit at Work with the variables considered for this research is briefly outlined below:

In a study by Geh (2010) Organisational Commitment and OBSE mediate the relationship between Spirituality at Work and OCB and the findings of the study, though exploratory, were interesting and had a positive impact.

Similarly Tan and Geh (2009) in a study of 217 respondents had provided a theoretical model linking spirituality at work with organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) through organizational commitment as the mediator and tested it empirically and it affirmed the effectiveness of commitment as a mediator between spirituality at work and OCB.

Individual Productivity was found to be positively associated with Spirituality at Work through Organisational Commitment in the studies by Rego and Cunha (2008) and they have suggested that when individuals experience spirituality in the workplace, they feel more affectively attached to their workplace and experienced a sense of commitment and loyalty. As reported by Pierce and Gardner (2004), the correlation between OBSE and job satisfaction is strong and robust.

Employee Spirit at Work has been positively associated with work attitudes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, self esteem in the empirical studies done by Milliman, Czaplewski & Ferguson, 2003. Kinjerski, V. & Skrypnik, B.J. (2008) has conducted the effectiveness of Spirit at Work and its impact on Vitality, Life Satisfaction and as well as organizational commitment among long term care professionals.

Tevichapong (2010) has conceptualized a framework between Spirit at Work and Inrole Behaviour through mediators such as Job Satisfaction, Organizational Identification and Psychological Wellbeing. Research also found that organizations that promote spirituality report increases in creativity, satisfaction, team performance and organizational commitment (Freshman, 1999). In the empirical study by Rego, Cunha, & Souto's (2007) they found out that there is a positive relationship between spirituality at work and individual performance.

## **7. Research Objective**

The basic objective of this study is to make it loud and clear what is spirituality and the purpose of this research is primarily to investigate the relationship between individual Spirit at Work (SAWS) and two work related attitudinal variables (Job Satisfaction and Organisational Commitment) in the organizations and how you may feel at work and its influence on the individual and Individual and Organisational outcomes (Vitality, Inrole Performance, Individual Productivity, Organisation Based Self Esteem and Life Satisfaction) in the organisation.

This study is particularly interested in looking into the mediating effects Organisational Commitment and Job Satisfaction on the relationship between Spirit at Work and Individual and Organisational Outcomes.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions are proposed for this research:

1. How can Individual Spirit at Work be conceptualised?
2. Does Spirit at Work impact Individual and Organisational Outcomes?
3. Is the relationship of Spirit at Work with Individual and Organisational Outcomes affected by mediators such as Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction?

Some previous studies have examined the relationship between these variables; however, lack of sufficient research, studying the relationship between these variables in the service industry. The power and influence of service sector in today's global business economy is greater than ever before. New technology has advanced and globalization intensified and organisations are committed towards value added services and millions of technocrats are working in the Service Industry. Due to significant power and influence of service sector in society, businesspeople making decisions in organisations, shall make an impact on the society positively. Our goal is to find out whether technocrats in addition with their technical expertise

are really working with their Spirit at Work. Thus these theoretical and practical contributions will considerably add value to the literature in this field.

The first question is to be addressed by literature survey the remaining through are by a cross sectioned field used using a structured questionnaire with validated scales. The collected data is to be subjected to empirical testing for building a model. Based on the findings of the study, theoretical and managerial implications are to be derived.

While taking into consideration the above mentioned literature, little attention is given to these research variables the following model is proposed. This model aims to systematically explore the underlying assumptions as well as the rationale of the main trends regarding spirit at work by critically discussing their relationship with the mediating effects of Organisational Commitment and Job Satisfaction on the relationship between Individual Spirit at Work and Individual and Organisational Outcomes in Service Sector Organizations.

**Proposed Model** Independent Variable Work attitudes Individual and Organisational Outcomes



**Figure 1** Conceptual Model for the Mediating Effect of Work Attitudes between Individual Spirit at Work and its Association with Individual and Organisational Outcomes

### Measures

The Instrument has been developed to measure the level of Individual Spirit at Work. The questionnaire consists of four sections. First part mainly deals with the individual's meaningfulness in work, interaction with the counterparts and also conveys us the feeling of spiritual connection in the workplace. In the second part individual's opinion about the work attitudes are measured. The third section consists of questions related to how the individuals feel at work. The fourth segment deals with the demographic information of the respondents. The respondents in the organisation are asked to rate against a 5 point likert scale ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 5(strongly agree). Some previous studies have examined the relationship between these variables; however, lack of sufficient research, studying the relationship between these factors in service industry.

## 8. Conclusion

Spirit at Work has been proved a sacred and blessed intangible asset for long term progress and survival of the organisations in the long run. The model outlined in this article can facilitate further research on Spirit at Work. This Spiritual paradigm helps to maintain a balance between an individual's personal values and the organization's practiced values and is a way to solve our own problems through greater empowerment and creativity. Ultimately, it is hoped that this paper will inspire a stream of research investigating the spiritual aspects of an individual and that organizations will subsequently be benefited in the workplace.

Spirit at Work research is in its infancy and is a worthy subject warranting scope for further research to understand the components and its impact on other behavioural variables and research is considered necessary to determine whether or not Spirit at Work results in better civilized behavior of the employee within the organisation.

To conclude, Spirituality grounds people in their work and allows them to connect with the transcendent in all they do and enables their organizations to prosper and this powerful new motivator "Spirit at Work" could help revitalize organizations and it is time to consider it as an asset to organisation.

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