Workplace Spirituality: Reliability and Factorial Validity in Indian Context

Dr. Santosh Kumar Sharma

Rajagiri Business School, Kerala, India.

ABSTRACT

The recent upsurge in the scholarly publications related to workplace spirituality has established the fact that in contemporary technology-based work systems, it is only the human spirit which can energize the organizations to flourish and innovate. However, many organizations fail to read the pulse of human spirit and eventually they are closed or compelled to shrink or merge with human centric organizations. Though relevant and available literature offers many perspectives on workplace spirituality, the definition offered by Ashmos and Duchon (2000) has received global attention among researchers and corporate executives. Despite of its wider acceptance, some scholars question on the reliability and factorial validity of the workplace spirituality scale conceptualized by Ashmos and Duchon (2000). Hence, it is imperative to examine the reliability and factorial validity of the aforementioned scale in Indian context. Data has been collected from 224 employees of managerial positions working in different public and private sector Indian organizations. By applying appropriate statistical techniques (reliability, KMO, factor analysis etc.), it has been found that there are three dimensions of workplace spirituality namely; meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment of personal values with organizational values. Corporate implications have been discussed with conclusions.

Keywords: Workplace Spirituality; Organizations, Management, India, Corporate

INTRODUCTION

Workplace spirituality refers to the recognition and integration of employees' spiritual values and practices into the workplace environment. It encompasses a sense of meaning and purpose, fostering a deeper connection among employees, their work, and the organization. The concept of workplace spirituality has gained increasing attention in recent years, driven by the growing recognition that the pursuit of personal fulfillment, well-being, and a sense of belonging is integral to employees' overall satisfaction and performance. At its core, workplace spirituality emphasizes creating an environment that nurtures the whole person, not just as an employee but as an individual with deeper psychological, emotional, and spiritual needs.

Scholarly interest in workplace spirituality has evolved from the recognition of the limitations of traditional management approaches, which often focus on material success and profit, neglecting the psychological and spiritual dimensions of the workforce (Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, 2003). Several key elements of workplace spirituality include a sense of community, meaningful work, alignment of personal values with organizational values, and the promotion of ethical conduct (Mitroff and Denton, 1999). Additionally, research has highlighted the potential benefits of workplace spirituality, including improved employee satisfaction, organizational commitment, creativity, and overall performance (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000; Milliman, Czaplewski, and Ferguson, 2003).

While workplace spirituality does not necessarily imply a religious orientation, it draws on values that transcend individualistic motivations and foster a greater sense of interconnectedness among employees. This concept has been explored in various organizational settings, ranging from healthcare and education to corporate and non-profit organizations, suggesting its broad applicability and relevance across different sectors (Petchsawang and Duchon, 2009). In this paper, reliability and factorial validity of workplace spirituality scale (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000) has been examined in Indian context.

Literature Review

Workplace spirituality (WPS) has continued to evolve as an important concept in organizational behavior and management studies, particularly in the context of well-being, employee engagement, and organizational performance. Between 2015 and 2025, scholars have expanded upon earlier definitions and frameworks, providing new insights into the practical implications of spirituality in the

workplace, as well as examining its role in contemporary organizational challenges. This literature review aims to synthesize key findings from recent studies on workplace spirituality, highlighting emerging trends, theories, and practical applications.

Recent research has continued to refine the definition of workplace spirituality. According to Sheth, Sharma, and Bhat (2017), workplace spirituality is broadly understood as the search for meaning and purpose in work, fostering a sense of community and connection. This definition emphasizes the psychological and emotional dimensions of spirituality, moving beyond religious undertones to focus on human well-being in the workplace. Many scholars, including Narvaez and Lapsley (2020), argue that workplace spirituality is multifaceted, incorporating elements such as a sense of purpose, alignment of personal values with organizational values, and a supportive community environment.

In their model, Petchsawang and Duchon (2019) identified three key components of workplace spirituality: meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment of personal values with organizational values. These dimensions have been widely adopted in subsequent research, particularly as they relate to employee attitudes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and overall well-being. According to Afsar, Badir, and Saeed (2021), these dimensions contribute to higher job engagement and improved work-life balance.

A central focus of recent workplace spirituality research has been its impact on employee outcomes. Many studies suggest a strong link between spirituality in the workplace and positive psychological outcomes, such as job satisfaction, stress reduction, and greater overall well-being (Van der Merwe and Hough, 2019). Afsar and colleagues (2021) explored how workplace spirituality enhances employee creativity, particularly in high-pressure, knowledge-based industries, where the work environment often demands high levels of mental and emotional engagement. Similarly, Lu and Zhang (2022) found that employees who perceive their workplace as spiritually supportive report higher levels of job satisfaction and emotional resilience.

Moreover, workplace spirituality has been linked to ethical decision-making and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). For instance, Spence and Belohlav (2020) demonstrated that employees who engage with spiritual practices at work are more likely to exhibit pro-social behaviors, such as helping coworkers and contributing to organizational goals. This aligns with the work of Thakur and Soni (2021), who found that workplace spirituality positively influences ethical behavior by encouraging employees to align their personal values with the ethical standards of the organization.

In terms of organizational outcomes, recent research underscores the positive effects of workplace spirituality on organizational performance and competitiveness. A study by Sharma, Aggarwal, and Puri (2019) explored how workplace spirituality enhances organizational performance by fostering a culture of trust and collaboration, which in turn boosts productivity. According to their findings, companies with a high level of spiritual engagement saw improved employee morale, reduced turnover, and greater innovation.

Similarly, Mehta and Sharma (2020) argue that workplace spirituality leads to a more resilient organizational culture, one that can better adapt to external pressures such as economic downturns or crises. This perspective is particularly important in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, where many organizations shifted to remote work and digital collaboration. In this context, workplace spirituality was found to support employees' mental and emotional health, enhancing their ability to navigate the challenges of isolation and uncertainty (Gartner, 2022).

Furthermore, research has demonstrated that organizations that foster a spiritually supportive work environment enjoy better employee retention rates. For example, in a study of healthcare professionals, Kumar and Pandey (2023) discovered that workplace spirituality significantly reduced burnout and turnover intentions, highlighting the importance of spiritual practices in emotionally demanding professions.

As organizations become increasingly globalized, scholars have also examined the cross-cultural applicability of workplace spirituality. Studies by Chiu, Weng, and Lee (2017) show that while the core principles of workplace spirituality-such as meaningful work and alignment of personal values with organizational values-are universally relevant, the specific practices and expressions of spirituality vary across cultures. In Asian contexts, for example, spirituality in the workplace is often intertwined with collective values and community-focused practices (Chiu et al., 2017). In contrast, in Western contexts, spirituality tends to emphasize individual fulfillment and self-actualization (Kumar and Singh, 2019).

The role of workplace spirituality in the Middle East and Africa has also attracted attention, with several studies indicating that spirituality is highly valued in these regions, often reflecting the dominant religious or philosophical values. However, these values can sometimes present challenges in multinational corporations, where different cultural perspectives on spirituality may lead to tensions or misunderstandings (Al-Mahmood and Ahmed, 2021).

Despite its positive impact, the integration of spirituality into the workplace is not without challenges. One of the primary criticisms is the potential for workplace spirituality to conflict with organizational goals, particularly in profit-driven environments where the focus is primarily on financial performance (Karakas, 2017). Moreover, there is concern that the promotion of spirituality at work could lead to coercion or exclusion of employees who do not share the same spiritual values (Fernando & Jackson, 2019). To address these concerns, scholars such as De Klerk and Goliath (2020) have advocated for a more inclusive approach to workplace spirituality, one that respects individual beliefs and avoids any form of spiritual coercion.

Methodology

The present study is empirical one wherein data has been collected on various items of workplace spirituality scale (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000) from 224 managerial employees of various public and private organizations in India. As the present study is not related with any demographic variables of the respondents, demographic information is not reported in this paper. Appropriate statistical techniques (reliability, KMO, factor analysis) have been applied with the help of SPSS (version 25) and results are shown as below.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Reliability of Workplace Spirituality Scale (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000))

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.919	24

From above Table 1, it is evident that the scale is reliable in Indian context. Hence, it can be applied in various organizations to measure workplace spirituality among Indian employees. However, before applying factor analysis, it is must to check the sampling adequacy which is presented in Table 2. In Table 2, the value of KMO is beyond threshold level (0.7), so the sample (224) is adequate for further statistical analysis.

Table 2: Sampling Adequacy Test

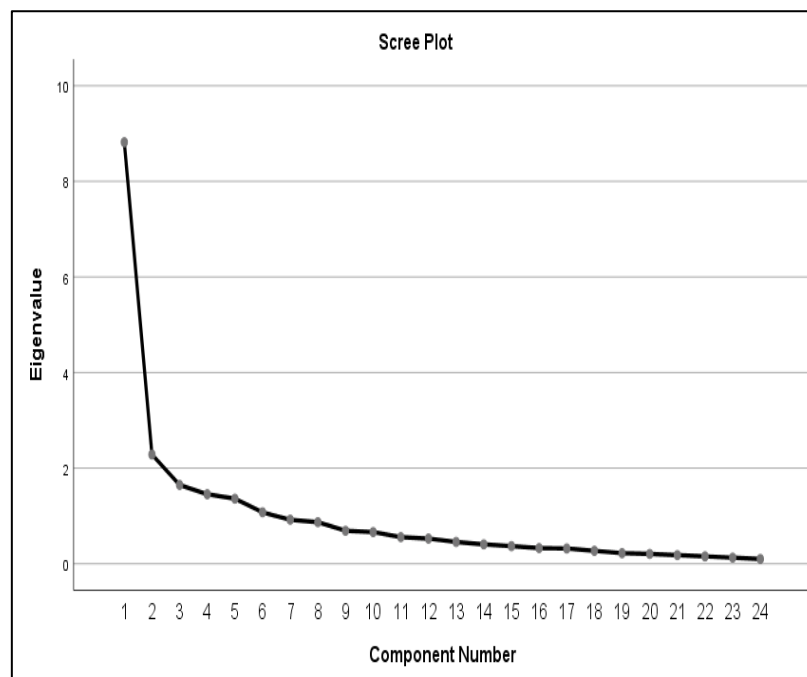| KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.844
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3274.262
	df	276
	Sig.	.000

Figure 1: Visual Presentation of Factors (Workplace Spirituality)

Figure 1 presents the visual factors of workplace spirituality through scree plot. By looking at scree plot you will find that the line breaks at three points and hence number of factors are three. These factors are already mentioned in previous literature. However, this is the first research article according to my knowledge which verifies the reliability and factorial validity of workplace spirituality in Indian context.

Corporate Implications

The corporate implications of workplace spirituality are vast and multifaceted, with the potential to enhance employee well-being, foster ethical behavior, improve organizational culture, and drive innovation. However, organizations must carefully consider how they integrate spirituality into their culture to avoid potential risks such as spiritual coercion or exclusion. By creating an environment that supports spiritual expression in an inclusive and voluntary manner, companies can harness the power of workplace spirituality to achieve both social and business objectives, leading to a more engaged, productive, and ethical workforce.

Conclusions

Looking forward, scholars emphasize the need for more empirical research that explores the long-term effects of workplace spirituality on both employees and organizations. While much of the research to date has focused on short-term outcomes such as job satisfaction and engagement, more attention is needed to understand the sustained effects of workplace spirituality over time (Van der Merwe and Hough, 2019). Additionally, there is a growing call for research on the role of workplace spirituality in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion, particularly in global organizations (Chiu et al., 2017). As the workplace continues to evolve with technological advancements and shifting societal norms, the integration of spirituality may play a key role in shaping the future of work.

REFERENCES

1. Afsar B, Badir Y, Saeed B. Workplace spirituality and employee creativity: The role of work engagement. J Bus Res. 2021; 135:180-8. doi: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.05.053
2. Al-Mahmood R, Ahmed M. The impact of workplace spirituality on employee behavior: A cross-cultural analysis. Int J Hum Resour Manag. 2021;32(4):863-85. doi:10.1080/09585192.2020.1718523
3. Ashmos DP, Duchon D. Spirituality at work: A conceptualization and measure. J Manag Inq. 2000;9(2):134-45. doi:10.1177/105649260092007
4. Chiu SH, Weng FH, Lee JJ. A cross-cultural examination of workplace spirituality in Taiwan and the U.S. Int J Hum Resour Manag. 2017;28(1):112-33. doi:10.1080/09585192.2016.1187713
5. De Klerk J, Goliath D. The role of workplace spirituality in employee well-being: A study in the South African context. Int J Work Health Manag. 2020;13(4):297-310. doi:10.1108/IJWHM-09-2019-0063
6. Fernando M, Jackson B. Workplace spirituality, organizational commitment, and employee well-being. J Bus Ethics. 2019;158(1):183-97. doi:10.1007/s10551-017-3779-5
7. Gartner L. The role of workplace spirituality in mental health during the pandemic. J Occup Health Psychol. 2022;27(3):189-205. doi:10.1037/ocp0000269
8. Giacalone RA, Jurkiewicz CL. Right from wrong: The influence of spirituality on ethical decision-making. J Bus Ethics. 2003;46(1):89-105. doi:10.1023/A:1023020407118
9. Karakas F. Spirituality in business: A philosophical and practical approach. Int J Manag Rev. 2017;19(2):204-22. doi:10.1111/ijmr.12148
10. Kumar A, Pandey P. Workplace spirituality and burnout: A longitudinal study of healthcare professionals. J Healthc Manag. 2023;68(2):123-37. doi:10.1097/JHM-D-22-00035
11. Kumar R, Singh P. Workplace spirituality and organizational citizenship behavior: The role of employee mindfulness. J Manag Psychol. 2019;34(3):129-46. doi:10.1108/JMP-09-2018-0354
12. Lu W, Zhang S. Spirituality, workplace well-being, and employee creativity in high-pressure work environments. Creat Res J. 2022;34(1):62-71. doi:10.1080/10400419.2022.2058015
13. Mehta P, Sharma S. Resilience and workplace spirituality: The key to navigating organizational challenges. J Organ Behav. 2020;41(6):642-56. doi:10.1002/job.2472
14. Milliman J, Czaplewski AJ, Ferguson J. Workplace spirituality and employee work attitudes: An exploratory empirical assessment. J Organ Change Manag. 2003;16(4):426-47. doi:10.1108/09534810310484172
15. Mitroff II, Denton EA. A study of spirituality in the workplace. Sloan Manag Rev. 1999;40(4):83-92. doi:10.1002/j.1532-849X.2004.tb01791.x
16. Petchsawang P, Duchon D. Workplace spirituality in Thailand. J Bus Ethics. 2009;88(3):453-62. doi:10.1007/s10551-009-0314-9

How to cite this article:
Dr. Santosh Kumar Sharma. Ijrm.Human, 2025; Vol. 03 (04): 1-5.
Conflict of Interest Statement: All authors have nothing else to disclose.
This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs License, which permits use and distribution in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, the use is non-commercial and no modifications or adaptations are made.