Impact of Workplace Spirituality on Workplace Counselling: The Study among Machine Operators of Apparel Industry in BOI Pallekale Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Counselling can provide an abundant impact on peoples' lives. Workplace counselling is beneficial for the balance between work life and family life. Today some counsellors integrate spirituality into counselling to enhance the effectiveness of counselling. Now a day's, workplace spirituality is a trend in most organizations. Spirituality is a powerful psychological thing in-universe. This research paper aimed to identify the impact of workplace spirituality on workplace counselling of machine operators of the apparel industry in BOI Pallekale Sri Lanka. Spiritual Leadership Theory is the based theory for this Research. Quantitative research approach was adopted for this research paper and the data collected through questionnaires from 361 machine operators. Data were analyzed by using SPSS (version 26), regression analysis was used in analysis of collected data. The empirical findings revealed that workplace spirituality has a significant and positive impact on workplace counselling of machine operators of the apparel industry in BOI Pallekale Sri Lanka. Meaningful work, sense of community Inner life, Altruistic love and faith positively impact on workplace counselling of machine operators. Meaningful work is the most influential dimension of workplace spirituality to the workplace counselling. Future researchers can investigate more depth into this paper including other sectors and they must focus on other factors which mediating and/or moderating effects of workplace spirituality under many other research themes. This research paper will help to researchers and academics also to understand the concept of workplace spirituality and its impact on workplace counselling in the apparel sector of Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Machine Operators, Workplace counselling, Workplace spirituality

INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly evolving corporate landscape, there's nearly no organization that's free from an excessive amount of anxiety rising out of assorted work connected problems like managing deadlines, meeting targets, lack of your time to satisfy personal and family commitments or mourning and disturbed thanks to some personal drawback. Several companies have integrated counselling services and creating it a section of their culture that they're providing services of worker counselling to its staff (Mwenze, 2018). According to McLeod & Henderson (2003), because of the workplace counselling employees become more satisfied and it will increase the performance, productivity, and reduce absenteeism, turnover through the positive attitudes. Nowadays spirituality is a trend in most of the human beings. Spirituality is a powerful psychological thing in universe (Hickson, Housely, & Wages, 2000). Hence the workplace spirituality becoming emergent concept. Positive spiritual place or moods of employees could act as a precursor to the enhancement of their performance (Do, 2018).

Apparel industry plays a major role in development of the srilankan economy. Many researchers have

identified that there is a positive relationship between Apparel Industry and Economy of Sri Lanka.

Therefore, the Apparel industry can make an impact on economy of Sri Lanka (Embuldeniya, 2017).The intention of encouraging the exports Sri Lankan government has created free trade zones such as katunayake, biyagama, koggala, Pallekale etc. In BOI Pallekale Sri Lanka also there are different garment factories who provide lots of job opportunities for people.

Problem Statement

Although counselling is essential for machine operators in the apparel industry, especially machine operators in the apparel sector have to face lots of issues in their lives because of their job, there is a poor perception of spirituality and counselling in the Sri Lankan context. And also, spirituality is a trend in human life to develop their lives. There are research in spirituality in workplace but there are no any published research relating to workplace spirituality in workplace counselling of Sri Lankan machine operators in Asian context. Therefore, this study aims to fill this contextual gap. Therefore, **the main purpose** of this research paper is to find whether workplace spirituality impacts workplace counselling of machine operators in the apparel industry, BOI Pallekale, Sri Lanka.

Research Questions

Having considered above literature, and research problem, following research questions developed for the purpose of the study.

1. How does workplace spirituality influence counseling practices for machine operators?
2. What is the relationship between meaningful work and workplace counseling for machine operators?
3. To what extent does a sense of community affect workplace counseling for machine operators?
4. What impact does an individual's inner life have on workplace counseling for machine operators?

Research Hypothesis

H1: Workplace spirituality positively impact on workplace counselling of machine operators of Apparel industry in BOI Pallekale Sri Lanka.

H2: There is a positive relationship among Meaningful work and workplace counselling of machine operators of Apparel industry in BOI Pallekale Sri Lanka.

H3: There is a positive impact of Sense of community on workplace counselling of machine operators of Apparel industry in BOI Pallekale Sri Lanka.

H4: There is a positive impact of Inner life on workplace counselling of machine operators of Apparel industry in BOI Pallekale Sri Lanka.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Workplace Spirituality

Workplace spirituality means the creation of organisation and organisational culture as motivating employees to be spiritual and the way that the connectedness between employees enhance (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003). Spiritual workplace is "one that enables the individual's expression of an inner life by performing meaningful work in the context of a community". They describe this with individual as well as organisational context (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). Workplace spirituality is "a search for meaning, deeper self-knowledge or transcendence to a higher level." And also, it means sense and meaning of inner life

which will affect for individual's behaviour (Dehler & Welsh, 2003). According to Milliman et al. (2003), workplace spirituality means "An employee's experiencing sense of meaning at work, sense of connectedness with others at work, and an experience of alignment with the organization's mission and purpose. "Workplace spirituality is having compassion toward others, experiencing a mindful inner consciousness in the pursuit of meaningful work that enables transcendence" (Petchsawang & Duchon, 2009)."Finding meaning through work that is deeper than material success" and the journey toward such purposeful work is one in which many people find themselves engaged (Dean, 2017).

Meaningful work means that people should feel that work which he/she is doing are significant to them. Without expecting material rewards people should do the assigned work by imagination of that work are part of their lives (Duchon & Plowman, 2005). Meaning of work simply known as the understanding of the work and purpose of it and beyond the material rewards people do their work as assuming it is very significant part for their lives (Petchsawang & Duchon, 2009).

Sense of Community means employees should have deep connection with others and inter connectedness with others (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). Sense of community is group level dimension which means the connection between employees and co-workers (Miliman, Czaplewski, & Ferguson, 2003). According to Milliman et al., (2003) & Dean (2017), sense of community is a must thing for counselling employees. Reducing the stress level there should be a community support mutual care (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000).

People have both inner and outer life while inner life affect for the outer life of people (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). Inner life means identifying individual's divine power. Most probably people put their whole spirit to the work. They concentrate fully on their work (Duchon & Plowman, 2005). "The feeling individuals have about the fundamental meaning of who they are, what they are doing, and the contributions they are making" (Vaill, 1998).

According to the spiritual leadership theory, altruistic love is also given unconditionally from the organization and is received in turn from followers in pursuit of a common vision that drives out and removes fears associated with worry, anger, jealousy, selfishness, failure and guilt and gives one a sense of membership – that part of spiritual survival/well-being that gives one an awareness of being understood and appreciated (Fry, 2003).

Faith means encouragement to act with purpose. According to Purdy & Dupey (2005) in the world people who have done hard working and people who act positively can attract positive results. People should have a motive to achieve their purpose. According to past literature faith is believing that suffering is short term (Purdy & Dupey , 2005).
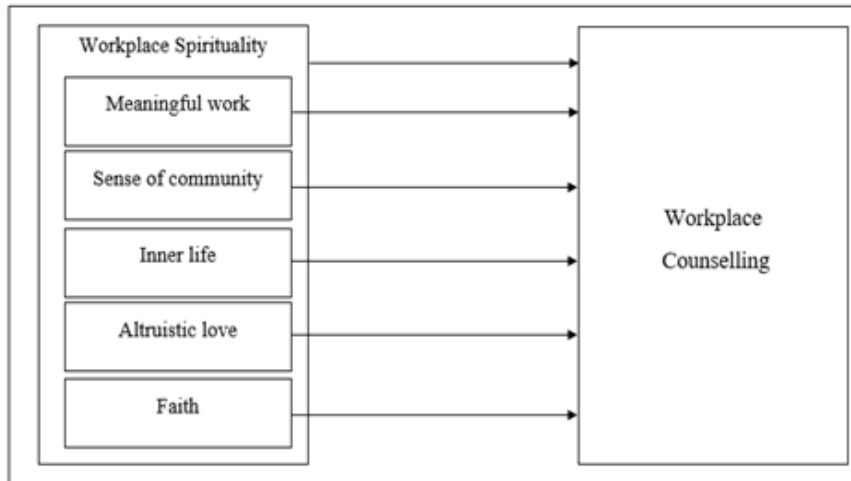
Workplace Counselling

Workplace counselling is very essential thing for the organizations to support employees emotionally when they have problems in order to enhance the productivity of employees. Especially when employees have to face different challenges, they need guidance to overcome them. Counseling services provide support to build great relationships and cope with different stress factors (Smither, 2011). The impact of workplace stress leads low productivity of employees, therefore this can be affected to the productivity of the organization so organizations seek employee assistant programs, counselling services and coaching facilities. Organizations are providing those services in order to motivate employees also. Some organizations provide these facilities without considering the financial ability also (Carmichael, Fenton, Pinilla , Sadhra, & Sing, 2016). Since 1980 this area has studied by different scholars, because they had a massive desire to do research in area of effectiveness of workplace counselling of stress in the workplace (Cooper, Sloan, & Williams, 1988).

Based on the above literature review following research framework (figure 1) was developed. Meaningful

work, sense of community, inner life, altruistic love and faith are labeled as independent variables while workplace counselling is considered as dependent variable.

Figure 1-Conceptual framework

Source: Author Developed

METHODS

The objective of the study was to identify the impact of workplace spirituality on workplace counselling of machine operators in the apparel industry, BOI Pallekale, Sri Lanka. The type of investigation of the study was experimental. This study is a field study since it examines the impact of workplace spirituality on workplace counselling of machine operators in natural working environment in apparel industry. Hence, this study was done under non- contrived setting in nature. None of the variable were controlled or manipulated. As the study was conducted in natural environment where events normally occur, that is non contrived setting. No artificial or contrived setting was created for the study. So, this research has done with minimal researcher interference (Sekaran & Roger, 2016). The population of this research is considered as the total number of machine operators in BOI Pallekale Sri Lanka. There are 5964 of machine operators are working in BOI Pallekale Srilanka. Current employee cadre list of the factories was used as the population frame. According to Krjcie & Morgan table, 361 of machine operators were used as the sample for this research paper. And for quantitative data collection researcher distributed questioners for 361 machine operators of Apparel industry in BOI Pallekale and received 353 questionnaires from the respondents. Random sampling method has used to collect the data from machine operators. In this study primary data were collected. Primary data were collected through questionnaire and interviews. The data is collected through primary and secondary sources. A self-administered, structured questionnaire and interview guide are used as a major method to collect primary data. Secondary data is collected by using organizational documents, research papers, books, journals, magazines and websites.

Measures

The questionnaire was divided in to three parts; demographic factors, workplace spirituality, which was measured by an instrument consisting of 38 questions by referring Ashmos & Duchon (2000) and Mousa (2020) and workplace counselling, which was measured by an instrument consisting of 11 questions by referring Mwenze (2018). All the questions in part two and three of the questionnaire were measured through five-point Likert scale indicating 5 for "strongly agree" and 1 for "strongly disagree". Data were collected from questioners were analyzed using SPSS version 26.

RESULTS

According to the data collected from the machine operators univariate and bivariate analysis were used to analyze the quantitative data. Collected data were analyzed by using SPSS version 26 for validity, reliability and hypothesis testing.

Frequency Distribution Analysis for Construct Item

The workplace spirituality of the Machine Operators of Apparel Industry in BOI Pallekale Sri Lanka were high (Mean – 4.1579, Sd – 0. 26925). The workplace counselling of the Machine Operators of Apparel Industry in BOI Pallekale Sri Lanka also high (Mean – 4.2369, Sd – 0. 22971).

Table I. Frequency Distribution Analysis for Construct Item

	Workplace Spirituality	Workplace Counselling
Mean	4.1579	4.2369
St. Deviation	0.26925	0.22971
Variance	0.029	0.053

Source: Survey Data 2023

The main objective of this study was to investigate the impact of workplace spirituality on workplace counselling of Machine Operators of Apparel Industry in BOI Pallekale Sri Lanka. Therefore, regression analysis was made to determine whether there is an impact of employee workplace spirituality on workplace counselling.

Table II. Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.735[a]	.540	.528	.15778

a. Predictors: (Constant), Workplace Spirituality

Source: Survey Data 2023

Table III. ANOVA

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.168	1	1.168	46.900	.000 b
	Residual	.996	351	.025		
	Total	2.163	352			

a. Dependent Variable: workplace Counselling

b. Predictors: (Constant), Workplace Spirituality

Source: Survey Data 2023

Table IV. Coefficient

Coefficients^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.094	.606		.155	.878
Workplace Spirituality	.997	.146	.735	6.848	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Workplace Counselling

Source: Survey Data 2023

The results show that the regression coefficient (R) of the independent variable (workplace spirituality) and dependent variable (workplace counselling) was 0.735 and R square was 0.540. The results suggested that 54% of the variance (R square) in workplace counselling of Machine Operators of Apparel Industry in BOI Pallekale has been significantly explained by the workplace spirituality. In order to determine whether the impact is statistically significant or not F value from ANOVA test was considered. F value is 46.900 that was significant at 0.05 as well as 0.01 level. Hence the impact of workplace spirituality on workplace counselling of Machine Operators of Apparel Industry in BOI Pallekale was statistically significant. The relevant regression equation is, Workplace Counselling = 0.606 + .735*Workplace Spirituality.

Table V. Ranking the Dimensions of Workplace Spirituality

Dimension	Beta	Rank
Meaningful Work	0.742	1
Altruistic Love	0.728	2
Sense of Community	0.718	3
Faith	0.711	4
Inner Life	0.445	5

Source: Survey Data 2022

Most influential dimension of workplace spirituality is the Meaningful Work. Since it has the highest beta value of 0.742.

CONCLUSION

The statistical data reveals different findings from the selected sample. The workplace spirituality of machine operators of Apparel industry in BOI Pallekale Sri Lanka were high (Mean – 4.1579, Sd -0. 26925). The workplace counselling of machine operators of Apparel industry in BOI Pallekale Sri Lanka also high (Mean – 4.2369, Sd -0. .22971).

The results of simple regression analysis of this study indicated that workplace counselling of apparel sector possess a substantial level of workplace spirituality. To elaborate, the study aimed to do the simple regression analysis to examine the impact of workplace spirituality on the employee performance. Using the result of regression analysis (R square = 0.540, Beta value = 0.735, P = 0.000) showed that there was

significant impact of workplace spirituality on workplace counselling. This is consistent with the research of (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). Hence it can be proved that there is a positive impact of workplace spirituality on workplace counselling among machine operators of Apparel industry in BOI Pallekale Sri Lanka. According to the statistical analysis main objective of the study to find whether there is an impact of workplace spirituality on workplace counselling of machine operators of Apparel industry in BOI Pallekale Sri Lanka was fulfilled. This finding is consistent of prior research of (Dean, 2017).

According to this research paper author has identified meaningful work positively impact on workplace counselling. According to the Dean (2017) by meaningful work counsellors can enhance the effectiveness of the counselling programmes. Also, Miliman et al., (2003) recognized meaning and purpose of work enhance the psychological therapy. Therefore, the finding of this hypothesis consists with past literature. And the author has identified that sense of community positively impacts on workplace counselling. Dean (2017) founded that sense of community was strongly correlated with the counselling. Bella et al., (2018) also stated that there is a positive impact of sense of community. Also this paper have been identified the positive impact of inner life on machine operator workplace counselling. Because of inner life counselors can increase the counselling of employees (Benefiel, Fry, & Geigle, 2014; Dean, 2017; Fry, 2003; Miliman, Czaplewski, & Ferguson, 2003). Therefore, the findings of the hypothesis consist with past literature. According to the findings of this study researcher has identified that there is a positive impact of Altruistic love on workplace counselling. Altruistic love is one of the needed dimensions in workplace spirituality and it also impact on workplace counselling (Biswakarma, 2018; Shankar, 2008). And the findings of this research identified that faith positively impacts on workplace counselling. Dean (2017), Mehta & Joshi (2010) & Shankar (2008) emphasize that through faith organizations can create the loyalty so faith can positively strengthen the counselling and therapy of employees. Therefore, the findings of the hypothesis consist with past literature. According to the research paper most influential dimension is meaningful work. Most of the machine operators are in the age between 25-34 range, they need a meaning or purpose for their lives to be success. Therefore, the results of the hypothesis consist with past literature. According to Ashmos & Duchon (2000) & Miliman et al., (2003) meaningful work is the most influential dimension.

This study was limited to investigate the impact of workplace spirituality on workplace counselling. Workplace spirituality is not the only factor for determining the workplace counselling. There are different new trending areas for measuring workplace counselling. Therefore, further studies are needed to identify other factors that affect workplace counselling of the machine operators in addition to the workplace spirituality. Two important variables, i.e., workplace spirituality and workplace counselling were considered in this study. It is statistically and through interviews proved that workplace spirituality positively and significantly impacts on workplace counselling. Thus, it is recommended that any organization that wishes to enhance the workplace counselling, needs to properly execute workplace spirituality with right policies and procedures.

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