Workplace Spirituality and Employee Performance in a Dynamic Work Environment

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ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on x-raying workplace spirituality in a dynamic work environment. HRM in the contemporary work arrangement has transcend scientific management and human relation school models. There is a shift in research on how employee's spirituality and faith values can be leveraged on to achieve both organizational and employee effectiveness and reduce poor performance and low output. Against this backdrop, this study will be guided by the following objectives: to evaluate the effect of work place spirituality on employee effectiveness in a dynamic work environment, establish the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee motivation in the dynamic work environment and examine the role of workplace spirituality in organizational performance. The conceptual framework describes how the workplace can be conducive through workplace spirituality that drives employee motivation which can lead to job satisfaction. The human relations theory by Elton Mayo (1922) was used to explain the concept of workplace spirituality in the performance of employees in an organization. Max Weber's Calvinist ascetic religious belief and the spirit of capitalism (1958) was adopted as a theoretical guide. This work applied the qualitative method of research where analysis and findings are basically made from data that was collected from secondary sources. In the findings, the research shows that workplace spirituality is factor that can lead to employee motivation in an organization. In conclusion, the research proved that workplace spirituality can directly or indirectly influence workers motivation that can lead to organizational performance. It was recommended that workplace spirituality should be incorporated into our contemporary work structure and reward system which is a reflection of Africa's cultural diversity and religious pluralism

Key Words: Workplace Spirituality, Employee Performance, Motivation, and Dynamic Work Environment

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary workplace the psychological state of employees determine the level at which the organization can perform both in the short and long term goal of the organization. In a typical Nigerian workplace today, spirituality is perceived as a key stimulant that can inspire workers (employees) to be in a positive state of mind to deliver on their daily tasks assigned to them. Workplace spirituality involves the effort to find one's ultimate purpose in life, to develop a strong connection to co-workers and other people associated with work, and to have consistency (or alignment) between one's core beliefs and the values of their organization. (Mitroff& Denton, 1999; Rupa &Pallavi, 2020).

In order to obtain an improved understanding of behavior at work, employees should be studied from physical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions. Although the physical and psychological dimensions of individuals at work have been studied extensively, the spiritual dimension has been neglected for many years (Walt & De Klerk, 2014).

In a dynamic work environment, the effectiveness of employees can best be measured by the degree of motivation. Naturally work is seen to be stressful and painful; therefore, it is in the best interest of management to open up every possible avenue that can bring about motivation amongst employees in other to enhance effectiveness and efficiency.

Spirituality at workplace is as simple as having a sense of connection between own self and the workplace. In a fast-moving world, employees often face anxiety, fear, and depression. Working in an environment that supports the employees' right to openly express their beliefs helps them to have better working relationships with colleagues, feel safer, and be more engaged in their work. Therefore, more and more organizations are inculcating spirituality in their environment, as the impact of a good environment is not only felt by the employees but can be measured through economic outputs, using measures such as quality, productivity, and profitability (Rupa&Pallavi, 2020).

Every organization is primarily interested in the wellbeing of its employees, knowing that motivation is a key to job satisfaction. An organization with happy workers has high probability of been productive. There is a relationship between workplace spirituality and employee motivation which inversely leads to organizational productivity. For an organization to be productive in its business, it must look beyond the task that is been assigned, by looking at what brings about team spirit and motivation among the staff of the organization. Workplace spirituality is a concept in industrial sociology that is concerned with the work attitudes of employees in connection to their religious beliefs. In a typical Nigerian work setting, workers so much attach their faith to the work they are doing. Workers sees it as a norm to come together in the morning when they resume at work to pray, and that gives them a sense of commitment to the work in good team spirit.

This research work is aimed at evaluating the impact of workplace spirituality on employee effectiveness in dynamic work environment, which were guided by the following research objectives:

1. To evaluate the effect of work place spirituality on employee effectiveness in a dynamic work environment.
2. Establish the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee motivation in the dynamic work environment.
3. Examine the role of workplace spirituality in organizational performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Meaning of Work Place Spirituality

Quite a lot of scholars have defined the concept of work place spirituality differently. For instance, (Mitroff and Denton, 1999) sees it as the desire of individual employee to seek and discover higher purpose of life. In the same vein, Millman et al (2003) describe workplace spirituality as the degree and extent to which work functions as designed by employees to fulfill inner needs. Impact society positively, cultivates social bonding with others, and streamlines organizational objectives with those of employees. Grzeda and Assogbavi (2011) defined workpl ace spirituality as a range of employee behaviors within the context of an organization largely fuelled by spiritual values, beliefs, and value of the organization.. Gebert et al on their part view workplace spirituality as employees long held believes and behaviors as demonstrated by their faith or religious proclivities through various spiritual activities. The bottom line is that, workplace spirituality tends to echo or stimulate the socio religious and cultural beliefs of employee and organization in other to make work meaningful and result oriented

Workplace Spirituality to Employee Effectiveness

The importance of spirituality in the workplace has grown in recent years because of its positive effect on employees' mental health and for the sustainable development of individuals Incorporating spirituality into the workplace positively affects employees' physical, psychological, mental, and spiritual well-being, hence contributing to sustainability (Mohammad et al, 2023). Religiosity is positively related to work engagement,

while work engagement is negatively related to turnover intention (Ahmed & Tamar, 2023). Religiosity was found to influence what employees want from a job environment and their job satisfaction, but only when organizational context was controlled. By introducing and exploring the concepts of workplace acceptance of religious expression by organizations and individuals, it was found that the interaction between an organization's stance and an employee's desire pertaining to the acceptance of workplace religious expression had the most significant influence on job satisfaction (King & Williamson, 2005).

Changes in the global economy, such as restructuring, globalization, diversity, competition, downsizing, re-engineering, ageing populations, as well as environmental pollution, have led to the realization at organizational level that current structures and policies are no longer appropriate in the 21st century. Workers have become demoralized, alienated and unable to cope with the compartmentalized nature of their work and non-work lives. The community structures given to employees formerly provided them with a source of meaning, but are now viewed by some as less relevant (De Klerk, 2005).

The term "workplace spirituality" has been coined to describe an attitude held by employees who feel a connection with their co-workers based on trust, love, and a shared sense of being, and who are therefore better able to accomplish the organization's goals via their work. Additionally, WS has been defined as "those aspects of the workplace (individual, group, or organization) that promote individual feelings of satisfaction through transcendence" (Mohammad et al, 2023). It was hypothesized that spiritual employees are better able to detach themselves from work and craft their job according to their preference and abilities, which would inculcate experience and make them intrinsically motivated and thereby leading to employee engagement (Nehra, 2023).

Organizations have to rethink their current approach to work and employees. This requires organizations to institute new systems in order to successfully embrace the changes which can be achieved with the introduction of spirituality to the workplace. In the context of the workplace, spirituality does not necessarily imply that the organization itself should be of a spiritual nature, but merely that the organization should allow and encourage employees to experience spirituality within the working environment. It is, however, assumed that when the organization is spiritual as well as its employees, value congruence might occur, which may imply even greater organizational outcomes, such as quality, productivity and profitability (Walt & de Klerk, 2014).

Khasawneh (2011) conducted a study on staff members at Jordanian public universities to ascertain the level of spirituality in the place of work. From the results, it was found that the staff members were not only encouraged to bring their soul to work, but they had the freedom to implement it too. All the dimensions of workplace spirituality, i.e. meaningful work, compassion, transcendence, mindfulness and sense of community, were found statistically significant and partially mediated between job satisfaction and OCB among managerial employees of Chhattisgarh (Dubey, 2022). The science of spirituality reveals that each human being is connected with self, others, and nature but they are unable to feel their connectedness and act accordingly until they grow. Similarly, a servant leader is someone who should feel connected with self, others, and nature so that he/she could serve followers unselfishly (Silva et al, 2023).

Workplace Spirituality and Effective Communication

The framework below describes how the work place can be conducive through workplace spirituality that drives employee motivation which can lead to job satisfaction via effective communication. It shows that employees can at best have a sense of commitment when there is a smooth and effective communication network in the workplace. It shows that organizational decisions should be focused on the motivation of employees who are the greatest asset of the organization that determines its success in the long run. Having effective feedback system is key to sustaining good leadership that builds the foundation for organizational productivity.

Management
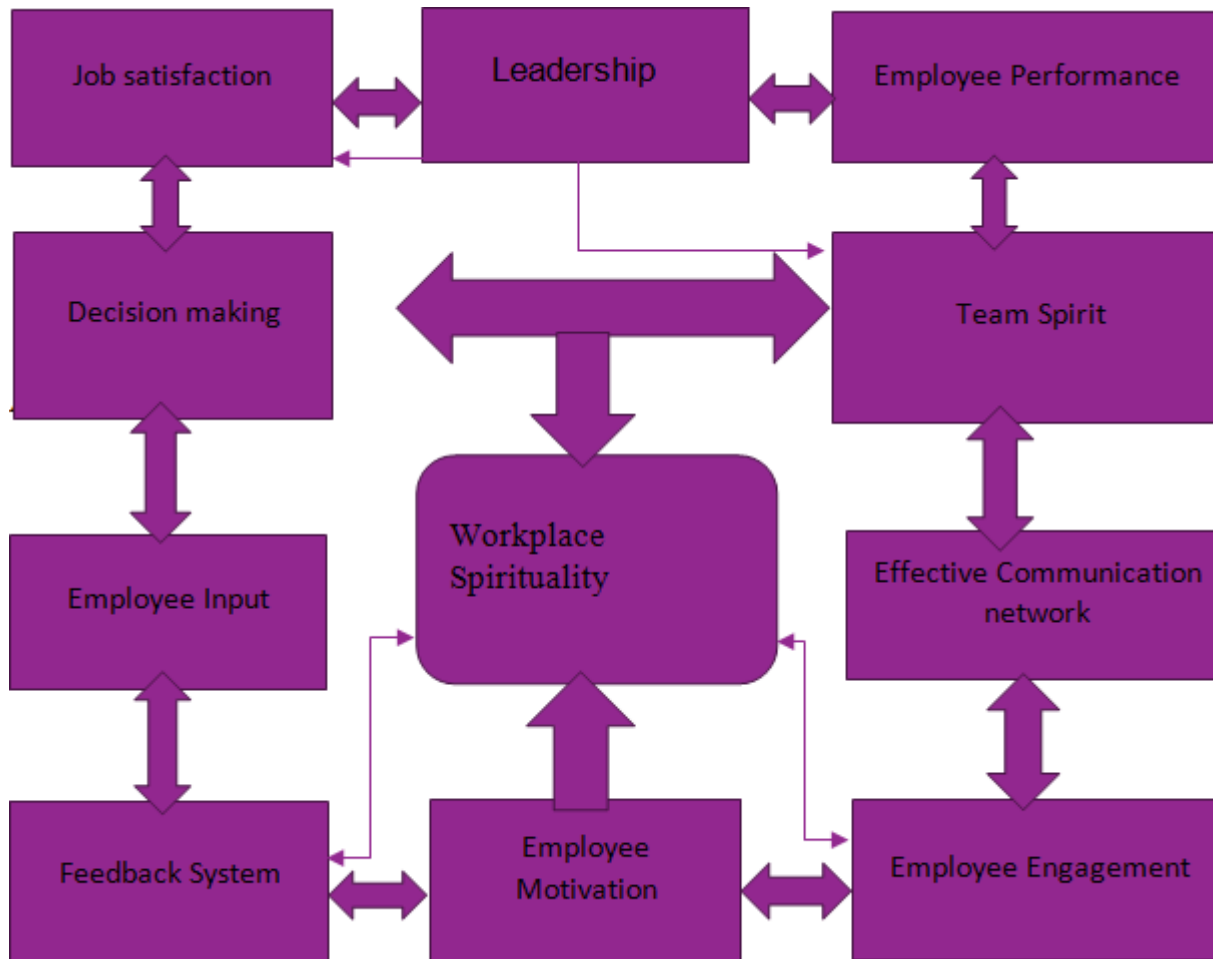
Field work, 2023.

Job Satisfaction and Spirituality

The human resource department's role in designing and developing strategies that embrace spirituality, with the intention of developing a culture aimed toward the successful achievement of both business and individual or personal goals, is very critical for the management (Belwalker et al, 2018).

Spirituality is not a new phenomenon but spirituality at workplace is new and it is on the conceptual stage. Recently, it has got an enormous amount of attention in the field of management research, because now organizations have understood that employees are satisfied not only with materialistic things and they want more than that. When people speak about work attitude, many often refer it to job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is important because it determines how employees love their work. A spiritual person is aroused and energized intrinsically, which leads to self-actualization, personal growth, personal achievement, fulfillment, creativity, social power and challenge. Achieving this state of existence means that the spiritual person is satisfied. This is not a static state because the spiritual individual continually strives towards greater satisfaction through the experience of spirituality, as this need becomes increasingly stronger. The spiritually-based organization forms the platform for the individual to experience spirituality which allows him or her to experience even more satisfaction (Anu. 2013).

Job satisfaction will be regarded as 'a pleasurable or positive emotional experience, job satisfaction regardless of the existence or absence of favorable work-related factors. This proposition holds that job satisfaction is to a large extent a manifestation of life meaning, job satisfaction is thus a manifestation of spirituality. If this is true, it might imply that job satisfaction is a relatively stable predisposition. Experiencing life satisfaction through one's work may lead to personally valuing outcomes, such as meaningful and purposeful life,

connectedness, compassion, and, ultimately, spirituality (Walt and De Klerk, 2014).Workplace spirituality has been seen to produce employees satisfaction when compared with the material and monetary reward system of offered by Taylorism.(Stone et al,2022). The social intrinsic needs of the worker that brings satisfaction and meaningful work are captured in workplace spirituality model.

Workplace spirituality and Employee Motivation

There is strong synergy between workplace spirituality and employees motivation toward optimum performance. The modern day management are incorporating individual unique spiritual and religious cultural beliefs as drivers of work performance. Employee motivational factors as critical component of human capital development is gradually shifting from scientific management rewards of carrot(material and monetary rewards) to social and spiritual rewards that makes work meaningful and satisfying(Kang,2014). Generally people and workers are searching for meaning in ones work beyond salaries and wages (Argandona,2015) Workplace spirituality has raised the bar of traditional reward system of economic and instrumental benefits to a search for a higher and deeper purpose of living and work reward. When the individual have a sense of purpose in their work they tend to become motivated and committed to the organization and have a greater push for productivity (Nnonyelu and Odogwu,2021) Spirituality has strong positive influence on individual work ethics and belief system which in the long run can potentially enhance employee motivation and performance(Hough,Neck,and Krishnakumar,2016)

Motivational factors promoting workplace Spirituality

According to Nnonyelu and Odogwu (2021), the followings are the motivational factors fuelling workplace spirituality far above other management strategy in our ever dynamic global work environment:

1. **Commercialization of Spirituality**. This 21st century has seen an upsurge in the commercialization of spiritual commodities and trade in terms of books, cassettes, videos', seminars, conferences, programmes, music and host of other that have become source of wealth creation and generation (Miller et al, 2013) in Nnonyelu & Odogwu (2021).
2. **Increase in global standard of living.** The 21ST century economic boom and prosperity have shifted the focus of motivational factors from material and monetary incentives to spiritual needs of social bonding and meaningful work experience. The writings on spirituality usually rank spiritual needs as a higher order needs.
3. **Transcending Taylorism**. There is shift in deploying the principle of scientific Management style to motivate employee to a social and spiritual motivational strategy. Work Spirituality is seen by most scholars as another aspect of human that deserves reflection when examining human reward system. The emergence of spiritual paradigm has enlarged the discourse of work and employee motivation.
4. **Increasing level of Job Insecurity**. A good number of scholars are of the view that contemporary workers seek meaningful and Purposeful work setting as a reaction to a period of intense job insecurity (Zare&Beheshtifar, 2013: Ajayi,2013). Recent economic downturn that has led to high labour turnover and employee downsizing is making workplace spirituality trending

Leadership, Workplace Spirituality, and Employee Performance

The spiritual needs are fulfilled by a recognition and acceptance of individual responsibility for the common good, by understanding the connectedness of all life and by serving humanity and the planet. When we speak, therefore, about bringing spirituality into the workplace, we are talking about changing organizational cultures through the transformation of leadership and employees so that humanistic practices and policies become an integral part of an organization's day-to-day function (Chukwuma, 2016). Leaders who would uphold workplace spirituality will "envision an environment in which all employees are given the opportunity to reach their highest potential both in terms of their work and as human beings. He regrettably stated (Turner 2006 cited by Chukwuma, 2016).Ethical decision making is one of the most controversial issues facing leaders of organizations today. Great organizational leaders are far and few and are becoming increasingly rare with each passing day (Chukwuma, 2016).

Theoretical Under Spinning

For the purpose of this study we shall be adopting the duo of Elton Mayo human relation management theory of (1922) and Max Weber's Calvinist ascetic theory of Protestantism 0f (1958)

The human relations theory by Elton Mayo (1922) is used to explain the concept of workplace spirituality in the performance of employees in an organization. The human relations school of thought is of opinion that, workers should freely related and have sense of oneness while functionally contributing their ideas in getting the job done efficiently. The workers should have some degree of freedom to relate with one another sharing ideas on the best ways to get the job done.

Workplace spirituality emerges when the workers behaviorally have some degree of freedom even before and after the job. In the contemporary Nigeria workplace, workers believes that there is a central connect between their belief system and the delivery of their task informal social organization or group with unique sub cultural religious beliefs and values have been catalyst to employee efficiency and organization effectiveness in modern and contemporary work setting.

Calvinism ascetic religious belief and the spirit of capitalism

Max Weber's effort on the protestant ethics and the spirit of capitalism (1958) was an effort to examine the impact of religion on social change and improved workers performance. The theory stressed the importance of religious belief and value on organizational efficiency. Weber believed that the rise of industrial capitalism was driven by Calvinism (an ascetic religious belief) a movement within the protestant reformation. According to Weber, central to the religious thought of John Calvin. (1909 -1964) is the

Doctrine of predestination, a strong belief that an all knowing and powerful God has selected some people for salvation while condemning most to eternal damnation. Aside, it is assumed that each person's fate has been sealed before birth and known only to God is either eternal glory or endless hellfire. Due to the uncertain nature of their fate, Calvinist looked anxiously for evidence of God's approval which was collectively tied to visible manifestation of prosperity and material success. According to Calvinist conviction, achieving prosperity in a bid to escape hell fire is best attained through a rigid devotion to hard work, a frugal thrifty life, reinvestment of accumulated profits, and embracement of technological advancement. According to Max Weber, this religious and spiritual belief unwittingly laid the foundation of economic prosperity and progress of the western European countries during the 17th and 18th century.

Relating this theory to the subject matter of study, a good number of contemporary organization and mangers are leveraging on employee's spirituality and religious beliefs to motivate them in achieving optima performance. Employee's spirituality and faith beliefs are mainstreamed into organizational strategy as well as corporate objectives as a way of maximizing employee's potentials.

METHODOLOGY

This work applied the content research approach, where analysis and findings are basically made from data collected from secondary sources.

Content study is a type of social science research that allows the collection of numerical and non-numerical data from secondary sources and seeks to interpret meaning from these data in other to understand social life patterns and causal factors through the study of targeted populations or places. People often frame it in opposition to quantitative research, which uses numerical data to identify large-scale trends and employs statistical operations to determine causal and correlative relationships between variables (Ashley, 2020).

The qualitative content analysis allows for a nuanced exploration of how workplace spirituality influences employee performance, offering insights into other individual experiences ad broader organizational outcomes.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The research shows that workplace spirituality is factor that can lead to employee motivation in an organization. Workplace spirituality enhances good team spirit among employees in today's dynamic work environment. Given workers the avenue to converge on religious grounds does boost morale of workers in the dynamic work environment. As postulated by Max Weber in his theory of protestant ethics and the spirit of capitalism, the findings has it that workplace spirituality involves the integration of personal beliefs, values, sense of purpose with organizational values and practices. It includes aspects such as meaningful work, a sense of community, ethical behavior, ad a supportive work environment. It further confirms that, organizations that emphasize ethical conduct, social responsibility, and employee well-being might experience higher employee performance due to increased motivation and engagement.

The study shows that workplace spirituality promotes love, trust, and oneness among employees in an organization. It brings about high level motivation among workers in the workplace. The fact motivation is key driver of organizational performance cannot be overemphasized. When employees have functional relationship at different levels in the organization it will contribute to growth and sustainability of the organization. Incorporating spirituality into the workplace positively affects employees' physical, psychological, mental, and spiritual well-being, hence contributing to sustainability (Mohammad et al, 2023).

The study finds out that employee's get easily connected on spiritual grounds when there is shared religious beliefs and ethical value among working group. Irrespective of the fact that getting spiritually connected is not formally a management strategy in driving high level performance, its' usefulness cannot be overlooked. Also, modern day employees tend to seek rewards beyond the traditional pay check system that emphasizes material and monetary incentives. They tend to focus on spiritual benefits such as fellowship, social bonding, divine calling, and meaningful work that has long lasting fulfillment. Workplace spirituality can potentially in the long run foster employer-employees relationship and engagement (Karakas, 2010). Besides, from this study we discovered that motivational factors such as increasing standard of living, uptick in commercialization of spirituality, migration, transcending taylorism, and what have you are changing the face and nature of workplace spirituality in our dynamic contemporary society. In addition, workplace spirituality is critical to employee's performance and commitment, especially in a highly unpredictable and volatile economy that is breeding job insecurity and high turnover rate. (Ule, Idemudia, & Wapaimi, 2020). Worker seek job satisfaction, meaningful work, and great sense of belonging far above material and monetary rewards that might be temporary and short-lived.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research proved that workplace spirituality can directly or indirectly influence workers motivation that can lead to organizational performance. In today's dynamic work environment, connection between workers on religious bases contribute primarily to performance level of employees, which invariably leads to organizational productivity and effectiveness. A plethora of empirical studies have identified the role and significance of workplace spirituality both to the employees and the organizations alike. For instance, (Karaka,2010) argued that workplace spirituality improve the morale, emotional attachment and loyalty of employees to the organization. On their Part, Falola & Salau(2014) discovered that workplace spirituality promotes employees satisfaction and team spirit which is very critical for organizational unity and realizing organizational collective goals and objectives. The importance of incorporating workplace spirituality into modern day corporate strategy cannot be over emphasized, especially if the business wants to achieve success and assemble a loyal, as well as formidably committed employee team as work force.

Management should always prioritize the motivation of its employees, thereby promoting workplace spirituality. This for sure will bring about a healthy work environment and also drive high level organizational effectiveness and employee's commitment. Also, we can leverage on our religiosity as a nation and begin to design our work structure and reward system to reflect the diverse cultural heritage and spiritual pluralism Nigeria and African are known for. This will definitely take work back to its original form and intent, where man derives satisfaction and meaning to life, when work becomes spiritual to man, it places him above work

itself and de alienates man from the yoke and bondage of work. Optimal performance and job satisfaction becomes the product of workplace spirituality in our ever dynamic environment.

Contribution to Knowledge

Below are contributions to knowledge.

I. From the analysis of Weber's work, we understand that the idea of capitalism shifted away from economic factors to include cultural and religious factors. It highlighted how religious beliefs and values can influence the development of capitalist economic system.

2. It is known that the Protestant work ethic, with its emphasis on hard work, discipline, and thrift, provided a cultural foundation that encouraged productivity and economic success.

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