

Role of spirituality in achieving purpose driven approach at workplace

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Abstract

The present study is a humble approach to understand the role of spirituality in achieving purpose driven approach towards work. It is intended through this work to establish an empirical relationship of Spirituality at Workplace, and Purpose-Driven Approach (karma, bhakti, jnana) with Employee Engagement and it also explored how these two variables affect each other. Spirituality as a transcendental relationship with that which is sacred in life, something which is divine beyond the self, it is the act, feeling, the experience of individuals in relation to what they consider as divine. While the ancient Indian wisdom talks about Duty/Action (Karma), Devotion (Bhakti), and Knowledge (Jnana), these three central themes help to inspire employees to excel at work. The study addresses the role of karma, bhakti, jnana for creation of transcendental relationship with the divine. A total of 509 respondents from 5 PSUs participated in this research. The study is helpful in understanding the role of spirituality for achieving purpose driven approach towards work. Contentment, and Ethical Conduct – dimensions of Spirituality at Workplace has significantly reported to have positive correlation with all the three dimensions - Action / Duty, Devotion, and Knowledge of Purpose Driven Approach towards Work. While the third dimension Self Confidence of Spirituality at Workplace has positive significant correlation with only two dimensions Devotion, and Knowledge of Purpose Driven Approach towards Work.

Keyword Spirituality at Workplace, Purpose Driven Approach, Employee Engagement

Introduction

Spirituality is the activity of connecting with the internal self. Walsh (2012) explains spirituality as a transcendental relationship with something which is sacred in life, something which is divine and beyond the self (Emmons, 1999), and considered as divine (Teotia, 2012). Spiritual Audit of Corporate America is widely regarded as the first truly empirical study specifically on workplace spirituality (Mitroff & Denton, 1999).

Spirituality is one specific dimension of values. Ashmos and Duchon (2000) associated workplace spirituality with a number of key dimensions such as meaning, purpose, and a sense of community connection to others. Spirituality at the workplace is the state when employees are motivated to perform their work without any external driver. They find a connection with their work and feel energized and passionate about it.

Spirituality in business has received increasing attention over the last decade. Evidence suggests spirituality may impact organizational effectiveness (Krahnke et al., 2003). Workplace Spirituality, when evidenced by employees, encourages them to demonstrate extra-role, pro-social behaviors (Delbecq, 1999; Fry, 2003; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003; Kinjerski & Skrypnik, 2004) – behaviors which are not part of the job description. These organizational citizenship behaviors are performed by the employee as a result of personal choice, contributing positively to the overall organizational effectiveness (Podsakoff et al., 2000).

Beazley (1997) found a correlation between a high level of spirituality and honesty, humility, and service to others. Lloyd (1990) found organizations high in workplace spirituality outperform those without it by 86%.

(Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004) argue that organizations that exhibit spirituality “create an environment where integration of the personal and professional selves are possible, engaging the whole person in the work process”. Mitroff and Denton (1999) found that those associated with organizations that were perceived as more spiritual indicated that they were able to bring more of their “complete selves” to work.

As organizations are looking for a more humanistic approach to management, there is an increasing call to embrace “an intentional and broader focus on purpose” (HOLLENSBE et al., 2014) through an intrinsic driven factor. “Workplace spirituality has been broadly defined as the purpose and meaning an individual gets in his work (J.F. Milliman 2001) and a sense of community by which the employees operate” (Shah, 2021). The idea of purpose has been around management for decades. Evidence from the field shows that the idea of purpose is also present and it develops at an individual level within the organizations. In Vedic Hindu philosophy, business is seen as a legitimate, integral part of society. Man can attain

excellence or perfection through his deeds or Karma. The ancient Indian wisdom talks about Duty/Action (Karma), Devotion (Bhakti), and Knowledge (Jnana). These three central themes help to inspire employees to excel at work. Any employee must be driven to fulfill his duties at work, feel devoted to it, and possess proper knowledge to perform his duties. Sincerity towards one's duties also increases employee commitment to the organization, and employees can use knowledge to achieve business excellence (Rajeev, 2007).

The practice of Karma, Bhakti, and Jnana has both physical and emotional effects on a human being. At the physical level, one can be transformed from being self-centered to unselfish to selfless, and at the emotional level, one can become conscious of one's emotions. After reaching this awareness, the change from the lower to the higher emotion comes to being committed and loyal (Rajeev, 2007). Action without knowledge is destined to fall apart. Action, devotion, and knowledge form the core of the drive to achieve the result. All three of them are necessary for achieving sustainable results. Any two elements are incomplete without the third one. Actions with knowledge but without devotion will hinder the achievement of goals. Any person, who performs his duties and has the knowledge to do it, will not be able to achieve the results if he lacks a burning desire to achieve his goals. Achieving goals requires perseverance, and lack of it will lead to unfulfilled work. Similarly, if actions are combined with devotion but the person lacks the knowledge to perform his duties, in such situations, a person will be stuck at a point and will not be able to move forward, and knowledge with devotion but without action will lack results. Thus, action is to be performed with knowledge, with a heart full of devotion, without attachment to the fruits of selfish actions. In the modern business context, the attributes mentioned above can be understood as follows:

1. Action/Duty (Karma)

Here, the stages are creating an employee, propelling him into action, and fruitful work. According to Swami Vivekananda, "we are responsible for what we are, and whatever we wish to be, we have the power to make ourselves. If what we are now has been the result of our past actions, it certainly follows that whatever we wish to be in future can be produced by our present actions; so we have to know how to act". This means that our actions define our destiny. If we want to excel in life, we must rely on our hard work and dedication, and nothing else will achieve that for us. Continuous efforts must be made to achieve the goal. People have different dreams in their lives, but very few can fulfill their dreams. These few people are the ones who are sincere and work relentlessly to make their dreams come true (Ranganathananda, 1991).

2. Devotion, Commitment, Loyalty towards Work (Bhakti)

Bhakti has been defined as love for God. The Bhagavad Gita proposes that one can perform one's daily activities or work as a form of worship to the Lord. The advantage of this attitude is that when employees do their work with this devoted spirit, they will strive to constantly better themselves. They would go beyond what they think they are capable of because work has become an expression of devotion and loyalty to the Lord. This concept has two merits. First, it helps one stretch one's capabilities far beyond what one thinks is possible, and second, since the work is done as a token of commitment, it improves the quality of work-life (Rajeev, 2007) ages are Demo Bhakti, the devotion to work, is the bond of union between people.

3. Knowledge, Understanding, Wisdom (Jnana)

Knowledge here refers to understanding the task and methodology that should be adopted to achieve one's goals. An example may understand this. Let us assume the goal one wants to achieve is a place where one wants to be, knowledge in that case, is the map that would lead to that place. Without a map or the knowledge of the path, the destination cannot be achieved.

Model Overview and Hypothesis

This study is a humble approach to understand the role of spirituality in achieving purpose driven approach towards work. "Workplace spirituality has been broadly defined as the purpose and meaning an individual gets in his work (J.F. Milliman 2001) and a sense of community by which the employees operate" (Shah, 2021). Thus, it is hypothesized that,

Hypothesis 1: Spirituality at Workplace (SW) is likely to have a positive correlation with Purpose Driven approach towards work (PD)

Methods

Sample and Procedures

The executives working in different Maharatna and Navaratna PSUs constituted the sample for the study. The setting for the study was limited to Delhi and NCR region (India). Data was collected from 5 PSUs to which the researcher was able to gain access. Each participant was asked to complete questions on demographic and role-related variables (i.e. gender, age, education, and level in the organization), followed by a questionnaire. All participants were given a notice containing a brief explanation of the purpose of the study and a statement ensuring the confidentiality of their results. Question order was counterbalanced to avoid common method bias .

Out of 509 respondents, 384 (75.4%) were males and only 125 (24.6%) were females. The reason for the high male population could be due to the skewed gender ratio in these organizations. Further, 78 (15.3%) respondents were from the age group 21-30 years, 163 (32.0%) were from 31-40 years, 157 (30.8%) were from 41-50 years, 107 (21.0%) were from 51-60 years, while only 4 (0.8%) was from above 60 age group. 178 (35.0%) respondents are having a graduate degree, whereas, 274 (53.8%) respondents have a postgraduate degree, while 57 (11.2%) have a Ph.D. degree. 279 (54.81%) respondents are from Junior (E1, E2, E3) Level Executive, 163 (32.02%) respondents are from Middle (E4, E5, E6) Level Executives, and 67 (13.17%) respondents are from Senior (E7, E8, E9) Level Executives.

The items used in the study had a reliability score of more than 0.6 (Cronbach's Alpha Reliability)

Measures

In scales to examine the research issues, a questionnaire was developed. A 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) was used to measure the variables related to Spirituality at Workplace, and Purpose Driven Approach towards Work. We asked each respondent to indicate the degree to which they agreed with each statement associated with the current situation of their organization.

Mean and Standard Deviation (Univariate Descriptive Analysis)

Mean as a measure of central tendency is computed to summarize the data collected. Standard Deviation as a measure of dispersion is used to compute and understand the variability of scores.

Purpose Driven Approach Towards Work

Table 1: Mean and SD for the Dimensions of Purpose Driven Approach Towards Work

SN	Dimension	Mean	SD
1	Devotion	4.01	.693
2	Knowledge	3.88	.822
3	Action / Duty	3.49	.495

Note: N = 509

Table 1 represents mean and standard deviation scores for the 3 dimensions of Purpose Driven Approach Towards Work. The 3 dimensions are Devotion (Mean = 4.01), Knowledge (Mean = 3.88), and Action/Duty (Mean = 3.49). It is reported that the respondents have agreed the highest on the dimension of 'Devotion'. The mean scores of all the dimensions are more than the average of 3.0 (on a scale of 5), indicating high agreement on the Purpose Driven Approach Towards Work. The dispersion is moderate, indicating agreement on the items.

We also decided to have descriptive analysis item wise to have the better understanding of data obtained.

Table 2: Mean and SD Scores of the Items Related to Purpose Driven Approach Towards Work

SN	Code	Items	Mean	SD
1	P1	I fulfill all the responsibilities specified in my job description	4.26	.703
2	P2	I conscientiously perform tasks that are expected of me	4.19	.791
3	P4	I am proud to work for my organization	4.18	.778
4	P3	I believe in what I do every day at work	3.95	.768
5	P8	I have clarity of purpose	3.93	.906

6	P7	I feel passionate about my work	3.89	1.001
7	P9	I have a strong sense of purpose and meaning with my co-workers about my work	3.85	.934
8	P5	There are days when I don't put much effort into my job	3.18	.979
9	P6	I frequently think about quitting my job and leaving this organization	2.33	1.177

Note: N = 509. Code denotes serial number of items in Purpose Driven Approach Towards Work as in the questionnaire.

Table 2 represents mean and standard deviation scores for the items related to purpose driven approach towards work. It is reported that the respondents have agreed the highest on the item 'I fulfill all the responsibilities specified in my job description (P1)' with mean of 4.26 followed by other items in the table in descending order. High agreement on the items of perception of work is reported as mean scores of all the items are more than the average of 3.0 (on a scale of 5) except the item 'I frequently think about quitting my job and leaving this organization' with the mean score of 2.33, to which the respond report not to agree highly and also has a very high deviation of 1.177. The dispersion is moderate, indicating agreement in the items.

Spirituality at Workplace

Table 3: Mean and SD for the Dimensions of Spirituality at Workplace

SN	Dimension	Mean	SD
1	Self Confidence	4.22	.629
2	Ethical Conduct	3.86	.638
3	Contentment	3.52	.650

Note: N = 509

Table 3 represents mean and standard deviation scores for the 3 dimensions of Spirituality at Workplace. The mean scores are reported in descending order and depicted graphically.

The 3 dimensions are Self Confidence (Mean = 4.22), Ethical Conduct (Mean = 3.86), and Contentment (Mean = 3.52). It is reported that the respondents have agreed the highest on the dimension of 'Self Confidence'. The mean scores of all the dimensions are more than the average of 3.0 (on a scale of 5), indicating high agreement on the Spirituality at Workplace. The dispersion is moderate, indicating agreement on the items.

We also decided to have descriptive analysis item wise to have the better understanding of data obtained.

Table 4 represents mean and standard deviation scores for the items related to spirituality at workplace. The mean scores are reported in descending order and depicted graphically.

Table 4: Mean and SD Scores of the Items Related to Spirituality at Workplace

SL	Code	Items	Mean	SD
1	S4	I have confidence on my own abilities	4.25	.691
2	S3	Moral values hold more importance for me than the personal gains	4.19	.807
3	S1	I try to stick to my ethics in any situation	4.06	.921
4	S6	Rewards play a major role in motivating me towards achieving my goals	3.89	.879
5	S9	The conditions of my life are excellent	3.71	.903
6	S2	I try to build the connection with divine	3.62	.940
7	S8	I experience moments at work where everything is blissful	3.60	.899
8	S7	In most ways my life is close to my ideal	3.54	.883
9	S5	Luxuries associated with money do not attract me	3.25	1.116

Note: N = 509. Code denotes serial number of items in Spirituality at Workplace as in the questionnaire.

It is reported that the respondents have agreed the highest on the item 'I have confidence on my own abilities (S4)' with mean of 4.25 followed by other items in the table in descending order. The mean scores of all the items are more than the average of 3.0 (on a scale of 4), indicating high agreement on the Spirituality at Workplace. The dispersion is moderate, indicating agreement in the items.

Factor Analysis

Factor Analysis has been used for summarizing the dimensions of the variables involved (Malhotra & Dash, 2011). Principle Component Analysis (PCA) was used for the process of factor extraction along with Varimax rotation involving Kaiser normalization. Factor Loading of 0.40 and above was used to decide whether to retain an item or not.

Table 5: Factor Analysis of the Items Related to Spirituality at Workplace

Factor No.	Item	Description	Loading
I Contentment	1	Luxuries associated with money do not attract me	.395
	2	In most ways my life is close to my ideal	.757
	3	I experience moments at work where everything is blissful	.802
	4	The conditions of my life are excellent	.714
Eigen Value = 2.541; % of Variance = 28.232			
II Ethical Conduct	1	I try to stick to my ethics in any situation	.607
	2	I try to build the connection with divine	.664
	3	Rewards play a major role in motivating me towards achieving my goals	.753
Eigen Value = 1.311; % of Variance = 14.563			
III Self Confidence	1	Moral values hold more importance for me than the personal gains	.784
	2	I have confidence on my own abilities	.836
Eigen Value = 1.140; % of Variance = 12.670			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

Rotation converged in 5 iteration

Cut off point was .40

Factor Analysis (PCA) was run for the factors of Spirituality at Workplace. It was observed that the factors extracted and the corresponding items of all the 3 factors are same as they were in the mutually ascertained dimensions, i.e. Contentment, Ethical Conduct, and Self Confidence. Factor 1 (Contentment) has eigen value 2.541 and is able to explain a variance of 28.23 % in Spirituality at Workplace, factor 2 (Ethical Conduct) has eigen value 1.311 and is able to explain a variance of 14.56 % in Spirituality at Workplace, and factor 3 (Self Confidence) has eigen value 1.104 and is able to explain a variance of 12.67 % in Spirituality at Workplace.

Correlation Analysis

Table 6: Dimension-wise Correlation Analysis: PD and SW

Dimensions	PD1	PD2	PD3	SW1	SW2	SW3
PD1	-	.107*	.174**	.098*	.096*	.037
PD2	-	-	.651**	.372**	.163**	.323**
PD3	-	-	-	.297**	.193**	.273**
SW1	-	-	-	-	.315**	.212**
SW2	-	-	-	-	-	.151**
SW3	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note: N=509. ** indicates that correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* indicates that correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The dimensions of Purpose Driven Approach towards Work - Action / Duty / PD1, Devotion / PD2 and Knowledge / PD3 have reported in significant correlation with the two dimensions of Spirituality at Workplace – Contentment / SW1, Ethical Conduct / SW2 and Self Confidence / SW3. While the dimension Action / Duty / PD1 has reported to have positive correlation with Ethical Conduct / SW2 and Self Confidence / SW3 only.

In Appendix VIII (C) (Item-wise Correlation Analysis: Purpose Driven Approach towards Work and Spirituality at Workplace) it is reported that P1 (I fulfill all the responsibilities specified in my job description / PD1), P2 (I conscientiously perform tasks that are expected of me / PD1), P3 (I believe in what I do every day at work / PD2), P4 (I am proud to work for my organization / PD2), P7 (I feel passionate about my work / PD2), P8 (I have clarity of purpose / PD3), and P9 (I have a strong sense of purpose and meaning with my co-workers about my work / PD3) items of Purpose Driven Approach towards Work have a positive significant correlation with S1 (I try to stick to my ethics in any situation / SW2) and S4 (I

have confidence on my own abilities / SW3) items of Spirituality at Workplace, while P5 (There are days when I don't put much effort into my job / PD1) and P6 (I frequently think about quitting my job and leaving this organization / PD1) has reported to have negative significant correlation.

P2 (I conscientiously perform tasks that are expected of me / PD1), P3 (I believe in what I do every day at work / PD2), P7 (I feel passionate about my work / PD2), P8 (I have clarity of purpose / PD3), and P9 (I have a strong sense of purpose and meaning with my co-workers about my work / PD3) items of Purpose Driven Approach towards Work has reported to have a positive significant correlation with S2 (I try to build the connection with divine / SW2) item of Spirituality at Workplace, while other items have reported no significant correlation.

P1 (I fulfill all the responsibilities specified in my job description / PD1), P2 (I conscientiously perform tasks that are expected of me / PD1), P3 (I believe in what I do every day at work / PD2), P4 (I am proud to work for my organization / PD2), P7 (I feel passionate about my work / PD2), P8 (I have clarity of purpose / PD3), and P9 (I have a strong sense of purpose and meaning with my co-workers about my work / PD3) items of Purpose Driven Approach towards Work has reported to have a positive significant correlation with S3 (Moral values hold more importance for me than the personal gains / SW3) and S7 (In most ways my life is close to my ideal / SW1) item of Spirituality at Workplace, while P5 (There are days when I don't put much effort into my job / PD1) and P6 (I frequently think about quitting my job and leaving this organization / PD1) has reported no significant correlation.

P7 (I feel passionate about my work / PD2), P8 (I have clarity of purpose / PD3), and P9 (I have a strong sense of purpose and meaning with my co-workers about my work / PD3) items of Purpose Driven Approach towards Work has reported to have a positive significant correlation with S5 (I try to build the connection with divine / SW2) item of Spirituality at Workplace, P5 (There are days when I don't put much effort into my job / PD1) item has reported negative significant correlation, while other items have reported no significant correlation.

P2 (I conscientiously perform tasks that are expected of me / PD1), P3 (I believe in what I do every day at work / PD2), and P6 (I frequently think about quitting my job and leaving this organization / PD1) items of Purpose Driven Approach towards Work has reported to have a positive significant correlation with S6 (Rewards play a major role in motivating me towards achieving my goals / SW2) item of Spirituality at Workplace, while the other items have reported no significant correlation. P1 (I fulfill all the responsibilities specified in my job description / PD1), P2 (I conscientiously perform tasks that are expected of me / PD1), P3 (I believe in what I do every day at work / PD2), P4 (I am proud to work for my organization / PD2), P7 (I feel passionate about my work / PD2), P8 (I have clarity of purpose / PD3), and P9 (I have a strong sense of purpose and meaning with my co-workers about my work / PD3) items of Purpose Driven Approach towards Work has reported to have a positive significant correlation with S8 (I experience moments at work where everything is blissful / SW1) item of Spirituality at Workplace, P6 (I frequently think about quitting my job and leaving this organization / PD1) has reported negative significant correlation, while P5 (There are days when I don't put much effort into my job / PD1) has reported no significant correlation.

P1 (I fulfill all the responsibilities specified in my job description / PD1), P2 (I conscientiously perform tasks that are expected of me / PD1), P3 (I believe in what I do every day at work / PD2), P4 (I am proud to work for my organization / PD2), P7 (I feel passionate about my work / PD2), P8 (I have clarity of purpose / PD3), and P9 (I have a strong sense of purpose and meaning with my co-workers about my work / PD3) items of Purpose Driven Approach towards Work has reported to have a positive significant correlation with S9 (The conditions of my life are excellent / SW1) item of Spirituality at Workplace, while P5 (There are days when I don't put much effort into my job / PD1) has reported negative significant correlation, while P6 (I frequently think about quitting my job and leaving this organization / PD1) has reported no significant correlation.

APPENDIX VIII (C)

ITEM-WISE CORRELATION ANALYSIS: PURPOSE DRIVEN APPROACH TOWARDS WORK AND SPIRITUALITY AT WORKPLACE

Items	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9
S1	.118**	.193**	.196**	.165**	-.142**	-.146**	.150**	.243**	.117**
S2	.071	.196**	.159**	.050	.013	.003	.116**	.196**	.132**
S3	.101*	.244**	.259**	.161**	-.025	-.064	.111*	.221**	.132**
S4	.284**	.186**	.277**	.221**	-.182**	-.191**	.329**	.183**	.293**

S5	.058	.000	.036	-.003	-.106*	.055	.169**	.089*	.101*
S6	.003	.214**	.121**	-.055	-.049	.114**	-.058	.057	-.032
S7	.120**	.221**	.291**	.207**	.000	-.017	.275**	.368**	.190**
S8	.158**	.150**	.219**	.274**	-.021	-.172**	.343**	.236**	.150**
S9	.193**	.224**	.273**	.185**	.091*	-.070	.268**	.192**	.178**

Note: N=509. ** indicates that correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* indicates that correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Conclusion

The study is helpful in understanding the role of spirituality for achieving purpose driven approach towards work. Contentment, and Ethical Conduct – dimensions of Spirituality at Workplace has significantly reported to have positive correlation with all the three dimensions - Action / Duty, Devotion, and Knowledge of Purpose Driven Approach towards Work. While the third dimension Self Confidence of Spirituality at Workplace has positive significant correlation with only two dimensions Devotion, and Knowledge of Purpose Driven Approach towards Work.

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