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LEVERAGING WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY AND EMPLOYEE AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT TO ENHANCE THE PERFORMANCE OF SERVICE EXECUTIVES: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

Surendar K Rawat

Research Scholar
Faculty of Management
Pacific University
Rajasthan, India

**Dr. Shikha
Bhargava**

Assistant Professor
Faculty of Management
Pacific University
Rajasthan, India

Abstract

This research aims to empirically investigate the complex dynamics of workplace spirituality and its relationship with employee affective commitment, interpreting their combined effects on the performance of service executives. Utilizing a cross-sectional survey design, data was collected from 736 service executives through convenience sampling methods. The survey incorporated established measures, including the Workplace Spirituality Scale by Ashmos and Duchon (2000), a condensed version of the TCM Employee Commitment Survey by Meyer and Allen (1991), and the Individual Work Performance Scale by Koopmans (2014). Rigorous statistical analysis revealed workplace spirituality as a significant predictor of employee performance. Particularly, the influence of workplace spirituality on performance was found to be partially mediated by employees affective commitment. These findings highlight the strong relationships between workplace spirituality, employee commitment, and employee performance among service executives. The study emphasizes the critical role of cultivating workplace spirituality to enhance employee performance among service executives in organizational contexts. Organizations can leverage these insights to develop strategies that foster a spiritually enriching workplace environment, ultimately optimizing employee affective commitment and employee performance. This study contributes to the existing literature by examining into the underexplored interconnection between workplace spirituality, employee affective commitment, and performance within the context of service executives. By uncovering the mediating role of affective commitment, it offers novel insights into enhancing employee performance through workplace dimensions.

Keywords: Workplace Spirituality, Affective Commitment, Employee Performance, Mediation Analysis, Service Executives.

Introduction

Mumbai's service sector is a dynamic component of its economy, comprising various industries such as finance, information technology, healthcare, hospitality and many more. As a busy metropolitan area, Mumbai offers a rich environment for studying workplace dynamics, characterized by rapid globalization, cultural diversity, and intense competition. Understanding the

factors that contribute to employee performance in this framework is important for organizations striving to thrive in Mumbai's dynamic business landscape.

The primary goal of the study is to provide empirical evidence of the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee performance within Mumbai's service sector. By focusing on this specific perspective, the study aims to offer insights that are directly applicable to organizations operating in similar environments. Furthermore, by investigating the mediating role of affective commitment, the study seeks to uncover the underlying mechanisms through which workplace spirituality influences performance outcomes, thus providing a more comprehensive understanding of this relationship.

Workplace spirituality refers to the recognition of employees' deeper needs for meaning, purpose, and connection in the workplace. In Mumbai's service sector, where employees often face high levels of stress and pressure, fostering a sense of spirituality in the workplace can have significant implications for employee well-being and organizational success. By examining how workplace spirituality influences employee performance, the study aims to highlight its potential as a strategic tool for enhancing organizational effectiveness and employee satisfaction.

As Mumbai is known for its cultural diversity, with people from various regions, religions, and backgrounds coexisting in the city. This diversity presents both opportunities and challenges for organizations operating in Mumbai's service sector. By acknowledging and studying the influence of cultural diversity on workplace dynamics, the study aims to provide insights into how organizations can leverage workplace spirituality to bridge cultural divides, promote inclusivity, and foster a sense of belonging among employees from diverse backgrounds.

The study employs a rigorous quantitative research methodology to gather and analyze data. By using established measurement tools and statistical techniques, such as regression analysis and mediation analysis, the study ensures the

reliability and validity of its findings. The rigorous methodology enhances the credibility of the study's findings and facilitates meaningful comparisons with existing research in the field.

The findings of the study have significant practical implications for organizations operating in Mumbai's service sector. By recognizing the importance of workplace spirituality and affective commitment in driving employee performance, organizations can implement targeted interventions and initiatives to promote a more spiritually enriching work environment. This, in turn, can lead to higher levels of employee engagement, satisfaction, and productivity, ultimately contributing to organizational success and sustainability in Mumbai's competitive business landscape.

Problem Statement

The problem which is the basis of this research study determines the lack of empirical evidence to support the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee work performance with intermediating effect of affective commitment. Until a more specific understanding of the impact of workplace spirituality on employee performance through the mediation of affective commitment can be empirically established, the concept of workplace spirituality will remain outside the framework of employee and organizational development.

Purpose of the Study

The research aims to investigate the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee performance, considering the potential mediation of affective commitment. Previous studies have shown varied findings regarding the temporal sequence and mediating effects of these variables. While some research suggests that workplace spirituality precedes employee performance, others propose the opposite relationship (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Milliman, et al., 2003; Albuquerque et al., 2014; Mousa, 2020). In addition, the nature of the relationship between the predictor and outcome variables could be partial, full, and non-existent mediation by affective commitment (Rego et al., 2007). This

study seeks to address these gaps by examining the role of affective commitment as an intermediary variable between workplace spirituality and employee performance, contributing to a deeper understanding of their relationship. By clarifying the mechanisms underlying this relationship, the research aims to provide insights that can inform organizational practices and strategies for enhancing employee performance through the cultivation of workplace spirituality and affective commitment.

Operational Definition of the variables

For research purposes, the variables were defined as follows:

1. **Workplace spirituality**, an independent variable, exists in an organizational environment where employee can find meaning, purpose, and a sense of community towards self and organization.
2. **Affective commitment**, a mediating variable, exists within an individual where he/she feels emotionally attached and dedicated toward their job, organization, or team. It's characterized by a strong sense of loyalty, pride, and enjoyment in one's work.
3. **Employee performance**, the dependent variable, can be defined as the employee's responsibility to effectively perform their job responsibilities, perform required tasks, and minimize waste to achieve personal and organizational goals.

Research Questions

The research methodology was designed to address the research questions proposed for this study: Does affective employee commitment has a positive mediating effect on relationship between workplace spirituality and employee work performance?

Hypotheses

It was hypothesized at the start of the study that a relationship exists between workplace spirituality, employee affective commitment and work performance. So with respect to stated

research question and set hypothesis, lets study only the direct mediation effect between the variables using path analysis.

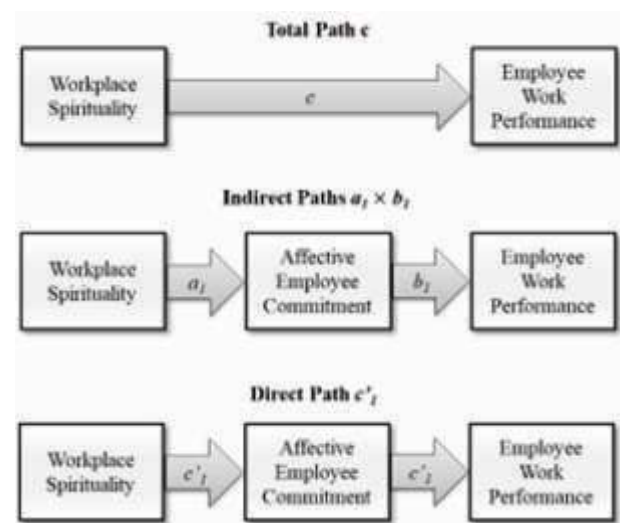
Direct Mediation Path

The direct mediation path involved several sub-paths. In each sub-path, it was important to examine whether and to what extent workplace spirituality explained the variance in employee performance and affective commitment (Figure 1). Research Question was answered, and the following hypotheses was tested:

H_{1o}: The affective employee commitment has no positive mediating effect on relationship between workplace spirituality and employee work performance.

H_{1a}: The affective employee commitment has a positive mediating effect on relationship between workplace spirituality and employee work performance (Figure-1, direct path c'1).

Figure 1 : First Mediation Analysis



Literature Review

According to Arora et al. (2024), a strong correlation between improved work environments, including managerial support and autonomy, and higher levels of job satisfaction among IT professionals, emphasizing the importance of fostering supportive work practices to enhance job satisfaction and retention. Bawa & Parmar (2023) proposed mediation model

through a systematic literature review on organizational culture in healthcare institutions emphasizes the demanding requirement for additional research in organizational culture, job satisfaction, and quality of work life within hospital management. It particularly highlights the significance of employee performance and commitment while stressing the critical role of qualitative research, especially in regions like India and Africa, to foster tangible improvements in healthcare practices and outcomes. Jaiswal & Saxena (2021) assessed how family-friendly HR practices (FFHRP) influence job performance and commitment, while also exploring the mediating effect of workplace spirituality within the Indian context. Results show a positive association between FFHRP, job performance, and organizational commitment. Moreover, workplace spirituality partially mediates the relationship between FFHRP and both organizational commitment and job performance.

Thus the research suggests that workplace spirituality plays a significant role in enhancing employee performance and commitment. Specifically, findings indicate that family-friendly HR practices positively influence both organizational commitment and job performance, with workplace spirituality acting as a partial mediator in this relationship. Thus, fostering a spiritually supportive work environment alongside family-friendly policies could lead to improved employee performance and commitment, ultimately contributing to organizational success. The study examines workplace spirituality's relationship with employee work performance and the mediating role of employee affective commitment in enhancing the employee performance.

Workplace Spirituality

Workplace spirituality is defined as expressing one's inner self through meaningful work, fostering community, and aligning individual beliefs with organizational values (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000). The dimensions include inner self, meaningful work, community, organizational values, and the individual and the organization, derived from the FMPW questionnaire (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000).

1. **Inner Life:** The dimension underscores nurturing spiritual needs alongside physical and emotional ones (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000).
2. **Meaning at Work:** Reflects the deep sense of purpose and fulfillment found in tasks (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000; Milliman et al., 2003).
3. **Conditions for Community:** Emphasizes belongingness and mutual support among employees (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000; Milliman et al., 2003).
4. **Alignment with Organizational Values:** Signifies congruence between personal and organizational values (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000; Milliman et al., 2003).
5. **Individual and the Organization:** Evaluates the organization's support for individual growth, learning, and talent development (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000).

Employee work performance

Employee performance is a focal point due to globalization's intensification of competition, economic recessions prompting cost-cutting measures, and employees striving to enhance performance to secure their positions (Linda Koopmans, 2014). The dimensions of employee work performance (Linda Koopmans, 2014) studied in this research are:

1. Task Performance involves job-specific proficiency, productivity, quality, problem-solving, planning, and decision-making.
2. Contextual Performance includes behaviors supporting the organizational environment.

Employee Commitment

Employee commitment remains a significant focus in organizational behavior literature, it is defined as the degree to which employees recognize and desire to maintain organizational membership, comprising affective, normative, and continuance.

The Three-Component Model (TCM) measures employee commitment through affective, normative, and continuance components using validated scales like the Affective Commitment Scale (ACS), the Normative Commitment Scale (NCS), and the Continuance Commitment Scale (CCS) (Meyer and Allen, 1991). For our research purpose, only Affective Commitment Scale (ACS) is considered. Affective commitment pertains to emotional attachment and participation in the organization, underlining the importance of fulfilling employees' psychological needs (Meyer and Allen, 1991).

Previous Research

Workplace Spirituality and Employee Work Performance: Several studies have demonstrated a significant positive relationship between workplace spirituality and employee work performance, focusing on empirical evidence from various contexts. Petchsawanga and Duchon (2012) conducted studies in Thailand, establishing a positive correlation between spirituality and work performance, emphasizing the significance of meditation in enhancing this relationship, employing ANOVA for data analysis. Bharadwaj and Jamal (2020) explored this relationship among Indian IT professionals, finding a positive association between workplace spirituality and employee performance, with gender as a non-significant moderator, utilizing structural equation modeling. Lalatendu Jena (2021) investigated the impact of workplace spirituality on employee performance, with organizational citizenship behavior mediating and employee emotional intelligence moderating this relationship, employing SPSS for analysis, adding insights to human resource effectiveness literature in India's manufacturing and service industries.

Workplace Spirituality and Employee Commitment: Several studies have pinpointed a strong correlation between workplace spirituality and employee commitment, highlighting specific dimensions of spirituality and their nuanced effects on different aspects of commitment. Rego and eCunha (2007) found that factors like a sense of community and alignment with organizational values significantly predict affective commitment, while enjoyment at work and inner life

opportunities influence employees' engagement and sense of purpose in their roles. Chawla and Guda (2010) discovered a robust positive correlation between individual spirituality at work and job satisfaction, along with a negative correlation with turnover intention among sales professionals. Campbell and Hua (2014) revealed that inner life and alignment with organizational values positively correlated with affective commitment. Jena and Pradhan (2018) confirmed a positive link between workplace spirituality and employee commitment, emphasizing how meaningful tasks foster environmental fit and strengthen employees' identification with the organization's mission.

Employee Commitment and Performance: Lee, Tan, and Javalgi (2010) surveyed 497 hospital employees, revealing that mastery-oriented individuals show strong affective commitment, leading to higher job satisfaction and innovative work behaviors. Rafiei, Amini, and Foroozandeh (2014) found that affective commitment significantly enhance employee performance among 244 cooperative department employees. Al Zefeiti and Mohamad (2017) discovered that affective commitment contribute to improved performance, particularly affecting contextual job performance among 335 respondents. L T Minh Loan (2020) showed that affective commitment positively influences job performance through job satisfaction among 547 employees, emphasizing its role in promoting job satisfaction and enhancing job performance.

The literature review underscores a shift towards outcome-driven research in India, a dearth of studies investigating workplace spirituality's mediation through employee commitment, and varying measurement approaches. Research predominantly originates from non-Indian contexts, with emerging interest in East and South Asia, posing challenges to the universality of organizational commitment measures. In India, studies have explored workplace spirituality's link to employee performance using intermediary variables like organizational citizenship behavior and emotional intelligence, yet little attention is given to the mediation of employee affective commitment. Closing these gaps will enhance understanding in the Indian context.

Research Methodology

A. Sample Design and Sampling Method

The research study employs a non-experimental research design, utilizing a cross-sectional survey approach to collect quantitative data at a single point in time. Non-probability sampling, specifically convenience sampling, is utilized due to the easy accessibility of participants from the target population. This method differs from probability sampling methods like random or cluster sampling, as well as quota sampling, which selects participants based on specific characteristics. A sample of 740 participants meeting predefined eligibility criteria is enrolled through online surveys over a six-month period. Seventy-seven questions, including measures of workplace spirituality, employee commitment, and work performance, are combined into a questionnaire distributed alongside a 9-item demographic survey. Measurement scales include the workplace spirituality scale by Ashmos and Duchon (2000), a condensed version of the TCM employee commitment survey by Meyer and Allen (1991), and the employee work performance scale by Koopmans (2014). Likert scales with five points are utilized, with special attention given to reverse coding during data exportation to IBM SPSS Statistics 28.

B. Target Population and Sample Size

The research methodology began with operational definitions of the target population, focusing on service executives meeting specific eligibility criteria in the Indian service sector, which encompasses activities like banking, tourism, healthcare, and IT, significant for India's GDP and employment growth initiatives like Skill India and Make in India. Criteria included English reading ability, higher secondary education, and minimum 2 years' experience in a position not lower than lower management, selecting a representative portion of the service executive population. Sample size and methodology choices significantly impact research validity and precision, with larger samples enhancing the ability to detect relationships between workplace spirituality, employee affective commitment, and work performance. Mediation analysis utilized an

alpha level of .05 for statistical significance, aiming for a statistical power of 0.80. Practical significance alongside statistical significance was considered, emphasizing the strength of relationships between variables and adopting the Baron and Kenny approach to mediation analysis based on previous research.

C. Data Collection

Data collection utilized a self-administered cross-sectional questionnaire distributed through Google Forms, chosen for its cost-effectiveness and efficiency in reaching a large participant pool quickly, featuring sections on introduction, demographics, and items on workplace spirituality, employee commitment, and work performance, assessed using the FMPW questionnaire by Ashmos and Duchon (2000), TCM Employee Commitment Survey (Meyer & Allen, 1991), and Individual Work Performance Scale (Koopmans, 2014) respectively, with respondents allocating approximately 30 seconds per question for a total completion time of 40-45 minutes, linked to participants' emails for unique submissions and automatic data export to Google Sheets, subsequently downloaded to Excel for analysis, with raw data and participant identities kept confidential and securely stored, undergoing preprocessing including reverse encoding and value label preparation before analysis in IBM SPSS 28, resulting in datasets facilitating statistical analysis for 736 participants, with data deletion and secure storage planned upon completion of analysis and defense.

D. Reliability and Validity of Instruments

To ensure the credibility of this research, the survey instrument employed for assessing workplace spirituality, employee commitment, and performance must demonstrate both reliability and validity, with focus on internal and face validity, ensuring consistent and accurate measurement across diverse contexts and conditions. Thus the reliable and the valid instruments used for the research are –

1. FMPW (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000) Scale for Workplace Spirituality

2. TCM Employee Commitment Survey (Meyer and Allen, 1991) for Affective Commitment
3. IWPQ (Linda Koopman, 2014) Scale for Employee Work Performance

E. Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics analyzed demographic characteristics of 736 respondents, with data manually transferred to IBM SPSS Statistics 28, assigning numerical values to variables such as type, gender, age, education, employment status, and managed employees. Frequency and percentage calculations were performed using the frequency command in SPSS, generating ascending tables. Preliminary data screening included verifying assumptions, assessing normality through histograms and tests, confirming linear relationships via scatter plots, detecting outliers with labeling rules, and evaluating homoscedasticity. Hypotheses were tested using direct mediation analysis by Baron and Kenny (1986), assessing mediating effects of affective commitment between workplace spirituality and employee performance. Statistical procedures involved Pearson's correlation for linear associations, linear regressions to explore explanatory power, multiple regressions to analyze mediation, and unstandardized coefficients with t-tests at $p < .05$ to assess significance.

Results

Research Question: Does employee affective

commitment has a positive mediating effect on relationship between workplace spirituality and employee work performance among service executives?

Mediation conditions: Baron and Kenny's (1986) fourth condition had to be satisfied in the first mediation analysis; accordingly, the employee affective commitment will have a positive mediation on relationship between workplace spirituality and employee work performance among service executives. The fourth condition included direct path c' (Baron & Kenny, 1986). However, to further answer this research question in this study, we need to examine how much workplace spirituality alone could explain the variance in employee performance. In addition to this, we need to investigate how variance in affective employee commitment could workplace spirituality cause, and how much variance in employee work performance could affective employee commitment explain (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Preliminary data screening: The preliminary data examination and explanations related to the assumptions in the regression analysis were discussed in connection with Research Question. Multiple regression was conducted to test whether the predictive value of employee performance for workplace spirituality was mediated by affective commitment. Workplace spirituality and affective commitment explained a significant proportion of the variance in employee performance scores, $R^2 = .339$, $F(2, 698) = 179$, $p <$

Table 1: Multiple Regression of NWPS on NEWP in the presence of NAEC

| Independent Variable | Dependent Variable | B | SE B | β | t | p |
|----------------------|--------------------|------|------|---------|--------|-------|
| NWPS | NEWP | .226 | .012 | .571 | 18.373 | <.001 |
| NAEC | NEWP | .187 | .016 | .472 | 11.695 | <.001 |
| NWPS | NEWP | .254 | .068 | .152 | 3.757 | <.001 |

$R = .582$, $R^2 = .339$, $Adj. R = .337$, $F(2, 698) = 179$, $p < .001$

.001. The results showed that workplace spirituality and affective commitment explained 34% of the variance in employee performance. Based on the findings from the overall regression analyses, the null hypothesis was rejected. Workplace spirituality significantly predicted employee performance, $B = .254$, $t(698) = 3.757$, $p < .001$, in the presence of affective employee commitment, which was statistically significant, $B = .187$, $t(698) = 11.695$, $p < .001$. The findings, therefore, reject the null hypothesis. Barron and Kenny's (1986) fourth condition were met, so partial mediation was supported (Table-1).

Conclusions

Based on the observations from the results, it is evident that employee affective commitment serves as a partial mediator in the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee work performance among service executives. Despite this mediation, workplace spirituality retained its status as a significant predictor of employee performance, indicating a direct influence on employee work performance beyond its indirect effect through affective commitment. This finding underscores the multifaceted nature of workplace spirituality and its intense impact on organizational dynamics.

The significance of these results cannot be overstated. Firstly, they emphasize the pivotal role of workplace spirituality in driving employee performance within organizational settings, particularly in the service sector. By nurturing a workplace culture that values spirituality and fosters a sense of purpose and connection among employees, organizations can effectively enhance performance outcomes among service executives.

Additionally, the findings highlight the importance of considering both individual and organizational factors in understanding the drivers of employee performance. While affective commitment plays a significant role in mediating the relationship between workplace spirituality and performance, the results suggest that workplace spirituality exerts a direct influence on performance outcomes, independent of affective commitment.

In applied terms, these insights offer valuable guidance for organizations seeking to optimize performance in their workforce. By investing in initiatives that promote workplace spirituality and cultivate a supportive and inclusive work environment, organizations can unlock the full potential of their employees and drive sustainable success in today's competitive business landscape. In summary, this study emphasizes the importance of embedding spiritual values within organizational culture to achieve outstanding performance among service executives.

Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research

Convenience sampling may limit the generalizability of findings due to potential biases associated with participant accessibility, while the cross-sectional survey design offers only a snapshot of data at a single point, hindering the establishment of causal relationships or temporal changes; future research employing diverse sampling methods and longitudinal designs could mitigate these limitations, offering a more comprehensive understanding of workplace spirituality, affective commitment, and performance relationships across different contexts and timeframes, with suggestions for alternative sampling methods like stratified or random sampling to enhance population representativeness, longitudinal designs to capture dynamics over time and explore causal pathways, and qualitative approaches like interviews or focus groups to delve into subjective experiences and perceptions, thus advancing comprehension of spirituality, commitment, and performance interplay in organizational settings.

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corresponding author.

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Declarations : Author(s) declare that all works are original and this manuscript has not been published in any other journal.

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