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Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Commitment Among Faculty Members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha

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ABSTRACT

The study broadly intended to examine the relationships between two variables, viz., workplace spirituality and organizational commitment that are critical to the success of an organization; and to find out gender differences in these two variables, particularly in the case of Faculty Members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha. Five specific objectives and corresponding null hypotheses are formulated to attain the purposes of the study. The descriptive research method, involving quantitative approaches, was employed for the study. The data are collected from a sample of 250 faculty members, including 151 male and 99 female faculty members working in Higher Education Institutions in the state of Odisha using the adapted version of the Workplace Spirituality Scale (WSC) by Petchsawang and Duchon (2009), and the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) by Mowday et al. (1979). Convenient and incidental sampling techniques are employed in the selection of the sample. Pearson's coefficient of correlation was employed to find out the correlation between the mean workplace spirituality scores and the mean organizational commitment scores in respect of male and female faculty members included in the sample, and t-test was employed to compare the mean workplace spirituality scores and the mean organizational commitment scores of male and female faculty members. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment in the case of faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha as a whole ($r=0.209$; $M_1=3.457$, $M_2=3.365$; $df = 248$; $p<0.01$); and separately in the case of both male faculty members ($r=0.258$; $M_1=3.462$, $M_2=3.369$; $df = 149$; $p<0.01$) as well as their female counterparts ($r=0.198$; $M_1=3.449$, $M_2=3.356$; $df = 98$; $p<0.05$). On the other hand, no significant differences between male and female faculty members were found in the case of both workplace spirituality ($t=0.926$; $M_1=3.463$, $M_2=3.450$; $df = 248$; $p>0.05$) as well as organizational

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commitment ($t=0.149$; $M1=3.366$, $M2=3.362$; $df = 248$; $p>0.05$). The findings of the study imply that necessary facilities and atmosphere need to be created in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha so as to motivate female faculty members to deliver goods and to attain gender inclusivity among faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha.

Keywords: workplace spirituality, organizational commitment, organizational goals, organizational values.

INTRODUCTION

An important trend in business, and other development as well as service sectors including education in the twenty-first century is a focus on employee spirituality in the workplace (Shellenbarger, 2000). Krebs (2001) suggested that the 20th century is an outer era, whereas the 21st century is an inner time. In the coming decade, technology will not dominate, and people will appreciate the significance of spirituality in human beings. Historically, spirituality has been rooted in religion, but, spirituality at the workplace today does not have a connection to any specific religious tradition; it rather is based on people's personal values and philosophy (Cavanagh, 1999; Mitroff and Denton, 1999). But some scholars defined "spirituality" from the view of religion and suggested that spirituality was a feeling related to "God" (McCormick, 1994; Hawly, 1993; Delbecq, 2000; Mattis, 2000; Reported in Chieh-Wen Sheng and Ming-Chia Chen, 2012). However, the feelings related to God were not the complete meaning of spirituality. For a conceptual analysis of the term spirituality, Emblen (1992) collected literature, including textbooks related to spirituality, from 1963-1989, and found that nine terms, viz., personal, life, life quality, principles, animator, being, relationship, transcendent, and God, appeared in the definition on spirituality. In another analysis of the concept, Martsolf and Mickley (1998) suggested four attributes for defining spirituality: meaning, value, connecting, and becoming, based on current definitions. The present study reorganizes the term spirituality as inner self-reflection throughout life experiences, which led to the realization of life essence, self-existence value, and relations between individuals and the universe (Reported in Chieh-Wen Sheng and Ming-Chia Chen, 2012). Although workplace spirituality is considered to be a personal and philosophical construct, most of the definitions admit that spirituality involves a sense of wholeness, connectedness at work, and deeper values (Gibbons, 2000). Workplace spirituality involves the effort to find one's ultimate purpose in life, to develop a strong connection to coworkers and other people associated with work, and to have consistency between one's fundamental beliefs and the values of the organization (Mitroff and Denton, 1999). Accordingly, workplace spirituality can be defined as ". . . the recognition that employees have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community" (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000). Moreover, workplace spirituality must take place within the context of appropriate organizational goals. Workplace spirituality and organizational commitment are related to each other in that both variables involve how individuals see their relationship with their organization and organizational goals. Employees who are satisfied with their organizational role see themselves as important, meaningful, respected, and worthwhile within their organization. Organizational commitment has been defined as a condition in which an individual feels a bond with their organization and wishes to maintain membership in the organization (Mowday *et al.*, 1979). Meyer and Allen (1997) have hypothesized three components of organizational commitment, viz., continuance, normative, and affective.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the last one and a half decades, there has been a growing body of literature on spirituality in the workplace, but most of the research has focused on the personal spiritual experiences of employees at the workplace (Konz and Ryan, 1999) rather than on the impact of workplace spirituality on individual work attitudes, organizational commitment, satisfaction with the organization, and behaviors. King and Nicol (1999), therefore, are of the opinion that it is important to conduct research that helps to understand the impact of workplace spirituality on employee attitudes and commitment, when management supports individuals' needs in the workplace. It can also be seen from the review of research in this area that the studies often assume that spirituality at work always has a positive impact

(Gibbons, 2000), rather than empirically testing these relationships. Therefore, in conducting research in this area, it is essential to clearly define and measure the concept of workplace spirituality. It has been recognized that workplace spirituality is a complex and multi-faceted concept. Recently, Ashmos and Duchon (2000) have identified seven dimensions of workplace spirituality, e.g., meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment with the organization's values, through a survey and factor analysis. Workplace spirituality has been found to be positively related to employee work attitudes in the study conducted by Neck and Milliman (1994).

Organizational commitment has been defined as a condition in which an individual feels a union with their organization and wishes to be a part of the organization (Mowday *et al.*, 1979). Meyer and Allen (1997) have identified three components of organizational commitment, viz., continuance, normative, and effective. The variables, namely organization commitment, reduced turnover, and intention to quit the organization, are related to each other in that they involve how individuals perceive their relationship to their organization. Since the spiritual concept of meaningful work is seen as a personal concept, it can be expected to positively impact employee attitudes and commitment toward their organization (Hackman and Oldham, 1976). Several studies have revealed that a sense of community is linked to employee commitment, satisfaction with the organization, and turnover (e.g. Trott, 1996; Milliman *et al.*, 1999; Brown, 1992). The association of employees with organizational values is considered to be related to organizational commitment. Researchers have found that organizations that are responsive to employees' contributions and values will have employees who will help the company to succeed and are more committed to helping the organization to succeed (Hawley, 1993; Catlett and Hadden, 1998).

A review of research on organizational commitment and workplace spirituality reveals that research in these areas, as well as their dimensions, are not only recent but also inadequate in terms of number. Moreover, most of the studies in these areas have been conducted, *inter alia*, in the health, business, and industry sectors. The review did not reveal any study in the area of education. The present study, therefore, is an attempt to fill this research gap.

Objectives of the Study

- 1) To study the experience of workplace spirituality among faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha.
- 2) To study the organizational commitment among faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha.
- 3) To study the relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment in cases of male and female faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha.
- 4) To study the gender difference in workplace spirituality among faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha.
- 5) To study the gender difference in organizational commitment among faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha.

Hypotheses

The review of research in the areas of workplace spirituality and organizational commitment did not reveal any study on the relationship between these two variables, nor gender differences in these two areas, particularly in the education sector. Hence, on the basis of the review of research and observations of commitments, behavior, attitude towards work, and satisfaction with the organization among male and female workers, the following null hypotheses are formulated:

H0.1: There is no significant relationship between the mean workplace spirituality and organizational commitment scores of faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha.

H0.2: There is no significant relationship between the mean workplace spirituality and organizational commitment scores of male faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha.

H0.3: There is no significant relationship between the mean workplace spirituality and organizational commitment scores of female faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha.

H0.4: The mean workplace spirituality score of male faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha does not differ significantly from that of their female counterparts.

H0.5: The mean organizational commitment score of male faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha does not differ significantly from that of their female counterparts.

Operational Meaning of Key Terms

- **Workplace Spirituality:** The phrase workplace spirituality is not associated with religion, God, or higher powers. It involves the effort to find one's ultimate purpose in life, to develop a strong connection to coworkers and other people associated with work, and to have consistency (or alignment) between one's core beliefs and the values of their organization (Mitroff and Denton, 1999). In other words, it refers to the extent to which an individual is motivated to find meaning and purpose in his or her existence, connected to her/his coworkers, and appreciates the philosophy and values of her/his organization.
- **Organizational Commitment:** Organizational commitment is "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization" (Mowday, Steers, and Porter, 1979).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The descriptive research method, involving quantitative approaches, was employed for the study. The research activities and processes, including population and sample, tools and techniques used in the collection of data, the procedure employed in carrying out the study, and techniques of data analysis, are presented as follows:

Population and Sample: The Population for the study consisted of all the faculty members working in Higher Education Institutions in the state of Odisha. The sample for the study consisted of 250 teachers, including 151 male and 99 female teachers working in Higher Education Institutions in the state of Odisha. Convenient and incidental sampling techniques are employed in the selection of the sample.

Tools: The following tools were used for the collection of data from the sample of teachers:

- i. Adapted versions of the Workplace Spirituality Scale (WSC) by Petchsawang and Duchon (2009).
- ii. Adapted versions of the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) by Mowday et al. (1979).

A brief description of the tools used for the collection of data is presented below:

- **Workplace Spirituality Scale (WSS):** The adapted version of the scale, originally developed by Petchsawang and Duchon (2009), consists of a 22-items. It is a 5-point Likert-type scale (from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree") consisting of four dimensions of workplace spirituality, viz., Compassion, Mindfulness, Meaningful work, and Transcendence.
- **Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ):** The adapted version of the scale is originally developed by Mowday, Steers and Porter (Mowday *et al.*, 1979). This 15-item scale uses a 5-point Likert type response format (from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree"), with 3 factors, viz., willingness to exert effort, desire to maintain membership in the organization, and acceptance of organizational values, that describes this commitment:

Procedure of the Study: The data from the Higher Education Institutions of Odisha, who constitute the key informants for the study, are collected through personal contacts, e-mails, and visits to Higher Education Institutions. Tabulation of data was done separately for each tool and for each category of respondents, viz., male and female faculty members.

Techniques of Data Analysis: The data collected through the adapted versions of structured tools, namely the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) by Mowday et al. (1979); and the Workplace Spirituality Scale (WSC) by Petchsawang and Duchon (2009) are analyzed with the help of inferential statistics such as Pearson's coefficient of correlation t-test. Pearson's coefficient of correlation was employed to find out the correlation between the mean workplace spirituality scores and the mean organizational commitment scores in respect of male and female faculty members included in the sample, and t-test was employed to compare the mean workplace spirituality scores and the mean organizational commitment scores of male and female faculty members. The data are analyzed using SPSS (version 20).

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

This section is devoted to the analysis of data gathered from the sample of 250 teachers, including 151 male and 99 female teachers with the help of the adapted versions of the Workplace Spirituality Scale (WSC) by Petchsawang and Duchon (2009); and Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) by Mowday *et al.* (1979). The analysis of results is presented under the sub-sections 5.1, and 5.2 in tabular form followed by analysis as follows:

Relationship between Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Commitment

This section is devoted to the analysis and interpretation of results pertaining to objective No. 3 which reads: To study the relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment in cases of faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha. On the basis of the results presented in Tables 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3, the null hypotheses H0.1, H0.2, and H0.3, have been tested:

Relationship between Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Commitment in the Case of Faculty Members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha.

H0.1: There is no significant relationship between the mean workplace spirituality and organizational commitment scores of faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha.

Table 5.1: Summary of Coefficient of Correlation between Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Commitment Among Faculty Members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	SE	r
Workplace Spirituality	250	3.457	0.110	0.007	0.209**
Organizational Commitment	250	3.365	0.228	0.005	

Note: ** Significant at $\alpha=0.01$; $df = 248$; $p<0.01$

The results of Table 5.1 depict that the coefficient of correlation between the mean Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Commitment scores of both male and female faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha is highly significant in the positive direction ($r=0.209$; $M1=3.457$, $M2=3.365$; $df = 248$; $p<0.01$). These results indicate a very high positive relationship between the variables, meaning thereby that the faculty members, who are well-connected with their colleagues and do appreciate the values of their organizations, are also committed to the attainment of the goals of their institutions. On the basis of these results, the null hypothesis (H0.1): There is no significant relationship between the mean workplace spirituality and organizational commitment scores of faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha, is rejected.

Relationship between Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Commitment in the Case of Male Faculty Members

H0.2: There is no significant relationship between the mean workplace spirituality and organizational commitment scores of male faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha.

Table 5.2: Summary of Coefficient of Correlation between Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Commitment in the Case of Male Faculty Members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha

Variable	N	Mean	SD	SE	r
Workplace Spirituality	151	3.462	0.114	0.009	0.258**
Organizational Commitment	151	3.369	0.233	0.019	

Note: ** Significant at $\alpha=0.01$; $df = 149$; $p<0.01$

The results of Table 5.2 depict that the coefficient of correlation between the mean workplace spirituality and organizational commitment scores of male faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha is significant in the positive direction ($r=0.258$; $M1=3.462$, $M2=3.369$; $df = 149$; $p<0.01$). These results indicate a very high relationship between the variables, meaning thereby that the male faculty members, who are well-connected with their colleagues and do appreciate the values of their organizations, are also committed to the attainment of the goals of their institutions. On the basis of these results, the null hypothesis (H0.2): There is no significant relationship between the mean workplace spirituality and organizational commitment scores of male faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha, is rejected.

Relationship between Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Commitment in the Case of Female Faculty Members

H0.3: There is no significant relationship between the mean workplace spirituality and organizational commitment scores of female faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha.

Table 5.3: Summary of Coefficient of Correlation between Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Commitment in the Case of Female Faculty Members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	SE	r
Workplace Spirituality	99	3.449	0.103	0.110	0.198*
Organizational Commitment	99	3.356	0.228	0.023	

Note: * Significant at $\alpha=0.05$; $df = 98$; $p<0.05$

The results of Table 5.3 depict that the coefficient of correlation between the mean workplace spirituality and organizational commitment scores of female faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha is significant in the positive direction ($r=0.198$; $M1=3.449$, $M2=3.356$; $df = 98$; $p<0.05$). These results indicate a positive significant relationship between the variables, meaning thereby that the female faculty members, who are well-connected with their colleagues and do appreciate the values of their organizations, are also committed to the attainment of the goals of their institutions. On the basis of these results, the null hypothesis (H0.3): There is no significant relationship between the mean workplace spirituality and organizational commitment scores of female faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha, is rejected.

Gender Difference in Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Commitment in the Case of Faculty Members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha

This section is devoted to the analysis and interpretation of results pertaining to objectives No. 4 and 5 of the study that read:

Objective No. 4: To study the gender difference in workplace spirituality among faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha.

Objective No. 5: To study the gender difference in organizational commitment among faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha.

On the basis of the results presented in Tables 5.4, and 5.5, the null hypotheses H0.4, and H0.5, have been tested:

Gender Difference in Workplace Spirituality in the Case of Faculty Members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha

H0.4: The mean workplace spirituality score of male faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha does not differ significantly from that of their female counterparts.

Table 5.4: Summary of t-test: Significance of Difference between Mean Workplace Spirituality Scores of Male and Female Faculty Members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha

Group	N	Mean	SD	SED	t
Male Faculty Members	151	3.463	0.114	0.015	0.926
Female Faculty Members	99	3.450	0.103	0.014	
Total	250	3.456	0.110		

Note: t-value is not significant at $\alpha=0.05$; $p>0.05$; $df = 248$

The results of Table 5.4 depict that the male and female faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha do not differ significantly in respect of their workplace spirituality ($t=0.926$; $M1=3.463$, $M2=3.450$; $df = 248$; $p>0.05$). However, the slightly higher mean score of male faculty members as compared to their female counterparts indicates that the male faculty members are superior to their female counterparts in being connected to their colleagues and appreciating the values of their institutions. On the basis of these results, the null hypothesis (H0.4): The mean workplace spirituality score of male faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha does not differ significantly from that of their female counterparts, is retained.

Gender Difference in Organizational Commitment in the Case of Faculty Members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha

H0.5: The mean organizational commitment score of male faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha does not differ significantly from that of their female counterparts.

Table 5.5 : Summary of t-test: Significance of Difference between Mean Organizational Commitment Scores of Male and Female Faculty Members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha

Group	N	Mean	SD	SED	t
Male Faculty Members	151	3.366	0.227	0.029	0.149
Female Faculty Members	99	3.362	0.229	0.030	
Total	250	3.364	0.227		

Note: t-value is not significant at $\alpha=0.05$; $p>0.05$; $df = 248$

The results of Table 5.5 depict that the male and female faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha do not differ significantly in respect of their organizational commitment ($t=0.149$; $M1=3.366$, $M2=3.362$; $df = 248$; $p>0.05$). However, the slightly higher mean score of male faculty members as compared to their female counterparts indicates that male faculty members are more committed to their organizational goals than female faculty members. On the basis of these results, the null hypothesis (H0.5): The mean organizational commitment score of male faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha does not differ significantly from that of their female counterparts, is retained.

FINDINGS

- 1) There is a very high significant positive relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment in the case of faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha, meaning thereby that the faculty members, who are well-connected with their colleagues and do appreciate the values of their organizations, are also committed to the attainment of the goals of their institutions. The coefficient of correlation between the mean workplace spirituality and organizational commitment scores of faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha is highly significant in the positive direction ($r=0.209$; $M1=3.457$, $M2=3.365$; $df = 248$; $p<0.01$).
- 2) There is a very high positive relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment in the case of male faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha, meaning that the male faculty members, who are well-connected with their colleagues and appreciate the values of their organizations, are also committed to the attainment of the goals of their institutions. The coefficient of correlation between the mean workplace spirituality and organizational commitment scores of male faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha is highly significant in the positive direction ($r=0.258$; $M1=3.462$, $M2=3.369$; $df = 149$; $p<0.01$).
- 3) There is a positive relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment in the case of female faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha, meaning that the female faculty members, who are well-connected with their colleagues and appreciate the values of their organizations, are also committed to the attainment of the goals of their institutions. The coefficient of correlation between the mean workplace spirituality and organizational commitment scores of female faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha is significant in the positive direction ($r=0.198$; $M1=3.449$, $M2=3.356$; $df = 98$; $p<0.05$).
- 4) There is no significant difference between male and female faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha with regard to their workplace spirituality. The mean workplace spirituality score of male faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha does not differ significantly from that of their female counterparts ($t=0.926$; $M1=3.463$, $M2=3.450$; $df = 248$; $p>0.05$). However, the slightly higher mean score of male faculty members as compared to their female counterparts indicates that the male faculty members are superior to their female counterparts in being connected to their colleagues and appreciating the values of their institutions.
- 5) There is no significant difference between male and female faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha with regard to their organizational commitment. The mean organizational commitment score of male faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha does not differ significantly from that of their female counterparts ($t=0.149$; $M1=3.366$, $M2=3.362$; $df = 248$; $p>0.05$). However, the slightly higher mean score of male faculty members as compared to their female counterparts indicates that male faculty members are more committed to their organizational goals than female faculty members.

DISCUSSION AND EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The outcomes of the study have immense implications for the institute heads, policymakers, and curriculum designers in the higher education sector of Odisha to bring improvement in the quality of education in general and in the teaching-learning and student evaluation process in particular. Whereas the study explored a significant positive relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment in the case of faculty members in Higher Education Institutions of Odisha as a whole, and separately in the case of both male faculty members, but no significant difference between male and female faculty members was found with regard to their workplace spirituality as well as organizational commitment. However, the higher workplace spirituality mean score of male

faculty members as compared to their female counterparts indicates that the male faculty members are superior to their female counterparts in being connected to their colleagues and appreciating the values of their institutions. Moreover, the higher organizational commitment mean score of male faculty members as compared to their female counterparts indicates that male faculty members are more committed to their organizational goals than female faculty members. These results deserve the attention of the policymakers, educational administrators, heads of institutions, and curriculum designers in the higher education sector of Odisha to create the necessary facilities and atmosphere in Higher Education Institutions so as to motivate the female faculty members to deliver goods and to attain gender inclusivity among faculty members.

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