

SPIRITUALITY AND EMPLOYEES' WORK ATTITUDE IN SELECTED WORKPLACES IN OYO AND LAGOS STATES, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The spiritual paradigm that recognizes that people work not only with their hands, but also with their hearts or spirit, led to investigating whether spirituality have anything to do with employees work attitude in the workplace. The descriptive survey design of the ex-post-facto type was used for the study. The participants consist of respondents from the Ministry of Social Welfare and Women Development in the Civil Service of Oyo and Lagos States. The stratified sampling technique was used to put the ministry workers into junior, middle and management levels. Fifty respondents were randomly selected from each level to give a total of 150 from each state. A questionnaire tagged "Workplace Spirituality and Employees Work Attitude Questionnaire- WESEWAQ" with five sub-sections was used for data collection. Of the three hundred questionnaires administered, 252 were returned and used for analysis. Findings from the study showed that organization commitment, job involvement and intrinsic work satisfaction correlated significantly with meaningful work, sense of community and alignment of workplace values, while intention to quit does not correlate with meaningful work; sense of community correlated positively with the four aspects of worker's attitude in the workplace. Furthermore, alignment of workplace values, an aspect of workplace spirituality, correlated positively with the four aspects of worker's attitude in the workplace. It was recommended that industrial social workers should reinforce spirituality values of both management and employees by aligning management's perception, employees' perception to organizational perception of spirituality with the intent of encouraging positive performance and good work attitude from the employees.

Keywords: Spirituality, Employees, Work Attitude, Workplace, Performance

Introduction

The change in the workplace study from mechanistic paradigm that value rationality and science to a spiritual paradigm that values consciousness and understanding has made the emphasis in the workplace issues to be on teamwork, trust, creativity and openness. This spiritual paradigm recognizes that people work not only with their hands, but also with their hearts or spirit (Biberman & Whitty, 1997; Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). When people work with a committed spirit it is then they can find meaning and purpose, and a form of fulfilment thereby making a workplace a platform for expression of their whole being. The expression of human experience at its fullest, especially the spiritual level, may reduce stress, conflict, absenteeism and enhancement of work performance (Krahnke, Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003) employee well-being and quality of work life (Karakas, 2010).

Although no widely accepted definition of workplace spirituality exists (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004) but it is an emerging consensus that spirituality is a multifaceted construct that is about finding a connection to something meaningful that transcends our ordinary lives (Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Dehler & Welsh, 2003; Tepper, 2003; George, Sorenson & Bums, 2004). The idea that when people are fully engaged in their work with a sense of purpose, they can fully express their complete selves, including their spiritual selves. Therefore, the workplace is seen as an arena where spirituality can be found and expressed (Ashmon & Duchon, 2000; Cacioppe, 2000; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003; Milliman, Czaplewski & Ferguson, 2003; George et al. 2004).

Workplace spirituality is meaningful at both the individual and the organizational levels of analysis (Kolodinsky, Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2008; Pawar, 2008). At the individual level, spirituality is seen as an affective and cognitive experience where an employee feels and believes in a spiritual connection to work and the workplace. At the organizational level, spirituality is seen as a reflection of spiritual values that is part of the organization's culture and is thus used to inform behaviour, decision-making and resource allocation (Kolodinsky et al., 2008). Pawar (2009) suggested that workplace spirituality can be encouraged at both individual and organizational levels. At the

individual level people might participate in spiritual development programmes (e.g. meditation), while at the organizational level, spiritual values can be used to modify organizational planning and strategy making, human resource management (hiring, training, development, and evaluation) and organizational culture that provides a context for daily life.

Of interest in this study is the Civil Service in Nigeria which is basically non-profit in principle with the intent of providing social services to the citizenry especially in the form of providing employment. The non-profit nature makes employees receive salaries without serious recourse to input/output measurement. It is against this background that the roles of industrial social worker in these organisations become imperative with the intent of making employees utilise their skills/abilities maximally whether they are quantitatively or qualitatively accessed for payment. This is the aspect of spirituality in them.

From the discussion above, there is the need to understand the role of Industrial social worker in the workplace. Industrial social worker practices specialization of programmes and interventions that are targeted specifically to the population of the workplace. Therefore, industrial social work is designed to remedy gaps in human and social needs of people in the workplace who are seen as a functional community, including employees, job seekers, labour union members, and retirees. Industrial social worker must be familiar with fundamentals of social policy (such as employment, unemployment, and marginal or underemployment); the cultural value of "work" within ideological frameworks and human development; the structure of work-based social service programs; the significance of substance abuse, mental illness, gender, race, national origin, sexual orientation, and ability as workplace variables. All these point to the fact as to why the understanding of the place of spirituality in the lives of the organisation and the employees.

Transformation can begin in the workplace, be it profit or non-profit oriented, when organizations open themselves to the cultivation of their own employees' spirituality (Petchsawanga & Duchon, 2012). This means addressing the whole human being of employees in terms of their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs (Dehler & Welsh, 2003). It is established that by addressing the spiritual side of

human experience, organizations will help reduce stress, enhance creativity and improve problem solving (Tischler, Bibermen & Mckeage, 2002); improve work performance (Duchon & Plowmern, 2005); greater honesty, trust and job commitment (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002).

Dimensions of Workplace Spirituality: According to researchers, there are different dimensions of workplace spirituality, namely: meaningful work, sense of community, alignment with work values, transcendence, and compassion. Milliman et al., (2003) stated that three of these dimensions are very relevant to workplace because earlier studies have shown the relevance of these dimensions to workplace spirituality (Hawley, 1993; Milliman et al., 1999; Mitroff & Denton 1999) and show that they are representative of employees' involvement in spirituality in the workplace (Neal & Bennett, 2000). Furthermore, the three core dimensions of workplace spirituality that reflect the individual, group and organisation itself involvement in the development of workplace culture are meaningful work (individual level), sense of community (group level) and alignment with the organisation's values and mission (organisation level) (Milliman et al., 2003). Therefore, three components of workplace spirituality (meaningful work, sense of community and alignment with organizational values) will be examined in this study.

(a) Meaningful Work: Throwing a deep sense of meaning and purpose in one's work as applicable to workplace spirituality denote how employees interact with their day-to-day work at the individual level (Milliman, Czaplewski & Ferguson, 2003). According to Ashmos and Duchon, 2000, the expression of spirituality at work is based on the assumptions that every employee has his/her own inner motivations and truths and desires to be involved in activities that give greater meaning to his/her life and the lives of others. Spirituality view about purpose in work is that work is not just meant to be interesting or challenging, but that it is about searching for deeper meaning and purpose, living one's dream, expressing one's inner life needs by seeking meaningful work, and contributing to others (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Neal, 1998).

(b) Sense of Community: Sense of community in workplace spirituality is having a deep connection to, or relationship with others (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). This dimension of workplace spirituality occurs at the

group level of human behaviour and concerns interactions between employees and their co-workers (Milliman et. al., 2003). Sense of community in workplace spirituality involves the mental, emotional and spiritual connections among employees in teams or groups in organizations (Neal & Bennet, 2000). The implication is that sense of community in the workplace spirituality occurs at the group level of human behaviour and the interaction between employees and their co-workers. Sense of community at work is based on the belief that employees see the inter-connectedness among themselves coupled with relationship between one's inner self and the inner self of co-employees (Maynard, 1992; Miller, 1992; Ajala, 2013). Therefore, the principle of sense of community in workplace spirituality involves a deeper sense of connection among employees including support, freedom of expression and genuine caring (Milliman et al, 2003). Ashmos and Duchon (2000) see sense of community as a component of dimension of workplace spirituality that is deeply connected to employees' relationship with others.

(c) Alignment with Organizational Values: This is when individual employees experience a strong sense of alignment between their personal values and their organization's mission and purpose. It is the interaction of employees' personal values with the larger organizational purpose (Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Alignment with the organization's value is related to the assumption that an individual's purpose is larger than one's self and should make a contribution to others or society (Milliman et al., 2003). When individual employees believe that managers and themselves within the organization have appropriate values, strong conscience, and are concerned about the welfare of its employees and community, there exists an alignment (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000).

The concept that employees desire to work in an organization whose goal is not just to be a good corporate citizen, but an organization that seeks to have a high sense of ethics or integrity and make a larger contribution to the welfare of employees, customers and society is base on alignment with organizational values (Milliman et al., 2003). Therefore, employees should work for an organization if he or she shares to a great degree the same institutional values (Malphurs, 1996).

Organizations Commitment/Intent to Quit/Intrinsic Work Satisfaction /Job Involvement

Organisation commitment reflects the extent to which an individual identifies with an organisation and is committed to its goal (Ajala, 2012). Organisational commitment is an important work attitude because committed individuals are expected to display a willingness to work harder to achieve organizational goals and a greater desire to stay employed at an organisation (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2011). Organisational commitment has been found to have influenced workers attitude like personnel stability, organisational citizenship, job satisfaction, lower rate of absenteeism (Ugbaro & Obeng, 2001; Meyer, Paunonen, Gallatly, Goffin & Jackson, 1989)

There is an interplay of relationship between organisational commitment, job security (intent to quit) and job satisfaction. Rosenblatt and Ayalla (1996) found that job insecurity adversely affected organisational commitment and intention to quit. Those that have job satisfaction have high organisational commitment (Eby, Freeman, Rush & Lance 1999; Igbaria & Greenhouse, 1992; Ajala 2007; 2012).

Intension to quit concerns whether an individual is considering leaving their current organisation and working for alternative employment elsewhere so organisational commitment is strongly related to reduce turnover (Milliman et al., 2003).

Intrinsic job satisfaction and job involvement are attitudinal variables that are related to how an employee perceives their work experience in their current job and organisation (Milliman et al., 2003). Intrinsic job satisfaction involves employee's attitudinal perception of work that are related to achievement, responsibility, advancement and growth (Herzberg et al., 1959); while job involvement is the degree to which employee identifies with and actively participates in his/her job and considers his/her performance to be important to their self esteem (Blau, 1986).

From the above discussion, the three levels of workplace spirituality (meaningful work, sense of community and alignment with organizational values) will be used to research into workers' attitude (organizational commitment, intention to quit, intrinsic work satisfaction, and job involvement) in the workplace (Civil Service of Oyo and Lagos State, Nigeria), by raising the following hypotheses.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant correlation between meaningful work and organizational commitment, intention to quit, intrinsic work satisfaction, and job involvement.
2. There is no significant correlation between sense of community and organization commitment, intention to quit, intrinsic work satisfaction and job involvement.
3. There is no significant correlation between organizational alignment of values and organization commitment, intention to quit, intrinsic work satisfaction and job involvement.
4. There is no significant correlation between spirituality (meaningful work, sense of community and alignment with organizational values) and workers attitude in the workplace (organizational commitment, intention to quit, intrinsic work satisfaction, and job involvement).

Methodology

Research Design: The descriptive survey research design of the ex-post-facto type was used for the study.

Participants: The participants consist of respondents from the Ministry of Social Welfare and Women Development in the Civil Service of Oyo and Lagos States. This Ministry is chosen because Social Workers are part of the staff and it is also a people-centered, with helping philosophy; establishment. The stratified sampling was used to put the Ministry workers into junior, middle and management levels. Fifty respondents with minimum of three years working experience were randomly selected from each level to give a total of 150 respondents from each state. Of the three hundred questionnaire administered, 252 were returned (84%) and found useable for analysis. Demographic characteristics showed that 76 were junior staff, 94 were middle level while 84 were management level. Of these respondents, 103 are male while 149 were female. The ages of the respondents ranged between 21 years and 52 years with a mean age of 28.5 years. 175 respondents (69.4%) had tertiary education qualifications, 65(25.8%) had secondary certificates and only 12(4.8%) had primary education. The least qualification of the respondents was the primary school certificate and

the highest was first degree. Meaning that, all the respondents are literate and could understand the questionnaire properly.

Instrumentation

A questionnaire tagged "Workplace Spirituality and Employees Work Attitudes Questionnaire - WSEWAQ" with five sub-divisions was used for the study. The scales were designed on a modified four point rating scale of Strongly Agreed (4), Agreed (3), Disagreed (2) and Strongly Disagreed (1).

Sub-section A: This section measures workplace spirituality. The three main components of spirituality (meaningful work, sense of community and alignment with organizational values) had four items each to make a total of 12 items to measure workplace spirituality. The items were adapted from Ashmos and Duchon (2000) spirituality scale. The adapted scale yielded coefficient alpha of 0.92.

Sub-section B: Organization Commitment Scale: This is an adopted six items scale from Milliman, Czaplewski and Ferguson (2003) that was derived from Mowday, et al (1979) organization commitment scale. The re-validated scale by the researcher yielded coefficient alpha 0.91.

Sub-section C: Intention to quit: This is an adopted three items from Milliman, Czaplewski and Ferguson (2003) intention to quit scale. The re-validated scale had coefficient alpha of 0.85.

Sub-section D: Intrinsic Work Satisfaction: This is an adopted four items questionnaire from Milliman et al (2003) intrinsic work satisfaction scale. Re-validated scale had coefficient alpha 0.90.

Sub-section E: Job Involvement Scale: A four-item scale adopted from Milliman et al (2003) that was isolated from Kanungo (1982) scale. The adapted scale had coefficient alpha of 0.85.

Data Analysis: A total of 252 questionnaires were used for data analysis. Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis at 0.05 level of significance was used to analyze the data.

Findings and Discussion

H₀₁: There is no significant correlation between meaningful work and organizational commitment, intention to quit, intrinsic work satisfaction, and job involvement.

Table1: showing the correlation between meaningful work and organizational commitment, intention to quit, intrinsic work satisfaction, and job involvement.

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	N	R	Remark
Meaningful work	12.7302	2.2080	252		
Organization commitment	17.6548	3.6853	252	.643	Sig
Intention to quit	6.5992	2.5220	252	-.011	NS
Intrinsic work satisfaction	11.5873	3.1843	252	.499	Sig
Job involvement	12.3413	2.7734	252	.580	Sig

Using the mean value and the r-values of the variables in table 1 above, meaningful work correlated with organization commitment ($X = 17.6548$; $r = .643$); job involvement ($X = 12.3413$; $r = .580$); intrinsic work satisfaction ($X = 11.5873$; $r = .499$) and intention to quit ($X = 6.5992$; $r = -.011$) in the descending order.

The implication is that organization commitment, job involvement and intrinsic work satisfaction corrected significantly with meaningful work, while intention to quit does not correlate spirituality with meaningful work. The negative direction of relationship was established between meaningful work and intention to quit. This finding showed that the stated hypothesis is partially and non-significantly supported, based on the negative and non-significant relationship between meaningful work and intention to quit, whereas majorly, the hypothesis is rejected because organization commitment, intrinsic work satisfaction and job involvement correlated significantly with meaningful work (spirituality at work).

The finding is in line with the finding of Milliman et. al., (2003) that meaningful work is significantly related to organization commitment, intrinsic work satisfaction, and job involvement with the exception being intention to quit. Similarly, Jacqus (1996; 1998) found that meaningful work influences employees' attitude at work.

H₀₂: There is no significant correlation between sense of community and organization commitment, intention to quit, intrinsic work satisfaction and job involvement.

Table2: showing the correlation between sense of community and organization commitment, intention to quit, intrinsic work satisfaction and job involvement.

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	N	R	Remark
Sense of community	12.2381	2.1790	252		
Organization commitment	17.6548	3.6853	252	.551	Sig
Intention to quit	6.5992	2.5220	252	.189	Sig
Intrinsic work satisfaction	11.5873	3.1843	252	.393	Sig
Job involvement	12.3413	2.7734	252	.492	Sig

The table 2 above showed that organization commitment ($X = \overline{17.6548}$; $r = .551$), job involvement ($X = 12.3413$; $r = .492$), intrinsic work satisfaction ($X = 11.5873$; $r = .393$) and intention to quit ($X = 6.5992$; $r = .189$) correlated significantly with sense of community.

This means that the aspect of spirituality (sense of community) correlated positively with the four aspect of worker's attitude in the workplace. Sense of community is linked to employee commitment and turnover (intension to quit). This is in line with the view of Milliman et al. 2003 and Trott, 1996 that spiritual well being, which includes a sense of community, is positively related to cooperation and negatively related to turnover and absenteeism. Similarly, Brown (1992) found that a sense of community leads to greater employee satisfaction with organization. Organisations that offer a sense of connectedness (sense of community) as germane sense of purpose encourages employees that are more creative and innovative in their work (Hawley, 1993; Harman, 1992).

H₀₃: There is no significant correlation between organizational alignment of values and organization commitment, intention to quit, intrinsic work satisfaction and job involvement.

Table3: showing correlation between organizational alignment of values and organization commitment, intention to quit, intrinsic work satisfaction and job involvement.

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	N	R	Remark
Alignment of values	10.5000	3.1566	252		
Organization commitment	17.6548	3.6853	252	.644	Sig
Intention to quit	6.5992	2.5220	252	.130	Sig
Intrinsic work satisfaction	11.5873	3.1843	252	.560	Sig
Job involvement	12.3413	2.7734	252	.561	Sig

Table 3 above showed that organization commitment ($\bar{X} = 17.6545$; $r = .644$), job involvement ($\bar{X} = 12.3413$; $r = .561$), intrinsic work satisfaction ($\bar{X} = 11.5873$; $r = .560$) and intention to quit ($\bar{X} = 6.5992$; $r = .130$) correlated with organizational alignment of values.

This means that the aspect of spirituality (alignment of workplace values) correlated positively with the four aspect of worker's attitude in the workplace. This finding is in line with the finding of Milliman et al. (2003) that organisations that have environment where there is identification with and equally responsive to employees' input and sense of values, employees will be more adaptable and help the company succeed (Catlette & Hadden 1998); have a greater sense of *esprit de corps* (Channon, 1992); strongly committed to organizational success (Hawley, 1993; Catlette & Hadden, 1998).

H₀₄: There is no significant correlation between spirituality and workers attitude in the workplace.

Table 4: showing the correlation between spirituality and workers attitude in the workplace.

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	N	R	Remark
Spirituality	35.4683	6.2334	252		
Organization commitment	17.6548	3.6853	252	.746	Sig

Intention to quit	6.5992	2.5220	252	.128	Sig
Intrinsic work satisfaction	11.5873	3.1843	252	.597	Sig
Job involvement	12.3413	2.7734	252	.661	Sig

Table 4 above showed spirituality at the workplace correlated significantly with workers attitude in the work place in the following descending order: organizational commitment ($X = 17.6545$; $r = .746$), job involvement ($X = 12.3413$; $r = .661$), intrinsic work satisfaction ($X = 11.5873$; $r = .597$) and intention to quit ($X = 6.5992$; $r = .128$).

This means that all the three aspects of spirituality (meaningful work, sense of community and alignment of values) taken together correlated positively with the four aspect of worker's attitude (organization commitment, intention to quit, intrinsic work satisfaction and job involvement) in the workplace. Meaning that spirituality as a concept has direct impact on workers' attitude in the workplace. This is in line with the finding of Ashmos and Duchon (2003), that there is relationship between the dimensions of workplace spirituality and employees attitude at the workplace.

Implications for industrial social workers

The study provides the following implications for the practice of social work at the industrial sector.

1. Since meaningful work, a component of spirituality, provides employees' opportunity to realise their full potentials as human beings, therefore, industrial social workers should sensitise management not to focus only on meaningful job characteristics sense but must also address employees need at deeper level so as to effect positive change in employees work attitude. By so doing, the positive implication on employees' attitude will contribute to the sustenance of both the organisation and the employees.
2. Furthermore, industrial social workers should enlighten employers to pay attention to continuous learning and development, full appreciation of employees' contribution, develop flexibility and autonomy of job designs, and promotion of creativity and initiative so as to make meaning out of

meaningful work, which will eventually positively impact on employees' attitude.

3. Though organisational factors such as culture, strategy and workplace policies can enhance workplace spirituality, industrial social worker should reinforce spirituality values of both management and employees by aligning management's perception, employees' perception to organisational perception of spirituality. This will encourage positive performance and good work attitude from the employees.

Conclusion

In summary, it can be concluded that proper alignment of organisational interventions and employees awareness of workplace spirituality will help in maintaining spirituality intervention training to sustain positive workers attitude. Therefore, employer should be encouraged and educated to design suitable organisational culture that allows employees workplace spirituality experience of sense of meaning, sense of community, alignment of values so as to guarantee organisational commitment, job involvement, job satisfaction on reduction in order to reduce the intent to quit the organisation. Also, the role of spirituality at work has been shown to have effect on employees work attitude at the workplace, hence, it is important for employers and employees to understand the role of spirituality so as to apply it at individual, groups and organisational level. There is no doubt therefore that when this is done, team work will be greatly enhanced, it will also improve employment retention and attendance, and promote loyalty towards organisations and higher workers' happiness.

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