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INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED RESEARCH (IJAR)

Article DOI:10.21474/IJAR01/16419
DOI URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/16419>



RESEARCH ARTICLE

CREATING SPIRITUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE TO INCREASE WORK PERFORMANCE OF MODERN ORGANIZATIONS

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Manuscript Info

Manuscript History

Received: 10 January 2023

Final Accepted: 14 February 2023

Published: March 2023

Key words:-

Spirituality, Workplace, Work Performance, Modern Organization, Management

Abstract

Spirituality in the workplace becomes the hottest issue in the past decades until the present time. Modern organizations are now paying much attention on helping employees to achieve their hope and dream through company cooperation, concerning about employees' wellbeing and welfare, and respect to individualism. Happiness, success and growth of employees are parts of organizational responsibility because employees and organization are interrelated as they can produce both negative and positive effects to each other. The purposes of this article were to find the meaning of spirituality in the workplace, the current situations of spirituality in the workplace, advantages of spirituality in the workplace, and an implementation of spirituality in the workplace. The findings showed that spirituality in the workplace is a recognition of employee that promotes employees' experience to work with joy, happiness and friendliness in the organization. Modern organizations pay much attention on spirituality in the workplace because they believe it can improve employee satisfaction, employee commitment, employee wellbeing and happiness at work, which lead to increase organizational performance such as productivity, profitability, innovation, competitiveness, customer satisfaction and customer service.

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Introduction:-

In the past, employees were considered as a machine or a body working to produce the final product and profit to the company. Now the company concerns more about employees' needs, feelings, mental well-being and social aspect of the workplace, and employees want to know more about the company, what they offer and how they are treated before a potential employee accepts a position at a company (Ricciardi, et al., 2021) Spirituality in the workplace has become the hot issues since 1982 when business researchers who were in the forefront of this new phenomenon held several conferences and meeting to discuss about this issue. The conferences on this field are held all around the

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world to report about spirituality in the workplace. The conferences are attended by thousands of people each year to find the ways to increase spirituality in the workplace. It is believed that workplace spirituality can help employees to work for the growth and success of the companies.

Many companies have successfully emerged from this system of interviews, analysis of missions and visions, and working side by side with their employees in order to create employee satisfaction, employee commitment, enhance their workplace and increase productivity and profitability (Naftali et al., 2000; Schuler, 1992). Some companies such as Microsoft see spirituality as a corporate culture in which they empower their employees to perform their best through respect, continued education, teamwork, and trust. On the flip side, Amazon considers themselves spiritual based on financial benefits offered to their employees based on production and profit. These two companies are great examples of just how different spirituality in the workplace can be described and carried out according to specific needs.

At the present, many companies are being encouraged to form a good corporate culture or workplace spirituality because they believe this will increase employee satisfaction and productivity. Spirituality in the workplace is often confusing for both management and personnel alike. Spirituality is a faith relationship with the transcendent. However, there are several different theories encompassing spirituality as it pertains to both a person's lifestyle and the company they are associated with. While companies and employees struggle to find a middle ground whereby the employees are empowered and the company is profitable, business researchers will continue to work to set standards in this field (Channuwong et al., 2022; Fowler & Markson, 2001).

When companies discuss their spirituality or "corporate culture", they often refer to respecting their employees and encouraging them to provide essential input to the company's success. They see their employees as a vital part and key success of the company that they rely on to bring new ideas and concepts to further the future growth both internally and externally. In the future, companies will begin to rely upon their employees for their expertise as technology and international business continue to grow at such a rapid rate. The future for spirituality in the workplace is promising. As people begin to focus on their individual values at work more than just a routine job, it is important for companies to improve their corporate culture and values to nourish the inner life of workers and make an organization a better workplace. Employees are no longer happy with their routine job; instead they want to have a position that is parallel to their morals. They desire to work at a company that has the same morale values that match their values, as well as a job that at some level contributes to society. To accomplish this, companies are seeking to work with the employees and community alike to give back to society.

The Meaning of Spirituality in the Workplace

Spirituality in the workplace refers to a recognition that each employee has an inner life which nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the organization and the community (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000). Workplace spirituality can also be defined as a framework of organizational values and cultures that promote employees' experience of transcendence through work process and connection with others in a way that provides feeling of joy, happiness and friendliness in the workplace (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003; Rego & Cunha, 2008). Spirituality at work does not involve in any religious belief and tradition, but it is based on individual value and philosophy. It is about employees who view themselves as spiritual beings whose spirit needs nourishment, sense of meaning and connectedness to one another in their workplace and community (Mitroff and Denton, 1999; Milliman et al., 2003).

Current Situations of Workplace Spirituality

In the past, employees were considered as a machine or a body working to produce the final product and profit to the company. The company did not concern and pay attention on employees' needs, employees' feelings, mental well-being and welfare of employees in the workplace. Today, however, before a potential employee accepts a position at a company, they want to know more about the company, what they offer and how they are treated (Channuwong et al., 2022; Barrett, 2000). One person who is working with today's companies to create environments in which employees are enthusiastic to come to work is spirituality guru Richard Barrett. He has worked with over 1,000 companies through research and has formulated a process that believes to be a formula for organizational success. Barrett works with a company and its employees to formulate a process in which employee's emotional needs are met and are inspired to, in return, be a productive and happy employee. Mr. Barrett insists that each plan must be formulated to the company's needs and specifications for success to follow (Barrett, 2000).

In term of spirituality at work, Gary Zukav, the author of *The Seat of the Soul* and circuit speaker often writes parallel with Richard Barrett and continues his explanation when he stated in *Rediscovering the Soul of Business* that “to understand the next step in the development of the entire system of mutual support and assistance that has metamorphosed into contemporary commerce as necessary to understand the changes that are occurring in the evolutionary development of the human species”(Moore, 2001). This statement relates to the issues that involve employee’s needs and companies’ success. Mr. Zukav continues to explain the concept that the workplace is no longer a location where people go solely to work, rather they prefer a position that is conducive to their home life. Gary continues his explanation by stating that “employees are spending more and more time at work, and less time with their families. Their work must now have meaning.” (Moore &Zelka, 2001).

Mr. Zukav believes that although human beings have five senses, most of them are not utilized at work. They are used only for sensory purposes, but not to enhance the external power. The external power, authentic power, and intuition work together to see fit that the world around us is benefiting us. While the senses are the physical; the authentic power, intuition and ownership are our guides. Each person has inside an intuition that must be heard and followed, if they so choose to understand what it is saying. This is important for each employee, and employer, to concentrate on when utilizing professionals in order to utilize them to their fullest capability.Mr. Zukav also believes that as the theories of business continue to advance, these companies will begin to also take into account and heed the customers physical and spiritual well-being as much as its employees. This phenomenon does not work in one direction, as it has now become a matter of mutual respect. While businesses continue to grow, they now look for their customers to be involved not only through shopping, but with the physical entity as well. This was particularly evident in the case of Ben & Jerry Ice Cream. Both Ben and Jerry encouraged the people in the community to come into their company and be involved with the process from tasting new flavors, to evaluating the amount of pollution excreted from the factory, to financial suggestions (Canto, 2001; Moore &Zelka, 2001).

Advantages of Spirituality in the Workplace

Neal (1999) proposed six approaches to make a workspace sacred to individuals. These approaches include: (1)Working with physical space, (2)Energy work, (3) Silence, (4)Beauty and aesthetics, (5)Workplace rituals, and (6)Computers and the Internet. There are many ways to encourage employees to enhance their physical space to begin to blend together their spiritual, family, and work life. Many studies have shown that usually employees separate these facets of their life, and consequently may not be a satisfied/productive employee. Therefore, modern organizations need to make a balance between family and work life of employees. When employees are satisfied with their lives and work, they can increase performance and productivity to the company itself.

While we cannot change the need to work, many companies are looking for a mutual ground where employees are able to include their work as part of their life. Some of the ways this can be accomplished is by allowing the employees to have items surrounding them that make them feel as though they are incorporating all aspects of their life in their work. While many employers look at their value system, management structure, interpersonal relations, etc., as a means for keeping the employees happy, many companies are now seeking to take this one step further (Channuwong, 2014, Nafis et al., 2018; Songtaweepon et al., 2020).

Many companies who are building their own avenues to a workplace that not only empower its employees, but help employees to make their workplace better. One way this is done is through allowing workplace altars. It has been found that many people have their own form of altar at their workplace. This could include things such as inspirational poems or prayers to read daily, crystals, or pictures of family members, just to name a few. This was found to be true of people who work at a desk, drive a truck, or work in retail. Many of the people interviewed stated that having these items near them helped remind them of why they work and maintain a balance between work and family (Horak et al., 2018; Glanz, 2001).

Other companies have taken further steps to help employees and customers by providing meditation rooms. These rooms are spiritually nondenominational and are soothing for all. They are strategically placed, structured, well organized and decorated. This has been found to be profitable to all by allowing employees the freedom to exercise their religious beliefs while being a productive member of a company. One company found that many of their customers were practicing Muslims that prayed five times a day. The company noticed that it was difficult for the customers to find a quiet place to pray. By simply providing a quiet, soothing room for prayer, the customers became more loyal to the company (Glanz, 2001).

Neal has reviewed “Care Packages for the Workplace: Dozens of little things you can do to regenerate spirit at work” by Barbara Glanz and has compiled a system to generate spirit at work, which is helpful for many companies to implement a spirit at work program. Mrs. Neal states that through the book, there are simplistic ideas that are morale boosters and that should be used to show respect to the employees. The book presents a model called “C.A.R.E. – The elements of a spirited workplace. The acronym stands for:

- C = Creative Communication
- A = Atmosphere and Appreciation for All
- R = Respect and Reason for Being
- E = Empathy and Enthusiasm” (Glanz, 2001).

These acronyms stand for elements every company should have. One example is a company who honors employees on a special day. This does not require much on the part of management, but it shows employees that a company is willing to invest time and money to show respect to their employees. It is not about money; it is about the respect.

An Implementation of Spirituality in the Workplace

Spirituality in the workplace is not a new concept in today’s businesses, however many companies have recognized the importance of implementing these concepts (Gregory et al., 2009; Karami et al., 2015; Kazlauskaitė et al., 2012). Companies such as Microsoft and Amazon have changed their corporate culture by honoring their employees with spiritual practices that make their companies a better place to work. These companies see themselves as being on the cutting edge of this new business trend. While they continue to grow and succeed, they are transforming the way they do business. They always adapt their strategies to motivate employees, increase marketing channels and customer satisfaction and increase organizational sustainability. Channuwong and Ruksat (2022) and Petchsawang and Duchon (2009) presented the five dimensions which can increase spirituality in the workplace consisting of (1) loving kindness, (2) compassion, (3) meaningful work, (4) connection, and (5) transcendence. Barrett (2000) has built an organization that focuses on helping companies find the spirituality within their employees and then use this inner worth to enhance company culture, production, and employee satisfaction. Barrett has found that intangible items such as “intellectual capital and cultural capital.” He holds a greater value in most companies than tangible items. In many cases, intangible assets represent more than two-thirds of the company’s stock market value. It is important to note that while companies have understood the importance of employees in the past, they have not acknowledged the true value an employee can bring. Today, companies are seeing the true worth of their employees, and subsequently providing them with the respect they truly deserve.

There are many companies that have tried to incorporate various ideas in their philosophy, but two have surfaced to the top. These companies are Microsoft and Amazon. They consider themselves to be on the cutting edge of this new business trend, and are continuing to light the path for businesses to follow. While they continue to grow and succeed, they are transforming the way they do business and bringing with this a new reputation as caring, spiritual, and profitable companies.

One of the companies that works in a non-traditional manner is Microsoft. While most companies work in an organized manner, with procedure manuals, deadlines, and specified goals, Microsoft is an exception to the norm. While Microsoft requires its employees to work in excess of 60-80 hours per week, they are also very flexible. Each employee decorates his/her own office. They utilize the given space the way they know best. Microsoft sees each person as an individual, with individual needs and desires. While employees know that they will be working outrageous hours, they also know that they are given the flexibility to be themselves, express themselves, and set their own work schedules. Some employees work all night, while some choose to work all day. Microsoft follows through the same aligns with giving employees freedom to work without rigidity. The company has a meeting once a month in which the employee teams bring forth what they have been working on and what they have completed. They are allowed to work on and develop a project, as well as being given a chance to see if it will be profitable for the company. Employees are excited to come to work, excited about the benefits, and excited about working for a company that is dedicated to its employees and to producing top products.

On the other hand, Amazon company continues to focus on teamworking and creating connection and network with other business partners. It gives award to employees in recognition for outstanding customer service, and a team award which recognizes a team that has created and enacted an idea which will benefit the future of their co-workers and the company as a whole (McKenzie, 2000). In reality, each company creates their own corporate culture, which is mandated by the practices, policies, and procedures within a company, as well as the interactions of the employees

and management as a whole. As researchers continue to examine the current business companies, their policies and practices, and the results of their productivity and profits they have found that each company differ from one to another based on their characteristics, environments, conditions and needs. There is no one format or procedure to be followed, but rather a team of management and employees working together to create a company where people enjoy their work and feel a sense of respect (Aboramadan et al., 2020; Songtaweeporn et al., 2022). Based on the literature survey, the researchers have proposed the model of spirituality in the workplace for modern organizations (Figure 1).

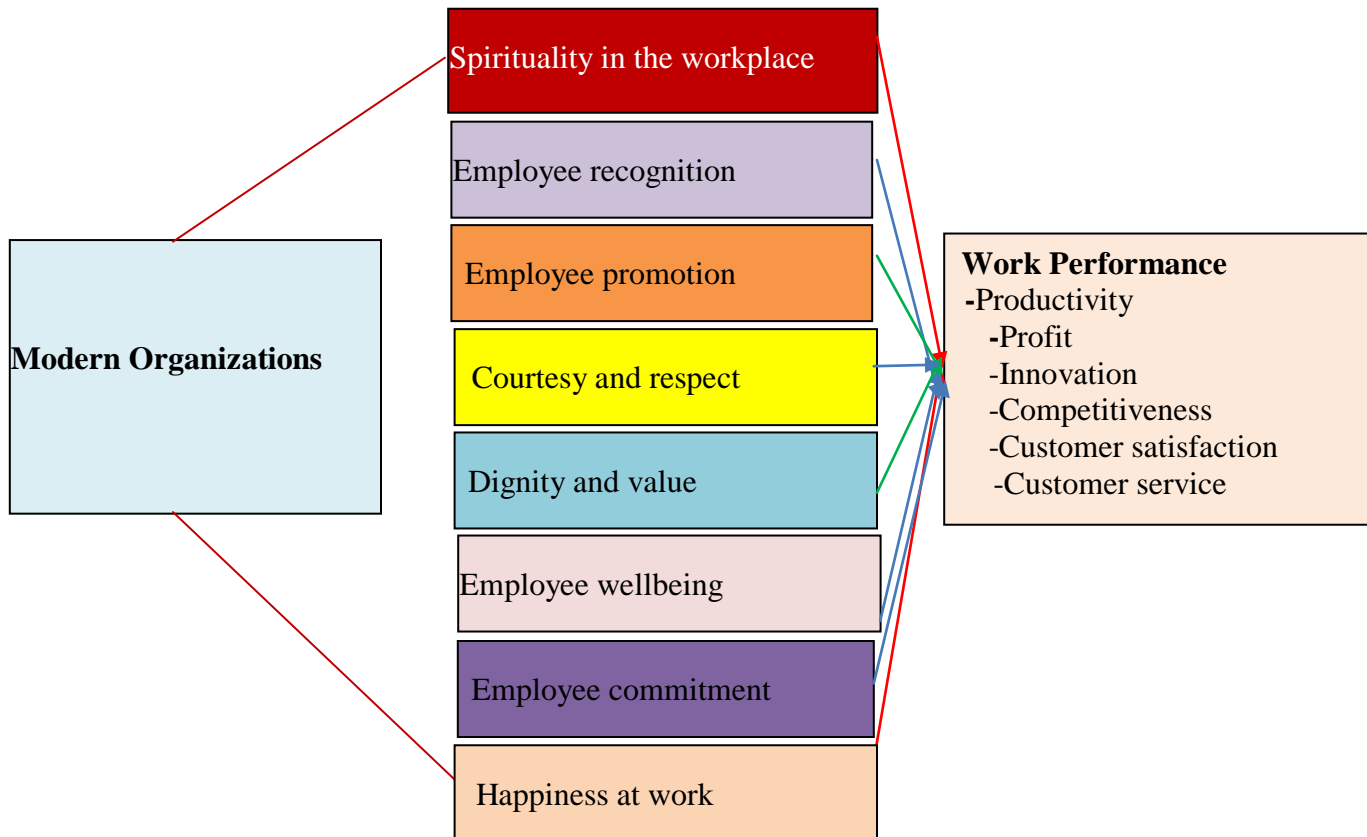


Figure 1:- The Model of Spirituality in the Workplace for Modern Organizations

Conclusion:-

Spirituality in the workplace is a desire of someone to seek for his or her meaning and goal in life; it is a process of creating personal value in the organization. Spirituality in the workplace is not about bringing religion into work, but it is the ability to create personal value and culture that promote positive feeling, positive attitude, employee commitment and employee satisfaction toward the organization they work with. Workplace spirituality is very much important for business companies as it can create employee commitment, satisfaction and loyalty. Managers can promote organizational commitment, which leads to increase individual and organizational performance through improving workplace spirituality. As companies continue to grow internally, they are beginning to realize the necessity for happy, and productive employees. Today's business world is no longer concerned with the bottom-line profit, but what it takes to get to that bottom line. Since the time when businesses began to think of their employees as assets, the growing trend has been to take notice of employees' needs, and to the ability of the company, meet those needs. This trend continues to grow and the future of business looks brighter for employees and employers alike. Employees are seeking to work for the companies who offer benefits packages that far outweigh their competitors. As more and more companies begin to offer these types of packages, many more companies will follow in their footsteps. Therefore, creating workplace spirituality is one of the most important strategies to increase employee commitment, employee satisfaction, employee loyalty, and happiness at workplace, which lead to achieve organizational goals and objectives.

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