

“The Perceived Importance Of Spirituality Amongst Employees In The Workplace” A Qualitative Study Based On Manufacturing Industries.

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ABSTRACT:-

This paper attempts to explore the perceived importance of spirituality in the workplace in different generational groups, in the general workforce of the manufacturing Industries in Vadodara. This exploration carried out a clearly under-explored area of research in the workplace.

Therefore, this study is the first of its kind. To make this research possible, we conducted an extensive literary study and conducted 10 semi-structured interviews with people from three different age groups: – 18-30, 30-45, and 45-65. The resulting product revealed the perceptions of the phenomenon of spirituality in the workplace, and the variations in these perceptions across different generations; differences and similarities interpreted between spirituality and religion in the workplace; relevance of spirituality in the workplace; and its impacts on the individuals’ organizational commitment. In addition, the research paves the way for future research, including a broader perspective that may be useful for industrial management.

Keywords: Spirituality, Age Diversity, Religion, Workplace Spirituality, Organizational Commitment.

Introduction

‘Something spiritual is creeping into the workplace, and it seems to be gearing up to be more than a trend.’ (Laabs, 1995:62)

The significance that work holds in a person's life shapes the central part of an adult's identity, as it absorbs effects from the

intellectual, physical, psychological, emotional, and social conditions surrounding them (Fairholm, 1996 & Fourie, 2014). Since these elements are constantly changing; the work and job of a specialist can't be portrayed as static. As Mitroff and Denton (1999) put it, after a specific limit, pay stops to be the prime motivator for work, and higher needs begin prevailing.

In any case, aside from the material achievement, this pervasive arrangement of thought has delivered the world, and work, significantly lacking in depth (Mohan and Uys, 2006). As Cavanaugh (1999) has put forth an emerging need that is necessary to be acknowledged as:

'The needs that business people often feel are a separation from other people, alienation from their work, a lack of meaning in their lives. They often experience their work, family life, and their faith to be in separate compartments . . . This separation leaves one feeling dry, unfulfilled and unhappy, and its often experienced as a profound absence or vacuum in one's life.' (p.186)

This view additionally stretched out by Henry Portage who had communicated his dissatisfactions citing why do I always get stuck with the whole person rather a pair of hands – hands were what I hired, but troublesome bodies and querulous minds were what I often get...' (Clegg, Kornberger and Pitsis. 2011: p.43). Hawthorne's examinations in the 1930-40s featured the significance of emotional and social needs along with physical efficiency and high standard performances. Continuing on to 1970s, and onwards into the 1990s, where people at work were not just considered physical and emotional beings but also thinking beings' (Marques, Dhiman & King, 2007: iii).

Purpose:

The motivation behind this study is to uncover this new phenomenon arising in the working environment. The manufacturing firms in Vadodara, India, chosen to conduct this study. Vadodara is a colossally pluralistic city as far as language, nationality, religion, and culture. This study will focus on the apparent significance of spirituality inside the work environment. The data gathered for this study is of both primary and secondary nature. The secondary data is collected through a literary research. The primary data has been conducted through a thorough process of semi-structured interviewing.

Literature Review

This literature review is divided into four main portions for the sake of clarity and understanding i.e.

i) The significance of spirituality and spirituality in the

workplace.

- ii) The definition and meanings of spirituality in the workplace.**
- iii) The differences between religion and spirituality in the workplace.**
- iv) The effects of spirituality in the workplace on organizational commitment.**

The significance of Spirituality and Spirituality in the Workplace:

People look forward to experience spirituality not only in their personal lives but also at work, where they spend a significant active portion of their active days (Neck & Krishankumar, 2002). Ashmos & Duchon (2000) referred to this sudden upsurge as the spirituality movement, and advocated it as an attempt to enhance the employee experience by allowing interactions with their spiritual dimensions.

Sheep (2006) noted the importance of spirituality in the workplace by relating it not only to individual levels, but also on organisational and societal levels. Various scholars (Cavanagh, 1999; Pawar, 2009; Mohan & Uys, 2006; Marques, Dhiman & King, 2007; Van Tonder & Ramdass, 2009; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010; Cash & Gray, 2000; Milliman, Czaplewski & Ferguson, 2003; Benefiel, Giegle & Fry, 2014) have indicated towards the increased attention to the phenomenon. This is demonstrated by the growing number of books and articles being authored and published on spirituality in business, including the Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion. Marques, Dhiman & King (2007) mentioned organizations, referred to as incubators of spirits, which are actively attending to their employees' needs by helping them find a balance between personal and professional lives, whilst helping them reach their full potential.

Fourie (2014) and Giacalone & Jurkiewicz (2010) hold the changes that are occurring at societal, economical, technological, historical, political, and cultural levels responsible for having a deep effect on the fundamental nature of work. In the recent scenario, various events have emerged that led to an insecure economy and an existential anxiety as individuals, also at work, find themselves unable to develop a sense of identity (Frankl cited in Mohan & Uys, 2006). Van Tonder & Ramdass (2009) have also voiced similar opinions by rendering spirituality a requisite of a need-driven and anxious society. A review of these events and scenarios, conducted by Marques, Dhiman & King (2007), Ashmos

& Duchon (2000), Leigh (1997), Dehler & Welsh (2010), Cash & Gray (2000), and Harrington (2001) revealed the sources of the anxiety that has plagued the modern workplace.

This pandemonium and lack of definition, that has immersed the cutting edge working environment, prodded the requirement for manageable and unique methods of getting sorted out and dealing with the work environments ((Harman, Ray & Rinzler as cited in Freshman, 1999).

Gozdz (2000) holds the culture of positivism, reductionism, and empiricism responsible for having stripped the workplace, and individuals in these workplaces, of their spirits. Moreover, the recent scandals emerging in the major corporations have also induced the need of spiritually and ethically orientated management (Gull & Doh, 2004). Similarly, Sheep (2006) pointed, as a consequence, towards the unfulfilling relationship between the employer and the employee which, he suggested, could be improved through three relevant areas of study; business ethics, corporate social responsibility, and workplace spirituality.

Karakas (2010) agreed with Ashmos & Duchon's (2000) stance of the spirituality movement and emphasised on the need of working environments that provided, along with financial rewards, experiences that enhanced the spirit, fulfilled the heart, and translated into personal and professional growth. He further mentioned large corporations like Coca Cola, Sears, Boeing, Intel, who have actively pursued the incorporation of spirituality into their cultures, strategies and practices. Nevertheless, Lips-Wiersma & Mills (2002) argued that spirituality is not something that needs to be introduced in the workplace, but it is something that is an inherent part of the individuals when they report to the workplace.

Scholars (Bandsuch & Cavanagh, 2005; Petchsawang & Duchon, 2009) pointed towards the personal and professional benefits that can be realised through the inclusion of spirituality in the workplace, such as improved ethics and increased productivity. Van Tonder & Ramdass (2009) indicated the overall transformation of the organisational practices that are a result of the individuals' transformation, as they undergo better, fuller, richer experiences and improvements in cultures, translating to productivity and performances. Bandsuch & Cavanagh (1999) brought forth the advantages such as peace, serenity, job satisfaction, meaningful work on individual levels and loyalty, organisational commitment, reduced absenteeism and turnover on organisational levels.

A thorough analysis conducted by Marques, King & Dhiman (2007) and Leigh (1997) revealed enhanced connections and

contributions, increased tolerance, advocacy of democratic leadership, organisational citizenship behavior, and ethicality. According to Thompson (2001), an effort towards spirituality will also curb the sources that lead to unspiritual workplaces which are mainly driven by human vulnerability.

(In any case, reactions have likewise been voiced against spirituality in the working environment asking for its careful execution. Cavanagh (1999) delivered the dread of pressure and partiality that could be practiced in the working environment, under the umbrella of spirituality. Additionally, Fenwick and Lange (1998) contended that it is, actually, a secretive endeavor to uncover the weak spirits towards additional double-dealings to accomplish corporate objectives. Dehler and Welsh (2010) demonstrated the risk of representatives being genuinely taken advantage of at work through the affectation of accepting their spiritual identities, just to additionally add to the corporate objectives. Bandsuch and Cavanagh (2005) further concluded the threats of spirituality in the workplace, if not managed properly, leading to divisiveness, discrimination, misuses, favouritism and superficiality).

Definition and Meaning of Spirituality in the workplace:

Different endeavors to arrive at an all-inclusive definition of spirituality, and spirituality in the working environment, have recognized that no commonly accepted definition of the phenomenon exists. This is on the grounds that there is a wide uniqueness thinking about what spirituality in the work environment truly implies (Marques, Dhiman and Lord, 2007; Neck and Krishankumar, 2002; Van Tonder and Ramdass, 2009; Delher and Welsh, 2010; Kinjerski and Skrypnek, 2004; Heaton, Schmidt-Wilk and Travis, 2004; Harrington, Preziosi and Gooden, 2001; Driver, 2007). Garcia-Zamor (2003: 355) reflected to it as a 'definitional muss'. This absence of a functioning meaning (Lord and Crowther, 2009) has demonstrated to be a bottleneck for the progression in the examination of the conditions and attributes that sway the spirit at work (Kinjerski and Skrypnek, 2004. Konz and Ryan (1999) and Neck and Krinshankumar (2002) remarked that such obstacles in characterizing the spirituality, and spirituality at work, are obvious considering the personal nature of the phenomenon.

Neal asserted that defining spirituality is difficult in light of the fact that individuals are attempting to generalize and classify an experience and method of being that is the center of exceptionally emotional and past arranging' (Heaton, Schmidt-Wilk and Travis, 2004: 123). Moreover, Dehler and Welsh (2010) considered individual decisions and social inclinations liable for

people's relationship with spirituality. Marques, Dhiman and Lord (2005) guaranteed that these numerous viewpoints of the importance of spirituality in the work environment delivers this wonder however convincing as it seems to be. In any case, Van Tonder and Ramdass (2009) contended that while this inconstancy demonstrated the significance of the marvel in the work environment, these clashing assessments additionally showed its delicate and questionable nature. Yet this variety of suppositions, Dehler and Welsh (2010) asserted that it is as yet conceivable to give normal and generalizable dimensions of spirituality that can be employed across individuals in the workplace.

Marques, Dhiman & King (2005:82) concluded an inclusive definition of spirituality in the workplace and outlined it as,

‘An experience of interconnectedness, shared by all those involved in a work process, initially triggered by the awareness that each person is individually driven by an inner power, which raises and maintains his or her sense of honesty, creativeness, proactivity, kindness, dependability, confidence, and courage; consequently leading to the collective creating an aesthetically motivational environment characterized by a sense of purpose, high ethical standards, acceptance, peace, respect, understanding, appreciation, care, involvement, helpfulness, encouragement, achievement, and perspective, thus establishing an atmosphere of enhanced team performance and overall harmony, and ultimately guiding organisation to become a leader in its industry and community, through its exudation of fairness, cooperativeness, vision, responsibility, charity, creativity, high productivity and accomplishment.’

The Differences between Religion and Spirituality in the Workplace:

The writing so far has kept a sharp spotlight on the distinction among religion and spirituality, and the assortment of viewpoints with which spirituality in the work environment is drawn nearer concerning the relatedness between these two develops (Van Tonder and Ramdass, 2009). The disarray among religion and spirituality is relied upon because of the nearby likenesses between them, in any case, the two builds are as yet observed to be very unmistakable (Harrington, Preziosi and Travis, 2002). While to a few, the contrasts among strict and otherworldliness are garbled, to others the two builds are only unique (Lord and Crowther, 2004). As indicated by Van Tonder and Ramdass (2009), this definitional indefinite quality between the two develops inside a work environment emerges from the absence of comprehension and mindfulness on the people's part. Their

investigation tracked down that the people who knew about the build of working environment spirituality were less inclined to get religion and spirituality befuddled together. (Mitroff and Denton's examination (1999) tracked down a solid separation among religion and spirituality in the work environment where religion was considered as an exceptionally unacceptable, though spirituality was viewed as a profoundly relevant topic of conversations. Slope and Smith (2010) affirmed that the qualification among religion and spirituality has accomplished a consent somewhat inside the researchers and people in general too. Notwithstanding, Marques, Dhiman and Lord (2007) have referred to researchers who accept that language of spirituality in the working environment is grounded in the traditions of religious imagery.

Religion, to some, is seen as an organised, structured, and formal system of beliefs, rites, rituals, values, ethics, doctrines and principles (Marques, Dhiman & King, 2005; King 2007, King & Crowther, 2009) established in the past (Harrington, Preziosi, & Gooden, 2001, Van Tonder & Ramdass, 2009) that provides framework of ethicality and morality for individuals, and motivates their behaviour. Whereas spirituality, in contrast to religion, is seen as a non-dogmatic, non-hierarchical, non-exclusive and non-patriarchal phenomenon (Marques, Dhiman & King, 2005) which is neither formal nor structured, and is something that is accessible to all individuals regardless of their religious inclinations (Mohan & Uys, 2006).

Hill and Smith (2010: 174), concluded these differences in the words,

'Religion is more community focused while spirituality tends to be more individualistic; religion is more observable, measurable, and objective while spirituality is less visible and quantifiable and more subjective; religion is more formal orthodox and organised while spirituality is less formal, less orthodox, and less systematic; religion tends to be behaviour oriented with an emphasis on outward practices while spirituality tends to be more emotionally oriented and inwardly directed; religion is more authoritarian, especially in terms of behaviours, while spirituality is less authoritarian and has little external accountability; and religion is more oriented toward doctrine, specially that which distinguishes good from evil, while spirituality stresses harmony and unity and is less concerned with doctrine.'

King (2007) and Mohan & Uys (2006) explained that despite God, or a higher power, being a main theme in spirituality, it is evident that spirituality is a notion that exceeds the boundaries of

religion. They referred to religion as the narrower subset of spirituality.

Twigg et al. (2001) identified three approaches to spirituality in the workplace under the lens of religion. They viewed them as; religious spirituality, which is based on a person's connection with God, or a higher power. Metaphysical spirituality, which is based on one's belief in a force greater than oneself. And lastly, humanist spirituality, also referred to as secular spirituality, based on the search for meaning and purpose in life but outside the circles of religion. Similar typology has been discussed by Neck & Krishankumar (2002) who named these dimensions as religious spirituality, intrinsic spirituality, and existentialist spirituality.

Spirituality in the Workplace and Organisational Commitment:

Studies carried on spirituality in the working environment affect different work perspectives relating to the employees. Milliman et al. (2002) considered the impact of the three elements of spirituality in the work environment; Firstly, meaningful work. Secondly, a sense of community, and lastly an alignment of spiritual values..

Literature has found that spirituality in the work environment is decidedly related with organisational commitment (Fry, 2003; Pawar, 2009; Rego and Cunha, 2008; White, 2010). This is on the grounds that these individuals felt a sense of community inside their work space, and experienced growth on a spiritual level inside the work environment. Garcia Zamor (2003) remarked that the inclusion of spirituality in the work environment delivers new organisational culture that creates bliss and joy, and results in better performances and commitment.

Research Methodology

This study planned to inspect the phenomenon of spirituality, and its appearance in the working environment, to decipher its apparent importance through the eyes of the members in question. Thus, a qualitative inquiry was considered suitable. As indicated by Meyers (2013)

'Qualitative researchers argue that if you want to understand peoples' motivations, their reasons, their actions, and the context for their beliefs and actions in an in-depth way, qualitative research is the best.' (p.5)

Rather than the definitive approaches, the study required a sensitizing approach (Bryman, 2012). (As per Meyers (2013), an interpretive viewpoint permits an inquirer to achieve thoughtfulness to reality through the social builds of language, consciousness, and shared meanings. A reflexive position was embraced where, rather than achieving a separated situation

from the external glancing in, the author put himself inside the setting to uncover the social and social components influencing the phenomenon of spirituality in the work environment (Roulston, 2010). This was found advantageous, as the author had comparative social positions and individual encounters with the members; which permitted him to have the option to react, comprehend, decipher and decipher of what was being passed on effectively (Meyers, 2013).

Participants:

General working population of manufacturing industries in Vadodara was considered for the study due to the author's participant access. The point of intervention of the study is the difference of perceptions between different generational cohorts. The participants were recruited in the form of three age groups; cohort one 18-30, cohort two 30-45, and cohort three 45-65.

Process of Data Collection:

The author utilized semi-structured interviews as the tool of data collection, which are claimed as the most important data collecting technique (Meyers, 2012), in order to enable rich data collection from people of different ages in varied roles and circumstances.

Measures taken to obtain information:

An interview protocol was designed to facilitate the interview procedure. The interview protocol was divided into three segments of questions, each segment tended to a different aspect of the study. These segments were:

- Career and behaviour questions: The career questions intended to investigate the career progress of the participants, and how they aimed to manage their careers in the foreseeable future.
- Knowledge questions: These questions aimed to investigate the knowledge the participants had, and the meanings that they ascribed to constructs involved in the study i.e. spirituality and religion.
- Attitude questions: This set of questions aimed at the attitudes and beliefs that the participants brought to the workplace.

Framework of Analysis:

The collected data was analysed thoroughly through a thematic analysis to gain an insight into the perceptions of the participants regarding the phenomenon of spirituality in the workplace (Meyers, 2013).

Ethical considerations:

Due to the sensitive nature of the study, the participants were provided with an informed consent form which acquainted the participants of the nature of the study, as well as the medium of recording. It further ensured the participants that their information would remain confidential and anonymous. The participants were explicitly told that they were able to withdraw out of the study at any time they felt uncomfortable, and the information relating to them would be destroyed immediately.

Limitations:

Firstly, inclusion of a more religiously diverse population would gain a better insight on the perspectives of the participants who not only belonged to different religions, but also to different sects within the population.

Secondly, it was realized that due to the personal and sensitive nature of the topic, despite their consented and voluntary participations, the participants were somewhat reluctant to express their opinions with comfort.

Lastly, a limitation came forth in regards to literature inclusion. To not transgress into the fields of sociological research, it was decided to exclude the works of Max Weber (1958) from the thesis research. However, Weber's work is proven significant regarding the individualization of society and the regression of faith.

FINDINGS: DESCRIPTIONS, INTERPRETATIONS & SYNTHESIS

Apart from the basic inquiry on the perceived meanings of spirituality within the workplace, the differences they perceived between religion and spirituality, its relevance and impacts on organisational commitment, it was discovered that these responses further led to avenues of future research on the phenomenon. Upon an extensive thematic analysis, facilitated by a careful coding process, four main themes emerged that will be described, interpreted and discussed below.

Theme # 1: Perceived Meaning of Spirituality in the Workplace amongst Different Generational Cohorts:

The perceptions of spirituality in the workplace mainly revolved around similar conceptions amongst the participants, regardless of their age. The concept of spirituality in combination with religion was found to be visibly stronger amongst the participants belonging to the age groups 30-45 and 45-60, to some extent the

age group 18-30 also based their spirituality in their religious backgrounds.

Perceived meaning of spirituality in the workplace:

When questioned about the meaning of spirituality, it became apparent that there was indeed a lack of a universal definition of the phenomenon as pointed out in the literature. Due to this personal nature, there appeared to be a definitional incongruence, as suggested by the scholars (Nick & Krishankumar 2002, Konz & Ryan 1999).

A) 18-30:

A 25 year old participant clearly indicated that his religion mainly provided him with spirituality.

Meanwhile a 23 year old participant, defined spirituality as the code that governs his behaviors in dealing with situations and people in life and at work.

Another 27 year old participant did not mention religion at all when providing a definition of spirituality. He regarded it as his framework of life and a desire within himself to be responsible for his actions in a personal and professional spectrum.

B) 30-45:

A 39 year old participant, described his perception of spirituality as, 'Whenever I do something according to my religion, spirituality comes to my mind.

A 30 year old participant, described spirituality as his link with God and his anticipation of life after death. He indicated that his strong belief in life after death allowed him to be fair and kind at the workplace. He further indicated that his dedication towards religion as his spiritual guide motivates him to justly act without discriminating on the basis of personal liking, race, religion, sex and orientation. An interesting description was brought forth by a 43 year old participant, who claimed, '**Spirituality is more like the software of religion**, it guides you, it helps you to live and strive for the better.

C) 45-65:

A 54 year old participant claimed that his spirituality allowed him to be humble at the workplace, forego anger and maintain healthy relationships with colleagues.

Similarly, a strong perception of spirituality arising from the religious imagery came from a 57 year old participant, who explained how the spirituality that he derives from his constant

connection with God has provided him with strength and confidence in difficult times at work.

It became apparent through the participants' responses that their perceptions of spirituality lie within the spectrum of religious/traditional spirituality and humanistic spirituality, as laid down by Twigg & Parayitam (2006), and fluctuated across the spectrum as the age range varied.

Respondents from the age group 45-65 were more inclined towards the religious/ traditional spirituality, which Twigg & Parayitam explained as having a strong connotation of religion in individual's minds.

Interconnectedness: They revealed that a strong sense of community in the workplace allowed them to cope easily with pressured situations.

Similarly, outcome reinforced the views of the various scholars mentioned above (Johnson, 2007; Marques, Dhiman & King, 2007; Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004); by expressing that the workplace could be a domain of building connections to develop a strong sense of community.

Presence of a higher power: There was a very strong acknowledgement and appreciation of the presence of a higher power or a supreme being in most of the responses that supported the ideas put forth by the scholars (Mitroff & Denton, 1999; King, 2007). This can also be related to their perception of spirituality, which is largely based on their religious views.

Within the age group of 18-30, a divided opinion was found. Whilst few of the participants indicated that they not only made frequent connections with a higher power in their hearts (which they referred to as God), they also often offered the physical prayers during office hours.

One of them said, 'I believe that what a belief in a higher power does is that it gives you **hope. I do get my hopes from there**'

One participant, on the other hand, stated that his belief in the connection with the Higher Power is so strong that when he forgets to make his supplications before starting his work, he feels that he is more prone towards making mistakes at work. This coincided with Bandsuch & Cavanaugh's (2005) concepts, who asserted that employees' beliefs, behaviours, and attitudes are reflected in their relationship with an ultimate source.

The participants indicated that they actively pursued their ambitions in their work life and left the rest in God's hands. This played a regulating factor in their lives and they readily accepted their fate as God's will (UWF, 2010).

Sense of wholeness in the workplace: All the participants acknowledged the ability to bring their complete whole selves to

the workplace, which reinforced Dehler & Welsh's (2010) findings indicating towards the importance of the individual's ability to integrate their whole selves in their working lives. Some of the participants even explained how this ability allowed them to be more efficient in the workplace (Fairholm, 1996; Van Tonder & Ramdass, 2009). One participant, endorsing the ideas of Mitroff & Denton (1999), said that the ability to bring his complete self to the workplace enabled him and his co-workers to cope with the tensions at work. He mentioned using his sense of humor to diffuse stress in his juniors in order to help them get through a difficult situation, 'They tend to panic so I crack jokes with them so they can calm down and also know that there is someone backing them up.'

Subjects were also pointed out their humble nature and good listening abilities, which allows them to be more accessible and tackle issues effectively in the workplace. Similarly, a 52 year old participant, emphasized the importance of bringing one's complete energized self to work, as it plays a very significant role in delivering excellence.

Theme # 2: Perceived Differences between Religion and Spirituality:

Upon the investigation of the perceived differences between religion and spirituality amongst the participants, it was found that a significant majority of the participants did not perceive any differences between the two constructs. This was in exception to the age group 18-30, who held divided opinions. It was noticed that this division was reflected in the differences in their educational backgrounds within this group.

A) 18-30

The impressions of the educational systems in the attitudes and mind-sets of the graduating students are significant. These findings were apparent in the participants' responses.

A 20 year old participant, who passed from the State system of education, indicated that she believed spirituality could not be compared to religion. She further added that to her, religion was a set of practices, a social norm that was guided the behaviors of the individuals in their daily personal and professional lives. Whereas spirituality, was a pure and conscious state of mind that can be achieved only by a few, as humans are prone to committing unconscious mistakes. However, she further indicated the perceptions of religion were merely utilized as a set of assigned rituals for the people around her. When asked to differentiate between religion and spirituality, she commented, **'It is a tough question, I never thought of it that way...but, I guess for me, both are the same thing because I find myself spiritual if I am following the religion.'**

Conversely, a participant who has graduated from a Central education system, clearly stated that he considered himself a spiritual person but not religious. He hinted aversion from religious dogma. On further probing, he revealed that following the common 'values' of religion in personal and professional lives meant spirituality for him. However, he further referred to 'mechanical religion', which is characterized as imposed dogma. This was found to be congruent with the views of the scholars in the literature that deemed religion to be an organized and a formal structure of rituals, dogma, doctrines and principles.

B) 30-45:

All the participants in this cohort perceived little or no difference between religion and spirituality. They clearly indicated that they viewed religion and spirituality in the same breath.

A participant maintained that, to him, the difference between religion and spirituality only existed for those who did not have an adequate understanding of the religion. He felt that if understood properly, religion will be found to be the ultimate source of an individual's spirituality. This assertion contradicted with Van Tonder & Ramdass (2009) who claimed that the lack of understanding of workplace spirituality led individuals to consider it similar to religion.

A participant asserted that being a good follower of his religion was his spirituality, diminishing the differences between the two constructs. However, he further mentioned that despite spirituality driven by religious values was highly appropriate in the workplace, and the topic of religion was not appropriate within the workplace. This coincided with the ideas of Mitroff & Denton (1999).

C) 45-65:

Assertive statements were made by the participants in this cohort as they claimed their spirituality to be equal to their religion.

One Participant stated that, **'Religion can cover my spirituality. But spirituality just alone cannot cover religion'**

Similarly, few more participants asserted that they found it 'difficult to separate the two' and explained how religion is his source of spirituality in the workplace. Similarly, few pointed out that they never experienced the clash between religion and his spirituality, as they extracted their spirituality from their relationship with God. Therefore, following HIS commands in personal and professional life.

It was found that all participants, despite their differences in age and educational background, strongly acknowledged the commonality between religion and spirituality i.e. a sacred core,

sense of meaning in life, sense of community and interconnectedness (Hill & Smith, 2010; Van Tonder & Ramdass, 2009; Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004).

Theme # 3: Religiously Religious versus Culturally Religious:

Another interesting theme that surfaced from the inspection of the interviews was the emergence of the religiously religious and the culturally religious gulf amongst the generational cohorts. This development was related to the source, and the extent, of the ethics extracted from religion which these individuals implemented in their daily working lives. Whilst the young cohort, 18-30, was inclined towards beings culturally religious, the older cohorts expressed themselves to be religiously religious.

A) 18-30:

Few indicated towards the lack of religious practices in their life. They revealed that religion did not have any space in his life except that it provided them with spirituality. In terms of their behavior and dealings in the workplace, with people and situations, they referred to the teachings of their parents, which were, in fact, the teachings of Hinduism. When asked if they differentiated between the both, he said, 'For me as a person, I have been taught by my parents well...So I can take it as the teaching of religion or of my parents.'

Furthermore, they revealed that they appreciated the values of Hindu in their personal and professional life, because they were in concurrent with his personal values. They said,

'If they were not following Hinduism, they believe they would still be the same persons. We can go ahead and denounce it [Hinduism] altogether but we will be the same person. So the things that we follow are the good things that every person should follow. It is not harmful, right? It all about peace, love, and harmony.'

Similarly, few others also claimed that they believed in the teachings of religion conveyed by his parents, because they were in line with the universal moral and ethical values common to all humans.

These statements related with the concept of religious socialization. Krauss et al. (2010) explained it as the parental influences on their children's religiosity. However, the authors further claimed that parental influences tend to decline in the modern era, due to social influences that the off-springs are exposed to because of educational settings, mass media, availability of information, and peers.

Few participants mentioned that they attempted to offer the mandatory prayers during their working hours if nothing critical was in their way. They felt that despite trying their best, they felt

that their religious obligations tended to get ignored in their daily life. They said,
'Sometimes...we miss our prayers at work. If we do not feel like praying, we do not pray at all. But...in reality we should go and pray...it should be important in our life but it is not important at the moment.'

B) Age Groups - 30-45 & 45-60:

All the participants assertively expressed that they were religiously religious. They indicated a great dedication with their God and deemed them as their role model. The God is our leader, the role model. Each and everything that I do in my life, how I behave, how I act or react, is inspired by HIM'.

Richardson et al. (2014) described three dimensions; unity, justice and benevolence. These three dimensions also became evident in the responses of participants in the cohorts 30- 45 and 45-65.

They further mentioned that their belief in religious values allowed them to be emotionally intelligent towards their co-workers, and be accessible to all members at the workplace; from the security guard to the president of the company. Similar notions were recorded by Richardson et al (2014), who emphasized the importance of collaboration and partnership in management.

Therefore, the analysis of the responses from the participants indicated a clear distinction between culturally religious and religiously religious participants on the basis of their ages and their presences within a typical workplace.

This distinction could also be related to Hill and Smith's (2010) connotations of dwellers and seekers in the workplace.

Theme # 4: Relevance of Spirituality in the Workplace, and its Impact on Organisational Commitment.

The responses, indeed, indicated the relevance of spirituality in the workplace, its positive impact on the organisational commitment, and supported its accommodation the workplace. The participants provided with intriguing points of views in order to elaborate their opinions.

i. Relevance:

A) 18-30:

They asserted that spirituality was relevant in the workplace as long as it enhanced the cause of the workplace i.e. productivity and profitability, employees' engagement and motivation. Similar views were observed in the literature by Ashmos & Duchon (2000)

and Fry (2005), who supported the notion of spirituality positively affecting the productivity and profitability within the organization. They commented, **'If it helps in the cause of the workplace, why not? If it makes the people more productive, why not? If it stops them from being productive, then it is a problem'**

B) 30-45:

Insightful viewpoints regarding the relevance of spirituality in the workplace surfaced in this age cohort as well. They felt that spirituality, which was driven from their religious beliefs, was highly relevant in the workplace.

They mentioned that spirituality was highly relevant in the workplace as it provided the individuals with a reason to live and work hard for, and provided them with meaning and purpose in the workplace. This was found to be consistent with the literature as scholars found a correlation between meaningful work and spirituality. Garcia-Zamor (2003) acknowledged it as a source of joy, happiness and better results amongst the employees in the workplace.

C) 45-65:

. They said, **'It is not only relevant but also very important in the workplace because you can spoil someone's career if you are not spiritual...if you don't have the fear of God, if you are just thinking about yourself. You have responsibilities and being spiritual will make you responsible. If someone, for example, is declining in his career and you are the boss or you are the colleague...if you guide him as a good person and you help him out, he can be a good employee again and make his life better.'**

ii. Impact on organisational commitment:

All the participants, regardless of age, agreed that spirituality positively impacted their commitment to their organization. This strongly coincided with the ideas of the scholars in the literature (Fry, 2003; Pawar, 2009; Rego & Cunha, 2008). The participants further pointed out that they would leave or shift to another organization if they felt that their spiritual values were being compromised upon.

Some strong assertions were made by few others, who felt that they would not stay in an organization if their spiritual values clashed on a large scale with the organisational values. One commented, **'Yes absolutely, it is a big factor in my commitment to the work and the organisation. In case there is a conflict in my values and organisational values, I will never be at peace and**

hence won't be able to work to the best of my ability. I will be left with no option but to look for a workplace that has similar values to mine. Barrett (2010) placed a similar emphasis on the alignment of personal values prevalent in the culture of the organizations in order to harness high quality organisational performances.

Interestingly, participants from 18-30 age groups, who viewed spirituality as a personal phenomenon, voiced caution towards consciously fostering spirituality in the workplace. They said, **'Spirituality is something personal and varies from person to person hence it would be difficult for an organization to actively accommodate spirituality in the workplace.'**

Few further commented, **'However, considering the religious diversity in the workplaces, it could be helpful to bring these differences towards a common point through fostering the common values through spirituality...yes, in that perspective we do feel that spirituality could be accommodated to remove these tensions arising'**.

Few participants acknowledging the religious diversity in the workplace. They commented that despite the religious pluralism, there had been no conflicts in terms of religious aspirations and practices. However, further unity could be promoted through extracting the common values within this diversity.

An Overall Sense:

Reviewing the analysis, an overall sense can be formulated to explain the phenomenon of spirituality in the workplace. Despite, the noted variations in the conceptions of spirituality amongst the generational cohorts, it was found that the basic values that these individuals

brought to the workplace were similar. The most cited values were honesty, kindness, reliability, and justice. These values were apparent through all the age groups albeit their religious backgrounds. A diagram has been constructed to represent the conceptualization of the process that leads to the spirituality evident in workplace.

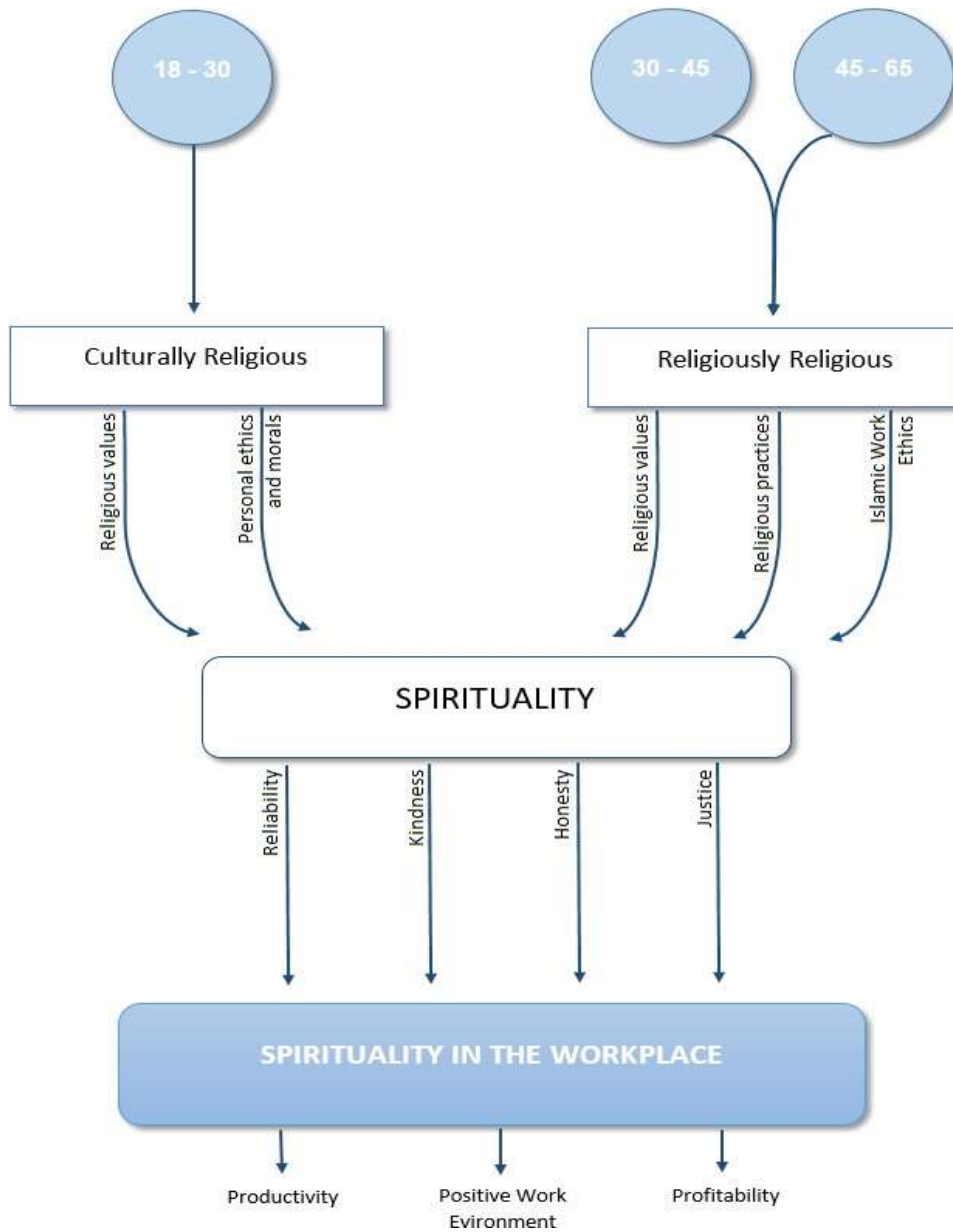


Fig. 1: A model representation of spirituality in workplace

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study aimed to uncover the perceptions and meanings individuals, belonging to different age cohorts, attributed to the

phenomenon of spirituality within the workplaces in manufacturing industries in Vadodara.

It became evident that significant differences existed in the perceptions of the phenomenon of spirituality amongst the individuals hailing from different generational cohorts. This difference could easily be attributed to the social, cultural, political and technological changes that impacted the thought process of these individuals. However, it was also visible that the main theme of the participants did actually revolve around religion, despite the significant intergenerational differences regarding their ideas of spirituality, religion, differences and similarities between the two constructs, relevance of the constructs within the workplace, and their resultant impacts on their organisational commitment. This is evident in the commonality between these individuals, as they brought the common values of **kindness, justice, honesty** and **reliability** into the workplace.

It was uncovered that the most of the younger generation, who were further divided because of the effects of educational differences upon them, ascribed little importance to religion as compared to the older generations whom regarded religion as a central force in their lives. On an overall standpoint, religion was indeed the provider of spirituality to these individuals in their working lives. The older generation fuelled their spirituality not only through the values of their religion but also through its practices, strongly ascribing to the Work Ethics – rendering them as the religiously religious or the spiritual dwellers within the workplace. They disregarded the difference between religion and spirituality. It should however be taken into account that this religiosity does not necessarily guarantee interpersonal or professional righteousness. This was also put forth by one of the participants, who pointed towards religion as the guiding principle and provider of spirituality, however acknowledging the personal thresholds of their behaviours at the workplace. In other words, one's behaviour could be considered intolerable within a work environment, despite having religious validity.

On the other hand, the younger generation claimed the extraction, and application, of their work values from the teachings of their religion because of the congruence with their personal values. They indicated a lack of practices or 'mechanics' of their religion in their lives – rendering them to be the culturally religious or the spiritual seekers in the workplace. They further acknowledged their spirituality in the workplace as their own individuality and considered it to be a personal aspect of their lives. They were, again, divided on their opinions on the

differences between religion and spirituality owing to their different educational backgrounds.

In conclusion, spirituality is a phenomenon that exists on a prominent level in individuals' lives and impacts all spheres of their lives, including their workplaces. An effective management of this phenomenon within the workplace can result in a working solution for the various issues that are arising in the workplace due to social, generational and religious differences.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Fostering spirituality within the workplace could inspire these organizations to do the right things, instead of the easiest. Organizations, instead of hiring and promoting individuals based on their similarities in backgrounds, could diminish the strongly prevalent discrimination by supporting an organisational culture where all individuals could be provided fair opportunities ... This would, undoubtedly, gain the organizations a competitive edge as it would inculcate innovativeness, productivity, and bring on-board creativity by these diverse individuals. This, of course, would require a longer time frame to implement, as it compels a change of organisational culture. However, it would also lead to longer lasting impacts. To achieve this, organisations will have to remove the sources that might cause hindrances towards the accommodation of spirituality in the workplace; this might include a change of leadership, or at its very least, a change of attitude regarding cultural and religious pluralism.

The organizations are already physically tending to the spiritual needs of the employees by providing them space and opportunities to perform their religious obligations. However, they could further utilise spirituality to enhance their culture, by accommodating accepting mind-sets that allow individuals to express themselves, and be tolerant towards the differences they perceive within one another by harnessing trust, respect and loyalties. The organisations can achieve these changes by investing in training programs, and by creating opportunities for employees to come together on a regular basis, creating group cohesion and incorporation of group incentives to achieve organisational goals.

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