Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Commitment: A Case Study of Water and Sanitation Agencies of Punjab, Pakistan

Wahab Shahbaz[a]*, Dr. Muhammad Mudasar Ghafoor[b]

[a]*Research Scholar, Pakistan*
[b]*Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, University of the Punjab, Gujranwala Campus, Pakistan*
[a]*Email: wahab006@yahoo.com*
[b]*Email: mudasar@pugc.edu.pk*

Abstract

The Water and Sanitation agencies (WASAs) of Punjab, Pakistan are responsible for providing basic municipals services including water supply, sanitation and drainage to the citizens in the urban areas of the province. The performance of these agencies can substantially influence the overall productivity of society in terms of socio-economic development and, human and environment health. Organizational commitment of employees exhibits their likely to remain in the organization for a long time and their devotion towards organizational performance. Modern organizations are integrating spirituality into the workplace in order to obtain its individual benefits like peace, job satisfaction and meaningful work, as well as organizational benefits like productivity, commitment, and employee's retention. The purpose of this research is to determine the role of workplace spirituality in predicting overall organizational commitment of employees working in WASAs of Punjab, Pakistan. Structured questionnaire is used for data collection and significance of relationship between the research variables is determined through Cronbach's alpha, ANOVA, Pearson's Correlation and regression analysis.

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* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: wahab006@yahoo.com

The results of this study revealed that there is significant positive relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment of employees. The study has enhanced the understanding of researchers and practitioners of organizational development and management that employees performance can be improved by instilling spirituality at workplace. The study has also provided direction to future researchers of organizational development and management.

Keywords: Workplace Spirituality; Organizational Commitment; WASAs; Organizational Performance

1. Introduction

Safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene are essential elements of a society to ensure community and environmental health because these facilities satisfy basic human needs and maintain natural ecosystem. Various water and sanitation departments around the world provide basic municipal services including drinking water supply, sanitation and drainage to the citizens in their respective country. The significance of these departments may be traced from developed countries like, in Australia; each state has its own water commission and environmental protection agency which is responsible for natural resources, sanitation and water supply. These agencies work under the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and the Minister of Trade. In England, there are three departments responsible for water supply and sanitation services that include water services regulation authority, environment agency and drinking water inspectorate. In France and Germany, water supply and sanitation system is the responsibility of Government municipalities at local level. However in China, water supply and sanitation system is shared between five ministries, whereas local government plays a substantial role in terms of financing and providing water supply and sanitation services in main urban areas.

Pakistan is the world's sixth most populous country with 173.5 million people and its province Punjab has major portion of its population with approximately 56% of country's total population. In 2010, the total urban population of Punjab was 38 million and five largest cities (Lahore, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala and Multan) had a population of 19.5 million or 50% of the total urban population of Punjab.

Pakistan is facing numerous challenges with respect to drinking water supply, including over population, pollution, water scarcity and lack of wastewater treatment system. WASAs of Pakistan are the potential departments that support the country in facing these challenges by providing safe drinking water, sanitation and drainage system to the citizens. Provision of adequate and efficient municipal services to the citizen make these departments a potential engine for socio-economic growth, better community and environment health. The economic and social performance of Pakistan is closely related to economic growth and social development of five major cities of Punjab including Lahore, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala and Multan because among Punjab's urban population, over 50% live in these cities of Punjab. WASAs in these cities, are working under city level development authorities these include Lahore development authority, Faisalabad development authority, Rawalpindi development authority, Gujranwala development authority and Multan development authority. Organizational development and strengthen human capacities are essential for effective and efficient working of these departments. International donor agencies like USAID, The World Bank and Japan International Cooperation Agency are working with WASAs through different capacity building and

development projects to enhance working conditions and performance of these agencies. Organizational development through improved performance of employees is one of the most effective tools to enhance performance of the organization.

Today's organizations are trying to satisfy the spiritual needs of their employees by providing a more humanistic environment through workplace spirituality where they find purpose and meaning of their life at work. Multinational organizations created programs to bring spirituality at work because it creates win-win situation for both employees and the organization. For example, Hewlett-Packard support spirituality at work through the company philosophy that emphasizes the value of mutual trust and respect and ultimately contributes towards cooperation and sharing a sense of purpose [7]. Intel, PepsiCo and Coca-Cola allow employees to make their own prayer groups; similarly employees who meet at noontime in gatherings are themselves and better listen to their subordinates [9]. The spiritual paradigm essentially recognizes that people work not only with their hands, but also with their hearts or spirit [5]. Workplace Spirituality can help employees in recognizing and understanding meanings in their lives and therefore improve their behavior at work. It can be considered as a step towards organizational development through improved performance of employees. Several researchers advances the idea that workplace spirituality enhance the organizational commitment of employees, the authors in [8] proposed that workplace spirituality has a positive impact on their organizational citizen behaviour and organizational commitment. Authors in [11] revealed that how workplace spirituality predicts employees work attitudes including job involvement, intentions to leave, organizational commitment, intrinsic work satisfaction and self-esteem. The findings of his study were based on three dimensions of workplace spirituality i.e. meaningful work that explains commitment, intrinsic work satisfaction, job involvement and self-esteem, the sense of community that explain employees attitude and employees value alignment with the organizational mission explains organizational commitment and intention to quit the organization. According to Author in [15] leaders who are more developed in terms of workplace spirituality by bringing mind, heart and soul into employees individually and collectively can help organizations to enhance sense of community as a basis of organizational performance.

The reasoning leads to the formation of our hypothesis that workplace spirituality influences the organizational commitment of employees working in five WASAs of Punjab, Pakistan. The study investigated the association between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment of employees working in five WASAs of Punjab, Pakistan. The results of this study showed that there is a significant positive relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment of employees working in WASAs. Furthermore, years of work experience of employees in WASA have to do with overall organizational commitment. More committed employees are tend to exert more efforts to their work and contribute significantly in overall organizational performance. It is because a humanistic organization that provides a meaningful workplace facilitates employees to achieve their self-esteem, peace, satisfaction and personal growth. Employees with greater mental, emotional and spiritual satisfaction work more effectively and efficiently for the organization and are more devoted towards increasing organizational productivity.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Workplace Spirituality

Authors in [5] define workplace spirituality as recognition of an inner life by the employee that is nourished by meaningful work in the context of community by using spiritual intelligence. Workplace spirituality is a culture in working environment where employees seek to find meaning and purpose in their work and want to connect with the other employees and be a part of the community. Initially spirituality was considered as a religious tendency which is highly personal and philosophical but current literature acknowledges that workplace spirituality is a sense of connectedness and wholeness at work. Workplace spirituality is about employees experiences based on personal values and philosophy [9]. One cannot separate spirituality from an individual expression of work as it predicts the personality of an individual. Author in [16] argued that spirituality is a complex but measurable construct that extends beyond religiousness, it is an essential element that fall within the parameters of the study of personality. Further, he argued that five factor model of personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism) is incomplete without considering spirituality. Modern organizations are integrating spirituality into their workplace in order to obtain its individual as well as organization benefits. Several reasons have been given at different time to explain why spirituality at workplace has become such an important issue these days, these justifications include the organizational shift towards creating a humanistic environment, growing concern for work life balance whereas some believes that workplaces have become impersonal and even insecure environments and this insecurity in the workplace increased the importance of spirituality at workplace [23]. After studying the concept of workplace spirituality, now the discussion turns to organizational commitment.

2.2. Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is defined as the individual's feelings of responsibility to remain attached with the organization. Authors in [19] claimed that committed employees feel proud to the part of organization and likely to remain in the organization. Organizations with many committed employees, gain competitive advantage, effectively implement business strategies, accomplish their goals and enhance employees productivity. Furthermore, committed employees are less likely to resign or absent, share responsibilities, project higher loyalty, possess lower work stress and produce higher performance towards their organization. According to Authors in [18] revealed that there are three components of commitment, firstly, affective commitment deals with identification with, involvement in and emotional attachment with the organization. Second, continue commitment deals with employee perceived costs related with quitting the organization. Third, normative commitment deals with feelings of obligation towards organization. These components of commitment increase the chances that employees will remain in the organization by decreasing turnover intentions and also reduce absenteeism, enhance performance and organizational citizenship behavior.

2.3. Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Commitment

Spirituality at workplace gives employees an opportunity to do meaningful work, improve their self-esteem, satisfaction, pleasure and personal growth. Consequently, employees bring their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual efforts into the organization, which in turn makes them more affectively attached to their organizations and more committed to improve organizational performance. Self-actualization, the Last level of Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory is a quest for spirituality enlightenment after basic needs and also serves as

motivational force to operate individual behaviour. Later on, in (1969) Maslow amended his model but introducing self-transcendence as motivational step beyond self-actualization. Self- transcendence is a state in which the individual pursues something beyond personal benefit in order to achieve greater cause, union with a power beyond the self, service to community as an expression of identification beyond the individual ego [13]. Authors in [4] found that workplace spirituality lead employees to experience consciousness, purposefulness, enhance intuitive abilities, teamwork, personal growth and development. Enhancing spirituality into the workplace can be seen as an approach to organizational development by enabling the expression of values including reliability, loyalty and corporate citizenship [20]. Authors in [3] emphasized that workplace spirituality is a type of treatment for the problems of contemporary management and a source to develop the reliance between employer and employee and contributed towards organizational performance. Authors in [3,14] also provided theoretical and experimental evidences in literature that workplace spirituality not only lead increased employees outcomes such as increased positive human psychological and physical welfare but also improve employee productivity, effectiveness, commitment and reduced absenteeism and turnover. Workplace spirituality is strongly associated with the employee working behavior and can affect the organizational performance. Authors in [12] indicated employees who enjoy their work and feel that they are meaningful would become more committed to their work and also alignment between personal and organisational values results in increasing organizational commitment. The literature review of workplace spirituality and organizational commitment leads to the formation of our hypothesis of this study that:

H1:   There is a significant relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment of employees

H2:   The greater the workplace spirituality, the greater the organizational commitment of employees

3. Methodology

3.1. Population

The population of this study is the employees working in five WASAs of Punjab, Pakistan including WASA-Lahore, WASA-Faisalabad, WASA-Rawalpindi, WASA-Gujranwala and WASA-Multan.

3.2. Sample

The target respondents for this research study are all officers of grade 17 and above working in WASA-Lahore, WASA-Faisalabad, WASA-Rawalpindi, WASA-Gujranwala and WASA-Multan. Officer's grade has been selected as a sample because official cadres are believed to be the decision makers of their respective departments and their organizational commitment is essential for overall organizational performance. In order to ensure that respondents are familiar with and contribute towards workplace spirituality and organizational commitment, the respondents selected for this study were required to have worked for atleast 03 years in the organization. A brief summary of number of officers working in five WASAs of Punjab, Pakistan is given in table 1.

Table 1: Number of officers working in five WASAs of Punjab, Pakistan

Official Grade	Lahore	Faisalabad	Rawalpindi	Gujranwala	Multan
17	91	76	14	9	21
18	41	9	7	2	10
19	7	13	5	3	-
20	1	-	1	-	-
Total	**140**	**98**	**27**	**14**	**31**

3.3. Instruments and measure

A structure questionnaire was adopted from two different studies. In order to measure workplace spirituality the questionnaire developed by Author in [5] were adopted that comprised of 17 questions. Similarly, organizational commitment was measured by using a 09 items questionnaire developed by Author in [21]. This measuring instrument utilized a five-point Likert scale where point 1 is strongly disagree to point 5 is strongly agree. These questions have been shown in questionnaire Appendix A. The questionnaire was distributed to all officers mentioned above through emails or hard copies. Out of 310 distributed questionnaires only 74 measureable data was received from the respondents. Others questionnaire were either incomplete or did not respond at all. Cronbach's alpha, ANOVA, Pearson's Correlation and regression analysis were used to determine the significance of relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

It has been presented in Table 2 that Cronbach's Alpha value of scale of workplace spirituality, organizational commitment and overall scale of two variables is in acceptable range of Alpha which shows overall reliability of scale. The Cronbach's Alpha value for workplace Spirituality scale is 0.573 and for Organizational Commitment scale it is 0.620 and for overall scale of two variables is 0.709, it shows that the scale used for both variables is reliable and affirm accurate results of the study.

Table 2: Reliability Analysis of Questionnaire

Variables Name	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Workplace Spirituality	0.573	17
Organizational Commitment	0.620	15
Overall reliability	0.709	32

Table 3: Pearson's Correlations Analysis

		Workplace Spirituality	**Organizational Commitment**
Workplace Spirituality	Pearson Correlation	1	0.408*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	74	74
Organizational Commitment	Pearson Correlation	0.408*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	74	74

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The results in Table 3 reveal the value of Pearson's Correlation among workplace spirituality and organizational commitment. It summarizes the values of Pearson's Coefficient of correlation and its significance. It is evident from the results that workplace spirituality is positively correlated with organizational commitment as the value of Pearson's Correlation Coefficient is 0.408 and relation is significant at 99% confident level. Therefore our first hypothesis H1 is accepted because there is a moderate but significant correlations exist between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment of employees. Furthermore, the value of correlation shows a positive relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment, which means that the value of organizational commitment increase with the increase in the value of workplace spirituality so our H2 is also accepted.

Table 4: Regression Analysis

	Unstandardized Coefficient Beta	**Std. Error**	**Standardized Coefficient Beta**	**t-Value**	**F**	**R-Square**
Constant	1.383	0.442		3.132	14.372	
Workplace Spirituality	0.469	0.124	0.408	3.791		0.166

Dependent variable: Organizational Commitment

In Table 4; regression analysis between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment illustrates the value of R-Square is 0.166. It shows that workplace spirituality have moderate positive association with organizational commitment of employees. The regression Coefficient of Beta is 0.408 which shows that employees perceived that 41% positive change in organizational commitment is due to workplace spirituality. The t-value 3.791 reveals relevant importance of workplace spirituality for organizational commitment of employees.

Table 5: Demographic Factor Analysis

	Model	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Official Grade	Between Groups	0.470	2	0.235	1.304	0.278
	Within Groups	12.786	71	0.180		
	Total	13.256	73			
Gender	Between Groups	0.450	1	0.450	2.529	0.116
	Within Groups	12.806	72	0.178		
	Total	13.256	73			
Age	Between Groups	0.842	3	0.281	1.582	0.201
	Within Groups	12.414	70	0.177		
	Total	13.256	73			
Experience	Between Groups	1.666	2	0.833	5.102	0.009
	Within Groups	11.590	71	0.163		
	Total	13.256	73			

The significant level of experience is 0.009 which is less than 0.05 and it shows that there is a significant difference in the means of organizational commitment between employees of varying experience groups. Whereas, the significant level of grade, age and gender is greater than 0.05 which shows that there is no significant difference in the means of organizational commitment between employees of varying age, gender and grade.

4.2. Discussion

Water supply and sanitation system are fundamental needs of a developed society. The organizations providing these municipal services can be the catalyst for overall socio-economic growth and community and environment health. Organizational development through improved performance of employees can benefit not only the organization but also the society as a whole. The results of the study suggested that there is a positive correlation exists between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment of employees. Furthermore, work experience of employees effect overall organizational commitment. The study has contributed towards filling a gap in the organizational development and management literature. It is a guide for decision makers and practitioners of public sector organizations that they have a crucial role in promoting organizational commitment and organizational performance. The study has also enhanced the understanding of researchers regarding workplace spirituality and organizational commitment of employees.

Few studies have been found in literature on workplace spirituality in Asian context. This study is unique in providing comprehensive study on workplace spirituality in public sector organization of Pakistan. Furthermore, the respondents of this study were officers from five mega cities of Punjab, Pakistan that increase generalizability of study. The study has highlighted the benefits of spirituality towards organizational

performance, the Human Resource Managers in public sector organizations may use this study as reference to consider spirituality an important factor of personality assessment while hiring of new employees i.e. candidate for employment with higher spiritual values may be weighted higher than others as he would be beneficial for the organization in the long run. In addition, public sector organizations can arrange spiritual development programs like group prayers, self-awareness trainings or workshops, learning meditation and ceremonial acts to improve their working environment, organizational commitment and productivity.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1. Conclusion

The study has concluded that workplace spirituality has to do with employees inner life and search for meaningful work in the context of community and predicts the significant variance of organizational commitment in public sector organizations. The results suggest that organizations that intend to improve their performance are required to enhance workplace spirituality through different spiritual development programs because workplace spirituality plays a vital role in predicting the commitment of employees at work leading to improve organizational performance. The finding of the study revealed that a moderate positive association exists between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment of employees. Certainly, one of the biggest challenges in an employee's life is not just to obtain financial success but also to establish and maintain balance among personal, work and spiritual life. Employees who are spiritually satisfied can bring their whole into their work and can make a difference through their work. The findings of this study are consistent with theoretical and experimental evidence provided by Authors in [3,6] suggesting that in a spiritual workplace employees feel accomplished and apply their full potential to their work and thus are more productive for their organization than employees in other organizations where spirituality is ignored.

5.2. Recommendation

The findings of the study have suggested that organizations should include spirituality in their management and research agendas because if organizations satisfy the spiritual needs of their employees it will result into individual as well as organizational benefits. The present study has a limitation due to its narrow but acceptable sample. Other agencies / departments working in this sector can be included to enlarge sample size and make the findings more extensive. Furthermore, it would be interesting to consider the influence of various spiritual development programs like group prayers, learning meditation and ceremonial act on the individual and organizational spiritual growth. A longitudinal research study may also be conducted in future with data collection from respondents at different time intervals.

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