An Examination of Proxy Measures of Workplace Spirituality: A Profile Model of Multidimensional Constructs

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The purpose of this paper is to suggest a theoretical foundation to operationalize the constructs of spirituality from existing established measures. Several constructs from existing literature - perceived organizational support, affective organizational commitment, and intrinsic job satisfaction are used to measure aspects of workplace spirituality. As a result, a profile model of multidimensional constructs is used to explain the conceptual relationships.

Spirituality in the workplace is purported to benefit organizations at three levels, the societal level, organizational level, and the individual or employee level. The main function that workplace spirituality serves at the societal level is that "it increases our confidence and competence in the power of goodness" (Miller, 2001, p. 3). One example of this confidence and competence can be seen in greater levels of social responsibility by a growing number of organizations.

Lloyd (1990) found that organizations with greater workplace spirituality outperformed organizations with little or no workplace spirituality by 86 percent. Also, organizations that embraced workplace spirituality grew faster, increased efficiencies, and had higher rates of return, as compared with organizations that do not (Jurkiewicz and Giacalone, 2004). Konz and Ryan (1999) assert that top management spirituality is "enunciated" within the firm culture. This culture also affects human resources. Thus, Marques (2005) discusses the role of human resources in establishing spirituality. In addition, if spirituality can be linked to financial ramifications, such as turnover, productivity, and growth, it can only help its prevalence in today's business world. Hence, any relationship between spirituality and some aspect of business that affects the bottom line is a worthwhile endeavor.

Some individual level benefits of workplace spirituality include "increased physical and mental health of employees, advanced personal growth, and enhanced sense of self worth" (Krahnke, Giacalone, and Jurkiewicz, 2003, p. 397). Mohamed, Wisnieski, Askar, & Syed (2004: 104) propose, "the stronger the spiritual factor of personality the more tolerant the person is of work failure and less susceptible to stress. Mitroff and Denton (1999: 86), assert that workplace spirituality benefits individuals by allowing them to realize their full potentials and "develop their complete self at work. Therefore, workplace spirituality is a pervasive force that affects individuals and organizations at multiple levels.

Three Dimensions of Spirituality

Overview

McCormick (1994) defines spirituality as an inner experience an individual has that can be evidenced by his or her behavior. Neck and Milliman (1994: 9) define spirituality as "expressing our desires to find meaning and purpose in our lives and is a process of living out one's set of deeply held personal values. Dehler and Welsh (1994) discuss how spirituality is an individual's inner source of inspiration. "The basic feeling of being connected with one's complete self, others, and the entire universe, is how Mitroff and Denton (1999) define spirituality. Therefore, spirituality is generally viewed as some internal value,

belief, attitude, or emotion. Nonetheless, individual spirituality is considered an internal substance that affects people's behavior. Consequently, the dimensions of spirituality can be measured by use of proxy measures that capture aspects of an individual's internal state.

Although there are different levels of spirituality, as discussed previously, each of the measures used in this research focus on the individual employee level. This is in part due to the nature of workplace spirituality. According to Konz and Ryan (1999), the organizational culture stems from the spiritual substance within the founders and leaders of an organization. This is communicated via the organization's mission, vision, policies, and procedures. Therefore, the "key to maintaining an organizational culture is the philosophy and values of the organization's leader" (Konz and Ryan, 1999: 203). This sentiment is echoed in Marques' (2005) discussion concerning human resources role in establishing workplace spirituality. As a result, whether spirituality is labeled as individual or organizational, it stems from the internal substance of people. This means that spirituality at the organizational level will still stem from individuals.

Three measures with established validity were chosen as proxy measures for the components of spirituality; perceived organizational support, affective organizational commitment, and intrinsic job satisfaction. These measures were chosen after synthesis of many studies attempting development of measures of spirituality through both empirical and qualitative means (Greenwald & Harder, 2003; Milliman et al., 2003; Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Sheep, 2004). These studies, while seemingly empirically and methodologically sound, each had significant and independent findings. In addition, these studies did not evaluate the possibility that spirituality could be a new way of describing a combination of established independent constructs. As a result, a conceptual hole in the foundation of the spirituality literature became evident. Why develop new measures of workplace spirituality when combinations of existing established constructs can be used?

Although perceived organizational support, affective organizational commitment, and intrinsic job satisfaction are attitudinal measures,

they were used because they intuitively fit the dimensions of spirituality. Theory is used to further develop these relationships in this manuscript, and empirical analysis is used to illustrate the nature of the workplace spirituality model. So, these measures represent a beginning point in which to investigate the measurement of spirituality. This is not to say that other constructs that measure values and beliefs could not also be incorporated to help measure spirituality. Since this stream of research is still in its infancy exacting definitions describing spirituality have not been developed, however, through continued replications, application, and theoretical development of conceptual models, spirituality can be intersubjectively certified.

Self-Work Immersion

The ability to bring one's whole self or one's spirituality to the workplace is one dimension of workplace spirituality that consistently arises as a topic of concern for researchers. Many authors have struggled to define this notion with varying levels of success. One perspective of this dimension includes the expression of an organization's spiritually based philosophy (Wagner-Marsh and Conley, 1999), while others use terms like "holism" and "wholeness" (Bell and Taylor, 2001). Mitroff and Denton (1999, p. 84), describe this notion as "immense spiritual energy that is at the core of everyone." According to Csikszentmihalyi (1990) this intense feeling can be described as "flow".

Although the dimension of workplace spirituality is somewhat nebulous, an empirical examination requires some way of operationalizing this concept. Dehler and Welsh (1994), illustrate this dimension of spirituality within the confines of organizational development. Organizational development is a bottom-up individual level process that relies on "change attitudes as a means to alter behavior" (Dehler and Welsh, 1994, p. 2). Thompson (2003) discusses spirituality in the context of making professional training available at the workplace to develop an individual's sense of spirituality. "A framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promote employee's experience of transcendence through the work process, is how Krahnke et al. (2003,

p.397), described the role of the organization in bolstering spirituality. This means that employees cannot bring their full spiritual selves to a workplace that does not support them. Employees must believe the organization supports and realizes their spiritual component.

Each perspective used to describe this dimension of workplace spirituality focuses on the workplace. Simply put, to operationalize this particular dimension, we are interested in assessing individual employees' perceptions of the organization. Therefore, in this paper the dimension of workplace spirituality that involves bringing one's whole self to work, is operationalized as perceived organizational support.

High levels of perceived organizational support demands the recognition of an employee's inner life by organizations (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000). Eisenberger, Fasolo, and Davis-LaMastro (1990), defined perceived organizational support as an employees' perception that the organization values and cares for them. When an organization develops an environment where employees perceive they are valued and cared for as individuals, the organization is communicating that the job is only a part of the whole employee. Employees feel as though the organization values them as a whole human being, not just the employment or job aspect of the individual. As a result, employees feel encouraged to bring their "whole" selves to work and not just their work only characteristics. Jacques (1996) discusses the importance of organizational support in fully developing the individual including his or her spirituality. In addition, high levels of perceived organizational support are positively related to behaviors such as innovation, decreased absences, increased performance, increased feelings of affiliation, and stronger expectancies of material and social rewards (Eisenberger et al. 1990). Consequently, Colbert, Mount, Harter, Witt, and Barrick (2004) found that employees who perceived low levels of organizational support reciprocated by withholding effort on the job. The defining element of this relationship is that when an employee perceives high organizational support, the employee is able to engage more of themselves into their work. Evidence of this can be found throughout the literature that discusses outcomes of

perceived high levels of organizational support (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, and Rhoades, 2001).

Since most of today's organizations seek greater levels of commitment, production, and efficiency, from employees, they must begin to care for the whole person (Bell and Taylor, 2001). Caring for the whole person starts with organizations recognizing "that employees have an inner life related to the soul and accessed through practices such as meditation, self-reflection and prayer" (Bell and Taylor, 2001, p. 2). Therefore, it is crucial that employees perceive that an organization recognizes and supports their whole being so employees are able to immerse themselves completely into their work, thereby reciprocating by increasing their commitment, production, and efficiency, instead of withholding effort on the job.

Interconnectedness

One of the more agreed upon dimensions of workplace spirituality is the notion of interconnectedness. Interconnectedness can simply be defined as the feeling of being part of something bigger than the self. According to Mitroff and Denton (1999), if only one single word could be used to describe workplace spirituality it would be interconnectedness. Bell and Taylor (2001, p. 2) go so far as to say that previous research on interconnectedness "suggests that work organizations are our most significant community, replacing institutions such as the church. A study conducted in November and December of 2002 by the Gallup Organization measured the commitment level of a sample of adults in the United States. The bottom lines of the results were those individuals who were committed to a faith community were more spiritual than those who were not committed to a faith community. The significance of this finding is that individuals who were connected with others exhibited greater levels of spirituality than did those individuals who were not connected with others. Jurkiewicz and Giacalone (2004), describe interconnectedness as a relationship to others that provides positive feelings. Burack (1999) discusses the need for trust in relationships to bolster workplace spirituality. Therefore, the salient construct of interconnectedness is

seemingly the depth of relationships at the workplace.

The operationalization of the dimensions of spirituality is paramount because of the lack of empirical research on the topic. Thus, interconnectedness must be operationalized in such a way as to capture the depth of workplace relationships.

Since we have established a theoretical basis for viewing the interconnectedness dimension of workplace spirituality as the depth of workplace relationships, affective commitment may be used as a means of measurement of this notion. Allen and Meyer (1990, p.2) characterize affective commitment as an "emotional attachment to the organization such that the strongly committed individual identifies with, is involved in, and enjoys membership in, the organization." Kanter (1968, p.507) says this type of commitment is "the attachment of an individual's fund of affectivity and emotion to the group." An employees' perception of his or her role being an interrelated and important part of the organization as a whole, is an additional way of describing affective organizational commitment (Buchanan, 1974). To further support this notion of interconnectedness being operationalized as affective commitment, we can look at the work of Mowday, Porter and Steers (1979). They described affective organizational commitment as "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization" (Mowday et al., 1979, p. 226). In addition, Mitroff and Denton (1999), discuss how greater interconnectedness at work breeds greater commitment to the organization. Thus, interconnectedness will be operationalized as affective commitment in this research effort.

Self-Actualization

The final dimension of workplace spirituality in this writing is self-actualization, which borrowed from Abraham Maslow's (1943) work on human motivation. According to Burack (1999), self-actualization is when the spirit meshes with the mind via work. King and Nicol (1999) describe the process of self-actualization as developing the full potential of the individual through work. Dehler and Welsh (1994) equate self-actualization to intrinsic

motivation in work. Butts (1999) also uses the term self-actualization to denote the human growth and development through work.

The common theme in using Maslow's term of self-actualization is that it usually entails both the mental and spiritual aspects of the individual and work as a component. How then can an individual's growth be operationalized? Since Burack (1999) states that the highest level of work is spiritual and mental, then some measurement of work should be reliable. Milliman, Czaplewski, and Ferguson (2003) discuss intrinsic job satisfaction in terms of achievement, personal reward, and growth. Likewise, Lucas (1985) asserts that employment that provides opportunities for personal growth and self-actualization is positively related to intrinsic job satisfaction. Therefore, intrinsic job satisfaction can be used as a measurement of self-actualization, or personal growth, at work.

Three conceptual dimensions of workplace spirituality have been discussed in this paper. The first dimension is self-work immersion, which is defined as the extent to which employees are supported by the organization in bringing their spiritual selves to work, or perceived organizational support. The second dimension is the extent to which employees experience interconnectedness, measured as affective organizational commitment. Finally, the extent in which employees self-actualize or experience spiritual and mental growth through work is measured as intrinsic job satisfaction.

Conceptual Model

According to Law and Wong (1998), there are three distinct models of multidimensional constructs; the "latent", "aggregate", and "profile" models. The "profile model" and the "aggregate model" are very similar; however, one key difference is whether or not the dimensions can be combined algebraically (Law & Wong, 1998). Previous research has developed sufficient levels of construct validity for each of the three organizational behavior constructs of concern. Each of these variables, AOC, POS, and IJS, is theorized to be related but distinct, respectively. Therefore, the profile model is used to classify the conceptual model of workplace spirituality.

The profile model of multidimensional constructs allows for several constructs to be put

together to describe different profiles, based on the differing combinations of the levels of those constructs.   Three such constructs are theoretically developed in this manuscript; however, this is by no means an exhaustive list of constructs that may help to develop this model of spirituality. As a result, the different profiles can then be categorized, which is out of the scope of this research.

Methods

Sample

The sample is from an unused portion of a much larger data set.   Respondents were recruited through various employers and employment agencies to complete an online survey, which consisted of a multitude of measures. Total population was 1076. Original responses were pruned down to 228 relevant responses resulting in a 21.2% response rate. This reduction is due to erroneous data input, missing data, and corrupted data fields. Respondents consisted of management and professional level employees in 14 different industries, in the southwest region of the United States.   Males comprised 54% of the sample with an average age of 33.76 years, while females comprised 46% of the sample with an average age of 33.12 years.

Measures

A reliability analysis was conducted for each of the three factor variables. Self-work immersion was measured using three items from Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa's (1986) scale of POS. Responses are measured using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 "Strongly Disagree" to 5 "Strongly Agree". Coefficient alpha was 0.77 for the three items measuring perceived organizational support. Organizational support items were: "My organization values my contribution to its well-being, "My organization strongly considers my goals and values," and "My organization really cares about my well-being."

Interconnectedness was measured using a 5-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Six items created by Meyer, Allen, and Smith's (1993) scale of AOC: "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with my organization," "I really feel as if

this organization's problems are my own," "I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my organization," "I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to my organization," "My organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me," and "I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization." Coefficient alpha was 0.84.

Finally, the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss, Davis, England, and Lofquist, 1967) was used to measure self-actualization.   The scale consisted of an eighteen-item 5-point Likert scale. Reliability analysis revealed a coefficient alpha of 0.92.

Operationalization

Three dimensions of spirituality have been discussed;   self-work   immersion, interconnectedness,   and   self-actualization. Theory has been developed to demonstrate how each of these can be measured via established organizational behavior variables.   Therefore, self-work immersion is operationalized as perceived organizational support (POS), interconnectedness   is   operationalized   as affective organizational commitment (AOC), and self-actualization is operationalized as intrinsic job satisfaction (IJS).

Analysis

Correlations

A correlation table was constructed to test for relationships between each of the study variables (Figure 2).   The three measures of spirituality; perceived organizational support, affective organizational commitment, and intrinsic job satisfaction were each positively and significantly related to one another.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed using LISREL 8.7. First, in order to assess the hypothesized structure, items from perceived organizational support, affective organizational commitment, and intrinsic job satisfaction were each loaded on separate factors. These factors were labeled (SWI), for self-work   immersion,   (INT),   for interconnectedness, and (SAZ), for self-actualization, respectively.   Several fit indices were examined (Figure 1), to determine model fit. The Chi^2 measure of fit was acceptable (p =

0.000, $X^2 = 83.99$, df = 32). The goodness of fit index (GFI), measures the quality of the model. Since the GFI = 0.93, the model has a sufficient level of quality. The normed fit index (NFI), compares the fit of the null model to the fit of the theoretical model. The NFI = 0.95, and indicates a good fit compared to the null model. The adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI), accounts for increases in fit due to chance. The AGFI = 0.87, which indicates an acceptable fit. The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.086, which was somewhat high, but deemed satisfactory. Finally, the root mean square residual (RMR) = 0.090, which was also deemed satisfactory.

Figure1: Confirmatory Factor Analysis results using LISREL 8.7

Model	Chi2	p	df	GFI	NFI	AGFI	RMSEA	RMR
Hyp	83.99	0.000	32	0.93	0.95	0.87	0.086	0.090
Alt1	255.99	0.003	35	0.79	0.84	0.66	0.180	0.140
Alt2	119.95	0.048	34	0.90	0.93	0.83	0.110	0.120

Alternative measurement model 1 loaded each of the items from perceived organizational support, affective organizational commitment, and intrinsic job satisfaction on one factor called SPIRIT. Alternative 1 had an unacceptable Chi^2 measurement of fit (p = 0.003, $X^2 = 255.99$, df = 35). The GFI = 0.79, NFI = 0.84, and AGFI = 0.66, further adding evidence of a poor fit. The RMSEA = 0.180 and RMR = 0.140, which was unacceptably high for a well fitting model.

Alternative 2 loaded each of the items from perceived organizational support, affective organizational commitment, and intrinsic job satisfaction on one two factors called SPIRIT1 and SPIRIT2. This alternative fit somewhat better than alternative1, however, the fit was still not acceptable. The Chi^2 measurement of fit was still unacceptable (p = 0.048, $X^2 = 119.95$, df = 34). The GFI = 0.90 and NFI = 0.93, which was acceptable, however, the AGFI = 0.83, RMSEA = 0.110, and RMR = 0.120, which is interpreted as poor model fit.

The results of confirmatory factor analysis supported the hypothesized model fit where perceived organizational support, affective organizational commitment, and intrinsic job satisfaction each loaded on separate and distinct factors. Although each of these variables are correlated (Figure 2), they each load on different factors. This provides further evidence that these three established variables fit the overall spirituality model where each factor is correlated, but describes a specific part of spirituality respectively.

Figure 2: Correlation table of perceived organizational support (POS), affective organizational commitment (AOC), and intrinsic job satisfaction (IJS).

	POS	AOC	IJS
POS	1.000		
AOC	.660**	1.000	
IJS	.531**	.693**	1.000

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Discussion

The purpose of this paper is to develop measures of spirituality from existing valid measures from the organizational behavior literature. We examine how three theoretical components of spirituality, perceived organizational support, affective organizational commitment, and intrinsic job satisfaction, theoretically mesh with the components of workplace spirituality.

The operationalized constructs of workplace spirituality used in this study have theoretical grounding in past research in differing research streams. For instance, Eisenberger et al., (1986) and Eisenberger et al., (1990) developed the notion of perceived organizational support. Affective organizational commitment was found to be a distinguishable dimension of organizational commitment by Meyer et al., (1993). The development of intrinsic job satisfaction and its application has been extensively studied (Bagozzi, 1980; Enis and Lucas, 1984; Lopez, 1982; Porter and Lawler, 1968).

There has been very little research in regards to operationalizing the constructs of spirituality. Most previous research has developed new scales as an attempt to better describe spirituality. Mitroff and Denton (1999) used qualitative means to establish some definitions of workplace spirituality, mainly interconnectedness and meaningful work. Greenwald and Harder (2003) found empirical evidence to support four main dimensions of spirituality: loving connection to others, self-effacing altruism, blissful transcendence, and religiosity/sacredness. Meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment of values were the workplace spirituality dimensions empirically investigated by Milliman et al., (2003). More recently, Sheep (2004) developed four dimensions of spirituality based on "conceptual convergence" of previous workplace spirituality literature. These four dimensions include self-workplace integration, meaning in work, transcendence of self, and personal growth and development of one's inner life at work.

Each of these studies has produced different and sometimes contrary dimensions and constructs of workplace spirituality with acceptable levels of validity and empirical support. Therefore, a lack of congruence in the dimensions of workplace spirituality is still prevalent. This research, however, offers theoretical and empirical support for an additional starting point towards a way of operationalizing the constructs of spirituality from existing intersubjectively certified dimensions.

Some future research could include the addition of the meaningful work construct of workplace spirituality within this model. This would take considerably more theoretical development to delineate the operationalized constructs. A combination of the person-organization-fit, job satisfaction, motivation, and commitment literature may offer a possible theoretical construct for operationalizing meaningful work.

Limitations

Although this research augments the body of empirical workplace spirituality literature, there are some associated limitations. For instance, a major limitation may be the operationalized variables used to measure the theoretical dimensions of workplace spirituality. Some prior research has sought to develop empirical measures for workplace spirituality; however, to date there has been no intersubjectively certified research. Thus, some of the measures used may be a subject of debate, but each measure has a theoretical basis.

Another limitation of this research is the possibility of correlated mediating variables. Since the dimensions of workplace spirituality are nebulous, at best, as research is expanded, a better-defined set of measurable dimensions will be developed. As these dimensions begin to be operationalized, the relationships between the dimensions will become clearer, and consequently, some correlations may exist. For example, some underlying constructs of interconnectedness may be correlated with growth or self-actualization.

The cross-sectional design and single source data are additional limitations of this research. Longitudinal studies allow stronger causal inferences to be drawn than cross-sectional designs. Although the hypothesized measures are naturally self-report measures, single source self-report data can artificially

increase common method variance. This is a potential problem with self-report measures where individual's rate related variables.

Some variation in the results could potentially be found by controlling for culture. One major potential question could be whether or not the organization purports to be spiritual. Culture is not differentiated in this study.

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