Spirituality: A Path Towards
Sustainable Human Resource Planning

Rumpa Neogi
Komal Raj
St. Xavier's University Kolkata, India

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Abstract

Sustainability has become increasingly important in today's world, as societies face numerous challenges caused by rapid technological advancements, globalization, short-term thinking, and, therefore, the character of labour itself. While many companies around the globe concentrate on materialistic approaches to form a sustainable human resource plan and a stable workforce, the aspect of Spirituality often goes overlooked. This paper explores the connection between workplace spirituality and sustainable human resource planning, analyzing its implications over recent years. Workplace spirituality extends beyond faith and encompasses a broader sense of purpose, meaning, and interconnectedness. It involves recognizing and nurturing the spiritual dimensions of employees, fostering community, and aligning individual values with organizational goals ethically. By integrating Spirituality into the workplace, organizations can create a harmonious environment that promotes well-being, engagement, and sustainability. The pioneering study by Mitroff and Denton (1999) titled "A Study of Spirituality in the Workplace" sheds light on the influence of Spirituality on organizational outcomes. This paper explored Spirituality as a non-material benefit that an organization can imbibe in its staff to create a positive work culture. Past studies have tried to study the implication of Spirituality in HRM, but we have explored the long-term benefit of sustainability by reviewing the related papers. We strongly believe that people have started looking for non-monetary benefits, and Spirituality can be seen as a driver for motivation and satisfaction within the workforce.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study: There was a significant shift in the workforce with 'The Great Resignation' in 2021-22 and 'Quiet Quitting' in 2023. Nearly ten million Americans switched jobs in the last two years due to this global trend. An imbalance in the workforce makes Human Resource Planning more complex. While technology has changed HRM, there is still a need for innovative solutions for a stable workforce and Sustainable HRP.

The interconnectedness of work culture, organizational climate, leadership style, etc., on an employee's job satisfaction level and happiness has been proven, but its scope is unexplored. Research is limited in this area to the extent that no English word explains immense satisfaction, joy, or happiness at work. This paper calls 'ORGANIZATIONAL BLISS' an extreme level of contentment, satisfaction and joy at work. Arbejdsglæde' is a Scandinavian word used by Nordic countries to mean happiness at work. Nordic countries prioritize workplace happiness, as 90% of people there were satisfied with their jobs. The world's happiest countries are those that put a high priority on workplace satisfaction because their citizens are more content and under less stress. Workplace culture and work happiness are positively correlated (Walt, 2007). Research shows that Spirituality, healthy habits, and psychological well-being are related (Boek, 2020). Additionally, a connection between Sustainable HRP and Spirituality was found in our research, suggesting that both are essential for generating organizational happiness.

1.2 Definition and Measurement
1.2.1 Definition

Definition of Spirituality: Spirituality is derived from the Latin word spiritus, which means "breath" or "something which is within the body providing the life force" (Wasner et al., 2005).

Definition of Workplace Spirituality: "Workplace spirituality involves the effort to find one's ultimate purpose in life, to develop a strong connection to co-workers and other people associated with work, and to have consistency (or alignment) between one's core beliefs and the values of their organization." (Mitroff & Denton, 1999)

Definition of Sustainable HRP: Looking at HRP from a long-term perspective, with stable existing manpower and loyal recruits, the current manpower position shifts to the desired state can be stated as Sustainable HRP.

Definition of Sustainable Workforce: Sustainability in the workforce involves short-term action to use human resources in ways that do not deplete resources and also facilitate capabilities to perform in the future. (Kossek, Valcour & Lirio, 2014).

Definition of Sustainable Career: "Sustainable careers allow individuals to have positive career experiences over the long term in ways that promote organizational and individual effectiveness. A sustainable career can be defined as providing (Kossek, Valcour & Lirio, 2014).

1.2.2 Measurement

Measurement of Workplace Spirituality: The various elements used in the past for measuring WPS have been stated below.

o Self Discovery (Illes & Zsolnai, 2015)
o A sense of purpose (Mitroff & Denton, 1999)
o Stress Reduction (Daniel, 2015)
o Meaningful Work (Duchson & Plowman, 2005)
o Aligning one's values with one's work-life (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Mathew L. Sheep, 2004; Rego & Cunha, 2007).
o Transcendence Rego & Cunha, 2007)
o Job Involvement (Swanepoel, 2015)

Measurement of Sustainable HRP: The various variables of a sustainable workforce leading to Sustainable HRP have been stated below.

o Employee Well-being (Kossek, Valcour & Lirio, 2014)
o Work-Life Balance (Kossek, Valcour & Lirio, 2014)
o Psychological Pressure (Fazal et al., 2022)
o Management Practices viz. recruitment, remuneration, etc. (Gutu, Agheorghiesei and Tugui, 2023)

1.3 Research Gap

Spirituality is a very individualized idea, so there is a big gap in the research on WPS.

Due to less research, no theories or evidence exist to establish a relationship between Spirituality in an organizational context and Sustainable HRP.

HRP has not been researched through the lens of sustainability.

There is a lack of innovation in new aspects of personnel which would contribute towards Sustainable HRP.

1.4 Objectives

This paper aims to study Spirituality and sustainability in HRP.

1.5 Novelty and Expected Contribution(s) of the Study

Previous research has demonstrated the link between Spirituality and employee well-being in a work environment. Our review study intends to close the research gap on the relationship between Spirituality and Sustainable HRP.

The paper is expected to contribute towards the growing literature on WPS. Also, this paper is intended to establish a need for research on Sustainable HRP due to rising attrition levels across the globe. Research is done to establish a link between Spirituality and Sustainable HRP.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Spirituality from an Organizational Perspective: WPS measurement is crucial in pursuing meaningful labour that facilitates transcendence. WPS is described as caring for others and having a mindful inner consciousness(Petchsawang & Duchon, 2009). The term "organizational spirituality" (O.S.) refers to both individual and workplace spirituality that is influenced by the environment and company culture as directed by leaders (Rocha & Pinheiro, 2021). Despite its importance, O.S. has not drawn much attention from the general scientific community. The paucity of research focus in this field is indicated by the publication of this research in books, book chapters, and journals with low impact factors (Vasconcelos, 2022). To benefit from Spirituality at work, the company and its employees must implement effective organizational change approaches to promote and embrace Spirituality (Rathee & Rajain, 2020). Workplace spirituality, as seen from an employee's perspective, is the conscious awareness and expression of one's Spirituality at work (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004) under the direction of spiritual leaders inside the organization. Although spiritual leadership is crucial, it is not enough for organizations to succeed in today's fast-paced, internet-driven world (Fry, 2003).

2.2 Employee Engagement, Workplace Spirituality and Sustainable HRP: Workplace spirituality (WPS) is a valuable tool that can improve organizational performance (Ferraz and Bezzara, 2018). Spirituality can improve productivity, leadership, and decision-making skills(Subramaniam & Panchanatham, 2013). Employees gain, as it improves their well-being and quality of life, gives them a feeling of purpose and meaning at work, and fosters a sense of connectivity and community(Karakas, 2010). As per the literature, a sustainable workforce is influenced by several management practices, such as recruitment, remuneration, community, leader-follower relationship, use of resources and digitalization (Gutu, Agheorghiesei & Tugui, 2023). Another study found that WPS instils compassion in responders, allowing them to handle youngsters better. Thus, spiritual components in the workplace help workplace agility to handle changes through job engagement(Saeed, 2022). Another research paper suggests a significant positive relationship between WPS and employees' innovation. Work behaviour and psychological empowerment in a business setup can fully mediate between WPS and employees' innovative work behaviour (Bantha & Nayak, 2021). While reviewing, we came across literature suggesting that several policies can be implemented to increase employee commitment and pride via models of individual spiritual approaches and groups (Utami, 2021).

3. Methodology

To cater to the objective of this paper, WPS and O.S. have been considered, and their effect on employees has been studied. Articles with terms such as "Workplace Spirituality", "Organizational Spirituality", and "Spiritual Intelligence" have been reviewed. Thereafter, articles featuring words such as "Sustainable Workforce", "Workforce Sustainability", and "Sustainable Career" have been referred to.

4. Findings

After examining several articles, we have discovered compelling evidence supporting the claim that Spirituality and Sustainable HRP are positively correlated.
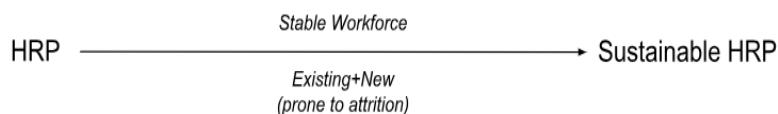
The above diagram shows that HRP with a stable existing and new workforce would lead towards Sustainable HRP. WPS directly affects employee engagement (Margaretha et al, 2021). Implementing WPS has positively impacted employees' performances (Baskar & Indradevi, 2020).

The above flowchart depicts how Spirituality leads to Sustainable HRP. Relationships have been derived from the insights of the literature survey.

5. Discussions and Conclusions

We concluded that Spirituality has a definite relationship with Sustainable HRP. Spirituality can be applied from an organizational perspective where an individual's values do not conflict with the organization's values. This will result in a stable workforce in the long term. Organizational Bliss is the key to Sustainable HRP, which can be achieved via Spirituality at an individual, interpersonal, and organizational level.

6. Limitations and direction for future research:

This paper is limited to a review of the previous work. Also, no direct relationship between Spirituality and Sustainable HRP has been established. The exact result of Spirituality on Sustainable HRP has also not been derived.

Empirical studies should be conducted to define the relation between Spirituality and Sustainable HRP. Future studies should focus on cross-cultural studies in WPS and sustainability in HRP to support and advance inclusion and diversity in organizations. Additionally, it's important to look into how WPS is related to trust, innovative behaviour, sustainable behaviour, and mental and behavioural health. In the workplace, it may also be possible to investigate Spirituality's darker aspects (Mhatre & Mehta, 2023).

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