

Linking Workplace Spirituality to Intrinsic Work Motivation: Seeing through Lens of Self-Determination Theory

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There has been a growing interest among organizational researchers in workplace spirituality area for the last few years (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6). Major research work on workplace spirituality has been addressed in Western context, and little attention was devoted to study it in Eastern context (7). Organizations are now recognizing spiritual dimension at workplace which is characterized by meaningfulness in work and sense of community (8). Theoretical and empirical support is emerging, though with slow pace, on how workplace spirituality could affect positive work outcomes such as creativity, effort, job satisfaction and job performance (3, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13). However, there is dearth of literature viewing the link of workplace spirituality dimensions such as meaning at work and conditions for community to intrinsic motivation through the lens of self-determination theory in banking context of Eastern country (Pakistan).

Practitioners and academics view a motivated work force as a sustainable source of competitive advantage in highly complex, competitive and dynamic work environment. Today, work motivation is considered as fundamental building block for effective management of workforce as popular motivational mantra (14). Such intrinsic work motivation stems from the work itself and positive engagement in tasks (15). Ryan and Deci define intrinsic motivation as “[A] natural inclination toward assimilation, mastery, spontaneous interest, and exploration that is so essential to cognitive and social development and that represents a principal source of enjoyment and vitality throughout life” (16). In this study, intrinsic work motivation is contended as state which can be developed and enhanced by workplace spirituality aspects such as meaning at work and conditions for community. The findings are of practical and theoretical relevance to improve not only understanding of how and to what extent workplace spirituality is related to intrinsic motivation which is critical for satisfied, committed, creative and high performing work force but also make workplace spirituality more legitimate and mainstream research area to

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organizational studies. Therefore, the following research question was addressed in the present study: What relationship does workplace spirituality have with banking employees' intrinsic work motivation?

Literature Review:

One of the difficulties of doing research on the topic of workplace spirituality is to provide a suitable working definition to it. There are numerous definitions due to highly personal and abstract nature of workplace spirituality concept (9). However, meaning at work and sense of community are considered as primary drivers for the nourishment of one's spiritual self at workplace (4, 17). A separate explanation of each relationship is given hereunder with its theoretical and empirical background.

Meaning at Work and Intrinsic Motivation:

Meaning at Work is one of the key ingredients of workplace spirituality(2,18). Ashmos and Duchon define it as "sense of what is important, energizing, and joyful about work" (18). However, conceptualization of "Meaning at Work" goes beyond the notion of job enrichment which entails not only pleasure oriented work (3, 18, 19) but also the work which connects employees not only to some greater good (20) and something important in their lives (3, 18).

Foundational work on internal motivation suggested theoretical and empirical link of meaning at work with intrinsic work motivation (21). Job characteristics model indicates that experienced meaningfulness of work has great potential for the employee to perceive work to be intrinsically motivating (21) which was also supported by subsequent research (22). According to postulations of self-determination theory, employees become intrinsically motivated when they experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness in their work activities (23). If they perceive the task as fun, interesting or meaningful, however, they are likely to engage in them with a sense of volition and psychological freedom (24) resulting into improved intrinsic motivation. SDT-based research suggests that providing meaningful rationale even for uninteresting tasks may endorse them and further incorporate them in their value systems which facilitates the internalization of behaviors (23) resulting into improved intrinsic task motivation (5, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26). As demographic variables may confound the effect of meaning at work on intrinsic task motivation, so the following relationship is expected:

Hypothesis 1: Meaning at work is positively related to intrinsic motivation of banking employees while controlling for the effect of demographic variables such as gender, age and job experience.

Conditions for community and Intrinsic Motivation:

The conception of workplaces as human communities with social functions and societal benefits is taking ground and momentum in organizations (27). Recently, studies indicated that workforce value workplaces where they can feel as part of a community (28). Being critical dimension of individual level workplace spirituality conditions for community has been defined, used in this study, by Ashmos and Duchon as the extent to which employees feel being a part of their work community where they experience personal growth, be valued for themselves as individuals, and have a sense of working together (18). People acquire interests from others, especially others to whom they feel socially connected suggesting that motivation is highly sensitive to social relationships (29). Within self-determination theory, it is assumed that the social context must satisfy the inherent basic psychological need of belongingness besides needs of autonomy and competence. Satisfaction of these needs is considered as crucial for individuals' thriving as water and sunlight is for plants to flourish (23). Therefore, when employees experience feeling of connectedness with their colleagues, their need of belongingness is satisfied which may result into their intrinsic task motivation (30). As demographic variables may confound the effect of conditions for community at work on intrinsic task motivation, therefore the expected positive link between conditions for community and intrinsic motivation is presented as follows:

Hypothesis 2: Perceptions of conditions for community is positively related to intrinsic motivation of banking employees taking into consideration the effect of demographic variables such as gender, age and job experience.

Research Methods:

Cross sectional research design was employed to estimate degree of relationship between workplace spirituality aspects and intrinsic motivation. Structured questionnaires were personally administered to bank non-managerial employees. Majority of eighty seven statistically usable survey respondents were male and married. Average age and overall job experience of respondents were about thirty one and eight years respectively. Validated scales to measure the study constructs were used. Meaning at work and conditions for community constructs were measured by using seven and nine item subscales of workplace spirituality developed by Ashmos and Duchon (18). Whereas intrinsic motivation was measured by using 4-item scale developed by Hackman and Oldham (21). 5-point Likert response format having extreme anchors "1" for "strongly disagree" and "5" for "strongly agree" was employed for the measurement of all constructs of interest. Demographic variables of banking employees such as gender, age

and job experience were used as control variables. Hierarchical regression analytical technique was used for data analysis to test study hypotheses.

RESULTS:

As regards the descriptive statistics, the means of all the study variables were below the mid points of the scales ranged from 2.01 to 2.85 (see table 1)

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Intrinsic Motivation	2.85	0.47	87
Conditions for Community	2.08	0.73	87
Meaning at Work	2.01	0.55	87

Hypothesis Testing:

The table # 2 displays results of hierarchy regression analysis to test hypothesis 1. Intrinsic motivation was first regressed on demographic variables of banking employees such as gender, age and job experience. Interestingly, none of demographic variables was found to be significantly related to intrinsic motivation. However, when intrinsic motivation was regressed on meaning at work along with demographic variables, it contributed about 15 percent unique variance in intrinsic motivation beyond demographic variables. The analysis indicated that meaning at work had highly significant moderate positive relationship with intrinsic work motivation ($\beta = 0.40$, $t = 3.84$, $p < 0.001$) which supports the hypothesis 1.

Table 2: Model Summary ^c									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				β t (sig.)
					R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change	ANOVA F (sig.)	
1	0.08 ^a	0.006	-0.030	0.48	0.006	0.17	0.91	0.17 (0.91) ^a	NS
2	0.40 ^b	0.158	0.117	0.44	0.152	14.76	0.00	3.84 (0.007) ^b	MW: 0.40 3.84 (0.000); NS

a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Job Experience, Age; b. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Job Experience, Age, Meaning at Work (MW); c. Dependent Variable: Intrinsic Motivation; NS: All demographic variables were non-significant

The table # 3 displays the results of hierarchy regression analysis to test hypothesis 2. Regressing intrinsic motivation on demographic variables indicated that neither of them was significantly related to intrinsic motivation. However, when intrinsic motivation was regressed on conditions for community besides demographic variables, it explained 6 percent unique variance in intrinsic motivation beyond demographic variables. The analysis

indicated that conditions for community had significant but weak positive relationship with intrinsic motivation ($\beta=0.25$, $t = 2.29$, $p < 0.02$) which is in line with hypothesis 2.

Table 3: Model Summary ^c									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				β t (sig.)
					R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change	ANOVA F (sig.)	
1	0.079 ^a	0.006	-0.03	0.48042	0.006	0.17	0.914	0.17 (0.91) ^a	NS
2	0.257 ^b	0.066	0.02	0.46862	0.060	5.23	0.025	1.45 (0.23) ^b	CC: 0.25 2.29 (0.02); NS
a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Job Experience, Age; b. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Job Experience, Age, Conditions for Community (CC); c. Dependent Variable: Intrinsic Motivation; NS: All demographic variables were non-significant									

Discussion:

As expected, results indicated that workplace spirituality aspects such as meaning at work and conditions for community had important role in nurturing intrinsic motivation even controlling for the effects of gender, age and job experience. These results can be explained by using tenets of SDT. Both dimensions of meaning of work such as meaning at work and perceptions of workplace as community might have provided meaningful rationale even for uninteresting tasks endorsed by banking employees and further incorporate them in their value systems which facilitates the internalization of their behaviors (23) resulting into improved intrinsic task motivation which is concurrent to empirical and theoretical evidence (5, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26). The findings have practical implications for leadership actions and organizational development endeavors. Leadership and human resource professionals are urged to bring “meaning of work”, meaning at work and conditions for community, to organization strategic agenda to nurture intrinsic motivation of banking employees which could make them more satisfied, committed, hard and smart workers. The study findings suggest some obvious lines of inquiry for future research. Future researchers should use experimental and longitudinal research designs to validate the results of this non-experimental cross sectional based study design. The findings of this study can also be tested for professionals in service sectors other than banking sector to improve its generalizability.

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