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Workplace spirituality and organizational effectiveness: exploration of relationship and moderators

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ABSTRACT

Research on benefits of workplace spirituality is rich in diversity, and has gained traction over the years. However, wider adoption of workplace spirituality initiatives will require sound justification of its ability to improve organizational effectiveness. Assertions about organizational effectiveness being a beneficial outcome of workplace spirituality are predominantly conceptual propositions, or based on narrow perspectives of the construct. Practitioners are under increasing pressure to adopt evidence-based management practices, and must justify investments in development interventions. Based on an eastern perspective of workplace spirituality, this study evaluates the relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational effectiveness as observed among academics in the higher education sector in India. The study establishes empirical evidence of relationship between the two constructs, as well as universality of this relationship across several demographic factors. These outcomes pave the way for wider adoption of workplace spirituality initiatives to improve organizational effectiveness.

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Rationale for the study

The study of spirituality at the workplace, popularly referred to as workplace spirituality, though of relatively recent origin, has gained considerable traction over the years. That the two terms are often used interchangeably is not surprising, as these are not disjointed terms. “*Spiritual development occurs when a person’s interactions with others result in a deeper connection to something beyond the self and awareness of self, which can lead to a growing clarity and commitment to beliefs, values, and purpose, that in turn motivates a way of living that benefits others*” (Ebsteyne King, Clardy, and Ramos 2014). Workplace spirituality is the experiencing of such feelings and sense of purpose in the context of one’s workplace (Kazemipour, Mohamad Amin, and Pourseidi 2012). From a management perspective, researchers have been interested in exploring its varied benefits to individuals in terms of attitudinal traits, which many purport will positively impact organizational effectiveness (Daniel 2010; Fry, Matherly, and Ouimet 2010; Pardasani, Sharma, and Bindlish 2014; Word 2012). However, such assertions about consequent benefits in terms of organizational outcomes have remained at the level of