

A Call to being a Spiritual Leader in the Workplace

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Abstract

The key elements of this study provided new research into spirituality in the workplace and leaders ability to make sound decisions. The purpose of this quantitative correlation study was to examine the relationship between leadership, decision-making, and spirituality. Fry theory of spiritual leadership was the theoretical framework used in the research. Fry theory examined factors that explain the correlation between spirituality, leadership and decision-making in the workplace. Results of the research showed that there is not significant evidence between leadership, decision-making, and spirituality in the workplace. The results from this study may provide significant information to help organizations create strategic plans to improve the decision-making process of leaders in the workplace that involves spirituality. Organizations and leaders may benefit from the utilization of sound decisions made in a spiritually based workplace by assessing the impact and consequences of spirituality in the workplace, while improving the effectiveness of the decision-making process.

Keywords: ethics, leader, leadership, spiritual, spirituality, decision-making, workplace

Spirituality in the Workplace

Spirituality in the workplace began thirty years ago as an unusual phenomenon that caused workers to form the goal of personal change in the workplace (Neal, 2013). Employees might attempt to conceptualize the way in which the workplace may be utilized by viewing the workplace as a state for releasing their spiritualities (Case & Gosling, 2010). Therefore, businesses should give a clear and broader insight to the conceptualization about the what, why and how of workplace spirituality themes. The spirituality based workplace encompasses pathways consisting of human resource development, organizational culture, and organization structure and job design. Human resource practices affect commitment and loyalty and high commitment and loyalty are associated with enhanced workplace performance (Banyhamdan et al., 2012).

Spirituality in the workplace requires simultaneous and steady process that encourages a post-structuralist view to argue that spirituality at work seeks to abolish the distinction between people's value systems, work based lives and their personal lives. In addition, spirituality at work enhances the impact of leaders over followers through the concealment of unidirectional flows from leaders to followers, rather than vice versa (Tourish & Tourish, 2010). Businesses should develop a framework that describes how the personal spiritual beliefs of leadership operate in strategic decision-making and the affect that spirituality and organizational commitment may have on leadership interaction with the employees, and how the outcome affects the employee's job performance, citizenship behavior, retention and emotional well-being (Phipps, 2012).

Businesses should consider the fact that spirituality assists workers in being dependable; it also assists workers in coping with stress (Kelly et al., 2010). Exile and Bright (2011) documented that struggles could occur at the organizational level and that employees may experience private spiritual struggles at work, struggles such as; (a) the pursuit of virtue, (b) anger toward higher power, (c) crises of meaning and (d) shifts in belief. Other conflicts could surround interpersonal disagreement in religious beliefs or values as leadership make decisions on how to encourage expressions of spirituality in the workplace. Meditation can be a valuable spiritual tool to use in the workplace. Petchsawang and Duchon (2012) reported how an organization might enable more productive work practices in a spiritual atmosphere, by arguing that meditation and work performance contribute to spirituality in the workplace. Petchsawang and Duchon (2012) showed that meditation produced a practical relationship between job performance and spirituality. Kazemipour, Amin and Pourseidi (2012) said that spirituality in the workplace explained for a 16% difference in organizational citizenship behavior and a 35% variation of commitment by leadership that affected employees and motivated their desire to work.

Research by Saks (2011) showed that a relationship does exist between spirituality and employees engagement and it consists of three dimensions of spirituality; (a) spiritual values, (b) transcendence and (c) community. The three relate to spirituality and employee engagement through four emotional conditions; (a) meaningfulness at work, (b) availability, (c) safety and (d) meaningfulness in performance. Tombaugh, Mayfield and Durand (2011) mentioned that workers might express their spirituality regardless of their perceptions of the spiritual nature of the business, which measures spirituality in the workplace with a tool call Spiritual Expression at Work (SEW). The results showed that spirituality in the workplace might impart significant personal and organizational outcomes. The results also showed a way to assess workplace spirituality that moved the study beyond existing research, by supporting the convergent, discriminate and predictive validities of the SEW construct. The hypothesized relationship between work attitudes and workplace spirituality was examined by Pawar (2009), which work attitudes consisted of; (a) job involvement, (b) organizational commitment and (c) job satisfaction.

In addition, workplace spirituality involves; (a) positive organizational design, (b) meaning in business and (c) community at work. Lips-Wiersma, Dean and Fornaciari (2009) implied that workplace spirituality consists of control and instrumentality, these are two potentially negative organizational dimensions in which it is impossible for one to define what spirituality means to every person. The culture of an individual or an organization can contribute to the understanding of spirituality in the workplace, because the culture approach to understanding workplace spirituality influence as suggested by Long and Mills (2010) how people can make sense of the organization in which they are members, by contributing to critiques of workplace spirituality and organizational culture. Long and Mills (2010) insight into the conditions that promulgate the linkage work, the spiritual fulfillment inordinate reverence of work, and an individual contribution toward enhanced organizational performance, are of interest to all members of the organization.

Spiritual Leadership and Decision-Making Process in the Workplace

Before addressing situations manager and leaders should take the time to recognize or identify the context that governs particular situation and help management make their decisions. Leadership according to Liu and Robertson (2011) perceives spirituality as a tool to use in identifying personal values of honesty and integrity of employees in the business workplace when making decisions. Smith (2011) argues that many individuals understand and experience religion and spirituality in the workplace and that leadership sees this understanding as a connection with issues of meaning, value, and ultimate significance with making the proper decision when it involves sales and profit.

Business should focus on the area of appreciation. Fagley and Alder (2012) argued that businesses should focus on the area of appreciation and that they should consider happiness as an important factor in workplace. Spirituality and appreciation have several points of commonality and are likely involved in the process of reciprocal causality. Eight aspects of appreciation are considered to be; (a) present moment, (b) interpersonal appreciation, (c) ritual, (d) loss/adversity, (e) awe, (f) self/social comparison, (g) focus on what one have or has and (h) gratitude. The level of support in organizational decision-making should vary with the level or extent of problems or situations that the decision-making face. According to Vasconcelos (2009) a religion based framework might enrich organizational decision-making processes and that rational and non-rational analysis decision-making process might co-exist perfectly in an integrative framework. In addition, Guerra-Lopez and Thomas (2011) presented a data evaluation framework that assisted the decision-makers with the evaluation on how to determine the potential effectiveness of the data use to inform their decisions. In their daily lives decision-makers encounter decision points on a continuous basis and sometimes copious data are available for evaluating and determining the potential effectiveness of data use to inform decisions.

Workplace spirituality is a control measure for unethical behavior in business decision-making. Leader's behavior and approaches do not constitute a specific style, because integrating leadership with the style of leadership in the 21st century will allow leadership to apply spirituality, logic and analytical skills to business activities. The leadership approach connects to the concept of spiritual leadership in the workplace, which makes it very difficult to list the benefits or costs of spirituality to decision-making and leadership in the business workplace (Curtis & O'Connell, 2011).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework referenced in this research was Fry (2003) Spiritual Leadership Theory. The spiritual leadership theory involves a model that incorporates theories of workplace spirituality, to create value congruence across individual levels to foster higher levels of organizational commitment and productivity. According to Fry (2003), the spiritual leadership theory is confluent and the major proposition of the theory is that spiritual leadership is necessary for the transformation to continued success of organizations. Spiritual leadership theory is a response to the call for a holistic leadership that helps to integrate the following four fundamental areas that define human existence in the workplace; (a) logical and rational thoughts, (b) physical-ness, (c) emotions and feelings and (d) the spirit. The leadership theory use this research study meet the four components that promote the necessary and sufficient conditions for the development of any theoretical model; (a) boundaries within the laws in which a relationship operates, (b) the units of interest to the researcher, (c) the variables of interest to the researcher and (d) contingency effects the units of the theory which take on values that are deterministic and persistent.

The spiritual leadership theory developed by Fry (2003) satisfies the conditions of the components mentioned above, in addition, six units or variables of spiritual leadership that provides value to the disciple of modern leadership practices are also mentioned in the spiritual leadership theory; (1) The first unit of spiritual leadership that provides value to the disciple of modern leadership practices is that the theory reviewed religious ethics and values based leadership theory. Which means, that the theory includes an order to motivate followers, (2) The second and third unit includes the human need for spirit survival through calling, membership distinguishes between religion and spirituality and the spiritual leadership theory, (3) The fourth unit is that the theory includes motivation based leadership theories, (4) the fifth unit the process of organizational development and transformation through spiritual leadership, and (5) the final unit or variable is that the theory introduces a generic definition of God as a higher power with a continuum upon which humanistic, theistic and pantheistic definitions of God.

Presentation of Findings

This study is designed to determine if a relationship exist between leadership, decision making, and spirituality in the workplace. Findings for this study were based upon the results from participants who were individual leaders from a leadership professional affiliation. The departures from normality, homoscedacity, and linearity only reduce the correlation between the items, and based on the analysis, no remedial counter measures were necessary:

RQ1: Does a relationship exist between spirituality and workplace decision making?

Hypotheses

H1₀: A relationship does not exist between spirituality, leadership, and decision-making.

H1_a: A relationship does exist between spirituality, leadership, and decision-making.

Findings for this study were based upon the results from participants who were individual leaders from leadership professional and from the results that was based upon a correlation/prediction design; the basis of the correlation/prediction design is that two or more scores are obtained from each member of a selected sample. Scores are based on variables of interest, with the pair score being correlated if there are two scores. The resulting correlation coefficient indicates the degree of the relationship between two or more variables. The correlation between the two measures provides an index of the direction and extent of the examined relationship.

The figures below display the model summary (Predictors: constant, decision-making, spirituality), ANOVA (Predictors: constant, decision-making, spirituality, and beta coefficient of the interaction between spirituality and decision making is not significant (beta = 0.014, t = -1.146, p = 0.890), given that the sig. (0.890) is greater than alpha (0.05). The null cannot be rejected therefore there is not significant evidence for the hypothesis that there is a relationship between spirituality and decision making.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
	0.113	0.014	-0.002	11.6982	1.960

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	242.900	3	122.418	0.899	0.415
Residual	19198.665	142	136.455		
Total	19342.195	144			

	Unstandardized Coefficients	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients		
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	45.331	4.986		9.104	0.000
Spirituality	-0.133	0.105	-0.109	-1.186	0.244
Decision-making	-5.96E-04	0.044	-0.014	-0.146	0.890

The figures below display the model summary (Predictors: constant, spirituality and leadership), ANOVA (Predictors: constant, spirituality and leadership), and beta coefficients of the regression of spirituality and leadership. The beta coefficient of the interaction term between spirituality and leadership is not significant (beta = 0.046, t = 0.469, p = 0.644), given that the sig. (0.644) is greater than alpha (0.05). The null cannot be rejected therefore there is not significant evidence for the hypothesis that there is a correlation between spirituality and leadership.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
	0.130	0.018	0.002	11.6767	1.944

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	309.692	3	154.896	1.147	0.326
Residual	18523.966	138	137.198		
Total	18833.747	140			

	Unstandardized Coefficients	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients		
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	45.606	5.605		9.102	0.000
Spirituality	-0.125	0.222	-0.102	-1.041	0.303
Leadership	-7.63E-04	0.018	-0.46	-0.469	0.644

Conclusion

Before addressing situations managers or leaders should take the time to recognize or identify the context that governs that particular situation and help management make their decisions (Schaltegger & Csutora, 2012). Leadership and decision-making connects to complexity science, the cause and effect of complexity science relations are very difficult to identify, the manageable patterns never exist, and the non-existence is due to the constant shifting between cause and effect (Schaltegger & Csutora, 2012).

Leaders of organizations have a responsibility to uphold the highest standards of ethical conduct, which means doing the right thing in relating spirituality and decision-making together (Li and Madsen, 2011). The research focused on the ethics of spirituality in the workplace. Spirituality in the workplace began thirty years ago, as an unusual phenomenon that caused workers to form the goal of personal change in the workplace (Neal, 2013). Organization systems approach embraces the best practices for determining ethical decision-making by leaders in a spiritual workplace. Spirituality in the workplace guides leaders to make sound decisions in the field of business ethics (Collins, 2010).

The results from this study may provide significant information to help organizations create strategic plans to improve the decision-making process of leaders in the workplace that involves spirituality (Kelly et al., 2011). Organizations and leaders may benefit from the utilization of sound decisions made in a spiritually based workplace by assessing the impact and consequences of spirituality in the workplace, while simultaneously improving the quality and effectiveness of the decision-making process.

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