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A Conceptual Review of Individual Spirituality as a Dimension of Workplace Spirituality

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Abstract

The conceptual paper deliberates on workplace spirituality and individual spirituality. The definitions of workplace spirituality enumerated brings out the need and importance of workplace spirituality in organizations. The paper underlines individual spirituality as one of the vital dimensions of workplace spirituality. The other dimensions being group/team and organizational spirituality. The facets of individual spirituality elucidated reflects the dynamism and potency of individual spirituality at workplace.

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Introduction

Workplace Spirituality

Workplace spirituality concerns with those employed who observes themselves as spiritual creatures and whose souls need nourishment through work, feels a sense of motive and meaning in their workplace, and a sense of linkage to one another and with their work circle. Spirituality at work place gives opportunity for employees to feel linkage and an intellect of individual wholeness and meaning in their professional lives. It also provides an opportunity to unite spirituality with their work and show pathway, impart linkage, and entirety at work. When organizations are capable to create ambiances that are favorable to employees, they will start experiencing peaceful conduct and a sense of motive in their work circle and also certain form of spiritual orientation would emerge.

Definitions of Workplace Spirituality

Cascio (1999) points out that people bring their wholeselves to work. This is because they desire to be authentic in what they do and how they do it as they strive for meaning at work. Organizations must therefore care for the whole employee's spiritual, emotional and physical wellbeing.

Petchsawang and Duchon (2012) mentions that "enhancing spirituality in workplace can be seen as an approach to organizational development by enabling the expression of values such as virtue, corporate citizenship, honesty and integrity.

Burack (1999) proposed workplace spirituality as a vehicle for growth of an individual. He stated that experiencing the spiritual growth improves the mental health, problem solving ability and continuous learning.

Ashar and Lane-Maher (2004) explains, workplace spirituality is integrating one's personal life with professional life for the service of greater good and be a part of principal community to serve others with meaningful work and experiencing the wholeness at work.

Marques *et al.,* (2007), states that spirituality provides motivation and experience of interconnectedness with the work community, meaningfulness in work and also improves personal goodwill, that leads to the organizational success.

Gibbons (2000) defined workplace spirituality as "a journey toward integration of work and spirituality, for individuals and organizations which provides direction, wholeness, and connectedness at work".

Dimensions of Workplace Spirituality

Spirituality at workplace permeates at three levels in an organization, namely, at the individual level, group level and organizational level. Individual level spirituality is related to meaningful work. In other words, work is not only considered as challenging and interesting, but also have deeper meaning and purpose to life (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000). Group level spirituality is related with the sense of community. Employees interact with each other in co-operative way and develop a sense of support to their co-workers and link them with a common purpose (Maynard and Miller, 1992). Organizational level spirituality is related to aligning the personal values of employees to the organizational values and goals. Individual employee must be properly inducted with the organizational goals (Mitroff and Denton, 1999). Let us now discuss on individual level spirituality.

Individual Spirituality

Individual spirituality at workplace concerns about individuals who identifies themselves as spirited beings, and whose spirits desires and needed to be strengthened with the work they do. Individual spirituality at workplace has the potential to shape employees' behaviour in a productive way from the inside-out. Individual spirituality is about feeling real purpose, meaning and vitality at work.

Facets of Individual Spirituality

Milliman *et al.,* (2003) asserted that meaningful work is the fundamental aspect of individual spirituality. It describes one's inner motivation towards their work which gives greater meaning to their work and that of others.

Individual spirituality at work refers to the reflection of individual's inner self through finding the meaning of work which he is engaged and connecting with the expectation of community (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000).

Vaibhav and Sridhar (2010) analyzed the correlation between individual spirituality and job satisfaction of the employees. The result showed positive relationship with job commitment and satisfaction.

Individual spirituality is the application of drive from the inner-self. The inner self which is recognized as spiritual identity is reflected as the feeling of oneness with others and entire universe (Krishnan, 2008).

Ryan Howelland Darwin Guevarra (2013) points out five benefits of individual spirituality, namely, gracious, optimistic, compassionate, and self actualized.

Individual spirituality reflects a relationship with higher consciousness that drives the way in which one operates in the world (Fry, 2003).

Kolodinsky *et al.,* (2008) stated that individual spirituality in the work place refers to the combination of organization spiritual values and culture. The author further commented that by enhancing individual spirituality, the workplace spirituality can be enriched.

According to Badrinarayanan and Madhavaram (2017), individual spirituality is the expression of individual characters responding to the individual features whereas workplace spirituality refers to the experiences of employees limited to workplace.

Individual spirituality may be considered as a core feeling of being connected with one's complete self (Mitroff and Denton, 1999), a feeling of interconnectedness (Piryaei and Zare, 2013), levels of awareness. Gudrun *et al.,* (2014), improved employee loyalty and commitment (Karakas, 2010), reduction of stress and conflict (Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, 2003), increased self- fulfillment, contentment and a deep sense of belonging (Reave, 2005), and inculcating honesty and integrity (Petchsawang and Duchon, 2012).

From the above elucidation, it may be clear that workplace spirituality refers to employees sense of

motive in their work, a sense of linkage to one another and with the organizational goals. Individual spirituality is concerned about feeling of real purpose, meaning and vitality at work, on the part of an employee. It is an important dimension of workplace spirituality.

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