

Enhancing workplace spirituality for higher education academicians through human resource practices

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Abstract

Purpose – This study investigates how human resource training and development (HRTD) shapes workplace spirituality in higher education. It delves into key factors impacting spirituality among academics, such as colleague support and e-learning initiatives. Through analytical tools like percentage analysis and Garret ranking, it divides workplace spirituality in academia, exploring the HR strategies that induce it.

Design/methodology/approach – (a) Type of research – Descriptive research (b) Area of research – The present study is taken up by the academicians as a respondent in selected colleges in Salem district. (c) Sampling technique – Simple random method was adopted. (d) Sources of data collection – The study comprises mixed data method that both types of data were adopted. (i) Primary data – Researcher conducted data by selecting a representative sample of the teaching faculties from various institutions employed in higher education in Salem. (ii) Secondary data – It is mostly gathered through content found on websites. (e) Method of data collection – Structured questionnaires were employed in this research to acquire the data needed for the investigation. Every item is rated through five-point scale of with 1 denoting “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree,” this includes questions about the job, coworkers, seniors and training. (f) Research tools used – Descriptive statistics, Friedman test and Garret ranking.

Findings – Findings highlight the significance of encouraging colleagues, workplace development and online learning in fostering workplace spirituality. Faculty encouragement emerges as the most impactful HR practice, while development initiatives improve the reputation of training for new aspects. Notably, online training significantly affects workplace spirituality, increasing the influence of cultural training.

Research limitations/implications – Implications for future research arise, suggesting potential models for studying workplace spirituality in academia and sparking curiosity about the connection between HR practices and spirituality.

Practical implications – From a practical viewpoint, the study offers actionable insights for authorities to improve workplace spirituality by supporting colleagues and emphasizing growth strategies. It outlines clear steps for organizations to create more spiritually enriching work environments.

Social implications – Socially, the study advocates for healthier work cultures that impact society’s perspective on work–life balance and employee well-being. It promotes positive work environments that benefit both individuals and society.

Originality/value – This paper’s originality lies in its focus on how HRTD contributes to workplace spirituality in higher education. It emphasizes supporting colleagues, fostering growth and utilizing e-learning, offering unique insights into spirituality at work. The methodology, using structured questionnaires and statistical analysis among faculty, provides a distinct approach to studying this area.

Keywords Workplace spirituality, Higher educational academicians, Professors, Human resource management, HR practices

Paper type Research paper



Introduction

Enhancing workplace spirituality among higher education academicians through human resource practices is a compelling approach aimed at nurturing a more holistic, purpose-driven and fulfilling work environment (Paul, 2023). By integrating spiritual values, purpose and meaning into HR practices, institutions can nurture a sense of community, personal growth and well-being among faculty and staff. This holistic approach recognizes the importance of addressing individuals' deeper needs and values, contributing to a more engaged, motivated and harmonious academic community. Abilities that emphasize knowledge, skills or talents are advantageous in HRTD (Abbas *et al.*, 2023). Training and development are never static, nor is expertise within them. The move to performance improvement and the utilization of technology are two of the training and development trends that are most obvious (Hafni *et al.*, 2020). As a result, training and development professionals will continue to need more and more of these sectors' specific skills, knowledge and abilities (Thomas, 2022), which will discover a fundamental change from formalized, intermittent and discontinuous situational training to increasing informal, interactive, asynchronous and real-time learning. Draws focus on three current themes in the literature on workplace learning and HRD, namely knowledge, expertise, competence and competence; organization development and adaptability and career concerns Norazuwa *et al.* (2012, p. 2022). It is crucial to create a people resource that is educated, highly talented, adaptable, creative and infused with moral and spiritual values (Paul, 2019). Teachers who are happy in their positions will be more devoted to their organizations. A sense of community, belonging at work and a reflection of heavenly ideals are all parts of spirituality. WPS has indeed been acknowledged to be among the unique methods for improving employee productivity.

Review of literature

Researchers review the significance of workplace spirituality, emphasizing its role in fostering a sense of community, belonging and purpose among academicians. They explore various dimensions of spirituality in the workplace, focusing on values, ethics, mindfulness and interconnectedness as key elements contributing to a more fulfilling work environment.

Workplace spirituality and employee engagement were explained by (Aprilia and Katiara, 2020). It emphasized that there is an inverse link between employee engagement and workplace spirituality, i.e. depending on workplace spirituality, either employee engagement is higher or lower Rahman *et al.* (2016). It is impossible to exaggerate the significance of the educator's role in this context. High levels of desire and a positive outlook on the teaching profession are two qualities that aid a teacher in having a favorable assessment of the workplace environment. By evaluating the ideas presented in this paper, businesses will be better equipped to investigate and comprehend alternative strategies designed to improve psychological health generally and address the current mental health crisis. Spirituality in the workplace is therefore seen as a crucial trend for fostering a great work environment where employees may express their positive beliefs and emotions and be authentic. Workplace spirituality is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors pertain to the inherent traits of the job, while external factors encompass the work environment's conditions. Internal factors refer to the intrinsic nature of the work, while external factors include elements like advancement opportunities, perks, interactions with managers, organizational policies, the network with colleagues and the assurance of job stability (Ponnampalam, 2020). There are five prominent themes that characterize the exploration of spirituality in the context of human resource development (HRD). These themes encompass the conceptual correlations

between spirituality and HRD, the holistic mechanisms of spirituality in HRD, spirituality's role in leadership development, tools for measuring spirituality's impact and the influence of spirituality on sustainability initiatives within organizations (Mahmood *et al.*, 2018).

Objective

- (1) To understand the factors that enhance higher educational academicians HRTD and workplace spirituality.

Link between human resource management and workplace spirituality

- (1) The term "human resource management" refers to the use of management concepts to oversee personnel inside any institution/organization. It refers to a function of ongoing development whose goal is to raise employee productivity while workplace spirituality is "a set of organizational principles reflected in the culture that support workers' experiences of transcendence via the work process, supporting their sense of connection to others in a way that fosters emotions of completion and joy".
- (2) Truthfulness, peace, love, righteousness and nonviolence are the virtues shared by all main spiritual paths; these spiritual routes are also the pillars of an active, healthy and prosperous professional life. HRM is a component of management, although HRM also incorporates HRD.
- (3) Unlike HRD, which is an active function that foresees and meets the evolving needs of the organization's human resources, HRM is a reactive function that works to meet demands as they arise. To improve and increase workplace productivity, workplace spirituality aims to integrate earlier experiences and foster employee trust.
- (4) Increasing employee productivity is HRM's primary goal. The spiritual life strives for diversity in oneness and perfection in that diversity; it demonstrates the infinite diversity of the one essence that penetrates all things while also exposing its oneness. Unlike HRD, which attempts to raise both employee and organizational skill, knowledge and competency levels. Morality raises a single unachievable norm at the expense of the diversity of life and the freedom of the soul.
- (5) HRD is a part of a larger system. But HRM, which has distinct duties for each employee, makes HRM an autonomous operation and spirituality in the workplace increases the output of the workforce, minimizes absences, boosts work happiness and uplifts the spirit of the workforce.

Human resources practices

- (1) *Engagement initiatives*: Design programs encouraging professors to actively participate in university decision-making, fostering a sense of belonging and commitment.
- (2) *Diversity training*: Offer workshops or forums to promote inclusivity in teaching methods and interactions with a diverse student body.

- (3) *Continuous learning*: Provide ongoing professional development opportunities to enhance teaching skills, adapt to technological advancements and stay updated in their field.
- (4) *Performance support*: Establish clear evaluation criteria, providing constructive feedback to aid in academic growth and improvement.
- (5) *Recruitment strategies*: Develop innovative methods to attract top-tier educators while ensuring alignment with the institution's culture and values.

Why is training in workplace needed?

- (1) It enhances knowledge and abilities.
- (2) It agrees with performance evaluations and recommendations.
- (3) It equips workers for more challenging tasks.
- (4) It reveals all the employees have own value.
- (5) It evaluates how effective a new performance management system.

How to integrate your spirituality into your work? (Cohen, 2017)

The foundation of whatever you do is frequently spirituality. It is more crucial than bringing our faith to the workplace as life becomes busier and more work-focused. The following are some ideas for integrating your faith at work:

- (1) *Mindfulness practices*: Incorporate mindfulness or meditation into your routine. It could be a short meditation session before work, mindful breathing exercises during breaks or even practicing awareness while performing tasks.
- (2) *Set intentions*: Begin your workday by setting intentions aligned with your spiritual values. Focus on qualities like compassion, integrity or kindness that you want to embody in your interactions and tasks.
- (3) *Create sacred spaces*: Designate a space at work that helps you feel connected to your spiritual self. It could be as simple as having a small altar, a meaningful quote or items that inspire you and serve as a reminder of your beliefs.
- (4) *Practice gratitude*: Incorporate gratitude into your work routine. Take time to appreciate the opportunities, people and experiences that come your way. This can shift your perspective and bring a sense of spiritual fulfillment.
- (5) *Align with Purpose*: Connect your work to a higher purpose. Understand how your job contributes positively to the world, your community or the lives of others. When you see the bigger picture, it can infuse your work with deeper meaning.
- (6) *Ethical decision-making*: Use your spiritual principles as a guide when faced with ethical dilemmas at work. Align your choices with your values, even when it might be challenging.

- (7) *Foster positive relationships*: Cultivate a supportive and compassionate work environment. Encourage empathy, understanding and kindness in your interactions with colleagues and clients.
- (8) *Continuous learning and growth*: Embrace learning opportunities that expand your spiritual horizons. This could include reading spiritual texts, attending workshops or engaging in discussions that stimulate personal and spiritual growth.
- (9) *Balance and boundaries*: Maintain a healthy work–life balance. Ensure you set boundaries that allow you time for spiritual practices outside of work, nurturing your spiritual well-being.
- (10) *Reflect and assess*: Regularly reflect on how well you're integrating spirituality into your work. Adjust your approach as needed to stay aligned with your beliefs and values.

Research methodology

- (1) *Type of research* – Descriptive research
- (2) *Area of research* – The present study is taken up by academicians as respondents in selected colleges in Salem district.
- (3) *Sampling technique* – Simple random method was adopted.
- (4) *Sources of data collection* – The study comprises a mixed-data method in which both types of data were adopted.
 - Primary data – The researcher collected data by selecting a representative sample of the teaching faculties from various institutions employed in higher education in Salem.
 - Secondary data – It is mostly gathered through content found on websites.
- (5) *Method of data collection* – Structured questionnaires were employed in this research to acquire the data needed for the investigation. Every item is rated on five-point scale, with 1 denoting “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree.” This includes questions about the job, coworkers, seniors and training.
- (6) *Research tools used* – Descriptive statistics, Friedman test and Garret ranking.

Data analysis and interpretation

The *p*-values of the variables “Alignment of Values among Co-Workers,” “Sense of Community and Collaborations,” “Meaningful Work and Purposes,” “Work-life Integration” and “Professional Development and Personal Development” were found to be more than 0.05 at the 5% level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis for those variables is accepted, and it can be inferred that there is no significant association between the variables of workplace spirituality practice and the designation of the respondents (see [Tables 1](#)).

The majority of the respondents responded that “Encouraging Employees” in the workplace has a great impact on creating a sound organization. Staff development was in second place and training for new implements came in last place in these descriptive statistics (see [Tables 2](#)).

It is obvious that the respondents were given greater rank in the institution when it came to “Development in Workplace.” As a result of this investigation, it was determined that training the employee before they started working was a crucial element in comparison to the

Workplace spirituality		Sum of squares	DF	Mean square	F	Significant value	Significant/ Not significant
Alignment of values among coworkers	Between groups	2.211	2	1.106	0.947	0.390	Significant
	Within groups	158.782	136	1.168	–		
	Total	160.993	138	–	–		
Sense of community and collaborations	Between groups	0.746	2	0.373	0.598	0.551	Significant
	Within groups	84.794	136	0.623	–		
	Total	85.540	138	–	–		
Meaningful work and purposes	Between groups	0.046	2	0.023	0.020	0.980	Significant
	Within groups	156.084	136	1.148	–		
	Total	156.129	138	–	–		
Work–life integration	Between groups	0.724	2	0.362	–	0.768	Significant
	Within groups	186.182	136	1.369	–		
	Total	186.906	138	–	–		
Professional development and personal development	Between groups	0.362	2	0.181	0.168	0.846	Significant
	Within groups	146.315	136	1.076	–		
	Total	146.677	138	–	–		

Note(s): Significant @ 5% ($p \leq 0.05$) and highly significant @ 1% ($p \leq 0.01$)
Source(s): Primary data

Table 1. Test for mean score regarding workplace spirituality practice and the designation of the higher education faculties

S.No	Human resource practices	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Staff development	23	16.7
2	Encouraging coworkers	67	48.6
3	Compensation benefits	21	15.2
4	Performance management	17	12.3
5	Trainings for new implements	10	7.2
Total		138	100

Source(s): Primary data

Table 2. Respondents based on their HR practices in their workplace

other aspects. This leads to the conclusion that the required training is more significant than the other organizational elements (see [Tables 3](#)).

From this analysis, it is found that among five factors, the highest mean rank (59.5) was obtained by e-learning trainings in workplace and the lowest mean rank (44.7) was obtained for training on company culture (see [Tables 4](#)).

Conclusion

Many educators and researchers have studied various advantages of promoting workplace spirituality. Most workers are interested in their coworkers' levels of pleasure, dedication, loyalty and trust in their workplace spirituality. As a result, the firm benefits financially and builds a more effective and contented team. Such a humane work atmosphere benefits the

organization as well as the personnel. Workplace spirituality has various advantages for businesses. Spirituality is a vehicle for the ideals of integrity, honesty, self-discipline and self-assurance. This study identifies that the respondents to this survey are professors from higher education institutions. According to this study, for higher education academics to improve their workplace spirituality, supporting their coworkers, workplace growth and e-learning trainings are crucial. To improve their longevity, employees must have compassion and company ideals that align with their own. Workplace spirituality and HR practices are like a coin of two sides.

Suggestions

(1) Job-related suggestions:

Professors will not have the time or inclination to participate in the task if they are given explicit instructions on what to accomplish and how to do it. They ought to understand that all instructors are gifted and skilled at what they do. Every faculty member must be given the opportunity to participate in decision-making. They will feel like members of the organization as a result.

(2) Colleagues-related suggestions:

Increase faculty members’ responsibility and work power. All employees should be held responsible for their work. Giving excuses and blaming others need to be avoided.

(3) General suggestions:

The college/organizations might plan family gatherings and invite them when the faculty achieves something or is recognized to encourage teaching staff to spend more time with their families.

Table 3.
Practicing training and development in workplace

S.No	Particulars	Min	Max	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean rank	Reliability
1	Workplace challenges	1.00	5.00	4.00	0.9345	2.087	0.386
2	<i>Development in workplace</i>	1.00	5.00	5.00	0.9532	3.056	
3	Trainings	1.00	5.00	5.00	0.6754	3.026	
4	Motivations from coworkers	1.00	5.00	4.00	0.6432	1.076	
5	Leadership	1.00	5.00	4.00	0.4567	1.876	

Source(s): Primary data

Table 4.
Ranking human resources training that encourages spirituality in workplace

S.No	Factors	Percentage position	Calculated value	Garret value	Total	Total score	Mean score	Rank
1	Immediate feedback in training	100(1–0.5)/5	10	75	138	2,580	51.65	4
2	<i>E-learning trainings</i>	100(2–0.5)/5	30	60	138	2,975	59.5	1
3	Training for company culture	100(3–0.5)/5	50	50	138	2,235	44.7	5
4	E-content development training	100(4–0.5)/5	70	40	138	2,665	53.3	2
5	Induction programs	100(5–0.5)/5	90	20	138	2,640	52.8	3

Source(s): Primary data

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