Workplace Spirituality and Team Spirit at Work : A Team - Level Contextualization of Spirituality

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Abstract

The paper aimed to investigate the issue of conceptualizing workplace spirituality at the team level. In this regard, this paper has reviewed the conceptualizations of spirituality so as to connect them to the conceptualizations of workplace spirituality. The originality of this paper lies in the discussion on categories of spirituality and their relationship with the varied conceptualizations of workplace spirituality. Further, this paper has deliberated upon the issue of contextualizing workplace spirituality at the team level by discussing the construct of 'team spirit at work'. However, this paper has not discussed the theoretical underpinnings of the concept of workplace spirituality. This paper has contributed to the workplace spirituality research discourse by building a link between the dimensions of the concept of spirituality with the dimensions of the concept of workplace spirituality and the construct of team spirit at work.

Key words : spirituality, workplace spirituality, spirit at work, team spirit at work

JEL Classification : M12, M14, M19, M54, Z12

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Workplace spirituality movement is a response to human beings' need for meaning, inner life, and community (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). Prior research on workplace spirituality has categorized the construct of workplace spirituality in three levels, that is, individual, group, and organization (Kolodinsky, Giacalone, & Jurkiewicz, 2008; Pawar, 2009). Much of the prior research, in this regard, has dwelt on specifying the meaning and dimensions of the construct of workplace spirituality. Further, the research discourse on workplace spirituality has also attempted to understand the notion of spirituality at the workplace from the standpoint of scriptural wisdom and values as also on the organizationally beneficial employee outcomes in addition to modes of workplace spirituality facilitation, especially in the Indian context. Accordingly, research community in this area, in the Indian context, has dwelt on issues such as the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee well-being (Pawar, 2016), impact of workplace spirituality on customer-orientation and sales person performance (Chawla, 2016), contribution of spiritual wisdom to facilitate corporate sustainability (Avinash & Chandrashekhar, 2016), effect of personal values on ethical behavior of managers (Pattanaik, Modi, & Budhiraja, 2015), lessons from Indian spiritual traditions in facilitating workplace spirituality (Pardasani, Sharma, & Bindlish, 2014), effect of ethics related courses on ethical perception (Das, 2015), curing negative

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workplace attitude (Shah & Talati, 2013), and relationship between 'Nishkama Karma' or selfless work and corporate social responsibility (Kumar, 2012). Though attempts have been made to conceptualize workplace spirituality at individual and organizational levels (Kolodinsky et al., 2008), there is paucity of research on team-level contextualization of workplace spirituality. This paper addresses this need. Prior research has identified the conceptual link between workplace spirituality and team effectiveness (Luis Daniel, 2010). In this regard, there is a dearth of studies that have conceptualized workplace spirituality at the team level, though there are studies that have conceptualized and measured workplace spirituality at all three levels, that is, individual, group, and organization (Rego & Pina e Cunha, 2008). This paper bridges this gap.

Researchers have also consistently tried to define spirituality in order to contextualize it to workplace. Much of the research work, in this regard, has taken place in its domain of concept specification. In the process of concept specification, the research work has taken place to explain workplace spirituality facilitation (Pawar, 2009), employee perspectives of the meaning of workplace spirituality (Van Tonder & Ramdass, 2009), dimensions of spirituality in the workplace (Badrinarayanan & Madhavaram, 2008; Kolodinsky et al., 2008), relationship between concepts of organizational behavior and workplace spirituality (Moore & Casper, 2006; Pawar, 2009), philosophical foundations of workplace spirituality (Sheep, 2006; Gotsis & Kortezi, 2008), relationship between workplace spirituality and ethics (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004), and religious and cultural perspectives of workplace spirituality (Bell & Taylor, 2004 ; Lynn, Naughton, & VanderVeen, 2009). This paper advances the research discourse on concept specification of workplace spirituality by discussing the commonly agreed components of the construct of workplace spirituality that are derived from the construct of spirituality. The prior research on workplace spirituality has not extensively discussed the components of workplace spirituality by relating the same to components of spirituality. This paper fulfills this need. Further, this paper has contextualized workplace spirituality at the team level by applying the construct of 'spirit at work' (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2006) for team level analysis of workplace spirituality.

This paper is organized as follows. First, this paper explains different categories of definitions and conceptualizations of spirituality against which conceptualizations of workplace spirituality are situated. Secondly, it discusses the dimensions of the construct of 'spirituality' so as to connect them with the dimensions of workplace spirituality. Thirdly, this paper deliberates upon the dimensions of 'workplace spirituality' in order to contextualize them to workplace in general, and teams in particular. Accordingly, the dimensions of spirituality are linked with the dimensions of workplace spirituality. Further, this paper analyzes the dimensions of the construct 'team spirit at work' so as to situate them against the dimensions of workplace spirituality.

Literature Review

It is necessary to know the meaning and dimensions of the broader term 'spirituality,' before proceeding to understand the meaning and dimensions of workplace spirituality, as the notion of 'workplace spirituality' addresses a particular level of 'spirituality'. Definitions of the term 'spirituality' can be categorized along several themes such as the focus of explanation, content of the term, and the implied orientation. The 'focus of explanation' of the term 'spirituality' changes depending upon the presence or absence of religious orientation while defining spirituality. Content viewpoint of spirituality attempts to understand the same by defining what constitutes spirituality. Spirituality's definitions can also be categorized from the point of view of 'direction of orientation' while attributing meaning to the term 'spirituality'. The perspective of 'direction of orientation' defines spirituality as either 'other-worldly' or humanistic.

(1) Categories of Definitions of Spirituality : From the viewpoint of focus of explanation, there are five categories of definitions of spirituality. These are named by prior research as traditionalist, cultist, humanist, affirmative post-modern, and skeptical post-modern categories. Traditionalist definitions define spirituality in

accordance with the ideas of world's organized religions. Cultist definitions define spirituality in terms of values that essentially imply the 'other-orientation'. Humanist definitions define spirituality through the lens of values and principles. Affirmative post-modern definitions also define spirituality within the framework of values, which are oriented towards 'self'. Skeptical post-modern treatment of spirituality is negative as it considers spirituality as a means of exploitation. Distinction between spirituality and religion is the common theme among post-modern and humanist categories of definitions of spirituality. However, preferences for traditionalist and humanist definitions of spirituality are found in empirical studies on the same (Mitroff & Denton, 1999).

'Content' viewpoint of categorizing definitions of spirituality tries to capture the varieties of approaches to spirituality that view it as 'experience,' 'values,' and 'behavior' (Cavanagh, Moberg, & Velasquez, 1981; Dehler & Welsh, 2003 ; Neck & Milliman, 1994). Accordingly, there are definitions that explain spirituality as an inner experience, definitions that explain spirituality as an integration of inner experience and external behavior, and lastly definitions that explain spirituality as values, behaviors, and principles. Among these three categories of definitions of spirituality that we find in the literature, those definitions of spirituality that position the same in terms of 'values' and 'behavior' gain relevance as this kind of conceptualization of spirituality facilitates its workplace contextualization.

The orientation of spirituality could either be 'other-worldly' or 'humane'. From this point of view, there are well-articulated forms of spirituality such as God-oriented spirituality, world-oriented spirituality, and humanistic spirituality. The latter two forms of spirituality become relevant in workplace contexts. This is because of two reasons. First, modern corporate organizations are run without any affiliation to religious organizations. Second, trying to appropriate God-oriented spirituality in the context of workplace becomes problematic as there exist numerous concepts of God, which may be inappropriately utilized by divisive elements. Though a definition provides concreteness, any definition of spirituality may not become comprehensive. Further, any attempt to do so tends to make the concept of spirituality dogmatic. A broader definition is necessary so as to practice suppleness. However, any given definition of spirituality would do better if it considers the above-mentioned relevant categories of the idea of spirituality. This is because categorized definitions of spirituality help us to contextualize it, though this attempt absolves spirituality of its diverse contextual applications. In this regard, what is expected is not missing the essential relevant dimensions while attempting particularized contextualization. Though this misses suppleness, it does provide contextual depth to the process of understanding the contextually attributed meaning of spirituality.

(2) Common Themes Among Conceptualizations of Spirituality : Existential meaning is the common theme that runs through the conceptualizations of spirituality. The same can be observed when researchers conceptualize spirituality as the quest for meaningful life (Cavanagh et al., 1981). Neck and Milliman (1994) defined spirituality as "…expressing our desires to find meaning and purpose in our lives and a process of living out one's set of deeply held personal values" (p. 9). Spirituality is also articulated as the source of one's inspiration and energy (Dehler & Welsh,2003). Post-modern view of spirituality and humanist spirituality that situate spirituality in the language of values and behavior constitute the essential nature of these definitions.

Spirituality is conceptualized by many scholars as a concept that addresses the dimension of connectedness in addition to the dimension of existential meaning. For example, spirituality is conceptualized as finding authenticity, meaning, and holism in our existence. Further, it is argued that spirituality is about the search for connectedness with one's fellow-beings, the sacred, and transcendent. Quest for connectedness reverberates in the definitions of spirituality as when it is defined as "…the basic feeling of being connected with one's complete self, others and the entire universe" (Mitroff & Denton, 1999 ; p.83). Spirituality is, accordingly, defined as "…the relationship between yourself and something higher"(Kaiser, 2000, p.6). Therefore, it stands for "…being in a right relationship to all that is" *(Ibid)*. Spirituality is also held to be something that represents our connection with the transcendent (Bloch & Richmond, 2015). Therefore, spirituality enters into higher purpose of existence,

transcending the ordinary level of self-interest. It is also seen as building relationship with others at workplace by considering company as community (Pawar, 2009). These definitions convey the transcendental dimension of spirituality, which implies transcendence of self-interests in order to embrace something larger than one's ego-self. These definitions of spirituality are humanist as well as affirmative post-modern. Therefore, they cater to world-oriented and humanist categorizes of spirituality.

Relationship with the divine principle is another theme around which we find definitions of spirituality. For example, spirituality is described as human aspiration for the Divine principle that manifests itself as its awareness and human effort to live for that principle (Howard, 2002). Spirituality is viewed as expressing itself in one's relationship with God, and the changes in soul's response so as to build its relationship with God. This conceptualization of spirituality pertains to traditionalist definitions of spirituality. However, discussions on 'higher power' or 'divine principle' are generally considered to be unacceptable in the context of workplace (Ibid). This is because concepts of people about God are varied. Further, these concepts are embedded with social identities of religious communities. This implies that the idea of God is crystallized as a basis of social identity and the consequent self-categorization. Individual and social identities based on self-categorizations associated with religious cults become essentially divisive as they lead to polarized views and institutionalized structures, and the resultant loss of essential dimensions of spirituality, that is, connectedness and transcendence.

Spirituality is thus interpreted as a search for meaning in life, encounter with transcendence, a sense of community, a search for the highest truth or highest value, a respect and appreciation for the mystery of creation, and as a process of personal transformation (Beck, 1986 ; Helminiak, 1996; Lapierre, 1994). Search for meaning, connectedness, transcendence, and inner life are thus the essential dimensions of spirituality in the conceptualizations of affirmative post-modern and humanist definitions of spirituality.

(3) Dimensions of Spirituality : Connection with the sacred, the transcendent, and the divine principle; existential meaning; connectedness with one's fellow-beings of the universe; authenticity and transcendence have emerged as the essential dimensions of spirituality. Though these dimensions of spirituality are acceptable in a general context, contextualizing them to the workplace may become problematic due to compulsions of a secular work atmosphere. Therefore, the relevant issue is how to justify contextualization of dimensions of spirituality to the workplace. In this regard, work that facilitates individuation (Jung,1935) and the aspiration for self-actualization (Maslow, 1964) are held to be the primary sources of spirituality. Accordingly, seeking meaning in life (Mitroff & Denton, 1999) and realizing values (Kolodinsky et al., 2008) are considered to be the primary focus of human life, and not mere gratification of innate drives.

While search for meaning is the primary motivation of human life, the belief in the divinity within oneself is held to be one more source of spirituality (Millikan & Drury, 1991). However, the polarized diversity of views regarding the concept of the Divine and divinity makes it difficult to universalize the same in workplace contexts, especially for its operationalization for research purpose. Although the operationalization per se may not pose any problem, universalization of operationalization does. It is to be noted further that 'functional rationalization' or the rational control over human experience, 'cultural pluralism' that manifests itself in the forms of recognition of various social perspectives and de-recognition of monopolistic worldviews, 'structural pluralism' or dichotomizing human experience into public and private spheres (Hunter, 1983) , and the emergence of 'religious individualism' are held to be the characteristics of deinstitutionalized religion. These characteristics gain relevance while contextualizing spirituality to the workplace.

(4) Conceptualization of Workplace Spirituality and Team Spirit at Work : Workplace spirituality shouldn't be construed as an attempt to indoctrinate employees of an organization with particular religious worldviews or specific religious practices. This is because it is not conceptualized as a rigid path to acquire a given form of mystical experience. Therefore, Sheep (2006) defined workplace spirituality as,"…a contextualized phenomenon

that examines questions of how spirituality relates to one's work organization, can be broadly conceptualized as the lived experiences and expressions of one's spirituality in the context of one's work and workplace" (p.358). Though this definition itself doesn't incorporate dimensions of workplace spirituality, Sheep (2006) stated that self-work integration, meaningful work, transcendence of self, and growth & development are the four dimensions of workplace spirituality.

Spirit at work is an individual level construct of the concept of workplace spirituality that expresses engagement in work, sense of community, transcendence, and inner life at the workplace (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2006). The construct of spirit at work is, in fact, conceptualized by prior research on workplace spirituality as an attempt to rise above polarized debates regarding appropriateness of religion and spirituality at the workplace (Dehler & Welsh, 2003). At the individual level, workplace spirituality is conceptualized as spirit at work that taps the individual experiences of spirituality at the workplace (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2006). Workplace spirituality can also be conceptualized at the team level. Accordingly, this paper conceptualizes the construct of 'spirit at work' at the team level as 'team spirit at work'. The construct of team spirit at work is a construct of workplace spirituality, a concept which is situated within the frameworks of the concepts of organizational behavior (Pawar, 2009), ethical theories (Sheep, 2006), and sociological perspectives (Ibid). Self-concept, job enrichment, and organizational climate are the three concepts of organizational behavior around which the dimensions of workplace spirituality, that is, inner life, meaning, and community are situated (Pawar, 2009). The idea of self-interest transcendence is identified as the common theme that runs through the dimensions of workplace spirituality (Ibid).Workplace spirituality is also posited to be an outcome of leadership, especially spiritual leadership (Fry, 2003 ; Fry, Vitucci, & Cedillo, 2005).

There is a need to discuss how the relevant research discourse has situated the concept of workplace spirituality, as 'team spirit at work' is a construct that captures workplace spirituality at the team level. The research community has defined workplace spirituality at several levels, that is, individual, group, and organization. Research discourse on conceptualization of the construct of workplace spirituality revolves around its conceptualizations at individual and organizational levels. For example, Jurkiewicz and Giacalone (2004) defined workplace spirituality as "… a framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promotes employees' experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy" (p.129).Accordingly, workplace spirituality is conceptualized essentially as an organizational state. Further, it is articulated as a collective construct. However, this definition recognizes workplace spirituality as a construct at the individual level too. Furthermore, this definition of workplace spirituality presents four dimensions of the construct, that is, transcendence, connectedness, completeness, and joy. These dimensions are relevant for team functioning because the presence of workplace spirituality among team members contributes to connectedness among themselves and, therefore, towards the improvement in interpersonal skills of team members ; augmentation of efforts of team members resulting from 'transcendence' ; and the internalized meaning that team members perceive in their work as well as work environment. The construct of team spirit at work, accordingly, captures the dimensions of transcendence and joy in its sub-construct of mystical experience, the dimension of connectedness in its sub-construct of sense of community, and the dimension of completeness in its sub-construct of engaging work (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2006).

Research discourse on workplace spirituality considers workplace spirituality also as an effort to operationalize the 'whole-person' paradigm (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). Accordingly, workplace spirituality is defined as a "…workplace that recognizes that employees have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community"(Duchon & Plowman, 2005, p.807). Accordingly, this definition of workplace spirituality presents three dimensions of the construct, that is, inner life, meaning, and community (Mitroff & Denton, 1999). The definition conceptualizes workplace spirituality as a quest of human beings to become whole persons at the workplace by integrating their individual identity with their social identity.

Further, it posits workplace spirituality as consisting in self-work integration which implies integration of personal identity with one's work role identity. Need for self-work integration or 'inner life' has relevance for team functioning too. Unless team members find meaning in their jobs, there won't be either motivational increments or augmentation of effort. However, the workplace spirituality research discourse goes beyond the job-related concept of meaning (Hackman, 1987) inherent in team effectiveness literature and deals with 'meaning' in a holistic manner by the integration of meaning of life with meaning in and at work. Secondly, the need for community addresses spiritual needs of human beings to experience oneness with others, and therefore, it distinguishes team-membership from team-embeddedness. Lastly, the need for inner life calls for self-work integration (Sheep, 2006) which team members experience through the recognition of their identity structure either through a leader or themselves. These dimensions of workplace spirituality, that is, meaning, community, and inner life are captured by the construct of team spirit at work in its sub-constructs of engaging work, sense of community, and spiritual connection, respectively (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2006).

The concept of workplace spirituality has varied connotations as, for example, organizational spirituality, individual spirituality, and individual spiritual experiences. The construct of spirit at work captures individual spiritual experiences at the workplace (Ibid). As the experiences of spirit at work are captured first at the individual level and then escalated to the team level, the construct is called team spirit at work.

Capturing the dimensions of workplace spirituality, this paper defines the construct of team spirit at work as follows : Team Spirit at work is a distinct state among team members that is characterized by engaging work ; spiritual connection ; a sense of community ; and a mystical or intuitive experience. This definition of team spirit at work at the team level captures workplace spirituality in its four dimensions, that is, cognitive, interpersonal, spiritual, and mystical dimensions.

The construct of 'team spirit at work' consists of four dimensions, that is, engaging work, sense of community, spiritual connection, and mystical experience (Ibid). These sub-constructs capture the dimensions of workplace spirituality, that is, meaning, connectedness, inner life, and transcendence. The construct of team spirit at work captures the dimension of 'meaning' in its sub-construct of 'engaging work,' the dimension of 'connectedness' in its sub-construct of 'sense of community,' the dimension of 'inner life' in its sub-construct of 'spiritual connection', and the dimension of 'transcendence' in its sub-construct of 'mystical experience'.

'Engaging work' is the first dimension of the construct 'team spirit at work'. Sense of well-being at the workplace, meaningful work, alignment of values, and the sense of authenticity are captured by the sub-construct of 'engaging work' (Ibid). This is quite akin to the dimension of 'meaningful work' (Ashmos & Duchon 2000; Milliman, Czaplewski, & Ferguson, 2003), though the sub-construct of 'engaging work' captures the element of 'authenticity' in addition to the elements of 'meaningful work' and 'alignment of values' (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2006).

The dimension of community occurs at the group level of human behavior. It is related to the relations between employees and their co-workers. The idea of community includes the notions of sharing, mutual obligation, commitment (Mirvis, 1997), and life-giving connections (Dutton & Heaphy,2003). The sub-construct of sense of community, as conceptualized in the construct of team spirit at work, is distinct in its ability to capture the individual experiences of connectedness among team members as it doesn't measure the 'conditions for community' (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). It is also interpreted as the sense of connectedness (Marques, Dhiman, & King, 2005). In this connection, Mirvis (1997) stated that work is a source of spiritual growth. Therefore, it is not just being present in a community, as a worker must feel the sense of embeddedness (Duchon & Plowman, 2005), which means the low degree of likelihood of people leaving the organization due to their strong connections with people in their organization (Ibid).

'Spiritual connection' is that dimension of team spirit at work, which tries to address team members' identification with something larger than self (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2006). The same is conceptualized as 'inner life' by Ashmos and Duchon (2000) and as 'self-work integration' by Sheep (2006). The notion of 'inner life' is

based on the premise that individuals report to work as 'whole persons'. The dimension of 'inner life' doesn't denote the life of a mystic as the same is understood in a mystical sense in spiritual traditions. Individuals experience 'inner life' in their work to the extent their individual and social identities find their expression in their work environment.

The 'mystical experience' dimension of the construct of 'team spirit at work' addresses the elements such as transcendence, experience of joy, energy, and the sense of perfection (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2006).The idea of transcendence has its roots in the notion of 'self-interest transcendence' (Pawar, 2009). The notion of 'self-interest transcendence' emanates from workplace spirituality's dimensions of meaning and community (Ibid). As the dimension of meaning is connected to a larger good which implies self-interest transcendence, the dimension of meaning leads to the dimension of transcendence too (Duchon & Plowman, 2005; Pawar, 2009). There is also a view which states that it is transcendence of self-interest which leads to meaning (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2006). Fulfillment of higher purpose in life, which is an element of the dimension of meaning, is also suggestive of self-interest transcendence.

The construct of 'spirit at work' does not describe the level of 'spiritual development' of individuals, nor does it measure spiritual values that individuals bring to the workplace. Further, the construct of 'spirit at work' does not explain the notion of 'workplace religion'. Moreover, it does not measure organizational spirituality. What it seeks to measure is individual experience of workplace spirituality along its existential, relational, transcendental, and mystical dimensions. Though the construct of 'spirit at work' is first conceptualized at the individual level, it is supposed to be escalated to the team level when it is conceptualized and measured as 'team spirit at work'.

Discussion

Though workplace spirituality exists in its own right, due to the inevitable need for meaning and connectedness in human relationships, the adoption of the same in organizations with an instrumentalist perspective may become self-defeatist in its nature. This is because any ulterior motive for the adoption of the notion of workplace spirituality may absolve workplaces of work-related meaning and connectedness. When the world is becoming increasingly utilitarian, workplace spirituality cannot be used as one more corporate strategy to increase profitability. The need for workplace spirituality has arisen not because the current strategies to increase profitability are deficient, but because there is a need to look upon human beings not as mere 'resources and instruments,' but as evolving beings who are in a quest for their own meaning so as to bring about their individualized interpretation of fulfilment.

It is interesting to note that workplace spirituality is conceptualized as 'meaning' and 'community' in addition to its conceptualization as the need of human beings for 'transcendence' and 'inner life'. However, the notion of workplace spirituality isn't universally accepted as individual preferences of certain normative values. This is because values are culture-specific as well as individualized. Therefore, there may not be any framework of values that may be said to represent workplace spirituality in a universal sense. Any interpretation of workplace spirituality only in terms of 'values,' that are likely to be culturally relative and individually specific, is likely to reduce the notion of workplace spirituality as dogmatic as well as normative. Therefore, the notion of workplace spirituality has to be situated on firm universal psychological grounds. The notion of workplace spirituality in terms of workplace contextualization of meaning and community fulfills this need.

The concept of workplace spirituality needs to be situated against firm theoretical foundations, though there is conceptual convergence on the idea of workplace spirituality as consisting of the dimensions such as meaning, community, transcendence, and inner life. As we have already seen, workplace spirituality has both individual and collective dimensions. Accordingly, both individual psychology and social psychology can provide firm theoretical foundations on which the need for 'meaning,' 'community,' 'transcendence,' and 'inner life' can be explained. The 'self' concept, the ideas of individual identity and social identity, the idea of identity structure and

the salience of hierarchies of identity help us understand the notion of workplace spirituality against the background of relevant theories of social psychology.

The notion of workplace spirituality cannot be isolated from the known attempts among the elites of humanity that have culminated in the idea of 'self'. Some of these notions may have originated from religious frameworks. However, they need to be considered as legitimate interpretations of the idea of 'self,' though the academic discourse on the same need not universalize the same. After all, attempts to understand the notion of 'self' did not begin with the research discourse on workplace spirituality. Humanity has always engaged itself in an enlightened attempt to know the nature of self, the consequent meaning of existence, and therefore, the nature of connectedness with fellow human beings. Instead of shunning completely the depth of the discourse on these issues merely because it is clothed in religious colors, it is advisable on the part of academic community of workplace spirituality research to draw from genuinely spiritual sources too. There is, of course, a word of caution that needs to be exercised here. The resistance to religion per se is partly due to its world-shunning stances. However, there is an alternative view too that presents world-affirming spirituality. Further, there are aspects of spirituality that abhor the divisive aspects of organized religions. Therefore, it would be a nourishing experience for scholars of workplace spirituality research if they draw from these aspects of world-affirming spirituality to situate the notion of workplace spirituality not only on socio-psychological foundations, but also the genuinely universal, yet irreligious, affirmative spiritual streams to make the notion of workplace spirituality truly all-encompassing.

Managerial Implications

This paper holds the view that the notion of workplace spirituality induces felt meaningfulness. Therefore, this paper argues that internalized intrinsic motivation resulting from the notion of 'felt meaningfulness' (Dehler & Welsh, 2003) rather than 'experience meaningfulness' (Hackman, 1987) is an organizational reality at the team level. The importance of team spirit at work vis-à-vis team interaction process implies that organizations should not nurture the notion that their employees look at their work only from a calculative, 'cost-benefit' point of view. Therefore, this paper argues that employees accord importance to engaging work, spiritual connection, and sense of community. In other words, they have an innate need for meaning even in their work life. However, the team processes such as augmentation of efforts and full application of knowledge and skills of team members (Wageman, Hackman, & Lehman, 2005) exercise equally important influence on team effectiveness in terms of performance. Therefore, this calls for the adoption of a balanced approach to the importance to be accorded to 'outside-in' and 'inside-out' factors of team processes. While this paper situates team spirit at work as an 'inside-out' process, it also argues that the construct of 'team interaction process' is an 'outside-in' process. Thus, this leads to the inference that the felt meaningfulness, which the employees experience, is more important than the organizationally pragmatic factor of the team interaction process in bringing about team effectiveness. This implication calls for the need to pay attention to the 'spiritual' side of employees by making their work engaging, striving to develop a sense of community among team members, and thus enabling connectedness among team members.

Conclusion

There is an argument that an abstract concept such as workplace spirituality should be interpreted in a universalist perspective without limiting it to any theoretical framework. Interpreting workplace spirituality within a theoretical perspective leads to context-specific definition which will effectively absolve it of its universality, it is argued. Any context-specific theoretical framework-based discussion on workplace spirituality requires a

thorough understanding of the core principles and concepts enshrined in the same, the absence of which inhibits and limits the full understanding of workplace spirituality against the background of a given context. However, it should be noted that diverse interpretations of workplace spirituality are justifiable because the very experience of spirituality is universal and multi-faceted. Different theoretical frameworks provide varied dimensions of this multi-faceted, yet universal construct. Therefore, there has to be enough space for diverse as well as inclusive conceptualizations of workplace spirituality. In fact, it should be wide enough to accommodate the breadth of spirituality so as to accommodate the context-specific cultural connotations of workplace spirituality.

Limitations of the Study and Future Directions

An abstract concept such as workplace spirituality gains academic acceptance only if its theoretical underpinnings are pointed out and discussed. This paper has not justified the legitimacy of workplace spirituality against the background of its theoretical underpinnings. As spirituality is a process of individuation, the self-concept and identity theories can provide rich theoretical background against which it is possible to situate the concept of workplace spirituality.

Further, this paper hasn't addressed the issue of the influence of cultural differences on the conceptualization of workplace spirituality. As culture is likely to be embedded with religion, it will be interesting to see how the religious influences embedded in culture exercise their context-specific conceptualizations of spirituality in the conceptualizations of workplace spirituality also. Furthermore, it is possible to conceptualize workplace spirituality as an attitude towards work, which is attempted by the concept of *Karma Yoga*. The idea of *'Karma Yoga'* is a practical philosophy of work articulated in the celebrated scripture of Hinduism, that is, *the Bhagavad Gita*. Though this philosophy of work emanated through a religious scripture, it has wide-ranging practicing potential for people cutting across cultural boundaries. As *Karma Yoga* is a philosophy of work, it is quite akin to the notion of workplace spirituality, though it has its own distinct features. However, this paper hasn't discussed how the concept of workplace spirituality is similar to or different from the concept of *Karma Yoga.*

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