Analyzing Symbiosis between Spirituality and Professional Commitment (A Case Study of Private Higher Educational Institutes of Peshawar)

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The study was conducted to find out the effects of professional commitment on workplace spirituality. The research was carried out at the private sector business schools of Peshawar, Pakistan. Three higher educational institutes including Qurtaba University, Iqra National University and Sarhad University of Science and Technology were selected as a sample for conducting the study. The data collected is primary and has been gathered through administering questionnaires. A closed-ended structured questionnaire was designed for the data collection. Two hundred faculty members (permanent and visiting), were selected as sample to collect data from. The main findings include: 1) Affective professional commitment has noticeable positive effects on workplace spirituality; 2) Continuous professional commitment has positive and significant effects on workplace spirituality and 3) Normative professional commitment has positive and significant effects on workplace spirituality.

Keywords: affective, continuous, normative, commitment, workplace spirituality

Under the influence of postmodernist values and due to entangling complexities of contemporary age where on the one hand traditional values have become less important, the recurring phenomena of *role-conflict* and *role-strain* on the other hand have seriously affected workers sense of responsibility and commitment to their jobs. Commitment by the employees to their respective work and other fellow human beings has been explained by certain social scientists particularly sociologists as *Workplace Spirituality.* The generic concept of *Workplace Spirituality* means that professionals have a sense of achievement and sense of purposefulness at their jobs. It also means that individuals and organizations consider their work not merely as a profession or a source of income but also as a means to have purpose in life and to contribute to the society and fellow human beings. There are two important aspects of workplace spirituality. The one is *vertical spirituality* that is commitment to God, religion or some other spiritual phenomenon or figure. The other is *horizontal spirituality* that is commitment to fellow human beings by considering their rights and service(s) more important than oneself. The main attributes of workplace spirituality include, *inter alia,* consideration, compassion, care, support, integrity, truthfulness both to oneself and others. Behaviours associated with vertical spirituality at the workplace include meditations during work, sparing time to spiritually train fellow workers, providing space and support to employees to offer their prayers. The behaviours associated with horizontal spirituality includes, *inter alia,* caring for co-workers, orientation towards social responsibility, strong customer care commitments, sensitivity towards environment and participating on a large-scale in community service activities.

In contemporary stressful working environment more and more employees are in search of workplace spirituality and for this very reason they are looking for jobs having purpose, meaning and inspiration (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004). The employees always look for the methods by which they connect their working lives with spiritual lives and this is the most cherished goal of majority of employees (Konz & Rayan, 1999). However, reconciling professional commitments and workplace spirituality is quite an uphill task. (Kinjerskikonz & Ryan, 1999) The employees are not happy with their working lives due to meager emoluments and insignificant incentives at workplace. At times, the employees get fed up of their professional lives due to the challenging interaction between spirituality and work life (Cacioppe, 2000).

The lay-off of employees by business enterprises due to financial compulsions engenders demoralization among employees and also results in spiritual disorientations (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004). In these circumstances workplace becomes alienating for employees who escape firing and increases their sense of insecurity (Collins & Kakabadse, 2006). Resultantly, these employees look for substitute sources of zing and these energies are spiritual in makeup (Harington et al, 2002).

Workplace spirituality has become a fact of professional life and researchers of business and management studies should handle this newly emerged reality of employees as a key test of the age. (Ziaee et al, 2008) Previously the perception of organizational commitment has been used to develop certain theories related to the organization and employee relationship but other job related commitments are not identified by business researchers. Due to the growth of contingent workforce, the commitment of employees might shift from institution to the work business (Blau, 1999). Consequently, the management ought to emphasize on the professional aspects of the job. (Haung, 2006) The employees' workplace behavior can be an important determinant in this regard (Kannan & Pillai, 2008).

Literature Review

Generally, there is an increased understanding and consensus among scholars of management studies that workplace spirituality is indeed very important. Marques (2005), argues workplace spirituality in the final analysis leads the organization toward excellence. Thompson, (2000) explained that it is the individual, who fundamentally make an organization; therefore, individuals' spiritual needs must also be taken care of. Scholars think that workplace spirituality is equally significant for both organizations and workers to advance their respective business and professional or career goals. (Long & Mills, 2010) In case professionals possess workplace spirituality, they feel more intimately or affectionately committed to their organizations, develops a sense of duty while simultaneously have less instrumental commitment. (Rego & Cunha, 2008) Scholars have also identified the role of leaders in making professional practice workplace spirituality. (Ziaee; Nargesian & Esfahani, 2008) Others have stressed on the need of training in this regard (Thompson, 2000).

There is also increasing identification by scholars that cultural approach or cultural relativity is also very important to understand the concept or workplace spirituality and its dynamics. (Long & Mills, 2010) Certain scholars have argued that there is incompatibility between religion and workplace spirituality (Afsar & Rehman, 2015; Milliman et al., 2003). In these scholars view workplace spirituality concentrates particularly on the themes of forbearance, endurance, and feeling of compatibility between one's idiosyncrasies and the normative institutional culture. Whereas, religion is the name of a specific belief system (Afsar & Rehman, 2015). However, in the context of Islam, which is not just a code of ethics but an all encompassing system to structure and reform every

aspect of personal, professional and social life, considering workplace spirituality and religion as incompatible is quite erroneous and troublesome especially in the cultural milieu of Pakistan.

Basically two different concepts explain the association between organizational and professional commitment. The first concept in this regard is that there is an incompatibility between the two concepts. The second concept is about mismatched argument. Consider that these two concepts are not in conflict (Ei-rajabi, 2007). The findings of the research work of Koren (1962), Blau and Scott (1962) reveals that organizational and professional commitments are irreconcilable rather in conflict. According to them, the professional employees are the 'most' committed employees. As per the research work of Goldner, the professionals commit to organizational reference like their professional team in its place to commit to their firm. The employees who have few skills and knowledge, they are committed to the firm and they have internal reference (Abtahi & Molaee, 2007). Recent researches highlighted this potential issue between organizational and professional conflict and they concluded that commitment is not an arena where one's gain is another person's loss (Bryant et al, 2007).

Contrary to this perception that incompatibility exists between organizational and professional commitment other researchers believe that there are no issues between these two concepts. (Abtahi & Molaee, 2007) The research work of Aranya, Kushnir and Valency (1986) showed that the professional and bureaucratic features among the employees at workplace are a fact of life. The conclusion of this perception is that when the firms appreciate their professional attitude, then these two commitments will be associated to each other. However, the research work of Baugh and Roberts states that the firm might have the desire of simultaneous presence of high level of organizational and professional commitment (Hauang, 2006). But organizations, whose goals are spiritually founded, afford more room for upward mobility and development to individual workers. This in turn gives more opportunities for personal growth. (Harrington, Preziosi & Gooden, 2002) This enabling environment help augments a worker's vim and zing (Neck & Milliman, 1994). Research has also revealed that after having experienced and cherishing for long profound and extensive individualistic environment and values executives in the United States are now moving toward spiritual values. (Neck & Milliman, 1994) However, this does not explain the situation in Pakistan having profound collectivist values and culture. Eastern cultures have their own dynamics and variations (Corner, 2009). Therefore, studies on workplace spirituality and its impact, like the one we have undertaken, have become quite important.

Method

The study was conducted to find out the effect of professional commitment on workplace spirituality. The study was conducted at the business schools of Peshawar. Qurtaba University, Iqra National University and Sarhad University were selected as sample for the data collection of the study. Due to the nature of the research data was collected by closed ended structured questionnaire. Five Likert scale questionnaires were designed for the data collection. Two hundred and ten questionnaires were distributed among the teaching staff of sampled business schools. Two hundred questionnaires were received back and used for the data analysis. Thus the response rate was 95 percent.

Hypotheses

H_1:   Affective professional commitment has significant effects on workplace spirituality.

H_2:   Continuous professional commitment has significant effects on workplace spirituality.

H_3:   Normative professional commitment has significant effects on workplace spirituality.

Variables
Affective Professional Commitment:

Affective professional commitment is the level to which an employee "wants to stay" in his/her working career because this is associated with the career objectives and helps him/her in achieving career goals (Hall et. al., 2012). APC was measured by six items and five Likert scale.

Continuous Professional Commitment

CPC is the level to which an individual employee feels about to stay in his current profession due to the lack of professional and fruitful alternatives (Hall et. al., 2012). CPC was measured by six items and five Likert scale.

Normative Professional Commitment

NPM is the level of individual employee who feels to stay in the current organization due to the sense of responsibility and loyalty. (Hall et. al., 2012). NPC was measured by six items and five item Likert scale.

Workplace spirituality

Workplace spirituality is the process of looking for the sense and principles in the life. (Wiersma, 2002) It is not related to one's religion or it is not the name of conversion of one's belief, but it is associated to the employees who consider themselves as religious individuals and that their souls required nourishment at the work area and their experience has the sense of rationale in their profession. (Rego & Cunha, 2008) WPS was measured by 21 items and five Likert scale.

Results

Table 1
Demographic Statistics

Gender					
Male	N	%	Female	N	%
	179	89.5		21	10.5
Age	**N**	**%**	**Qualification**	**N**	**%**
< 20	45	22.5	Graduate	16	8
20-30	53	26.5	Master's	93	46.5
31-35	72	36	M. Phil	60	30
36 & Above	30	15	Higher	31	15.5
Designation	**N**	**%**	**Nature of job**	**N**	**%**
Lecturer	125	62.5	Government	16	8
Assistant Professor	65	32.5	Private	90	45
Higher	10	5	Business	64	32
			Others	30	15

According to table 4.1 the majority of the respondents that was 179 (89.5 percent) were male and the number of female respondents was 21 (10.5 percent). The highest respondents in the age category were from 31 to 35 years age group numbering 72 respondents or 36 percent. In the age group category the lowest response was from 36 years and above that is 30 respondents making

15 percent of the total respondents. The highest response in the qualification category was from respondents having master's degree numbering 93 respondents or 46.5 percent. The number of respondents having college education was 16 or eight percent respectively.

Position-wise lecturers were the highest number of respondents i.e. 125 or 62.5 percent whereas the number of respondents of the rank of professor was the lowest i.e. 10 or five percent. The majority of the respondents were those working at privately-run institutes i.e. 90 or 45 percent.

Table 2

Regression (APC and WPS)

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F	Sig
	.946	.895	.894	167.9	.000

The above table shows the regression results of affective professional commitment and workplace spirituality. The R (coefficient of correlation) shows the relationship of the variable. The value shows that the variables are 94 percent correlated to each other. The R^2 value of the model is .895 which means that affective professional commitment shows .89 percent variance in the workplace spirituality. The F-value is 167.9, which is higher than 4 percent and means that the model is statistically significant. The P-value of the model is 0.000 < 0.05 which means significant.

Variables	Beta	t-value	Sign
Constant	-.238	-2.577	.011
Affective Professional Commitment	.946	40.976	.000

The table shows the results of coefficients of the regression model. The beta value of APC is .946 means that 1 unit change in the APC will lead to change in WPS of about .946 units and the change will be in positive direction or same direction. The t-value of APC is 40.976, which is more than 2. So it shows the significant effects of APC on WPS. The same reflection can be seen in the P-value figure i.e. 0.000 < 0.05.

Table 3

Regression (CPC and WPS)

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F	Sig
	.927	.859	.858	120.53	.000

The above table shows the regression results of continuous professional commitment (CPC) and workplace spirituality (WPS). The R (correlation coefficient) shows the relationship of the variable. The value shows that the variables are 92 percent correlated to each other. The R^2 value of the model is .86, which means that CPC shows 86 percent variance in the WPS. The f-value is 120.53, which is higher than '4' meaning that the model is statistically significant. The P-value of the model is 0.000 < 0.05 means significant.

Variables	Beta	t-value	Sign
Constant	.345	3.744	.000
Continuous Professional Commitment	.928	34.715	.000

The table shows the results of coefficients of the regression model. The beta value of CPC is .928 means that 1 unit change in the CPC will lead to change of about .928 units in WPS and the change will be positive or unidirectional. The t-value of APC is 34.715, which is more than '2' so it shows the significant effects of CPC on WPS. The same reflection can be seen in the P-value figure i.e. 0.000 < 0.05.

Table 4

Regression (NPC and WPS)

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F	Sig
	.841	.708	.706	78.88	.000

The above table shows the regression results of normative professional commitment (NPC) and workplace spirituality (WPS). The R (coefficient of correlation) shows the relationship of the variable. The value shows that the variables are 84 percent correlated to each other. The R^2 value of the model is .708, which means that CPC shows 71 percent variance in the WPS. The f-value is 78.88 which is higher than '4' meaning that the model is statistically significant. The p-value of the model is 0.000 < 0.05 means significant.

Variables	Beta	t-value	Sign
Constant	.114	9.037	.000
Normative Professional Commitment	.709	21.906	.000

The table shows the results of coefficients of the regression model. The beta value of NPC is .709 means that one unit change in the NPC will lead to change in WPS of about .709 units and the change will be in positive direction or same direction. The t-value of NPC is 21.906, which is more than '2' so it shows the significant effects of NPC on WPS. The same reflection can be seen in the p-value figure i.e. 0.000 < 0.05.

Conclusion

The study was conducted to find out the effects of workplace spirituality on affective professional commitment, continuous professional commitment and normative professional commitment. The study concludes that the faculty members in the sampled business schools corroborate that their goals are associated with their firms' goals and they want to achieve these goals. In other words there is compatibility and coherence between the objectives of the firm and the employees. But at the same time and apart from having the similar objectives the employees have their respective spiritual beliefs. The results can be seen in the regression model as affective professional commitment has significant effects on workplace spirituality. The normative professional commitment has significant effects on workplace spirituality. This confirms that the employees are largely loyal to their firms and they want to stay in the current organization and additionally have spiritual perceptions about their jobs also. Continuous professional commitment has significant effects on workplace spirituality. This shows that the employees wants to stay in the current organization and having spiritual perception but they also have less options in the outside market to set their career. Resultantly, increasing their continuous professional commitment.

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