

Role of Demographic Variables in Understanding Workplace Spirituality

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Abstract

The positive impact of workplace spirituality on attitudes and behaviors has been well established in previous research. This includes not only academic and health settings, but also in the corporate world, where workplace spirituality is gaining recognition for its impact on organizational performance. This study investigated the influence of various demographic factors on workplace spirituality. The findings revealed that males had a higher mean score than females, although there was no significant difference between them. Private banks also had a higher mean score than public banks. Additionally, employees aged 41 and above, as well as those with more work experience, exhibited higher levels of workplace spirituality. The study also outlines future research directions for academics and provides managerial implications for HR practitioners and management in formulating effective strategies and interventions.

Keywords: Workplace Spirituality, Banking Sector, Demographic variables

Introduction

There is an increasing interest among corporations, academics, and researchers regarding the concept of spirituality in the workplace. The advantages of fostering spirituality in professional settings are numerous. Workplace spirituality is closely linked to the financial performance of businesses. Studies indicate that organizations that offer their employees opportunities for spiritual growth tend to outperform their counterparts (Konz & Ryan, 1999). In India, numerous companies embrace contemporary principles such as meditation for achieving inner peace, Purshartaa for balancing personal and professional lives, and yoga for promoting health and well-being, all of which are rooted in Indian traditions aimed at enhancing the spiritual dimension of organizations. On an individual level, workplace spirituality contributes to job satisfaction and mitigates employee burnout, as evidenced in research involving healthcare professionals (Komala & Ganesh, 2007). To enhance employee retention and reduce turnover rates among talented individuals, for whom organizations invest substantial resources annually, decision-makers must comprehend the expectations that employees hold regarding their daily work. Modern employees increasingly seek meaning and purpose in their professional endeavors. Organizations should not disregard this intrinsic desire of their workforce (Fry, 2003). Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003) emphasized the significance of workplace spirituality in advancing organizational science. Additionally, Sheep (2006) elucidated the relevance of workplace spirituality for the well-being of individuals, organizations, and society at large.

Spirituality involves acknowledging the entirety of a human being, and investing in all aspects of their development: physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual. This includes fostering a corporate culture that embraces universal human and spiritual values. Therefore, spirituality should advocate for causes that benefit humanity, leading to the argument that spirituality cannot exist without humanization. These values should manifest in behaviors such as respect for others, active listening, excellent customer service, solidarity, leadership, and teamwork. Connecting spirituality with work is a way to establish a management model that enables organizations to maintain their creativity (Mumtaz, 2017).

Literature Review:

There are many definitions of workplace spirituality in literature, yet none has fully captured the essence of workplace spirituality. Moreover, scholars have not reached a consensus on the definitions, which is attributed to the subjective nature of the concept (Gull & Doh, 2004). Additionally, there is limited empirical research conducted on this subject (McCormick, 1994). Generally, spirituality can be defined as the pursuit of meaning and purpose in life, which involves the active expression of one's deeply held personal values (Lorraine, 2009; Pardasani et al., 2014).

The concept of spirituality in the workplace is linked to a positive work environment (Thomas, 2005), enhanced individual performance, and comprehensive feedback mechanisms (Das & Panda, 2017). Furthermore, it contributes to emotional, psychological, social, and spiritual well-being (Pawar, 2016). According to the findings of Maria and Arnaldo (2017), workplace spirituality plays a significant role in fostering job resourcefulness and emotional commitment. Additionally, it has been identified as a crucial factor influencing employee commitment, work-life balance, and overall job satisfaction (Garg, 2017).

Jasmeet & Chopra (2016) conducted a study focusing on the workplace and its relationship with spirituality, patience, and work engagement. Their findings revealed a positive correlation between work engagement and the engagement of work.

Krishnakumar & Neck (2002) identified two perceptions of spirituality: intrinsic and existentialist. The intrinsic perspective views spirituality as an internal force within the individual. On the other hand, existentialists emphasize the importance of seeking meaning in all aspects of one's life, particularly in response to a lack of purpose in one's profession.

According to Garg (2020), integrating spiritual viewpoints in the workplace enhances employee creativity and innovation, boosts employee dedication, and leads to an enhancement in overall organizational performance.

Konz and Ryan (1999) suggest that the mission statement serves as the expressed spirituality of the organization. By incorporating the organization's business philosophy rooted in spiritual principles in the mission statement and key documents, as well as in places like the company lobby, it can aid in cultivating and sustaining a spiritual culture within the organization (Bandsch & Cavanagh, 2005).

According to Aury (1994), work is no longer a fixed-time hour shift commitment; it is increasingly viewed as a means to fulfill one's destiny. If work fails to provide spiritual and personal growth alongside financial growth, it is considered a waste of one's life. Organizations are now seeking ways to enrich employees' minds, satisfy their souls, and also provide financial rewards. Researchers have identified the surge of interest in spirituality as the most significant trend since the 1950s (Howard, 2002). They have labeled Toffler's 1980 technological wave as the third wave and have dubbed the subsequent wave as the "organizational fourth wave," referring to it as a "spirituality-based firm."

Research Gap:

Empirical studies on spirituality have primarily focused on the western context, examining its impact on various factors at individual, group, and organizational levels. However, recent international studies, such as the Nigerian Workgroup, have indicated that personal factors like gender, age, job tenure, organization type, and management level strongly influence readiness to engage in OCB. Research on workplace behavior has also shown the connection between these variables and demographic factors. There is a need to further explore spirituality in different cultural contexts and understand how it varies based on age, gender, education, and role. The current study aims to uncover the influence of gender, age, education, and work experience on workplace spirituality. Therefore, it is important to investigate the impact of demographic factors on the experience of workplace spirituality among employees in the banking sector in India.

Objective of the Study:

This study conducts an empirical analysis of how demographic variables, including gender, age, bank type, work experience, and education, impact the level of workplace spirituality experienced by employees in the banking industry.

Hypotheses:

The different hypotheses have been set to accomplish the above stated objectives, which are as follows:

H01: There is no significant difference in the level of experience of workplace spirituality among male and female employees.

H02: There is no significant difference in the level of experience of workplace spirituality among public and private sector banks' employees.

H03: There is no significant difference in the level of experience of workplace spirituality among different age groups of employees.

H04: There is no significant difference in the level of experience of workplace spirituality relating to level of education qualification of employees.

H05: There is no significant difference in the level of experience of workplace spirituality relating to work experience of employees.

Research Methodology:

The main focus of this research was on the banking industry. Initially, a convenience sampling method was employed to choose branches of banks, followed by the utilization of a simple random technique for selecting samples (Utami et al., 2021). The questionnaire was distributed online or were provided with hard copies to the respondents. As a result, the study made use of both online and offline channels. A total of 100 hard copies of the questionnaire were distributed in person, while a Google form was utilized to develop the questionnaire and 100 form were distributed to the target audience via Facebook, messages and WhatsApp. The researcher gathered a total of 140 responses from both sources. Invalid and incomplete responses were eliminated from the collected sample, leading to a final sample size of 110. Furthermore, a questionnaire from previous studies was adopted to assess various aspects of workplace spirituality. The variables were evaluated on a five-point rating scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The dimensions and their corresponding measuring items are provided below.

Meaningful Work:

Meaningful work is rooted in the philosophical considerations and conversations surrounding the concept of a meaningful life in connection to an individual's purpose of existence, as individuals are always influenced by the environment and community they are a part of. Put simply, meaningful work pertains to tasks that hold lasting value and importance, aligning with the mindset of the individuals or employees (Ciulla 2015).

Sense of Community:

The sense of community, recognized as a dimension of workplace spirituality, pertains to the interpersonal behaviors exhibited by individuals within a group, particularly focusing on the interactions among employees and their colleagues within an organization. This sense of community encompasses the mental, emotional, and spiritual bonds that employees form with one another, whether as teams or as distinct groups within the organizational framework (Neal & Bennet, 2000).

Alignment of Values:

This aspect is a crucial element that greatly prioritizes the well-being of their employees by encompassing the notion that organizations uphold suitable values and a firm moral compass (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). Essentially, it signifies the harmonization of an individual's personal beliefs with the mission and objectives of the organization. When organizations manage to cultivate a culture that successfully synchronizes individual and organizational values, it will result in fostering a positive work ethic, job contentment, and ultimately lead to a greater level of organizational dedication (O'Reilly et al., 1991).

Compassion:

Compassion is a prevalent sentiment found in human beings, characterized by feelings of pity and empathy towards the suffering of others. It is deemed as a fundamental emotion in promoting peace within society. Compassion differs from empathy in that it drives individuals to not only understand others' pain but also to actively work towards easing their suffering (Daniel, 2015).

Demographic profile:

Demographic profiles of 110 respondents are given below in Table 1. The data is examined based on gender, age groups, education qualification, type of banks and work experience in current organisation.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

S.No.	Demographic	Classification	Frequency	Percent
1.	Gender	Male	56	50.9
		Female	54	49.1
		Total	110	100
2.	Age	21-30 years	52	47.3
		31-40 years	26	23.6
		41-50 years	22	20.0
		51 & above years	10	9.1
		Total	110	100
3.	Types of Bank	Public Bank	48	43.6
		Private Bank	62	56.4
		Total	110	100
4.	Qualification	Graduate	42	38.2
		Post Graduate	68	61.8
		Total	110	100.0
5.	Work Experience	0-5 years	43	39.1
		6-10 years	29	26.4
		11-15 years	20	18.2
		16-20 years	18	16.4
		Total	110	100.0

The following is a comprehensive analysis of the table data, which outlines various demographic attributes of a sample comprising 110 individuals: The gender distribution is almost equal, with a slight predominance of males at 50.9% compared to females at 49.1%. This suggests that the sample is quite representative in terms of gender diversity. A significant portion of the individuals falls within the 21-30 age bracket, accounting for 47.3%, indicating a predominantly younger demographic. There is a marked decline in the number of individuals as age increases, with only 9.1% of the sample being aged 51 years or older. This trend may reflect a youthful workforce or respondent demographic. Furthermore, there is a greater representation of individuals affiliated with private banks, comprising 56.4%, in contrast to those associated with public banks at 43.6%. This may indicate a preference for private banking institutions among the sample. Additionally, a majority of the participants possess postgraduate qualifications, totaling 61.8%, while a smaller segment holds only graduate degrees at 38.2%. This points to a generally higher educational attainment within the sample, with a considerable number holding advanced degrees. Most individuals report having relatively limited work experience, with 39.1% having between 0-5 years. There is a gradual decline in the number of individuals as work experience increases, suggesting a blend of both relatively inexperienced and more seasoned professionals in the sample, albeit with a tendency towards those with less experience.

Data Analysis:

The analysis of the data for this study was conducted utilizing SPSS 21. Descriptive statistics were employed to examine the general characteristics of the study subjects and their perceived workplace spirituality. The variations in perceived workplace spirituality based on the demographic profiles of the respondents were assessed through independent t-tests and ANOVA.

Box -Plot: Box plots, also referred to as whisker plots, were introduced by Tukey (1977) as a standardized method for illustrating data distribution using a five-number summary: minimum, first quartile (Q1), median (Q2), third quartile (Q3), and maximum. They are effective in visually representing a large amount of data and facilitating comparisons between different datasets. The inclusion of box plots in any analysis offers a comprehensive and insightful approach to data presentation. This aids in providing a clear understanding of the data's central tendency, variability, and distribution symmetry. The identification of outliers is essential for comprehending data variability and for determining the necessity of data cleaning or further investigation. During the data screening process, in order to find outliers box plot method has been used in this study Hair et al., 2010.

Meaningful work: The box plot Figure 1 illustrates the distribution summary of the "Meaningful Work" (MW) scores. The median score, represented by the thick horizontal line inside the box, is approximately 4.25. This means that half of the respondents have a meaningful work score below 4.25, while the other half have a score above 4.25. The lower end of the box is about 4.00, and the upper end is around 4.50, indicating that the central half of the meaningful work scores falls between 4.00 and 4.50. The whiskers extending from the top and bottom of the box show the data range, excluding outliers. The lower whisker reaches around 3.75, and the upper whisker extends to about 5.00, suggesting that most meaningful work scores range between 3.75 and 5.00. In conclusion, the box plot reveals that the meaningful work scores are predominantly concentrated around the median of 4.25, with the majority of scores falling between 3.75 and 5.00.

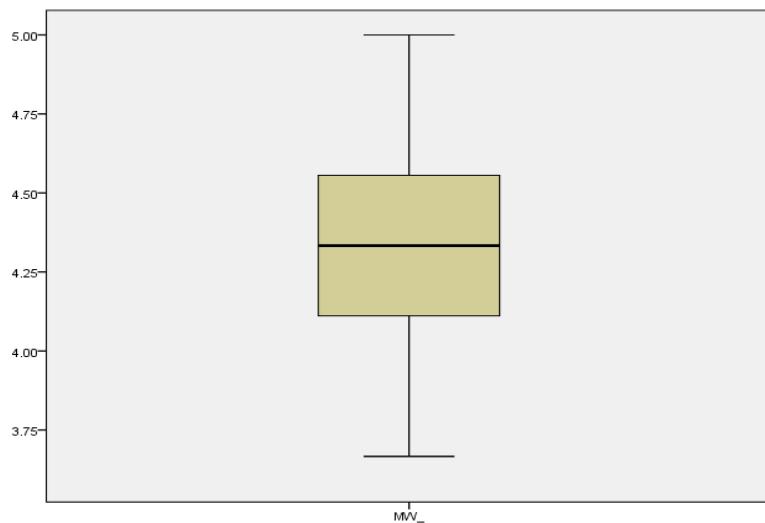


Figure 1: Box Plot of Meaningful work

Sense of Community:

The box plot illustrates the distribution of the "Sense of Community" (SOC) scores. The median score, which is approximately 4.25, is represented by the thick horizontal line inside the box. This means that half of the respondents have a sense of community score below 4.25, and the other half have a score above 4.25. The lower whisker extends to around 3.50, while the upper whisker extends to about 5.00, indicating that most sense of community scores fall between 3.50 and 5.00. There are two outliers shown in this box plot, represented by small circles below the lower whisker. One outlier is at a score of 3.00 (labeled 26), and the other is at a slightly higher score (labeled 78). These outliers suggest that there are a few respondents with significantly lower sense of community scores compared to the rest of the data. In summary, the box plot demonstrates that the sense of community scores are fairly concentrated around the median of

4.25, with most scores falling between 3.50 and 5.00. The presence of a couple of outliers indicates some variation in the lower end of the score range.

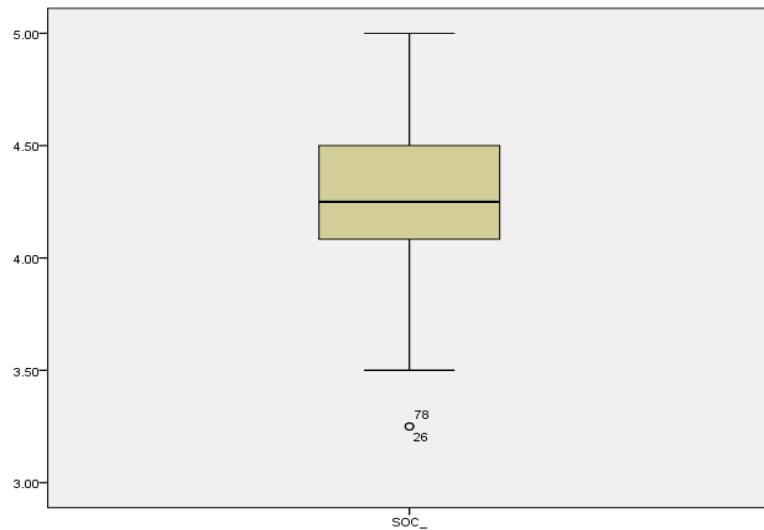


Figure 2: Box plot of Sense of Community

Alignment with Organisational Values:

The box plot illustrates the distribution of scores for "Alignment with Organizational Values" (OV). It indicates that the lower quartile is approximately 3.75, while the upper quartile is around 4.50. This implies that half of the alignment scores fall between 3.75 and 4.50. The lower whisker stretches to about 3.00, and the upper whisker extends to roughly 5.00, suggesting that the majority of alignment scores range from 3.00 to 5.00. Notably, there are outliers identified in the box plot, denoted by small circles and an asterisk below the lower whisker. These outliers are at scores of 3.00 (labeled 102), 2.00 (labeled 48 and 51), and 1.00 (labeled 100), indicating a few respondents with notably lower alignment scores compared to the rest of the data. In summary, the box plot demonstrates that the alignment with organizational values scores is predominantly centered around the median of 4.00, with most falling between 3.00 and 5.00. The presence of multiple outliers suggests some variability in the lower end of the score spectrum, with a minority of respondents reporting significantly lower alignment with organizational values.

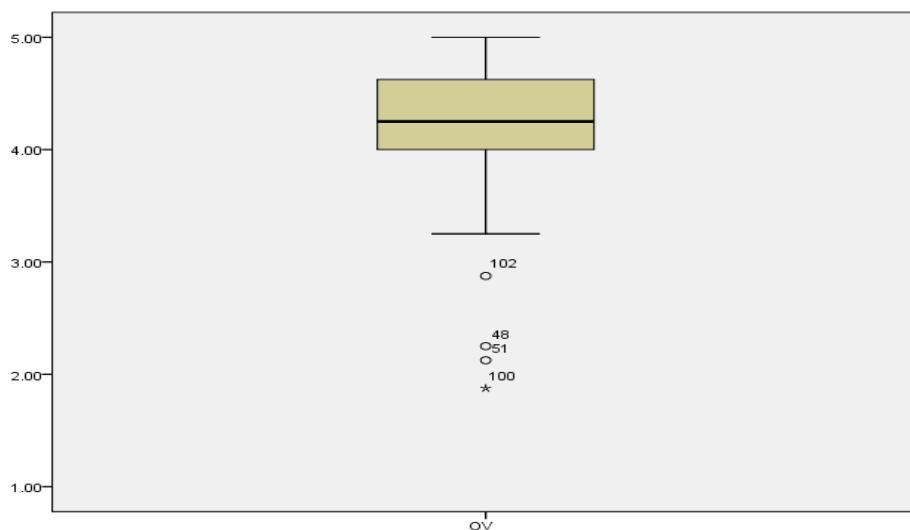


Figure 3: Box plot of Alignment with Organisational Values

Compassion:

The box plot illustrates the distribution of "Compassion" (CP) scores. The lower end of the box is approximately 3.75, while the upper end is around 4.50. This indicates that the middle 50% of compassion scores range from 3.75 to 4.50. The lower whisker stretches to about 3.00, and the upper whisker extends to about 5.00, suggesting that the majority of compassion scores fall between 3.00 and 5.00. There are no outliers present in this box plot, signifying that all data points are within the whiskers' range. In summary, the box plot reveals that compassion scores are centered around the median of 4.00, with most scores falling between 3.00 and 5.00. The lack of outliers indicates a consistent distribution of compassion scores among participants.

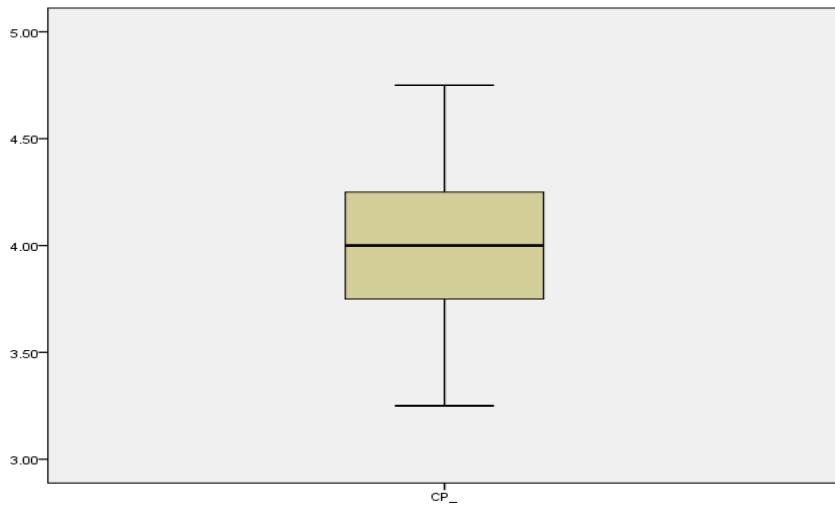


Figure 4: Box plot of Compassion

Results and Findings:

H01: There is no significant difference in workplace spirituality between male and female employees

Table 2: Independent Sample T-test Result according to Gender

Groups	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances					t-test		
	Mean	SD	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
Male	4.25	0.35	0.394	0.532	1.150	109	0.253	
Female	4.18	0.30						

In the above table, Levene's Test evaluates the equality of variances between two groups. The p-value (Sig.) obtained is 0.532, which exceeds the threshold of 0.05; therefore, we do not reject the null hypothesis asserting that the variances are equal. Consequently, we proceed with the t-test under the assumption of equal variances. The t-value of 1.150 reflects the magnitude of the difference between the means of the groups in relation to the variability observed within them. The p-value of 0.253 represents the likelihood of observing a difference as extreme as the one noted, assuming the null hypothesis holds true. The mean score for Males is 4.25, while for Females it is 4.18, resulting in a mean difference of 0.07. Given that the p-value (0.253) surpasses the conventional alpha level of 0.05, it indicates that the difference in means is not statistically significant. The analysis reveals no statistically significant difference between the means of the Male and Female groups according to this t-test, as indicated by the p-value of 0.253. This implies that any observed difference in means is likely attributable to random variation rather than a genuine effect.

H02: There is no significant difference in public and private banks regarding workplace spirituality.**Table 3:** Independent Sample T-test Result according to Type of Banks

Groups	Mean	SD	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test		Sig. (2-tailed)
			F	Sig.	t	df	
Public Banks	4.17	0.37	5.497	0.004	2.156	109	0.000
Private Banks	4.28	0.24					

From the above table, it is visible that there is a distinction exists in the average scores of Public and Private Banks, with Private Banks exhibiting a higher mean score, specifically 0.11 units greater. Levene's Test is employed to assess the equality of variances between the two groups. The resulting p-value of 0.004, which is below the threshold of 0.05, signifies a significant disparity in variances. The mean score for Private Banks stands at 4.28, surpassing that of Public Banks, which is 4.17, by 0.11 units. Furthermore, the p-value of 0.000, also less than 0.05, indicates that the difference in means between Public and Private Banks is statistically significant. Given that Levene's Test reveals unequal variances, the findings should be interpreted under the assumption of unequal variances, specifically utilizing Welch's t-test. Thus, there is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of Public and Private Banks, with Private Banks demonstrating a higher mean score, a difference that is unlikely to be attributed to random chance, as evidenced by the p-value of 0.000.

H03: There is no significant difference in workplace spirituality across different age groups.**Table 4:** ANOVA (F) Test Result according to Age Group

Age Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	Test of Homogeneity of Variances	ANOVA		
			Levene's Statistics	Sig.	F	Sig.
21-30 yrs	4.18	.318	2.741	0.047	0.209	0.890
31-40 yrs	4.19	.344				
41-50 yrs	4.21	.426				
51 & Above	4.24	.108				

The result shows that participants were divided into 4 age groups i.e., 21-30 yrs, 31-40 yrs, 41-50 yrs and 51 & above. The ANOVA result suggests that workplace spirituality scores of the different age groups do not differ significantly ($F=0.209$ & $p>0.05$). Since the Levene's statistics is significant, the equal variance was not assumed. To check for individual differences between age groups post-hoc comparison was assessed using Dunnett's T3. The test indicated that the mean score of 21-30 yrs age group ($M=4.18$, $SD=0.318$) was not significantly different from 31-40 yrs age group ($M=4.19$, $SD=0.344$) and of 41-50 age group ($M=4.21$, $SD=0.426$) and the last age group 51 & above ($M=4.24$, $SD=0.128$). The mean differences were not significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, no significant difference was detected among different age groups of employees relating workplace spirituality level.

H05: There is no significant difference in workplace spirituality relating to education qualification of employees.**Table 4:** Independent Sample T-test Result according to education qualification

Groups	Mean	SD	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test		Sig. (2-tailed)
			F	Sig.	t	df	
Graduate	4.23	0.32	0.035	0.851	0.019	109	0.885
Post Graduate	4.21	0.34					

Upon conducting an independent samples t-test, it was found that the mean score for employees with graduate degree (4.23, SD = 0.32) is slightly higher than that of post graduate employees(4.21, SD = 0.34). The results of the t-test indicate that there is no significant disparity between the mean scores of Public Banks and Private Banks. With a p-value of 0.885, the observed difference in means is not statistically significant. Furthermore, Levene's Test confirms that the assumption of equal variances is met, thereby validating the t-test results. In conclusion, the statistical analysis reveals no compelling evidence to suggest a discrepancy in the average scores between Graduate and Post Graduate employees. The minimal difference observed is not statistically meaningful, signifying that the education qualification of employees does not significantly influence the recorded scores.

H05: There is no significant difference among employees with different work experience regarding workplace spirituality**Table 6:** ANOVA (F) Test Result according to Work Experience

Work Experience	Test of Homogeneity of Variances			ANOVA		
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Levene's Statistics	Sig.	F	Sig.
0-5 yrs	4.16	0.33	6.54	0.01	3.848	0.04
6-10 yrs	4.09	0.28				
11-15 yrs	4.21	0.46				
16-20 yrs	4.31	0.19				

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was carried out to assess variations in average scores among four work experience levels. The mean and standard deviation values for each group are as follows: 0-5 years (Mean = 4.16, SD = 0.33), 6-10 years (Mean = 4.09, SD = 0.28), 11-15 years (Mean = 4.21, SD = 0.46), 16-20 years (Mean = 4.31, SD = 0.19). Levene's Test for equality of variances resulted in an F-value of 6.54 with a p-value of 0.01, indicating a violation of the assumption of equal variances. Nevertheless, the ANOVA findings exhibit an F-value of 3.848 with a p-value of 0.04, indicating statistically significant variations in mean scores across the different work experience categories. The examination uncovers notable differences in average scores based on work experience levels. The p-value of 0.04 indicates the statistical significance of these differences.

Discussion:

In the modern era, spirituality in the workplace is becoming more popular as companies and policymakers recognize its significance and seek to explore its effects on organizational results. Currently, there are numerous socio-economic

challenges such as employee layoffs, declining job satisfaction, rising job-related stress and burnout, technological progress, unethical corporate practices, and more (Gupta & Singh, 2016). Therefore, it is crucial for policymakers, human resource professionals, psychologists, and scholars to mitigate the negative impact and instigate a shift in mindset, with the belief that enhancing workplace spirituality can achieve this goal.

The study revealed that men exhibit a higher level of workplace spirituality compared to women, although the difference was not statistically significant. Employees in the private sector banks demonstrated a significantly higher level of workplace spirituality ($M= 4.28$) compared to those in public banks ($M= 4.17$). Both graduate and post-graduate employees showed a higher level of workplace spirituality, with no significant difference between the two. Additionally, employees aged 51 and above exhibited a higher level of workplace spirituality, indicating a preference for stability and settling down in a particular organization. The results also suggest that as employees age, their level of workplace spirituality increases. Furthermore, employees with 16-20 years of work experience displayed a higher level of workplace spirituality, with a statistically significant difference in relation to their work experience. This indicates that longer tenure in an organization leads to a sense of interconnectedness and a positive association with the organization.

Conclusion and Suggestion:

This research indicates that spirituality plays a significant role in enhancing wellbeing and quality of life. It fosters a sense of interconnectedness among employees, as well as a sense of purpose and meaning in their work. The workplace should actively promote a sense of community among professionals, allowing individuals to express aspects of their spiritual identity through their affiliation with the community. Organizations that align their employees' self-concept with their spiritual identity (inner life) and facilitate the expression of this identity through meaningful work and a sense of belonging contribute to higher job satisfaction. This, in turn, enhances employee commitment and reduces turnover intentions. Thus, it can be concluded that workplace spirituality is a vital component in fostering organizational effectiveness and efficiency. Consequently, organizations should explore various methods to cultivate this environment, such as bereavement programs, meditation sessions, wellness information dissemination, Employee Assistance Programs, and initiatives that integrate work and family life.

Limitations and Scope for Future Research:

This study, like others, has its limitations. In the future, research in this area should investigate the relationship between spirituality and citizenship behavior, personal goals, job involvement, task characteristics, and other factors (Indradevi, 2020). Additionally, the study only used data from the banking sector, so the results may not be representative of all sectors (Purnamasari et al., 2020). Therefore, caution should be taken when generalizing the results to other sectors, and further research is needed. It is also suggested that future studies should apply models to different socio-economic groups and across cultures to establish the validity and reliability of the adopted model. Furthermore, the study collected data using a cross-sectional method, so future studies should consider collecting longitudinal data to analyze the actual level of workplace spirituality and its positive impacts over time.

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