

Workplace spirituality and job satisfaction

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Abstract

In order to obtain an improved understanding of behaviour at work, employees should be studied from physical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions. Although the physical and psychological dimensions of individuals at work have been studied extensively, the spiritual dimension has been neglected for many years. The objective of the current research was to determine the relationship between workplace spirituality and a positive attitude related to work, that is, job satisfaction. A cross-sectional study was conducted with a sample of 600 white-collar workers, chosen from two organizations in different industries in South Africa. The research results indicate that there is a positive relationship between workplace spirituality and job satisfaction. These findings deepen the understanding of personal spirituality, organizational spirituality, and job satisfaction. They bring new insights into the significant role which spirituality plays in the context of the workplace. To survive in the 21st century, organizations need to be spiritually based. This, in turn, will lead to workers being satisfied with their entire work experience.

Introduction

Changes in the global economy, such as restructuring, globalization, diversity, competition, downsizing, re-engineering, ageing populations, as well as environmental pollution, have led to the realization at organizational level that current structures and policies are no longer appropriate in the 21st century. Workers have become demoralized, alienated and unable to cope with the compartmentalized nature of their work and non-work lives. The community structures given to employees formerly provided them with a source of meaning, but are now viewed by some as less relevant (De Klerk, 2005). In order to achieve meaning in life (and therefore in the individual's working life), it seems necessary for organizations to introduce spirituality into the workplace.

The modern organization is facing employee-related problems such as stress-related illnesses, burnout, absenteeism, violence and corruption. These work-related problems are characteristic to organizations where spirituality is absent (Nasina & Doris, 2011). There is a widespread belief that in order for 21st century organizations to survive, it is necessary for their leaders and employees to tap into their spiritual resources (Marschke et al., 2011). Furthermore, if employees are at liberty to bring their physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual attributes to

the workplace, they will become more productive, creative and fulfilled (Nasina & Doris, 2011).

Organizations have to rethink their current approach to work and employees. This requires organizations to institute new systems in order to successfully embrace the changes which can be achieved with the introduction of spirituality to the workplace. In the context of the workplace, spirituality does not necessarily imply that the organization itself should be of a spiritual nature, but merely that the organization should allow and encourage employees to experience spirituality within the working environment. It is, however, assumed that when the organization is spiritual as well as its employees, value congruence might occur, which may imply even greater organizational outcomes, such as quality, productivity and profitability.

Worldwide, the construct of spirituality in the workplace has received increased academic attention over the last years. Although the study of spirituality in the context of the workplace still appears to be in the formative stages of its development, groundbreaking work and several empirical studies consistently confirm significant correlations between spirituality and positive work outcomes. These relationships include the relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational performance

(Neck & Milliman, 1994; Thompson, 2000), organizational commitment (Rego & Cunha, 2008), job involvement, organizational identification, work rewards satisfaction (Milliman et al., 2003; Kolodinsky et al., 2008), work motivation and career commitment (De Klerk et al., 2006), ethics (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003), emotional intelligence, self-efficacy (Hartsfield, 2003), intrinsic, extrinsic and total work rewards (Kolodinsky et al., 2004, 2008), employee performance, organizational effectiveness (Karakas, 2010), leadership (Nooralizad et al., 2011; Phipps, 2012), work values, work ethic (Issa & Pick, 2011), and social justice (Prior & Quinn, 2012).

Positive relationships have also been found between individual spirituality, spiritual well-being or workplace spirituality, and important psychological (individual) outcomes, such as life satisfaction, subjective well-being (Pagnini et al., 2011; Pashak & Laughter, 2012), happiness, self-esteem, hope, optimism (Emmons, 1999), success (Ashar & Lane-Maher, 2004), honesty and mutual trust (Wagner-Marsh & Conley, 1999). These relationships consistently confirm that higher levels of spirituality enhance mental wellness and that it is appropriate to study organizations and their members from a spiritual perspective.

Apart from the positive relationships between spirituality and various psychological and organizational outcomes, lower levels of spirituality have also been found to be negatively correlated with negative phenomena such as loneliness (Ellison, 1983), negative moods (Fehring et al., 1987), end-of-life despair, desiring hastened death, suicidal ideation (McClain et al., 2003), as well as an individual's intention to quit (Milliman et al., 2003). These findings indicate the significant and positive role that spirituality plays in a person's psychological well-being. This relationship is confirmed by De Klerk et al. (De Klerk, 2005; De Klerk et al., 2006), who indicate how meaning in life relates to almost every aspect of psychological well-being. Due to the centrality of work in people's lives, meaning in life may be achieved through a person's work, thus indicating the value of a person's well-being, being enhanced by spirituality in the context of the workplace.

Perspectives on spirituality in the workplace

According to Krishnakumar and Neck (2002) and Sanders et al. (2005), personal spirituality should be studied from an inner-origin or transcendent perspective, and an existential perspective. The intrinsic-origin perspective of workplace spirituality argues that spirituality originates from inside an individual (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002). This view postulates that spirituality implies an inner search for meaningfulness and fulfilment as well as a feeling of connectedness with others, which search may be embarked upon by

anyone, regardless of religion (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002). Milliman et al. (2003) share this perspective, indicating that workplace spirituality implies a connection or a relationship with others, which includes, inter alia, a deeper connection with people, support, freedom of expression, and genuine caring. This view corresponds with the definition of the transcendent capacity of spirituality offered by Sanders et al. (2005, p. 46), who state that 'this involves the process of encouraging employees to feel connected to a network beyond themselves, by fostering a sense of community in the workplace.' Brown (quoted by Milliman et al., 2003) develops this idea further by stating that this sense of community will lead to employees experiencing more satisfaction with the organization. This view confirms that it is appropriate to determine whether there is a relationship between spirituality and job satisfaction.

The existential perspective of workplace spirituality refers to an individual's search to find meaning in life and in the workplace. The definition of the existential capacity of spirituality offered by Bennis and Nanus (quoted by Sanders et al., 2005, p. 46) states that this refers to 'the capacity for organizations to influence and organize meaning for their employees.' An individual's search to find meaning in life (and therefore spirituality) may be advanced by having meaningful work. In addition, the organization can make a deliberate effort to assist individuals to find meaning in life (and in the workplace), by providing autonomy, responsibility, task significance, identity, complexity, challenge, and variety (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). Although meaningful work may assist an individual to advance to a state of true spirituality (and therefore find meaning in life), meaningful work appears to be narrow in scope, and may not be regarded as the only prerequisite to achieve this state of existence.

Defining workplace spirituality

The definition of workplace spirituality should allow for the difference between spirituality on a personal or individual level and spirituality on an organizational level, or workplace spirituality (Kolodinsky et al., 2004). Although many definitions have been offered to capture the essence of workplace spirituality, it seems that authors are not yet in full agreement on the conceptual definition of the construct. This assertion is confirmed by Dent et al. (2005) who have postulated that theory development of workplace spirituality is in its infancy and that as a result construct clarity is lacking. However, enough work has been done on spirituality to offer workable definitions.

On the personal level, spirituality is viewed as the application of an individual's personal spirituality to the working environment (Kolodinsky et al., 2004). This implies that a person may experience spirituality personally through his or her working environment

even though the organization does not support this experience. Most of the research cited in the previous section about the correlations between spirituality with psychological well-being and positive work outcomes relates to individual or personal spirituality.

In the organizational definition of workplace spirituality, the focus is on the spiritual nature of the organization itself rather than the individual (Kolodinsky et al., 2004, 2008). According to this perspective, an organization can be regarded as being spiritual if it strongly adheres to spiritual values such as benevolence, generativity, humanism, justice, receptivity, respect, self-transcendence, trust, and mutuality (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003), even though the members of the organization may not necessarily be spiritually orientated. The focus of this study is on the organizational perspective of workplace spirituality.

Ashmos and Duchon (2000, p. 140) define workplace spirituality as ‘the recognition of an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community.’ Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003, p. 23) offer a conceptual definition of workplace spirituality, defining it 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 to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy.’ From these definitions, for the purpose of this study, we define workplace spirituality to refer to the spiritual nature of the organization itself (Kolodinsky et al., 2008), evidenced by spiritual organizational values and a culture that facilitates employees’ experience and sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003), with the recognition of an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work in the context of the work community (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000).

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction may be regarded as an employee attitude. Although job satisfaction has been extensively researched, consistent results have not always been obtained. Because contemporary employees regard aspects such as self-actualization, being associated with an ethical organization, having interesting work, making money, having colleagues who serve humankind, and serving future generations and the immediate community as important, meaningful and purposeful in their work (Mitroff & Denton, 1999), one may conclude that job satisfaction might potentially have a spiritual basis, rather than only a superfluous ‘materialistic’ basis. For the purposes of this study, job satisfaction will be regarded as ‘a pleasurable or positive emotional state

resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences’ (Locke, 1976, p. 1300).

Previously, various job satisfaction theories have been proposed to explain job satisfaction. Although cognisance has been taken of these theories, the two models of job satisfaction which are most appropriate to this study are the dispositional or genetic components model and needs fulfilment theory.

Explaining of job satisfaction from a dispositional perspective has a long history. In studies dating back as far as 1913, job satisfaction has been studied in relation to personality (Staw & Cohen-Charash, 2005), and emotional adjustment (Fisher & Hanna, 1931). Although the dispositional theory has been extensively criticized, it seems to be a well-constructed theory which provides an interesting and acceptable explanation of job satisfaction. In terms of this perspective, job satisfaction is influenced by what an employee brings to the organization, such as personal traits. Furthermore, some individuals are generally more satisfied than others with life and work, and these individuals will experience job satisfaction because of their disposition to be happy, not because of situational factors such as a fair salary, good relationships with their supervisors, and adequate equipment.

Studies on job satisfaction have found that personal determinants such as personality variables, organizational status and seniority, and general life satisfaction influence an individual’s experience of job satisfaction. The personality variables which have been found to be related to job satisfaction include an individual’s self-esteem (which refers to the extent to which an individual has a positive or a negative view of himself or herself) (Locke, 1976), coping with stress (Scheier et al., 1986), locus of control (which refers to an individual’s perception of the source of his or her destiny) (Stout et al., 1987; Surrence & Harlow, 1992), patience or tolerance (Bluen et al., 1990), and social trust (Liou et al., 1990). Most of these personality traits are regarded as indicative of people experiencing well-being.

Some of these personal determinants have also been found to be related to meaning and purpose in living, such as self-esteem, and internal locus of control (Reker, 1977). Meaning and purpose in living also advance a person’s well-being (or life satisfaction) (Zika & Chamberlain, 1992). Thus, spirituality is central to people’s well-being (or life satisfaction). This assertion is confirmed by Young et al. (1998), who have found that spirituality assists individuals to maintain general well-being. It is therefore assumed that a spiritual person will generally be satisfied with life, and consequently will view events differently and behave differently from a person who is not satisfied.

The dispositional model posits that a person who is generally satisfied with life is more likely to

experience job satisfaction regardless of the existence or absence of favourable work-related factors. This proposition holds that job satisfaction is to a large extent a manifestation of life meaning, life satisfaction and thus a manifestation of spirituality. If this is true, it might imply that job satisfaction is a relatively stable predisposition. Experiencing life satisfaction through one's work may lead to personally valuing outcomes, such as meaning and purpose in life, connectedness, compassion, and, ultimately, spirituality.

The theoretical relationship between spirituality and job satisfaction can also be adequately explained from a needs fulfilment perspective. In accordance with Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs theory, an individual has the need to grow and develop until he or she reaches the highest level of the needs hierarchy, namely self-actualization, which is referred to as a state in which an individual experiences complete intellectual, emotional and spiritual fulfilment (Quatro, 2004). Although this is not true for all individuals, many people strive to achieve self-actualization.

Maslow (1954) distinguished between achieving self-actualization as 'transcenders' and as 'merely healthy' (Dye et al., 2005). Achieving self-actualization as 'a transcendent' (as explained in the context of workplace spirituality) means the achievement of full potential, personal development, and acting with integrity. Maslow (1966) further proposes that individuals who reach this state of self-actualization will strive to achieve ultimate and self-transcending values, such as truth, goodness, beauty, justice, oneness, order, comprehensiveness, and perfection. These values of transcendent individuals correspond with the values of a spiritual individual. According to Fernando (2005), 'there seems to be a noteworthy similarity between the value characteristics of self-actualizers of Abraham Maslow and the characterization of spirituality in contemporary literature.' Thus, in accordance with Maslow's needs theory (1954, 1970), it seems that spiritual individuals will also be those who have a dominant need to achieve self-actualization, which will lead to them being satisfied. It also seems that organizations would need to persistently satisfy deeply rooted spiritual needs, in order for self-actualizers to experience satisfaction.

The changing nature of the contemporary employee forces organizations to view job satisfaction from a new perspective, focusing on deeply held spiritual values and belief systems. Meaning and purpose in life, significant components of spirituality, have been used to conclude the conceptual relationship of personal spirituality with job satisfaction. Meaning and purpose in life have been positively correlated with work motivation and positive work attitudes (Sargent, 1973), which include aspects such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The importance of meaning in life as an important facet of workplace spirituality has

consistently been found to correlate with positive work outcomes such as positive work attitudes (Neck & Milliman, 1994), intrinsic job satisfaction (Davis et al., 2003; De Klerk et al., 2006) and career commitment and goal orientation (De Klerk et al., 2006). Milliman et al. (2003) report a positive association between spirituality and employee job outcomes, such as organizational commitment, an individual's intention to quit, intrinsic work satisfaction, job involvement, and organization-based self-esteem. The same employee attitudes were tested in a study by Crawford et al. (2009) and significant relationships were reported between spirituality with organizational commitment, job involvement, and organization-based self-esteem in this industry. Pawar (2009) also reported a strong association between personal spirituality in the workplace and positive work attitudes such as job satisfaction, job involvement and organizational commitment, and Noor and Arif (2011) found that spirituality plays a key role in employees' job satisfaction.

With the relationship between personal spirituality and job satisfaction confirmed, there are several arguments for the conceptual relationship of job satisfaction with organizational spirituality. Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2010) note that aspects of the workplace and the organization promote individual feelings of satisfaction through transcendence. Thus, the process of work and spiritual values in the organization facilitate an employee's sense of well-being, joy and completeness. Ashforth and Pratt (2010) propose three major dimensions to workplace spirituality – all of these conceptually related to job satisfaction. These dimensions include self-transcendence (making a connection to something greater than oneself), holism and harmony (a degree of self-mastery, authenticity and balance), and personal growth and development (or self-actualization). They argue that if transcendence leads to connection, and holism and harmony to coherence, then growth leads to completeness. Crawford et al. (2009) found that workplace spirituality impacts on organizational commitment, intention to quit, intrinsic satisfaction, job involvement and organization-based self-esteem. They found that when organization was perceived to have incorporated spiritual values into their ethos and was actively promoting workplace spirituality, there is a significant difference compared to an organization that was perceived not to have incorporated spirituality on the organizational level. Crawford et al.'s (2009) study strongly suggests the potential relationship between workplace spirituality and variables such as job satisfaction.

Motivation for the study

Although several research studies examined the relationship between personal spirituality and positive work outcomes, such as job satisfaction (Kolodinsky

et al., 2008), the relationship of organizational spirituality with positive outcomes such as job satisfaction has not received the same level of attention. More research is thus needed to examine the relationship between organizational spirituality (workplace spirituality) and positive work outcomes, such as job satisfaction.

Work, the work environment and the organization are taking up an increasingly central role in people's lives (De Klerk et al., 2006). The dynamic environment within which organizations function seems to have a definite impact on the feelings and emotions of the contemporary worker. Some organizations focus on a materialistic approach to address these concerns, but for many this superficial approach will be inadequate. For the spiritual employee, the organization should have a spiritually based philosophy, vision, mission, core-value, and leadership. Not only will this create positive feelings and emotions, but the spiritually based organization will also create many positive organizational outcomes, including job satisfaction.

The spiritually based organization can also provide meaningful work to those workers who have a need of spiritual fulfilment. If these workers view work as central to their lives, meaningful work will lead them to experiencing meaning in life. For them, having a meaningful life will lead to spiritual fulfilment and general life satisfaction, which may eventually lead to satisfaction with their work experience and thus more general job satisfaction. On the other hand, if an individual has realized personal spirituality and do not experience some spirituality within the organization, the absence of workplace spirituality may lead them to being less satisfied with their jobs and entire work experience.

In an article by De Klerk (2005), a research agenda for workplace spirituality was proposed. According to De Klerk (2005), research on workplace spirituality should specifically inquire into the relationship between spirituality and wellness-related concepts such as intrinsic motivation, work satisfaction, work involvement, and job involvement. Riasudeen and Prabavathy (2011) confirm this proposition by stating that there is a need to empirically investigate workplace spirituality, and to establish whether the construct is related to employee attitudes. The study of the impacts of workplace spirituality will lead to a richer, more advanced explanation and more holistic understanding of human behaviour at work, especially the impact that the nature of an organization has on its employees.

Improved understanding of the relationship between workplace spirituality and job satisfaction will assist organizations to develop organizational initiatives different from those currently available, and to develop different kinds of organizations that can create a more

motivating climate to employees. Such interventions or approaches would be aimed at enhancing workplace spirituality, and as a result will benefit both the organization and its employees and lead to organizations creating 'spirited' cultures which are proposed to result in the improved experience of job satisfaction by employees, and thus better organizational profitability (Garcia-Zamor, 2003).

The global economy and its materialistic relationship with tangible outcomes have caused organizations to focus predominantly on quantifiable monetary outcomes, rather than enhancing spiritual values. This focus on tangible outcomes and financial results mean that organizations are becoming increasingly detached from emotional and spiritual concerns or spiritual values (Karakas, 2010). This is troubling, taking into consideration that people spend more time at work than ever before, and often the workplace is regarded as the primary social institution where meaning and purpose in living is found (De Klerk, 2005). These changing conditions have left many workers with a need for connectedness, meaning, purpose, and hope, which is at an all-time high (Kolodinsky et al. 2008).

The meaning of work has also changed extensively, and is today viewed as a means to discover one's life purpose and a mode of self-expression (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). Work may be regarded as the cradle of meaning, replacing family and social groups (Karakas, 2010). On the other hand, employee dissatisfaction is increasing (Barrett, 2004), suggesting that employees' deeply held needs may not be satisfied by organizations or the work that they do. Hence the research question 'Is there a relationship between workplace spirituality and job satisfaction?'

In addition, most of the research on workplace spirituality has been conducted in first-world countries, especially in North America. However, research results often differ across continents and cultures (De Klerk et al., 2009). Similarly, research is required to establish whether the relationships found in North America also apply to a developing country such as South Africa. In this study the relationship between spirituality and job satisfaction within the South African context will be explored.

Research design

Research approach

A cross-sectional study was conducted to examine the relationship between workplace spirituality and job satisfaction. This method was inexpensive, yet adequate to achieve the goal of the research, namely to examine the relationship between workplace spirituality and job satisfaction in South Africa. Primary data was collected by means of a questionnaire. A total

number of 600 questionnaires were distributed to white-collar workers from two different organizations, representing different industries in South Africa; one being a private hospital, and the other a partially state-subsidized educational institution. The study focused specifically on white-collar workers, because work centrality and meaningful work seem to be more important to them (De Klerk et al., 2006, 2009; Morse & Weiss, 1955; Orzack, 1959).

A total of 242 questionnaires were returned, 164 from the hospital and 78 from the educational institution. The final sample consisted of 21.5% men and 77.7% women. The sample consisted predominantly of middle-aged people (41–62 years, $N = 106$, 43.8%), with further education or university of technology graduates ($N = 83$, 34.3%). In terms of the respondents' ethnic distribution, 73.1% were white, 17.4% were African, 7% were coloured, and 1.7% were Asian. The sample consisted predominantly of professional workers ($N = 84$, 34.7%). This group consisted of occupations such as psychologists, pharmacists, doctors, and professional nurses. A large number of workers are administrative staff ($N = 62$, 25.6%), with other respondents being academic personnel (8.7%), managerial personnel (12.4%), and technical personnel (8.3%). The sample consisted predominantly of Christians (93.4%) with very strong or strong religious convictions (83.1%). Similar findings have been obtained by other researchers conducting studies in South Africa (e.g. De Klerk et al., 2006).

Measuring instruments

Workplace spirituality was measured using the Organizational Spiritual Values Scale (OSVS) developed by Kolodinsky et al. (2004, 2008), which assesses a person's perceptions of the spiritual values exhibited by his or her organization. The OSVS consists of one factor containing 20 items, 19 of the questions are set positively and one is set negatively. Scoring is done through a Likert-type scaling, ranging from 1 (completely false) to 5 (completely true). The internal consistency reliability estimate for the scale was 0.93, indicating a strong reliability.

Job satisfaction was measured using the short version of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), which was developed by Weiss et al. in 1967. The MSQ was developed to measure an employee's satisfaction with his or her work and had reliability coefficients of between 0.87 and 0.92 and a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.91 (Weiss et al., 1967). For practical reasons it was decided to use the short form of the MSQ. It measures total (general) job satisfaction and two dimensions, namely intrinsic job satisfaction and extrinsic job satisfaction. The scale consists of 20 items with Likert-type scaling, ranging from 'very satisfied' to 'very dissatisfied'. The

MSQ has been applied in a few South African studies with mixed results. In the studies by Adonisi (2003), Buitendach and De Witte (2005), and Kamfer et al. (1998), a two-factor solution was retained for all 20 items of the original instrument. However, Boshoff and Hoole's (1998) study could not differentiate between the MSQ's two factors and concluded that the questionnaire was essentially one-dimensional.

Research procedure

It was decided to collect data by means of self-administered questionnaires. This data-collection method has been evaluated as effective for collecting data on a topic such as workplace spirituality, because it allows respondents to answer questions anonymously and to reflect on questions before answering them. The self-administered questionnaire was distributed to the sample (which was randomly chosen) through the internal mail systems of the two organizations. The purpose of the study was explained in a covering letter attached to the questionnaire, and respondents completed the questionnaire anonymously and voluntarily.

Statistical analysis

The first step in the analysis of the data was to subject the responses to both instruments individually to principal factor analysis (PFA). This was done to determine whether the factor structure of each instrument was similar for this South African sample to that described in the theory and by previous studies. The next step was to verify each item on their factor loadings in the instruments. Items which did not show acceptable loadings ($r \geq 0.25$) on only one factor were removed and the PFA was repeated until all the remaining items showed acceptable loadings and thus 'clean' structures. Once the factor structures of the instruments were confirmed, the associations of biographic variables with workplace spirituality and job satisfaction were investigated through analysis of variance (ANOVA) to control for external variance. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to determine whether a significant relationship exists between the variables of workplace spirituality (independent variable) and job satisfaction (dependent variable).

Results

The PFA of the OSVS confirmed a one-factor structure, but one item did not show a satisfactory loading ($r < 0.25$). This item was removed and a further PFA was repeated, but only with the 19 remaining items. This PFA showed a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.95, with 53.3% of the total variance been explained, confirming the reliability of the OSVS.

The PFA of the MSQ confirmed a one-factor solution, with all the items showing satisfactory loadings; the lowest loading being $r = 0.45$ and the highest $r = 0.86$. The one-factor solution of the MSQ showed a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.93 and explained 40.2% of the total variance, confirming its reliability as a measure of general job satisfaction.

Results from the ANOVA indicate that of all the biographic variables measured, only the employing organization (hospital or education) and respondents' age are significantly associated with workplace spirituality ($p < 0.05$). The mean score on workplace spirituality for the educational organization was 57.4 ($N = 68$), which was higher than the mean score of the hospital (39.8, $N = 144$). Thus, the educational organization is perceived by its organizational members as having more spiritual values than the private hospital. The 30–40 year age group experienced the highest levels of workplace spirituality (49.3, $N = 78$), followed by the 41–62 year age group (45.1, $N = 88$) and lastly the 19–29 year group (39.4, $N = 46$). The first two groupings represent the life stage where meaning and purpose typically represent prominent issues in the workplace (De Klerk et al., 2009).

Although the association between gender and the experience of organizational spirituality differ statistically significantly ($p < 0.05$), the results between the hospital and educational organization are inconsistent and therefore not regarded as of any practical relevance. Women working at the educational organization experienced a higher mean score on workplace spirituality of (61.4; $N = 37$) than men (52.4; $N = 31$). However, men working at the hospital perceived higher workplace spirituality (46.1, $N = 15$) than women (39.1, $N = 129$).

None of the biographical variables measured rendered statistically significant associations with job satisfaction ($p < 0.05$), and therefore it is concluded that job satisfaction is independent of biographical-type variables. Before the results of the relationship between workplace spirituality and job satisfaction are presented and analysed, the level of the scores of the respondents in the current sample will be discussed. The means, standard deviations, and maximum and minimum scores of the respondents on the two variables are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 shows that the MSQ had a mean score of 45.7 and a standard deviation of 13.1. A study by Buitendach and De Witte (2005) shows a mean score of 34.7 for the MSQ for the South African population. Thus, it appears as though the South African population are mostly dissatisfied with their jobs. The OSVS had a mean score of 45.7 and a standard deviation of 16. The mean score of the OSVS indicates that, on average, the respondents had a slightly below-average level of workplace spirituality.

Table 1. Data on levels of scores.

	n	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Items (n)
MSQ	238	45.7	13.1	26	100	20
OSVS	239	45.7	16.0	21	91	20

MSQ, Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire; OSVS, Organizational Spiritual Values Scale.

Through Pearson correlation analysis, workplace spirituality was found to be positively correlated with job satisfaction ($r = 0.47$, $p < 0.0001$). This finding is supported by previous research, which indicated a positive correlation between workplace spirituality and intrinsic work satisfaction (Kolodinsky et al., 2008; Milliman et al., 2003). The respondents showed to be somewhat dissatisfied with their work (mean = 45.7) and perceived their organizations as not having strong spiritual values (mean = 45.7). Therefore, one may speculate that employees expect their organizations to display more spiritual values.

Although workplace spirituality was measured as slightly below average, reference is made to spiritual values in the mission statements and core values of both these organizations. However, information contained in visions, mission statements, and core values are often not practically implemented and lived out by organizational leaders. This leads to organizational members not perceiving their organizations as being serious about their vision and their mission statements. Miller and Skidmore (quoted by Cartwright & Holmes, 2006) stated that if mission statements are not practically implemented and fail to have authenticity they will result in an unmotivated and uncommitted workforce. One may therefore deduce that although the organizations included in this study do to some extent have spiritually based values, this is possibly not evident to organizational members because of a lack of commitment to these values by organizational leaders, which may potentially lead to employees being dissatisfied.

Discussion and conclusion

The findings of this study showed a significant relationship between workplace spirituality and job satisfaction. In the absence of significant correlations between biographic variables with either workplace spirituality (except for type of organization and age) and job satisfaction, it can be assumed that the relationship between workplace spirituality and job satisfaction is not a function of biographical context. These findings confirm that organizations that adhere to and promote spiritual values are likely to create an environment where job satisfaction will manifest in employees.

The findings of this study support the spiritual values-based organizational model proposed by Milliman et al. (1999) and Kolodinsky et al. (2008). In this model it is indicated that the values of a spiritual organization influences business and employees' plans. It is also indicated that the spirituality of an organization influences outcomes such as organizational performance and employee attitudes. It is further revealed that it is not sufficient just to have a spiritual mission statement, but rather that these spiritually based values should be interwoven into business strategies, organizational cultures and business practices (Milliman et al., 1999).

Workplace spirituality can either be introduced on an individual or organizational level. Higher levels of personal spirituality have often been associated with positive outcomes. However, from this study it is clear that if organizations are not well prepared to introduce spirituality to the workplace on an organizational level, they are unlikely to release the full potential advantage of workplace spirituality. From the research results, we offer the opinion that, in order to bring about spiritual transformation in an organization, more emphasis should be given to the promotion, implementation and encouragement of spirituality on an organizational level than what has previously been considered. This may include fundamental changes in the organization's philosophy, vision, purpose, and mission and the embedding of spiritual values in the organization.

The dynamic and increasing competitive global business environment within which organizations function requires that all avenues and mechanisms should be explored in order to enhance organizational performance. According to Gratton (2011) the contemporary world of work is being rediscovered as a source of spiritual growth and community, where people experience connection with others. This study confirmed that the popular focus of organizations on direct material results and tangible outcomes are inadequate; an increased focus on developing workplace spirituality is also called for. Spiritual values and organizational spirituality is not just 'nice to have' or a good idea, but an essential aspect that brings both good to the benefit of the world at large, and enhances organizational profitability and competitiveness. The spiritual organization can provide meaningful work to those workers who have a need for spiritual fulfilment. Not only will this create positive feelings and emotions in employees, but the spiritually based organization will also create job satisfaction and arguably, many other positive organizational outcomes.

To ensure that an organization is truly transformed into a workplace that is spiritual, spiritual leaders are needed who will live out spiritual values in the organization. Fry (2005, p. 694) emphasizes the

importance of spiritual leadership, defined as 'the values, attitudes, and behaviors necessary to intrinsically motivate one's self and others so that they have a sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership.' He suggests that an effective leader should be a leader who is spiritual, who focuses on the spiritual needs of his or her followers in order to ensure organizational success. Reave (2005) supports this notion and argues that having spiritual values has led to leaders being judged as more effective, and such effective leaders have been shown to increase worker satisfaction, motivation, productivity, and profits. Leaders are regarded as those who have the biggest impact on organizational culture. The importance of spiritual leadership to promote and embed organizational spirituality has been confirmed by this study.

According to Jurkiewicz and Giacalone (2004), spiritual organizational cultures largely depend on the values of organizational leaders, and are said to have a positive impact on employee motivation. Previous studies have established a positive relationship between employee motivation and job satisfaction (Pool, 1997). This shows that when organizations have spiritually based cultures, their employees will be motivated and satisfied. Milliman et al. (1999) came to similar conclusions, indicating that an organization which is regarded as spiritual has high levels of employee satisfaction and low staff turnover rates. These arguments support the findings of this study, indicating that workplace spirituality is positively correlated with job satisfaction.

This study has some limitations. Firstly, although causality is assumed that organizational spirituality leads to job satisfaction, this direction of correlation has not been established. Although it is conceptually unlikely, it is arguably possible that the direction of causality is from job satisfaction to organizational spirituality. Secondly, the sample appears to be rather homogeneous with regard to education, race, gender, religious affiliation and strength of religious conviction. The sample can be described as well-educated professional white Christian women. Although this might be representative of the white-collar worker population in the two organizations that took part in the study, one may argue that the sample is not representative of South African demographics, and it seems to be similar to the samples from the North American studies. As such, care should be taken when generalizing results to other populations and also within the South African context. Future studies that include samples that are more representative of the South African demographics should be conducted to assess whether it renders similar results.

This study has revealed the importance of organizational spirituality in the context of the workplace.

However, because the topic did not receive adequate attention in previous empirical research, the nature of the current study was essentially exploratory. More confirmatory empirical studies with more sophisticated statistical analyses are thus needed to confirm the results obtained in the current study. This will lead to more integrated and solid theories on the role of spirituality in the workplace. Having a more solid theoretical foundation will also necessitate an evaluation of the suitability of current measures to measure workplace spirituality.

As this was an explorative study, it was decided to restrict the statistical analyses to explorative statistical methods such as PFA and Pearson correlation. With the correlation between workplace spirituality and job satisfaction established, future studies should focus on more sophisticated confirmatory analyses, such as multiple regression, to confirm the dimensions of workplace spirituality and the predictability of job satisfaction in the presence of organizational spirituality. Future research may explore research questions such as what are the origins of workplace spirituality; why do employees view their organizations as having, or not having, spiritual values; when would these values appear; how do official statements such as the vision, mission statement, core values, and beliefs of the organization influence the manifestation of organizational spirituality or the perception thereof? Moreover, future studies should explore how to move organizations from spiritual values in official statements being espoused values, to become fundamental beliefs and organizational assumptions (Kinjerski & Skrypnik, 2004; Schein, 1996). This might include investigating the valuable role of having leaders that are spiritual in the organization in order to ensure that spirituality is successfully integrated in the organization. Other aspects that could be investigated are how different workers experience workplace spirituality, and the impact of workplace spirituality on their respective work satisfaction.

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