Spirituality in Management

M Subramaniam	N Panchanatham
Bharathiyar University, Coimbatore-641038, Tamilnadu, India	Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar-608002, India

ABSTRACT *The purpose of this study is to explore the individual perceptions about integrating spirituality in management and to assess the benefits of spirituality towards organizational performance. This paper focuses on the impact of spirituality in management for performance improvement. The methodology adopted involves descriptive field study using a structured questionnaire as the research instrument with statistical analysis to arrive at the results. The results of the study reveal that people are positive about integrating spirituality into management and it is viewed as a highly acceptable and beneficial concept in the workplace, especially in the current turbulent economic situation in the world. Also it is noted that several individuals and organizations are attempting to modify their way of working to include spirituality in the workplace as well as in business.*

Introduction

Spirituality is the development of our inner well being for achieving happiness, peace and fulfillment. Spirituality helps to find meaning in work, a meaning that extends further than economic gain. Spirituality is about people who perceive themselves as spirited beings, whose spirit needs energizing at work. In the modern business world, there are several entrepreneurs and managers refer their success to their spiritual attitude and practices. It is widely believed that for companies to survive in the face of economical downturn and globalization, it would be helpful to tap into employees' spiritual resources. This study focuses on employee perceptions of how spirituality impacts the workplace. The key questions addressed are:

1. What are the perceptions about integrating spirituality in management?
2. How does the integration of spirituality in management affect organizational performance?
3. What are the benefits of integrating spirituality into the management?

Spirituality

There are quite a number of definitions, and still, there is no widely accepted definition of spirituality. Howard (2002) concluded that spirituality encompasses the way an individual lives out his or her sense of interconnectedness with the world through an ability to tap into deep resources. Spirituality is the basic feelings of being connected with one's complete self, others and the entire universe. Spirituality is a live experience, a set of practices and a consciousness that aligns us with a sense of sanctity of all being. Traditionally, religions have regarded spirituality as an integral aspect of religious experience. Many do still equate spirituality with religion, but the growth of secularism has given rise to a broader view of spirituality. Spirituality is not about making people believe a system or a thought system. It's about knowing that every person has within themselves, a level of truth and integrity, and that we all have our own divine power (Laabs, 1995).

Spiritual Intelligence

Spiritual Intelligence is a term used to indicate a spiritual correlation to IQ (Intelligence Quotient) and EQ (Emotional Quotient). Like EQ, SQ (Spiritual Quotient) is becoming more main stream in scientific inquiry and philosophical/psychological discussions. It has been identified as a key component of leadership by bestselling business author Stephen (2004), who observes that Spiritual Intelligence is the central and most fundamental of all the intelligences, because it

becomes the source of guidance for others. Spiritual Intelligence is the ability to act with wisdom and compassion, while maintaining inner and outer peace, regardless of the circumstances. Business leaders build all three forms of capital viz. material, social, and spiritual, by using their own intelligence.

Workplace Spirituality

Workplace Spirituality is expressing our desires to find meaning and purpose in our lives and is a process of living out one's set of deeply held personal values. Without the existence of the human spirit at work, there is no meaning in work. Workplace Spirituality is a spiritual culture recognizing that employees have both mind and spirit, seek to find meaning and purposes in their work, and desire to connect with other employees and be part of a community. In order for people to find self fulfillment not only in their personal lives, but at work as well, they must be able to express their values, dreams, and creativity. Several studies show that spiritual organizations have witnessed improved productivity, reduced turnover, greater employee satisfaction and increased organizational commitment.

Spiritual Organization

Spiritual Organizations are concerned with helping employees develop and reach their potentials. According to Robbins and Judge (2007), the characteristics of Spiritual Organizations are: (i) Strong sense of purpose (ii) Focus on individual development (iii) Trust and openness (iv) Employee empowerment (v) Toleration of employee expression.

Spirituality in Management

There are varied perspectives about spirituality in management. Some say that it is embodying personal values of honesty, integrity, and good quality work. Others say that it is treating their co-workers and employees in a responsible, caring way. For others, it is participating in spiritual study groups or using prayer, meditation, or intuitive guidance at work. And for some, it is making their business socially responsible in how it impacts the environment, serves the community or helps create a better world. In general, key spiritual values embraced in a business context include integrity, honesty, accountability, quality, cooperation, service, intuition, trustworthiness, respect, justice, and service.

Benefits of Spirituality

Bringing ethics and spiritual values into the workplace can lead to increased productivity and profitability as well as employee retention, customer loyalty, and brand reputation (Corinne (2005). Research has shown that there are numer-

ous benefits like higher profits, less absenteeism, higher morale, less stress etc are associated by integrating spirituality in management. The key outcomes that everyone can benefit include (i) Boosts morale (ii) Influences satisfaction (iii) Strengthens (iv) Increases productivity (v) Improves Profit. Spiritual organizations believe that spirituality could ultimately be the greatest competitive advantage.

Literature Review

Extensive literature review shows that spirituality is becoming a popular field of interest among management researchers and practitioners. Karakas (2010) has exclusively reviewed about 140 papers in the literature on workplace spirituality. A study reported by Ian and Elizabeth (1999) concluded that, "People are hungry for ways in which to practice their spirituality in the workplace without offending their co-workers or causing acrimony". The growing interest in workplace spirituality is also evident in bookstores, virtual bookstores and the recent spirituality books on the issue. Some of these books on spirituality in management or spirituality and leadership have been among the best sellers. There are many national newsletters, associations, and several national conferences held based on spirituality.

Research Objective

The purpose of study is to assess the role spirituality plays in management through the perspectives of employees and employers. The study comprises of following three objectives:

(1) To study the individual perceptions about integrating spirituality in management
(2) To identify the impact of spirituality in management towards organizational performance
(3) To study the benefits of integrating the spirituality into management and workplace.

Research Method

The methodology adopted is descriptive field study based on survey research. This study depends mainly on the primary data collected through the research instrument which is a well-framed and structured questionnaire to elicit the well-considered opinions of the participants. Multi-Stage Random Sampling Method is used to select the sample. The study is confined to few selected organizations in the city of Coimbatore in South India. The participants were chosen randomly from seven business sectors viz. Banking, Educational, Government, Healthcare, Manufacturing, IT Software and Trading establishments which is considered as the sample domain. Total of 75 questionnaires were distributed and responses obtained. After scrutiny, five were rejected due to incomplete responses. Finally, seventy completed questionnaires were used for the study. Sample demographics are shown in Table-1.

Table 1: Sample Demographics

Description		Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	55	79
	Female	15	21
Marriage	Married	60	86
	Single	10	14
Age	25-35	17	24
	36-50	38	54
	51+	15	22
Education	High School	5	7
	Graduate	49	70
	Post Graduate	16	23
Status	Senior level	11	16
	Middle level	40	57
	Junior level	19	27

Management	Banking	11	16
	Educational	11	16
	Govt. Offices	9	13
	Healthcare	10	14
	IT Software	9	13
	Manufacturing	11	16
	Trading	9	13

Results and Discussions

Questionnaire is structured with nine simple questions encompassing the objectives. Measurement made on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. Results are shown in Table-2.

Table 2: Survey Results

No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Spirituality is different from religion	19	35	7	6	3
2.	Spirituality and management can co-exist	20	37	6	5	2
3.	Spirituality enhances quality of life	20	38	5	6	1
4.	Spirituality provides purpose and meaning at work	19	39	7	4	1
5.	Spirituality provides interconnectedness	20	39	6	4	1
6.	Spirituality boosts morale and productivity	21	38	6	4	1
7.	Spirituality develops leadership skills	21	37	6	5	1
8.	Spirituality drives success in decision making	20	37	7	5	1
9.	Spirituality can help overcoming crisis situation	20	36	6	6	2

Statistical analysis for mean, standard deviation, standard error mean and t-test for comparing mean values with hypothetical mean value were carried out. Results are shown in Table-3.

Table 3: Statistical Analysis

No.	Statement	Mean	S.D	Std. Error Mean	t-test	Sig.
1.	Spirituality is different from religion	3.871	1.048	0.125	6.954	0.000
2.	Spirituality and management can co-exist	3.971	0.963	0.115	8.443	0.000
3.	Spirituality enhances quality of life	4.000	0.917	0.110	9.126	0.000
4.	Spirituality provides purpose and meaning at work	4.014	0.860	0.103	9.872	0.000
5.	Spirituality provides interconnectedness	4.043	0.859	0.103	10.162	0.000
6.	Spirituality boosts morale and productivity	4.057	0.866	0.104	10.211	0.000
7.	Spirituality develops leadership skills	4.029	0.900	0.108	9.557	0.000
8.	Spirituality drives success in decision making	4.000	0.901	0.108	9.287	0.000
9.	Spirituality can help overcoming crisis situation	3.943	0.991	0.118	7.960	0.000

It is found that the mean, the respective standard deviations (S.D) and the Standard Error Mean values show consistency. Also, the t-values are positive and statistically significant at 5% level.

Based on the findings, it is inferred that most individuals have strong perception about spirituality, differentiated between religion and spirituality accepting the later as appropriate, positive about integrating spirituality into management, affirmed that spirituality and managements can co-exist, and agreed that spirituality enhances quality of life. Also, confirmed that spirituality can improve productivity, leadership and decision making skills resulting in organizational performance and accept spirituality as a solution to the current turbulent economic situation in the world.

Conclusion

Spirituality enables inner transformation resulting in a new paradigm for management and should be an integral part of business. Several organizations acknowledge and modify their way of working with awareness of spirituality and the importance is expected to grow more in future. Based on this study, following recommendations are proposed for implementation:

τOrganizations should make efforts to help employees feel comfortable expressing themselves.

- Managements should strive hard to implement spiritual practices at all levels of management.
- Employers should arrange spirituality related coaching classes/courses on yoga, meditation etc.
- Managements should make employees feel that they are valued based on individual values.
- Efforts should be made to include spirituality as a subject in Management Education.

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