

# AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON SPIRITUAL WORK CULTURE AMONG INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY EMPLOYEES

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## Abstract

*Work culture plays a vital role in the success of an organisation. Spiritual influence in the work place has gained momentum in recent years and it has paved way to organisations focusing on spiritual work culture. This study is an initiative about spiritual work culture among employees in selected Information Technology (IT) organisations. It analyses the prevailing work culture, the factors contributing to spiritual work culture and the employees' satisfaction level towards the spiritual work culture factors. A well structured questionnaire was framed and distributed for the purpose of the study and the responses were recorded. It was found that the spiritual work culture does exist among employees in the organisations and the employees are satisfied with the existing levels of spiritual work culture. The major factors that contribute to the spiritual work culture are trust and confidence.*

**KEYWORDS:** Spiritual Work culture

## INTRODUCTION

Work culture is very important and vital to any organisation because of the fact that it improves production without sacrificing people. An enhanced work culture in the organization helps to survive the increasingly competitive domestic as well as global markets. Work culture has to be imbibed and developed over a period of time in the organization's work path. A good work culture involves the organization creating a climate where employees are eager to work and complete the task. Work culture, which is a blend of practices and ideologies arising from the interactions of people with their work environments, have been shaped by many diverse factors of employment opportunities, population, the ways in which people find jobs, the rhythms of employment, the size of the workplace, the process of getting to and from work, how the workday is organized, power relationships and hierarchies, how workers learn and manage their tasks, how they socialize and organize work life, how informal worker behavior interacts with formal authority, rules and regulations, welfare facilities and above all the organisations concern for its people.

There are many different work cultures within an organisation, reflecting the differences between

officers and workmen, professional, white-collar, service work, and workers' identities by race, gender, age, and ethnicity. Work cultures have also changed as the nature of work has transformed over the past decade.

A spiritual organization is concerned with helping its employees to develop and to reach their fullest potential. It is concerned with directly addressing their problems created by work vis-à-vis life. In order to do so, organizations have to develop certain characteristics. The organisations should realize that employees as individuals bring certain personal values to work. It must give ways for the employees to implement those values in their work. A spiritual work culture will help employees realize their sense of purpose and believe that the organisations have trust in them. Therefore, spiritual work culture is the highest manifestation of organisational work culture.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

It is carried out in three parts:

- a) Work culture
- b) Work place spirituality
- c) Spiritual Work culture

### a) WORK CULTURE

Jai.B.Psingh, (1990) has defined the concept and meaning of work culture in the book "Work culture in Indian context" as the work related activities and the meanings attached to such activities in the framework of norms and values regarding to work. These activities, norms and values are generally conceptualized in an organization. An organization has its boundaries, goals and objectives, technology managerial practices, material and human resources as well as constraints. Its employees have skills, knowledge, needs and expectations. The two sets of factors organizational and personal interact and over a period of time, establish roles, norms and values pertaining to work. It is the totality of interacting factors around the focus for work.

The British were the first to introduce procedures and work methods in India and subsequent developments were all patterned after the British model. The preference for relationship orientation which requires a superior to be dominant and the subordinate to be dependent was never totally erased from the Indian psyche. The rapid expansion of industrial activities required a large-scale import of Western technology and work forms, which contained Western work values. The organizations were put in the service of National development with the twin goals of growth and social justice. However the developmental roles were not congruent to economic objectives much less to the personal development of the people. The climate in many of the work organizations is still marked by bureaucratization, impersonalization, political interference, and tendency towards dehumanization. With the recruitment of employees from broader spectrum of the society there has been greater penetration of social habits and cultural values into the fabric of the work organization.

The emphasis on equitable distribution of wealth had its roots in the Indian cultural preference for philanthropy and sharing of wealth. In highly heterogeneous and pluralistic

social context of India, the condition of the employees was sought to be improved through building tolerant organizations with the minimal conflict. However it worked the other way as employees applied these employee - friendly policies to meet their personal and social obligations while neglecting work requirements.

### b) WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY

The concept of spirituality has existed in the society even before the emergence of religion but so far it has not found a place in the literature of Management. Spirituality applicable to workplace is the recognition that people have personal values that nourish work and in turn nourished by meaningful work. Organizations that promote spiritual culture recognize that people have a mind & spirit and therefore seek to find meaning and purpose in their work and desire to connect these with their ultimate goal in life.

The notion of workplace spirituality has been well articulated in the literature (Dale, 1991<sup>[1]</sup>; Fairholm, 1997<sup>[2]</sup>; Fry, 2003<sup>[3]</sup>; Hawley, 1993<sup>[4]</sup>; Holland, 1989<sup>[5]</sup>; Kunde & Cunningham, 2000<sup>[6]</sup>; Mitroff & Denton, 1999b<sup>[7]</sup>). It is commonly defined (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003)<sup>[8]</sup> as, "A framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promote employees' experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected in a way that generates feelings of compassion and joy". Duchon and Plowman (2005)<sup>[9]</sup> revealed that "work unit performance is associated with work unit spirituality; work unit performance is greater if spiritual climate is prevalent".

### c) SPIRITUAL WORK CULTURE

Rego and Pina e cohna (2008) argue that "a spiritual organization is one that provides meaningful work that instills a feeling of purpose fosters a sense of connection and positive social relations with co-workers, and that provides workers with the ability to live integrated lives".

Pfeffer(2003)<sup>[10]</sup> summarizes the human goals people seek in their workplace as follows, "Interesting work that allows learning and development and that provides a sense of competence and mastery; meaningful work that instills some feeling of purpose, a sense of connection and positive social relation with co-workers".

A spiritual work culture is said to have the following characteristics:

- Sense of purpose
- Focus on personal development
- Trust and openness
- Employee empowerment
- Tolerance of employee expression

**OBJECTIVES**

The following are the objectives of the study:

1. To find the prevailing work culture among executives in the selected IT organisations
2. To study the factors contributing to spiritual work culture in the selected IT organisations with reference to executives
3. To analyze the satisfaction level of the executives with regard to the spiritual work culture factors

**METHODOLOGY**

**Sampling Design**

The study was conducted using a sample size of 300 executives from selected IT organizations in Chennai. Respondents from each company comprises of executives, software engineers and senior software engineers. The samples were selected using convenient sampling method. The distribution of the sample is as follows:

| S.NO | Name of the Company | No. of Respondents |
|------|---------------------|--------------------|
|------|---------------------|--------------------|

|   |         |     |
|---|---------|-----|
| 1 | Infosys | 114 |
| 2 | TCS     | 103 |
| 3 | Wipro   | 56  |
| 4 | CSC     | 37  |

**Research Instrument**

The research used a well structured questionnaire for this purpose. A pilot study was conducted and modifications were made based on the feedback. The questionnaire was then distributed to the respondents in person by the researcher and mail responses were also collected. The questionnaire was tested for its reliability with Cronbach Alpha test. All the scales had coefficient Cronbach Alpha greater than 0.7.

**Limitations**

The research study was limited due to time constraint. The research was intended for selected IT organisations and suitable safeguards must be applied before it is generalized for the entire industry.

**Analysis and Interpretation**

Out of the 300 questionnaires distributed, only 102 were usable and 198 were rejected as they were incomplete. The response rate was 34%. By gender, 45.5% were male and 54.5% were female. The highest number of respondents falls into 26-35 age group. The highest number of respondents has qualification of B.E /B.Tech. Most of the respondents belong to top level organizations and are full time employees.

A weighted average was computed to find out the contribution of organizations towards work

culture. The prevailing work culture of the selected IT organizations were analyzed with the factors like rewards and recognition, work place maintenance, equal opportunities to employees, enforcement of discipline, transparency between top management and employees. Table 1 represents the analysis of responses and Table

2 shows the weighted average computation for the above mentioned factors.

**Table 1: Frequency-responses regarding the prevailing organisational work culture (N=102)**

| Factors of organizational work culture            | To a great extent | To a moderate extent | To some extent | To a small extent | Not at all |
|---|-------------------|----------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------|
| Rewards and recognitions                          | 20                | 26                   | 31             | 20                | 5          |
| Work place maintenance                            | 13                | 44                   | 30             | 10                | 5          |
| Equal opportunities to employees                  | 7                 | 28                   | 18             | 40                | 9          |
| Enforcement of discipline                         | 25                | 39                   | 19             | 15                | 4          |
| Transparency between top management and employees | 1                 | 25                   | 30             | 38                | 8          |

(Source: Primary Data)

| POINT WEIGHTAGE  | 5        | 4        | 3        | 2        | 1        |          |          |          |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>FACTORS</b>   | <b>H</b> | <b>S</b> | <b>N</b> | <b>D</b> | <b>H</b> | <b>T</b> | <b>A</b> | <b>R</b> |
|  | <b>S</b> |          |          | <b>D</b> | <b>S</b> | <b>O</b> | <b>V</b> | <b>A</b> |
|  |          |          |          |          |          | <b>T</b> | <b>G</b> | <b>N</b> |
|  |          |          |          |          |          | <b>A</b> |          | <b>K</b> |
|  |          |          |          |          |          | <b>L</b> |          |          |
| <b>Rewards and recognitions</b>                            | 1004     | 104      | 930      | 430      | 540      | 342      | 68       | 34       |
| <b>Work place maintenance</b>                              | 656      | 176      | 970      | 200      | 500      | 356      | 71       | 22       |
| <b>Equal opportunities to employees</b>                    | 352      | 112      | 540      | 840      | 900      | 290      | 58       | 40       |
| <b>Enforcement of discipline</b>                           | 1255     | 156      | 570      | 370      | 440      | 372      | 74       | 14       |
| <b>Transparency between top management &amp; employees</b> | 500      | 100      | 906      | 780      | 820      | 279      | 55       | 58       |

**Table 2: Weighted average of the prevailing work culture**

(Source: Primary Data)

From Table 2, it is found that the selected organisations give more consideration to enforcement of discipline. Following it, is work place maintenance, rewards and recognitions, equal opportunities to employees and transparency between top management and employees. However there is low score in the transparency between management and employees.

Table 3 lists the factors contributing to spiritual work culture. The spiritual work culture is characterized by factors like sense of purpose, trust and openness, focus on individual

development, tolerance of employee expression and employee empowerment.

Table 3 presents the analysis of these factors. The respondents were asked to agree or

disagree on the statements based on their existence in a scale of 5. 1 being strongly agree, 2 Agree, 3 Neutral, 4 Disagree and 5 strongly disagree.

**Table 3: Descriptive statistics of the factors contributing to spiritual work culture (N=102)**

| <b>Factors</b>                     | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std. Deviation</b> |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Clear role assignments             | 2.0098      | .72433                |
| Clear responsibilities             | 2.0196      | .68910                |
| Clear objectives                   | 2.1373      | .80885                |
| Self identity                      | 2.5980      | 1.00749               |
| Information on doing a good job    | 2.3627      | 1.03205               |
| Opportunity to grow                | 2.3235      | .66246                |
| Opportunity for promotion          | 2.4902      | .85301                |
| Guidance in your job               | 2.2157      | .77877                |
| Knowledge development              | 2.0294      | .81394                |
| Identify your strength             | 2.1765      | .61999                |
| Methods to develop your talent     | 2.3431      | .76424                |
| Job security                       | 2.3922      | 1.14457               |
| Means to improve wealth            | 2.6275      | .92192                |
| Identifies your potential          | 2.3627      | 1.05106               |
| Improves your capabilities         | 2.3725      | 1.05231               |
| Develops your creativity           | 2.4608      | 1.19132               |
| Appreciates innovation             | 2.2843      | 1.21360               |
| Enhances lifestyle                 | 2.2059      | 1.08398               |
| Benefits for improving your health | 2.6765      | 1.24409               |
| Fulfills your aspirations          | 2.7255      | 1.12713               |

(Source: Primary Data)

From the above table 3, it is clear that the mean of all the factors are above 2 and this proves that respondents agree that there is an existence of all the spiritual work culture.

A chi square analysis was performed to find out the significant relationship between the spiritual

work culture characteristics and the satisfaction level of the employees. Table 4 depicts the chi square analysis. The hypothesis framed is showed below:

Null Hypothesis H0: There is no significant relationship between the spiritual work culture

characteristics and the satisfaction level of the employees.

characteristics and the satisfaction level of the employees.

Alternate Hypothesis H1: There is a significant relationship between the spiritual work culture

**Table 4 Chi-square analysis to find the significant relationship between the spiritual work culture characteristics and the satisfaction level of the employee satisfaction**

**Spiritual work culture characteristics viz- a-viz Employee satisfaction**

|                                  |                             | Employee Satisfaction |       |          |                   | Total |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------|----------|-------------------|-------|
|                                  |                             | Strongly Agree        | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |       |
| <b>Spiritual Characteristics</b> | <b>Sense of purpose</b>     | 6                     | 7     | 3        | 1                 | 17    |
|                                  | <b>Personal Development</b> | 4                     | 8     | 1        | 2                 | 15    |
|                                  | <b>Trust and Openness</b>   | 11                    | 12    | 4        | 5                 | 32    |
|                                  | <b>Employee Empowerment</b> | 9                     | 18    | 4        | 7                 | 38    |
| <b>Total</b>                     |                             | 30                    | 45    | 12       | 15                | 102   |

|                                     | Value    | Df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----|-----------------------|
| <b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>           | 3.851(a) | 9  | .921                  |
| <b>Likelihood Ratio</b>             | 4.092    | 9  | .905                  |
| <b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b> | 1.069    | 1  | .301                  |

|                         |            |  |  |
|-------------------------|------------|--|--|
|                         |            |  |  |
| <b>N of Valid Cases</b> | <b>102</b> |  |  |

(Source: Primary Data)

The calculated Chi square value is higher than 0.01 and thus the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is significant relationship between spiritual work culture characteristics and employee satisfaction.

### CONCLUSION

Even though many researches have been carried out in the field of **work culture**, there is no specific study that was carried out in the area of **spiritual work culture**. The has made an attempt to analyze the prevailing work culture and find out the factors contributing to spiritual work culture. The level of employees' satisfaction towards the spiritual work culture was also measured. It was found that the prevailing work culture is influenced by enforcement of discipline, workplace maintenance and rewards & recognitions. But there is less transparency between the top management and the employees. The study also points out that the various factors of spiritual work culture do exist in the organisations. The organisations are providing means to fulfill the aspirations of the employees, benefits to improve health, appreciates innovation and also aids creativity. It was found that the employees are satisfied with the spiritual work culture offered by the selected IT organisations. When spiritual work culture is enhanced and improved, there will be enhancement in the employees'

performance and this will turn out to be a greater opportunity for organizational development.

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