

Workplace Spirituality versus Work Engagement among Faculty Staff Members and their Assistants

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Abstract

Background: work engagement is a positive state of mind characterized by the extent to which employees are vigorous. Spirituality is a sense of wholeness, connectedness at work, and deeper values. **Aim:** The current study aimed at comparing between faculty staff members and their assistants regarding workplace spirituality and work engagement. **Subject and Methods:** A descriptive comparative research design. This study was conducted at faculty of nursing Ain Shams University. (124) faculty staff members and (79) faculty staff members' assistants were included in the study. Data were collected using two tools; workplace spirituality questionnaire to assess faculty staff members and their assistants' perception toward workplace spirituality and work engagement scale to assess faculty staff members and their assistants' perception toward work engagement. **Results:** There are a statistically significant difference between demographic variables of faculty staff members and workplace spirituality regarding position and specialty $P < 0.05$, there is no statistically significant correlation between workplace spirituality and demographic of faculty staff assistants $P > 0.05$, there is highly statistically significant direct positive relation between all dimensions of workplace spirituality and all dimensions of work engagement. **Conclusion:** The current study concluded that there is no significant difference among the perception of the faculty staff members and their assistants regarding workplace spirituality, while there is a significant difference between the perception of the faculty staff and faculty staff assistants regarding work engagement. **Recommendations:** The study recommends encourage high spirituality of all faculty staff and workers, reward high engaged staff and gives more appreciation, enhance sense of community for all staff and workers, and disseminate organizational values all over the faculty to get more cooperation

Key words: Workplace Spirituality, Work Engagement, Faculty Staff Members and Faculty Staff Assistants

Introduction

Workplace spirituality defined as an experience of interconnectedness, shared by all those involved in the work process, initially triggered by the awareness that each is individually driven by an inner power, which raises and maintains her/his sense of honesty, creativeness, pro activity, kindness, dependability, confidence, and courage; consequently, leading to the collective creation of an aesthetically. Motivational environment characterized by a sense of purpose, high ethical standards, acceptance, peace, trust, respect, understanding, appreciation, care, involvement, helpfulness, encouragement, achievement, and perspective, thus establishing

an atmosphere of enhanced team performance and overall harmony, and ultimately guiding the organization to become highly productive, and agency accomplished its goals (Afsar and Badir, 2017).

Workplace spirituality is based on an individual's personal values and philosophy where in, it is expected that an individual need to view themselves as spiritual being whose soul need proper sustenance at work, who experience a sense of purpose and meaning in work, and a sense of connectedness to one another and to their workplace and community at large. Workplace spirituality involves the effort to find one's ultimate purpose in life, to

develop a strong connection to coworkers and other people associated with work, and to have consistency (or alignment) between one's core beliefs and the values of their organization (Daniel, 2015).

Workplace spirituality has three important dimensions. The first dimension is meaningful work- signifies the degree to which people experience a deep sense of meaning and purpose at work. The sense of community is the second dimension which means people see themselves as connected to each other and that there is some type of relationship between one's inner self and the inner self of other people. The third and the most important dimension is value alignment- which measures whether or not individuals experience a strong sense of alignment between their personal values and the organization's mission and purpose (Mohsen, et al., 2016).

Work engagement is the willingness of an individual to spend his efforts and time beyond the minimum requirements, to commit and work on task or job that is related to his/her position in an organization, in order to ensure organizational success (Roof, 2015).

It is the state whereby an individual is enthusiastically involved in her/his role performance while aligning personal targets with the organizational goals. Work engagement is important for organization and the employees. In fact, in the practical world of work, building the engagement among staff is considered as the most fundamental task of today's organizations. Researches has shown that job engagement leads to positive effects such as less displacement, more organizational commitment, and organizational performance (Mahakul and Pathi, 2016).

Work engagement is very important for enterprises and the employees. In fact, in the practical world of work, building the engagement among staff is considered as the most fundamental task of today's organizations.

Work engagement positively influences an employee's performance. It allows to baring full potential to the job. It even supports extra-role performance by adopting a proactive approach to work. It motivates an employee to go beyond his core responsibilities and gain new knowledge. Work engagement includes three core aspects which are: Intellectual engagement - think hard how to do the job better, affective engagement - feel good about doing a job and social engagement - take chances actively to converse with others work-related improvements (Petchsawang and McLean, 2017).

The meaning of workplace spirituality and engagement both advocates a sense of inclusiveness to each other in their underlying construct. Fostering spirituality will lead to the employees feeling complete when they come to work. The primary drivers of feeling completeness are identification of oneself with organization's goals and internalization of the organization's values and mission engagement with meaningfulness and joy at work, compassion, trust, well-being of employees through fostering spirituality at work. However, there is a dearth of empirical investigation whether spirituality influences human productivity as asserted by academic researchers and professional consultants (Karanika, et al., 2015).

Faculty members sharing their knowledge and skills to prepare the next generation of nurses for effective practice. they develop lesson plans, teach courses, evaluate educational programs, oversee students' clinical practice and serve as role models for their students. They may teach general courses or focus on areas of specialization. Most faculty teachers have extensive clinical experience, and many continue caring for patients after becoming educators. Even if they no longer practice, nurse educators must stay current with new nursing methods and technologies, which keep them on the leading edge of clinical practice (Sulaiman, W. S. W., & Zahoni, 2016).

Significance of the study

During the researcher post graduate study observed that faculty staff members and their assistants are suffering from over

workload, attached to multiple activities and roles because they are often overwhelmed with multiple job functions (e.g., teaching, research, and working with people, budgeting) that are essential to the overall operation of the organization. Stressed staff tends to report warning signs and how it relates to the critical imperative of engagement in the workplace.

Disengaged staff suffering from job dissatisfaction, low motivation, low workplace spirituality and low morale (Gutermann, et al., 2017). Interest in workplace spirituality and staff engagement has increased considerably over the last decade among practitioners and scholars. However, even though both topics focus on the importance of the spirit at work, they have emerged independent of each other with little attention to how they are related. So, the present study aimed at finding out the relationship between workplace spirituality and work engagement among faculty staff members and their assistants.

AIM OF THE STUDY

This study aims at:

- 1- Assessing the perception of faculty staff members and their assistants' toward workplace spirituality.
- 2- Assessing the level of work engagement among faculty members and their assistant.
- 3- Comparing between faculty staff members and their assistants toward workplace spirituality and work engagement.

Research Question:

Q1- Is there a difference between faculty staff members and their assistants' perception regarding workplace spirituality?

Q2- Is there a difference between faculty staff members and their assistants' perception regarding work engagement?

Subject and Methods

Research design:

A descriptive comparative research design was used to achieve the aim of the current study.

Setting:

The study was conducted at Faculty of Nursing Ain-Shams University at all scientific departments namely: Nursing Administration Department, Medical Surgical Nursing Department, Pediatric Nursing department I&II, Maternity & Gynecological Nursing Department, Community Health Nursing Department and Psychiatric Nursing Department.

Subjects

The subjects for the study included two groups, namely; faculty staff members, their assistant's group. 1- Faculty staff members group: this group consisted of (124) faculty members divided as follows: (30) Professors, (34) assistant professors and (60) lecturers. 2- Faculty staff assistants group:

This group consisted of (79) faculty staff assistants divided as follows: (42) assistants lecturers and (37) demonstrators.

Data collection tools

The data in this study was collected by using two tools: Workplace Spirituality Questionnaire and Work Engagement scale.

1-Workplace Spirituality Questionnaire:

It aimed to assess study subjects' perception regarding workplace spirituality. (This tool was adopted from Gupta (2014) it comprises two parts:

Part 1: Demographic sheet: to gather data pertaining demographic characteristics of study subjects such as age, gender, level of education, marital status, and years of experience ...etc.

Part 2: This part included (35) items, divided into four main dimensions: Meaningful work, Sense of community, Organizational values and compassion

2- Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES):

It developed by Schaufeli et al. (2002) and adopted from Shusha and Abd Elkader (2017). This scale aimed to assess work engagement level.

It included 17 items. The scale was divided into three main domains namely Vigor, Dedication and Absorption.

Tools validity and reliability

Face and content validity of the tools was assessed by jury group consisted of five experts in nursing administration from different nursing faculties. Jury group members judge tools for comprehensiveness, accuracy and clarity in language. Based on their recommendations correction, addition and / or omission of some items were done.

The study tools were tested for its internal consistency by Cronbach's Alpha. It was 0.783 for workplace spirituality questionnaire and 0.815 for the utrecht work engagement scale.

Pilot study

A pilot study was carried out on 10% of the study subjects. Its aimed to evaluate the relevance, clarity and content of the tools used for data collection, validity evaluate time needed for the study subjects to fill tools of the study and find the possible obstacles and problems that might face researcher and interfere data collection. According to the results of the pilot study, simple modifications were done.

Data collection procedure:

Data collection of the study was started at the beginning of December 2017, and completed by the end of March 2018. Data were collected during morning for faculty of

nursing Ain Shams University for three days weekly including all faculty staff members and their assistants with the previous inclusion criteria through using study tools by the

researcher. An approval of the study subjects was obtained orally after explaining the purpose of the study.

The researcher met faculty staff members and their assistants and explain to them how to file in the study tools. The researcher took the completed tools in the same day workplace spirituality questionnaire took from 25 to 35 minutes to be completed while the work engagement questionnaire from 20 to 25 minutes to be completed. Data collected was anonymous to preserve confidentiality. Code number was used for every woman.

Ethical Considerations

Prior study conduction, ethical approval was obtained from the scientific research ethical committee of the faculty of nursing, Ain Shams University. The researcher met the study subjects to explain the purpose of the study and to obtain their approval to participate. They were reassured about the anonymity and confidentiality of the collected data, which was used only for the purpose of scientific research. The subjects' right to withdraw from the study at any time was assured.

Results:

Table (1): clarifies that the majority of the studied faculty staff members are females (98.4%), more than half (61.3%)with years of experience <25 years , the majority (90.3%) married , and around the third (29.8%) specialized in Medical-Surgical Nursing

Table (2): clarifies that the majority of the studied faculty staff assistants are females (88.5%), in the age group <30 years (84.6%), assistant lecturers (55.1%), with years of experience <20 years (87%), married (55%), with 32% specialized Medical-Surgical Nursing.

Table (3): shows that there is no significant difference between the perception of the faculty staff assistants and faculty assistants

regarding workplace spirituality ($P>0.05$) but perception of the faculty staff assistants is higher than perception of faculty staff for all dimensions except organizational values dimension.

Table (4): shows that there is a significant difference between the perception of the faculty staff and faculty staff assistants regarding work engagement ($P<0.05$) where the perception of the faculty staff is higher than perception of faculty staff assistants for all dimensions.

Table (5): shows that there is no significant difference between the perception of the faculty staff members and faculty staff assistants regarding workplace spirituality but perception of the faculty staff assistants is higher than faculty staff members for all dimensions except organizational values dimension.

Part (1): Demographic Characteristics of faculty staff member and faculty staff assistant in the Study Sample ($n=202$).

Table (1): Demographic characteristics of faculty staff member ($n=124$).

Variables	No.	%
Gender		
Female	122	98.4
Male	2	1.6
Age(years)		
<40	56	45.2
40-50	54	43.5
>50	14	11.3
Position		
Professor	30	24.2
Assistant professor	34	27.4
Lecturer	60	48.4
Years of experience in current work		
<25	76	61.3
25-35	21	16.9
>35	27	21.8
Marital status		
Single	10	8.1
Married	112	90.3
Widow	2	1.6
Specialty		
Nursing administration	13	10.5
Maternity and Gynecological Nursing	19	15.3
Medical-Surgical Nursing	37	29.8
Community Health Nursing	17	13.7
Psychiatric Nursing	15	12.1
Pediatric Nursing	23	18.5

Table (6): shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the perception of the faculty staff members and faculty staff assistants regarding work engagement where the perception of the faculty staff is higher than faculty staff assistants for all dimensions.

Table (7): shows that there is highly statistically significant direct positive relation between all dimensions of workplace spirituality and all dimensions of work engagement $P<0.001$.

Table (8): shows that there is a statistically significant high positive direct relation between all the dimensions of workplace spirituality and all the dimensions of work engagement except compassion which is not correlated with work engagement.

Table (2): Demographic characteristics of faculty staff assistant (n = 78).

Variables	No.	%
Gender		
Female	70	88.5
Male	8	11.5
Age(years)		
<35	66	84.6
35-45	10	12.8
>45	2	2.6
Position		
Assistant lecturer	43	55.1
Teaching assistant	35	44.9
Years of experience in current work		
<25	68	87.2
20-35	10	12.8
Marital status		
Single	35	44.9
Married	43	55.1
Specialty		
Nursing administration	17	21.8
Maternity and Gynecological Nursing	9	11.5
Medical-Surgical Nursing	25	32.1
Community Health Nursing	9	11.5
Psychiatric Nursing	7	9.0
Pediatric Nursing	11	14.1

Table (3): Comparison between Faculty staff members and Faculty staff assistants' perception mean scores regarding workplace spirituality dimensions.

Dimensions	Faculty staff		Faculty staff assistants		t-value	p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Meaningful work	4.20	0.50	4.22	0.57	0.19	0.84
Sense of community	4.05	0.50	4.06	0.63	0.16	0.86
Organizational values	3.85	0.59	3.81	0.64	0.45	0.65
Compassion	4.32	0.59	4.45	0.50	1.54	0.12
Total spirituality in workplace	4.07	0.43	4.13	0.49	0.98	0.32

Table (4): Comparison between Faculty staff members (n=124) and Faculty staff assistants' (n=79) perception mean scores regarding work engagement dimensions.

Dimensions	Faculty staff		Faculty staff assistants		t-value	p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Viger	3.94	0.63	3.70	0.72	2.45	0.015*
Dedication	4.09	0.65	3.91	0.83	1.64	0.1
Absorption	4.00	0.64	3.74	0.72	2.74	0.007*
Total work engagement	4.01	0.59	3.78	0.70	2.43	0.016*

Table (5): Comparison between Faculty staff members and their assistants regarding workplace spirituality.

workplace spirituality Dimensions	Faculty staff		Faculty staff assistants		t-value	p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Meaningful work	4.20	0.50	4.22	0.57	0.19	0.84
Sense of community	4.05	0.50	4.06	0.63	0.16	0.86
Organizational values	3.85	0.59	3.81	0.64	0.45	0.65
Compassion	4.32	0.59	4.45	0.50	1.54	0.12
Total spirituality in workplace	4.07	0.43	4.13	0.49	0.98	0.32

Table (6): Comparison between Faculty staff members and their assistants regarding work engagement.

work engagement	Faculty staff		Faculty staff assistants		t-value	p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Viger	3.94	0.63	3.70	0.72	2.45	0.015*
Dedication	4.09	0.65	3.91	0.83	1.64	0.1
Absorption	4.00	0.64	3.74	0.72	2.74	0.007*
Total work engagement	4.01	0.59	3.78	0.70	2.43	0.016*

Table (7): Correlation between workplace spirituality and work engagement for faculty staff members.

Work engagement dimensions	Workplace spirituality dimensions									
	Meaningful work		Sense of community		Organizational values		Compassion		Total workplace spirituality	
	R	P	r	p	R	P	R	p	r	p
Viger	.34	.0001*	.35	.0001*	.23	.008*	.19	.03*	.36	.0001*
Dedication	.36	.0001*	.38	.0001*	.2	.02*	.15	.08	.35	.0001*
Absorption	.34	.0001*	.36	.0001*	.2	.02*	.18	.04*	.35	.0001*
Total work engagement	.39	.0001*	.39	.0001*	.22	.01*	.18	.03*	.38	.0001*

Table (8): Correlation between workplace spirituality and work engagement for faculty staff assistants.

workplace Spirituality	Meaningful work		Sense of community		Organizational values		Compassion		Total workplace spirituality	
	r	p	r	p	R	P	R	p	r	P
Work engagement										
Viger	.41	.0001*	.34	.001*	.22	.06	.11	.34	.33	.003*
Dedication	.35	.001*	.41	.0001*	.32	.004*	.16	.15	.38	.001*
Absorption	.38	.001*	.8	.001*	.3	.007*	.12	.26	.36	.001*
Total work engagement	.41	.0001*	.42	.0001*	.3	.006*	.14	.2	.39	.001*

Discussion

Regarding faculty staff members' perception toward meaningful work dimension, the present study finding showed that the majority of agreement was for the items (I understand that my work gives me personal meaning) and (I see a connection between my work and the social good of my community) while the majority of disagreement was for the item (My spirit is energized by work). Concerning faculty staff assistants' perception toward meaningful work dimension, the majority of agreement was for the item (I understand that my work gives me personal meaning) but majority disagreement was for the item (I look forward to coming to work most days).

These results may be due to overload of work between the ordinary work activities and studying and doing researches for promotion in addition to working with their students, all these factors result in low spirituality of the workers.

These findings is in agreement with Milliman, et al., (2012) who indicated that meaningful work is a fundamental aspect of spirituality at work and involves having a deep sense of meaning and purpose in one's work. this dimension of workplace spirituality represents how employees interact with their day-to-day work at the individual level. Also, Roof (2015) found that the majority of the studied sample having partially meaningful

work due to some factors such as low salary and overload of work.

Regarding Faculty staff members' perception toward sense of community dimension the present study demonstrated that the majority of agreement was for the item (I have had numerous experiences in my job that have resulted in my personal growth) while the highest disagreement was for the item (I am evaluated fairly). Concerning faculty staff assistants, majority of them had agreed on (I believe working cooperatively with others is valued at my workplace) while minority of them hadn't agreed for the item (When I have fears, I am encouraged to discuss them in the workplace).

From the researcher point of view, this result indicated the importance of free communication between faculty staff to express their internal feelings and thoughts that can be changes or corrected by proper communication and result in correct sense of the community of work and in turn affect quality of work.

The same result reported by Mohsen, et al., (2016) who stated that feeling part of a community created a pleasant atmosphere and that this was a key element to engaging nurses in their work. The study result is in agreement with Gutermann et al., (2017) who revealed that

employee awareness and understanding of workplace spirituality are limited and added that

Leadership is so important for work spirituality. Besides, effective leadership whether ethical, or empowering contribute positively to work engagement

Regarding relation between work engagement and demographic variables among faculty staff members the finding of the present study indicated that there is a statistical significant relation between work engagement and Specialty where the majority mean is for nursing management. Considering faculty staff assistants, there is a statistically significant high positive direct relation between all the dimensions of workplace spirituality and all the dimensions of work engagement except compassion which is not correlated with work engagement.

This result may be due to more understanding of the nursing management department for the faculty rules and policies that affect their sense of unfairness and frustration, the correct understanding of the faculty mission, goals, and philosophy give clear vision for the working staff.

In the same line, Daniel (2015) reported that nearly one quarter of the variance in engagement was explained by the six areas of work-life (workload, control, reward, community, fairness and value congruence between company and employees) as conceptualized by Maslach and Leiter (1997).

Also, Fiabane et al. (2013) found significant and positive correlations between reward, fairness and values and the three dimensions of engagement and found that a significant association between personal factors such as mental health, locus of control and job satisfaction, and engagement. In addition, Lisbona et al. (2018) declared that employee engagement helps develop strong positive attitudes among people towards work and organization, and they give their best even when times are tough.

Regarding the comparison between faculty staff members' perception and faculty

staff assistants' perception regarding workplace spirituality dimensions and work engagement,

the result revealed that the perception of the faculty staff assistants regarding workplace spirituality is higher than perception of faculty staff for all dimensions except organizational values dimensions. While, the perception of the faculty staff regarding work engagement is higher than perception of faculty staff assistants for all dimensions. Concerning work engagement, there is a significant difference between the perception of the faculty staff and faculty staff assistants regarding work engagement where the perception of the faculty staff is higher than perception of faculty staff assistants for all dimensions.

This result may be due to more value is experiences by faculty staff members, this value affects their spirituality positively and make them feel better, also high spirituality of faculty staff assistants given from their hope and dreams for better future.

In the same line, Lisbona et al., (2018) who revealed that workplace spirituality inculcates past practices of inter-connectivity and a feeling of trust between individuals, who are a part of a particular work process, which subsequently instigate cooperative feelings and lead to an overall organizational culture that is driven by motivation, exemplified by a positive response, and unanimity and harmony among the individuals, and affect the younger workers than others and improve their spirituality.

While, Stoeber and Damian, (2016) concluded that there is no dominant leadership style/s whether the traditional or innovative. That could be good, but when combined with average level of work engagement revealed no significant correlations. This means that work engagement level should be improved mainly based on to vigor and dedication improvement measures.

Regarding Correlation between work spirituality and work engagement among faculty staff and their assistants, there was a statistically significant high positive direct relation between all the dimensions of workplace spirituality and all the dimensions of work engagement except compassion which is not correlated with work engagement. This result may be due to the

positive effect of work spirituality on employees' work engagement. The more work spirituality the more work engagement.

The same result was reported by Roof (2015); Paul and Saha (2015) who explained that, the spirituality has now become an effective tool to handle stress related issues, for overcoming work problems, and promoting psychological growth. It has direct positive correlation with work engagement. These results are in congruence with the findings of Büssing et al. (2015) who found a negative relationship between workplace stressors and work engagement.

Similar finding was reported with Holland (2016) conducted a study on the mediating nature of work engagement among working adults in Malaysia. The author found that work engagement had partially mediated the resources-performance interactions. Moreover, Bakker and Bal (2018) conducted a study on the weekly work engagement and performance of Dutch teachers. The author confirmed that work engagement played a role of mediator in the relationship between resources and performance.

Conclusion

The current study concluded that there is no significant difference between the perception of the faculty staff assistants and faculty assistants regarding workplace spirituality, while there is a significant difference between the perception of the faculty staff and faculty staff assistants regarding work engagement where the perception of the faculty staff is higher than perception of faculty staff assistants for all dimensions.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings of the present study, the following *are* recommended:

- Encourage high spirituality of all faculty staff and workers.
- Reward high engaged staff and gives more appreciation.
- Enhance sense of community for all staff and workers.

- Disseminate organizational values all over the faculty to get more cooperation.
- Periodical assessment of workplace spirituality of faculty staff members and their assistants.
- Periodical assessment of workplace spirituality of faculty employees.

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