

# Individual Spirit at Work and Its Relationship with Job Satisfaction and Personal Outcomes

D.Jaichitra<sup>1</sup>, P.T. Srinivasan<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration,  
Vels University, Pallavaram, Chennai - 600 117, Tamilnadu, India

<sup>2</sup>Professor and Head (Retd.), Department of Management Studies,  
University of Madras, Chennai, Tamilnadu, India

## ABSTRACT

In today's vibrant and turbulent business setting, employees are struggling with changes at work and are enthusiastically engaged in a reinvention of a range of practices within the organization. Employees are in need of, and search for deeper and meaningful and enjoyable life. Spirituality is about being constructive toward one's self and other living beings. This current study aims to explore the relationship between individual spirit at work (SAW) and attitudinal variable (job satisfaction) in the organizations and how you may feel at work and its influence on the personal outcomes (vitality and life satisfaction). Data was collected from 551 employees of service sector to test the study hypotheses. Structural equation modeling revealed that individual's spirit at work, vitality and life satisfaction contributed significantly to their satisfaction level at work. It was also found that job satisfaction mediated the relationship between individual spirit at work, vitality and life satisfaction. This research is significant as it highlights the dynamics of the relationship between spirit at work, job satisfaction and personal outcomes.

**Keywords:** *Individual spirit at work, job satisfaction, vitality and life satisfaction.*

## INTRODUCTION

Organisations that support a spiritual dimension recognize that employees have both a mind and a spirit, strive to find significant and meaningful purpose in their work and need to associate with other employees and be part of a community. Hence, employees may forge long-lasting relationship with the organizations if they understand their contributions are being recognized. Hence, business community and the employees show a significant increase in interest in spirituality at workplace. A growing body of literature claims that spirituality can cause a change in service industries.

Individuals are keen for more meaning and sense in the work realm of their lives as they dedicate most of their time at work. There is a need to look ahead of the human side of an organization and incorporate the spirit of an individual at work. Spirit is contemplated as the inner spring of energy and spirituality as the outward expression of that force.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

One of the foremost goals of every organization is to have an idealistic ambience in which employees can exhibit their full potential. Various problems such as interpersonal conflicts, displeased employees, and lack of trust can be the results of a poor organizational environment. In sum, studying spirituality at workplace can lead to a better knowledge of the actual status of the organisational climate and can also reveal information about the conditions in which employees conduct their activities. Spirituality in the Workplace has come up as the strongest interpreter to cope up with the symptoms caused by work overload, stress and strain and facilitate the employee to succeed in achieving the targets<sup>7</sup>.

The basic objective of this study is to make it loud and clear what is spirituality, and the drive of this research is primarily to investigate the relationship between individual spirit at work (SAW) and work related attitudinal variable (job satisfaction) in the organizations

and how you may feel at work and its influence on the personal outcomes (vitality, life satisfaction).

This study aims to systematically explore the underlying assumptions as well as the rationale of the main trends regarding spirit at work by critically discussing their relationship with the mediating effects of job satisfaction on the relationship between individual spirit at work and personal outcomes<sup>7</sup> such as vitality and life satisfaction in service sector organisations. The motive for preferring these variables are, they can exhibit vital facts about the sensations and actual situation of the

employees in an organization. Previous research on spirit at work has noted that most of the empirical studies have neglected variables such as vitality, job satisfaction, individual productivity and in-role performance<sup>13</sup>. It is observed that the study of spirit at work has not been subjected to critical analysis or produced empirical results and hence there is a need for increasing the study of its relationship with personal outcomes<sup>12</sup>. In particular, no empirical study has tested the relationship between spirit at work and these outcomes in India. Figure 1. explains in detail the variables of the study.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Model**

### SPIRIT AT WORK

Spirit at work is the focus of the business in the new century and it has started its grassroots are from the early 1920's. It is all about individuals seeking to live their belief and/or spiritual values in the workplace. The spirit at work scale was originally formulated by<sup>9</sup> which had four factors namely i) Engaging Work ii) Mystical Experience iii) Spiritual Connection and iv) Sense of Community. <sup>16</sup>used the spirit at work scale in his study and adopted it for UK and Thai samples. He reduced the four factor model to three factors, namely i) meaningful work (combination of engaging work and mystical experience), ii) spiritual connection and iii) sense of community. This research study, However considers spirit at work as a composite index.

### JOB SATISFACTION AS A MEDIATOR

There are many attitudes that can enhance performance, which have been studied by researchers. However, there are controversial deliberations on the association amidst spirituality at workplace and Job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is one among the extensively used attitude in organizational behaviour, and it is an individual's attitudinal reciprocation to the organization. This is a powerful key variable which specifies the extent

to which individuals like their jobs and which influences the performance within an organization. It is a distinctive attitude toward essentials related to work and it leads to accomplishment, accountability, advancement, and growth and development.

### VITALITY

Vitality is expounded as one's conscious experience of possessing energy, power and aliveness. In other words, it is an ongoing feature of individuals who relate positively to self-actualization and self-respect and pertain negatively to depression, despair and anxiety. Individuals, who hold subjective vitality, will forever be passionate, energized and alive. Hence when an individual involves himself at work from his bottom of his heart, his vital power intensifies and makes him to be alive, energetic, fully operating and psychologically suitable in the workplace.

### LIFE SATISFACTION

A significant feature of the today's environment is the desire to realize life satisfaction and how the spirit at work transforms it. Life satisfaction is the cognitive evaluation of life into a complete entity and is the overall

assessment that an individual makes of their lives, balancing their outcomes with their anticipations. This means that they explore the tangible details of his or her life, weigh up the good and the bad, compare this to a standard or criterion chosen by them, and take a decision regarding satisfaction in their lives. Thus, judgments concerning satisfaction depend upon investigating life events against a standard is contemplated appropriate<sup>4</sup>.

## SPIRIT AT WORK AND PERSONAL OUTCOMES

The focus on individual spirit at work experiences is essential, and it is also vital to steer research, which assists to comprehend the potential and clear significance on work attitudes and personal and work-related outcomes which can materialize when an individual engages his spirit at work. Even though, previous studies have identified how job satisfaction correlate with personal and work-related outcomes, there is still lack of study to explain the mechanism how these variables work together in improving outcomes..<sup>12</sup>interpretation of spirituality as a “belief system grounded on intangible elements that confer vitality and add meaning to life events” furthermore, emphasize is on the significance of understanding the association between spirit at work and vitality.

Spirituality has projected well being and correlated with satisfaction and life indices. An association was also affirmed between quality of life (or life satisfaction) and spirituality<sup>2</sup>. It is therefore, feasible that spirituality aids individuals to endure life satisfaction, which in turn influences on the individual’s feel of job satisfaction.

Integral education is setting up “a positive affiliation, rhythm and synchronization among distinguishing characteristics of human personality to achieve perfection and excellence in distinctive life situations”<sup>10</sup>.<sup>5</sup>hypothesized that those practicing spiritual leadership at the personal level will score high on both life satisfaction in terms of joy, as well as peace and serenity. In supplement<sup>6</sup>indicate that spirituality at workplace provides employees with a sense of completeness because meaning can be found in both their lives and workplace. It is contended that this intra and inter personal connections of spirit at work increase personal and career satisfaction and life satisfaction as a whole and therefore, function as a buffer for reducing the stress allied with the profession.

## RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

After conducting an extensive review of literature, the following hypotheses, are developed in line with the research problems and objectives:

H.1: Individual spirit at work will have a significant positive effect on job satisfaction.

H.2: Job satisfaction will have a significant positive effect on life satisfaction of the individual.

H.3: Job satisfaction will have a significant positive effect on vitality of the individual.

H4: There is a significant model fit between spirit at work, job satisfaction, and personal outcomes of the individual.

H5: Job Satisfaction will mediate the relationship between the spirit at work and personal outcomes of the individual.

## METHODOLOGY

The current study<sup>8</sup> used a cross-sectional survey design. The main characteristic of a cross-sectional design is that all information of variables is collected just once, at a single point in time. In this research study, a field-based survey questionnaire was distributed to the employees of each of the service organizations surveyed, and the research variables used in the study employed a five-point Likert scale.

Data for this study was collected from 4 service sector organizations which expressed cooperation for the study, located in Chennai and Bangalore, Convenient sampling was adopted for this study and a total of 625 questionnaires were distributed among the employees in of the organisations. Valid responses were obtained from 551 individuals. 54% employees were married and 54% were single. Among 551 respondents 47% percent were male, 53% were female. 14% of the respondents were diploma holders, 42% were graduates, 25% post graduates and 19% professionals.

## MEASUREMENT

In order to measure the level of individual Spirit at work reduced form of spirit at work scale (SAW) adopted by<sup>16</sup> containing 12 items, which was originally formulated

by<sup>9</sup> which had 18 items was employed for this research. Five item scale employed by<sup>1</sup> was used to assess the level of job satisfaction among the employees. Vitality was measured using<sup>14</sup> subjective vitality scale which had seven items. The five item scale used by<sup>4</sup> was employed to measure the life satisfaction of the employees.

### RESULTS AND FINDINGS

As a preliminary step the reliability of the measures were assessed The Cronbach alpha values reported for the variables are as follows: Individual spirit at work=0.73, Job satisfaction=0.71, Vitality = 0.79 and Life satisfaction=0.75.

The relationship between the variables was then tested using structural equation modeling (SEM) procedure. The application of SEM is executed using

maximum likelihood (ML) estimation in Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) 21.0. AMOS has the ability for producing bootstrapped standard error estimates and confidence intervals for parameter estimates.

The central point in analyzing structural models is the extent to which the hypothesized model “fits” or adequately describes the sample data<sup>3</sup>. Besides fit statistics, of particular interest is the path significance indicated by the standardized regression estimate ( $\beta$ ) that assesses the effect of one variable on another. The significance level was set at  $p < .01$ .

The path analysis executed for spirit at work, job satisfaction and personal outcomes are as shown in figure 2. To control the effect of size and nature of companies, organization was entered as a control variable in our analysis.

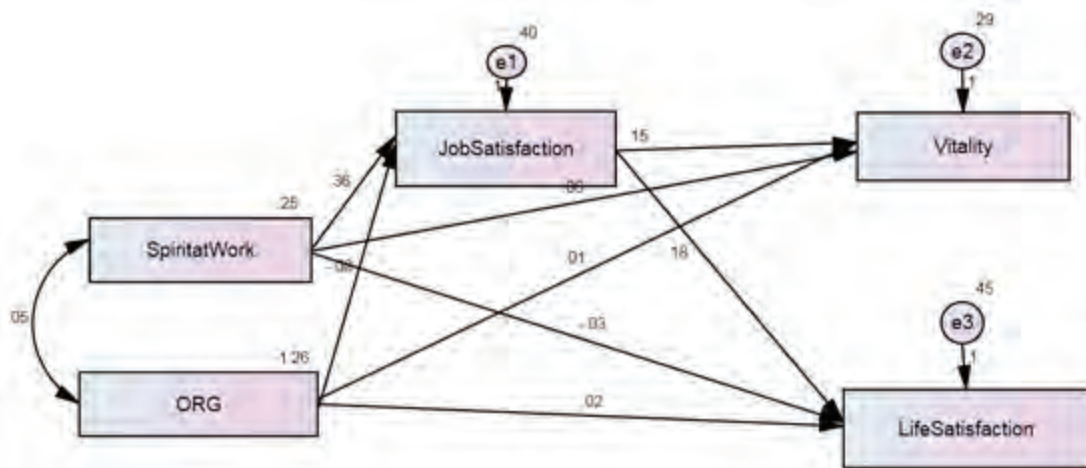


Figure 2: Standardized Structural Model for Spirit at Work on Personal Outcomes

Table. 1. Path estimates for Spirit at Work on Personal Outcomes through Work Attitudes

Constructs and Measures			Coefficients		Standard Error
			Unstandardised	Standardised	
Job Satisfaction	<---	Organization	-.08***	-.14	.02
Job Satisfaction	<---	Spirit at Work	.37 ***	.27	.05
Vitality	<---	Spirit at Work	.01	.01	.05
Life Satisfaction	<---	Spirit at Work	-.04	-.03	.06
Life Satisfaction	<---	Job Satisfaction	.17 ***	.17	.05
Vitality	<---	Job Satisfaction	.13 ***	.16	.04
Life Satisfaction	<---	Organization	.02	.03	.02
Vitality	<---	Organization	.01	.01	.02

Note: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

By examining the standardized path coefficients of the proposed given in table 1, it is observed that the path of all the study variables, were all significant at 0.01 levels and above. Individual spirit at work is seen to have a strong correlation with Job Satisfaction. Job satisfaction also had a significant path relationship with vitality and life satisfaction measures. Hence hypothesis 1, 2 and 3 were supported.

The result shows a good fitting model, with the relative chi square value was 1.150. Ratio approximately five or less is considered to be reasonable<sup>17</sup>. The model fit for spirit at work, job satisfaction and personal outcomes is seen as a good fit also by the values of GFI = 0.99, AGFI = 0.97, CFI = 0.96, SRMR = 0.01, RMSEA = .06. Hence hypothesis H4 is supported.

**Table 2: Indirect Pathways based on SEM for mediating effects of Job Satisfaction**

Indirect Effect	Bootstrapping (Unstandardized)		BC 95% CI (Unstandardized)	
	Est	S.E.	Lower	Upper
x → m → y				
SAW → JS → VIT	.05***	.02	.02	.09
SAW → JS → LS	.07***	.02	.03	.12

Note: \*\*\* p<.001

As the significance of the parameter estimates and model fit was established, indirect effect of the variables was also carried on and the results given in table 2. From table 2 it is seen that the indirect effect of spirit at work on outcome variables vitality (B = .05, p < .001) and life satisfaction (B = .07, p < .001); are both significant and even the confidence intervals does not include a zero. Moreover, while the indirect path effects from spirit at work and personal outcomes were significant and there was no direct effect between SAW and personal outcomes. Job satisfaction mediates spirit at work and vitality as well as life satisfaction. Hence hypothesis H5 is supported.

outcomes mediated through the effect of job satisfaction and a mediated relationship was also evident similar to the study by<sup>15</sup>.

**CONCLUSION**

This study is one of the few empirical investigations to research the collective impact of the individual experiences of spirit at work with the personal outcomes such as vitality, life satisfaction; with the mediating effect of work attitude such as job satisfaction. The findings in this study present multiple avenues for further research. These findings is envisaged, will stimulate important dialogue which will contribute to the 21<sup>st</sup> century view on organizational behaviour and development and ultimately organizational success.

**DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS**

The structural path model was used to determine the path estimates and model fit between spirit at work, work attitudes and personal outcomes. The work attitude job satisfaction was confirmed as mediator between the spirit at work and personal outcomes. Path coefficients revealed a strong, statistically significant positive association between SAW and job satisfaction.

SAW portrayed a positive association with job satisfaction which was similar to the studies done by<sup>16</sup>. Moreover SAW did not show positive relationship with vitality and life satisfaction and it is substantiated with the studies conducted by<sup>9</sup> where by pretest and post tests conducted for long care employees, found there was no significance difference among the employees for the variables vitality and life satisfaction. The personal

**Ethical Clearance:** Nil

**Source of Funding:** Self

**Conflict of Interest:** Nil

**REFERENCES**

1. Brayfield, A. H., & Rothe, H. F. (1951). An index of job satisfaction. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 35(5), 307.
2. Brillhart, B. (2005). A study of spirituality and life satisfaction among persons with spinal cord injury. *Rehabilitation Nursing*, 30(1), 31-34.
3. Byrne, B. M. (2001). Structural equation modeling with AMOS, EQS, and LISREL: Comparative

- approaches to testing for the factorial validity of a Measuring Instrument. *International Journal of Testing*, 1(1), 55-86.
4. Diener, E. D., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 49(1), 71-75.
  5. Fry, L. W. (2005). Introduction to the leadership quarterly special issue: Toward a paradigm of spiritual leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 16(5), 619-622.
  6. Giacalone, R. A., & Jurkiewicz, C. L. (2003). Right from wrong: The influence of spirituality on perceptions of unethical business activities. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 46(1), 85-97.
  7. Jaichitra, D., & Srinivasan, P. T. (2015) Spirit at Work & Its Relation with Individual & organizational Valued States. <http://www.aims-international.org/aims12/12A-CD/PDF/K394-final.pdf>
  8. Jaichitra, D. (2016). Individual spirit at work and its relationship with personal and work related valued states, Unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Madras.
  9. Kinjerski, V., & Skrypnek, B. J. (2006). Measuring the intangible: development of the spirit at work scale. *Academy of Management*, 2006(1), A1- A6.
  10. Kiran, M. (2010). Integral education and its (implications) for teacher education. *Educational Quest*, 1(1).
  11. Maddox, M. (2002). Spiritual assessments in primary care. *The Nurse Practitioner*, 27(2), 12-14.
  12. Mitroff, I., & Denton, E. A. (1999). A study of spirituality in the workplace. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 40(4), 83.
  13. Rego, A., & Pina e Cunha, M. (2008). Workplace spirituality and organizational commitment: an empirical study. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 21(1), 53-75.
  14. Ryan, R. M., & Frederick, C. (1997). On energy, personality, and health: Subjective vitality as a dynamic reflection of well-being. *Journal of Personality*, 65(3), 529-565.
  15. Stevison, M., Dent, E., & White, D. (2009). Toward a greater understanding of spirit at work: a model of spirit at work and outcomes. *Academy of Management Proceedings*, 1-6.
  16. Tevichapong, P. (2012). *Individual spirit at work and its relationship with employee work attitudes and organisational outcomes: An empirical examination in Corporate Thailand*, Doctoral dissertation, Aston University.
  17. Wheaton, B., B. B. Muthen, D. Alwin, & G. Summers. (1977). Assessing reliability and stability in panel models. *Sociological Methodology*, 84-136.