Unacknowledged Dimensions of Spirituality in Mitigating the Effect of Workplace Stress- A Literature Review

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Abstract

With the rise of competition, today's businesses face greater hurdles. Employees frequently express their worry and unhappiness as a result of workplace stress. The rapid advancement of modern life has resulted in several changes and challenges in recent years. Heavy demand for new inventions has increased manufacturing demands, and as a result, many businesses are expanding. These industries are instrumental in the creation of jobs. Earnings levels are gradually increasing. Employees, though, continue to be unhappy and dissatisfied. Workplace spirituality reduces stress and improves brain capability, allowing knowledge and abilities to be retained. Various dimensions of spirituality are still unacknowledged but they have a very great impact in mitigating the stress at workplace. These unacknowledged dimensions are discussed in this paper. The researcher endeavoured to explore potential link between the chosen dimensions of spirituality i.e., Compassion, Forgiveness, Mindfulness and Transcendence as well as their impact in mitigating workplace stress.

Keywords: workplace stress, Spirituality, Compassion, Transcendence, Mindfulness.

Introduction

A person experiences stress when they believe that the demands are greater than the personal and communal resources, they are capable of securing. Most of the time, stress is thought of as a natural reaction to pressures from day-to-day life, but prolonged exposure to stress, demands, external forces, inability to manage, and insufficient social support can cause it to become unhealthy and interfere with day-to-day functioning. In a 2019 APA Stress Survey, more than 75% of individuals reported experiencing physical or emotional signs of stress, such as headache, exhaustion, or changes in sleeping patterns. On the other hand, spirituality is the realisation of a sense of a feeling or a faith that there is a presence of something higher than oneself and that we exist as a part of an entity that is celestial or cosmic in nature. The pursuit of a higher purpose in life than simply satisfying one's basic needs is known as spirituality. Being conscious of the fact that humans play a crucial role in the universe's deliberate development of life is a universal human experience. **(Trishala & Fatima, 2021)**

Over the past few years, numerous studies on the various causes of stress have been carried out. Therefore, an effort is made in the current research to comprehend how spirituality contributes to stress management. **(Trishala & Fatima, 2021)**

Stress

Stress is the extent to which an individual feels overburdened, under pressure, or tense mentally. The body is driven to create stress hormones when under stress, which start the "flight or fight" response. This reaction enables one to react swiftly to

perilous circumstances. Repeated activation of this stress response wears down the body, which can lead to weariness and an inability to cope. Numerous factors, including stress, can negatively affect our physical and emotional health. (Trishala & Fatima, 2021)Stress is typically thought of as the most prevalent phenomenon of the modern world. There are many factors that can lead to stress, some of which include: job stress, long hours, the possibility of losing your job, personal factors, such as divorce, illness, emotional difficulties, and the loss of a loved one, etc. Contrarily, a person's personality and disposition can stress them out. Additionally, one's own attitude and perspective might contribute to stress, such as having high expectations, having a temperamental personality, being a particular type of person, or going through a significant life change. (Trishala & Fatima, 2021)

Spirituality

A sense or awareness of being connected to the transcendent is referred to as spirituality. a link to something that is greater and more comprehensive for our understanding. a sense of purpose and a singular encounter. Or, to put it another way, a condition of connectivity. Spirituality entails a more advanced type of being, a kind of observant awareness of the cosmos.

Since there are so many various types of spirituality, it is difficult to define and express it. The phrase "spirituality" is distinct. It might be perceived as separate from religion or as a part of a religious activity.

Some people's spiritual experiences involve a strong sense of aliveness and connectivity, a sense of something sacred or superior, or any combination of these. Some people have a propensity to pray and establish a close contact with a deity or higher power. But for some people, a temple, mosque, or church is an integral part of their spirituality. Others look for purpose in life through their innate connections to nature or the arts. So, depending on a person's experiences and connections, the meaning of spirituality might alter. (Trishala & Fatima, 2021)

Spirituality and Management of Stress

People can better comprehend themselves through spirituality. It offers some understanding of their purpose in life. Spirituality also aids in managing with negative emotions like fear, worry, and despair while under a lot of stress.

Spirituality, on the other hand, offers a sense of satisfaction, optimism, and hope. The goal of many spiritual practises, including prayer and chanting, is to eliminate negativity and promote self-esteem. (Trishala & Fatima, 2021)

Although there are many different definitions of spirituality at work, five themes—connection, compassion, mindfulness, meaningful work, and transcendence—seem to come up frequently. Therefore, the definition of workplace spirituality employed in this study is as described in the following: spirituality at workplace is about experiencing an aware inner awareness in the pursuit of productive employment and that enables transcendence. It is also about feeling connected to and having compassion for others. (Petchsawanga et al., 2009)

Measuring Workplace Spirituality

Dimension 1: Compassion

Humans frequently feel compassion, which is defined by sympathy and sorrow for the suffering of others. By consoling and supporting others emotionally, compassion motivates people to assist others in overcoming their difficulties. When someone empathizes with others, they are able to comprehend their emotional state and feel sorry for them, hoping that their pain will end or be lessened. (Zaidi et al., 2019) Buddhism, Catholicism, and spiritualism, among other religions, all base their doctrines and beliefs on compassion, which is said to be a necessary emotion for the upkeep of world peace. Understanding another person's suffering and wanting to lessen or eliminate it are two characteristics of compassion. Empathy is more complex, while compassion is both simpler and more intense. This emotion motivates us to wish to alleviate others' suffering. (Zaidi et al., 2019)

Dimension 2: Forgiveness

A worker's fear of the repercussions of making mistakes at work or failing to perform duties in accordance with organisational standards, according to Kurzynski (1998), "inhibits inventive

thinking." Additionally, it demotivates a worker to the point where efforts to achieve firm goals and the willingness to take chances for the business are reduced. Since they are longer fearful of being evaluated or tagged only for their flaws and have the courage to move on, employees are motivated to perform better, innovate, and work at their utmost in the workplace. By forgiving others, employees become friendlier, more helpful, and more engaged in prosocial behaviour. (Sood, 2018)

Dimension 3: Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the very first spiritual practise that can assist you in managing stress. In order to learn mindfulness, one must deliberately slow down and unwind as well as focus on the here and now rather than dwelling on difficulties in the past or future. Why don't we all settle down and accept every little event that occurs (present situations) in our life instead of floundering through everything in today's confusing world? Being mindful is a key stress-reduction approach since it advises us to slow down and appreciate every little thing that happens rather than rushing or fighting through life in today's modern unstable environment (present moments). (Trishala & Fatima, 2021)

Because of the numerous studies establishing its beneficial benefits on human health and well-being as well as its capacity to alleviate a variety of stress-related physical and psychological disorders, mindfulness has been incorporated into a number of well-known mental health interventions. (Shahid et al., 2016)

Dimension 4: Transcendence

According to Mitroff (2008), the majority of studies prioritised religion in their interpretations of spirituality; however, this causes this view to be associated with intellectual and religious intolerance. Nevertheless, it enables an individual to be free from this if they are able to transcend this intolerance through their behaviour and uphold healthy social interactions, moral openness, and tolerance. (Al-obeidi, 2019)

According to Arriba (2013), the ability to coordinate and adapt between scenes and situations that a person encounters in his life, any Provide and

development of the individual's ability to use a profound understanding of the social relationships of reciprocity with himself and others, are all parts of an individual's transcendental awareness, which is linked to their spiritual transcendence. As we can call on transcendent awareness that the acknowledgement of the natural truth that are broad and multi-dimensional, and it relates to the overall explanation and public goals in the march of human action, and the exploitation of maximum efforts and developments in order to provide the adequate service to the community and employees in the work environment, and all this can be leads to tolerance, endurance, and analytical thinking, as well as acceptance of ordinary and conventional ways of doing things. Based on the aforementioned, it is necessary in the researchers' opinion to explain specific concepts of spiritual transcendence that were found in several global investigations. (Al-obeidi, 2019)

Literature Review

Unavoidably, stress plays a significant role in everyone's life. It accomplishes a very useful task by inspiring someone or by defending against danger. However, if the person is unable to manage the pressure or feels overwhelmed by it, it can negatively impact their daily activities, career, health, and family life as well.

Thus, stress management can make life easier. There are numerous methods or procedures that may be utilised to control this stress and enable a person to live a life free from stress. One such method for reducing stress is spirituality or spiritual practises. (Trishala & Fatima, 2021)

The nature and purpose of employment are profoundly changing. The acceleration of this process and the creation of a more pervasive and individualised spirituality are being aided by two reasons. The concern is having to work harder and with less resources if the job is lost. Additionally, the rise of spirituality in the workplace indicates a desire for work to be more than just a means of subsistence.(Podile, 2018)

Spirituality is now being recognised by an increasing number of scholars and organisations as an essential part of stress management. People that are spiritual

are less stressed. Health care managers experience occupational or work-related stress. More spirituality is needed among those in the medical field so that they can care for patients more effectively and with less stress. They think that a company's ability to function effectively depends on its spirituality. Organizations are seeking for a new generation of managers with greater education who are not only smart but also spiritual people by nature. (Bhatnagar, 2020)

Spirituality is a maturing and growing process of what it means to be a human. Spirituality promotes a sense of forgiveness throughout your body and releases you from negative emotions like rage or hatred. Our mental health is under the protection of spirituality. Spirituality promotes sharing in a workplace where motivation increases rivalry. In a spiritually oriented organisation, all the professionals go to the podium and, better still, they all fit in the first position. In a motivated organisation, only one professional wins. (Zaidi et al., 2019)

It will be possible for the elements of a sense of community in the team, joy in work, and opportunity for the inner life to grow thanks to the performance of experts capable of attending to these demands of the organization's employees.(Zaidi et al., 2019)

According to Dutton et al. (2014), demonstrating compassion entails a variety of acts, from being physically present and paying close attention to the person who is suffering to more complicated and planned actions that entail mobilising several organisational resources. (Banker & Bhal, 2020) People who are empathetic assess how closely their moral principles and motivations line up with the suffering of others. They estimate how well they will be able to handle the circumstance and whether it will lead to favourable or unfavourable outcomes in the future.(Banker & Bhal, 2020)

The possibility for workplace forgiveness promotion boosting employee satisfaction while reducing organisation losses brought on by employee interpersonal strife. Following infractions at work, demanding regret and compensation, Restoring confidence by cooperating on a project or developing a Third-party intervention is a tactic that could aid in promoting forgiveness. Organizational leaders can change the working culture to increase

the likelihood of forgiveness. That is to say, leaders can greatly promote workplace forgiveness and hence enhance health and productivity by encouraging a sense of communal purpose and identity, making selfless sacrifices, upholding forgiving standards or principles, and modelling forgiveness in the workplace. (Toussaint et al., 2018) Forgiveness can potentially be helpful in addressing the offences that inevitably occur in interpersonal relationships, according to social scientists.(Cao et al., 2021) To see with discernment is a common translation for mindfulness, a type of meditation that originated in the Theravada school of Buddhism. (Lawson, 2011). Fear is what causes our problems, according to Swami Vivekananda, and fearlessness is what opens the door to paradise in an instant. Employees who practise workplace spirituality are better able to understand the meaning and goal of their work as well as realise their fullest potential as people. Employees who are given the freedom to use their physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual qualities to their work will become more creative, innovative, and devoted. On the other side, staff members who operate in a downbeat environment will encounter various forms of work pressure, low self-esteem, rising whining, high attrition, burnout, frequent stress-related illnesses, and the adoption of a non-committal attitude toward the company. By refocusing their attention away from a little, self-centred perspective and onto a much bigger picture of interconnection in which they aren't viewed as distinct from their daily activities, mindfulness meditation can theoretically help people feel more spiritual. (Janssen et al., 2018)

Conclusion

With the shifting demands in our daily life, it is crucial to learn effective coping mechanisms that can help us refocus on ourselves, relax the mind, and aid someone in becoming conscious of their thoughts and feelings. Spiritualism is one such powerful tool that helps people manage stress and perform at their best. A person with spiritual intelligence may deal with contradictions and disputes more skill-fully. A person's ability to manage stress in their life efficiently leads to improved life management skills, which in turn reduces a person's propensity for using drugs, alcohol, or other unhealthy coping mechanisms. Spiritual practises primarily impact the intellect, which further influences the body and lessens stress. Numerous studies have shown, as

was already mentioned, that spirituality and spiritual practises have positive benefits on the body and significantly reduce stress. Daily exposure to spiritual experiences improved people' ability to deal with negative emotions and increased positive emotions (Whitehead BR, 2013). Thus, it is clear that engaging in spiritual activities such as prayer, meditation, mindfulness, pilgrimage, etc. will serve as a stress reliever and also improve one's physical and psychological well-being, increase emotions of happiness, lower blood pressure, and lessen depression and anxiety. (Trishala & Fatima, 2021)

Implications

The application of spirituality and its practises in stress management or reduction in mental health services has the potential to be beneficial. The therapeutic process will be aided by recognising and appreciating a person's or client's spiritual beliefs and values during the assessment. People need assistance in identifying the elements that give their lives meaning, hope, and purpose. The person will be better able to handle stress by cultivating these qualities.

Spiritual practises can be simple to pick up, and it has been demonstrated that they promote self-improvement and make it easier for people to deal with obstacles. Spirituality is a useful strategy for coping with life's shifting demands, and it has become increasingly important for people to do so. Additionally, there is a need for greater public understanding of spirituality's potential benefits for stress relief and general welfare. It is important to educate people about the fact that spirituality may be found in any peaceful activity and is not just confined to religion and God.

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