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# A Study of Spirituality at Work and Organisational Commitment of University Teachers

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# ABSTRACT

Organisations today are not only concerned with skills and qualifications of employees but are also looking for workforce who can integrate their body, mind and soul with the work and maintain cordial work relationships. Incorporating spirituality at the workplace has now become an important need of the day. The present study is intended to explore the relationship between demographic profiles of individuals and spirituality at the workplace. Further, this study focuses on the relationship between organisational commitment and spirituality at work. For the present study, descriptive research design was used and data was collected using questionnaire containing items on both constructs. The study findings outline that gender has a significant impact on sense of community while age bears no impact on this factor. In contrast, age has a significant impact on intention to stay whereas gender has no impact on one's intention to stay. Additionally, spirituality at work and organisational commitment are found to have considerable relationship. Spirituality at work can be compared with other aspects such as leadership styles, work-life balance, organisation citizenship behaviour and organisation culture. This research can further be extended to other industries and an industry wise analysis can be carried out.

> *Keywords:* Intention to stay, Mystical experience, Organisation commitment, Sense of community, Spirituality at work

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# **INTRODUCTION**

As life has no sense without work, likewise, work without spirit has no meaning. Employees who maintain spirituality at work

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have more positive values like responsibility, justice, and mutuality. According to Khasawneh (2011), spirituality at work is an endeavor to discover the extreme objective in persons for working in their life, so as to build a strong relationship between the individual and the organisation. Spirituality at the workplace is also a key component of organisational success. In view of this, many employees are looking for a work environment that is more meaningful to them, in which they feel more connected to work (Riordan & Griffeth, 1995). Spiritual organisations value and respect the beliefs of their employees and are comparatively more creative, competent and profitable (Marschke, Preziosi, & Harrington, 2009). In essence, spirituality at work is the feeling of belongingness towards the organisation. Spirituality and organisational commitment are also very much interlinked. Organisational commitment refers to the involvement and dedication, sincerity and the job the employee is performing, which should be very effective and make him / her an effective employee (Bielby, 1992; Shaw & Reyes, 1992; Valentine & Barnett, 2003). Spirituality at work and organisational commitment are two essential aspects of an employee work life (Grant, O'Neil, & Stephens, 2004; Suarez & Michel, 2015). An employee must possess appropriate knowledge, skills and attitude to contribute in achievement in an organisation's stated objectives. Thus, in order to align an individual's objective with the organisation's mission and to bring out the best out of the employee, organisations are emphasising on activities which provide a sense of belongingness to the employees. It is not only the religious belief or activity which is needed by the employee. It can also be the culture which gets adopted at the workplace and the organisation. For example, Air India is seen to follow the Indian culture and represents Indian tradition which creates a fellowship and trust among the company employees as well as their customers.

Similarly, large corporate organisations, namely, Google, Amazon and Facebook have adopted some of the finest human resource practices for their employees, such as favorable working conditions and celebrations of various festivals during working hours which create satisfaction and a sense of connection among employees and the organisations. Hence, human resource management policies must be oriented to maximise employees' good experience at the workplace, which further automatically lead to employee commitment with increased productivity and goodwill.

# **Literature Review**

According to Beheshtifar and Zare (2013), spirituality at work fulfills employees' ultimate purpose of life. Garcia-Zamor (2003) also point out that spirituality leads to employee happiness and feeling of belonging to the organisation, which in turn lead to productivity, effectiveness as well as job satisfaction. Pawar (2009) suggests the comprehensive model of spirituality at work spanning around focal points, such as individual, organisation and group.

Milliman, Czaplewski, and Ferguson (2003) argue that attitude has a direct and major part in spirituality at work. Further, Corner (2009) point out that employees should feel free to express their spirituality at the workplace. According to Altaf and Awan (2011), employees who can freely express their spiritual beliefs at the workplace unquestionably develop an affection with the firm. Meanwhile, Cullinan, Bline, Farrar and Lowe (2008) found that individuals with stronger organisational commitment are less likely to engage in behaviours which are detrimental to the organisation's interests. They further suggest that dimensions of organisational stress such as role conflict and role ambiguity have a significant influence on the organisational commitment (Biswas & Biswas, 2010).

Groen (2001)'s study explain that one can be spiritually infused when the leadership within the organisation is also spiritually infused on both internal and external aspects of leadership. This is also supported by Cheng, Jiang and Riley (2003) who found supervisory commitment to have considerable impact on employee behavioural outcome. According to Luis Daniel (2010), companies are increasingly incorporating the aspect of spirituality within their organisations in order to create a better environment for their employees. When team members embrace and experience spirituality at work, some important attributes such as trust, creativity and respect can be found within the organization, with positive consequence on team effectiveness. Gotsis and Kortezi

(2008) postulate that spirituality at work encompasses two important variables - one is character and the other is wellbeing. Likewise, Jurkiewicz and Giacalone (2004) explain the importance of value of the organisation for employees' selfdevelopment as well as for the development of the organisation. Hence, in order to achieve high productivity and effectiveness, employees and the organisation should have a common value for which they work together. Values, when linked with spirituality within an organisation will yield job satisfaction and high retention rate, with other variables fulfilling its importance. Kolodinsky, Giacalone, and Jurkiewicz's (2008) study examined the positive relationship of organisational spirituality with job involvement, organisational identification and rewards satisfaction. The study proposed that workers ought to encourage their employers to follow spiritual values, regardless of whether the employees themselves observe this form of spirituality. Suárez and Michel (2015) mention that employees' spirituality creates a unified harmony with the workplace, where leadership and motivation increase as a result of trust, spirituality and prayer. Further, Dhiman and Marques (2011) argue that organisations which carry the spiritual mindset are more prosperous, have contented employees and are more responsive towards their environmental accountabilities.

Meyer and Allen (1991) describe three components of organisation commitment viz. affective, continuance and normative. Affective commitment explains emotional attachment of employees with their organisation. while staying committed to the organisation because the employee has a need to do so is called continuance commitment. The employee is aware of the cost associated with leaving the organisation. In case of normative commitment, the employee feels it obligatory or a moral duty to stay with the organisation. As workers age, there are less options for alternative employment, thus, there is a tendency to stay longer with their current organisation (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Furthermore, older employees stay longer because they have invested more time into the organisation as compared to young individuals (Dunham, Grube, & Castaneda, 1994). Similarly, Hellman (1997) also discovered that with increasing age, federal employees were less likely to leave the organisation.

According to Rego and Pina e Cunha (2008) and Badrinarayanan and Madhavaram (2008), people experiencing spirituality at work are more affectively committed to their organisations, are more loyal and have a sense of obligation. Improvements in spiritual climates of the firm can foster organisational commitment, leading to improved organisational performance. Further, Thakur and Singh (2016) mention that a culture can be developed in which employees feel more connected to each other. By clearly defining the mission and vision of an organisation and by becoming an ethical organisation, workers' faith can be developed and maintained. Providing a clear growth path in the organisational ladder and

empowering the subordinates are effective ways to win employee trust. If organisations are able to align the individual's values and objectives with organisational mission and vision, the firm / organisation can become more productive and successful.

# **Rationale of the Study**

Education is a core sector for achieving the objective of employment; it is a platform which provides the best human resource capital for social and business endeavours. For example, in India, by 2020, this resource capital will be the second largest graduate talent pipeline globally, as predicted by India Brand Equity Foundation. One of the research requirements for spirituality at the workplace construct is that it is still lacking in theoretical base and needs to be studied with other organisational behaviour variables such as organisation commitment, employee engagement and deviant workplace behaviour. The present study is focused on the teaching faculty of Punjab, the only university from where teachers (the sample) were selected for the study.

# **Objectives**

- To study the relationship between the demographic profile / age and spirituality at work of teachers in universities of Punjab.
- To study the relationship between spirituality at work and organisational commitment.

### **Hypotheses**

- H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relation between gender and organisational commitment.
- $H_{02}$ : There is no significant relation between gender and spirituality at work.
- H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant relation between age and organisational commitment.
- H<sub>04</sub>: There is no significant relation between age and spirituality at work.
- H<sub>05</sub>: There is no significant relation between spirituality and organisational commitment.

# METHODOLOGY

In order to address the objectives framed for the study, descriptive research was carried out. A structured questionnaire was administered among 120 respondents who were selected using stratified random sampling. Out of the responses received, 85 questionnaires were valid. Data analysis was done using the SPSS tool. Factor analysis, t-test, one-way ANOVA and correlation analysis were run to analyse the data.

#### **Data Analysis and Findings**

Initially a study was conducted on 50 teachers in order to check the validity of the questionnaire in which definition of face, content, construct and criterion were considered. Results showed that question framing was done using complex

English language. Therefore, language was further simplified to suit respondents' comprehension level. Subsequently, the survey was administered again - Cronbach's alpha value was of acceptable range, demonstrating reliability of the instrument used.

Table 1 *Reliability analysis* 

Reliabi	lity Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	
.881	42	

**Factor Analysis for Spirituality at Work.** The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of

Sampling Adequacy is 0.865, which is greater than 0.7, therefore, the data is acceptable. In total, 64.039% variance is explained by three factors, while the other questions have relatively less contribution. Therefore, three factors have been framed which define the best value for spirituality at work. The significance value of each question is determined and is greater than 0.5. The factors taken are as follows:

Factor 1 includes questions 3, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17and 18 which is stated as sense of community. Factor 2 includes questions 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 10, 12 and 14 which is stated as congruence with organisation values. Factor 3 comprises question 16 which is stated under mystical experience.

#### Thakur, K., Singh, J. and Kaur, P.

# Table 2KMO and Bartlett's test

KMO and Bartlett's Test			
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.865		
Rotated Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>			
		Compone	ent
	1	2	3
I feel that I am at the right place where I actually wanted to work.	0.811		
I share a strong sense of purpose and meaning with my co-workers about our work.	0.780		
<i>There is a real sense of trust and personal connection between my co-</i> <i>workers and I.</i>	0.723		
My subordinates inspire and guide me at work.	0.719		
Sometimes, I experience unmatched energy at work.	0.680		
I feel myself as part of the community at work.	0.621		
My work will help me achieve my mission in life.	0.595		-0.537
My work fulfills my livelihood.	0.587		
<i>My connection with the greater source has a positive impact on my work.</i>	0.517	0.503	
I am passionate about my work.		0.829	
My work is meaningful.		0.750	
Sometimes, I am highly motivated at work.		0.744	
My everyday work decisions are based on my spiritual beliefs.		0.712	
I am grateful to be involved in my present work.		0.706	
Sometimes during work, I completely forget about sense of time.		0.618	
There are moments when I feel complete joy at work.		0.609	
My values and beliefs match with my work.		0.580	
Sometimes, at work I feel everything is blissful.			0.918
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis			
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization			
a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations			

**Organisational Commitment.** The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy is 0.743 which is greater than 0.7, therefore the data is acceptable. A total of 72.221% variance is explained by seven factors, while the other questions have a negligible value. As such, seven

factors have been framed which define the best value for organisational commitment. The significance value of each item has been determined and is greater than 0.5. The factors taken are as follows: Factor 4 includes questions 28, 29, 32, 34, and 41, which is stated as "intention to stay". Factor 5 includes question 26, 30, 33, 35, 36, and 37 which is stated "intention to leave". Factor 6 includes question 19, 38, 40, and 42 which is stated as "loyalty". Factor 7 includes questions 23 and 24, which is stated as "not connected with organisation". Factor 8 includes questions 25 and 31, which is stated as "necessity to stay". Factor 9 includes questions 20 and 21, which is stated as "connectedness".

Factor 10 includes question 22, which is stated as "easy switching", the others are neglected due to low significance value.

Table 3KMO and Bartlett's test

KMO and Bartlett's Test Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling				0.743			
Adequacy				0.745			
Rotated Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>							
				Compon	ent		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel that I have very few options to consider if I want to leave this organisation.	0.805						
Leaving the current organisation will disturb many aspects of my life.	0.785						
Currently, it would be really difficult for me to leave my organisation, even if I wanted to.	0.769						
will continue to work in this organisation because other organisations may not provide or match the benefits that I have here.	0.739						
Staying with an organisation for most of the career is a good thing.	0.671						
would not leave this job even if I get a better offer elsewhere.							
After leaving this organization, I may not have other alternatives available.		0.803					
Employees cannot be always loyal to their organisation.		0.751					
Leaving my current organisation would be too costly for me.		0.742					
Shifting job from one organisation to nother is not unethical.		0.660					
Moving jobs from one firm to another is very common nowadays.		0.648			-0.504	1	
am not too attached to my organisation.		0.523		0.521			

#### Table 3 (continue)

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Normalization	· · ·					
a. Rotation converged in 25 iterations						
	a. Rotation converged in 25 iterations					

**Normality.** Normality test shows which factors explain both workplace spirituality and organisational commitment. Sense of community and intention to stay have the highest significance value which make these as major factors. All the other factors have low significance value, and are therefore,

considered to be less effective. For the major factors, t-test and one way ANOVA. (p>0.05) was performed.

# **T-Test and One Way ANOVA**

**Sense of community.** In the t-test, (2-tailed), the significance value is less than 0.05, so,

the null hypothesis is rejected ( $H_{02}$  means that there is a significant relationship between gender and sense of community). The results show that males feel a higher sense of community compared to females. In the one way ANOVA, the significance value, p is 0.093, which is greater than 0.05, so, the null hypothesis is accepted (H<sub>04</sub> means that there is no significant relationship between age and sense of community).

Table 4

Significance of difference in sense of community and intention to stay experiences between males and females

Factor	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value	Inference
Sense of Community	Male	4.2711	.59058	2.966	.004	Significant
	Female	3.8698	.64591			
Intention to Stay	Male	3.8200	.73651	2.375	.020	Significant
	Female	3.4000	.88915			

**Intention to stay.** In the t-test, (2-tailed), the significance value is greater than 0.05, so, the null hypothesis is accepted ( $H_{01}$  means that there is no significant relationship between gender and intention to stay. Males feel higher intention to stay compared females.

In the one way ANOVA, significance value, p is 0.02, which is less than 0.05, so, the null hypothesis is rejected (H<sub>03</sub> means that there is a significant relationship between age and intention to stay).

### Correlations

The Pearson correlation value varies from +1 to -1, its value indicates the direction and strength of the relation between variables. The sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.00 < 0.05, so, the null hypothesis is rejected (H<sub>05</sub> means that there is a significant relationship between the sense of community and intention to stay. Through the analysis of Table 5, it is clear that sense of community is highly correlated with congruence and correlates normally with intention to stay, loyalty, and necessity to stay. Intention to leave is negatively correlated with connectedness and mystical experience.

Correlation	Sense of Community	Congruence	Mystical Exp.	Intention to Stay	Intention to Leave	Loyalty	Non Connectedness	Necessity to Stay	Connectedness	Easy Switching
Sense of Community	Pearson Correlation	1	.753**	.052	.561**	.318**	.565**	311**	.424**	.222*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		000 <sup>-</sup>	.635	000 <sup>.</sup>	.003	000 <sup>-</sup>	.004	000.	.041
Congruence	Pearson Correlation	.753**	1	.100	.300**	.266*	.560**	327**	.349**	.183
	Sig. (2-tailed)	000		.362	.005	.014	000.	.002	.001	.095
Mystical Experience	Pearson Correlation	.052	.100	1	.093	016	.077	067	.080	.036
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.635	.362		.396	.881	.483	.541	.467	.744
Intention to Stay	Pearson Correlation	.561**	.300**	.093	1	.369**	.461**	353**	.483**	.150
	Sig. (2-tailed)	000 <sup>-</sup>	.005	.396		.001	.000	.001	000 <sup>-</sup>	.171
Intention to Leave	Pearson Correlation	.318**	.266*	016	.369**	1	.364**	.080	.295**	121
	Sig (2-tailed)	.003	.014	.881	.001		.001	.467	.006	.271
Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	.565**	.560**	.077	.461**	.364**	1	201	.451**	.288**
	Sig(2-tailed)	000 <sup>-</sup>	000 <sup>-</sup>	.483	000	.001		.066	000 <sup>.</sup>	.007
Non Connectedness	Pearson Correlation	311**	327**	067	353**	.080	201	1	243*	058
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.002	.541	.001	.467	.066		.025	.600
Necessity to Stay	Pearson Correlation	.424**	.349**	.080	.483**	.295**	.451**	243*	1	.204
	Sig(2-tailed)	000	.001	.467	000	.006	.000	.025		.061
Connectedness	Pearson Correlation	.222*	.183	.036	.150	121	.288**	058	.204	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.041	.095	.744	.171	.271	.007	.600	.061	
Easy Switching	Pearson Correlation	.346**	.360**	.082	.308**	.087	.340**	209	.246*	.228*
	Sig(2-tailed)	.001	.001	.457	.004	.430	.001	.055	.024	.036

Thakur, K., Singh, J. and Kaur, P.

Table 5 Correlation analysis

Pertanika J. Soc. Sci. & Hum. 25 (4): 1501 - 1514 (2017)

1510

**Regression.** The *R* value represents the simple correlation between intention to stay (organisation commitment major variable) and spirituality at work variables (sense of community, congruence, mystical experience) that is 0.596, which indicates average degree of correlation. The *R* square value indicates that spirituality at work accounts for 35.6% of variation in

Table 6

organisation commitment; the balance 64.4% variation is explained by other factors - intention to stay = 1.131 + (0.778\*senseof community) + (+0.293\*congruence) + (0.082\*mystical exp).

Based on the complete analysis, null hypothesis is rejected and a significant relationship exists between spirituality at work and organisational commitment.

Model	Summary					
Model	R	R Square		Adjusted R Square	Std. Erro Estimate	
1	.596ª	.356		.332	67384	
a. Pred	lictors: (Constant),	Mystical Ex	p, Sense of Com	munity, Congruence		
Coeffic	cients <sup>a</sup>					
		** 1		~		
Model		Unstanda Coefficier		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model					t	Sig.
Model	(Constant)	Coefficier	nts	Coefficients	t 	.035
Model		Coefficier B	Std. Error	Coefficients	_	
Model	(Constant) Sense of	Coefficier B 1.131	Std. Error .529	Coefficients Beta	2.140	.035

a. Dependent Variable: Intention to stay

# **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The first part of data using factor analysis suggests that the three major factors contributing mainly to spirituality at work are sense of community, congruence with organisation values and mystical experience. Organisation commitment factors are intention to stay, intention to leave, loyalty, not connected with organisation, necessity to stay, connectedness and easy switching. The study reveals that gender has a significant impact on spirituality at work, whereby, males experience higher spirituality at work (sense of community) compared to their female colleagues. In contrast, organisation commitment is independent of gender, but males have slightly higher intention to stay compared to females. Spirituality at work does not vary with age; in other words, employees at any age can remain fully attached to his / her workplace. In contrary, organisation commitment of the employees varies as their tenure increases in the organisation, as supported by Mathieu and Zajac (1990); Dunham et al. (1994) and Hellman (1997). Further, the results confirm that if employees feel connected to the workplace, there is no doubt that they will be committed and trustworthy employees, as proven by Kolodinsky et al. (2008) and Rego and Pina e Cunha (2008). Sense of community is also highly influenced by congruence to organisational values (Beheshtifar & Zare, 2013; Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004; Thakur & Singh, 2016). These results can assist policy makers to avoid stereotyping, especially on the basis of gender and age. In addition, these results can help managers understand the differential needs and behaviour of their employees, which in turn, will lead to retention, commitment and greater productivity at the workplace.

# CONCLUSION

After empirical analysis, it is concluded that spirituality at work has a considerable impact on organisational commitment. There is a significant relationship between sense of community and intention to stay, which emphasise the role of effective teams and groups in increasing the stay of an employee in the organisation. Further, it is evident that intention to stay in an organisation is not dependent on gender. Furthermore, sense of community and willingness to stay in the organisation is also independent of age groups. On the other hand, there is a relation between age and intention to stay; that means, different age groups have different priorities to remain within an organisation.

# LIMITATION AND FUTURE SCOPE OF STUDY

Location is always a constraint; it is a challenging task to include respondents in uniformity. There are issues of access to information in some universities, where employees are reluctant to share the information. To further confirm these findings, more research can be carried on various other demographic factors such as marital status, tenure and income. Spirituality at work can also be related to other organisational constructs such as deviant workplace behaviour, and happiness at work

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