

Organizational Culture and Workplace Spirituality

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Abstract

Over the last decade, workplace spirituality has become a buzzword in business and organization literature. Furthermore, many studies have affirmed its significance in satisfying individuals' inner feelings and self-actualization. As organizational culture represents the personality of any organization, it has a tremendous role in shaping current and future organizational orientation. This study explores the link between organizational culture traits and workplace spirituality dimensions by conducting a qualitative case study in Menoufia province (Egypt). Both correlation and regression analysis of collected data indicated that it is false to assume that all traits of organizational culture have a strong effect on workplace spirituality dimensions.

Keywords: Organizational culture; Workplace spirituality; Dension model; Knowledge sharing; Education; Egypt

Introduction

Many studies [1,2] affirm the importance of organizational culture in determining success or failure of any organization. Hosseini [3] sees that culture represents the identity of organization and works as personality in human interaction. Sulkowski [4] elaborates that organizational culture is derived from social norms, communication methods, customs, subcultures, organizational stereotypes, organizational heroes and so on. Accordingly, it strongly affects organizational objectives, strategy, tasks, performance, employee engagement, job satisfaction and many other organizational aspects [5]. Morris [6] considers organizational culture as essential business strength if it is well-developed and effectively employed. However, it may place roadblocks and hinder organizational continuity if it progresses over time without a plan. This may be one of the reasons on which Luthans [7] has depended when highlighting that both sharedness and intensity are the two significant factors in determining organizational culture's strength. Sharedness shows the extent to which employees accept their organizational culture's core beliefs and values. Intensity reflects employees' commitment level towards these core beliefs and values. Hence, it appears that organizational culture is often seen as a main factor in identifying and maintaining underlying assumptions, values, and collective options within organizations.

Human resources are the most significant factors for organizations to survive and prosper [8]. Successful organizations largely pay attention to the education and training of their employees. Such organizations know that developing their human capital can no longer stay without a carefully planned up-to-date code of practices to enhance and satisfy them [9]. This has led empirical research to take a new turn by focusing on the factors that influence employee wellbeing. Recently, a number of studies [10-14] have demonstrated a growing interest in spirituality in many modern business organizations. One of the main reasons for such growing interest is the stress employees feel when organizations set very high targets for them to achieve [15]. The second reason is employees' struggle to answer the questions: Why they do what they do and how it is to be done? That's why global business organizations such as Deloitte, AT&T, and Pizza Hut have started to organize spirituality lecture sessions, yoga classes and training on spirituality for their staff [14]. And management scholars have investigated workplace spirituality [10,16-18] and its relation to organizational commitment [19], employee satisfaction [15,20], employee engagement [21] and team effectiveness [22].

Given the above and the rising importance of both organizational culture and workplace spirituality for various organizations, this study seeks to examine the relationship between them in the context of public primary school education in Menoufia, a province in Egypt.

Education in Egypt

Education has always been seen as a mechanism for attaining both economic development and political stability [23]. As a developing nation, Egypt puts a great emphasis on education as a dynamic force cutting the path to prosperity. Hargreaves [24] notes that education in Egypt has passed through three stages: the first was Arabism (1950 to 1970) which was based on principles of social equality and community organization perspectives. The second was openness (1970 to 1981), in which Egypt witnessed a shift from a socialist to free market economy. This shift fostered the emergence of foreign schools and accelerated the tendency to learn foreign languages. The third stage started in 1981 and has continued into the present. In this current phase, various Egyptian governments have affirmed the importance of education in Egypt. However, this stage has witnessed a surge in negative social phenomena such as drug addiction and street children.

The decline of the status of teachers and their many strikes from time to time has had a negative impact on the rank and quality of Egyptian schools. In a report published in El Fagr, one of the independent weekly newspapers in Egypt, many teachers have expressed that besides their low salaries, they don't feel any appreciation from both the society and the managers of their schools. Some have expressed the lack of training hinders their abilities in directing students. Moreover, a number of them elaborated that they don't know the mission of their schools especially if they teach such outdated syllabuses and have old methods in teaching.

Menoufia province is one of 27 provinces in Egypt. It includes about 80 primary public schools in its 10 zones. The teachers in these schools are suffering from the same problems as other teachers of

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Egypt. Low sense of community, inadequate training, low self-esteem, missing sense of meaningfulness in work, immorality and many more are only some of the problems teachers suffer from in this province. Accordingly, in this study, researchers have decided to explore the link between organizational culture traits and workplace spirituality dimensions in Menoufia's primary public schools.

Significance of this Study

The study offers two major contributions. First, it explores the link between organizational culture traits and workplace spirituality dimensions. With the help of the findings of this study, various academic and organizational professionals may rethink the traits of organizational culture and their importance to organizations.

Second and as pointed out, workplace spirituality is one of the new and hot buzzwords in the business arena. However, it is still at an embryonic stage and needs a lot of empirical and theoretical research to examine the extent of its impact on job performance, employee development and employee satisfaction. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, no published studies have discussed workplace spirituality in schools in Egypt. Accordingly, this research strongly opens new areas for research in this regard.

Literature Review

Organizational culture

Before examining the meaning of organizational culture within this research, it is preferable to identify in more specific terms the meaning of culture. Culture can be defined as "The collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another" [25]. Ouchi [26] indicates that scholars started to study organizational culture when they needed to have in depth knowledge about why organizational behavior changes from time to time and from one situation to another. Cameron and Quinn [27] define organizational culture as "The taken-for-granted values, the underlying assumptions, expectations, collective memories, and definitions present in the organization. It represents how things are around here. It reflects the prevailing ideology that people carry inside their heads". Schein [28] describes it as "a pattern of basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problem of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to these problems". Thus, organizational culture is considered a framework of unwritten rules that guides employees' behavior within organizations. Moreover, Morris [6] and Sulkowski [4] mention that through organizational history, in-house training, customs, taboo, symbols, stories, narratives, metaphors and myths, senior members transfer aspects of organizational culture to new employees.

Koutroumanis and Alexakis [2] and Kraljevic et al. [29] highlight that the main characteristics of organizational culture: First, it is a pattern of basic assumptions and beliefs developed by a given group. Second, it seeks a harmony between external orientation and internal integration. Third, it is transferred from senior to new employees. Finally, it defines how employees feel, think and act.

According to Lewis [1] organizational culture often works as a determinant of how organizations react to new situations because of its capacity to store all past history lessons. Moreover, Hosseini [3] affirms that organizational culture may work as an operational system by directing employees' behavior, stabilizing new organizational orientations and leading any current or future change.

Denison model of organizational culture:

This model was developed by Daniel R. Denison and William S. Neale [30] after twenty years of research of thousands of companies [29]. The model is based on four cultural traits of organization.

1. *Involvement*: The degree to which employees at all levels have influence over organizational decisions and are directly connected to organizational goals [31].
2. *Consistency*: The degree to which employees understand the shared system of beliefs in their organization and accordingly are able to act in a predictable way even when facing unfamiliar situations [31].
3. *Adaptability*: The degree to which organization responds to both internal customers and external environment. Adaptability often promotes organizational learning [31].
4. *Mission*: The degree to which employees know and share the purpose, the goals and the vision of their organization [31].

Given the fact that the economies of countries around the world have increasingly become global and companies are facing a kind of uncertainty, the researchers have chosen to add knowledge sharing as a fifth trait of culture. Sorakraikitikul and Siengthai [32] consider knowledge sharing as the degree to which employees exchange experience and work-related knowledge with their colleagues. The importance of such exchange of knowledge is not only encouraging employees to work together but also creating a shared organizational knowledge that turns into a competitive value hence forth [33]. Therefore, this research considers that organization culture is composed of five traits: Involvement, consistency, adaptability, mission, and knowledge sharing.

Workplace spirituality

Over the past decade, workplace spirituality has become one of the hot and new topics in business literature. Moreover, the relationship between workplace spirituality and management has been highlighted in media, internet sites, work groups, and newsletters [13]. Furthermore, some journal articles [11,12] have tried to explore the why and how of spirituality in workplace.

Rego and Cunha [19] and Deshpande [34] indicate that workplace spirituality is a reality in the business world that should not be ignored. This supports what has been highlighted by Jurkiewicz and Giacalone [35] when mentioning that spirituality in workplace is a basic need for employees' personal growth due to the declining role of families, neighborhoods, and other societal main players. Waddock [36] assures that bringing employees' heart, mind, body, and soul to organizations is vital for both individual and organizational success. In line with this, Giacalone and Jurkiewicz [35] clarify that spirituality is a dynamic factor in building trust between employers and their employees, the matter that positively affects overall organizational performance.

Spirituality in the workplace is considered a motive for employees who spend long hours in their work [37]. However, spirituality and religion are often times confused. Sorakraikitikul and Siengthai [32] see that both spirituality and religion reflect the personal experience of searching for high power and a meaning for life. Mitroff and Denton [38], Fry [18], Klenke [39] and Gupta et al. [15] agree that spirituality is about personal beliefs, but religion relates to behavior. Spirituality is flexible and applicable whereas religion is fixed and based on customs. Moreover, spirituality is discussable at the workplace, but religion is an inappropriate topic for discussion in the workplace.

Heschel [40] considers spirituality as the search for an ultimate being. Thus, the concept of spirituality is completely different from the concept of workplace spirituality which is about employees' common connection in their workplace [41]. Marques et al. [42] define workplace spirituality 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 his/her sense of honesty, kindness and courage". It is also defined by Ashmos and Duchon [10] as "recognition that employees have an inner life which nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work taking place in the context of community". Daniel [22] reflects that workplace spirituality is a central variable in developing the culture of trust, inclusion and innovation within various workplaces. Although workplace spirituality includes many dimensions, the researchers have chosen to focus on three of them: meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment with organizational values [15].

Research Design

Conceptual framework:

The conceptual framework of this study is designed based on a review of previous research studies that have been conducted to demonstrate the link between organizational culture and workplace spirituality. In this article, the proposed independent variables are: Involvement, Consistency, Adaptability, Mission and Knowledge Sharing. Workplace spirituality dimensions - meaningful work, sense of community and organizational values - are functioned as dependent variables.

Survey instruments:

A set of questionnaires is used to collect the primary data for this quantitative research. The questions included in the questionnaire are based on established existing models with some modification made to match this study. The questionnaire used in this study contains three main sections:

- A. Demographic Variables: This includes questions about the personal information of the targeted respondents such as gender, age, marital status, level of income, and religion.
- B. Organizational Culture: This is based on Sherfati et al. [5] Danish model which includes four cultural traits: involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission. The researchers have considered knowledge sharing as a fifth cultural trait due to the high level of uncertainty and competitiveness the world economy is currently witnessing [32].
- C. Workplace Spirituality: This is based on Gupta et al. [15] survey of workplace spirituality and is prepared to cover three selected dimensions of workplace spirituality: meaningful work, sense of community and organizational values. This section involves three scales: the first subscale involves seven questions about meaningful work, the second involves seven questions about sense of community, whereas the third involves five questions about organizational values.

Hypotheses

The following are the main hypotheses for this research:

1. There is a strong statistical relationship between the organizational culture traits (involvement, consistency, adaptability, mission, and knowledge sharing) and meaningful work.

2. There is a strong statistical relationship between the organizational culture traits (involvement, consistency, adaptability, mission, and knowledge sharing) and sense of community.
3. There is a strong statistical relationship between the organizational culture traits (involvement, consistency, adaptability, mission, and knowledge sharing) and organizational values.

Scope of the study

The population pool of this study is teachers who are working in public schools in Menoufia province in Egypt. Teachers in this province were chosen as a sample for this study for ease of access by the researchers. The researchers count on stratified random sampling by dividing the population into homogenous subgroups and then taking a random sample from each subgroup. This ensures that each subgroup is represented in the chosen samples.

Teachers in Egyptian public schools are classified into five categories: junior teachers, first class teachers, alpha first class teachers, expert teachers, and senior teachers. Since, it is difficult to determine the size of population, 120 sets of questionnaires were distributed to the targeted respondents. It is needless to say that the questionnaires were delivered in Arabic - the native language of all targeted respondents - in order to motivate them to respond.

Data analysis

SPSS Pearson correlation was adopted to get the results of hypotheses testing in order to show the normal descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, mean and standard deviation.

Research findings

As previous stated the researchers distributed 120 sets of questionnaires and received responses from 100 teachers. With the help of stratified random sampling, the researcher formed the following respondents' profiles.

Reliability analysis

The Cronbach Alpha is used to assess the internal consistency of each of the variables used in the study. As depicted in Table 1, all variables have adequate levels of internal consistency and meet the acceptable standard of 0.60 [43]. In this study, the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient is 0.947 (Table 2).

Hypothesis 1

- a) The analysis results in the Pearson coefficient of 0.482 and the value are highly significant ($P = 0.0$). There is a significant positive correction that proves that involvement moderately affects teachers' meaningful work. The result ($R^2 = 0.233$, $P = 0.0$) suggests that when meaningful work is assigned, there is a 23.3% increase in teachers' sense of meaningful work (Table 3).
- b) The analysis results in the Pearson coefficient of 0.199, and the value is highly significant ($P = 0.0$). This correlation coefficient proves that consistency modestly affects teachers' meaningful work. The result ($R^2 = 0.040$, $P = 0.0$) shows the very low effect for consistency over meaningful work (Table 4).
- c) The analysis results in the Pearson coefficient of 0.907, and the value is highly significant ($P = 0.0$), and this shows that there is a highly significant statistical relationship between adaptability and meaningful work. The result ($R^2 = 0.822$, $P = 0.00$) shows

Demographic Variables	Items	Count
Gender	Male	82
	Female	18
Age	below 25 years	20
	26-30 years	20
	31-35 years	20
	36-40 years	20
	41-45 years	10
	46-50 years	5
	More than 50 years	5
Marital Status	Single	25
	Married	62
	Other	13
Level of Education	Bachelor	77
	Bachelor + Diploma	21
	Master	2
Level of Income	EGP 1200	20
	EGP 1300-2500	20
	EGP 2500-4000	40
	EGP 4000-5500	19
	Above 5500	1
Organizational tenure	Less than 1 year	1
	1-3 years	39
	4-6 years	20
	7-9 years	20
	10-12 years	10
	Above 15 years	10
Religion	Muslim	92
	Christian	8
Work Bases	Full time	100
	Part time	0

Table 1: Respondents' profile.

Scale name	Number of items	Coefficient alpha values
Organizational culture		
Commitment to participation	0.775	4
Consistency	0.951	4
Adaptability	0.888	4
Mission	0.709	3
Knowledge Sharing	0.700	7
Workplace spirituality		
Meaningful work	0.890	7
Sense of community	0.823	7
Organizational Values	0.780	6
Total	0.937	42

Table 2: Reliability analysis.

that when adaptability is employed, a 82.2% increase in teachers' sense of meaningful work is attained (Table 5).

- d) The analysis results in a Pearson Coefficient of 0.828, and the value is highly significant (P = 0.0) that showing that there is a strong statistical relationship between mission and meaningful work. The result (R2 = 0.686, P = 0.0) shows that when mission is adopted, there is an increase of 68.6% in teachers' sense of meaningful work (Table 6).
- e) The analysis results in a Pearson Coefficient of 0.440, and the value is highly significant (P = 0.0) that showing that there is a moderate correlation between knowledge sharing and

meaningful work. The result (R2 = 0.194, P = 0.0) shows that when knowledge sharing is used, there is a 19.4% increase in teachers' sense of meaningful work (Table 7).

Findings 1: Since consistency has a weak effect of the dimensions of workplace spirituality, the first hypothesis is partly supported. The results show that adaptability (0.828) has the strongest cultural effect on meaningful work.

Hypothesis 2

- a) The analysis results in a Pearson coefficient of 0.556, and the value is highly significant (P = 0.0). This result indicates that involvement positively affects sense of community. The result (R2 = 0.309, P = 0.0) suggests that when involvement exists, there is a 30.9 % increase in teachers' sense of community (Table 8).
- b) The analysis results in a Pearson coefficient of 0.225 and the value is highly significant (P = 0.0). This result proves that consistency can modestly affect continuance commitment. The result (R2 = 0.051, P = 0.0) suggests that even when teachers find consistency, the result is a very week increase in the level of teachers' sense of community (Table 9).
- c) The analysis results in a Pearson coefficient of 0.879, and the value is highly significant (P = 0.0), thus showing a highly significant effect for adaptability on the level of sense of community. The result (R2 = 0.772, P = 0.0) shows that when

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SE of the estimate
1	0.482	0.233	0.225	0.42383

Table 3: Correlation and regression between involvement and meaningful work.

Model	r	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SE of the estimate
1	0.199	0.040	0.030	0.80975

Table 4: Correlation and regression between consistency and meaningful work.

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SE of the estimate
1	0.907	0.822	0.820	0.349

Table 5: Correlation and regression between adaptability and meaningful work.

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SE of the estimate
1	0.828	0.686	0.683	0.46299

Table 6: Correlation and regression between knowledge sharing and meaningful work.

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SE of the estimate
1	0.440	0.194	0.185	0.40045

Table 7: Correlation and regression between involvement and meaningful work.

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SE of the estimate
1	0.556	0.309	0.302	0.40209

Table 8: Correlation and regression between involvement and sense of community.

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SE of the estimate
1	0.225	0.051	0.041	0.80508

Table 9: Correlation and regression between consistency and sense of community.

teachers align with adaptability, there is a 77.2% increase in their sense of community (Table 10).

- d) The analysis results in a Pearson Coefficient of 0.880, and the value is highly significant (P = 0.0) and show that there is a highly positive statistical relationship between mission and sense of community. The result (R2 = 0.774, P = 0.0) suggests that when teachers believe in their school’s mission, there is a 77.4% increase in their sense of community (Table 11).
- e) The analysis results in a Pearson Coefficient of 0.415, and the value is highly significant (P = 0.0) that showing that there is a moderate correlation relationship between knowledge sharing and sense of community. The result (R2 = 0.172, P = 0.0) suggests that when knowledge sharing is adopted, there is a 17.2% increase in teachers’ sense of community (Table 12).

Findings 2: Consistency has a very weak correlation with sense of community. Accordingly, hypothesis 2 is not fully accepted .The results also show that mission (0.774) has the strongest effect on sense of community.

Hypothesis 3

- a) The analysis results in a Pearson coefficient of 0.300, and the value is highly significant (P=0.002).This correlation coefficient implies that involvement weakly affect teachers’ alignment with organizational values. Specifically, the result (R² = 0.090, P = 0.02) suggests that even involvement is assigned; there is a weak effect on teachers’ organizational values (Table 13).
- b) The analysis results in a Pearson coefficient of 0.231, and the value is highly significant (P = 0.021). This correlation coefficient implies that consistency modestly affects teachers’ alignment with organizational values. The result (R² = 0.054, P = 0.021) suggests that even when consistency exists, there is a very weak effect on teachers’ alignment with organizational values (Table 14).
- c) The analysis results in a Pearson coefficient of 0.879, and the value is highly significant (P = 0.0).This result shows a very strong correlation between adaptability and teachers’ alignment with organizational values .The result (R² = 0.773, P = 0.0) suggests that when adaptability is employed, there is a 77.3% increase in teachers’ alignment with organizational values (Table 15).
- d) The analysis results in a Pearson Coefficient of 0.741, and the value is highly significant (P = 0.0) that showing that there is a positive statistical relationship between mission and alignment with organizational values. The result (R2 = 0.549, P = 0.0) shows that if schools use a clear mission, there is a 54.9% increase in teachers’ alignment with organizational values (Table 16).
- e) The analysis results in a Pearson Coefficient of 0.453, and the value is highly significant (P = 0.0) showing that there is a moderate correlation between knowledge sharing and teachers’ alignment with organizational values. The result (R2 = 0.205, P= 0.0) shows that if knowledge sharing is adopted, a 20.5% increase in teachers’ alignment with organizational values is attained (Table 17).

Findings 3: Both involvement and consistency have a very weak effect on organizational values, so hypothesis 3 is partly accepted. The results show that adaptability (0.773) has the strongest effect on teachers’ alignment with organizational values.

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SE of the estimate
1	0.879	0.772	0.770	0.395

Table 10: Correlation and regression between adaptability and sense of community.

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SE of the estimate
1	0.880	0.774	0.772	0.39244

Table 11: Correlation and regression between knowledge sharing and sense of community.

Model	r	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SE of the estimate
1	0.415	0.172	0.164	0.40576

Table 12: Correlation and regression between mission and sense of community.

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SE of the estimate
1	0.300	0.090	0.081	0.46154

Table 13: Correlation and regression between involvement and organizational values.

Model	r	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SE of the estimate
1	0.231	0.054	0.044	0.80384

Table 14: Correlation and regression between normative commitment and sense of community.

Model	r	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SE of the estimate
1	0.879	0.773	0.771	0.394

Table 15: Correlation and regression between mission and organizational values.

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SE of the estimate
1	0.741	0.549	0.545	0.55454

Table 16: Correlation and regression between knowledge sharing and organizational values.

Model	r	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SE of the estimate
1	0.453	0.205	0.197	0.39767

Table 17: Correlation and regression between adaptability and organizational values.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study has attempted to examine the relationship between organizational culture traits (involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission) and workplace spirituality dimensions (meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment with organizational values). The researchers have considered knowledge sharing as a significance fifth trait of organizational culture as it is imposed by the rapidness, creativity, technological advancements, and other characteristics that distinguish our global economy nowadays.

In line with the study of Sherfati et al. [5], this study has found that workplace spirituality dimensions (meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment with organizational values) are strongly affected by both adaptability and mission. Also, in agreement with the same study, the results of this research have proved a weak correlation between consistency and workplace spirituality dimensions. However, and contrary to results of Sherfati et al. [5], the results of this research have shown a moderate correlation between involvement and the two

dimensions of workplace spirituality; namely, meaningful work and sense of community.

In congruence with Sorakraikitikul and Siengthai [30], the results of this study have highlighted a positive relationship between knowledge sharing and workplace spirituality dimensions. Such positive relationship urges schools to consider knowledge sharing as a vital trait of organizational culture. Moreover, instead of relying on teachers' intentions to exchange knowledge and their work-related experience with each other, schools are required to design a planned approach to accelerate such exchange of experiences [31]. This may occur through in-house training and coaching activities.

Adaptability has emerged to be the most dominant variable in predicting teachers' meaningful work and their alignment with organizational values, whereas, mission tends to be the most influential trait in terms of sense of community.

Given the fact that education represents a matter of life for Egypt and that teachers are one of the main components of any educational process, schools in Egypt should reformulate their organizational cultures to fulfill teachers' inner lines and self-actualization needs. The results of this study have confirmed that adaptability is the most dynamic cultural trait for teachers' meaningful work and sense of community. Accordingly, schools should promote an orientation towards supporting teachers' empowerment through continuous learning.

Finally, this research may subject to criticism because of overlooking some moderating variables such as teachers' engagement, teachers' satisfaction, teachers' motivation, teachers' inclusion, teachers' individual performance and so on. However, this research has filled in a gap in management and organization literature by examining the relationship between organizational culture and workplace spirituality. Moreover, future studies done by the researchers and/or other management academic scholars should further shed more light on these variables.

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