Impact of Workplace Spirituality on Organizational Commitment – A Study in an Emerging Economy

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Abstract: Workplace spirituality has emerged as one of the effective mechanisms to induce organizational commitment, job involvement, creativity, innovation and to reduce employee turnover intentions. This has attracted the attention of researchers worldwide, and there have been several studies on the components and effect of workplace spirituality on employee performance in Western nations. The Covid 19 pandemic has led to job losses and pay cuts across industries, leading to an alarming Increase in stress, depression and alcohol and substance abuse among employees. However, hardly any studies have been conducted on workplace spirituality in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region, leaving a gap in the literature. This study investigates the impact of four dimensions of workplace spirituality namely, meaningful work, inner life, organizational values and sense of community on the organizational commitment of employees working in various organizations in Oman during Covid-19. The study employs survey data collected from 117 respondents across various managerial levels using a structured questionnaire having 20 items. The data has been analyzed using SmartPLS 3 software. The results reveal the impact of the chosen dimensions of workplace spirituality on the organizational commitment of employees. The findings of the study suggest that meaningful work has the highest impact on organizational commitment, followed by inner life and sense of community. Organizational values have been found not to have a significant effect on organizational commitment. Workplace spirituality can have a profound impact on the mental health and wellbeing of employees in these troubled times.

Keywords: workplace spirituality, meaningful work, inner life, sense of community, organizational values, organizational commitment, mental health.

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of spirituality is an ancient one and has been studied in civilizations both ancient and modern. However, its impact on the workplace has been neglected till relatively recently. The concept of workplace spirituality is applied correctly can lead to an exponential increase in the efficiency and productivity of the workforce, from senior level management to shop floor workers. This concept is now fast gaining traction as management research is now focusing on how spirituality can be effectively utilized as a tool to manage and motivate employees. Spirituality is now seen as a tool of change that is based on the idea that people seek to achieve more than just material gains in the workplace. They also yearn for mental satisfaction that comes from a sense of harmony with the work environment and a proper alignment of individual values with organizational objectives. A sense of worth and meaningfulness and the intrinsic satisfaction of a job well done can act as a major driver of employee motivation and self – worth. The concept of being part of a larger objective is being explored to achieve higher levels of satisfaction, which in turn lead to reduced turnover and other undesirable behavior and also contributes to building organizational commitment among employees. According to Friedman and Lobel (2003), people spend a lot of their time at work and hence the well-being of the workers can be predicted by the quality of the work environment. This has driven employers to think more about wellness in the workplace, both in terms of physical and spiritual health, including the concepts of spiritual capital and spiritual intelligence. The recent upheavals in the world economy due to the economic downturn followed by the COVID 19 pandemic have led to job cuts, delayed salaries and promotions, shutting down of businesses and the concept of 'Work From Home' (WFH). This has caused significant increase in the stress levels of employees at all levels of organizations. Financial and family problems during the crisis have led to significant increase in cases of depression and turnover across countries and continents. In such a

scenario, the role of workplace spirituality assumes greater significance and can play a vital role in enhancing the metal wellbeing of employees if properly imbibed and practiced in organizations.

There is no single well-defined concept of spirituality as it is a broad concept encompassing several dimensions, including mental, material and spiritual. Research into workplace spirituality started catching pace in the 1990s, and Izak(2012) in his paper takes the concept of organizational spirituality back to the 1930s, when Max Weber suggested a relationship between a particular individual's religious beliefs and his social and economic activity. According to Ashmos and Duchon (2000), workplace spirituality is "the recognition that employees have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community." This is most widely accepted definition of the term Workplace Spirituality. Although there is no clear definition of the term, a conceptual framework of workplace spirituality is mainly structured around three structures: a) inner life, b) meaningful and purposeful work, c) a sense of community and connectedness (Houghton, Neck & Krishnakumar, 2016). According to Milliman (2003), workplace spirituality can be conceived at three levels, namely individual, community and organizational.Mitroff and Denton (1999) define spirituality as "a search for the meaning of life and work that is both individual and personal. It is defined by the actor and does not refer to any particular religion, sect or school of thought". Karakas (2010) defines spirituality "as the journey to find a lasting, authentic, meaningful, holistic and profound understanding of the existential self and its relation/interconnection with the sacred and the transcendent." Transcendence, that is a sensation of utmost joy and connection beyond the self or mystical experience- can be also included as an important component of spirituality (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004).

Workplace spirituality has been found to deliver multiple benefits to organizations. According to Gotsis and Kortezi(2008), spirituality at work results in increased commitment to one's goals, productivity and performance at higher levels, reduced absenteeism, increased honesty and trust, increased creativity, increased profits and morale, job satisfaction and intrinsic motivation, and a sense of community with one's colleagues. In other words, there is an increase in organizational commitment due to the practice of spirituality at the workplace. According to Saxena and Saxena (2011), workers experiencing workplace spirituality can overcome problems such as depression, nervous problems, alcohol and cigarette use, incompetence, and being overweight. In view of this, Long and Mills (2010) claimed that spirituality at workplace is a requirement for the development of people and organizations.

Although several studies have been conducted in the field of spirituality but empirical and quantitative studies in this field are scarce. Several articles based on workplace spirituality were compiled by Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003), but unfortunately none of the article was based on empirical research design. Although several studies have been conducted in developed countries, practically no such empirical studies on the impact of workplace spirituality on organizational commitment and other factors in the Arab gulf region , thereby leaving a gap in the literature on WPS in this important part of the world. Rathee and Rajain (2020) studied various models of workplace spirituality and found that alignment of values is one aspect of spirituality that needs further study. This research study attempts to fill these gaps by empirically analyzing the impact of four dimensions of workplace spirituality, namely meaningful work, inner life, sense of community and alignment of personal values with organizational values on organizational commitment in Sultanate of Oman, which is the fastest growing economy in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region. These constructs have been well established in several previous studies. This research attempts to fulfil the existing gaps in the literature by studying the impact of the four variables of WPS on organizational commitment in the times of the COVID-19 pandemic.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Workplace Spirituality
Workplace spirituality (WPS) has been found to consist of several aspects like sense of community, meaningful work and organizational value. Workplace spirituality seeks to develop mutual trust among employees and to refresh and connect past life experiences in such a way that there is a better and more productive environment at the workplace. It plays an important role in improving the performance of employees and thus is an aid in achieving organizational excellence (Afsar & Rehman, 2015). Thus, we can

define workplace spirituality as a sense of understanding of the workplace, feeling a sense of belongingness and community and aligning one's personal values with those of the organization. It enhances organizational commitment, motivation and job satisfaction by connecting the essence and inner feelings of the workers with the task at hand(Leigh, 1997; Milliman, Czaplewski, & Ferguson, 2003; Mirvis, 1997). Workplace spirituality gives strength and firmness to organizations' foundations and increases performance (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003; Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004). Spirituality has been defined as "the journey to find a lasting, authentic, meaningful, holistic and profound understanding of the existential self and its relation/interconnection with the sacred and the transcendent" (Karakas, 2010). According to Ashmos and Duchon (2000) workplace spirituality is the recognition of employees spiritual inner wellbeing that comes from meaningful work and takes place in the context of community.

There are three elements of spirituality that common to all definitions in the existing literature: the quest for happiness, the search for the meaning of life and meaningful work experiences that make one feel that he is doing something for the common good and the relationship to transcendence. It has to be understood here that workplace spirituality has nothing to do with religion, and is a concept based on an individual's feelings and choices. According to Afsar and Rehman(2015), religion is defined by a specific belief system, a particular system of faith and worship and a set of beliefs and rules whereas WSP focuses on interpersonal tolerance, purpose of the mind and acceptance of the organizational norms, patience, working for the common good, spiritual fulfillment and the feeling of connectedness to the world around us. According to Milliman et al. (2003) there are three workplace spirituality dimensions namely meaningful work, sense of community and alignment of personal with organizational values. These three dimensions together can explain five work attitudes: intentions to leave. affective organizational commitment, job involvement, organizational-based self-esteem and intrinsic (internal) work satisfaction.

Research into workplace spirituality has been gathering pace since the last two decades (Gotsis & Kortezi 2008; Karakas 2010; Hayden & Barbuto 2011 & Fourie 2014). There have been several different approaches and methodologies that have been used to define and understand the meaning and impact of workplace spirituality on employees as well as organizations. According to Krishnakumar and Neck (2002), this diversity of approaches is logical given the diversity of people, cultures and organizations. They also found that as many as 78% of Americans feel that they experience spiritual needs and the presence of spirituality at the workplace is appreciated. Most of the researchers are of the opinion employees can experience and practice divinity in the universe by experiencing spirituality in workplaces (Neck & Milliman, 1994). They also observed that now-a-days peoples' spiritual orientation is not limited to their private life but also extends to their workspaces. Many scholars (e.g., Gotsis & Kortezi 2008; Hicks 2003) claim that WSP is an emerging field of study within a social movement on spirituality in workplaces (Ashmos & Duchon 2000; Miller 2007). Various studies have revealed different levels of employee outcomes of workplace spirituality. Workplace spirituality has been found to have significant effect on the affirmative commitment at the organizational, team and individual level (Dehler,1994; Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002). Fry (2003) found that practicing workplace spirituality benefits to both individuals and organizations. Organizations with a spiritual have reported higher productivity and lower absenteeism and turnover (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003). Mitroff and Denton (1999) state that organizations which are viewed as spiritual also achieve higher profits than competitors. Petchsawanga and Duchon (2012) found that spirituality relates to work performance and is partially mediated by meditation. Garg (2020) found that workplace spirituality is a necessary condition for existence of organizational performance and that employees show higher levels of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) when their spiritual needs are satisfied at the workplace.

The growth of interest in the field of workplace spirituality can be seen in the proliferation of spirituality-related books, conferences, centers, speakers, websites, awards, consultants, coaches and trainers in the corporate world. Several firms now regularly conduct coaching, yoga and exercise classes, sessions for stress relief and talk sessions for their employees. (e.g., Diddams, Whittington & Davigo 2005; Miller 2007; Ross et al. 2006; Williams 2003) have said that several classes of people like philosophers, religious figures and social scientists have been discussing, and writing about the relationship between spirituality, religion and work for over two millennia. WPS delivers many benefits for the organization like it helps to improve trust among people, increases interconnectedness among workgroups, and helps to create more motivation amongst employees which in turn leads to enhancement in organizational commitment and bonding (Marques,2005). He said that it eventually led the organization toward excellence. Thompson (2000) postulated that organizations should recognize and encourage the individual view of spirituality. According to Thompson

(2000), since every organization is essentially a collection of individuals with differing spiritual needs, hence these have to be fulfilled individually instead of collectively.

Factors such as job satisfaction, organizational citizenship and organizational commitment have been found to have significant relationships with organizational and individual performance. Several studies have been conducted to identify the constructs that comprise Workplace Spirituality and the relationship between them and their impact upon variables such as job satisfaction (Abbas, Idrees & Rehman, 2020; Tubay, 2019), organizational citizenship behavior, job performance (Sukoroto & Haryano, 2020) and organizational commitment (Dehaghi, Goodarzi & Arazi, 2012; Bodia & Ali,2012; Chawla & Guda, 2010; Hong, 2012; Markow & Klenke, 2005; Marschke, Preziosi & Harrington,2011). Their findings show that the employees experience higher affective commitment to their organization as well as a sense of obligation and loyalty if they experience spiritual values in the workplace. In addition, the studies reveal that organizational commitment and individual and organizational performance can be promoted by introducing and practicing spirituality in the workplace. This happens because people reciprocate though increased commitment towards an organization that satisfies their spiritual needs and values them as human beings. Organizational commitment has been found to have significant impact on job satisfaction, performance, and turnover intentions (Wazir &Jan, 2020). (Kriger & Hanson (1999) reported that an atmosphere of spirituality at work significantly increases employee commitment. Spirituality establishes atmosphere of trust in the workplace and helps to increase commitment (Burack, 1999).

From the literature review, four factors namely Meaningful Work, Inner life, Sense of Community and Organizational Values have been identified as the key factors defining WPS and are selected as the predictors of Organizational Commitment. Although a few previous studies have hinted at the connection between WPS and Organizational Commitment, there are very few empirical studies to confirm the association. This study attempts to plug this gap by analyzing the relationship with the help of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS SEM).

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is one of the key factors used to measure the feelings that an employee has for his organization and is characterized as the willingness of the employee to remain with the organization in the future. It is a magnetic effect that attracts the employee to the organization. Organizational commitment is a situation where the employee feels a bond with the organization and wishes to maintain his association and membership with the organization (Mowday *et al*., 1979). Newstrom and Davies (2002) define employee commitment as "the degree to which an employee identifies with the organization and wants to continue actively participating in it." Mullins (2005) viewed organizational commitment as "using time constructively, attention to detail, making thatextra effort, accepting change, co-operation with others, self-development, respecting trust, pride in abilities, seeking improvements and giving loyal support." Martins and Nicholls (1999) formulated a model of commitment consisting of three constructs namely a sense of belonging in the organization, a sense of excitement in the job and confidence in the leadership of the management. According to them, organizational commitment leads to a sense of pride, trust and accountability for results.

Allen and Meyer (1997) hypothesized three components of organizational commitment: continuance, normative and affective. Affective commitment refers to the employee's emotional attachment, identification and involvement in the organization. High level of affective commitment has been found to reduce turnover and truancy and increase performance and productivity. Normative commitment refers to the employee's sense of obligation to the organization, for giving him gainful employment and compensation while continuance commitment refers to the employee's commitment to continue with the organization because of the high costs associated with switching jobs.

Several studies have highlighted the effect of WPS on organizational commitment. Milliman *et al*.(2003) studied the impact of meaningful work, sense of community at work and alignment of personal values with organizational values on organizational commitment. They concluded that there is a significant and positive relationship between these dimensions of spirituality and organizational commitment. Dehaghi, Goodarzi and Arazi (2012) in their study found that an introduction of spirituality in the work environment led to an increase in the organizational performance as well as organizational commitment of employees. This is because employees reciprocate when they feel that the organization is satisfying their needs and valuing them as human beings.

Meaningful Work and Workplace Spirituality

"Deprived of meaningful work, men and women lose their reason for existence; they go stark, raving mad." - Fyodor Dostoevsky

As the spotlight grows on the environmental and social responsibilities of corporates, the time has come when we have to assess the quality of our work lives. Work which actually has meaning and contributes to the advancement of people and society are the primary motivator of most employees (Michealson,2009). Employees are now actively seeking meaning and a sense of purpose in their work lives in order to enrich their inner self (Frankl, 1962). An individual's self-worth and living experiences can be strengthened if they find meaning in their day-to-day work (Yeoman, 2014). Lips-Wiersma and Morris (2009) argue that meaningfulness is "the subjective experience of the existential significance or purpose of life". Truss and Madden (2013) and Koltko-Rivera (2006) feel that self-transcendence, rather than self-actualization, is actually the highest form of human achievement and propose that meaningfulness arises when people feel that there is an authentic connection between their work and a higher purpose in life that goes beyond the self. Pratt and Ashforth (2003) have identified three basic dimensions of meaningfulness: meaningfulness in and at work, and transcendence: Meaningfulness in work occurs when the individual feels "worthwhile, useful and valuable". A feeling that insignificant outcomes are expected leads to a feeling of meaninglessness(Kahn and Heaphy, 2014).

Meaningfulness at work tries to answer the question of 'where do I belong?' and is the measure of how much people view their work as strengthening their affiliation and connection with the workplace (Pratt and Ashforth, 2003). Meaningfulness at work fulfils the basic human desire of belonging to a group by focusing upon the employee's identity and self-worth as an organization member. (Cohen-Meitar et al, 2009). It leads to that feeling that "I am part of my organization".

Transcendence reflects the feeling that one is doing something for a greater good (Lips-Wiersma, 2002), It shows the relationship between individual identity and the aspirations to do something for the benefit of others (Rosso et al, 2010). Transcendence leads to a feeling that 'I make a difference'. Studies by several researchers (Chen et al, 2011; Hirschi, 2012; May et al, 2004) have shown that meaningfulness leads to higher levels of engagement, reduced absenteeism and better quality of work performance.

According to Kahn (1990), meaningfulness at work can be practiced by giving a greater degree of autonomy and challenging tasks to employees. The employee should also be the right fit for the job and social interactions with coworkers and customers should be appreciated. Pratt and Ashforth (2003) in their study found that strong visionary leadership that is able to build a positive and strong organizational culture facilitates the infusion of meaningfulness at work.

H1: *There is a significant and positive relationship between meaningful work and Organizational Commitment.*

Innerlife and Workplace Spirituality

This term comes from the Hebrew concept that we have two lives: inner lives and outer lives. Outer life is defined by success, money and material comforts, while inner life refers to satisfaction with the life one is leading and a feeling of spiritual bliss. A person with a rich inner life may have a simple job and a modest salary, but he is happy and has mental peace. He has a rich and satisfying family and social life, strong relationships and never loses his integrity. For such a man, relationships are more important than money because he realizes that material success is fleeting. This is a concept taught by all religions and it emphasizes on love, compassion, dedication and care.Thus, having a rich inner life means being in touch with one's true self and the landscape of one's hopes and aspirations, thoughts, emotions, instincts, and intuition. It encourages imagination and reflection which feeds and stimulates the creative spirit and a sense of inner well-being. The concept of inner life has been studied by several scholars and it has been identified a one of the key aspects of workplace spirituality. Inner satisfaction and a feeling of wellbeing goes a long way in improving productivity ,performance and morale and thus affects organizational commitment in those organizations who focus on improving these factors amongst employees. According to Gupta, Kumar and Singh (2014), inner life has been identified as a dimension of spirituality affecting the inner consciousness where people show a spirit of interconnectedness, tranquility and agreement. Inner life can be described as

the way people identify themselves and their work and the commitments that they make in life (Vaill, 1998). According to Ashmos and Duchon (2000), when a worker has a chance to his inner life at work, it sends positive signals to the work group and the organization as a whole, resulting in an atmosphere of positivity. According to Moberg (2002) inner life or spiritual wellbeing is a sense of going beyond or transcending one's life circumstances, and includes other dimensions such as the purpose and meaning of life and sense of connectedness with oneself. Shamir (1991) put forward the self – idea theory which postulates that when there is harmoniousness between work and inner life, an employee will see the work as an inspiration and a medium to realize his inner goals, which in turn will lead to high levels of bonding with and commitment to the organization.

H2: *Inner life has a significant and positive influence on Organizational Commitment*.

Alignment with Organizational Values and Workplace Spirituality
Organizational values (OV) are the core principles or ethics of an organization which is an ingrained part of the organization's culture and ethos. Companies imbibe these values in the workplace and among employees and always abide by them, no matter what the situation is. Well drafted values guide staff behavior as well as strategic and operational decisions. They reduce the risk of unethical and inappropriate behavior ad set the organization apart from its competitors. Over a period of time, they help to improve the ethical character of the organization, as expressed by its culture and operations. According to Bourne and Jenkins (2013), term 'organizational values' typically refers to the small number of values that together make up a value system. Value systems are developed by individuals and organizations which typify values and place more significance on some values over others, through education and experience. These value systems are stable and endure over time. They may change over time as individuals and groups adapt and learn new things over time, but such changes are limited and incremental in nature. The core values of the organization are deemed to be permanent, and they represent what the organization stands for. Alignment with organizational values means that employees desire to work in an organization which aspires to have a high level of integrity and ethics and make a significant contribution to society at large (Ashmos and Duchon,2000).

Bourne and Jenkins (2013) identified four components of organizational values namely shared values, espoused values, aspirational values and attributed values. According to Maierhofer (2013), values are presumed to be embedded in the organization when they are shared in such a way that members are able to anticipate the behavior of other members in different situational contexts. They are a part of the structures and systems of the organization. Values drive behavior in the organization and rapid change can be brought about only when there is an alignment between the values of the employees and the organization.Employees identify with the values that their organization stands for and these values induce a feeling of commitment towards the organization if the individual shares the values of the organization. Employees are happier, more committed and more inspired to do their job when their personal values align with those of the company. There is an inner motivator that fuels their drive to complete the task at hand because they realize that their contribution has a positive impact on the company's success, and this acts as an inner motivator. Milliman and Ferguson (2003) found that alignment of personal with organizational values is a key construct in WPS and makes employees aligned to the organization's goals and identify with its mission and values.

The above review of literature leads to the following hypothesis:

H3: *Alignment of personal values with organizational values has a significant and positive influence on Organizational Commitment.*

Sense of Community and Workplace Spirituality
McMillan and Chavis (1986) have defined sense of community (SOC) as "the feeling that members have of belonging, the feeling that the members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that their needs will be met through their commitment to be together". They identified four criteria to define sense of community namely, membership, influence, reinforcement (integration and fulfilment of the needs of members of the community) and shared emotional connection, that is the belief that community members have a shared sense of common places, history, time spent together, and other such similar experiences. According to them, a sense of community is evident when members of a group have similar and shared experiences, needs and feelings. A sense of community is essential to forge a bonding among members of a

community. In an organizational context, sense of community leads to team spirit, increased cooperation, mutual help and understanding and a common hunger to achieve the organizational goals and objectives. It is an essential element in building teamwork. Sense of community enhances a feeling of emotional safety, a sense of belonging and identification and leads to personal investment in the group, team or community. According to Peterson, Speer and McMillan (2008), sense of community refers to the "phenomenon of collective human experience" and has been used to study neighborhoods, community organizations and workplaces. This study found that a sense of community was strongly correlated with, psychological empowerment, depression, mental health and community participation. "A true sense of connectedness and belonging occurs when individuals see themselves as an integral part of a community and its work" (Duchon and Plowman 2005). According to Garg (2017), sense of community refers to "interconnectedness and interdependence among employees and a sense of place and belonging in society" and can be developed through shared vision, common values, empowerment, sharing of responsibility, growth and friendship. Employees value those organizations where they have a sense of community feeling.
The study of literature enables to formulate the following hypothesis:

H4: *Sense of Community has a significant and positive influence on Organizational Commitment.*

IV.   METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS

Methodology

The present study aims to determine the impact of four dimensions of WPS namely Meaningful Work, Inner life, Sense of Community and Organizational Values on Organizational Commitment of employees. To analyze the reliability and validity of constructs and understand the impact of the predictor variables on the dependent variable, Partial Least Square Modelling (PLS SEM) with SmartPLS3 software has been used. PLS has been used because of various reasons: the sample size is small (117 respondents) and the study is predictive in nature. All the factors are reflective in nature.

Sample Design and Data Collection

The present study is quantitative in nature and uses cross sectional descriptive survey design to measure the proposed hypotheses. Stratified simple random sampling method has been used to collect data from respondents. The respondents are employees working in various sectors including banks, educational institutions and manufacturing companies in the Sultanate of Oman. They include employees at different levels of management from top level to supervisors. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire comprising of 20 items representing the independent and dependent variables. In the first step, pilot test on 10 respondents was conducted and the results were used to refine the questions and scales for the final study. The questionnaire was also translated to Arabic as several respondents were not proficient in the English language. The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale to measure the responses (ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). 150 questionnaires were sent electronically out of which 117 responses were received, translating to a response rate of 78 percent which is considered as good.

Table 1 shows the demographic shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents. 71 percent of the respondents were male, and 34 percent were female. Most of the respondents (42 percent) were in the age group of 36-45 years, followed by 38 percent in the age group 46-55 years and 27 percent in the age group of 26-35 years.52 percent of the respondents were graduates and 34 percent were postgraduates while 16 respondents (14 percent) were PhD holders.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variables	Number	Percent
Age (in years)		
26-35	27	23.00
36-45	42	36.00
46-55	38	32.00
56 and above	10	09.00

Gender		
Male	83	71.00
Female	34	29.00
Education		
Graduate	61	52.00
Masters	40	34.00
PhD	16	14.00

Measures

The measures used in the research have been adapted from various studies previously conducted on the dimensions of workplace spirituality. These scales have been tested and validated in different cultural contexts. Meaningful work, inner life and alignment with organizational values are measured by four items each adapted from the workplace spirituality dimension scale developed by Ashmos and Duchon (2000). Measure of sense of community has been done with four items adapted from the scale developed by Milliman *et al.* (2003). Organizational commitment was measured by four items adapted from the three dimensional organizational commitment scale of Allen and Meyer (1991). All the measures revealed a high level of reliability with Cronbach alpha above 0.7.

V.   ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The analysis of the collected and collated data was done with PLS SEM 3 software to determine the relationship between meaningful work, inner life, sense of community, and alignment of personal and organizational values as predictor variables and organizational commitment as the dependent variable. PLS SEM is a variance based method of structural equation modelling which allows for estimating complex cause-effect relationships with several latent variables. Unlike other approaches to structural equation modelling, the PLS SEM fits a composite model rather than a common factor model and thus is able to maximize the amount of variance explained and it is a well-accepted method (Hair, Sarstedt & RIngle, 2019). PLS SEM is a model endorser which involves two stages of analysis : assessment of the measurement model and assessment of the structural model.

Assessment of Measurement Model

The assessment of the measurement model is done by analyzing the reflective factor loadings, internal consistency or reliability and convergent validity of the items measuring the latent constructs. According to Hulland (1999), the factor loading>0.5 shows that an item is a good measurement of the latent construct. Most of the factor loadings in the model are greater than 0.5 except MW1 (0.459), MW2 (-0.08) and OV2(0.375), indicating that the items measure their latent constructs well. Reliability or internal consistency of the items is measured using Cronbach Alpha which evaluates the extent to which all the variables in the scale are positively related to each other and α>0.7 shows adequate scale reliability (Nunally,1978). As can be seen in Table 2, all the constructs have α>0.7 which indicates that there is adequate internal consistency in the items. Composite Reliability (CR) is another measure of internal consistency of scale items and should be greater than 0.7 (Hair ,2010). Convergent validity of the items is measured using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) which is defined as the variance captured by a construct as compared to the variance due to measurement error and should be greater than 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As seen in the Table 2, each variable has value of CR> 0.7 and AVE>0.5 thus showing that there is internal consistency and convergent validity in the measurement model (Hinton, 2014; Bagozzi & Yi, 1988).

Table 2: Measurement Model

Variable Name	Items	Factor Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	CR	AVE
MeaningfulWork	MW1	0.459			
	MW2	-0.08			

	MW3	0.525			
	MW4	0.797	0.852	0.823	0.513
Inner life	IL1	0.622			
	IL2	0.697			
	IL3	0.714			
	IL4	0.476	0.732	0.725	0.545
Sense ofCommunity	SOC1	0.666			
	SOC2	0.807			
	SOC3	0.584			
	SOC4	0.504	0.773	0.74	0.522
OrganizationalValues	OV1	0.711			
	OV2	0.375			
	OV3	0.708			
	OV4	0.403	0.831	0.75	0.632
OrganizationCommitment	OC1	0.708			
	OC2	0.857			
	OC3	0.841			
	OC4	0.649	0.765	0.851	0.591

Discriminant validity measures whether the believed unrelated constructs are, in fact unrelated to each other. Discriminant validity of the measurement model in PLS can be measured in three ways: by checking the cross loadings of the items, by using the Fornell Larcker Criterion or by the Hetreotrait Monotrait (HTMT) criterion. The assessment discriminant validity by the cross loadings of the indicators specifies that an indicator's outer loading on the associated construct should be greater than all of its loadings on other constructs on each item row. The presence of cross loadings that exceed the indicators' outer loadings represents a discriminant validity problem (Hair *et al.,* 2010). This condition is satisfied for the outer loadings of each indicator as seen in Table 3. This indicates that the constructs have good discriminant validity.

<p align="center">Table 3 - Indicator Item Cross Loading</p>

Items	Meaningful Work	Inner life	Sense of Community	Organizational Values	Organization Commitment
MW1	**0.459**	0.063	0.063	0.198	0.201
MW2	**-0.08**	-0.097	-0.094	-0.103	-0.043
MW3	**0.525**	0.009	0.081	0.133	0.233
MW4	**0.797**	0.214	0.354	0.218	0.377
IL1	0.141	**0.622**	0.248	0.288	0.263
IL2	0.141	**0.697**	0.213	0.361	0.311
IL3	0.136	**0.714**	0.189	0.298	0.327
IL4	0.053	**0.476**	0.324	0.22	0.201
SOC1	0.213	0.284	**0.666**	0.467	0.295
SOC2	0.292	0.287	**0.807**	0.251	0.364
SOC3	0.157	0.194	**0.584**	0.205	0.273
SOC4	0.161	0.138	**0.504**	0.31	0.091

OV1	0.208	0.424	0.374	**0.711**	0.324
OV2	0.054	0.06	0.15	**0.375**	0.042
OV3	0.26	0.221	0.291	**0.708**	0.314
OV4	0.018	0.28	0.092	**0.403**	0.088
OC1	0.489	0.218	0.446	0.31	**0.708**
OC2	0.382	0.453	0.301	0.33	**0.857**
OC3	0.247	0.379	0.322	0.35	**0.841**
OC4	0.252	0.302	0.242	0.311	**0.649**

Another method of measuring the discriminant validity among constructs in PLS SEM is known as the Fornell Larcker criterion. According to this criterion the values of the square root of AVE should be greater than 0.5 which indicates a good level of discriminant validity of the model's constructs. As can be seen in Table 3 in the bold fonts, the square root of the AVE of each variable is greater than the acceptable value of 0.5 hence showing that there is sufficient discriminant validity among the variables.

TABLE 4: Discriminant Validity (Fornell and Larcker Criterion)

	IL	**MW**	**OC**	**OV**	**SOC**
IL	**0.635**				
MW	0.192	**0.531**			
OC	0.441	0.46	**0.769**		
OV	0.464	0.303	0.423	**0.572**	
SOC	0.364	0.326	0.435	0.45	**0.65**

Yet another new method of measuring the validity and multicollinearity of the variables is the Heterotrait – Monotrait (HTMT) ratio, which is defined as the ratio of trait correlations to within correlations. Gold, Malhotra, and Segars (2001) and Teo, Srivastava and Jiang (2008) have postulated that the HTMT ratio should not be greater than 0.9, else there is a lack of discriminant validity. Table 5 shows that the HTMT ratio of all the variables are less than 0.9 thus confirming that there is good discriminant validity among the variables of the study.

Table 5: Discriminant Validity (HTMT)

	IL	**MW**	**OC**	**OV**	**SOC**
IL					
MW	0.72				
OC	0.703	0.862			
OV	0.878	0.832	0.560		
SOC	0.741	0.811	0.588	0.804	

Assessment of Structural Model
The next step in the analysis is the assessment of the structural model. This includes calculating the indices of goodness of fit, the standardized coefficients, t – tests and p values. The analysis of the paths to test the hypothesized relationships is also a part of the structural model assessment.

In partial least square structural equation modelling, the goodness of fit of the indices are measured primarily by SRMR, chi squares and NFI.SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual) is defined as "the difference between the observed correlation and the model implied correlation matrix. Thus, it allows assessing the

average magnitude of the discrepancies between observed and expected correlations as an absolute measure of (model) fit criterion". According to Henseler *et al.* (2014), an SRMR value of less than 0.1 indicates that the data fits the model well. The SRMR value for the research model is .112 which indicates that the data fits the model reasonably well and is acceptable, although not perfectly so (Table 6). The chi square value is 351.77. NFI (Normed Fit Index) is another indicator of goodness of fit and measures the chi square value against a standard benchmark. The value of NFI >0.9 is considered satisfactory (Myers, 2013). The NFI for the observed model is 0.912 which also indicates that the data fits the model satisfactorily.

Table 6: Fit Indices of Observed Model

Fit summary	Calculated
SRMR	0.112
d_uls	2.62
d_G	0.664
CHI- SQUARE	351.77
NFI	0.912

Table 7 shows the structural model hypothesis testing for direct effects, also known as path analysis. The table includes the standardized beta coefficients (β), standard deviations, t- values, p values, the decision, f^2 (effect size) and Q^2 (predictive relevance). Coefficient of determination (R^2) is also calculated to determine the proportion of variance of a dependent variable that is explained by and independent variable or variables. Decisions are taken at 5% level of significance (p 0.05). The t-values should be greater than 1.96 (t> 1.96) in order to be significant. Bootstrapping of the model has been done to calculate the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2) and predictive relevance (Q^2). The effect size (f^2) is a measure that shows the relative effect of a particular exogenous latent variable on endogenous latent variable by means of changes in the R-squared (Chin, 1998). According to Cohen (1998), an f^2 value above 0.35 is considered as a large effect size while values between 0.15 to 0.25 are medium effect size. The predictive relevance (Q^2) is obtained by blindfolding procedure and evaluates the predictive validity of the model. This technique omits data for a given block of indicators and then predicts the omitted part based on the calculated parameters. According to Hair *et al* (2014) and Fornell and Cha (1994), a Q^2 value of more than 0.35 indicates high predictive relevance while values between 0.15 and 0.35 show medium predictive relevance of the model.

Hypothesis 1 was constructed to measure the positive and significant effect of Meaningful Work on Organizational Commitment. The results show that the beta coefficient (β) is 0.313, t-value is 3.645 and p-value is 0.00 <0.05. Hence this hypothesis is accepted as it satisfies the recommended parameters. f^2 value of this hypothesis is 0.138 which indicates a medium effect size and Q^2 is 0.152. Hence this hypothesis was supported on the basis of the significance level.

Hypothesis 2 was proposed to measure the positive and significant effect of Inner life on Organizational Commitment. The results are significant with beta coefficient (β) value 0.256 , t-value 2.347 and p value is 0.019 <0.05. Hence this hypothesis is accepted as it satisfies the recommended parameters. f^2 value of this hypothesis is 0.083 which indicates a small effect size and Q^2 is 0.136 indicating medium predictive relevance. Hence this hypothesis was supported on the basis of the significance level.

Hypothesis 3 was proposed to measure the positive and significant effect of Organizational Values alignment with personal values on Organizational Commitment. The results show that beta coefficient (β) value is 0.127, t-value is 1.149 (<1.96) and p value is 0.0251. Hence this hypothesis was rejected as the p value is greater than 0.05. The f^2 value of this hypothesis is 0.018 which indicates a small effect size and Q^2 is 0.02 indicating insignificant predictive relevance.

Hypothesis 4 was constructed to measure the positive and significant effect of Sense of Community on Organizational Commitment. The results are significant with beta coefficient (β) value 0.183, t-value 2.008 and p value of 0.045 <0.05. Hence this hypothesis is accepted as it satisfies the recommended parameters.

The f^2 value of this hypothesis is 0.040 which indicates a small effect size and Q^2 is 0.092 indicating little predictive relevance. This hypothesis was supported on the basis of the significance level.

Table 7 - Structural Model Hypothesis Testing (Path Analysis)

Hypothesis	Relationship	Std Beta	Std Dev	t-values	P -values	Decision	f^2	Q^2
H1	MW→OC	0.313	0.086	3.645*	0.00**	Supported	0.138	0.152
H2	IL → OC	0.256	0.109	2.347*	0.019**	Supported	0.083	0.136
H3	OV→OC	0.127	0.111	1.149	0.251	Not Supported	0.018	0.02
H4	SOC→OC	0.183	0.091	2.008*	0.045**	Supported	0.040	0.092

Note: * indicates significant t-values (>1.96) and supports hypothesis
** indicates p<0.05.

R-squared (R^2) also known as coefficient of determination is a statistical measure that checks how close the data are to the fitted regression line. It is the ratio of the explained variation to the total variation. The value of the coefficient of determination (R^2) of the model is 0.390 which means that 39% of the variation in Organizational Commitment can be explained by the four constructs namely Meaningful Work, Inner life, Organizational Values and Sense of Community. The R^2 value shows that the data explains the model quite well.

Figure 1 shows the structural model of the study. As discussed above all the paths except the one between Organizational Values and Organizational Commitment were found to be significant with t – values > 1.96 and p values <0.05. The path having the maximum beta coefficient was found between Meaningful Work and Organizational Commitment (0.313) showing that Meaningful Work has the maximum impact on Organizational Commitment among all the predictor variables. This is followed by the path between Inner life and OC with a beta coefficient of 0.256. The third path between Sense of Community and OC has a beta coefficient of 0.183. All these hypotheses also have a p value < 0.05 and hence are accepted at the 5% level of significance. The path between Organizational Values and Organizational Commitment has a β of 0.127 and a t-value of 1.149 which is less than the recommended value of 1.96. The p value is 0.251 which is >0.05 and hence this hypothesis is rejected.
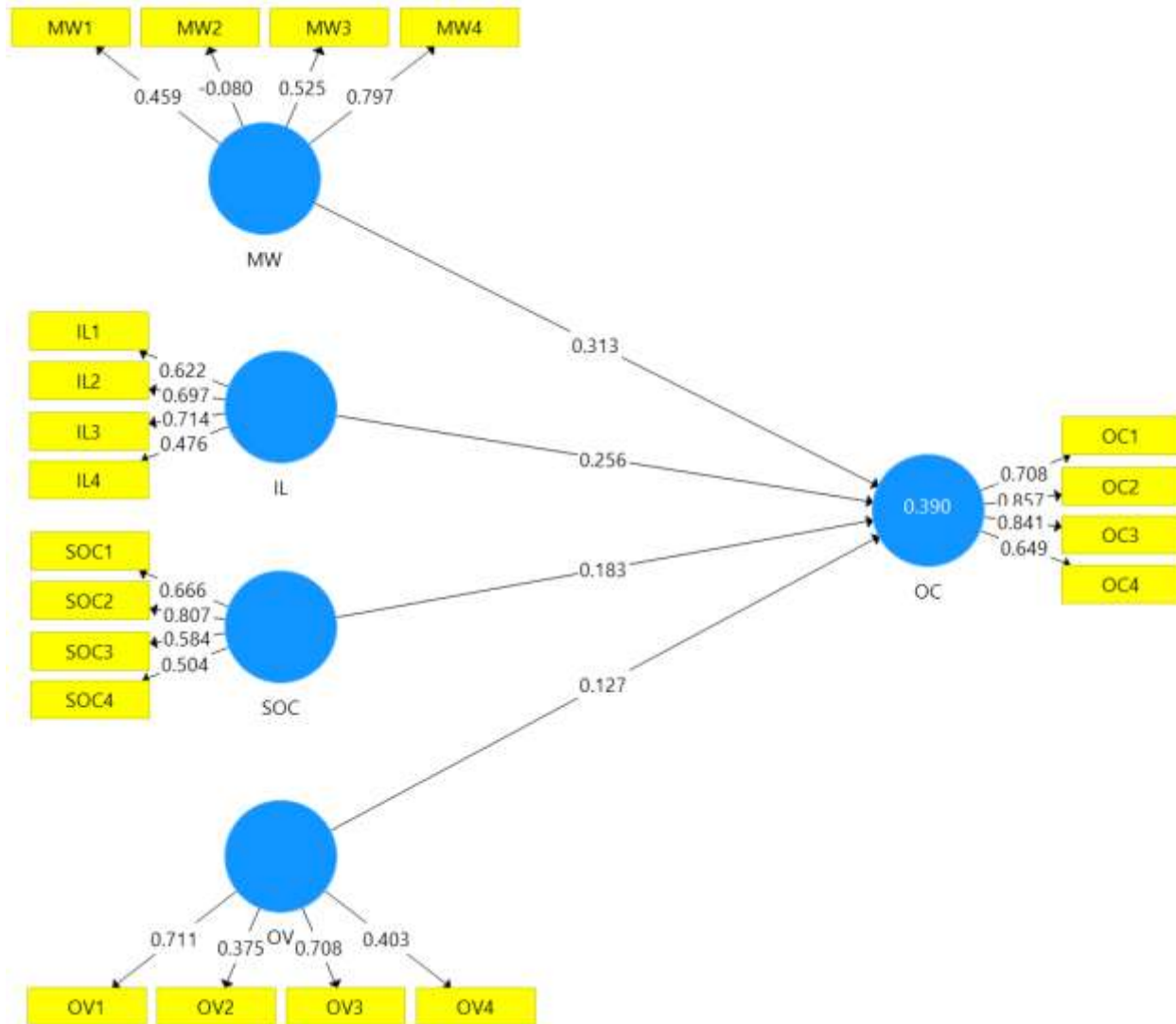
Figure 1. Structural Model

VI. DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of the study was to find the impact of four factors namely, Meaningful Work, Inner life, alignment of personal values with organizational values and Sense of Community on Workplace Spirituality in an emerging economy like Oman. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study of its kind in Oman and one of a very few in the Arab gulf region. For this purpose, primary data was collected from 117 respondents who are working at various managerial levels in different sectors including banks, educational institutions and manufacturing companies in Oman. The results were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS SEM) 3.2.7 software package which allows estimating complex cause – effect relationship models with multiple latent variables. PLS SEM also can calculate the predictive validity of a large complex model even with small sample sizes.

Previous literature has shown that Workplace Spirituality has a positive effect on Organizational Commitment and that workplace spirituality can help employees be less stressful, become better team members and contribute positively to the organization. The results showed that Meaningful work has the most significant and positive relationship with Organizational Commitment (β= 0.313, t-value=3.645 and p=0.00), followed by Inner life (β= 0.256, t-value= 2.347 and p=0.019) and Sense of Community (β= 0.183, t-

value= 2.008 and p=0.045). These findings are in line with and supports the work of Milliman (2003), who found that Meaningful Work, Inner life and a Sense of Community were important components of Workplace Spirituality and have a very clear and positive relationship with Organizational Commitment as well as with work satisfaction, job involvement and intention to quit. Organizational Values (β= 0.127, t-value= 1.149 and p=0.251) did not have a significant relationship with Organizational Commitment. This may be the result of a mismatch in the alignment of personal values with those of the organization and may be due to perceived lack of organizational justice and fair play.

This research also supports the findings of Houghton, Neck and Krishnakumar (2016) who identified Meaningful Work, Inner life, Sense of Community and Organizational Values as common dimensions of Workplace Spirituality and demonstrated that spirituality has a significant impact on commitment, intuition, creativity and honesty. Dehaghi et al. (2012) in their study on the models of organizational commitment and employees' spiritual values also found that a spiritual work environment led to greater feelings of bonding, emotional attachment and job satisfaction among employees, which is in line with the findings of this study. They also identified three types of commitment namely, affective, normative and continuance commitment. These studies were conducted primarily in western countries. A study of Nigerian banking sector employees by Nwibere and Emecheta (2012) also found positive and significant relationships between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment. Thus, by contributing empirical knowledge and evidence this study has supported the findings of several scholars such Milliman (2003), Houghton *et al.* (2016) and Sintaasih *et al.* (2018) and demonstrated the impact of the dimensions of workplace spirituality on organizational commitment in an Omani context, thus filling a gap in the existing literature on the topic in the Arab world.

VII.   CONCLUSION AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This research has contributed by identifying the major dimensions of workplace spirituality and establishing their relationship with and impact on organizational commitment. The study has shown that there is a positive and significant relationship of workplace spirituality on organizational commitment. This is one of very few studies conducted on spirituality in the workplace in the Arab world and has succeeded in filling a significant gap in the existing literature by providing empirical research evidence. Employees at all levels of organizations in various sectors including service sector organizations like banks and higher educational institutions as well as manufacturing companies in Oman were surveyed with a structured questionnaire.117 respondents were surveyed in all. Four dimensions of workplace spirituality namely Meaningful Work, Inner life, Organizational Values and Sense of Community were identified from the exiting literature. The results of the research showed that all the factors of WPS except alignment of personal with organizational values were found to have a significant positive relationship on organizational commitment.

Several researchers have found that workers and employees in various kinds of organizations are stressed, demotivated and have little attachment or bonding with their colleagues or with the organization itself. This situation has been exacerbated during the COVID 19 pandemic. This can be attributed to high pressure work schedules, intense competition at the workplace, personal ambitions, a sense of not being recognized at work and various other factors. The COVID 19 pandemic has led to intense pressure on companies, especially SMEs resulting in many businesses being shut down and employees being led off. Increments and promotions in most companies have been kept on hold and salary cuts have become the norm. This has led to even greater feelings of stress among employees with job insecurity being a serious issue of concern.

In terms of implications for policy and practice for managements in such a scenario, introducing and practicing spirituality at the workplace can have a very positive influence on the mental wellbeing of employees, thereby positively impacting organizational commitment and in turn, improving job involvement, job satisfaction, a feeling of bonding and community and reducing turnover intentions(Izak,2012; Hong,2012 & Sukoroto, 2020).Values of the company have to be emphasized and highlighted at all interactions, in order to ensure that that employees can identify with and align their personal values with those of the organization. Fares and Noordin (2016) have noted the impact of values, specifically religious values on organizational commitment and behavior. Values include factors such as honesty, integrity, ethics and justice. Several organizations have taken the lead by conducting sessions with spiritual mentors, yoga, exercise and

meditation sessions. These practices enable employees to freely express their thoughts, beliefs and feelings and provides an outlet to discuss their fears and insecurities. Thus, a feeling of togetherness and bonding is perpetuated. Paul and Saha (2015) have espoused the implementation of Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) to help employees dealing with work related or family related problems as well as emotional issues. Professional counselors are hired to provide free short – term counseling to employees dealing with emotional and other personal or professional issues. They also suggest tools like mini meditation breaks during the day, listening to spiritual music in the background and encouraging leaders to apply spiritual values like trust, humility, faith and courage in teams. In Oman, the benefits of these practices have been recognized by senior management of many institutions and corporates and consequently there has been a conscious effort to imbibe spirituality in the organizational culture and environment. The workforce is very diverse with individuals from dozens of nationalities working in the public and private sector. Cultural differences and varying notions of faith and spirituality make the task of infusing spirituality in the workplace a challenging task. Managers and leaders in such diverse workplaces have to create an environment of inclusion and diversity and training employees to recognize their value and self-worth. Employees are being encouraged to express their creative ideas freely and the mission, vision and values of the organization have to be expressed clearly to all the employees (Indradevi, 2020). This is very much similar to the "spiritual freedom" model proposed by Houghton, Neck and Krishnakumar (2016) to perpetuate a culture of spirituality in organizations. Such steps will significantly help in developing a culture of workplace spirituality at the workplace and positively contribute to organizational commitment and better performance.

Workplace Spirituality is now in the second stage of construct evolution, that is the stage of concept evolution and argumentation as per the three- stage model of evolution of constructs (Reichers and Schneider, 1990) and there has been a lot of speculation about the development and future research in this field. As this is an evolving concept, there is a lot of scope for further research on workplace spirituality. For example, Krishnakumar and Neck (2002) proposed that several benefits of workplace spirituality such as honesty, creativity and trust have not been adequately explored by empirical research. In addition, although the potential benefits of workplace spirituality on several outcomes such as job satisfaction, involvement and organizational commitment have been established, several mediators and moderators remain to be examined. The mediating and moderating effect of workplace spirituality between various constructs such as leadership styles and other significant organizational outcomes can be further investigated in different contexts. Through such research agendas, the concept of workplace spirituality will evolve and expand leading to spiritual freedom and practiced spirituality at workplaces, finally leading to personal growth and better overall organizational performance.

VIII.   REFERENCES:

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