Spirituality: A New Focus for Wellbeing at Work Place

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Abstract: *The workplace environment keeps on changing, indicating its dynamic nature as well as unpredictability. The workforce is now more diverse, not only in terms of age but also of nationality. Globalization has made the world boundary less and people are now mobile. Organizations require its employees to be more committed as well as to have a better cohesive working inter-relationship. Spiritual people have a strong sense of self and purpose and a deep understanding of their situations. One's sense of self is influenced greatly by held fundamental beliefs and are continually fostered and renewed through an ongoing spiritual journey. Spiritual intelligence is the set of abilities that individuals use to apply, manifest and embody spiritual resources, values and qualities in ways that enhance their daily functioning and well-being. With both these intelligences happening in the workplace, the environment will be more conducive. A better working environment relates to a higher level of productivity. The present study intended to study the level of spiritual wellbeing of the school principals and their effectiveness as leaders.*

Keywords: Spiritual Well-being, Workplace, Principals

1. Introduction

The nature of work is constantly changing (Biberman and Whitty 1997). This is evident in the kinds of jobs that employees used to be engaged for. Traditional concept of lifetime employment has also changed. Employees of the futureneed to demonstrate to the organizations that they can add value to the organization.(Harari 1993).

Work life reaches and touches into the very soul and spirit of all employees at work. Those at work are constantly seeking ways to improve themselves and a sense of contribution to their work life.
Spiritual Intelligence

National Interfaith Coalition on Aging (1975) defined Spiritual Wellbeing as the affirmation of life in a relationship with God, self, community and environment that nurtures and celebrates wholeness.

Emmons (2000) have defined spiritual intelligence as "the adaptive use of spiritual information to facilitate everyday problem solving and goal attainment". He had suggested five components of spiritual intelligence:
1) The capacity to transcend the physical and material.
2) The ability to experience heightened states of consciousness.
3) The ability to sanctify everyday experience.
4) The ability to utilize spiritual resources to solve problems.
5) The capacity to be virtuous.

Noble (2000; 2001) has identified spiritual intelligence as an innate human potential and agreed with Emmons' (2000) core abilities and added two other elements.

According to Amram (2007), spiritual intelligence is the set of abilities that individuals use to apply, manifest and embody spiritual resources, values and qualities in ways that enhances their daily functioning and well-being.

2. Spirituality in Work Place

Although not easily defined, the spirituality in the workplace movement is about acknowledging that people come to work with more than their bodies and minds; they bring individual talents and unique spirits. (Leigh 1997).

According to Roches, (2007), "Spirituality at workplace means that work would move from merely being a place to get enough money to survive, from just earning our daily bread, to being a place of "livelihood." i.e. a place where we both survive and are fully alive. We are alive in that our Spirit fully expresses itself and that expression contributes to others allowing their spirits to be nourished and to flourish."

The present study used Spiritual Well-Being scale by Ellison (1983) which attempted to measure the quality of life or subjective well-being with its two dimensions: Religious Well-Being and Existential Well-Being. Religious Well-being has a reference to God whereas Existential Well-Being refers to a sense of meaning, coherence, and the sense that life has a larger purpose.

According to Koeing (2002), spirituality came into focus in times of stress, suffering, physical and mental illness, loss, dying and bereavement. It is important not only in psychiatry but also throughout all of medicine. Spirituality has been called a quality that strives for inspiration, reverence, awe, meaning and purpose, even in those who do not believe in God.

Idler (2008) found that religious and spiritual practices correlated negatively to some known health risk factors. However, lifestyle factors were not the only mechanism that illustrated the relationship between spirituality and health and well-being. Another very important aspect of religious

faith, is that religious congregations became social circles that provided support and reduced stress in people's lives, provides periods of rest and respite from work and the demands of daily life. These served to reduce stress, a fundamental cause of chronic diseases that is still the primary causes of mortality today. Transcendent spiritual and religious experiences were found to have a positive, healing, restorative effect.

The present study aimed to study Spiritual Well-being among school principals.

Relatively, in order to enhance and nurture successful transformation and excellence in schools, the school administrators are encouraged to work with teachers, empower them, get them involved as wholeness, connectedness toward work, and instilled deeper values , and initiative the team spirit which benefits the school as a whole.

Hence, it is believed that the spirituality entity, would enhance the organizational learning, unify and build communities, serve the needs to connect with others at work, and to the work itself, and as the source of a healing and harmonizing expression, wisdom, and connectedness that transcends all egocentric, socio-centric, or anthropocentric forms.

3. Sample

The subjects comprised of 50 school principals selected randomly from the tri city. Principals who had minimum five years of experience were selected.

General information schedule was also administered to gather information about the demographic variables viz age, sex, educational qualifications, marital status, number of children, hobbies, belief in God, concept of forgiveness, stressors and ways to deal with them etc.

Spiritual Well- being Scale (Ellison, 1983)

Spiritual Well-being was assessed using the Spiritual Well-being scale (Ellison, 1983). This test has 20 items which are to be responded on 6 point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. 10 of the items measure Religious Well- being while the remaining 10 measure Existential Well-being. Existential Well-being includes the individual's sense of purpose in life and life satisfaction, which is a horizontal concept (Ellison 1983); Existential Well-being is connected to a sense of vocation and purpose, which has been considered essential to job satisfaction (Trott, 1996).

The Religious Well-being includes the individual's belief in God or a Spiritual being, which is a vertical concept. High correlations have been found between Religious Well-being and Existential Well-being. Croanbach's alpha for both subscales were reported to be adequate (Spiritual Well-being =.90, Religious Well-being =.93 and Existential Well-being =.92).

4. Results

Means and Standard Deviations for the three groups: males, females and the Total Sample of principals were calculated. t-ratios were calculated to find out the significance of differences comparing male and female principals.

Male principals scored higher than female principals on the Existential Well-being (t=1.99 p<.05).

Religious Well-being 47.44 8.27 47.57 8.83 .11
Existential Well-being 47.70 7.46 45.66 8.63 1.99
Spiritual Well-being 95.14 14.92 93.12 16.68 1.00

5. Conclusion

According to Fairholm (1996), work has become the main feature of many people. It has also become the main issue in the society. On the average, an individual who is working in the office works about 10 hours. The workplace has become a place where individuals or the employees find their sense of full meaning. As per Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the topmost level is the self-actualization needs. Employees achieve that level after they have gone through the lower level needs. The spirit at work becomes the guiding principles of wholeness, relationships, inner wisdom and inner authority.

Employees become happier, are more committed to work, and develop a stronger sense of calling, when around spiritual leadership characterized by promotion of self-determination and personal development, appreciation shown and confidence in employees. (Rego,et al,2007)

In addition to this, the results from this research also revealed that, workplace spirituality correlates positively with teachers' satisfaction and commitment, departmental effectiveness, and also with effective leadership practices. In other words, if a school administrators were to have greater ability to lifts a spiritual "fit" in others, to understand the causes and allows the expression of employee's work-place spirituality, then the teachers' would feel more satisfied and committed.

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