

Workplace Spirituality and Turnover Intention in the Healthcare Sector of Istanbul

Muhammad Muzammil Ghayas¹, Dr. Sana Arz Bhutto²

¹Lecturer, Iqra University, muzzammilghayas87@gmail.com

²Assistant Professor, Iqra University, sana.arz@iqra.edu.pk

ARTICLE DETAILS

History

Received: February 2020

Available online: May 2020

Keywords

Workplace Spirituality

Turnover Intention

Compassion

ABSTRACT

Purpose:

The research aims to explore the relationship between the dimensions of workplace spirituality and turnover intention in the healthcare sector of Istanbul.

Methodology:

A twenty-three item instrument was developed for the purpose of data collection. Respondents were asked to rate their responses on a likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, where, 1 is strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree. A total of 350 instruments were distributed among the employees of the healthcare sector of Istanbul. From these 350 instruments, 323 returned the filled questionnaires. These instruments were used as the final sample. Multiple regression Analysis was used as the statistical technique.

Findings:

Results indicated that dimensions of workplace spirituality have significant negative association with turnover intention in the healthcare sector of Istanbul.

Conclusion:

Since, all the dimensions of workplace spirituality namely meaningful work, spiritual association, compassion and alignment of values are found to be negatively associated with turnover intention, therefore, it is concluded that workplace spirituality is negatively associated with turnover intention. Therefore, managers in the healthcare sector must focus of making sure to satisfy the spiritual needs of the employees to make sure that they are not leaving the organization soon.

1. Introduction

Istanbul is one of the largest and most populous cities of world and almost 20% of the entire Turkish population live in this city. The city had remained the capital of Roman and Ottoman Empires and has remained the center of excellence for over a millennium. Therefore, the city has been able to gain significant attention of people from all walks of life. The city houses numerous organizations including a large number of healthcare centers. One can safely suggest that no other Turkish city houses more healthcare centers than that of Istanbul. The greater number of healthcare centers in the city provides the people working in these healthcare centers with a number of alternative employment opportunities. This allows the people working in the healthcare sector of Istanbul to switch the jobs much more easily in comparison to the employees of healthcare sector of any other Turkish city. Hence, turnover intention among the employees is a major concern for the managers of the healthcare centers in Istanbul.

Hence, the managers in the healthcare sector of Istanbul are in desperate need to find the ways of reducing turnover intentions among the employees. In this regard, number of researchers have studied turnover intentions. Abbas and Iqbal (2020) suggested that it is the lack of job satisfaction that cause increased turnover intentions. However, others Hussain and Hussain (2020) argued that workplace spirituality may provide the solution to the questions regarding the ways to reduce turnover intentions among the healthcare professionals. However, to the best of researchers' knowledge there is a scarcity of researches that deals with the workplace spirituality and turnover intentions in the healthcare sector of Istanbul. Therefore, this research study seeks to examine the impact of dimensions of workplace spirituality on turnover intention among the employees of healthcare sector of Istanbul.

1.1 Significance of Study

The present research study aims to explore the relationship between dimensions of workplace spirituality and turnover intention among the professionals of healthcare sector of Istanbul. Furthermore, this research study is first such study that seeks to explain the relationship between dimensions of workplace spirituality in the healthcare sector, therefore, this study is of key importance for the managers of Istanbul's healthcare sector to understand the concept workplace spirituality and how it can be used to reduce the turnover intention among the healthcare professionals in Istanbul. Hence, this study will be of key importance for those managers of healthcare sector in Istanbul who are willing to retain their employees.

1.2 Research Objectives

Since, the present research study seeks to answer the following research question:

- What is the impact of dimensions of workplace spirituality on turnover intentions in the healthcare sector of Istanbul?

Therefore, it is evident from the research question of the current research study that the basis objective of present research study is to test the causal relationship between the dimensions of workplace spirituality and turnover intentions among the healthcare professionals of Istanbul.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Herzberg et al., (1959) presented the two factor theory of motivation. Herzberg identified the factors that caused employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the workplace. Herzberg then divided these accounts into two factors namely motivators and hygiene factors (Walt & de Klerk, 2014). In the words of Walt and de Klerk (2014) motivators are the factors that pleases the employees, whereas, hygiene factors are the factors that do not pleases the employees. However, their absence lead to demotivation. In other words, Herzberg's theory is basically a motivational theory that focuses on motivation and the job satisfaction. The theory suggests that traditional motivational factors such as pay, etc. are the hygiene factors and these factors do not motivate employees. Their absence may result in demotivation or dissatisfaction for the employees. This, in turns suggests that the topics of employee motivation and employee satisfaction are not as simple as they are thought to be. This led the researchers to seek for the motivators and workplace spirituality is one such factor that can be categorized as the motivator and this research study seeks to explain the impact of this motivator on turnover intention. Hence, this research study is based on the two factor theory.

2.2. Workplace Spirituality

People spend most of the time at workplace. Therefore, satisfaction at workplace is as important as the satisfaction on other matters of life. Therefore, researchers have remained concerned for employee satisfaction. It is primarily because of the fact that employees who are not satisfied with their jobs tend to leave the organization (Abbas & Iqbal, 2020). Therefore, researchers have continued their search to find the ways of enhancing the level of satisfaction among the employees. Hence, researchers (Zaidi, Ghayas & Durrani, 2019; Abbas, Idress & Rehman, 2020) studied workplace spirituality in relation to job satisfaction and found positive association between the dimensions of workplace spirituality and job satisfaction. Hence, the concept of spirituality is an important concept.

It should be noted that the concept of workplace spirituality emerged in 1940s (Mayo, 1949). Mitroff and Denton (1999) proposed five organizational models of spirituality at workplace. These models included: a) religion-based organization, b) evolutionary organization, c) recovering organization d) socially responsible organization and e) value based organization. However, the study separated spirituality from religion and advocated the concept of workplace spirituality be studied in terms of finding meaning in life, creating a strong bonding with colleagues, and alignment of individual values with that of an organization. Additionally, the study also noted that the employees with a stronger sense of spirituality at workplace experienced creativity, flexibility and meaningfulness through their work. However, in contrast to the suggestions of Mitroff and Denton (1999), Hicks (2003) analyzed literature about spirituality and religion at workplace and argued that spirituality and religion should not be separated from each other. Hence, organizations should allow employees to consider their own spirituality and religion in order to develop meaningfulness in their routine work (Hicks, 2003). On the other hand, Duchonand Plowman (2005) pointed towards the fact that there exists a need to understand that members of organizations have inner life and require that their spiritual needs are satisfied for the satisfaction of their inner lives. Whereas, Ashmos and Duchon (2000) stated that workplace spirituality is important for organizations because it enhances the sense of community within the organization.

2.3. Dimensions of Workplace Spirituality

Spiritual association is one of the dimensions of workplace spirituality. In this regard, Garrett, Spreitzer and Bacevice (2014) suggested that employees feel encouraged for personal connections rather than impersonal connections through their roles. This helps them to have a strong sense of relation with others (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). Hence, Milliman et al., (2003) argued that spiritual association is the dimension of workplace spirituality that can be expressed through interactions between colleagues. On the other hand, Kamddron (2005) asserted that work is a significant source of meaningfulness in life. Therefore, meaningfulness of work provides the employees to satisfy one's inner needs. Hence, Milliman et al., (2003) suggested that meaningful work is another dimension of workplace spirituality.

Compassion is the third dimension of workplace spirituality. Thibault et al., (1991) proposed that compassion is the pathway through which people find their personal satisfaction in the context of the world. It is the feeling of pity, sympathy, and understanding for someone who is suffering. It can also be defined as being touched by the suffering of others. Alignment of values is the last dimension of workplace spirituality. Shuck et al., (2015) described the phenomenon of alignment as a dynamic source of capability that can be attained through a combined shared vision under the interdependent system. In other words, if the values of a person and the organization are aligned with each other, it will serve as a source of encouragement for the employee to feel that his/her inner needs are satisfied.

2.4. Employee Turnover Intention

Researchers Elci, Şener, Aksoy, & Alpkın (2012) described turnover intention as the phenomenon in which an employee plans to leave the organization. This is different from the termination of services of an employee by an organization in a manner that in this case it is the employee who has decided to leave the organization. The turnover is considered as a counter-productive behavior. It is because of the fact that when employee leaves the organization, it not only strips the organization with the competencies that the employee processes but also creates an atmosphere where others feel demotivated. Furthermore, the employee who leaves usually joins the other firm in the same industry, hence, joins the competitor. Moreover, the employee who has already left the job from one organization and has joined the other usually becomes the source of contact for other people working in the firm to connect with the people in the other firm. These connections often pave the ways for other employees to switch the job. Hence, it starts a chain of resignations. Therefore, it is very important for the organizations to reduce the turnover intentions at earlier stages.

2.5. Workplace Spirituality and Turnover Intention

A number of researchers have studied workplace spirituality and turnover intentions. Fry and Nisiewicz (2013) argued that spirituality has significant association with turnover intentions. Whereas, other regressed the dimensions of workplace spirituality against the turnover intentions. In this regard, Janik, (2015) argued that meaningfulness at work is important. Furthermore, Cortese, Gatti, and Ghislieri (2014) also used meaningful work as the antecedent of turnover intention. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant negative relationship between meaningful work and turnover intention.

On the other hand, various researchers (Hussain & Hussain, 2020) have used spiritual

association as the dimension of workplace spirituality. Since, spirituality is generally found to be negatively associated with the turnover intention and spiritual association is one of the dimensions of spirituality, therefore, it is argued that spiritual association may also have negative association with the turnover intention. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant negative relationship between spiritual association and turnover intention.

Furthermore, researchers (Hussain & Hussain, 2020) found negative association between compassion and turnover intention. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant negative relationship between alignment of values and turnover intention.

Moreover, Ghadi (2017) found significant negative association between alignment of values and turnover intentions. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: There is a significant negative relationship between alignment of values and turnover intention.

3. Methodology

A twenty-three item instrument was developed for the purpose of data collection. Twenty items were adapted from Pradhan, Jena and Soto (2017) for measuring workplace spirituality. Whereas, three items were adapted from Cumman et al., (1979) for measuring turnover intentions. The instrument is a widely used instrument for measuring turnover intentions and a number of researchers (Elci, et al., 2012; Ghayas & Jabeen, 2020) have used the same scale for measuring the turnover intention. Respondents were asked to rate their responses on a likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, where, 1 is strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree. A total of 350 instruments were distributed among the employees of the healthcare sector of Istanbul. From these 350 instruments, 323 returned the filled questionnaires. These instruments were used as the final sample. Multiple Regression Analysis was used as the statistical technique. The following regression model was made to test the hypotheses:

$$TI = \alpha + \beta_1 MW + \beta_2 C + \beta_3 SA + \beta_4 (APOV) + \varepsilon \text{-----(1)}$$

Where, TI is Turnover intention, MW is Meaningful work, C is Compassion, SA is Spiritual Association, AV is Alignment of values, α is constant, β is the regression coefficient and ε is the error term.

4. Results & Discussions

4.1 Reliability

Prior to proceed the data for further testing we have to check that whether the collected data is reliable or not. To check the internal reliability of data and correlation between various items, Cronbach alpha test was run. If the value of cronbach alpha is 0.70 or above, it indicates that data received from questionnaire is reliable and can be used for proceeding analysis and interpretation of results. The cronbach alpha values of the variables used in this study, are as under:

Table 1: Internal Reliability of instrument

Variable Name	No. of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Meaningful Work	08	.876
Spiritual Association	11	.864
Compassion	04	.792
Alignment of Values	05	.784
Turnover Intention	03	.738

Since, the values of Cronbachalpha for all the variables are greater than 0.7, therefore, it is suggested that all the variables used in the study are statistically reliable.

4.2 Regression Results

After testing the internal reliability of the instrument, Multiple Regression Analysis was applied. In this regard, dimensions of workplace spirituality are regressed against the turnover intentions. The results of Multiple Regression Analysis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Regression Results

Variable Name	β	t-value	Sig	VIF
Constant	-.084	-1.99	.049	
Meaningful Work	-.345	-2.941	.000	7.941
Spiritual Association	-.124	-2.051	.021	6.754
Compassion	-.159	-2.234	.023	3.254
Alignment of Values	-.234	-2.756	.012	4.213
Adjusted R ² = .865	F- Statistics = 21.45		Sig = 0.000	

Table 2 indicates the results of multiple regression analysis. Since, the VIF values of all the variables are less than 10, therefore, it is suggested that there is no issue pertaining to multicollinearity in the data. Furthermore, the negative values of β coefficients point to the fact that dimensions of workplace spirituality have negative relationship with the turnover intentions. On the other hand, since the sig values of all the dimensions of workplace spirituality are less than 0.05, therefore, it is argued that all the dimensions of workplace spirituality have significant relationship with turnover intentions.

5. Discussions, Conclusions, Recommendations and Future Research

5.1 Discussion

This research study seeks to test the relationship between the dimensions of workplace spirituality and turnover intentions in the healthcare sector of Istanbul. Since, the present research study found that all the meaningful work dimension of workplace spirituality if negatively associated with the turnover intentions, therefore, it is argued that the present research study reinforces the views of Cortese et al., (2014). On the other hand, in alignment with the results of Hussain and Hussain (2020), the present research study suggests that spiritual association and compassion have significant negative association with turnover intention. Whereas, alignment of values is also found to be negatively associated with turnover intention. This is consistent with the results of Ghadi (2017).

5.2 Conclusions

Since, all the dimensions of workplace spirituality namely meaningful work, spiritual association, compassion and alignment of values are found to be negatively associated with turnover intention, therefore, it is concluded that workplace spirituality is negatively associated with turnover intention. Therefore, managers in the healthcare sector must focus of making sure to satisfy the spiritual needs of the employees to make sure that they are not leaving the organization soon.

5.3 Recommendations

Since, the results of present research study suggest that dimensions of workplace spirituality have significant negative association with turnover intentions in the healthcare sector of Istanbul, therefore, managers in the healthcare sector must focus on satisfying the spiritual needs of people working for them to make sure that the turnover intentions among the employees remain low.

On the other hand, since workplace spirituality cannot be categorized as the hygiene factor, therefore, in terms of two factor theory proposed by Herzberg et al., (1959), it is proposed that workplace spirituality should be categorized as the motivator.

5.4 Limitation & Future Researchers

The study is limited to the geographical boundaries of Istanbul, therefore, this study provides minimal generalizability of results. For greater generalizability of results, similar studies should also be conducted in other parts of the country. Furthermore, there is a need to test the role of other variables in the relationship between spirituality and turnover intentions. In this regard, it is suggested that role of job satisfaction and perceived employment opportunity should be tested. It is also suggested that this study should also be conducted in others business sectors of Istanbul. Similar studies can also be conducted in the Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı (Directorate of Religious Affairs) in Turkey. This will help in understanding the religious aspects of spirituality as well. It is also suggested that similar studies should also be conducted in East European countries that were once part of Soviet bloc. This will help in understanding the impact of communist regimes on the spiritual needs of employees.

References

- Abbas, M., Idrees, N., & Rehman, U. (2020). Workplace Spirituality and Job Satisfaction: Evidence from Pharmaceutical Industry of Karachi, Pakistan. *Global Business Spectrum*, 1(1), 12-20.
- Abbas, M., & Iqbal, R. (2020). Impact of Job Satisfaction on Employee Turnover Intents: Evidence from Private Universities in Karachi, Pakistan. *RADS Journal of Business Management*, 2(1), 48-58.
- Ashmos, D. P., & Duchon, D. (2000). Spirituality at work: A conceptualization and measure. *Journal of management inquiry*, 9(2), 134-145.
- Cortese, C. G., Gatti, P., & Ghislieri, C. (2014). Job demands, meaningful work, and turnover intention among nurses. *La Medicina del lavoro*, 105(1), 37-47.
- Cummann, C., Fichman, M., Jenkins, D., & Klesh, J. (1979). The Michigan organizational assessment questionnaire. Unpublished Manuscript, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.
- Duchon, D., & Plowman, D. A. (2005). Nurturing the spirit at work: Impact on work unit performance. *The leadership quarterly*, 16(5), 807-833.
- Elci, M., Şener, İ., Aksoy, S., & Alpkan, L. (2012). The impact of ethical leadership and leadership effectiveness on employees' turnover intention: The mediating role of work related stress. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 58, 289-297.
- Fry, L. W., & Nisiewicz, M. S. (2013). *Maximizing the triple bottom line through spiritual leadership*. Stanford University Press.
- Ghadi, M. Y. (2017). The impact of workplace spirituality on voluntary turnover intentions through loneliness in work. *Journal of Economic and Administrative Sciences*. 33 (1), 81-110.
- Garrett, L.E., Spreitzer, G.M. & Bacevice, P.A. (2014). Co-constructing a sense of community in coworking spaces. Academy of Management Annual Meeting Proceedings, pp. 1015-1020. doi: 10.5465/AMBPP. 2014.139
- Herzberg, F. I., Mausner, B., & Snyderman, B. (1959). *The motivation to work* (2nd ed.). New York: John Wiley.
- Hicks, D. A. (2003). *Religion and the workplace: Pluralism, spirituality, leadership*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hussain, S., & Hussain, Z. (2020). Workplace Spirituality And Turnover Intentions Among The Doctors Working In Private Hospitals In Karachi, Pakistan: A Cross Sectional Study. *British Journal of Medical & Health Sciences (BJMHS)*, 2(8), 402-407.
- Janik, M. (2015). Meaningful work and secondary school teachers' intention to leave. *South African Journal of Education*, 35(2), 1008-1008.
- Mayo, E. (1949). Hawthorne and the western electric company. *Public administration: Concepts and cases*, 149-158.
- Milliman, J., Czaplewski, A. J., & Ferguson, J. (2003). Workplace spirituality and employee work attitudes: An exploratory empirical assessment. *Journal of organizational change management*, 16(4), 426-447.
- Mitroff, I. I., & Denton, E. A. (1999). A study of spirituality in the workplace. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 40(4), 83.
- Pradhan, R.K., Jena, L.K., Soto, C.M. (2017). Workplace spirituality in Indian organizations: Construction of reliable and valid measurement scale. *Business: Theory and Practice*, 18(1), 43–53. doi:10.3846/btp.2017.759.
- Shuck, B., Zigarmi, D., & Owen, J. (2015). Psychological needs, engagement, and work intentions. *European Journal of Training and Development*.
- Thibault, L., Slack, T., & Hinings, B. (1991). Professionalism, structures and systems: The impact of professional staff on voluntary sport organizations. *International*

Review for the Sociology of Sport, 26, 83-97.

Van der Walt, F., & De Klerk, J. J. (2014). Measuring spirituality in South Africa: Validation of instruments developed in the USA. *International Review of Psychiatry*, 26(3), 368-378.

Zaidi, H., Ghayas, M. M., & Durrani, T. I. K. (2019). Impact of Work Place Spirituality on Job Satisfaction. *RADS Journal of Business Management*, 1(1), 49-57.