Workplace Spirituality, Moral Convictions, Work Ethics and Job Performance among State University Educators

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Abstract

Work plays a central role in the formulation of a person's sense of dignity and self-worth. It results to the manifestation of competence, proficiency in a vocational calling, and induced increase in productivity. This study aims to ascertain workplace spirituality, moral convictions, work ethics, and job performance of educators in a state university. It was conducted on February 2015 among the 231 randomly selected faculty members of state university. Results reveal that generally, educators in this research are spiritual, with strong moral convictions, good work ethics, and are outstanding in their job performance. Their moral convictions and work ethics are significantly related to their workplace spirituality, and their work ethics and job performance are significantly related to their moral convictions. However, the workplace spirituality and work ethics are positively but not significantly related to job performance. Moral convictions and work ethics are found to predict significantly the educators' job performance. Workplace spirituality, however, is not a significant predictor of job performance.

Keywords: workplace spirituality, moral convictions, work ethics, job performance

In this age of education globalization, educators play a crucial role in building a quality nation and in contributing to cultural transformation. Teachers need to be role models to exhibit a dignified personality worthy of emulation by learners and peers.

Teachers have great potentials to affect students' educational outcome. Teaching performance is usually equated with productivity of the teacher inside the classroom. In order to enhance teacher's effectiveness, it would also be necessary to find out his or her personality, attitude, skills, and knowledge. These characteristics are important to the achievement of assigned goals and tasks. Thus, the key to success in teaching must lie on the characteristics of teachers.

In higher education, there is an increasing interest in matters of meaning, purpose, and spirituality amidst the call for high moral integrity and reform. Spirituality in educational institutions suggests that educators seek balance between the body, mind, and spirit. It has been argued that educators play a significant role in transmitting spiritual values through student-centered attitudes and teaching methods. They have a responsibility to nurture the soul through their teaching, and to relate their teaching strategies, and classroom management skills with this work.

Teaching calls for a commitment to high professional ethical standards. In order to achieve the noble vocation of education institutions, ethical standards of academic integrity provide the foundation for quality teaching and the training. Teachers are tasked to nurture students to be able to make responsible judgments about matters of moral importance and develop the ability to think through the ethical and social implications of their actions.

Workplace spirituality is an aspect of organization culture that encourages organization members to integrate spiritual life and work life. As an individual construct, spirituality at work is said to be evident where employees can bring their whole selves to work (Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Encouraging spirituality in the workplace leads to improved ethical behavior at a personal level and an enhanced ethical climate/culture at an organizational level (McGhee & Grant, 2008). Workplace spirituality is a crucial part of workplace dynamics and has a significant positive influence on job performance. It leads to improved ethical behavior because a spiritual person lives a moral life.

Moral conviction is a strong and absolute belief that something is right or wrong, moral or immoral (Skitka, Bauman, & Mullen, 2008). Moral convictions are high when people perceive that their attitude is related to their moral beliefs. It was found that moral convictions contribute to a better job performance (Mahdavikhou, Moez, Khotanlou, & Karami, 2014). Moral attitudes have unique behavioral consequences that lead to ethical behaviors.

Work ethics is knowing what is the right thing to do, and doing it. It is a system of values in which central importance is ascribed to work (Chester, 2012; Woodal, 2010), leading them to produce high-quality work consistently. Teaching is an ethical enterprise and there are basic ethical principles for teaching (Hill IV & Zinsmeister, 2012). Teachers' professional ethics mean a set of dignified principles put into practice by the teachers (Campbell, 2008). Work ethics has positive impact on job performance (Ahmadie, Sori, & Iman, 2014; Imam, Abbasi, & Muneer, 2013).

Performance is an action or behavior that is relevant to the organization's goal. Teacher performance is one of the criteria for determining the success in teaching and is related to teachers' effectiveness (Milanowski, Heneman III, & Kimball, 2009). Teachers who are contented with their job maintain high level of performance (Usop, Askandar, Kadtong, & Usop, 2013).

Currently, there is a limited knowledge and research about the relationships of workplace spirituality, moral convictions, and work ethics as related to job performance of educators in a state university. Exploration is required to gain understanding of how these constructs are specifically related. Hence this study aims to find out the strength of the relationships among these constructs.

The researcher's very vocation as a member of the religious congregation, Missionary Sister of the Lord's Table, inspires her to commit to the great task of building society and integral development of people. This is a humble contribution to the building up of community where aspirations are nurtured creatively by genuine values.

Methodology

The survey-correlational research method was employed in this investigation. The participants of this study were the 231 randomly selected faculty members teaching tertiary courses both in the main and external campuses of state university. The proportional random sampling was employed in the selection of the participants.

This paper adapted four (4) published data-gathering instruments to obtain the data for the study: (1) Workplace Spirituality Scale by Petchsawang and Duchon (2009); (2) Moral Foundations Questionnaire by Graham, Haidt, and Nosek (2008); (3) Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile-Short Form by Meriac, Woehr, Gorman, and Thomas (2013); and (4) the WVSU Faculty Performance Evaluation (F-PES). The researcher solicited permission to use the four survey instruments.

To measure the educators' level of workplace spirituality, Workplace Spirituality Scale by Petchsawang and Duchon (2009) was adapted. It consisted of nineteen (19) statements that pertained to the educators' spirituality in the workplace. The Workplace Spirituality Scale used a 5-point Likert scale. The educators indicated their responses by encircling the letters along the *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree* continuum.

To ascertain the educators' degree of moral convictions, the Moral Foundation Questionnaire by Graham, Haidt, and Nosek (2008) was used. It consisted of twenty six (26) statements that pertained to the educators' moral convictions and their fundamental beliefs about right and wrong. Using the 5-point Likert scale, the educators indicated their responses by encircling the letters along the *not at all relevant* to *extremely relevant* continuum.

To measure the educators' degree of work ethics, the Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile–Short Form by Meriac, Woehr, Gorman, and Thomas (2013) was employed. It consisted of twenty seven (27) work-related statements that pertained to the educators' work ethics. Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile used a 5-point Likert scale and the educators indicated their responses by encircling the letters along the *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree* continuum.

The results of the F-PES of the two semesters for the school year 2013-2014 were utilized as data for job performance. The WVSU F-PES consisted of two parts: (1) Performance Appraisal Form for teaching effectiveness, and

(2) Critical Factors. For supervisor and students to rate, a rating scale of 10-highest and 2-lowest was the basis. The obtained score was multiplied by .05. The weighted mean of each category was obtained for both the parts of the F-PES, 30% for the critical factors and 70% for the instruction.

The three adapted instruments, namely: Workplace Spirituality Scale, Moral Foundations Questionnaire, and Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile were pilot tested to ascertain the administrability in the local setting. Thirty (30) faculty members of the Integrated Laboratory School and Colleges of the main campus served as respondents. These educators were no longer included in the final administration of the research instruments.

The results of the factor analysis revealed that of the 20 items of Workplace Spirituality Scale, 19 items had factor loads higher than .50 and ranged from .532 to .925. For Moral Foundations Questionnaire, 4 items of the 30 items were culled out because they obtained factor loads lower than +.50. The obtained factor loads ranged from .508 to .824. Of the 28 items of the Multidimensional Work Ethics Profile, 1 item was excluded because it obtained a factor load of .488 which is lower than .50. Obtained factor loads ranged from .514 to .895.

The reliability of the four adapted instrument was not tested in this paper.   However, the authors of the instruments reported the following reliability: Each dimension of the Workplace Spirituality Scale exhibits adequate reliability and the Cronbach's alpha for the entire scale is .85. For the Moral Foundations Questionnaire, Cronbach's reliability statistics were as follows: Harm $\alpha = .67$, Fairness $\alpha = .67$, Ingroup $\alpha = .70$, Authority $\alpha = .75$, and Purity $\alpha = .84$. The Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile MWEP-Short Form demonstrated an acceptable factor structure and reliability, commensurate with that of the full version. The Cronbach's alpha for all values were above .70 for the short form.

To ensure the ethical norms of research, all retrieved questionnaires were secured and coded numerically to maintain confidentiality.   Upon retrieval of the accomplished questionnaires, the data were encoded, tallied, and interpreted. Frequency count, percentage analysis, mean, and standard deviation were used as descriptive statistics, while *t*-test for independent samples, stepwise multiple regression analysis, and Pearson's *r,* all set at .05 alpha level of significance, were used as inferential statistics. All the statistical computations were computer-processed through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

Results and Discussion

Educators' Workplace Spirituality

The findings revealed that a large majority of the educators were spiritual (163 or 71%) and the rest were highly spiritual (68 or 29%).

The educators' manifestation of being spiritual concurs with Lindholm and Astin's (2008) study which indicated that teaching methods faculty elect to use reflect who they are and what they believe. However, the findings of this present research counters the findings of Carvajal (2014) who found out that the spiritual intelligence at work of selected Philippine government employees, as well as the effects of their spiritual intelligence in their work were fairly good. Though they value their connection to the transcendent and have a desire to deepen this relationship, this was not a part of their daily awareness.

Educators' Moral Convictions

The results showed that a large majority of the educators had strong moral convictions (143 or 62%) while 88 (38%) had very strong moral convictions.

The results of this present study on educators' strong moral convictions find support in Lumpkin's (2008) report that teachers are expected to be morally upright individuals and they serve as role models for living a moral life. Because of their influential role in the lives of young people, they are expected to display behavior reflective of moral virtues and they adhere to professional code of conduct. The importance of moral convictions among teachers has also been proven by Mahony (2009) who found out that the very nature of educating people is a moral enterprise. Teachers and schools are held partly responsible for the moral behavior of their students and this implies that there are restrictions on how they may themselves behave in the process.

Educators' Work Ethics

The findings revealed that a large majority of the educators had good work ethics (145 or 63%) while 86 (37%) had very good work ethics.

This finding is congruent with Parkay and Stanford's (1998) belief that teaching is an ethical enterprise, which means that a teacher has an obligation to act ethically and to follow what he or she knows to be the most appropriate action to take. Moreover, this confirms the claim of Jayamma and Sumangala (2012) that ethical teaching means engaging in behaviors that meet these responsibilities in ways expected by students, co-workers, institution, and other stakeholders.

Educators' Job Performance

Results showed that a large majority of the educators had outstanding job performance (220 or 95%) while 11 (5%) had very satisfactory job performance.

This finding supports the study of Milanowski, Heneman III, and Kimball (2009) which asserted that teacher performance in the classroom is the lifeblood of the educational enterprise. Teachers weave a combination of their knowledge, skills, and abilities into specific performance competencies that become drivers of student learning and achievement. In similar vein, Selamat and Samsu (2013) claimed that teachers' job performance is the way in which a teacher behaves in the process of teaching. Teachers' job performance plays a crucial role in student's learning process.

Differences in the Level of Job Performance among Educators grouped according to Workplace Spirituality, Moral Convictions, and Work Ethics

The t-test results in Table 1 showed that the educators did not differ significantly in their level of job performance when they were classified according to workplace spirituality, moral convictions, and work ethics. Obtained ts were: $t = 0.301$, $p = .764$; $t = 1.889$, $p = .060$; and $t = 1.139$, $p = .256$, respectively. Obtained ps were all higher than .05.

Table 1

t-test Results for the Differences in the Level of Job Performance Among Educators Classified According to Workplace Spirituality, Moral Convictions, and Work Ethics

Category	M	df	t-value	Sig (2-tailed)
Workplace spirituality				
Highly spiritual	4.80	229	0.301	.764
Spiritual	4.79			
Moral convictions				
Very strong convictions	4.82	229	1.889	.060
Strong convictions	4.77			
Work ethics				
Very good work ethics	4.81	229	1.139	.256
Good work ethics	4.78			

Relationships among Educators' Workplace Spirituality, Moral Convictions, Work Ethics, and Job Performance

The data in Table 2 revealed that a positive and significant relationship existed between the educators' workplace spirituality and moral convictions ($r = .274$, $p = .000$), and between workplace spirituality and work ethics ($r = .316$, $p = .000$).

This paper shows that the educators' workplace spirituality affects their moral convictions and work ethics. This conforms to the study of Ming-Chia (2012) about workplace spirituality that can enhance moral standards of individual or organizations and influence various decision behaviors. This study likewise finds support in the report of Emerson and Mckinney (2010) about business professionals who considered their religious faith to be highly important and were significantly less accepting of ethically questionable behavior. Supporting these findings were McGhee and Grant (2008) on the link between individual spirituality and ethical behavior in the workplace. Allowing and encouraging spirituality in the workplace leads to improved ethical behavior at a personal level and an enhanced ethical climate/culture at an organizational level.

The link between workplace spirituality and ethics is reflected in the existing literature. Workplace spirituality comes out as a source of employees' ethical well-being. This highlights the relevance of workplace spirituality

to the ethical aspects of work (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003). Employees' ethical well-being can come from their experiencing the meaning/calling and community/membership aspects of workplace spirituality. Workplace spirituality can facilitate employees' ethical well-being and can pose certain ethical issues for organizations (Sheep, 2006). Organizations that manifest workplace spirituality are more purpose-driven. Spirituality emphasizes empowering, delegation, and cooperation.

This present investigation also found a positive and significant relationship between the educators' moral convictions and work ethics ($r = .300$, $p = .000$), and between moral convictions and job performance ($r = .180$, $p = .006$).

The result that moral convictions and work ethics were related supports the findings of Campbell (2008) that ethical knowledge has its origins in moral sensibility and intuitive perspectives on right and wrong. Likewise, it corroborates the findings of Morgan (2011) who established that workplace ethics is a moral philosophy developed by a place of business that determined what was expected of employees in a particular setting.

The result of this study concurs with the findings of Sheraz, Zaheer, Rehman, and Nadeem (2012) that there was a positive and significant relationship between ethical leadership and employee performance. Leaders that have strong moral values and support their teams resulted to increase employee performance.

Moreover, the findings revealed that a positive but not significant relationship existed between the educators' workplace spirituality and job performance ($r = .110$, $p = .095$), and between their work ethics and job performance ($r = .081$, $p = .221$).

The study of Madhur (2013) validates the finding of this research that no significant correlation existed between spirituality and job performance, but Rastgar, Zarei, Davoudi, and Fartash (2012) found a positive and significant influence of workplace spirituality on job performance among insurance employees of Iran. Likewise, Petchsawang and Duchon (2012) noted a positive and significant relationship between workplace spirituality and work outcomes, not attitudes about work, but work performance as it were measured by the organization. Organizations that manifest workplace spirituality manifest productivity and improved job performance.

However, incongruence with the present findings was a current body of literature demonstrating the relationships between work ethics and job performance. Ahmadie, Sori, and Iman (2014) found a direct positive relationship between all elements of work ethics (individual, occupational, organizational, and management elements) with employees' productivity at Lorestan province's Education Department. Moreover, Vimba, Coetzee, and Ukpere (2013) found a correlation between work ethics and organizational performance.

Table 2

Pearson's r Results Showing the Relationship among the Educators' Workplace Spirituality, Moral Convictions, Work Ethics, and Job Performance

Category (n=231)	1		2		3		4	
	r	*r* prob.	*r*	*r* prob.	*r*	*r* prob.	*r*	*r* prob.
Workplace spirituality	-	-	.274*	.000	.316*	.000	.110	.095
Moral convictions	-	-	-	-	.300*	.000	.180*	.006
Work ethics	-	-	-	-	-	-	.081	.221
Job performance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

*Note: *p < .05*

Predictors of Job Performance among Educators

Data in Table 3 revealed that moral convictions and work ethics were significant predictors of the educators' job performance.

Workplace spirituality. This was found not to significantly predict the educators' job performance, $F = 2.810$, $p = .095$. This result runs counter with the findings of Drake (2011) who established that workplace spirituality had a strong correlation with organization based self- esteem and proved to be a highly significant predictor of job outcome. Nazir and Malik (2013) found that workplace spirituality strongly predicts organizational commitment, organizational based self-esteem and intrinsic work satisfaction, thus enhancing job productivity and outcomes

Moral convictions. As a predictor, moral convictions had obtained R value of .191 and an R^2 of .036, explaining that 3.6% of the variations in job performance could be attributed to workplace spirituality and moral convictions. With the addition of moral convictions to the equation, an R^2 change of .028 was obtained, explaining that 2.8% of the variations in job performance could be attributed to moral convictions alone, $F = 4.305$, $p = .015$.

It can be construed that moral conviction is a significant factor in determining the performance of the educators. This finding is congruent with Morgan's (2011) findings that when people vest a position with moral conviction, they feel an obligation to act that, in turn, fuels their willingness to take action. People translate their moral mandates into action because they feel that they must, because standing up for their moral vision is the right thing to do.

Work ethics. As a predictor, work ethics had obtained R value of .191 and an R^2 of .037, explaining that 3.7% of the variations in job performance could be attributed to workplace spirituality, moral convictions, and work ethics. With the addition of work ethics to the equation, an R^2 change of .024 was obtained, explaining that 2.4% of the variations in job performance could be attributed to work ethics alone, $F = 2.870$, $p = .037$.

It can be gleaned that work ethics is a factor in determining the job performance of the educators. This supports Ntayi (2014) who found that work ethics was an important predictor of task performance. In like manner, Imam, Abbasi, and Muneer (2013) established that Islamic work ethics proved to be a good predictor of employee performance.

Table 3

Predictors of Educators' Job Performance

Variables	R	R^2	R^2 Change	B	Beta	Beta	Sig
Workplace spirituality	.110	.012	.008	.060	.110	2.810	.095
Moral convictions	.191	.036	.028	.082	.162	4.305*	.015
Work ethics	.191	.037	.024	.008	.013	2.870*	.037

*Note: *$p < .05$

Conclusions

The educators' high workplace spirituality in this research, manifest profound feelings of well-being, a belief that one's work makes a contribution, and a sense of connection to others. The educators also emerge to contribute to a common purpose, and create meaning of their work as a vocation, a calling. Moreover, they have been nurtured with organizational values evidenced in the culture that promotes employees' experience of transcendence through the work process. The strong moral convictions exhibited by the educators tend to prove that they are able to look beyond their own concerns and allegiances in order to respect others so as to promote what is good and right. This emphasizes that one's moral conviction is not a matter of isolated external acts, a thing done or avoided, but a habitual orientation, a fundamental option. Good work ethics, as exemplified among educators, indicate that they have embraced certain principles that make them determine what is right or wrong and eventually guide their work behavior—making them highly motivated, reliable, dedicated, and willing to put in extra effort on the job. The educators' outstanding job performance proves that they contributed to achieving the goals and objectives of the university. They tend to be organized, dependable, and achievement-oriented, and they promote student learning in and out of the classroom. There is an indication that if one has strong moral convictions and good work ethics, he or she tends to be spiritual. The spirit at work can enhance moral standards and lead to improved ethical behavior and culture.

The educators' work ethics and job performance were positively and significantly related to their moral convictions as revealed in this study. This explains that if one has good work ethics and outstanding job performance, he or she possesses strong moral convictions. Perhaps one's strong belief that something is right or wrong could lead him or her to reason, make choices, decisions, and actions imbued with high ethical standards. As it is, one tends to conduct himself or herself in organizations with honesty, integrity, compassion, one also tends to foster a sense of accomplishment and produce high-quality work consistently.

The educators' workplace spirituality and work ethics were positively but not significantly related to job performance. As it is, there seems to be an indication that one's spirituality, moral convictions, and work ethics do not affect the job performance of the educators. This explains that although important and might have contributed to the interplay, the variables identified in the study do not pose a significant impact on the job performance of the educators.

Moral convictions and work ethics were factors found to significantly predict job performance. A strong and absolute belief that something is right or wrong, moral or immoral, are deem responsible for one's belief about one's capacity to perform and contribute to achieving the goals and objectives of an organization.

Workplace spirituality, however, was not a significant predictor of job performance. This explains that spirituality caters to one's inner consciousness and a profound feeling of well-being. Perhaps, one's regard for meaningful work serves as a higher goal that is beyond his or her accomplishments in the attainment of individual contributions to achieving the goals and objectives of an organization.

Recommendations

Informed of the findings, educators are encouraged to enhance or at least sustain their workplace spirituality, moral convictions, work ethics, and job performance and to continue emphasizing commitment for effective instruction and outcome-based learning. The way educators teach and relate to students all depends on what they bring to the classroom as persons. Thus, they should endeavor to hone their students by turning them into individuals imbued with ethical, moral, and spiritual values, as well as the belief on their capacity to achieve and be productive.

The administrators and school heads substantial knowledge and understanding of their faculty members and the culture of their respective schools may enable them to craft leadership strategies that may contribute to the promotion and enhancement of a spiritual work environment, moral convictions, work ethics, and job performance of their faculty members. Likewise, human resource officers are encouraged to utilize the moral enhancement program as part of faculty development to heighten an organizational culture imbued with spiritual, moral, and ethical sense, and productivity among educators, thereby promoting positive changes in the institution. Moreover, integrating spirituality, morality, and ethics with work opens new approaches for recruitment, training, performance evaluation, and career development.

Future research undertakings may be conducted among educators and non-teaching staff in a wider scope. Researchers may also utilize other variables such as retaliatory behaviors, turnover, psychological well-being, and innovative behavior.

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