Examining the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment: A study of Indian MSMEs

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ABSTRACT

In India, spirituality is regarded as a personal issue and frequently has a religious connotation. Spirituality is a phenomenon that gives life purpose to live. Employers can motivate their staff mentally and physically by infusing spirituality into the workplace. The organizational culture, built on fundamental values like loyalty, integrity, compassion, and trust, reflects workplace spirituality. Growing benefits of "workplace spirituality" have been recognized at individual and organizational levels. Still, there is a lack of empirical studies that investigate how "workplace spirituality" enhances "organizational commitment" via a mechanism of "job satisfaction", especially in the case of the MSMEs sector. The purpose of the current study is to address this knowledge gap by providing empirical evidence that job satisfaction mediates the link between "workplace spirituality" and "organizational commitment. So, by identifying the areas that need to be focused on, the links between "job satisfaction", "workplace spirituality", and "organizational commitment" among employees of MSMEs can contribute to improving the performance of MSMEs. Hopefully, this study will enlighten Indian firms on integrating spiritual practices at the workplace to foster employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

KEYWORDS: Workplace spirituality, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, MSMEs.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid changes brought about by globalization have changed the workplace environment, which may hurt employees. The corporate world is significantly impacted by changes that occur at the political, social, economic, and cultural levels. All industries are experiencing increased competitiveness due to the unstable global economy recently brought on by the disastrous effects of the coronavirus pandemic (Greenhaus & Callanan, 2013).

These changes necessitate updating the concept of what constitutes work. Innovation, vocational flexibility, and continual learning are currently highlighted as the elements of success

in a modern economy. Employee dedication to their organizations, initiative and receptivity to new experiences are becoming increasingly demanded. Firms must ensure that their staff members bring their entire selves to work rather than simply their muscles and intellect because of the new challenges in the workplace.

These requirements indicate that intelligence and spirituality should be productively incorporated into the workplace. The spiritual paradigm, a developing and burgeoning paradigm, should be the center of attention.

In India, spirituality is regarded as a personal issue and frequently has a religious connotation. Spirituality is a phenomenon that gives life purpose to live. Workplace spirituality is not about converting an individual to a particular religion or belief system (Laabs, 1995; Cavanagh, 1999; Robbins & Judge, 2019).

It may be founded on one's values and philosophical beliefs rather than having anything to do with any religious tradition. It targets people who see themselves as spiritual beings whose souls need to be fed at work, who yearn for meaning and purpose in their work, and who feel connected to the rest of the workplace community. At both the individual and organizational levels, there has been growing recognition of the advantages of workplace spirituality. Still, there is a lack of empirical studies that examine how workplace spirituality enhances organizational commitment via a mechanism of job satisfaction, especially in the case of the MSME sector. The current paper intended to fill this gap and presented empirical evidence to show how job satisfaction mediates the relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE
2.1 Workplace spirituality (WPS)

Workplace spirituality is a concept used to describe how employees feel when they are energetic and passionate about what they do, when they find meaning and purpose in it when they feel free to express themselves entirely at work, and when they feel connected to their fellows (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004). Workplace spirituality can be seen as a person's perception of belongingness and togetherness with coworkers and his deeper values (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2010).

Finding significance in one's work, forging close bonds with coworkers and those connected to it, and demonstrating a solid alignment between one's core beliefs and business ideals are all part of workplace spirituality (Mitroff & Denton, 1999).

When workers are free to bring their spiritual selves to work, they become more inventive, which fosters satisfaction (Turner, 1999). The organizational culture, built on fundamental values like loyalty, integrity, compassion, and trust, reflects workplace spirituality.

"Dimensions" of WPS in the present study

- **Meaningful work:** This aspect considers that workers value their jobs for motives other than monetary compensation (Albuquerque et al., 2014), and they have inner drives, truths, and wants that compel them to engage in activities that have more profound importance for their lives and the lives of others.
- **Sense of community:** Having a strong bond with people or a close relationship with them is a crucial aspect of WPS. The foundation of a "sense of community" at work is the conviction that individuals perceive themselves as interconnected and that there is some connection between one's inner self and the inner selves of others.
- **Alignment of values:** This third essential element of WPS refers to how employees perceive the compatibility of their personal beliefs with the objectives and values of their company. The term "alignment" refers to workers' conviction that their organization's leaders maintain moral principles and are morally upright and concerned for the welfare of their workforce and the community (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000).

2.2 Job satisfaction

"Job satisfaction" is one of the most commonly investigated variables in organizational behaviour (Van Ham et al., 2014). It is a complex term with many facets. Several distinct definitions are mentioned in the literature. Still, Locke's (1976) definition of "job satisfaction" is the most popular and widely referred to, as his description of the term "job satisfaction" is very comprehensive, including job characteristics and work environment.(Adio & Popoola,2010; González et al., 2006)). He expressed job satisfaction as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences".

2.3 Organizational commitment

"Organizational commitment" refers to a member's psychological outlook on their affiliation to their company. Allen & Meyer (1990) conceptualized organizational commitment at three levels: Affective, normative and continuance.

- Affective commitment is the emotional bond that an individual feels toward a firm. There is a great possibility that an employee with an exceptionally high degree of "affective commitment" will work for the organization for an extensive period.
- Continuance commitment: This kind of commitment makes an employee feel that quitting the firm would be expensive.
- Normative commitment: A person is considered to have a normative commitment if they continue working for their employer out of a sense of duty. It Invokes a feeling of indebtedness among employees by making them aware of the firm's contribution to their development. It can persuade them to stay with an organization through thick and thin.

Hypotheses formulation
2.4 Workplace Spirituality and job satisfaction

A sense of purpose in work allows employees to express themselves. Besides this, when employees believe their work roles are significant in the organization, they attempt to analyze the problems more rigorously and seek new solutions. In this way, meaningful work satisfies the inner needs of employees and ultimately leads to their job satisfaction. The researchers (Sony & Mekoth, 2019) also found in their study that meaningful work, a sense of transcendence and mindfulness(dimensions of WPS) significantly impact job satisfaction and the performance of employees. Similarly, Hassan et al. (2016) revealed in their study that a sense of compassion and alignment of personal and organizational values significantly impact employees' job satisfaction. Furthermore, other studies suggested that workplace spirituality contributes to achieving a sense of meaning and purpose, fosters creativity, and ultimately increases job satisfaction and organizational commitment(Pawar, 2009; Shivani Belwalkar, 2018). In light of the above justification hypothesis, H1 is proposed

H1: Workplace spirituality has a positive and significant impact on the job satisfaction of employees

2.5 "Job Satisfaction" and "Organizational Commitment"

The study of the relationship between "job satisfaction" and "organizational commitment" is of utmost importance for an organization to promote the organization's performance. Gunu et al. (2010) revealed that job satisfaction is a stronger predictor of organizational commitment. Similarly, the study of Feinstein and Vondrasek (2001) also provided evidence of the positive impact of "job satisfaction" on "organizational commitment" in the case of restaurant employees. According to Azeem (2010), organizations can increase organizational commitment among their staff by fostering job satisfaction by establishing practical training and development programs. Eliyana & Ma'arif (2019) found that organizations can promote job satisfaction by infusing transformational leadership, which enhances organizational commitment and work performance. In light of the above justification hypothesis, H2 is proposed.

H2: "Job satisfaction" has a positive and significant impact on the "organizational commitment" of employees

2.6 "Workplace Spirituality" and "organizational commitment."

Workplace spirituality promotes organizational commitment among employees by providing them with an environment of trust, belongingness, care and altruism. When employee experience that management take care of their inner needs and believe in their inner selves, they are motivated to stay in the organization for a more extended period. The feeling of belongingness with co-fellows also makes them glued to their organization. Employees who perceive congruency between their and organizational values feel more committed to their organization(Regu and Cunha, 2008; Campbell & Hwa, 2014). Milliman et al.(2003) also found in their study that the workplace spirituality dimension(" meaningful work", "sense of community," and "alignment with organizational values") leads to promoting organizational commitment, which eventually enhances organizational performance. Rego and Cuna(2008) also reported a positive relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment. Kulshrestha & Singhal. (2022) study also confirmed the positive effect of workplace spirituality on organizational commitment. In light of the literature mentioned above review, hypothesis H3 is proposed.

H3: Workplace spirituality has a positive and significant impact on organizational commitment

2.7 Workplace spirituality, job satisfaction and organizational commitment

WPS enhances the job satisfaction of employees by providing them with a sense of meaningful work (Dubey, P., Pathak, 2020; Rahman et al., 2019), and a study of literature shows that job satisfaction promotes organizational commitment (Ismail & Razak, 2016). Literature shows that employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment are closely related (Azeem, 2010; McNeese-Smith, 1996; Gunlu et al., 2010). WPS leads to job satisfaction by creating a culture of trust, openness, altruism, empathy and respect for others(Mukherjee, 2018). WPS aspects are crucial for meeting employees' inner needs, and they greatly aid in realizing the importance of organization and make them obliged and loyal towards their organization (Al-Aameri,2000). Therefore, when employees are satisfied with their jobs, they will be highly motivated to stay in the organization longer. In light of the above justification hypothesis, H4 is proposed.

H4: "Job satisfaction" mediates the relationship between "workplace spirituality" and "Organizational commitment".

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
3.1 "Population, sample and sampling technique"

The population for the present study is all employees of MSMEs of the Uttarakhand state. The questionnaires were sent to a sample of 390 employees selected using the multistage purposive sampling technique. But only 240 filled questionnaires were received back.

3.2 Research instruments

The items for the construct "workplace spirituality" were adapted from a scale developed by Ashmos & Duchon (2000) & Milliman et al. (2003). Job satisfaction was measured using the scale of Wright et al. (1998). While items to measure construct "Organizational commitment" were adapted from a scale developed by Allen & Meyer (1990).

4. DATA ANALYSIS
Table 1: "Demographics features of the sample".

Demographic variables	category	Frequency	Frequency
Gender	Male	158	66%
	Female	82	34%
Age	21- 30 years	53	22%
	31 to 40 years	108	45%
	41 to 50 years	43	18%
	Above 50 years	36	17%
Types of organization	Manufacturing	156	65%
	Service	84	35%
Educational Qualification	Graduation	43	18%
	Post Graduation	96	40%
	Professional / ITI	101	42%
Experience in organization	2 years to 5 years	67	28%
	6 years to 9 years	82	34%
	10 and above than 10 years	91	38%
Designation	Senior manager	72	30%
	Manager	101	42%
	Supervisor/ officer	67	28%

4.1 Assessment of the "measurement model"

The "measurement model" assessment is the first phase in "Structural equation modelling analysis". It includes an examination of the reliability and validity of each construct.

4.1.1 Reliability and Validity

The reliability of each construct was examined individually with the help of "Cronbach alpha(α)" and "composite reliability (CB)". According to the criterion(Hair et al., 2019), the "alpha value" and "composite reliability" of each construct should be greater than 0.70. As depicted in Table 2, all "alpha value" and "composite reliability" values are more significant than the threshold limit. Thus, all constructs used in the questionnaire for the present study are reliable.

Table 2: "Reliability and validity"

Second order constructs	First order constructs	Items loading	Construct items loading (Outer loading)	"Cronbach's Alpha (α)"	"Composite reliability (CB)"	"Average Variance Extracted (AVE)"
	Job satisfaction	JBS1	0.740	0.850	0.890	0.675
		JBS2	0.709			
		JBS3	0.799			
		JBS4	0.750			
		JBS5	0.867			
	Organizational commitment	OCOMT1	0.876	0.905	0.910	0.670
		OCOMT2	0.796			
		OCOMT3	0.856			
		OCOMT4	0.781			
		OCOMT5	0.793			
		OCOMT6	0.806			
		OCOMT7	0.764			
		OCOMT8	0.831			
Workplace spirituality	Meaningful work	MFW1	0.890	0.878	0.899	0.605
		MFW2	0.806			
		MFW3	0.789			

		MFW4	0.796		
		MFW5	0.801		
		MFW6	0.889		
	Sense of community	SOCT1	0.780	0.901	0.910	0.620
		SOCT2	0.890		
		SOCT3	0.789		
		SOCT4	0.834		
		SOCT5	0.767		
		SOCT6	0.821		
		SOCT7	0.765		
	Alignment of values	AMOV1	0.865	0.885	0.906	0.598
		AMOV2	0.789		
		AMOV3	0.853		
		AMOV4	0.763		
		AMOV5	0.845		
		AMOV6	0.761		
		AMOV7	0.809		
		AMOV8	0.849		

4.1.2 Convergent validity

"Convergent validity" examines whether constructs of study measure what they are purposed to measure. To ensure the "convergent validity" of the construct, items loading and the "Average Variance Extracted (AVE)" value of each construct are to be examined. As per the criterion (Hair et al., 2019), each item loading should be greater than 0.70, and each construct's AVE must be greater than 0.50. Table 2 revealed that each item loading is more significant than 0.70, and the AVE of each construct is more critical than 0.50. This indicates all constructs have good convergent validity.

4.1.3 Discriminant Validity

It refers to how much the measurements of a given construct differ from those of other constructs in the same model. To Examine the "discriminant validity" of the construct, "Fornell Larker Criterion" and "Hetero trait–Mono trait Ratio (HTMT)" are typically used.
"Fornell and Larcker (1981")" state that the square root of the AVE must be greater than its squared correlations with other latent variables in the model. Table 3 reveals that bold values in the matrix satisfy the "Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion".

Table 3: Fornell Larker Criterion

	AMOV	JBS	MFW	OCOMT	SOCT
AMOV	0.890				
JBS	0.589	0.878			
MFW	0.545	0.690	0.867		
OCOMT	0.530	0.653	0.605	0.769	
SOCT	0.479	0.576	0.589	0.497	0.856

Note: AMOV=Alignment of values, JBS= Job satisfaction, MFW=Meaningful Work,OCOMT= Organizational commitment, SOCT= Sense of community

4.1.4 Hetero trait–Mono trait Ratio (HTMT)

This criterion to examine the discriminant validity was given by Henseler et al.(2015). According to this criterion, all values in the matrix should be less than 0.850. Table 4 reveals that all values in the matrix are less than 0.850. Thus, all constructs have good discriminant validity.

Table 4: HTMT criterion

	AMOV	JBS	MFW	OCOMT	SOCT
AMOV					
JBS	0.565				
MFW	0.556	0.645			
OCOMT	0.576	0.768	0.673		
SOCT	0.509	0.505	0.630	0.612	

Note: AMOV=Alignment of values, JBS= Job satisfaction, MFW=Meaningful Work, OCOMT= Organizational commitment, SOCT= Sense of community

4.2 Evaluation of "structural model"

Before analysing the results of "Structural Equation Modelling", it is desirable to examine the "structural model" to ensure that the model has good "predictive relevance". The "predictive relevance" of the model is reviewed with the help of the coefficient of determination and value of Q2.

Table 5: Coefficient of Determination R-square and Q-square

Dependent constructs	R- Square	Q-square
job satisfaction	0.327	0.221
Organizational commitment	0.467	0.278

The coefficient of determination R2 measures the change in the dependent variable due to the difference in the independent variable. Table 5 depicts that workplace spirituality accounts for a 46.70% change in organizational commitment and a 32.70% change in job satisfaction. The value of Q-square measures the "predictive relevance" of the model. According to the criterion (Hair et al., 2019), if the value of Q-square is greater than 0, the model has good "predictive relevance". As shown in Table 5, the Q-square value of all dependent variables is greater than 0. Thus, the calculated value of R2 and Q2 indicates that the present model has good "predictive relevance".
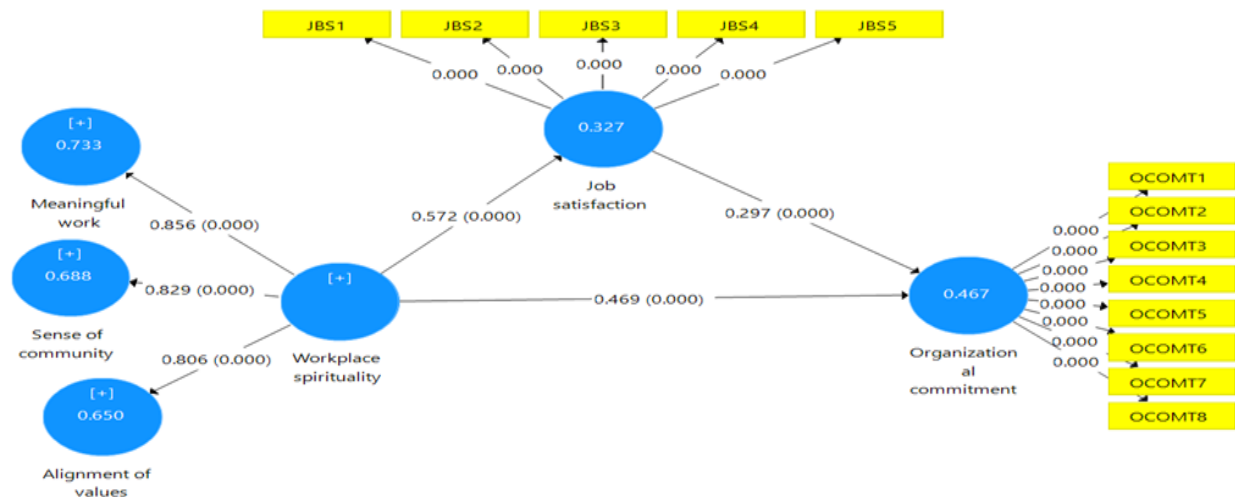
4.3 Hypotheses analysis and results (Direct relationship)

Hypotheses were tested using the bootstrapping method in Smart PLS. The results of the hypotheses testing are given in Table 6. H1 proposes that "workplace spirituality" has a significant and positive impact on job satisfaction. As shown in Table 6, the results indicate that workplace spirituality (WPS) has a significant and positive effect on job satisfaction (t=16.342, β=0.572 and p < 0.05), thus supporting hypothesis H1. Similarly, job satisfaction also reported a significant positive impact on organizational commitment (t= 6.313, β =0.297 and p <0.05), thus supporting the H2. Workplace spirituality (WPS) also reported a significant and positive impact on organizational commitment (t=11.076, β=0.469 and p <0.05), thus supporting the H3.

Table 6: Hypotheses testing and results (Direct relationship)

Effects	Hypotheses	Beta value	T-Statistics	P - Values	Remarks
Workplace spirituality→job satisfaction	HI	0.572	16.342**	0.000	supported
Job satisfaction→ Organizational commitment	H2	0.297	6.313**	0.000	supported
Workplace spirituality →Organizational commitment	H3	0.469	11.076**	0.000	supported

Note- ** indicates results are significant at 0.05 level of significance.

4.4 Mediation analysis

Mediation analysis was carried out to examine the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between WPS and Organizational commitment using the bootstrapping procedure (Hair et al., 2019). The indirect effect shows that with the inclusion of the mediating variable job satisfaction, the effect of WPS on organizational commitment was still significant (t=5.378, β= 0.170 and p<0.05), which shows a mediating effect of Job satisfaction. The direct effect must be examined to check whether this mediation is partial or full. In direct effect, the mediator is excluded. As shown in Table 7, the direct effect is also significant (t=11.078, β=0.469 and p<0.05), which indicates that the variable "job satisfaction" partially mediates the relationship between WPS and organizational commitment. The value of "variance Accounted For (VAF)" calculated by using the following formula (Hair et al., 2019) also confirmed partial mediation since VAF is more significant than 0.20.

VAF= Indirect effect/total effect= (0.170/0.639) = 0.266

Hence H4 was supported.

Table 7: Mediation analysis results

Hypothesis	Effect	Path coefficient	t-statistics	P-values	Result	Remarks
H4 **WPS→JB→OCOMT**	**Total effect**	0.639	20.076**	0.00	significant	**Accepted**
	Indirect effect	0.170	5.372**	0.00	significant	
	Direct effect	0.469	11.078**	0.00	significant	

Note- ** indicates results are significant at 0.05 level of significance, WPS= workplace spirituality, JB= job satisfaction, OCOMT =Organizational commitment.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study offered four important findings. The study's first finding showed a positive association between WPS and "job satisfaction" (JB). This finding aligns with Sony and Mekoth's (2019) findings, who revealed in their study that WPS significantly impacts employee JB and improves job performance. Thus, the current study results imply that an employee who feels that his work is important and meaningful in his life and views his values are aligned with organizational values will have a variety of favourable attitudes about their job.

Second, the research's findings confirmed the results of Bashir & Gani (2020) and Pratama et al. (2022) by demonstrating a favourable relationship between Job satisfaction and organizational commitment. This result implies that management should ensure employees' job satisfaction to promote organizational commitment. The third finding of the current study shows that WPS enables organizational commitment, thus supporting the results of Hisam's (2021) and Yuan's (2022) studies. So, results imply that employee who can integrate their spiritual self with their organization is more likely committed to their organizations. The last finding of the study revealed that "Job satisfaction" partially mediates the relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment.

5.1 Implications

The results of the present study contribute to the existing literature on workplace spirituality by showing its impact on job satisfaction and organizational commitment of employees of MSMEs. The study's findings suggest that MSME executives should promote spiritual practices at work to enhance employees' job satisfaction. The executives of MSMEs should promote spiritual practices at work by assigning meaningful work to employees, arranging yoga and meditation classes, and incorporating spiritual practices in their mission and culture so that employees can feel that their employer cares for their inner(spiritual) needs and can perceive a sense alignment between their values and organizational values. The training programmes should be tailored to provide meaning to work. So, by identifying the areas that need to be focused on, the links between job satisfaction, workplace spirituality, and organizational commitment of employees of MSMEs can contribute to improving the performance of MSMEs. Hopefully, this study will enlighten Indian firms on integrating spiritual practices at the workplace to foster employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment. An increase in organizational commitment and job satisfaction of employees ultimately leads to enhancing organizational performance. So, by promoting workplace spirituality, MSME executives may improve the performance and effectiveness of their firms.

6. SHORTCOMINGS OF STUDY AND SCOPE OF FURTHER RESEARCH

This study scope is limited to employees of MSMEs of Uttarakhand state of India, so before generalizing the results, the model of the current study should be validated in various country contexts and sectors. Additionally, as this is a cross-sectional study, a longitudinal study should be used to validate.

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