



The role of staff engagement and satisfaction in the relationship between workplace spirituality and job performance: Evidence from Ghanaian tertiary institution

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ABSTRACT

In this study, we examine how staff engagement and satisfaction mediates the path between workplace spirituality (WPS) and job performance (JP) using Kumasi Technical University staff as a case study. A structured questionnaire was administered to 186 teaching and non-teaching staff of the university. Sobel mediation analysis was used to explore the relationships under study. The study revealed a positive relationship between WPS and JP. The study again showed that staff engagement significantly mediates the relationship between WPS and JP. Lastly, satisfaction was also found to significantly influence the relationship between WPS and JP. The study recommends that organizations should provide employees with an environment, which harnesses their inner life and develops a sense of belonging and purpose as they perform work-related activities. It is also recommended that management should provide training and development program to encourage staff in undertaking team building activity to enhance cohesion and increase their productivity.

Keywords: workplace spirituality, staff engagement, Sobel mediation analysis, job satisfaction, performance

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INTRODUCTION

Workplace spirituality (WPS) is characterized by an acute sensation of spiritual connectivity to something higher than oneself, for the common good of the society (Afsar & Rehman, 2015). It is a set of corporate principles realized via the development of culture in the workplace (Giacolone et al., 2016). To the employees, spirituality acts as a reinforcement mechanism (Bosch Rabell & Bastons, 2020). Spirituality at the workplace is a concept, which aims to strengthen people's collaboration skills (Hassan et al., 2022; Zaidi et al., 2019) and foster a feeling of involvement between employees resulting in a culture that promotes peace and expands the capacity of the firm (Liputra & Munawaroh, 2016).

WPS promotes employee's quality of work and again provides enjoyable and significant emotions at work (Margaretha et al., 2021), moral judgement (Otake-Ebede et al., 2020) and causes them to be more sensitive to the workplace (Fatima et al., 2019). Behaviors such as job fulfillment, involvement, innovative behavior, and commitment are all dimensions of WPS (Margaretha et al., 2021). According to Bharadwaj and Jamal (2020), employees look for an environment, which resonates with their spirituality. Specifically, a spiritual work environment allows

employees to associate their inner life's in finding a sense of purpose while they are working to achieve company's goal (Singh, 2019). Therefore, WPS drives employee's performance in return for something more than simply material rewards (Sardana, 2018).

Engagement is defined as an individual entire self-investment in their professional job including cognitive, emotional, and physical aspects (Lee Whittington et al., 2017). The first factor is the employee's perception of the company, its leaders, and the working environment. The emotional aspect refers to their feelings for one another, as well as if they have favorable or beneficial sentiments towards the organization. The behavior equivalence is a company's important component that comprises of initiatives to give engaged employees more freedom of choice. Several studies (Lee Whittington et al., 2017; Schaufeli, 2014) have demonstrated that engagement is based on employees' work results. Employee engagement differs from organizational culture principles like job involvement, citizenship, and communication (Margaretha et al., 2018).

Job satisfaction is described as an emotional state resulting from an individual's view of what excites him or allows him to satisfy his highest values at work (Zeidi et al., 2019). Job satisfaction is an employee's feeling of content or discontent at work (Judge et al., 2017).

Job satisfaction has been linked to a variety of factors, including features of the individual's personality as well as contextual factors such as the environment setting in which employees perform their work (van der Walt & de Klerk, 2014). Within this diversity of explanations, there are unique views whose differences must be understood and analyzed if theoretical knowledge and research on job satisfaction are to be redirected (Houghton et al., 2016). Employees that are satisfied are more likely to talk positively of the company, are willing to aid coworkers and are more in line with task decisions (Husin & Nurwati, 2014; Vizano et al., 2021).

According to Sarkawi et al. (2016), job satisfaction that is well executed and closed can aid in increasing employee motivation and organizational loyalty, which will help the organization to perform better. Eliyana et al. (2019) stated that work performance refers to a person's capacity to carry out tasks that help the organizations technological core development. The degree to which a person has a good opinion of themselves is known as the individual self-esteem, which is associated to job satisfaction (Locke, 2015), stress management (Scherer et al., 2016), patience or tolerance and social trust (Feng et al., 2016). According to Ali and Anwar (2021), measures of job satisfaction include the work itself, supervision, and co-worker relationship.

Job performance (JP) is an employee's ability to achieve set objectives (Arifin et al., 2020). Pawirosumarto et al. (2017) highlight that employee performance includes the extent of employee's desire and efforts to accomplish his work. This is vital as it contributes to the competitive advantage and success of a company (Daniel, 2019). Thus far, work environment has been recognized to significantly impact employee performance (Amin & Majid, 2017).

Eliyana and Sridadi (2020) attempted to discover the relationship between spirituality at the workplace and work satisfaction in terms of productivity. They found that spirituality at the workplace has a significant influence on performance and job satisfaction. Zaidi et al. (2019) also conducted research on WPS and job satisfaction. The focus of the study was to see how spirituality in the workplace affected job productivity. The findings revealed that aligning values such as purposeful labor, tolerance and spiritual focus helps employees understand spirituality in the workplace. In a related study, conducted by Margaretha et al. (2021), engagement was influenced by spirituality in the workplace.

Another research conducted by Bantha and Nayak (2021) showed a link between employee creativity and spirituality at the workplace. Jeon and Choi (2021) also initiated a study on spirituality at work, corporate dedication, and personal satisfaction. Their findings revealed a positive link between spirituality at work and personal commitment and life satisfaction. Notwithstanding the above, there has not been any studies made on the impact of spirituality at work and employee involvement to enhance work fulfilment and involvement. As a result, the purpose of this study was to examine the influence of spirituality at work on job satisfaction by determining the effect of performance management on productivity.

MATERIALS & METHODS

This study adopted a WPS questionnaire from a modified version of Eliyana and Sridadi (2020). The questionnaire was designed into five sections. The first one being WPS and wellbeing, which was measured on a Linkert scale of 1-7, where 1=strongly agree to 7=strongly

disagree. Examples are 'I feel am a member of the organizations team 'I want to achieve organizational goals together with my colleagues and 'there's mutual support from colleagues at work. The second was job satisfaction, which was also measured on a Linkert scale of 1-7. Examples are 'my boss is capable of his duties, and I feel satisfied with my job as an employee. The third talked about JP under which we have examples to be 'I can complete task assigned to me in accordance with the time set and there's support from leaders and colleagues in the organization. The fourth section is creative process engagement. Examples are I can bring new and creative ideas on board; I am willing and have the capacity to conduct continuous research. The last section is the demographics. Under it we have the gender, age, staff category and number of working years.

Procedure

Data was collected through in person delivery of questionnaires to the teaching and non-teaching staff of Kumasi Technical University. The questionnaire was targeted at 200 people and 186 out of the total gave out their responses.

Data Analysis

The hypothesized model was tested using Sobel's Mediation analysis. This allows for a simultaneous test of a complete relationship between variables in a hypothesized model, allowing for evaluation of the model's consistency with the data.

Hypotheses Tested

- H1.** WPS positively influences performance.
- H2.** Staff engagement mediate the relationship between WPS and JP.
- H3.** Satisfaction mediates the relationship between WPS and JP.

RESULTS

Demographics

Demographic statistics in **Table 1** illustrate the general information such as gender, age, staff category and number of working years of the study participants. Subsequently, the results showed that out of the 186 total responds obtained, 109 were males and 79 were females, which consisted of 58.6% and 41.4%, respectively. Participants from age 25-35 responded most to the questionnaire delivered, which constitute 38.7% and those from age 56-60 and above responded least to the questionnaire (2.7%). The staff category based on the 186 respondents, 54.3% were academic staff and 45.7% non-academic staff. According to the number of working years, respondents with a year between two-five years of work experience were the dominant respondents (34.4%), while those with more than 10years working experience were the least (17.7%).

Reliability Analysis

In this section, the items, which were used to measure the constructs were analysed to determine whether they were internally consistent with each other and valid. Based on the reliability test, items, which were not reliable were excluded. **Table 2** shows the results of the reliability and validity of the constructs. It is evident that the constructs (WPS, staff engagement, job satisfaction, and JP) are highly reliable since the Cronbach's alpha values ranges from 0.908 to 0.956. This means that the items were internally consistent with each other. The

Table 1. Demographic statistics

Variable	Category	N	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	109	58.6
	Female	77	41.4
Age (years)	Less than 25	27	14.5
	25-35	72	38.7
	36-45	43	23.1
	46-55	39	21.0
	56+	5	2.7
Staff category	Academic	101	54.3
	Non-academic	85	45.7
Number of years	Below 1	64	34.4
	2-5	53	28.5
	6-10	36	19.4
	Above 10	33	17.7

Table 2. Reliability & validity results

	R	r critical	Valid or not
Workplace spirituality			
WPS1	.602	0.138	Valid
WPS2	.695	0.138	Valid
WPS3	.527	0.138	Valid
WPS4	.522	0.138	Valid
WPS5	.588	0.138	Valid
WPS6	.688	0.138	Valid
WPS7	.682	0.138	Valid
WPS8	.696	0.138	Valid
Cronbach's alpha	0.908		
Job satisfaction			
J3	.811	0.138	Valid
J4	.761	0.138	Valid
J6	.825	0.138	Valid
J7	.835	0.138	Valid
J8	.791	0.138	Valid
Cronbach's alpha	0.913		
Job performance			
JP1	.865	0.138	Valid
JP2	.832	0.138	Valid
JP3	.802	0.138	Valid
JP4	.811	0.138	Valid
JP5	.798	0.138	Valid
JP6	.847	0.138	Valid
JP7	.846	0.138	Valid
JP8	.852	0.138	Valid
Cronbach's alpha	0.955		
Staff engagement			
SE 1	.816	0.138	Valid
SE 2	.858	0.138	Valid
SE 3	.803	0.138	Valid
SE 4	.805	0.138	Valid
SE 5	.855	0.138	Valid
SE 6	.839	0.138	Valid
SE 7	.821	0.138	Valid
Cronbach's alpha	0.956		

validity test also shows that all the items are valid since the regression coefficient (r) provided by the test is greater than the r critical value across all the selected items.

Correlation Analysis

After obtaining the reliability and validity of the variables, the Pearson's correlation was used to see if there is a link between the

Table 3. Correlation results

Variables	1	2	3	4
Workplace spirituality	-			
Job satisfaction	.675	-		
Job performance	.620	.889	-	
Staff engagement	.610	.837	.902	-
Mean	2.3797	2.9720	2.7144	2.9396
Standard deviation	1.25380	1.59759	1.56281	1.48923

Table 4. Estimates for workplace spirituality & performance

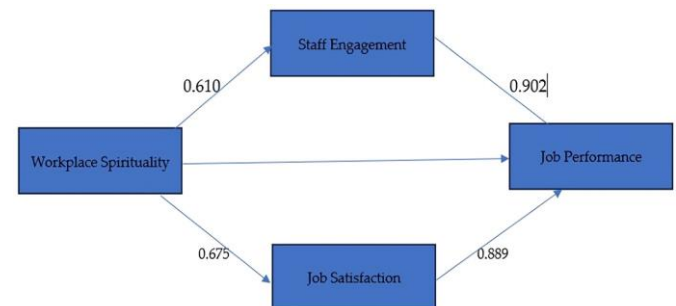
Variables	Estimates	Standard error	t-value	p-value
Constant	.875	.194	4.514	<.001
WSP	.773	.074	10.726	<.001
R ²	.385			

Note. p<.05** & Dependent: **Job performance**

Table 5. Sobel test results

Test	Test statistics	p-value
Sobel test 1	9.808	<.001
Sobel test 2	11.227	<.001

FooterWillBeHere

**Figure 1.** Relationship between variables (Source: Authors)

constructs under study. It can be seen from **Table 3** that there is a positive correlation between the constructs. But in all, there is a substantial link between JP and staff engagement.

Sobel's Mediation Analysis

To meet the study's goal, the Sobel's analysis was performed to determine whether the mediating variables (staff engagement and job satisfaction) significantly impact the link between the dependent variable (JP) and the independent variable (WPS). To investigate the link between the dependent and independent variables, regression analysis was first used. It is evident from **Table 4** that a unit increase in WPS increases JP. This change is significant with a p-value less than 0.001. This implies that WPS and JP have a significant relationship.

After establishing this relationship, two Sobel tests were performed to see whether the two mediating variables (staff engagement and job satisfaction) significantly impact WPS and JP. In Sobel test 1 (**Table 5**), staff engagement significantly mediates the relationship between WPS and JP. In Sobel test 2, job satisfaction was found to significantly mediate the relationship between WPS and JP. **Figure 1** shows the relationship between variables.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this research was to examine how WPS, as developed by Ashmos and Duchon (2014), influenced organizational productivity. **H1** was to see if WPS has an impact on organizational performance and the results revealed a significant impact of WPS on performance.

The main implication drawn from these findings is that the sense of purpose obtained from spirituality at the workplace provides employees with internal cues and energy to keep their focus during the demanding and fast-paced working atmosphere (Kendall, 2019). Apart from highlighting instrumental values of work and their contribution, it is also imperative that organizations emphasize the spiritual values of their existence and link the organization's performance to non-financial needs (Latiff, 2021).

Benefiel et al. (2014) suggested that WPS does not only have personal benefits (joy, satisfaction, and commitment), but has organizational benefits, which is productivity, reduced absenteeism, and turnover. Karakas (2010) conducted a review of 140 papers on how spirituality in the workplace improves organizational performance and discovered that spirituality benefits both people and organizations because spirituality enhances the well-being and quality of life of employees. Therefore, the first hypothesis WPS and JP are positively related.

H2 confirmed that staff engagement significantly mediates the relationship between WPS and JP. This is consistent with the study of McKee et al. (2011), which revealed that engagement significantly mediates the relationship between WPS and JP. It was also supported by many researchers in the context of health (Corry et al., 2013; Mayo, 2009) and tourism. The findings were known to be consistent with previous studies (Baskar & Indradevi, 2020; Fogaça et al., 2018). It can be inferred that organizations that ensures cohesiveness towards their employees can identify problems, able to watch it from a different point of view to create solutions and carefully look for information to support problem solving (Fachrunnisa et al., 2014).

H3 aimed to test the connection between spirituality at work and performance using job satisfaction as a mediating variable. It was derived that cohesiveness at the workplace creates job satisfaction. Employees who feel that their job is part of their own life, their organization is their home, and the vision and mission is their own life vision, help put a high value to their job and organization. It then leads to a higher degree of job satisfaction. This finding was supported by Zerach and Levin (2018). Spirituality at the workplace and individual practical approaches used in the workplace are positively related to job satisfaction (Singer & Klimecki, 2014).

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The first findings revealed a positive impact on WPS and JP. The study again showed that staff engagement significantly mediates the relationship between WPS and JP. Lastly, job satisfaction significantly influences WPS and JP. The study recommends that organizations should provide employees with an environment, which harness their inner life, develop a sense of belonging and purpose while performing work-related activities and to assist them develop new ideas and strategy, which can help them solve problems to attain satisfaction and performance on their job. It can also be recommended that

management should provide training and development program to encourage staff practice team building activity to enhance cohesiveness and increase their productivity.

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Data availability: Data generated or analyzed during this study are available from the authors on request.

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