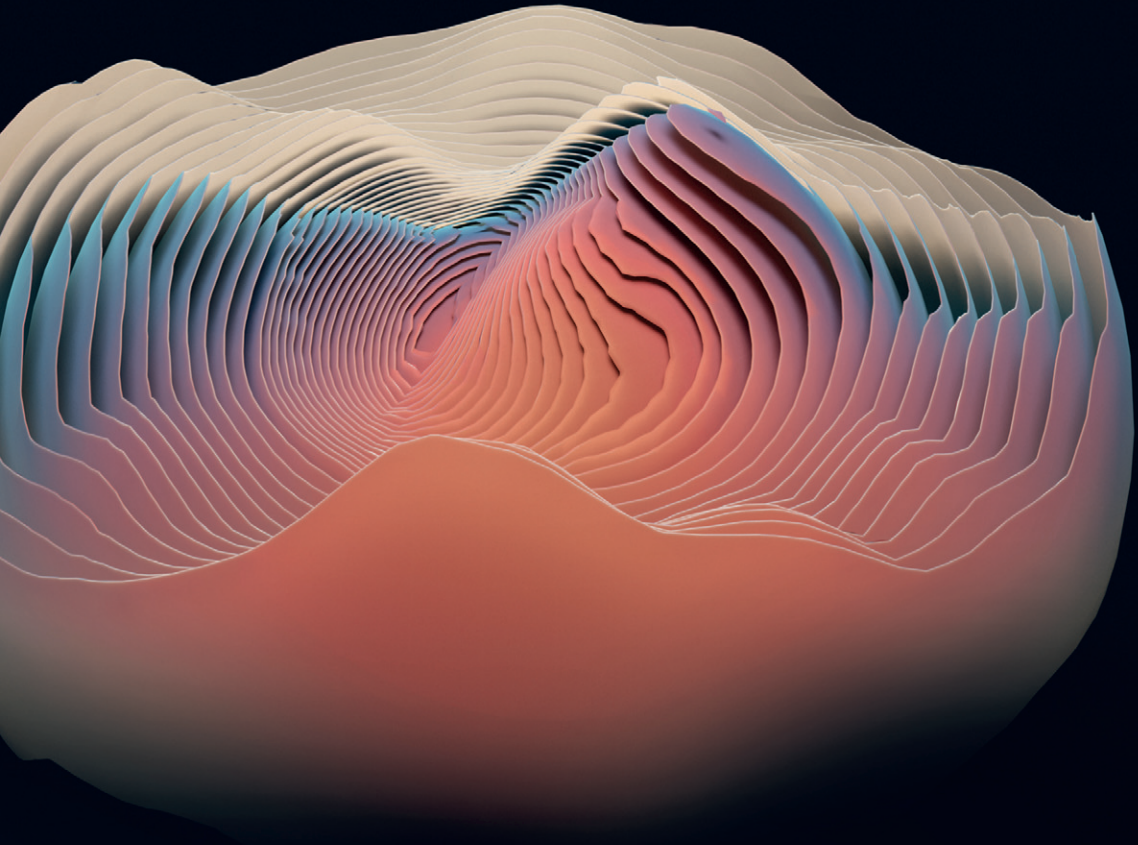


Spirituality Management in the Workplace

New Strategies and Approaches



Edited by

Fahri Özsungur • Fevziye Bekar

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Spirituality Management in the Workplace: New Strategies and Approaches

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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Preface

Spirituality in the workplace positively affects the psychological well-being of employees at work. It reduces the stress, depression, and anxiety of the employees; contributes to the increase in performance, job satisfaction, job commitment, and dedication to the workplace. Spirituality has an important regulatory effect on human psychology. This effect has a multifunctional structure on the behavior of the individual. Thus, individuals shape their perceptions along with their spiritual values and direct their behaviors. This situation triggers the psychological well-being and motivation factors of the employees. In addition, the development of psychological resilience and empathy has an important function in revealing the current position of the individual in working life. The differentiation of spirituality elements due to different demographic characteristics of individuals may cause each to reveal different behaviors in work life.

In recent years, especially as a result of the development of technology, moral values have begun to be integrated into information systems, robots, and machine learning processes. For this reason, revealing the factors affecting spirituality in the workplace is essential not only for individuals but also for the interaction of robots with employees, which are the elements of technology used in the workplace.

Influencing the employees by the leaders, guiding the employees in the processes in which the employees continue their activities, the interactions with the employees, the commitment of the employees to the organization, their performance, productivity, work culture, and their relations with their colleagues and managers are also affected by spiritual issues. This effect can be either positive or negative. The dark aspects of spirituality are called positive transcendence. It is essential to reveal what elements such as positive transcendence are, rather than the positive aspects of spirituality in the workplace.

The effect of psychology and spiritual processes, which are one of the most critical needs of today, on business life causes the formation of spirituality to come to the fore. In circumstances where power based on material elements is not enough, the issue of spirituality comes to the fore. In this book, based on current issues, the effect of spirituality in the workplace on employees is discussed, and what these effects are, how, and what situations they can cause.

In February 2023, during the preparation of this book, an earthquake occurred in Turkey that affected the lives of thousands of people. Due to the earthquake that has been faced, experience has been gained in many subjects, and the importance of the subject of spirituality has been experienced not theoretically but

practically. The devastating effects of the earthquake on individuals were felt not only economically but also psychologically and spiritually. Employers faced complete economic bankruptcy and workers became unemployed. One of the first and most important steps to overcome such great destruction has been the cooperation of the public, private sector, and voluntary organizations. On the other hand, there have been countries that have not spared their moral support to these organizations, first of all, our Turkish people, and then around the world. Many people had to bury their loved ones first and then their property under the ground. Earthquake survivors currently survive, thanks to their moral values, and continue their work processes by trying to adapt to the rest of their loved ones. For this reason, we dedicate this book to tens of thousands of people who lost their lives in the earthquake and those who are left behind trying to hold on to life. Everyone knows that any society may face such adverse conditions one day. We have written this book with a high moral value, both by experiencing and considering all these negative situations. Therefore, we have seen once again how important the issue of spirituality is for us.

Finally, we hope that this book will be useful to all audiences and a crucial guide for all stakeholders in work life. We wish readers to feel this book and review it by noticing that there are scientifically different experiences and feelings in each word.

Stay on Spirituality

Chapter 1

Managing Differences and Importance Between Religion, Spirituality, Spirituality at Work, Cyber Spirituality, and Dataism

Fevziye Bekar and M. Ferhat Özbek

Abstract

Today, changing business systems, especially the COVID-19 epidemic, and the rapid development of technology have brought the phenomenon of spirituality to a new point. Cyber spirituality and dataism are also starting to become the focus of attention in this field. This situation also affects the issue of spirituality in the workplace. While the subject of spirituality in the workplace keeps up with innovations and expands in the literature, the relationship between religion and spirituality continues to be discussed and examined. For this reason, this study aims primarily to explain the relationship between the concept of religion and spirituality. In light of current developments, it is to mention the place of spirituality in the workplace between these two concepts.

Keywords: Spirituality at work; spirituality; dataism; religion; cyber spirituality; conceptual perspective

Introduction

In 2019, the First Pre-Hospital Emergency Aid and Medicine Symposium was held in cooperation with Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University Vocational School of Health Services, Primary and Emergency Program, Faculty of Medicine, Department of Emergency Medicine and Paramedic Association (PARDER). Rallies were organized in different stages. This symposium showed simulations of patients' survival in life-threatening diseases or injuries. First and Emergency students from 16 universities (2 state universities, 14 private universities) competed in different stages in this process. Competitors coming from private universities participating in the competition are the teams that have the opportunity to be

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prepared with the best models and devices in the laboratories they have in the field of health, with the highest level of technology within the possibilities of the universities they have studied. On the other hand, a team of students from two state universities watched videos with a rag doll and prepared with case studies led by academics. Moreover, the school where these contestants receive an education is a district with limited location, transportation, and physical and sociological opportunities. In other words, the limited equipment of the competitors, the support of the trainers, and the knowledge and experience of the trainers were the most important resources. On the day of the competition, these competitors received the third prize in the basic life support stage of the case competitions held in nine different stages, in which 23 groups were participating in the competition.

This experience brought along the following questions: What was it that led these competitors to success despite their financial inadequacy? Was this success based on the same phenomenon as the story of Aziz Sancar, who was born in a town in eastern Turkey and achieved such high success as being awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry, despite being the child of a middle-income family? Yes, these students chose the program they studied to benefit others. They loved the programs they had chosen. But in the essence of all this, what could have led individuals to success? Is it enough just to love your job? Or, what could be the element that reveals the passion for helping and creating benefits for others, not for himself? How do individuals achieve success even though they are aware that they do not have equal opportunity in the use of resources? Are beliefs the main factor in achieving their goals? How do these beliefs enable individuals to be proactive? Does religion/belief play a role in supporting beliefs?

The answers to all these questions have led researchers toward the phenomenon of spirituality. Because, according to [Karakaş \(2008\)](#), human is an entity that lives in line with their beliefs. Employees: It is important for employees to examine the soul, body, and mind as a whole ([Karakaş, 2008](#)). Spirituality is expressed through the eyes of rational thought as the spokesperson of emotions and reason ([Braud, 2009](#), p. 60). For this reason, spirituality has become an important issue in the business world. Before going into detailed information about spirituality, here is a story from [Marques, Dhiman, and King \(2007\)](#), p. 10). Spirituality in the Workplace: What it is, why it matters, how to make it work for you should be included:

One day a man met three stonemasons working in a quarry. Each of them was cutting a block of stone. The man curiously asked the first stone carving master what he was doing. The stonemason said, "What? Are you blind?" he cried, "Don't you see? I'm cutting this stupid piece of stone," he said. Surprised but no wiser, the man turned to the second stonecutter and asked him what he was doing. The second man replied, "I'm cutting the edges of this block of stone so that the bricklayer can build a straight wall." The man, feeling better but still not very clear, turned to the third stonemason who seemed the happiest of the three stonecutters,

and asked him what he was doing. The third master replied, “I am building a cathedral”.

(Marques et al., 2007, p. 10)

This story is essentially a piece of a beautiful parable that represents each stonemason’s degree of spirituality and perspectives. Those who listen to the story, on the other hand, can make inferences that the happiness of individuals is high if their spirituality is high.

Paradigms related to spirituality express curiosity and personal search. In this context, researchers have identified numerous spirituality-based dimensions and structures in a divergent religious and non-religious stream. When the literature is examined, the subject of spirituality is examined from many different aspects. Considering that the majority of the world’s population is subject to one of the five major religions (Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism) (Kriger & Seng, 2005), the differences between these two concepts were mentioned while explaining the concept of religion and spirituality in the early literature (e.g., Altmeyer et al., 2015; Benefiel, Fry, & Geigle, 2014; Hodges, 2002; Hyman & Handal, 2006; Kale, 2004; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). On the basis of these concepts, the subject of spirituality at work was developed (Vasconcelos, 2010). The subject of spirituality was discovered as an awakening mechanism between managers and workers. Spirituality in the workplace, which promises to express inner strength and revitalize organizations, has emerged as a useful concept in many ways (Vitell et al., 2016).

The topic of spirituality at work has been studied mostly on the basis of positive work behavior issues. For example, ethics (Pava, 2007; Sheep, 2006; Vitell et al., 2016), work engagement (Roof, 2015), well-being (Chowdhury, 2018; Hodges, 2002), organizational citizenship behavior (Chen & Yang, 2012), motivation (Guillén, Ferrero, & Hoffman, 2015), job satisfaction (Gupta, Kumar, & ve Singh, 2014), and performance (Karakaş, 2010). At the same time, an inclusive research model based on organizational processes has been proposed for the subject of spirituality in the workplace (Pawar, 2009).

At the same time, the issue of spirituality in the workplace is also discussed in the context of negative psychology, albeit in the minority. Among these topics, unethical organizational behavior (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003; Zhang, 2020), strategic leadership (Phipps, 2012), and organizational frustration (Kolodinsky, Giacalone, & Jurkiewicz, 2008) were focused on. In fact, Zhang (2020) examined that employees based on the meaningfulness of work, which is the sub-dimension of work spirituality, have a moral value that supports unethical proactive behaviors in order to take a place. Here, employees can combine the values of the organization with their own values. In this example, the first master example in the story described above comes to mind. Because sometimes the dark side of individuals can be the element that increases their spiritual values, such as the first stonemason, that they believe in and are happy. He can find meaning in his work by complaining about the life and work of the first master. For this reason, individuals may be able to feed their spiritual aspects with their dark aspects. Or wrongs that are known to be true may be perceived as correct when the subject is

corporate interests. In order to reveal these differences, it is necessary to give a detailed place to human psychology and values. If today's addiction is based on blind belief, the most important issue will be dataism.

Today, especially in the process of COVID-19, business systems have started to change, social isolation and e-internet applications have started to become important. In this situation, there is a change in spiritual values both in business life and in terms of religion. While cyber spirituality practices gained weight in religion, the developments observed in information systems such as metaverse, blockchain, artificial intelligence, big data and robots brought dataism (data religion) issues to the fore.

When the subject of spirituality at work is considered, it can be confused with religion, but it can create a false perception of worshipping the works carried out in the workplace. Today, dataism and cyber spirituality can be concepts that can be confused with each other. Therefore, in this study, the concepts of spirituality, religion, spirituality in business life, cyber spirituality, and dataism will be explained one by one, and then the differences between these five concepts will be discussed.

Definition of Spirituality

The meaning of the word spirituality is based on Latin origins and means “spiritus, meaning breath – the breath of life” (Kale, 2004, p. 93). Although it has been studied by many researchers in the literature, spirituality is a difficult subject to define and measure fully (Peteet & Balboni, 2013). There are more than 70 different definitions of the word spirituality (Karakas, 2008, p. 61).

Definitions of the subject of spirituality have been discussed through different authors and sources as follows:

- According to Türk Dil Kurumu Sözlükleri (TDK, 2023), spirituality (1) is intangible things, spiritual things; (2) heart strength has been defined as moral.
- Spirituality can be defined as the desire to find the ultimate purpose in life and live accordingly (Marques et al., 2007, p. 9).
- Spirituality also means intimacy and devotion to someone or something that is considered sacred by the self of individuals. These sacred objects can be divine power, humanity, nature, and the universe (Worthington et al., 2010, p. 119).
- According to the definition of Reich (2000, p. 126), spirituality means the sharing of joy and sorrow among people, a deep connection between people themselves and nature at a higher level.
- Alewell (2022, pp. 125–126), on the other hand, used McGhee and Grant (2017), Mitroff and Denton (1999) and Sheep (2006)'s studies as a basis while defining spirituality. He defined spirituality at the individual level as individual needs and characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors related to them. These attitudes and behaviors; transcendence and being connected with a higher power and/or a greater whole (searching), being connected with other people,

meaning in life, and personal development between birth and death as the existential poles of life.

- To make a comprehensive evaluation of the various discourses made about spirituality: The concept of spirituality is a sense of inner self, a sense of meaning, a sense of interconnectedness, and beyond (or God). Finally, based on these ideas, it can be described as “dedicated” to exploring spirituality. Here, one can connect the inner self of the person in a deep and meaningful way (Kale, 2004).
- Individual spirituality is associated with philanthropy, productivity, humanism, honesty, justice, partnership, reception, respect, responsibility, and trust (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003).¹

When these definitions are examined, spirituality is essentially a factor that supports individuals’ search for meaning between life and death. It can contribute to a person’s connection to a power greater than himself or to create this power. Thanks to spiritual power, the attitudes and behaviors of individuals can be shaped in line with their beliefs. These beliefs can be shaped under the influence of ethical committees and cultural values.

Spirituality and Religion

The differences and similarities between spirituality and religion have been the focus of attention of many researchers (e.g., Benefiel et al., 2014; Dein, Cook, Powell, & Eagger, 2010; Kale, 2004; Newman, 2004; Vasconcelos, 2015; Zwissler, 2007).

The use of the concepts of spirituality and religion interchangeably and their reflection on business processes can be traced back hundreds of years. Written in the sixth century by Benedict (c. 480–543), St. in the rules of monastic life, the concepts of work and religion were discussed together. For Benedict, work and prayer are complementary factors for the formation of spirituality on the path to holiness. The priests here spend most of the day working, and after the working process is over, they are interested in the worship processes. It considers work as sacred as prayer, and it is stated that well-being is provided for the body and soul (Benefiel et al., 2014). According to Benefiel et al. (2014), these teachings, which combine religion and work, influenced the Christian West on the basis of the sanctity of labor, and Martin Luther during the Reformation. It is stated here that Luther claims that “perfection should be sought in business life,” and that all people, regardless of their status, can reach holiness through “a faithful work discipline.”

There is an important point to be made between the subject of spirituality and religion. The definition of spirituality evokes the concepts of religion/religiousness. The concepts of *religion/religiousness* and *spirituality* are often interrelated or used interchangeably. When we consider the source of this situation in terms of the attitude-behavior approach, the attitudes and behaviors of individuals may be related to a certain religion or not otherwise. For example,

God (in Christianity), Yahweh (in Israelites), Allah (in Islam) is defined as the most important power. Spirituality, whose source is benefited from the foundations of religion, can be expressed as “religious spirituality.” It can also be called “religiousness.” Religious spirituality has developed on religion as a collective, often heavily institutionalized foundation (Alewell, 2022, pp. 125–126; Vitell et al., 2016). When we consider a spirituality that is not based on religion, there is a difference between the concepts of religion and spirituality (Karakas, 2008, p. 62; Twigg & Parayitam, 2007, p. 331). In other words, the concept of “religiousness” generally includes concepts and organized practices related to religion (for example, sects and their associated customs and traditions). The term “spirituality,” on the other hand, is used to indicate feelings and behaviors that include transcendence and unity (Probst & Strand, 2010, p. 141; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). Because, basically, individuals (atheists, etc.) who are not affiliated with a particular religion may also have different spiritual values regardless of their religious belief status.² Therefore, in this definition, spirituality is a general term. It covers a wide spectrum of forms, from purely religious spirituality to non-religious spirituality and many mixed forms in between (Alewell, 2022, pp. 125–126).

If we need to elaborate on the subject from the perspectives of different authors: For example, according to a study by Mitroff and Denton (1999, p. xvi), religion has a largely institutionalized, formal structure based on certain teachings for the individual’s belief system. Contrary to this definition, the concept of spirituality is stated to have an informal and personal meaning (Mitroff & Denton, 1999). In other words, the concept of spirituality, unlike institutionalized religious thought, is accepted as a sacred element in the essence of all existence. Whatever its source, the sacred element lives in every living organism. Spirituality is a non-natural, non-exclusive, patriarchal, and sexist-free approach to connecting with this unique source of all existence. However, religion generally directs people to the wealth of knowledge, senses, aspirations, and emotions that individuals contain (Hyman & Handal, 2006; Marques et al., 2007).

The concept of spirituality is thought to have a broader perspective, like an umbrella that includes religion (Dust & Greenhaus, 2013; Groen, 2007, pp. 287, 312). The concept of spirituality may have more tolerance, open-mindedness, and inclusiveness than the concept of religion (Jackson & Konz, 2006, p. 251). In other words, while the concept of religiosity is described as “institutional and narrow-scoped,” spirituality is characterized as more “personal and subjective.” The reason for this distinction also reveals the necessity of examining religion from a social perspective based on cultural change. Moreover, in recent years, good “individual spirituality” and bad “institutionalized religion” can also be based on perception management based on polarization (Zinnbauer et al., 1997). According to Hyman and Handal (2006), even though the structures of the definitions of religion and spirituality are different, religion provides guidance on what people can do in their spiritual journey with their application or commitment to the rules, beliefs, or laws that are objective, external behavior and organizational practices or group commitment. It contributes to providing a subjective, internal, or divine experience or a direct relationship with God in the

definition of spirituality. [Peteet and Balboni \(2013\)](#) also supports this view in their study. According to [Peteet and Balboni \(2013\)](#), spirituality is attained through experience gained through a religious tradition, connecting with a greater reality that gives meaning to one's life, and through nature and art than in more meditation or secular Western culture.

According to [Dein et al. \(2010\)](#), while religion generally refers to socially based beliefs and traditions associated with ritual and ceremonial, spirituality is generally a deeply individualistic experience in which each person's life is experienced as contributing together with a valuable and greater "whole." These are the sense of "belonging" and "acceptance." Spirituality is expressed through art, poetry, and myth, as well as religious practice. Both religion and spirituality often emphasize the depth of meaning and purpose in life. Of course, life doesn't have to be religious for it to be deeply meaningful, as atheists would remove it. Still, although some atheists do not consider themselves spiritual, many do have a spiritual experience. Spirituality is therefore a more inclusive concept than religion.

To summarize, in line with the above-mentioned information; There are similarities and differences between the concepts of spirituality and religion. Spirituality is an approach to meeting the spiritual needs of people. Religion is a belief system. The differences between the concept of spirituality and the concept of religion can be summarized as follows:

Differences between religion and spirituality:

- While religion requires a certain belief system and organizational structure, spirituality is a more personal and broader approach that includes the concept of religion.
- While religion is associated with a certain understanding of god and forms of worship that also have rituals, there is no understanding of god or worship rituals in spirituality.
- While religion is generally associated with social order and codes of conduct, spirituality is more associated with personal development and inner experiences.

The similarities between spirituality and religion can be summarized as follows:

- Both spirituality and religion are aimed at meeting people's spiritual needs. Therefore, it has an important place.
- Both spirituality and religion support people's inner experiences and personal growth.
- Both spirituality and religion encourage people to connect with each other and to be in unity, that is, in solidarity.
- Both spirituality and religion support people's search for meaning and purpose in their lives.

As a result, there are similarities and differences between both spirituality and religion. Both concepts are aimed at meeting the spiritual needs of people. Therefore, it has an important place. But religion has a certain belief system and organizational structure, dogmatic, non-negotiable issues. Spirituality, on the other hand, is a more subjective approach. It does not require any belief system or order of worship regarding spirituality.

The purpose of this research is not to make due diligence or question a particular belief (or lack of belief). To ensure that the issue of spirituality in the workplace affects the functioning of business life in terms of individuals. For this reason, it is thought that it will be useful to make an explanation about the concept of workplace spirituality in the light of these explanations to better reveal the purpose of the research.

Definition of Spirituality at Work

Spirituality and religion are intertwined in people's journeys in this world. It was insufficient in some criteria. It may be important for organizations whether people take into account the issue of spirituality, especially in organizational environments. Because in the twentieth century, although there was information about the dark aspects of institutions, institutions intervened to meet the needs of people to do business with their hearts. Spirituality principles promise permanent spiritual values for people's search (Vitell et al., 2016).

Spirituality in the workplace provides the examination of employees as a whole in the form of soul, body, and mind because the development of belief and spirit is as important as mental strength in the workplace (Karakaş, 2008, p. 60). According to Karakaş (2008, pp. 60–61), spirituality at work is defined as a journey. This definition, which is sustainable, authentic, meaningful, and holistic, has a deep meaning in the existential self and has a universally meaningful relationship: (a) originality, (b) the meaning of seeking, (c) interdependence, (d) transcendence, which is defined as the "best" of the human condition, which is defined by scientists as positive organizational deviation (Karakaş, 2008). According to McCulloch (2006, pp. 12–13), transcendence is the individual's feeling of being internally connected not only with himself but also with different subjects and contributing to the subjects he is connected to. It is the individual's thinking that the service he has provided to others in the workplace or in the institutions and organizations where he works is important. Transcendence is also the need to feel connected with others, a sense of meaning, satisfaction, and purpose (McCulloch, 2006). Spiritual well-being/health is the idea that the work environment supports the spirituality of individuals, fulfilling the functions of the person at work with his whole self, showing high potential in personal development; being directly related to values such as ethics, hope, honesty, and forgiveness is among the beneficial elements that spirituality creates in the workplace (Braud, 2009, p. 63). According to Marques et al. (2007), spirituality at work is like catching an angel. Explaining spirituality at work is spiritual and beautiful, but confusing.