INFLUENCE OF WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY ON EMPLOYEES’ JOB COMMITMENT: A STUDY OF LAGOS ISLAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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ABSTRACT
This study investigated the relationship between workplace spirituality and employees’ job commitment in Lagos Island local government. The study used the descriptive survey research design to select 192 respondents using purposive sampling method. Three hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation with the aid of SPSS version 20. Results indicated a strong and statistically significant relationship between the three components of workplace spirituality (meaningful work, inner life, and sense of connection) and three components of employees’ commitment (affective, continuance and normative commitment). Arising from the findings, it was recommended among other things, that Lagos Island local government management should create forums for open discussion on spirituality, values, and rights of employees, and integrate organizational goals and personal goals to increase employees’ commitment. Also, there is need for Lagos Island local government management to put in place policies and procedures towards spiritual freedom which will assist employees develop their true potential and personality. Finally, Lagos Island local government management should indoctrinate workplace spiritual programmes towards organizational commitment into the workforce. By so doing, this will compel workers to be more loyal and committed, thereby rendering more positive services to the third tier of government.

Keywords: Workplace Spirituality, Inner Life, Meaningful Work, Sense of Connection, Employees’ Commitment, Lagos Island Local Government.

Introduction
The role of spirituality cannot be ignored in the day-to-day activities of human being especially in this twenty-first century. This confirmed the position of Gopal and Khagendra (2015) that spirituality and human behaviour are interconnected to each other. According to Indradevi (2020),organisations in the 21st century will be expecting the workforce to bring their whole selves to the job – not only physical presence and mental power, but also spirituality. In view of this, it is imperative to know the effect of workplace spirituality of the employees in different organisational sector as it relates to their job commitment. Spirituality in workplace is gradually valued, as many businesses leaders regard spirituality as a meaningful solution to many problems in organisation.

Sharma (2010); Gotsis and Kortezi (2008) opined that spirituality has become a growing endorsement on organisational building. They stated further that the success of an organisation depends not only on how the organisation selects and makes most use of the human competencies,
but it also depends on how to inspire the workforce to be committed. The perceptions of employees about workplace spirituality help to explain their level of commitment and loyalty. According to Rego and Cunha (2008), the commitment is an essential factor, specified that more committed people have a tendency to devote higher efforts to work, consequently contributing to organisational performance.

For example, in organizations with higher levels of workplace spirituality, the workforce feel that organizations do not only offer them jobs, but also offer them a physical and mental growing environment, and as a result, they had a stronger sense of belonging and ownership (Bhat, Anees, & Manzoor, Geelani, Khan, Ali, Gull, Nusrat, & Ahmad, 2019). Equally, Amin, Situngkir and Aira (2021) acknowledged that attitudes of employees with high levels of spirituality are positive, supportive of the organisation, and display commitment to a much better degree than in organisations without such values. Meanwhile, the modern world is confronted by social, economic, political, security and environmental problems that are the result of human greed and a lack of love and compassion. These large-scale problems have triggered in human being a renewed search for harmony and peace, a search that is essentially a spiritual journey.

However, workplace spirituality strategy recognizes that people work not only with their hands but also with their hearts or spirits (Ashmos& Duchon, 2000). These days spirituality of an employee in the workplace has become a major focus of organizational research. According to Muteswa and Ortlepp (2011), one of the most disruptive and expensive challenges facing organisation today is employee’s turnover and disloyal to the work system. That is why keeping employees committed to the organisation have become a top priority for many present-day organisations. In view of this, workplace spirituality is about understanding that workers are not only having a mind but also a spirit which stimulate them to look for a rationale behind the work they perform as well as a wish to develop relationship with others and having a sense of connection (Jayashree & Ishita, 2020).

Meanwhile, organizational commitment can be referred to as the individuals’ sense of belonging in their organizations. In addition, the employees’ organizational commitment consists of emotional and staying commitments. The former is the employees’ will with the emotional experience in the organizations. Hence, they are willing to make efforts for organizational goals; the latter means that employees would like to stay in the organizations. As a result of workplace spirituality, the employees would experience trust and honesty or sense of self-realization, which strengthened their commitment to the organizations and job satisfaction, and reduce business costs and absence rates.

**Statement of the Problem**

Human resource as the most important asset forms the intellectual capital of any organisation and if not treated well it will lead to the end of such organisation. This explains why there is need for organizations to pay more attention to employees’ workplace spirituality in order to gain their commitment and loyalty (Bhat et al., 2019). According to Pradhan, Pradhan and Jena (2016), the increasing recognition and open acceptance of the concept of workplace spirituality can be judged from the fact that a recent investigation revealed that over a thousand research paper had been
written on the subject matter. This confirms the position of Fatima, Naz, Chughtai, and Khawaja (2017) that workplace spirituality is one of the most important trends that have emerged in the last few decades. Besides, organisations have realized that in order to gain strategic competitive advantage, there is need for them to continuously outperform their competitors by paying more attention to the employee’s demands and aspirations.

Similarly, for organisation to have a superior performing and committed workforce they have to engage the workforce in a meaningful and spiritual way (Habeeb & Khan, 2018). Bodi and Ali (2012) revealed the positions of several studies in which organisations that pay more attention towards ethical and spiritual aspects reap both financial and non-financial benefits. Likewise, Sukmawati and Afendi (2017), in their studies established that organizations that provide their employees with opportunities to fulfill their spirituality will have committed and loyal workforce than organisations that refused to provide such opportunities. Also, promoting work spirituality will lead to employees feeling complete when they come to work because it will result in a high degree of personal fulfillment and increased morale (Garg, 2018).

Many researchers have found spirituality to have a positive impact on organisational commitment of employees. Nazir and Malik (2013); Cherati, Mahdavi and Rezaeian (2013) found that workplace spirituality strongly predict the organizational commitment and work satisfaction. The similar research conducted by Ahiauzu and Asawo (2010) discovered that workplace spirituality positively influences employee’s work attitudes. Most of the studies in the area of spirituality at workplace have been examined in Western perspective. However, considering the level of unethical behaviour and practices, lack of trust, creativity and motivation, loss of values and belief as a result of paying little or no attention to self-worth or spirituality among the local government employees, there is need to examine the role of workplace spirituality in non-western countries such as Nigeria. It is against this background that this study investigates the relationship between workplace spirituality in the third tier of government (Local Government) using one of the oldest local governments (Lagos Island Local government) in the commercial capital of Nigeria and metropolitan city (Lagos) as a point of reference.

Objectives of the Study
1. To investigate the relationship between meaningful work and affective commitment in Lagos Island Local government.

2. To investigate the relationship between inner life and continuance commitment in Lagos Island Local government.

3. To investigate the relationship between sense of connection and normative commitment in Lagos Island Local government.

Research Hypotheses
Ho: There is no significant relationship between meaningful work and affective commitment in Lagos Island Local government.
Ho: There is no significant relationship between inner life and continuance commitment Lagos Island Local government.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between sense of connection and normative commitment Lagos Island Local government.

Literature Review

Workplace Spirituality

Workplace spirituality is considered highly personal; this explains the reasons why virtually all academic definitions recognized that spirituality involves a sense of connectedness at work, and deeper ethics (Pushkar, Abhishek, & Kailash, 2020). According to Rajput, Goyal, Jyotsna and Kundu (2020), workplace spirituality is not about religion, or getting people converted to a specific religious belief system, but is based on personal values extremely rooted in sense of connectedness, meaning, purpose, tolerance, and open mindedness. This clarified the position of Evalyna and Wibawa (2020) that workplace spirituality is about effort to find one’s purpose in life, develop a strong connection with coworkers and have alignment between one’s core beliefs and organizational.

In addition, workplace spirituality is a multifaceted construct that involves individual, the organization, and the interactions of the personalities within the organization. The concept provides a framework where employees can discover ultimate their purpose in life, develop strong connections with co-workers and other people associated with the work environment, and as well establishes an alignment between core beliefs and the values of the organization (Jayashree & Ishita, 2020). According to Fry (2003), the concept of spirituality originates from religious perspectives but not limited to formal religion. Consequently, Vandenberghhe (2011) affirmed that many studies involving workplace spirituality are not related to any particular religious tradition, but instead focus on individual and organizational values and practices.

Meaningful Work

Meaningful work is defined as one’s experience that employees work is a significant and meaningful part to his/her life. Khan and Qazi (2017) established that after recognizing spiritual element in employees, the expression of spirituality at work requires accepting that employees want to be involved in work that gives meaning to their lives. In other words, meaningful work also creates a sense of joy and energy at work in the sense that one feels work has meaning for him beyond the material rewards (Duchon & Plowman 2005). Furthermore, meaningful work responds to reason why one is in the workplace by admitting that his work helps him to express his inner self.

Inner Life

Spirituality at work is not talking about being a supernatural person or ability to perform physical or intellectual tasks; it is rather, about finding an opportunity at work to express many aspects of ones being. Beheshtifar and Zare (2013), were of the view that understanding spirituality at work begins with acknowledging that the nourishment of inner life can lead to a more meaningful and productive
outer life. Also, workplace with inner peace and harmony will bring about spirituality and commitment from the workforce (Baber, Baber & Agarwal, 2021).

**Sense of Connection**
A critical dimension of workplace spirituality involves having a deep connection or relationship with others, which has been articulated as a sense of connection. Sense of connection at work is based on the belief that people see themselves as connected to one another and that there some types of relationship between one’s life and other people. Neal and Bennett (2000) affirmed that this level of spirituality involves the mental, emotional, and spiritual (e.g., ‘spirit of corps”) connections among employees in teams or groups in organizations. The essence of sense of connection is that it involves a deeper relationship with people, including support, freedom of expression, and genuine caring. For instance, giving employees sense of belonging shows clearly that they are all part of a larger organizational family and therefore will encourage them to show more commitment.

**Affective Commitment**
Affective commitment is referred to the employee’s emotional attachment and identification with the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Affective commitment considers three main aspects namely: the development of psychological affinity to a firm; association with the organization; and the wish to remain as a member of the organization. Therefore, employees develop affective commitment when they are treated fairly and respectfully at work.

**Continuance Commitment**
Employees tend to develop continuance commitment when they perceive the cost of leaving organization is high. That is, when employee works for several years, he tends to accumulate investments in form of time, job effort and organization specific skills which are too costly to lose. In view of this, employees tend to evaluate their contribution towards the organization and what would be the gain by remaining in the organization and what they would lose if they leave.

**Normative commitment**
Normative commitment exists when the worker feels obligated towards the firm which has invested in them. Therefore, it is right decision when employee decides to stay and continue to provide their service to organisation, having been trained and developed using organisation resources.

**Link between Workplace Spirituality and Employee’s Commitment**
In today’s business competitive environment, organizations are canvassing the need for committed workforce for its growth and development. However, commitment in this context has been brought out by Allen and Meyer (1990) as a “psychological state characterizing an employee’s relationship with the organization which reduces the probability that he may break the employment relationship”.

In view of this, it stands as a requirement for organization to create an environment where there should be a promotion of hope and happiness among its workers (Bodia, & Ali, 2012). In view of this, the positive employee motivational values are expected to develop a sense of belonging with greater loyalty and commitment from employees which contributes significantly to organization (Gupta, Kumar, & Singh, 2014).
These kinds of perceptions emphasized on the fact that business organizations are not just machines for producing goods but rather it is in the form of human community towards development a meaningful and rewarding life experiences for individuals and society (Geigle, 2012). It is important to note that the health of the organization is dependent on the health of entire workforce (physically and spiritually) and for this reason, Seaward (1995) studies have discovered that spirituality at work-settings is a fundamental trait of an effective organization. Spirituality in this context is about recognizing that people come to work with more than their bodies and minds; as they bring their talents and unique spirit individually (Adebayo, Akanmode & Udegbe, 2007).

Meanwhile, it can be said that spirituality at workplace is becoming an important agenda for today’s organization because people want to feel connected to their job profile, and also seek to get connected to each other at work (Indradevi, 2020). For that reason, organizations with a sense of spirituality in their value system, creates a sense in the employees that organizations not only provide them with jobs, but also offer them a conducive environment where both the skilled and unskilled workers will have regard to job as purposeful and important (Karakas, 2010).

According to Ashmos and Duchon, (2000) and Dudeck (2004), it has been observed that, employees whose career direction equivalents with their anticipated job outline are found of achieving job satisfaction and consequently, getting committed within their chosen job. Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) were of the point of view that when the workforces are treated with kindness and given sense of belonging, they use to display a greater level of commitment to their organization. In corroborating the earlier statement Rego and Cunha (2008) in their empirical study to understand the link between spirituality and organizational commitment has proved that “more committed people have tendency to dedicate higher efforts to work.

**Theoretical Framework**

In order to have better understanding of this study, social exchange theory will be discussed to provide a better explanation. Social Exchange Theory (SET) is among the most influential conceptual models for understanding workplace behaviour. It is a theory that describes relationship as result oriented social conduct. It has been widely used as a primary lens to explain how workplace spirituality influences employee’s commitment (Blau, 1964). The social exchange theory makes assumptions in two fields: One is regarding human nature and second is regarding the quality of relationships (Homans, 1958). According to this theory, people choose to go into relationships and maintain it in order to maximize the benefits of these relationships. For instance, if employees perceive that the cost of remaining in the relationship outweighs the benefits, they will withdraw from the relationship (Blau, 1964). Invariably, this theory states that people conduct a cost-benefit analysis in order to evaluate the risk and rewards that it would bring, once the risks outweigh the rewards, the relationship is terminated.

**Methodology**

The study employed descriptive survey research design to examine the influence of workplace spirituality on employee’s job commitment in Lagos Island local government, Lagos State Nigeria. The study population comprises of all staff of the local government including non-pensionable staff.
but exclude industrial training (IT) students and the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members serving in the Lagos Island local government using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling size determination table, a sample size of two hundred and forty-eight (248) was selected from the population of six hundred and eighty-five (685) using purposive sampling technique.

The study adapted two scales for data collections purposes: for workplace spirituality, a 20 items standardised scale by Ashmons and Duchon (2000) was adapted for independent variables with reliability co-efficient of 0.84. Also, 24 items standard scale by Allen and Meyer (1990) was adapted for dependent variable (organisational commitment) and obtained reliability co-efficient of 0.80. The scale was formatted on a 4-point Likert’s type rating scale: ranging from strongly disagree (1), to strongly agree (4). The copies of the questionnaire were administered personally by the researcher with the help of two experienced research assistants. A total of two hundred and forty-eight (248) copies of questionnaire were administered, out of which 227 copies were retrieved but only 192 copies were certified valid for final analysis. With the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20, data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis at 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion
This section comprised of the tested hypothesis utilizing Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. Below are the results of the analysis:

**Hypothesis 1**

**Table 1: Result of correlation between Meaningful Work and Affective Commitment.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MEANIN_WORK</th>
<th>AFFECT_COMMIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
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<td>.211**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.211**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

Table 1 shows the result of the bi-variate Pearson’s correlation analysis between meaningful work and affective commitment in Lagos Island local government, Lagos State. The result indicates a positive and statistically significant relationship between the variables \(r=.211, \ p<.05\). This suggests that an employee’s feels his work has meaning beyond the material rewards, he will display more commitment to his job in the local government. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted.
Hypothesis 2

Table 2: Result of correlation between Inner Life and Continuance Commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>INNER_LIFE</th>
<th>CONTIN_COMM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pearson Correlation</strong></td>
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<td>.224**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sig. (2-tailed)</strong></td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>192</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 shows the result of the bi-variate Pearson’s correlation analysis between inner life and continuance commitment in Lagos Island Local government. The result indicates a positive and statistically significant relationship between the variables ($r=.224$, $p<.05$). This implies that inner life can lead to more meaningful employees’ commitment in the local government in focus. In view of this, the alternate hypothesis that state there is significant relationship between inner life and employee’s commitment was accepted.

Hypothesis 3

Table 3: Result of correlation between Sense of Connection and Affective Commitment.

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>SENSE_CONNECT</th>
<th>NORMA_COMM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pearson Correlation</strong></td>
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<td>.216**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sig. (2-tailed)</strong></td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>192</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 shows the result of correlation analysis between sense of connection and normative commitment among the Lagos Island local government workers. The result indicates a positive and statistically significant relationship between the variables ($r=.216$, $p<.05$). This implies that sense of connection which is based on the belief that workers see themselves as connected to each other will create a strong
teamwork culture. Therefore, the alternate that state there is a significant relationship between sense of connection and normative commitment was accepted.

Discussion

The outcomes of this study are in line with quite a lot of related studies that focused on the relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment. From hypothesis one, a positive and significant relationship was established between meaningful work and affective commitment. According to the result, local government workers want to be involved and attached to work that gives them meaningful life. For instance, if work is meaningful employees will be happier and healthier by bringing their emotional selves to the organization, thereby displaying more commitment and are less likely to leave the organisation.

This finding corroborates the study of Haryokusumo (2015); Mousa and Alas (2016) that established a positive relationship between meaningful work and affective commitment that promoting and maintaining spiritual practices like meditation on spirituality are important for creating a healthy and happy work environment for the workers. Also, Campbell and Hwa (2014) revealed that organizations that recognize and value the spiritual dimension to work by providing a more meaningful, compassionate and sustainable environment for staff creates a room for joy and energy at work in the sense that individual feels work has meaning for him beyond the material rewards. Also, the study is in line with Evalyna and Wibawa (2020) that workplace spirituality variables have positive and significant effect on organizational commitment. That is, employees with high workplace spirituality will have higher organizational commitment that will bring out the best in them.

Similarly, hypothesis two which states there is no significant relationship between inner life and continuance commitment was rejected because, the finding showed a strong and positive relationship between inner life and continuance commitment. The finding is in line with the work of Evalyna and Wibawa (2020) that inner life gives high influence on the workplace spirituality variable when compared to other two dimensions and leads to employees’ job commitment. Consequently, the finding corroborates the work of Amin, et al. (2021) that by improving spirituality climates employees’ commitment will be better enhanced; besides, employee with high organizational commitment will not hide it. This is because the workers reciprocate when organization satisfies their spiritual desires. In addition, it permits them to experience a sense of belongings, psychological safety and makes them feel appreciated as human beings and that they deserve good treatment.

Besides, employees who are cared for and valued by their organizations will always attach to their organization. However, the present study contradicts the work of Campbell and Hwa (2014) who found a negative relationship between inner life and continuance commitment. Hypothesis three also revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between sense of connection and normative commitment. Corroborating Meyer and Herscovitch (2001), normative commitment exists when employee feels gratitude through training and career development and other investment by the
organization and compelled to stand by the organizational. The study conforms to the work of Garg, (2018) that once employee experience a sense of connection in their work there will be higher normative commitment. Equally, the study found support in the work of Mousa and Alas (2016) who confirmed that sense of connection tends to be the most influential dimension in terms of normative commitment. Also, this study aligned with the outcome of Rajput, et al. (2020) that there is a relationship between impacts of workplace spirituality and institutions commitment. Meanwhile, the outcomes of the work are in line with social exchange theory by Homans (1958) and Blau (1964). To Blau (1964), successful exchange can cause one individual to become committed to another, suggesting that an exchange may sometimes affect relationships. Social exchange theory argues that people calculate the overall worth of a particular relationship by subtracting its cost from the rewards it provides. In other word, the theory affirmed that when people experience workplace spirituality, they feel more affectively attached to their organizations and experience a sense of responsibility and loyalty to the organization.

Conclusion and Recommendation
The study investigated the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee’s job commitment in Lagos Island local government. The study concluded that there is a positive and statistical relationship between workplace spirituality dimensions (meaningful work, inner life and sense of connection) and employees’ commitment dimensions (affective, continuance and normative commitment) among the workers of Lagos Island local government. The study found that employees are spiritual beings and always searching for a meaningful life at work and would aspire to work in organization whose values are compatible with their own because they desire to experience joy at work. The study also brings into being that workplace spirituality led to employee’s prosperity and benefits for the local government by generating a positive organizational culture which results in better commitment and loyalty.

Similarly, the practice of workplace spirituality has created the positive sign on the commitment of local government employees, specifically, that of Lagos Island local government. Meanwhile, as the study revealed the importance and understanding of workplace spirituality at the local government administration level, it will be useful to policy makers in public and private sectors, trade union leaders and activist, HR professionals and practitioners as well as researchers who may wish to embark on similar study. Consequently, the practice of workplace spirituality will create a positive work environment to entire workforce with high level of harmony and relationship.

It is recommended that the management of Lagos Island Local Government should create forum for round-table discussion in form of seminars for all workers on workplace spirituality, values, ethical behaviour and rights of employees, and integrate organizational goals and personal goals in order to boost employees’ well-being and commitment. In addition to that, there is need for Lagos Island local government to put in place policies and procedures towards spiritual freedom which will assist employees develop their true potential and personality. Equally, management of local government should indoctrinate workplace spiritual value towards organizational programmes by allocating space and create few minutes for religious activities, by so doing, this will compel workforce to realize their self-worth and be more loyal and committed. Finally, future studies might
be repeated in other local governments of the federation as well as ministries, department, agencies (MDAs) or private sector of Nigeria economy.

References


