

Workplace spirituality and organizational citizenship behaviour: Exploring gender as a moderator

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Despite extensive studies on the antecedents of organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB), empirical studies on the effect of the workplace spirituality on OCB remains limited. The present study investigates the effects of workplace spirituality dimensions on OCB, with the moderating role of gender. Analyses of 171 academic staff attached to 15 private institutions of higher learning in Malaysia partially supported the relationship between workplace spirituality and OCB, as well as gender's role as a moderator in the workplace spirituality-OCB linkage. Findings are discussed in the light of available literature. Implications for future research and practice are also highlighted.

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Introduction

In today's competitive environment, organizations will become more dependent on their human resources as a source of competitive advantage. Enlightened organizations are no longer interested in the workforce who contributed marginally to maintain membership. Instead, organizations seek the type of employees who go the "extra mile" by engaging in beneficial extra-role behaviours. These extra work-related behaviours, which are beyond those specified by job descriptions and measured by formal appraisals, are termed as organizational citizenship behaviours (or OCBs).

Organizational citizenship behaviours have received ample attention. According to Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine and Bachrach (2000), the four major categories of antecedents that have been the focus of most research on OCBs comprised of individual characteristics, organizational characteristics, task characteristics, and leadership behaviours. Of these, greater concentration has been given to factors associated with the individual. Besides, an employee's characteristics and reactions in the workplace is assumed to influence the extent to which he/she will go above and beyond the call of duty (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2004). In a meta-analysis by Organ and Ryan (1995), some of the individual factors that have been found to affect OCBs include job attitudes (job satisfaction, perceived fairness, organizational commitment, leader supportiveness), role perceptions (role ambiguity and role conflict), and personality traits (agreeableness, conscientiousness, positive affectivity, and negative affectivity).

Despite the mushrooming of studies on OCB predictors, the role of workplace spirituality on OCB has yet to be determined. It is important to note that most of these studies

were undertaken in Western countries particularly North America. In the case of Malaysia, research in this area remains sparse (Ishak, 2005; Nasurdin & Ramayah, 2005). According to Robbins and Judge (2011), an awareness of workplace spirituality is crucial since it can help organizations understand employee behaviour in the twenty-first century. Milliman, Czaplewski and Ferguson (2003) argued that the literature on workplace spirituality has two major constraints. First, much of research on workplace spirituality has concentrated on an individual's spiritual experiences at work rather than the influence of workplace spirituality on the person's work attitudes and behaviours. Second, studies on employee attitudes have often assumed spirituality at work will have functional consequences yet empirical testing on these proposed relationships have been limited. Therefore, this research aims to address these deficiencies. Furthermore, considering the fact that spirituality concepts have been widely applied within the Malaysian educational setting (Abdullah, Alzaidiyeen & Aldarabah, 2009), an investigation on workplace spirituality and its influence on OCB among academics in Malaysia would proved to be worthwhile.

In order for Malaysia to become a fully developed country by the year 2020 as espoused in the country's *Vision 2020* (Economic Planning Unit, 2006), the need for a knowledgeable, skilled, and innovative workforce becomes crucial. Recognizing that formal higher education is a precursor to the creation of such workers, educational reforms have been introduced in the country. Opportunities for tertiary education were expanded resulting in increased roles for institutions of higher learning in the country particularly the private ones with the enactment of the Private Higher Educational Institutions (PHEI) Act in 1996 (Economic Planning Unit, 2001). Lee (1999) surmised that the rapid expansion of private education resulted from the

growing demand for higher education, limited available places in public institutions, and higher costs associated with overseas education. Since private institutions of higher learning are not government-funded, their income is likely to be generated through students' fees. As such, these institutions are dependent on students' enrolment. To achieve this end, private institutions of higher learning need to offer education service of high quality. According to Bienstock, DeMoranville and Smith (2003), OCBs can increase service employees' performance and enhance perceptions of service quality. Since academics play a key role in the delivery of high quality education, the need for OCBs among these employees becomes salient. Against this backdrop, our aim is to investigate the relationships between workplace spirituality and OCBs among academics in private institutions of higher learning in Malaysia.

In addition, one's engagement in different types of OCBs may differ according to gender. Consistent with the gender socialization perspective (Bem, 1974), the masculine role emphasizes more instrumental qualities whereas the feminine role endorses more communal traits. For instance, civic virtue is associated with "masculine" stereotype whereas altruism reflects more of expected behaviours for females (Kidder & McLean Parks, 2001). However, studies examining gender differences in OCBs have been inconclusive (Organ & Ryan, 1995; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2000). According to Podsakoff *et al.* (2000), even though existing empirical evidence has not been very supportive of the relationship between gender and OCBs, further studies are required in order to resolve this issue conclusively. Therefore, this study will also examine the moderating role of gender in workplace spirituality-OCBs relationships.

Literature review

Organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB)

Organizational citizenship behaviours (OCBs) are work-related discretionary activities performed by employees. Organ (1988:4) formally defined OCB as "an individual's behaviour in the workplace that is discretionary, and not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization". Organ and Ryan (1995) in their meta-analysis viewed OCBs as encompassing actions that surpass one's formal job responsibilities, yet contribute to organizational efficiency and effectiveness by supporting both organizational and social transformations at the workplace. Later, Organ (1997:91) redefined OCBs "as contributions to the maintenance and enhancement of the social and psychological context that supports task performance". Prior to Organ's (1988) introduction of the citizenship construct, Katz (1964) recognized the value of extra-role behaviours and its significance to the functioning of any social system. According to Katz (1964), some level of extra-role behaviour is necessary to ensure the survival and success of a social system. These desirable, informal, extra-role behaviours at the workplace are reflective of OCBs. Since citizenship behaviours are voluntary, employees are usually not rewarded for engaging in such behaviour nor are they punished for not doing so (Organ, 1988). Examples of OCBs include punctuality, helping other

employees, volunteering for things that are not required, making innovative suggestions to improve a department, and not wasting time (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Organ, 1988; Smith, Organ & Near, 1983), as well as behaviours that a person refrains from doing such as complaining and expressing resentment (Organ, 1988). In the aggregate, OCBs help improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness by contributing to resource transformations, innovativeness, and adaptability (Organ, 1988).

According to Organ (1988), OCB can be conceptualized as comprising of five dimensions which include altruism (e.g. assisting others who have heavy workloads), conscientiousness (e.g. work attendance beyond the norm), sportsmanship (e.g. not complaining about trivial matter), courtesy (e.g. consulting with others before taking action), and civic virtue (e.g. involvement in the political process of the organization). LePine, Erez and Johnson (2002) in their meta-analytic review of the literature noted that the five-dimension framework proposed by Organ (1988) has received wide coverage and support in numerous empirical studies. The popularity of Organ's (1988) framework can be attributed to at least three reasons. First, the framework has the longest history. Second, the measure by Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990) provided a sound measure of Organ's (1988) five dimensions. Third, OCB scholars generally assume that over the long run, the array of behavioural dimensions identified by Organ (1988) are beneficial across situations and organizations. Hence, the five-factor structure of OCB warrants further investigation.

In their comprehensive review of the literature, Podsakoff *et al.* (2000) reported that employee characteristics and their work reactions have received the most attention as antecedents of OCB. Since working people spend a large amount of their time at the workplace and work is partly responsible in the development of their self-identity (Pfeffer, 2003), one would expect how employees perceive their organizations will affect their work attitudes and behaviours. It is anticipated that a work environment that recognizes that people have both a mind and soul, seek to find meaning and purpose in their work, and a desire to connect with other human beings and be part of a community, would result in beneficial consequences to the individual and ultimately the organization. This phenomenon relates to workplace spirituality.

Workplace spirituality and OCB

There is increasing evidence concerning interests in workplace spirituality (WPS) which has captured the attention of academicians and practitioners. According to Ashmos and Duchon (2000), spirituality at work, despite religious imagery, is not about religion or conversion, or about getting people to accept a specific belief system. Instead, spirituality at work is about employees who understand themselves as spiritual beings whose souls need nourishment at work. However, despite the growing literature on workplace spirituality, little advancement has been made towards the establishment of a widely accepted definition of the construct (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2008). For example, workplace spirituality refers to the efforts involved to find one's ultimate purpose in life, to develop a strong

connection to coworkers and other people associated with work, and to have consistency between one's core beliefs and organizational values (Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Ashmos and Duchon (2000) defined workplace spirituality as the recognition that employees have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community. Adams and Csiernik (2002) viewed workplace spirituality as comprising of the positive valuation, acknowledgement and respect of employees' innate abilities in a context of meaningful, goal-oriented behaviour that encourages creativity, belongingness, and personal fulfilment. Giacalone and Jurkiewicz's (2003) conceptualization of workplace spirituality place emphasis on value-system and community building by defining workplace spirituality as "a framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promotes employees' experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected to others in a way that brings feelings of completeness and joy" (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003:13). Marques (2005) provided further expansion of the construct by defining spirituality in the workplace as "an experience of interconnectedness and trust among those involved in a work process, engendered by individual goodwill, leading to the collective creation of a motivational organizational culture, epitomized by reciprocity and solidarity; and resulting in enhanced overall performance, which is ultimately translated in lasting organizational excellence" (Marques, 2005:283). Despite the lack of clarity and agreement on an appropriate definition of workplace spirituality, Duchon and Plowman (2005) concluded that most definitions of workplace spirituality incorporate the notions of meaning, purpose, and being connected to others.

Ashmos and Duchon (2000) identified three components of workplace spirituality: the inner life, meaningful work, and community. They developed and validated a measurement instrument for three levels of analysis: individual, work team, and organization. In their factor analysis, they extracted seven dimensions for the individual level, two for the work team level, and two for the organization level. In order to be parsimonious, Milliman *et al.* (2003) based on the work of Ashmos and Duchon (2000), focused on only three of their dimensions: meaningful work (individual level), having a sense of community (group level), and alignment with the organization's values (organization level). They argued that these dimensions were likely to be associated with employee work attitudes and behaviours. The first dimension, "meaningful work", involves having a deep sense of meaning and purpose in work. It represents how one interacts with his or her daily work at the individual level (Milliman *et al.*, 2003). The second dimension, "sense of community", relates to the interaction among employees. It involves having a deep connection to, or relationships with others (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). The third dimension, "alignment with organizational values", is when employees experience a strong sense of alignment between their personal values and their organization's mission and purpose (Milliman *et al.*, 2003).

According to Krishnakumar and Neck (2002), the encouragement of workplace spirituality can be advantageous to individuals and ultimately the organization.

It has been suggested that spirituality in the workplace contributed to enhanced creativity (Freshman, 1999), increased honesty and trust within the organization (Wagner-Marsh & Conley, 1999), increased sense of personal fulfilment (Burack, 1999), higher organizational commitment (Leigh, 1997), and greater organizational performance (Garcia-Zamor, 2003). Duchon and Plowman (2005) in their exploratory study of work units in a large hospital system examined workplace differences in terms of their openness to spirituality and whether these differences were associated with differences in work unit performance. They subsequently proposed a theoretical model that links spiritual leadership, workplace spirituality, and work unit performance. Despite the fact that aspects of workplace spirituality has been accorded extensive treatment, there remains a paucity of empirical research linking workplace spirituality and work attitudes and behaviours except for the work of a few scholars. For example, Milliman *et al.* (2003) provided empirical evidence on the relationships between the three dimensions of workplace spirituality and selected attitudinal variables (organizational commitment, intrinsic work satisfaction, job involvement, organization-based self-esteem, and intention to quit). Using structural equation analysis, their results indicated that workplace spirituality dimensions were significantly and positively related to five job attitudes. Specifically, meaningful work had positive relationships with four of the five attitudes examined with the exception of intention to quit. Sense of community was positively and significantly related to all the attitudinal outcomes. On the other hand, alignment with organization values was positively and significantly related to organizational commitment but negatively related to intention to quit. Rego and Cunha (2008) provided further support for a positive relationship between spirituality dimensions and both affective and normative commitment. A negative relationship was found to exist between workplace spirituality dimensions and continuance commitment. Spirituality describes the experience of employees who are passionate about and energized by their work, find meaning and purpose in their work, feel that they can express their complete selves at work, and feel connected to those with whom they work (Kinjerski & Skrypnik, 2004). Since this construct covers beyond individual perspective and thinking, it is justifiable to expect workplace spirituality to result in greater OCBs, which reflect behaviours that benefit others, and over time contribute to organizational effectiveness. Considering what has been discussed, it is hypothesized that:

H1: Workplace spirituality (meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment of values) will be positively related to organizational citizenship behaviour (altruism, courtesy, sportsmanship, conscientiousness, and civic virtue).

OCB, workplace spirituality, and gender

Prior research on gender differences in OCB has not yielded consistent results. Although Organ and Ryan (1995) in their meta-analysis provided no indications of differences in OCB between men and women, several scholars have explored issues concerning OCB and gender directly by providing a theoretical explanation as to why women will be more likely

to engage in OCB compared to men. For instance, Lovell, Kahn, Anton, Davidson, Dowling, Post, and Mason (1999) argued that the qualities that comprise OCBs are consistent with the traits contained in the stereotype of woman. Qualities such as “understanding”, “kind”, “considerate”, “caring”, “empathy”, “sympathy”, “helpful to others” as more typical of women than men (see Eagly & Crowley, 1986). Spence and Helmreich (1980) suggested that feminine traits are expressive in nature whereas masculine traits are more instrumental. Kidder and McLean Parks (2001) argued that gender roles may affect the performance of OCBs. They proposed that the altruism and courtesy dimension of OCB would be more likely to be perceived as exemplifying the feminine stereotypes. Hence, females would be expected to engage in such behaviours compared to males. In fact, for women, helping behaviours are considered to be less optional and are seen as rather an expectation (Heilman & Chen, 2005).

On the other hand, sportsmanship and civic virtue may be judged as more masculine than feminine, creating expectations that males would exhibit more of such behaviours (Kidder & McLean Parks, 2001). Kidder and McLean Parks (2001), however, did not focus on conscientiousness since they argued that this form of behaviour is more of an in-role rather than an extra-role behaviour. Kark and Waismal-Manor (2005) using a feminist framework identified two dimensions of Organ’s (1988) OCBs (altruism and courtesy) as behaviours associated with the female gender role. On the other hand, the three remaining dimensions (sportsmanship, civic virtue, and conscientiousness) are related to the male gender role and notions of masculinity. According to Lovell *et al.* (1999), men and women learn different skills due to the different adult social roles they have to perform, with more women than men staying at home and providing caregiver roles leading to greater nurturing skills. Results from past studies (Farrell & Finkelstein, 2007; Kidder, 2002; Lovell *et al.*, 1999) have provided support for differences in OCB across gender. In their study of 109 resident advisers of a university, Lovell *et al.* (1999) found that women received higher OCB scores than men. The findings by Kidder (2002) demonstrate significant differences in the performance of OCBs consistent with traditional gender roles. Specifically, female nurses were more inclined to engage in altruism (a female-typed OCB) and less inclined to perform civic virtue (a male-typed OCB) than engineers. Farrell and Finkelstein (2007) also reported similar findings whereby female employees were more likely to participate in OCB as opposed to male employees.

Although no published research has tested for gender differences in perceptions of workplace spirituality, it would be reasonable to expect possible differences based on the gender socialization theory. As highlighted by Smith and Rogers (2000), the gender socialization theory proposes that males and females tend to regard their work environments with different attitudes and expectations. Similarly, Ngo, Foley, Wong, and Loi (2003) argued that men and women perceive things differently due to the fact that their socialization may lead them to perceive behaviour differently. People are expected to behave with their socially defined gender roles and may experience negative outcomes

if they deviate from these gender prescriptions (Eagly, Karau, & Makhijani, 1995). As aforementioned, differential traits attached to men and women concerning helping behaviour may influence the performance of OCBs. Previous scholars (Eagly & Crowley, 1986; Kark & Waismal-Manor, 2005; Kidder & McLean Parks, 2001; Lovell *et al.*, 1999) have provided a foundation for suggesting that different forms of OCBs are more related to different gender roles and stereotypes. Following this logic, we would expect:

H2: The positive relationship between workplace spirituality (meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment of values) and organizational citizenship behaviour (altruism, courtesy, sportsmanship, conscientiousness, and civic virtue) will be moderated by gender.

Gender as a moderator in the relationship between workplace spirituality and altruism

Altruism captured behaviour directly intended to help other persons with respect to organizationally relevant tasks or problems (Organ, 1988). According to researchers (Bem, 1974; Eagly & Crowley, 1986), women are more likely to participate more actively in helping behaviour and demonstrating a nurturing and caring attitude. Higher altruism shown by women can be a result of their helping attitudes towards others and paying attention to their needs. As some researchers have pointed out, women tend to put the need of others before their own and care more about others’ personal and emotional needs (Bernard, 1981; Eagly & Crowley, 1986). Similarly, George, Carroll, Kersnik and Calderon (1998) discovered that women were more helpful in the context of assisting friends, in comparison with men. This can be explained by the fact that women are generally more empathic or sympathetic than men (Feshbach, 1982). Kark and Waismal-Manor (2005) argued that altruism, a form of helping behaviour aimed at enhancing the welfare of others appears to be congruent with the female gender role expectations. Therefore, it is expected that the positive relationship between workplace spirituality and the OCB dimension of altruism may be stronger for women than men. Accordingly, we hypothesized:

H2a: The positive relationship between workplace spirituality (Meaningful work, Sense of community, and Alignment of values) and altruism dimension of OCB will be stronger for women than men.

Gender as a moderator in the relationship between workplace spirituality and courtesy

Courtesy is defined as discretionary behaviours that prevent work-related problems with other employees (Organ, 1988). According to Kark and Waismal-Manor (2005), courtesy is another form of helping behaviour that can be distinguished from altruism in that the former implies helping someone prevent a problem from occurring or taking steps to mitigate the problem. Courtesy, which emphasizes concern for the welfare of others, fits with female gender role expectations (Kark & Waismal-Manor, 2005; Kidder & McLean Parks, 2001). Being mindful of how one’s behaviour affects other

people implies empathy and an awareness and concern for the feelings and needs of others, all of which relate to feminine stereotypes (see Davis, 1983; Santilli & Hudson, 1992). Considering the fact that women are generally more worried about other's feelings than men (Heatherington, Burns & Gustafson, 1998), they are expected to avoid quarrels and work-related problems more than men. In line with this discussion, we posit that:

H2b: The positive relationship between workplace spirituality (Meaningful work, Sense of community, and Alignment of values) and courtesy dimension of OCB will be stronger for women than men.

Gender as a moderator in the relationship between workplace spirituality and sportsmanship

Sportsmanship is defined as the willingness of the employee to tolerate less ideal circumstances without complaining (Organ, 1988). According to Kidder and McLean Parks (2001), being a "good sport" implies being a team player. Other scholars (Blier & Blier-Wilson, 1989; Stoppard & Gruchy, 1993) suggested that being a "good sport" is a masculine trait. Men are generally expected to be more heroic and perform more positive high-risk citizenship behaviour than women (Kidder, 2002). Since sportsmanship involves actions that employee refrain from doing such as complaining about trivial matters and railing against real or imagined slights (Organ, 1988) and given that men are more likely to respond to a conflict situation from a practical angle (Lin, 2008), we would anticipate men to engage more in this form of discretionary behaviour compared to women. Conversely, a common female stereotype relates to women's inability to engage in team play (Ely, 1994). Women are often judged to be irrational, emotional, and petty, inducing the image of a complainer (Deaux, 1984). Tsukada, Tokita, Kato, Kato, Miyauchi, Ono, Tanabe, Yokoshima, Fukumoto, Miyatake and Mizuno (2009) in their study of cardiologists found out that even though both males and females reported having to work for long hours as their most problematic issue, significantly more women complained about this difficult situation than men. Besides, women showed significantly more dissatisfaction towards their jobs than men. In fact, women reported greater career constraints and experienced higher stress level than men as a result of their family and home caring responsibilities (Tomei, Rosati, Martini, Tarsitani, Biondi, Pancheri, Monti, Ciarrocca, Capozzella & Tomei, 2006). This phenomenon leads to the following hypothesis:

H2c: The positive relationship between workplace spirituality (Meaningful work, Sense of community, and Alignment of values) and sportsmanship dimension of OCB will be stronger for men than women.

Gender as a moderator in the relationship between workplace spirituality and conscientiousness

As defined by Organ (1988), conscientiousness reflects a pattern of discretionary behaviour that extends beyond minimally required levels such as in attendance and punctuality. In other words, it entails the tendency to undertake responsibilities other than those prescribed in one's job description, which requires dedicating more time and energy to work. According to Kark and Waismal-Manor (2005), behaviours associated with conscientiousness dimension of OCB, seem to characterize male stereotypes. Men are seen to be able to stay for long hours at work, or come early, and limit their breaks and days off, because they are usually not the ones who are expected to invest time and working hours in the private domains, attending to the needs of their spouses and children (Acker, 1990). For men, working many hours to provide a stable income for the family is part of the "good provider role" as opined by Bernard (1981). Even among dual-earner couples, husbands are assumed to take the role of the "breadwinner" for the family, which necessitates them to engage in paid work for longer hours than wives (Potuchek, 1997). Given the traditional gender role perspective, we would expect the positive relationship between workplace spirituality and the OCB dimension of conscientiousness to be stronger for men than women. Hence:

H2d: The positive relationship between workplace spirituality (Meaningful work, Sense of community, and Alignment of values) and conscientiousness dimension of OCB will be stronger for men than women.

Gender as a moderator in the relationship between workplace spirituality and civic virtue

Civic virtue refers to the behaviours that indicate an employee's active involvement or participation in issues concerning the life of the organization (Organ, 1988). Kidder and McLean Parks (2001) argued that challenging voice behaviours, which exemplify civic virtue, may be judged to be more consistent with the masculine gender stereotypes than with feminine gender stereotypes. Men are usually perceived to be more assertive and task-oriented rather than relationship-oriented (Eagly *et al.*, 1995). The findings by Walker, Ilardi, McMahan and Fennell (1996) provided evidence for the assertive nature of men. Farrell and Finkelstein (2007) further demonstrated that expectations of civic virtue behaviour for men and women differ according to job condition. Specifically, for laboratory technicians, men would be rated as more likely to engage in civic virtue compared to women (Farrell & Finkelstein, 2007). Therefore, we rationalize that:

H2e: The positive relationship between workplace spirituality (Meaningful work, Sense of community, and Alignment of values) and civic virtue dimension of OCB will be stronger for men than women.

Methodology

Sample and procedure

Respondents of the study were full-time academic staff of private institutions of higher learning located in the state of Penang, Malaysia. A two-stage sampling technique was used in selecting the sample. First, a total of 15 private institutions of higher learning in Penang were randomly selected from a list of 32 released by the Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia (Ministry of Higher Education, 2009). Second, once the institutions have been identified, a total of 250 questionnaires were distributed to each of them in proportion to their number of academic staff. Information on the number of academic staff in each institution was initially gathered from each institution's human resource department. Respondents were given two weeks to answer the questionnaires. After the stipulated period, 171 usable questionnaires were returned yielding a response rate of 68,4%.

Measurement

Workplace spirituality measures comprised of 21 items adopted from Ashmos and Duchon (2000) based on three dimensions: meaningful work (6 items), sense of community (7 items), and alignment with organizational values (8 items). On the other hand, OCB was measured using supervisory rating. The OCB scale comprised of 24 items relating to Organ's (1988) five dimensions (altruism, courtesy, sportsmanship, conscientiousness, and civic virtue), developed by Podsakoff *et al.* (1990). All measurement items were rated using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "(1) strongly disagree" to "(5) strongly agree". Demographic information such as gender, marital status, job tenure, and organizational tenure were also requested. Following previous studies (Farh, Earley, & Lin, 1997; Moon, Kamdar, Mayer & Takeuchi, 2008; Salami, 2007), we controlled for both age and job tenure.

Method of analysis

A principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation was initially conducted to examine the validity of the study constructs. Based on the study's sample, a factor loading of 0,45 or greater on one factor was considered significant following the criteria set by Hair, Black, Babin and

Anderson (2010). As for tackling the issue of high-cross loadings, we applied the criteria set by Snell and Dean (1992) whereby we deleted items when the differences between the loadings across factors were less than 0,10. Following our exploratory factor analyses, four dimensions of OCB were identified instead of five as originally conceptualized by Organ (1988). In our study, items relating to courtesy and altruism came to be grouped under one factor instead of two separate ones. This factor was renamed "helping behaviour" since the items associated with it reflected behaviours originally subsumed under the altruism and courtesy dimension, all of which were aimed at assisting others. Therefore, the four dimensions of OCB identified in our study were: 1) sportsmanship, 2) helping behaviour, 3) conscientiousness, and 4) civic virtue. Our exploratory factor analysis of the work spirituality construct revealed a three-factor solution comprising of meaningful work (MW), sense of community (SC), and alignment of values (AV), which concurs with those of Ashmos and Duchon's (2000). Since our factor results proved to be slightly different from earlier conceptualization, our initial hypotheses had to be restated.

Results

Profile of respondents

Females represented 61,4% of the sample, and 55,6% of the respondents were married. The mean age for the sample is 36,85 years (SD=8,02). On the average, respondents have been in their jobs for 6,47 years (SD=3,40) and have worked in the institution for 7,44 years (SD=3,86).

Means, standard deviations, reliabilities and correlations of the study variables

Table 1 depicts the mean scores, standard deviations, intercorrelations, and reliabilities of the study variables. The mean values for the study variables ranged from 3,74 to 4,01. Standard deviations ranged from 0,39 to 0,86. Meanwhile, the four dimensions of OCB had significant correlations with the three dimensions of workplace spirituality ($p < 0,01$). In addition, the reliability coefficients of the study variables were respectable which surpassed the minimum threshold value of 0,60 suggested by Sekaran and Bougie (2010).

Table 1: Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelation of variables

	Mean	Standard Deviation	MW	SC	AV	SP	HB	CO	CV
MW	3,88	0,39	(0,88)						
SC	3,89	0,43	0,48**	(0,74)					
AV	3,74	0,39	0,58**	0,67**	(0,89)				
SP	4,01	0,86	0,43**	0,38**	0,47**	(0,94)			
HB	3,75	0,38	0,58**	0,38**	0,44**	0,48**	(0,89)		
CO	3,84	0,42	0,47**	0,30**	0,37**	0,63**	0,61**	(0,91)	
CV	3,94	0,64	0,51**	0,37**	0,48**	0,64**	0,66**	0,65**	(0,84)

Note: ** $p < 0,01$. MW=meaningful work; SC=sense of community; AV=alignment of values; SP=sportsmanship; HB= helping behaviour; CO=conscientiousness; CV=civic virtue

Regression results

We tested our restated hypotheses using hierarchical regression as recommended by Cohen and Cohen (1975). Our four-step regression involves the inclusion of: (1) two control variables, (2) three dimensions of workplace spirituality (meaningful work (MW), sense of community (SC), and alignment of values (AV)), (3) gender, and (4) three interaction terms (Meaningful Work X Gender, Sense of Community X Gender, and Alignment of Values X Gender). Each dimension of OCB (sportsmanship, helping behaviour, conscientiousness, and civic virtue) was treated as a separate dependent variable. The results of the analyses are illustrated in Tables 2 to 5.

Impact of workplace spirituality (meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment of values) on sportsmanship

As shown in the first model of Table 2, both age ($\beta = 0,234$; $p < 0,01$) and job tenure ($\beta = 0,229$; $p < 0,01$) were found to be positively related to sportsmanship, which explained 11% of the variance in sportsmanship ($R^2 = 0,110$). By adding the three model variables relating to workplace spirituality into the equation, R^2 increased from 0,110 to 0,326. This R^2 change (0,216) was significant ($p < 0,01$) suggesting that the additional 21,6% of the variation in sportsmanship can be explained by the workplace spirituality dimensions. From the second model, meaningful work ($\beta = 0,269$; $p < 0,01$) and alignment of values ($\beta = 0,217$; $p < 0,05$) were found to be positively related to sportsmanship. These results provided partial support for H1. Based on our third model, gender did not have any significant influence on sportsmanship as an independent predictor. Finally, results from the fourth model indicate that gender did not have any moderating effect since none of the interaction terms were significant. These results did not provide support for H2.

Impact of workplace spirituality (meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment of values) on helping behaviour

As portrayed in the first model of Table 3, none of the control variables were found to be related to helping behaviour. When the three model variables were added into the regression equation in the second step, the R^2 increased from 0,024 to 0,362. This R^2 change (0,338) was significant ($p < 0,01$) indicating that the workplace spirituality variables contributed 33,8% to the additional variance in helping behaviour. Of the three dimensions of workplace spirituality, only meaningful work was found to have a significant and positive relationship ($\beta = 0,486$) with helping behaviour ($p < 0,01$), thereby providing partial support for H1. From the third model, gender had no independent effect on helping behaviour. Finally, results from the fourth model indicate that none of the interaction terms contributed to a significant increment in helping behaviour. Therefore, H2 was unsupported.

Impact of Workplace spirituality (meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment of values) on Conscientiousness

As reported in the first model of Table 4, none of the control variables were found to be related to conscientiousness. With the inclusion of the three model variables in the second model, the R^2 increased from 0,030 to 0,252. This R^2 change (0,221) was significant ($p < 0,01$), thereby indicating that the workplace spirituality variables contributed significantly to the additional variance in conscientiousness. Of the three dimensions of workplace spirituality, only meaningful work was found to have a significant and positive relationship ($\beta = 0,397$; $p < 0,01$) with conscientiousness. Thus, H1 was partially supported. According to the third model, gender did not have any significant influence on conscientiousness as an independent predictor. Surprisingly, from our fourth model, two of the interaction terms (MW X Gender [$\beta = -2,894$; $p < 0,01$], and SC X Gender [$\beta = 1,796$; $p < 0,01$]) contributed to a significant increment in conscientiousness ($R^2 = 0,336$). The additional variance explained by the interaction terms (7,4%) was significant ($p < 0,01$), indicating the existence of moderation effects. Our results provided partial support for H2.

Impact of Workplace spirituality (meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment of values) on Civic virtue

As depicted in the first model of Table 5, age ($\beta = 0,247$; $p < 0,01$) alone was found to be positively related to civic virtue, which explained 6,6% of the variance in sportsmanship ($R^2 = 0,066$). In step 2, by adding the three workplace spirituality variables into the equation, R^2 increased from 0,066 to 0,352. This R^2 change (0,333) was significant ($p < 0,01$) suggesting that the additional 33,3% of the variation in civic virtue can be explained by the workplace spirituality dimensions. Our examination also revealed that both meaningful work ($\beta = 0,371$; $p < 0,01$) and alignment of values ($\beta = 0,237$; $p < 0,05$) were positively related to civic virtue. These results provided partial support for H1. From the third model, gender did not have any independent effect on civic virtue. Finally, as shown in fourth model, none of the interaction terms were significant, suggesting that gender had no moderating effect on the workplace spirituality-civic virtue relationship. Thus, H2 was unsupported.

Moderating effects of gender

Information on the significance of the interaction terms gathered from Table 2-5 indicates that gender only had a moderating effect for the OCB dimension of conscientiousness. To facilitate interpretation of the significant moderators, graphs were plotted. To draw the graphs, the workplace spirituality facets were first recorded into two categories i.e. Low and High by dividing the respondents into two equal groups using median (below median = Low; above median = High). The results of significant interactions are presented in Figures 1 and 2 respectively.

Table 2: Regression analysis: Impact of MW, SC, and AV on sportsmanship

	Std Beta (Model 1)	Std Beta (Model 2)	Std Beta (Model 3)	Std Beta (Model 4)
Age	0,234**	0,183**	0,182**	0,182**
Job Tenure	0,229**	0,180**	0,178**	0,184**
MW		0,269**	0,270**	0,449**
SC		0,057	0,054	0,044
AV		0,217*	0,220*	0,240
Gender			0,030	1,408
MW * Gender				-1,315
SC * Gender				0,154
AV * Gender				-0,226
R ²	0,110	0,326	0,327	0,345
Adj. R ²	0,099	0,306	0,302	0,308
R ² - Change	0,110	0,216	0,001	0,018
F-Change	10,344**	17,654**	0,224	1,461

**p < 0,01, *p < 0,05

Table 3: Regression analysis: Impact of MW, SC, and AV on helping behaviour

	Std Beta (Model 1)	Std Beta (Model 2)	Std Beta (Model 3)	Std Beta (Model 4)
Age	0,083	0,041	0,038	0,037
Job Tenure	0,128	0,098	0,093	0,097
MW		0,486**	0,490**	0,582**
SC		0,068	0,061	0,080
AV		0,091	0,100	0,196
Gender			0,105	1,574*
MW * Gender				-0,689
SC * Gender				-0,077
AV * Gender				-0,715
R ²	0,024	0,362	0,373	0,389
Adj. R ²	0,012	0,343	0,350	0,355
R ² - Change	0,024	0,338	0,011	0,016
F-Change	2,048	29,163**	2,831	1,418

**p < 0,01, *p < 0,05

Table 4: Regression analysis: Impact of MW, SC, and AV on conscientiousness

	Std Beta (Model 1)	Std Beta (Model 2)	Std Beta (Model 3)	Std Beta (Model 4)
Age	0,139	0,107	0,104	0,097
Job Tenure	0,102	0,076	0,071	0,066
MW		0,397**	0,401**	0,787**
SC		0,017	0,009	-0,223
AV		0,101	0,110	0,178
Gender			0,102	1,858*
MW * Gender				-2,894**
SC * Gender				1,796*
AV * Gender				-0,654
R ²	0,030	0,252	0,262	0,336
Adj. R ²	0,019	0,229	0,235	0,299
R ² - Change	0,030	0,221	0,010	0,074
F-Change	2,639	16,263**	2,309	5,993**

**p < 0,01, *p < 0,05

Table 5: Regression analysis: Impact of MW, SC, and AV on civic virtue

	Std Beta (Model 1)	Std Beta (Model 2)	Std Beta (Model 3)	Std Beta (Model 4)
Age	0,247**	0,198**	0,196**	0,192**
Job Tenure	0,063	0,013	0,010	-0,006
MW		0,371**	0,373**	0,482**
SC		-0,005	-0,010	-0,112
AV		0,237*	0,243*	0,337*
Gender			0,068	0,854
MW * Gender				-0,894
SC * Gender				0,779
AV * Gender				-0,715
R²	0,066	0,352	0,357	0,368
Adj, R²	0,054	0,333	0,333	0,333
R²- Change	0,066	0,287	0,005	0,011
F-Change	5,896**	24,359**	1,156	0,962

**p < 0,01, *p < 0,05

As demonstrated in Figure 1, when the level of meaningful work increases from low to high, the level of conscientiousness decreases for both men and women. However, the rate of decline is greater for men than women. Besides, women portrayed higher level of conscientiousness compared to men.

According to Figure 2, when sense of community level increases from low to high, the level of conscientiousness increases for women but decreases for men.

Discussion

Research in workplace spirituality is still at its formative stage (Pawar, 2009). As opined by Krishnakumar and Neck (2002), despite anecdotal claims that workplace spirituality can be beneficial to individuals and ultimately the organization, empirical research in this area remains scant. Therefore, our study was aimed at addressing this gap in the literature. In this study, we examined the effects of workplace spirituality dimensions on OCB among full-time academic staff of private institutions of higher learning in Malaysia. In addition, the moderating role of gender on the relationship between workplace spirituality and OCB was explored. Our regression results revealed that only one of the three workplace spirituality variables (in the form of meaningful work) had positive relationships with all dimensions of OCB. The other two dimensions of workplace spirituality (comprising of sense of community, and alignment of values) have either partial or insignificant

relationships with the OCB dimensions. Generally, our results are congruent with theoretical evidence (Duchon & Plowman, 2005; Garcia-Zamor, 2003; Gotsis & Kortezi, 2008) suggesting that when employees possess a deep sense of meaning and purpose in their work, feel connected to others, and experience a strong sense of alignment between their personal values and that of their organization, they are bound to become more satisfied, act in a more collaborative manner, and apply their full potential to work and their employing organization. The potential positive impact of workplace spirituality on the individual and organization was further highlighted by other scholars (Burack, 1999; Freshman, 1999; Garcia-Zamor, 2003; Leigh, 1997; Wagner-Marsh & Conley, 1999). For instance, the experience of workplace spirituality may lead to greater creativity, increased honesty and trust in organization, higher sense of personal fulfilment, greater commitment, and ultimately improved organizational performance. Interestingly, sense of community had no significant influence on any of the OCB dimensions. One potential explanation here could relate to the culture of the sample itself. Sense of community may reflect Malaysia's own societal norms. Being more collectivistic than individualistic (Abdullah, 1996), our sample which comprised of Malaysians are more likely to view sense of community as an integral part of their lives instead of a subset of the organization's culture. Thus, this variable may not have any effect on OCB.

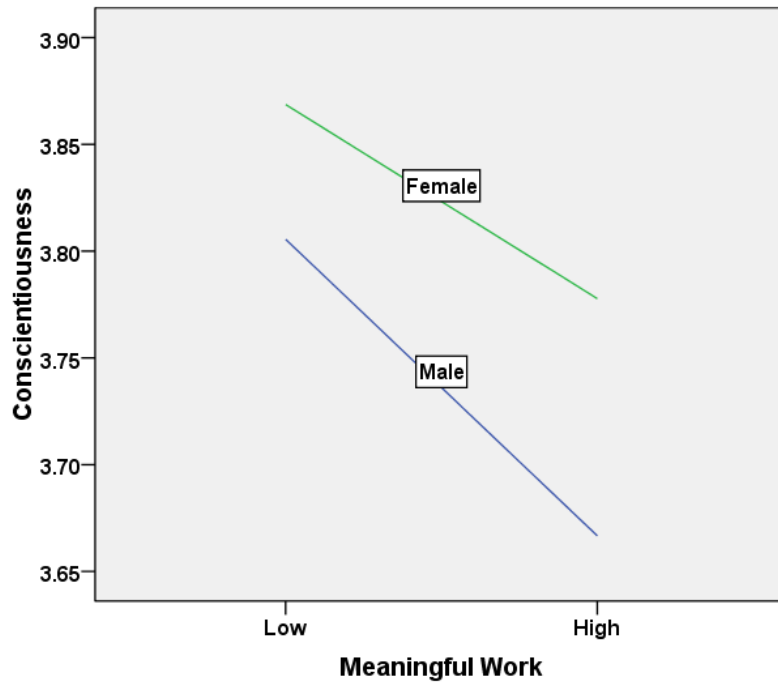


Figure 1: Moderating role of gender on the relationship between meaningful work and conscientiousness

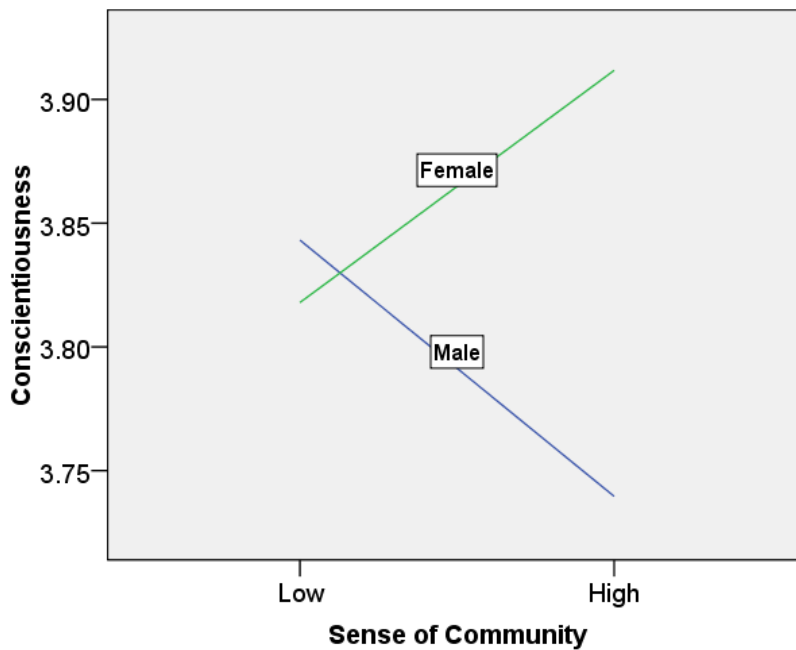


Figure 2: Moderating role of gender on the relationship between sense of community and conscientiousness

Our data was unable to provide full support for the role of gender in the workplace spirituality-OCB relationship. Specifically, gender was only able to moderate the relationship between the two dimensions of workplace spirituality and the conscientiousness dimension of OCB. Surprisingly, conscientiousness level decreases as the level of meaningful work increases for both men and women. The rate of decline was greater for men than women. On the other hand, conscientiousness level showed an increasing trend as sense of community level increases for women, but a decreasing trend for men. To a certain extent, this finding concurs with the gender role expectations forwarded by

Kark and Waisman-Manor (2005). Despite theoretical explanation as to why OCB may vary as a function of gender, our findings do not seem to fully support this line of argument. It appears that certain workplace spirituality dimensions (meaningful work and alignment of values) directly affect OCB dimensions (sportsmanship, helping behaviour, conscientiousness, and civic virtue) regardless of gender. Thus, organizational values that align well with employees' personal values and that are able to promote their experience of meaningfulness in their work may encourage employees to engage in beneficial extra-role behaviours. Rising competition particularly among private

institutions of higher learning may have created the need for every academic staff to work hard and perform "beyond their call of duty" in the delivery of education services regardless of gender.

Practical implications, limitations, and future directions

Given the potential positive effect of workplace spirituality on OCB, organizations may attempt to create a culture of spirituality at work. In this regard, effective organizational change approaches are needed to implement workplace spirituality philosophies. Top-management must clearly communicate the organization's philosophy that workplace spirituality represents truth and is the right thing to do and must be embraced at all organizational levels. As highlighted by Milliman *et al.* (2003), the practice of workplace spirituality must be genuine before it can have any fruitful consequences on employees or on the long-term organizational effectiveness. Since the concept is highly abstract, employing institutions should clarify what spirituality at work means and allow employees to participate in open discussions on how to go about creating a culture of spirituality. Training programs on listening and interpersonal skills will likely be required to aid this process. Besides, since workplace spirituality occurs within the context of appropriate organizational values and goals, feedback from the organization's internal and external stakeholders is important.

As with all research, this study has limitations. First, our study was limited to academic staff attached to private institutions of higher learning within one state in Peninsular Malaysia. Although this technique allows us to control for possible industry and organizational effects, it does curtail the generalizability of our findings. Similar research could be replicated in other parts of the country as well as among academic staff from public institutions of higher learning. Second, this study makes use of cross-sectional data, which makes it impossible to establish causality between the independent variables and OCB. We recommend that future researchers consider the use of a longitudinal design to collect data that would improve the ability to make causal statements. Third, gender alone was investigated as a moderator in the workplace spirituality-OCB relationships. Following Milliman *et al.* (2003), it would also be interesting to view how various organizational variables such as organizational structure or leader-member exchange may moderate or mediate the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee OCB.

Conclusion

Given the importance of work to most people and the amount of time they spend at work, our study has provided some empirical evidence concerning workplace spirituality and the role played by gender as a moderator in the relationship between workplace spirituality and OCB. Given the dearth of studies on workplace spirituality in non-western countries, the use of a Malaysian sample in this study has helped to address the gap in the literature by shedding some light on the dimensionality of the workplace spirituality construct, and the predictive ability of these

dimensions on employee behaviour particularly organizational citizenship.

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