# Workplace Spirituality, Emotions, and Deviant Workplace **Behavior**

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ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
<b>History</b> Received: March 2022 Available online: June 2022	<b>Purpose:</b> The study investigates the role of emotions in determining the relationship between workplace spirituality and deviant workplace behavior.
<b>Keywords</b> Workplace Spirituality Emotions Workplace Deviance Happiness Anger	Methodology: A total of 550 instruments were distributed to employees of the IT sector of Karachi, and 457 were returned. Therefore, five separate structural models were used to investigate the role of emotions in the relationship between workplace spirituality and deviance in workplace behavior. Findings:
This is an open-access article distributed under the <u>Creative</u> <u>Commons Attribution License4.0</u>	Results suggest that emotions mediate the relationship between workplace spirituality and deviant workplace behavior. <b>Conclusion:</b> Therefore, since emotions mediate workplace spirituality and deviant workplace behavior, it is concluded that managers must focus on emotions to reduce deviance in the workplace.

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# **1. Introduction**

# 1.1. Background

Humans are a bit different from machines. Machines follow procedures and are usually operated on the basis of pre-determined algorithms, whereas, humans cannot be controlled using pre-determined algorithms. Instead, humans are free in nature and they make decisions on their own. Often, these decisions are made on the basis of human psychology. This is because of the fact that humans have thinking and feelings, whereas, on the other hand, machines do not have the capacity to think and feel. Hence, there is a major difference between humans and machines.

For the past two centuries, unfortunately, managers and researchers have extensively worked to find ways of creating an emotionless environment. It was done because of the fact that people usually think that emotions are always destructive in nature and cannot bring any positivity to the workplace. However, the problem associated with trying to solve the question concerning emotions in the workplace could not have been solved using this approach. This is because of the fact that no matter whatever we do to create an emotionless environment, it has always been useless as humans have not yet been able to create an emotionless environment.

On the other hand, there has been a debate as to how firms can achieve a sustainable competitive edge (Men, 2014). In this regard, Ghayas and Siddiqui (2012) argued that humans can be helpful in creating a sustainable competitive edge. It is because of the fact that humans are the only resources that cannot be imitated (Ghayas & Khan, 2019). Hence, providing the basis for the long-term sustainability of the competitive edge that has been achieved on their basis. However, as discussed, humans have their own needs that are a bit different from the things that are required to operate a machine. Humans, at times, are worried about spirituality and they almost always have emotions and no matter whatever we do, we cannot separate these emotions from humans. In this regard, one can argue that emotions cannot be altogether eliminated. Therefore, it is suggested that organizations should rather try to use emotions than try to eliminate the emotions. However, in order to use the concepts of emotional intelligence, there exists a need to understand the things that can alter emotions. Zhang (2020) argued that workplace spirituality enhances positive behaviors. In this regard, Shaheen and Rashidi (2021) argued that spirituality significantly affects emotions. On the other hand, Rahman, Ferdausy, and Karan (2012) suggested that there exists a link between emotions and workplace deviance. Hence, it can be argued that emotions mediate workplace spirituality and deviant place behavior. However, there exists a scarcity of research that seek to test the mediating role in the relationship between workplace spirituality and deviant workplace behavior. Therefore, this study seeks to explore how emotions can be helpful in reducing negative work outcomes and what role emotions play between workplace spirituality and deviant workplace behavior.

# **1.2.** Importance of Study

This research paper aims to explain the role of emotions in the relationship between workplace spirituality and deviant workplace behavior in the IT Sector of Karachi. Therefore, this paper is important for managers in the IT Sector of Karachi in understanding the importance of emotions and how emotions can be used for decreasing the level of deviance the in the workplace. This can certainly help the managers in understanding the importance of managing emotions and devising strategies through workplace spirituality for managing the emotions at the workplace which in turn may help the managers in reducing the deviance in the workplace. Hence, this study will be helpful in devising strategies for managing then resources in a better manner.

# 2. Literature Review

# 2.1. Workplace Spirituality

People spend much of their time at work (Vasconcelos, 2018), therefore, it is very important that there is something at the workplace that provides inner satisfaction to the people at their workplace. This inner satisfaction can be provided in terms of workplace spirituality. The term workplace spirituality describes the aspect that people have inner meaning to life at the place they work at. Spirituality in the workplace is important and is helpful in enhancing the well-being of the employees (Zou, Houghton, & Li, 2020). This is something important because of the fact that for a number of people, spirituality provides them something that can help them eliminate the feeling of emptiness from their lives.

#### 2.2. Dimensions of Workplace Spirituality

Ashmos and Duchon (2000) suggested that there are five dimensions of workplace spirituality. A team sense of community is the first dimension of workplace spirituality and it can be described as the connection that one has with other people working in the organization (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Hussain & Hussain, 2020). On the other hand, a Sense of Enjoyment at Work is the degree to which an employee is enthusiastic about the assigned tasks because of the sense of enjoyment from the assigned task (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). Now, let's talk about Alignment of Values. Values are important, and there must be a synchronization between the values of an employee and the values of the organization he/she works for. Synchronization of personal and organizational values can be considered as an alignment of values (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). This alignment of values certainly makes the employee feel comfortable and at ease and on the other hand, its absence makes the employee feel uncomfortable. Furthermore, researchers have also included Opportunities for Inner Life as a dimension of spirituality at work and have (Ahmad & Omar, 2014). This is basically the extent to which it is realized that employees are a bit different from the machines and they have their inner lives. This certainly indicates that they need to satisfy their inner needs and failing to do so may affect their emotions. Moreover, there is also a realization on part of researchers and practitioners that people feel good when they do good deeds. It makes them feel proud and this indeed can help in having positive emotions. In this regard, it can be suggested that when good deeds that one performs positively affect the entire society or community, it certainly has multiplied effect and the person feels very good about it and it has a pleasant impact on the overall emotions of the person. Hence, a sense of contribution to the community is another dimension of workplace spirituality (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000).

#### **2.3.** Emotions

Humans are quite different from machines. It is primarily because of the fact that humans do not run on pre-determined algorithms but rather have the intellect. This intellect provides humans with the ability to make decisions. However, this intellect comes with other stuff like emotions which also alters the behavior of the people. Emotions are important and can play a pivotal role in enhancing positive work outcomes and can reduce negative work outcomes (Van Kleef, & Côté, 2022; Diener, Thapa, & Tay, 2020; Jordan, Spencer, & Prayag, 2019). In this regard, it can be suggested that there are five basic emotions (Shaheen & Rashidi, 2021). One of these basic emotions is happiness, whereas, love is another positive emotion (Doherty, 1997). On other hand, the three remaining emotions are somewhat negative in nature. These emotions include sadness, anger, and fear. These can be defined in terms of the extent to which an employee feels sadness, anger, or fear at the workplace (Doherty, 1997).

# 2.4. Deviant Workplace Behavior

People often do what they are not supposed to do. This is not only the case with their personal lives, people do this at the very place they work at. This creates problems in the workplace and is considered a negative behavior and has been named their workplace behavior. Certainly, this is not something that people want at the workplace and it does create problems for the firms in achieving the organizational goals. Hence, deviance in the workplace is undesirable in nature (Hashish, 2020: Raza, Ahmed, Zubair, & Moueed, 2019). This is because of the fact that workplace deviance results in negative work outcomes (Howladar, Rahman & Jewel, 2018). This leads the firms toward failure. Hence, there is a consensus among scholars and practitioners that serious efforts should be made to eliminate or at least reduce deviance in the workplace.

# 2.5. Workplace Spirituality, Emotions, and Deviant workplace Behavior

It has already been realized by the businesses that there exists a need to manage human resources for gaining a sustainable competitive edge. Furthermore, businesses also realized that abusing employees usually brings counter-productive behaviors (Ghayas & Jabeen, 2020). Therefore, managers had been looking for something that can help them enhance the positive work outcomes and reduce the level of deviant behaviors. In this regard, one may argue that the basic aim here is to control the behavior of the people working in an organization in such a way that can be beneficial for the firm and off course this can be done through the usage of emotional intelligence. However, in order to use the concepts of emotional intelligence, there exists a need to understand the things that can alter emotions. Zhang (2020) argued that workplace spirituality enhances the positive behaviors. In this regard, Shaheen and Rashidi (2021) argued that spirituality significantly affects the emotions. On the other hand, Rahman, Ferdausy, and Karan (2012) suggested that there exists a link between emotions and workplace deviance. Furthermore, Haldorai, Kim, Chang, and Li, (2020) also supported the fact that there exists a relationship between workplace spirituality and deviant workplace behavior. Hence, managers must be vigilant about the emotions and should try to reduce the deviance at workplace using the concept of emotional intelligence. Hence, it can be argued that emotions mediate workplace spirituality and deviant workplace behavior.

# 3. Methodology

To conduct this study, a fifty-six-item scale was developed. From these items twenty-nine items were adapted from Ashmos and Duchon (2000), these items were used for measuring dimensions of workplace spirituality. On the other hand, fifteen items were adapted from Doherty (1997) for measuring emotions, whereas, twelve items were adapted from Bennett and Robinson (2000) for measuring deviant workplace behavior. A purposive sampling technique was used and the data were collected only from those employees of the IT Sector who have been working with the same firm for at least six months. This is done so because of the fact that it takes some time to make a perception about the presence of spirituality. The instrument was distributed among 550 employees working in the IT Sector of Karachi, of which 447 respondents filled and gave the instruments back. After collecting the data, we first applied the confirmatory factor analysis for establishing the reliability and validity of the instrument. Once, reliability and validity are established, five separate structural models were used to test hypotheses.

The reason for applying separate structural models was that there were five mediators in the study, and Klein et al., (2006) has already argued that in a single model, simultaneously testing individual mediation is not possible. Therefore, there was a need to test each mediator separately.

# 4. Results

# 4.1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Variable	SFL	SFL CR Cronbach Alpha			
Alignment of Values		0.894	0.749	0.585	
AOI1	0.784	0.07 1		0.000	
AOI2	0.711				
AOI3	0.702				
AOI4	0.812				
AOI5	0.819				
AOI6	0.754				
Team Sense of Community		0.870	0.782	0.757	
TSC1	0.745				
TSC2	0.725				
TSC3	0.784				
TSC4	0.812				
TSC5	0.717				
Sense of Contribution to Community		0.914	0.801	0.777	
SCC1	0.756				
SCC2	0.748				
SCC3	0.716				
SCC4	0.794				
SCC5	0.842				
SCC6	0.746				
SCC7	0.833				
Sense of Enjoyment at Work		0.881	0.764	0.744	
SEW1	0.738				
SEW2	0.864				
SEW3	0.713				
SEW4	0.721				
SEW5	0.707				
SEW6	0.709				
Opportunities for Inner Life		0.889	0.771	0.616	
OIL1	0.811				
OIL2	0.785				
OIL3	0.711				
OIL4	0.865				
OIL5	0.743				
Happiness		0.963	0.956	0.896	
HAP1	0.921				

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HAP2	0.954			
HAP3	0.964			
Love		0.859	0.818	0.670
LOVE1	0.821			
LOVE2	0.799			
LOVE3	0.835			
Anger		0.931	0.904	0.817
ANG1	0.941			
ANG2	0.899			
ANG3	0.871			
Fear		0.856	0.837	0.665
FEAR1	0.845			
FEAR2	0.851			
FEAR3	0.747			
Sadness		0.853	0.826	0.659
SAD1	0.814			
SAD2	0.864			
SAD1	0.754			
Deviant Workplace Behavior		0.918	0.784	0.588
DWB1	0.723			
DWB2	0.845			
DWB3	0.722			
DWB4	0.726			
DWB5	0.721			
DWB6	0.821			
DWB7	0.796			
DWB8	0.749			
DWB9	0.751			
DWB10	0.754			
DWB11	0.738			
DWB12	0.762			
Note: The table shows SFL, CR an	d AVE values.	•		

Source: Author's own elaboration

Table.2. Discrimin	nant Validity
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Construct Items	AOI	TSC	SCC	SEW	OIL	HAP	LOV	SAD	ANG	FEAR	DWB
AOI	0.764*										
TSC	0.564	0.870*									
SCC	-0.312	-0.324	0.881*								
SEW	0.218	0.451	0.074	0.862*							
OIL	0.051	0.109	0.315	0.267	0.784*						

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HAP	0.384	0.191	0.054	0.249	0.512	0.946*					
LOV	0.123	0.605	0.383	0.185	0.417	0.309	0.818*				
SAD	-0.318	-0.246	-0.189	-0.321	-0.319	-0.399	-0.478	0.811*			
ANG	-0.174	-0.273	-0.413	-0.312	-0.253	-0.246	-0.381	0.703	0.903*		
FEAR	-0.283	-0.214	-0.165	-0.218	-0.523	-0.384	-0.564	0.789	0.535	0.815*	
DWB	354	456	478	-0.545	-0.364	-0.422	-0.124	0.742	0.456	0.784	0.766*
Note: * Squa	are Root of	the AVE a	as a criteria	L							

Source: Author's own elaboration

#### 4.2. Structural Models

Results of structural models are given below:

Table.3. Model Fit Indices										
Model	Independent	Mediator	Dependent	CMIN/	CFI	NFI	AGFI	Model		
	Variables		Variable	df				Status		
	AOI									
	TSC	Happiness	Deviant	2.71	0.971	0.968	0.894	Fit		
1	SCC		Workplace							
	SEW		Behavior							
	OIL									
	AOI									
	TSC	Love	Deviant	2.64	9.975	0.970	0.898	Fit		
2	SCC		Workplace							
	SEW		Behavior							
	OIL									
	AOI		Deviant							
	TSC	Anger	Workplace	2.72	0.964	0.961	0.874	Fit		
3	SCC		Behavior							
	SEW									
	OIL									
	AOI									
	TSC	Fear	Deviant	2.78	0.955	0.943	0.855	Fit		
4	SCC		Workplace							
	SEW		Behavior							
	OIL									
	AOI									
	TSC	Sadness	Deviant	2.89	0.931	0.924	0.824	Fit		
5	SCC		Workplace							
	SEW		Behavior							
	OIL									

#### Source: Author's own elaboration

Since the CMIN/df values of all the models are less than 3, therefore, consistent with the proposal of Kline (1998) that the models with CMIN/df values of 3 or less should be considered as fit models, we concluded that the models are statistically fit. Furthermore, the CFI and NFI values of all the models are greater than 0.9 and the AFGI values are greater than 0.8, which further indicates that the models are fit.

			e.4. Results	Effect of	Direct	Indirect	Total	
Model	Independent	Mediator	Dependent	IV on	Effect	Effect	Effect	Degree of
	Variables		Variable	Mediator	(c)	(ab)	(c')	Mediation
	AOI			.290*	327*	130*	447*	Partial
	TSC		Deviant	.168*	114*	073*	183*	Partial
1	SCC	Happiness	Workplace	.107*	048	-047*	095*	Full
	SEW		Behavior	.091	115*	-0.40*	145*	Partial
	OIL			.100*	175*	042*	189*	Partial
	AOI			.285*	363*	098*	452*	Partial
	TSC		Deviant	.152*	136*	051*	190*	Partial
2	SCC	Love	Workplace	.117*	058	039*	126*	Full
	SEW		Behavior	.129*	122*	045*	144*	Partial
	OIL			.200*	171*	076*	226*	Partial
	AOI			290*	342*	119*	460*	Partial
	TSC		Deviant	168*	124*	069*	191*	Partial
3	SCC	Anger	Workplace	108*	055	044*	097*	Partial
	SEW		Behavior	105	121*	043*	161*	Partial
	OIL			097*	187*	040*	226*	Partial
	AOI			302*	356*	100*	462*	Partial
	TSC		Deviant	166*	135*	054*	190*	Partial
4	SCC	Fear	Workplace	111*	058	038*	097	Full
	SEW		Behavior	121*	125*	040*	160*	Partial
	OIL			183*	164*	060*	220*	Partial
	AOI			294*	350*	105*	358*	Partial
	TSC		Deviant	151*	135*	051*	273*	Partial
5	SCC	Sadness	Workplace	086*	064	031*	097	Full
	SEW		Behavior	114*	119*	041*	161*	Partial
	OIL			201*	150*	071*	221*	Partial
Note: * Re	epresent significant	relationship						

#### Table.4. Results of Structural Model

#### Source: Author's own elaboration

The above table depicts the role of emotions between dimensions of workplace spirituality and deviant workplace behavior. In this regard, five separate mediation analyses were applied. This is done so because there were multiple mediators in the study and Klein et al., (2006) had already suggested that in order to test simultaneous mediation, one needs to apply more than one test.

Results indicated that dimensions of workplace spirituality have a significant positive relationship with positive emotions and have a negative association with negative emotions. Furthermore, dimensions of workplace spirituality are negatively associated with dependent variable deviant workplace behavior. It is also found that each of the five emotions used in the study namely happiness, love, anger, fear, and sadness mediate dimensions of workplace spirituality and deviant workplace behavior. This is consistent with the findings of Shaheen and Rashidi (2021) that emotions mediate the relationship between spirituality at work and negative work outcomes such as turnover intentions. Furthermore, it is also found that happiness, love, fear, and sadness fully mediate SCC and deviant workplace behavior, whereas, the rest of the mediating relations were partial in nature.

# 5. Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

#### 5.1. Discussion

The study seeks to test if spirituality at work has any impact on the emotions of people working for the firm and do these emotions reduce the undesired workplace behaviors. Hence, the study aimed at testing the phenomenon of spirituality, emotions, and resultant behaviors and the workplace. Results indicated that dimensions of workplace spirituality have a significant positive relationship with positive emotions and have a negative association with negative emotions (Shaheen & Rashidi, 2021). Furthermore, dimensions of workplace spirituality are negatively associated with the dependent variable of deviant workplace behavior. This is consistent with the findings of researchers (Khan, Usman, Saeed, Ali, & Nisar, 2022; Amin, Situngkir, & Aira, 2021: Astuti, Maryati, & Harsono, 2020: Wahyono, Prihandono, & Wijayanto, 2020; Naseer, Syed, Nauman, Fatima, Jameel, & Riaz, 2020) which suggests that spirituality have a positive association with positive work outcomes and vice versa. Furthermore, emotions mediate the relationship between dimensions of workplace spirituality and deviant workplace behavior. This is consistent with the study of Shaheen and Rashidi (2021). From all this discussion, it is concluded that emotions cannot be ignored in workplace and managers must focus on emotions in order to reduce the deviance in the workplace.

# 5.2. Conclusion

Since workplace spirituality is negatively associated with dependent variable deviant workplace behavior. Therefore, spirituality can play an important role in decreasing deviance in the workplace. Furthermore, emotions mediate workplace spirituality and deviant workplace behavior. Therefore, it is concluded that emotions cannot be ignored in the workplace. Hence, managers in the IT sector must be vigilant about their emotions and should try to reduce the deviance in the workplace using the concept of emotional intelligence. In this way, they can solve the issues related to deviance in the workplace.

# 5.3. Recommendations

Since workplace spirituality is negatively associated with the dependent variable of deviant workplace behavior. Therefore, it is recommended that managers should focus on enhancing spirituality in order to reduce deviance in the workplace. Furthermore, emotions mediate dimensions of workplace spirituality and deviant workplace behavior. Therefore, it is recommended that managers in the IT sector must be vigilant about their emotions and should try to reduce the deviance at the workplace using the concept of emotional intelligence. It is also recommended that managers should take spirituality seriously and should do everything possible to enhance spirituality at work. It is because of the fact that it will help them manage their emotions and reduce the deviance at the workplace.

# **5.4.** Limitations and Recommendations for Future Researchers

Since the study revolves around the IT sector and the concept has not been tested in other industries, therefore, it is suggested that researchers should replicate the study in the other sectors. This will be helpful for the greater generalizability of the results. In this way limitations of the study can be addressed.

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