

Role of Workplace Spirituality: Personality Traits and Counterproductive Workplace Behaviors in Banking Sector

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Abstract

This research has examined moderating role of workplace spirituality with five traits of personality and counterproductive work behaviors. Researchers have growing trend to enhance understanding of workplace spirituality. Corporate environment has also realized significance of workplace spirituality. Self-structured questionnaire have been employed to collect data from employees of private commercial banks, operating in jurisdiction of Distt. Attock, Pakistan. Response rate in this study is 82%. Data was analyzed on the basis of moderating concept of Baron and Kenny (1986) in statistical software for social sciences. This study concludes that workplace spirituality has significant moderating impact over the association of openness, conscientiousness and agreeableness with counterproductive work behaviors. It has been also revealed that there is no relationship between extroversion and counterproductive work behaviors. Workplace spirituality has no moderating impact over association of neuroticism and extroversion with counterproductive work behaviors of employees. This study develops ways for management and practitioners to alleviate the effects of personality traits on counterproductive work behaviors and reduce the occurrences of counterproductive work behaviors. Ultimately it will improve organizational performance.

Keywords: Spirituality at work, Big Five personality factors, work behavior, workplace spirituality.

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Introduction

Counterproductive work behaviors are prevalent in workplace. Counterproductive work behaviors are not only costly to organization but are also harmful to employee's growth. Academic researchers and practitioners are showing great concern over ways to abolish impact of counterproductive work behaviors or prevent its occurrence. Contemporary research has been conducted to analyze impact of personality over counterproductive work behaviors and significant linkages have been found.

Contemporary management researchers have established linkage between spirituality and management. Academic researchers and practitioners now realized importance of spirituality as predictor of organizational commitment and employee's performance. Spirituality is assumed to be at individual level. It does not take into account workplace itself in its domain. There is consensus among researchers that if properly implemented workplace spirituality may control behavior of employees at workplace. Workplace spirituality may mitigate and remove injuries to mental health of employees. Workplace spirituality may play its role in the development of self-esteem. Spirituality has also positively correlated to the satisfaction of employees.

Workplace spirituality has been considered as a hot topic for researchers since last decade. There is great focus over the meaning and experience of workplace spirituality. From a management perspective, there is emphasis over the engagement of employees. Heavy progress has been made to understand workplace spirituality. There is a lack of research where workplace spirituality has been discussed as a moderator to effect personality and work behavior of employees.

Besides keeping personality traits on one side, management can create a more relaxed and effective working environment by bringing and promoting spirituality in workplace. A spiritual working environment covers relatedness, delivers a sense of purpose, promotes a positive working environment among personnel and ultimately develops functioning of organization. Researchers postulate that employees and organizations go side by side until their interests are common. Thus, it is of high importance from a management point of view to build a business model which may enforce employees to be loyal with their organizations.

Literature Review

Personality

There is no consensus among researchers regarding five dimensions of personality. Literature on personality suggests that five personality dimensions, big five or five factor model has been employed by academic researchers to investigate its role. These five traits of personality are conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience, extraversion and neuroticism. Conscientiousness is defined as an extent to which individual is diligent, efficient, organized and hard working. Agreeableness talks about kind, cooperative, selfless and generous nature of personality. Openness to experience is concerned how much individual is ready to face new challenges and innovative tasks. Extraversion people are very outgoing, social and positively communicate with others in

their life. Neuroticism is opposite to emotional stability. Emotionally stable people remain self-confident, cool and calm in their dealings (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Jesus F Salgado, 1997; Van der Walt, Meiring, Rothmann, & Barrick, 2002).

There are strong research evidences about five traits of personality as highly predictors of counterproductive workplace behavior. Agreeableness has been revealed to be the best interpreter of counterproductive workplace behavior. People with low agreeableness are revengeful and inconsiderate. Their interpersonal dealings are full of conflict and discordance. Neuroticism has been publicized as positive correlated with counterproductive workplace behavior. People with low emotional stability are anxious, stress-prone and unhappy to interact with others. Thus emotional stability has clear linkages with counterproductive workplace behaviors (Barrick, Mount, & Judge, 2001; Berry, Ones, & Sackett, 2007; Cullen & Sackett, 2003; Douglas & Martinko, 2001; Hurtz & Donovan, 2000; Jensen-Campbell & Graziano, 2001; M. Mount, Ilies, & Johnson, 2006; Ones, Viswesvaran, & Schmidt, 1993; Sackett, Berry, Wiemann, & Laczko, 2006; Jesus F Salgado, 2002).

Conscientiousness and agreeableness is strong positive predictor of job performance. Openness to experience and extraversion has been seen with no impact or with negative influence over job performance. Agreeableness people are generous, selfless, courteous, good-natured and cooperative. These People go against others with characteristics of altruism and antagonism. Agreeableness is a strong predictor of helping behavior. Agreeableness has direct connection with workplace performance. Conscientiousness deals with impulse-control smoothing task and goal-behavior such as following norms and rules, planning, organizing, and prioritizing tasks and thinking before acting. Conscientiousness people are highly responsible, devoted, organized, and hard worker. Conscientiousness is a strong predictor of job satisfaction (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Barrick et al., 2001; Barrick, Stewart, Neubert, & Mount, 1998; Hogan, 1996; O. P. John & Srivastava, 1999; Liao & Chuang, 2004; Witt, Burke, Barrick, & Mount, 2002).

All five traits of personality are related to some aspects of spirituality. This statement goes against propositions that only agreeableness and conscientiousness are only associated with spirituality. Some researchers have examined personality and spirituality as independent constructs while others have conceptualized spirituality as a dimension of personality. Most academic researchers have used five factor model of personality in their research associated with relationship of personality and spirituality. There are research evidences about positive strong association of agreeableness and conscientiousness with spirituality. Researchers also claim openness to experience as personality dimension most concerned with spirituality. There are no evidences available for association of extroversion and neuroticism with spirituality. McCrae (1999) and researchers have conceptualized it very significant to investigate which dimensions of personality are connected to which aspects of spirituality (Lazar, 2016; Piedmont, 1999; Saroglou, 2002).

Keeping in mind time and cost incurred by organization during a recruitment process it is imperative to use some personality measure to assess the suitability of candidates. Management must make use of personality measure in personnel selection in order to make sure candidates with rights qualities. Extent literature review suggests that there is varying impact of personality over job performance. This differing attitude of personality

may refer to the job type and context of research studies. This variability of personality is very considerate for agreeableness and emotional stability traits. A meta-analysis study concludes that agreeableness, emotional stability and conscientiousness are strong predictors of team performance. In a working team environment, neuroticism, agreeableness and conscientiousness have strong positive impact over job performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Furnham & Fudge, 2008; Hough, 1992; Hurtz & Donovan, 2000; M. K. Mount, Barrick, & Stewart, 1998; Jesús F Salgado, 2003; Tett & Burnett, 2003; Tett, Jackson, & Rothstein, 1991; Thoresen, Bradley, Bliese, & Thoresen, 2004).

Workplace spirituality

There is lacking of consensus among researchers over definition of spirituality. However on the basis of conceptualization and modern-age definitions of spirituality, it has been classified as multidimensional and multilevel phenomenon. Spirituality is based on three principles;

- a unifying force or energy which is present in the nature of everything
- this force exists within each of us
- we are all gifted of experiencing this power

Spirituality has been defined as a force that boosts us outside ourselves and our narrow self-interests. It is most kind of all forces. Spirituality helps us to see our relations and the world beyond ourselves (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Pandey & Gupta, 2008).

To conceptualize spirituality, there is differentiation between immanent and transcendent. Immanent refers to the personal and ordinary desires of employees. Immanent constitutes of those that fulfill our status, income, security, accomplishment and so on. Transcendent is concerned with motivations, principles, and work related interest that go beyond our self. In management literature, spirituality has been defined from three angles first, in the context of personal terms second, emphasize on the applied aspects of spirituality and third is concerned with characteristics of spiritual organization. On the basis of these three contexts, spirituality has been defined as an instinctive and universal search for superior meaning in one's life. Spirituality at workplace involves a desire to do something that is useful for others and to be associated with an honorable community. When individual integrates his inner life with his/her professional role in the service of a greater good, it is spirituality at workplace (Ashar & Lane-Maher, 2004; Schmidt-Wilk, Heaton, & Steingard, 2000; Thompson, 2000).

Spirituality in workplace is about feeling of employees to see their job as a spiritual path, as an opportunity to do something for the betterment of others and progress personally. There are five dimensions of workplace spirituality. These dimensions are enjoyment at work, alignment with organizational values, sense of community, and sense of contribution to the society and satisfaction of inner life. Workplace spirituality teaches employees to be more compassionate and concerned with colleagues, subordinates, bosses and customers. Workplace spirituality emphasizes being true to oneself and express reality to others. It refers to employees to be more careful about their values in the

workplace. Workplace spirituality has impact over behaviors of employees as organizational commitment, motivation and organizational performance. Organizations with higher spirituality show high performance than those without it on the basis of growth and efficiency (Neal, 1997; Pandey & Gupta, 2008; Rego, Cunha, & Oliveira, 2008).

There are research evidences about prevalent nature of spirituality within organizations of United States. Employees always seek for values, support and meaning in their jobs. Spirituality is very useful to both organizations and employees. Spirituality has been seen to be a strong predictor of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intentions and intrinsic motivation. In the presence of spirituality employees perform better because of increased motivation and meaning in their job. Besides main effects, spirituality has been studied as moderator. Spirituality plays its role buffering the impact of stress in working environment. Employees facing stress may behave differently depending upon level of their spirituality. Ultimately, spiritual employees may take problems and difficulties in their working environment as opportunities and challenges for personal growth rather than obstacles. There is redundant literature available about association of religiosity and personality. But, literature is lacking about interplay of spirituality and personality traits. Spirituality has a positive correlation with agreeableness, extraversion, openness to experience and conscientiousness. Spirituality has negative association with neuroticism (Cash & Gray, 2000; Garcia-Zamor, 2003; Kim & Seidlitz, 2002; Milliman, Czaplewski, & Ferguson, 2003; Saroglou, 2002; Zinnbauer, Pargament, & Scott, 1999).

Counterproductive Workplace Behavior

Bad behaviors of employees in workplace are not new, however research regarding deviance behavior is new. There is long rich history when employees start performing behaviors to hurt their coworkers and their organizations. Counterproductive work behaviors refer to behaviors of employees that are harmful to organization directly by affecting its operations or property or by hurting others employees in a way that will reduce their effectiveness. These behaviors affect organization and all stakeholders including customers, colleagues, and supervisors. There are types of counterproductive work behaviors-counterproductive work behaviors targeting individuals counterproductive work behaviors-I and counterproductive work behaviors aimed at organization counterproductive work behaviors-Counterproductive work behaviors-I takes workplace shooting into its domain. Organizational retaliatory behaviors, time banditry and employee theft comes in the arena of counterproductive work behaviors-O. There are two types of counterproductive work behaviors-O- property deviance and production deviance (Fox, Spector, & Miles, 2001; Ketchen, Craighead, & Buckley, 2008; Klotz & Buckley, 2010; LeBlanc & Barling, 2005; Spector et al., 2006).

Behaviors have been classified into active behavior and passive behavior. Active forms of counterproductive work behaviors require some sort of behavior but passive form is confined to employee's dormancy. Abuse against others, theft and sabotage are included in active form of behavior whereas production deviance and withdrawal behaviors come under passive form of behavior. Counterproductive work behaviors has been categorized into five types-abuse against others, production deviance, sabotage, withdrawal and theft.

All these five types of counterproductive work behaviors are differently related to others variables. Abuse against others is those behaviors which affect others psychologically and physically in organization. Range of its severity is from simply ignoring to hitting or pushing someone. When employees deface or destroy of organization, it is called sabotage. Theft is concerned with stealing or taking property of organization or another individual. Whenever employees intentionally fail to accomplish a task on time it comes under the umbrella of production deviance. There is clear distinction between property deviance and production deviance of counterproductive work behaviors-organization. Property deviance is concerned with intentionally and illicitly taking or damaging property and equipment of company to home. Production deviance is associated with behaviors that go against norms of organization.it constitutes of demarcating minimum required quality and quantity of output and efforts anticipated of workers (Buss, 1962; Hollinger & Clark, 1982; Robinson & Bennett, 1995; Spector et al., 2006).

Counterproductive work behaviors have two additional dimensions i.e. social undermining and horseplay. These two dimensions have not been mentioned in Spector et al. (2006) work. Horseplay consists of those behaviors which are non-malicious but make work environment livelier and entertaining. Examples of horseplay are using of internet for non-work related purpose, engaging in gossip and joking for the purpose of entertainment. Horseplay has significant linkages to the boredom. Social undermining are behaviors which harm reputation, success and interpersonal relations of target employee (Bruursema, 2007; Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002).

Counterproductive work behaviors may or may not include playing hard pranks, harassment/cursing at others at work, window-dressing in preparation of expense reports, harming other's work and theft. Literature review conclude that deviance, destructive, unruliness and antisocial behaviors are all linked to the counterproductive work behaviors and are very pervasive and costly to both organizations and employees.58% of women have reported facing harassing behaviors and 24% have reported for sexual harassment at work.25% of organizations have fired employees for misusing internet in workplace in united states.95% of organizations have shown concern over theft and sabotage behaviors of employees (Case, 2000; Giacalone, Riordan, & Rosenfeld, 1997; Ilies, Hauserman, Schwochau, & Stibal, 2003; Robinson & Bennett, 1995).

Organizations and employees bear pervasive and costly consequences because of counterproductive work behaviors of employees. These consequences have forces researchers to investigate antecedents of counterproductive work behaviors. Extent literature presents subtle evidences for the linkages of counterproductive work behaviors with personality characteristics i.e. five traits of personality of employees. Literature review also suggests some personality characteristics to be the antecedents of counterproductive work behaviors. Extent literature review has suggested associations between job satisfaction, personality, negative emotions, stress, abusive supervision, justice, boredom and counterproductive work behaviors -O. Five big have been tested in various studies across different countries and culture but its results fairly remains stable. Conscientiousness I is a strong predictor of job satisfaction both in western and Asian context. Five traits of personality has been also analyzed as predictor of counterproductive work behaviors. There is strong positive impact of consciousness over counterproductive work behaviors. Agreeableness has strong correlation with counterproductive work

behaviors-I and conscientiousness is strongly positively associated to counterproductive work behaviors-O. these behaviors may disturb employees and increase job dissatisfaction which will ultimately trigger counterproductive work behaviors. This study infers that five traits of personality have significant impact over counterproductive work behaviors (Berry et al., 2007; Dalal, 2005; Fox et al., 2001; McCrae & Terracciano, 2005; M. Mount et al., 2006; M. K. Mount & Barrick, 1995; Jesus F Salgado, 2002; Smithikrai, 2007; Spector & Fox, 2002; Spector et al., 2006; Tepper, Duffy, & Shaw, 2001).

Research Gap

Workplace spirituality is currently very exciting topic in management research. it is concerned with spirit at workplace and performance of both employees and organizations. Exploration of practical implications of workplace spirituality is very useful from management perspective. Three W and how scenario can be used to investigate role of workplace spirituality. Ultimately, it will drive us to new horizon of research creating beneficial ways for both individuals and organizations.

Extent literature review suggests that no work has been conducted so far to study inter play of workplace spirituality with five big of personality and counterproductive workplace behavior. The integration of workplace spirituality, personality traits and counterproductive workplace behaviors will enrich knowledge and understanding in the management library. it will further open new ways of research ultimately improve performance of both employees and organizations.

Research Questions

Whether workplace spirituality moderates all five traits of personality and counterproductive workplace behavior or not?

Hypothesis Development

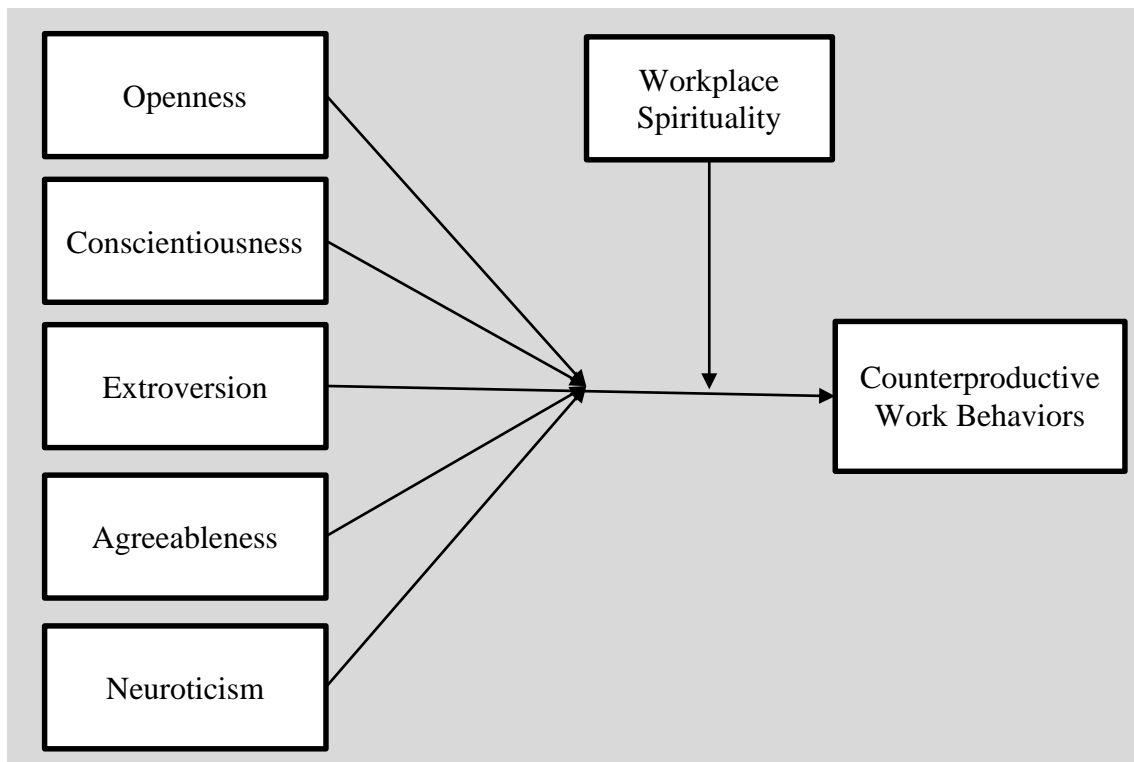
H₁: *Workplace spirituality moderates association of Openness and Counterproductive Work Behaviors*

H₂: *Workplace spirituality moderates association of Conscientiousness and Counterproductive Work Behaviors*

H₃: *Workplace spirituality moderates association of Extroversion and Counterproductive Work Behaviors*

H₄: *Workplace spirituality moderates association of Neuroticism and Counterproductive Work Behaviors*

H₅: *Workplace spirituality moderates association of Agreeableness and Counterproductive Work Behaviors*



Research Methodology

Research Design

Moderation technique of Barron and Kenny (1986) has been employed to perform data analysis in statistical software for social sciences. According to Barron and Kenny (1986), moderation exists if following three conditions are fulfilled;

1. Independent variable has significant association with dependent variable.
2. Moderator has significant relation with dependent variable.
3. Interaction term of independent variable and moderator significantly forecasts dependent variable.

Instrument Development

Measurement scale employed in this study has been already published in international journals. A pilot test was run to check their reliability of this scale. References of this scale along with their Chronbach Alpha value are given below;

Counterproductive Workplace Behavior

Counterproductive work behavior has been measured by 32-items scale developed by Spector et al. (2006). Cronbach's Alpha value of counterproductive work behavior is 0.906.

Personality

Five traits of personality has been measured by Big Five Inventory,44-items scale developed by O. John, Donahue, and Kentle (1991). Cronbach's Alpha value of five traits of personality extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience are 0.560, 0.580, 0.586, 0.550, and 0.656respectively..

Workplace Spirituality

Scale developed by (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000) has been employed to measure workplace spirituality. Cronbach's Alpha value of this scale is 0.692.

Population and Sample

Population of this study is employees working in private commercial banks of Pakistan. Using facility of Google Docs, an online questionnaire link was created to collect viewpoints of these employees.

Sampling Technique

Convenient sampling technique was used to collect data from employees. Employees working in branches in the vicinity of District Attock were approached by sending them questionnaire in email. Large two banks, employees of MCB Bank Ltd and HBL have participated in this study with open hearts. Response rate of this study is 82%.

Data Analysis

Table 1. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.705 ^a	0.497	0.488	7.87396
a. Predictors: (Constant), INTR1, WPS, OPEN				

Table 2. Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	196.473	19.791		9.927	0.000
	WPS	-2.968	0.391	-1.647	-7.592	0.000
	OPEN	-22.784	3.509	-2.951	-6.492	0.000
	INTR1	0.392	0.068	3.230	5.777	0.000
a. Dependent Variable: CWB						

From table 1 and 2, $R\ square = 0.497$, $\beta = 0.392$ and $\rho < 0.05$, value of β turns positive when interaction term of openness to experience and work spirituality relate with counterproductive work behavior. Hence there is moderation and H_1 is accepted.

Table 3 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.709 ^a	0.502	0.494	7.82920
a. Predictors: (Constant), INTR2, WPS, CON				

Table 4 Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	204.192	17.436		11.711	0.000
	WPS	-3.089	0.332	-1.715	-9.294	0.000
	CON	-19.894	2.461	-3.284	-8.085	0.000
	INTR2	0.338	0.045	3.896	7.516	0.000
a. Dependent Variable: CWB						

Above table 3 and 4 that, $R\ square = .502$, $\beta = 0.338$ and $\rho < 0.05$. Value of coefficient gets changed upon intersection of interaction term of conscientiousness and workplace spirituality with counterproductive work behavior. Thus, it is proved that workplace spirituality moderates the association of conscientiousness and counterproductive work behaviors of employees. So H_2 are accepted.

Table 5 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.555 ^a	0.308	0.297	9.22879
a. Predictors: (Constant), INTR3, WPS, EXT				

Table 6 Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	98.721	19.058		5.180	0.000
	WPS	-1.372	0.349	0-.762	-3.935	0.000
	EXT	-3.463	3.173	-0.550	-1.091	0.277
	INTR3	0.071	0.059	0.615	1.202	0.231
a. Dependent Variable: CWB						

It is evident from data analysis that independent variable extraversion has non-significant relationship with counterproductive workplace behavior so here first condition of Barron and Kenny (1986) procedure for moderation testing fails. Therefore, hypothesis H_3 is rejected.

Table 7 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.731 ^a	0.535	0.527	7.56773
a. Predictors: (Constant), INTR4, WPS, NEU				

Table 8 Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-14.483	17.527		-0.826	0.410
	WPS	0.533	0.326	0.296	1.636	0.104
	NEU	13.843	2.530	2.387	5.472	0.000
	INTR4	-0.214	0.047	-2.014	-4.510	0.000
a. Dependent Variable: CWB						

Data analysis exhibits non-significant impact of workplace spirituality over counterproductive work behavior of employees in the presence of neuroticism. Therefore Barron and Kenny methodology of moderation is no more applicable. Hypothesis H₄ is rejected.

Table 9 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.733 ^a	0.538	0.531	7.54269
a. Predictors: (Constant), INTR5, WPS, AGR				

Table 10 Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	121.946	17.876		6.822	0.000
	WPS	-1.366	0.364	-0.758	-3.755	0.000
	AGR	-9.048	2.483	-1.385	-3.644	0.000
	INTR5	0.112	0.049	1.130	2.280	0.024
a. Dependent Variable: CWB						

Table 9 and 10 shows that $\beta = 0.112$, $R\ square = 0.538$ and $\rho = 0.024 < 0.05$ and value of coefficient turns positive when interaction term of agreeableness and workplace spirituality interact with counterproductive work behavior. it concludes that workplace spirituality moderates significantly relationship of agreeableness and counterproductive work behavior. Hence H₅ is accepted.

Conclusion

This study shows that there is strong impact of workplace spirituality over agreeableness trait and counterproductive workplace behaviors of employees. Workplace spirituality has moderating effects over the relatedness of conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness to experience with workplace spirituality. On the other hand, Workplace spirituality does not moderate the association of extraversion and neuroticism with counterproductive workplace behaviors. There is empirical evidence about non-significant linkage of neuroticism with workplace spirituality.

In summary, management should understand role of workplace spirituality to get substantial and deeper engagement of employees. Keeping in mind, workplace spirituality is not panacea for behaviors problems of employees that may stem from other roots. On the other hand, management should avoid using it as manipulative attempt. Organizations, those are sincere in their efforts, should make sure that employees find meaning in their job. Ultimately, organization will reap productive behaviors of employees.

Limitation

Every research study has some drawbacks and there is no exception of this work. Main drawback is social desirability effect. Respondents have been shown to deliver desirable response besides anonymity was guaranteed. Dependence upon single source of data like self-structured questionnaire may make overstatement about relatedness of variables. Personality has been taken as constant variable in this study. There are still no unanimous evidences available about stability of personality. Future research may be conducted to analyze stability of personality traits with counterproductive work behaviors. Situational variables like culture, leadership and reward system may be investigated as moderator with personality and counterproductive work behavior.

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