ORGANIZATION COMMITMENT AND ORGANIZATION CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR: THE MODERATING ROLE OF WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between organization commitment and organization citizenship behavior has been frequently investigated in the literature. What has received less attention is the role that workplace spirituality plays in this relationship. This study examines the extent to which workplace spirituality moderates the relationship between affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment on one hand, and organization citizenship behavior on the other hand in the context of Uganda. Data was collected from a systematic sample of staff at Uganda Christian University using psychometrically valid measures from published studies. Composite measures of the study variables were calculated, followed by standardization of the moderating variable. This analysis was followed by regression analysis to examine the extent to which workplace spirituality moderates the commitment-citizenship relationship. It has been established that affective commitment does not predict altruism, but normative and continuance commitment do. Further, a sense of community moderates the relationship between affective commitment and altruism.

Keywords: Workplace spirituality, organization commitment, organization citizenship behavior, Uganda, Africa

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of workplace spirituality has gained considerable interest in the literature. A number of studies have examined this construct. Examples would be Milliman, Czaplewski and Ferguson's (2003) study of workplace spirituality manifestations in organizations, Fry's (2003) examination of leadership as a mechanism for facilitating workplace spirituality, and Kolodinsy, Giacalone, and Jurkiewicz's review of outcomes of workplace spirituality in relation to employee attitudes. These and many other studies demonstrate the importance of workplace spirituality on organizational outcomes. Many researchers also found it to be an avenue for improving employee well-being and organizational performance (Jurkiewicz and Giacalone, 2004). In spite of this body of work, the concept is not yet adequately examined (Duchon and Plowman, 2005) and is still in its beginning stages of serious research (Dent, Higgins and Wharf, 2005; Moore and Casper, 2006) and empirical studies are rare (Rego, Cuhna and Souto, 2007). Moreover, most studies on workplace spirituality have been done in the United States. Thus contexts that have "received little attention from the literature and are culturally different from the US [are] a valuable contribution to research in this field" (Rego, Cuhna and Souto, 2007:164).

Organization commitment (OC) is a central variable in organization research and is an antecedent to many positive outcomes, e.g. organization citizenship behavior (OCB). This paper focuses on the relationship between these two constructs and workplace spirituality. To date the three dimensional model of organization commitment (consisting of affective, normative and continuance dimensions) is the most widely accepted conceptualization of this construct (Cohen, 2003; Bentein et al, 2005). However, various studies show this three dimensional model of commitment is not fully consistent with empirical findings (Allen and Meyer, 1996; Ko et al, 1997). Further, while the relationship between OC and OCB is well documented in the literature (Meyer et al, 2002), certain issues do cause concern. For example, the

extent of the cross-cultural applicability of both OC and OCB constructs is contentious (Gautam et al, 2005). Further with regard to OCB, a number of issues remain to be resolved. First, the overall structure of the OCB construct is open to debate, as well as the causal relationship between dimensions of OC and the dimensions of OCB (Gautam et al, 2004). In addition, Paine and Organ (2000) assert that the meaning, dimensions and perceptions of OCB may vary from culture to culture.

Many authors concur that high levels of workplace spirituality enable employees to satisfy their spiritual needs, resulting in higher normative and affective commitment and lower continuance commitment (Fry, 2003; Fry, Vitucci and Cedillo, 2005), thus leading to greater individual performance. In light of the concerns raised over OCB and OC studies, the fragmented and non cumulating nature of workplace spirituality research (Tischler, Biberman and Altiman, 2007), and the fact that most studies on workplace spirituality have been done in the west, an examination of the relationship between workplace spirituality, organization commitment and organization citizenship behavior in other contexts is warranted. This study builds largely on the work of Rego, Cuhna and Souto (2007) to examine the extent to which workplace spirituality moderates the relationship between organization commitment and organization citizenship behavior.

This study contributes to the literature in three ways. First, unlike Milliman, Czaplewski and Ferguson (2003) who study only affective commitment, this study follows Rego, Cuhna and Souto (2007) to examine normative and continuous commitment. Second, unlike Rego, Cuhna and Souto (2007) who study work performance as the outcome variable, this study has organization citizenship behavior as the dependent variable. Third, as pointed out earlier, while most studies on workplace spirituality have been done in the west where society is more individualistic, this study context is the East African nation of Uganda where society is more collective (Manyak and Katono, 2010). The findings of this study will contribute to the literature on the study variables as well provide a platform from which further diagnosis of workplace spirituality can be made in an emerging nation context. The paper is structured as follows. In the next section the literature will be reviewed on the study variables, the theories on which the study is anchored, and to identify research hypotheses. This review is followed by examining the methodology used to execute the study. The study ends with a discussion of the findings and conclusions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definitional divergence of workplace spirituality

No agreed upon definition of workplace spirituality is found in the literature. Rego, Cuhna and Souto (2007: 164) call it a "slippery field" where definitional controversy prevails. This controversy led Laabs (1995) to posit that it is easier to explain what workplace spirituality is not than what it is. Still other authors have expressed reservations about whether workplace spirituality deserves the attention it has received.

Ashmos and Dunchon (2000) define workplace spirituality as the recognition that employees have an inner life that nourishes, and is nourished by, meaningful work taking place in the context of a community. Gibbons (2012) asserts that a workplace can provide a sense of wholeness, connectedness at work, and deeper values. In other words, workplace spirituality is an effort to find one's ultimate purpose in life, to develop a strong connection to co-workers, and to align one's core beliefs and values with those of the organization (Mitroff and Denton, 1999). It is important to note that while workplace spirituality for some people involves a religious connotation, for others it does not (Milliman, Czaplewski and Ferguson, 2003; Neck and Milliman, 1994). Finally, despite its popularity, workplace spirituality has not escaped criticism. For example, some researchers assert that workplace spirituality is simply a new way of describing a combination of established variables (Moore and Casper, 2006).

2.2 Dimensions of workplace spirituality

The literature does appear to identify five major dimensions of workplace spirituality.

Meaningful work: This dimension represents the extent to which employees interact with their day to day work at an individual level. Spirituality at work assumes that individuals have personal motivation and a desire to be involved in activities that add meaning to their lives and the lives of others (Hawley, 1993).

Sense of community: This dimension refers to the extent to which one has a deep connection to or a relationship with others that is articulated as a sense of community (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000). It is anchored in the notion that individuals view themselves as connected to each other, and that a relationship exists between a person's inner self and the inner self of others (Maynard, 1992). This level of spirituality involves mental, emotional and spiritual connections among employees working in teams or groups (Neal and Bennett, 2000).

Alignment with organizational values

This dimension measures the extent to which individuals experience a strong sense of alignment between their personal sense of purpose and the mission of the organization mission (Milliman, Czaplewski and Ferguson, 2003). It is premised on the notion that a sense of purpose is greater than one's self and that feeling should become manifest by making a contribution to others in society. Further, this dimension means that employees have appropriate values, a strong conscience, and a concern for the well being of society at large. The dimension shows that employees prefer to work for organizations that exhibit a strong sense of integrity, practice ethical behavior, and make a strong contribution to the welfare of society at large.

2.3 Organization commitment

The organization commitment literature defines organizational commitment as the strength of attachment a person has to the organization (Arnold, Cooper, and Robertson, 2005), or as the strength of an individual's identification with an organization (Mowday, Steers and Porter, 1979). Organization commitment has received much attention in the literature (Morgan and Hunt, 1994) and is associated with achieving major outcomes in organizations. For instance, it should lead to improved interpersonal relationships and performance, perception of alternatives, intentions to search or leave, and turnover (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990).

Meyer and Allen (1991) and Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993) conceptualize three dimensions of commitment: an affective component characterized by emotional attachment to an organization; a belief in, and acceptance of, the values and goals of the organization; and a willingness to expend effort on behalf of the organization. Commitment is an obligation to remain with the organization (normative) and commitment as a perceived cost associated with leaving the organization (continuance commitment). Continuance commitment is a calculation of costs and benefits, including investments and available alternatives, to replace or make up for foregone investment (Venetis and Ghauri, 2004). According to Becker's (1960) side-bet theory as validated by Meyer and Allen (1984), continuance commitment develops as employees realize they have accumulated investments or side-bets they would lose if they left the organization. The more investments made in the relationship, the more difficult it becomes to disengage from the relationship and the more the party will continue with the relationship (Venetis and Ghauri, 2004).

Each form of commitment has different behavioral consequences (Meyer et al, 2002). For example, affective commitment will result in employees that are willing to make a contribution to the organization, and usually results in organization citizenship behavior. With continuance commitment, employees feel no desire to contribute to the organization beyond what is needed to keep their jobs. They exhibit less

organization citizenship behavior, higher absenteeism and greater resistance to change. On the other hand, since feelings of obligation do not translate into feelings of enthusiasm and involvement typical of affective commitment, normative commitment employees will exhibit less pronounced positive organization outcomes (Rego, Cuhna and Souto, 2007).

2.4 Organization commitment and workplace spirituality

The literature strongly suggests that high levels of workplace spirituality help people to satisfy their spiritual needs. The result tends to be high normative and affective commitment to the organization while lowering continuance commitment (Milliman, Czaplewski and Ferguson, 2003). This outcome is possibly because when people perceive a strong sense of community they are able to feel they can satisfy their social, intimacy and security needs and therefore experience higher psychological well being (Haller and Hadler, 2006). Such positive attitudes are likely to translate into affective and normative bonds (Milliman, Czaplewski and Ferguson, 2003) and eventually translate into cooperative behavior (Wright and Cropanzano, 2004). This progression can be explained by the fact that workers who experience support from the organization are likely to reciprocate by exhibiting strong affective commitment and loyalty to the organization (Eisenberger et al, 2001).

Similarly, the sense of enjoyment at work is also a source of psychological well-being (Kets de Vries, 2001). Just like the opportunity to do meaningful work, it instills a sense of purpose and improves worker self esteem, happiness and personal growth (Rego, Cuhna and Souto, 2007). In the same way, when employees feel a strong sense of community the organization provides them an opportunity for inner life. Because they perform meaningful work, they feel respected as valuable spiritual and intellectual beings (Strack et al, 2002). Lastly, when employees feel their values and those of the organization are aligned, they perceive greater satisfaction and develop strong affective and normative bonds (Cooper-Thomas, van Vianen and Anderson, 2004) that result in more cooperative behaviors and self-esteem (Herrbach and Mignonac, 2004).

In summary, when employees feel the organization cares about their well being, they experience high levels of health and psychological and emotional safety (Brown and Leigh, 1996) that eventually translates in cooperative behavior and more affective and normative commitment. Workplace spirituality as defined by the presence of traits such as trust, respect, meaningful work, dignity and honesty, creates an environment that enables the integration of personal and professional selves, thus engaging the whole person in the work process (Jurkiewicz and Giacalone, 2004).

2.5 Organization citizenship behavior (OCB)

This construct is an example of extra role behaviors that are closely linked to organization commitment (Gautam et al, 2004). According to Organ (1988), OCB is an outcome of a committed workforce, which is characterized by voluntary extra role behaviors that are not recognized by the formal organization's reward system. Smith, Organ and Near (1983) view OCB as contributions individuals make in the workplace that go beyond role requirements and contractually rewarded job achievements.

The OCB construct is contentious between two related models. Some authors propose a five dimensional structure made up of conscientiousness, altruism, civic virtue, sportsmanship and courtesy (Organ, 1988; Podsakoff, Ahearne and MacKenzie, 1997). Others propose a two dimensional model consisting of altruism and compliance (Smith, Organ and Near, 1983). It has been suggested that the first model appears to be consistent with values in individualistic societies while the latter model is more universal (Gautam et al, 2004). In light of this argument, the study adopted the two dimensional model.

Other conceptualizations of OCB have emerged. Williams and Anderson (1991) propose a two factor model. OCB-I focuses on citizenship behaviors geared towards an individual. OCB-O behaviors focus on the organization. Coleman and Borman (2000) propose a three factor model consisting of interpersonal citizenship performance, organization citizen performance, and task citizenship performance

Brecton, Giles and Schraeder (2008) provide several helpful definitions of key terms. Altruism is behavior directed to helping a specific person at work, e.g. assisting a coworker without being asked. Generalized compliance refers to employee conscientiousness that goes beyond enforceable work standards, e.g. doing more than what is required to complete a task or voluntarily offering ideas to solve an organizational problem. Sportsmanship is the extent to which nuisances on the job are tolerated, e.g. enduring inconveniences without complaint or making a huge issue out of a minor thing. Courtesy refers to contacting others before taking actions or making decisions, e.g. sending a reminder or giving coworkers advance notice before taking action. Civic virtue is active participation in organization affairs, e.g. attending meetings and generally keeping abreast of organizational issues.

In summary, the structure of the OCB construct is still uncertain given the wide array of conceptualizations. Thus the results of OCB studies are a function of how the concept is defined and which dimensions are actually incorporated into a study (Brecton, Giles and Schraeder, 2008). While aware of the lack of consensus, the following hypotheses are advanced for examination within the Ugandan context:

H1: Affectively committed employees will exhibit higher levels of altruism and compliance than normative and continuance commitment employees

H2: Sense of community will moderate the relationship between affective, continuous, normative commitment and altruism

H3: Alignment of values will moderate the relationship between, affective, continuous, normative commitment and altruism

H4: Meaningful work will moderate the relationship between affective, continuous, normative commitment, and altruism

3. METHOD

The study utilizes a triangulation technique (Campbell and Fiske, 1959) in that both qualitative and quantitative techniques are used. First, a qualitative study was carried out to gain an in-depth understanding of the study concepts by talking to, and holding conversations with, various management experts, human resource managers, scholars, MBA students, and perusing the literature. This study enabled the researchers to place the investigation in context and to identify the measures of the various study dimensions. Following this investigation, a list of all the permanent staff at Uganda Christian University was obtained from the Human Resource Office to be used as the sampling frame. To obtain a systematic study sample, a random starting point was chosen. Every third name was then chosen for inclusion in the study. The study questionnaire was sent to the identified people accompanied by a letter from the HRM office explaining the purpose of the study and requesting the recipient to complete the questionnaire. In all, about 200 questionnaires were sent out and 74 usable ones were collected back, representing 37% response rate.

To overcome common method bias, two procedural measures were taken (Podsakoff et al, 2003). First, respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity to reduce evaluation comprehension and the

questionnaire had no correct or incorrect answers. Second, different sets of instructions were given for the different variables to assure psychological separation.

4. MEASURES

Measures from published studies with established validity and reliability were used to make the study constructs operational. Organization citizenship behavior was measured with the original index adopted by Smith, Organ and Near (1983). Altruism and compliance were measured with three items each from this scale. Responses were anchored on a 5-point Likert scale, 1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree. Affective commitment was measured with six items from the Meyer and Allen (1983) study, while continuance and normative commitment were measured with five and four items respectively from the same scale. All these commitment measures were anchored on a 5-point scale ranging from 1=Strongly Disagree and 5=Strongly Agree.

Three workplace spirituality dimensions were considered for this study. Teams' sense of community was measured with three items from Milliman, Czaplewski and Ferguson (2003) and one item from Ashmos and Duchon (2000). Alignment with organizational values was measured with three items from Milliman, Czaplewski and Ferguson (2003), two items from Ashmos and Duchon (2000), and one item from Rego, Cuhna and Souto (2007). Meaningful work was measured with three items from Milliman, Czaplewski and Ferguson (2003). All the scales were anchored on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 "strongly disagree" and 5 "strongly agree".

Data analysis started by constructing composite measures of the OC, OCB, and workplace spirituality dimensions. Following Frazier, Tix and Barron (2004), the workplace dimensions were standardized so they had a mean of zero and a standard deviation 1, to reduce the effect of multi-collinearity. Thereafter, regression analysis was carried out to test the study hypotheses.

5. RESULTS

The gender division between the 74 respondents was male 63% and 36.5% female. In term of marital status, 49% of the respondents were married, 39% were single while 12% did not disclose their status. Most of the respondents (48%) were in the 20-35 age range, and those between ages 36-45 were only 4%. Those between the ages of 46-55 were 19%, those between ages 56-65 were 13%, and those over 66 years of age were also 13%. In terms of length of service, those with less than one year's service were the minority at 7%, those with service between 1-2 years were 28%, those with 3-5 years of service were 26%, and those with 6-8 years were 7%, while those exceeding 9 years were 21.7%.

The analysis began with the construction of a correlation matrix to examine the relationship of all the study variables. This analysis was followed by an examination of their statistical reliabilities (Table 1). Regression analysis was done in two phases. In phase one, the commitment dimensions (independent variables) were regressed against altruism (dependent variable) in three steps as shown in table 2. In phase two, the standardized interaction terms of each of the three spirituality dimensions was entered in the model (tables, 3, 4 and 5). Lastly, phase one was repeated for the compliance dimension (table 6) though no moderation analysis was carried out for this variable.

The correlations shown in table 1 reveal that affective commitment is significantly correlated to continuous commitment, but not to normative commitment. However, both normative commitment and continuous commitment are significantly correlated. Alignment of values and meaningful work are significantly correlated to affective commitment, and meaningful work is also significantly correlated to normative commitment, and alignment of organizational values. Altruism and compliance are significantly correlated with meaningful work. Next, regression analysis was carried between the independent and dependent variables followed by moderation analysis.

Table 1: Correlation of study variables

Variables	М	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Affective Commitment	4.22	.619	.65							
Continuous Commitment	3.27	.873	.252*	.70						
Normative Commitment	3.57	.783	.201	.608**	.66					
Community WPS	3.94	.816	.171	.03	.009	.92				
Alignment WPS	3.99	.711	.500**	.163	.27	.45*	.70			
Meaningful Work	4.36	.511	.436**	.335**	.47**	.233	.30*	.76		
Altruism	4.13	.572	.139	04	.209	.214	.091	.27*	.64	
Compliance	3.93	.776	.195	.195	.111	.145	.087	.166	.25**	.60
p<.05* p<.01** (Two-tailed) Reliability coefficients in bold on diagonal										

Tables 1 and 2 show that affective commitment does not predict altruism in this sample population, but continuous and normative commitment does predict, thus the rejection of *H1*.

Table 2: Regression of Commitment Variables and Altruism

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	
Active Commitment	.170	.195	.176	
Continuance Commitment		099	.316*	
Normative Commitment			.366*	
Adjusted R	.014	.008	.080	
Change in Adjusted R			.009	.084*
P<.05* p<.01** (two-tailed)				

Table 3 shows a significant interaction between the affective commitment dimension and sense of community, partly supporting H2. However, no significant interaction is found between the other spirituality dimensions and all the commitment variables as evidenced in tables 4 and 5, thus rejecting H3 and H4.

Table 3: Moderation of Sense of Community with Commitment Dimensions

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Active Commitment	.017	.215*	.239*
Continuance Commitment		.229	182
Normative Commitment			073
Adjusted R	.083	.146	.216*
Change in Adjusted R		.072	.004
P<.05* p<.01** (two-tailed)			

Table 4: Moderation of Alignment of Values with Commitment Dimensions

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Active Commitment	002	.022	.010
Continuance Commitment		029	041
Normative Commitment			.025
Adjusted R	.065	.051	.035
Change in Adjusted R		.001	.001

Table 5: Moderation of Meaningful Work with Commitment Dimensions

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Active Commitment	.030	077	135
Continuance Commitment		.137	.081
Normative Commitment			.120
Adjusted R	.086	.100	.103
Change in Adjusted R		.027	.017

Table 6 shows that all the three commitment variables do not predict compliance, thus partly rejecting H1.

Table 6: Regression of Commitment Variables with Compliance

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	
Active Commitment	.186	.168	.162	
Continuance Commitment		.075	.012	
Normative Commitment			.105	
Adjusted R	.019	.008	002	
Change in Adjusted R			.005	.007
P<.05* p<.01** (two-tailed)				

6. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are mixed, which is consistent with the lack of consensus in the literature. While it is expected that affectively committed workers will exhibit high levels of altruism, the findings instead show that it is normative and continuous commitment workers who do so. In a country like Uganda where many workers are dissatisfied with their salaries and strikes are a common occurrence, it is possible that workers used in this study are dissatisfied with their jobs. Hence they exhibit only normative and continuous commitment. However, consistent with our expectations, we find a significant interaction between sense of community and affective commitment influences altruism. As explained, a sense of community refers to the extent to which an employee has a deep connection to or a relationship with others (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000). It is possible that individuals in this study view themselves as connected to each other and perceive a relationship between their inner self and the inner self of others (Milliman, Czaplewski and Ferguson, 2003). If so, this would lead them to develop a cooperative behavior manifested in altruism.

7. CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the extent to which workplace spirituality variables, sense of community, alignment with organisation values and meaningful work moderate the relationship between organization commitment and OCB, altruism in particular. The study established that affective commitment per se does not predict altruism; however, an interaction between affective commitment and sense of community significantly influences OCB (altruism).

8. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Given the importance of OCB in the performance of organizations, managers should as much as possible encourage the development of spirituality in their organizations, particularly a sense of community. Activities that encourage workers to stay connected with each other should be encouraged.

9.0 Limitations of the study

The study utilized a small sample of respondents from only one institution. Further, the scope of OCB was limited as only two variables were examined. Similarly, the scope of workplace spirituality was also limited as only three dimensions were examined. In spite of these limitations, the findings of this study can be used as a platform from which further diagnosis of the study variables can be made.

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