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Cross-Generational Effects of Workplace Spirituality on Job and Life Satisfaction

Bobbie Bannerman

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CROSS-GENERATIONAL EFFECTS OF WORKPLACE
SPIRITUALITY ON JOB AND LIFE SATISFACTION

Bobbie Bannerman
2018

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COLUMBUS STATE UNIVERSITY

CROSS-GENERATIONAL EFFECTS OF WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY ON
JOB AND LIFE SATISFACTION

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE
HONORS COLLEGE
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR HONORS IN THE DEGREE OF

BACHELOR OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
COLLEGE OF LETTERS AND SCIENCES

BY

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The nature of work in the twenty-first century has changed substantially from that of the twentieth century. Distant and online work makes today's workforce feel more isolated and disconnected from coworkers, while constant access to work technologies such as email, text messaging, and file sharing platforms may also lead workers to feel less connected at home as well. Workplace spirituality – including work-related opportunities to develop one's inner life, higher senses of meaning and purpose, and interconnectedness – can serve to ameliorate the isolation and disconnection often experienced in today's workplace. The literature reveals that workplace spirituality leads to greater job satisfaction and maybe even life satisfaction. But, is this effect constant across generations? Our research tested the hypothesis that the positive effects of workplace spirituality on both job satisfaction and life satisfaction are experienced differently among Millennials as compared to older generations. Specifically, in a survey of 224 participants, we found that while workplace spirituality has a positive effect on both job satisfaction and life satisfaction for all age groups, the impact of workplace spirituality is stronger for Millennials on at least one facet of job satisfaction compared to older generations. Implications for practice and suggestions for further research are discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

The nature of work in the twenty-first century has changed substantially from that of the twentieth century. Distant and online work makes today's workforce feel more isolated and disconnected from coworkers, while constant access to work technologies such as email, text messaging, and file sharing platforms may also lead workers to feel less connected at home as well. Workplace spirituality – including work-related opportunities to develop one's inner life, higher senses of meaning and purpose, and interconnectedness – can serve to ameliorate the isolation and disconnection often experienced in today's workplace. The literature reveals that workplace spirituality leads to greater job satisfaction and maybe even life satisfaction. But, is this effect constant across generations? Our research tested the hypothesis that the positive effects of workplace spirituality on both job satisfaction and life satisfaction are experienced differently among Millennials as compared to older generations. Specifically, in a survey of 224 participants, we found that while workplace spirituality has a positive effect on both job satisfaction and life satisfaction for all age groups, the impact of workplace spirituality is stronger for Millennials on at least one facet of job satisfaction compared to older generations. Implications for practice and suggestions for further research are discussed.

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Cross-Generational Effects of Workplace Spirituality on Job and Life Satisfaction

Since the 1990's, the concept of workplace spirituality has grown in popularity. Contrary to the public notion of spirituality in the workplace, it does not have much to do with organized religion but more with the connectedness that one has with other people (Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003), beautifully explain workplace spirituality as "a framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promote employees' experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy (p. 7)." Workplace spirituality includes the perceived connection to one's inner and personal life felt while at work, the perceived sense of meaning and purpose at work, and the perceived sense of connection to other employees.

In the last two decades, workplace spirituality and its motivational benefits have been a hot topic in management research (Karakas, 2010; Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004). A majority of the literature has supported the idea that workplace spirituality has a significant benefit to a company when it comes to employee productivity and performance (Karakas, 2010). According to Jurkiewicz and Giacalone (2004), social life and business have become so entwined that employees have begun to feel alienated at work. This has increased desire, on the employers' part, to recapture the connection between them and their employees (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004). This desire could be fulfilled with more organizations moving toward implementing workplace spirituality programs. Employees have shifted from desiring a career to earn a living to desiring a

vocation where they can express themselves and make a difference (Neal, 2000). This trend shows further indication that implementing workplace spirituality programs may be beneficial in today's workplace. Furthermore, several studies have shown that organizational spirituality programs positively impact employee job satisfaction (Karakas, 2010; Kennedy Campbell & Yen Siew, 2014; Van der Walt & de Klerk, 2014). Therefore, an understanding of workplace spirituality can be beneficial to both individual employees and companies as a whole.

Organizational Spirituality

Workplace spirituality, or organizational spirituality, is comprised of three components: inner life, meaning and purpose, and interconnectedness. The first component of workplace spirituality is called "inner life." The "inner life" component of workplace spirituality refers to the opportunities that employers provide for employees to express and develop parts of themselves that not only pertain to the job, but also to other parts of their existence (Ashmos & Dunchon, 2000). An example of an "inner life" strategy would be integrating an employee's family life with the company and it could be done with things like "Bring Your Child to Work Day" or allowing employees to pursue their other interests and/or improving their overall well-being with things like company gyms. Moore and Casper (2006) point out that a large percentage of a person's time is spent at work, and they are hiding portions of themselves with the mask of their "work self." A cohesive integration of a person's self-concept with his/her work self is likely to lead to more positive work attitudes (Badrinarayanan & Madhavaram, 2008). Workplace spirituality programs that focus on employees' well-being include fitness/sports groups, meditation programs, and wellness programs that help to promote a "true self"

environment (Karakas, 2010). These types of programs can also help reduce stress, decrease health problems, and aim for overall well-being. Thus, one aspect of spirituality involves making employees feel like the company is investing in their overall well-being, allowing for transcendence and self-development.

Another component of spirituality in the workplace is a sense of meaning and purpose (Karakas, 2010). A good alignment between the company's meaning and purpose to that of the employee can lead to the employee feeling a sense of intrinsic satisfaction (Karakas, 2005; Moore & Casper, 2006). It's important to remember that finding meaning at work is a part of employees' bigger search for meaning in their personal life (Badrinarayanan & Madhavaram, 2008). Workplace spirituality is about "the search for daily meaning as well as daily bread" (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000, p. 136), and about the connection between an individual person and the work that they do.

The third component of workplace spirituality is the sense of community and interconnectedness. Being a part of something greater, or interconnectedness, is a major part of workplace spirituality (Mittroff & Denton, 1999). In recent years, due to advances in technology, the lines between one's work life and personal life are blurring and work is consuming more and more of employees' lives which has, in turn, led to less participation in nonwork-related communities (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Duchon & Plowman, 2005; Karakas, 2010; Miller, 1998). The lack of participation in nonwork-related communities has resulted in employees' increased desire for a kind of spirituality that's not founded in religion but based on relationships and experiences (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000).

Employees want to be more connected with each other, and some employers quantify their success by these connections, because of the attachment and loyalty that employees

develop from interconnected organizations (Duchon & Plowman, 2005; Karakas, 2010; Miller, 1998). Thus, feelings of interconnectedness and belonging are a portion of workplace spirituality and can be advantageous for organizations.

Employee Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a type of job attitude that consists of how a person feels about their job and what they think and believe about their job (Brief, 1998; Ilies & Judge, 2002; Locke, 1976; Reizer, 2015). Employee job satisfaction has been shown to be correlated with employee behaviors that are beneficial for organizations. Research has shown it to be correlated with employee commitment, turnover, and overall performance (Koslowsky, Caspy, & Lazar, 1991; Lambert & Hogan, 2009; Mouluod, Boghera, & Samir, 2016). Therefore, job satisfaction should be important to owners and managers of companies and organizations. It has also been shown to have a direct impact on important employee work behaviors, service quality, and customer satisfaction (Snipes, 1996).

One advantageous aspect of workplace spirituality is that it can affect employee job satisfaction. Supporting and showing interest in employees' overall well-being (perceived organizational support) will help employees feel more comfortable to be their "true selves," which can lead to an increase in employee job satisfaction and commitment (Eisenberger, Fasolo & Dais-LaMastro, 1990; Karakas, 2010, Moore & Casper, 2006). Additionally, a recent study involving white collar workers in South Africa concluded that as workplace spirituality increased so did job satisfaction among employees (Van der Walt & de Klerk, 2014). The study went on to show that the only biographic variables that were related to workplace spirituality and job satisfaction were age and type of organization.

A recent study has also shown that workplace spirituality can have a positive effect on both normative commitment, which is feeling obligated to an organization, and affective commitment, which is wanting to belong to an organization (Bergman, 2006; Kennedy, Campbell & Yen Siew, 2014). When employees have a higher commitment to their job, they have a higher sense of job satisfaction, and this in turn leads to higher job performance (Mouluod, Boughera & Samir, 2016).

Therefore, based on the foregoing literature review, the following three hypotheses are posited:

Hypothesis 1a: The inner-life facet of workplace spirituality has a direct and positive effect on job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1b: The connectedness facet of workplace spirituality has a direct and positive effect on job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1c: The meaning and purpose facet of workplace spirituality has a direct and positive effect on job satisfaction.

Workplace Spirituality and Life Satisfaction

The literature has supported the notion that workplace spirituality can be beneficial to employees' health, job performance, and ethical habits (Gull & Doh, 2004; Kumar & Kumar, 2014; Milliman, 1994). In 2014, Kumar and Kumar found that a meaningful and healthy work environment correlated to one's overall level of health. Likewise, Milliman posited that spirituality not only has a positive effect on health but also on job performance (1994). Moreover, Gull and Doh argued that it is possible there may be opportunity costs for organizations that do not implement workplace spirituality programs (2004). This is because workplace spirituality programs are able to produce an

environment where employees are more likely to behave ethically, and therefore organizations are less likely to have to fix ethical blunders that may occur when employees feel less connected to the organization and its employees (Gull & Doh, 2004).

Another benefit of workplace spirituality appears to be an increase of one's overall life satisfaction, according to recent research (Erdogan, Bauer, Truxillo, & Mansfield, 2012; Huffman, Watrous-Rodriguez, & King, 2008; Lucas, Dyrenforth, & Diener, 2008). Though there are few researchers that have studied the specific relationship between all components of organizational spirituality and life satisfaction, some studies have examined individual components of workplace spirituality and their connection to overall life satisfaction. For example, it has been shown that interconnectedness, a component of organizational spirituality, is just as important as income and health when it comes to predicting overall life satisfaction (Erdogan, Bauer, Truxillo, & Mansfield, 2012; Lucas, Dyrenforth, & Diener, 2008; Michel, Mitchelson, Kotrba, LeBreton, & Baltes, 2009). Furthermore, social support from coworkers, supervisors, and the company itself has been shown to be positively correlated with overall life satisfaction (Erdogan et al, 2012; Fusilier, Ganster, & Mayes, 1986; Huffman, Watrous-Rodriguez, & King, 2008; Michel, Mitchelson, Kotrba, LeBreton, & Baltes, 2009). Meaningfulness of work is another component of workplace spirituality that has been shown to have a relationship with life satisfaction. Day and Jreige (2002) found that meaning at work that was produced through employee control over job choice had a high (.62) correlation with job satisfaction. Other research has found that as much as 11% of the variance in life satisfaction is due to meaning at work (Erdogan et al, 2012; Rau, 2006). However, the results of the research on this topic are not conclusive and there is a

need for further research in this area. Based on the review of the existing research literature on these variable relationships, the following hypothesis is posited:

Hypothesis 2: Workplace spirituality has a direct and positive effect on life satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction's Impact on Life Satisfaction

Researchers have been debating the direction of the job satisfaction-life satisfaction relationship for years: does job satisfaction increase life satisfaction, or vice versa (Judge & Watanabe, 1993; Reizer, 2015)? Though researchers may not all agree on the direction of the job satisfaction-life satisfaction relationship, the data have been consistent in the strong correlation between the two. One researcher proposed that job satisfaction may act as a mediator in its impact on life satisfaction (Reizer, 2015). Researchers have also postulated that job satisfaction and life satisfaction may have a bi-directional effect on each other. Judge and Watanabe (1993) set out to study the complicated relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction - both short-term and long-term. They found that when looking at short-term effects the relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction went both ways, meaning that when a person is satisfied with his/her job, he/she is then more likely to be satisfied with his/her life and vice versa. However, the researchers concluded that when looking at long-term effects, life satisfaction has a larger impact on job satisfaction. Although the results are somewhat mixed, from the bulk of the research it appears that job satisfaction and life satisfaction mutually influence each other. Therefore, the following hypothesis is posited:

Hypothesis 3: Job satisfaction and life satisfaction will have a positive and mutual effect on each other.

Research on Generation Y attitudes and behaviors has been somewhat

Generational Impact on Organizational Spirituality and Job Satisfaction

The nicknames given to the different generations vary a bit, as do the exact age ranges assigned to each generation. However, it is agreed that a generation represents about a 20-year time span, and researchers tend to vary within only a few years in their categorization of the different generations. The current study focuses on the two dominant generations in the workplace today: Generation X, defined here as those born between the years 1963-1981, and Generation Y (also called "Millennials"), defined here as those born between the years 1982-2001 (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

Generation Y represents the largest percentage of the workforce according to a 2015 Pew Research Center analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data. Therefore, researchers have been eager to study the work habits of this group of employees. Researchers have attempted to develop some consistent stereotypes of this large and diverse group of employees. Some researchers have posited that members of Generation Y, as a group, prefer to work for organizations with values that match their own idealistic views on society, including the importance of volunteering (Baldonado & Spangenburg, 2009; Roepe, 2017). Researchers have also proposed that members of Generation Y prefer management styles that are inclusive, and managers who understand the importance of life/work balance (Baldonado & Spangenburg, 2009; Josiam et al., 2009; Qenani-Petrela, Schlosser & Pompa, 2007; Roepe 2017). Likewise, a study conducted by Cugin (2012) concluded that having work-life balance is an instrumental part of Generation Y's interpretation of a successful career, so programs catering to Generation Y's well-being would both entice and captivate them.

Research on Generation Y attitudes and behaviors has been somewhat inconsistent, however. For example, one researcher postulated Generation Y employees are more likely to desire to work alone and that constant feedback and recognition are not needed for motivation (Cordeniz, 2002). In contrast, Cugin (2012) stated that while both Generation X and Generation Y employees have a desire for more frequent feedback, the desire of Generation X was less than Generation Y. Another study proposed that Generation X held less value for extrinsic rewards when compared to Generation Y (Krahn & Galambos, 2014), but there is research that contradicts this claim, proposing that Generation X tends to prefer *both* extrinsic and intrinsic rewards more than Generation Y (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, Lance, 2010). When comparing the literature on both Generation X's and Y's work ethics and attitudes there are some differences that arise. For example the difference between the desire to work alone, and the need for constant feedback and work/life balance (Baldonado & Spangenburg, 2009; Cugin, 2012; Roepe, 2017). However, the bulk of the research appears to support the notion that workplace spirituality appears to be more important to the younger group of employees as compared to older generations (Baldonado & Spangenburg, 2009; 2017; Cugin, 2012; Cordeniz, 2002; Josiam et al., 2009; Qenani-Petrela, Schlosser & Pompa, 2007; Roepe). Therefore, the following hypothesis is advanced:

Hypothesis 4: Generational age groups will moderate the relationship between workplace spirituality and job satisfaction such that the relationship is stronger for millennials than older generations.

Study Methods

Sample and Survey Distribution

The study consisted of 224 upper-level undergraduates and graduate students in a medium-sized university located in the southeastern part of the United States. Only students who were employed were asked to participate in the study. Students who belonged to Generation Y (those 35 and under) were also asked to help recruit Generation X employees to participate in the study. Of the 224 participants, 58% (130) were from Generation Y (35 or under), and 42% (94) were Generation X (36-54). About 55% of the sample was female and 45% were male. The mean age of the sample was 34. Participants' work experience ranged from 1 month to 40 years with a mean of 10 years. About 43% of the participants had supervisory responsibilities. The sample represents employees from many different types of organizations and industries, including the arts, government, construction, manufacturing, and professional services.

Study Measures

Participants received a survey that consisted of the three measures under investigation in this study: Job Satisfaction, Organizational Spirituality, and Life Satisfaction. The survey also included demographics such as: age, experience, gender, annual salary, level of education, type of job, type of organization, and whether they were a supervisor.

An adapted version of Spector's (1994) "Job Satisfaction Survey" was used to measure job satisfaction facets. Global job satisfaction was measured with one item ("Overall, how satisfied are you with your job?"). An adapted version of Ashmos and Duchon's (2000) "Spirituality at Work" scale was used to measure organizational

spirituality. Lastly, Diener, Emmons, Larson, and Griffins' (1985) "Satisfaction with Life Scale" ("SWLS") was used to measure life satisfaction. To measure employee generation, a dummy variable was added to group study participants into two groups: Millennials (coded with a "1") and non-Millennials (coded with a "0"). All scales had high Cronbach's alpha -- over .78 (see Table 1 below). Cronbach's alpha is used to test the internal consistency of a measure. Internal consistency tells us whether each question in a scale is generally measuring the same construct. The commonly-accepted rule of thumb is that if the Cronbach's alpha is higher than .70 then the scale has good internal consistency. As shown in Table 1 below, all scales had a coefficient of .79 and above indicating high internal consistency.

Table 1:
Scale Reliability Statistics

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
Workplace Spirituality Scale		
Inner Life	.86	4
Sense of Community	.84	5
Meaning at Work	.88	5
Job Satisfaction Scale		
Pay and Contingent Rewards	.87	9
Work Itself	.80	3
Supervision and Communication	.80	6
Operating Procedures	.79	2
Life Satisfaction	.87	5

Study Results

Impact of Workplace Spirituality on Job and Life Satisfaction

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test the first two hypotheses regarding the effects of the three facets of workplace spirituality on job satisfaction and life satisfaction. It was also used to test the hypothesis that generation moderates the relationship between workplace spirituality and overall job satisfaction. Table 2 shows the results for the hierarchical regression analysis.

The hierarchical regression analysis consisted of five models. The first model included the control variables (months spent at current job, years of experience, gender, education, annual pay, and supervisory position). Interconnectedness (a facet of workplace spirituality) was added in Model 2. As shown in Table 2, the “interconnectedness” facet of workplace spirituality is a significant predictor of both job satisfaction ($\beta=.332$, $p=.008$) and life satisfaction ($\beta=.335$, $p=.009$). The meaning and purpose variable (another facet of workplace spirituality) was added to Model 3. As shown in Table 2, this variable is not a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction ($\beta=-.144$, $p=.252$), or life satisfaction ($\beta=.027$, $p=.840$). However, upon investigating this variable’s effect on different facets of job satisfaction, it is interesting to note that it is a significant predictor of the “satisfaction with pay and contingent rewards” ($\beta=-.255$, $p<.05$) and “satisfaction with the work itself” facets ($\beta=.226$, $p<.05$). The third facet of workplace spirituality, “inner-life,” was added in Model 4. Inner-life was shown to be a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction ($\beta=.572$, $p<.01$) as well as life satisfaction ($\beta=.229$, $p<.05$). The facets of Workplace Spirituality were entered into the hierarchical

regressions model in this order (interconnectedness, meaning and purpose, then inner-life) because there seemed to be some type co-linearity or co-variance that happens when the facets are put in any other order. However, when the appropriate test were ran to test for co-linearity and co-variance the tests were not significant. This means there was no significant co-linearity or co-variance between the three facets.

The three workplace spirituality facets explain an impressive 46.8% of the variance in overall job satisfaction, 45.9% of the variance in satisfaction with pay and contingent rewards, 51.1% of the variance in satisfaction with the work itself, 45.7% of the variance in satisfaction with supervision and communications, 9.2% of the variance in satisfaction with operating procedures, and 24.6% of the variance in overall life satisfaction. In other words, workplace spirituality has a powerful impact on both job and life satisfaction.

Life and Job Satisfaction:

A Pearson's correlation test was conducted to test hypothesis three, which states that life satisfaction and job satisfaction will have positive and equal effect on each other. The test revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between life satisfaction and job satisfaction. The test results are as follows:

supported by the data.

Table 2
 Hierarchical Analysis to Measure the Three Workplace Spirituality Facets
 Effects on Job Satisfaction Facets

Dependent Variable	Inter-	Inter-	M&P		Inner	Inner	All	Model
	connected	connected	β	β	Life	Life	Model	ΔF
	β	β Sig.	β	β Sig.	β	β Sig.	Δr^2	Sig.
Overall Job Satisfaction	.332	.008**	-.144	.252	.572	.000**	.468	.000**
Satisfaction with Pay and Contingent Rewards	.649	.000**	-.255	.027*	.308	.023*	.459	.000**
Satisfaction with Work Itself	.047	.601	.226	.013*	.349	.000**	.511	.000**
Satisfaction with Supervision/Communications	.674	.000**	-.091	.383	.043	.640	.457	.000**
Satisfaction with Operating Procedures ¹	.409	.000**	-.033	.862	.154	.366	.092	.000**
Overall Life Satisfaction ¹	.335	.009**	.027	.840	.299	.012*	.246	.012**

* Significant at the $p < .05$ level

** Significant at the $p < .01$ level

¹ Interconnectedness becomes insignificant at the $p < .05$ level when M&P and Inner Life are added to the regression model

Life and Job Satisfaction

A Pearson's correlation analysis was used to test hypothesis three, which states that life satisfaction and job satisfaction will have a positive and mutual effect on each other. The test revealed that there is a significant and positive correlation between life satisfaction and job satisfaction ($r = .500$, $N = 210$, $p = .000$). Therefore, hypothesis three is supported by the data in this study.

Moderation Effect of Generation

Hierarchical regression analysis was performed to test the fourth hypothesis that generational age groups will moderate the relationship between workplace spirituality and job satisfaction. Generation was added in the fifth model after control variables (Model 1), interconnectedness (Model 2), meaning and purpose (Model 3), and inner life (Model 4). As shown in Table 3, Model 5 (in which generation was added) had a significant beta coefficient with only one facet of job satisfaction: satisfaction with pay and promotions ($\beta=.458, p=.042$).

Table 3
Hierarchical Analysis to Measure the Moderating Effect of Generation
On the Workplace Spirituality-Job Satisfaction Relationship

Dependent Variable	B	β sig.	Δr^2	ΔF Sig.
Global Job Satisfaction	.086	.725	.000	.725
Satisfaction with Pay/ Contingent Rewards	.458	.042	.014	.042
Satisfaction with Work itself	-.106	.546	.001	.546
Satisfaction with Supervisor/ Communications	.294	.148	.007	.148
Satisfaction with Operating Procedures	.224	.555	.002	.555
Life Satisfaction	.071	.787	.000	.787

The data analysis revealed that, although employee generation does not significantly influence global job satisfaction (F change significance = .725), it is significant to one important job satisfaction facet: satisfaction with pay and contingent

rewards (F chance significance = .04). The positive sign on the beta coefficient for the satisfaction with pay and contingent rewards facet means that workplace spirituality has a *stronger* impact for Millennials than for non-Millennials. In other words, Millennials are more likely than older employees to be satisfied with pay and promotion opportunities in organizations where workplace spirituality is perceived to be high. This provides partial support for the fourth hypothesis and suggests that Millennials may be more likely than older employees to accept lower-paying jobs if they feel the job provides opportunities for interconnectedness and fulfillment.

Discussion

This study tested the hypothesis that workplace spirituality, composed of three facets (inner-life, connectedness, and meaning and purpose), would positively affect employee job satisfaction and life satisfaction. The inner-life facet of workplace spirituality represents the employee's perspective of his/her organization's investment in his/her personal life and personal growth. The connectedness facet pertains to the employee's feeling as he/she worked with a community of people that cared about his/her well-being as if they were family. Lastly, the meaning and purpose facet represents employees feeling like they were doing meaningful work that positively affects society. This study also tested the hypothesis that employee job and life satisfaction of Generation Y (Millennials) employees would be impacted more by workplace spirituality than older generations.

The results of this study show that workplace spirituality, as a whole, can be a significant predictor of job satisfaction and life satisfaction. When analyzing the different facets of job satisfaction (i.e., satisfaction with pay and contingent rewards, work itself,

supervision/communications, operating procedures, and overall job satisfaction), the results support the notion that workplace spirituality positively impacts all of these facets. This means that employees who work at companies that implement workplace spirituality programs may be more likely to be satisfied with all facets of their jobs (including pay and contingent rewards, the work itself, supervision/communications, and operating procedures) than those who work at companies that do not implement workplace spirituality programs. Interestingly, this study provides support that workplace spirituality explains almost 50% of overall job satisfaction, satisfaction with pay and contingent rewards and supervision/communications (46.8%, 45.9%, and 45.7% respectively). This implies workplace spirituality perceptions may explain nearly half of employee job satisfaction. This has been shown in past research as well. Van der Walt (2018) concluded that when there is perceived workplace spirituality, employees feel like they are thriving more and are more engaged with their work.

Another finding of this study is that interconnectedness seems to be the more important facet of the three when looking at the impact on job and life satisfaction. The interconnectedness component was found to be predictive of more components of job satisfaction than the other two facets of workplace spirituality. This is consistent with past research. Previous studies have shown that feeling both connected and a part of a community can be beneficial to employees and, in turn, employers (Erdogan et al, 2012; Fusilier, Ganster, & Mayes, 1986; Huffman, Watrous-Rodriguez, & King, 2008; Michel, Mitchelson, Kotrba, LeBreton, & Baltes, 2009). One study investigated the relationship between leadership and workplace bullying (Francioli et. al., 2015). In that study, researchers found a relationship between low social community at work and poor

leadership. In 2002, Baumeister and colleagues concluded that having low social workplace community could lead to negative job performance. The relationship between workplace spirituality and employee job satisfaction should be important for employers because employee job satisfaction has been shown to influence many important workplace behaviors that affect customer service quality, customer satisfaction, employee commitment and overall work performance (Koslowsky, Caspy, & Lazar, 1991; Lambert & Hogan, 2009; Moulouod, Boghera, & Samir, 2016; Snipes, 1996).

One hypothesis in this study was that employee generation would act as a moderator of the relationship between workplace spirituality and overall job and life satisfaction. This hypothesis was not fully supported, which may mean that Generation Y might not be so different from older generations in this regard. However, the results of this study show that employee generation has a small, but significant impact on one important facet of job satisfaction: satisfaction with pay and contingent rewards. The results show that compared to older generations, Millennials are slightly more likely to put a bigger emphasis on workplace spirituality than on pay. In other words, if a company has implemented workplace spirituality programs, Millennial employees may be less likely to focus on pay and more likely to focus on corporate culture. Other research has found similar results. Researchers Kowske, Rasch, and Wiley (2010) found that there are slight differences between Millennials and older generations when it comes to work attitudes towards overall job and company satisfaction, job security, career development and advancement, and recognition. However, similar to the current study, they concluded that the variance for the relationship between Millennials and these work

attitudes was low (1.8% and less), which therefore indicates only a small difference in work attitudes between generations.

Study Limitations

To ensure that there was equal distribution of generations, some participants were instructed to give surveys to two other people who were not in their generation. Those surveys were to be returned in sealed envelopes. Some people could have given their surveys to individuals in their family. People from the same family might have the same work ethics and attitudes, or the person from the older generation could influence the persons from the younger generation. Therefore, this could be a potentially confounding issue in the data.

Another limitation was the sample size. This study had a sufficient amount of participants but could have benefited by having a larger sample size. Generation was not shown to be significant when testing its moderation effect on the relationship between workplace spirituality and job/life satisfaction. A larger sample size might allow for different statistical techniques and more sample representation, which could reveal a more accurate analysis of the impact of employee generation on the workplace spirituality- job satisfaction relationship.

Future Research

Future studies should continue to research generational differences when it comes to the impact of workplace spirituality programs. The literature on this topic is sparse, and there is still a need for further research to fully understand relationships between workplace spirituality and important job attitudes. Also, future researchers should look at age as a moderation as opposed to generation. Because each generation has a span of

about 20 years, the oldest and youngest members might have views and attitudes that align better with entirely different generations. Using age as a moderator instead of generations might account for the diversity within a generational group.

Another avenue for future research is to explore the potential responsibility employers and companies have when it comes to employee life satisfaction. This study provides further evidence that workplace spirituality programs have a huge impact on both job and life satisfaction, which implies that employers may have a social responsibility to implement programs that can positively impact employee job satisfaction.

Lastly, future research should continue to study the best ways to implement workplace spirituality programs. One of the findings in this study is that workplace spirituality explains nearly half of the variance (46.8%) in overall job satisfaction. Since employee job satisfaction impacts so many important work behaviors – which in turn impact the firm's bottom line - research on the best practices in workplace spirituality programs would provide mutual benefit to both employers and employees alike.

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CROSS-GENERATIONAL EFFECTS OF WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY ON
JOB AND LIFE SATISFACTION

By

Bobbie Bannerman

A Thesis Submitted to the

HONORS COLLEGE

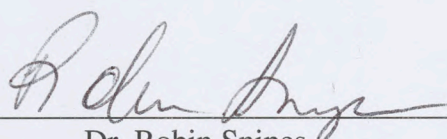
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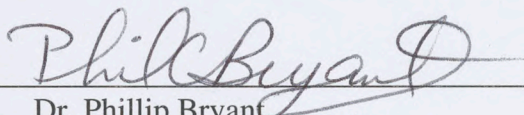
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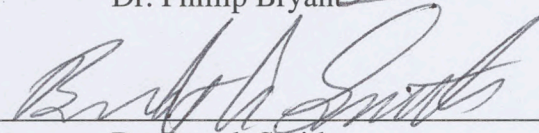
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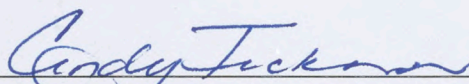
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