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Meaningful Work: A Review of an Organizational Change Towards Health and Well-Being at Work

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Abstract

This article aims to present a literary review of workplace spirituality as an approach for meaningful work. This topic has been discussed in regards to organizational changes by journals. As the authors discuss spirituality, it may be noted that this topic is about a tendency of the last generation of workers seeking more meaningful labor. However, job satisfaction cannot be measured only by financial returns and growth opportunities for recent workers. Old working objectives were replaced by new work objectives that could increase the experience of meaningful work. In this article the preview literature about workplace spirituality was reviewed with the objective of finding the main work attributes that support this new perspective for job satisfaction. A systematic literature review was done to identify the key work attributes and propose a job satisfaction diagnostic instrument in order to attend new jobs' expectations. The diagnostic instrument was based on Kano's Model, which maps the workers' satisfaction level related to the work attributes. It is expected that the proposal of this instrument contribute to the organizational efforts of developing more health and well being in workplaces through job satisfaction.

Keywords: meaningful work; organizational changes; health and well-being.

1. Introduction

Productivity comes from the combination of work and technology (HOBOUBI et al., 2017). From worker perspective, maintaining productivity requires a self-motivation that goes beyond financial returns and growth opportunities (DRIVER, 2007). In order to support employees' motivation, the organizations are investing on better places to work (JUNG et al, 2017). Even with all these investments, today a scenario of growth in mental health disorders due to job stress had been announced by some international organizations of work (CORNELISSENA et. al, 2011). The employees are facing high levels of job stress even in workplaces with great job satisfaction (BUBONYA et. al, 2017). Why? For some authors one of the causes is the lack of meaning at work (GREEN, 2010).

Despite we can find a literature of meaningful work we choose to approach this lack on workplace by the perspective of work spirituality. The spiritual approach brings more than a subjective perception of meaning but redesign the work experience by three dimensions of relationships: with yourself; with others and with collectives. The harmonization of theses dimensions results into what Ashmos and Duchon (2000) defines as work spirituality: "the recognition of an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community".

2. Methods

The research was marked by two major steps: first, the generation of work attributes related to meaningful work by a systematic literature review; after that, a questionnaire based on these attributes was elaborated as a diagnostic instrument for evaluation of the perception of these attribute.

The review strategy used was conducted from successive refinements on Scopus database. We start from over twenty thousands of publications about spirituality in general. The first filter used was limit results to "article or review" and "business or economies areas" that take us to 842 articles. The second filter limit results to articles that have the words "workplace and job satisfaction" in some part of text that lead us to 115 articles. Finally, a third filter was used in order to retrieve some articles that were not classified in the "business or economies areas" which sum more another 87 new articles. Thus, the articles nucleus was composed by 202 articles from conjunction of these two samples (i.e., 115+87). This process is illustrated in figure 1.
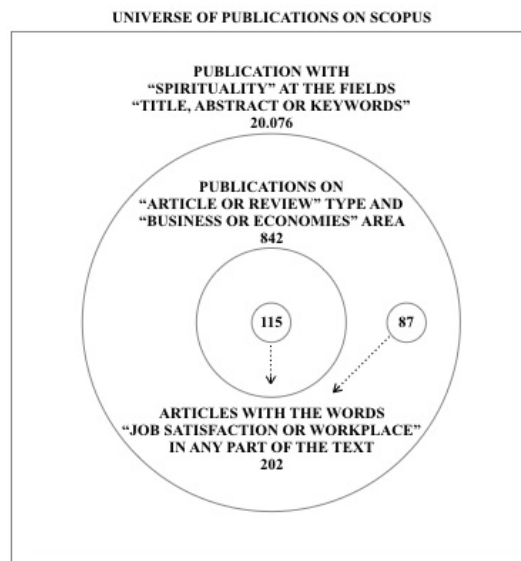

Fig. 1: The Articles Nucleus for Review

The articles nucleus allows the generation of work attributes. This process started from selection of most relevant articles to review. The selection was conducted by a title and abstract reading that elected 34 articles to a full read. These 34 articles were analyzed by coding techniques commonly applied in qualitative studies to transform text into useful data. Fragments of these selected articles were coded, categorized, grouped and decoded. All these steps are illustrated in the figure 2.
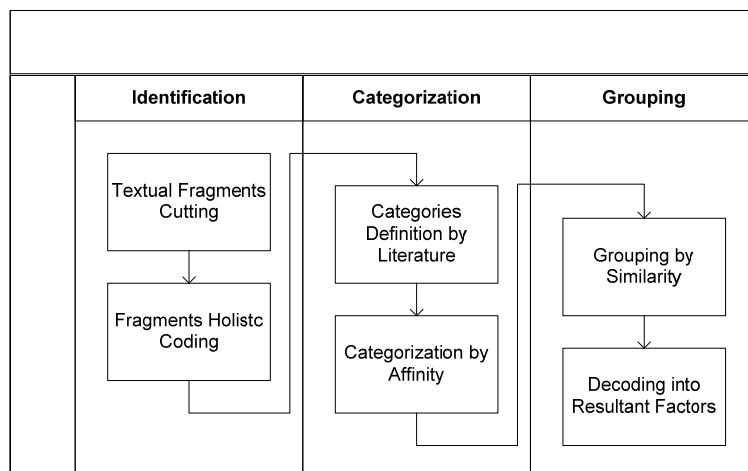

Fig. 2: The Spiritual Human Factors Generation

The criteria to identifying texts fragments that could be coded were previously parameterized by definitions or conclusions about spirituality. For decode the parameter used was the perspective of human necessity. The following coding methods were used:

- Holistic coding (attribute a code that passes the central idea of a larger fragment): it was used in a first moment to extract the plurality of expressions of spiritual human factors;

- Descriptive coding (a noun that passes the central idea of the highlighted text was alighted): it was used in a second moment to categorize the spiritual human factors. The categories used were based on the dimensions of spirituality proposed by Ashmos & Duchon (2000). In a third moment, this coding technique was used to group the spiritual human factors by similarity and then translate into just one resulting factor that express central idea of the grouped spiritual human factors.

The Kano's model was used to orient the questions and answer scale design. This model analyses the relationship between two variables: satisfaction & attribute functionality. The model can explain the tendency of satisfaction in relation to functional performance of an attribute by some categories previous mapped as (KANO, 1984):

- Must-be (M): the attribute classified in this category consists of the basic criteria and it will be extremely dissatisfied if it is not fulfilled. However, its fulfillment does not increase satisfaction level because it was taken by granted;

- One-dimensional (O): the presence of the attribute in this category will increase satisfaction level, while its absence will proportionally decrease satisfaction level;

- Attractive (A): the attribute falling in this category generates absolutely positive satisfaction while customers will not be dissatisfied at all when it is not fulfilled;

- Reverse (R): an attribute falling in this category should be removed because its functional presence is harmful to satisfaction but its dysfunctional absence is beneficial,

- Indifferent (I): the attribute in this category does not contribute much to satisfaction irrespective of whether it is fulfilled or unfulfilled;

- Questionable (Q): this outcome indicates either the question was described incorrectly or an illogical response was given by an evaluator.

For each attribute was presented a couple of questions that the participants can answer in five different ways. The first question is concerned with the reaction of participants when the attribute is present (functional form). The second question is concerned with the reaction of participants when the attribute is absent (dysfunctional form). By combining the responses it can determine the category of the analyzed attribute. In table 5 we present the categories.

Tab. 1: Questionnaire scale and interpretation by Kano's Model

Functional Answer	Dysfunctional Answer				
	Like	Must-be	Neutral	Live-with	Dislike
Like	Questionable	Attractive	Attractive	Attractive	One-dimensional
Must-be	Reverse	Indifferent	Indifferent	Indifferent	Must-be
Neutral	Reverse	Indifferent	Indifferent	Indifferent	Must-be
Live-with	Reverse	Indifferent	Indifferent	Indifferent	Must-be
Dislike	Reverse	Reverse	Reverse	Reverse	Questionable

3. Results

3.1. Spiritual matter: this is not the same of religion

It is important to remark that spirituality is not religion. Religion manifests itself as a guide to transcendence and contact with the divine. The benefits proposed by this connection depend on each religion, but in all of them there is a path, that is, an orientation (BYRNE et al, 2011). This perspective of religion, as a way, manifests itself in a set of cultural systems and beliefs, as well as visions of the world, which are responsible for assigning purpose and meaning to the existence of the individual, as well as establishing symbols that relate humanity to moral values personified in the deity (CAVANAGH & BANDSUCH, 2002).

While religion is an organized belief system, spirituality is an experience experienced by the human being in addressing issues that give meaning, purpose, and coherence to their existence (BIERLY et al., 2000). Thus, although spirituality can be lived apart from religion, religion allows the construction of an organized spirituality and marked by spiritual beliefs and leaders (KONZ & RYAN, 1999). This does not diminish the importance of separating spirituality from religion (GOERTZEN & BARBUTO, 2001).

3.2. Spirituality at work: towards a meaningful work

Workplace spirituality can refer to an individual's attempts to live their values more fully in the workplace or refer to how organizations structure themselves to support the spiritual growth of employees (NEAL, 2000). The dimensions of spirituality in the workplace were discussed by several authors, however the theoretical framework adopted in this research was evidenced as predominant by several authors (HOUGHTON, 2016).

Notably human beings are animals that seek meaning, and consequently seek meaning in their work activities (JUDGE, 2001). We are sociable, so we also have concern with belonging to social groups (GARAVAN & DIMITROV, 2012). These two aspects - meaning and belonging - reflect anxieties that develop within an internal life (GOLTZ, 2011). So spirituality in the workplace is about fostering opportunities for personal growth, opportunities to contribute significantly to society, as well as being more attentive to colleagues, bosses, subordinates and clients (GUPTA et al, 2014). It is about meeting the needs of inner life, purpose and community.

On the other hand, the company's role is to recognize that employees have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work in the context of a community (ASHMOS & DUCHON, 2000). The main ways that current organizations use to deal with spirituality are through the leaders of the institution, its organizational culture, policies and the design of work (AL-HOSAINI & SOFIAN, 2015).

3.2. Job satisfaction: a metric for health and well-being

From the worker's point of view, Job Satisfaction stands out for Quality Work Life (GREENHAUS et. al, 2003). The relationship between Job Satisfaction and Quality Work Life was perceived by the school of human relations administration (AHMAD et. al, 2014). In the main theory of this school, Maslow identified several sources of workers' needs came from physiological and social matters (BARLING et al, 2003). The evolution of the job satisfaction theories shows a tendency to consider more needs that are not directly related to the work activity but with the integrity of the human being and his aspirations. In Table 2 the evolution of these theories are presented.

Tab. 2: The evolution of job satisfaction theories

Author	Study emphasis	Job Satisfaction Perspective
Taylor (1903)	Fatigue and wage as most important factors for job satisfaction	Workers are motivated by interests and materials
Mayo (1933)	Preponderance of the psychological factor over the physiological in job satisfaction	Expansion of factors related to satisfaction increasing the importance of informal groups
Hoppock (1935)	Emphasizes the relationship of job satisfaction factors with effective aspects	Highlight for multiple factors influencing job satisfaction (fatigue, supervision, monotony, etc)

Author	Study emphasis	Job Satisfaction Perspective
Herzberg et al (1959)	Psychological growth that comes from the work itself as a condition for job satisfaction	Two groups of distinct factors are responsible for job satisfaction, intrinsic factors are called motivational and extrinsic factors are called hygienic
Vromm (1964)	Situational and personality variables (expectations)	Job satisfaction is an anticipated reaction to a result or expectation that the employee expects to achieve
Porter (1968)	Needs of individual fulfillment (altruistic vision)	The job satisfaction is determined by the degree to which the work meets the needs of realization of the individual, basic for their well being
Hackman e Oldham (1974)	Influence and relation with work factors	The job satisfaction is determined by critical psychological states caused by five characteristics of the work: variety, identity, significance, task autonomy and feedback
Locke (1976)	Affective nature and mental process in work evaluation	Job satisfaction is a pleasant or positive emotional state that results from some work or work experience
Orpen (1981)	Respect to values	If the values of the individual are not respected in work situations, workers will feel dissatisfied
Quarstein et al (1992)	Balance between variables	Job satisfaction is caused by situational characteristics and occurrences. The characteristics are aspects that can be pre-evaluated and the occurrences are situations that cannot be predicted

3.3. Work attributes: seeking for a meaningful work

The spiritual matter remains to a human centered view based on self awareness, life purpose and community engagement. These three aspects of spirituality are the predominant perspective on the literature. These aspects are defining new paradigms for work relationships and impacting the work environments. These new paradigms are related to the search of meaningful work by last generation of workers. Therefore, we choose investigate the workplace spirituality in order to move towards health and well-being at work. In fact, there are already some reviews about workplace spirituality, the most cited one organize the topic by three dimensions: first, the inner life dimension that remains to self-centered matters such as identity and values; second, the sense of purpose dimension that refers to work significance perception; at last, the sense of community dimension that remains to connection and engagement. So, we start from these dimensions to find out which work attribute that can increase a meaningful work perception.

Tab. 3: Work attributes for a meaningful work

Dimension	Attribute	Description	References
Inner Life & Identity	Identity	Development of an integral self-knowledge (ie, physical, emotional, spiritual, social and organizational)	Albuquerque I.F., et. al. (2014); Hayashi Jr P. (2016); Jurkiewicz C.L., Giacalone R.A. (2004)
	Belonging	Perception of belonging and connection with you, with other people, with the universe and with your god	Azad Marzabadi E., Niknafs S. (2014); Chawla V., Guda S. (2010); Houghton J.D., Neck C.P., Krishnakumar S. (2016); McCormick DW. (1994)
	Values	Recognition of the employment, by you and your colleagues, of your personal values at work, daily (for example, productivity, tranquility, kindness among others)	Cunha MP, Rego A, Oliveira TD. (2006); Kolodinsky RW.,Giacalone RA., Jurkiewicz CL. 2008; Kumar V., Kumar S. (2014); McCormick DW. (1994)
	Inner Life	Zeal for internal issues (ie, feelings, beliefs, values, purpose among others)	de Klerk J.J. (2005); Ghazzawi I.A., Smith Y., Cao Y. (2016); Kessler V. (2017); Kinjerski V., Skrypnek BJ. (2008); Lazar A. (2010); Pryal V., Ramkumar N. (2016); Van Der Walt F., De Klerk J.J. (2014)
Purpose & Meaning	Coherence	Level of difficulty of tasks appropriate to personal skills and defined scope (ie, purpose, purpose, time and quality)	Altaf A., Awan M.A. (2011); Kessler V. (2017); Rego A., Pina E Cunha M. (2008)

Dimension	Attribute	Description	References
	Cohesion	Challenges in all spheres with gradual evolution and engagement (ie, physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual)	Altaf A., Awan M.A. (2011); Duchon D., Plowman DA. (2006); McGuire T. (2010); Ramnarain C., Parumasur S.B. (2015)
	Purpose	Daily engagement with a legacy that integrates all areas of your life (ie contributing daily to your own life, team, organization, and future generations)	Ahmad A., Omar Z. (2014); Hayashi Jr P. (2016)
	Meaning	Recognizing the alignment of your vocation and sources of job satisfaction (that is, employing the most outstanding talents and qualities of your personality at work)	Kessler V. (2017); Noor S., Arif S. (2011); Rego A., Pina E Cunha M. (2008); Word J. (2012)
Community& Connection	Climate	Mild organizational climate (ie, promoting autonomy, communication, and the practice of cooperative values)	Albuquerque I.F., et. al. (2014); Van Der Walt F., De Klerk J.J. (2014); Word J. (2012)
	Community	Respect for the basic beliefs and values of each individual (ie, not pressuring or persuading someone to assume or act with values contrary to their own)	Ahmad A., Omar Z. (2014); Kutcher E.J., et. al. (2010); Marques J.F. (2006); Marschke E., Preziosi R., Harrington W.J. (2011); Thakur K., Singh J. (2016)
	Connection	Personality in work relationships (for example, attention to personal problems and the need for words of encouragement among others)	Albuquerque I.F., et. al. (2014); Baran BE., Shanock LR., Miller LR. (2011); Daniel J.L. (2015); Sani A., Soetjipto B.E., Maharani V. (2016); Van Der Walt F., De Klerk J.J. (2014)
	Environment	Organizational environment open to expression of personality (ie expression weaknesses & vulnerability, plurality of tastes & options, among others)	Doram K., et. al. (2017); Kumar V., Kumar S. (2014); Marques J.F. (2006); Sani A., Soetjipto B.E., Maharani V. (2016); Van Der Walt F., Klerk J.J. (2014)

3.4. Diagnostic instrument: mapping the workers expectation

For evaluation of these work attributes we propose a group of two questions for each attribute based on Kano's model logic (i.e., one question functional and another one dysfunctional). The questions were elaborated based on the work attributes descriptions. On table 4, the functional questions are organized by each attribute. To turn a functional question into a dysfunctional one just put "no" in the sentence, like "how do you feel when there is no opportunity to develop self-knowledge".

Tab. 4: Question propose for a meaningful work diagnostic instrument

Dimension	Attribute	Question
Inner Life & Identity	Identity	How do you feel when there is opportunity to develop self-knowledge?
	Belonging	How do you feel when there is opportunity to develop a connection with your god?
	Values	How do you feel when there is opportunity to employ your personal values at work?
	Inner Life	How do you feel when there is an opportunity to care for internal personal issues?
Purpose & Meaning	Coherence	How do you feel when the tasks fit your personal skills?
	Cohesion	How do you feel when you face professional challenges with a gradual evolution?
	Purpose	How do you feel when you have the opportunity to commit to a legacy that integrates all areas of your life?
	Meaning	How do you feel when there is opportunity to develop your strengths at work?
Community& Connection	Climate	How are you feeling when there is a light organizational climate?
	Community	How do you feel when there is concern about each individual's core beliefs and values?
	Connection	How do you feel when you are in work relationships?
	Environment	How do you feel an open organizational environment in the expression of authenticity?

4. Conclusion

The main contributions of this article were organizing the previous literature about workplace spirituality into work attributes that can be related to meaningful work. This perspective makes a practically approach to the issue by proposing that meeting these work attributes can bring satisfaction and work quality of life. The usage of this model also can contribute to individuals and organizations in matter of understand that their spiritual health needs attention as well their body and mind. Besides that the main application of this finds were health and well-being by workplace design. For example the work attributes can be used in strategic planning taking to mission, vision and organizational values more alignment with the workforce. At the team level the understanding of these work attributes can add self aware, commitment and engagement. Finally, the spiritual perspective for a meaningful work remains to fostering opportunities for personal growth, opportunities to contribute significantly to society, as well as being more attentive to colleagues, bosses, subordinates and clients.

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