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WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE: A STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELLING APPROACH

TRABAJO ESPIRITUAL Y ORGANIZACIÓN: UN ENFOQUE DE MODELADO DE ECUACIONES ESTRUCTURALES

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Abstract

Purpose: this research aims to identify whether workplace spirituality variables (meaningful work, work belongingness and inner life at work) have any influence on employee's organizational performance. Methodology: purposive sampling technique was used for this research. 350 questionnaires were distributed amongst the employees out which 335 completely filled and useable questionnaires were returned. SPSS 23 and AMOS 23 were used for data analysis. Findings: the hypothesis regarding workplace belongingness was rejected while the other two hypotheses regarding meaningful work and inner life at work were accepted, implying that if employees find the work to be meaningful and in alignment with their inner life goals then their organizational performance is enhanced. While. Workplace belongingness did not play any significant role in enhancing the organizational performance in this particular scenario. Implications: Organizations should identify when employee performance is declining and its causes. Organizations should develop programs to analyze the changing needs of their employees and the factors that can keep their employees motivated. Organizations can improve their overall output when their employees find a balance between their work and inner life. More importantly, employees make an extra effort when they find that the work they are doing is meaningful not just for themselves but also the organization and the clients to whom they are catering to.

Keywords

Meaningful work – Work belongingness – Inner life at work
Workplace spirituality and organizational performance

Para Citar este Artículo:

Introduction

In the 20th century, western society did a lot of work on the subject of spirituality, spiritualism and phenomena of spirituality from conceptual and philosophical contexts, but only recently this focus has shifted towards the modern work place setting in order to have coherence between society, employee and work[1]. Spirituality is defined as the search for meaning, purpose, moral fulfillment, mental satisfaction, self-satisfaction, and knowledge of ultimate reality. In workplace context spirituality is defined as certain kind of feelings that energizes actions related to the work[2]. There has been growing interest in spirituality in the business and corporate world. One of the reasons of this might be because of growing competition and market concentration, that makes people spend too much of their time in places in which they work[3]. Spirituality has been defined by scholars in compartment forms by dividing them into meaningfulness, membership and inner life satisfaction[4].

Meaningful Work

The interest in meaningfulness has enormously grown in the last few decades especially after the age of turmoil in which people apart from their financial concerns also started thinking about other factors related to them and their surroundings. Meaningful work is actually derived from the philosophical concerns and discourse relating to the discussions of meaningful life in relationship to the purpose of existence of an individual, that is because an individual always relates himself with the environment and surrounding he lives in.

Holistically speaking, when people are able to properly answer the question, "why am I here?" then it actually makes them realize if something is meaningful or not[5]. Similarly now they want to answer the same question in the context of the place they work in. People want to have fulfilling jobs in which they have interests aligned to the organization and also in which they have this sense of contribution in other people's lives. Meaningful work deals with having some assigned long term purpose with work, which means that they want and desire for a type of work that has substantial meaning to it, primarily because of the workers association with his organization that is on consistent basis, i.e. he spends more time at his work rather than his home. In simpler words meaningful work relates to something that has long-term significance and worthiness which can relate to the individuals/employees mindset[6].

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Workplace Belonging

Many of the things that human being does is because of some kind of service to some kind of belongingness that the human being has with other human beings. Belongingness relates to the interpersonal relationships and the connectivity of one human being with another human being at a place that is common for both individuals. Belongingness can be understood under the context of social and emotional dimensions of all human beings that exist because of the experiences they have with other human beings and how they feel about those experiences, which actually becomes part of their development and growth for their entire life.

Basically, belonging or social identity means that how we actually define ourselves in the context of the place we are in by the answering to the question of, "who we are?". This actually facilitates us in connecting with the identity that we already have or helps us in building an identity in relationship to the place we are in Association[7].

It is the indication that human beings have this natural drive of having and maintaining some of amount of interaction with other human beings on frequent basis so that they don't feel isolated neither feel like stranger amongst others[8]. That is Human beings wants to be included and invited with others at their workplace in a group, in which they are accepted for who they are and are also heard about what they have to say and also have acceptance about what they say rather than having the fear of being rejected because of competition.

Inner life at work

Inner life is about the satisfaction of the self in terms of the outer life that is apparent to others. Inner life is actually what plays an important role in making the outer life productive. It means that inner life comprehensively deals with the internal and non-physical elements of the human being and hence includes emotions, perceptions, motivation, role, and deals with the questions like whether they feel good doing something, how they are doing something, whether they are being appreciated of what they are doing; however inner life is something that is mostly invisible to the workplace managers and subordinates who actually evaluate only on the basis of outer life rather than inner life[9].

However this doesn't remain limited to this only, philosophers like Kant, Aristotle, Rawls, Nozick and others have linked inner life of human being with morality and that his will to exercise himself as a moral being makes him feel autonomous[10], which means that inner self does not only deal with how much productive the human being in a particular work setting feels but also deals with how moral he feels in the same work setting where he is also productive. Inner work life answers the questions of who they are, why and what they are doing and what they are contributing under the context of organization[11].

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Conceptual framework
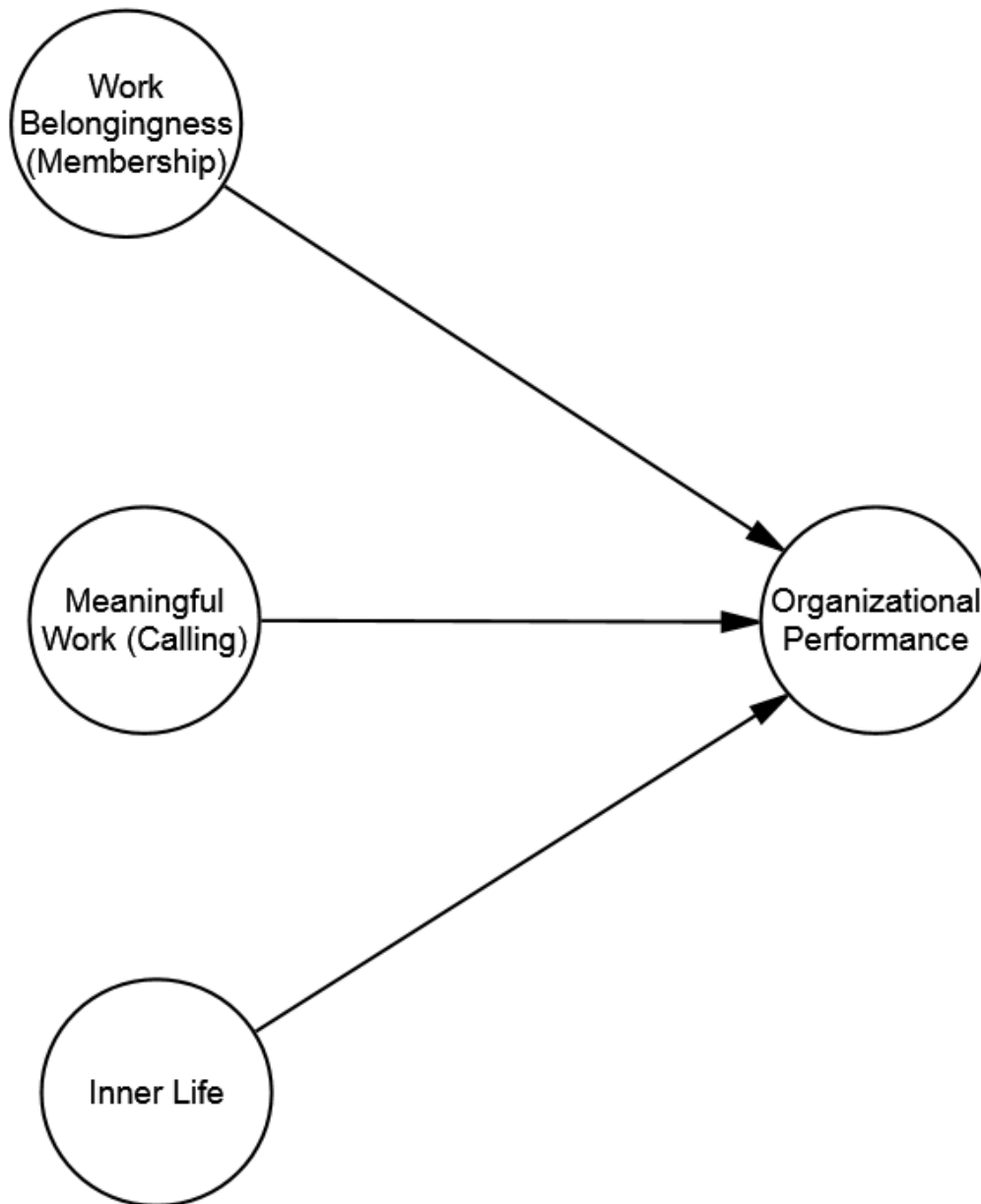
Figure 1
Conceptual Framework

Inner life at work and organization performance

In any organization, any kind of employee has two kinds of phase; bad days and good days, and in most cases most managers ignore the phase that deals with the bad days of employees without caring that it may highly effect the organization's performance on the whole, because most of the times the bad days of employees actually deals with

their inner lives which includes emotions, motivations, perceptions, which actually hurt the performance of the organization in return. Organizations are facing non-participative existence of their employees because the workers in their organizations are getting very disengaged, non-interested, non-passionate and not-driven in their jobs; as a result it is causing organizations in not having effective decisions for growth and sustainability[12].

The notion of inner life at work is actually based upon the concept or idea that employees at a workplace has certain spiritual needs that caters to fulfill the requirements of the inner self of the human being and fulfillment of those needs helps to create a motivated climate which actually effects the organization's performance directly[13]. The fruitful performance of the organization then influences the employees to work much more effectively, as a result and realization of this particular relationship between inner work life satisfaction and organization performance, there has been growing interest in learning about inner work life phenomena due to high turnover rate in organizations as well as lack of employee's effective commitment towards organization[14]. Amabile & Kramer[15] relates productive performance of the employees in an organization quality inner life – which highlights the intrinsic happiness of the employee with the progress in the performance of an organization.

H₁: Inner life has an impact on organization performance

Meaningful work and Organization Performance

Meaningful work leads to higher job satisfaction, work performance, work engagement, loyalty to the organization for a longer period and a better overall performance of the organization. So if organizations want sanity and sustainability in their organization then they must direct themselves from lean and mean to lean and meaningful[16], keeping lean as the only factor that should remain from the previous organizational work patterns. Meaningful work also makes organizations more effective and also helps them in enhancing themselves from one state to another. It is the only common element that drives innovativeness of the organization; it is the element that can be noted from the stories of the world acknowledged creators and that all of these creators – marketers, engineers, programmers, scientists share similar element in order to ignite their emotions, fuel their motivation and trigger their perceptions[17].

Organization that values upon providing meaningful opportunities and work to the employee, improves the self-esteem of the employee, which makes the employee apply his entire self towards the success and improvement of the organization. Therefore organizations that have meaningful environment have higher organizational commitment from their employees in the shape of higher meaningful contributions eventually leading towards a better organization performance overall.

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H$_2$: Meaningful work has an impact on organization performance

Workplace Belonging and organization performance

Other than the inner self there is a social self that relates to the identity of the person in relation to the place that person is in, this belongingness to that particular place as the integral factor in developing self-identity, also known as place identity. The mentioning of the place does not only constitute the environment, but also the people and other factors in it. This sense of belonging – place identity – does not only effect in the enjoyment of the work employees do but also affect their productivity significantly, this relationship got higher after rapid urbanization and progress because it caused decline in neighborhood, churches, civic groups and extended families, therefore the workplaces became the central institute where people could meet and interact with others, as it became the primary community itself for the employees to interact with others and remain motivated towards life[18]. This implies that exclusion from a group at a workplace or from a project at a particular workplace can cause withdrawal and lower performance of the employee, hence negatively impacting the performance of the organization. The employee should not be treated as the revenue generating tool for the organization but rather as a building block of the organization and should be encouraged to speak about the gaps they identify of their respective organization without hesitation and also should be empowered to eliminate those gaps[19]. It is now believed amongst the managers that the knowledge workers now cannot be treated under a totalitarian form of organization behavior, and that employees now keep the success of the organization sustainable only if they find emotional attachment and engagement with the organization, i.e. they improve the performance if the organization is able to create an atmosphere where the employees are able to work together without the sense of competing each other, rather working for the benefit of the organization[20].

H$_3$: Workplace Belonging has an impact on organization performance

Methodology

Sample was selected using purposive sampling technique. Questionnaires were distributed amongst 350 respondents who have been working at officer or managerial level and were familiar with organizational culture. 335 filled questionnaires were received. Response rate was 96%. The data was analyzed using SPSS 23 and AMOS 23.

Data analysis

Demographics

Demographics for the respondents taken for this research are elaborated in Table 1.

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Workplace spirituality and organizational performance: a structural equation modelling approach pág. 363

Variable		Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	129	38.5
	Female	206	61.5
Age	15 to 20 Years	9	2.7
	21 to 25 Years	56	16.7
	26 to 30 Years	83	24.8
	31 to 35 Years	52	15.5
	36 to 40 Years	48	14.3
	41 to 45 Years	38	11.3
	46 to 50 Years	18	5.4
	51 to 55 Years	18	5.4
	56 to 60 Years	10	3.0
	60+ Years	3	0.9
Business Industry	Manufacture	40	11.9
	Finance	69	20.6
	Construction	15	4.5
	Retail	32	9.6
	Telecom/IT	31	9.3
	Pharmaceutical	19	5.7
	Audit and Accounting	27	8.1
	Business Consultancy/Training	21	6.3
	Oil/Gas	8	2.4
	Banking	10	3.0
	Medical	7	2.1
	Ministry/Government	4	1.2
	Services	20	6.0
	Education	21	6.3
	Marketing/Management	9	2.7
	NGO/Welfare	2	0.6
Education	Intermediate	31	9.3
	University	301	89.9
	Other	3	0.9
Work Experience	Less than 1 Year	40	11.9
	Between 1 to 5 Years	104	31.0
	Between 5 to 10 Years	76	22.7
	More than 10 Years	115	34.3
Religion	Islam	157	46.9
	Islam Sunni	50	14.9
	Islam Deoband	66	19.7
	Islam Baralvi	10	3.0
	Islam Ahle Hadith	5	1.5
	Islam Shia	25	7.5
	Christian	5	1.5

Christian Catholic	4	1.2
Christian Protestant	1	0.3
Buddhist	0	0
Hindu	11	3.3
Zoroastrian	1	0.3
Total	335	100

Table 1
Demographics

Descriptive

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Skewness	Kurtosis
Work Belongingness (Membership) (M)	3.84	0.76	-1.14	2.12
Inner Life (IL)	3.81	0.73	-1.19	2.39
Calling (Meaningful Work) (C)	3.82	0.78	-0.97	1.63
Organization Performance (PP)	3.75	0.75	-1.04	2.00

Table 2
Descriptive Analysis
Note: M, C, IL and PP are the codes used by the researchers from this point onwards

Based on the skewness and kurtosis values Table–2, shows the normality and reliability of the data. The data in Table-1 falls in the range of ± 3.5 which is appropriate criteria for data normality.

Reliability

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha on standardized item	No. of items	Mean	S.D
M	0.829	0.829	4	3.84	0.76
IL	0.801	0.802	5	3.81	0.73
C	0.840	0.840	4	3.82	0.78
PP	0.807	0.808	4	3.75	0.75
Overall	0.819	0.819	17	3.81	0.76

Table 3
Reliability Analysis

Each construct ha reliability greater than 0.79 which is a good range (Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2005). The highest reliability is of Meaningful Work (α = 0.840, M = 3.82, SD = 0.78), while the lowest reliability is of Inner Life (α = 0.801, M = 3.81, SD = 0.73), see Table-3.

Correlation

	WB	IL	MW	OP
M	1			
IL	0.638	1		
C	0.775	0.622	1	

| PP | 0.627 | 0.623 | 0.639 | 1 |

Table 4
Correlation

Analysis

In Table-4 it is shown that all variables show factor loading greater than 0.40 indicating existence of convergent validity[21]. Additionally convergent validity was checked using correlation analysis, this was done by taking correlation of all the constructs. Table – 4 contains the summarized results. Results show work belongingness, meaningful work, inner life, and organizational productivity are positively associated with each other.

Discriminant Validity

	M	IL	C	PP
M	0.814			
IL	0.407	0.748		
C	0.601	0.387	0.819	
PP	0.393	0.388	0.408	0.796

Table 5
Discriminant Validity

Table-5 summarizes the results of discriminant validity. Since the square rate of variance explained is greater than square of each pair of correlation, hence indicating that data fulfills discriminant validity requirements.

	χ^2	χ^2/df	HOELTER	NFI	CFI	GFI	AGFI	IFI	TLI	RMSEA	PCLOSE
M	11.98	11.98	108 (.05)	0.978	0.979	0.983	0.827	0.980	0.870	0.181	0.005
C	1.709	1.709	751 (.05)	0.997	0.999	0.997	0.975	0.999	0.992	0.046	0.360
IL	2.753	0.918	949 (.05)	0.994	1.000	0.997	0.984	1.000	1.002	0.000	0.720
PP	0.980	0.980	1310 (.05)	0.998	1.000	0.999	0.985	1.000	1.000	0.000	0.498
Criteria	Low	< 5.0	> 200 (.05)	> 0.90	> 0.95	> 0.9	> 0.50	> 0.95	> 0.95	< 0.05	> 0.50

Table 6
Individual Model Fit Results after Individual Regression on SEM
Note: M = Membership (Work Belongingness), C = Calling (Meaningful Work), IL = Inner Life, PP = Organization's Performance

To test the items and factors on theory CFA is used Table – 6 shows the summarized CFA results.

No construct was dropped after individual SEM results. RMSEA, PCLOSE and HOELTER of all the constructs were falling within the acceptable range. Overall SEM was conducted with all four constructs and the overall SEM model is shown in Figure-2. The results of individual SEM are shown in Table-6.

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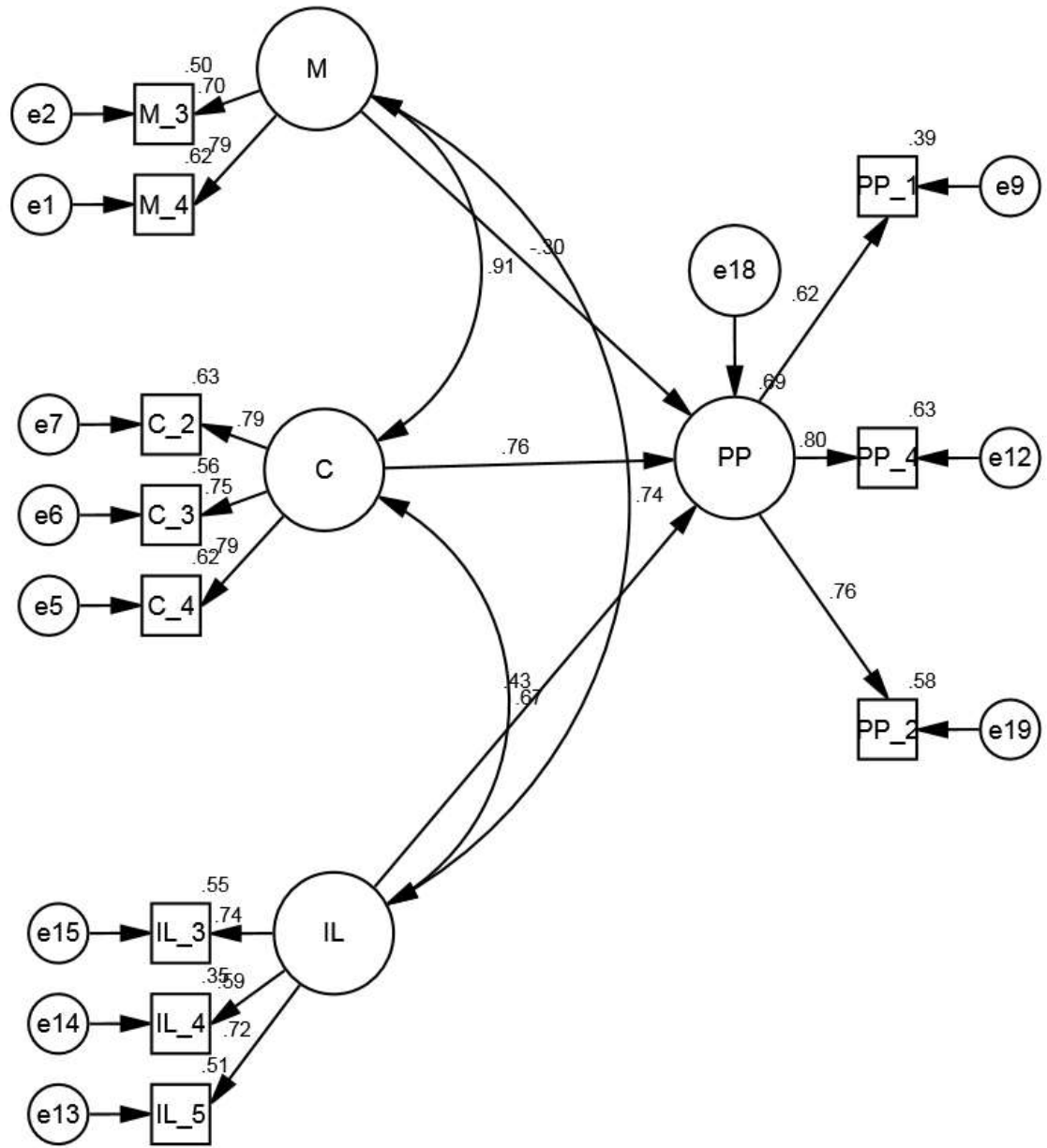
Overall SEM Model

Figure 2
Latent Model of Employee's Spirituality and Organization Performance

Overall SEM model comprises of three exogenous models including; M = Membership (Work Belongingness), C = Calling (Meaningful Work), IL = Inner Life, and one endogenous model PP = Organization's Performance and Productivity. Figure – 2 shows the overall SEM model.

Each observed construct has a factor loading of at least 0.40, and hence meets the minimum criteria for factor loading. Furthermore, the standardized residuals lie below ±2.58 for each construct. The Goodness-of-Fit indexes for each construct are within the prescribed limits. The indexes are discussed in the subsequent paragraph.

NOMAN MAHMOOD / MARIUM MATEEN KHAN / RIZWAN MATLOOB ELLAHI

The value of chi-square (absolute fit indices) was significant (x^2= 56.394, df = 38, p = 0.028 < .05). The CMIN/df (Relative x^2/df) was 1.484 < 5. The RMSEA = 0.038 < 0.05, which meets both the absolute of Goodness-of-Fit and badness-of-fit criteria. The HOELTER was 317(0.05) > 200(0.05), NFI = 0.964 > 0.90; CFI = 0.988 > 0.95; GFI = 0.970 > 0.90; AGFI = 0.948 > 0.50; IFI = 0.988 > 0.95; TLI = 0.982 > 0.95 and PCLOSE = 0.825 > 0.50 meet the incremental fit index criteria. The CFA results indicate that the overall exogenous model is a good fit. Table – 7 shows the summarized results of overall model SEM.

	x^2	x^2/df	HOELTER	NFI	CFI	GFI	AGFI	IFI	TLI	RMSEA	PCLOSE
Overall	56.394	1.484	317 (.05)	0.964	0.988	0.970	0.948	0.988	0.982	0.038	0.825
Criteria	Low	< 5.0	> 200 (.05)	> 0.90	> 0.95	> 0.9	> 0.50	> 0.95	> 0.95	< 0.05	> 0.50

Table 7
Overall Regression Results on SEM

I-Variable	Relationship	D-Variable	SRW	SE	CR	P (<0.05)	FTReject/Reject
M	⟶	PP	-0.300	0.264	-0.982	0.326	Reject
C	⟶	PP	0.764	0.210	2.870	0.004	FTReject
IL	⟶	PP	0.425	0.101	3.517	0.000	FTReject

Table 8
Overall Regression Results on SEM

Here fail to reject means that the alternate hypotheses for C and IL have been accepted while that for M has been rejected.

I-Variable	Relationship	I-Variable	ESTIMATE	SE	CR	P (<0.05)	FTReject/Reject
M	⟷	C	0.907 (90.7%)	0.072	7.680	0.000	FTReject
M	⟷	IL	0.738 (73.8%)	0.071	8.127	0.000	FTReject
C	⟷	IL	0.673 (67.3%)	0.077	6.679	0.000	FTReject

Table 9
Correlation Results on SEM

Calling (work belongingness) and Inner life have a positive effect on organization's productivity and performance (See Table-8) and these two were accepted having a significance of 0.004 < 0.05 and 0.000 < 0.05respectively. Therefore, the hypotheses; H2: Meaningful work has an impact on organization performance and H1: Inner life has an impact on organization performance were accepted.

Table – 8 shows that out of three hypotheses only two were accept while the hypothesis H3: Workplace Belonging has an impact on organization performance was rejected. The relationship between Calling (work belongingness) (M= 3.82, SD= 0.78) and organization's performance (M= 3.75, SD= 0.75) was supported (SRW = 0.764, CR = 2.870, p = 0.004 < 0.05). The relationship between Inner life (M= 3.81, SD = 0.73) organization's performance (M= 3.75, SD= 0.75) was also supported (SRW = 0.425, CR = 3.517, p = 0.000 < 0.05) while the relationship between user Work belongingness (M = 3.84, SD = 0.76) and organization's performance (M= 3.75, SD= 0.75) was not supported (SWR = -0.300, CR = -0.982, p = 0.326 > 0.05), the critical ratio for H3 is also less than 1.96.

Discussion & conclusión

H1: Inner life has an impact on organization performance was accepted: Which means that when an individual's inner life is satisfactory for him/her than that individual is highly motivated towards the goals of the organization hence increasing the organization's performance and productivity. Furthermore, inner life is not only linked with the individual's performance but also with the moral aspects. Inner life gives insights regarding how the individual is feeling regarding his/her work place in terms of his personal moral beliefs. Inner life is an aspect of one's life that brings a balance in the person's life from work point of view as well as from moral stand point about how satisfied the individual is with his/her workplace policies, environment and practices.

Inner life is one's self-satisfaction which can only be felt by the individual themselves rather than being visible to the outside world including the people around him or her. Inner life involves the non-physical aspects of an individual's life and can only be felt by him/her. Inner life deals with questions regarding if an individual is motivated, satisfied with something or not and also if that individual feels good about doing something or feel happy in a particular role or not. This aspect of an individual is most often invisible in the eyes of the bosses, subordinates and managers who do appraisal only on the basis of outer life aspects[22]. However and Young linked inner life with the morality of the individual, which means that inner life is not only concerned with the productivity of individual but also deals with how moral he/she feels in the work place where he/she is also productive. Inner work life helps in answering the questions of who they are, why and what they are doing and what they are contributing under the context of organization[23]. Hence, we can conclude that to bring balance in the individual's life a balance needs to be created between the outer and inner life aspects. It is the organization's responsibility to develop an understanding of how significant the inner life aspects are for the long term happiness of the individual not just from performance point of view but more importantly from moral stand point.

H2: Meaningful work has an impact on organization performance was accepted. Which means that for greater work performance an individual needs to feel that what they are doing is meaningful and is of value. It was derived from having a meaningful life linked to the purpose of existence for an individual. An important question for individuals is to know why they are in a particular place whether it be this world or a workplace[24]. People want to work in an organization which provides them which fulfilling jobs where their goals are aligned with the goals of the organization and as an end result they want to make a positive contribution in the lives of other people. People when try to jobs that have little or no meaning to them, having little or no contribution in the world and in people's lives then the work they are doing becomes monotonous for them. The work instead of being a source of happiness becomes a burden for them and their motivation goes down along with their performance. People seek out work that has substantial meaning to it and will prove critical in the long run. This is important because people spend more time at work rather at home, therefore they need to have a meaning in the work they do and spend their time. In short meaningful work is a kind of work that enhances individuals with self-worth[25].

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[22] T. Amabile & S. Kramer, "Inner Work Life"…
[23] M. Benefiel; L. Fry & D. Geigle, "Spirituality and Religion in the Workplace…
[24] M. Wiersma & L. Morris, "Discriminating Between 'Meaningful Work'…
[25] J. B. Ciulla, "Meaningful Work"…

*H3: **Workplace Belonging has an impact on organization performance was rejected.*** It implies that for this research study and for the selected group of research participants workplace belongingness has no significances in terms of organization performance. Here it can be concluded that if an individual finds that the work they are doing is meaningful and have a satisfactory inner life than the need for interacting with everyone at a workplace becomes a secondary thing. Furthermore that the workplace belongingness and interaction with other people will not have any influence on their performance.

Workplace belongingness encompasses the interactions and relationships between people in a workplace setting. Workplace belongingness has its roots in the emotional and social aspects of an individual's life since theses dimensions along with the human interactions gives rise to human experiences which are a significant part of a human's development and growth throughout their lives. However, the results of this research state that in center workplace situations workplace belongingness does not play a significant role in an individual's performance. Having said that it must also be kept in mind that the results indicate that if the person has inner life satisfaction and meaningful work regardless having too much interaction with the people the performance is positively affected.

Practical implications

Organizations should identify when employee performance is declining and its causes. Organizations should develop programs to analyze the changing needs of their employees and the factors that can keep their employees motivated. Organizations can improve their overall output when their employees find a balance between their work and inner life. More importantly, employees make an extra effort when they find that the work they are doing is meaningful not just for themselves but also the organization and the clients to whom they are catering to. Organizations should strive to develop an environment in which such significant variables that effect employee performance can flourish.

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