

Workplace Spirituality, Grit and Work Engagement

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Abstract

Workplace spirituality and grit are gaining momentum among researchers, academicians and business professionals. While workplace spirituality is an extrinsic factor which refers to a supportive working environment, grit is an internal factor which refers to passion and perseverance. The aim of this article is to examine the impact of workplace spirituality and grit on work engagement. Data were collected using standardised questionnaires from 275 full-time employees working in various government, private and public-private organisations in Delhi-NCR, India. Correlational analysis showed a positive correlation between components of workplace spirituality (inner life, meaningful work and community) and components of work engagement (attention and absorption) and between components of grit (consistency of interest and perseverance) and components of work engagement (attention and absorption). Hierarchical multiple regression analysis showed that meaningful work, consistency of interest and perseverance significantly predicted work engagement after controlling for gender, age, tenure and educational qualification. This implies that organisations should hire employees with high grit and provide them with meaningful work to enhance their engagement. Practical and theoretical implications, along with the limitations of the study, are discussed.

Keywords

Workplace spirituality, grit, work engagement, industrial/organisational psychology

Introduction

Employees spend a considerable amount of their time at work due to which they are unable to devote time to their families or communities. Increased occupational stress has led to the erosion of concepts such as 'family time' and 'community activities'. The onus of meeting the belongingness needs of employees is now on the shoulders of organisations. Therefore, concepts such as workplace spirituality, spiritual leadership and spirituality at work have gained importance.

The concept of workplace spirituality became popular in the late 1980s due to constant economic changes (Miller, 2007). Employees were no longer required to sentinel their souls at the door; instead, they were encouraged to bring their body, mind, heart and soul to work (Benefiel, Fry, & Geigle, 2014; Dehler & Welsh, 2003; Whyte, 1965). According to Ashmos and Duchon (2000), workplace

spirituality refers to 'a place where individuals can satisfy their inner selves by performing meaningful work with the feeling of working in a community'. The concept is different from the conventional concept of spirituality in the sense that it considers an employee a spiritual entity who seeks spiritual fulfilment through purposeful work and community at the workplace (Gupta, Kumar, & Singh, 2014). It covers the applied side of spirituality by creating a congenial environment at workplace which has been found to produce coveted outcomes for an organisation such as job satisfaction, work engagement and organisational commitment, among others. This explains why several multinational companies such as Google, Maruti Suzuki India and Apple, among others, are taking initiatives to bring spirituality into their workplaces by establishing spiritual centres or by offering courses on spirituality (Devendhiran & Wesley, 2017).

Positive organisational behaviours displayed as an outcome of a spiritual environment created by the organisation

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Intro. —
 Thesis —
 Data Collect —
 Outcome —
 Correlat. —

Extrinsic
 Internal
 } Terms def.

This applies to the
 USW-USMC
 esp. w/ homes +
 "dones". Seeking
 sense of belonging,
 identity, ect. usually
 found in relig, fami
 + location. In relig
 frag. fam + transient
 ness militate against
 this.
 US Mil. has chapls
 + chapels.

A pos. shift
 ~ wkplace
 culture.

n! These once shared societal values have eroded + may not be expected w/in members' families.

NB: not just important to communicate what a manager does but ^{that} why + for whom.

also depends on the employees. If employees are passionate about their work and remain persistent in the face of challenges, then an amicable environment would facilitate their engagement. Galton (1869/2006) opined that 'zeal' (passion) and 'the capacity for hard labor' (perseverance) are essential qualities for achieving success. James (1890) and Freud (1920) also speculated that the capacity to regulate attention, behaviour and emotion was paramount for achieving everyday success. To promote engagement, an organisation has to take both intrinsic and situational factors into account. While workplace spirituality is an external or situational factor in this study, grit is an intrinsic variable. Therefore, the aim of the present study is to examine how a spiritual environment at workplace and the grit of employees boost work engagement.

Translate into ordinary speak.

KEY PT

exactly

Review of Literature

Workplace Spirituality

The concept of workplace spirituality was pioneered by St. Benedict (c. 480-543) in the sixth century (Benefiel et al., 2014). He integrated work and prayer in his rules for monastic life. During the Reformation era, Martin Luther proclaimed that seeking perfection in work and working faithfully is a way of attaining holiness (Benefiel et al., 2014). The era of industrial revolution witnessed the exploration of a plethora of ways to extract the best out of employees by promoting their identification with the organisation (Benefiel et al., 2014). The Protestants developed a work ethic that aimed to spiritualise the workplace (Buchholz & Rosenthal, 2003). In modern times, Whyte (1965) argued, 'the old authoritarian man wanted your sweat but the new man wants your soul'.

CRP

Luther - Doc. of vocativ

There are several models of workplace spirituality; the present research used the model given by Ashmos and Duchon (2000). Their model comprises three components: inner life, meaningful work and community (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). Inner life refers to the feeling an individual has about who he or she is, what he or she is doing and what the contribution(s) he or she is making (Vaill, 1998). For instance, a therapist may answer these three questions as, 'I am a therapist'; 'my work is to help people solve their problems' and 'I bring smiles on their faces'. Inner life is an important component of workplace spirituality. It is the seat of an individual's divine power (something that is god-gifted). The more an individual's inner life is replenished, the more his or her outer life will be replenished (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). For instance, if an individual has a natural gift of being empathetic towards others, then professions such as counselling or social work would be conducive in allowing him or her to utilise this gift.

models

meaningful work

Nourishment of the inner life also depends on the meaning an individual attributes to his or her work.

Meaningful work involves a sense of purposefulness; employees should perceive that their work is worthwhile or important (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). Employees perceive their work as meaningful if it challenges their skills, allows them to utilise their diverse abilities and has a significant impact on the lives of others (Duchon & Plowman, 2005). Gupta et al. (2014) found that meaningful work increased job satisfaction by 28.7 per cent among employees in Punjab, India. It is also positively associated with employee well-being and performance (Grant, 2008; Van Wingerden & Van der Stoep, 2017) and has been found to encourage an employee to go beyond the normal requirements of his or her job (Seibert, Wang, & Courtright, 2011). Meaningful work satiates the cognitive needs of employees, but with the increased time now spent at the workplace, the responsibility of satisfying the belongingness needs of employees is also the responsibility of the organisation.

Resilience, commitment, motivation

near-peer mentoring

Hence, the third component of workplace spirituality, that is, community focuses on the formation of strong connections or bonds among employees. Supportive and trusting interpersonal relationships at workplace promote psychological safety which allows employees to experiment and try new things and fail without fear of the consequences (Kahn, 1990). Gupta et al. (2014) found that the sense of community increased job satisfaction by 45.7 per cent.

Taking away from more human dimensions of life in one area (Tech./mech./etc) requires putting elsewhere or persons are impacted.

Combining inner life, meaningful work and community produces beneficial outcomes for organisations. It promotes better communication among employees (Altaf & Awan, 2011), employee satisfaction (Altaf & Awan, 2011; Chawla & Guda, 2010; Pawar, 2009; Turner, 1999), organisational commitment (Chawla & Guda, 2010; Pawar, 2009; Rego & Cunha, 2008), ethical behaviour (Ming-Chia, 2012), self-career management (Chen, Yang, & Li, 2012), altruism (Chen & Yang, 2012), job involvement (Pawar, 2009), team efficacy (Daniel, 2010), creativity at workplace (Cash & Gray, 2000; Guillory, 2000; Harman & Hormann, 1990) and resilience (Gangadharan & Welbourne, 2017). Workplace spirituality is also conducive in nibbling away at the intention to quit (Chawla & Guda, 2010), inter-role conflict (Hall, Oates, Anderson, & Willingham, 2012) and frustration (Kolodinsky, Giacalone, & Jurkiewicz, 2008).

Beneficial outcome

Research exploring the relation between workplace spirituality and work engagement remains limited. Few empirical studies which have examined the relation between the two have shown that workplace spirituality is positively related to work engagement (Breytenbach, 2016; Ke, Zhang, Yan, & Fu, 2017; Singh & Gambhir, 2016; van der Walt, 2018). This implies that 'the extent to which people feel engaged and immersed at work is therefore somewhat dependent on the extent to which they experience spirit in their work' (Breytenbach, 2016). A spiritual environment at workplace instils a love for work among employees as a result of which they become engaged in their work (Ke et al., 2017). Based on the above evidence, the authors propose that workplace spirituality can significantly predict work engagement.

Research is limited. A consumer culture is just now yielding ground

H₁: The components of workplace spirituality (inner life, meaningful work and community) will positively predict work engagement.

However, workplace spirituality is an extrinsic variable which alone may not suffice in promoting engagement. The intrinsic motivation of employees also plays a pivotal role in determining their engagement; therefore, the present study has included 'grit' as an intrinsic independent variable affecting engagement.

Grit

Grit refers to the consistency of interest and perseverance for long-term goals (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007). Metaphorically, it is described as 'sweat not swagger, character not charisma' (Singh & Gambhir, 2016). The term 'grit' became popular in 2016 with Angela Lee Duckworth's book, *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*. The idea that passion and perseverance are vital for becoming successful goes back to the foundational years of psychology as mentioned in the introduction.

Research has shown that high grit positively predicts academic success (Strayhorn, 2013), the completion of rigorous/military training courses (Duckworth et al., 2007), rank in the National Spelling Bee (Duckworth et al., 2007, 2011), professional success (Baum & Locke, 2004; Locke & Latham, 2013; Vallerand, Houliort, & Forest, 2014; Wrzesniewski, 2012), lower level of burnout (Salles, Cohen, & Mueller, 2014), lower intention to quit (Burkhart et al., 2014) and teacher effectiveness (Kraft & Duckworth, 2014).

The relation between grit and work engagement is largely unexplored. Only two research studies were found which explored the relation between grit and work engagement. Suzuki, Tamesue, Asahi, and Ishikawa (2015) found that there is a moderate correlation between grit and work engagement, and Singh and Gambhir (2016) found a low correlation between grit and work engagement. Based on the evidence presented above, the researchers propose that workplace spirituality and grit are positively related to work engagement.

H₂: The components of grit (consistency of interest and perseverance) will demonstrate incremental validity over the components of workplace spirituality (inner life, meaningful work and community) in predicting work engagement.

Work Engagement

Work engagement is defined as 'a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigor, dedication, and absorption' (Schaufeli et al., 2002). It has

positive consequences for employees as well as employers. Bakker and Schaufeli (2015) found that compared with non-engaged employees, engaged employees have better mental and psychosomatic health and experience more positive emotions. For instance, Seppälä, Mauno, Kinnunen, Feldt, and Juuti (2012) found that engaged employees have healthy cardiac autonomic activity. The link between work engagement and better health can be attributed to the fact that engaged employees are more likely to engage in leisure activities which foster relaxation and psychological detachment from work (Sonnetag, Mojza, Demerouti, & Bakker 2012; Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012).

The continuous measurement of engagement by organisations such as Gallup proves that work engagement is pivotal for organisational success. Research has shown that work engagement has several advantages for an organisation. It is positively associated with job satisfaction, organisational commitment and low intention to quit (Demerouti, Bakker, Janssen, & Schaufeli, 2001). It has also been linked to employees' initiatives to learn (Sonnetag, 2003), willingness to learn (Bakker, Demerouti, & Ten Brummelhuis, 2012; Sonnetag, 2003), proactive work approach (Salanova, Agut, & Piero, 2005), organisational citizenship behaviour (Bakker, Demerouti, & Verbeke, 2004; Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011), customer satisfaction (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002), organisational performance (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009) and organisation-based self-esteem (Mauno, Kinnunen, & Ruokolainen, 2007). Engaged employees are emotionally attached to their organisation (Bakker, Demerouti, & Sanz-Vergel, 2014) and are highly involved in their job to the extent that they are willing to go an extra mile beyond their employment contract (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2015; Markos & Sridevi, 2010). They are more creative (Bakker & Xanthopoulou, 2013), report fewer errors, are less often involved in occupational injuries and accidents, show more innovative work behaviour and are better rated by their supervisors in terms of effectiveness and job performance than less engaged employees (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2015). Even for philanthropic activities, work engagement has been found to mediate the relationship between intrinsic attributions for corporate social responsibility and creativity (Chaudhary & Akhouri, 2018).

Research has shown that work engagement can be enhanced by using both job resources and personal resources. Job resources refer to 'those physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that may: (a) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; (b) be functional in achieving work goals or (c) stimulate personal growth, learning, and development' (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Job resources such as skill variety, performance feedback, social support from the supervisor and colleagues and opportunities for learning

personal advantages

organization's advantages

less errors, mistakes, accidents

how achieved?

workplace resources

n' Cell phone use & presence provide a constant distraction. See Elsewhere Man. Consider that the presence of a cell phone is the present day equivalent of having, in 1995, your television, phone, & desktop computer w/you — and on + active @ workplace. arcade

and growth have been found to enhance work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Workplace spirituality offers similar job resources such as meaningful and challenging work which fosters learning and personal growth, a sense of community at workplace and the opportunity to pursue tasks which intrinsically motivate an employee. Job resources provide intrinsic motivation by fulfilling the social and cognitive needs of employees (Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte, & Lens, 2008), as well as extrinsic motivation by aiding in the accomplishment of employees' goals (Meijman & Mulder, 1998).

In addition to job resources, personal resources have also been found to significantly predict work engagement. Personal resources refer to positive appraisal of one's ability to control the environment (Hobfoll, Johnson, Ennis, & Jackson, 2003). Judge, Bono, Erez, and Locke (2005) demonstrated that personal resources are positively related to self-regard and self-concordance. This implies that employees who positively evaluate their abilities and whose interests and values match their goals may be more engaged in their work. Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, and Schaufeli (2007) found that personal resources such as organisation-based self-esteem, self-efficacy and optimism were positively associated with work engagement. As mentioned previously, personal resources such as passion and consistency of interest also enhance work engagement (Suzuki et al., 2015).

Present Study

Workplace spirituality, grit and work engagement have positive consequences for organisations and employees. Research studies found while reviewing the existing literature have explored the relationship between the individual components of workplace spirituality and work engagement but not workplace spirituality as a whole. And, only two research studies (Singh & Gambhir, 2016; Suzuki et al., 2015) were found that explored the relation between grit and work engagement. No research study was found that explored the combined effect of workplace spirituality and grit on work engagement. Therefore, in the present study, the authors propose that just like situational demands and individual traits influence behaviour so does workplace spirituality and grit influence work engagement. Workplace spirituality in this study refers to an affable environment at the workplace, and grit refers to an employee's passion towards his or her work and his or her consistency of effort. Both, workplace spirituality and grit can produce positive organisational outcomes. The aim of the present study is to examine how workplace spirituality and grit predict work engagement. This is perhaps the first study that has explored the combined effect of workplace spirituality and grit on work engagement.

Measures

Measuring Workplace Spirituality

Data for workplace spirituality were collected using a 7-point Likert scale questionnaire developed by Duchon and Plowman (2005). Items representing meaning at work, community and inner life were selected. The Cronbach's alpha correlation for meaning at work was 0.86; for community it was 0.85, and for inner life it was 0.82 (Duchon & Plowman, 2005). The questionnaire included items such as: 'I experience joy in my work'; 'I feel part of a community in my immediate workplace (department, unit, etc.)' and 'I feel hopeful about life'.

Measuring Work Engagement

Data for work engagement were collected using work and family engagement survey developed by Nancy P. Rothbard (2001). Items representing two dimensions of work engagement, namely, attention and absorption, were selected. The Cronbach's alpha reliability of the survey ranged between 0.77 and 0.95, with a median of 0.87 (Rothbard, 2001). The survey included items such as: 'I spend a lot of time thinking about my work'; 'When I am working, I often lose track of time' and 'I often get carried away by what I am working on'.

Measuring Grit

Data for grit were collected using Short Grit Scale developed by Duckworth and Quinn (2009). The scale had two dimensions: consistency of interests and perseverance of efforts. The Cronbach's alpha reliability of the scale ranged between 0.82 and 0.84 (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009). The scale included items such as: 'I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one'; 'New ideas and new projects sometimes distract me from previous ones' and 'I become interested in new pursuits every few months'.

Ethical Considerations

Before administering the questionnaire, participants were informed about the purpose of the study as well as ethical considerations, such as informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality. Participants were also informed that their participation was voluntary and that they may choose to withdraw from the study at any time.

Sample

The sample comprised full-time employees working at various organisations. Data were collected from 283

Personal resources

Themes: positive

Workplace spirituality def -
grit def -
TLegis def -

Measures
Data Group Questions

✓

Sample

participants using simple random sampling. Data of eight participants were discarded due to missing data resulting in a usable sample size of 275 employees. The participants were selected from various settings such as neighbourhood areas, government organisations, private organisations, multinational corporations and public-private organisations in Delhi-NCR, India. The sample comprised 70.65 per cent of male employees and 29.34 per cent of female employees. Of the sample, 50.36 per cent is over 35 years of age. Of the participants, 42.75 per cent had work experience of 1-5 years, and 28.26 per cent of the participants had a work experience of 20 years or more. Of the participants, 47.46 per cent were graduates, and 27.53 per cent of the participants were postgraduates.

Analyses

Data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics software (version 23.0). Descriptive statistical analyses were performed in addition to examining the intercorrelations among variables. Pearson's product-moment correlation determined statistically significant relations among workplace spirituality, grit and work engagement (Table 1).

In addition to examining the intercorrelations among variables, three sets of hierarchical multiple regression

were employed to assess the contribution of the components of workplace spirituality (inner life, meaningful work and community) and the components of grit (consistency of interest and perseverance) to work engagement after controlling for several relevant variables. In the first step of the regression, demographic variables (gender, age, tenure and educational qualification) were entered as control variables. In the second and third steps, the components of workplace spirituality (inner life, meaningful work and community) and the components of grit (consistency of interest and perseverance) were entered, respectively. The statistical assumptions for the model (i.e., ratio of cases to independent variables, normality, independence of errors, linearity and absence of multicollinearity) were all met. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and Shapiro-Wilk test showed that data were not normally distributed ($p < 0.05$). Collinearity diagnosis showed that a very low level of multicollinearity was present (variance inflation factor for all predictors was less than 3.0 and tolerance level for predictors was greater than 0.1).

Results

Table 2 shows the means, standard deviations and intercorrelations among variables in the study. Results showed that there was a moderate correlation between meaningful work and attention ($r = 0.45, p < 0.01$), attention and perseverance ($r = 0.53, p < 0.01$) and meaningful work and perseverance ($r = 0.55, p < 0.01$).

In the first model of hierarchical multiple regression, demographic variables (gender, age, tenure and educational qualification) were regressed on work engagement. Together, they accounted for 3.9 per cent (Adj. $R^2 = 0.04, F(4, 275) = 3.78, p < 0.01$) of variance in work engagement. Age was the only significant predictor ($\beta = 0.36, t = 3.08, p < 0.01$) indicating that elderly workers are more likely to be engaged in their work than young workers. This may be because employees with more experience may be conversant with handling everyday challenges, and their experience may have led them to identify conditions under which they are comfortable working.

The first hypothesis (H_1) predicted that the components of workplace (inner life, meaningful work and community) would positively predict work engagement. H_1 was investigated concentrating on the effects of demographic variables (gender, age, tenure and educational qualification) and the components of workplace spirituality (inner life, meaningful work and community) on work engagement. Results are displayed in Table 3. The results show that the model explained 21.7 per cent (Adj. $R^2 = 0.22, F(7, 275) = 11.91, p < 0.0001$) of total variance in work engagement. Beta coefficient for the significant predictor was meaningful work, $\beta = 0.36, t = 5.14, p < 0.0001$. The results show that work that challenges employees and offers them

Table 1. Sample Characteristics

Demographic Characteristics	n (%)
Gender	
Male	70.65
Female	42.75
Age	
20-25 years	13.40
25-35 years	36.95
35-45 years	21.37
45-60 years	27.89
Tenure	
1-5 years	42.75
5-10 years	15.94
10-20 years	13.04
20 years or more	28.26
Educational Qualification	
High school certificate or equivalent	3.62
Bachelors' degree	47.46
Postgraduate degree with associated diploma	27.53
Professional degree	19.56

Source: The authors.

Note: $N = 275$.

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations and Intercorrelations among the Components of Workplace Spirituality (inner life, meaningful work and community), Grit (consistency of interest and perseverance) and Work Engagement (attention and absorption)

		Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Inner life	27.82	5.00	–	–	–	–	–	–
2	Meaningful work	37.84	6.49	0.44**	–	–	–	–	–
3	Community	47.75	8.60	0.35**	0.57**	–	–	–	–
4	Attention	22.30	3.46	0.28**	0.44**	0.34**	–	–	–
5	Absorption	25.64	4.53	0.27**	0.38**	0.23**	0.68**	–	–
6	Consistency of interest	24.06	7.05	0.13*	0.04	0.05	0.08	0.18**	–
7	Perseverance	33.52	5.02	0.33**	0.55**	0.35**	0.53**	0.45**	0.018

Source: The authors.

Notes: $N = 275$, * $p < 0.05$ and ** $p < 0.01$.

Table 3. Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Demographic Variables, the Components of Workplace Spirituality (inner life, meaningful work and community) and the Components of Grit (consistency of interest and perseverance) on Work Engagement

Variable	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3		
	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Gender	.082	.484	.010	-.132	.438	-.016	-.097	.402	-.012
Age	1.195	.388	.335**	.906	.357	.254*	1.000	.328	.280**
Tenure	-.437	.315	-.151	-.596	.287	-.207*	-.548	.264	-.190*
Educational Qualification	.158	.262	.036	.290	.238	.067	.146	.220	.034
Inner Life				.062	.045	.085	.018	.042	.024
Meaningful Work				.205	.040	.363***	.088	.040	.156*
Community				.029	.028	.069	.024	.026	.057
Consistency of Interest							.077	.026	.148**
Perseverance							.290	.044	.397***
Adj. R^2		.039**			.217***			.340***	
F		3.784**			21.600***			25.998***	
ΔR^2		–			.178			.123	

Source: The authors.

Notes: $N = 275$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$ and *** $p < 0.0001$, B = Beta, SE = Standard Error.

H_2
opportunities for growth and development fosters their engagement in work. Inner life and community did not significantly predict variance in work engagement. Thus, H_1 was partially supported.

H_2
The second hypothesis (H_2) predicted that the components of grit (consistency of interest and perseverance) would demonstrate incremental validity over the components of workplace spirituality (inner life, meaningful work and community) in predicting work engagement. H_2 was investigated concentrating on the effects of demographic variables (gender, age, tenure and educational qualifications),

the components of workplace spirituality (inner life, meaningful work and community) and the components of grit (consistency of interest and perseverance) on workplace spirituality. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis showed that this was the best fitting model for predicting work engagement, Adj. $R^2 = 0.34$, $F(9, 275) = 16.77$, $p < 0.0001$. Beta coefficients for significant predictors were meaningful work, $\beta = 0.16$, $t = 2.18$, $p < 0.0001$; consistency of interest, $\beta = 0.15$, $t = 2.92$, $p < 0.005$; and, perseverance, $\beta = 0.40$, $t = 6.65$, $p < 0.0001$. This indicates that in addition to meaningful work, if employees are having a strong interest

in their work and they remain persistent when faced with challenges, their engagement in their work will increase. Inner life and community did not significantly predict variance in work engagement. Thus, the second hypothesis was also partially supported.

Discussion

The current study was designed to demonstrate the impact of workplace spirituality and grit on work engagement. Data were collected using standardised questionnaires from 275 full-time employees working in various government, private and public-private organisations in Delhi NCR, India.

Hierarchical multiple regression analysis showed that a linear combination of demographic variables (gender, age, tenure and educational qualification) (control variable), the components of workplace spirituality (inner life, meaningful work and community) and the components of grit (consistency of interest and perseverance) was the best fitting model explaining 34 per cent of variance in work engagement. In this model, meaningful work and the consistency of interest and perseverance emerged as significant predictors of work engagement. This shows that work engagement will be high if employees are having a strong interest in their work, persevere in difficult times and are provided with challenging work. Pearson product-moment correlation also showed that meaningful work, consistency of interest and perseverance were positively related to attention and absorption (the components of work engagement). Among three significant predictors, perseverance predicted 39.7 per cent of variance in work engagement, while meaningful work and consistency of interest predicted 15.6 per cent and 14.8 per cent, respectively. This indicates that individuals who are perseverant when confronted with challenges are more engaged in their work. Also, such individuals may have high goal self-concordance which may boost their engagement, that is, they may positively appraise their ability to complete tasks assigned to them. This implies that personal resources like perseverance are better predictors of work engagement than job resources like meaningful work.

Results of the study are consistent with previous research studies (Holbeche & Springett, 2004; May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004; Olivier & Rothmann, 2007). Learner (1996) found that employees desire their jobs to be connected to a larger purpose in life. Van Wingerden and Van der Stoep (2018) found that meaningful work predicts work engagement by 57 per cent. This is not astonishing as work needs to challenge an employee at a cognitive level to promote engagement. It needs to give employees opportunities to utilise their skills and develop new skills by being involved in diverse projects that foster learning. Etzioni (1995) also argued that the meaning employees attribute to their work is more important for them than material rewards.

Studies based on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model have also shown that skill variety (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007) and opportunities for learning and development (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008) are positively related to work engagement. Meaningful work allows employees to utilise their skills and perhaps even learn new skills if required, as it satiates employees' need for competence (Van den Broeck et al., 2008). Moreover, if employees are having consistent interest in their work and they are provided meaningful work then they are likely to be intrinsically motivated to excel and may even persevere in challenging situations. Correlational analysis also showed that there was a moderately strong correlation between meaningful work and perseverance ($r = 0.55, p < 0.01$).

Duckworth et al. (2007) found that the consistency of interest and perseverance is highly correlated with conscientiousness ($r = 0.77, p < 0.001$), and conscientiousness is also linked to high engagement (Mäkikangas, Feldt, Kinnunen, & Mauno, 2013). This implies that if gritty individuals are meticulous, they diligently undertake tasks assigned to them. Their absorption in their work could be enhanced by giving them work which allows them grow at personal and professional levels. Pearson's product-moment correlation also showed that meaningful work and perseverance are positively associated with each other ($r = 0.55, p < 0.01$).

Implications

This study offers some useful insights for organisations. Organisations can measure the grit of employees at the time of recruitment, and if employees are having high grit then they must be assigned meaningful work to enhance their engagement. Employees are more likely to persevere if they perceive their work as meaningful, and they will perceive their work as meaningful if they are given more autonomy to decide how they want to work. Moreover, larger decision latitude can also help in reducing work-related stress. The grit of employees could be enhanced through training which may have a ripple effect. Research has shown that grit is positively related to self-control and mental well-being (Kannangara et al., 2018). From a theoretical standpoint, this is the first study that has examined the combined effect of workplace spirituality and grit on work engagement. Grit is still a novel concept; therefore this study adds to the already established work in the literature.

Limitations

Despite a large sample, our study had some limitations. First, the grit questionnaire (a self-report measure) might have led to social desirability bias. Since passion and perseverance are positive traits, the participants might have

not given genuine responses in order to portray themselves in a positive light. Second, we attempted to study an intrinsic concept such as grit using a quantitative measure. It shows that the quantitative research method has limitations in studying deeply subjective and intrinsic concepts like grit. It also fails to answer 'why' and 'how' of a behaviour. Qualitative research methods such as personal interview or focused group discussion would have been more appropriate to study work engagement and grit as they allow the researcher to conduct a micro-analysis of parts and multi-layered interpretation of individual mental construction. Third, the culture of the organisation was not examined. For spirituality to thrive, the organisation should establish a culture that promotes prosocial behaviour, a sense of membership and appreciation for both self and others (Benefiel et al., 2014). Fourth, the personality of employees was not tested. For instance, employees high on certain personality traits such as openness or extraversion may benefit more from community created at workplace as a part of workplace spirituality. And, fifth, data were not normally distributed. It is a major limitation as parametric tests such as regression require data to be normally distributed.

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