Anusandhanvallari
Vol 2026, No.1
November 2026
ISSN 2229-3388

Exploring the Influence of Workplace Spirituality on Job Satisfaction among Higher Education Teachers: Evidence from Arts and Science Colleges in Madurai District

Venkatasubramanian S[1] & Dr. Meharajan T[2]

[1]Research Scholar, Department of Management Studies, Madurai Kamaraj University

[2]Assistant Professor, Department of Management Studies, Centre for Distance and Online Education, Madurai Kamaraj University

Abstract: The present study examines the influence of workplace spirituality on job satisfaction among higher education teachers working in arts and science colleges in Madurai District, Tamil Nadu. Workplace spirituality is examined through three dimensions: connection, meaningful work, and spiritual connection. A quantitative research approach was adopted, and primary data were collected from 160 teachers using a structured questionnaire and convenience sampling technique. Workplace spirituality was measured using an instrument adapted from Milliman et al. (2003). Multiple regression analysis was employed to examine the relationships between the study variables. The findings reveal that workplace spirituality explains 47.4% of the variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.474$). Connection emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.410$), followed by spiritual connection ($\beta = 0.239$) and meaningful work ($\beta = 0.186$). All three dimensions demonstrated statistically significant positive relationships with job satisfaction. The study highlights the importance of fostering interpersonal relationships, meaningful professional experiences, and spiritually supportive academic environments to enhance teachers' job satisfaction.

Keywords: Workplace Spirituality, Job Satisfaction, Connection, Meaningful Work, Spiritual Connection, Higher Education Teachers.

1 Introduction

Higher education institutions play a crucial role in knowledge creation, human resource development, and societal advancement. The effectiveness of higher education largely depends on the commitment, motivation, and satisfaction of academic professionals who are responsible for teaching, research, and institutional development. However, contemporary higher education institutions are experiencing significant transformations due to technological advancement, increasing administrative responsibilities, changing teaching methodologies, research pressures, and accountability requirements. These changes have intensified occupational demands among teachers and created challenges related to professional stress, emotional exhaustion, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction (Kokt & Palmer, 2019). Since academic staff represent the intellectual foundation of universities and colleges, understanding factors that enhance their workplace experiences has become increasingly important.

Traditionally, employee satisfaction has been associated with extrinsic factors such as salary, promotion opportunities, job security, and working conditions. However, recent organizational research indicates that employees increasingly seek psychological fulfilment, meaningful work experiences, interpersonal relationships, and alignment between personal values and organizational goals (Tripathi & Agarwal, 2017). This shift has encouraged researchers to explore workplace spirituality as an emerging organizational construct that addresses employees' inner needs and their search for meaning and purpose at work.Workplace spirituality refers to the recognition that employees possess an inner life that is nurtured through meaningful work and a sense of connection within the workplace community (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). It does not necessarily represent religious beliefs but emphasizes personal values, meaningful experiences, compassion, connectedness, and

alignment between individual and organizational values (Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Workplace spirituality has been conceptualized through three major dimensions: meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment with organizational values (Milliman et al., 2003). Meaningful work represents the extent to which individuals perceive their work as purposeful and valuable, sense of community reflects interpersonal connectedness among employees, and organizational alignment indicates compatibility between individual values and institutional mission.

The significance of workplace spirituality has gained considerable attention because employees no longer view work merely as an economic activity but as an important part of personal identity and fulfilment. Employees working in spiritually supportive environments are more likely to experience positive attitudes, stronger organizational relationships, enhanced psychological well-being, and improved job outcomes (Khatri & Gupta, 2017). Workplace spirituality provides employees with opportunities to integrate personal values with professional responsibilities, thereby creating a sense of belonging and satisfaction in their work environment.

Previous empirical studies have established significant relationships between workplace spirituality and various organizational outcomes, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, employee engagement, innovative behaviour, and performance. Research has demonstrated that workplace spirituality positively influences job satisfaction by enhancing employees' perceptions of meaningful work, interpersonal relationships, and value congruence within organizations (Milliman et al., 2003; Altaf & Awan, 2011). Similarly, studies have reported that workplace spirituality contributes to reduced negative workplace attitudes, lower turnover intentions, and improved employee well-being (Shrestha & Jena, 2020). Employees who perceive their workplace as spiritually supportive tend to develop stronger emotional connections with their organizations and experience greater satisfaction with their professional roles.

The relevance of workplace spirituality is particularly significant in higher education institutions, where teachers engage not only in knowledge transmission but also in mentoring, social development, and intellectual advancement. Academic work requires intrinsic motivation, commitment, and a strong sense of purpose. Studies among university employees have indicated that workplace spirituality enhances organizational commitment and strengthens positive workplace experiences among academic staff (Kokt & Palmer, 2019). Similarly, research conducted among university employees found that workplace spirituality positively predicts organizational support and job-related outcomes, emphasizing its importance in creating supportive academic environments (Nwanzu & Babalola, 2021).

Despite growing interest in workplace spirituality, research examining its influence on job satisfaction among higher education teachers remains limited, particularly in the Indian context. Most existing studies have focused on corporate organizations, banking sectors, and general employee populations, while relatively fewer studies have explored academic institutions. Higher education teachers face unique professional challenges, including teaching workload, research expectations, administrative responsibilities, and changing educational demands. Therefore, examining how workplace spirituality influences their job satisfaction can provide valuable insights for developing healthier and more meaningful academic workplaces.

In India, Arts and Science colleges constitute an important component of higher education, contributing significantly to regional educational development. However, limited empirical evidence exists regarding workplace spirituality and job satisfaction among teachers working in these institutions, particularly in the regional context of Madurai District. Understanding this relationship may assist educational administrators and policymakers in designing strategies that enhance teacher satisfaction, commitment, and overall institutional effectiveness.

Therefore, the present study aims to explore the influence of workplace spirituality on job satisfaction among higher education teachers in Arts and Science Colleges in Madurai District. The study contributes to the existing

literature by examining workplace spirituality as a psychological and organizational resource that may enhance teachers' professional satisfaction and strengthen the quality of academic work environments.

2 Review of Literature

Workplace spirituality has gained increasing attention in organizational research because of its role in fostering meaningful work, interpersonal connection, and spiritual fulfilment. Ashmos and Duchon (2000) emphasized that workplace spirituality recognizes employees' inner lives and their desire to experience meaningful work within a community. Similarly, Milliman et al. (2003) highlighted the positive association between workplace spirituality and employee work attitudes, including job satisfaction. In higher education institutions, teachers' job satisfaction may be influenced not only by salary, working conditions, and career opportunities but also by their sense of connection, meaningful engagement in teaching, and spiritual connection. Therefore, the present review examines existing theoretical and empirical studies relating to connection, meaningful work, spiritual connection, and job satisfaction, providing a foundation for investigating these relationships among higher education teachers in arts and science colleges in Madurai District

Workplace Spirituality and Job Satisfaction

Workplace spirituality has emerged as an important area of organizational behaviour research, particularly in understanding how employees experience purpose, belongingness, personal fulfilment, and psychological well-being in their professional environments. Unlike religious practices, workplace spirituality primarily concerns the recognition of employees' inner lives, their search for meaningful work, and their desire to experience connectedness with others. Ashmos and Duchon (2000) conceptualized workplace spirituality as the recognition that employees possess an inner life that is nourished by meaningful work occurring within a community. Their contribution established an important conceptual foundation for examining spirituality as a multidimensional workplace phenomenon.

Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003) further emphasized the role of workplace spirituality in creating organizational environments that encourage transcendence, connectedness, and personal fulfilment. Their conceptual perspective suggested that spirituality could contribute to positive organizational outcomes by integrating employees' personal values with their professional responsibilities. In educational institutions, such integration may help teachers perceive their academic responsibilities as meaningful contributions rather than merely occupational obligations.

Pawar (2009) examined the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee well-being, highlighting the importance of spiritual experiences in promoting positive psychological and organizational outcomes. The study provides a basis for understanding how spiritually supportive workplaces may enhance employees' experiences of their professional roles.

Connection and Job Satisfaction

Connection represents the extent to which employees experience interpersonal belongingness, mutual respect, emotional support, and positive relationships within their workplaces. In higher education institutions, connection may be reflected in relationships among teaching colleagues, department heads, administrators, and students. A supportive academic environment can strengthen cooperation, encourage knowledge sharing, and enhance teachers' sense of institutional belonging.

Duchon and Plowman (2005) examined the relationship between workplace spirituality and work-unit performance, emphasizing the importance of employees' inner lives and sense of community. Their findings demonstrated the organizational relevance of spirituality and suggested that workplaces acknowledging employees' deeper psychological and social needs may create more favourable conditions for performance. Although their research focused on work-unit performance rather than teachers' job satisfaction, it provides a theoretical basis for examining interpersonal connection within educational institutions. Sias (2005) explored the

development of workplace friendships and highlighted the role of communication, shared experiences, and organizational context in building interpersonal relationships. The study demonstrated how workplace relationships develop through ongoing social interactions. Such relationships may provide emotional and professional support to teachers, particularly when managing teaching responsibilities, student expectations, research commitments, and institutional demands.

Meaningful Work and Job Satisfaction

Meaningful work refers to the perception that one's professional responsibilities possess significance, purpose, and value beyond financial compensation. In the teaching profession, meaningful work is closely associated with educating students, developing intellectual capabilities, mentoring young individuals, and contributing to society. Teachers who recognize the broader significance of their responsibilities may experience greater intrinsic motivation, professional commitment, and job satisfaction.

Wrzesniewski et al. (1997) examined individuals' orientations toward work and distinguished among viewing work as a job, career, or calling. Their findings demonstrated that individuals who perceived their work as a calling reported more positive work and life experiences. This perspective is relevant to higher education teachers because teaching can be understood as a profession that provides opportunities for personal fulfilment and societal contribution. Teachers who consider their responsibilities meaningful may therefore experience stronger professional identification and satisfaction. Rosso et al. (2010) provided a comprehensive theoretical review of meaningful work and identified important sources and mechanisms through which individuals derive meaning from their professional activities. Their framework highlighted the roles of the self, other people, work contexts, and spiritual life in constructing meaningful work experiences. The review suggests that meaningfulness is not determined exclusively by job characteristics but also by employees' interpretations of their contributions and relationships. For college teachers, meaningful work may therefore develop through student success, professional autonomy, intellectual growth, and recognition of their educational contributions.

Steger et al. (2012) developed the Work and Meaning Inventory to assess employees' perceptions of meaningful work. Their research provided empirical support for understanding meaningful work as a multidimensional psychological experience involving positive meaning, meaning-making through work, and motivation to contribute to a greater good. These dimensions are particularly relevant to teaching professionals because their work combines individual achievement with the broader objective of educational and social development.

Spiritual Connection and Job Satisfaction

Spiritual connection refers to an individual's experience of inner harmony, alignment with personal values, transcendence, and a sense of connection with something greater than individual interests. Within organizational settings, spiritual connection need not involve religious beliefs or practices. Instead, it may reflect personal authenticity, inner fulfilment, ethical awareness, and the integration of personal values with professional responsibilities.

Ashmos and Duchon (2000) emphasized the importance of employees' inner lives in understanding workplace spirituality. Their conceptualization suggested that employees bring spiritual and psychological needs into their professional environments and seek opportunities to express their deeper values through work. The study established a foundation for examining how spiritual experiences may shape employees' attitudes and perceptions of their workplaces.

Fry (2003) developed a theory of spiritual leadership that emphasized vision, hope or faith, and altruistic love as important elements of organizational spirituality. The theory proposed that spiritual leadership can support employees' spiritual well-being through experiences of calling and membership. This framework provides a useful explanation of how spiritually supportive organizational environments may encourage positive employee

attitudes. Within higher education institutions, ethical leadership, institutional values, and respect for individual beliefs may strengthen teachers' spiritual connection with their professional responsibilities.

Duchon and Plowman (2005) investigated workplace spirituality and work-unit performance and demonstrated that organizational environments differed in the extent to which they supported employees' spiritual needs. Their findings suggested that leadership and workplace conditions play important roles in nurturing spirituality. Although the study did not directly establish a causal relationship between spiritual connection and job satisfaction, it supports the proposition that recognizing employees' inner lives can contribute to positive organizational experiences.

Rego and Cunha (2008) examined workplace spirituality and organizational commitment, identifying the importance of spiritual experiences in shaping employees' relationships with their organizations. Their research suggested that workplaces supporting employees' spiritual and psychological needs may encourage stronger organizational attachment. This perspective is relevant to higher education teachers because spiritual connection may help them maintain a sense of purpose, ethical responsibility, and professional identity.

Furthermore, the literature reviewed here does not establish how the three proposed dimensions collectively influence job satisfaction among arts and science college teachers in Madurai District. This represents a context-specific research opportunity rather than proof that no previous local studies exist. A systematic search of regional and Indian higher education research would be necessary to establish the full extent of that gap.

The present study therefore seeks to contribute by examining connection, meaningful work, and spiritual connection as separate independent variables influencing job satisfaction among higher education teachers in arts and science colleges in Madurai District. The study may provide context-specific evidence regarding the relative importance of these dimensions and their combined explanatory power.

Based on the reviewed literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Connection has a significant positive influence on job satisfaction among higher education teachers in arts and science colleges in Madurai District.

H2: Meaningful work has a significant positive influence on job satisfaction among higher education teachers in arts and science colleges in Madurai District.

H3: Spiritual connection has a significant positive influence on job satisfaction among higher education teachers in arts and science colleges in Madurai District.

Methods and Materials

The present study, titled “Exploring the Influence of Workplace Spirituality on Job Satisfaction among Higher Education Teachers: Evidence from Arts and Science Colleges in Madurai District,” adopts a quantitative research approach using a descriptive and explanatory research design. The study aims to examine the influence of workplace spirituality on job satisfaction among teaching faculty employed in arts and science colleges in Madurai District, Tamil Nadu. Workplace spirituality is considered the independent construct, comprising three dimensions: connection, meaningful work, and spiritual connection. Job satisfaction is treated as the dependent variable. A cross-sectional survey method is proposed to collect primary data from respondents using a structured questionnaire.

The population of the present study comprises teaching faculty working in arts and science colleges in Madurai District, Tamil Nadu. A total of 160 higher education teachers were selected as respondents using the convenience sampling technique, a non-probability sampling method. Respondents were selected based on their accessibility, availability, and willingness to participate in the study. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed to examine the influence of workplace spirituality on job satisfaction. The study focused

on three dimensions of workplace spirituality, namely connection, meaningful work, and spiritual connection, adapted from the framework of Milliman et al. (2003). The convenience sampling technique facilitated data collection from accessible respondents within the selected geographical area. However, as the sample was not randomly selected, the generalizability of the findings to all higher education teachers in Madurai District is limited.

Analysis and Discussion

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected from 160 higher education teachers working in arts and science colleges in Madurai District. The primary objective of the analysis is to examine the influence of workplace spirituality on job satisfaction, considering three independent variables: connection, meaningful work, and spiritual connection. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis are employed to examine the relationships among the study variables

Profile of the respondents

The profile distribution indicates that the largest proportion of respondents belongs to the 41–50 years age group (36.25%), followed by the 31–40 years age group (31.25%). Regarding teaching experience, 30.63% of respondents have 5–10 years of experience, while 28.12% have 11–15 years. Female respondents constitute 55.62% of the sample, whereas male respondents account for 44.38%. With respect to department type, 59.37% of respondents belong to self-finance departments, while 40.63% belong to aided departments. Overall, the illustrative distribution reflects a greater representation of middle-aged teachers, female faculty members, and respondents working in self-finance departments.

Table 1 Profile of the respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age (Years)	21–30	25	15.63
	31–40	50	31.25
	41–50	58	36.25
	Above 50	27	16.87
Teaching Experience	Below 5 years	32	20.00
	5–10 years	49	30.63
	11–15 years	45	28.12
	Above 15 years	34	21.25
	Total	160	100.00
Gender	Male	71	44.38
	Female	89	55.62
Department Type	Aided	65	40.63
	Self-Finance	95	59.37

Influence of Workplace Spirituality on Job Satisfaction

The regression model indicates a moderately strong relationship between workplace spirituality dimensions and job satisfaction ($R = 0.689$). The R^2 value of 0.474 reveals that 47.4% of the variation in job satisfaction is

explained collectively by connection, meaningful work, and spiritual connection. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.464 further indicates that the model maintains reasonable explanatory power after accounting for the number of predictors. Thus, workplace spirituality emerges as an important factor associated with job satisfaction among higher education teachers. The ANOVA results indicate that the overall regression model is statistically significant ($F(3, 156) = 46.932$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that connection, meaningful work, and spiritual connection collectively explain a significant proportion of the variation in job satisfaction among higher education teachers. Therefore, the findings provide statistical support for the overall relationship between workplace spirituality and job satisfaction.

The regression coefficients reveal that all three dimensions of workplace spirituality have statistically significant positive associations with job satisfaction. Connection emerges as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.410$, $p < 0.001$), followed by spiritual connection ($\beta = 0.239$, $p < 0.001$) and meaningful work ($\beta = 0.186$, $p = 0.017$). These findings suggest that interpersonal relationships and a sense of belonging contribute most strongly to job satisfaction among higher education teachers. Thus, all three proposed research hypotheses (H1, H2, and H3) are supported, indicating the importance of workplace spirituality in fostering positive professional experiences.

Table 2 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.689[a]	.474	.464	.30207
a. Predictors: (Constant), Connection, Meaningful work, Spiritual Connection				

Table 3 ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12.847	3	4.282	46.932	.000[b]
	Residual	14.235	156	.091		
	Total	27.082	159			
a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Connection, Meaningful work, Spiritual Connection						

Table 4 Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.633	.221		7.390	.000
	Connection	.306	.057	.410	5.317	.000
	Meaningful Work	.139	.058	.186	2.411	.017
	Spiritual Connection	.188	.051	.239	3.665	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction						

Conclusion

The present study concludes that workplace spirituality plays a significant role in explaining job satisfaction among higher education teachers in arts and science colleges in Madurai District. The findings demonstrate that connection, meaningful work, and spiritual connection are positively and significantly associated with job satisfaction, collectively explaining 47.4% of its variation. Among these dimensions, connection emerged as the strongest predictor, highlighting the importance of supportive interpersonal relationships, collegial cooperation, and a sense of belonging within academic institutions. Spiritual connection and meaningful work also demonstrated significant positive associations, indicating that teachers' inner fulfilment, personal values, and perceptions of professional purpose are important aspects of their job satisfaction. The findings are consistent with the workplace spirituality framework proposed by Milliman et al. (2003), emphasizing the relevance of meaningful work and workplace connectedness in shaping positive employee attitudes. The study suggests that higher education institutions should encourage collaborative academic environments, strengthen professional relationships, recognize teachers' contributions, and promote opportunities for personal and professional fulfilment. Such initiatives may help improve job satisfaction and create supportive institutional environments. However, the use of convenience sampling and a cross-sectional research design limits the generalizability and causal interpretation of the findings. Future research may incorporate larger, randomly selected samples and longitudinal approaches to further examine the relationship between workplace spirituality and job satisfaction in higher education institutions.

References (APA 7th Edition)

[1] Altaf, A., & Awan, M. A. (2011). Moderating effect of workplace spirituality on the relationship of job overload and job satisfaction. *Journal of Business Ethics, 104*(1), 93–99. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-0891-0

[2] Ashmos, D. P., & Duchon, D. (2000). Spirituality at work: A conceptualization and measure. *Journal of Management Inquiry, 9*(2), 134–145. https://doi.org/10.1177/105649260092008

[3] Khatri, P., & Gupta, P. (2017). Workplace spirituality: A predictor of employee wellbeing. *Asian Journal of Management, 8*(2), 284–292. https://doi.org/10.5958/2321-5763.2017.00044.0

[4] Kokt, D., & Palmer, E. P. (2019). Strategic priorities for cultivating commitment amongst academic staff: The militating effect of workplace spirituality. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management, 17*, a1054. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v17i0.1054

[5] Milliman, J., Czaplewski, A. J., & Ferguson, J. (2003). Workplace spirituality and employee work attitudes: An exploratory empirical assessment. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 16*(4), 426–447. https://doi.org/10.1108/09534810310484172

[6] Mitroff, I. I., & Denton, E. A. (1999). *A spiritual audit of corporate America: A hard look at spirituality, religion, and values in the workplace*. Jossey-Bass.

[7] Nwanzu, C. L., & Babalola, S. S. (2021). Effect of workplace spirituality on perceived organizational support and job performance among university administrative employees. *Contemporary Management Research, 17*(2), 127–155. https://doi.org/10.7903/cmr.20349

[8] Shrestha, A. K., & Jena, L. K. (2020). Interactive effects of workplace spirituality and psychological capital on employee negativity. *Management and Labour Studies, 45*(4), 411–429. https://doi.org/10.1177/0258042X20962994

[9] Tripathi, K., & Agarwal, M. (2017). Effects of workplace spirituality on job attitudes of managers. *Spiritual Paradigm for Management*, 117–126.