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Workplace Spirituality and Employee Well-Being: A Systematic Review and Preliminary Quantitative Synthesis of Empirical Evidence

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Abstract

Workplace spirituality has gained increasing attention in organisational psychology due to its potential relationship with employee well-being, work engagement and occupational burnout. It refers to employees' experiences of meaningful work, belongingness, shared values and connection with a purpose beyond financial or professional goals. Although several empirical studies have explored these relationships, differences in conceptual definitions, measurement instruments and research designs make it difficult to establish the consistency and strength of the available evidence. The present paper examines empirical evidence on the relationship between workplace spirituality and three employee outcomes: burnout, work engagement and psychological well-being. A preliminary literature search was conducted to identify relevant empirical studies and systematic reviews. The selected studies were examined based on their sample sizes, research designs, conceptualisation of workplace spirituality and reported statistical associations. Pearson's correlation coefficients were considered suitable for a correlation-based meta-analysis, while other statistical findings were examined separately where direct conversion was not possible. Listopad et al. (2021), in a study involving 439 working adults, reported a negative correlation between perceived meaningfulness of work and burnout (*r* = −.64) and a positive correlation with work engagement (*r* = .65). Similarly, Khatri and Gupta (2017), using a sample of 298 employees from Delhi NCR, found that workplace spirituality significantly predicted employee well-being. Additionally, a systematic review by Syahir et al. (2025), which examined 38 studies, reported generally positive relationships between workplace spirituality and employee well-being. However, the available primary studies do not provide sufficient comparable effect-size information to calculate reliable pooled estimates across all three outcomes. The findings suggest that workplace spirituality, particularly

the experience of meaningful work, is associated with favourable employee outcomes. Nevertheless, differences in conceptualisation, measurement and incomplete statistical reporting limit the conclusions that can be drawn. Further extraction and verification of primary study data are necessary to conduct a comprehensive and reproducible meta-analysis.

Keywords: Workplace spirituality, employee well-being, burnout, work engagement, meaningful work, organisational psychology, systematic review, meta-analysis.

1. Introduction

Work is an important part of adult life and contributes to an individual's financial stability, social relationships, identity and psychological development. However, the workplace can also become a source of chronic stress, emotional exhaustion and reduced psychological well-being. Organisational psychology has traditionally examined these experiences through factors such as job demands, leadership, organisational support, motivation and work environment. More recent research has also considered the role of spirituality and meaningfulness in employees' experiences of work.

Workplace spirituality refers to the experience of meaning, purpose, connectedness and a sense of community within the work environment. It does not necessarily refer to religious practices or institutional religious beliefs. Instead, it focuses on how employees experience their work in relation to personal values, meaningful contribution and relationships with others.

Kinjerski and Skrypnek (2004) conceptualised spirit at work through dimensions including engaging work, a sense of community, spiritual connection and mystical experience. These dimensions suggest that employees may experience work as more than a set of professional

responsibilities. Work can also become a source of personal meaning, belonging and psychological fulfilment.

The relationship between spirituality and occupational well-being has received empirical attention. Listopad et al. (2021) examined perceived meaningfulness of work and workplace culture in relation to burnout and work engagement. Their findings suggested that meaningfulness was negatively associated with burnout and positively associated with work engagement.

Similarly, Khatri and Gupta (2017) examined workplace spirituality and employee well-being among 298 employees working in IT, IT-enabled services and banking, financial services and insurance organisations in Delhi NCR. Their findings indicated that workplace spirituality was a significant predictor of employee well-being.

Recent literature has also expanded the discussion. Syahir et al. (2025) reviewed 38 studies published between 2020 and 2024 and identified generally positive relationships between religious workplace environments, employee engagement and well-being. However, the authors also highlighted the importance of inclusion and the possibility that religious expressions in workplaces may create discomfort or exclusion for employees with different beliefs.

Despite these findings, three important issues remain.

First, workplace spirituality is measured differently across studies. Some researchers focus on meaningful work, while others examine inner life, community, spiritual leadership or religious organisational practices. These concepts are related but should not automatically be treated as identical.

Second, employee outcomes are also measured differently. Burnout, work engagement and psychological well-being represent separate psychological constructs. Although they may be related, they should be analysed independently.

Third, much of the available research reports associations or regression results without providing all the information needed for quantitative synthesis. A systematic examination of actual empirical findings is therefore necessary before estimating an overall effect.

1.1 Research gap

Although previous research has examined workplace spirituality and employee well-being, there remains a need for a more structured quantitative understanding of these relationships.

In particular, the literature requires greater clarity regarding:

- The relationship between workplace spirituality and occupational burnout.
- The association between meaningful work and employee engagement.
- The relationship between workplace spirituality and psychological well-being.
- The influence of different conceptualisations and measurement instruments on reported findings.
- The methodological quality and statistical reporting of existing empirical studies.

The present review addresses these issues by examining published empirical evidence and evaluating its suitability for quantitative synthesis.

1.2 Objectives

1. To examine empirical research on workplace spirituality and employee well-being.
2. To examine the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee burnout.
3. To examine the association between workplace spirituality and work engagement.

4. To examine the relationship between workplace spirituality and psychological well-being.
5. To undertsand the availability of statistical information for a reproducible meta-analysis.
6. To examine methodological limitations and directions for future research.

1.3 Research questions

RQ1: Is workplace spirituality negatively associated with employee burnout?

RQ2: Is workplace spirituality positively associated with work engagement?

RQ3: Is workplace spirituality positively associated with employee psychological well-being?

RQ4: How do differences in measurement and research design affect the comparability of existing findings?

2. Method

2.1 Research design

The present paper follows a systematic-review framework with a preliminary quantitative evidence synthesis.

The review uses previously published empirical studies rather than collecting new participant data. Its purpose is to examine existing statistical relationships and determine whether the available evidence supports a quantitative meta-analysis.

The review is not a simulation study. No artificial observations, computer-generated correlations or assumed population effects are used as empirical findings.

2.2 Literature search

A preliminary search was conducted using scholarly search resources, including Google Scholar-indexed literature, PubMed and publisher websites.

The search focused on combinations of the following terms:

- "Workplace spirituality" AND "employee well-being"
- "Workplace spirituality" AND burnout
- "Workplace spirituality" AND work engagement
- "Meaningful work" AND employee mental health
- "Spirituality" AND occupational well-being
- "Workplace spirituality" AND psychological well-being

The search prioritised empirical research involving employed adults and studies reporting relationships between workplace spirituality or its dimensions and employee psychological outcomes.

This is a preliminary search rather than a completed multi-database PRISMA search. A final review will require documented searches in databases such as Scopus, Web of Science and PsycINFO, including search dates, full search strings and screening records.

2.3 Inclusion criteria

Studies were considered relevant when they met the following conditions:

1. Included working adults or employees.
2. Examined workplace spirituality or a clearly identified dimension, such as meaningfulness of work.
3. Investigated at least one relevant employee outcome.
4. Used an empirical quantitative or mixed-methods design.
5. Reported sufficient methodological information to assess the findings.
6. Were available as identifiable scholarly publications.

2.4 Exclusion criteria

The following were not treated as primary empirical studies:

- Conceptual papers without participant data.
- Studies examining spirituality outside occupational settings.
- Systematic reviews and meta-analyses when extracting independent primary-study effects.
- Studies that did not examine relevant employee outcomes.
- Research that did not provide sufficient information to identify the population or variables.

Systematic reviews were retained as contextual sources but were not counted as additional independent participant samples.

2.5 Data extraction

The following information was considered for extraction:

Variable	Information required
Study identification	Authors and publication year
Country	Location of the research
Sample size	Number of employees
Research design	Cross-sectional, longitudinal or experimental
Spirituality measure	Instrument or dimension examined
Outcome	Burnout, engagement or well-being
Effect size	Pearson's r or another appropriate statistic
Significance	p-value and confidence interval
Measurement	Instruments used for each construct

Particular attention was given to distinguishing workplace spirituality as a broad construct from individual dimensions such as meaningful work.

2.6 Statistical analysis

For studies reporting Pearson's correlation coefficients, Fisher's z transformation can be used:

$$z = \frac{1}{2}\ln\left(\frac{1+r}{1-r}\right)$$

The sampling variance is:

$$V_z = \frac{1}{n-3}$$

Where:

- (r) represents the reported correlation.
- (n) represents the sample size.
- (z) represents the transformed correlation.

A random-effects model would be appropriate when sufficient independent studies with comparable effect sizes are available.

Between-study heterogeneity would be examined using Cochran's Q, I^2 and τ^2. Prediction intervals would also be considered to describe the expected variation in effects across future studies.

However, these statistics cannot be meaningfully estimated from a single independent study per outcome. Therefore, pooled correlations and heterogeneity statistics are not reported in the present preliminary synthesis.

3. Results

3.1 Overview of identified empirical evidence

The preliminary literature search identified empirical studies and systematic reviews relevant to workplace spirituality and employee outcomes.

Two primary empirical studies provide particularly relevant evidence.

Table 1. Characteristics of identified primary empirical studies

Study	Sample	Population	Main outcome
Listopad et al. (2021)	439	Working adults from different industries	Burnout and work engagement
Khatri and Gupta (2017)	298	IT, ITES and BFSI employees in Delhi NCR	Employee well-being

Sources: Listopad et al. (2021); Khatri and Gupta (2017).

The two studies provide evidence from different occupational contexts and examine related but not identical dimensions of workplace spirituality.

3.2 Workplace spirituality and employee burnout

One of the most directly relevant studies was conducted by Listopad et al. (2021). The researchers examined the relationship between perceived meaningfulness of work, sense of homeliness in the working environment, burnout and work engagement.

The study involved 439 working adults from different industries. Standardised questionnaires were used to examine the relationships between the study variables.

The results indicated a significant negative correlation between perceived meaningfulness of work and burnout.

[r=-0.64,\quad n=439,\quad p<.01]

This finding suggests that employees who experienced greater meaning in their work also tended to report lower burnout.

The study also found a negative relationship between sense of homeliness at work and burnout:

[r=-0.70]

These results suggest that both meaningful work and a sense of belonging may be relevant to employees' occupational experiences.

However, the findings should be interpreted carefully. The study was cross-sectional, meaning that the direction of causality cannot be established. It is possible that meaningful work contributes to lower burnout, but employees experiencing lower burnout may also be more likely to perceive their work as meaningful.

3.3 Workplace spirituality and work engagement

The same study examined the association between meaningfulness of work and employee engagement.

The reported correlation was:

[r=0.65,\quad n=439,\quad p<.01]

This indicates a positive relationship between meaningfulness of work and engagement. Employees who experienced greater meaning in their work also tended to report higher levels of engagement.

The study further examined the relationship between a sense of homeliness and engagement:

[r=0.68]

The regression analysis identified positive meaning as an important predictor of work engagement, with a standardised regression coefficient of:

[\beta=0.62]

These findings support the possibility that meaningfulness and workplace belonging contribute to positive occupational experiences.

It is important to distinguish the correlation coefficient from the regression coefficient. The reported (r=.65) represents a bivariate association, whereas (\beta=.62) represents the standardised contribution of the predictor within the specified regression model.

3.4 Workplace spirituality and psychological well-being

Khatri and Gupta (2017) conducted an empirical investigation involving 298 employees working in IT, IT-enabled services and banking, financial services and insurance organisations in Delhi NCR.

The study examined workplace spirituality in relation to employee wellness.

The researchers used correlation and regression analyses to investigate the relationship between the variables.

Their findings indicated that workplace spirituality was a significant predictor of employee well-being.

The study is particularly relevant because it provides evidence from an Indian organisational context.

However, the accessible publication information does not provide the exact correlation coefficient, confidence interval or complete regression statistics. Therefore, a numerical effect size cannot currently be included in the correlation-based synthesis.

The study should remain part of the narrative evidence synthesis until its complete statistical results can be extracted and verified.

3.5 Evidence from systematic reviews

Syahir et al. (2025) conducted a systematic literature review examining workplace spirituality and employee well-being.

The review included 38 studies retrieved from Scopus and Web of Science, focusing on literature published between 2020 and 2024.

The findings were organised into four broad themes:

1. Workplace spirituality and employee well-being.
2. Spiritual leadership and organisational performance.
3. Workplace spirituality and employee engagement or motivation.
4. Religiosity, spirituality and employee experiences.

The authors reported that most of the reviewed studies demonstrated positive relationships between religious workplace practices and employee well-being.

However, they also emphasised that organisations should consider inclusion when introducing spiritual practices.

This is important because workplace spirituality should not be understood as requiring employees to follow a particular religious belief. A workplace can support meaningfulness, community and personal values without imposing religious expectations.

The review provides useful contextual evidence, but its 38 studies should not be counted as 38 newly collected samples in the present analysis.

3.6 Summary of available quantitative findings

Table 2. Actual reported statistical findings

Study	Relationship	N	Effect size	Statistical significance
Listopad et al. (2021)	Meaningfulness and burnout	439	r = –.64	p less than .01
Listopad et al. (2021)	Meaningfulness and engagement	439	r = .65	p less than .01
Listopad et al. (2021)	Sense of homeliness and burnout	439	r = –.70	p less than .01

Listopad et al. (2021)	Sense of homeliness and engagement	439	r = .68	p less than .01

Note: The correlations are published findings, not newly calculated pooled effects. The correlations from Listopad et al. represent different dimensions of workplace spirituality and must not be treated as independent studies.

3.7 Status of quantitative synthesis

The identified findings demonstrate that actual statistical relationships are available in the literature. However, the currently verified evidence does not provide multiple independent, comparable correlation estimates for each outcome.

Consequently, the present paper does not report:

- A pooled random-effects correlation.
- A 95% pooled confidence interval.
- Cochran's Q.
- I^2 or τ^2.
- A prediction interval.
- Egger's regression test.

Reporting these values without a sufficiently extracted study-level dataset would create misleading statistical conclusions.

4. Discussion

The present review examined empirical evidence concerning workplace spirituality and three employee outcomes: burnout, work engagement and psychological well-being.

The available findings generally support the view that workplace spirituality and meaningful work are relevant to positive occupational experiences. However, the strength of the available evidence differs across outcomes and research contexts.

4.1 Workplace spirituality and burnout

The negative association between meaningfulness of work and burnout reported by Listopad et al. (2021) suggests that employees who experience greater purpose and meaning in their professional roles may report lower occupational burnout.

One possible explanation is that meaningful work provides employees with a stronger sense of purpose. When individuals understand the value of their contribution, they may experience greater psychological connection with their professional responsibilities.

However, meaningfulness alone may not protect employees from excessive workloads, poor leadership or inadequate organisational support.

Therefore, workplace spirituality should be considered alongside established occupational factors rather than as a replacement for them.

4.2 Workplace spirituality and work engagement

The positive association between meaningfulness and engagement suggests that employees may become more psychologically involved in their work when they perceive it as personally significant.

Work engagement involves positive work-related experiences, including vigour, dedication and absorption.

Meaningful work may support dedication because employees can connect their everyday responsibilities with broader personal or organisational goals.

The findings from Listopad et al. (2021) are consistent with the broader literature on meaningful work.

Allan et al. (2019), in a meta-analysis of 44 articles involving 23,144 participants, reported large correlations between meaningful work and work engagement, commitment and job satisfaction. However, meaningful work is a related construct rather than a direct substitute for workplace spirituality. Its meta-analytic findings should therefore be used as supporting theoretical evidence rather than combined with workplace-spirituality correlations without construct justification.

4.3 Workplace spirituality and psychological well-being

The Indian study by Khatri and Gupta (2017) provides useful evidence regarding the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee well-being.

Its sample of 298 employees from Delhi NCR makes it particularly relevant to organisational research in India.

The finding that workplace spirituality significantly predicted employee well-being supports the importance of examining meaningfulness, personal values and workplace relationships in occupational health research.

However, the absence of an accessible numerical effect size limits the possibility of comparing this study directly with other research.

Further research should report complete correlation matrices, confidence intervals and measurement details to support future evidence synthesis.

4.4 The importance of conceptual clarity

An important issue emerging from the review is the difference between workplace spirituality and meaningful work.

Workplace spirituality can include multiple dimensions, such as:

- Meaningful work.
- Inner life.
- Sense of community.
- Shared values.
- Connection with a broader purpose.

Meaningful work represents one important dimension, but it does not necessarily capture the complete construct.

This distinction matters when conducting a meta-analysis. Combining all dimensions without considering their conceptual differences may produce an inaccurate pooled effect.

Future quantitative research should examine whether different dimensions of workplace spirituality demonstrate similar relationships with employee outcomes.

4.5 Implications for organisational psychology

The findings have several implications for organisational practice.

First, organisations may benefit from creating environments in which employees understand the purpose and value of their work.

Second, social belonging and supportive workplace relationships should be considered important parts of employee well-being.

Third, organisational spirituality should remain inclusive. Employers should not assume that employees share the same religious beliefs or spiritual practices.

Finally, workplace spirituality should not be used to place responsibility for occupational stress entirely on employees. Organisational working conditions, workload, leadership and access to psychological support remain important.

5. Limitations

Several limitations should be considered.

First, limited effect-size availability: Not all identified studies provide accessible numerical correlations or complete statistical results. This restricts the possibility of conducting a full quantitative synthesis.

Second, conceptual differences: Workplace spirituality, meaningful work, religious workplace practices and spiritual leadership are related but distinct constructs.

Third, differences in measurement: Studies may use different questionnaires and operational definitions, reducing comparability.

Fourth, research design: Much of the available evidence is cross-sectional. Therefore, causal conclusions cannot be established.

Fifth, geographical representation: The identified evidence comes from different organisational and cultural contexts. More research is needed to understand how cultural differences influence workplace spirituality.

Sixth, preliminary search coverage: The present paper does not represent a completed PRISMA 2020 review. The database searches, screening process and risk-of-bias assessment require further work.

Seventh, limited quantitative synthesis: The current dataset does not contain enough independent comparable effects to estimate reliable pooled correlations or heterogeneity statistics.

6. Future Research Directions

Future research should focus on developing a stronger empirical understanding of workplace spirituality and employee well-being.

Several directions are particularly relevant:

1. **Longitudinal research:** Examine whether workplace spirituality predicts changes in burnout and well-being over time.
2. **Cross-cultural research:** Compare workplace spirituality across different countries, industries and organisational cultures.
3. **Measurement consistency:** Use clearly defined and validated instruments to improve comparability between studies.
4. **Organisational factors:** Examine the role of leadership, organisational support, job demands and workplace belonging.
5. **Psychological mechanisms:** Investigate whether meaningfulness, social connectedness and perceived organisational support explain the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee well-being.
6. **Inclusive organisational practices:** Examine how organisations can support meaningful work without imposing religious or ideological expectations.
7. **Improved statistical reporting:** Encourage researchers to provide complete correlation matrices, sample sizes, confidence intervals and measurement reliability estimates.

7. Conclusion

The present review examined empirical research concerning workplace spirituality and employee well-being, with particular attention to burnout, work engagement and psychological well-being.

The available findings suggest that workplace spirituality, especially the experience of meaningful work and workplace belonging, is associated with favourable employee outcomes. Listopad et al. (2021) reported a negative correlation between meaningfulness of work and burnout and a positive correlation with work engagement. Khatri and Gupta (2017) also identified workplace spirituality as a significant predictor of employee well-being among employees in Delhi NCR.

These findings provide a useful empirical foundation for further research. However, the current evidence extraction is not sufficient to establish pooled effect sizes across the three outcomes. A complete meta-analysis will require additional primary studies, verified statistical information and a transparent screening process.

Overall, workplace spirituality represents a relevant area of organisational psychology because it encourages researchers to consider not only employees' working conditions and professional responsibilities but also their experiences of meaning, connection and psychological fulfilment.

8. References

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Appendix A

Data Extraction and Evidence Register

The evidence register was developed to organise the empirical literature on workplace spirituality and employee well-being. It contained 24 variables covering bibliographic information, study characteristics, sample details, workplace spirituality measures, outcome measures, effect sizes, and eligibility decisions.

The following information was recorded for each study:

1. Study identification number and author details.
2. Publication year, article title, journal, and DOI or URL.
3. Country and research design.
4. Sample size and workplace spirituality measurement.
5. Workplace spirituality dimensions and employee outcomes.
6. Outcome measurement instruments.
7. Available statistical information, including Pearson's correlation coefficient, standard error, and confidence intervals.
8. Sample overlap, eligibility status, and data extraction notes.

The evidence register contained 26 records at the time of analysis. These records included primary empirical studies, candidate studies requiring further extraction, and studies reporting statistical results that were not directly suitable for correlation-based synthesis.

Appendix B

Python Code for Data Cleaning and Statistical Analysis

The analysis was conducted using Python in Google Colab. The libraries used included Pandas, NumPy, SciPy, and Matplotlib.

The analysis involved the following stages:

- Importing and inspecting the evidence register.
- Checking missing values and data types.

- Identifying records containing usable Pearson correlations.
- Converting Pearson's correlation coefficients into Fisher's z values.
- Calculating sampling variances and confidence intervals.
- Checking repeated study-outcome records.
- Conducting separate random-effects analyses where the available evidence permitted.
- Generating descriptive statistics and forest plots.
- Exporting the cleaned dataset and analysis results.

The DerSimonian–Laird estimator was selected for the preliminary random-effects model. The analysis was restricted to comparable and independent effect sizes.

Appendix C

Effect Size Calculation

Pearson's correlation coefficients were transformed using Fisher's z transformation:

$$z = \frac{1}{2}\ln\left(\frac{1+r}{1-r}\right)$$

The sampling variance was calculated as:

$$V_z = \frac{1}{N-3}$$

The standard error was calculated as:

$$SE_z = \sqrt{\frac{1}{N-3}}$$

The 95% confidence interval was calculated on the Fisher's z scale:

$$CI = z \pm 1.96(SE_z)$$

The resulting confidence limits were converted back into correlation coefficients using the inverse Fisher transformation.

Appendix D

Random-Effects Model

The DerSimonian–Laird method was used to estimate between-study variance. The random-effects weights were calculated as:

$$w_i = \frac{1}{V_i+\tau^2}$$

The pooled Fisher's z estimate was calculated as:

$$\bar{z} = \frac{\sum w_i z_i}{\sum w_i}$$

The pooled estimate was converted back into a correlation coefficient for interpretation.

Between-study heterogeneity was assessed using Cochran's Q and the I^2 statistic:

$$I^2 = \max\left(0,\frac{Q-df}{Q}\right)\times100$$

The between-study variance was estimated using the DerSimonian–Laird method.

Appendix E

Methodological Considerations

Several methodological considerations were followed during the analysis.

First, regression coefficients were not automatically treated as Pearson correlations. Standardised beta coefficients and Pearson correlations represent different statistical quantities.

Second, multiple effect sizes obtained from the same participant sample were not treated as independent studies. Such observations require appropriate methods to account for dependence.

Third, different employee outcomes were analysed separately. Burnout, work engagement, and psychological well-being represent distinct constructs and were not combined into one pooled estimate.

Fourth, studies with missing sample sizes or unavailable correlation coefficients were retained in the evidence register for qualitative assessment but excluded from correlation-based calculations until the necessary information could be extracted.

Finally, the results were interpreted as preliminary quantitative evidence rather than a completed meta-analysis unless the number and independence of comparable effect sizes supported statistical pooling.

Appendix F

Software and Reproducibility

All statistical procedures were implemented in Python using Google Colab. The analysis generated the following output files:

- `extracted_correlation_effect_sizes.csv`
- `records_requiring_further_extraction.csv`
- `random_effects_meta_analysis_results.csv`
- `descriptive_statistics.csv`
- `workplace_spirituality_complete_analysis.xlsx`

https://colab.research.google.com/drive/1IOxG5lfEOXJlh5b4qc5aHFlrdzAfbhmS#scrollTo=4XdRDEYwHtxs&fullscreenOutput=true

The Excel workbook contained the original evidence register, eligible correlation records, records requiring further extraction, meta-analysis results, descriptive statistics, and repeated-effect records.

These files provide an organised record of the data preparation and analysis process. The numerical results should be interpreted only after verifying the underlying publications and resolving sample overlap and effect-size comparability.