Capturing imperative inevitability of spiritual values in Pakistani organizations

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Abstract

This study is an attempt to understand and analyze the attitudes and behaviors of Pakistani employees and workers towards adoption of spiritual values for enhancing their productivity and in order to become an effective employee for the organization. The spiritual values are hypothesized in terms of individual betterment, collective betterment and organizational betterment to determine the organizational behavior. The Z-test has been employed which validates most of our developed hypothesis and shows that most of Pakistani employees believe that spiritual values can affect positively their individual, collective and organizational betterment.

I. INTRODUCTION

We are living in the age of everyday transformational situations in the business environment. After revolutionary advancement of business industry, there are many dilemmas of changing demographic work conditions such as instability resulted by globalization, mergers and acquisitions, downsizing, cut-backs, increasing work-load, 'do more for less', environmental pollution, energy crisis, increasing incidents of depression, scandals of unethical corporate behavior, de-humanizing effects of technology-driven information economy, workplace violence and office rage, etc. These are some major factors causing organizations to adopt some spiritual values which are directly concerned with individual's meaning of work, loyalty, motivation, connectedness of organizational culture and organizational citizenship.

Spiritual values within organizations are not new phenomena. There are many countries where the practices of these values are adopted for the sake of enhancing organizational culture. Katz (2007) mentions that trends are evident in the United States particularly and other Western countries generally which reflect the tendency of people turning towards spirituality. A research study reveals that 33 to 50 percent Americans believe that they have experienced a significant spiritual life affection, 23 percent regularly do spiritual practices such as yoga, meditation, prayer or other stress reducing exercises, 20 percent described

that all aspects of their lives are influenced by spirituality, 12 percent experienced a great deal with God, Allah, Jesus, Mary, Elijah or Buddha, 40 percent people proclaimed themselves religious but not a member of any religious institution (Forman, 2004). It was the discussion of general spiritual attitude of Western people, while many authors have mentioned the importance of spiritual norms on workplace. Aburdene (2005) has listed many mega trends towards intrinsic values inspired by spirituality; some of these include:

a) After economic turbulence and crises, people look for journey inwards; 78 percent people are looking forward spiritual practices, such as, meditation and yoga.

b) The capitalism is going down that means top companies and CEOs are rearranging themselves to fulfill all stakeholders' needs (including customers and employees working for them)

c) Leadership is not just at senior level but leadership values and morality are carefully considered from middle level within the organization.

d) Spirituality in business is showing a rising drift.

e) Now people have very much conscious about companies to respect the values of humanity such as environment.

f) Many businesses are showing social responsibility investment boom after much criticism, reflecting that labor forces are being much more monitored than 10 years ago.

Because of increasing importance of spirituality on workplace, it is being a part of curriculum of many universities, institutions and management/administration schools. Harvard Business School has included courses where workplace spirituality is being studied (Wong, 2003). Conlin (1999) mentions that the American University of New Haven, Minnesota's University of St. Thomas and University of Denver have established research centers on the subject of 'spirituality and the workplace'. Similarly Cranfield School of Management in the United Kingdom offers an elective of a spirituality and organizational transformation (Howard, 2002). Weston (2002) adds that the Department of Management of the Canterbury University in New Zealand has started offering a subject on spirituality in workplace since 2002. According to the research by Garcia-Zamor (2003), more than 30 MBA programs are offered on the importance of spirituality in the workplace

in USA.

A. Meaning of Spirituality

Hense (2006) mentions that there are too many definitions of spirituality, based on geographic, ethnic and demographic grounds. Harmer and Fallon (2007) report tremendous differences in way spirituality is defined. Myers, Sweeney and Witmer (2000) believe that spirituality is an awareness of a being or force that transcends the material aspects of life. Vella-Brodrick (1995) mentions that spiritual life causes self development, encompasses aspects of self awareness, existentialisms, religiosity and life purpose, morality and ethics, peace with oneself and self actualization.

The role of spirituality within an organization strives employees for connectedness to the workplace and authenticity on oneself which are considerably important both for an employee and the organizational culture. This would be a great deal to create personal meaning, warmth engagement, effectiveness and productivity of individuals that directly and positively impact on organizational culture. Mitroff and Denton (1999); Dierendonck et al. (2005); Milliman et al. (2003); Harmer and Fallon (2007); and Neal and Biberman (2004) describe that the purpose of spiritual organization is to support the spiritual development of employees, customers and other stakeholders and for the organization to be an agent of change for positive good in the world.

Ashmose and Duchon (2000) believe that an organization can be regarded as being spiritual when it recognizes that employees have an inner life that nourishes, and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community. Coetzee and Roythorne-Jacobs (2007) believe it a search for spiritual wholeness with the context of the workplace. It involves seeking to discover one's true self, higher life purpose and meaning through one's work activities and roles.

B. Criticism

Robbins, Judge and Sanghi (2007) add that criticism on spirituality is of three types. First type of criticism is about the scientific foundation or authenticity of spiritual culture within an organization. Second criticism is about secularization of organization, according to which spirituality is a religious term that can damage the secular interpretation of an organization. To answer this criticism, Robbins, Judge and Sanghi (2007) opine that this criticism is valid if spirituality is applied as a religious practice; however it is less stinging when the goal is limited to helping employees find meaning in their work lives. Third criticism is about the relation or compatibility between spirituality and profit margins of an organization. Robbins, Judge and Sanghi (2007) state that that the organizations which used spiritual norms have more productivity

and higher profits than the organizations which did not.

Bierly, Kessler and Christensen (2000) believe that spirituality enhances organizational learning. On the other hand, Cavanaugh et al. (2000) argue that it unities and builds communities. Khanna and Srinivas (2000) believe that spirituality helps for connecting to others in an organization and to work itself. Maxwell (2003) describes spirituality as a source of healing and harmonizing expression of compassion, wisdom and connectedness that transcendent all egocentric, sociocentric and anthropocentric forms.

The aforementioned references encouraged the present researchers to investigate and study the attitudes and behaviors of employees towards adoption of spiritual values for enhancing their performance and productivity, especially in the context of working environment prevailing in Pakistan.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Conceptual framework

To operationalize the idea of studying spirituality in Pakistani organizations, we hypothesize that spiritual values, including individual betterment, collective betterment and organizational betterment determine the organizational spiritual behavior. Figure 1 represents the idea in a formal form.

Figure I
**Conceptual framework**
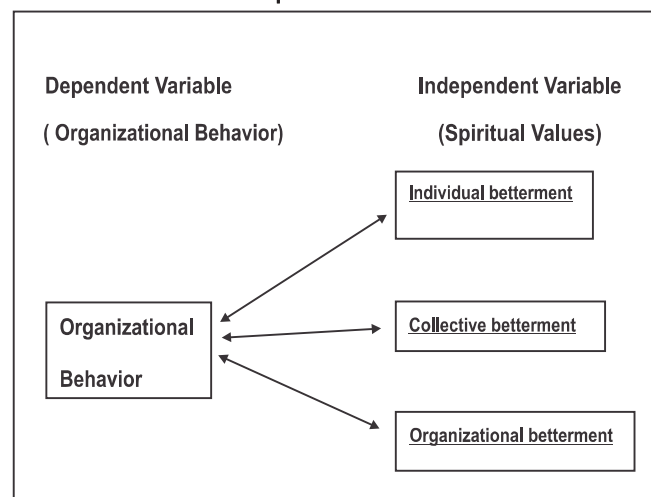
For this piece of research, we further formulate the research idea and present it in a formal operational definition form in details, as follows.

For statistical testing, hypotheses are formulated, as follows.

a)   *H_1: Spirituality is something that provides under-*

standing of one's self-awareness.

b) H_2: *Spiritual values positively affect one's ethics/ good moral.*

c) H_3: *Spiritual values positively affect one's mental and physical health.*

d) H_4: *Spiritual values enable a person to make good relations to his/her colleagues.*

e) H_5: *Spiritual values improve the productivity of an organization.*

Figure II
Operational defination
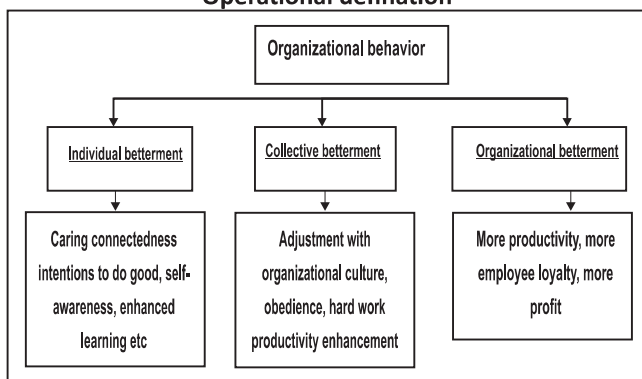
III. METHOD

A. Statistical tool used

The responses of the organizational employees were collected and analyzed, using the Z test, namely:

$$Z = (\bar{x} - \mu)/(\sigma/\sqrt{n}) \qquad (1)$$

Where $\bar{x}$ represents the sample mean of the respective variable; μ represents the population mean, and has been taken as 3; and $\sigma/\sqrt{n}$ is standard error. The calculated Z values have been evaluated at critical values, ranging within 1.96± range, at significance level $\alpha = 0.05$.

B. Sample and sampling

According to the need of our research, we used stratified random sampling for acquiring desired feedback from respondents belonging to different industries, including print media (editors, and other workers), banking (managers and other workers), education (primary/ secondary school and university teachers), and factory employees (managers and other workers).

In total, 135 respondents provided their answers. Personally administered questionnaires were used to measure the response, except for nine respondents from whom questionnaires were managed to be filled via telephone. A five point likert scale was used to collect responses. A number of respondents were not proficient in English, so we used Urdu translation of the questionnaire.

The questions covered the following aspects: (i) meaning of spiritual values; (ii) application of spiritual values on individual level (for individual betterment), and (iii) application of spiritual values on collective (group and organizational betterment) levels.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The respondents' responses, collected through the above stated Likert-type scale, were subjected to one-sample test; the empirical results obtained, are provided in summarized form tables III (a & b); while the results are further discussed in detail (hypothesis-wise) in subsequent tables.

TABLE I (a)
One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
H_1	135	3.93	.908	.078
H_2	135	4.08	.978	.084
H_3	135	3.96	.973	.084
H_4	135	4.13	.893	.077
H_4	135	3.86	.940	.081

TABLE I (b)
One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
				Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	Sig. (2 tailed)		Lower	Upper
H_1	11.947	134	.000	.933	.78	1.09
H_2	12.852	134	.000	.1.081	.92	1.25
H_3	11.501	134	.000	.963	.80	1.13
H_4	14.650	134	.000	1.126	.97	1.28
H_5	10.624	134	.000	.859	.70	1.02

A. Interpretation of empirical results

Hypothesis 1

Our first hypothesis covers the attributes/dimensions of understanding of one's intrinsic values that describes as to what idea Pakistani workers have regarding their spirituality. This aspect covers the meaning of spirituality within the minds of employees that provides basis for their understanding about the impact of spirituality on their individual, collective and organizational betterment.
More specifically:

H_{O1}: *Spiritual values are NOT something providing understanding of one's self-awareness.*

H_{A1}: *Spiritual values are something providing understanding of one's self-awareness.*

Detailed empirical results are provided, as follows.

TABLE II

Hypothesis H_1		
Null Hypothesis	=	3
Level of Significance		0.05
Population Standard Deviation		0.9384
Sample Size		135
Sample Mean		3.93
Intermediate Calculations		
Standard Error of the Mean		0.080764613
Z-test Statistic		11.51494409
Two-Tailed Test		
Lower Critical Value		-1.959963985
Upper Critical Value		1.959963985
p-Value		0
Reject the null hypothesis		

P-Value = 0.0001

test z = 11.5

z=1.959963985   *z=1.959963985*
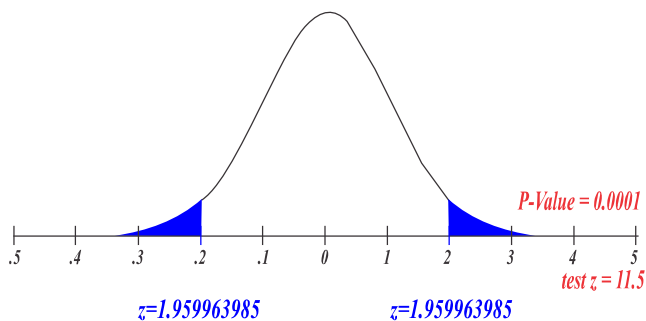
Two tail test figure demonstrates that Z test value = 11.51 falls outside the critical area. This requires that the null hypothesis (H_{O1}) be rejected, in favour of alternate hypothesis (H_{A1}). The confidence interval difference (lower level: 0.78 and upper level: 1.09) shows adequate confidence level of respondents that is an evidence that respondents were much convinced that their spiritual values can provide them high self-awareness on their professional aspirations. It also proves that Pakistani workers believe that spiritual values can endow with positive meaningfulness to their organizational culture.

Hypothesis 2

It has already been discussed in literature review that there have been three expected interpretations of spirituality. Some scholars interpret it in the light of mysticism, some for enhancing their religious affiliation and some for enrichment of their ethics or having good morale. Second hypothesis was set to acknowledge the attitudes of Pakistani workers toward ethical betterment or impact of spiritual values on their good morale. More specifically:

H_{O2}: *Spiritual values DO NOT positively affect one's ethics /good moral.*

H_{A2}: *Spiritual values positively affect one's ethics/good Moral.*

Detailed empirical results are provided, as follows.

TABLE III

Hypothesis H_2		
Data		
Null Hypothesis	=	3
Level of Significance		0.05
Population Standard Deviation		0.9384
Sample Size		135
Sample Mean		4.08
Intermediate Calculations		
Standard Error of the Mean		0.080764613
Z Test Statistic		13.37219314
Two-Tailed Test		
Lower Critical Value		-1.959963985
Upper Critical Value		1.959963985
p-Value		0
Reject the null hypothesis		

P-Value = 0.0001

test z = 13.9

z=1.959963985   *z=1.959963985*
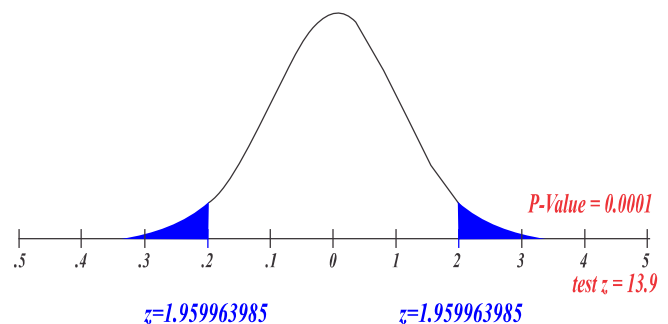
The test statistic Z estimates at 13.372, and therefore falls outside of the critical values Z = 1.96±, that suggests rejection of null hypothesis in favor of alternative. This test shows that

Pakistani employees believe that spiritual values can positively affect their ethics and enhance the overall morale.

Hypothesis 3

This hypothesis was set to ask for the understanding of workers towards impact of spiritual values on mental and physical health. The main purpose behind this hypothesis was to look at the possibilities and acceptance level of workers if there were some spiritual exercises applied within their organizations. There are many international organizations in developed countries where some spiritual exercises are practiced, such as yoga, meditation, Reiki, kinesiology and collective enchanting of some particular words. The main question within the hypothesis was to ask whether the understanding of Pakistani workers exists towards mental and physical health through spiritual practices; more specifically:

H_{O3}: *Spiritual values DO NOT positively affect one's mental and physical health.*
H_{A3}: *Spiritual values can positively affect one's mental and physical health*

Detailed empirical results are provided, as follows.

TABLE IV

Hypothesis H_3		
Data		
Null Hypothesis	=	3
Level of Significance		0.05
Population Standard Deviation		0.9384
Sample Size		135
Sample Mean		3.96
Intermediate Calculations		
Standard Error of the Mean		0.080764613
Z Test Statistic		11.8863939
Two-Tailed Test		
Lower Critical Value		-1.959963985
Upper Critical Value		1.959963985
p-Value		0
Reject the null hypothesis		

P-Value = 0.0001

z=1.959963985 *z=1.959963985* *test z = 11.5*
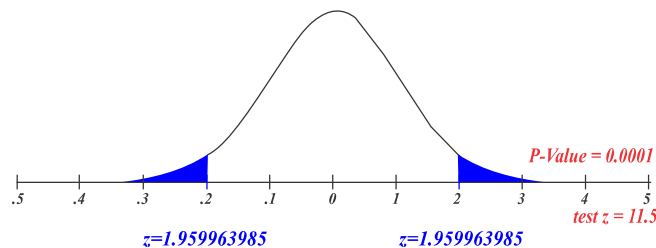
The estimated Z-test value = 11.88 strongly rejects the null hypothesis, in favor of alternate hypothesis; this suggests that Pakistani working class strongly believes mental and physical health can be strengthened through enhancement of spiritual culture within the organizations.

Hypothesis 4

The fourth hypothesis was set to test the enrichment of relationship among workers of organizations through spiritual values. The organization is a cluster of people where organizational relationships are very important; so the question was asked with reference to the relation between spiritual values and its positive impact on employees' relationships. More specifically:

H_{O4}: *Spiritual values DO NOT enable a person to make good relations to his/her colleagues*
H_{A4}: *Spiritual values enable a person to make good relations to his/her colleagues*

Detailed empirical results are provided, as follows.

TABLE V

Hypothesis H_4		
Data		
Null Hypothesis	=	3
Level of Significance		0.05
Population Standard Deviation		0.9384
Sample Size		135
Sample Mean		4.13
Intermediate Calculations		
Standard Error of the Mean		0.080764613
Z Test Statistic		13.99127615
Two-Tailed Test		
Lower Critical Value		-1.959963985
Upper Critical Value		1.959963985
p-Value		0
Reject the null hypothesis		

P-Value = 0.0001

test z = 13.9

z=1.959963985 *z=1.959963985*
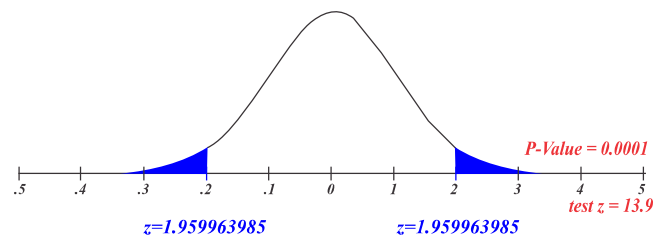
The calculated Z-values = 13.99 favors to reject null hypoth-

esis in favor of alternate hypothesis, suggesting that Pakistani employees believe that their professional relationships can be strengthened with the help of spiritual values.

Hypothesis 5

The fifth hypothesis was set to test whether employees believe that there is positive relationship between spiritual values and productivity of an organization. Essentially the management is always conscious about having full loyalty and commitment of employees on workplace so that it can acquire full productivity, profits and revenues in the business. This hypothesis explores the answer of these types of problem more clearly within Pakistani work environment.

H_{O5}:   *Spiritual values CAN NOT improve the productivity of an organization.*

H_{A5}:   *Spiritual values can improve the productivity of an organization.*

Detailed empirical results are provided, as follows.

TABLE IV

Hypothesis H_5		
Data		
Null Hypothesis	=	3
Level of Significance		0.05
Population Standard Deviation		0.9384
Sample Size		135
Sample Mean		3.86
Intermediate Calculations		
Standard Error of the Mean		0.080764613
Z Test Statistic		13.99127615
Two-Tailed Test		
Lower Critical Value		-1.959963985
Upper Critical Value		1.959963985
p-Value		0
Reject the null hypothesis		

P-Value = 0.0001

test z = 13.9

z=1.959963985   *z=1.959963985*
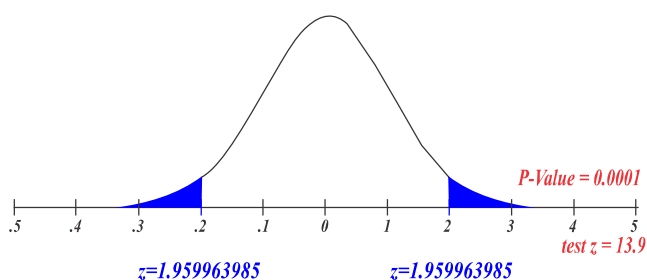
The calculated Z-value = 10.6 falls outside the critical values

of Z = 1.96±, and thus suggests rejecting null and accepting alternate hypothesis. This further means that Pakistani employees believe that spiritual values can positively affect their ethics and enhance their overall morale, resulting in improvement in the productivity of an organization.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has tried to test five hypotheses, using a holistic conceptual framework for evaluating the effect of spiritual values on three major aspects of organizational behavior, namely: (i) individual betterment; (ii) collective betterment; and (iii) organizational betterment.

The results help to draw five major conclusions. First, the majority of the Pakistani employees believe that their spiritual values provide high level of self-awareness on their professional aspirations. It can improve their connectedness with work, intentions to do good, self awareness, learning competency and caring attitude in individual levels. Second, they understand that spiritual values positively affect their ethics and enhance the overall morale. It affects their adjustment with organizational culture, obedience, hard work and productivity on collective levels. Third, they believe that mental and physical health can be strengthened through enhancement of spiritual culture within the organizations. Fourth, they understand that their professional relationships can be strengthened with the help of spiritual values. And fifth, Pakistani employees believe that spiritual values positively affect their ethics and enhance their overall morale, resulting in improvement in the productivity of their organization. Hence, the organizational productivity, employee loyalty and profit margins might be increased through the positive outcomes of spiritual values.

It reflects that understanding ourselves and others is very important for an organizational culture. It is therefore recommended that organizations adopt the stated spiritual values within their circumstances. It seems important to recognize the individual and organizational level of awareness or the degree in which spiritual practices can be applied. The best way for doing so is to improve management intelligence system (MIS) for measuring up the level of coaching/training that is required. An important question is about those spiritual practices (for example; meditation, yoga, reflexology, breathing exercises etc.) that can be adopted for all members of organizations. It is recommended to adopt any such practice with the consultation of representatives of employees so that there is little probability of clash of idea regarding the implementation of practices. These practices should be adopted according to socio-cultural needs of employees. It is recommended to combine appropriate connectedness between ethical dilemmas and

work spiritual values. It is recommended to sketch some important questionnaires for acquiring feedback from employees. These questionnaires can be distinguished for management/supervisors and general employees.

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BIOGRAPHIES

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