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Exploring Intellectual Capital

Workplace Spirituality as a Determinant of Organizational Commitment amongst Academic Staff in the Private and Public Universities in Kenya

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Abstract

This study focused on workplace spirituality an intrinsic factor as a determinant of organizational commitment although most recent studies on organizational commitment have focused mostly on the extrinsic rewards such remuneration, training opportunities, promotion and other tangible monetary benefits as predictors of organizational commitment. Employees are viewed as one of the most important assets for most organizations, in particular service-based organizations like universities because of the benefits of delivering successful performances. It was therefore important to investigate whether workplace spirituality affects employee commitment. This survey study was a form of a cross-section study where both descriptive and correlational research designs were used. The study targeted all the academic staff in the public and private universities in Kenya. Stratified sampling was used where sixteen universities were selected followed by simple random sampling to select both representative department and staff from the selected departments. Data for the study was collected by administering a 25-item questionnaire to a sample of 347 academic. A total of 282 questionnaires were returned and analysis was done with the help of SPSS. Correlation and regression analysis results showed there was a significant positive relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment.

Keywords: Workplace Spirituality, Organizational Commitment, Affective Commitment, Academic Staff.

1. Introduction

Over the past few years, workplace spirituality has been recognized as a fundamental area of research in the academic world to add more meaning to one's workplace (Petchsawang & Duchon, 2009). If the employees are allowed to bring their spiritual attributes to the workplace, they will become more fulfilled but if the employees work in a dispirited workplace, they will manifest themselves in various work troubles like low morale, high turnover, and non committed attitude to the organization.

As Armstrong (2008) suggested, organizational commitment plays an important part in Human Resource Management philosophy. Human Resource Management policies are designed to maximize employee commitment, flexibility and quality of work. A committed employee has a strong desire to remain a member of an organization and accept its values in addition to readiness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization.

There is now a substantial body of evidence demonstrating the benefits to organizations for having a strongly committed workforce. According to Mayer and Martin, (2010) reviews of various research demonstrate that employees who are committed and especially affectively committed to an organization are less likely to leave and more likely to attend regularly, perform effectively, and be good organizational citizens.

2.1 Objective of the Study

The objective of this study was to establish the effect of workplace spirituality on organizational commitment of academic staff in the public and private universities in Kenya.

2.2 Research Hypotheses

The study was guided by the following null hypotheses:
H_{01}: Workplace spirituality does not affect employee organizational commitment.

3.1 Literature Review

According to McKee, Mills and Driscoll (2008), there is little consensus over the meaning of workplace spirituality. It has been associated with meaningful work, sense of community and connection to others. Another definition includes feelings of completeness and joy and alignment with organizational values. Ashmos and Duchon (2000) have defined workplace spirituality as recognition that employees have an inner life which nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work, taking place in the context of a community. Spirit at work is a term that describes the experience of employees who are passionate about and energized by their work, find meaning and purpose in their work, feel that they can express their complete selves at work, and feel connected to those with whom they work (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004)

There are different views of workplace spirituality but specifically this study focused on intrinsic-origin perspective view of workplace spirituality. This is different from the religious view. It implies an inner search for meaning or fulfillment that may be undertaken by anyone regardless of religion. This spirituality view originates from the inside of an individual and is not

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related to a particular religion. It does not necessarily involve a connection or conversion to any specific religion, but rather can be based on personal values and philosophy. It is about employees who view themselves as spiritual beings who experience a sense of purpose and meaning in their work, and a sense of connectedness to one another and to their workplace community and whose individual values are in line with the organizational values (Milliman, Czaplewski & Ferguson, 2003). In contrast to the intrinsic-origin view, spirituality based on the religious view is attached to a particular religion as opposed to individual consciousness.

While workplace spirituality is considered a highly personal, nearly all of the academic definitions acknowledge that spirituality involves a sense of connectedness at work, and deeper values. Workplace spirituality involves the effort to find one's ultimate purpose in life, to develop a strong connection to coworkers and other people associated with work, and to have alignment between one's core beliefs and the values of their organization (Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Accordingly, workplace spirituality can be defined as the recognition that employees have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000).

This study focused on three dimensions of workplace spirituality. These includes: meaningful work, sense of community and alignment of individual's values with the organization's values and mission. These dimensions were chosen as the study postulated they would have closer relationships with our intended study objective and employee organizational commitment. Much research has not been done postulating and empirically testing for the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee commitment. Meaningful work represents how employees interact with their day-to-day work at the individual level. Sense of community involves having a deep connection to, or relationship with, others, which has been articulated as a sense of community. This dimension of workplace spirituality occurs at the group level of human behavior and concerns interactions between employees and their co-workers.

Alignment with the organization's values and mission encompasses the interaction of employees with the larger organizational purpose. It is related to the premise that an individual's purpose is larger than one's self and should make a contribution to others. Alignment also means that individuals believe that managers and employees in their organization have appropriate values, have a strong conscience, and are concerned about the welfare of its employees and community (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000).

Organizational commitment generally means attachment and loyalty to an organization. It refers to the relative strength of the individual's identification with, and involvement in a particular organization. Employees' commitment especially affective commitment has been considered an important determinant of dedication and loyalty. Affectively committed employees are seen as having a sense of belonging and identification that increases their involvement and their desire to remain with the organization (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2001). Staff commitment is important because committed employees are less likely to leave for another job and are more likely to perform at higher levels. According to Mathieu and Zajac

(1990), the outcomes with the greatest correlation with commitment (in order) were intention to search, intention to leave, and actual turnover.

One of the models that have generated most research on organizational commitment is that developed by Meyer and Allen (1990). They labeled them: affective commitment (desire to stay), continuance commitment (perceived costs of leaving) and normative commitment (perceived obligation to stay) to distinguish the various types of commitment. According to them, more than one of each type of commitment may be present in an individual employee.

When a person has an affective commitment, he or she has the desire to follow a course of action. It refers to employees' emotional attachment to identification with, and involvement in the organization. An employee who has continuance commitment wants to continue the relation with an organization, because the costs of leaving the organization are too high. It may also happen that he or she has no alternatives. The third is normative commitment which according to Meyer and Allen (1990) means that people feel the obligation to follow a certain course of action because of the much the organization has invested in them. Employees with strong affective commitment would be motivated to higher levels of performance and make more meaningful contributions towards the organization than employees who express continuance or normative commitment.

This study adopted Meyer and Allen's (1991) multidimensional organizational commitment because an employee's relationship with the organization can reflect varying degrees of all the three dimensions (Kipkebut, 2010). The applicability of Mayer & Allen model was tested in the Kenyan situation and was found to be applicable. This was done by Kipkebut (2010) in a study involving three public and three private universities among academic and administrative staff.
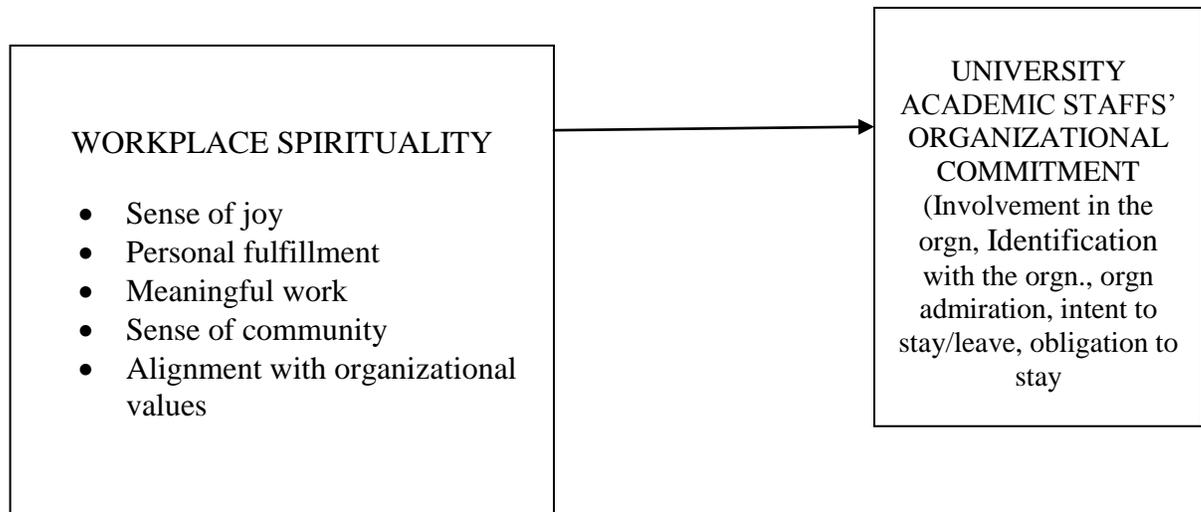
3.2 Theoretical Framework

This research is based on the organizational support theory and the social exchange theory. Organizational support theory assumes that in order to meet social emotional needs and to assess the organization's readiness to reward increased efforts, employees form general beliefs concerning how much the organization values their contribution and cares about their well being. This is known as Perceived Organizational Support (POS). According to the findings of a study by Colakoglu and Culha (2010), perceived organizational support has a significantly positive effect on employee organizational commitment. Employees who are cared for and valued by their organizations will attach to their organization in affective way. Employees who attach to their organization show better performance and more meaningful contributions (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Organizations or supervisors, therefore, should spend reasonable and intensive time with their employees through supportive activities.

The social exchange perspective argues that people calculate the overall worth of a particular relationship by subtracting its costs from the rewards it provides. In an organizational set-up, there exists a relationship between an employee and the organization and its destiny will be determined by the worth of the relationship on both parties. The social exchange theory posits that the major force in interpersonal relationship is the satisfaction of both people's self

interest. Self interest is not considered necessarily bad and can be used to enhance relationships. Employees expect benefits in form of such things like financial gains, social status and emotional comforts (spiritual workplace). Commitment will act as cost in terms of time spent in the workplace and lost opportunities.

3.3 Conceptual Framework
The study conceptualized that workplace spirituality determines university academic staffs' organizational commitment.

WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY

- Sense of joy
- Personal fulfillment
- Meaningful work
- Sense of community
- Alignment with organizational values

UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC STAFFS' ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT
(Involvement in the orgn, Identification with the orgn., orgn admiration, intent to stay/leave, obligation to stay

Independent variable   Dependent variable
Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

4.1 Research Methodology
This survey study was a form of a cross-section study. Both descriptive and correlational research designs were used. The study targeted all the academic staff in the public and private universities in Kenya. Stratified sampling was used where sixteen universities were selected followed by simple random sampling to select both representative department and staff from the selected departments. Data for the study was collected by administering a 24-item questionnaire to a sample of 349 academic. Nine items were measuring workplace spirituality while 15 items were measuring organizational commitment (5 items for each type of commitment). A total of 282 questionnaires were returned and analysis was done with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences.

4.2 Target Population
The study was conducted in the public and private universities in Kenya and targeted all the academic staffs. There are 22 public and 27 private universities in Kenya spread in the main towns in Kenya. The population of academic staff in the universities in Kenya was 9258 (Public and Private Universities' HR Departments).

4.3 Sample Size Determination

With a population of 9258 in this study, a sample size 347 respondents was selected using the following formula developed by Cochran (1977) will be used to guide the selection of the respondents.

$$n=Z^2pq/e^2$$

Where:

n=the desired sample

Z=the value of the standard normal deviate at a given confidence level (to be read from the table) and it is 1.96 for a 95% confidence level

p=sample proportion-the population proportion in target population estimated to have characteristics being measured (assume 50% if unknown)

q=1-p

e=acceptable error or the desired level of precision

In this research

$n=1.96^2 X 0.5^2/0.05^2=384.$

Since the population is small (less than10, 000) then the sample size can be reduced slightly. This is because a given sample size provides proportionately more information for a small population than for a large population. Cochran's (1977) correction formula will be used to calculate the final sample size as suggested by Mugenda (2008). These calculations are as follows

$$n = \frac{n_0}{1 + n_0/\text{population}}$$
$$n = \frac{}{1+384/3673}$$
347 respondents

Where =

Population=3673 (staff from the 16 universities selected to represent a total of 44 universities)

n_0=sample size according to Cochran's formula

n=the required sample size

4.4 Data Collection Method

Data for the study was collected by administering the specially designed questionnaire to a sample of 347 academic staff of the public and private universities in Kenya. The questionnaires were completed in the presence of the researcher or the research assistants. The respondents who felt they can complete their questionnaires during their free time were allowed to do so. To encourage open responses to sensitive questions, the questionnaires were anonymous. The completed questionnaires were then collected for analysis.

5.1 Background of the Respondent

In this study majority 172 (61%) of the respondents were male while female respondents were 110 (39%). This shows that there was no gender balance among the respondents. Analysis of the respondent's university sector indicated that 172 (61%) of the respondents were from public universities while 110 (39%) from private universities. In her study on university staff employee commitment Kirkebut (2010) had 77.6 % respondents from public and 22.4% private

universities. In the last five years the number of private universities has increased leading to a proportionate increase in the number of staff. Majority of the respondents were therefore from public universities. Results on analysis of respondent's age indicated that the highest numbers of respondents 67 (25.2%) were aged between 43-48 years. This was followed by 37-42 age category at 23.8%, 31-36 were 17.0% , age category 55-60 being 9.2%, 25-30 age category were 7.8% while the lowest was those aged over 60 years with 11 respondents representing 3.9%. Majority of the respondents 198 (70.2%) had masters degrees. Those who had PhD were 80 (28.4%) while only 4 (1.4%) had degree level of education. Most academic staffs at the PhD level have a busy time schedule and this contributed to a low response rate among that group. Respondents were asked to indicate their marital status and the results were that single were 41 (14.5%), married 238 (84.4%) and widowed 3 (1.1%) in shown in table 1.

Table 1 Background of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	172	61
Female	110	39
Total	**282**	**100**
Respondents' university sector		
Private	110	39
Public	172	61
Total	**282**	**100**
Respondents' age		
25-30	22	7.8
31-42	48	7.0
43-48	71	25.2
49-54	37	13.1
55-60	26	9.2
Over 60	11	3.9
Education Level		
Ph.D	80	28.4
Masters	198	70.2

Bachelors	4	1.4
Marital Status		
Married	238	84.4
Single	41	14.5
Widowed	3	1.1

5.2 Descriptive Statistics on Workplace Spirituality

To measure workplace spirituality Ashmos and Duchon (2000) developed and validated a measurement instrument for three levels of analysis: individual, work team and organization. Later, Milliman et al. (2003) carried out studies to examine how the three workplace spirituality dimensions (meaningful work, sense of community, value alignment) affect organizational commitment. In this study the first three factors measured workplace spirituality at individual level, the next three at work team level and the last three at organizational level. The reason advanced as justifications for this choice was that organizational commitment falls within organizational behavior which is analyzed at the three levels.

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with given statements concerning their happiness if they are to spend their career life with their current employer. Majority 73.4% agreed with the statement that they experience joy in their work while working in their respective universities while 21.3% strongly agreed, 4.6% were undecided while only 0.7% strongly disagreed. When asked whether work is connected to what they believe is important in life, 16.7% strongly agreed, 58.5% agreed, 19.9% were undecided while only 5% disagreed. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they look forward to coming to work with majority 73.7% agreeing, 13.8% strongly agreeing, 10.3% were undecided, 2.1% disagreed while no respondent strongly disagreed. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for workplace spirituality.

The findings are in line with those of Duchon and Plowman, (2005) who found that when people find joy in their activities and feel involved in heavily spiritual organizational climates, they become healthier and happier, where they act in a more committed manner, become more engaged and are able to apply their full potential to work. Nasina and Doris (2011) supports this in a study they conducted among auditors in big four public accounting firms found that when work is meaningful or when its connected to what is important to an employee's life then an employee can become committed. Meaningful work is an indicator of a spiritual workplace. The findings also support Rego and Cuhna (2008) who observed that when employees feel they are linked with a common purpose for example through team work, or when they feel they are part of a family, they are likely to reciprocate with more cooperative and supportive actions, and with greater affective commitment.

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Table 2 Employee workplace spirituality

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	TOTAL
	%	%	%	%	%	
Employees experience joy at work.	21.3	73.4	4.6	0	0.7	100
Work is connected to what is important in life.	16.7	58.5	19.9	5.0	0.0	100
Employees look forward to go to work	13.8	73.8	10.3	2.1	0.0	100
Employees are linked with a common purpose	10.6	44.3	25.2	17.0	2.8	100
Employees genuinely care about each other	6.0	49.6	34.4	9.6	0.4	100
Employees feel being a part of a family	7.4	50.4	18.8	19.9	3.5	100
Employees feel positive about university values	14.4	51.1	17.4	17.4	0.0	100
Employees feel connected with university goals	18.1	56.4	17.4	8.2	0.0	100
Employees' spirit is energized at the workplace	6.7	32.5	26.2	30.1	14.3	100
Average	**12.8**	**54.5**	**19.4**	**12.1**	**0**	**100**

*(Strongly agree-SA, Agree-A, Undecided-U Disagree-D, Strongly disagree-SD)

5.2 Correlation and Regression Analysis on Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Commitment

Correlation

The Pearson Correlation of workplace spirituality versus organizational commitment was computed and established as 0.605 which is a high relationship between the two variables. From table 4.3, it could then be concluded that there is strong positive between the two variables since the correlation coefficient is above +0.5.

Table 3 Pearson Correlation of Workplace spirituality versus organizational commitment

		Organizational Commitment	Workplace Spirituality
Organizational Commitment	Pearson Correlation	1	.605**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	282	282
Workplace Spirituality	Pearson Correlation	.605**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	282	282

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Scatter Plot

To show the kind of a relationship that existed between the independent variable workplace spirituality and the dependent variable organizational commitment, a scatter plot was generated. From figure 4.8, the scatter plot shows an upward sloping relationship. This suggests that there is a strong positive linear relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment. Therefore the level of influence of workplace spirituality on organizational commitment can statistically be tested determined by undertaking a linear regression analysis.
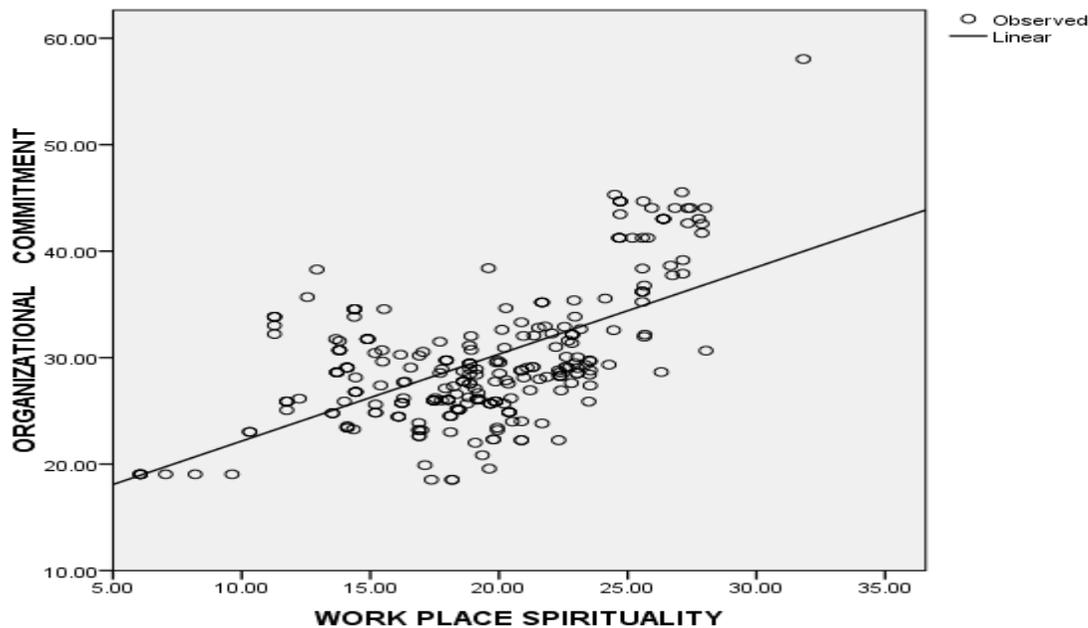

Fig. 4.8 Regression line of Workplace spirituality versus Organizational Commitment
Regression Analysis

The regression analysis shows a relationship R=0.605 and R^2=0.366. This meant that 36.6% of variation in the organizational commitment can be explained by the workplace spirituality. The remaining percentage of 63.4% is explained by other variables.

Table 4 Model Summary for workplace Spirituality versus Organizational Commitment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.605[a]	.366	.364	4.95784

a. Predictors: (Constant), Workplace Spirituality

To test the significance of regression relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment, the regression coefficients (β), the intercept (α), and the significance of all coefficients in the model were subjected to the t-test to test the null hypothesis that the coefficient is zero. The null hypothesis state that, β (beta) = 0, meaning there is no relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment as the slope β (beta) = 0 (no relationship). The results on the beta coefficient of the resulting model in table 5 shows that the constant α = 14.004 is significantly different from 0, since the p value p = 0.000 is less than p= 0.05. The coefficient $β$ = 0.816 is also significantly different from 0 with a p=0.000 which is less than p=0.05.

This implies that the null hypothesis $β_1$=0 is rejected and the alternative hypothesis $β_1$≠0 is taken to hold implying that the model Y= $β_0$ + $β_1 X_1$ + e, is significantly fit. The model Organizational Commitment = α + $β$ (Workplace Spirituality) holds for as suggested by the test above. This confirms that there is a positive linear relationship between Workplace spirituality and organizational commitment.

Table 5 Relationship between Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Commitment

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	14.004	1.270		11.029	.000
	Workplace Spirituality	.816	.064	.605	12.720	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Commitment

Further, F-test was carried out to test the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment. The ANOVA test in Table 6 shows that the significance of the F-statistic 0.000 is less than 0.05 meaning that null hypothesis is rejected and conclude that there is a relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment.

Table 6 ANOVA Results for Workplace Spirituality

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	3977.115	1	3977.115	161.801	.000[b]
1	Residual	6882.459	280	24.580		
	Total	10859.574	281			

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Commitment

b. Predictors: (Constant), Workplace Spirituality

5.3 Discussions and Conclusions

The Pearson Correlation Coefficient of 0.605 shows that there is a high relationship between the two variables. The regression analysis shows a relationship R=0.605 and R^2=0.366. This meant that 36.6% of variation in the organizational commitment can be explained by the workplace spirituality. The results on the beta coefficient $β$ = 0.816 is significantly different from 0 with a p=0.000 which is less than p=0.05 leading to the rejection of the null hypotheses. Futher, the ANOVA test led to the conclusion that there is a relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment. These findings confirm those of Rego and Cuhna (2007) who undertook a study on the effect of the various dimensions of workplace spirituality on organizational commitment. The results indicated a higher correlation between workplace spirituality and organization commitment. The findings suggest that when people experience workplace spirituality, they feel more affectively attached to their organizations and experience a sense of obligation/loyalty to the organization. The findings also collaborates those of Milliman et al. (2003) who examined how three workplace spirituality dimensions (meaningful work, sense of community, value alignment) explain work attitudes like organizational commitment and intentions to leave. The findings were that when work is meaningful employees tend to be more committed and are less likely to quit. Dehaghi, Goodarzi and Arazi (2012) in their study concluded that by improving spirituality at work climates, organizational commitment and individual and organizational performance can be promoted. In conclusion, human beings are spiritual beings and always searching for a meaningful life and work, performed in a community context. Organizations are therefore expected to encourage the realization of these needs. Human beings would also wish to work in an organization whose values are congruent with their own. They would also want to experience joy at work and all these have a positive relationship with organizational commitment.

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