Workplace Spirituality, Ethical Behavior and Ethical Climate in Nursing Profession

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ABSTRACT

Aim: To measure workplace spirituality, ethical behavior and ethical climate in nursing profession
Study Design: Purposive sampling
Methods: Sample of 200 nurses drawn from public and private hospitals. Workplace spirituality by Petchsawnga and Duchon (2009), Ethical behaviour is by Newstrom and Ruch (1975) and Ethical climate is by Victor and Cullen (1993) were used for measuring these constructs
RESULTS: The findings indicated that a significant that a positive relationship exists between workplace spirituality and ethical climate. However, no significant relationship between workplace spirituality and ethical behavior was found. The study also investigated the impact of experience and income on workplace spirituality, ethical climate and ethical behavior and results showed no impact of experience on these three constructs; however only income showed the main effect on workplace spirituality, ethical climate and ethical behavior. The study has wide implications for health.
Conclusions: Workplace spirituality has a significant and positive relation with ethical climate of organizations. Workplace spirituality also predicts ethical climate. It can be concluded that workplace spirituality contributes to team interest, codes of ethics, following SOPs while having benevolent interests. The income diversity of nurses also shows that lower level of nurses' income manifests in greater workplace spirituality and helps to main the ethical climate of organization.
Keywords: Workplace spirituality, ethical behavior, ethical climate, nursing

INTRODUCTION

Workplace spirituality depict the four dimensional construct of work place spirituality in terms of spiritual orientation, compassion, meaningful work and alignment of values. The authors used the dimensions of, 'team sense of community, alignment between organization and individual values, sense of contribution to the community, sense of enjoyment at work and opportunities of inner life'. The instrument was re-evaluated and went through content validity. The authors used the dimensions of, 'compassion, mindfulness, meaningful work and transcendence[1]'. The findings reported that the correlations between each item and its underlying dimension ranged from .20 to .48 and r-square from .20 to .35, thus proving evidence of sufficient convergent validity. The Cronbach Alpha was found to be satisfactory at .78 which is above the level of .70[2].

Managing ethical behaviour is one of the most universal and complex of problems. The workers' decision making according to ethics is influenced by many personality and cultural factors." People behave ethically according to their background, decision history, managerial philosophy and reinforcement"[3].

Ethical behaviour has been studied in the context of healthcare sector. It is important as this current study of mine is also relevant. It is reviewed that managerial dependencies and organizational independence is very important for the ethical behaviour of workers[4]. Healthcare industry has been scrutinized for questionable practices from executives who have worked in the industry. Previous researches have included number of factors that are causal such as ethical climate, moral philosophy, education, work experience, culture, codes of ethics, job satisfaction and organizational factors[5].

These researchers have propagated the notion of theoretical grounding and testing other ethical decision making factors. It was found out that people with specialized skills were less likely to show ethical behaviour. The management does not take serious disciplinary action on ethical misbehaviour by workers with expertise. It is often the case when workers think that they can "get away" with ethical misconduct. Workers who have had contacts with upper management politically were also more able to exhibit unethical behaviour. Previous researches have also showed that highly visible workers are less to engage in unethical behaviour.

Also, health care professionals are expected to have greater sense of spirit at work however literature still needs to cover aspects of holistic nursing practices. Furthermore, a person's ethical behaviour is an outcome of personality factors, background, values and norms. Some actions may be considered unpleasant but not unethical. Ethical behaviour is modelled so environment has a role to play in determination of ethical behaviour. Females depict more ethics in their course of lives as compared to their male counterparts because they have more referent groups. Together with workplace spirituality and ethical climate, ethical behaviour is determined. It can be said that ethical climate is also a composite of both constructs. Ethical climate is formed when spiritual and ethically conscious individuals are hired[6].

MATERIALS AND METHOD

An exploratory and correlational research design was used in this study to determine the relationship among work spirituality, work climate and ethical behaviour. The purpose of this study is to test workplace spirituality in relation to ethical behaviour and ethical climate. Validated instruments are used. Recent research has found that in most cases, a sample size of 150 observations is sufficient to obtain an accurate solution in

exploratory design as long as item-inter correlations are reasonably strong

A purposive sample of 200 nurses with an age range of 21 to 59 years were drawn from the three reputable hospitals of Lahore which are Children Hospital, Khairun Nisa Hospital and Ittefaq Hospital. Only female educated nurses were the participants of this study. Nurses who did not understand simple English Language were not made the part of this study.

RESULTS

The reliability analysis shows mean, standard deviation and Cronbach Alpha with skewness and kurtosis values. Descriptive values and reliabilities of workplace spirituality, ethical behaviour and ethical climate were calculated. Reliabilities of main scales and their sub scales are reported as follows:

Ethical behaviour has the highest reliability α=.913,Meaningfulness has moderate to stronger reliability α= .820,Mindfulness has moderate to stronger reliability α=.800, Ethical climate has moderate reliability α= .794, Workplace spirituality has moderate reliability α= .754,Self-interest has moderate reliability α=.745,Friendship has moderate reliability α=.753, Laws and professional codes has moderate reliability α=.733,Communication has less to moderate reliability α=.646,Transcendence has less / weak reliability α=.58,Company profit having the least reliability α=.368.

The results of Pearson Correlation that indicates that workplace spirituality has highly significant positive correlation with ethical climate (r=.509, p<.001). Communication, a subscale of workplace spirituality has highly significant correlation with ethical climate (r=.550, p<0.01). Meaningfulness, a subscale of workplace spirituality has highly significant correlation with ethical climate. (r=.447, p<0.01). Transcendence, a subscale of workplace spirituality has highly significant correlation with ethical climate (r=2.53, p<0.01).

The multiple linear regression analysis was carried out to determine the significant predictors of ethical behaviour in nursing profession. Results indicated that communication, a subscale of workplace spirituality (B=-3.17 , p<0.05) and self-interest ,a subscale of ethical climate (B=-.453,p<0.01) and personal morality , a subscale of ethical climate(B=,330, p<0.01) are predictors of ethical behaviour in nursing profession.

The R^2 indicated that 27% variance in ethical behaviour in the organizations can be accounted for by workplace spirituality and ethical climate.

The simple linear regression analysis was carried out to for the significant predictors of ethical climate. The findings indicated workplace spirituality as that strongest predictor of ethical climate. The B values show that there is 71% of relative influence of workplace spirituality on ethical climate of organizations. R^2 indicates that 35% of variance in ethical climate of organizations can be accounted for by workplace spirituality.

Multivariate analysis (MANOVA) was computed to calculate the main effect of years of experience on workplace spirituality, ethical climate and ethical behaviour on nursing profession. For nurses, year of experience does no differ in ethical behaviour, ethical climate and workplace spirituality.

Moreover, Multivariate analysis (MANOVA) that was computed to calculate the main effect of income on workplace spirituality, ethical climate and ethical behaviour on nursing profession. The descriptive statistics indicate that income group with less than30k are high on workplace spirituality (M=75.02, SD=10.34), F(2,391) p<0.05, than income group above 30k but less than 50k (M=70.42,SD=69.81) and income group with more than 50k (M=69.8), SD=10.15 F(2391) p<0.05. Hence, nurses who belong to three income groups differ significantly in terms of workplace spirituality

Table 1: Demographic variables of the Study (N=200)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Family System		
Nuclear	107	53.5
Joint	93	46.5
Marital Status		
Single	89	44.5
Married	99	49.5
Separated	7	3.5
Divorced	3	1.5
Widowed	2	1
Years of Experience		
1-5	119	59.5
6-10	49	24.5
11-15	16	8.0
16-20	12	6.0
21 above	4	2.0
Age		
21-39	182	91
40-59	18	9
Income		
Less than 30,000	41	20.5
Less than 50,000	54	27.0
And above 30,000		
More than 50,000	105	52.5
Education		
No college or degree	11	5.5
Some college	65	32.5
Bachelor degree	63	31.5
Some graduate degree	27	13.5
Graduate degree	34	17.0

Table 2: Psychometric Properties of Study Scales (n=200)

Scales	K	M(SD)	α	Skewness	Kurtosis
Workplace Spirituality	22	70.9(10.1)	.754	-2.98	-0.50
Communication	4	13.27(3.29)	.646	-.177	-3.49
Mindfulness	6	16.43(5.24)	.800	-.332	-.614
Meaningfulness	7	24.88(5.25)	.820	.075	-.582
Transcendence	5	16.45(3.85)	.581	1.864	14.59
Ethical Behaviour	17	42.47(12.89)	.913	.281	-.696
Ethical Climate	19	65.9(9.36)	.794	.047	-.585
Self Interest	3	9.13(2.906)	.745	-.200	-3.66
Company Profit	3	9.85(2.07)	.368	-2.86	1.002
Efficiency	3	10.62(2.23)	.582	-.058	-.405
Friendship	2	3.605(1.02)	.753	-.230	-.599
Personal Morality	2	7.155(1.68)	.499	-.049	-.510
Social Responsibility	1	7.51(1.63)	.733	-.087	.679
Laws and Professional Codes	3	11.05(2.57)	.548	-.445	-.249
Standards and Operating procedures	2	7.52(1.64)		-0.87	-.720

Table 3: Correlational Analysis

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1.Workplace Spirituality	-	.092	.509**	.683**	.365**	.739**	.556**	.193*	.331**	.378**	.129	.369*	.381**	.377**	.370**
2.Ethical Behaviour		-	-.079	-.151*	.312*	-.108	.087	.295**	.103	-.148*	-1.33	.011	-.288**	-.205**	-.288**
3.Ethical Climate			-	.550**	-.009	.447**	.253**	.295**	.570**	.755**	.339**	.576**	.645**	.682**	.645**
4.Communication				-	-.087	.617**	.248	.110	.307**	.422**	.145	.374**	.500**	.359**	.500**
5Mindfulness					-	-.238	.043	.376**	.161	-.012	-.251*	-.149	-2.31	-.122	-.231**
6.Meaningfulness						-	.352**	-.064	.179	.380**	.243	.457**	.517**	.274**	.517**
7.Transcendence							-	.018	.146	.117	.240*	.259**	.139	.136	.139
8.Self interest								-	.310**	.056	-.124	-.144*	-.132	-.121	-.132
9.Company profit									-	.418**	.007	.185**	.149	.179*	.149*
10.Efficiency										-	.136	.339**	.492**	.510**	.492**
11.Friendship											-	.316**	.389**.	.215**	.382**
12.Personal morality												-	.482**	.407**	.487**
13.Social responsibility													-	.537**	.966**
14.Laws and professional codes														-	.537**
15.Standards rules and procedures															-

Table 4: Multiple Linear Regression

Predictors	B	95% CI UL	LL	P
Constant	-			0.00
Workplace spirituality	.602	1.719	-.186	.114
Communication	-3.17	-.149	-2.334	0.026
Mindfulness	-1.39	.676	-1.361	.508
Meaningfulness	-289	.456	-1.876	.231
Transcendence	-0.062	.563	-9.77	.596
Ethical climate	-.453	.212	-1.4599	.143
Self interest	.360	2.684	.508	.004
Company profit	.158	2.202	-2.40	.115
Efficiency	0.059	1.803	-1.127	.650
Friendship	.012	2.175	-1.868	.881
Personal morality	.330	4.099	.947	.002
Social responsibility	.034	12.59	-12.06	.966
Laws and professional codes	.061	1.546	-.934	.627
Standard rules and procedures	-.169	10.84	-13.48	.831
R^2	.265			
F	4.75			

Table 5: Simple Linear Regression

Predictors	B	95% CI - UL	LL	P
Constant	-	44.534	29.497	.00
Workplace spirituality	.716	1.285	.041	.037
Communication	.215	1.32	-1.01	.092
Mindfulness	-.308	.301	-1.209	.101
Meaningfulness	.165	-.255	-1.210	.237
Transcendence	-.096	.508	-.276	.368
R^2	.348			
F	20.66			

Table 6: Multivariate Analysis of Variance(MANOVA) in terms of income

Dependent Variables	(I) INCOME	(J) INCOME	MD	S.E	p
Work place spirituality	less than 30	less than 50	4.6013*	2.14671	.033
		more than 50	5.2071*	1.89540	.007
	less than 50	less than 30	-4.6013*	2.14671	.033
		more than 50	.6058	1.74570	.729
	more than 50	less than 30	-5.2071*	1.89540	.007
		less than 50	-.6058	1.74570	.729
Ethical behaviour	less than 30	less than 50	6.8724*	2.66624	.011
		more than 50	5.9013*	2.35411	.013
	less than 50	less than 30	-6.8724*	2.66624	.011
		more than 50	-.9712	2.16818	.655
	more than 50	less than 30	-5.9013*	2.35411	.013
		less than 50	.9712	2.16818	.655
Ethicalclimate	less than 30	less than 50	.1829	1.88568	.923
		more than 50	4.9906*	1.66493	.003
	less than 50	less than 30	-.1829	1.88568	.923
		more than 50	4.8077*	1.53343	.002
	more than 50	less than 30	-4.9906*	1.66493	.003
		less than 50	-4.8077*	1.53343	.002
Communication	less than 30	less than 50	.8119	.67787	.232
		more than 50	1.6004*	.59851	.008
	less than 50	less than 30	-.8119	.67787	.232
		more than 50	.7885	.55124	.154

	more than 50	less than 30	-1.6004*	.59851	.008
		less than 50	-.7885	.55124	.154
Mindfulness	less than 30	less than 50	2.1501*	1.03735	.040
		more than 50	-1.8499*	.91591	.045
	less than 50	less than 30	-2.1501*	1.03735	.040
		more than 50	-4.0000*	.84357	.000
	more than 50	less than 30	1.8499*	.91591	.045
		less than 50	4.0000*	.84357	.000
Meaningfulness	less than 30	less than 50	.7397	1.04587	.480
		more than 50	3.6435*	.92343	.000
	less than 50	less than 30	-.7397	1.04587	.480
		more than 50	2.9038*	.85050	.001
	more than 50	less than 30	-3.6435*	.92343	.000
		less than 50	-2.9038*	.85050	.001
Transcendence	less than 30	less than 50	.8996	.79295	.258
		more than 50	1.8131*	.70012	.010
	less than 50	less than 30	-.8996	.79295	.258
		more than 50	.9135	.64483	.158
	more than 50	less than 30	-1.8131*	.70012	.010
		less than 50	-.9135	.64483	.158
Self interest	less than 30	less than 50	2.5957*	.57233	.000
		more than 50	1.4226*	.50533	.005
	less than 50	less than 30	-2.5957*	.57233	.000
		more than 50	-1.1731*	.46541	.013
	more than 50	less than 30	-1.4226*	.50533	.005
		less than 50	1.1731*	.46541	.013
Company profi	less than 30	less than 50	1.0005*	.43277	.022
		more than 50	.4909	.38210	.200
	less than 50	less than 30	-1.0005*	.43277	.022
		more than 50	-.5096	.35193	.149
	more than 50	less than 30	-.4909	.38210	.200
		less than 50	.5096	.35193	.149
Efficiency	less than 30	less than 50	-.5399	.44931	.231
		more than 50	.8255*	.39671	.039
	less than 50	less than 30	.5399	.44931	.231
		more than 50	1.3654*	.36537	.000
	more than 50	less than 30	-.8255*	.39671	.039
		less than 50	-1.3654*	.36537	.000
Friendship	less than 30	less than 50	-.3902	.20810	.062
		more than 50	.2155	.18374	.242
	less than 50	less than 30	.3902	.20810	.062
		more than 50	.6058*	.16922	.000
	more than 50	less than 30	-.2155	.18374	.242
		less than 50	-.6058*	.16922	.000
Personal morality	less than 30	less than 50	.0084	.33915	.980
		more than 50	.8642*	.29945	.004
	less than 50	less than 30	-.0084	.33915	.980
		more than 50	.8558*	.27580	.002
	more than 50	less than 30	-.8642*	.29945	.004
		less than 50	-.8558*	.27580	.002
Social responsibility	less than 30	less than 50	-.8354*	.32915	.012
		more than 50	.2800	.29061	.336
	less than 50	less than 30	.8354*	.32915	.012
		more than 50	1.1154*	.26766	.000
	more than 50	less than 30	-.2800	.29061	.336
		less than 50	-1.1154*	.26766	.000
Laws and professional codes	less than 30	less than 50	-.8949	.52835	.092
		more than 50	.3455	.46650	.460
	less than 50	less than 30	.8949	.52835	.092
		more than 50	1.2404*	.42965	.004
	more than 50	less than 30	-.3455	.46650	.460
		less than 50	-1.2404*	.42965	.004
Rules standard operating procedures	less than 30	less than 50	-.8354*	.32915	.012
		more than 50	.2800	.29061	.336
	less than 50	less than 30	.8354*	.32915	.012
		more than 50	1.1154*	.26766	.000
	more than 50	less than 30	-.2800	.29061	.336
		less than 50	-1.1154*	.26766	.000

Income group with 30k scored higher on ethical behaviour (M=47.48, SD=15.37) than income less than 50k (M=40.6, SD=13.57) and more than 50k (M=41.58, SD=11.12) F(2,396) p<0.05.

Income group less than 30k scored higher on ethical climate (M=68.68, SD=9.4) and income group with less than 50k (M=68.5, SD=7.85), income group with more than 50k (M=63.69,SD=9.41) F(2,720) p<0.01.

Income group with more than 50k scored higher on communication (M=13.23, SD=3.29) F(2,378) p<0.05. Income group with less than 30 k scored higher on mindfulness (M=16.07, SD=6.13) and income group less

than 50k (M=13.92, SD=5.72) and income group more than 50k (M=17.92, SD=3.95) F(2,1141) p<0.05.

Income group with less than 50k scored higher mindfulness (M=26.2,SD=6.31)and income group with more than 50k(M=23.3, SD=4.10) F=(2,104)Income group with more than 50k score higher on transcendence (M=15.89 , SD=3.84 F(2,356) p<0.05.

Income group with less than 30k(M=10.63 SD=2.8) scored higher on self-interest and income group with less than 50k (M=8.03, SD=3.68) and income group with more than 50k(M=9.2, SD=2.07) F(2,102) p<0.05.

Income group with less than 30k(M=10.36, SD=1.88) scored higher on company profit and income group with less than 50k(M=9.36,SD=2.8) F(2,269) p<0.05.Income group more than 50k scored higher on efficiency (M=10.67, SD=2.03) F(2,746) p<0.05.Income group with less than 30k scored higher on friendship(M=3.60 SD=1.22) and income group with less than 50k(M=4.00,SD=1.15) and income group with more than 50k (M=3.39, SD .793) F(2,641) p<0.05.

Income group with less than 30k scored higher on personal morality (M=7.58, SD=1.91) and income group with more than 50k (M=6.72, SD=1.25) F=2,687) p<0.05.Income group with less than 30k scored higher on social responsibility (M=7.41,SD=1.70) and income group with less than 50k (M=8.25,SD=1.69) F=(2,873) p<0.05Income group with less than 30k scored higher on law and procedures (M=10.95, SD=2.63) and income group with less than 50k (M=11.84, SD=2.77) F=(2,417) p<0.05.Income group with less than 50k (M=8.25, SD=1.69) scored higher on rules standard operating procedures F(2,873) p<0.05.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study indicate that there is a significant positive relation that exists between workplace spirituality and ethical climate. It also showed that workplace spirituality is a strong predictor of ethical climate. The finding support stake holder theory which postulates that nurses have moral obligations towards their organization[7].

In return the ethical atmosphere of organization are expected to take care of their workers. Similarly the findings support Kantian Deontology which emphasizes on moral autonomy and this in turn leads to the formation of moral capacities within and outside the organizations[8]. If moral rights of workers are protected then the organization's climate becomes favorable for ethical practice too. However, surprisingly no relationship was found between workplace spirituality and ethical behaviour. The findings does not support the Spillover Theory[9], which states that spiritual values deeply impacts the ethical behavior. However, in the case of this study; we did not find any connection between workplace spirituality and ethical behavior. This arises concern may be we are lacking good role models in the nursing professions to follow. These findings can be attributed to the workplace spirituality which varies from person to person.

The findings emphasize on the conceptual frame work of Social Learning Theory which highlights that nurses learn through their peers, leaders, managers and supervisors at workplace[10]. If the senior staff depicts ethical behavior, the junior staff is most likely to act accordingly. It may be possible that the senior administration does not exercise full ethical behavior to inspire the nursing staff at each level. Findings of study report that nurses would behave ethically only if the managers were behaving ethically[11].

Similarly, Virtue Theory also put forward that if managers, leaders and peers model an ethical behavior, then the organizational climate becomes ethical, conducive, healthy and principled in nature. Virtues, morality and good deeds inspire other nurses, but if the senior management shows lack of ethics, thereupon ethical behavior is comprised[12].

The correlational findings also indicated that workplace spirituality and its subscales are related to ethical climate of organization in nursing profession. It means that nurses who depict greater workplace spirituality, better communication, are empathetic then the carry out their jobs conscientiously, who have strong linkage to God can better contribute to the ethical climate of hospitals[13].

Secondly, it is found that workplace spirituality is the predictor of ethical climate in nurses. The findings support this study which indicates that nurses who follow standard operating procedures, laws and professional codes paired with benevolent aims in turn helps the hospital to have a better ethical climate[14]. The findings indicated that effective communication skills predicts ethical behaviour in nursing profession which means that if the communication is effective, there will be lower chances of unethical behaviour in nursing profession. Moreover, higher the self-interest, higher will be the unethical behaviour. Also, the greater personal morality, higher are the chances of ethical practice in nursing profession.

Thirdly, surprisingly there was no impact of years of experience on the three constructs. Findings support Kohlberg's Mode of Moral Reasoning, workers can behave ethically only through the course of time. However, in this case of study, the sample contained mostly of fresh nurses in the field (n=119) with 1-5 years of experience which means that the nurses did not have much time/ duration spent in nursing career. Findings support Wang and Hsiech (2012) which says that personality factors, psychological perception and prior work experience can affect attitudes of nurses in a new hospital[15].

Lastly, findings indicated an impact of income on the three constructs. The findings revealed that that nurses with less income can contribute spiritually to workplace, forming an ethical climate thus behaving ethically in return. The income analysis indicated that there is a strong impact of income on workplace spirituality, ethical climate and ethical behaviour in nursing profession. Interestingly, nurses who belong to the income group (less than 30k) scored higher on workplace spirituality as compared to nurses (with less than 50k or more than 50k income levels). It may be that personalities of nurses who earn less have personalities driven by "moral intrinsic motivation" and may regard their service wholeheartedly.

The limitations are that the phenomenon of workplace spirituality, ethical climate and ethical behaviour have been investigated quantitatively. The study is restricted to the nursing profession.

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