

**MANAGERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
SPIRITUALITY AND WORK PERFORMANCE**

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that this publication is my own work and that all the sources that have been used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged in the reference list in the last section of this document.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	II
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	III
TABLE OF CONTENTS	IV
SUMMARY	IX
CHAPTER 1	1
SCIENTIFIC OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH	1
1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT	3
1.4 AIMS	5
1.4.1 General aim	5
1.4.2 Theoretical aims	5
1.4.3 Empirical aim	5
1.5 THE RESEARCH MODEL	6
1.6 THE PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE	8
1.7 THE RESEARCH METHOD	8
1.8 CHAPTER LAYOUT	9
1.9 CONCLUSION	9
CHAPTER 2	10
SPIRITUALITY	10
2.1 INTRODUCTION	10
2.2 DEFINITION OF SPIRITUALITY	10
2.3 CONCEPTS RELATING TO SPIRITUALITY	11

2.3.1 Spirituality and religion	11
2.3.2 Spirituality and ethics.....	13
2.3.3 Spirituality and well-being	15
2.4 DIMENSIONS OF SPIRITUALITY	16
2.4.1 Giving	17
2.4.2 Humbleness	18
2.4.3 Forgiveness	19
2.4.4 Establishing a sense of community.....	21
2.4.5 Providing balance	21
2.4.6 Embracing diversity	22
2.4.7 Maintaining integrity	23
2.5 SPIRITUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE	24
2.6 MANAGING SPIRITUALITY	27
2.6.1 Reasons for seeking Spirituality in the workplace	28
2.6.2 Risks facing Spirituality in the workplace	30
2.6.3 Workplace readiness for Spirituality	32
2.7 CONCLUSION	32
 CHAPTER 3	 34
WORK PERFORMANCE	34
3.1 INTRODUCTION	34
3.2 DEFINITION OF WORK PERFORMANCE	34
3.3 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANISATIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL WORK PERFORMANCE	35
3.4 APPROACHES IN DETERMINING WORK PERFORMANCE	36
3.4.1 Traditional approaches to organisational performance	36
3.4.2 A balanced approach to organisational performance	38
3.5 DIMENSIONS OF WORK PERFORMANCE	40
3.5.1 Profitability	41
3.5.2 Growth	42
3.5.3 Adaptability	42

3.5.4 Relevance	43
3.5.5 Integrity	44
3.5.6 Leadership	44
3.6 MANAGING WORK PERFORMANCE	45
3.6.1 The use of appraisals	45
3.6.2 More recent approaches to managing individual work performance	48
3.6.3 Payment management and its effect on individual work performance	49
3.6.4 Humour and its effect on individual work performance	50
3.6.5 Average and excellent individual work performance	50
3.6.6 Managing poor individual work performance	50
3.6.7 Mental health and individual work performance	53
3.6.8 Violence and work performance	54
3.6.9 Stress and work performance	54
3.6.10 Depression and work performance	59
3.7 INTEGRATION	63
3.7.1 Profitability and Giving	64
3.7.2 Growth and Embracing Diversity	65
3.7.3 Adaptability, Forgiveness and Providing Balance.....	65
3.7.4 Relevance and Establishing a Sense of Community	66
3.7.5 Integrity and Maintaining Integrity	66
3.7.6 Leadership and Humbleness	67
3.7.7 Spirituality and its effect on health	68
3.7.8 Spirituality and its effect on stress	69
3.7.9 Spirituality and its effect on depression	70
3.7.10 Spirituality and its overall effect on the workplace	71
3.8 CONCLUSION	73
CHAPTER 4	74
THE EMPIRICAL STUDY	74
4.1 INTRODUCTION	74
4.2 POPULATION AND SAMPLE	74

4.2.1 Population	74
4.2.2 Descriptive profile of the sample	75
4.2.3 Measuring instruments	78
4.2.4 Data gathering	80
4.2.5 Data analysis	82
4.3 CONCLUSION	83
 CHAPTER 5	 84
FINDINGS	84
5.1 INTRODUCTION	84
5.2 THEMES IDENTIFIED	85
5.2.1 Theme 1: spirituality promotes the healthy development of individuals	85
5.2.2 Theme 2: spirituality enhances teamwork	89
5.2.3 Theme 3: spirituality redefines the concept of success	91
5.3 CONCLUSION	94
 CHAPTER 6	 95
CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	95
6.1 INTRODUCTION	95
6.2 CONCLUSIONS	95
6.2.1 Conclusions in terms of the goals of the literature review	95
6.2.2 Conclusions in terms of the empirical research	97
6.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH	100
6.3.1 Limitations in terms of the literature review	100
6.3.2 Limitations in terms of the empirical research	102
6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS	102
6.4.1 Recommendations for managing work performance and spirituality	103
6.4.2 Recommendations for further research	103
6.5 FINAL CONCLUSION	103
 REFERENCE LIST	 104

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Work Performance Dimensions and Spirituality Dimensions	64
Table 4.1: Details of sample by race, gender and level	76
Table 4.2: Details of sample by race, gender and age	77
Table 4.3: Details of sample by age, race and seniority	78

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to determine managers' perceptions of the relationship between spirituality and work performance. The sample consisted of twelve senior managers from different organisations. Semi structured interviews were used to gather the data. The data was qualitatively analysed and themes were identified.

The findings indicated that spirituality promotes the healthy development of individuals by assisting with their own self-awareness, helping them find inner peace and dealing with stress and depression. Respondents also felt that spirituality enhances teamwork and redefines the concept of success in terms of engaging in competition, having unselfish motives and encouraging honesty.

Based on the findings, recommendations were made for practice and for future research.

KEY TERMS

Spirituality, work performance, profitability, workplace, stress, depression, meaning at work, meaning through work, team work, competition.

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CHAPTER 1

SCIENTIFIC OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this dissertation is to determine managers' perceptions of the relationship between spirituality and work performance. First, the background of the research is discussed followed by the formulation of the problem statement. The aims of the research are then stated and the paradigm perspective provided. The research model and design are also discussed. The chapter concludes with the chapter layout.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

When the Greeks and Romans ruled the world, work was regarded as a burden for slaves to perform (Schreuder & Theron, 2002). The ideal was to exercise the mind by contemplating philosophy, politics and art, and not to work. Centuries later, the Protestant Work Ethic introduced the concept of working to serve God. It is founded on the belief that hard work is important and that leisure and excess money are detrimental (Carmeli & Freund, 2004). Martin Luther explained that God is continually creating, and He (God) invites us human beings to also participate in this creation (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002). During the Renaissance period in Europe, work became intrinsically meaningful as the focus shifted from physical to mental power. People became their own masters and creators in their own right (Schreuder & Theron, 2002).

Industrialisation removed meaning from the workplace with its focus on mass production, mechanisation and repetition. Employees were encouraged to find meaning outside the workplace. Henry Ford is reported to have remarked that he did not want the whole person at work, just a pair of hands (Sheep, 2004). Post-industrialism shifted the focus from industry to information, ideas and technology (Sheep, 2004).

With this shift in focus, work has developed into the centrepiece of society and the location for humankind's most useful contributions. The workplace is where most people now find meaning (Konz & Ryan, 1999) and is becoming the most significant community (Fairholm, 1996).

The corporate world is showing increasing interest in spirituality (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002). The apparent reason for this is that people have an increasing desire to experience spirituality, not only in their personal lives, but also at work where they spend a large amount of their time (Garcia-Zamor, 2003; Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002, Mohan & Uys, 2006). Managers are seeking to integrate their spirituality with managing people, to bring greater meaning to their roles (McCormick, 1994). Organisations seem to be evolving from arenas of economic and social activity into places of spiritual development (Konz & Ryan, 1999). Sales of bibles and prayer books, inspirational volumes and books on philosophy and Eastern religions are growing faster than any other category, with the market expanding from \$1,69 billion in 1995 to \$2,24 billion in 2000 in the USA (Garcia-Zamor, 2003).

Nevertheless, there still seems to be a gap between what employees are starting to expect in terms of spirituality at work, and what organisations and managers are able to provide (Konz & Ryan, 1999). The uncertainty may be in terms of whether organisations (through management) need to introduce spirituality into the workplace from the top or if they should encourage employees to express their spirituality at work (Konz & Ryan, 1999; Lips-Wiersma & Mills, 2002).

Humans exist in four parts, the body (physical), mind (logical/rational thought), heart (emotions, feelings) and spirit (Fry, 2003). Unless organisations are able to harness the whole person (including the immense spiritual energy that is at the core of everyone), they will not be able to produce world-class products and services (Mitroff & Denton, 1999). When an employee's inner self (which knows no limits) connects to the working environment, it challenges the confines of existence and stretches towards the spiritual horizon, which is infinitely superior to the limited natural realm. The highest level of work is spiritual (Burack, 1999).

The concept of spirituality has profound importance for the human condition, especially in the workplace (Salopek, 2004). Spirituality in the workplace allows people to grow personally and make a meaningful contribution to society (Neal, 1997). Spiritual freedom is what makes life meaningful and purposeful (Frankl, 1985; Sosik, 2007) and the workplace has become the location where most people now find meaning (Bell & Taylor, 2001; Fairholm, 1996; Konz & Ryan, 1999).

Preliminary research has shown that organisations that afford their employees with opportunities for spiritual development perform better than those that do not (Konz & Ryan, 1999). Organisations that help people to achieve their potential become instrumental in improving their own economic bottom line (Burack, 1999). Spirituality in the workplace creates a new culture in which employees feel happier and perform better (Garcia-Zamor, 2003).

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Historically, the study of spirituality, from an academic viewpoint, has been largely neglected (Butts, 1999; Hall et al, 2004; Mohamed, 2004; Sheep, 2004), despite increasing interest in this topic in popular magazines and books

(Benefiel, 2003; Garcia-Zamor, 2003) and in the workplace (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Fry, 2003; Hankin, 2005; Konz & Ryan, 1999; Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002; Neal, 1997). Since most of the existing texts on spirituality are popular works, the literature tends to be optimistic and uncritical (Brown 2003), lacking central focus and a well-defined methodology (Hicks, 2002).

Academics contend that spirituality and religion are not relevant in studying human behaviour (Lips-Wiersma, 2003). This assumption is erroneous according to Hall et al (2004).

Researchers have found that while managers are attempting to integrate their own spirituality (as well as that of their employees) into their workplace, the topic remains largely unexamined in academic literature (Butts, 1999; Hall et al, 2004; Mohamed, 2004; McCormick, 1994; Sheep, 2004). Spirituality at work is an idea of revolutionary potential that requires greater clarity and theoretical understanding (Butts, 1999).

This study will attempt to answer the call for more academic research in this area by attempting to establish management perceptions of the relationship between spirituality and work performance. The empirical study will be specific to the South African workplace, which is characterised by a diverse workforce in terms of both ethnicity and religious affiliation.

At the outset of the study, the following research questions were formulated:

- How can spirituality be conceptualised?
- How can work performance be conceptualised?
- Is there a theoretical relationship between spirituality and work performance?
- What are the perceptions of managers regarding the relationship between spirituality and work performance?

- What recommendations can be made about spirituality and work performance?

1.4 AIMS

1.4.1 General aim

The general aim of this study is to determine managers' perceptions of the relationship between spirituality and work performance.

1.4.2 Theoretical aims

Theoretical aims involve the following:

- conceptualising spirituality
- conceptualising work performance
- determining the theoretical relationship between spirituality and work performance

1.4.3 Empirical aim

Empirical aims involve the following:

- determining the perception of managers regarding the relationship between spirituality and work performance
- making recommendations regarding spirituality and work performance.

1.5 THE RESEARCH MODEL

The following model graphically represents the research process:

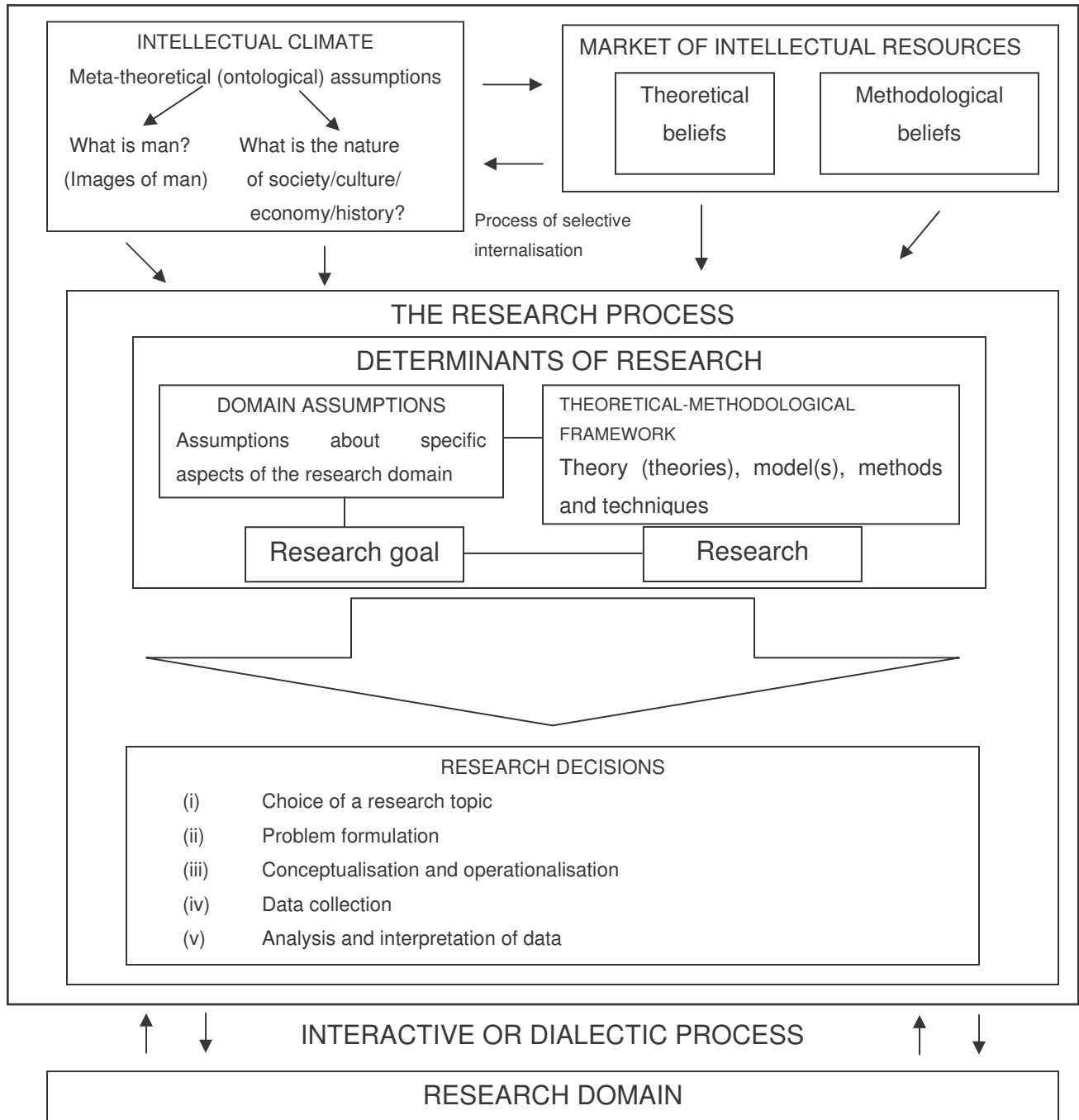


Figure 1.1: Research model (Mouton & Marais, 1996, p. 22.)

Initially, a literature review will take place in order to gain insight into the two variables of the research, namely spirituality and work performance. The empirical study will follow a qualitative approach. The method makes use of semi structured interviews with senior managers or directors of various South African organisations.

No measuring instruments could be found to measure spirituality as a research topic (Moore & Casper, 2006) and owing to the sensitivity and complexity of the topic it is believed that qualitative data gathering will be far more useful than applying a quantitative approach. Discussing spirituality requires a greater amount of intimacy than is usually required for academic purposes (Lips-Wiersma & Mills, 2002; Lips-Wiersma, 2003). An exploratory approach will be adopted in the research process.

Various measures were taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the research. Reliability relates predominantly to quantitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2003) but the process used to gather the information used in this research process was explained in detail in Chapter 4. This should allow other researchers to repeat the survey process and hopefully obtain similar results.

Various types of validity exist in research (Bryman & Bell, 2003). Measurement or construct validity applies primarily to quantitative research and has to do with whether the questions used in the research accurately measure the concept they are meant to denote. Internal validity is concerned with a conclusion that incorporates a causal relationship between two or more variables (Bryman & Bell, 2003). In the case of this research, the relationship analysed was between spirituality and work performance. Analyses of recent and original sources were used to determine the relationship as well as obtaining perceptions of managers to ensure internal validity. External validity is concerned with the question of whether the results of a study can be generalised beyond the specific research context (Bryman & Bell, 2003).

The independent variable for this research is spirituality (viewed in a polytomic context – Mouton & Marais, 1996).

The dependent variable is work performance (which will be considered in both an individual and organisational context).

The unit of analysis for this research is the individual manager.

1.6 THE PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE

The research is based predominantly upon the humanistic existential paradigm.

The humanistic existential paradigm regards people as optimistic (even tragically optimistic), self actualising, being conscious of their own choices, being aware of their existence and questioning their reason for being alive (Frankl, 1985, Rogers, 1995).

1.7 THE RESEARCH METHOD

The research is presented in two phases, the literature review and the empirical study.

The literature review contains the following steps:

- Conceptualisation of spirituality
- Conceptualisation of work performance
- The theoretical integration of spirituality and work performance

The empirical study contains the following steps:

- Determining and describing the sample

- Determining the measuring instrument
- Performing the data gathering
- Reporting and interpreting the findings
- Formulating the recommendations

1.8 CHAPTER LAYOUT

The chapters were presented in the following manner:

CHAPTER 1: SCIENTIFIC OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

CHAPTER 2: SPIRITUALITY

CHAPTER 3: WORK PERFORMANCE

CHAPTER 4: THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a scientific overview of the research and formulated the problem statement. The aims of the research were stated and the paradigm perspective provided. The research model and design were also discussed. The chapter concluded with the chapter layout.

CHAPTER 2

SPIRITUALITY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to conceptualise spirituality. Firstly, spirituality will be defined and then compared with other similar concepts, namely religion, ethics and well-being. Dimensions of spirituality will be discussed after which spirituality in the workplace will be examined. Before concluding the chapter, management of spirituality will be discussed, including an evaluation of the benefits and risks associated with spirituality and workplace readiness to accept and embrace spirituality.

2.2 DEFINITION OF SPIRITUALITY

One of the greatest challenges facing researchers is agreeing on a definition of spirituality (Konz & Ryan, 1999; Moore & Casper, 2006; Neal, 1997; Salopek, 2004). Although the diversity of opinion surrounding spirituality enriches understanding of the topic, it also leads to confusion and frustration (Mohamed, 2004).

Certain authors concur that spirituality can be defined as the basic feeling of being connected with oneself, others and the entire universe (Garcia-Zamor, 2003; Harrington et al, 2001; Howard, 2002; Konz & Ryan, 1999; Krishnakumar

& Neck, 2002; Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Individual concern for spirituality reflects an attempt to understand the “connectedness” between their work, relationships with others and their life to something beyond self (Duignan & Bhindi, 1997). Some authors continue by saying that the single word that best captures the meaning of spirituality is “interconnectedness” (Garcia-Zamor, 2003; Mitroff & Denton, 1999).

A second grouping of definitions links spirituality to finding a higher purpose or meaning in life (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Covey, 2005; Harrington et al, 2001; Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002; Mitroff & Denton, 1999).

A third grouping focuses on principles, virtues, ethics, values, emotions, wisdom and intuition. The more these qualities are expressed in behaviours, the greater the person’s (or organisation’s) spirituality (Harrington et al, 2001).

For the purpose of this study, spirituality will be defined as the process of finding meaning in life through relationships with oneself, others and the universe.

2.3 CONCEPTS RELATING TO SPIRITUALITY

Three concepts that relate to or may seem to overlap with spirituality will now be discussed for greater clarity. These concepts are

- religion
- ethics
- well-being

2.3.1 Spirituality and religion

The concept of religion is closely intertwined with spirituality. In existing literature on spirituality, many negative connotations are attached to religion, while spirituality tends to be seen in a far more favourable and positive light (Brandt,

1996; Thompson, 2001). Research in Canada has found that although the majority of the population places a high priority on spirituality, attendance at religious institutions is in a steep decline (Catto et al, 2003).

Research into people's perceptions of spirituality and religion found that the latter is seen primarily as a social phenomenon while the former is regarded as an individual activity (Hall et al, 2004). God was viewed as loving, forgiving and non-judgemental by those who consider themselves to be spiritual, whereas those identifying themselves as religious saw God as being more judgemental (Hall et al, 2004).

Generally, researchers still insist that the word "spirituality" is not a synonym for the word "religion" (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003; Wolf, 2004). The distinction drawn is that religion may relate to the accumulation of specific cultural forms, processes, institutions and ceremonies that have evolved over time, while spirituality relates to a primary core, which is both within and beyond religion (Wolf, 2004). The view is that religions attempt to harness innate spirituality for organisational purposes, which may not be interpreted positively (Kluger et al, 2004). Spirituality has also been regarded as something that exists beyond the rules of religion (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002).

As far as spirituality in the workplace is concerned, most research papers also distinguish clearly between spirituality and religion (Chaleff, 1998; Fry, 2003; Lips-Wiersma, 2003; McCormick, 1994; Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Researchers argue that there is a role for spirituality but not for religion in the workplace (Cash & Gray, 2000; Carcasole, 1995; Cavanagh, 1999; Mitroff & Denton, 1999).

More recent research, however, is starting to dispute this opinion (Hicks, 2002; Lips-Wiersma & Mills, 2002). Although it has been said that spirituality is personal, inclusive and positive while religiosity is external, exclusive and negative, Mohamed (2004) believes that the distinction is artificial and

unnecessary. Mohamed (2004) says that religions promote a belief in a higher power and provide a specific and ultimate meaning and purpose for life. Although religious services may seem ritualistic they often involve spiritual activities such as prayer and meditation.

Religion is an organised structure that can be used to develop a person's spirituality (Johnson, 2004). It is in community that people can find God (Catto et al, 2003). It can be said that not all religion is bad and not all spirituality is good (Howard, 2002).

If spirituality can be viewed as the process of finding meaning in life through relationships with oneself, others and the universe, religion can be regarded as a vehicle through which people are able to find meaning in life. They are able to interact with others (and the universe) in a religious context, be it in a church, synagogue, mosque or temple while praying, reading religious books or worshipping. They are also able to interact with themselves when meditating. Religion is a tool through which greater spirituality can be achieved since it allows people to find meaning in life through their interactions with other believers and their relationship with their creator (Johnson, 2004).

2.3.2 Spirituality and ethics

Another concept that is closely intertwined with spirituality is ethics. Recent unethical behaviour in various global corporations has led to an increasing awareness of the need for spirituality in the workplace (Giacalone, 2004; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003; Hankin, 2005; Henneman, 2004; Jain, 2004, Wolf, 2004).

There is, however, a distinct difference between spirituality and ethics (Mohamed, 2004). Although many corporations attempt to train their employees to be ethical, the process is flawed because companies tend to do so out of a

need for compliance with and obedience to the law instead of a pure desire to do the right thing for employees and clients (Johnson, 2004). Ethical dilemmas in the workplace cannot simply be resolved by providing ethics courses (Giacalone, 2004). The first and largest company to be exposed for lying to its shareholders and the public in order to inflate its share price, had impressive ethics policies and even gave major donations to worthwhile organisations (Hankin, 2005).

The fundamental spiritual principle that should underlie all ethical decisions, is that businesses and individuals should treat others as they would like to be treated themselves (Jain, 2004; Salopek, 2004). If people treat themselves and others with respect and dignity, as ethical practice implies, the meaning they will find in life through these interactions will be far more positive and valuable. Feelings of guilt and potential embarrassment will no longer exist and they will be able to operate on a much higher spiritual plane. The satisfaction derived from taking advantage of another person is short-lived. The abused person is unlikely to return for more abuse and the abuser will eventually experience guilt and remorse for his or her actions (Kaplan & Norton, 1996). However, the satisfaction and benefits emanating from establishing a mutually beneficial relationship can last a lifetime with no negative side effects. Spirituality will lead a person to behave more ethically as he or she endeavours to find meaning in his or her positive relationships with others (Frankl, 1985).

Great achievers develop their spiritual energy into conscience (an inward moral sense of what is right and wrong). This, in turn, drives them towards finding meaning and making a contribution (Covey, 2005). Conscience (the small voice within us) is quiet and peaceful. It deeply appreciates people and recognises their potential for self-control. It empowers, understands the value of all people, and affirms their power and freedom to choose. It values feedback and tries to see the truth in it (Covey, 2005).

2.3.3 Spirituality and well-being

Studies have shown that spirituality plays an essential role in health (Servan-Schreiber, 2003). Showing gratitude in prayer has been found to produce both a positive mental and physical state (Servan-Schreiber, 2003). Prayer has led to numerous “miraculous” physical recoveries (or healings) that medical practitioners cannot explain (McLean, 2002).

Psychologically, transcendental meditation (TM) has led to increased self-actualisation, stronger self-identity, greater empathy, growth of wisdom, less neuroticism, less depression, increased self-esteem, ego strength, independence, self-acceptance, an interest in academic activities, intellectual orientation, social extroversion, personal integration and a positive attitude (Tischler et al, 2002).

Spirituality is associated with general well-being including life satisfaction, reduced depression, less anxiety, less cardiovascular disease, lower blood pressure increased hope, optimism and longevity (Mason, 2003). Spirituality has also been found to have a moderating effect on negative life experiences, depression and anxiety (Mohamed, 2004). Spiritual people are more trusting of others, feel less estranged in highly diverse environments and have a strong sense of commitment and community (Mohamed, 2004).

Scientific studies have proven that involvement in religion or religious activities may benefit both mental and physical health (Hall et al, 2004). Studies on how the brain changes when people pray or meditate have provided interesting results (Kluger et al, 2004). In the research, the deeper the subjects descended into meditation or prayer, the more active their frontal lobe and their limbic system became. Concentration and attention reside in the frontal lobe, whereas powerful feelings are processed in the limbic system (Kluger et al, 2004). According to the research, the subject’s parietal lobe, situated at the back of his or her brain, showed diminished activity. This part of the brain orientates a

person in time and space, which means that as he or she moves further into this enraptured state, his or her boundaries of self fall away and he or she feels more united with the universe (Kluger et al, 2004).

The findings of the above research show that spirituality has a significant positive effect on people's physical and psychological well-being. Spirituality enables them to cope better with uncertainty, stress, failure and diversified workplaces and gives them a strong sense of commitment. Prayer and meditation have also been found to counteract the negative side effects of stress and depression.

As people develop their spirituality by finding meaning in life through their relationships within themselves as well as with others and the universe, their physical and psychological health will hopefully improve.

2.4 DIMENSIONS OF SPIRITUALITY

Considering the definition of spirituality, employees will be able to discover meaning while performing their own jobs and as they connect and interact with others. In addition, organisations will benefit from supporting the following spiritual dimensions:

- giving
- humbleness
- forgiveness
- establishing a sense of community
- providing balance
- embracing diversity
- maintaining integrity

These dimensions will be discussed in greater detail below.

2.4.1 Giving

Giving entails more than only financial sacrifice. It includes aspects such as giving of time, talents and gifts to those less fortunate than oneself. The spiritual component of this construct has to do with giving to people or causes that are unable (or unlikely to be able) to ever give back to one in return (Wolf, 2004). This is contrary to sound financial advice and economic principles which teach that it is wise to invest in causes that have a low risk of loss and yield a high return (Giacalone, 2004).

Economics teaches the opposite of giving, namely that the pursuit of money and power is undeniably good (Giacalone, 2004). Contrary to this viewpoint, a spiritual principle teaches that when one gives, one receives (Wolf, 2004). The spiritual journey calls individuals to become more loving and compassionate, less self-oriented and more giving (Howard, 2002). The successful owner of an organisation with retail sales of nearly \$530 million that earmarks money for charities says that giving is the basis of business success (Liss, 2004). Similarly, in the USA, the owner of the third-largest fast-food chicken restaurant, comprising 1 080 restaurants across 36 states, claims that their success stems from generosity (Johnson, 2004).

A founder and CEO of a health and beauty aid manufacturer in the USA allows his employees to spend 5 percent of their work time assisting community groups (Brandt, 1996). The company also gives 10 percent of pre-tax profits to environmental groups. Another well-known ice-cream manufacturer in the USA commits 7,5 percent of its pre-tax profits to social causes such as voter registration drives, hiring the homeless and providing free movie festivals (Elmes & Smith, 2001). Even President George Bush has been encouraging more charitable giving (Mason, 2003).

USAA, an insurance giant in the United States of America that serves military personnel and their families, generously sent refunds to policyholders who went

to the Gulf to cover the period that they were not driving their vehicles at home (Sisodia et al.; 2007).

This action goes completely against the principles of economics, accounting and engineering which focus on lack and scarcity (Sheth, 2000). Individuals and organisations are able to find meaning in giving of themselves and their finances to others, a spiritual act that generates spiritual benefits.

This may also be called an “abundance mentality” (Covey, 2005). Instead of seeing life as a competition with only one winner, it may be regarded as a journey filled with opportunities and resources. Instead of comparing oneself with others, one is able to feel genuine happiness when others around one succeed (Covey, 2005).

Organisations need to initiate a culture of giving before getting (Branham, 2005). Offering valued services, trust and understanding will encourage employees to reciprocate with loyalty and improved work performance. For example, 2,500 of the USAA policy holders mentioned earlier that had received refunds for their time in the Gulf returned the money they received with notes of appreciation saying that they wanted to keep the insurance company financially sound (Sisodia et al.; 2007).

2.4.2 Humbleness

Humbleness entails having a balanced and realistic view of oneself. Typically, this construct will determine how a person responds to success (Collins, 2002). A person, who thinks that he or she alone is responsible for his or her success, is likely to project an image of pride and smugness. A successful person who is able to admit that other people have assisted him with his or her achievements is likely to remain grounded and will project an image of humbleness and modesty (Rogers, 1995).

A key spiritual business concept is the need for employees to put their heads down and work, not push their chests out and become puffed up with pride (Liss, 2004). As Gandhi observed, instead of pride fully trying to change the world, people should attempt to be the change they want to see (Giacalone, 2004). Jesus humbled himself to the point of death for the benefit of those unable to reciprocate (Barker & Coy, 2003). Carl Rogers found that in dealing with others, the degree to which he was willing to be himself, not only helped him to change for the better, but the people he related to seemed to change as well (Rogers, 1995). The most successful leaders are those who are able to combine extreme personal humility with intense professional will (Collins, 2002). Humble leaders are excellent mentors and are highly trusted by their followers (Sosik, 2007). By focusing less on selfish gain and more on serving and giving of themselves to others, individuals are able to find meaning in their work.

2.4.3 Forgiveness

This construct is most likely to come to the fore when competition and conflict occur (Butler & Mullis, 2001). The natural tendency for people would be to have negative feelings and thoughts about people who have harmed them (intentionally or unintentionally), people with whom they compete with or people who have done better than them in some way, say, by being promoted. The desire to bring about misfortune or take revenge would be the most likely next step (Bradfield & Aquino, 1999). Spiritual people would rather break this cycle of revenge by forgiving the person (or group of people) concerned, and not holding their actions or attitudes against them.

Revenge occurs routinely in the workplace and can lead to employee theft, industrial sabotage, is frequently accompanied by suppressed anger and can increase conflict leading to reciprocal acts of revenge and counter-revenge (Bradfield & Aquino, 1999). Conflict tends to lower productivity (Butler & Mullis,

2001; Huntsman, 2005). Holding on to grudges causes tenseness, nervousness and puts people on the defense or the offense (Sosik, 2007) .

While revenge in the workplace has been well researched, forgiveness has almost been totally ignored (Bradfield & Aquino, 1999). Although research suggests that people view revenge and forgiveness as acceptable ways of restoring justice, a person seeking revenge clings to anger and resentment while a forgiving person frees himself or herself from negative emotions that may lead to acts of vengeance. This improves both physical and psychological health (Bradfield & Aquino, 1999). True forgiveness involves “letting go” and moving on (Covey, 2005).

Forgiveness allows people to forget painful experiences and reduces the need for defensiveness, justification of anger and retaliation (Butler & Mullis, 2001). Research indicates that individuals balanced by hope, gratitude and forgiveness lead better lives (Giacalone, 2004). Forgiveness promotes increased hopefulness and the elimination of moderate depressive symptoms (Butler & Mullis, 2001). Despite its flaws, the South African truth and reconciliation process frequently displayed the transcendent power of love and forgiveness (Eden, 2000). Forgiveness and refusing to bear a grudge take away another person’s power over one’s life (Covey, 2005).

By focusing on forgiveness instead of revenge, people are able to restore and maintain relationships with others (Bradfield & Aquino, 1999; Covey, 2005). Even if a relationship has been irreparably damaged, a person is able to find inner peace by letting go of any resentment and bitterness he or she may hold against another person through forgiveness.

2.4.4 Establishing a sense of community

Competition and success in the workplace tend to emphasise the importance of individual reward and recognition (Giacalone, 2004). This reduces collegiality and the focus on team work. Spirituality encourages interdependence and operation within a community.

According to Konz and Ryan (1999), people are seeking a way to combine their work and spiritual lives and work in community with others. In the past, bureaucracy and scientific management promoted specialisation, which led to the isolation and alienation of workers (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000).

Success in business is not achieved individually with personal gain, but in embracing a common victory (Giacalone, 2004). A study of 12,000 male workers in Sweden over 14 years found that workers who felt isolated in their roles were 162% more likely to have fatal heart attacks than those who worked in teams (Blanchard, 2007).

Spiritual people feel a strong sense of connection, commitment and community with others (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Mohamed, 2004, Mohan & Uys, 2006). Establishing and maintaining relationships with others, as opposed to operating in isolation, promotes spirituality. The highest level of business relationships is when people not only like the business, but more importantly, the people running the business (Maxwell, 2005).

2.4.5 Providing balance

In the modern workplace, there is a great deal of focus on the rational, logical and natural. This focus (which employers expect) does not leave much room for the spiritual dimension which is irrational, illogical and supernatural. This may seem limiting or restricting to employees who see their spirit as a vital part of

their being (Jain, 2004; Wolf, 2004). Some may even consider their spirits to be the most important part of their being.

Research has found that employees have an increasing desire for their faith to be part of their daily lives (Jain, 2004). By encouraging spirituality in the workplace, employers satisfy this desire and promote a balance between work and self (Hankin, 2005; Wolf, 2004).

Allowing employees to experience spirituality in both their personal and professional life, maximises their efficiency (Johnson, 2004) and minimises the risk of burnout (Robin, 2003). Meditation has led directly to improved problem solving, greater creativity, increased innovation, less neuroticism and the capacity for warm interpersonal relationships (Tischler et al., 2002).

2.4.6 Embracing diversity

Diversity causes stress. Groups containing individuals from different ethnicities, genders, religious beliefs, languages, ages, cultures, etc, are likely to experience problems with communication, understanding, tolerance and acceptance (Hankin, 2005; Mahomed, 2004). Spiritual people do not tend to place a great deal of emphasis on external factors (such as ethnicity, age, culture etc), but attempt instead to connect with people on a higher level.

This means that spiritual people are more trusting and feel less estranged in environments characterised by high diversity (Mohamed, 2004). One should always bear in mind that diversity is about more than just ethnicity. Diversity in the workplace also relates to other areas such as gender, religion, age, sexual preference, people with disabilities and generational differences (Hankin, 2005; Lewis & Geroy, 2000).

In order to create a safe, equitable and welcoming working environment, judgemental and divisive reactions to visible social identities such as ethnicity, age or gender cannot be tolerated (Lips-Wiersma & Mills, 2002). Since 9/11, people have become far more aware of biases towards other people. Respect and dignity for others is born out of people's personal beliefs (Johnson, 2004).

2.4.7 Maintaining integrity

Integrity entails honesty, ethics and truthfulness. It affects the way in which a person engages in business and treats others (Barker & Coy, 2003; Han, 2006). Individuals who are spiritually aware are likely to have a high level of integrity, since they are aware of how their behaviour and attitudes affect the people around them (Covey, 2005; Maxwell, 2005). They would not want to offend, mislead or behave dishonestly, as this would have a bad effect on their interpersonal relationships.

Integrity is grounded in knowing what is right and acting on it, or not acting on what might be wrong (Barker & Coy, 2003). This requires a clear set of values grounded in a strong personal ethical framework. Organisations require a clearly articulated vision, mission and values framework, against which decisions can be measured.

If companies lack a clear set of values, it is the individual's responsibility to adhere to such values (Barker & Coy, 2003; Huntsman, 2005). In times of economic depression, the trust relationship between the employer and employee plays a pivotal role in the organisation's future performance (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002).

Truth and honesty are the exception in the workplace (Duignan & Bhindi, 1997). Management still seem to believe that the path to success requires them to be

untruthful and deceptive while they wear masks of authenticity and respectability. However, this behaviour is sometimes challenged.

For example, a manager working for a global investment bank based in China vetoed a decision to sweeten a bid for a contract with a large shipment of tea (Jain, 2004). Although his company lost the deal, the manager was certain that the decision was the right one to make.

Employees feel betrayed, neglected and wounded by the political wrangling and power struggles higher up in their organisations (Duignan and Bhindi, 1997). Only by putting integrity and relationships with others above selfish pride can powerful bonds of trust become established in organisations (Covey, 2005; Maxwell, 2005).

Ironically, the lack of integrity in organisations is causing people to now start seeking a deeper sense of meaning at work and for more human connection (Marques et al., 2005).

2.5 SPIRITUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

The common trend in the workplace where organisations are downsizing and expecting their employees to work longer hours with fewer resources has lowered productivity (Robin, 2003). The stress caused by excessive work demands has led to pessimism, dissatisfaction, reduced concentration, decreased motivation, accidents, absenteeism and general poor health (Robin, 2003). Between 50 and 70 percent of primary health-care problems are stress related (Servan-Schreiber, 2003).

One of the clearest relationships between spirituality and work behaviour is the way in which people are able to handle failure and stress (Mohamed, 2004).

Diseases caused by stress in the workplace include mental illness, heart disease, diabetes, anxiety and depression (Robin, 2003). Depression has a severe impact on work performance in the workplace since it is likely to lead to fatigue, a feeling of worthlessness, loss of interest, a tendency to withdraw from society, a reluctance to work collaboratively, irritability and a lack of concentration (Robin, 2003). In Canada alone, depression costs businesses \$12 billion per annum. The trend that can be identified thus far is that a lack of spirituality is likely to increase stress, which tends to have a negative impact on work performance.

Most people who make serious mistakes, suffer reversal of fortunes or are publicly humiliated at work tend to become embittered, cynical or distrustful (Sheth, 2000). Conversely, spiritually inclined people are less likely to suffer from the negative psychological and physical consequences of failure and stress (Mohamed, 2004). Researchers suggest that there is a positive relationship between spirituality and coping (Miller, 2004). Researchers are also starting to see a link between mental health, productivity and absenteeism. People who are happy both at home and at work are more productive (Robin, 2003). According to *Fortune* magazine, the best 100 places to work for in the USA provide a culture that promotes meaningful work in a nurturing and supportive work environment (Chalofsky, 2003).

The recent increasing interest in spirituality is a result of a search for meaning (Eden, 2000; Pink, 2006). Employees no longer want to be coerced or manipulated by their managers, but have a desire to build trusting relationships at work (Duignan & Bhindi, 1997). This desire relates back to the definition of spirituality and how a person is able to find meaning in life through his or her relationships with others. This increased search for meaning seems to have been triggered by the events of 9/11 in New York and Washington DC (Jain, 2004; Johnson, 2004; Miller, 2004). Employees have become more interested in self-expression, belongingness, sense of community, social equity and quality of

life (Giacalone, 2004). The expression of spirituality at work means that employees want to be involved in work that gives meaning to their lives (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000, Mohan & Uys, 2006) and is psychologically rewarding (Sisodia et al.; 2007).

Meaningful work is no longer just about the work that employees are paid to perform but the way they live their lives (Chalofsky, 2003). Employees experience severe frustration if they are expected to hide or deny their spirituality when entering the workplace (Chalofsky, 2003; Johnson, 2004; Lips-Wiersma & Mills, 2002; Salopek, 2004). Since they spend so much of their time at work, employees want to be able to apply their faith to the workplace (Jain, 2004). Profit-driven businesses have thus far essentially failed to recognise the merit of spiritual well-being at work (Tischler et al., 2002) and have only succeeded in generating increased wealth for some of their employees, economic growth and technological advancement (Mohan & Uys, 2006).

Allowing employees to experience and live out their spirituality at work should not be regarded as accommodating a handicap. Employees who are encouraged to bring their spiritual values to work are happier, more productive and tend to remain with their companies longer (Henneman, 2004; Tischler et al., 2002). Employees develop further and continue to grow spiritually when they are able to converge the meaning of their lives with the meaning of their work (Sheep, 2004).

Recent research in the USA indicates that more than half of employees now consider spirituality to play a significant role in the workplace (Marques et al., 2005). More than a third of employees felt that spirituality's importance had increased after the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001.

One of the primary reasons for people leaving their jobs is to seek meaning (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002). When people have meaning and purpose at

work, their performance improves, and this, in turn, has a direct impact on the organisation's performance (Tischler et al., 2002; Wolf, 2004).

Where spirituality was defined as finding meaning in life through relationships with yourself, others and your universe, spirituality at work has been described as finding meaning and purpose at work, expressing one's whole self at work and feeling connected to those with whom one works (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004).

2.6 MANAGING SPIRITUALITY

There is an increasing need for employees to find spiritual purpose and meaning in the work that they perform (King & Nicol, 1999; Marques et al., 2005, Mohan & Uys, 2006; Pink, 2006) so it is becoming increasingly beneficial for organisations to manage spirituality at both the organisational and individual level. By actively managing spirituality, the organisation needs to consider the risks it faces in the workplace as well as the perceived readiness of the organisation to embrace or accept spirituality.

This section deals with the benefits of encouraging spirituality in the workplace, the risks faced by spirituality in the workplace and assessing workplace readiness for spirituality.

Spirituality in an organisation can be managed and encouraged through the process of performance management. Performance management, in its most basic form, can be defined as a systemic approach to tracking individual work performance against the targeted objectives of the organisation and then identifying strengths and any opportunities for development or improvement (Smith & Mazin, 2004).

The limitation of this definition is that it fails to consider broader organisational performance. Another similar definition states that performance management is an integrated management system that boosts the valuable output of employees to its functional maximum and aims to keep it there (Phelps, 2005). This definition also simplistically links performance to the employee only.

For the purpose of this study, a far more accurate definition of performance management would be that it is the process of linking an organisation's overall business objectives to departmental, team and individual objectives (Heery & Noon, 2001). It involves target setting, regularly reviewing progress and taking remedial action where there are shortfalls. This is a far more holistic and all-encompassing definition of performance management.

It is necessary for the leadership or management to reward and encourage behaviour through the process of performance management. For example, ethical and honest behaviour should be praised when displayed by employees. Dishonest and unethical behaviour should be discouraged and condemned.

2.6.1 Reasons for seeking Spirituality in the workplace

Owing to downsizing, re-engineering, retrenchments, redundancies, increased competitiveness, reduced support staff, difficult technology to master (Brandt, 1996; Carcasole, 1995), lack of integrity and the market crash (Marques et al., 2005), the workplace has become increasingly insecure for employees (King & Nicol, 1999). Employees are expected to do more problem solving than before, adapt more quickly to any changes and work longer hours (Burack, 1999). This has left them feeling demoralised and alienated (Bell & Taylor, 2001). Unhappiness and dissatisfaction with work in the USA is at a 40-year high (Marques et al., 2005). HR professionals report increasing numbers of employees with problems that cross the lines between personal, professional and

spiritual boundaries as they seek meaning in the workplace (Cash & Gray, 2000). The general public also have little faith in their leaders (Duignan & Bhindi, 1997).

Employees have to find strength from within to help them do their jobs and live their lives, despite fear and insecurity. Spirituality helps employees to cope with this ever-changing environment by allowing them to find a higher purpose and meaning in their lives (King & Nicol, 1999; Marques et al., 2005, Mohan & Uys, 2006; Pink, 2006). For employees that have a spiritual centre from which to work, no task will be just a chore. Even sweeping floors can be seen as a sacred act, whether or not it holds a deeper meaning (Bell & Taylor, 2003).

Typically, the spiritual journey starts from within in order to gain an awareness of self (King & Nicol, 1999). In order to improve any relationship, a person has to first start with himself or herself (Covey, 2005; Han, 2006). Next, the person connects with others and his or her creator in order to produce a sense of order and balance. This sense of wholeness brings awareness of how the person fits into his or her external environment (King & Nicol, 1999). Transpersonal psychology, which began in the mid-1970s as an extension of humanistic/existential psychology, encompasses realms of consciousness beyond ordinary borders in disciplines such as meditation and transpersonal experiences that embrace humankind, life and the cosmos or creation (Butts, 1999). A large part of this spiritual journey occurs at work. As stated earlier, for the purpose of this study, spirituality is defined as the process of finding meaning through interactions with oneself, others and the universe, not in what one does.

This awareness of interdependency and connectedness is essential for organisations concerned with customer, associate and supplier loyalty (Covey, 2005).

Positive benefits of workplace spirituality include the following (Brown, 2003; Cavanagh, 1999; Lips-Wiersema & Mills, 2002):

- fostering wholeness and integration
- promoting ethics and aesthetics in the workplace
- assisting in the development of emotional and spiritual competence
- developing an enhanced team and community at work
- empowering the workforce
- promoting centrality of people and listening to others, resulting in better relations with others
- helping to promote peace and harmony in the world
- being optimistic about the perfectibility of human nature (people and the world can become better)
- committing to a sustainable environment with a view to passing on a better world to future generations (also referred to as “eco-spirituality”)
- increasing creativity and intuition
- improving ethical behaviour
- fostering better relationships as employees feel less alienated from work, self and others (interconnectedness)

2.6.2 Risks facing Spirituality in the workplace

Although there are obvious benefits in encouraging spirituality at work, there are also several risks possibly related to spirituality that have to be managed. Promoting spirituality in the workplace may lead to coercion and favouritism (Cavanagh, 1999). People who prefer not to attend prayer or meditation groups may feel left out or disadvantaged, especially if management are responsible for driving the programmes. In extreme cases, overemphasising spirituality at work may even be interpreted as religious harassment and lead to discrimination in the workplace (Cash & Gray, 2000).

On the other side of the spectrum are employees who take advantage of well-meaning employers, such as the self-proclaimed “witch” who forced his organisation to give him a day off on Halloween (Eden, 2000). As humorous as

this example may seem, spirituality may be associated with these and other negative connotations such as paganism, cults and devil worship (Howard, 2002).

The rationale for organisations introducing or encouraging spirituality in the workplace may be to simply improve their bottom line. If this is indeed so, the process belittles spirituality, which focuses on nonmaterial gain (Benefiel, 2003).

The challenge for organisations is to balance employees' rights to religious and spiritual freedom against other employees' rights to work without obvious harassment and aggressive intrusion in their workplace and general environment (Cash & Gray, 2000).

Since the paradigm in which spirituality is being studied in this study is existential humanism (as discussed in Chapter 1), it is worthwhile considering the risks associated with this view. Generally, human nature may be seen as being unrealistically optimistic (Kirschenbaum, 2004).

Additionally, human evil may be underestimated (Kirschenbaum, 2004) with its drive for greed, power and control leading to problems discussed earlier such as fraud, corruption, lying, theft and manipulation.

On the basis of this discussion, it is imperative for companies wishing to encourage a spiritual awakening in their companies to heed these risks. Sadly, spirituality can be abused both by companies and individuals. A great deal of sensitivity and respect needs to be given to the individuals who embrace spirituality as well as those who choose to avoid it in the workplace.

2.6.3 Workplace readiness for Spirituality

The next aspect regarding management of spirituality, is to determine how ready the workplace currently is to accept and embrace spirituality. Companies that are concerned only with their own profits are on the lowest rung of the spiritual ladder (Eden, 2000). In order to maximise the return on utilising spirituality in the workplace, management need to understand the relationship between an individual's spiritual quest and the organisational environment (King & Nicol, 1999). In the past, organisations have failed to foster any spiritual development in their employees (King & Nicol, 1999). Truth, honesty and spiritual experiences are still the exception in most organisations (Duignan & Bhindi, 1997).

Emerging literature is starting to promote the view that organisations should support employees' spiritual needs to enable the organisation to flourish (Bell & Taylor, 2003; Mohan & Uys, 2006; Moore & Casper, 2006; Pink, 2006). Building feelings, values and belief systems into company policy results in a more content, loyal and stable workforce (Eden, 2000).

Management thinkers are predicting that the effective leaders of the future will be spiritual leaders (Marques at al., 2005). The workplace needs to create an environment in which these leaders of the future can flourish.

2.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter spirituality was conceptualised. Spirituality was defined as the process of finding meaning in life through relationships with oneself, others and the universe. The concept was then compared with other similar concepts, namely:

- religion
- ethics
- well-being (health)

Spiritual dimensions and the way spirituality relates to the workplace were discussed next and the management of spirituality was examined. This section included discussions on the benefits and risks associated with spirituality and the readiness of organisations to accept spirituality.

CHAPTER 3

WORK PERFORMANCE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to conceptualise work performance. The chapter starts with a definition of the term “work performance”. The relationship between organisational and individual work performance will then be discussed. Approaches to work performance will then be discussed after which a number of dimensions related to work performance will be discussed. Ways of managing performance will then be discussed and finally, integration will take place where spirituality and work performance will be integrated.

3.2 DEFINITION OF WORK PERFORMANCE

Work performance is an extremely broad concept that can be easily oversimplified. Work performance can be defined in two ways. The first definition views work performance as a result or consequence of action. In this instance, work performance can be defined as the accomplishment of assigned tasks (Suliman, 2001). Where performance is the deed itself, it may be defined as the actions or behaviours that are relevant to an organisation’s goals and that

can be scaled (or measured) in terms of an individual's proficiency (or level of contribution) (Suliman, 2001).

Work performance should not be confined to individuals only. It should be considered an outcome of both human and organisational activities (De Waal, 2002).

Work performance is the action or behaviour that is relevant to achieving an organisation's goals (what is actually done), whereas performance management is the process of linking organisational goals to departmental, team and individual goals (guiding or directing what is done).

For the purpose of this research, work performance will be defined as the process through which an individual operates to achieve the goals of the organisation.

A vital point to consider at this stage is the link between organisational and individual performance.

3.3 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANISATIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL WORK PERFORMANCE

The definitions of work performance have highlighted the need to look at work performance from both an individual and organisational perspective. The link between individual and organisational performance will be discussed in this section.

In the past, it was assumed that encouraging individuals to improve their work performance would automatically improve an organisation's overall performance. In simple terms, improving the parts will improve the whole (Coens & Jenkins,

2000). Systems theorists disagree, saying that it is the system in which the work is done that determines performance success, not individual initiative, abilities and efforts (Coens & Jenkins, 2000). Despite widespread acceptance of systems theory, managers still cling to the belief that organisations can only improve if individual work performance is raised. In reality increased individual performance may do little or nothing to improve the overall system (Coens & Jenkins, 2000).

As indicated above, the relationship between individual and organisational performance is not as simple as is commonly believed. Management make a mistake when they assume that improving individual performance will automatically increase the organisation's performance. In point of fact, they are two separate processes that need to be treated completely differently.

The next two sections will investigate how individual and organisational performance management processes have developed.

3.4 APPROACHES IN DETERMINING WORK PERFORMANCE

This section looks at how organisational performance management processes have developed over time. The traditional process of using financial metrics will first be examined, followed by a discussion of the balanced scorecard approach to managing organisational performance. According to the definition of performance management, it is a process that links organisational objectives to departmental, team and individual objectives.

3.4.1 Traditional approaches to organisational performance

A company's performance is commonly evaluated by its measure of profitability in terms of profit margin, return on investment, equity, earnings per share, and so forth. However, these lagging indicators do not really guarantee a company's survival because survival depends on events that have occurred months or even

years before (Pandey, 2005). However, successful companies are still viewed as those that are able to generate profits by focusing on quality products, excellent service, the right location, satisfied customers, access to capital, controlled costs, etc (Burud & Tumulo, 2004).

The problem with this approach to determine organisational performance is that past events, and not the capabilities that will provide value in the future, are measured. Focusing on financial measures encourages managers to make short-sighted decisions that will maximise short-term return but possibly sacrifice long-term prospects and the firm's sustainability (Pandey, 2005). Financial indicators also do not focus directly on customer needs and satisfaction (Pandey, 2005). Relying on this type of historical data is as effective as driving a car while looking in the rear-view mirror (Cummings, 2004).

An even more serious problem of focusing on short-term financial performance is that companies are tempted to reduce spending on new product development, process improvement, human resource management, system and market development, and so forth (Kaplan & Norton, 1996). Financial measures fail to recognise expenditures such as training as investments (Pandey, 2005). Although these spending cutbacks increase profits, such reductions erode company assets and jeopardise the company's ability to create future economic value.

An alternative method of maximising short-term financial results that could lead to problems later on is the exploitation of customers by charging unnecessarily high prices, or keeping prices the same and reducing the quality of service (Kaplan & Norton, 1996). Although short-term profitability may be achieved, lack of loyalty and customer satisfaction could make the company vulnerable to competition.

Management practices based on this Industrial Age way of thinking, view people as an expense and machines as assets. Centralised budgeting also creates hierarchies and bureaucracies that focus only on “getting the numbers”. This is a reactive process that leads to “kiss-up” cultures aimed at “spending so we won’t lose it next year” (Covey, 2005).

3.4.2 A balanced approach to organisational performance

All systems require balance to perform optimally. The weather makes use of high and low pressure systems, whereas the human body uses enzymes, hormones and other communication processes to maintain balance. Businesses disrupt this sense of balance when they put short-term gains ahead of their long-term, strategic focus (Mcmanus, 2005). Although it is possible to obtain a measure of success in the short term without using a balanced approach, sustained levels of performance excellence can only be achieved by using a balanced system in which all key areas of performance are measured and reviewed regularly (Mcmanus, 2005). Although organisational work performance has traditionally been measured in terms of profit and monetary success, these events are short term and backward-looking (Kaplan & Norton, 1996; Pandey, 2005).

The balanced scorecard approach was introduced a decade ago in an attempt to counteract the retrospective and short-term approach to determining performance success. This approach endeavours to align and focus an organisation on the implementation of a long-term strategy (Kaplan & Norton, 1996). This is done by

- clarifying and gaining consensus about the strategy
- communicating the strategy through the entire organisation
- aligning both departmental and personal goals to the strategy
- linking the strategic objectives to long-term targets and annual budgets
- identifying and aligning strategic initiatives

- performing strategic reviews
- obtaining feedback to learn about and improve the strategy

Balanced scorecards eliminate information overload and correct the tendency to focus on the wrong information (Pieper, 2005). The scorecard also facilitates performance review and feedback on a continuous basis (Pandey, 2005). In this way, individual goals are linked to organisational goals.

Since the introduction of balanced scorecards, many companies have implemented them an attempt to remain competitive, but few have managed to make them work effectively. A recent survey found that less than 20 percent of companies that tried balanced scorecards still have mature models in place that generate business value (McMahan, 2005). Although there are many reasons for these failures, two of the most common reasons are the fact that companies incorporate too many metrics (Cummings, 2004) and that they still place far too much weight on historical performance and not enough on forward-looking measures such as external finance and operating performance (McMahan, 2005).

The reason for the excessive number of metrics being used is usually the abundance of information available in the organisation. When using a balanced scorecard, management need to remember that the process is not only about collecting information but also using it to monitor performance, identifying areas that need improvement and making adjustments to ensure continued success (Pieper, 2005).

The balanced scorecard's effectiveness arises from its ability to focus management's attention on a limited number of financial and non-financial metrics (Pandey, 2005) that balance short-term and long-term organisational objectives (Cummings, 2004). These metrics generally include financial processes, customer management processes, internal business processes and

innovation (learning and growth) (Pandey, 2005). It also affords managers the opportunity to ensure that their subordinates' goals are effectively linked to the organisational goals. This means that as individual performance is improved, organisational goals are also directly impacted in a positive way.

The balanced scorecard puts vital information in the hands of decision makers allowing them to align an organisation's vision, mission and strategy and improve its ability to predict the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead (Pieper, 2005). It helps to track performance and provide quick feedback for control and evaluation (Pandey, 2005).

The reason for the excessive focus on historical performance in the past, stems from the problem discussed in the previous section. Most companies are still comfortable with and understand historical financial data the best (Cummings, 2004). However, a comprehensive performance management system needs to measure lagging, current and leading indicators (Pandey, 2005). Lead indicators are proactive and provide an early indication of whether a strategy is being implemented successfully on the basis of, say, the daily sales figures. Lag indicators (such as historical financial data) are reactive and the results often a surprise (MacDonald, 2005).

The balanced scorecard approach aligns well with the definition of performance management since it clearly links an organisation's overall objectives to those of the departments, teams and individuals in the organisation.

3.5 DIMENSIONS OF WORK PERFORMANCE

Having already defined work performance and looked at the relationship between organisational and individual work performance, the dimensions of work

performance will now be discussed. The following dimensions of work performance can typically be measured to indicate success for an organisation (Burud & Tumulo, 2004; Covey, 2005; Dotlich et al, 2006; Hesselbein & Goldsmith, 2006; Jonash & Sommerlatte, 2000; Kaplan & Norton, 1996; Maxwell, 2005; Pandey, 2005; Wind & Crook, 2004):

- profitability
- growth
- adaptability
- relevance
- integrity
- leadership

3.5.1 Profitability

Profitability can be measured in a number of ways but all seem to indicate that an organisation is “healthy”, such as high profit margins, good returns on investment, equity, earnings per share etc. (Pandey, 2005). Various ways of maintaining profitability have been developed, such as focusing on quality products, providing excellent service, being in the right location, having satisfied customers, controlling costs etc. (Burud & Tumulo, 2004).

The problem with only focusing on profitability as a predictor of success, is that a highly profitable company might avoid spending money on things such as new product development, process improvement, effective human resource management, proper training and development, adequate market development etc. (Kaplan & Norton, 1996). These savings might be good for profitability in the short term, but the perceived success of the organisation will probably be short-lived.

3.5.2 Growth

There is a perception that an organisation that shows consistent growth is successful. This is not necessarily true. GEC, for example (a U.K. based firm), grew into a company that provided power, defense and electronics (Wind & Crook, 2004). It continued growing and renamed itself Marconi when it transformed itself into a high-technology firm. However, the telecom revolution in Europe failed and the company lost nearly all its value. Some companies have done the opposite and thrived (Dotlich et al, 2006). Nokia had existed as a lumber company for 100 years when it decided to divest itself of everything but microchips and telephones. In 1992, it threw all its efforts into creating a portable telephone that provided access to the internet and email (Jonash & Sommerlatte, 2000). The change in strategy and rethinking of its business has helped the company to grow significantly (Dotlich et al, 2006).

For many companies, a huge barrier to growth is gaining international exposure by opening up offices or distributors in other countries. Besides the legislative implications, the biggest risk is coming to terms with diversity. The clash of civilizations between the Muslim and non-Muslim worlds is an example of one of the biggest diversity challenges that companies face (Hesselbein & Goldsmith, 2006). Although growth is a sign of good performance and success, an important dimension that also needs to be considered is that of adaptability.

3.5.3 Adaptability

Ensuring that your organisation is adaptable, agile and able to change as the demands of markets and people change is crucial to an organisation's success (Dotlich et al., 2006; Hesselbein & Goldsmith, 2006; Jonash & Sommerlatte, 2000). British Petroleum (BP) changed from a debt-ridden and divided "behemoth" into a sleek, innovative company by effectively managing its performance (Jonash & Sommerlatte, 2000). Rudolph Giuliani was able to successfully reduce crime in New York through effective measurement, tracking

and reporting of incidents and holding people accountable for results (Wind & Crook, 2004). The crime rate in the city between 1993 and 1994 fell six times faster than the national average.

Inability to adapt, eventually leads to failure. Carly Fiorina, the highly charismatic leader of Hewlett-Packard faced increased competition from Dell and IBM. Instead of pulling employees together and embracing change, Fiorina fired key people, alienated board members and strained relationships with influential journalists (Dotlich et al., 2006). Although her skill as a sales person was never questioned, her inability to adapt as the new leader could have destroyed the company. She was eventually dismissed.

3.5.4 Relevance

Next to adaptability, the importance of remaining relevant is also vitally important to an organisation. Market expectations and desires continually change and there is always a risk that a company could lose touch with its market. For example, when Oprah Winfrey first made her appearance in the mid 1980's, she was competing with Phil Donahue's detached style of reporting (Wind & Crook, 2004). Instead of copying his approach, Oprah met with her guests as friends and shared her own personal life experiences. Her intimacy has made her the "Queen of Talk" and two decades later she reaches over 23 million viewers in more than 100 countries (Wind & Crook, 2004).

New Line Cinema co-CEO's Bob Shaye and Michael Lynne invested more than \$200 million with their parent company, Time Warner, into the making of the three Lord of the Rings movies simultaneously, using an unproven director (Peter Jackson). By anticipating the needs and expectations of their audience well, the movies have become one of the most successful movie trilogies of all time (Dotlich et al., 2006).

3.5.5 Integrity

Recent widely publicised scandals such as Enron, Adelphia, WorldCom, Tyco and Vivendi has eroded trust in organisations (Dotlich et al., 2006). A recent Harvard study found that two-thirds of Americans have lost confidence in leadership across various sectors including business, religion, local, state and federal government (Sosik, 2007). Integrity is viewed as a vanishing commodity in the business world (Maxwell, 1993). Although it may be difficult to act with integrity at all times, it is essential for the survival of an organisation (Dotlich et al., 2006).

Only by putting integrity and relationships with others above our own desire to hide mistakes and avoid embarrassment will powerful bonds of trust allow an organisation to succeed (Covey, 2005). Integrity is the basis of trust and, similar to constructing a building, it takes a great deal of time and effort to create, but can be torn down quickly and easily (Maxwell, 2005).

3.5.6 Leadership

John Maxwell says that “everything rises and falls on leadership” (1993). In the 21st century where change is happening at an ever increasing pace and the ability to remain agile can be the difference between victory and defeat, it is the leaders of today and tomorrow that will allow a company to survive or perish (Hesselbein & Goldsmith, 2006).

Traditional leadership focuses too much on the “head” or rational world (Dotlich et al., 2006). In an environment that is becoming morally complex, where attitudes are shifting rapidly and where social, political, economic and technological changes are taking place on higher levels than ever before, it is only organisations with leaders that know how to lead from the front, create meaningful relationships, are authentic, inspire trust and know themselves that will succeed (Dotlich et al., 2006).

3.6 MANAGING WORK PERFORMANCE

This section looks exclusively at how individual performance management takes place. The use of appraisals to assist with performance management will first be examined, followed by a discussion of new approaches to managing individual work performance. Factors that impact on work performance, such as payment, humour, mental health, violence, stress and depression, will then be examined.

3.6.1 The use of appraisals

Most organisations use appraisals (also referred to as performance evaluations) as a fundamental part of their individual performance management process (Smith & Mazin, 2004). Some choose an annual appraisal system while others have introduced processes that require more frequent interactions between managers and employees. Appraisals focus on each individual separately in order to review his or her performance over the previous period and set new objectives for the following period (Heery & Noon, 2001). Some organisations make exclusive use of appraisals to manage individual work performance (Smith & Mazin, 2004).

Performance appraisals have been used in industry since the early 1800s (Coens & Jenkins, 2000). In 1954, a study of 400 employers found that half were regularly making use of merit rating plans. A 1962 study found that 61 percent of organisations used appraisals. Numerous studies in the past 20 years have revealed that between 74 and 89 percent of businesses in the USA use a formal performance evaluation tool (Coens & Jenkins, 2000). These trends illustrate the increasing popularity of using appraisals in organisations.

Typically, the appraisal is a tool used by management to influence the behaviour of subordinates (De Waal, 2002). It also enables employees to accept responsibility for their own work performance (Cadwell, 2000). In an attempt to

make the relationship between appraisals and predictable reliable behaviour even stronger, management commonly link appraisals to salary increases and promotions (Coens & Jenkins, 2000). This strategy is often effective since it satisfies an employee's most basic needs (Norgaard, 2001).

However, some critics censure this top-down approach of appraisals, saying that it de-emphasises entrepreneurial talent and individual input (Smith & Mazin, 2004). Managers who perceive people as objects believe that it is necessary to set and keep them in motion using levers such as pay and promotions. These managers also often think that people are inherently lazy (Norgaard, 2001). Even Sigmund Freud argued that people are basically lazy and need to be coerced to work (Moline, 2005). This thinking led to the formation of appraisal as a process of ensuring strict control of individual work performance. In the modern workplace, however, appraisal sends a number of resounding, negative messages about the nature and potential of employees (Coens & Jenkins, 2000). A person's contribution to the organisation is reduced from something unique and wonderful, to a cold and sterile numerical rating (Coens & Jenkins, 2000).

Another criticism of traditional evaluations is that the exercise is too costly, both in terms of quantifiable costs such as supporting IT infrastructures and loss of work time, and unquantifiable costs such as increasing fear, undermining teamwork, promoting rivalry and the loss of employee morale and motivation (Gliddon, 2004). It is also felt that evaluations lead to high turnover rates and discontent with managers who dislike the time, paperwork and discomfort associated with the process. A study found that 75 percent of managers did not provide ongoing and constructive feedback but simply followed the performance management process as an annual routine (Gliddon, 2004).

Another study found that incorrect performance assumptions about employees led to bias during evaluations. The biasing effects were more pronounced in low-performing employees. Despite all the research that questions the validity and

reliability of evaluations, they still commonly determine wage increases, bonus awards and promotional prospects. A single unfavourable evaluation can shatter an entire career and life (Gliddon, 2004).

Rating errors and inconsistencies are common in evaluations. Raters may tend to give high ratings on all aspects of work performance, thus creating a halo effect. In the same way, one poor rating may influence all future ratings for an employee. Senior management may also put pressure on managers to fit employees into a bell curve, in which most employees will fall into the “average” or middle category. Most employees view themselves as above average, which leads to conflict and possible demotivation (Gliddon, 2004).

A further study found that performance ratings are directly affected by gender differences (Butler & Skattebo, 2004). Men who experienced family conflict received lower overall work performance ratings than those who did not. Conversely, women’s ratings were not affected by any family conflict experiences (Butler & Skattebo, 2004). This provides a strong disincentive for men who desire greater family involvement

Formal research and observation indicate that both managers and employees view performance management as an unpleasant task that should be avoided whenever possible. This often means that the goal setting, coaching and evaluation sessions are usually rushed, late, incomplete or entirely omitted (Gliddon, 2004).

The traditional appraisal process does not align well with the definition of performance management since there is often a gap between the objectives of the individual and those of the organisation. The appraisal does little to bolster organisational performance (Coens & Jenkins, 2000).

3.6.2 More recent approaches to managing individual work performance

Traditional workplace practices, such as using appraisals to manage work performance, encourage passive and dependent behaviour which robs people of their self-respect, erodes the confidence required for consistent high work performance and induces an organisationally sanctioned mediocrity (Moline, 2005). Employees become used to being controlled and their passivity further fuels management's urge to direct and control (Covey, 2005).

Managers with a more enlightened understanding of human behaviour engage in a more interdependent relationship with their employees. When employees are treated as assets rather than objects, managers discover a surprising reservoir of talent, initiative and ingenuity that results in a greater capacity for breakthrough performance (Norgaard, 2001). The reason for this is that employees are more likely to contribute if they are treated as respected, valued adults with individual motives, abilities and preferences (Moline, 2005). Appraisals tend to reduce employees to objects rather than assets, which is why there has been a call to abolish appraisals completely (Coens & Jenkins, 2000).

Traditional sources of sustainable advantage for companies such as new products, technological superiority and regulated markets are no longer as effective. It is increasingly the way in which employees are able to use their skills, strategic relationships and motivation that determine an organisation's long-term success (Burud & Tumolo, 2004).

Research on 18 visionary companies that remained leaders in their industries for over 50 years found that success was because of a focus on core values and an empowering culture and not only on the bottom line (Neal et al, 1999). In economic terms, these companies outperformed their competitors by as much as 16:1.

Research studies have also found that organisations that invest in human capital are able to grow profits and revenues more impressively, sustain growth over longer periods and generate greater value for shareholders (Burud & Tumolo, 2004). These investments in people can take the form of recognising and valuing individuality, responding to needs and empowering employees to operate. Employees who feel respected and have the resources required to perform on the job, will treat customers better. Customers will be more satisfied and will return for more of the same kind of treatment (Burud & Tumolo, 2004).

Appraisals tend to focus too much on individual work performance. Employees should rather be encouraged to work together to overcome obstacles through sharing experiences, strategising and experimenting. Group work provides synergy that individuals working alone cannot achieve (Nelson, 2002). Group work also provides greater ownership and sense of responsibility (King, 2002).

In the same way, recognising individual work performance tends to cause fragmentation and interpersonal competition. Celebrating achievements as a team reduces this tendency (Nelson, 2002).

This approach to individual work performance fits in well with the definition of performance management since organisational objectives will be better aligned to those of the departments, teams and individuals operating in the environment.

3.6.3 Payment management and its effect on individual work performance

The assumption that high pay levels will maintain and enhance future work performance has been largely untested (Gardner et al, 2004). A study on this relationship found that pay level did influence employee performance through its effect on organisation-based self-esteem. Organisations are able to increase their return on investment in salary payments by reinforcing the connection

between pay level and the value of the employee to the organisation (Gardner et al, 2004).

3.6.4 Humour and its effect on individual work performance

A study found that humour has a positive effect on work performance through its effect on motivation and morale. More than half of the respondents, however, indicated a concern that jokes could lead to offence and even accusations of sexual or racial discrimination (Watts, 2002).

3.6.5 Average and excellent individual work performance

Research has found (Sonnentag, 2000) that the two main differences between average and excellent performers are as follows:

- Excellent performers are not only concerned about themselves but also about the performance of the larger department in which they work.
- Excellent performers ask for feedback and regard cooperation as critical. By implication, they do not rely simply on their own skills and knowledge but take advantage of the resources available in their wider work context.

This ability ensures high work performance in both the short and long term.

Another study found that “connected” people, in other words, those who network informally, tend to be more successful than their colleagues who do not. They are able to build relationships with a wide variety and range of people and maintain these relationships through good communication (Sparrow, 2005).

3.6.6 Managing poor individual work performance

Most people in organisations today are neither fulfilled nor excited (Covey, 2005). Employees also seem to trust their leaders less and less (Duignan & Bhindi, 1997). These feelings may eventually lead to employees experiencing work performance problems. A vital part of management is dealing with work

performance problems and taking disciplinary action when required (Alexander, 2003). Managers frequently avoid acting (Moline, 2005), which leaves problems unresolved. They also tend to avoid giving negative feedback to their employees (Covey, 2005). This avoidance of giving negative feedback and inaction on management's part in attempting to correct performance sends a message to employees that management accept or tolerate unsatisfactory work performance. Instead, managers need to deal with non-performers who do not respond to coaching or reassigning, even if this means taking the drastic step of terminating employment (Branham, 2005). Failure to act may adversely affect the performance of valued employees who work with poor performers.

There are various reasons for poor work performance. These can be divided into two categories, namely management/organisational and employee centred causes (Alexander, 2003).

Management/organisational causes may lead to unsatisfactory work performance for the following reasons:

- *Unclear roles and expectations.* If no-one tells employees what is expected of them or what their roles are, it is unlikely that they will be able to meet management expectations. This is not the employees' fault. They are likely to become frustrated because they are not involved in helping the organisation achieve its goals (Covey, 2005)
- *Inappropriate job assignment.* This is likely to occur if an employee is promoted, transferred or assigned to a job for which he or she is not qualified because of a lack of competency or interest or having the wrong kind of personality.
- *Lack of adequate training.* It is unreasonable to expect an individual to be able to perform a job if he or she lacks the proper training.
- *Incorrect job design.* If a job offers variety, a challenge, responsibility and opportunity for growth, performance is unlikely to be a problem. Lack of

these is likely to lead to boredom, frustration and decreased work performance.

- Inadequate or poor supervision

Employee-centred causes that lead to unsatisfactory work performance may be as follows (Alexander, 2003):

- *Lack of interest.* An employee must remain interested in his or her work in order to continue performing well.
- *Personality.* It is difficult, if not impossible, to expect an employee to change his or her personality. In certain cases, it may be necessary to move an individual from one position to another to accommodate his or her personality, for example, from an aggressive sales environment to a stable support function.
- *Limited capabilities.* Every individual has a limit to what he or she can accomplish. In the same way as there are physical limitations to how high or far a person can jump, there are limits to what a person can achieve on the job (physically, mentally or emotionally).

Shifting the focus away from employees leads to the realisation that the workplace is currently experiencing an under-management epidemic (Tulgan, 2004). Research has found that only one out of every 100 managers provides every direct report with work performance feedback every day. It is vital for managers to not only observe performance, but also provide frequent feedback and recognise and compliment good work performance (Moline, 2005). The most common denominator in most cases of suboptimal workplace performance is under-management. The under-managed employee struggles because the supervisor does not provide sufficient direction and support. Ironically, under-managers believe that their “soft-peddling” approach to authority is effective, when it actually leads to a downward spiral of management problems because of the lack of feedback and direction (Tulgan, 2004). They continue to operate with

serious “blind spots” simply because nobody is brave enough to confront them (Covey, 2005).

Employees who feel unappreciated and undervalued often do not feel satisfied at work and are unlikely to operate at their full potential (Moline, 2005). Employees need to be appreciated and their contributions should never go unnoticed. Lack of recognition is one of the primary reasons why employees leave their jobs (King, 2002). Failure to recognise people may not only extinguish good behaviour, but also create bad behaviour in an attempt to attract attention (Anderson, 2003). One of the main reasons why employees do not perform as required is because of a lack of feedback on their work performance (Cadwell, 2000).

3.6.7 Mental health and individual work performance

Mental fitness is a critical component of individual work performance (Acton, 2002). The ability to manage one’s emotions contributes to a harmonious workplace, superior productivity and increased profitability. Managing emotions does not simply mean curbing negative emotions such as anger, fatigue, worry and indifference, but enhancing positive emotions such as contentment, joy, competency and passion (Acton, 2002).

Conversely, mental illness has a direct impact on work performance owing to problems such as cognitive deficits, interpersonal problems, intrapersonal issues (e.g. lack of motivation and self-esteem), function fluctuations and a work history that is disrupted (Honey, 2003). Worse still, the lack of motivation associated with many mental illnesses is a prevalent barrier to employment (Honey, 2003).

Stress may impact negatively on employees’ mental health (Gura, 2002). It increases the problems of mental illness, such as thinking, poor memory,

confusion, difficulty concentrating, tiredness, lethargy, loss of motivation and an inability to relate to others (Honey, 2003).

Mental illness causes reduced work performance because of decreased quality or speed of task performance, the inability to perform certain tasks, reduced effort or overzealousness, reduced reliability or attendance, erratic performance and strange or inappropriate behaviour (Honey, 2003). The side effects of medication may also have a negative impact on work performance (Honey, 2003).

3.6.8 Violence and work performance

In the USA, Businesses lose an estimated \$728 million in productivity per annum because of domestic violence (Gurchiek, 2005). Violence affects employee safety, work performance and organisational profitability. In extreme cases, violence has led to fatalities at work such as revenge shootings or shootings during robberies. Besides physical assault, violence can also be manifested in the use of inappropriate language, verbal abuse and threats (intimidation). Besides its direct impact, the negative side effects of violence on work performance include tardiness, increased absenteeism and mistakes (Gurchiek, 2005).

3.6.9 Stress and work performance

Stress is a major contributing factor to absenteeism and is a serious organisational issue when it comes to health and safety (Spiers, 2003). Stress is an unusual concept because it is often interpreted and treated as a disease. In essence, stress is simply a perception. People do not experience stress because of what actually happens to them. The stress they experience is as the result of their *perception* of what happens to them (Atkinson & Peterson, 2004).

Occupational stress is defined as the cumulative pressures in the workplace that cause psycho-physiological symptoms and susceptibilities to work injuries and disease (Stein, 2001).

Not all stress that is experienced by people is negative. Having a baby or buying a home may be stressful but at the same time positive (Bolden-Barrett, 2003). Some individuals may even experience stress as motivating and positive (Stein, 2001). Stress becomes a problem when the strain, pressure or tension of an experience becomes so intense that people are unable to live or work comfortably (Bolden-Barrett, 2003).

Work is a major source of stress in people's lives. Problems at work are more strongly associated with health complaints than any other stressors, including financial and family problems (Kerner, 2003).

In the UK, stress has overtaken the common cold as the number one cause of employee absence from work (Spratt, 2003). An estimated half a million people in the UK are suffering from work-related stress, anxiety or depression at levels that make them unwell (Aldred, 2001). British research shows that the number of stress-related conditions has increased from 829 per 100 000 workers in 1990, to 1 700 in 100 000 (Willmott, 2003).

Stress-related illness costs the UK about £7 billion a year (Spratt, 2003). In Canada, stress and illness caused by mounting workloads contribute to most of the \$6 billion a year spent on health care (Price, 2004). In the USA, occupational stress causes many of the occupational injuries that cost employers approximately \$120 billion a year (Stein, 2001). When measured in terms of absenteeism, lost productivity, turnover and direct costs, stress costs US industries \$300 billion annually (Ruez, 2004).

The following factors contribute to stress in the workplace (Spratt, 2003):

- low job discretion (little freedom to make decisions or exercise control)
- low use of skills (leads to under load stress [Atkinson & Peterson, 2004])
- low or high work demands
- low task variety or repetitive work (also leads to under load stress)
- uncertainty about how well or poorly one is performing
- low pay
- inadequate supervision
- bullying by a supervisor or colleague
- violence at work
- Organisational change
- lack of promotional prospects
- poor communication in the workplace

The following reactions to stress are common (Arden, 2002; Bolden-Barrett, 2003; Spratt, 2003):

- Physical stress
 - high blood pressure and rapid heart rate
 - loss of appetite/excessive eating
 - headaches
 - heartburn
 - diarrhoea or constipation
 - frequent urination
 - sleep problems (including insomnia [Atkinson & Peterson, 2004])
 - muscle spasms
 - voice tremor
 - nausea
 - shortness of breath
 - difficulty sitting still or excessive energy
 - increased use of alcohol, drugs or cigarettes

- fatigue
- insomnia
- skin rashes
- low sex drive
- Mental stress
 - inability to concentrate or work effectively
 - difficulty completing work tasks
 - habitual absenteeism or tardiness
 - low self-esteem
 - increased irritability
 - hostility and aggression
- Emotional stress
 - arguments with co-workers
 - family conflicts
 - boredom
 - insensitivity to others
 - loss of interest in life
 - feelings of hopelessness or inability to cope
 - persistent worries about health or security
 - feelings of isolation
 - anxiety
 - depression
 - mood swings
 - irritability

The link between stress and sleep is a vicious cycle (Atkinson & Peterson, 2004). Research conducted by the National Sleep Foundation in the USA found that the most common negative mental effect of lack of sleep is a person's inability to handle stressful situations. The Foundation also found that the most common cause of inability to sleep is stress. This implies that a lack of sleep increases a

person's stress which then interferes with his or her ability to sleep (Atkinson & Peterson, 2004).

The following are common symptoms of stress that affect work (Toman & Sikin, 2004):

- negative change in mood or behaviour
- deterioration in relationships with colleagues
- longer hours being worked with no additional achievement
- indecisiveness
- absenteeism
- poor work performance (more mistakes, missed deadlines, reluctance to face up to or prioritise difficult tasks)

Sustained levels of severe stress can lead to cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal and psychological disorders, suicide, stroke, cancer, ulcers, impaired immune function, arthritis, depression, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, accidents, errors in judgement, conflict, chronic fatigue and reduced quality of both life and work (Kerner, 2003; Stein, 2001).

Stress may also impact negatively on employees' mental health (Gura, 2002). It increases the problems associated with mental illness, such as thinking, poor memory, confusion, difficulty concentrating, tiredness, lethargy, loss of motivation and of the ability to relate to others (Honey, 2003).

Stress-related events may trigger 50 percent of all depression. Early life stress can also prime people for depression later in their lives (Paul, 2003).

The Department of Labour in South Africa has recently acknowledged the direct impact of stress on work performance. It recently obtained a court order to recognise post-traumatic stress syndrome as an occupational disease (De Bruin, 2006). This allows government employees to receive compensation from the

Department of Labour to assist with their recovery. Professionals working for organisations such as the South African Police Services, Metro Police, Fire Department, Ambulance Services and the Education Department are regularly exposed to traumatic and stressful situations.

3.6.10 Depression and work performance

It has been found that depression is the number one cause of disability worldwide (Paradise & Kirby, 2005). It is the most common disorder experienced by people who see mental health practitioners. Depression is 10 times as prevalent now as it was in 1960 (Paradise & Kirby, 2005). It is not clear what causes depression. Stress might play a significant two-way role as both a possible cause and a consequence of depression (Paul, 2003).

Depression can be defined as a neurodegenerative disorder that disrupts the structure and function of brain cells, destroying nerve cell connections and even killing certain brain cells, leading to cognitive decline (Paul, 2003).

Depression is not simply a “chemical imbalance”. Faulty circuitry in the brain fails both in generating positive feelings and inhibiting disruptive negative ones (Paul, 2003). Mental illness generally and depression specifically are not well understood as physical disabilities. The general public continue to hold prejudices and have misconceptions about the cause and treatment of depression (Kline, 2000).

Approximately 19 million Americans suffered from depression in 2002 (Paul, 2003). In 1990, the cost of depression in the USA was \$44 billion through lost productive time (Greener & Guest, 2005). Depression costs Canadian businesses more than \$6 billion a year in lost productivity (Kurylłowicz, 2002). Approximately 10 percent of Americans between the ages of 15 and 54 experience major depression or dysthymia (chronic low-grade depression that

does not reach the threshold for major depression). A further 11 percent experience symptoms of depression that do not reach the diagnostic threshold for either major depression or dysthymia (Greener & Guest, 2005). European studies paint a broadly similar picture.

Unfortunately, in South Africa no research could be found on the prevalence of stress or depression in members of its population. Although Statistics South Africa produces statistics on a range of 35 diseases, including tuberculosis, tetanus, malaria and rheumatic fever (Statistics South Africa, 2004), stress and depression do not form part of their research at present.

A productivity cost which directly affects employees suffering from depression but which is difficult to quantify or measure, is a concept known as “presenteeism” (Durso, 2004). Presenteeism is a term used to describe the “working sick”, a practice that costs organisations more than the loss of productivity due to absenteeism and having to pay for medical and disability costs (Ruez, 2004). Generally, presenteeism is caused by stress, depression, injury or illness. It affects employees’ quality of work and puts employee safety and productivity at risk (Ruez, 2004).

Presenteeism occurs when people are physically at work, but are limited in some way in their ability to produce or participate in the workplace. A recent Gallup survey found that these “disengaged” employees could cost the U.S. economy as much as \$300 billion each year in lost productivity (Sosik, 2007). These “lost” costs are not included in the amounts mentioned in the previous few paragraphs. The 17% of the U.S. employees that were defined as “actively disengaged” in the study, tended to be absent from work 3.5 more days per year than their colleagues (86.5 million days in total) (Blanchard, 2007). It was found in another study that employees suffering from chronic depressive symptoms were seven times more likely to have reduced effectiveness at work than employees with no depressive symptoms (49,1% compared with 13,6%) (Greener & Guest, 2005).

In general, employees suffering from depression perform physically at only 77,6 percent of their normal functional levels (Greener & Guest, 2005). In comparison, advanced coronary artery disease and angina are associated with average impairments of 65,8 and 71,6 percent respectively. Depressed employees tend to be absent from work more regularly than “normal” employees and symptoms of depression dramatically undermine productivity (Greener & Guest, 2005).

Depression also has a negative impact on unemployed people’s employability. A study found that employment rates for people with recent psychiatric disorders were reduced by 11 percent (Kline, 2000).

Major depression is predominantly a recurrent illness. Eighty percent of people who have had one episode are likely to have another one in the future (Greener & Guest, 2005; Paul, 2003). With each episode, the risk of future episodes increases (Kline, 2000).

The following are common symptoms of depression (Kline, 2000; Paul, 2003):

- persistent sad, anxious or empty moods
- sleeping too little or too much
- reduced appetite and weight loss or increased appetite and weight gain
- restlessness and irritability
- persistent physical symptoms such as headaches, chronic pain or digestive disorders that do not respond to treatment
- difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions
- fatigue or loss of energy
- feeling guilty, hopeless or worthless
- thoughts of suicide or death
- loss of interest in activities once enjoyed

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, the signs and symptoms listed above must be present for at least two consecutive weeks for the condition to be diagnosed as major depression (Greener & Guest, 2005; Kline, 2000).

Suicidal thoughts are a frequent symptom of major depression. Over 50 percent of all suicides are committed by individuals in a major depressive episode (Kline, 2000). A study in France found that 64 percent of suicides involved depressed individuals (Greener & Guest, 2005). This study also found that depression increases the suicide risk thirty-fold.

The following list indicates the consequences of employee depression (Greener & Guest, 2005; Kline, 2000; Paul, 2003):

- higher absenteeism and turnover
- declining or impaired productivity (“presenteeism”)
- poor interpersonal relations
- cognitive decline
- reduced information processing
- low motivation and slowed movements
- loss of interest and goal focus
- reduced ability to think and concentrate
- impaired short-term memory
- reduced ability to change and see alternatives
- increased alcohol and drug abuse
- anxiety and overreaction to stress
- reduced morale and job satisfaction
- increased tendency to focus on negative events
- complaints of constant fatigue
- reduced desire to cooperate

Ironically, depressed people tend to behave in a manner that takes them even deeper into depression (Arden, 2002). They are inclined to isolate themselves even further, postpone exercise and avoid eating.

Although depression has become a common occurrence among employed people and is associated with substantial work impairment, adequate depression treatment can substantially reduce the impairment and thus improve work performance (Wang et al, 2004).

3.7 INTEGRATION

This section will attempt to establish the theoretical relationship between spirituality and work performance.

While discussing spirituality and work performance, a number of dimensions were discussed for each topic. Under spirituality, the following dimensions were discussed:

- Giving
- Humbleness
- Forgiveness
- Establishing a sense of community
- Providing balance
- Embracing diversity
- Maintaining integrity

Under work performance, the following dimensions were discussed:

- Profitability
- Growth
- Adaptability
- Relevance

- Integrity
- Leadership

These dimensions are not necessarily exclusive, but they are the ones that were raised most commonly in existing research covering these two topics. They will be discussed and compared according to the table below to illustrate how spirituality impacts work performance:

Table 3.1: Work Performance Dimensions and Spiritual Dimensions

Performance	Spirituality	
Profitability	Giving	
Growth	Embracing diversity	
Adaptability	Forgiveness	Providing balance
Relevance	Establishing a sense of community	
Integrity	Maintaining integrity	
Leadership	Humbleness	

3.7.1 Profitability and Giving

The profitability dimension focuses on high profit margins, good returns on investment, equity, earning per share and suchlike (Pandey, 2005). The spiritual dimension that relates strongest to this dimension is giving. This dimension entails giving of finances, time, talent, gifts etc. to those less fortunate than yourself and that are unable or unlikely to ever give back in return (Wolf, 2004). Giving is the opposite of profitability since it is contrary to sound financial advice and economic principles that teach to invest in causes that have a low risk of loss and are likely to yield a high return (Giacalone, 2004). Whether it is through financial support, provision of talent or services or by offering training or experience to less privileged groups, many companies and governments (Brandt, 1996; Elmes & Smith, 2001; Liss, 2004; Mason, 2003) believe that their success

is due to the fact that they ignore the economic principles of lack and scarcity (Sheth, 2000) in favour of their generosity or abundance mentality (Covey, 2005). By initiating a culture of giving instead of getting from management, employees will be encouraged to reciprocate with loyalty and improved performance (Branham, 2005).

3.7.2 Growth and Embracing Diversity

One of the largest barriers to international exposure and organisational growth is facing diversity issues between civilisations, such as between the Muslim and non-Muslim world (Hesselbein & Goldsmith, 2006). Even within countries, the amount of diversity organisations face can be overwhelming (for example, differences in ethnicity or race, gender, religious belief, language, age, culture etc.) (Hankin, 2005; Mahomed, 2004). These factors can complicate organisational growth plans and hinder performance.

Although diversity causes stress, spiritual people tend to be more trusting of others and feel less estranged in environments that are characterised by a great deal of diversity (Mohamed, 2004). This is because spiritual people place less emphasis on external factors and tend to show more respect and dignity for others based on their own personal beliefs (Johnson, 2004). It is therefore likely that organisations with greater levels of spirituality are more likely to be accepting of diversity and should be able to grow better.

3.7.3 Adaptability, Forgiveness and Providing Balance

In order to maintain high levels of performance, organisations need to remain adaptable, agile and be able to change as the demands of their markets and people change (Dotlich et al., 2006; Hesselbein & Goldsmith, 2006; Jonash & Sommerlatte, 2000). For employees, the uncertainty, pain and stress associated with competition and change in the organisation can lead to resentment, resistance, anger and even revenge or retaliation (Bradfield & Aquino, 1999).

Spiritual employees are more likely to be accepting of change and forgiving of the painful experiences they endure (Butler & Mullis, 2001). Forgiveness also promotes hopefulness and eliminates moderate depressive symptoms (Butler & Mullis, 2001).

Another positive effect that spirituality has on adaptability is to promote balance between work and self (Hankin, 2005; Wolf, 2004). This balance minimises the risk of burnout (Robin, 2003) and maximises efficiency (Johnson, 2004) as employees are able to draw on power greater than themselves whether it be from their colleagues (Sonnentag, 2000) or from their relationship with their creator (Bell & Taylor, 2003; King & Nicol, 1999).

3.7.4 Relevance and Establishing a Sense of Community

Market expectations and desires continually change so from a performance perspective, there is always a risk that an organisation could lose touch with its market and lose business to its competitors (Wind & Crook, 2004). Bureaucracy and scientific management (which promotes specialisation) makes this situation even worse through further isolation and alienation of workers (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). Spirituality minimises these risks as it encourages interdependence and operation within a community (Giacalone, 2004). Spiritual people feel a strong sense of connection, commitment and community with others (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Mohamed, 2004, Mohan & Uys, 2006) both within and outside of the organisation which would counteract the risks mentioned earlier.

3.7.5 Integrity and Maintaining Integrity

Integrity is viewed as a vanishing commodity in the business world (Maxwell, 1993) and recently publicised scandals involving organisations such as Enron, Adelphia, WorldCom, Tyco and Vivendi have eroded trust in organisations (Dotlich et al., 2006). Recent research found that two-thirds of Americans have

lost confidence in leadership across various sectors including business, religion, local, state and federal government (Sosik, 2007). Integrity is the basis of trust and, similar to constructing a building, it takes a great deal of time and effort to create, but can be torn down quickly and easily (Maxwell, 2005).

Integrity is grounded in knowing what is right and acting on it, or not acting on what might be wrong (Barker & Coy, 2003). Integrity affects the way in which a person engages in business and treats others (Barker & Coy, 2003; Han, 2006). Individuals with an appreciation for spirituality are likely to have a high level of integrity, since they are aware of how their behaviour and attitudes affect the people around them (Covey, 2005; Maxwell, 2005).

3.7.6 Leadership and Humbleness

Traditional leadership focuses on the “head” or rational world (Dotlich et al., 2006) but in an environment that is becoming morally complex, where attitudes are shifting rapidly and where social, political, economic and technological changes are taking place on higher levels than ever before, it is only organisations with leaders that know how to lead from the front, create meaningful relationships, are authentic, inspire trust and know themselves that will succeed (Dotlich et al., 2006).

Humbleness determines how a person responds to success (Collins, 2002) and the most successful leaders are those who are able to combine extreme personal humility with intense professional will (Collins, 2002).

Besides the previous dimensions that were identified and discussed, managing spirituality and work performance was also discussed in the previous chapters. The following related concepts will now be discussed:

- Spirituality and its effect on health
- Spirituality and its effect on stress

- Spirituality and its effect on depression
- Spirituality and its overall effect on the workplace

3.7.7 Spirituality and its effect on health

One of the largest group studies performed about spirituality, was based on people who practise transcendental meditation (TM) (Tischler et al., 2002). The following results were discovered in people who practised it regularly:

- Physiological changes:
 - increased blood flow to the brain
 - decreased stress hormone production
 - increased muscle relaxation
 - lower baseline heart rate
 - lower respiration rate
- Mental changes (after long-term practice of TM):
 - enhanced creativity and intelligence
 - improved function of left and right hemispheres of the brain
 - accelerated cognitive development in children
 - improved problem-solving ability
 - increased independence and self-esteem
 - increased ability to deal with abstract and complex situations
 - decreased anxiety
- Psychological changes:
 - increased self-actualisation
 - general psychological health
 - stronger self-identity
 - improved perception of others
 - greater empathy
 - orientation towards positive values
 - growth of wisdom (ego development, affective functioning and cognitive development)

- increased time competence
- self-supportiveness
- self-acceptance
- sensitivity to one's own needs and feelings
- capacity for warm interpersonal relationships
- greater interest in academic activities
- intellectual orientation
- social extroversion
- less impulsiveness and anxiety
- more positive social psychological attitudes

Another spiritual practice that has shown positive results is a form of exercise called Yoga. Yoga has been shown to reduce pain, relieve tension, reduce risks of injury, correct posture, improve communication, increase energy and attention span, and enhance feelings of overall wellness and well-being (Gura, 2002).

Prayer is a practice that is similar to that of meditation. Prayer has been found to produce a state of calm, love and a sense of belonging in individuals (Servan-Schreiber, 2003). According to the definition of spirituality for the purposes of this study, this practice contributes to healthier relationships with others as well as the universe.

3.7.8 Spirituality and its effect on stress

The spiritual practise of meditation (also sometimes referred to as reflection in the work environment) entails taking a rest by stepping away from the usual hustle and bustle in the workplace in order to reflect and see the bigger picture (Wind & Cook, 2004). This has been found to reduce levels of stress and anxiety because different parts of the brain are stimulated (Tischler et al., 2002). Regular meditation leads to increased problem-solving ability, enhanced creativity and a more positive attitude (Tischler et al., 2002).

Similarly, prayer produces a state of calm, love and a sense of belonging in individuals (Servan-Schreiber, 2003) that counteracts the negative effects of stress.

Increasingly, diversity is a cause for stress in individuals and organisations. Differences in ethnicity (race), gender, religious beliefs, language, age, cultures, etc, lead to problems with communication, understanding, tolerance and acceptance (Hankin, 2005; Mahomed, 2004).

Spiritual people are more trusting and feel less estranged in environments characterised by high diversity (Mohamed, 2004) and also do not place a great deal of emphasis on external differences such as those mentioned in the earlier paragraph.

3.7.9 Spirituality and its effect on depression

Depression has a negative impact on performance in the workplace since it is likely to lead to fatigue, a feeling of worthlessness, loss of interest, a tendency to withdraw from society, a reluctance to work collaboratively, irritability and a lack of concentration (Robin, 2003).

Research on spirituality has found that it reduces anxiety and depression (Mason, 2003) and that it has a moderating effect on negative life experiences (Mohamed, 2004).

Meditation specifically has been found to lead to less neuroticism and less depression in individuals (Tischler et al, 2002).

3.7.10 Spirituality and its overall effect on the workplace

It has been said that the highest level of work that employees can accomplish is on a spiritual level (Burack, 1999). This implies that encouraging employees to be spiritual at work will ensure that they produce the best results they possibly can for their employer, thus guaranteeing improved performance. An absence of spirituality is likely to result in a demotivated and disillusioned workforce (Harrington et al, 2001).

Based on the literature review, the following benefits for encouraging workplace spirituality were identified (Brown, 2003; Cavanagh, 1999; Lips-Wiersema & Mills, 2002):

- assisting in developing emotional and spiritual competence
- developing an enhanced team and community at work
- experiencing optimism about the perfectibility of human nature (people and the world can improve)
- committing to a sustainable environment in order to pass on a better world to future generations (also referred to as “eco-spirituality”)
- increasing creativity and intuition
- improving ethical behaviour
- promoting better relationships because employees feel less alienated from work, self and others (interconnectedness)

Although spirituality may not have an obvious, direct impact on organisational performance, many organisations are attempting to promote workplace spirituality because it is likely to enhance employee attitudes towards work with the intention of improving motivation and thus have a positive impact on organisational performance (Bell & Taylor, 2003). From a performance management perspective at an organisational level, the following spiritual aspects could be measured to improve overall performance:

- Promoting ethics and aesthetics in the workplace

- Developing emotional and spiritual competence
- Encouraging optimism
- Recognising centrality of people and listening to others (sense of community)
- Fostering better relationships
- Maintaining integrity
- Embracing diversity
- Giving

A spiritual base in the workplace enables workers to feel whole and complete. This environment allows organisations to prosper (Elmes & Smith, 2001). For the purpose of this study, spirituality has been defined as the way in which individuals gain meaning in life through relationships with self, others and the universe. As employees are able to establish deeper and more fruitful relationships with colleagues and clients, they derive greater meaning and a deeper sense of purpose in their work. This increases their self-discipline, motivation, commitment to the job and concern for the customer which benefits the organisation (Elmes & Smith, 2001).

These healthy relationships will allow the organisation to withstand difficult times whether they are organisational threats (such as being bought out by another organisation or difficult economic times) or individual problems (such as stress and depression).

A recent survey found that companies that were more “spirited” outperformed other companies by between 400 and 500 percent. This was in terms of net earnings, return on investment and shareholder value (Marques et al., 2005). Other research similarly found that organisations that encouraged spirituality experienced higher profits and success (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002).

The following are two reasons why spirituality is leading to business success (Marques et al., 2005, p 84):

- Profitability is as a result of excellence in business; and
- A team of self-motivated, aligned and high-performing individuals is the best source of sustainability and excellence.

3.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter conceptualised work performance. The chapter started with a definition of the term “work performance”. The relationship between organisational and individual work performance was discussed and individual work performance was studied. Approaches to work performance were discussed after which dimensions related to work performance were discussed. Ways of managing performance were discussed and finally, the constructs spirituality and work performance were integrated.

CHAPTER 4

THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will discuss the empirical part of the research as mentioned in chapter 1. The empirical objectives of the study were to determine managers' perceptions of the relationship between spirituality and work performance. This chapter will discuss the sampling, measuring instruments, data gathering and data analysis processes used in the study.

4.2 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

This section will discuss the research population as well as the sample selection and measuring instrument that were used for the research.

4.2.1 Population

Since both the concepts that were discussed in the study (spirituality and work performance) are complex, in terms of their utilisation and applicability, it was decided that only people in management positions and higher would be approached. Although non-managers may have been exposed to both these concepts, managers would have applied them not only to themselves, but quite possibly to their subordinates as well. This would mean that they have not only had exposure to spirituality and work performance and how it affects them as individuals, but also to how it affects their subordinates and possibly the functioning of the entire organisation.

Managers are responsible for the management of work performance and spirituality in the workplace. The management of spirituality depends on managers perceptions of spirituality.

The concepts “spirituality” and “work performance” from an industrial and organisational perspective, essentially relate to all organisations, regardless of their classification (e.g. private or public sector) and purpose (e.g. profit driven or non-profit driven). For this reason, individuals were approached from seven different organisations and a method of convenient sampling was used. No organisations were intentionally included or excluded from the study. One company is an international health-care provider, another is an international audit and consulting firm, another company manufactures paint for motor vehicles and road markings while another is the largest church of its type in South Africa at present.

4.2.2 Descriptive profile of the sample

Sampling is an ideal way in which to gather data for a qualitative study (Flick et al, 2004). An essential component is the formation of groups that will allow for comparison.

Because of the diverse workforce in South Africa, individuals representing a wide range in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and level in the organisation were selected. The following table shows how the management levels were distributed by racial group and gender:

Table 4.1: Details of sample by race, gender and level

Race	Gender	Snr Manager/ Manager	Director	GM/Partner	CEO	Grand Total
Black	Female	1				1
	Male	1				1
Coloured	Male				1	1
Indian	Male			1		1
White	Female	1	1	1		3
	Male	1	3		1	5
Grand Total		4	4	2	2	12

A total of 12 individuals were interviewed. In terms of racial composition, two individuals were black, one was Coloured, one Indian and eight white. There were four females and eight males.

Management levels ranged from managers to chief executive officers (CEOs). CEOs were the most senior of the group, since they either owned the organisation or had the greatest decision-making powers. They had general managers or partners reporting to them. General managers or partners owned a smaller share of the company, had fewer decision-making powers than the CEOs and had directors and/or managers reporting to them.

Directors reported to partners or general managers and had managers or senior managers reporting to them. Four of the individuals interviewed were managers or senior managers, four were directors, two were general managers or partners and two were CEOs. Only white employees were distributed across all four management levels.

Because of the need to approach people in senior positions in organisations, it was found that there was a distinct lack of people from previously disadvantaged racial groups (females, blacks, coloureds and Indians) available to interview. Nevertheless, a coloured CEO and Indian partner were interviewed. A female general manager and director also were respondents.

Overall, it was found that the older (and not necessarily the more senior) respondents had far more to contribute to the research process. The younger respondents had not been exposed as much to some of the concepts (e.g. depression). The younger respondents tended to rely far more on their theoretical knowledge, while the older respondents were inclined to rely more on their experiential knowledge and were able to give more examples and stories about practical situations they had faced previously, either in their work or personal lives.

The following table represents the sample by race, gender and age in years:

Table 4.2: Details of sample by race, gender and age

Race	Gender	20s	30s	40s	50s	Grand Total
Black	Female			1		1
	Male		1			1
Coloured	Male				1	1
Indian	Male				1	1
White	Female	1	1		1	3
	Male	1		3	1	5
Grand Total		2	2	4	4	12

Owing to the overall seniority of the population, most of the respondents (66,7%) were in their forties or fifties. Few of the younger employees held senior positions in their organisations. The exception was one CEO who was in his twenties.

The following table represents the sample by age, race and seniority:

Table 4.3: Details of sample by age, race and seniority

Age	Race	Snr Manager/ Manager	Director	GM/Partner	CEO	Grand Total
20	White	1			1	2
30	Black	1				1
	White		1			1
40	Black	1				1
	White	1	2			3
50	Coloured				1	1
	Indian			1		1
	White		1	1		2
Grand Total		4	4	2	2	12

This table shows a general tendency that the older the respondents are, the more senior their level in the organisation. As mentioned earlier, the main exception to this trend was the one CEO in his twenties.

4.2.3 Measuring instruments

The self and interviews were used as measuring instruments.

4.2.3.1 Self as an instrument

The researcher grew up in a traditional Christian family, attending Sunday school from an early age. He was christened in a Dutch Reformed Church (NG Kerk) and spent most of his teenage years in a Methodist Church. In his early twenties, he started attending a number of Pentecostal churches (where he was baptised) and he now regularly attends an Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) church in his neighbourhood. He is actively involved in the church, assisting with multimedia presentations and lighting on a weekly basis.

Although the researcher has had little exposure to other religions (such as Judaism, Hinduism and the Muslim faith), he does respect other people's beliefs, even though they may differ from his own.

The researcher is well aware of the fact that discussing spirituality with individuals requires a greater amount of intimacy than usual (Lips-Wiersma & Mills, 2002; Lips-Wiersma, 2003). He is also conscious that he needed to be aware of interpretations that he may not be open to, or questions that he has not thought of asking because they may seem obvious or irrelevant within his own world view (Lips-Wiersma, 2003).

Since discussing spirituality requires greater sensitivity and intimacy on the interviewer's part (Lips-Wiersma & Mills, 2002), the interviewer also needed to be conscious of his own personal biases in an attempt to prevent them from affecting the way he asked questions or responded to answers.

The researcher is aware of the impact that his background and beliefs may have had on the research process. Where possible, he clarified concepts he did not understand by asking the respondents to explain their comments in more detail. Despite these precautions, this study needs to be viewed in the light of the researcher's history and current world view.

4.2.3.2 Interviews

A questionnaire containing four questions was used to perform semi-structured interviews with all the participants. This was not a counselling interview because its aim was purely to gather data. Although focused interviews are normally group interviews, they are not necessarily bound to group situations (Flick et al, 2004). The participants were all interviewed individually in the study.

Since the researcher knew most the interviewees fairly well before their respective interviews, this helped him to establish good rapport and neutralise possible initial distrust (Mouton, 1996) sometimes associated with these types of interviews. The researcher also attempted to be friendly and engaging towards the interviewees in order to maintain a high level of energy and motivation for the duration of the interview (Mouton, 1996). However, owing to the content of the

interviews, most interviewees were highly energised and excited about the topics that were discussed. This meant that they were engaged for the entire interview.

Because of the diversity of the group that was interviewed (in terms of race, gender, age and level), the researcher had explanations or slightly different versions of the questions to ask the interviewees if they were unsure about how to answer. The researcher was also willing to repeat the question if the respondents felt that they were off the point or had lost their train of thought.

After numerous discussions between the researcher and his supervisor, the following questions were selected and used to gather data for the purposes of this study:

- What is your idea of spirituality?
- How do you experience spirituality in the workplace?
- What are the benefits of encouraging spirituality at work?
- How do depression and stress affect work performance?

4.2.4 Data gathering

Individual meetings were arranged with each of the respondents either telephonically or in person. In all but one of the meetings, the researcher met with the respondent in a meeting room to ensure that there were no distractions or interruptions during the interview. Because of geographical constraints, one participant was interviewed telephonically.

The meeting started with an introduction. This entailed explaining the purpose of the meeting and giving the individuals background on the topic being studied. If the respondents asked for more detail, the researcher explained that he would only be able to provide this once the interview had been completed. For example, if a participant asked the researcher to define spirituality, his response might have influenced the participant's definition of the concept. For this reason,

the researcher made a concerted effort to ensure that he did not contaminate the process by giving the respondents information that could have influenced their answers.

The following five stages were followed in conducting the interviews individually with each participant in the study (Flick et al, 2004):

- *Explaining the framework.* The interviewee was told what the interview would entail and what process would be followed to collect data. The interviewer explained his personal religious and spiritual background and encouraged the interviewee to explain complex concepts if he or she felt that the interviewer might not understand them. From an ethical and confidentiality perspective, respondents were informed that their responses would be treated anonymously and that their comments were to be used purely for research purposes.
- *Creating a relaxed atmosphere.* The interviewee was encouraged to relax, and an initial informal discussion with no bearing on the study was held to enable the interviewer and interviewee to connect informally (Mouton, 1996). Permission was also obtained to record every interview on a digital audio recorder.
- *Giving the interviewee room to open up.* The interviewer avoided explaining his own beliefs or views during the interview and did not say anything if he disagreed with the interviewee. He retained an “independent interest”. If necessary, he asked additional questions to obtain further information from the interviewee. He also rephrased questions if the respondent seemed uncertain or did not understand. He was careful not to overly agree or disagree with what the interviewee was saying because this generally influences subsequent responses and could even make the information biased (Mouton, 1996).
- *Providing an opportunity for “drama” to develop.* All the questions asked were short and couched in simple language. This was done to minimise

confusion. The interviewer gave the interviewees adequate time to respond to each question.

- *Avoiding an attempt to discover theoretical ideas.* At times, the interviewer pretended to be naive, asking the interviewees to explain concepts that seemed obvious to them. An attempt was made to understand the interviewee's life-world and avoid academic and impersonal discussions.

Once the interviews had been completed, the discussion ended. In most cases, the participants had questions about the researcher's findings so far in the process. He was able to elaborate in more detail and compare the responses to others that had been made previously. The interviewer then thanked the individuals for their contribution and closed the meeting.

4.2.5 Data analysis

Once each interview had been completed, the researcher wrote out the interview in full. This entailed listening to the recorded material and typing each statement in an electronic format (Microsoft Excel). The responses were captured with one concept or idea in each sentence. While rewriting the responses, the researcher reviewed what each interviewee had said.

Once all the interviews had been transcribed, the transcriptions were all combined in one file in order to allow the researcher to compare the different responses.

The researcher used an alphabetical letter to link the responses to each interviewee (from A to L for the 12 respondents). This ensured that the researcher would be able to link each response to the originator.

The labelled sentences were then ordered by concept/idea in an attempt to identify common trends and themes. The researcher attempted to identify

similarities in the responses. Similar responses were grouped together as well as differing opinions on the same topics.

Once all the trends and similarities had been grouped together in the file they were shown to and discussed with the researcher's supervisor. Themes and sub-themes for the information were drawn from these groupings. This information was then reported, interpreted and integrated.

In order to further validate the process, the chapters dealing with spirituality and work performance as well as the next chapter were sent to the 12 participants for them to review. All the responses were favourable.

A common mistake made in this phase of qualitative data analysis, is to simply reflect the coding and categorising of the raw data (Henning, 2004). This process (referred to as "qualitative content analysis") is easy to produce and works on one level of meaning, taking what respondents have said at face value. This could lead to the findings being naively realistic because of a lack of interrogation (Henning, 2004). In this study, open coding was used to ensure that the process of "seeing the whole" was followed. This was done in an attempt to give more depth to the findings.

4.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the empirical study by describing the sampling, measuring instruments, data gathering and data analysis processes that were used.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings of the research process. This will be done by providing the themes that resulted from the data-gathering process. Where appropriate, the responses of the individuals who were interviewed will be provided in order to substantiate the identified themes and will be integrated with the theory.

The following themes were identified:

- Theme 1: spirituality promotes the healthy development of individuals
 - Subtheme 1.1: spirituality leads to increased self-awareness
 - Subtheme 1.2: spirituality helps individuals find inner peace
 - Subtheme 1.3: spirituality helps individuals deal with stress and depression
- Theme 2: spirituality enhances teamwork
- Theme 3: spirituality redefines the concept of success
 - Subtheme 3.1: spirituality reduces the pressure for individuals to compete with others
 - Subtheme 3.2: spirituality teaches individuals to respect others
 - Subtheme 3.3: spirituality encourages honesty in the workplace

5.2 THEMES IDENTIFIED

The following themes and related subthemes were identified in the research process:

5.2.1 Theme 1: spirituality promotes the healthy development of individuals

It was generally felt that spirituality assisted individuals with their self-development. Respondent L stated that a spiritual person “is all rounded”, while Respondent E explained that individual spirituality assists with “being a whole person”. This ties in with studies performed on people who regularly practise transcendental meditation (Tischler et al., 2002). These people showed a tendency to have increased independence and self-esteem, a stronger self-identity, sensitivity towards their own needs and feelings and more positive social psychological attitudes. This would make them better team players and more valuable to the organisation.

5.2.1.1 Subtheme 1.1: spirituality leads to increased self-awareness

A fairly common topic that was raised in the discussions was how spirituality helps people to increase their self-awareness. In other words, as Respondent F put it: “Spirituality enables a person to know who he or she is”. Similarly, Respondent G explained that spirituality helps individuals to “get in touch with who they are”. To build on this theme, Respondent H stated that spiritual individuals “know the limits to their strength and wisdom”. According to Respondent A, spirituality makes a person aware that he or she requires guidance instead of trying to do everything with his or her own strength.

In this sense, spirituality not only allows people to know themselves and their strengths and weaknesses, but also gives them the self-confidence to find assistance or guidance outside of themselves if necessary.

Another way, in which spirituality promotes self-development, is that, as Respondent L put it, a spiritual person “takes the bigger picture into account”. This means that when individuals make decisions, they do not do so necessarily for their own selfish gain. This aspect is discussed in more detail in the next theme (teamwork).

This aspect of spirituality, knowing oneself, is vitally important for individuals (Rogers & Rothlisberger, 1991). This knowledge of self usually determines the quality of one’s relationships with others. People who are out of touch with themselves are more likely to be disconnected from others. People who have good communication within themselves are more likely to have healthy relationships with others (Rogers & Rothlisberger, 1991).

The definition of spirituality used in this research study, is that it is the process of finding meaning in life through relationships with oneself, others and the universe. The first step (having a relationship with oneself) can be linked directly to this concept of self-awareness.

From a work performance perspective, a person who is self-aware will be well-connected with his or her colleagues, will have healthy relationships with others in the organisation and will be an effective communicator.

5.2.1.2 Subtheme 1.2: spirituality helps individuals find inner peace

According to the respondents in this study, besides promoting self-awareness, spirituality helps with the healthy development of individuals by providing inner peace. According to Respondent L, spiritual people “find peace in themselves”, while respondent E stated that “having belief provides inner peace” for spiritual people. Respondent B mentioned that spirituality affords people a “chance to be at peace for a bit of time with yourself”.

Finding inner peace will help to put individuals more in touch with themselves which should also ensure that they are more connected with others (Rogers & Rothlisberger, 1991).

From a work performance perspective, inner peace is a vital factor in building healthy relationships in an organisation (Rogers & Rothlisberger, 1991). This will promote healthy growth and development of people and is likely to minimise hostility, politics and revenge in the workplace.

5.2.1.3 Subtheme 1.3: spirituality helps individuals deal with stress and depression

Most of the respondents acknowledged that stress can have a negative impact on work performance. Respondent F stated that “stress makes you feel overloaded”, while Respondent H explained that stress “saps your energy” and that any problems that you may face seem to “drain you”. According to Respondent L, stress “clouds your judgement and stops you from behaving normally”. A few respondents acknowledged the fact that certain stress levels are necessary to promote action. Respondent F stated that “stress is not necessarily bad” because it can encourage you “to focus”. According to Respondent I, stress only becomes a problem when people “do not know what to do next”.

The respondents felt more strongly about depression. Respondent D stated that depression “is the most underestimated issue in business” and that its negative effect on people is worsened because it is “not talked about”. Respondent C explained that depressed people “cannot function at their best”. According to Respondent B, depression has a “significant effect on work performance”. In Respondent E’s opinion, depression makes people “unproductive” and prevents them from being able to “enjoy being at work”. Respondent F mentioned that depression makes some people “withdraw and become more introverted”, while

Respondent H felt that “depression buries problems”. According to Respondent K, people suffering from depression “lose their sense of purpose” and this it makes them feel as if they “have nothing to offer”. Respondent I stated that “society does not know how to deal with depression”.

Research has found that only half of all people suffering from depression actually seek professional help (Hirschman, 2004). Clinically depressed people may feel “dread and despair” and believe that they are alone and hopeless. In reality, they need not and should not be alone (Kline, 2000).

In 80 percent of depression cases, treatment is effective (Paul, 2003; Witchalls, 2005). Treatment normally involves medication and therapy. Greater awareness has reduced the stigma attached to and improved the drugs available to treat depression (Hirschman, 2004). Mild cases may be responsive to psychotherapy alone (Kline, 2000). Research is currently being conducted to find ways of assisting the 20 percent of people who currently do not respond positively to existing treatments for depression (Witchalls, 2005).

However, a risk for work performance is that medication that enhances work-related outputs by reducing the symptoms of depression can also undermine cognitive functioning because of sedation, for example (Greener & Guest, 2005).

Despite the negativity surrounding stress and depression, the respondents felt that spirituality can help individuals to cope better with stress and depression. Respondent G stated that spirituality helps people to “cope with life’s stresses”; while Respondent H explained that spiritual people are more inclined to “look after other people and care”. According to Respondent K, spirituality helped her to recognise the symptoms of stress and depression in herself and to do something about it before it developed into a serious problem. Respondent K mentioned that spirituality also makes one sensitive enough to look out for the symptoms in others.

This ties in with findings that spirituality generally leads to reduced depression, less anxiety, increased hope, optimism and longer life (Mason, 2003; Mohammed, 2004). Transcendental meditation has also been found to make people less neurotic, depressed and sensitive to criticism, while it also makes individuals more empathic towards others (Tischler et al., 2002). Spirituality has also been found to have a moderating effect on negative life experiences (Mohamed, 2004).

5.2.2 Theme 2: spirituality enhances teamwork

For the purpose of this study, spirituality is defined as the process of finding meaning in life through relationships with oneself, others and the universe. Theme 1 dealt specifically with the first aspect of the definition, namely the individual. This theme relates well to the second aspect of the definition, namely relationships with others. According to Respondent F, “spiritual people are able to forge and maintain relationships better”. Respondent E explained that spiritual people accept others “for who they are, not who we would like them to be”. This reduced problems associated with people who had judgmental and critical attitudes towards other people. Research has shown that prayer produces a sense of belonging for individuals (Servan-Schreiber, 2003) and transcendental meditation has been found to increase people’s capacity to have warm interpersonal relationships (Tischler et al., 2002).

According to Respondent K, spirituality allows people to acknowledge others as “whole beings” as well. This built on the topic discussed previously, namely that spiritual people are able to see themselves as whole people. Once individuals are able to accept themselves as whole people, they can appreciate and value others as whole individuals as well (Rogers & Rothlisberger, 1991).

Respondent L explained that spiritual people are not “brash”, while according to Respondent H, spiritual people “respect other creatures”. This also is possible because of the appreciation that spiritual people have for others. Respondent K stated that spirituality encourages “humility”, and that this has a positive impact on interpersonal relationships because people treat others as equals.

Globalisation has resulted in the workforce composition changing continuously over the past few decades. This has led to a greater degree of demographic diversity in organisations (Chuang et al., 2004). Individual differences can either be readily detectable (age, race, sex, etc) or underlying and not so easily discerned (skills, abilities, knowledge and values). The similarity/attraction paradigm states that individuals who possess similar individual characteristics and attitudes will be attracted to each other. Demographic diversity (specifically visible attributes) generates negative effects such as hostility and anxiety which may impede group processes and functioning (Chuang et al., 2004). Heterogeneity in functional background, however, may improve group performance through the contribution of diverse information and skills.

Respondent D stated that there is an incorrect assumption that spiritual managers are “soft” when dealing with non-performers at work. This grows out of the sense of humility and respect that spiritual people have for others, regardless of their status or position in the organisation. Respondent D continued by saying that spiritual managers are likely to “get the message across differently” in the way they treat poor performers.

According to Respondent C, “people that do not fear God, have no respect for themselves or other people”. This would have a negative effect on interpersonal relationships. Respondent K mentioned that spiritual people have a “sense of respect for others” that will be positive and healthy for interpersonal relationships. Spiritual people are generally more trusting of others, feel less estranged in high diversity environments and have a strong sense of commitment and community

(Mohamed, 2004). It is an individual's personal beliefs that allow him or her to respect others (Johnson, 2004). Teamwork allows employees to be less concerned about themselves, to focus their efforts on the performance of the department and to make use of resources available in the wider work context (Mohan & Uys, 2006, Sonnentag, 2000).

5.2.3 Theme 3: spirituality redefines the concept of success

Most of the respondents believed that spiritual people have a vastly different approach to success. Their perception of success differs in three main ways. The first has to do with competition, the second with motives and the third with honesty.

5.2.3.1 Subtheme 3.1: spirituality reduces the pressure for individuals to compete with others

Owing to the pressures that exist in the workplace, the need for profitability and high performance demands at all cost, competition is rife between employees as well as businesses. This competitive environment tends to encourage individuals to take chances, cut corners, compromise and sometimes use dishonesty or deceit in order to get ahead of their opponents (Duignan & Bhindi, 1997). Spiritual people, however, seem to have a completely different approach to competition.

According to Respondent I, certain people think that they are better than others because of their position in the organisation. Spiritual people, however, treat all people the same, regardless of their social standing or position in the organisation. This reduces the need to impress and show off in order to "beat" other people.

Respondent H stated that spirituality helps people to be "happy with what you have" instead of always wanting more. Research confirms that spirituality is

associated with general satisfaction with life which leads to increased hope and optimism (Mason, 2003). This satisfaction further reduces the need to compete for bigger bonuses, salaries, promotions, etc.

From a work performance perspective, spiritually motivated employees will seek healthy relationships with their managers and colleagues ahead of promotion and purely financial rewards. This need for human connection ensures improved work performance not just on an individual (selfish) level, but on a larger (departmental or organisational) level (Covey, 2005; Marques et al., 2005).

5.2.3.2 Subtheme 3.2: spirituality teaches individuals to respect others

The respondents felt that spiritual people had motives that were different from those of other people. Respondent K explained that certain people set their sights on being “rich and famous, for example”. Such a person is driven by greed. A spiritual person may be driven by a need to help others instead. If he writes a book that is successful, his wealth and fame will be the result of his desire to assist others, not out of greed.

Respondent H explained that spirituality also teaches people to “not be desperate”. He went on to say that a non-spiritual person may be tempted to do something evil or immoral out of desperation. Spiritual people tend not to give in to these temptations. They have developed their conscience to such an extent that it gives them a clear inward moral sense of what is right and wrong (Covey, 2005). Their spirituality teaches them to treat others as they themselves would like to be treated (Jain, 2004; Salopek, 2004).

Respondent I explained that employers have a choice of three types of employees. The first “subscribes to values and makes no money, the second subscribes to values and makes some money and the third has no values but makes a lot of money”. The ideal employee, in his opinion, is the second person who is not driven so much by greed that he or she is prepared to compromise on

his or her values. However, he or she is not so heavenly minded that he or she is of no earthly use.

Respondent I admitted that employees do sometimes hire people who are driven only by money. They may be highly successful and good to the business for a certain period of time, but he felt that their success was not sustainable in the long term. As he put it: “Ultimately, you have to drive values with profitability and performance.”

According to Respondent L, spiritual people are all rounded and take the bigger picture into account in their decision making. They are more likely to “act in line with their principles” and thus avoid possibly hurting others because of their selfish motives.

5.2.3.3 Subtheme 3.3: spirituality encourages honesty in the workplace

Respondent C explained that generally, spiritual people are “happier, more reliable, have more integrity and are more responsible”. This behaviour is built out of respect and reverence for God. This ties in with the final part of the definition of spirituality, namely finding meaning in life by having a relationship with one’s creator.

Respondent A stated that spirituality gives people “beliefs, principles and values that guide them to be honest and productive”. This ensures that they will do their best in everything they do.

According to Respondent I, in the long term, honesty saves companies “a huge amount of cost”. In his experience, if people are wronged, they believe that they are entitled to “do something wrong back”. This cycle of destruction could lead to revenge in various forms such as theft, dishonesty or fraud.

“You can trust spiritual people”, Respondent H explained, because spiritual people do not just want to look after “themselves and their children”.

Trust between managers and their employees has been found to play a pivotal role in an organisation’s future performance (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002). Spiritual people are in a position to help others because they have no limits. They do not only rely on themselves and their own abilities. Honesty is the exception in the workplace (Duignan & Bhindi, 1997) but spiritual people are prepared to put their integrity and relationships with others above their own selfish needs (Covey, 2005).

5.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided the findings of the research process. Themes that emerged during the data-gathering process were discussed. Where appropriate, the responses of the individuals who were interviewed were provided in order to substantiate the themes identified.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter concludes the study of managers' perceptions of the relationship between spirituality and work performance. Conclusions and limitations relating to the literature review and empirical research will be discussed and recommendations made for future research. This will round off the entire research process.

6.2 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions drawn in this section relate to both the literature review and the empirical research process.

6.2.1 Conclusions in terms of the goals of the literature review

The aims of the literature review were to

- conceptualise spirituality in the workplace
- conceptualise work performance
- determine the theoretical relationship between spirituality and work performance

Spirituality was defined as the process of finding meaning in life through relationships with oneself, others and the universe. Spirituality was then compared with similar concepts such as religion, ethics and well-being. This discussion highlighted both the differences and similarities between these various concepts.

The existence of spirituality in the workplace was dealt with and the benefits of encouraging spirituality in the workplace discussed. These benefits included giving, humility, forgiveness, establishing a sense of community, providing balance, embracing diversity and maintaining integrity.

Ways of managing spirituality through performance management were discussed next. Reasons for seeking spirituality in the workplace were then explained. These included promoting wholeness and integration, furthering ethics and aesthetics, assisting in developing emotional and spiritual competence, developing an enhanced team and community at work, empowering the workforce, helping to create peace and harmony, commitment to a sustainable environment, increased creativity and intuition, improved ethical behaviour and better relationships.

The risks facing spirituality in the workplace were discussed and workplace readiness for spirituality explained.

The concept of work performance was then dealt with. The concept was defined as the process through which an individual operates to achieve the goals of the organisation. The relationship between organisational and individual work performance was highlighted. Organisational performance was the next topic of discussion. This entailed a discussion of the traditional approach to organisational performance management followed by a discussion of the balanced scorecard approach.

The discussion of organisational performance led to an explanation of individual performance. This covered the use of appraisals as well as new methods of managing individual performance. Payment and its effect on individual work performance, as well as humour, were mentioned. Poor, average and excellent work performance was then highlighted.

The next topic of discussion was mental health and the effect of violence on individual work performance. This was followed by a detailed elucidation of stress and depression and their effect on work performance.

In the integration section, the relationship between the two concepts “spirituality” and “work performance” was discussed by looking at existing research and information.

6.2.2 Conclusions in terms of the empirical research

The aims of the empirical research were to

- determine the perception of managers regarding the relationship between spirituality and work performance
- make recommendations regarding spirituality and work performance.

Based on the findings of the study, the following hypotheses are formulated in line with the qualitative aims of the research:

- **Spirituality promotes the healthy development of individuals**

The respondents felt that spirituality helps individuals with their self-development. To be more specific, this occurred on the basis of the following subthemes:

- *Subtheme 1.1: spirituality leads to increased self-awareness*

Some of the respondents agreed that spirituality allows individuals to “know who they are” by helping them to “get in touch” with themselves. This also allows them to identify their own strengths and weaknesses so that they know when they may need to rely on others for assistance. Self-awareness determines the quality of interpersonal relationships by encouraging “good” internal communication and thereby healthy and productive working relationships (Rogers & Rothlisberger, 1991).

○ *Subtheme 1.2: spirituality helps individuals find inner peace*

Some of the respondents felt that spirituality assists people to find peace in themselves and be comfortable with themselves. Having inner peace promotes healthy growth and development and so minimises hostility, politics and revenge (Rogers & Rothlisberger, 1991).

○ *Subtheme 1.3: spirituality helps individuals deal with stress and depression*

Most of the respondents acknowledged that stress and depression tend to have a negative effect on performance. However, they felt that spirituality helped individuals not only to deal with stress and depression, but also to be sensitive enough to identify these symptoms in others. Spirituality has been found to lead to reduced depression, less anxiety, increased hope, optimism and living a longer life (Mason, 2003; Mohammed, 2004).

• **Spirituality enhances teamwork**

The respondents stated that spirituality helps individuals to forge and maintain healthy relationships and reduces their tendency to be judgemental and critical of others. Spiritual people tend to accept themselves and others as whole people. This allows them to appreciate, respect and value others. This is helpful in the current workplace which is becoming increasingly diverse because of globalisation and employment equity (Chuang et al., 2004).

Teamwork encourages employees to focus on the performance of the department as a whole (Mohan & Uys, 2006, Sonnentag, 2000).

- **Spirituality redefines the concept of success**

According to the respondents, spiritual people approach success differently, the main differences being in the way they view the following:

- *Subtheme 3.1: spirituality reduces the pressure for individuals to compete with others*

Since spiritual people tend to treat everyone with respect, they are less likely to see others as competitors (Duignan & Bhindi, 1997). Spiritual people also tend to be satisfied with what they have which increases their hope and optimism and reduces their need to impress others or compete for salaries, promotions, etc. (Mason, 2003).

- *Subtheme 3.2: spirituality teaches individuals to respect others*

Spiritual people are not motivated by their own selfish needs. Their success is usually the result of who they are as people, not because of their greed and desires. Since spiritual people are unlikely to become desperate they do not easily succumb to temptation. They are more likely to take the bigger picture into account when making decisions to ensure that other people that may also be affected by the decisions are either included or consulted. They have developed their conscience that gives them a clear moral sense of what is right and wrong (Covey, 2005).

- *Subtheme 3.3: spirituality encourages honesty in the workplace*

The respondents felt that spiritual people have a set of beliefs, principles and values that guide them to be honest and productive. This drives them to do their best at everything they do. They are also unlikely to engage in revenge cycles that typically lead to theft, dishonesty and fraud. Spiritual people are able to place their integrity and relationships with others above their own

selfish needs (Covey, 2005). A healthy trust relationship will also exist between managers and their employees (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002).

The respondents indicated that there is a positive relationship between spirituality and work performance. They believed that spiritual people

- are well rounded, happier, more reliable, more responsible and have greater integrity
- are more honest with themselves and others
- know the limits to their own strength and wisdom
- respect other people and are more accepting of them
- do not chase after riches
- are unselfish and care about other people
- are in touch with themselves which leads to healthy relationships with others
- cope with the pressures of life, stress and depression better.

6.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Limitations in terms of both the literature review and empirical research will be discussed in this section.

6.3.1 Limitations in terms of the literature review

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the study of spirituality, from an academic viewpoint, has been largely neglected in the past (Butts, 1999; Hall et al, 2004; Mohamed, 2004; Sheep, 2004), despite increasing interest in this topic in popular magazines and books (Benefiel, 2003; Garcia-Zamor, 2003) and in the workplace (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Fry, 2003; Hankin, 2005; Konz & Ryan, 1999; Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002; Neal, 1997). Most of the existing texts on spirituality are popular works. This means that the literature tends to be

optimistic and uncritical (Brown 2003), lacking central focus and a well-defined methodology (Hicks, 2002).

Prior to 2002, little literature was available on spirituality in the workplace. Most of the research on this topic was published in 2002 and later. Since it is such a new topic, the body of research that is available appears to be in its infancy. Far more research needs to be conducted on the topic before organisations are likely to consider it relevant and senior managers and executives to actually take spirituality seriously. Hopefully, more research on this topic in the future will give spirituality more credibility and recognition.

Spirituality still seems to be regarded as a controversial topic and most of the research that is available in the literature is based predominantly on qualitative interviews as opposed to large-scale quantitative surveys. It may seem difficult for a “new” topic such as spirituality to be measured quantitatively, but this will assist in comparing perceptions about the topic across management levels, organisations and countries.

There is a lack of consensus on a definition of spirituality which means that making a comparison between the studies is difficult. This may also explain why no quantitative studies have yet been conducted on spirituality.

In South Africa, no documented research could be found on the effects of stress and depression on employee and organisational performance. Such research would not only indicate how “healthy” the South African workplace is, but also indicate the business costs incurred as a result of absenteeism, “presenteeism” and medical care. This could also indicate the potential savings that would be made by encouraging employees to develop their spirituality in the workplace in South Africa.

6.3.2 Limitations in terms of the empirical research

The greatest limitation of this study was to find senior managers from previously disadvantaged groups that could be interviewed. Although all racial groups were represented in the study, most of the senior managers and directors with more than 20 years of experience were white.

Spirituality proved to be a fairly elusive topic for the respondents. Managers' perceptions varied quite dramatically. Some respondents looked to the researcher to provide some guidance in assisting to answer the qualitative questions, but this was avoided because it would have tainted the data-gathering process.

Some of the respondents were not able to comment on depression and its possible impact on performance as they had never been exposed to people who had suffered from the disease.

The researcher's own spiritual and religious views and experiences may have impacted on the data-gathering and analysis processes. In an attempt to minimise this, the researcher ensured that the respondents knew his frame of reference and asked them to expand on concepts that were not understood or may have been open to interpretation.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

This section will discuss recommendations for managing work performance and spirituality as well as recommendations for further research.

6.4.1 Recommendations for managing work performance and spirituality

It is suggested that quantitative studies on spirituality in the workplace be conducted in order to measure the concept and its impact on work performance. This would also allow benchmarking that could be used to measure possible increases or decreases in spirituality which could then be compared with work performance and success of organisations. In this way, successful ways of managing work performance and spirituality to enhance organisational performance can be recommended.

6.4.2 Recommendations for further research

The relationship between spirituality and religion could be analysed in more detail. Existing researchers disagree on this point. Some believe that the two are mutually exclusive (spirituality is the opposite of religion) while others say that they are closely intertwined (religion enhances spirituality).

In the South African context, the impact of stress and depression on the performance of individuals and organisations could be analysed in more detail.

6.5 FINAL CONCLUSION

This chapter concluded the discussion on managers' perceptions of the relationship between spirituality and work performance. Conclusions and limitations relating to the literature review and empirical research were discussed and recommendations made for future research.

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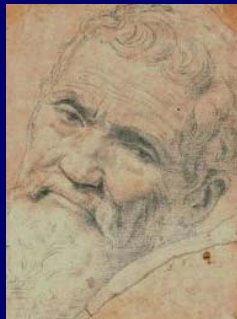
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Spirituality and Work Performance

By George F. Honiball

The inspiration

- Michelangelo – Artwork
- Viktor Frankl – “Man’s search for meaning”
- Carl Rogers – Client centered therapy



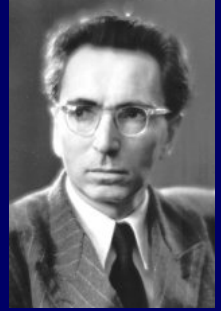
Michelangelo

1475 – 1564

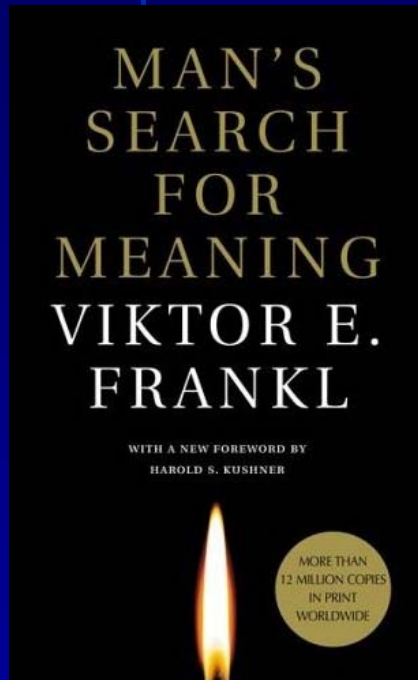


Viktor E. Frankl

1905 - 1997

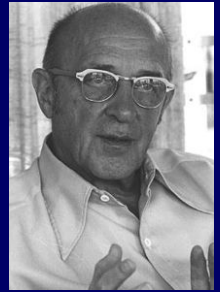


- More than 12 million copies sold
- First half – experiences in Concentration camp
- Second half – Logotherapy (meaning)
- His wife, his father, mother, and brother were killed by the Nazi's
- "People who had hopes of being reunited with loved ones, or who had projects they felt a need to complete, or who had great faith, tended to have better chances than those who had lost all hope".



Carl Rogers

1902 - 1987



- "Why am I entering the ministry?"
- Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology
- Client-Centered Therapy
- All creatures strive to make the very best of their existence. Even weeds!
- Alternative approach to Freud (victim of past) and Behaviourism (victim of surroundings)

My thesis

- Managers' perceptions of the relationship between Spirituality and Work Performance
- Humanistic Existential approach
- Qualitative (not quantitative)

My findings

- Stress and depression
- Perceptions of Spirituality
- Improving Work Performance

Stress leads to:

- Negative changes in mood or behaviour
- Deterioration in relationships
- Longer hours being worked with no additional achievement
- Indecisiveness
- Absenteeism and "presenteeism"
- Poor performance
 - More mistakes,
 - Missed deadlines
 - Reluctance to face up to or prioritise difficult tasks.

Stress and health

- Cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal and psychological disorders, suicide, stroke, cancer, ulcers, impaired immune function, arthritis, depression, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, accidents, errors in judgment, chronic fatigue.
- Mental health problems such as poor memory, confusion, difficulty concentrating, tiredness, lethargy, loss of motivation and ability to relate to others.

The cost of stress

- Stress-related illness costs the UK about £7 billion a year (Spratt, 2003).
- In Canada, stress and illness caused by mounting workloads contribute to most of the \$6 billion a year spent on health care (Price, 2004).
- In the USA, occupational stress causes many of the occupational injuries that cost employers approximately \$120 billion a year (Stein, 2001).
- When measured in terms of absenteeism, lost productivity, turnover and direct costs, stress costs US industries \$300 billion annually

Stress in South Africa

- The Department of Labour in South Africa has recently acknowledged the direct impact of stress on work performance. It recently obtained a court order to recognise post-traumatic stress syndrome as an occupational disease (De Bruin, 2006).
- This allows government employees to receive compensation from the Department of Labour to assist with their recovery.
- Professionals working for organisations such as the South African Police Services, Metro Police, Fire Department, Ambulance Services and the Education Department are regularly exposed to traumatic and stressful situations.

Depression

- Depression is the number one cause of disability worldwide
- Depression is 10 times as prevalent now as it was in 1960
- Employees suffering from depression perform physically at only 77.6% of their normal functional levels.
- In comparison, advanced coronary artery disease and angina are associated with average impairments of 65.8% and 71.6% respectively

Depression leads to:

- Higher absenteeism and turnover (resignations)
- Declining or impaired productivity ("presenteeism")
- Poor interpersonal relations
- Cognitive decline
- Reduced information processing
- Low motivation
- Slowed movements
- Loss of interest and goal focus
- Reduced ability to think and concentrate
- Impaired short-term memory...

Depression leads to (ctd):

- Reduced ability to change and see alternatives
- Increased alcohol and drug abuse
- Anxiety and overreaction to stress
- Reduced morale and job satisfaction
- Increased tendency to focus on negative events
- Complaints of constant fatigue
- Reduced desire to cooperate.

The cost of depression

- In 1990, the cost of depression in the USA was \$44 billion through lost productive time (Greener & Guest, 2005).
- Depression costs Canadian businesses more than \$6 billion a year in lost productivity (Kuryllowicz, 2002).
- A productivity cost which directly affects employees suffering from depression but which is difficult to quantify or measure, is a concept known as “presenteeism” (Durso, 2004).

The cost of “presenteeism”

- Presenteeism is a term used to describe the “working sick”, a practice that costs organisations more than the loss of productivity due to absenteeism and having to pay for medical and disability costs (Ruez, 2004).
- Generally, presenteeism is caused by stress, depression, injury or illness. It affects employees' quality of work and puts employee safety and productivity at risk (Ruez, 2004).
- A recent Gallup survey found that these “disengaged” employees could cost the U.S. economy as much as \$300 billion each year in lost productivity (Sosik, 2007). These “lost” costs are not included in the amounts mentioned in the previous few paragraphs.

Prevalence of depression

- Approximately 10 percent of Americans between the ages of 15 and 54 experience major depression or dysthymia (chronic low-grade depression that does not reach the threshold for major depression).
- A further 11 percent experience symptoms of depression that do not reach the diagnostic threshold for either major depression or dysthymia (Greener & Guest, 2005). European studies paint a broadly similar picture.

Stress and depression in SA

- Unfortunately, in South Africa no research has been conducted on the prevalence of stress or depression.
- Although Statistics South Africa produces statistics on a range of 35 diseases, including tuberculosis, tetanus, malaria and rheumatic fever (Statistics South Africa, 2004), stress and depression do not form part of their research at present.

So what?

- Prayer and meditation counteracts the negative effects of stress and depression
- How? ...

Prayer and meditation benefits

- Physiological changes:
 - Increased blood flow to the brain;
 - Decreased stress hormone production;
 - Increased muscle relaxation;
 - Lower baseline heart rate;
 - Lower respiration rate.

Prayer and meditation benefits

- Mental changes (after long-term practise):
 - Enhanced creativity and intelligence;
 - Improved function of left and right hemispheres of the brain;
 - Accelerated cognitive development in children;
 - Improved problem-solving ability;
 - Increased independence and self-esteem;
 - Increased ability to deal with abstract and complex situations;
 - Decreased anxiety.

Prayer and meditation benefits ctd.

- Interpersonal changes:
 - Improved perception of others;
 - Greater empathy;
 - Self-supportiveness;
 - Self-acceptance;
 - Sensitivity to one's own needs and feelings;
 - Capacity for warm interpersonal relationships;
 - Social extroversion;
 - Less impulsiveness and anxiety;
 - More positive social psychological attitudes.

Prayer and meditation benefits ctd.

- Business changes:
 - Improved work performance;
 - Improved relationships with co-workers and supervisors;
 - Increased work satisfaction;
 - Decreased turnover propensity.

Manager perceptions of spirituality

- Managers believe that spiritual people:
 - are well rounded, happier, more reliable, more responsible and have greater integrity
 - are more honest with themselves and others
 - know the limits to their own strength and wisdom
 - respect other people and are more accepting of them
 - do not chase after riches
 - are unselfish and care about other people
 - are in touch with themselves which leads to healthy relationships with others
 - cope with the pressures of life, stress and depression better.

Manager perceptions of spirituality

- **Theme 1: spirituality promotes the healthy development of individuals**
- The respondents felt that spirituality helps individuals with their self-development. To be more specific, this occurred on the basis of the following subthemes:
- *Subtheme 1.1: spirituality leads to increased self-awareness*
- Some of the respondents agreed that spirituality allows individuals to “know who they are” by helping them to “get in touch” with themselves. This also allows them to identify their own strengths and weaknesses so that they know when they may need to rely on others for assistance. Self-awareness determines the quality of interpersonal relationships by encouraging “good” internal communication and thereby healthy and productive working relationships (Rogers & Rothlisberger, 1991).
- *Subtheme 1.2: spirituality helps individuals find inner peace*
- Some of the respondents felt that spirituality assists people to find peace in themselves and be comfortable with themselves. Having inner peace promotes healthy growth and development and so minimises hostility, politics and revenge (Rogers & Rothlisberger, 1991).
- *Subtheme 1.3: spirituality helps individuals deal with stress and depression*
- Most of the respondents acknowledged that stress and depression tend to have a negative effect on performance. However, they felt that spirituality helped individuals not only to deal with stress and depression, but also to be sensitive enough to identify these symptoms in others. Spirituality has been found to lead to reduced depression, less anxiety, increased hope, optimism and living a longer life (Mason, 2003; Mohammed, 2004).

Manager perceptions of spirituality

- **Theme 2: spirituality enhances teamwork**
- The respondents stated that spirituality helps individuals to forge and maintain healthy relationships and reduces their tendency to be judgemental and critical of others. Spiritual people tend to accept themselves and others as whole people. This allows them to appreciate, respect and value others. This is helpful in the current workplace which is becoming increasingly diverse because of globalisation and employment equity (Chuang et al., 2004). Teamwork encourages employees to focus on the performance of the department as a whole (Mohan & Uys, 2006, Sonnentag, 2000).

Manager perceptions of spirituality

- **Theme 3: spirituality redefines the concept of success**
- According to the respondents, spiritual people approach success differently, the main differences being in the way they view the following:
 - *Subtheme 3.1: spirituality reduces the pressure for individuals to compete with others*
 - Since spiritual people tend to treat everyone with respect, they are less likely to see others as competitors (Duignan & Bhindi, 1997). Spiritual people also tend to be satisfied with what they have which increases their hope and optimism and reduces their need to impress others or compete for salaries, promotions, etc. (Mason, 2003).
 - *Subtheme 3.2: spirituality teaches individuals to respect others*
 - Spiritual people are not motivated by their own selfish needs. Their success is usually the result of who they are as people, not because of their greed and desires. Since spiritual people are unlikely to become desperate they do not easily succumb to temptation. They are more likely to take the bigger picture into account when making decisions to ensure that other people that may also be affected by the decisions are either included or consulted. They have developed their conscience that gives them a clear moral sense of what is right and wrong (Covey, 2005).
 - *Subtheme 3.3: spirituality encourages honesty in the workplace*
 - The respondents felt that spiritual people have a set of beliefs, principles and values that guide them to be honest and productive. This drives them to do their best at everything they do. They are also unlikely to engage in revenge cycles that typically lead to theft, dishonesty and fraud. Spiritual people are able to place their integrity and relationships with others above their own selfish needs (Covey, 2005). A healthy trust relationship will also exist between managers and their employees (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002).
 - The respondents indicated that there is a positive relationship between spirituality and work performance. They believed that spiritual people
 - are well rounded, happier, more reliable, more responsible and have greater integrity
 - are more honest with themselves and others
 - know the limits to their own strength and wisdom
 - respect other people and are more accepting of them
 - do not chase after riches
 - are unselfish and care about other people
 - are in touch with themselves which leads to healthy relationships with others
 - cope with the pressures of life, stress and depression better.

Dangers of spirituality at work

- Overemphasising spirituality at work may be interpreted as religious harassment and lead to discrimination in the workplace
- Difficult to balance employees' rights to religious and spiritual freedom against other employees' rights to work without obvious harassment and aggressive intrusion into their workplace
- Human nature may be seen as being unrealistically optimistic
- Human evil may be underestimated together with its drive for greed, power and control leading to problems such as fraud, corruption, lying, theft, and manipulation



Relevance?

- If not working, have children or parents or friends that work
- Look out for symptoms