

**EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SPIRITUALITY AND WORKPLACE
SPIRITUALITY**

by

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements for
the degree of

MASTER OF COMMERCE

In the subject

INDUSTRIAL AND ORGANISATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

at the

University of South Africa

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February 2015

DECLARATION

I, Nompumelelo Penny Mahlaba, Student number 32328311, declare that “Employees’ perceptions about spirituality and workplace spirituality” is my own original work, and that all the sources that I have used or quoted from have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature

04 February 2015

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank God almighty, for blessing me and giving me physical strength, courage and spiritual guidance throughout this journey. Indeed you said we can do all things through You who give us strength.

My supervisor, Mr Moalusi, for the guidance, supervision and making sure that this research study was completed. Sir, I am indebted to you for all your invaluable advice and support. Without you, I would never have achieved this milestone.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my husband, Pat Dittrich, for his support and understanding during this journey. Without you by my side, I would not have reached the finishing line.

To Lusanda and Laila, this is actually dedicated to you my precious children. Please learn from Mom that education is the key to success. Always remember that learning does not come easily, but with hard work and perseverance, anything is possible.

To my parents for always believing in me. Thank you, may God bless you and give you more years to see my further success.

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SUMMARY

TITLE: EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY

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DEGREE: MASTER OF COMMERCE IN INDUSTRIAL AND ORGANISATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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This study investigated employees' perceptions about workplace spirituality in a national government department located in KwaZulu-Natal. A constructivist and qualitative approach was followed to gain an in-depth understanding of employees' perceptions of spirituality, based on their personal understanding and experiences. A sample of 16 participants employed in the department was interviewed using a semi-structured interview. Thematic analysis was used to transcribe and assess the interviews. The findings revealed different notions of spirituality and the significance of workplace spirituality. In the workplace, employees continue to search for meaning in their work – meaning that transcends economic gain. Spirituality was perceived as being valuable for the interconnectedness and harmony that it brought to members of the organisation.

Key terms

Spirituality; serving others; team spirit; inner being; religion; caring leadership; respect for employees

ABSTRACT

Orientation

Spirituality in general, and in the workplace in particular, have become important topic in recent years. Although views on the nature of spirituality and workplace spirituality abound, the meaning of the two concepts is still unclear to some employees. Spirituality in the workplace is more than an illusion – it is ever-present and changing the fundamental nature of work. Employees are searching for meaning in their work, a meaning that transcends mere economic gain. Employees expect their employers to help them in their search for spirituality.

Research purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore employees' perceptions about workplace spirituality.

Motivation for the study

There has been heightened interest in workplace spirituality as evidenced by the drastic increase in the sale of spiritual books and number of academic journal articles on workplace spirituality. Despite this interest in workplace spirituality, research has shown that there are still some challenges pertaining to the agreed-upon conceptualisations of workplace spirituality (De Klerk, 2005). The motivation for this study was to gather data on employees' perceptions and understanding of workplace spirituality.

Research design, approach and method

Using a qualitative approach, the current study set out to explore employees' perceptions about workplace spirituality among 16 employees in a national government department in the KwaZulu-Natal Province of South Africa.

Main findings

The findings of the study revealed employees' diverse notions of spirituality and workplace spirituality. The results were in harmony with what has been observed in the extant literature on the interconnectedness and harmony among organisational members that are facilitated by spirituality. In the workplace, employees continue to search for meaning in their work – meaning that transcends economic gain. Positive attributes such as caring for one another as members of the organisation were associated with workplace spirituality.

Practical/managerial implications

This research provides an indication of how employees perceived workplace spirituality and how workplace spirituality enhances what the participants saw as a meaningful workplace and environment.

Contribution/value-add

This study provides an overview of employees' perceptions and understanding of spirituality and workplace spirituality. The findings will also add to the existing literature about different perceptions of spirituality and workplace spirituality.

Key words

Spirituality; serving others; team spirit; inner being; religion; caring leadership; respect for employees.

CHAPTER 1: SCIENTIFIC ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH

This study explored employees' perceptions of spirituality in the workplace in a national government department located in KwaZulu-Natal province in South Africa. In this chapter, the background to the research is discussed in order to provide the context of the study. The problem statement indicates the main question of the research, and the general and specific aims of the study are formulated. The paradigm for the research is also discussed. Lastly, the research design is explained.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

Since the latter years of the 20th century, there has been a constant increase in the number of scholarly articles on spirituality in the workplace (Daniel, 2015; Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002; Pardasani, Sharma, & Bindlish, 2014; Tinley & Kinney, 2007). The growing interest in spirituality in the corporate world may reflect a workplace that is becoming increasingly demanding in terms of higher stress levels. The fast-paced changes occurring in the world of work result in extreme uncertainty and competition (Xio, Peng, & Zhao, 2012). Survival in highly competitive markets may, inter alia, imply that organisations are able to develop a product of a superior quality, improve the services they renders and gain larger market shares (Li, 2013). Stemming from the need to remain competitive, organisations place substantial pressure on employees, which in turn tends to disrupt the essential work-life balance (Chand & Koul, 2012).

The changing work environment makes increasing demands on employees to search for creative ways to maintain their work-life balance. People tend to perceive ethereal interventions such as seeking spiritual solutions as helping them cope with work demands (Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Downsizing, redundancies, organisational re-engineering and other new technologies have created an unstable environment that leads people not to trust their organisations (Cash & Gray, 2000). This mistrust is reflected in organisations' policies, which result in employees seeing themselves as nothing more than expendable resources (Cohen, 1996). Generally, people spend a substantial part of their lives in organisations, and it is important that this period ideally be meaningful to them (Fairholm, 1996). However, the decline in traditional forms of community, technological acceleration and competitiveness pressures have resulted in employees' personal and social values becoming increasingly marginalised, leading to alienation and other pathological behavioural occurrences in the

modern world of work (Daniel, 2015; Sorakraikitikul & Siengthai, 2014). In Terkel's (1985) study, employees expressed perceptions that work has wounded their spirit. These and other debilitating experiences have thrust people into spirituality in the workplace in order to reclaim some deeper meaning in life (Ali & Falcone, 1995; Daniel, 2015). The desire of modern employees to find meaning in work is reflected by their seeking to fulfil their need to belong at work and the growing interest in Eastern philosophies of spirituality (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Daniel, 2015; Moore & Casper, 2006).

Work is seen as being about searching for meaning as well as earning cash for a living. It is an opportunity of great significance that can serve other functions than merely earning a living. This notion of work resonates with the view of Gupta, Kumar, and Singh (2014), who maintain that organisations have realised that material rewards are not sufficient for employee satisfaction and that employees want more than only financial rewards. Work can be considered as a way of finding meaning in life. Meaningful work is about aspects of work that are motivating, and these include autonomy, responsibility, task significance, identity, complexity, challenge and variety (Wrzesniewski, 2001). Meaning in life stems from the construct of spirituality. This gives one an indication of the significant contribution of work in people's lives.

According to Jason and Sudha (2014), organisations should recognise the significance of employees' spiritual needs and show tolerance towards them. They suggested that the organisation should provide a forum where employees can freely express their views and opinions, and this can only be implemented by realising the importance of workplace spirituality. Gupta et al. (2014) posited that spirituality can play a major role in overcoming the alienation experienced in the modern workplace, because it is about being positive towards both oneself and other living beings.

In the 1980s, there was a noticeably rampant ascendancy of corporate greed that was met and challenged by the rise of the spirituality movement as a counter-balance (Garcia-Zarmor, 2003). Ashmos and Duchon (2000) have described this spirituality movement as a major transformation where organisations make room for the spiritual dimension which has to do with employees' purpose and meaning in the workplace and a sense of community. This spiritual dimension embodies employees' search for simplicity, self-expression and interconnectedness to something higher (Marques & King, 2007). Many companies, such as

IBM, Microsoft, and Reliance, are using programmes such as spiritual lecture sessions, meditation, and yoga classes to circumvent the problems of spiritual loneliness that characterise most of the world of work (Gupta et al., 2014).

Workplace spirituality is commonly described in terms of an employee experiencing a sense of wholeness, connectedness at work and deeper values (Van Tonder & Ramdass, 2009). Spiritual workplaces are created by organisations that encourage justice and fair practices such as respect for cultural diversity, respect for employees' personal values, employee development programmes, employee participation in decision making, impartial behaviour from senior employees and healthy employer-employee relationships. Gupta et al. (2014) stated that organisations that respect their employees have witnessed employees' commitment, consistency and greater productivity. Understanding spirituality at work is about first acknowledging that people have both an inner and outer life, and that nourishment of the inner life can lead to a more meaningful and productive outer life (Fox, 1994). However, according to De Klerk (2005), the importance of meaning in life is revealed when an employee asks questions such as: "What is my purpose here at work? What contribution do I make and what is it that I have to offer that is of significance? What do I want to leave behind here?" It is clear from these questions that employees seek to find meaning in their work in order to connect with a meaningful life. Deriving meaning from work has a vital role in workplace spirituality. Self-actualisation, a term coined by Maslow (1943), is used by many authors to describe meaning from work. Maslow conceptualised self-actualisation as the point at which individuals begin to fulfil their purpose and derive meaning through work.

Previously employers thought that employees come to work only with their body and minds, forgetting that they bring with them their talents and different spirits. Leigh (1997) deemed this to be a fact of human existence. De Klerk-Lutting (2008) postulated that human beings are spiritual beings. Dyer (1993) supported this view by stating that we have to see ourselves as spiritual beings having a human experience rather than human beings who may be having a spiritual experience. This means we cannot separate individuals from their spiritual being. The compartmentalisation of workers by their employers and separating business concerns from personal identities results in poor performance. Lee, Lovelace, and Manz (2014) stated that workplace spirituality values and an ethical organisational climate provide a context in which organisational practices support personal transcendence and connectedness to the workplace and co-workers. In their studies of an integrative model of workplace spirituality (WPS) in a service organisation, they discovered that workplace spirituality values of respect,

humanism, and integrity, and an ethical organisational climate can be a positive buffer to the negative effect of emotional labour. They further established that WPS through workplace spirituality values and ethical climate can affect employees' satisfaction and commitment and also increase customers' satisfaction and loyalty. They are of the strong view that development and integration of WPS values in the workplace by introducing ethical organisational climate mean that the service organisation can achieve and sustain success.

Many corporations are encouraging the development of this new trend, because they believe a humanistic work environment creates a win-win situation for both employees and the organisation. If members of the organisation are happy, they will be more productive, more creative and more fulfilled. Several studies have reported a positive relationship between workplace spirituality and organisational performance (Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Organisations that do not encourage spirituality in their workplaces manifest low morale, high turnover, burnout, frequent stress-related illness and high absenteeism (Garcia-Zamor, 2003).

As much as studies have revealed the positive impact of workplace spirituality on organisational performance, one cannot ignore the contradictions that have been highlighted by some authors. A credible submission has been advanced about the tension that exists between the traditional organisational goals and the promotion of workplace spirituality (Geh & Tan, 2009). Geh and Tan postulated that the social responsibility of business is to generate profit by using its resources and energy. They believed that the best management practice is the one that focuses on increasing value to shareholders and profit. Lips-Wiersma (2003) regards spirituality as anti-materialist and anti-positivist. Fernando and Jackson (2006) placed more emphasis on the ethical and moral concerns in the research question of whether enabling or incorporating spirituality at work will result in better organisational performance or productivity. According to these authors, spirituality is being used as an administrative tool to control employees. They argue that spirituality should not be used by managers to improve organisational performance. Furthermore, according to Lee et al, (2014), critical scholars like Bell and Taylor (2004) are questioning the benevolence of workplace spirituality, arguing that it is used by companies to control employee resistance to corporate policies. Izak's (2009) review of workplace spirituality discourse cautioned that spirituality at work can be the source of great fraud suggesting that spirituality is a means of individualising problems whose root lies at the organisational level.

In the study by Lips-Wiersman and Mills (2002), employees stated that they do not feel safe in expressing their views of spirituality in workplace settings. A high proportion (74%) of employees who claimed to be spiritual in nature expressed fear that religious beliefs would be forced on to them if spirituality was introduced into the workplace (Bruce, 2000). With all that has been said about the benefits of spirituality at work, there are still different views about whether employers should encourage it in the workplace. This study aimed to explore employees' perceptions about workplace spirituality.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The review of literature has shown that there is a growing interest in workplace spirituality and that it is gaining recognition and value among researchers, academics and business professionals (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Chawla, 2014; Gupta et al., 2014; Pardasani et al., 2014). There has been a drastic increase in the sales of books on workplace spirituality and the heightened interest in workplace spirituality because of the perceived win-win situation it creates for both employees and the employer (Karakas, 2010; Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Regardless of the growing interest in spirituality and workplace spirituality, there are still some challenges with regard to the agreed-upon definition of spirituality and workplace spirituality (De Klerk, 2005). According to Gupta et al. (2014) the concept of spirituality has taken on many forms, and Rupali and Sharma (2014) stated that the lack of a single and agreed-upon definition of workplace spirituality has resulted in subjective categorisation of the concept.

It also needs to be pointed out that there is a school of thought that has suggested that the topic of spirituality in the workplace does not merit attention. Among others, this school has posited that spirituality is non-materialistic, it does not exist and it has no implications for management (Daniels, Franz, & Wong, 2000). Also, opinions about reasons for the latent inertia in pursuing research on this topic have been pinned on to the lack of construct validity of spirituality and also the lack of a specific conceptual relationship between spirituality and work-related constructs (Sanders, Hopkins, & Geroy, 2004). The aim of this study was to explore employees' perceptions about workplace spirituality with a view to gaining an in-depth understanding of the situation.

The research questions in this study were formulated as follows:

- What is spirituality?

- What are employees' views on workplace spirituality?

1.3 AIMS OR RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 General aim

- The general aim of the study was to uncover employees' perceptions about workplace spirituality.

1.3.2 Specific aims

The specific literature aim was as follows:

- To conceptualise spirituality and workplace spirituality

The empirical aims were as follows:

- To establish employees' understanding about spirituality
- To ascertain employees' understanding about workplace spirituality

1.4 THE PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE

1.4.1 Theoretical framework

This study falls within the disciplinary context of industrial and organisational (I/O) psychology and its sub-discipline of organisational psychology (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2010).

I/O psychology is the scientific study of the behaviour of individuals in the work environment at individual, group and organisational levels. Behaviour can be explained in terms of psychological theories, constructs and models. The knowledge of I/O psychology is developed and applied in various sub-disciplines, one of which is organisational psychology. Organisational psychology is the applied science of measuring and predicting the differences in human behaviour and performance in order to improve the attainment of organisational and individual goals (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2010).

Organisational psychology strives to study human behaviour in organisations in order to understand and manage it effectively (Hyde, Harris, & Boaden, 2013). It is contended that spirituality in the workplace is vital for human or employee performance. The focus of organisational psychology remains the human side of the organisation at both the individual

and the group levels (Seo et al., 2012). Hence the goal of research in the construct of workplace spirituality is to facilitate the creation, development and management of performing and competitive business organisations. As stated earlier, at a theoretical level, the study endeavoured to develop a more insightful understanding of spirituality in the workplace. At the empirical level, it sought to unveil the perceptions of the participants using the lens of constructivism and a qualitative approach. Such employee perceptions are an essential ingredient for improving performance in today's work organisations.

1.4.2 Philosophical paradigm

Most research is conducted through the lens of a philosophical paradigm. However, some researchers do not always make explicit the philosophical paradigm underlying their research. The significance of the paradigms lies in the fact that each one has a specific mode of creating knowledge and evaluating what defines knowledge (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). Some have argued for the explicit adoption of the paradigm underlying research at the outset of the research process so that all stages throughout the methodology are approached in the same way and provide a consistent perspective.

This study adopted an interpretive paradigm and a constructivist view to explore the perceptions of individual participants (Flood, 2010; Thorne, 1991). Methodologically, the interpretive paradigm assisted the research by facilitating in-depth dialogue with the participants in order to understand their perceptions regarding spirituality in the workplace (Daniel, 2015; Pardasani et al., 2014). The interpretive paradigm operates from the view that a social phenomenon like employees' perceptions of workplace spirituality is best understood from the subjective perspective of research participants. Therefore, in unveiling employees' perceptions of spirituality, the focus is on their individual subjective experiences. In a sense, the social world is explained from the experiences of the participants.

At the ontological level, embracing a constructivist and qualitative approach implies that reality is relative (Burrell & Morgan, 1977). The relative nature of employees' perceptions of workplace spirituality means that individuals have unique perceptions of spirituality in the organisation as revealed by the results of this study. The participants individually constructed their own subjective experience when they dialogued with the researcher during the interview. The implication of this relativistic view is that reality has multiple meaning (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Epistemologically, the data lies within the perceptions of the participants. It was essential to interact with the participants through individual interviews to gather data. It can then be seen that the epistemological data assumption made in the study was that knowledge is something soft and subjective. This presupposed that knowledge was based on personal and unique perceptions of individual employees, such as those unveiled in this study (Morgan & Burrell, 1977).

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

Yin (1994) defined research design as the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research question and, ultimately, to its conclusion. Research design is like an action plan which guides a researcher from the beginning to the end of the research. Qualitative research was adopted as the research approach for the study. The study was conducted in an environment comprising a multiplicity of languages, races, mores, creeds and cultures.

1.5.1 Research approach

Employees' perceptions were explored using an interpretivist paradigm and the constructivist world view. Interpretivism is a paradigm that places more emphasis on the meaning that is shared through the use of language and culture. It allows the researcher to understand the participants' experiences and the varied meanings they assign to them. The focus of the interpretivist is on the complexity of multiple meanings rather than reducing them to a few categories or ideas. There are multiple interpretivist methodologies with diverse theoretical perspectives, but they all follow an inductive approach and share the assumption that we come to know truth through human experience (Tinley & Kinney, 2007).

Qualitative research is primarily about meaning making and not formulating hypotheses (Mason, 2010). In this study, meaning making occurred by exploring and understanding, from the perspective of the participants, their views of workplace spirituality.

Rich qualitative data was obtained when participants narrated their experiences and views on the subject (Janse van Rensburg & Roodt, 2009). Qualitative research has been defined as a multi-method in focus, which involves an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). This means qualitative researchers study people and things in their natural settings, trying to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them. This research relied on interviews with individual participants.

1.5.2 Research strategy

Qualitative research was used to understand the participants' perceptions about spirituality and workplace spirituality. Qualitative research is grounded in the interpretive and constructive approach to understanding human phenomena. For this reason human participants' perspectives are explored to understand their world and experiences and their meaning. In-depth interviews were conducted with those participants who accepted the invitation to participate by signing informed consent forms. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) stated that the interview is an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest. Furthermore, according to Mouton (2001), the aim of the interview is to see the world through the eyes of the participant.

1.5.3 Research method

In the section below, the techniques and procedures used to conduct the empirical study are discussed.

1.5.3.1 Research setting

The study was conducted in a national government department located in KwaZulu-Natal province in South Africa. The department supports municipalities in carrying out their mandate of delivering services to people, restoring the dignity of traditional leaders and supporting and democratising traditional institutions in line with the essence of the Constitution. It provides an oversight function to 61 municipalities and 294 traditional leaders and their institutions.

1.5.3.2 Entrée and establishing researcher roles

In order to gain access to the participants, it was important to obtain permission from top management of the organisation. In a letter written to management of the organisation, the purpose of the study was highlighted and benefits to the organisation were explained.

After obtaining permission to conduct the research, the researcher engaged with employees to explain the purpose of the study and the reasons for choosing their department. The benefits of the study were also explained. Employees were informed that, after the study had been completed and approved, the results would be shared with them. The researcher ensured the

participants that she had proper identification. Employees were told from the beginning that all the information would be kept confidential.

Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of South Africa's Ethics Committee and participants were requested to give their written consent to participate in the study.

1.5.3.3 Sampling

There are two main categories of sampling. The first is probability sampling where the researcher can determine the chances that each segment of the population will be represented in the sample in advance. The second is non-probability sampling, where the researcher has no way of forecasting the probability that each element of the population will be represented in the sample (Hussey & Hussey 1997). For this study, non-probability sampling was used.

Convenience sampling was used for this study. In convenience sampling, the sample is gathered conveniently, rather than randomly or in some other methodologically rigorous way (Leong & Austin, 1996). This form of sampling does not identify a subset of a population and makes use of people who are readily available (Hussey & Hussey, 1997). The reason the researcher selected this type of sampling was because participants were readily available, and the topic of the study did not warrant people with a special knowledge in the area of workplace spirituality. The topic simply required people employed in the organisation who could express their perceptions about workplace spirituality. Owing to the nature of the environment and the work that participants are doing, this method seemed to be the ideal one, although Patton (2002) reported that it is the least desirable strategy to use because it is often biased in systematic ways and very likely tends to provide homogeneous participants. The total number of participants in this study was 16. The age groups ranged from 22 to 45 years.

1.5.3.4 Data collection method

The data for this research were obtained from the employees of public department in KZN. One-on-one interviews with participants were used as a method to collect data. An interview schedule was compiled through a list of themes identified in the literature review. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, where open-ended questions were developed in advance, along with prepared probes as advocated by Richards and Morse (2007). This approach works when the interviewer knows enough about the phenomenon being studied, but not enough to anticipate the answers.

1.5.3.5 Recording of data

According to Terreblanche and Durrheim (2006), interviews are usually recorded by note taking, audio taking and video recording, although these authors stated that these methods can sometimes be problematic because of the background noise which often makes recording incomprehensible. They also posited that it is helpful to work with a co-researcher who does the recording, while the main researcher concentrates on facilitating the interviews. The interview data were recorded using the audio recording tape after permission had been obtained from each individual participant. Notes were also taken during the interview. In addition to reducing the time required for each interview, the audio recording of the interviews also made it possible to capture the responses verbatim.

1.5.3.6 Thematic data analysis

According to Mouton (2006), analysing data refers to the resolution of a complex whole into its parts. The thematic data analysis technique was used to analyse the data gathered from the interviews. This technique allowed the researcher to code the data into themes in order to explore employees' perceptions about spirituality and workplace spirituality (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter 2006).

The following steps of an interpretive data analysis, as described by Terre Blanche et al. (2006) were used to analyse the data gathered from the interviews:

- *Familiarisation and immersion.* After the transcription of the recorded interviews, the researcher listened to the voice recorder and read the transcripts and the field notes in order to acquaint herself with the data.
- *Inducing themes.* To better manage the data, the researcher categorised it into three headings, namely work, spirituality and workplace spirituality. The researcher focused on each heading one at a time. Statements with similar meaning were highlighted with one colour. On completion of this process, the researcher categorised the data into manageable themes.
- *Coding.* The data was then coded according to different themes that emerged from the participants' responses. Different colour highlighters were used to code different themes.

- *Elaboration.* Themes that occurred more than once were acknowledged in the findings section.
- *Interpretation and checking.* To ensure that interpretation of the data remained true to the original content, the researcher double-checked the information on the voice recorder to confirm the findings and the discussion sessions of the document. The researcher's supervisor familiarised himself with the data by reading the transcripts, and checked the interpretations that the researcher had attached to the data.

1.5.3.7 Strategies employed to ensure quality data, and ethical considerations

Various steps throughout the process were adopted to ensure the quality and integrity of the data. These steps included checking the transcripts while relistening to recordings, obtaining participant confirmation and the approval of transcripts and the findings, supervision by the researcher's supervisor at Unisa, in her capacity as both researcher and student, and checking and comparing the data with academic literature and theories. Transcripts were typed up verbatim in the natural voice (Mero-Jaffe, 2011) of the participants, which included the "uhms", pauses, repetition of phrases and incomplete sentences. This was done so that none of the subtle nuances in meaning were lost. However, these natural voice elements were removed from the final version of the dissertation.

Each participant received an e-mail of the typed transcript of his or her interview and the findings, and asked to confirm that confidentiality had been maintained, and that the data had been interpreted accurately. Owing to extenuating circumstances, and under consultation, it was decided that any participant who had left the research unit after the interviews had been conducted would not be contacted.

As part of the researcher's postgraduate studies, a Unisa supervisor was allocated to oversee her work as student researcher, from its inception at the research proposal stage. Every step, process and written draft was submitted to the researcher's supervisor for review and comment.

Ethical considerations

In the context of research, according to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2000), ethics refers to the appropriateness of the researcher's behaviour in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of the study or those affected by it. Van Tonder and Ramdass (2009) remind researchers that they should always remember that while they are conducting research, they are actually entering the private space of participants. This raises several ethical issues that should be addressed during and after the research has been conducted. According to Creswell (2003), it is the researcher's responsibility to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the informants.

Most ethical issues in research fall into one of four categories namely, protection from harm, informed consent, right to privacy and honesty with professional colleagues (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001).

- *Informed consent.* The nature of the study was explained to the participants. They were given the choice to either participate or withdraw from the study. They were told that, they had a right to withdraw at any time should they feel uncomfortable during the study. All the participants were given the consent form, which was clearly explained to them, to sign.
- *Right to privacy.* A private office with minimal disturbance was used for the interviews. The audio recorder interviews and the transcripts were kept in a secure place to ensure that no one had access to the data.
- *Honesty with professional colleagues.* The researcher ensured that findings were not manipulated but reported as they were heard and transcribed.
- *Confidentiality and anonymity.* The researcher ensured that the participants' names were not used in any document for any other purposes, and no information about the participants' responses would be shared with anyone.
- *Voluntary participation.* The participants were informed that their participation in the study was completely voluntary. They had the right to withdraw at any point in time.

1.5.3.8 Reporting

The findings of the investigation were presented in the sequence of formulated objectives, in the form of themes emanating from the transcription of data.

1.5.3.9 Discussion

In this section of a study, the findings are summarised. According to Calfee (2000), discussion is a form of argumentation, with a claim (hypothesis), evidence (data) and warrant. He refers to the warrant as the “connective tissue”. This section summarises and interprets the findings with reference to the literature on the subject at hand. The information provided in this section enables the researcher to draw a conclusion on the outcomes of the study.

1.5.3.10 Conclusion, limitations and recommendations

The conclusion is a reflection on what has been discovered about the subject matter, in the case of this research study, employees’ perceptions about workplace spirituality. The implications of the findings as well as a review of specific shortcomings of the study are outlined.

1.6 CHAPTER LAYOUT

The chapter layout of the study is as follow:

Chapter 1: Scientific orientation to the study

As an introduction to the study, this chapter provides information on the following:

- the variables investigated;
- the design and methodology; and
- the collection and analysis of data.

Chapter 2: Literature review

In this chapter, the following research variables are conceptualised:

- spirituality; and
- workplace spirituality.

Chapter 3: Research article

This chapter takes the form of a research article, in which the methodology, data collection, data analysis, results and discussion are presented.

Chapter 4: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

The closing arguments and findings, together with further research in industrial and organisational psychology are addressed in this chapter, together with a brief discussion of the limitations of the study.

1.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter dealt with the scientific orientation to this research study, which included the background and motivation, problem statement, aims, paradigms and research design. It concluded with the chapter layout.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gupta et al. (2014) observed that most of the literature on spirituality in the workplace is theoretical with negligible empirical research. Regardless of this limitation, an increase in the number of scholarly articles on spirituality in the workplace has been reported (Daniel, 2015; Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002; Pardasani et al., 2014).

According to De Klerk (2005), the growing interest in spirituality in organisations can no longer be ignored. Researchers have reported the significance of workplace spirituality in both popular literature and scholarly journals. Spirituality in the workplace has gained acceptance at a top-tier conference and from respected institutions, in such a way that the Academy of Management has established a special interest group on the topic and allocated a separate track to spirituality and religion in the Academy of Management annual meeting (De Klerk, 2005). Konz and Ryan (1999) postulated that spirituality, in general, and in the workplace, in particular, has become a crucial topic in recent years. Gupta et al. (2014) stated that the essay entitled, “The servant as leader”, by Greenleaf has become extremely popular in the corporate world and followed by many prominent business leaders, and has now been included in many management books and magazines read by thousands of business people around the world. Garcia-Zamor (2003) also noted the spiritual awakening in the American workplace. Clearly, business organisations became more interested in workplace spirituality in the decades leading to the close of the 20th century (De Klerk, 2005).

The persistent interest in spirituality in the workplace has resulted in different conceptualisations and meanings of the construct (Cendemic, Ferguson, Milliman, & Trickety, 1999). Also noteworthy is the tendency to confuse workplace spirituality with religion (Rupali & Sharma, 2014). Gupta et al. (2014) have attributed the multiplicity in definitions and meanings of workplace spirituality to the fact that the term is still in a conceptual stage.

The purpose of this chapter is threefold. Firstly, it conceptualises spirituality and workplace spirituality by reviewing the extant literature in the field. Secondly, it recognises from the extant literature that the notions of spirituality or workplace spirituality and religiosity are often confused. The chapter thus endeavours to distinguish spirituality and workplace

spirituality from religiosity. Thirdly, it proceeds to discuss models of spirituality and the dimension of workplace spirituality.

As stated in chapter 1, this study explored employees' perceptions about workplace spirituality in a national government department located in KwaZulu-Natal.

2.1 SPIRITUALITY DEFINED

The term spirituality is as old as the beginning of this world (Malik, Danish, & Usman, 2010). The challenge with the term "spirituality" is that it means different things to different people, which makes it difficult to formulate a universal definition of this dynamic concept (Cendemic et al., 1999). Spirituality is seen as a subjective and intangible construct (Sorakraikitikul & Siengthai, 2014). Spirituality, according to Badrinarayanan and Madhavaram (2008), is taken from the Latin root "spiritus" which means breath of life. The concept is receiving increased attention in the contexts of employees, work environment, management, leadership and organisational research.

Because spirituality is connected to the breath of life, over the years, researchers have identified some of the fundamental questions about spirituality and workplace spirituality that individuals have to contend with (Block, 1993; De Klerk, 2005).

The following are some of the questions that arise in the context of spirituality:

- Who am I?
- What is my purpose in life?
- What is my purpose here at work?
- What contribution do I make and what is it that I have to offer that is of significance?
- What do I want to leave behind here?

According to Krishnakumar and Neck (2002), there are three views of spirituality, namely the intrinsic-origin view, the religious view and the existential view. According to the intrinsic-origin view, spirituality is an inner feeling that originates with the individual. A religious view of spirituality is specific to a particular religion. The existential view is the most appropriate to the concept of workplace spirituality, which means finding meaning in the work the individual does in the workplace (Gupta et al., 2014). It is apparent from the discussion below

that different authors define spirituality in terms of one of the three views of spirituality discussed by Krishnakumar & Neck (2002).

Dehler and Welsh (1994) defined spirituality as an individual's inner source of inspiration and an energising feeling. This energising feeling is explained by Gull and Doh (2004) as an important manifestation of an individual's spirit. Spirituality is also defined as the basic feeling of being connected with one's complete self, others and the entire universe (Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Neck and Milliman (1994) defined spirituality as an expression of individuals' desire to find meaning and purpose in their lives and a process of living their set of deeply held personal values. Spirituality, according to Conger (1994), gives expression to the being that is in us. It has to do with the feeling, with the power that comes from within, with knowing our deepest selves and what is sacred to us. Conger (1994) believed that people are becoming interested in their spiritual journey in an effort to discover their true selves, and search for higher purpose and meaning in their lives. He also posited that spirituality is called the heart of knowledge as it explicitly discovers our real self. Conger (1994) viewed spirituality as a journey which is not confined to religion. Covey (1989) also perceived spirituality as a journey whereby one focuses within, in order to gain an awareness of self. This awareness helps one to become truly actualised and find meaning and purpose in work and life. This process is called individuation, which produces both an interconnection with self and a connection with others, fostering a sense of order and balance in an otherwise chaotic life (King & Nicol, 1999).

The search and actualisation provide a sense of alignment and order for an individual, and a spiritual cohesiveness, which installs a sense of rightness and well-being (King & Nicol, 1999). Csikszentmihalyi (1990) described this as an experience of wholeness, a sense of oneness with who we are and an awareness of how we fit with our external environment. This spiritual adventure usually takes place in the workplace since work is a central part of our existence (King & Nicol, 1999). According to McKenna (1997), spirituality grounds people in their work and allows them to connect with the transcendence in all they do.

Koenig, McCullough, and Larson (2001) defined spirituality as the search for meaning, with meaning referring to the experience of a connection to a higher purpose. Cash and Grey (2000) described spirituality as a broad concept and values such as a transcendence, balance, sacredness, altruism, meaning in life, living with a deep connectedness to the universe, and the awareness of something or someone greater than oneself that provides energy and

wisdom that transcends the material aspect of life. De Klerk (2005) asserted that as much as there are multiple definitions of spirituality, there seem to be three main themes that are prevalent in the definition of the concept. These themes are meaning in life, a sense of unity with the universe and awareness of the life force.

Spirituality was also defined by Koenig et al., (2001) as the personal quest for understanding answers to ultimate questions about life, about meaning, and about a relationship to the sacred or transcended, which may or may not lead to the development of religious rituals and the formation of community. Lips-Wiersman and Mills (2002), however, explained spirituality as emotion connoted with daily personal integration and applications of deeply held values such as humility, integrity or service. According to Heaton, Schmidt-Wilk, and Travis (2004), spirituality refers to a salient, unbounded, inner experience of pure self-awareness, devoid of customary content of perception, thoughts and feelings.

Moore and Casper (2006) described spirituality as an internal belief, attitude or emotion that has an impact on people's behaviour. Johnson (2007) described it as a tool that provides meaning in one's life and allows individuals to develop and grow, and also to establish connectedness and community, thereby helping them see that they are a part of something bigger than themselves. Reed (1992) also shared the same sentiment, defining spirituality as the propensity to make meaning through a sense of preparedness for dimensions that transcend the self in such a way that empowers and does not devalue the individual. Brown (2003) suggested that a sense of relatedness may occur in multiple forms, which includes the following:

- integration and connection within one's self (how we see ourselves/self-identity);
- connection with other individuals (via friendship, trust, companionship, intimacy); and
- connection with transcendent dimensions (the divine nature) (cited by Koenig & Cohen, 2002).

King (2007), however, associated spirituality with a search for the sacred – a journey through which the individual examines life, its meaning and purpose and the overall effect that one has on others and the environment. Fairholm (1996) defined spirituality as the essence of who a person is, and argued that it defines the inner self, which is separated from the body, but includes the physical and intellectual self.

Martsof and Mickley (1998) identified the following five components of spirituality:

- *Meaning.* According to Lam (2012), individuals are inherently motivated to make sense of events, to derive meaning and ultimate purpose in their lives. He believed that meaning can be found in the midst of human tragedy and horror. He posited that meaning and purpose can also be found in the joyful and transformative experience.
- *Becoming.* Spirituality includes experiencing the unfolding of life while also coming to know oneself through self-reflection. Through self-reflection on one's life journey, an individual will become aware of that journey (Lam, 2012).
- *Connecting.* As part of our spirituality, we may connect with things of this world (i.e. family, friend and nature and with things not of this world, the divine, the universe, God). Humans find their great meaning in connection and intimacy with something other than us; this is because humans are considered as social, relational beings (Buck, 2006).
- *Values/beliefs.* This aspect of spirituality includes what the individual most cherishes, and holds as ultimate values. This may include religious beliefs. Spirituality is defined as human experience which may or may not be expressed through a given religion or tradition (Martsof & Mickley, 1998).
- *Transcendence.* Martsof and Mickley (1998) believed that transcendence is a spiritual term which is most difficult to define and understand. Transcendence suggests expansion of self-boundaries inwards through self-acceptance, with acceptance of what is and can be through an openness to that which is not of the self (others, the divine, and nature). This personal growth suggests knowing oneself, in an integrated way of past, present and future, while living fully in the present moment (Martsof & Mickley, 1998).

The preceding above five components of spirituality clearly indicates the diversity of notions of spirituality and workplace spirituality. This therefore suggests and explains the subjectivity of different authors when defining spirituality and workplace spirituality. Below is a table with some of the definitions of spirituality by different authors, indicating their different understanding or notions.

Table 1

Different Definitions of Spirituality (adapted from Markow and Klenke, 2005)

Scholars	Definition
Maslow (1969)	Spirituality is a transcendental feeling, including extreme experiences, such as ecstatic states.
Stallwood and Stoll (1975)	Spirituality is the recognition of self – existence value and it reinforces inner harmony and peace.
Watson (1985)	Spirituality is a kind of inner energy, which results in individuals’ self-transcendence.
Trice (1990)	Spirituality is the perception of self-transcendence and life meaning.
Skolimowski (1992)	Spirituality is the ultimate discovery of life essence and meaning.
Hawley (1993)	Spirituality is a kind of self – transcendence, and is related to beliefs and values of the meaning of life.
Ross (1995)	Spirituality is related to hope and “will to live”, and involves the relations between the inner self, the universe and self-transcendence.
Kellehear (2000)	Spirituality is the discovery of the meaning and essence of existence.
Smutny (2001)	Spirituality is a kind of self-

	transcendence, which clarifies the relation between self and universe.
Pava (2003)	Spirituality is the feeling of searching for life meaning and purpose.

Referring to the five components of spirituality briefly described above, De Klerk (2005) in his study of spirituality relied on the meaning component. Briefly stated, the meaning component of spirituality asserts that individuals are inherently motivated to make sense of events. In the events that occur in the individual's life lies meaning and ultimate purpose. De Klerk (2005) believed that confusion about meaning in life can easily arise when this construct is applied to work situations. Meaning in life should not be equated to the philosophical question: "What is the meaning of life?" De Klerk (2005) viewed this as an eternal quest which is out of reach of objectivist scientific methodology. However, the importance of meaning in life is revealed when rephrased by an individual who asks: "What is my purpose here at work? What contribution do I make and what is it that I have to offer that is of significance? What do I want to leave behind here?"

According to De Klerk (2005), meaning in life should also be distinguished from other related constructs like meaning of work and meaningful work. Meaning in life entails a significance of being – a feeling, experience or perception that one's existence is of significance. Meaning in life is closely related to a sense of being committed to and fulfilling a higher purpose in life. Purposefulness gives one a reason for living – it makes life more than just a survival quest, but rather experiencing one's life as having made or being able to make a difference in the world. Meaningfulness is the core of these descriptions. Meaningfulness is the degree that people's lives make emotional sense and the demands confronted by them being perceived as being worthy of energy and commitment.

According to Csikszentmihalyi (1990), individuals who report that their lives are meaningful tend to experience fulfilment and significance. The meaning of work describes the role of work in a person's life, and the sociological reasons why people work (De Klerk, 2005). According to Gill (1999), several studies emphasise the importance of work in people's experience of life. De Klerk (2005) defined work as a pathway to finding meaning in life. Work is a social process which is found in all societies, and in modern society it is often

identified with employment. This includes an exchange relationship whereby, for a set period and within prescribed limits and policies, people put their talents at the disposal of an employer in return for tangible rewards such as pay, and less tangible rewards such as recognition and status.

Industrialisation led to many psychological needs that earlier societies met through structures like religious rituals, the expanded family and the village community to be replaced by the institution of paid work (Gill, 1999). Work has become central compared to family, friendship and social groups. Work gives people a feeling of being tied into the larger society, of having something to do, of having a purpose in life. There has been a change in people's attitude towards work. People are moving away from materialism and more towards a society in which spiritual values and meaning in life are becoming more important values than materialistic objects. People are more concerned about finding meaning in all aspects of their lives. Much of this spiritual odyssey occurs in the context of the organisation since work is considered a central part of human existence (De Klerk, 2005).

According to Miller (1998), the nature of work has changed fundamentally, and work is a tool to develop individuals. Miller (1998) asserted that work has been transformed into a forum in which individuals develop themselves. People are searching for meaning in work that transcends mere economic exchanges between isolated, autonomous individuals. People are trying to find ways to connect their work lives to their spiritual lives, to work together in community, to be unified in a vision and purpose that goes beyond making money (Miller, 1998). The relationship between managers and subordinates has also changed. According to Leigh (1997), managers were once seen as those who give orders, whose role had no influence on the personal development of their subordinates. Managers have moved into the role of assisting subordinates to search for meaning in the workplace (Neal, 1997).

Having explained the concept of spirituality and what the literature describes as the constituents of the construct, the next section focuses on the models of spirituality.

2.1.1 Models of spirituality

The Relational integration model by Sandage and Shult (2007) examines spirituality in terms of a relational integration model, where spirituality is seen as a journey. According to Sandage and Shult (2007), spirituality is more about relationship and experience rather than only the content of what we believe (e.g. religion and dogma). They assert that individuals go

through periods of dwelling or spiritual stability. People may also go through phases of spiritual intensification or growth. Spiritual intensification may happen as a result of major life events that bring about actual or anticipated change in a person's life (Sandage & Shult, 2007). Intensification, according to Sandage and Shult (2007), ultimately results in an impressed sense of peace or deepening spirituality.

The transactional model examines spirituality in terms of how an individual interprets and copes with threatening life events.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) posited that when an event occurs, there are two appraisals that take place with the aim of finding out how much of a stressor or threat there is. During primary appraisal, individuals ascertain if the situation is benign or if it poses a threat, harm or challenge. During the secondary appraisal process, individuals determine if they have the resources to address the stressor while also identifying possible coping strategies. According to Gall, Clarke, Josephe, and Shouldice (2005), when stressors occur, a similar spiritual stress and coping transactional process may happen. This means that when individuals try to make sense of events, they try to determine who and what caused the event. An individual may attribute an event to a combination of themselves ("I caused this"), other people (friends, family), chance ("My luck"), and the intention of God or something greater ("This is meant to be", "God's will for my life". According to Gall et al. (2005), during the primary appraisal, individuals assess the degree of consistency in the event to how they view the world (i.e. does this threaten the sense of self or the status quo?). During the secondary appraisal process, an individual reflects on spiritual resources (e.g. reliance on God, hope) and means of coping (e.g. prayer, connection with nature, meditation, ritual, meaning making and connection with loved ones and or spiritual community).

2.1.2 Jung's theory of spirituality

According to Jung's theory of spirituality, individuals strive to become whole and distinctive from the collective (Jung, 1933). In order for an individual to realise his or her specific purpose, connection with one's unique self must be achieved (Eddinger, 1972). Harding (1965) defined self as a whole of the individual, including all aspects of an individual's conscious and unconscious, which is often referred to as a paradoxical union of opposite. Self is considered by Jung as being superior to the ego and is experienced as the centre of the personality. According to Singer (1972), the path to individuation can be different for each person, but the process tends to be similar. Singer postulated that individuals become

conscious of their whole personality – the process to gain awareness of their higher purpose and potential capabilities.

2.1.2.1 The individuation process

Jung (1933) explained that the individuation process involves the initial development of one's ego. This is then challenged and ultimately subordinated to a more comprehensive psychic entity called the Self. This process entails the conscious realisation and fulfilment of one's unique being. In the first stage, the individual is without the conscious awareness of self (Harding, 1965). The whole of the individual is unified in the unconscious. However, as a child develops, a conscious awareness, the ego, begins to develop and becomes the seat of one's identity. During this stage, a child only develops part of the whole of the personality, leaving the other part lost in the unconscious. The ego develops as the result of adaptation to parents, environment and collective expectations. The more intensified the ego, the more it becomes difficult to reconnect with the part lost in the childhood. This leaves the individual wandering in a spiritual desert, suffering a sense of alienation and separation from the self (Eddinger, 1972). Jung asserted that the need to reconnect to the Self is instinctual –hence the effort to do so occurs either consciously or unconsciously. According to Eddinger (1972), if an individual continues to be disconnected from his or her unconscious side, and operates solely from ego, he or she will often experience extreme adverse emotions which may lead to depression.

Jung suggested that if an individual's ego becomes too one-sided, with the conscious personality fixated on his or her dominant characteristics, then repressed unconscious personality characteristics gain expression by being projected on to another (Harding, 1965). This makes it possible to develop an awareness of one's undeveloped personality by focusing on the nature of relationships with others (Jung & Von Franz, 1964). According to Harding (1965), if projections are recognised and confronted, an individual has opportunities to understand and then consciously integrate those personality characteristics. The most basic projection, according to Jung and Von Franz (1964), is the shadow which is the dark side of the personality. This shadow is the personification of that which we deny in ourselves (Harding, 1965). He believed that by projecting our shadow on to others, we are able to reject it instead of taking responsibility for it. The recognition and utilisation of these projections is important in the process towards individuation and spiritual enhancement (Harding, 1965).

2.2 RELIGIOSITY VERSUS SPIRITUALITY

There are different views about religiosity and spirituality. According to Burgess (1997), some researchers believe that religiosity and spirituality are equivocal, while others believe that they are unequivocal. Gupta et al. (2014) posited that spirituality and religion are quite different concepts with different meanings. They concurred that a spiritual person can also be religious, but a religious person is not always spiritual, because it is simple to follow a religion, but difficult to be spiritual. They held the view that religion forms the basis of the present society in which we live, whereas spirituality (the truth of our soul within) upholds the values in the society. Below are the various views on religion and spirituality.

Lukoff, Lu, and Turner (1992) defined religiosity as adhering to the beliefs and practice of a recognised organisation, whereas spirituality means a relationship between a person and what transcendence is, regardless of religious affiliation. Religiosity embraces traditional rituals, beliefs and conventions of meaning (Burke et al., 1999). Convention requires communal agreement of what something ought to mean. This means religiosity refers to the connection between people and a specific doctrine or group of people (Berry, 2005). According to Del Rio, and White (2012) spirituality entails human individuality and making sense of one's life. By contrast, religiosity defines how a person behaves, based on various established beliefs systems within given milieus, cultures and generations.

2.3 WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY DEFINED

Over the past few years, spirituality has been recognised as one of the key research topics in the academic world to add more meaning to one's workplace (Ashmos & Dunchon, 2000). Gupta et al. (2014) reported that there is limited research literature on spirituality at work, and the idea is only starting to move from a conceptual to an empirical phase.

The following are some of the reasons advanced by Ashmos and Duchon (2004) for the growing interest of spirituality in the workplace:

- The downsizing, re-engineering and layoffs of the past decade have turned the workplace into an environment in which workers are demoralised and there is growing inequity in wages.
- The decline of neighbourhoods, churches, civic groups and extended families as the principal places for feeling connected has resulted in the workplace being seen as a primary source of community for many people (Conger, 1994).

- Leaders have recognised the importance of employees' creativity because of the pressure of global competition; such creativity can only be achieved when work itself is meaningful.
- According to Brandt (1996), the workplace provides a consistent link to other people and to the human needs for connection and contribution.
- Another factor is that of curiosity about Rim cultures and Eastern philosophies (Brandt, 1996).
- Some researchers have suggested that, as aging baby boomers move closer to life's greatest uncertainty, the interest in contemplating life's meaning is also growing (Conger, 1994).

The concept of workplace spirituality is not perceived as part of religion, but contains elements beyond religion. It derives from ethics, values, motivation, and the work-life balance and leadership elements of an organisation. These elements, along with the personal values of an individual at work, constitute workplace spirituality (Jason & Sudha, 2014).

The influence of spirituality on employees has been acknowledged by managers in the United States. Lloyd (1990) reported that organisations with highly influenced workplace spirituality were able to outperform other organisations by 86%. Turner (1990) found that workplace spirituality has a huge impact on an organisation since it is able to gain advantage by developing a humanistic environment in which workers can achieve their full capacity.

Mat Desa and Koh Pin Pin (2011) ascertained that if employees have the freedom to bring their physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual attributes to the workplace, they will become more productive, creative and fulfilled. This is a state where an organisation's culture encourages employees to be themselves and allows them to express their views and opinions, thoughts and feelings without fear (Jason & Sudha, 2014). Daniel (2010) also contended that workplace spirituality is an element of organisational culture that creates a unique environment with trust, creativity and respect in the workplace, and fosters team effectiveness. Gupta et al. (2014) reported that organisations are in urgent need of a cultural transformation through applying spiritual practice such as meditation, lectures on spirituality, silence before meetings, respect for the religion of every employee, impartial behaviour on the part of senior employees and the abolition of hierarchical levels for creating a sense of community.

As much as researchers on workplace spirituality have indicated the positive influence of workplace spirituality, Garcia-Zamor (2003) still considers the meaning of workplace spirituality to be the most glaring challenge. In their research, Rupali and Sharma (2014) also found that the absence of a concrete definition of workplace spirituality led to subjective categorisation of the concept.

Kolodinsky, Giacalone, and Jurkiewicz (2008) asserted that there are three distinct conceptual understandings of workplace spirituality, namely the individual, macro and interactive levels. According to them, workplace spirituality at individual level can be viewed as the incorporation of one's own spiritual ideas and values into work settings. This conceptualisation of workplace spirituality reflects a simple application of personal spirituality, the totality of personal spiritual values that an individual brings to the workplace and how such values influence both ethically related and ethically unrelated work interactions and outcome (Kolodinsky et al., 2008). This view of workplace spirituality assumes that one's personal spiritual values have an effect on worker behaviour as well as interpretations of and responses to work-related events.

At macro level, workplace spirituality refers to an organisation's climate and culture, whereas personal spirituality encompasses the individual values brought to the workplace. Organisational spirituality reflects an individual's perception of the spiritual values in an organisational setting (Parboteeah & Cullen, 2003). According to Deal and Kennedy (1982), the way workers view organisational spirituality is likely to impact on their work attitude, beliefs, satisfaction and personal capacities to meet work challenges. The third conceptualisation of workplace spirituality is an interactive one. Workplace spirituality is seen as the interaction between an individual's personal spiritual values and the organisation's spiritual values. Understanding the impact of spirituality is not merely a function of either a micro or macro value structure alone, but of their interactive impact in the work setting. Conceptualising workplace spirituality in this way corresponds with the concept of person-organisation fit, as expounded by Caplan and Harrison (1993).

Cable and De Rue (2002) defined person-organisation fit as a perceptual construct which refers to judgements of congruence between an employee's personal values and the organisation's culture. Sharma and Rupali (2014) viewed this as an alignment between employees' values and organisational values. They ascertained that for this alignment to be

achieved, the organisation needs to provide a workplace environment that nurtures ethical decisions making, moral behaviours and workplace spirituality.

The consequences of failing to recognise the spiritual side of the individual in the organisation is that organisation will fail to trigger the full creativity and potential of their employees. Employees, in turn, will not succeed in developing themselves as holistic human beings. A holistic understanding of the person at work will not only encourage the development of the individual's IQ and emotional intelligence, but also the individual's spirit (Campbell & Hwa, 2014).

Gunther (2001) viewed the spiritual workplace as one with an employee-friendly environment that recognises supports and develops the spirit of its employees. Workplace spirituality is not about religion or conversion, or about encouraging people to accept a specific belief system. Instead, it is about employees who are self-aware of their spiritual beings whose souls need nourishment at work (Duchon & Plowman, 2005). Spirituality, according to Duchon and Plowman (2005), is about experiencing a sense of purpose and meaning in work which is beyond the meaning found in the performance of task. It is also about people experiencing a sense of connectedness to one another and to their workplace community.

2.3.1 The dimensions of workplace spirituality

Three dimensions of workplace spirituality can be identified from Duchon and Polkman's (2005) definition of workplace spirituality. Organisations must

- recognise that employees have an inner life;
- assume that employees have a desire to find their work purposeful and meaningful; and
- provide a commitment to serve as a community for spiritual growth (connectedness).

2.3.1.1 Inner self

The inner self dimension of workplace spirituality refers to the viewpoint that employees bring their whole selves to work (Duchon & Plowman, 2005). Organisations need to understand that employees have spiritual needs (an inner life), just as they have physical, emotional and cognitive needs, and all these are needs these employees bring with them to work (Duchon & Plowman, 2005). Organisations also need to understand that the satisfaction

of the inner life will automatically lead to greater satisfaction with the outer life (Gupta et al., 2014).

2.3.1.2 Meaningful work

The second dimension of workplace spirituality encompasses the idea that people seek meaning at work (Duchon & Plowman, 2005). Mitroff and Denton (1999) defined spirituality as the desire to find ultimate meaning and purpose in one's life and to lead an integrated life. Likewise, a spiritual workplace is one that has meaning over and above financial rewards. Sheep (2006) posited that, in order to support employees' spiritual growth and job performance, there must be a convergence between employees' perceptions of their own life and the meaning of their work. According to Duchon and Plowman (2005), the conceptualisation of spirituality at work must include not only the recognition that individuals have inner lives that push them towards a search for meaning, but that part of the search for meaning is satisfied by meaningful work. Rupali and Sharma (2014) looked at meaningful work from a human resource management (HRM) perspective. They believed that job design as a critical function of HRM has always focused on improving the productivity and performance of employees and the organisation. According to them, the discussion of the dimension of meaningful work provides a new insight in the sense that academics and practitioners need to design jobs in a manner that not only enhances motivation and satisfaction of employees, but also fulfils their need to seek meaning and purpose in their work.

Daniel (2015) posited that one possible way to help employees find and conduct meaningful activities in the workplace could be to empower them through rotation at work. He also suggested that employees could be assigned to work in a specific project for a specific period of time, and then move to another one to avoid redundancy and stress. In the study conducted by Lips-Wiersman and Mills (2014), the concept of meaningful work turned out to be one of the important concepts for the group of Lancelot employees. To assist employees to experience meaningful work in this organisation, they were afforded the opportunity to be autonomous in designing and structuring their tasks to ensure permanent meaningful work. Lips-Wiersman and Mills (2014) concluded that meaningful work is a construct that requires shaping and reshaping, and that reflection plays a significant role in this process.

2.3.1.3 Connectedness

Workplace spirituality also entails connectedness and community which, according to Duchon and Plowman (2005), are exemplified through sharing, mutual obligation and higher levels of commitments. Mitroff and Denton (1999) proposed interconnectedness as one of the significant elements of spirituality. Pfeffer (2003) also noted that an important dimension that people value at work is being able to feel part of a large community or being interconnected. According to Milliman, Ferguson, Trickett, and Condemni (1999), an organisation that treats its employees as part of its community and emotionally engages them in its purpose will obtain a higher level of employee motivation and loyalty. Duchon and Plowman (2005) postulated that workplace spirituality is a psychological state, a set of perceptions that workers have about the local work unit, how it is managed, and how they relate to one another. Jurkiewicz and Giacalone (2004) also viewed workplace spirituality as an organisational culture that promotes employees' well-being by positively affecting their experiences, work processes and connection with others. Lips-Wiersman and Mills' (2002) study explored human connectivity, which also means connectedness. This was one of the phenomena that featured strongly in their study. Employees felt the importance of others to articulate and that it was deeply meaningful to have a sense of connection to them. Rupali and Sharma (2014) maintained that training and development as a component of HRM could play a vital role in ensuring that there is interconnectedness between employees. They observed that the component of interconnectedness highlights the need and benefits of genuine relationships between employees. According to Lips-Wiersman and Mills (2002), training and development initiatives have been focusing on technical and analytical skills and competencies in employee and they believe that this focus is too narrow. They proposed that development programmes need to urgently include spiritual elements into their curricula. In their study on facilitating workplace spirituality, Rupali and Sharma (2014) looked at how human behaviour and organisational development can facilitate workplace spirituality. They established that the focus of organisational development is on increasing organisational effectiveness, developing human potential and designing change. Organisational effectiveness, according to Rupali and Sharma (2014), can be enhanced by developing a divine work culture (*davi sampat*) which is characterised by fearless ethical practice, justice and support. They believed that human potential can be developed by focusing on the transcendence of self.

Another factor that influences connectedness or interconnectedness was explored by Sorakraikitikul and Siengthai (2014). He emphasised the impact of the interaction of

organisational learning culture and knowledge sharing behaviours on workplace spirituality. He concluded that organisational learning culture shapes the contextual environment for knowledge sharing and at the same time, stimulates employees' perceptions that their work and lives have meaning. This seems to help employees integrate their lives and energy into the workplace. He further stated that the strong positive influence of knowledge sharing behaviours on workplace spirituality indicates that participating in knowledge sharing increases the sense of human value and purpose and connectedness with others. Siengthai (2014) emphasised the importance of sharing, which makes employees experience a profound sense of purpose or value which, in turn, intensifies the extent to which they bond and at the same time fulfils the human spirit. A learning culture, according to Siengthai (2014), fosters the ultimate human need, enabling new meaning for work and life that integrates into the employing organisation.

The literature reviewed in this chapter, indicates what many scholars have said about spirituality and workplace spirituality being multifaceted concepts. This has resulted in difficulties in reaching consensus on the definition of these two concepts. As stated previously, the aim of this study was to explore the perceptions of employees working in a national government department in KwaZulu-Natal about spirituality and workplace spirituality.

2.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 2 focused on the core concepts of the research study and explored the literature on spirituality and workplace spirituality. The literature on the difference between religion and spirituality was also examined in order to gain a clear understanding of what exactly spirituality is and is not.

CHAPTER 3

ARTICLE

**EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SPIRITUALITY AND WORKPLACE
SPIRITUALITY**

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ABSTRACT

Orientation

Spirituality in general, and in the workplace in particular, has become an important topic in recent years. Although views on the nature of spirituality and workplace spirituality abound, the meaning of the two concepts is still unclear for some employees. Spirituality in the workplace is more than an illusion – it is changing the fundamental nature of work. Employees are searching for meaning in their work – a meaning that transcends mere economic gain. Employees expect their employers to help them in their search for spirituality.

Research purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore employees' perceptions about spirituality and workplace spirituality.

Motivation for the study

According to Karakas (2010), there has been heightened interest in spirituality which is evident in the drastic increase in the sale of spiritual books. Despite this interest in workplace spirituality, research has shown that there are still some challenges regarding the agreed-upon definition of workplace spirituality (De Klerk, 2005). The motivation for this study was to gather data on employees' perceptions about spirituality and workplace spirituality.

Research design, approach and method

Using a qualitative approach, the current study set out to explore employees' perceptions about spirituality and workplace spirituality among 16 employees in a public service delivery government department.

Main findings

The findings derived from thematic analysis in this study aligned well with the literature perspectives on the phenomenon of spirituality. The findings, however, also revealed that the participants had diverse perceptions about spirituality and workplace spirituality. Serving people was one factor among others that motivated employees in their work. Some of the participants perceived spirituality to be separate from religion, while others associated it with

God or a higher being, and others fused spirituality and religion. According to some of the participants, workplace spirituality is about caring for one another.

Practical/managerial implications

This research gives some indication about employees' perceptions on what is a meaningful work environment and how employees perceive workplace spirituality.

Contribution/value-add

This study provides an overview of employees' perceptions and understanding of spirituality and workplace spirituality. The findings also add to the existing literature on different perceptions of spirituality and workplace spirituality.

Key words

Spirituality; serving others; team spirit; inner being; religion; Ubuntu; caring leadership; respect for employees

INTRODUCTION

During the decades leading to the close of the 20th century, rapid changes occurred in the world of work and resulted in extreme uncertainty and competition (Xio, Peng, & Zhao, 2012). In this highly competitive milieu, survival may require organisations to be able to develop products of superior quality, improve their services and gain larger market shares (Li, 2013). The need for organisations to remain competitive places substantial pressures on employees to perform. This in turn tends to increase stress levels and disrupt the essential work-life balance (Chand & Koul, 2012).

In response to unrelenting competition and diminishing resources, organisations invoke initiatives aimed at cost-cutting and enhancing profit margins such as downsizing, redundancies and organisational re-engineering, which have contributed immensely to the creation of an unstable environment that leads employees not to trust their organisations (Cash & Gray, 2000). The debilitating effects of downsizing leave emotional scars on both the victims and survivors in organisations (Agwe, Carter, & Murray, 2014). Equally debilitating is the merger syndrome that includes possibilities of job losses and extreme uncertainties among those employees who are affected (Sinkovics, Zagelmeyer, & Kusstatscher, 2011).

The impact of cost-cutting measures on the most important assets of organisations, namely employees, is widely acknowledged in the literature. Employees are seen as significant assets that distinguish an organisation from its competitors because competencies that cannot be easily accessed by competitors are embedded in them (King, Fowler, & Zeithaml, 2001). Such competencies may, for example, include knowledge of markets.

Employees often find themselves as first targets in cost-cutting initiatives, and they have come to perceive themselves as nothing more than expendable resources (Cohen, 1996). More than ever, individuals find themselves in a world of permanent white water, experiencing a lack of meaning in their lives and an attendant sense of spiritual desolation (Vail, 1989). Work overload, with its concomitant long working hours, fewer holidays and high performance targets, has become the norm, resulting in high stress levels which, in turn, result in poor work performance (Amal & Mohammand, 2011). According to Amal and Mohammand (2011), globalisation, customer orientation, and competitive services and

technologies are some of the factors that complicate the operations of organisations, resulting in employees becoming overwhelmed.

The changing work environment makes increasing demands on employees to search for creative ways to maintain their work-life balance. People tend to perceive ethereal interventions such as seeking spiritual solutions to help them cope with work demands (Mitroff & Denton, 1999). The review of the extant literature on workplace spirituality reveals a growing interest in spirituality in the corporate world, reflected by a substantial increase in the number of scholarly articles on workplace spirituality (Daniel, 2015; Pardasani, Sharma, & Bindlish, 2014).

The notion of spirituality is regarded as being as old as the beginning of the world (Danish et al., 2010). The dynamism, utility and research progress on the concept is undermined by the fact that it means different things to different people, which makes it difficult to develop a universal definition (Milliman, Ferguson, Trickett & Condemni, 1999). However, the relative and subjective nature of the construct is informed by its ontological and epistemological nature. Spirituality is seen as a subjective and intangible construct (Sorakraikitikul & Siengthai, 2014). According to Badrinarayanan and Madhavaram (2008), the notion of spirituality is derived from the Latin root, *spiritus*, which means breath of life.

Chen and Sheng (2013) asserted that without spirituality human nature is incomplete. They maintain that self-recognition and an individual's inner world contribute to a happy life. But in organisational settings, the inner world of organisational members, including its emotional component, is constrained and confined to a model of complete rationality leaving no room for spirituality (Chen & Sheng, 2013). This stance on human beings gives rise to an imbalance in the material and the spiritual life of individuals. In Chen and Sheng's (2013) view, this creates spiritual emptiness, moral abnormalities, twisted social values and greed, which all have a serious impact on organisations' work value and ethics.

According to Amal and Mohammand (2011), workplace spirituality can be utilised to overcome the effects of globalisation and other factors that result in employees becoming overwhelmed. In their view, spirituality can help employees achieve a sense of direction and purpose in life. Guillen, Ferrero, and Hoffman (2015) posited that there are certain individuals whose conducts is motivated by spirituality. In their study, they refer to spiritual good, which is defined as "any intangible human good regarding transcendence and a deep sense of meaning that requires some sort of faith in its origin" (Guillen et al., 2015, p. 810).

Spiritual good is perceived as a motivator of human conduct and they argued that it should be recognised and respected. Spirituality is also perceived by Chen and Sheng (2013) as an effective way of stimulating employees' internal strengths, and for this reason they maintain that introducing workplace spirituality should be encouraged. Furthermore, Roof (2005) discovered that individual spirituality can positively and significantly correlate with engagement, vigour and dedication. Roof (2005) also contended that workers' spirituality may promote more effort, energy, diligence, persistence, purpose and pride.

According to Karakas, Sarigollu, and Kavas (2015), most studies conducted on spirituality describe it as an individual-level phenomenon, and they believed that the focus is more on the inner life, idiosyncratic experiences and feelings of the individual neglecting interpersonal and relational elements. They also claimed that from the Eastern perspective, people who view spirituality as religion are those who are not aware of the depth of spirituality and the extent to which it has been researched. They defined spirituality as any sense of connectedness, understanding, and satisfaction with respect not only to religion but also to people and oneself.

Karakas et al. (2015) perceived spirituality as a journey to find a holistic and profound understanding of the existential self and its relationship with the universe or the transcendent. Three themes are emphasised in the preceding definition, namely transcendence, connectedness and virtuousness. Transcendence means rising above the ego trap or short-term interest in the pursuit of greater good and collective well-being in the long run. Connectedness is defined as an organisational climate which is characterised by trust, friendship, genuineness, belongingness and interpersonal sensitivity. Virtuousness is viewed as upholding and practising ethical values and leaving a solid legacy for the future.

However, spirituality is sometimes perceived as a synonym for religion (Del Rio & White, 2012). The misunderstanding and blurred meanings of spirituality and religion were observed by Guillen et al. (2015), who later argued that a clear distinction should be made between religion and spirituality. In his distinction between spirituality and religion, Del Rio and White (2012) concluded that spirituality entails human individuality and making sense of one's life, whereas religiosity defines how a person behaves, based on various established belief systems within given milieus, different cultures and different generations. Duchon and Plowman (2005) viewed religion as being connected to the more organised belief systems and spirituality as related to the individual's inner longing for meaning and community.

The two are also distinguished on the perceived comprehensiveness of the constructs (Fry, 2003). Religion is viewed as a narrower concept that prescribes the behaviour of members. It has prescribed principles, dogma and doctrines (Fry, 2003; Westgate, 1996). Spirituality, however, is seen as a broader and non-prescriptive concept that reflects individuals' beliefs and values (Fry, 2003). Neck and Milliman (1994) noted that for some people, spirituality at work or workplace spirituality involves a religious connotation, while for others it does not.

The following table further tabulates the differences between spirituality and religiosity:

Table 2

Difference between Spirituality and Religiosity (adapted from Badrinarayanan & Madhavaram, 2008)

Spirituality	Religiosity	Source
Inner longing for meaning and community.	An organised belief system.	Duchon and Plowman (2005).
Highly appropriate topic for discussion in the workplace.	Highly inappropriate topic for discussion in the workplace.	Mitroff and Denton (1999).
Not dependent on or predicated by any form of religion.	May serve as a vehicle or road map to nurture, comprehend, and express spirituality.	Kale (2004).
Broader concept that represents beliefs and values.	Narrower concept that refers to behaviours. Has prescribed tenets, dogma, and doctrines.	Fry (2003); Westgate (1996).
Looks inward, within the individual. More inclusive, universally applicable, and embraces diverse expressions of interconnectedness.	Often looks outward, depending on rites and rituals. Sometimes tends to be dogmatic, exclusive, and patriarchal.	Klenke (2003); Marques, Dhiman, and King (2005).
Not operationalised in terms of affiliation or	Characterised by measures of church attendance, amount of	Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003b); Koenig,

denominational ideals.	prayer, involvement in church-related activities, among other things.	McCullough, and Larson (2001).
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Workplace spirituality

The changes effected by globalisation have driven employees to strive for spiritual support in order to cope with the resulting tension (Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Employees spend a substantial amount of their time in work organisations. Spiritual adventure usually takes place in the workplace, since work is the central part of human existence (King & Nicol, 1999). This view is shared by Chen and Sheng (2013), who perceive the workplace as a centre of everyday life. The centrality of work in the lives of many people and the changes in the nature of work over the years has resulted in a lonelier workplace with reduced social contact between employees.

According to McKenna (1997), spirituality grounds people in their work and allows them to connect with the transcendent in all they do. The nature of work has changed profoundly over the years. Previously, work was seen as a tool to facilitate the development of individuals. It has been transformed into a forum in which individuals develop themselves (Miller, 1998). People are endeavouring to find meaning in work that transcends mere economic exchange between isolated, autonomous individuals. Miller (1998) contended that people are trying to find ways to connect their work lives with their spiritual lives, to work together in community, and to be unified in a vision and purpose that gives meaning beyond making money. According to Chen and Sheng (2013), workplace spirituality is mutual support from individual and work groups, which enhances the meaning of work and the enlightenment of self-transcendence in order for the individual to feel value and completeness of life. According to De Klerk (2005), the meaning of work describes the role of work in a person's life. De Klerk (2005) defines work as a pathway to finding meaning in life. Work is a social process which is found in all societies, and in modern society it is often identified with employment.

Business organisations have shown much interest in workplace spirituality, and this interest can no longer be ignored (De Klerk, 2005). Many authors have shown the significance of workplace spirituality in publications both in popular literature and scholarly journals. One may well ask, why the focus and interest on spirituality at work? According to Chen and

Sheng (2013), individual spirituality is different from workplace spirituality in the sense that workplace spirituality is about individuals who seek the meaning of life through work itself. For many such individuals, payment in the form of wages and salaries is pivotal but certainly not the only attraction to the workplace and the work itself. In work, some people experience more meaning and connectedness to their colleagues and the broader society that they service.

Organisations have invested in spirituality in the workplace because of the perceived connection between the construct and ethics. There are strong perceptions that when spirituality is embedded in the workplace, ethical considerations among employees predominate and support the desired organisational culture and enhance productivity (Chen & Sheng, 2013).

The decades leading to the close of the 20th century witnessed perceived declines in the significant role of neighbourhoods, churches, civic groups and extended families (Conger, 1994). Previously, these institutions were central in inculcating feelings of interconnectedness between communities (Conger, 1994). The decline in the centrality of these institutions has resulted in the workplace being seen more often as a primary source of community despite the alienating nature of the job.

There is a school of thought that argues that the advent of industrialisation has disrupted the earlier institutions of the society and the vital role they played in fulfilling the psychological needs of the society (De Klerk, 2005). Religious institutions, the extended family and the village community have come to be replaced by institutions of paid work because employees spend a significant part of their lives in these institutions (Gill, 1999). Despite the weaknesses in the changed nature of work observed by Sievers (1986), work and workplace give people a feeling of being tied into larger society, of having something to do and of having a purpose in life (De Klerk, 2005).

De Klerk (2005) observed that people are moving away from materialism and more towards a society in which spiritual values and meaning in life are becoming more significant values than materialistic objects. Related to this, Lips-Wiersman (2003) also understood spirituality to be anti-materialist and anti-positivist. A similar sentiment was echoed by Fry (2003) when he asserted that American managers and leaders want a deeper sense of meaning and fulfilment on the job, even more than they want money and time off.

Research has also shown the positive contribution of spirituality in the workplace. The extant literature has reported positive correlations between spirituality and significant workplace variables such as job involvement, organisational identification, work-reward satisfaction and organisational performance (Kolodinsky, Giacalone, & Jurkiewicz, 2007). Workplace spirituality has been reported to be negatively related to organisational frustration (Kolodinsky et al., 2007). Other research has also revealed that organisations that do not encourage spirituality in their workplaces tend to experience low morale, high turnover, burnout, frequent stress-related illness and high absenteeism (Garcia-Zamor, 2003).

In the same way as interest and exhilaration have been evidenced in the popular literature and academic research journals, the notion of workplace spirituality has also been censured (Fernando, 2005). It has been argued that the purported positive relationship between workplace spirituality and organisational performance has not been established. The argument goes that the notion of workplace spirituality is misused by managers and those in management in organisations as an administrative tool to control employees (Fernando, 2005).

Despite the criticism levelled at the misuse of workplace spirituality, the vitality of the construct is appreciated in many other quarters. Ashmos and Duchon (2000) recognised that employees have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of the community (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). In other words, work assumes its meaning and significance in the context of the community. Workplace spirituality facilitates employees' efforts to find an ultimate purpose in life, to develop a strong connection with co-workers and other people associated with work, and to have alignment between one's core beliefs and the values of the organisation (Mitroff & Denton, 1999).

Milliman, Czaplewski, and Ferguson (2003) conceptualised workplace spirituality from what they saw as three organisational echelons, namely individual, group and organisational. The individual echelon is related to the purpose of one's work. At the group level, the notion is associated with a sense of community that workplace spirituality engenders. The organisational echelon of workplace spirituality facilitates alignment of employees' values with the organisation's values and mission. Figure 1 represents a conceptualisation of spirituality (Milliman et al., 2003).

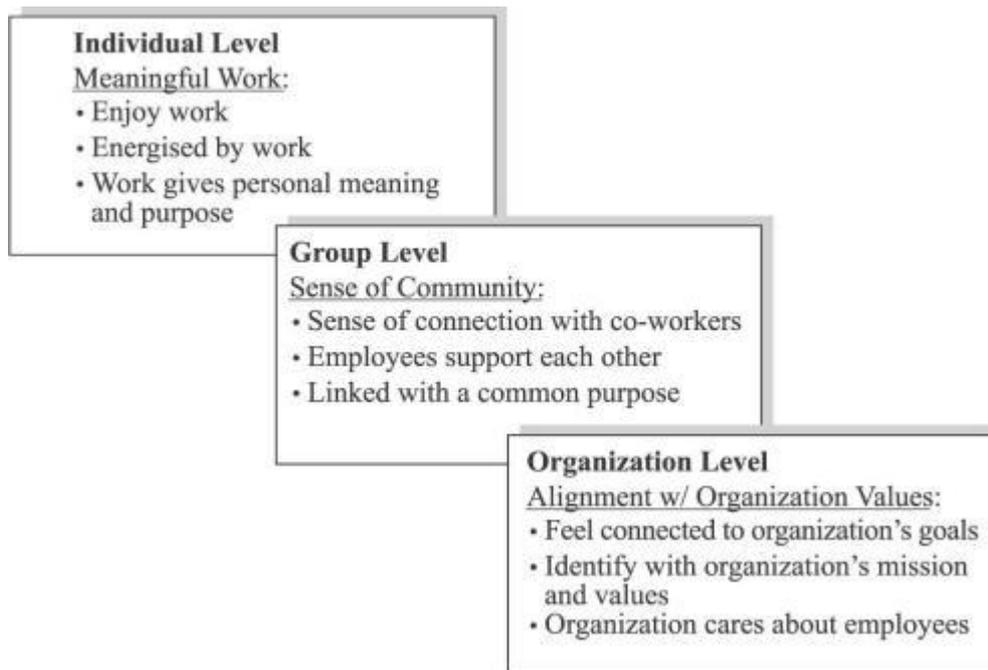


Figure 1. Spirituality in the workplace (adapted from Milliman et al., 2003, p. 428)

Dimensions of workplace spirituality

Individual level: At the individual level, a fundamental aspect of spirituality at work involves having a deep sense of meaning and purpose in one's work. This dimension represents how employees interact with their day-to-day work at the individual level (Milliman et al., 2003).

According to Ashmos and Duchon (2000), the expression of spirituality at work involves the assumptions that each person has his or her own inner motivations, truths and desires to be involved in activities that give greater meaning to his or her life and the lives of others. The spirituality view is that work is not simply meant to be interesting or challenging, but that it is about things such as searching for deeper meaning and purpose, living one's dream and expressing one's inner life needs by seeking meaningful work and contributing to others (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000).

From an employee's point of view, work is perceived as a calling whenever he or she feels that work done has resulted in a change in the lives of others. When employees experience a sense of care from others or to others they conclude that the work is highly meaningful (Fachrunnisa, Adhiatma, & Mutamimah, 2014). According to Rupali and Sharma (2014), when employees perceive their work as meaningful, their stress levels are reduced.

Group level: This dimension of workplace spirituality involves having a deep connection to or relationship with others and has been articulated as a sense of community or interconnectedness (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). According to Miller (1992), this dimension of spirituality occurs at the group level of human behaviour and concerns interactions between employees and their co-workers. To facilitate interconnectedness in the workplace, Rupali and Sharma (2014) postulated that *Loksangrah* (which stands for the unit of the world and the interconnectedness of society) can assist. It implies that all the actions of the individual and that of the organisation should be driven by enthusiasm for promoting the welfare of society and its stakeholders. This is breaking away from the old idea of “survival of the fittest to survival of all” (Rupali & Sharma, 2014, p. 851).

Organisational level: This is the dimension where individuals experience a strong sense of alignment between their personal values and their organisation’s mission and purpose. According to Mitroff and Denton (1999), this component of workplace spirituality incorporates the interaction of employees with the larger organisational purpose. This alignment with the organisation’s values is related to the premise that an individual’s purpose is larger than himself or herself, and should make a contribution to others or society. Alignment also means that individuals believe that managers and employees in the organisation have appropriate values, have a strong conscience and are concerned about employees and community welfare (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). This implies that the organisation should provide an environment which will encourage ethical decision making, moral behaviour and workplace spirituality (Rupali & Sharma, 2014). Rupali and Sharma (2014) asserted that the organisation should strive to create an effective work culture in pursuit of its goals and objectives in order to facilitate workplace spirituality.

This study endeavoured to gain an insightful understanding of employees’ notions of workplace spirituality and relied on their own perceptions unveiled through interviews in order to foster such an understanding.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research (Terreblanche & Durrheim, 2006). According to Maree (2007), a research design is a strategy which moves from underlying philosophical assumptions to specify the selection of participants, data gathering techniques and data analysis to be done. Moreover, Babbie and Mouton (1998) stated that

research design involves the researcher explaining why certain methods are used and what type of data needs to be captured. The research design helps to indicate the direction to be followed when generating data and how it will be analysed. Basically, this means that as a researcher needs to plan his or her work accordingly, considering that he or she will be interacting with the different participants in order to collect data.

Research approach

Guba and Lincoln (2000) asserted that a paradigm is a basic set of beliefs, a set of assumptions researchers are willing to make, which serve as the touchstones in guiding research activities. This study fits into the interpretive paradigm. The interpretive paradigm allows the researcher to understand how individual employees subjectively define spirituality and workplace spirituality. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011), each paradigm has several basic beliefs, namely ontology, epistemology, methodology and axiology.

In this study, employees' perceptions of workplace spirituality were explored through an interpretive paradigm and a constructivist world view. This view enabled the researcher to study the participants' perspectives and ultimately their individual and subjective meaning of spirituality. The voice of the participants provided a rich form of qualitative data (Janse van Rensburg & Roodt, 2009; Saunders et al., 2009).

The thrust of constructivist and qualitative research is about meaning making and not positing and testing hypotheses (Mason, 2010). Meaning making occurred when the researcher explored employees' conceptions or ideas about spirituality and developed an understanding of the issues involved from the inside rather than the outside. Ultimately, the themes emerged from the employees' perceptions of workplace spirituality.

Ontologically, this study operated from the assertion that reality is relative and as a result there may be as many realities as individuals to contemplate them (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Hence the study revealed numerous notions of workplace spirituality because the participants viewed the phenomenon of workplace spirituality differently.

The epistemology stance of the study was that the data is contained in the perceptions of the individual participants. The researcher interacted with the participants to gather the data because it (the data) is embedded in the participants' perceptions, epistemologically speaking. Hence the epistemological assumption made in this study was that knowledge is something

subjective. This suggests that knowledge is based on personal and unique views of the participants (Morgan & Burrell, 1977). The participants' expressions on workplace spirituality revealed their own individual views.

One should bear in mind that the focus of constructivist studies is on harnessing and extending the power of ordinary languages and expression to help researchers and others understand the social world we live in rather than isolating and controlling variables (Babbie & Mouton, 1998).

Research strategy

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), the research methodology is the general approach the researcher adopts in conducting a research project. In this qualitative study, the unit of analysis was the individual employees (Mason, 2010). Flick (2007) posited that qualitative research emphasises elaborated descriptions of social or instructional settings. Qualitative research was deemed to be more appropriate for this study. Corbin and Strauss (2008) argued that qualitative research affords the researcher access to the inner experiences of participants, to determine how meanings are formed through and in culture, and to discover rather than test variables. In the current study, the researcher utilised interviews as the means to generate data. The employees or participants were interviewed with the objective of unravelling their perceptions and understanding workplace spirituality.

Research method

The next section the techniques and procedures used to conduct the empirical study.

Research setting

This research was conducted in a public service delivery government department located in Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu-Natal province. The organisation strives to uplift the quality of life of people of the province by providing sustainable infrastructure, water, health services, sanitation and social amenities. This study was conducted among HR and finance staff. It is also important to note that most of the respondents were from HR and their day-to-day duties were to provide services to internal staff. The department had a total staff complement of 1 706 employees, starting from the general worker level to the HOD level. Below is the table of how the population was distributed according to gender and grades.

The table identifies the grades, gender and how they were classified.

Table 3

Occupational Levels, Gender and Employee Grades

Occupational level	Females	Males	Grade
Junior staff	534	384	2–6
Supervisor	159	107	7– 8
Assistant directors	79	49	9–10
Deputy directors	70	77	11–12
Senior managers	19	18	13
General managers	7	44	14
Senior general managers	1	33	15
Head of the department	1	9	16

Adapted from the A3 statistics of race, gender, disabled and vacant posts per salary level, June 2014.

Entrée and establishing research roles

A letter requesting permission to conduct the study was written to the relevant provincial government department. The permission of the provincial government was submitted to the University of South Africa's (Unisa's) Ethics Committee in support of the application. Subsequent to the department's permission and ethical clearance from Unisa, permission to conduct the study was then sought and obtained from the human resources senior management team as per the permission granted by the department. In line with the ethical principles governing research, the purpose of the study was explained to the participants. They were informed of their rights, including the right to participate voluntarily and the right to anonymity and confidentiality. The respondents were also informed that they could withdraw from the interviews at any stage of their participation.

Each employee consented to participate in the study by signing the consent form after this form and information letter had been explained (see appendix 3). Interviews were only scheduled once the participants had signed and returned the consent forms to the researcher. The one-on-one in-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted during the researcher's vacation leave. At the start of the interviews, permission was requested and granted to use the audio recorder to record the interview (appendix 4). Interviewees were reminded that the

researcher was conducting the research as a Unisa master’s student and not as their HR administrator. Owing to time limitations, no alternate forms of communication were offered in terms of Skype or telephonic interviews.

Sampling

Using convenience sampling, 16 employees from the department’s two different business units were identified. These employees from the two units were available and willing to participate in the study (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006). According to Patton (2002), this method is the least desirable strategy to use because it is biased in a systematic way, and tends to provide homogeneous participants.

Mason (2002) further postulated that it is essential for qualitative researchers to understand the setting being studied. Hence qualitative researchers typically deal with small purposefully selected samples that can enrich the data. The chosen employees assisted the researcher by articulating their perceptions, which disentangled their views on workplace spirituality. The gender spread of respondents was three males and 13 females, of whom eight were English speaking and eight isiZulu speaking. Three respondents were of Indian descent, five whites and eight Africans. The characteristics of the sample are presented in table 4.

Table 4

Description of the Sample

Gender	Race	No. of employees	Total no. of participants
Females	African	6	6
Males	Africa	0	
Females	Indians	3	4
Males	Indians	1	
Females	White	5	5
Males	White	0	

Females	Coloured	1	1
Males	Coloured	0	
Total		16	16

Data collection methods

According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011), interviews are a particular kind of conversation between the researcher and the interviewee that requires active asking and listening. In addition, Blaxter, Hughes, and Tight (2006) posited that the interview constitutes a learning process for both the interviewee and the interviewer since the conversation brings the experiences of the interviewee, and at the same time the interviewer uses this opportunity to further advance the research process. Cohen et al. (2011) mentioned different types of interviews that can be used to acquire data from various sources. This study utilised semi-structured interviews as a data gathering tool. Taylor (2006) affirmed that semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to use a list of prompts he or she wishes to explore. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, and Delpont (2011) stated that these forms of interview allow the researcher to explain the questions to the participants and ensure that they understand what is required of them. In terms of this study, semi-structured interviews attempted to provide a contextual understanding of employees' perceptions about workplace spirituality.

The interviews were conducted in a secluded office, behind closed doors to ensure confidentiality and to encourage employees to openly express their opinions as well as to ensure that possible disruptions were eliminated. The duration of the interviews was between 45 and 60 minutes. The semi-structured interview guide which comprised questions to explore employees understanding of the concept under investigation was used as a guide throughout the interviews.

Recording of data

All the interviews were voice-recorded with the consent of the interviewees. It was imperative to voice-record the conversation to have accurate records of what transpired during the interview process. It also assisted in keeping the record of the interview without having to be distracted by detailed note taking (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Most importantly, the audio recording assisted the research process by ensuring that the whole and accurate

content of the interview facilitated in-depth analysis of the data because it was used for data immersion. The audio recording was then transcribed and printed to facilitate data analysis. To ensure data security all data records, including transcripts were kept in the researcher's locked office.

Data analysis

The researcher took her time to read, reread and listen to the audio tapes to facilitate familiarisation with the data. The data immersion and resultant familiarisation involved forward and backward movement as they happened again and again. After familiarisation, the researcher used different colours to highlight expressions that were similar in terms of content. Highlighting the data with markers of different colours aided data analysis (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

Codes were developed. A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or a short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data (Saldana, 2013). According to Saldana (2013), data may consist of interview transcripts, participant observation field notes, journals, documents, drawings, artefacts, photographs, videos, internet sites, e-mail correspondence and literature. *In vivo* coding was used as a first-cycle coding method (Saldana, 2013). *In vivo* coding means “in that which is alive,” and as a code, refers to a word or short phrase from the actual language found in the qualitative data record (Saldana, 2013). This aided the research process and ensured that the analysis and the results would stay as close as possible to the language and voices of the participants. Themes were then established from the coded data. According to Saldana (2013), a theme is an outcome of coding, categorisation and analytic reflection, rather than being something that is in itself coded. A theme is an extended phrase or sentence that identifies what a unit of data is about or what it means.

Strategies employed to ensure quality data

Maree (2007) posited that when qualitative researchers speak of research “validity and reliability” they are usually referring to research that is credible and trustworthy. La Blanca (2010) defined trustworthiness as a demonstration that the evidence for results reported is sound.

Various steps throughout the process were adopted to ensure the quality, integrity and trustworthiness of the data. To enhance transferability of the findings and not generalisation

to the larger population, this research provided rich descriptions of the context. Such detailed descriptions of the context were significant for contextual applicability.

The transcripts were also typed up verbatim using the natural voice of the participants, which included pauses, repetition of phrases and incomplete sentences. However, the natural voice elements were omitted from the final version of the dissertation for ease of reading.

For each interview, a consistent routine was followed to ensure credibility and dependability. The integrity of the data was ensured by storing the data transcripts and interview recordings safely and securely. In so doing, the confidentiality and integrity of the information was maintained.

Furthermore, Lincoln and Guba (2000) mentioned credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability as the key criteria of trustworthiness in qualitative research studies. Credibility refers to the ability of the researcher to produce findings that are convincing and believable (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Smaling (1992) asserted that transferability refers to the ability of the account to provide answers in other contexts and to the transferability of findings to other contexts (cited in Terreblanche, 2006).

The research was conducted in a private office where there was minimum distraction. According to Yin (2012), dependability refers to the degree to which the reader can be convinced that the findings did indeed occur as the researcher said. Considering the diversity of the participants in terms of racial and cultural backgrounds, it was expected that they would behave differently and express different opinions about the notion of workplace spirituality. Lincoln and Guba (2000) postulated that confirmability refers to the practice by researchers to go back to the participants with a view to verifying whether or not initial interpretations by the researcher were correct. The researcher went back to the participants after the data collection and initial analysis had been done to check whether the research findings were accurate. According to Cohen et al. (2011), another trustworthiness technique measure is crystallisation. Crystallisation is used to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the process of the study and its findings. Furthermore, Maree (2007) posited that crystallisation in qualitative research sets out to penetrate the human understandings and constructions about it. The interview questions probed the participants to elaborate further on the topic, build knowledge and state their own perspectives on their understanding of spirituality in general and spirituality at work in particular.

FINDINGS

This section presents the findings relating to employees' perceptions of workplace spirituality. A number of themes were used.

Work

The respondents were asked to explain the significance of work on their daily lives. The purpose of this question was to understand the meaning that employees attached to their work and the type of fulfilment stemming from doing this work. This was not to exclude any unanticipated explanations that the participants would advance.

The responses varied, with the overwhelming majority expressing the view that they were motivated to do their current work by their interest to serve people and to see that the people they served were satisfied. All but one respondent expressed the perception that they worked to serve people or the customers. Some of the verbatim statements captured the essence of what motivated them in the work they performed:

"I am a people's person. I enjoy helping people. I am here to help and I find it very rare to find people in the public service who really want to help. I really feel happy if I helped someone, it makes me feel that I've worked for my salary. I believe HR is people oriented; we are for the people, we are here to serve the people. I'm not here for the job I'm here to help. If I succeed in something at least I know I have achieved something. My work is a calling for me. I don't believe anyone can work in HR, yes everyone can write a letter, but to go that extra and feel for people is definitely a calling. I love my job."

Some participants reported that the work and workplace were a motivating factor because of the people they worked with. The support they received and provided to others was significant. The workplace had become a second home for them. One participant reported that even when he or she was sick he or she would rather come to work than stay at home because if *"I am at work my colleagues will support me and that deflects the focus from the pain"*. *"I like the company of my colleagues; they are like a second family to me. When I'm sick I don't stay at home I prefer coming to work because I know that I have my friends who will make me laugh and forget about the pain."*

Another respondent spoke glowingly about the amazing team spirit and support that motivated him or her in the workplace.

“It is the people in my team that motivate me. We are just few, but the team spirit is so great. We are there for each; if one person is going through crisis, we ensure that we are available for support purposes. It sometimes becomes difficult to get up in the morning and prepare for work, but the thought of fun and good spirit that the team brings to the office makes you realise that it pointless to stay at home. Our team has that ability to cheer one another and that motivates me to get up in the morning and come to work. Our bosses care for us. Our office is a very busy office but our managers ensure that they give us that tender loving care and support that play a very huge role in our daily work life. Our team has a certain way of taking care of you, I remember last year I lost my son and I could not stay much at home, I came back to work and the team was taking very good care of me. During lunchtime, they will make sure that they invite me in their office for lunch and ensure that I eat. Our HOD and our senior manager are very nice managers. When an employee is going through tough times, you see her when she comes to the office she will hug that person and tell you that everything will be fine, and she will tell that if you do not feel like coming to work, you can stay at home until you feel better.”

For another employee, service to clients or people brought fulfilment.

“The main thing is that, I like helping people, I like working with people. I like to see people happy. I get personal fulfilment when people become happy because of the help I offer them. If people are not happy with my services it makes me feel that I’m not fit enough to be doing my work. I enjoy serving people. When an employee is requesting my assistance, I make sure that they get help. If a person is not happy because of the service we render as a team, I ensure that I rectify the mistake even though I’m not the cause of the mistake.”

When asked if he or she would leave their job if his or her financial position were to change, the latter respondent expressed the following view:

“Money is not an issue, as much as we need it. I can win a billion rand then invest it because working for me it not about making money. The work that I do doesn’t pay much to say I’m working for money; my purpose is to serve people. My aim is to see people getting assisted. I’m here to serve the community. Even when I’m in hospital if I see someone struggling I stand up and assist, though I’m not in my workplace”.

Three participants expressed the view that the reason for them to come to work was only for financial gain. When asked if they would consider resigning if they were to win a million in the lottery, one of them said that he or she would leave in order to travel around the world because that had always been her dream. The two other participants expressed the view that they would leave their job because their work was meaningless and they felt that favouritism and corruption were making the workplace a more unfavourable place to be.

One of them expressed the view that he or she was actually not motivated by the work because of favouritism in the organisation:

“Nothing, I do not enjoy my work. I am working because I needed a job and I needed a salary. I have been here for 18 years and there is nothing interesting about it. I am very demotivated. I am not happy here. There is no job satisfaction. There is nothing that energises me. I live in Durban and I travel to Pietermaritzburg. I have tried to explain my situation to my manager but he seems not to care. I have applied for a transfer but nothing has happened. There is lot of favouritism and the unfairness in this department and that demotivates me. There is a lack of consideration. There is no motivation, you do something and it will be like you did not even try.”

Another reported that he or she was not motivated by the work because of corruption:

“There is so much of corruption taking place. That is a big big factor. Being here so long we see the changes, that what is not nice. These things make you feel like you must just resign. I’m here solely because of finance. It is said that you can’t do anything because this management is where the corruption starts.”

In spite of the repulsive corruption, the latter participant identified a positive contribution that he or she could make in the workplace.

“I have been in the department for years so lot of the junior staff comes to me for assistance, that’s satisfying ... I currently have a youngster that I’ve been training to do the job and it makes me happy to see her excelling in the work that I’ve trained her to do. Personal fulfilment is so important for me; money is secondary to personal fulfilment, happiness and satisfaction.”

Other respondents expressed the perceptions that they were motivated by their work because of the opportunities for learning and growth that their employment provided:

“It a good environment, beside people being friendly, you get to learn more things. When I first started, I didn’t know anything about registry till they started teaching me and then I learnt a lot. There is a lot of growing in here, because of that I get energised.”

Spirituality

The participants were asked about their understanding of spirituality. The purpose of this question was to elicit the respondents’ individual perceptions and meaning of the term “spirituality”.

The respondents provided three broad categories of responses to the question. The first saw spirituality as separate from religion. The second viewpoint tended to associate spirituality with God or a higher being. The third completely fused spirituality and religion.

The perception that regarded religion and spirituality as separate constructs is illustrated by the following verbatim statements:

“I think you can find spirituality in everyone, regardless of religion or which religion a person belongs to. I believe that everyone has a spiritual element no matter which religion you belong to. Religion is specific in terms of, for instance Christianity, Shembes, etc.”

“I think it is more of being aware that there is more than just a spiritual world, that there is a greater power that is more to life than the jeans that I’m wearing and the shoes that I bought yesterday. It is about understanding that there’s greater power, greater responsibility to humanity, not to say I owe Dolly, I owe Lulu but humanity as a whole, and to understand that on the spiritual level we are all living, feeling and breathing human beings. We don’t just wake up eat and go to bed. We are dynamic; there is more to me than just a person sitting behind my desk. Being a spiritual person you get to understand that the actions that you take, the decisions you make, your behaviour don’t just affect you, it affects other people. A simple example will be cutting off a person in traffic and you upset that person they will end up knocking down the person crossing the road because he is upset and is not concentrating. As a spiritual person it comes down to consideration, respect, respect is not a tangible thing, it a spiritual thing, neither is consideration, courtesy, manners, all of these are spiritual things, they are not recognised because people value things more than people.”

“Spirituality is about being connected with your inner being, to be aware of your feelings, and being aware of other people’s feelings and also treating people the way you will like to

be treated, regardless of their gender and race differences. Acknowledging that other people have feelings and also acknowledging that they have different beliefs.”

The second viewpoint tended to associate spirituality with God or the higher being. The following verbatim statement mirrored the views of some of the respondents:

“Spirituality for me is serving a living God, treating each other as human beings, treat each other the way you want to be treated and having that quite time to sit and give your problems to God. When I come in the morning the first thing I do I read a scripture and I just pray and then have a bit of quite time before I start my day’s work. During my quiet time I prepare myself to engage with other people, I align myself with what I’m supposed to be doing for the day. The whole day yesterday I had this song in my head that says, He hold my hand, I don’t know what the reason was for that.”

The third strand completely fused spirituality and religion, as illustrated by the following perceptions expressed by some of the respondents:

“My understanding is biblical. According to the bible there are different spirits. There is Holy Spirit and there are demonic spirits. Demonic spirits compel people to do bad things where the Holy Spirit makes people do right things.”

“For me spirituality is about Christianity.”

Differences between religion and spirituality

In further probing the respondents’ opinions of spirituality, they were asked what they thought the differences between religion and spirituality were. The responses differed, with more employees perceiving spirituality as being distinct from religion, but simultaneously expressing a strong perception regarding the link between religion and spirituality.

“I think it depends on how the individual perceives it. It sometimes happens that a person’s spirituality is somehow linked to religion, for example when you are at church and feel that there is something that is happening to you and this thing becomes more stronger when you are at church hence I’m saying there is a link between these two concepts. Some people become so spiritual without having to go to church, and some people they will just look for a quiet place and try to reconnect. You may also say spirituality becomes more prominent when they are in their place of worshipping. Sangomas have their own ways to connect to their spirit or spirituality. Different people nourish spirituality differently.”

Other respondents expressed the view that religion is the same as spirituality, that is, the two concepts are synonyms. These respondents found it difficult to separate the two concepts:

“Religion and spirituality are more or less the same.”

It can be said that generally, the respondents saw the two constructs as separate, but the uncertainty regarding how they relate to each other was evident from the following verbatim statements made by the respondents:

“Yes there’s a difference, but it sometimes go hand in hand. Let say if I say I’m Zulu there’s a spirit behind being u Mzulu; there are certain cultural things that I will have to do which is driven by a certain spirit. Even if you are a Christian there’s spirit that pushes Christianity.”

“To me spirituality is your religion, in the same breath I think it works hand in hand. Honestly, I don’t know how to separate the two. These two concepts are somehow different because I believe that they are people who doesn’t belong to any religion but I wouldn’t say there are not spiritual, and for me it difficult to understand how a person can live without spirituality, spirituality is like an inborn thing, something that you are born with. Religion is something that you learn as you grow and I think you are being socialised into a religion. Spirituality is who you are; it is the whole of you. Spirituality can also refer to afterlife. If someone is within in spirit, I always experience that, my brother is late but I always feel his spirit around me. When I consult with fortune tellers they will always say, ‘your brother is here I can feel him he is very protective of you’.”

“I do believe that religion and spirituality do go hand in hand. I believe that God, whichever God that is, places you somewhere for a purpose. But to me religion is following something, something written down that states what you expected to do and what you not expected to do, whereas spirituality is what you feel you should be doing. Spirituality is more of a feeling than a following. I can follow a religion but it might not be what I meant to be doing whereas spirituality is what I feel I should be doing and I am happy to be doing.”

“I think there is a difference, because people can be spiritual without having that spiritual experience. Walking through a fire is a spiritual experience, bowing down and praying is a spiritual experience. There is a likeness. Religion can be Anglican, Catholics, and Methodist whatever, if you could just take those three, they are vast difference, but it doesn’t mean they are not spiritual. Religions are about which group you belong too. Spirituality is about the closeness or the feeling of closeness to your creator. Spirituality also shows in people’s

behaviour, how they react to people, how do you react to a beggar that comes and ask for food, how they live their life. How do they deal with other staff in a work environment, peers, subordinator or supervisors? Does she scream, does she rave, and you can't say I'm spiritual then you scream at someone? You can be firm but still loving and for me if you are spiritual the love should show, uBuntu should show. Ubuntu is the coming together of everyone and caring irrespective of race, colour and religion. It encompasses love, caring sharing, feeding, helping, for me Ubuntu is spirituality. If this spirit of Ubuntu can be seen in the organisation we will have people who will be helping one other, respecting one another and it also encourages team spirit and the organisation will grow. This will encourage people to serve other people, we will see Batho Pele being lived out and we will have happy customers. It really doesn't matter which religion you come from let's come together and work. In my team we are six individuals from different religions and we all committed to our religion but the team spirit is amazing because of who we are."

One employee strongly believed that spirituality is something that is deep in an individual and is revealed through behaviour:

"Religion is about those things that we believe in hence we have so many religions. Spirituality on the other hand is something that is within you. Spirituality is that thing which explains the type of a person you are. For example, when a person is saying, this lady has a good heart. Spirituality is a human consciousness, like when you do something wrong your spirit or your consciousness will be talking within you saying why did you do such a thing. Spirituality is that thing that lives within you, it guides you on how to live your life, how to live with people, do you have self-conscience or not."

Other employees felt that one needs religion to enhance spirituality. One employee defined religion as a roadmap to spirituality. They also believed that for a person to be spiritual he or she needs to be religious:

"A religion is basically guidelines, it's a roadmap, like for example Christianity even Hindus, these are the beliefs, and you can even call it institutions. In terms of Christianity we have our bible which is our roadmap, our guidelines; these are the promises that have been made to you. For example, the verse when the Lord says 'ask anything in my name and believing and it shall be added on to you.' He is saying that he is going to bless you; he is saying that the rule is that, you must ask, but the condition is, you ask in belief, it's a simple line but you need to understand what you want, then what do you need to do to achieve what I want? I

need to perform the task of asking, besides the task of asking I need to believe and that faith, faith is spirituality. It shows us that there is your map, this is what you need to do, there is your goal but this is the process that you have to follow to get there.”

For this next participant, religion is about people with similar beliefs but spirituality looks beyond beliefs and it accommodates everyone regardless of what their beliefs are.

“A religion brings together people of similar people, of similar beliefs and similar faith and then you get a support structure. Religion is also a support structure and from that support structure you get your motivation, you have your foundation, you have someone whose there that you can pick up the phone and say, you know I had a very bad day I need someone to talk to or I need someone to pray with me. Religion gives you identity to say this is what I believe but then your beliefs immediately tie in with your spirituality because beliefs are not a tangible thing. Spirituality gives you encouragement because now I believe in something and those people who have a sense of belief, a sense of belonging to something bigger, something greater than man and themselves actually have a sense of purpose. So you draw your spirituality from your religion and you draw who you are from your spirituality. There are lots of Christians that go to church that are not spiritual, but they follow the religion because those are the rules and guidelines. Spirituality is universal it does not discriminate according to beliefs. Spirituality is accommodative, you don't have to be Hindu and you don't have to be a Christian and don't have to be Jewish, to be spiritual.”

“There is a bit of a difference. Spirituality could be the way you think, the way you behave, it's who you are. Religion is about your beliefs. Religion is the way you worship. We may be coming from different religions but we all have one God which connects all of us. It's nice to know that regardless of whichever religion you belong to, there is a higher force that guides us.”

Workplace spirituality

The participants had different perceptions about workplace spirituality. The majority perceived workplace spirituality as organisations or managers that care for their employees. The employees also understood that they were employed and they were expected to fulfil their tasks, duties and responsibilities. In turn, the employer should care for them and show interest in their development and growth.

When asked what they thought workplace spirituality is, a number of perceptions were expressed.

“A spiritual organisation is an organisation that values and respects its employees, and organisation that cares for its employees, for example, if there is an employee that is always reporting late at work, a manager should take it upon himself or herself to sit the employee down and establish if everything is okay or whether the employees have other problems, if so then provide assistance. We don't need managers who will say leave your problem at the door we are here to work because honestly, as much as you are saying that, that what I will think about for whole day and I will not be able to perform”.

“Workplace spirituality is about how things are conducted within the organisation, especially when it comes to relationships with other stakeholders. Spirituality is about the relationship between manager and their employees. For example, in our department our HOD cares very much about her employees. Last year one of our colleagues lost her brother. The HOD was supportive and you could see that she felt pain for what happened to the employee. She went out of her way to assist the employee to get home and accommodate her in terms of the leave. She booked the flight for this employee because she felt that the employee was not in a state to drive and she paid from her pocket. When the employee arrived at home, the HOD contributed to assist with the funeral arrangement because she understood that such things happen when you least expect them, and that for me relates closely to workplace spirituality. If all managers can have that attitude, I will say the organisation is a spiritual organisation.”

Workplace spirituality was not limited to what organisations can do. In other words, workplace spirituality was not defined in terms of what the organisation can do for its employees but also from employees' own behaviour. For example, the perception that it is significant for employees to understand their purpose in the organisation and the mission or purpose of the organisation. Working to serve the community in accordance with the mission of the organisation employing them was emphasised by respondents as evidenced by the following perception:

“For me workplace spirituality is about employees getting along and understanding that they are all here to accomplish one goal. You find places within the department that when you get there everyone will greet you and you can feel that the environment is welcoming. The culture of the organisation, the way employees conduct themselves and the mentality of serving others, not of being served.”

“I believe that I’ve got a spiritual Organisation, if we have one goal or one purpose which is to serve a government to serve a country, and to serve people, and if you not there for that it’s pointless coming to work.”

“It’s an organisation where you get good commitment from the people, who are passionate about what they are doing; they are not just there to come and sit to occupy space, and the Government’s money and telephones. People who know why they are here and people who make sure that they do what they come to do.”

“A spiritual organisation will be an organisation with employees who associate with anyone irrespective of their levels in the organisation. The spirit should be, we are all here to work in our different corners but the most important thing should be that, we are working toward a common goal. Having such an organisation will motivate people, it will help them to see the bigger picture, they will understand that they are here for a certain reason and your job is no different from the next person. It may be different in terms of what you are doing but it adds value to the department. If we don’t have such an organisation it means we will not have a happy workforce, things won’t go well, you will always have conflict. If people are happy to come to work there will be no absenteeism.”

Some employees tended to associate workplace spirituality with team work in the organisation. Team work was perceived as an essential component of workplace spirituality:

“Workplace spirituality is about team work, by that I mean having people that look forward to assist other people. Let us say for example, if you need a report from your staff, how long they take to provide you with that report.”

“For me workplace spirituality is an organisation that has employees who assist each other to achieve the goals of the organisation. It is about employees who will sacrifice to help each other. Having employees with such attitude will encourage team work and people within the team will feel wanted and valued.”

DISCUSSION

The aim of the study was to establish employees’ perceptions about workplace spirituality. In order to reveal employees’ perceptions about workplace spirituality, it was essential that the value or meaning of work in their lives be understood. It was also significant to unpack their

notions of workplace spirituality and see that their very concept of spirituality and religion was sometimes the same.

The meaning of work

The results of the study revealed that work had a significant part in the lives of many respondents. The meaning that work has for individual employees reflects the significance that working had in their lives. The results of the study revealed that for a substantial number of employees in this organisation, work tended to serve a meaningful role because they found fulfilment in it (Beadle & Knight, 2012). Work becomes meaningful because it satisfies economic and biological needs that sustain people, but work can also satisfy higher level needs such as feelings of connectedness with one's own community (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000).

Some of the participants expressed the view that service to the community they belonged to through work was an important attraction to the organisation that contributed to the feelings of being fulfilled. Work enables employees to gain occupational skills and enhances their career prospects (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2010). Other respondents expressed the view that the work they were doing was meaningless. This is not surprising in view of the fact that some employees felt less challenged by the work they were doing.

The meaning of spirituality

The findings of the study revealed numerous employees' perceptions and notions of spirituality. This is not surprising in view of the fact that the extant literature has shown that spirituality has means different things to different people (Cendemic et al., 1999; Gupta, Kumar, & Singh, 2014). For the majority of the participants, spirituality is connected to one's inner life. Through work, some individuals felt that their inner world was connected to the outer world such as others and the community they served. Irrespective of the notion of spirituality expressed, meaning and purpose in life were seen as benefits that the participants derived from spirituality. Individual participants reported that spirituality enabled them to come to understand who they were and the fulfilment they derived from different life activities and interests.

Workplace spirituality

Understanding the participants' notions of spirituality facilitated comprehending what they regarded as a spiritual workplace. The participants associated the concept of spirituality with positive or constructive ideas. Hence workplace spirituality was associated with many work-related constructs that contribute to high levels of productivity and good work ethics. Work was strongly perceived as a mechanism used by employees to search for meaning in life.

It has been argued that work occupies a significant part of employees' lives and they spend a significant amount of time in work organisations (Gill, 1999). The results of this study underscore the significance and meaning of work in the lives of employees. This centrality of work implies that employees are attracted to organisations, not only to satisfy their economic and other needs through the monetary rewards they receive. For employees, work serves a variety of objectives. Job design or redesign initiatives cognisant of the centrality of work to employees will enhance employee motivation and job satisfaction. Job redesigns need to consider employees' needs relating to seeking meaning and purpose in their work. In other words, it is essential for organisations to realise that work serves more than the financial needs of employees. It also serves the fulfilment employees derive from serving their colleagues, the public as a whole and striving to improve service delivery.

According to Miller (1998), spirituality in general, and workplace spirituality in particular, have become key topics in recent years. Miller (1998) asserted that work has been transformed into the forum in which individuals develop themselves. People search for meaning in work that transcends mere economic exchanges between isolated, autonomous individuals. They seek a way to connect their work lives to their spiritual lives to work together in community, to be unified in a vision and purpose that goes beyond making money. The findings of this study support the existence of different notions of the construct workplace spirituality and its significance in the lives of many employees.

Of course other employees felt less challenged by the work they were doing. The nature of the work, lack of career advancement and corruption within the department were cited as reasons for the lack of motivation. As soon as work becomes meaningless, employees begin to feel demotivated and lose interest in their work. The issue of the presence or absence of meaning of work becomes more important if viewed against the significant amount of time employees spend in work organisations.

The overwhelming majority of the employees who participated in this study stated that they enjoyed their work because they were afforded the opportunity to help and serve others.

Some of the positive expressions about the work they did included work as a calling, service to the community and learning and development opportunities in the workplace. Clearly, the jobs and the workplace provided the participants with opportunities to express humanism, which Jurkiewicz and Giacalone (2004) defined as the responsibility of each and every individual to strive to bring the greater good of humanity. Chawla (2014) cited an example of the South West Airline to support what the statement made by Jurkiewicz and Giacalone about humanity actually means. According to Chawla (2014), the South West Airline has an extraordinary focus on showing care to its employees and customers: They would drive their customers to their destination in the event of missing their flight.

What the work itself provides for some and training and development opportunities were appreciated by some employees in this study. This supports the argument that work may also serve higher level needs, including self-actualisation. According to Burack (1999), self-actualisation means that the spirit meshes with the mind via work. King and Nicol described the process of self-actualisation as developing the full potential of the individual through work. Dehler and Welsh (1994) equated self-actualisation with intrinsic motivation in work.

Some employees expressed the view that work gives them a reason to wake up in the morning because they understand that they have something to achieve, they set goals for themselves and they work in order to achieve those goals. One may infer that there is a deeper meaning other than monetary value that work provides for employees and when this meaning is realised, employees obtain a sense of fulfilment. This finding corresponds with that of Terkel (1985), namely that work is about searching for meaning and earning money. He defined work as an opportunity of great significance that serves others earning a living.

This study concurred with that of Rupali and Sharma (2014) regarding the subjectivity of workplace spirituality, which is evident from the variety in employees' perceptions about workplace spirituality. Numerous categorisations and notions of workplace spirituality reflected the subjectivity of the construct. This study revealed that some of the participants perceived spirituality to be somehow related or similar to religion. This coincides with Badrinarayanan and Madhavaram's (2008) study, in which they concluded that two factors that impeded scholarly research on spirituality in mainstream business were the prevailing confusion about the difference between spirituality and religion and a lack of consensus on the definition of spirituality. A probing question was posed to employees to differentiate between spirituality and religion. This question assisted them to think more deeply about

these two concepts. Although it was not easy, some of the respondents managed to find the differences that separate the two concepts.

The majority of the employees defined spirituality in terms of self-awareness and the ability to maintain relationships. This resonates with the definition of spirituality by Mitroff and Denton (1999), namely that spirituality is the basic feeling of being connected with one's complete self, others and the entire universe. Ashmos and Duchon (2000) also emphasised that spirituality is about people experiencing a sense of connectedness to one another and to their workplace community. Workplace spirituality is also seen as a force behind every human action, a force that guides or that propels employees to act in a certain way.

One employee perceived spirituality as somehow being linked to culture. According to this employee, spirituality is about the spirit behind every culture. She believed that spirituality is the inner force that directs people from a similar culture to behave in a certain way. This is somehow related to the conclusion drawn by Moore and Casper (2006), namely the perception that spirituality is the internal value, belief, attitude, or emotion that has an impact on how people behave. According to Konz and Ryan (1999), organisational culture stems from the spiritual substance in the founder and leaders of an organisation. This basically means that spirituality is a force inside an individual that directs his or her behaviour.

Most responses to the question about employees' perception of spirituality revolved around "feeling for others, respecting other people irrespective of their cultural background and racial groups".

In exploring employees' perceptions of the term "workplace spirituality", the lines between spirituality and religion were still blurred. Some still believed that a spiritual organisation or workplace spirituality is evidenced in an organisation that encourages praying together. One could infer from this that the employees had different images and notions of workplace spirituality. The construct meant different things to different employees. Others thought that workplace spirituality and religion were two separate constructs that should not be equated.

Employees perceived workplace spirituality as an organisation that cares for its employees and one that encourages development and empowerment of its employees. This is in support of Barnett's (1985) interpretation of an individual's business career as a path of spiritual growth. According to Leigh (1997), other researchers reported an increase in creativity,

satisfaction, team performance and organisational commitment in organisations that attempt to promote the spiritual development of their employees.

The respondents also perceived workplace spirituality as an organisation that promotes team work and the spirit of Ubuntu. According to Mbigi and Maree (2005), the notion of Ubuntu comprises collective personhood and collective morality. Mbigi and Maree (2005) view harmony as one of the values that are central to Ubuntu.

The respondents defined a spiritual workplace as one that encourages programmes like employee health and wellness. Garcia-Zamor (2003) asserted that for a long time, employers compartmentalised workers, separating business concerns from personal identities. The challenge with this approach was that, performance was compromised. Companies then decided to add work-and-family programmes, and a variety of other benefits aimed at assisting employees to achieve balanced lives (Laabs, 1995). According to some of the respondents in the current study, workplace spirituality is constructed on the culture of the organisation. Employees defined workplace spirituality based on their observation on how things are done and on how the organisation or management values employees. An organisation that is people centred is strongly perceived by employees as a spiritual organisation. As much as employee's show that they are more concerned about how the organisation perceives them, they also understand the importance of performing their work as expected by the employer. The current results should add to a large body of research indicating that the content of an organisation's culture matters to employees (Deal & Kennedy, 1982).

Workplace spirituality was also perceived by employees as an organisation with employees striving for one goal – employees who understand that they have one purpose and are all working towards accomplishing the purpose which connects them together. The values of interconnectedness and harmony are crucial for organisational functioning (Van der Colff, 2003). The importance of the alignment between an employee's beliefs, needs and values and the mission of the organisation was strongly emphasised as a determinant of a spiritual organisation. When employees perceive this alignment, they regard the organisation as a spiritual one. This is echoed by the spiritual value-based model of Anderson (1997). According to Channon (1992), the higher purpose of an organisation is reflected in its values, which directly influence the mission, goal, and objectives and ultimately provide the foundation for corporate practices and the context in which employees think, act and make

decisions. Collins and Porras (1994) stated the importance of understanding that, for these values to truly have an impact, they must reflect the inner needs, beliefs and aspirations of employees.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to establish employees' perception about workplace spirituality. This was achieved by involving a group of participants employed in a provincial government department whose primary purpose is service delivery. Clearly, for most of the employees, work was more meaningful when they managed to serve people and the community. Harmony and sound relationships between employees, on the one hand, and management, on the other, were regarded as reasons for the perception that work was meaningful and motivating.

Spirituality was perceived as an inner being, the voice that tells one what to do and what not to do – being connected with the real person. However, other voices also expressed spirituality as religion or cultural practices. However, the value and association of spirituality with a powerful force were not contradicted throughout the different views.

Workplace spirituality was seen as applying spirituality in the work context. It was more about coming together to achieve one goal and forming good relationships. Workplace spirituality was also associated with an organisation that takes care of its employees' emotional, mental and physical well-being. Workplace spirituality allows employees to find meaning in their lives by affording them the opportunity to make a difference in other peoples' lives through the work they do.

The workplace was seen by some of the respondents as a second home, essentially because of its perceived spirituality or, more specifically, the harmony that prevailed among organisational members. Hence the connections and relationships the members of the organisation have with one another were perceived as significant. The participants expressed their notions of spirituality and workplace spirituality, and for some it was still difficult to divorce spirituality from religion. Somehow, spirituality was perceived as being committed to prayer, reading of the scriptures and having faith in God. Other perceptions that separated spirituality and religion were also revealed in the study.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The study set out to explore employees' perceptions about spirituality and workplace spirituality and it did so by engaging a group of employees from a provincial government department located in KwaZulu-Natal. The study sought to answer two questions: (1) What is spirituality; and (2) What are employees' views on workplace spirituality? In this chapter, conclusions and limitations relating to the literature review and empirical research are discussed and recommendations are made for future research.

4.2 CONCLUSIONS

Firstly, the theoretical component of the study was conducted in order to explore and gain insight into how different scholars define spirituality, the meaning of work, difference between religion and spirituality, and lastly, workplace spirituality. The empirical study was conducted to establish employees' perceptions about workplace spirituality. The study also looked at how employees perceived their work and the difference between spirituality and religion. This was achieved by involving a group of participants employed in a provincial government department whose primary purpose is service delivery. The data were gathered from employees working in the HR and finance services of the department. Interviews were used as a method to collect data. Sixteen participants were selected using the convenience sampling method. Data were then coded and themes formulated from the coded data.

The conclusions are discussed below, and it is hoped that this might shed more light on the constructs of work and its meaning and employees' perceptions about spirituality and workplace spirituality.

4.2.1 Work

Work was perceived positively by most employees. Only three employees perceived their work as lacking in meaning and that they were mostly working purely for financial gain. When probed, it emerged that lack of work-life balance, opportunities for advancement, corruption and favouritism were the explanations for the perceptions. Work was perceived as

meaningful and satisfying when employees managed to serve people, the community and ensure stakeholder satisfaction. Harmony and sound relationships between employees, on the one hand, and management, on the other, were regarded as reasons for the perceptions that work was meaningful and motivating.

Work was perceived as a calling by some of the respondents and team spirit, support from management, learning and development and a family-like workplace were amongst other factors named, which contributed to work being more meaningful and motivating for employees. Financial gain was an important consideration but certainly not the only concern or motivating factor for them. It goes without saying that employees require money to satisfy their living needs. It can be concluded that the workplace environment characterised by perceived harmony among employees and their managers facilitated job performance resulting in enhanced service delivery and customer satisfaction. The results of this study support other scholars who believe that work is perceived as a pathway to spirituality.

4.2.2 Spirituality

The study also confirmed how diverse and subjective employees' perceptions were on the concept of spirituality. Religion and spirituality were perceived by some employees to have the same meaning.

Spirituality is more about finding meaning in one's life and living a purposeful life. The values of respect, caring, helping others, Ubuntu and serving others were highly supported in this study. Other values that were associated with spirituality were respecting other people's beliefs regardless of their age, race and occupational level, consideration, caring, forgiving, giving, courtesy, love and fairness. The study also revealed that employees assume that if spirituality can be encouraged in the organisation, there will be more positive results and the employer will have a happy and a productive workforce.

There was still some confusion and lack of clarity in terms of defining and differentiating between spirituality and religion, and this made it even more difficult for some employees to define workplace spirituality. The conclusion drawn here is that spirituality is a diverse and highly subjective concept – hence the plethora of different definitions by scholars.

4.2.3 Religion versus spirituality

The results of the study revealed one interesting factor regarding the relationship between spirituality and religion, namely that religion is perceived by some employees as providing guidelines or roadmaps to spiritual growth. Others believed that spirituality brings people of similar beliefs together. Religion was understood as something that one is socialised into, whereas spirituality was seen as an inborn thing, and these employees concluded by saying every human being is a spiritual being, but not everyone is religious. Religion was also seen as an institution with rules and regulations, whereas spirituality was perceived as something from within – the inner voice that guides a person. The findings also revealed that for certain employees it was difficult to divorce the two concepts.

4.2.4 Workplace spirituality

In conclusion, workplace spirituality was perceived at three levels, namely individual, team and organisational. At individual level employees expressed themselves through meaningful work, where some felt that their work provided meaning beyond monetary value. Others felt their work had become meaningless as a result of what was transpiring in the organisation. Gaining fulfilment from serving other people, being passionate about one's work and being a committed employee were other dimensions that granted individual gratification.

According to the respondents, at group or team level, workplace spirituality was about "building good relationships with co-workers and managers, showing humanity to each other and understanding that they are all employed to achieve a certain goal". The study revealed that team spirit and committed employees were perceived as prerequisites for achieving the desired organisational goals.

At organisational level, workplace spirituality was perceived as an organisation that takes care of its employees' emotional, mental and physical well-being. It can also be concluded that workplace spirituality allowed the employees to find meaning in their lives by affording them the opportunity to make a difference in other people's lives through the work they did. A spiritual workplace was also regarded as a second home for employees. This was the result of the connection and the relationship employees had with one another. At organisational level, it was concluded that workplace spirituality is about the organisational culture. This is because employees analyse how things are done and how they are treated by their managers, and the work environment, and on the basis of this, they then decide whether or not the organisation is spiritual.

From the study it can be concluded that although the participants provided their perceptions of spirituality and workplace spirituality, it is necessary to mention that for some participants, it was still difficult to divorce spirituality and workplace spirituality from religion.

The study is significant because it supports previous research on spirituality being about the search for meaning, living a purposeful life and the relationship between a person and what transcendence occurs, regardless of religious affiliation.

4.3 LIMITATIONS

One of the likely criticisms against this study would be the issue of sampling and sample size. Arguments could be made that this study cannot be generalised because of the sample size, which was not representative of the population. However, one should bear in mind that the central task of this study was not to generalise the results to the larger population. In line with the tenets of the qualitative method, the aim was to explore the diversity of views. Another limitation was the fact that some employees could not answer the question on spirituality, and they reported that they had never thought about it before.

The researcher's own spiritual and religious views and experience may have impacted on the data gathering and analysis processes. In an attempt to minimise this, the researcher ensured that the respondents knew her frame of reference and requested that they expand on concepts that were not understood or may have been open to interpretation. However, to circumvent the potential problem of the researcher's frame of reference interfering with data analysis, the supervisor also accessed and immersed himself in the verbatim data. Another limitation of the study was that it focused mainly on HR employees whose role is to provide service or support to other employees and to the community at large. This could have had an effect on how they perceived spirituality, because these employees spent most of their time serving and helping others. Workplace spirituality proved to be a highly subjective construct for the respondents. Employees' perceptions varied quite dramatically. Some respondents looked to the researcher to provide guidance in answering the qualitative question, but this was avoided because it would have tainted the data gathering process.

4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the main lessons from the study is employees' regard for the significance of harmony in the workplace. Harmony amongst employees and also with management was held in high regard. Organisations should strive to develop environments and climates that are supportive of harmony.

Work has an important place in the lives of many people. Indeed, employees spend significant amounts of time in work organisations. Employers should recognise these simple facts and strive to make the workplace a spiritually conducive place and to make work as interesting and meaningful as possible.

The difference or the relationship between spirituality and religion could be analysed in more detail. Existing researchers disagree on this point. Some research and some of the respondents in this study believe that the two constructs are mutually exclusive (spirituality is the opposite of religion), while others say that they are closely intertwined (religion enhances spirituality). A similar study could be conducted with managers since this study was limited to employees only.

The study focused on employees who spend most of their time servicing and helping others. A study with individuals who receive service from others who are not working in an HR environment or who are not working directly with people could be conducted to establish whether the same themes that were discovered in this study remain the same when discussing spirituality and workplace spirituality.

A quantitative study is further recommended to ensure generalisation of the findings. Cross-cultural studies are recommended since there might be different opinions and other constructs might emerge.

4.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter concluded the discussion on employees' perceptions about spirituality and workplace spirituality. Conclusions relating to the literature review and empirical research, the limitations of the study and recommendations for possible future research were discussed.

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ANNEXURE 1: Interview guide

Purpose of the study

My name is Penny Dittrich. As explained to you, I am conducting this research as part of the requirements for the Master's degree in Industrial Psychology.

The purpose of this research is to explore employees' perceptions about spirituality and workplace spirituality. You are requested to assist the research process by answering the questions honestly and candidly.

CONFIDENTIALITY, ANONYMITY AND INFORMED CONSENT

All information provided in response to questions asked will be treated confidentially.

Care will be taken to ensure that all the respondents remain anonymous. Therefore the names of the respondents or any other form of identification will not be recorded or attached to the responses they provide.

You are also requested to provide your written informed consent to participate in this interview, by completing and signing the form provided.

The consent form includes the request for your permission to use audio-recording equipment to capture or record our conversation.

Your honest answers to the questions will be appreciated and greatly enhance the usefulness of the data or information you provide.

I would also like to remind you that you can choose not to answer some of the questions that make you uncomfortable, and even terminate your participation at any time during the interview. You are welcome to ask me any questions during the interview or point out things I may not have explained fully.

Thank you for generously taking time to participate in this study.

ANNEXURE 2: Interview schedule

1. What does your work entail?
2. What is it that motivates you or what makes you happy about your work?
3. If you were to win the lotto today and cash in R3 million, would you consider quitting your job?
4. What does spirituality mean to you?
5. What is the difference between religion and spirituality?
6. What is your understanding of workplace spirituality?

ANNEXURE 3: Consent form

Dear Participants

Thank you for taking interest in participating in this study. The purpose of this study is to explore employees' perception about spirituality and spirituality at work.

Your participation in this research is strictly voluntary. You can refuse to participate or choose to withdraw at any point in the research without fear of penalty or negative consequences of any kind.

Your participation is anonymous. The information you provide in this research will be treated as confidential and the recorder will be stored on a safe lockable shelf. The interviewer will ask questions, record your response and also take notes. This information will be used only for the research purposes.

Your participation will take approximately 45 minutes.

If you wish to voluntarily participate in this research project as described, please indicate by signing your name below.

Name of the participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher: _____

Date: _____

ANNEXURE 4: Request for permission to do research within COGTA



cogta

Department:
Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

BUSINESS SUPPORT: HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

Enquiries: Imibuzo: Navrae:	D.A Beykirch	My Reference: Inkomba Yami: My Verwysing:	22/2/1/R	E-mail:	Des.beykirch@kzncogta.gov.za	Date: Usuku: Datum:	30/09/13
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Mrs. NP Dittrich
D1103 Ngunezi Road
Hammarsdale
3699

Dear Mrs. Dittrich

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF COGTA

I refer to your request to do research within the Department and wish to grant permission to you to do so with understanding that;

1. Research will be conducted as set out in your proposal titled "Employees' Perceptions about Workplace Spirituality" as per the application for Ethical clearance granted by UNISA on 21 May 2013.
2. All forms of spirituality will need to be included in the research and not merely spirituality within the context of a specific religion.
3. Departmental staff who participate in the study will need to sign consent forms.
4. No names of persons who participated will be divulged.
5. The department's Policy Research Unit must be the contact point to conduct the study.
6. A copy of the completed thesis will be made available to the Department.
7. Findings and feedback will be shared with the participants and management involved in the research

I wish you well in the study.

Yours faithfully

MRS D.N QHOBOSHEANE
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
CO-OPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS

Private Bag X9078, Pietermaritzburg, 3200 | 330 Langalibalele Street, Pietermaritzburg 3201
Tell: +27(0) 33 395 2831 | Fax: +27(0) 33 345 6432 | www.kzncogta.gov.za
People-centered sustainable co-operative governance which focuses on effective service delivery responsive to the needs of the community

Annexure 5: Language clearance certificate

Mrs ME Joubert

Faerie Glen

Pretoria

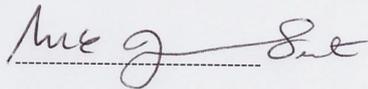
0043

22 December 2015

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that in my capacity as a professional language editor (retired), I conducted a thorough language edit of a master's dissertation for Ms Nompumelelo Penny Mahlaba

Title: "Employees' perceptions about spirituality and workplace spirituality"

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Mrs ME Joubert', written over a horizontal dashed line.