

## The Understanding of Workplace Spirituality among a Group of Human Resource Managers: Meaning, Influencing Factors and Practices\*

Bir Grup İnsan Kaynakları Yöneticisinin İşyeri Maneviyatı Anlayışı: Anlam, Etkileyen Faktörler ve Uygulamalar

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**Abstract.** The purpose of this paper was to find out how workplace spirituality was understood by a group of human resource managers from Turkey and how it was practised in their companies. The research methodology was qualitative, and the study followed a phenomenological research design. A focus group interview method was used to collect the data. The data were analysed using content analysis. Three main themes and their sub-themes are reported. The findings indicated that the participants had different understandings and definitions of workplace spirituality. Workplace spirituality was understood as being related to organizational values, commitment, loyalty, trust, support, integration and identification, and also to participatory management and support from senior management. The main factors influencing workplace spirituality were participatory management, touching the heart, well-established organizational communication, reciprocity, respect for employees and their acceptance as part of the family, appreciation and motivation, the giving of rewards and official rights to employees and, finally, cultural values. The practices related to workplace spirituality were different, but they were mostly aimed at a stronger organizational communication and commitment. The study contributes to the understanding of workplace spirituality and forms a basis for further research.

**Keywords:** Workplace spirituality, human resource management, workplace spirituality practices

**Öz.** Bu çalışmanın amacı, işyeri maneviyatının Türkiye’de bir grup insan kaynakları yöneticisi tarafından nasıl anlaşıldığını ve şirketlerinde ne şekilde uygulandığını ortaya koymaktır. Araştırma metodolojisi nitel olarak seçilmiş olup çalışmada fenomenolojik araştırma tasarımı izlenmiştir. Verileri toplamak için odak grup görüşmesi kullanılmıştır. Veriler içerik analizi kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Üç ana tema ve alt temaları saptanmıştır. Bulgular, katılımcıların işyeri maneviyatı ile ilgili farklı anlayış ve tanımları olduğunu göstermiştir. İşyeri maneviyatının örgütsel değerler, aidiyet, sadakat, güven, destek, örgütle bütünleşme ve örgüt kimliğini benimseme ile katılımcı yönetim ve üst yönetimin desteğiyle ilişkili olduğu görülmüştür. İşyeri maneviyatını etkileyen ana etkenler; katılımcı yönetim, kalbe dokunma, etkin örgütsel iletişim, karşılıklılık, çalışanlara saygı ve ailenin bir parçası olarak kabul edilmeleri, takdir ve motivasyon, çalışanlara ödül ve resmi hakların verilmesi ve nihayet kültürel değerlerdir. İşyeri maneviyatı ile ilgili uygulamalar farklı şekillerde gerçekleşmekte olup, daha ziyade güçlü bir örgütsel iletişim ve aidiyete yönelik çalışmaları içermektedir. Çalışma, işyeri maneviyatının anlaşılmasına katkıda bulunmakta ve sonraki araştırmalar için bir temel oluşturmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İşyeri maneviyatı, insan kaynakları yönetimi, işyeri maneviyatı uygulamaları

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## Introduction

In today's world, most organizations face employee-related problems such as stress-related illnesses, burnout, violence, corruption, job dissatisfaction and high turnover rates. As Van Der Walt and De Klerk (2014) found, employees are becoming demoralized, alienated and unable to cope with the compartmentalized nature of their working and non-working lives. Organizations have to find new approaches, applications and systems in order to create a satisfying atmosphere for a better workplace. Workplace spirituality can be one of the outstanding paradigms for human resource managers as an important area for job satisfaction, performance and motivation.

Workplace spirituality has received increased attention over recent years. Ashmos and Duchon (2000) described the spirituality movement as "a major transformation" in which organizations make room for the spiritual dimension, which has to do with meaning, purpose, and a sense of community. Ashmos and Duchon (2000) defined workplace spirituality as the "recognition that employees have an inner life which nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work taking place in the context of a community". This spiritual dimension embodies employees' search for simplicity, meaning, self-expression, and interconnectedness to something higher (Marques, Dhiman, & King, 2005). Companies are finding that employees who act on a personal sense of workplace spirituality are more creative, self-directed, committed and desirable employees and are therefore highly sought after (DeFoore & Renesch, 1995).

It is of great importance from a management point of view to understand workplace spirituality in order to encourage the development of self-esteem and to increase satisfaction with the company. However, there is a lack of consensus among researchers over the definition of workplace spirituality (Iqbal & Hassan, 2016). The lack of consensus may create different understandings as well as having implications. In addition, the research related to workplace spirituality is limited in Turkey, and the first studies date back to 2009 (Özkalp, Sungur, & Özdemir, 2008; Seyyar, 2009). Human resource management is assumed to improve the performance of employees and contribute to a sustainable competition advantage for the company (Lado & Wilson, 1994; Wright & McMahan, 2011). Human resource managers function as the bridge between employees and employers, and they try to achieve a healthy and safe working environment. Therefore, it seems essential to understand the views, comments and experiences of human resource managers as well as those of employees. This study aims to discover how workplace spirituality is understood and practised in a group of companies from Antalya Industrial Zone, Turkey, based on data from the companies' human resource managers.

## Literature Review

Among those who have researched workplace spirituality, there have been many researchers who have attempted to define workplace spirituality. Among these researchers, Mitroff and Denton (1999) stated that spirituality is a basic feeling of being connected with one's complete self, others and the entire universe. Guillory (2000) suggested that "spirituality is the integration of holistic principles, practices and behaviours that encourages full expression of body, mind and spirit. These include humanistic and employee friendly work environments, service orientation, creativity and innovation, personal and collective transformation, environmental sensitivity and high performance". The word spirituality originally comes from the Latin word *spiritus*, which means "breath of life". It has been defined as the valuing of the non-material or transcendental aspects of life (Pradhan, Jena, & Soto, 2017). Krishnakumar and Neck (2002) defined

spirituality as a perennial search for the purpose and meaning of life. In addition, workplace spirituality is usually considered to be related to spiritual beliefs, but Gonzalez-Gonzalez (2018) examined the relationship between spirituality in the workplace and occupational health, and stated that religious beliefs and practices should be balanced between the needs of employers and those of employees. Spirituality at work is not about religion, or about getting people converted to a specific belief system (Cavanagh, 1999; Laabs, 1995). Workplace spirituality considers the spiritual wellbeing of workers, respecting every kind of belief and focusing on the importance of spirituality for human beings.

The relationship between spirituality and human beings is intertwined, as all people are spiritual beings. Everyone has a spiritual dimension that motivates, energizes and influences every aspect of his or her life. Spirituality can be considered as a basic human quality that transcends gender, race, colour and national origin. At the same time, spirituality has many intangible aspects and is an intensely personal issue (Gupta & Saini, 2014). Personal spirituality is defined as “the totality of personal spiritual values that an individual brings to the workplace” (Kolodinsky, Giacalone, & Jurkiewicz, 2008). In addition, spirituality may seem to be contradictory to materialism. Materialism refers to the valuing of material success at the expense of the fulfilment of intrinsic needs such as autonomy, competence and relatedness (Deckop, Jurkiewicz, & Giacalone, 2010). Deckop et al. (2010) argued that materialistic people tend to set unrealistic goals in the work context – for example, the goal of obtaining a highly rewarded position in an organization – which exposes them to disillusionment because many uncontrollable factors come into play in determining pay levels in organizations. According to Dossey, Keegan and Guzzetta (2000), spirituality is the essence of who we are and how we are in the world and, like breathing, is essential to our human existence.

Researchers point to some important reasons for considering workplace spirituality in organizations. For example, organizations with greater spirituality show better performance, in terms of growth and efficiency, than those without spirituality (Benefiel, 2003; Garcia-Zamor, 2003; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003; Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004; Milliman, Ferguson, Trickett, & Condemni, 1999; Neal, 1997; Pandey & Gupta, 2008; Rego, Cunha, & Oliveira, 2008; Sanders, Hopkins, & Geroy, 2003). Also, Neck and Milliman (1994) in their study revealed that spirituality positively affects organizational performance. In addition, organizations that promote spirituality will increase creativity, satisfaction, team performance and also organizational commitment (Litzsey, 2006; Luis Daniel, 2010).

Organizational commitment is often noted to have a close relationship with workplace spirituality. It has a positive impact on various employee-level outcomes such as attitude and behaviour at the workplace, attrition, attendance and adherence to timeliness, and organizational citizenship behaviours (Allen & Meyer, 2000; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). The results of Abedi Jafari and Rastgar’s (2007) research were that spirituality in the workplace positively affects organizational commitment and the organizational citizenship behaviour of the employees. Turner (1999) believed that promoting spirituality is conducive to bringing out the inner feelings of perfection and excellence of employees when they do their jobs. Moreover, the results of Iqbal and Hassan’s research (2016) into the effect of workplace spirituality on personality traits showed that there is a strong impact of workplace spirituality on agreeableness traits and counterproductive workplace behaviour of employees. Van der Walt (2018) found that workplace spirituality has a relationship with positive outcomes like thriving at work and work engagement.

The relationship between spirituality and the workplace is taken into consideration by Drucker (1954) as “the spirit that motivates, that calls upon a man’s reserves of dedication and effort, that decides whether he will give his best or just enough to get by”. Workplace spirituality has been found to be related to motivation, dedication, loyalty, commitment, job satisfaction and the inspiring self-actualization of employees (Abedi Jafari & Rastgar, 2007; Allen & Meyer, 2000; Fry, 2003; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Milliman, Czaplewski, & Ferguson, 2003; Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004). Employees who can find meaning in their business and personal lives are usually observed to have a more balanced life and to work with better motivation as a consequence. In addition, companies think that a congruent fit between an individual’s values and the values of the organization’s culture is tied to organizational success (Iqbal & Hassan, 2016).

The encouragement and promotion of spirituality can be examined at individual and organizational levels in the work environment (Long & Driscoll, 2015). First, the individual level refers to the set of values that encourage transcendent experiences for an individual through work processes, and facilitates the feeling of being connected with others while also providing a feeling of completeness and happiness. At the individual level, spirituality in the workplace results in better physical, psychological, mental and spiritual health for the employees (Krahnke, Giacalone, & Jurkiewicz, 2003). Secondly, the organizational level refers to the framework of the values of the organizational culture that encourage transcendent experiences for employees through the work process, facilitating the feeling of being connected with others (Fanggidae, Suryana, Efendi, & Hilmiana, 2015). At the organizational level it is believed that spirituality should be sensed throughout the organization, and that the organization as a whole must be spiritual. Since there are many differences between the preferences, interests and attitudes of individuals, spirituality at this level is more detailed and complex (Mehran, 2017). It is proposed that spiritual organizations achieve greater efficiencies and rates of return than their competitors (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004). In addition, Moore and Casper (2006) propose that workplace spirituality has another level, namely a societal level. At the societal level, workplace spirituality strengthens and consolidates trust and faith in the power of goodness (Miller, 2001). Workplace spirituality calls for profit maximization to be augmented by the fulfilment of moral obligations, social service, philanthropic activities and corporate social responsibility.

The Web of Science Core Collection Database contains 225 studies related to workplace spirituality published between 1970 and 2018 (127 papers, 63 book sections, 16 editorials, 6 proceedings and 7 reviews) (www.webofknowledge.com, access date: 15.11.2018). It can be observed that the number of studies showed a tendency to increase in 2018 (N = 21). However, there is a limited amount of research in Turkey, and the first studies go back to 2009 with that of Özkalp et al. (2008). Örgenç and Günalan (2011) researched spirituality in organizations, whereas Başbuğ (2012) discussed business and spirituality in social law. Çakır Berzah and Çakır (2015) discussed the conceptual basis of workplace spirituality. In general, the literature review points to the fact that research related to workplace spirituality mainly concentrates on its definition, its relationship with many organizational and managerial concepts, and how it should be examined. This study concentrates on the understanding and practices of workplace spirituality of a group of Turkish human resource managers, as well as revealing the factors that may influence workplace spirituality. Human resource management is defined as the use of individuals to achieve organizational objectives (Mondy & Martocchio, 2016). Human resource managers try to achieve human resource development, high employee performance and a safe and good working environment, in order to reach the objectives. Therefore, they are assumed to observe,

feel or experience workplace spirituality very closely. The following research questions are asked:

1. What do human resource managers understand about workplace spirituality?
2. Which organizational concepts may be related to workplace spirituality?
3. Do human resource managers have any practices that may be related to workplace spirituality?

### Method

This study is a phenomenological study with a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach was chosen because this research is more concerned with understanding individuals' perceptions of the world, and seeks insights rather than statistical analysis (Silverman, 2005). The summary of the research is shown in figure 1.

Pattern: Phenomenology	Study Group	Data Collection and Analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Phenomenon: Workplace spirituality understanding of Human Resource Managers</li><li>• Purpose: To find out thoughts depending on experience and practice</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Purpose sampling</li><li>• 9 Human Resource Managers</li><li>• 9 Women</li><li>• Having experience as a Human Resource Manager for at least five years</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focus Group Interview</li><li>• Content Analysis</li></ul>

**Figure 1.** Summary of the research

### Research Design

Phenomenological research is a research pattern that aims to emphasize the perceptions and experiences of individuals from their point of view (Saban & Ersoy, 2017). Phenomenology focuses on facts that we are aware of, but of which we do not have an in-depth or detailed understanding (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). In this study, we searched for the understandings of workplace spirituality of human resource managers, by asking about their work experiences. A phenomenological design is appropriate for a study of the meaning, practices and factors that influence workplace spirituality.

### Study Group

The research was conducted in Antalya Industrial Zone, Antalya, Turkey. In Antalya Industrial Zone there are around three hundred companies from eight different sectors. A non-probability sample was preferred; such a sample arises from the researcher targeting a particular group, in the full knowledge that it represents not the wider population but simply represents itself (Cohen, Mannion, & Morrison, 2007).

Human resource managers who are members of the Antalya Industrial Zone Human Resource Managers Community Board were invited by phone to participate in the research two weeks before the planned date. All of the board members had at least five years of work experience. They were informed about the purpose of the study and the confidentiality of the information. Out of fifteen board members, nine human resource managers agreed to take part in the study. The research purpose and questions were sent by mail, and the participants' agreement to take part was requested. The date was decided according to the time schedules of the participants, and they were called again on the date of the session.

As Morgan (1988) pointed out, each participant should have something to say on the topic and should feel comfortable speaking with the other participants. The participants knew each other before the session. The sample was homogeneous in terms of occupation, since the participants belonged to the same board and worked in the same business zone.

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the participants. The number of employees in their companies ranged between 30 and 600. The participants had work experience ranging from 5 years to 22 years.

**Table 1.**

*Demographic Qualifications of the Participants*

Code	Gender	Sector	Work experience (Years)
K1	Woman	Manufacturing	21
K2	Woman	Chemicals	5
K3	Woman	Manufacturing	7
K4	Woman	Manufacturing	5
K5	Woman	Packaging	8
K6	Woman	Manufacturing	6
K7	Woman	Machinery	9
K8	Woman	Machinery	5
K9	Woman	Manufacturing	19

**Data Collection**

Data were collected from focus group interviews. Focus group interviews provide rich and highly varied information that quantitative research may not supply, as well as providing in-depth data and preventing misunderstandings (Çokluk, Yılmaz, & Oğuz, 2011). A focus group is the basis for a form of qualitative research consisting of interviews in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes towards a concept or topic. A focus group gathers together people from similar backgrounds or experiences to discuss a specific topic of interest, guided by a moderator who introduces topics for discussion and helps the group to participate in a lively and natural discussion. A focus group allows qualitative analysis investigating the recent context and its content (Creswell, 2016). A focus group usually consists of eight people (Baş & Akturan, 2008), although the number of people in a study may vary between four and fifteen (Çokluk et al., 2011). The phases of a focus group study are planning the focus group, group composition, conducting the focus group interview, recording the responses, data analysis and reporting the findings (Dilshad & Latif, 2013). A focus group interview is a type of in-depth interview accomplished in a group, where the meetings are

characterized with respect to the proposal, size, composition and interview procedures, and the focus or object of analysis is the interaction inside the group (Freitas, Oliveira, Jenkins, & Popjoy, 1998). The participants are chosen for their special expertise, experience or interest, and thus their conversation can be a source of highly informative data not otherwise available in evaluation research (Gray, Williamson, Karp, & Dalphin, 2007).

The data were collected in May 2018. Nine human resource managers attended the research. The research was conducted in the lounge of the Business Hotel in the Industrial Zone of Antalya. The Business Hotel is located in the centre of the Industrial Zone and the participants could reach it easily. A silent meeting room with a U-shaped table was reserved for the session. The room size was appropriate for the size of the group. The room was well lit and ventilated, and was comfortable. The participants could sit comfortably, and were offered drinks and food. The hotel officers were informed about the session and were asked to help to ensure silence. There was nobody present during the interview except the participants and the researchers. The participants were told that the session would be tape recorded. Their permission was asked for tape recording.

Freitas et al. (1998) mentioned that the success of a focus group depends on good questions being formulated appropriately for the chosen respondents, and another essential ingredient is the moderator's ability to lead the discussion. One of the researchers acted as the moderator of the session. She had the necessary ability to guide the group process. She had previous experience in working with groups, since she was an experienced instructor and trainer. According to Krueger (1998), the existence of homogeneity among the participants should be reinforced by the moderator in the introduction to the group discussion. The moderator explained that people with similar experiences had been invited to share their perceptions and ideas on the topic.

As one researcher acted as the moderator, the other observed the participants very closely and concentrated on understanding whether the questions measured what they were intended to measure. For each question and each set of answers, she observed the body language, tone and differences of opinion among the participants so as to facilitate a deeper understanding of the study topic. The session was over after the researchers agreed with each other that there was adequate data saturation. There was interaction between the participants during and after the session, which played a significant role in generating the data.

The participants expressed their ideas in turn when they were asked the following questions:

1. Today, concepts such as stress, burnout, loneliness, and alienation are frequently heard about in the workplace. What is your observation on this subject?
2. What could the meaning of workplace spirituality be?
3. What is workplace spirituality related to?
4. What could be done to make work more meaningful?
5. What is your view related to different religious beliefs and spirituality in your workplace?
6. What are your practices and approaches related to workplace spirituality?

The interview took around 120 minutes. According to Krueger (1998), factors that determine the effectiveness of focus groups are: clarity of objective, suitable setting, adequate resources, appropriate subjects, a skilled moderator, effective questions, and honouring the participants.

Researchers agreed upon the saturation of data when the answers were similar and were repeated. The participants were thanked for their contributions, and the researchers allowed some more time for the participants to discuss the topic after the questions were over. The researchers decided that one session was enough as they had received a large amount of rich data.

### **Data Analysis**

The recorded data were converted into written form. The data were analysed by content analysis. A list of codes was prepared by examining the responses of the participants, and general themes and sub-themes were determined by gathering similar codes under the same roof. For this purpose, the researchers and an experienced content analysis expert worked to analyse the data. Themes and sub-themes were decided upon when there was “consensus” or “divergence” of the grouped data. A consensus of at least 70% was reached on the themes, which proved the validity of the study. Authentic quotations are given to support valid and reliable data. The analysis process is described in as much detail as possible when reporting the results, and the data and interpretations are stated to enable readers to follow the process and procedures of the inquiry (Elo & Kyngas, 2008).

## **Results**

### **Meaning of Workplace Spirituality**

The study findings reveal that the professionals did not have a common understanding of workplace spirituality, and they defined it as a multidimensional concept related to many organizational and behavioural dimensions like organizational values, commitment, loyalty, trust, support, integration and identification as well as participatory management and support from senior management. The participants hesitated over defining workplace spirituality as a single concept, instead mentioning that it is similar to commitment and is something that is difficult to measure:

*“It is something quite little different than the feeling for organizational commitment and something difficult to measure” K2*

First of all, it reminded the respondents of organizational values, as K1 stated:

*“Workplace spirituality means organizational values to me” K1*

K5 mentioned that individual values and organizational values would be expected to match, as otherwise this could even cause the employee to resign:

*“When the personal values of the employee do not match with the organizational values, he thinks of resigning. We can say that matching of the personal values and organizational values is quite important” K5*

K4 and K6 described workplace spirituality through organizational loyalty:

*“It is related to the loyalty of the personnel to the organization, this comes to my mind” K4*

*“According to me, spirituality means loyalty to the organization by heart. What I mean is the working of the person not because of obligation but because of loyalty by heart, it is owning your task” K6*

Some participants thought that workplace spirituality might be explained using the concepts of integration, identification and organizational culture:

*“I can say that it is the integration of the employees with the organization and their identification on several criteria” K8*

*“The company is quite old. Its values are already old and strong. I think a strong organizational culture is quite important and I think integration with that culture is also quite important” K1*

### **Main Factors Influencing Workplace Spirituality**

The main factors influencing workplace spirituality are reported under the sub-themes of participatory management, touching the heart, well-established organizational communication, reciprocity, respect of employees and their acceptance as part of the family, appreciation and motivation, rewards and official rights for employees, and finally cultural values. As the findings show, workplace spirituality is affected by many organizational factors.

Touching the heart of employees is considered as an important dynamic, and may be the basic concept for many organizational behavioural dimensions like commitment, loyalty, trust etc. It is one of the most common dynamics to be reported. For many of the professionals, workplace spirituality means touching hearts. However, they talked about reciprocity, saying that the feelings and ideas are effective only when they are shared. Employees, especially in younger generations, do not want to be considered as human beings who have needs and wants.

*“The employees should not see the manager very far away. We are human resources, we are a bridge, however from time to time managers should get close to the employees and touch their hearts and keep strong relations with them” K3*

*“As its name means, spirituality is not something you can touch or see with your eyes, unfortunately, if somebody would come and say that you will put a coin in this moneybox each day, this would be something that you would touch, spirituality is not something like that, it is not something you can impose on people, it should be willingly, employer and employee is like a picture together, they should touch their hearts mutually” K9*

*“It is the mutual support of the employer and employee in times of trouble” K5*

Organizational communication that is well-established, open and systematized was frequently mentioned by most of the participants. The participants tried to establish better communication channels with their employees by creating specific times or occasions for communication. According to K6, communication is the most important dimension in the work environment. K5 stated that communication with managers is also of the utmost importance, and may even lead to an employee leaving the company:

*“Organizational communication is very important. Some of the employers never meet with employees, they never look at their faces and this unfortunately decreases their motivation. From my point of view, communication is most important of all” K6*

*“We have been a big team with around 600 people. When an employee wants to resign, we ask his/her manager if he/she has information, if he/she has no information, then we ask the manager to talk to the employee, only then we do the formalities for resignation. What we have learned from our experience is that people do not leave their companies, they leave their managers” K5*

*“We tell the managers to go and talk their employees, if they have a problem, if their children are sick etc., this is also important to decrease turnover rate” K2*

*“I talk to the personnel every Friday and ask whether there is anything they want to say or they need” K4*

The participants supported a participatory management style and tried to understand the needs of the employees and involve them in decision making. Cultural values that the individuals bring from their families, the way they have been brought up and their education are reported to have an influence on their personal views and behaviour. However, the professionals observed a change in the younger generations as they have a different upbringing and there have been changes in the education system. Management style and how participatory it is are considered to be important factors for workplace spirituality:

*“You can achieve spirituality by involving the employees in decision making” K8*

*“If there is a problem in the company as a total, you should investigate for upper level management applications, participatory management is necessary” K3*

*“I try to involve our employees in decision making” K2*

The human resource managers stated that workplace spirituality would be affected by mutual positive feelings as well as respect and cooperation:

*“Mutual positive feelings and expectations affect spirituality. If there is happiness mutually, this will cause spirituality in total” K5*

*“Mutual trust and trying to understand what employees want and cooperate with them would help to create spirituality” K7*

*“The employer should respect the personnel very willingly so that personnel will have a feeling of spirituality. Respecting his ideas, being with him when he has problems and showing him that he is part of the family. If he sees the company as part of his family, if he feels that it is with him in troubled times, I think his spirituality will be much better” K6*

*“There is such a case: you should involve your employees in your targets. Senior managers must touch the employees for sure” K5*

Appreciation and motivation increase the motivation of the employees, and it was accepted that regular rewards and the giving of official rights are related to workplace spirituality:

*“Both sides (employer and employee) have things to do. If the employee is appreciated, if this is told to him, his motivation will increase” K7*

*“As much commitment as we may create or feel, if the employee cannot pay his credit card at the end of the month, he will say “God damn it!”, of course it is not possible to make wage increases very often, however this could be handled since this may influence spirituality” K9*

*“I think compensating the employee with monetary rewards is also very important. Monetary rewards should accompany spirituality” K7*

*“Giving the official rights of the employees would form the basis for spirituality. If the employee sees that he gets his official rights, he feels confidence and trust and all the rest starts to occur afterwards” K4*

### **Workplace Spirituality Practices**

The participants of the study explained and gave examples of practices that they assumed were positively related to workplace spirituality. Many of them mentioned that their practices were aimed at achieving better communication in their organizations. They declared that on the job training made a major contribution to the employees, and as a result might positively influence workplace spirituality. Practices related to employee involvement were considered to be important. Finally, coordination meetings were held to influence workplace spirituality in a positive way:

*“If we come back to spirituality, some of our employees want to go for praying on Fridays, we organize vehicles for their transportation, we listen to their needs” K3*

*“Actually, I started to work in the company very recently. I can say something with my recent experience for a short period of time. They took support from the Antalya Organized Industrial Zone Education programs, this year we started to get training from private companies. We are analysing the needs of our staff for training” K6*

*“Everything starts with training, this is how we decided. If we were well trained before, maybe we would not behave like that” K1*

*“In some of our departments, the manager goes to picnic with them in the weekends, he goes playing football with them in the evening” K6*

*“When we are conducting our job interviews, we try to understand if the new person’s values match with our organizational values” K6*

*“When we appoint the manager for a new position, we try to understand how much he can conform with the organizational culture” K2*

*“The middle level managers should conform with the organizational culture. First of all, we organize a coordination meeting every month. I put all kinds of problems on the table” K1*

Table 2 shows a summary of the main themes, sub-themes and content following the content analysis.

**Table 2.**

*Main themes, sub-themes and contents*

<b>Main Themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>	<b>Content</b>
The meaning of workplace spirituality	Organizational values Organizational commitment Organizational loyalty Organizational trust Organizational support Organizational integration and identification	Meaning of workplace spirituality is difficult to describe, it is mostly defined using another organizational or behavioural dimension like commitment, loyalty, trust, support, integration, identification. Employee and organizational values were also mentioned to define the subject.
Main factors influencing workplace spirituality	Participatory management Touching the heart Strong organizational communication Reciprocity Respecting employees and accepting them as part of the family Appreciation and motivation Rewards and giving employees official rights Culture	Participatory management was stated to influence workplace spirituality by involving the employees in decision making and creating teams supported by upper level managers. Communication with high level managers has a strong influence by “touching the hearts”. Therefore, strong organizational communication was repeatedly advised. Reciprocal relations improve communication and understanding. Appreciation, motivation and appropriate rewards are important to support workplace spirituality. Matching of employee and organizational values influence workplace spirituality positively.
Workplace practices that may influence spirituality	Practices to create better organizational communication On the job training Practices related to employee involvement Coordination meetings	Practices are required to support workplace spirituality. Empowerment of organizational communication at the first stage is mainly necessary between employees and managers. Special organizations, events, efforts etc. are planned and executed. On the job training supports employee involvement and communication.

### **Discussion and Implications**

Many researchers discussed workplace spirituality and its relationship with another organizational concept like values, commitment, loyalty etc. (Fanggidae et al., 2015; Kazemipour, Mohamad Amin, & Pourseidi, 2012; Mousa & Alas, 2016). This study aims to obtain an in-depth understanding of the meaning, factors and practices of workplace spirituality. However, the results indicate that workplace spirituality is a difficult concept to define on its own, and that professionals can only explain it in relation to other organizational concepts like organizational values, commitment, loyalty, trust and support. The study reveals that workplace spirituality is a multi-dimensional concept that has breadth and depth. This is consistent with the

findings of many other researchers (Allen & Meyer, 2000; Brown, 2003; Fry, 2003; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Mitroff, 2003; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003; Milliman et al., 2003; Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004).

Workplace spirituality has been searched for at spiritual (individual), organizational and societal levels (Long & Driscoll, 2015). The findings of this study illustrate that the participants mainly focused on the organizational level and concentrated on practices to improve workplace spirituality by increasing organizational communication and commitment, which are understood to be related to workplace spirituality.

Many studies stress meaningful work as being important and affecting other organizational behaviour dimensions and employees' workplace spirituality on the individual level (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Fox, 1994; Neal, 1998). In addition, Ayoun, Rowe and Yassine (2015) stated that the relationship between spirituality and business ethics was sensible. The research results obtained by Van Der Walt and De Klerk (2014) indicate that there is a positive relationship between workplace spirituality and job satisfaction. However, this study's findings do not include any information related to "meaningful work", "business ethics" or "job satisfaction". This finding reminds us that workplace spirituality may have different understandings and relationships in different cultures. Therefore, an international survey covering different cultures would supply a broader understanding of workplace spirituality.

The workplace is an environment in which employees spend a large part of their daily life, develop meaningful work-related relationships, and adapt their beliefs and values to the organization's values. The quality of the workplace environment significantly affects an employee's job satisfaction as well as organizational communication, loyalty and trust. As human beings, managers are spiritual and, therefore, have spiritual needs (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). In this sense, the findings support the proposal that spiritual values in the workplace have a significant influence on the work environment.

Another interesting finding is related to the relationship between workplace spirituality and the giving of rewards and official rights. The participants argued that giving rewards and official rights to employees has a positive effect on them, and that if these rewards and rights are not given as stated, workplace spirituality could be negatively influenced. This is somewhat different from the findings of Deckop et al. (2010), where the participants mentioned physical and non-physical rewards in the organization. It is accepted that rewards motivate workplace spirituality.

Workplace spirituality is a mutually shared phenomenon that occurs as a result of the interaction between employees and employers. The dynamics of workplace spirituality are reported to be participatory management, touching the heart, well-established organizational communication, reciprocity, respect for employees and their acceptance as part of the family, appreciation and motivation, the giving of rewards and official rights to employees and, finally, cultural values. Consequently, it is possible to say that workplace spirituality is shared and develops through common efforts like rewards, motivation, appreciation and communication. Among these organizational dynamics, strong and open communication, mainly between upper level management and employees, is said to have the most important influence. Workplace spirituality has a sentimental dimension that is explained as "touching the heart"; this is also closely related to communication. Spirituality in the workplace is considered to include understanding and

touching the hearts of employees, and behaving accordingly. Spirituality therefore implies that feelings are sensed, transferred and respected.

The findings of the study are that workplace spirituality is a concept involving organizational values, commitment, loyalty, trust, support, integration and identification, and that these contribute to the spiritual wellbeing of employees and the workplace. It is a multi-dimensional and poorly defined concept. It is nourished and developed when there is reciprocity and mutual sharing between the employee and the organizational values. Human resource managers and other professionals would benefit from pursuing strategies for better understanding, communication and commitment. Practices for better communication, job training, practices leading to better job involvement, and coordination meetings to support communication are some of the examples given by the participants. This finding implies the importance of practical organizational efforts to support and develop workplace spirituality. Regular practices to support workplace spirituality are required to establish a better workplace, and this will also support organizational values, communication, loyalty, trust etc. Organizational communication is given the first priority, and the two organizational dimensions most commonly thought to be closely related to workplace spirituality are organizational communication and commitment.

The beliefs and practices concerning spirituality involve investing in employees and strengthening employees' inner value judgments, making life more meaningful. In other words, organizational spirituality is an understanding that empowers employees, adds meaning to their business life and ensures the sustainability of their success (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Howard, 2002). It is suggested that organizations accept their employees as a whole, taking into account their physical, emotional, cognitive and spiritual needs. Future research may take into consideration that organizational policies can be implemented more effectively if the employees are seen as part of the family or team, and it is understood that they bring their hearts and spirits to work.

A workplace that provides and supports respect, sincerity and reliable relationships, and enables relationships to be nurtured, can be expected to increase workplace spirituality for both employees and employers. Workplace spirituality is expected to support the work environment and contribute to the organizational climate. This can create cultural transformation through the sharing of values. One practice that supports this would be to conduct different sorts of spiritual lectures, meditation, and respect for other religions, as well as practices like on the job training, coordination meetings, and the creation of better communication channels, as this research shows. Through such training, the workplace would be more spiritual, and cultural understanding would improve, which would enable people to act more openly and trust each other. Increased trust would improve their workplace satisfaction. Positive changes would be observed, such as increased work commitment and engagement, and there would be less attrition and absenteeism (Hassan, Nadeem, Akhter, & Nisar, 2016). Workplace spirituality can contribute to organizational effectiveness and the human development of employees towards higher levels of satisfaction and organizational commitment, greater creativity and innovation, better ethics and community involvement (Neal, 2013). All these efforts may lead to higher organizational efficiency, less absenteeism and a higher return. However, workplace spirituality develops among all employees, it is shared and nourished by organization members, and it needs time to be cultivated and developed.

A climate for spirituality can be viewed as a set of shared perceptions regarding the norms, practices and procedures that prevail in an organization concerning benevolence, humanity,

respect and trust as values that guide employee behaviour (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004). Such a climate could be said to exist if there is a consensus among individuals working in the same unit regarding the salience of these values as descriptors of the nature of the relationships among them (Chan, 1998; Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009). Workers having this type of identification transcend physical and cognitive demands, are more committed, and interpret their tasks as having spiritual significance (Richards, 1995). In many of today's organizations, people only bring their arms and brains to work, not their souls (Mitroff, 2003). On the other hand, when their personal and organizational lives collide, people experience negative emotions, a lack of connection, disparity and alienation from their work environment, further contributing to higher absenteeism, turnover, negligent behaviour and lower affective and normative commitment. The spillover effect from workplace spirituality into personal/family life may be expected to enhance satisfaction with family, marriage, leisure activities and social interactions, enabling people to live an integrated life (Pfeffer, 2003), which in turn may improve their organizational commitment and work performance (Bromet, Dew, & Parkinson, 1990; Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004). The findings of this study also point to the importance of matching the employee and the organizational values. Values are expected to contribute positively to workplace spirituality so long as they are clearly shared by the organization members.

Workplace spirituality is also assumed to be affected by the culture, family upbringing and education system of an individual employee. As a result, hiring and selection procedures should concentrate on candidates who match up with the organization's spirit and values. Organizations are like living organisms that have their own spirits. If the employee's spirits are in accordance with those of the organization, the shared spirituality will have a positive effect.

The findings highlight the meaning, dynamics and practices of workplace spirituality in the view of a group of human resource managers in Antalya, in Turkey. Workplace spirituality is a multi-dimensional phenomenon and needs to be considered by professionals and academics. Besides, cultural differences may have an influence and therefore the research should include local and original data.

Finally, taking into consideration the limited amount of research related to the concept of workplace spirituality in Turkey, this study will contribute to future research, as the findings could be used for wider further research. However, the findings cannot be generalized, and they are limited since they come from a limited number of participants. The study could be repeated with employee groups, and the findings could be compared. Wider research could be done based on the findings of both types of research on a broader scale. This research supplies basic and preliminary data to be followed and widened.

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