Enabling resilience and satisfaction during a crisis: The case of a spiritual non-profit.

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ABSTRACT

Can volunteer and member life satisfaction and resilience be influenced by spirituality, especially during a crisis? To understand this relationship, we conducted research with the Spiritual Science Research Foundation (SSRF), a Not-for-Profit, All Volunteer Organization (AVO) based in the United States, Australia and Europe that has a growing web presence with members and volunteers from across the globe. We develop a framework based on the 'Broaden and Build Theory' of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2004) and then test it using a mixed methods approach using focus groups, interviews, and hierarchical and process model regression. The results suggest that workplace outcomes such as resilience, life satisfaction and performance can be significantly influenced by individual and organizational spirituality. The role of organizational context and perceptions of social context is also crucial to this relationship. These findings are especially relevant in light of the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Non-profits, resilience, satisfaction, spirituality, mixed-methods

INTRODUCTION

This is the story of a Not-for-Profit (NFP), spiritual start-up registered in the United States, Australia and Germany that has seen modest but marked growth over the internet within its domain since its founding in 2007. The objective behind this study is to understand the impact that spirituality can have on small organizations with spiritual core values and its workforce, especially in terms of outcomes like resilience, productivity and life satisfaction. Despite a period of rapid growth, Spiritual Science Research Foundation (SSRF) continues to operate entirely with a mix of part-time and full-time volunteers who are dedicated to its cause of spreading spirituality globally. Its workforce of about 400 part-time and full-time workers, has managed to sustain growth within its domain of spirituality mainly characterized by an active web presence with hundreds of published articles and content that has been translated into 23 languages. The site has more than half a million monthly visits and has so far seen 55.5 million visitors. SSRF also holds regular spiritual workshops with a worldwide attendance from over 30 countries.

The story of a small non-profit startup like SSRF provides a number of reasons that make it interesting to the researcher – a) The story in itself is remarkable in that very little of the All-Volunteer Organizations (AVOs), especially those with spiritual goals, gets attention in business research. b) In the study of Not-for-Profits (NFPs), there is mixed information about workplace outcomes such as life satisfaction and resilience. Although some surveys do indicate that NFP employees may have greater levels of job satisfaction and possibly life satisfaction as well (Binder, 2016), others show the opposite results (Lee and Sabharwal, 2016; Mirvis and Hackett, 1977). c) The present research becomes more relevant in the backdrop of the crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic. At a time when worker stress and job market uncertainty has reached peak levels (Altig et al., 2020), individual resilience and satisfaction can take on added value. As such, the data collected for this research took place in early and mid-2020 and reflects the impact of the crisis.   d) This study takes up the recommendations of researchers (King et al., 2016) to examine worker resilience from the perspective of existing theory like the Broaden and Build Framework of Frederickson (2014). Lastly, e) While Spirituality and Religion in the Workplace (SRW) has taken on importance as a topic of investigation for the management researcher, not much work has been done specifically in the non-profit sector. Also, whereas traditional SRW research tends to fall into notions of spirituality that are either outcomes based (psychological or humanist) or religious (and therefore, sectarian), the present study takes a more holistic view by approaching the matter in a manner that neither mandates religious adherence, nor shuns it (Shinde et al., 2018). SSRF is suitable for such a study since it fits such a description quite well as shall be seen in the sections that follow.

To achieve these objectives, SSRF is examined mainly from the perspective of human resource outcomes like resilience, and life satisfaction. Towards this end, a mixed methods approach is used to frame the linkages between these constructs in the background of wider factors such as organizational spirituality, climate, and perceptions of social context.

Understanding Spirituality, Life Satisfaction and Resilience

Spirituality, Religiosity and the Organization

Spirituality and Religiosity in the Workplace (SRW) as a field of academic interest has gained a lot of attention from researchers but its development has been somewhat organic and less systematic than most would prefer (Kolodinsky et al., 2008; Gotsis & Kortezi, 2008; Neal, 2018; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010). Nevertheless, thanks to a concurrent movement to make more sense out of all this work, it is clear that research generally tends to fall into two main parallel developments (Neal, 2018). Spirituality is viewed as an inclusive, humanist and outcomes-based construct (Delaney, 2005; Giacalone & Jurkeiwicz, 2003) associated with terms such respect, integrity, honesty, connectedness and compassion. Or conversely, spirituality can be considered as a more religious phenomenon with all that is traditionally associated with religion (Koenig, 2008; Benefiel et al., 2014; Gotsis and Kortezi, 2008).

For the purpose of this study, a broad and inclusive definition of spirituality, which at the same time distinguishes itself from purely humanistic connotations was appropriate. As such the work of Shinde et al. (2018) was deemed suitable; it posits that spirituality can be defined, "as the degree to which an individual believes in a transcendent power and prioritizes understanding this aspect of life through consistent spiritual practice, while incorporating a universal outlook." (pp. 19). The definition conceives spirituality as a multi-dimensional construct that emphasizes firstly, a transcendent resource or power that is beyond the five senses, mental and reasoning faculties. Second, the need to actualize this belief is fulfilled via consistent practice and implementation of spiritual methods. Finally, this focus on the transcendent domain maintains a universal and inclusivist approach as opposed to a sectarian outlook. An individual or an organization can be religious or irreligious and yet be considered spiritual so long as they are accepting of and open to other methods and practices.

At an organizational level, spirituality refers to the degree to which an organization promotes and incorporates these values (of transcendent belief, practice and universality) in its culture and practices (Kolodinsky et al., 2008). SSRF fulfills these conditions based on its online explanation of spirituality (www.ssrf.org, nd), and therefore is an ideal organization for this study. SSRF's main objective is educate and guide curious audiences about spirituality and it does this by imparting a program of practices and methods. SSRF emphasizes a non-sectarian approach in the entire program, which does not require adherence to any one religion, faith tradition or belief system and thereby fulfils the universality criterion of spirituality as defined above.

Life Satisfaction and its Connection to Spirituality

Traditionally, Life satisfaction (LS) has been thought of as a long term outcome that is primarily concerned with how individuals evaluate their own life in its entirety; it is not a result of temporary positive feelings based on affect or emotion (Jayawickreme et al., 2017; Deiner et al., 2002; Pavot & Deiner, 2008). Research suggests a number of individual outcomes and behaviors that can act as antecedents to life satisfaction. These include job satisfaction, stress management, and work-family conflict (Aranya et al., 1982; Chacko, 1983; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998). Can spirituality at an individual level and organizational level also play a part in this

connection? Our review of the literature seems to suggest so although this linkage needs to be explored more holistically and in the context of NFPs.

A number of studies in the disciplines of psychology, mental health and wellbeing suggest that there is indeed a strong relationship between spirituality and religiosity, and life satisfaction. Few studies, however, can be found that examine this relationship in the non-profit, management literature. A notable exception to this is the work done by Shelton et al. (2019) in which the authors suggest that spiritual practice can be related positively to such outcomes.

However, very few studies measure spirituality in an inclusive and overarching sense that not only considers the secular aspects of the term, but also its possible traditional and religious connotations. Nor does the extant literature examine this relationship in the context of a non-profit, spiritual organization despite the suggestion that NFPs could potentially provide a 'unique capacity' to foster workplace spirituality (Alexander, 2010).

Spirituality and Resilience

Resilience can be understood as the individual's ability (trait) to adapt to and bounce back from adversity that is to say, one's ability to deal with negative circumstances with little or no impact on workplace performance and well-being (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013; Luthar et al., 2000; Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). This could be the result of a variety of factors such as the uncertainty of the business environment including volatility of markets, technological breakthroughs and the need to implement increasingly sophisticated technologies as well as the debilitating effect of the overuse of distracting social media in the workplace (Clark & Roberts, 2010; Priyadarshini et al., 2020).

However, another conceptualization of resilience considers it as a state that can be developed by the individual through training and transformation (Abbott et al., 2009; Robertson et al., 2015; Tebes et al., 2004). This is relevant because research suggests that spirituality can play a crucial role in developing resilience. The work of Bruce Smith and his colleagues in this context is especially noteworthy. Smith demonstrates that factors associated with spirituality (such as Mindfulness interventions, meaningfulness, gratitude and compassion) can have a significant positive impact on resilience (2008; 2009, 2012).

While resilience has been studied to a considerable degree as an antecedent to individual outcomes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Shin et al., 2012; Youssef & Luthans, 2007), and as a consequence of personal qualities such as experience and competence; not much research is available in terms of how resilience might be related to spirituality in an organizational context. Some studies do examine mindfulness practice interventions as an antecedent to resilience (Bajaj and Pande, 2016; Aikens et al., 2014) and still others have dealt with how religion and spirituality can impact coping mechanisms in a variety of populations, from young adults and students (Kim & Esquival, 2011), mental health and physical trauma patients (Kabat-Zinn et al., 1985; Peres et al., 2007) to the elderly (Faigin and Pargement, 2011; Pargament et al., 2004). However, much needs to be done to understand the impact of spirituality as an integrative, multi-dimensional and inclusive construct and its direct impact on employee resilience. This is relevant considering that a deep belief system with strong values that give meaning are considered amongst the top three characteristics of resilient people (Coutu, 2002). Not that there haven't been attempts to understand this relationship before, but these efforts again tend to have the same gaps as the literature in the Spirituality-Satisfaction relationship do, namely – a conceptualization of spirituality that either emphasizes religion (Carneiro et al., 2019)

or psychological constructs and outcomes (Abdelzaher, 2017; Esievo et al., 2019; Hesketh et al., 2014). Saks (2011) perhaps comes closest to capturing this relationship through his model that describes the linkages between spirituality, and engagement (including resilience). However, he does not investigate this linkage in the study empirically, which we address in the current paper.

Using Broaden and Build to Model a Framework

Fredrickson (2004) suggested that personal positivity (joy, compassion, love) ignite a cycle of positive outcomes and feedback in what is now commonly understood as the 'Broaden and Build Theory' of positive emotions (BBT). In general, BBT suggests that 'positive emotions broaden people's attention and thinking, undo negative emotional arousal, fuel resilience and…. trigger upward spirals towards greater well-being' (Fredrickson, 2004, pp. 1375). In this paper, BBT's development process is used to underpin a structure wherein to develop the relationships between the variables of spirituality, resilience, and life satisfaction. As suggested by the research covered so far, spirituality can be positively related to both resilience, and life satisfaction. However, this linkage might not be entirely linear in that BBT suggests that resilience might mediate the relationship between life satisfaction and spirituality.

This is especially the case when one considers spirituality in the light of its three dimensions: belief, practice and universality. There are numerous studies that are suggestive of linkages between resilience and life satisfaction with individual dimensions of spirituality, especially belief and practice, as indicated in the earlier sections. Universality on the other hand, is related to concepts such as openness, acceptance, empathy and connectedness which are aligned with Frederickson's premise that a *broadening* of individual perspectives (in this case through universality), could lead to increased resilience. Afterall, the word, 'broadening' is quite suggestive of an open or universal outlook. This leads us to believe that universality could be related to resilience as well. Thus, we posit that spirituality in the comprehensive and inclusive sense suggested here can lead to resilience, which in turn can trigger life satisfaction as indicated in Figure 1 (Appendix).

Methods (Measures and Data Collection)

The proposed model is tested using a Mixed Methods approach and data collected from SSRF. The data collection efforts are organized into two steps:

STUDY A – Qualitative investigation to understand individual and organizational spirituality, culture and climate.
STUDY B – Quantitative investigation verifying the relationship posited via theory and Study A

The end result of this two-step method is akin to the Mixed Methods approach allowing for a rich tapestry of data points that enable meaningful insights into the relationships between these variables. The principal reason(s) for such mixed methods approach (Campbell & Fiske, 1959) is to generate greater understanding of the phenomena under study, and more confidence and validity of the results by using multiple, independent observations Webb et al., 1968; Brewer & Hunter, 2006).

Study A - Understanding the Spirituality – Resilience – Satisfaction Model via Qualitative Analysis

In this study, data was mainly gathered from focus groups, interviews, and an internal survey. Data from two internal focus groups of 10 participants, each representing middle management positions was analyzed and five hours of recorded interviews with four members of SSRF in leadership positions was also used. Additional qualitative data such as observational and personal notes, diaries and public records were available to understand these relationships. Furthermore, the following additional questions based on the Universal Spirituality Scale (Shinde et al., 2018) but related to organizational culture were asked in an internal survey (n = 171):

1. I feel that SSRF's culture (values, mission, methods etc.) promotes a belief in a Higher Power
2. I feel that SSRF' culture promotes an acceptance of other spiritual paths and methods
3. I feel that SSRF's culture is really conducive to my spiritual practices
4. I feel that SSRF much more than other organizations embodies spiritual values

The requisite IRB protocols were followed in obtaining this information.

Qualitative data analysis for this study follows the general recommendations of Yin (1989) to examine, categorize and organize the qualitative data according to the purpose of the study (Krueger & Casey, 2000), which in this case is to examine the impact of spirituality on workforce resilience and life satisfaction. Attempts were made to find thematic patterns in the data and corroborate it at different levels (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Once recurring patterns and themes were identified and classified, these are then corroborated via quantitative (hypothesis testing) analysis in Study B.

Organizational Spirituality was measured with the five questions mentioned earlier, the results of the survey (n = 171) showed that SSRF members considered the organization's culture to be highly spiritual, with more than 90% rating SSRF as highly conducive to their belief in a Higher Power. 86% of the respondents rated SSRF as promoting an acceptance of other spiritual paths, 98% considered as SSRF's culture as being highly conducive to their spiritual practice, 92% felt that the culture enables them to see all humanity as one family, and finally 97% of respondents felt that in comparison to other organizations, SSRF promotes values of awareness and acceptance of others.

Overall, the average score for organizational spirituality was 4.6 on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). This confirms the choice of SSRF to study the research question investigating the impact of spirituality on workplace outcomes, which is now understood through the results of focus groups, and interviews.

Focus Group Analysis

Two focus groups aimed at understanding the differences between professional work experiences and SSRF work culture were conducted. Each focus group had ten participants who represented the mid-level of the SSRF hierarchy. These were participants who had some decision-making responsibilities and leadership roles within SSRF. A few of them (5 participants) were full time SSRF members while others engaged in SSRF roles on a part time basis. Average years of involvement with SSRF for the participants was seven years. Participants

were mainly asked questions related to differences between their workplace environment and the environment at SSRF.

After analyzing the transcripts of the two focus groups, which included multiple coding cycles, some crucial differences between members' experiences with the SSRF workspace and their professional careers became apparent. Two themes in particular repeatedly emerged during the focus groups: First, spirituality creates an open organizational climate that fosters individual resources and needs. These needs are related to positive perceptions regarding management and co-worker support, stress, empathy, emotional labor, social pain and workplace negativity, a sense of shared values and meaningfulness. This positive climate then brings about individual outcomes such work performance (engagement, focus and decision making), and life satisfaction.

While these themes corroborate our proposition that spirituality is positively related to resilience and life satisfaction, they also unexpectedly reveal the mechanisms through which these relationships occurred. In effect, these positive perceptions constitute what has been referred to as Perceptions of Social Context (PoSC) by organizational behavior researchers (Borgogni et al., 2010; Meneghal et al., 2016). PoSC encourages positive individual attributes such as resilience, satisfaction, performance, cooperation, and enthusiasm (Parker et al., 2003; Ostroff, 1993). The salience of the social context is highlighted by a study that analyzed the responses of 835 British employees, which indicated that the biggest drain on individual resilience at work is via the social context of managing office interactions and relationships and the concomitant politics that go with such social exchanges (Bond and Shapiro, 2014).

A sampling of comments from the two focus groups shows that participants felt that their ability to work (performance) and manage stress was positively affected by spirituality. As noted earlier, stress can often be an antecedent to satisfaction and is inversely related to it; similarly, performance, being an outcome of resilience, is indicative of the latter. Relational and emotional needs, and a willingness to open up about vulnerabilities (suggestive of openness amongst members) seem to also have benefitted from spirituality, both individual and organizational.

The contributive role played by an open culture and positive work climate in engendering member cooperation, growth, warmth, cohesion and meaningfulness through shared values (of spirituality) corroborates earlier work done by researchers (Lawler et al., 1974; Carr et al., 2003; Ostroff, 1993).

Analysis of Interviews and Observational Notes

An investigation of SSRF's organizational climate and culture was done through a content analysis of interviews of members in leadership positions at SSRF. The emphasis on spiritual leadership is underlined in an article published on the SSRF site that states: "Any CSR strategy implemented by a leader or CEO should ideally include the spiritual upliftment of people. To accomplish this, he himself needs to have a strong spiritual base" (Magdum, 2019).

Altogether four interviews totaling five hours of recordings with those in leadership positions (including serving and past Presidents of SSRF) were analyzed. All interview participants had responsibilities tied to strategic decision making for the overall worldwide operations of the organization as well as its regional divisions. The aim was to find similarities and corroborative themes between focus group and interview data.

When asked about why SSRF members might exhibit high levels of work-related outcomes such as organizational citizenship, satisfaction and engagement, interview responses

strongly suggested that spirituality plays a crucial role in this regard. Responses ranged from suggesting spirituality as an enabler of love (feelings of unity) and esprit de corps within team members to an antecedent for intrinsic motivational factors such as the desire for self-improvement, fulfillment, and a sense of meaningfulness.

The themes that the interviews brought out most commonly were: Individual Support Systems, Open Systems that foster a sense of trust and unity, the prominent role played by spirituality, and gains in terms of performance.

Support Systems

Those in leadership roles pointed out that even though the spread of spirituality and helping others is the main goal of SSRF, emphasizing the growth of the individual was primary to achieving this goal. A former President of SSRF explained this process as being ingrained in the teachings of SSRF, where members are taught that spirituality is a progression from thinking about others to loving and accepting them unconditionally. Note that this approach is quite analogous to the spiritual dimension of universality as explained by Shinde and colleagues (2018). This attitude corroborates the research of Coutu (2002), which emphasizes the ability of resilient people to accept reality based on how things are rather than misleading notions that could be negative or optimistic. Another interviewee seemed to agree with this approach and noted the need to treat each member "holistically" and not taking anything for granted.

The idea is to provide support to members in their attempts to grow at a personal level, which is considered a pre-requisite for achieving the goals of the organization.

Open Systems and Communication

Towards this end, SSRF has instituted some important structures and processes that allow for open communication, feedback, and management of grievances. During the interviews, each participant pointed to review meetings and an escalation process that was transparent and effective. Members of SSRF (including novices) are assigned mentors who proactively reach out to the member on at least a weekly basis to discuss individual goals, challenges, and obstacles. These mentors are constantly available and consider it an opportunity to grow by mentoring others. Another important feature of this structure is that a member can escalate any given situation to the highest rungs in the hierarchy. Horizontally too, seekers are encouraged to speak to each other although it is strongly recommended that they focus on spiritual topics and issues.

Fear of repercussions and retribution is mitigated via collective meetings at least once a month. These meetings are dedicated to discussing conflicts and issues more openly. Similar meetings are also conducted during bi-annual retreats. In such meetings incidents involving senior members are often used as examples of open sharing and admission of incorrect actions. This fosters a sense of comfort when it comes to sharing mistakes, one's own as well as those of others. Members on each side of an argument are allowed to speak and place their positions in detail. Inputs and feedback are sought from all and normally both sides' arguments are verified using collective feedback. A collective analysis and solution (with guidance from the meeting coordinators) is then chosen as the correct approach and is accepted by all parties within the dispute. Such solutions can often require great introspection on part of those involved and can bring about cathartic but helpful reactions. This is considered a good thing and members experiencing such emotions are encouraged to work on obstacles and difficulties that have been

identified with the help of the PDR process (see below). In time, such an open attitude that doesn't punish vulnerability encourages all members to be open as well.

The Role of Individual Spirituality

This approach and structure is crucially aided by individual spirituality – both belief and practices. Leaders pointed out that SSRF attempts to foster acceptance (of decisions and outcomes of such meetings) in members, but this is entirely based on individual spirituality - the belief that such a process is part of the Transcendent purpose of each member. Individual practices and rituals are emphasized in a collective and personal setting. For example, each meeting starts with prayer and chanting followed by an offering of gratitude is offered at the end. During meetings, breaks are routinely taken to reorient and to ensure that everyone leaves on a positive note. These processes harken back to the observation made by Coutu (2002) regarding acceptance of 'reality', including criticism and awareness of weakness, being among the 'top three' characteristics of resilient individuals.

A salient practice that further aids this approach to maintaining open systems is that of the Personality Defect Removal (PDR) process. This process was referred to by participants at all levels and as such bears some elaboration. The PDR process instituted in SSRF as a part of individual spiritual practice requires every member to introspect daily and work on weaknesses that they have identified within themselves (often with the help of feedback from other SSRF members or those who are close to them such as family). These weaknesses are called personality defects and mainly take the form of internal stressors such as anger, jealousy, insecurity etc. Once such personality defects are identified, individuals are then required to journal them and take remedial measures called auto-suggestions to mitigate their effect on individual behavior.

The importance of individual spiritual beliefs and practices is further evidenced by interview comments that underline the value of spirituality in informing personal and organizational outcomes such as decision-making, empathic leadership, and an open, communicative environment. SSRF leaders who were interviewed suggested as much through numerous personal examples.

Impact on Performance and Resilience

Another noteworthy outcome that emerged in the interviews and was corroborative of focus group responses, was that of work performance. This was a result of the open and positive organizational climate fostered by spirituality. Work performance was a quality that was sincerely appreciated by those in leadership positions, not only in terms of the nature of the task itself; but also in terms of the context within which it was completed. These contexts often took the shape of a very dynamic and oft-changing environment where entire operations, roles and tasks were changed in a very short period of time. A significant example of such performance was SSRF's ability to quickly move its operations online during the crisis created by the COVID19 virus pandemic. Most SSRF outreach activities including retreats were held in face-to-face formats prior to the crisis; however, the organization was able to make the shift to online deliveries in a very short span thanks to the spiritual principles that they prioritize.

This ability to improvise at short notice, is another quality which Coutu deems significant for resilient individuals and organizations.

From the above analysis it becomes apparent that SSRF leaders and members endeavor to foster an open and nurturing workplace climate with appropriate structures and processes, which in turn are a result of their commitment to the spiritual principles of belief, practice and universality. All in all, the high scores showed by SSRF members on measures of spirituality, resilience and satisfaction seem to be borne out as the overarching theme(s) in the data gathered from focus groups and interviews.

The results of our study corroborate the model proposed earlier and also provide a rich lens to understand the mechanism behind this model. It can be inferred from the qualitative inputs that Spirituality (individual and organizational) leads to open systems characterized by greater cohesion and empathy, which in turn can result in outcomes like resilience (short-term), performance and life satisfaction (long-term). This is replicative of research done earlier by Luthans et al. (2008) and more recently, Meneghel et al. (2016), which point out that supportive environments and perceptions of social context can influence individual resilience.

Interestingly, we had not included work performance as an outcome of spirituality in the theoretical model. However, the results of both, interviews and focus groups, suggest that work performance is strongly correlated to spirituality. As such it is incorporated in the revised model below. Furthermore, performance is also intrinsic to resilience in the context of the workplace since it is the ability of the individual to bounce back (perform) despite difficulties (Luthar, 1991; Luthans et al., 2005). The comments with regard to SSRF's members' ability to improvise and respond proactively to the COVID19 crisis reflects this resilience and verifies Coutu's assertion that the ability to make such quick changes is a crucial aspect of resilience. To verify the results and insights that became apparent from the qualitative analysis, we conducted surveys with SSRF members that now also included administering Williams & Anderson's (1991) shortened Work Performance scale as related to in-job responsibilities. The resultant hypothetical model is given below (Figure 2, Appendix).

Study B - Understanding the Spirituality – Resilience – Satisfaction Model via Quantitative Analysis

Based on the above reconceptualization, the measurement model would test a sequential mediation between spirituality and life satisfaction caused by resilience first, and then performance. As such the following relationships were hypothesized:
H1. Individual Spirituality (IS) will be positively related to life satisfaction (LS).
H2. Individual Spirituality will be positively related to resilience
H3. Individual Spirituality will be positively related to performance
H4. Resilience (Re) will be positively related to life satisfaction
H5. Resilience will be positively related to performance
H6. Performance (Pf) will be positively related to life satisfaction.
H7. Resilience will mediate the relationship between spirituality and life satisfaction (Model 1)
H8. Resilience will mediate the relationship between spirituality and performance (Model 2)
H9. Performance will mediate between spirituality and life satisfaction (Model 3)
H10. Performance will mediate between resilience and life satisfaction (Model 4)
H11. Performance and resilience will sequentially mediate the relationship between spirituality and life satisfaction (Model 5)

Measures

All the scales used to test the above hypotheses were chosen because of robust psychometric properties and displayed reliability scores (Cronbach's alpha) of .70 and above (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Individual Spirituality was measured with a shortened version of the Universal Spiritual Scale (USS) developed by Shinde et al. (2018) with 11 items ($\alpha = .75$). A Principal Components Analysis showed that construct validity was high in that there were no cross-loading items, and item weights were all above .55 indicating strong convergent and discriminant validity. Eigen values supported the expected 3-factor solution supporting the dimensions of universality, belief, and practice (Shinde, 2018). Life Satisfaction was measured using the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Pavot & Diener, 1993), and resilience was measured with the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) developed by Smith et al. (2008), Reliability Scores for both these scales were .77. In-role work performance was measured with Anderson & Williams' (1991) 5-item scale ($\alpha = .86$).

Statistical Methods

We tested these relationships with Hierarchical Regression Analysis and the Process Model Regression Analysis (PMRA) method in SPSS 26.0 for mediation effects (Hayes, 2016). PMRA, which measures mediation through the indirect effect, is more suitable for samples of smaller sizes such as ours as compared to the traditional alternative, a combination of the 4 step mediation model of Baron & Kenny (1986) and the use of Sobel's test (1982). We checked for collinearity and outliers using the Mahalanobis test and deleted 3 responses for a final sample size of 90 participants.

Results and Discussion (Quantitative)

Results of statistical analyses show that all hypotheses and the theorized model were supported. Model variables in the study were co-related but not too highly indicating appropriate levels of differentiation (discriminant validity) between them as indicated in Table 1 (Appendix). Note also that there were no inter-correlations between the hypothesized variables and the covariates of gender, age and education. Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were well within the cutoff levels of .1 and 10 (Field, 2018). The results of hierarchical regressions controlling for age, gender and education (H1-H6) are summarized in Table 2 (Appendix). The overall models showed variance from 9% to 23% in the outcome variables; the inclusion of individual spirituality, resilience and performance accounting for 6% to 18% of additional variance.

All the mediation models 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 as described and hypothesized earlier (H7-H11) were also supported as indicated by the increased strength of the indirect effects and correspondingly reduced strength and significance of the direct effects. The indirect effects caused by the mediators for each of the hypothesized models are given below. These are summarized in Table 3 (Appendix)

The confidence interval for the indirect effect is a bootstrapped CI based on 5000 samples and again, does not include zero values, suggesting that all associated hypotheses (H7-H11) were supported. This is clarified below in the statistical diagrams (Figures 3 to 7 in the Appendix). In all cases, the path being tested is significant indicating lowered total effects of the independent

variables (individual spirituality or resilience) on the (life satisfaction or performance). The statistical models show the significance of the indirect effect (no zero values between confidence intervals), and the reduction of the total (independent) effect as indicated by the unstandardized b-values (b) upon introduction of the mediator(s), aka the direct effect in each model.

Although the impact of spirituality and organizational climate on worker outcomes has been studied in the past, studies connecting all three constructs are not too common, especially in the context of not-for-profit organizations. This study develops a theory driven framework to bring together these areas and in doing so expands each of these domains. The first study used a qualitative approach to bring out themes and threads that could then be tested with quantitative analyses. These approaches together create a far clearer picture than either one would have individually. The roles played by positive organizational climate related factors such as trust in management, empathic leadership, open and cooperative systems that don't penalize individual vulnerability were all brought out through Study A, especially in the focus groups. Interview results indicated that when individual spirituality is enshrined in organizational culture through values and processes, it creates the above climate related factors, which then produce employee outcomes like resilience, performance and finally, life satisfaction. These linkages were clearly demonstrated by the quantitative analyses, which not only confirms the premise of Frederickson's BBT (2014), but also the work of Pavot and Diener (2008), who view life satisfaction as a long-term outcome.

In both studies, it was found that resilience plays a key role with regard to worker life satisfaction, and spirituality can act as an antecedent to this relationship.

## Limitations, Implications and Future Research

The above analysis suggests there is great promise for Spirituality as an enabler of positive workplace outcomes such as resilience and life satisfaction. Some of the spiritual practices recommended by SSRF to its members are especially relevant in this regard, especially since they do not carry any religious, exclusivist or sectarian connotations.

However, this has been an exploratory study examining the dynamics of a single all-volunteer, spiritual organization called SSRF. As such it is hampered by sample related weaknesses of any case study, however, detailed. These weaknesses include the lack of broad and diverse sample, its cross-sectional nature, and the possibility of single-respondent bias (although the use of multiple respondents in the qualitative section, somewhat addresses the last concern). Nevertheless, these shortcomings can also provide a starting point for further exploration of this domain of intersection between workplace related individual outcomes and spirituality. Potential studies could use quantitative analysis to flesh out the intricacies of the relationships involved. This can take the form of three main thrusts – a) the use of more diverse workplace samples, whereby comparative analysis (for example, between religious and spiritual organizations, for profit and not for profit organizations etc.), (b) the exploration of how the three dimensions of spirituality are individually related to outcomes such as resilience, and (c) the use of longitudinal samples to examine the long term effects of spirituality in the workplace. Such studies could generate insights into these relationships that are relevant to human resource development programs in non-profit organizations.

Conclusions, Strengths and Limitations

This study starts out to examine the relationship between spirituality (both individual and organizational) and the workplace outcomes of resilience and life satisfaction in the context of a young spiritual organization called Spiritual Science Research Foundation (SSRF). Using a variety of qualitative and quantitative tools, it concludes that high levels of spirituality can have a positive impact on an individual's ability to perform in the face of adversity, which then can lead to greater life satisfaction and performance. This work corroborates and extends the Build and Broaden Framework (Frederickson, 2004) by positioning spirituality as an antecedent to the relationship between resilience and life satisfaction. The use of a mixed methods approach provided unexpected insights into this relationship by bringing into relief the role played by organizational context and resultant performance gains.

Both these insights (the importance of organizational context and the outcome of work performance) were not theory driven but were only evident through qualitative analysis and as such corroborate the effectiveness of the Mixed Methods approach in understanding the gossamer threads between organizational contexts and outcomes, which might not have been possible through a purely quantitative analysis.
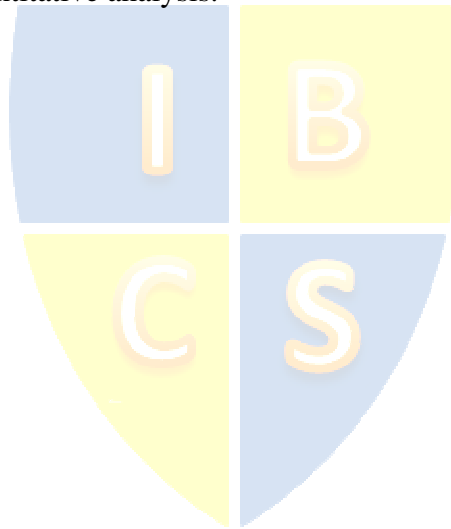
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Appendix – Tables and Figures
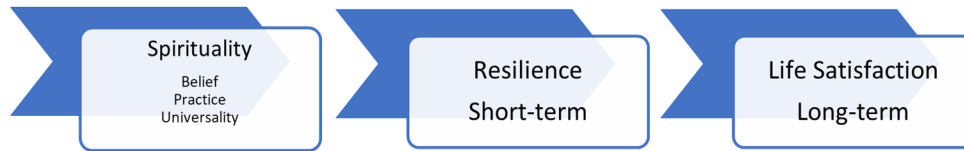
Figure 1: Theoretical Model based on BBT

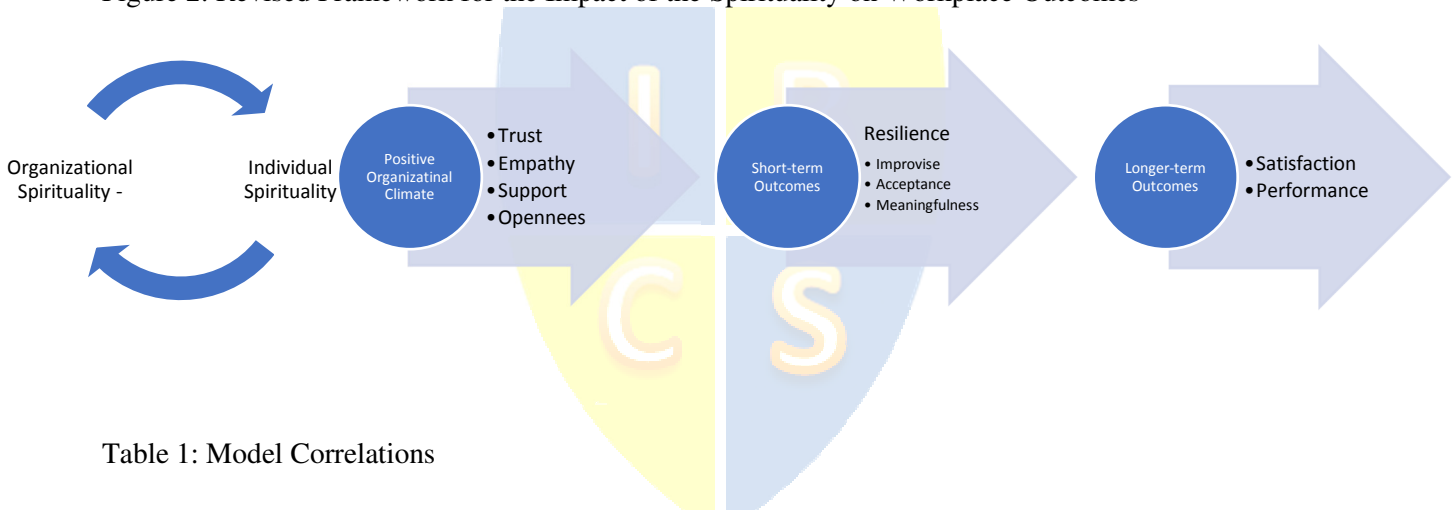Figure 2: Revised Framework for the Impact of the Spirituality on Workplace Outcomes

Table 1: Model Correlations

Correlations Between Variables							
Variables	**Age**	**Gender**	**Education**	**Resilience**	**Perform**	**Satisfaction**	**Spirituality**
Age		-.042	.029	.041	.205	.065	.161
Gender			-.035	.194	-.033	.088	.052
Education				-.064	.110	-.078	.161
Resilience					**.332****	**.355****	**.425****
Perform						**.396****	**.277****
Satisfaction							**.328****
N = 90, **$p < .01$							

Table 2: Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analyses for Variables

Results for Hypothesis (H1 – H6), $N = 90$								
Hypotheses					95% Confidence Interval for B			
	B	$SE\ B$	β	Sig.	*Lower*	*Upper*	R^2	ΔR^2, (sig.)
H1 (IS – LS)	6.36	1.93	.34	< .001	2.53	10.2	.09	.11, ($p < .001$)
H2 (IS – Re)	.715	.16	.44	< .001	.40	1.03	.23	.18, ($p < .001$)
H3 (IS – Pe)	.93	.40	.24	< .05	.13	1.74	.11	.06, ($p < .02$)
H4 (Re – LS)	3.4	1.18	.35	<.001	1.6	6.3	.13	.11, ($p < .001$)
H5 (Re – Pe)	.83	.24	.35	<.001	.35	1.3	.13	.12, ($p < .001$)
H6 (Pe – LS)	2.00	.49	.42	<.001	1.03	2.97	.18	.16, ($p < .001$)

Table 3: Results of Mediation Analyses (Models 1-5)

Results: Hypotheses (H7-H10), $N = 90$ (Indirect Effects of Mediation)				
Hypotheses			95% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	$SE\ B$	*Lower Bound Bound*	*Upper*
H7 (IS – Re - LS)	2.07	.92	.45	4.0
H8 (IS – Re - Pe)	.43	.19	.10	.86
H9 (IS – Pe - LS)	1.7	.92	.24	3.78
H10 (Re – Pe - LS)	1.18	.56	.25	2.4
H11 (IS - Re – Pe - LS)	.59	.37	.05	1.5

Fig. 3 - H7. Resilience will mediate the relationship between spirituality and life satisfaction (Model 1)
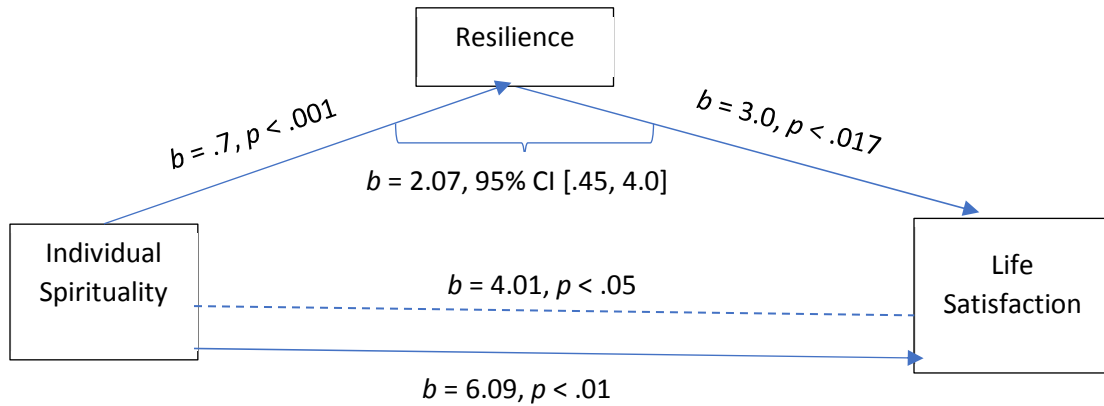
Resilience

$b = .7, p < .001$

$b = 3.0, p < .017$

$b = 2.07, 95\% \text{ CI } [.45, 4.0]$

Individual Spirituality

$b = 4.01, p < .05$

Life Satisfaction

$b = 6.09, p < .01$

Fig. 4 - H8. Resilience will mediate the relationship between spirituality and performance (Model 2)

Resilience

$b = .7, p < .001$

$b = .62, p < .02$

$b = .43, 95\% \text{ CI } [.1, .86]$

Individual Spirituality

$b = .64, p < .13$

Performance

$b = 1.06, p < .01$

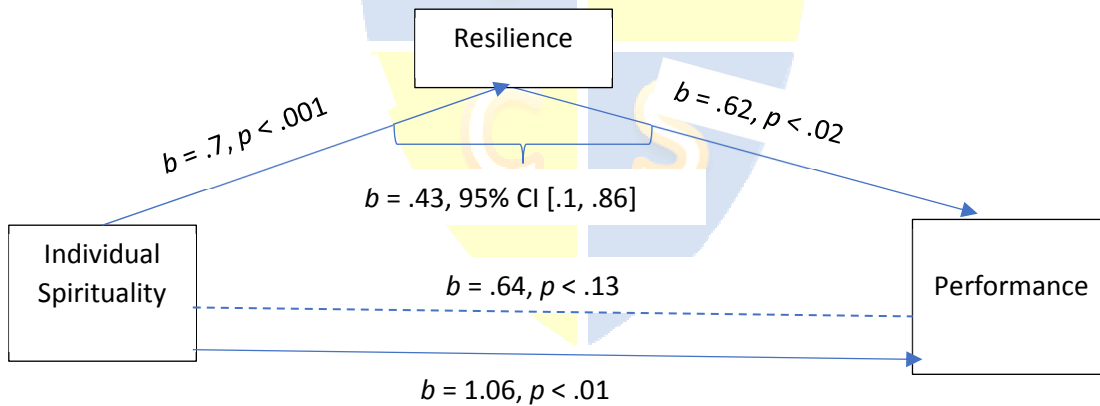Fig. 5 - H9. Performance will mediate the relationship between spirituality and life satisfaction (Model 3)

Performance

$b = 1.06, p < .01$

$b = 1.59, p < .01$

$b = 1.7, 95\% \text{ CI } [.24, 3.8]$

Individual Spirituality

$b = 4.38, p < .02$
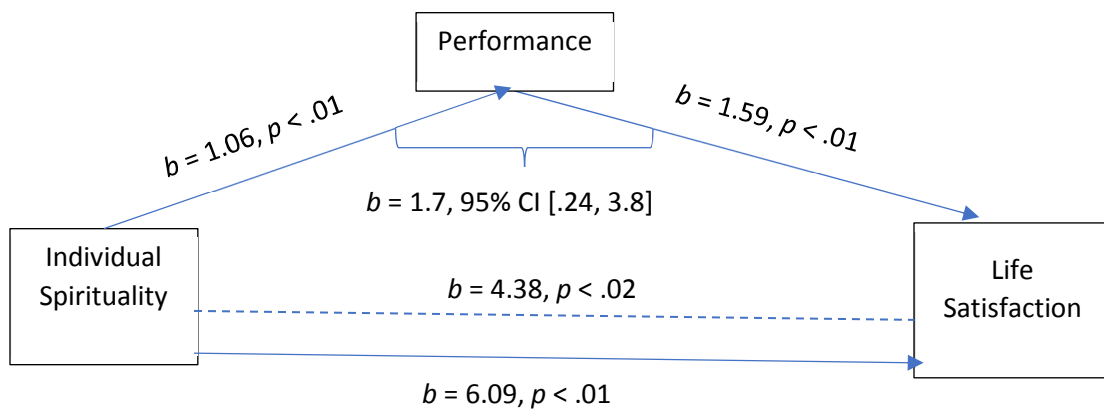
Life Satisfaction

$b = 6.09, p < .01$

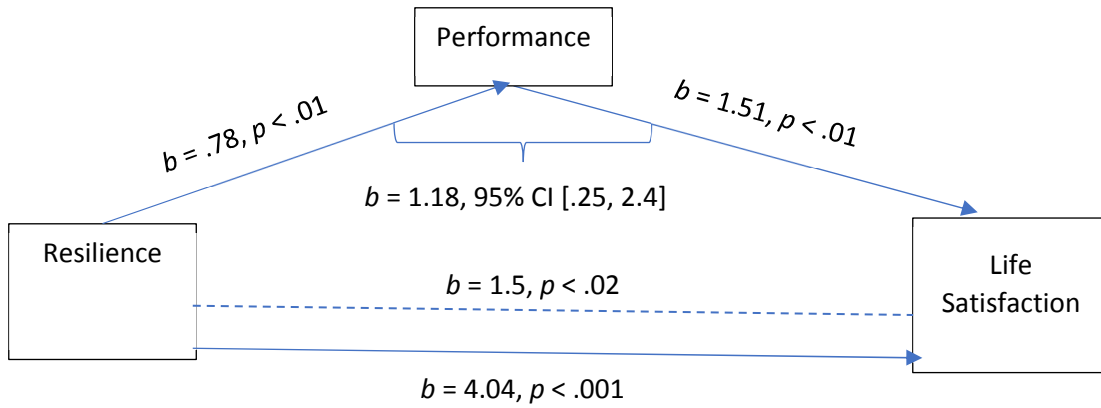Fig. 6 - H10. Performance will mediate the relationship between resilience and life satisfaction

Fig 7. - H11. Performance and resilience will sequentially mediate the relationship between spirituality and life satisfaction (Model 5)