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Workplace spirituality and its relevance to workplace flourishing

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Orientation: Workplace spirituality may previously have been just a new buzzword in the corporate world, but it has now become a topic of serious scientific inquiry, which cannot be ignored or disregarded. The reason for the increased attention given to workplace spirituality in recent years is the positive psychological working environment that it creates for employees.

Research purpose: The research established whether workplace spirituality at the individual, work unit and organisational levels influence each other and whether individual spirituality influences workplace flourishing.

Motivation for the study: The work and life domains in which employees need to function are not always conducive to their well-being. Therefore, it is necessary to consider to what degree work-related factors such as workplace spirituality influence employees' flourishing, that is, holistic well-being, in the work context.

Research approach/design and method: The study used a deductive approach, employing a correlational cross-sectional research design. Data collection involved a structured questionnaire, resulting in a final sample of 394 respondents.

Main findings: The study's main findings were that individual spirituality impacted emotional well-being. Also, organisational and work unit spirituality influences individual spirituality, and organisational spirituality influences work unit spirituality.

Practical/managerial implications: Workplace spirituality should be considered to increase employees' experience of work-related well-being, expressed as a sense of happiness and contentment and feeling satisfied at work. Furthermore, the spiritual development and growth of spiritual employees should be emphasised.

Contribution/value-add: The study contributes to theory development and knowledge creation of the constructs of workplace spirituality and workplace flourishing.

Keywords: workplace spirituality; organisational spirituality; individual spirituality; work unit spirituality; workplace flourishing; emotional well-being; psychological well-being; social well-being.

Introduction

Mental health is becoming increasingly problematic in South Africa, with one in six individuals in the country experiencing challenges related to substance abuse, depression or anxiety (South African College of Applied Psychology [SACAP], 2019). Given the gravity of South Africa's mental health concerns, organisational leaders have no option but to consider work-related factors to promote mental health, for employees to cope with work demands. Apart from work demands and social pressures, the increased time employees dedicate to work and work-related activities threatens employee well-being (Harju et al., 2021). A different human resource management (HRM) approach is therefore needed (Guest, 2017) to support organisations in encouraging health, safety and well-being. Meaningful work (a key component of workplace spirituality) has been found to play a critical role in enhancing psychological health, life satisfaction and positive affect (Johnson & Jiang, 2017). These positive outcomes of meaningful work suggest holistic well-being and thus flourishing. Because work encounters can play a role in individuals' flourishing, it is necessary to explore whether creating spiritual workplaces, where individuals can discover meaning and purpose, could foster their holistic well-being and thus their flourishing.

Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003) define workplace spirituality as:

> [A] framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promotes employees' experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy. (p. 18)

According to this definition, organisations with spiritually based cultures are more likely to cultivate joy or happiness, also called domain satisfaction or subjective well-being (Sahai & Mahapatra, 2020). The increased importance of workplace spirituality relates to its ability to cultivate a positive psychological working environment for employees (Haldorai et al., 2019). This is imperative, as one of the primary challenges confronting contemporary organisations is their capacity to address the escalating demands of employees for work that is meaningful and purposeful while also fostering constructive relationships with both leaders and peers (Hunsaker & Ding, 2022; Singh et al., 2021; Zou et al., 2022). Moreover, an individual's spirituality may be shaped by the team or group with whom they collaborate within an organisation (Mhatre & Mehta, 2023).

The person–organisation (P–O) fit theory considers the extent to which an individual's needs are met by the organisational environment or the extent to which the organisation's needs are met by the individual's capabilities (Memon et al., 2018; Oh et al., 2014). Individual–organisation congruence affects attitudes and behaviours, because individuals are more connected and attached to similar things (Priyadarshi & Premchandran, 2018), and those similarities influence communication and socially reinforce personal identities between employees and the organisation (Kaur & Kang, 2021; Koburtay & Alzoubi, 2020), which increases the well-being of employees and enables them to flourish within the organisation. Aligned with this theory, this article argues that if the spiritual needs of employees are met by the organisation and work units, it will lead to individual, work unit and organisational congruence, enabling workplace flourishing.

Research purpose, objectives and hypotheses

The purpose of this research study was to establish the extent to which workplace spirituality impacts workplace flourishing. The rationale for the study was that the construct of workplace flourishing has not been sufficiently investigated in the work context, and, as such, it is necessary to broaden the existing limited body of knowledge on flourishing in this context to support theory development. The first objective was to measure the impact of individual spirituality on flourishing at work, which consists of emotional well-being, psychological well-being and social well-being. The second objective was to determine whether there is a statistically significant relationship between organisational, work unit and individual spirituality. The research hypotheses are:

H1: Individual spirituality positively impacts the dimensions of workplace flourishing.

H2: There is a positive relationship between organisational, work unit and individual spirituality.

This article comprehensively explores workplace spirituality and workplace flourishing. It is organised as follows: The 'Literature review' section presents an overview of the relevant literature, highlighting the relationship between workplace spirituality and workplace flourishing. After that, the details of the methodology employed are presented. In the following section, the results of the data analysis are presented, followed by a discussion. Finally, the article concludes with implications for future research and practical applications.

Literature review

Mental health challenges remain problematic in the South African context (SACAP, 2019). Because of the impact that mental health challenges can have on organisational functioning, it is imperative for leaders to prioritise the mental health and well-being of their employees. This study investigates the importance of workplace spirituality in enhancing well-being. Previous research confirms that spiritually oriented workplaces advance emotional and psychological well-being, enabling employees to thrive in the work context (Johnson & Jiang, 2017). This study intends to expand on previous research findings by examining the relationship between individual, organisational and work unit spirituality and its influence on workplace flourishing. In this section, these variables included in the study are discussed.

Workplace spirituality

The infusion of faith into the workplace, which emerged in the early 1920s, has ignited a growing interest in workplace spirituality (Hill & Pargament, 2003). The recent scholarly view, as expressed by Mahipalan and S. (2019), is that spirituality is no longer just a passing trend but is increasingly becoming a reality in organisations. According to Shava and Chinyamurindi (2022), workplace spirituality pertains to the personal pursuit of meaning and purpose in life, manifested through the embodiment of deeply held individual values. This construct is highly relevant in contemporary organisational settings, as it has been found to promote work engagement (Van der Walt, 2018), reduce stress (Saxena et al., 2019) and enhance job satisfaction (Van der Walt & De Klerk, 2014). By aligning their personal values with the organisation's mission and vision, employees are more likely to experience a sense of purpose and fulfilment in their work, leading to increased productivity and overall performance (Garg, 2017). Therefore, fostering spirituality in the workplace can be an effective strategy for promoting employee well-being and organisational success. Ashmos and Duchon (2000) state that workplace spirituality acknowledges and embraces employees' inner lives, sustained and nourished by meaningful work in a communal environment. According to Widodo and Suryosukmono (2021), workplace spirituality is an employee's

experience of self-transcendence, meaning and community. This means that individuals can experience spirituality through various mechanisms, including those within the organisation. These definitions suggest that spirituality may be experienced at the individual, group or organisational level.

From the individual perspective of workplace spirituality, also referred to as the intrinsic-origin perspective, it is proposed that organisations are comprised of individuals, who hold diverse views of spirituality (Lewis, 2019). Prominent scholars in the field of workplace spirituality, such as Joelle and Coelho (2017), assert that individual spirituality concerns employees' desire to present themselves holistically at work, engage in meaningful work and seek meaning and purpose in their lives, by embodying deeply held values. Individual spirituality supports the notion that the work environment should cultivate an individual's spiritual ideals and values to promote positive behaviour and performance (Astakoni et al., 2022).

According to Rathee and Rajain (2020), the organisational perspective of workplace spirituality involves a framework of corporate values expressed within a culture that promotes employees' understanding of transcendence through work. This occurs when an organisation fosters respect and care, which suggests that the employee's job experience is part of a broader, holistic view of the individual (Kumar & Kumar, 2014; Vasconcelos, 2023). Word (2012) and Thakur and Singh (2016) state that organisational spirituality indicates the organisation's spiritual principles and employees' perceptions of the macro-organisational setting. As such, the organisational culture must reflect its spiritual values.

Workplace spirituality is the belief that individuals in a work unit have spiritual needs that should be acknowledged (Herzog et al., 2020). When these needs are met, the work unit develops a unique atmosphere characterised by shared values, beliefs and practices (Mhatre & Mehta, 2023). This shared sense of purpose unifies the people in an organisation dedicated to serving a joint mission (Mabazo & Van der Walt, 2024). Workplace spirituality includes the mental, emotional and spiritual support that colleagues provide to each other (Neal & Bennett, 2000). This connection between co-workers enhances their relationship, leading to more significant support and freedom of expression (Van der Walt & De Klerk, 2014). Although scholars have provided different definitions of work unit spirituality, the consensus is that it involves a sense of connection, meaning and purpose among members of a work unit that is grounded in spiritual or transcendent values (Arnold et al., 2019; Bhattacharyya & Afroz, 2019; Van der Walt, 2018).

Workplace flourishing

Well-being is fundamental for workers' happiness (Puchalska-Wasyl & Zarzycka, 2020). Research indicates that well-being in organisations may bring more stability and better functionality across the workplace, encouraging employees to achieve higher levels of fulfilment and productivity (Sharpe & Fard, 2022). Building on the work of Keyes (2002), Rothmann (2013) explored the multidimensional nature of flourishing in the workplace, confirming that it comprises emotional, psychological and social well-being. Thereafter, Rautenbach (2015) confirmed that workplace flourishing includes employees' perception of feeling well and functioning effectively.

Emotional well-being represents a pivotal aspect of overall well-being, which includes the capacity to effectively regulate emotions, experience positive emotions and maintain balance and harmony in one's emotional life (Breedt et al., 2023). This dimension of flourishing in the work context consists of three variables: positive affect, negative affect and job satisfaction (Rothmann, 2013). Positive affect pertains to cheerfulness, interest in life, good spirits, happiness, tranquillity and peace (Keyes, 2014). Negative affect refers to unpleasant thoughts resulting from adverse reactions, such as anger, sadness, anxiety, boredom, frustration and guilt (Rautenbach, 2015). Job satisfaction is defined as an individual's work-related attitude (Ramhit, 2019; Sibanyoni et al., 2024), and it refers to employees' perception of all aspects of their current job concerning the fulfilment of their needs and desires (Ali & Anwar, 2021).

Trudel-Fitzgerald et al. (2019) define psychological well-being as personal growth, which includes how people interact with their environment and employs a eudaimonia approach to happiness. Rothmann's (2013) framework of workplace flourishing, which is used in this study, indicates that psychological well-being includes dimensions such as self-acceptance, environmental mastery, positive relations with others, personal growth, meaning and purpose in life, autonomy, competence and work engagement. Autonomy refers to pursuing self-determination and personal freedom, in a society that tends to prioritise conformity and submission to authority (Lesenyeho et al., 2018; Pieters et al., 2019). Competence is people's inherent desire to feel successful while engaging with the environment (Pieters et al., 2019). Positive relations with others concern people's intrinsic need to establish connections, show affection and concern for others and receive love and care in return (Rautenbach, 2015). Social support theory contends that those with access to social support networks typically experience better well-being than those without (Yildirim & Tanriverdi, 2021). Learning, or personal growth, refers to the perception of acquiring and applying knowledge and skills to one's work (Spreitzer et al., 2010). Individuals perceive work as meaningful when they understand how it connects to the meaning of life, comprehend what makes the job valuable and believe that their work contributes to a greater purpose (Lysova et al., 2019). Work engagement is defined as 'a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption' (Maake et al., 2021).

The third dimension of workplace flourishing is social well-being. According to Joshanloo et al. (2018), social well-being refers to how well a person performs in their social life, which considers the nature of their relationships with others, the

neighbourhood and the community. When an individual's social needs (i.e. family relationships, community acceptability and involvement in relationships) are met, they are naturally more at ease (Hill & Broady, 2019), because it suggests that physiological and psychological needs are also met (Kinicki & Williams, 2013). Although social well-being is a one-dimensional construct, it includes the following aspects: social acceptance, social actualisation, social coherence, social integration and social contribution (Khumalo et al., 2021; Rothmann, 2013).

The relationship between spirituality and well-being

In psychology, there has been interest in and investigation of the relationship between spirituality and emotional health. It is also postulated that an individual's emotional well-being can be significantly influenced by their spirituality, which includes beliefs, values and practices related to a transcendent, or higher, power (Jamali et al., 2017; Villani et al., 2019). Moreover, spirituality provides a sense of meaning and purpose in life, which can contribute to positive emotions and overall psychological and emotional well-being (Ryff, 2021). Spirituality also indirectly influences dimensions of emotional well-being, namely positive affect, negative affect and life satisfaction, through optimism and meaning in life (Aglozo et al., 2021). Research confirms that workplace spirituality significantly contributes to mental well-being (Jnaneswar & Sulphey, 2021).

Research has shown that spirituality can also positively impact psychological well-being (Bożek et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2019). Fajar et al. (2023) argue that by improving the spiritual climate, managers promote organisational commitment, individual performance and organisational performance. This is achieved by fulfilling employees' spiritual needs; promoting psychological safety; emphasising human value and respect and providing a sense of purpose, self-determination, enjoyment and belonging (Chen et al., 2019). Srivastava and Gupta (2022) reported that workplace spirituality has a statistically significant influence on psychological well-being. These findings underscore the importance of spiritual practices in promoting positive mental health outcomes.

Regarding spirituality and social well-being, Ratnakar and Nair (2012) found that individuals with strong spiritual beliefs may be more likely to engage in activities that foster social support and connection, such as volunteering or joining religious or community groups. It is therefore increasingly acknowledged as a key constituent of social welfare, which is the degree to which individuals feel a sense of community and belongingness with, and support from, others. A study conducted by Kim and Seidlitz (2002) and Roth (2017) found that individuals who exhibited higher levels of spirituality were more inclined to engage in prosocial behaviour, thereby fostering social well-being. These findings highlight the importance of spirituality in promoting social welfare and overall well-being. To optimise individual performance and promote positive affect and life satisfaction,

workplaces and societies must be integrated, through the cultivation of general social structures (Lezar, 2021). Employees can thrive professionally and personally if employers foster an environment that prioritises social cohesion and interconnectedness.

Research design
Research approach

This research study was approached from a positivist stance (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015), which allowed the researchers to objectively investigate the relationship between workplace spirituality and flourishing at work, using a deductive research approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A descriptive cross-sectional explanatory research design (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015; Setia, 2016) was utilised to examine the impact of workplace spirituality on the dimensions of workplace flourishing. This design was deemed appropriate to achieve the aim of the study, namely, to measure the impact of workplace spirituality on workplace flourishing. The research was quantitative, and a survey strategy was used to collect primary data.

Research method
Research respondents

The target population was residents of a town situated in Free State province in South Africa. In substitution for the originally intended random sampling, the impracticability of employing such a method necessitated the utilisation of convenience sampling. The sampling criteria used to draw the sample were working individuals between the ages of 15 and 65 years who had completed Grade 12. Using these sampling criteria ensured that the sample would understand the questions in the questionnaire because it was assumed that they would have fair English language proficiency. The final sample consisted of 394 individuals that met the stated sampling criteria. This sample size was deemed appropriate as recommended by Bartlett et al. (2001).

The final sample comprised 138 males (35%) and 256 females (65%). With regard to age, 131 respondents (33%) were 21 to 30 years old, 125 respondents (32%) were 31 to 40 years old, 80 respondents (20%) were 41 to 50 years old, 33 respondents (9%) were 51 to 60 years old, 17 respondents (4%) were 61 years or older and eight respondents (2%) were 20 years or younger. Regarding work experience, most of the respondents indicated that they had 6 to 10 years of work experience ($n = 198$; 50%), followed by respondents with less than 6 years of work experience ($n = 87$; 22%), followed by respondents with 11 to 15 years of work experience ($n = 67$; 17%), followed by respondents with 16 or more years of work experience ($n = 41$; 10%) and one respondent did not answer the question on work experience.

Measuring instruments

The current study utilised a self-administered questionnaire consisting of three sections to collect data. Section A of the

questionnaire was specifically designed to gather data on demographic variables, which was necessary to describe the sample under investigation. This section comprised five questions, which related to the participants' race, gender, age, years of service with their current organisation and highest academic qualification, respectively. In Section B, flourishing at work was measured. The Flourishing at Work Scale (FAWS), developed by Rautenbach (2015) and validated by Rautenbach and Rothmann (2017), measured flourishing. This section measured the three dimensions of flourishing (i.e. emotional, psychological and social well-being). Section C measured workplace spirituality at the individual, organisational and work unit levels, and the instrument used was adapted from the version of the Spirituality at Work (SAW) questionnaire developed by Ashmos and Duchon (2000). The respondents were asked to choose the most suitable answer from the questions in Sections B and C using a five-point Likert scale.

Research procedure

A pilot study was conducted before the final questionnaire was distributed. The pilot study included 40 participants from the target population who did not form part of the final sample. The objective was to examine the questionnaire for ambiguous, biased or suggestive questions, as well as to establish the minimum time required to complete the questionnaire. In addition, to assess content validity, two HRM experts were consulted to offer their insights on the content of the questionnaire. To ensure face validity, input was requested from the experts. Initial reliability was also measured during the pilot study, utilising Cronbach's alpha coefficients. The alphas ranged from 0.71 to 0.95, which was deemed acceptable to very good initial reliability. After modifying the layout of the questionnaire, informed by suggestions made by the statistician, the final version, with clear subsections, as advised, was administered to the sample.

Ethical considerations

The study was approved by the Faculty Research and Innovation Committee of the Faculty of Management Sciences, Central University of Technology (CUT) (FMSEC31720). The final questionnaires were distributed online using QuestionPro. The online questionnaire was designed using an existing template, and an introductory letter was included. The introductory letter included the name and logo of CUT, the title of the research project, general instructions to participants, and the researchers' contact details. Participants were explicitly informed of the voluntary and anonymous nature of participation in the study, and they were assured of confidentiality and anonymity (Creswell, 2023). A data management plan was developed to ensure that data is kept confidential.

Statistical analysis

The researchers formulated the data analysis plan in consultation with an independent statistician, who conducted the data analysis. The questionnaire responses were exported as a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and analysed using the statistical software program SmartPLS version 3.2.7. To execute the structural equation modelling (SEM), partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was used. PLS-SEM is used when theories are developed or when theoretical frameworks are tested (Hair et al., 2017), as is the case in this study. According to Henseler (2017), variance-based structural equation modelling in PLS-SEM determines construct scores as linear combinations of observed variables, such that a certain criterion of interrelatedness is maximised. This type of statistical software program explains the total variance and uses it to estimate parameters (Hair et al., 2018).

Results

Results of the assessment of the measurement model

PLS-SEM results are assessed in two stages, as recommended by Hair et al. (2018). The measurement model results are assessed in the first stage, and in stage two, the structural model results are assessed. Cronbach's alphas and composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) values were considered to assess the measurement model. The measurement model results for the first-order factors of the measurement model are presented in Table 1.

From the results presented in Table 1, it is evident that all outer loadings were statistically significant and above 0.4. The AVEs of the first-order factors exceeded 0.5. Thus, the measurement model results in Table 1 provided sufficient evidence of internal consistency reliability and convergent validity to proceed with testing the measurement model for the first-order factors for discriminant validity.

Next, the study's measurement model was assessed for the second-order factors by utilising the latent variable scores of the dimensions as indicators. Table 2 depicts the outer loadings for the dimensions of each second-order factor. The results indicate that all the outer loadings were statistically significant. These findings confirm that the measurement model for each second-order factor met internal consistency, reliability and convergent validity criteria.

The discriminant validity of the first-order and the second-order factors was considered. The Fornell–Larcker criterion was used to assess for discriminant validity. For each pair of the first-order and the second-order factors, the correlation between the factors was less than the square root of the AVE of the pair of factors. Therefore, the results presented in this section provide sufficient evidence of internal consistency reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity of the overall measurement model to proceed with testing the structural model.

Results of the assessment of the structural model

The structural model results are presented in Figure 1.

The structural model results were inspected for collinearity before the R^2s, path coefficients and p-values were interpreted.

TABLE 1: Measurement model results for the first-order factors.

Item	Outer loading	*p* (two-tailed)	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
CC1	0.766	0.000	0.864	0.896	0.552
CC2	0.777	0.000	-	-	-
CC3	0.772	0.000	-	-	-
CC4	0.721	0.000	-	-	-
CC5	0.727	0.000	-	-	-
CC6	0.689	0.000	-	-	-
CC7	0.743	0.000	-	-	-
IL1	0.531	0.000	0.698	0.819	0.537
IL2	0.789	0.000	-	-	-
IL3	0.765	0.000	-	-	-
IL4	0.811	0.000	-	-	-
MW1	0.749	0.000	0.777	0.849	0.529
MW2	0.738	0.000	-	-	-
MW3	0.706	0.000	-	-	-
MW4	0.759	0.000	-	-	-
MW5	0.683	0.000	-	-	-
PR1	0.883	0.000	0.680	0.862	0.757
PR2	0.857	0.000	-	-	-
PCOI1	0.746	0.000	0.690	0.829	0.619
PCOI2	0.849	0.000	-	-	-
PCOI3	0.762	0.000	-	-	-
CON1	0.648	0.000	0.684	0.829	0.621
CON2	0.841	0.000	-	-	-
CONT3	0.859	0.000	-	-	-
WUC1	0.449	0.000	0.746	0.832	0.506
WUC2	0.731	0.000	-	-	-
WUC3	0.801	0.000	-	-	-
WUC4	0.789	0.000	-	-	-
WUC5	0.728	0.000	-	-	-
PWUV3	0.862	0.000	0.523	0.806	0.675
PWUV4	0.780	0.000	-	-	-
OV1	0.701	0.000	0.809	0.863	0.511
OV2	0.699	0.000	-	-	-
OV3	0.733	0.000	-	-	-
OV4	0.721	0.000	-	-	-
OV5	0.728	0.000	-	-	-
OV6	0.708	0.000	-	-	-
IO1	0.783	0.000	0.668	0.819	0.601
IO2	0.767	0.000	-	-	-
IO3	0.775	0.000	-	-	-
PA2	0.772	0.000	0.633	0.805	0.582
PA3	0.837	0.000	-	-	-
PA1	0.669	0.000	-	-	-
JS1	0.813	0.000	0.765	0.865	0.681
JS2	0.857	0.000	-	-	-
JS3	0.804	0.000	-	-	-
AUT1	0.769	0.000	0.705	0.836	0.629
AUT2	0.816	0.000	-	-	-
AUT3	0.793	0.000	-	-	-
COMP1	0.843	0.000	0.540	0.813	0.685
COMP2	0.811	0.000	-	-	-
ENG1	0.738	0.000	0.619	0.797	0.567
ENG2	0.768	0.000	-	-	-
ENG3	0.753	0.000	-	-	-
LEARN1	0.848	0.000	0.595	0.832	0.712
LEARN2	0.840	0.000	-	-	
MP1	0.743	0.000	0.648	0.810	0.586
MP2	0.766	0.000	-	-	-
MP3	0.788	0.000	-	-	-
REL1	0.778	0.000	0.680	0.824	0.610
REL2	0.815	0.000	-	-	-

TABLE 1 (Continues...): Measurement model results for the first-order factors.

Item	Outer loading	*p* (two-tailed)	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
REL3	0.749	0.000	-	-	-
SWB1	0.695	0.000	0.790	0.842	0.522
SWB2	0.917	0.000	-	-	-
SWB3	0.724	0.000	-	-	-
SWB4	0.648	0.000	-	-	-
SWB5	0.585	0.000	-	-	-

Note: $p \leq 0.05$.
AVE, average variance extracted; AUT, autonomy; CC, conditions for the community; CR, composite reliability; CON, contemplation; COMP, competence; ENG, engagement; IL, inner life; IO, individual and organisation; JS, job satisfaction; LEARN, learning; MP, meaning and purpose; MW, meaning at work; OV, organisational values; PA, positive affect; PR, personal responsibility; PCOI, positive connections with other individuals; PWUV, positive work unit values; REL, relatedness; SWB, social well-being; WUC, work unit community.

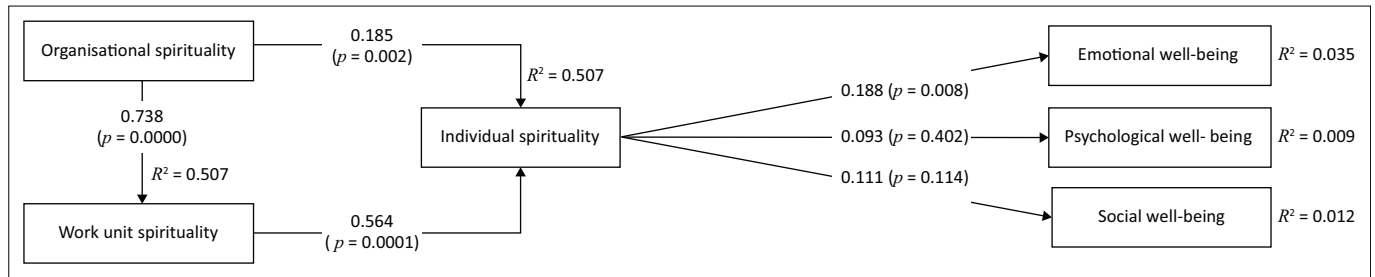**TABLE 2:** Measurement model results: Second-order factors.

Dimension	Construct	Outer loading	*p* (two-tailed)	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
JS	EWB	0.768	0.000	0.470	0.789	0.652
PA	-	0.845	0.000	-	-	-
CC	IS	0.730	0.000	0.859	0.894	0.584
CONTEM	-	0.747	0.000	-	-	-
IL	-	0.802	0.000	-	-	-
MW	-	0.792	0.000	-	-	-
PC	-	0.766	0.000	-	-	-
PR	-	0.747	0.000	-	-	-
IO	OS	0.908	0.000	0.815	0.915	0.843
OV	-	0.929	0.000	-	-	-
AUT	PWB	0.784	0.000	0.874	0.898	0.596
COMP	-	0.833	0.000	-	-	-
ENG	-	0.732	0.005	-	-	-
LEARN	-	0.637	0.038	-	-	-
MP	-	0.831	0.000	-	-	-
REL	-	0.797	0.001	-	-	-
PWUV	WUS	0.899	0.000	0.776	0.899	0.817
WUC	-	0.908	0.000	-	-	-

AVE, average variance extracted; AUT, autonomy; CC, conditions for community; CR, composite reliability; CON, contemplation; COMP, competence; ENG, engagement; EWB, emotional well-being; IO, individual and organisation; IS, individual spirituality; JS, job satisfaction; LEARN, learning; IL, inner life; MP, meaning and purpose; MW, meaning at work; OS, organisational spirituality; OV, organisational value; PA, positive affect; PR, personal responsibility; PCOI, positive connections with other individuals; PWB, psychological well-being; PWUV, positive work unit value; REL, relatedness; WUC, work unit community; WUS, work unit spirituality.

The VIF for organisational spirituality and work unit spirituality was 2.2, which was below the cut-off of 3.0. Thus, collinearity did not threaten the results of the structural model. The structural model showed moderate in-sample predictive accuracy for individual spirituality (R^2 = 50.7%) and work unit spirituality (R^2 = 54.5%). As the only determinant of emotional, psychological and social well-being, individual spirituality explained 3.5%, 0.9%, and 1.2% of the variance in each respective factor. Organisational spirituality strongly influenced work unit spirituality (β = 0.738; *p* = 0.000 [two tailed]), but it exerted a weak influence on individual spirituality (β = 0.185; *p* = 0.002 [two tailed]). Work unit spirituality moderately influenced individual spirituality (β = 0.564; *p* = 0.000 [two tailed]). Individual spirituality statistically significantly influenced only emotional well-being (β = 0.188; *p* = 0.008 [two tailed]).

Discussion

The study aimed to measure the impact of workplace spirituality on workplace flourishing. Firstly, the study examined whether workplace spirituality at an individual

Note: $p \leq 0.05$.

FIGURE 1: Structural model results.

level influences workplace flourishing. The results presented in Figure 1 indicate that individual spirituality had a positive and statistically significant influence on emotional well-being. This finding is consistent with Villani et al.'s (2019) finding that spirituality influences subjective well-being. Similarly, Aglozo et al. (2021) found that spirituality was related to the affective and cognitive dimensions of subjective well-being. Although these studies were not conducted in a work context, the correlation between spirituality and emotional well-being seems to remain the same across different contexts. Based on these findings, one may conclude that more spiritual employees would likely experience increased positive emotions, reduced negative emotions and higher job satisfaction than their less spiritual counterparts.

Secondly, the findings indicate that individual spirituality did not significantly influence psychological well-being. This finding contradicts Bożek et al. (2020) and Kim et al.'s (2019) finding that individual spirituality directly influences psychological well-being. The scholar argues that employees' psychological well-being is greatly influenced by their personal spirituality and that those who exhibit this quality tend to hold positive values and lifestyles. Hassan et al. (2022) conducted a study and reported that individuals with a strong sense of spirituality in the workplace were likely to experience enhanced overall well-being. Their research suggests that workplace spirituality increases an individual's self-esteem and promotes psychological well-being. It is possible that the current study yielded contradictory results because of differences in the research context, as cultural, social and economic factors may significantly influence the outcome. Variations in cultural norms, values, attitudes and workplace practices may cause participants to perceive things differently, thus affecting the findings' generalisability. The non-significant findings could suggest that the relationship between individual spirituality and psychological well-being is not as direct as hypothesised and may require the existence of additional factors, that is, community to have a significant impact.

The findings also indicate that individual spirituality did not significantly influence social well-being. This contradicts the findings of Hassan et al. (2022), who reported that spiritual individuals tended to have their social needs met. Van der Walt and De Klerk (2014) assert that the role of the workplace in fulfilling employees' social needs has been emphasised.

Because of the changing workforce, contemporary employees are now looking to organisations to provide them with community structures that formerly were accessed outside the workplace. Spirituality practised alone may not produce the same social benefits as spirituality practised in the context of a caring community, and it is possible that the current study yielded contradictory results because of differences in the composition of the sample or methodological differences. Further research on the relationship between individual spirituality and social well-being is needed to clarify this relationship. H1 is, therefore, partially accepted.

The secondary objective was to determine whether there is a relationship between individual, organisational and work unit spirituality. The results indicate that organisational spirituality positively and statistically significantly influenced individual spirituality. This finding is consistent with the findings of Asgari et al. (2015), who reported that organisational spirituality directly influenced individual spirituality. The scholars found that organisational spirituality increased the individual spirituality of employees, thus increasing their well-being and productivity. One may therefore argue that if organisations are perceived to be spiritual, it may promote individual spirituality, including dimensions such as meaning in life, a spiritual inner life, contemplation and personal responsibility. This, in turn, could promote well-being and productivity.

The findings also show that organisational spirituality had a strong positive and statistically significant influence on work unit spirituality. This means that when an organisation is perceived to have a solid spiritual culture, for example, meaningful work and connectedness, it increases the spirituality of the work unit or team. This finding confirms Kolodinsky et al.'s (2008) argument that organisational spirituality plays a significant role in fostering a sense of community, ethics and openness to diverse points of view. McClurg (2019) asserts that it is essential for an organisation to have a sense of spirituality and to foster it, as it will spill over and increase the spirituality in the work unit. The scholar states that in a workplace where values shape and develop conventions, individual and team behaviours and attitudes are influenced by those values. From the findings, one may conclude that when the organisation is spiritually inclined, it can foster deep spiritual connectedness, and, consequently, the work unit, or team, will be more spiritual.

The results also found that work unit spirituality had a positive and statistically significant influence on individual spirituality. This finding suggests that when the work unit, or department, in an organisation is spiritual, it is likely to be supportive of spiritual employees, and, as such, the spirituality of individuals in the organisation will increase. Work team or unit outcomes include factors such as harmony in the work team (Li et al., 2014); collaborative and cohesive team behaviour; higher-quality performance (Assbeihat, 2016; Suárez, 2015); the capacity for critical and innovative thinking (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003) without fear of repercussions; and fostering respectful and honest communication, resulting in decisions geared towards the collective benefit of the team. Neal and Bennett (2000) contend that employees connect mentally, emotionally and spiritually to enhance this sense of community within the team, work unit and organisation. Thus, through the work unit level of spirituality, a stronger sense of community among employees could be fostered, as well as unrestrained expression and genuine caring. In addition, when there is cohesion within a team, individuals feel connected to and supported by the work unit, which helps them with their spiritual development. H2 is therefore accepted.

Practical implications

The findings show that workplace spirituality at an individual level impacted emotional well-being. However, employees also need good psychological and social well-being to flourish in the organisation. Organisations should therefore not focus only on emotional, psychological or social well-being while neglecting the other dimensions of flourishing. Lezar (2021) states that employees need psychological, social and emotional well-being to cope and experience flourishing within the organisation. Thus, psychological, emotional and social well-being should be considered holistically.

Because of the benefits that workplace spirituality holds, and the potential risks if it is absent, it seems crucial that organisations give it more consideration. The workplace should give employees a sense of purpose and meaning, so they know that their work is valued, and proper induction and orientation should be carried out when employees join the company, so they are aware of and understand the spiritual values of the organisation. Organisations should also ensure that each job description includes a job purpose, which would outline how the job relates to the organisation's purpose and strategic objectives. It is further recommended that just as organisations do annual research projects, such as engagement surveys, they should do workplace spirituality surveys. Organisations can use the results of these surveys to help create a positive atmosphere and a sense of purpose in the organisation.

Organisations can foster well-being by implementing wellness programmes internally; having managers regularly interact with employees through one-on-one meetings; and ensuring that managers are available as business coaches, or outsourcing business coaching, to support employees. Organisations can also ensure that the employee assistance programme is running so that employees experiencing personal or work-related problems can receive assistance. These wellness initiatives could benefit not only employees' mental well-being but also their physical well-being.

Limitations and recommendations

It is important to recognise the study's limitations. Firstly, a simple random sampling method was intended, but a convenience sampling method was used because of the inability of the participating organisations to provide sampling frames. This approach relied on employees' availability and willingness to participate, resulting in a suitable sample size for data analysis. Additionally, the study was developmental and can serve as a framework for future empirical research. Secondly, it is possible that the inclusion of other factors not considered in this study, such as engagement or ethical leadership when dealing with spirituality for employees to flourish, could potentially contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between workplace spirituality and workplace flourishing in organisations. Another limitation was that only one measure of workplace spirituality and one measure of flourishing were used in the data collection. Although it would have been ideal to include more than one measure for each construct, time constraints and practical considerations prevented using more than one measuring instrument for each construct. There were already 78 questions on the questionnaire, so adding more questions would have burdened the respondents, which could have decreased the response rate. However, the psychometric qualities of the questionnaire were confirmed for the current population. Finally, causality could not be proven because the study adopted a cross-sectional design. Therefore, a longitudinal study should be undertaken if a causal design is adopted.

As mentioned, there is a paucity of empirical research studies focussing on workplace spirituality in South Africa. The study's findings have shown how valuable workplace spirituality is in promoting workplace flourishing. Therefore, further studies should be conducted on workplace spirituality in the South African work context and its relationship to mental health indicators, such as thriving. It is also recommended that more studies be conducted to explore whether workplace spirituality in the South African context could improve engagement and ethical behaviour, which are currently of great concern to many organisational leaders. This would help develop a solid theoretical foundation for studying spirituality in the work context.

Workplace flourishing has not received sufficient attention in empirical studies and has not been thoroughly studied in the context of the South African workplace. Although workplace flourishing is a relatively new concept, further research should consider the social and personal factors that might promote it. Expanding this field of study may help organisations combat the problem of mental illness, which seems to be pervasive in South Africa (Redelinghuys et al., 2019).

Conclusion

The findings show a relationship between organisational spirituality and work unit spirituality, between work unit spirituality and individual spirituality and between individual spirituality and emotional well-being. This implies that organisations should consider introducing workplace spirituality to promote well-being in the work context. This seems necessary if one considers that contemporary employees are concerned with both financial outcomes and finding meaning and purpose in the work context. Although some scholars have emphasised the importance of workplace spirituality, this construct and the construct of flourishing have not received sufficient attention in the work context. It is therefore imperative that research focussing on these constructs continue. Should organisations not pay attention to the intrinsic needs of contemporary employees and continue to implement generic development initiatives, they might lose talented employees who could have contributed significantly to organisational success.

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Authors' contributions

R.N.T., F.v.d.W. and M.P.N. contributed to the design and implementation of the research, the analysis of the results and the writing of the article.

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Data availability

The data that support the findings of this study is available from the corresponding author, F.v.d.W. upon reasonable request.

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