

## Happiness as a Mediator in the Relationship Between Workplace Spirituality and Job Satisfaction Among Nursing Staff

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### Abstract

This paper investigates the mediating role of happiness between dimensions of workplace spirituality and job satisfaction within the context of Pakistan's healthcare sector, particularly among nursing professionals. Three scales were administered by employing a cross-sectional study design to a sample of 412 participants, and the analysis was conducted through Structural Equation Modeling. The result shows a significant mediating role of happiness in the relationship between workplace spirituality dimensions and job satisfaction. Moreover, this mediating role of happiness is partial in all cases. The study's findings emphasize the relevance of applying workplace spirituality concepts to raise nurses' happiness levels and offer insightful information about the relationship between organizational spirituality, happiness, and job satisfaction in the healthcare industry.

**Keywords:** Spirituality, Happiness, Job Satisfaction, Workplace Spirituality, and Health Sector.

### Introduction

People spend the majority of their time at work. Therefore, happiness in the workplace cannot be ignored (Ghayas et al., 2021). Furthermore, some professions are more demanding because the nature of these jobs is important, and negligence in these jobs can result in disasters. The nursing profession is one such profession that is significant in nature, and any failure can result in loss of life (Mello et al., 2020). Furthermore, medical emergencies may occur any time and any day of the week makes this profession more challenging. As a result, night shifts are a common occurrence in this profession (Books et al., 2020). People working in this profession are exposed to life-threatening situations as some diseases are contagious, making this profession a more challenging career choice. During Covid-19, millions of people worldwide have lost their lives. Thousands of paramedics and nursing staff have also lost their lives while performing their duties during the recent COVID-19 crisis, forcing the nursing staff to think about their career choices. Hence, healthcare centers across the globe are in search to find out of ways to keep their nursing staff happy and satisfied. The happiness of nurses is crucial because happiness or unhappiness might impair nurses' ability to treat patients (Ozkara, 2015). Nurses' job responsibilities include looking after sick, weak, wounded, and traumatized patients, and due to the nature of their job, they are prone to experience negative feelings (Bandari et al., 2014; Bandari et al., 2015). In addition, nurses frequently face challenging conditions at work, such as issues relating to patients, long and demanding workdays, low staffing, an old nursing workforce, inefficient policies for nurses, inadequate supervisor support, unfair compensation, unfavorable working conditions, lack of resources for efficient work, few opportunities for advancement in the nursing profession, few opportunities for education, and unstable work environments. These challenging conditions may affect nurses' emotional health and capacity to give care on a daily basis (Ozkara, 2015). Moreover, there is a shortage of healthcare workers with the necessary training in the Pakistani province of Sindh (Hussain et al., 2018). Resolving this shortfall emphasizes how important it is to keep nursing staff happy and engaged. Research indicates that promoting spirituality in the workplace has great potential to improve workers' general well-being. Workplace spirituality is defined as the level of spirit one puts at his job (Kolodinsky, 2008). It is also associated with job satisfaction. and it helps employees deal with day-to-day challenges in a better way. As a result, it leads to more happiness. Happiness boosts motivation and loyalty, which improves organizational performance (Daniels & Harris, 2000), eventually resulting in more happiness at the job.

Numerous research studies have looked into the various facets of workplace spirituality and how it affects different factors. Although research has been done on health industry professionals in the Pakistani context (Hussain & Hussain, 2020). None of the study investigated the association between workplace spirituality and happiness at work in the healthcare setting. This study is an attempt to close the gap in the existing literature by identifying the relationship between workplace spirituality, job satisfaction, and happiness at work and focusing on exploring the mediating effect of happiness between workplace spirituality and job satisfaction.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Workplace Spirituality***

Spirituality is vital in one's life. (O'Brien, 2001). Workplace spirituality is about corporate ideals. These ideals enable the employees to experience transcendence and are usually mirrored in the organizational culture. These ideals help employees discover meaning in the workplace and provide them with a sense of fulfillment and purpose (Amin et al., 2021). Hence, organizations that believe in providing such an environment where employees can discover the ultimate purpose of their lives can be considered organizations that are conscious about workplace spirituality (Fagley & Adler, 2012). This fosters a positive working environment in which employees show willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty. Consequently, employees feel that they should reciprocate the gesture by trying their best to achieve the organizational goals.

### ***Dimensions of Workplace Spirituality***

Researchers have explored workplace spirituality dimensions (Hussain & Hussain, 2020; Ghayas & Bhutto, 2020; Pradhan et al., 2017), and it has four dimensions: alignment of values, compassion, meaningful work, and spiritual connectedness. Alignment of values can be defined in terms of compatibility between an employee and the values of their organization (Milliman et al., 2003). Employees can associate with the organization better if their values are compatible with their organization (Amin et al., 2021; Zaidi et al., 2019). On the other hand, compassion is about the sense of community at work (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). It is an active form of trying to relieve the suffering of others. The third dimension is meaningful work. It suggests that people want to see the meaningfulness in their work (Kinjerski & Skrypnik, 2004) because if people believe they are doing something meaningful, it gives them a sense of pride. Lastly, spiritual connectedness talks about the sense of connectedness with the organization.

### ***Happiness***

Growing, prospering, or flourishing and leaving this world in good shape are the definitions of happiness (Fredrickson & Losada 2005). According to certain data, most people's happiness is both internal and universal, and it even seems to be influenced by their mental state. Employee happiness is the most essential thing at work, and improving emotional well-being is a crucial component of raising total productivity. People who are happy show interest in what they do. These initiatives have frequently been a part of a lifetime quest to increase contentment. Additionally, contentment is a prerequisite for productive work from employees. Employee happiness is positively correlated with productivity (DiMaria et al., 2020).

### ***Job Satisfaction***

It is the degree to which people are happy with and like their jobs. Job satisfaction is important because people spend more time at work than at any other activity. Hence, its importance for the employees can be recognized as it constitutes satisfaction with a significant portion of their lives. Furthermore, organizations also reap the benefits if their employees are happy and satisfied. Job satisfaction increases organizational commitment (Ghayas, 2015). Moreover, it also enhances employee commitment (Vandenberghe, 2011) and employee performance (Ghayas & Abbas, 2021) and reduces turnover intention (Abbas & Iqbal, 2020). Hence, job satisfaction is crucial for organizations across the world.

### ***Workplace Spirituality and Happiness***

Workplace Spirituality and emotions are linked together. Hence, workplace spirituality is essential in determining the emotions at the workplace (Shaheen & Ghayas, 2022). Furthermore, the absence of spirituality in the workplace can result in negative emotions. Therefore, it is logical to use the concept of workplace spirituality rather than trying to subtract emotions from the workplace. This use of workplace spirituality may bring positive emotions to work. Hence, it will enhance happiness in the workplace. For this purpose, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H1: Dimensions of workplace spirituality increase happiness.

### ***Workplace Spirituality and Job Satisfaction***

People usually want others to care about them; they expect others to realize their feelings and want others to understand their opinions. Hence, people feel good in the company of those who understand them and have similar values, which helps people fulfill their spiritual needs and to fulfill these needs at the workplace is also essential as it provides inner satisfaction to the employees. Hence, spirituality in the workplace is linked to job satisfaction (Ghayas et al., 2022; Ghayas & Bhutto, 2020; Ghayas et al., 2023). Consequently, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H2: Dimensions of workplace spirituality increase job satisfaction.

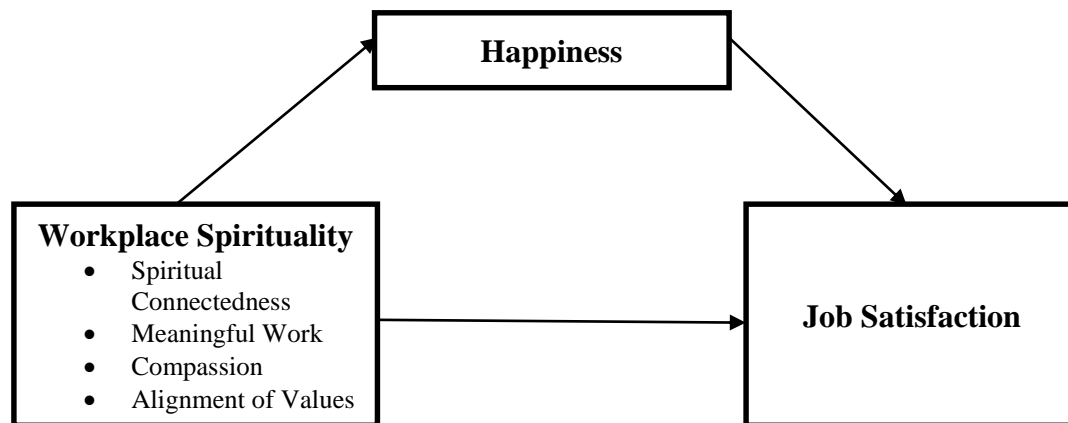
### **Workplace Spirituality, Happiness, and Job Satisfaction**

Emotions can neither be eliminated from the workplace nor their influence on work outcomes. Therefore, many people have started to think that instead of focusing on eliminating emotions, managers should try to see emotions unconventionally and use emotions for the betterment of the organization. Furthermore, workplace spirituality can result in positive emotions such as happiness. Moreover, happiness at work also reduces adverse work outcomes (Shaheen & Ghayas, 2022) and can increase positive outcomes. Therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed:

*H3: Happiness mediates the relationship between dimensions of workplace spirituality and job satisfaction.*

**Figure 1.**

*Conceptual Model*



### **Methods**

#### **Study Design and Sample**

The current study was a cross-sectional quantitative study and data were collected through three instruments at three different points in time from nurses working in different hospitals in Karachi. These hospitals include Saifi Hospital, Liaquat National Hospital, Rahim Hospital, National Medical Center, Ziauddin Hospital etc. Initially, 600 Participants were contacted to fill out the questionnaire, but only 412 completed the questionnaires.

#### **Sampling Technique**

It takes time to understand the nature of the organization and the prevalent situation of workplace spirituality in the organizations which ultimately results in happiness and satisfaction. Therefore, it would not have made sense to randomly collect data from the employees working in the organization. As a result, data were gathered exclusively from personnel who had been with the organization for at least six months. The purpose of doing this was to ensure that only those respondents are chosen who have some knowledge of the organization's workplace spirituality condition. Hence, a purposive sampling technique was used.

#### **Data Collection Instrument**

Various researchers (Koenig, 2012) have discussed the ways of measuring workplace spirituality. Three instruments were adapted in the study. The first instrument was to measure workplace spirituality (Pradhan et al., 2017). The second instrument was adapted from Doherty (1997) and used for measuring happiness. The third instrument was adapted from Agho et al. (1992) and used to measure job satisfaction.

#### **Statistical Analysis**

Data was analyzed through confirmatory Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Modeling and the CFA and structural models were developed through AMOS software.

**Table 1.**  
*SFL, CR, Alpha and AVE*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>SFL</b>	<b>CR</b>	<b>Cronbach Alpha</b>	<b>AVE</b>
<b>Spiritual Connectedness</b>		0.943	0.940	0.623
SC1	0.711			
SC2	0.728			
SC3	0.821			
SC4	0.865			
SC5	0.868			
SC6	0.765			
SC8	0.718			
SC9	0.794			
SC11	0.846			
SC12	0.753			
<b>Compassion</b>		0.883	0.882	0.654
Com1	0.814			
Com2	0.892			
Com3	0.795			
Com4	0.725			
<b>Meaningful Work</b>		0.934	0.932	0.639
MW1	0.884			
MW2	0.777			
MW3	0.761			
MW4	0.829			
MW5	0.758			
MW6	0.845			
MW7	0.748			
MW8	0.784			
<b>Alignment of Values</b>		0.917	0.915	0.650
AOV1	0.825			
AOV2	0.762			
AOV3	0.874			
AOV4	0.901			
AOV5	0.712			
AOV6	0.745			
<b>Happiness</b>		0.820	0.819	0.604
Hap1	0.855			
Hap2	0.714			
Hap3	0.756			
<b>Job Satisfaction</b>		0.933	0.931	0.699
JS1	0.759			
JS2	0.872			
JS3	0.874			
JS4	0.794			
JS5	0.798			
JS6	0.908			

\* SFL = Standardized Factor Loadings, CR = Composite Reliability and AVE = Average Variance Extracted

The above table presents the values of Standardized Factor Loadings (SFL), the Composite Reliability (CR) and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Since the SFL of all the items are greater than 0.7, therefore, there are no issues pertaining to factor loadings. On the other hand, since the cronbach alfa and composite reliability values of all the factors are also above 0.7 threshold, therefore, it is suggested that there are no issues pertaining to the cronbach alpha and composite reliabilities as well. Furthermore, the very fact that the AVE values are greater than 0.5 and their corresponding composite reliability values are greater than AVE values, this establishes the convergent validity of the variables used in the study.

**Table 2.**  
*Discriminant Validity*

Construct Items	SC	Com	MW	AOV	Hap	JS
SC	<b>0.789*</b>					
Com	0.251	<b>0.808*</b>				
MW	0.456	0.401	<b>0.799*</b>			
AOV	0.325	0.428	0.324	<b>0.806*</b>		
Hap	0.524	0.512	0.499	0.524	<b>0.777*</b>	
JS	0.548	0.501	0.532	0.516	0.509	<b>0.836*</b>

Note: \* Square Root of AVE as a criterion

Table 2 is used to measure the discriminant validity of the instrument. In this regard, it should be noted that since the square root of AVE which is used as the criterion in this study is greater than the correlation of that factor with the other factors, therefore, there are no issues pertaining the to discriminant validity.

**Table 3.**  
*Structural Modeling*

Model	Independent Variables	Mediator	Dependent Variable	Effect of IV on Mediator	Direct Effect (c)	Indirect Effect (ab)	Total Effect(c' )	Degree of Mediation
SEM	Spiritual Connectedness	Happiness	Job Satisfaction	0.135*	0.425*	0.065*	0.490*	Partial
	Compassion			0.145*	0.411*	0.045*	0.456*	Partial
	Meaningful Work			0.152*	0.352*	0.029*	0.381*	Partial
	Alignment of Values			0.162*	0.288*	0.076*	0.364*	Partial

Note: \* Represent significant relationship

There was a total of 412 respondents. Of these respondents, 328 were females, and 84 were males. Hence, most (79.6%) of the respondents were females. Regarding the educational background of these respondents, 347 had a bachelor's degree (84.2%), whereas only 65 had a Master's degree. The average age of the candidates was 31.8 years. CFA was used twice in this research. In the CFA's first attempt, two items of spiritual connectedness had factor loadings lower than 0.7. Therefore, these items were removed, and the CFA was applied again. The model fit indices for the second CFA model suggest that the CMIN/df value is 1.89, which is less than the maximum threshold. Furthermore, the CFI value was 0.94, and the RMSEA value was 0.061, which indicates a good model fit. In Table 1, Cronbach alpha values are greater than 0.7, indicating that variables are reliable. Moreover, CR values are greater than AVE and are above 0.7 thresholds; whereas AVE values are greater than 0.5, this establishes the convergent validity. Moreover, the square roots of AVE (table 2) are greater than the correlation of the variable with other variables. This establishes discriminant validity. The Structural Equation Model suggest that the CMIN/df value is 1.96, which is less than the maximum threshold. Furthermore, the CFI value was 0.92, and the RMSEA value was 0.069, also indicates a good model fit. Table 3 indicates that all four dimensions of workplace spirituality are linked with happiness, and their relationship with it is significant. Moreover, these dimensions of spirituality also have a significant relationship with job satisfaction, whereas, apart from

the values in the table 3, the value of  $\beta$  coefficient in the relationship between happiness and job satisfaction is 0.102, and its significant value was 0.03, indicating that this relationship is also significant.

Furthermore, all these dimensions of spirituality indirectly affect job satisfaction through happiness, and these indirect effects were also significant, indicating the presence of mediation. Additionally, after adding a mediating variable in the model, the direct effect of all dimensions of spirituality has remained significant, indicating that these mediations were partial.

### **Discussion**

This study examined the relationship between workplace spirituality, happiness, and job satisfaction. All the hypotheses of the study have been proved. Caring for others is seen as a noble profession, and saving lives is a matter of pride for medical professionals and this makes them feel happy and fulfilled. The results show a positive relationship between workplace spirituality, happiness, and job satisfaction. Although, the present research is one of the studies in a series of studies that seek to explain the concept of workplace spirituality (Hussain & Hussain, 2020; Pradhan et al., 2017; Milliman et al., 2003; Vandenberghe, 2011; Rego & Cunha 2008; Mónico & Margaca 2021; Saeed et al., 2022; Iqbal et al., 2021). However, this is the first such study among the nursing employees of Karachi. The study revealed that spirituality in the workplace is linked to happiness. This is in agreement with previous studies (Shaheen & Ghayas, 2022). Furthermore, the study also indicates that spirituality is linked with job satisfaction; this is also in alignment with previous studies (Ghayas et al., 2022; Zaidi et al., 2019). Furthermore, it is also found that happiness plays a mediating role between workplace spirituality and job satisfaction. This is similar to previous studies that suggest that happiness plays a vital role in spirituality and work outcomes (Ule et al., 2020; Baskar & Indradevi, 2020). This study has a few limitations as it didn't cater the gender differences, and the research is limited to the nursing staff of Pakistan only; hence, for the greater generalizability, it can be replicated in other countries. Furthermore, future researchers should check the moderating role of perceived alternative employment opportunities in the relationship between spirituality and happiness.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of the current study emphasized the importance of workplace spirituality in the healthcare industry. Results of this study indicate all the dimensions of workplace spirituality not only increase happiness but also improve job satisfaction. Hence, it is concluded that spirituality is important in keeping the nursing staff happy and satisfied. To maintain the contentment and happiness of nursing staff, the healthcare industry should encourage spiritual practices like mindfulness, yoga, and gratitude exercises for hospital workers. Therefore, it is advised that the healthcare industry take the necessary steps to enhance the psychological and emotional health of nurses.

### **Recommendations**

Happiness is important and cannot be ignored at the workplace, therefore, it is suggested that managers in the hospitals must remain vigilant about the happiness of the nurses to make sure that they remain satisfied with their jobs. Further, applying the principles of workplace spirituality can help enhance the level of happiness among the nurses which may lead to greater levels of job satisfaction.

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