Full Length Research Paper

Spirituality in the workplace: Awareness of the human resources function

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This study explores whether a link exists between employees' personal/spiritual values and the values of the company where the research was undertaken. It further determines whether employees view themselves as spiritual and whether they integrate their personal/spiritual values at work. At the time of the research, the population consisted of approximately 1388 employees. A representative sample size consisting of 139 employees responded to the questionnaire. Responses were analysed using the SPSS statistical analysis program. The main results indicated that a link exists between employees' personal/spiritual values and the company values. Further, the results indicated that employees viewed themselves as spiritual and strive to integrate their spiritual values at work.

Key words: Spiritual values, spiritual integration, company values, awareness, human resources.

INTRODUCTION

For a long time, the spiritual component has been ignored by companies (Lund, 2004: 15), possibly out of fear that the workplace will be turned into a religious war-zone. However, spirituality has made its mark in the glo-bal business world and the time has come for companies to start engaging their employees spiritually by giving attention to the concept of bringing the person wholly to work.

Key focus of the study

The key focus of the study is to establish a link between employees' personal/spiritual values and the company's values by way of how these values are portrayed in the company where the research was undertaken. The value system of a company is an important tool for steering the actions and behaviour of employees in the direction of its mission and purpose. Therefore, it is important for an attempt to be made by companies to align their employee's

values with that of the company in order to avoid misalignment which may affect the company's overall success (Branson, 2008: 377). The study further focuses on whether employees view themselves as spiritual and whether they integrate their spiritual values at work (Marques, 2005b: 150). For the researcher to make the assumption that employees view themselves as spiritual, a common understanding of what spirituality means or a framework is required as it could be different for each person. As it was determined from the literature research, the concept of spirituality is complex to define (Niederman, 1999: 4); therefore, a framework is necessary and this can be used as a guide in this research.

Background of the study

Employee misbehaviour could create a misalignment to the company's values which could jeopardise the company's success (Branson, 2008: 377). As observed in the company that was researched, the work environment could become fertile with elements such as materialism, competition, distrust, insecurity, suspicion, corruption and dishonesty which are contrary to the company's values. Due to the observation made by the researcher, it gave

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rise to the research focus of whether a link exists between the values of the employees and the company's values, that is, whether the company's values are portrayed as it appeared to be misaligned. In the opinion of the researcher, the negative elements mentioned which could be present in the company may be caused by human beings' tendency towards selfishness and greediness. If these elements are present, it could create a scenario where members of one team could become each other's rivals (Marques, 2005b: 149). This could then create a misalignment to the company's values and expectations. Employees, finding themselves in such situations, then have to deal with the added stresses of a troubled work environment, the job itself, as well as their personal life challenges. If one considers that employees spend most of their time at work (Lund, 2004: 15), such conditions could become toxic to their emotional, physical and spiritual health and wellbeing.

TRENDS FROM THE RESEARCH LITERATURE

Spirituality is a multifaceted and very personal construct, given the various definitions found in literature. Niederman (1999: 4), who reviewed a vast number of definitions by previous researchers, stated "the review of the literature did not offer a consensus on the definition of spirituality". Due to this reality, the definitions that exist for spirituality could, each time, bring a new perspective to the construct which present challenges with measuring the construct. Much has been commented, and challenging questions have been raised by researchers about appropriate methods and measures to the research with such an "ineffable" concept as spirituality (Benefiel, 2003: 367; Fornaciari and McGee, 2003: 380; Neal and Biberman, 2003: 364; Lund, 2004: 16). Therefore, in an attempt to narrow down the literature research and make the concept measurable, the work of researchers with similar perspectives on spirituality was examined in order to find a common understanding of the concept. Four elements of similarity were identified and used as a framework in order to define spirituality for empirical purposes.

Framework for defining spirituality

Although various definitions exist on the concept of spirituality (Krishnakumar and Neck, 2002: 153), the research literature shows similarity in respect to four elements of the concept which could be summarised that, spirituality is an inner experience by the individual who, through connection with others and a higher power, finds meaning and purpose in life. The four elements are thus shown:

The first element of spirituality denotes that spirituality originates in the inside of an individual as described by

Krishnakumar and Neck (2002: 153). In agreement with this viewpoint, Turner (1999: 41) also sees spirituality as that which comes from within, beyond the survival instincts of the mind. Similarly, Guillory (2000: 33) confirms that whatever is spiritual comes from within, that is, beyond our programmed beliefs and values, and further defines spirituality as "our inner consciousness".

The second element, as noted by Kale and Shrivastava (2003: 310), deals with a "connectedness" which they state is contained in the majority of definitions of spirituality. Krishnakumar and Neck (2002: 156) agree that spirituality is that inexplicable feeling of connectedness with others and the universe. In support of this viewpoint, Zumeta (1993: 26) defines spirituality as "… an awareness of the connectedness of all things … when people are fully in a spiritual place, they feel connected with themselves, clients, student, their town, state, country, planet and the universe …".

A third element arising as seen in the work of Ashmos and Duchon (2000: 137) and Mitroff and Denton (1999) is the notion of "meaning and purpose". Milliman et al. (2003: 429) noted that being involved with a work that gives meaning and purpose to employees is foundational to spirituality in the workplace. Zohar and Marshall (2000) further stated in their book titled "Spiritual intelligence (SQ): The ultimate intelligence", that human beings are driven and defined by a specific longing to find meaning and value in what they do and experience. In agreement, Graber (2001: 40) states "… spirituality implies an inner search for meaning or fulfilment… ". The fourth element highlights spirituality as a connection with a "higher power" or the "beyond" as noted by Kale and Shrivastava (2003: 311). The researchers mention that although these terms seem subjective, it remains essential in defining spirituality. Niederman (1999: 13) concurs to the fact that a relationship with an 'ultimate other' (or reality) is found in various descriptions of spirituality. Green (1987: 903) frankly remarks "spirituality … is striving for the presence of God and the fashioning of a life of holiness appropriate for such striving …".

Through the review of literature, although limited, the four elements highlighted may bring about some understanding and provide clarity amongst the myriad definitions found on spirituality. It is noted that these elements are not the only similarities that exist in literature; however, the framework of defining spirituality in this way supported the research focus of whether employees viewed themselves as spiritual or not.

Integrating and aligning values

While the exercise of finding a common understanding for the definition of spirituality revealed the four elements, the concept of spirituality in the workplace and its link to values also need to be explored. It was found that the definitions of spirituality in the workplace often included a link to values. This is evident in the definition as summarized

by Milliman et al. (2003: 427) that spirituality in the workplace involves … consistency (or alignment) between one's core beliefs and the values of their organization. Weston (2002: 28) further notes that spirituality in the workplace is often expressed in the broadest sense as organizational and personal aspirations and goals, values and ethics …, whereas Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003: 7) subsequently confirm its connection to values by stating that spirituality in the workplace at the individual level refers to a personal set of values and at the organisational level, it is a framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture of the organisation. Marques (2005b: 149) notes that employees have a "growing desire to merge their personal and professional values, viewing their career as an avenue to express themselves ...". It seems evident that a person's value system is predominant in defining who they are as a person (Udovičič and Mulej, 2006: 994). It is assumed that the employee coming to the workplace would bring a unique set of personal/spiritual values and attempt to integrate those in the workplace as a manifestation of himself. For companies to make an attempt to align the values of the employees and the company in order to achieve future success (Branson, 2008: 377), it becomes important to have an understanding of the personal/spiritual values of the employee and then attempt such alignment. Marques (2005a: 27) notes that the spiritual perspective is already causing a shift in workplace values. Branson (2008: 381) further attests to it that "positive employee attitudes such as organisational commitment and job satisfaction" are derived from aligned values. This research literature supported the research focus of whether employees integrate their personal/spiritual values at work or not.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this research is to investigate whether or not a relationship exists between the values of employees and the company values by way of how the company values are portrayed. Subsequent to the main objective, the second objective is to determine whether employees view themselves as spiritual and whether they strive to integrate their personal/spiritual values at work. If a positive relationship can be established between the employees' personal/spiritual and the company values, then an application in the workplace could be made so that companies could attempt to raise awareness on spirituality in the workplace. This attempt should be supported by the company's Human Resources (HR) Department as a function that deals mainly with the people's aspect of the business (Marques, 2005a: 28).

Potential added-value of the study

Companies constantly seek to engage the hearts and minds

minds of its employees. Many companies make a concerted effort to find a way of enabling their employees connect to their vision and values, policies and procedures, and their mission and goals (Branson, 2008: 381). Employers strive to make sure that their employees are committed to the bottom line and do come to work with enthusiasm to give their best each day. However, in many cases, the opposite is true that many employees come to work for their own interest and do not always have the company's interest at heart. Often, it is found that there is a difference between the expectations from the employer and the needs of the employee.

By allowing employees to integrate their personal/spiritual values in the workplace and by attempting to align those values with the company's values, both parties may learn to move beyond themselves and aspire for greater things that could give meaning and purpose to the lives of all at work. Companies that create this bigger picture view can assist employees to move beyond self-interest to a higher knowledge that their deeds are purposeful. This approach could significantly aid the overall success of the organisation (Branson, 2008: 82). Furthermore, this research could also contribute towards establishing whether or not there is a misalignment between the employee and the company values. This may give rise to strategic interventions in order to achieve a closer alignment of these values. The HR Department can play a key role in assisting management to create strategies and interventions that encompass spirituality in order to create a culture that is geared towards the successful achievement of both company and personal goals. Marques (2005a: 28) attests that one of the new perspectives for HR strategies is the implementation of spirituality in the workplace. These strategies may benefit the whole company and may assist HR professionals to gain strategic ground.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research approach

The objective approach of the quantitative and empirical research was adopted. Heaton et al. (2004: 65) stated that researching spirituality in organisations can be understood in terms of two complementary approaches: subjective and objective … in which the objective methods consist of conducting a research in which spirituality in organisations is the object of the quantitative or qualitative research. The study was aimed at establishing a link between the personal/spiritual values of the employees and the company's values, and whether or not, employees view themselves as spiritual and whether they integrate their spiritual values at work. A limitation of the quantitative approach of this research could be that it greatly reduces the richness of the concept of spirituality considering that it is viewed as indefinable (Lips-Wiersma, 2003). A subsequent limitation could be attempted to measure such a concept by means of quantitative measures.

Research method

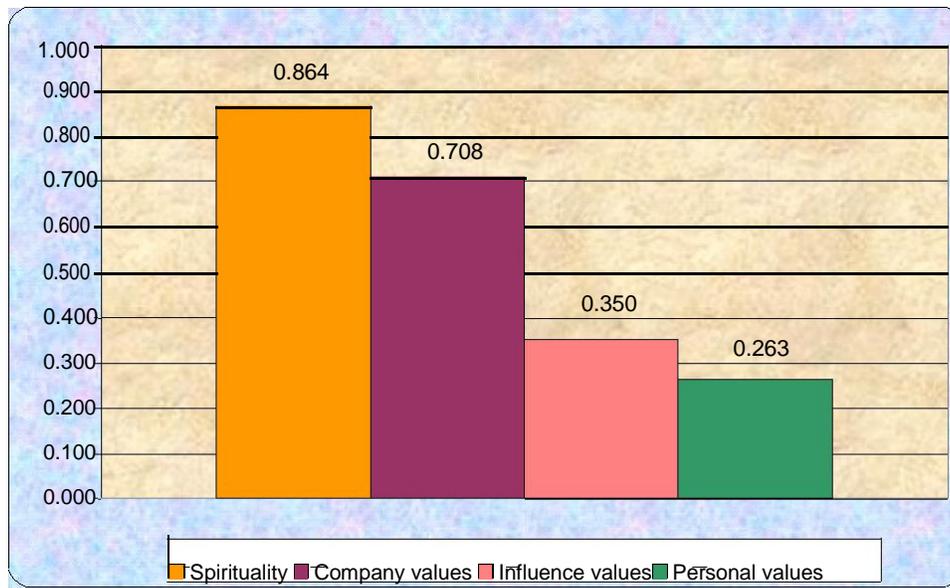A literature study was undertaken to highlight the key concepts of

Figure 1. Cronbach's α for measuring instrument.

spirituality and the integration of spiritual values at work. As stated, due to the vast number of definitions found in literature on the concept of spirituality, the researcher found a common understanding of the concept by reviewing the work of researchers who shared a similar perspective on certain elements of spirituality. These elements were then used as a framework to define spirituality for empirical purposes (Alam et al., 2010). Furthermore, an empirical study was undertaken to determine the main objective of whether a link exists between the personal/spiritual values of employees and the company values (Alam, 2009). A questionnaire was developed with the aim of addressing these research object-tives. The questionnaire was distributed electronically via e-mail to all secretaries employed in the company. This approach was convenient for the researcher who is employed at the company, although the distribution list of the secretaries was already set up on the company system. The secretaries, in turn, have set distribution lists of all employees in their respective departments and groups and could forward the questionnaire to their distribution lists. This was a convenient way of ensuring that the questionnaire would be disseminated widely enough to obtain the required sam-ple size. A computer print-out of the e-mail properties list was used by the researcher to determine how many secretaries forwarded the questionnaire.

Research participants

The population consists of all permanently employed employees of the Western Cape unit of the company that was researched. At the time of the research, during the period of June to August 2008, the population consisted of approximately 1388 permanent employees. The levels of employees range from blue collar to white collar workers. The population is diverse in terms of gender: male (75%) and female (25%); and race groups: black (22%), coloured (48%), white (27%) and Asian (4%). The population consists of 82% at the employee level and 19% at the management level. The religion or faith of the majority of the population is uncertain as these statistics were not available.

The Western Cape unit of the company that was researched plays an integral role in the economy of South Africa as a country,

and so, employees are required to be committed to the achieve-ment of the company's goals. This commitment is entrenched in its values of excellence, innovation, customer satisfaction, integrity and accountability. A convenient sampling technique was employed to obtain the required sample size of the total population. The number of participants that responded to the research question-naire consisted of a total of 191 employees with eight responses from contract employees. Since the research was aimed at perma-nent employees, the contract employee responses were removed. Therefore, the participants that responded to the research consisted of a total of 183 employees.

Measuring instrument

The questionnaire used in this study was divided into five sections. The internal consistency of the measuring instrument was tested using the Cronbach's (1951) coefficient. Rubin and Babbie (1997: 177) stated that the most common and powerful method used today for calculating internal consistency reliability is coefficient alpha. In relation, Spearman's rank-order (p-value) was also used to measure the significance of the relationship between the categories (Welman and Kruger, 2001). The reliability of the scales for spirituality and values were tested by using the coefficient alpha. Niederman (1999: 22) quotes "a rule of thumb is that alpha should be at least 0.70 for a scale to demonstrate internal consistency".

The first section of the questionnaire started with 11 items on whether employees viewed themselves as spiritual or not. Res-pondents were asked to answer questions relating to the definition of spirituality, for example "I believe in a higher power" and "I seek meaning and purpose in the workplace". The second section contained 22 items which asked whether the values are portrayed in the company or not. Questions pertaining to both positive and negative behaviours were asked to bring out both sides of the values spectrum, for example, within the organisation, the following behaviours have been seen: "Delivering on promises made" and "lying by employees". As shown in Figure 1, the results indicated internal consistency of these scales with an alpha of 0.864 for the spirituality scale and an alpha of 0.708 for the company values scale.

Table 1. Demographics of the sample.

Race	Percentage	Religion	Percentage	Gender	Percentage	Level	Percentage
Coloured	40.8	Christian	86	Male	57.7	Employee	77.5
White	36.1	Muslim	6.9	Female	39	Management	18.7
African	15.4	Other	3.5	None specified	3.3	None specified	3.8
Asian	4.1	None specified	3.5				
None specified	3.6						

The third section of the questionnaire comprised a 6-item scale to test whether employees' values are in line with the company value, for example "my personal values are different from the organisations' values" and "I understand what is expected of me to portray the organisations' values". The score of this 6-item scale however resulted in a low alpha of 0.350. A possible reason for the low internal consistency could lie in the incorrect grouping of these items and a lack of conducting a confirmatory factor analysis test. The fourth section contained an open-ended question on whether or not employees believe the integration of their spiritual values which is important to them. They had to list three values that they believe could make the largest contribution in the workplace. However, the score for the 3-item scale on personal values of employees also resulted in a low α of 0.263. A possible reason for the low internal consistency could be the difference in responses to the open-ended questions where respondents had to list three personal values. The questionnaire was concluded with the fifth section requesting only the necessary biographical data such as gender, race, religion and job level.

A five-point Likert scale questionnaire was used with the following responses: strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, undecided = 3, agree = 4 and strongly agree = 5. Clear instructions, with examples, were provided to respondents on how to complete the questionnaire in respect to the aforementioned scales. Respondents were assured that their responses will remain confidential. The questionnaire was typed in MS Excel and fitted into one page for convenience.

Research procedure

Employees were given the choice to return the completed questionnaires via internal post (preferred method by the researcher) or via e-mail (for convenience purposes of the respondent). Each of the completed questionnaires was numbered on return for easy reference. All data were coded by assigning code values to each: nominal (for example, to distinguish between genders) and interval (for example, to distinguish the degree of agreeableness).

The open-ended question inputs on personal values of employees were coded and clustered by the researcher, firstly according to the degree that the value was explicitly named by the respondent (for example, honesty). Secondly, the remaining inputs were clustered according to commonality, and themes were assigned to each cluster by the researcher (for example, empathy). Thirdly, inputs that could not be grouped as a fit with the existing clusters were grouped as "other". All responses were com-piled into a comprehensive data sheet reflecting the appropriate codes assigned to each value.

Statistical analyses

The data sheet with the coded responses was mailed to the statistician who used the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) statistical analysis program to analyse the data.

RESULTS

Demographics of the sample

A summary of the demographic results of the sample that responded to the questionnaire are presented in Table 1. The sample that responded, consist of diverse race groups such as Black, Coloured, White and Asian. Participants had different religious backgrounds such as Christian, Muslim, Atheist, Hindu, Ushembe, Divine and Bantu religions. Both male and female participants responded from both employee and management levels.

Employees' spirituality

The results displayed in Table 2 determined whether employees viewed themselves as spiritual or not. According to the responses, the majority of employees viewed themselves as spiritual in relation to the four elements of similarity as per the definition that spirituality is an "inner experience" for the individual with feelings of "connection" to others and a "higher power" which gives "meaning and purpose" to life.

Link between company values and personal/spiritual values of the employees

The results displayed in Figure 2 indicated whether or not there was a link between the company values and the personal/spiritual values of the employees, and as such, it indicated the extent to which the company values were portrayed. The earlier results indicated that a majority of respondents believed that the company values of customer satisfaction, excellence, innovation and accountability were portrayed. However, as indicated, respondents felt that the value of integrity is not fully portrayed in the company. The reason for this finding may probably be understood in light of Table 3 which depicts the negative behaviours observed in the company. The earlier results determined that a majority of these behaviours were evident in the company, though a significant percentage of participants remained undecided.

Table 2. Spirituality of the employees.

|	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Undecided (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)
Inner experience					
I find strength in my faith or spiritual beliefs	2.7	3.3	8.2	29.7	56.0
I believe there is a spiritual part of me that will exist forever	4.4	3.3	9.9	28.6	53.8
Connection					
I feel connected to other people in the workplace	3.3	8.8	20.4	50.8	16.6
It is important for me to feel a sense of connection with the world	5.0	7.8	16.1	48.3	22.8
I feel connected to a higher power	5.0	4.4	6.7	27.8	56.1
Meaning and purpose					
My life lacks meaning and purpose	53.9	28.9	8.9	6.1	2.2
I seek meaning and purpose in the workplace	10.0	13.9	13.9	45.6	16.7
Higher power					
I believe there is a connection between my spirit and the higher power	2.8	2.8	8.3	32.6	53.6
I believe in a higher power	2.2	2.7	4.4	24.2	66.5
I do activities in order to connect with a higher power	4.4	8.2	10.4	36.3	40.7
It is important for me to receive guidance from a higher power	5.0	5.0	8.8	33.7	47.5
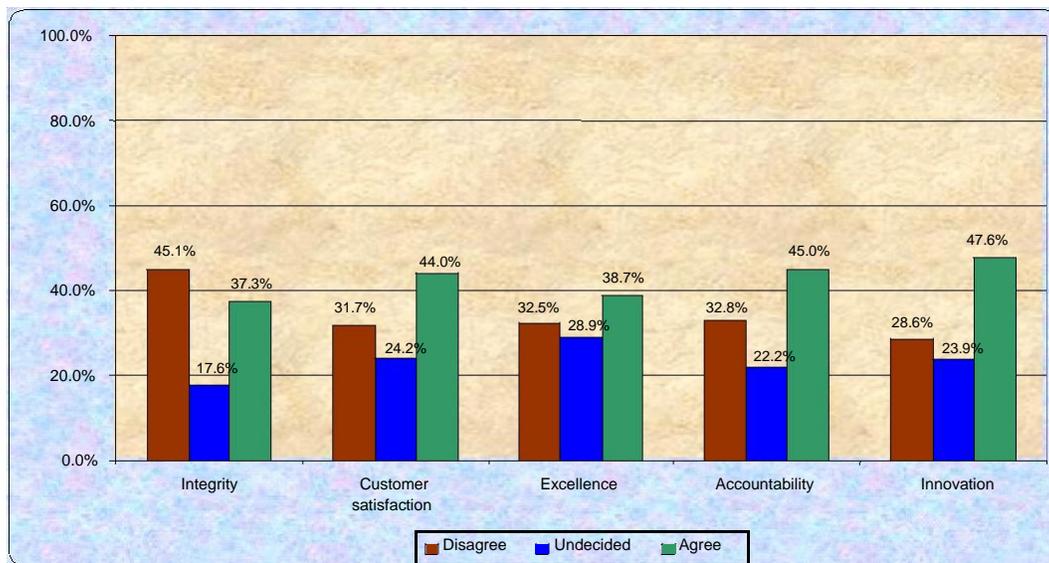
Figure 2. Link between the company and the personal/spiritual values of the employees.

Integrating and aligning spiritual values of employees

The following results in Table 4 indicate whether or not employees strive to integrate their spiritual values at work, and it indicated that employees bring their spiritual values to work. They also reported an alignment between their values and that of the company.

Personal/spiritual values of employees

The results in Figure 3 indicate the personal or spiritual values explicitly mentioned by employees. The results displayed that the personal/spiritual values of employees consisted of the following: Honesty, respect, integrity, equality, openness, work ethic and empathy. The results that could not be clustered with one of these values due

Table 3. Negative behaviours observed in the company.

	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Undecided (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)
Micro-management	5.2	8.6	33.3	42.0	10.9
Failure to give credit	7.2	18.9	20.6	40.0	13.3
Hidden agendas	7.2	16.7	23.9	40.6	11.7
Dictatorial management	6.2	21.6	19.9	37.5	14.8
Lack of accountability	7.7	21.4	16.5	41.8	12.6
Unequal treatment of employees	7.8	15.6	15.0	40.6	21.1
Lying by employees	8.3	22.2	33.9	31.1	4.4
Distortion of facts to customers	11.1	23.9	35.0	27.2	2.8
Lying to employees	7.3	21.3	33.7	32.6	5.1

Table 4. Integration of employees' personal/spiritual values at work.

	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Undecided (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)
I understand what is expected of me to live out the organisations' values	2.7	14.8	10.4	51.6	20.3
I am aware of what my organisations' values are	1.1	7.1	9.9	64.3	17.6
My personal values are different from the organisations' values	9.9	36.5	21.0	25.4	7.2
I bring my spirituality and related values to work	4.4	10.9	9.8	49.7	25.1
It is difficult for me to live out my spirituality and related values in the workplace	13.1	41.5	15.8	22.4	7.1
Spirituality can help the organisation live out its values	3.9	2.8	19.3	42.0	32.0

to the incongruity of meaning were labelled as "other".

DISCUSSION

Demographics of the sample

A convenient sampling technique was employed to obtain the required sample size of the total population of 1388 employees. The number of participants that responded to the research questionnaire consisted of a total of 191 employees with eight responses from contract employees. Since the research was aimed at permanent employees, the contract employee responses were removed. Therefore the sample consisted of a total of 183 employees. With respect to race groups, Table 1 indicates that a majority (40.8%) of Coloureds responded, as well as a 36% response from Whites. These two race group responses could be seen as a representative of the population where Coloureds make out 48% and Whites make out 27% of the total population. The 15% response rate from Africans could also be seen as a representative of the percentage Africans (22%) of the population as well as the 4% response rate from Asians that are in a

minority (4%) of the population.

Furthermore, the majority (86%) of Christians responded to this questionnaire. Based on these results, an assumption can be made that spirituality may be a topic of interest to most Christians of this population. The percentage of Muslims that responded was 6.9%. Furthermore, a minor response of 3.5% came from Atheist, Hindu, Ushembe, Divine and Bantu religions. A further 3.5% did not indicate any religion. Based on these low responses, a possible conclusion could be drawn that these groups did not show a direct interest in the topic of spirituality in the workplace or did not wish to participate in any form or share their opinions about it.

In terms of gender, a majority (57.7%) of males responded with a significant percentage (39%) of females as well, although females make out 25% of the total population. Apart from the fact that the population consists mainly of males (75%), it is surprising to note that more males than females responded to a topic such as "spirituality in the workplace". A general assumption is that males do not normally share the same sentiments as females when it comes to the "softer" types of issues. However, based on the results, a further assumption can be made that this is not the general case here, as the
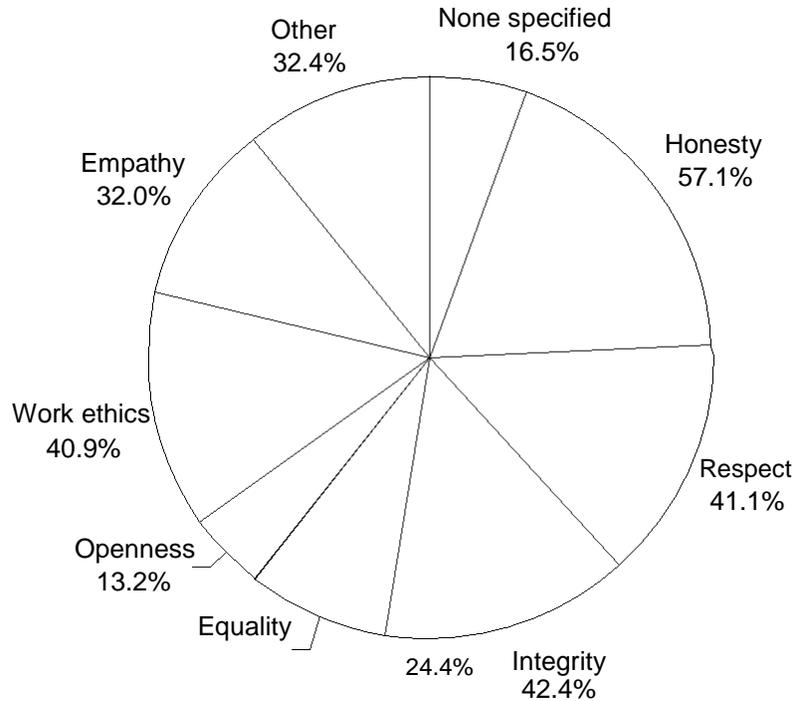
Figure 3. Personal/spiritual values of the employees.

majority of males indicated an interest in the topic of spirituality.

Additionally, the results indicated a majority response of 77% from employees and a significant response of 19% from management. In relation to the total population, these response rates could be seen as a representative of the total population consisting of 82% employees and 18% management. A further 3.8% did not indicate any level or category. Based on the results, an assumption can be made that most employees show an interest or a level of curiosity in the topic of spirituality in the workplace.

The fact that the sample size consisted of 183 employees improved the probability that the views expressed by the sample were representative of the population. This further increased the probability that valid deductions could be made from these responses. In comparing the statistics of the population to that of the sample, it is evident that the sample was representative in terms of race, gender and job level. Since the statistics on the religion of the population were not available, an assumption could be made probably that the majority of Coloureds that responded to the questionnaire could belong to either the Christian or Muslim religion. However, an assumption can be made by the researcher that most Coloureds within the population practice Christianity based on the fact that the researcher is employed in the company and is familiar with the population.

Spirituality of employees

The results indicated that the majority of respondents strongly agreed on items relating to whether employees viewed themselves as spiritual or not. In relation to the framework for the definition of spirituality, the overall results indicate that employees viewed themselves as spiritual. The cumulative responses for each element of spirituality, as displayed in Table 2, resulted in the following results. The majority (56%) of respondents strongly agreed that they find strength in their faith and spiritual beliefs. A further majority (54%) strongly believed that there is a spiritual part of them that will exist forever. As stated in the literature review, these results show a relationship with the element noted by Krishnakumar and Neck (2002: 153) that spirituality originates inside the individual. Spirituality then can be seen as an inner experience which shows that individuals' faith and beliefs are personal elements. The cumulative percentage of respondents that both agreed and strongly agreed that they find strength in their faith and spiritual beliefs was 86%, while the cumulative percentage for respondents that both agreed and strongly agreed that there is a spiritual part of them that will exist forever was 82%. These results proved that an overwhelming majority of employees held personal beliefs and seek strength and answers in their spirituality.

The majority (51%) of respondents agreed that they feel connected to other people in the workplace. A further

majority (48%) of the respondents agreed that it is important for them to feel a sense of connection with the world. As stated in the literature review, these beliefs correspond with the view of Kale and Shrivastava (2003: 310) that spirituality deals with the element of "connectedness". Krishnakumar and Neck (2002: 153) in agreement noted in their interpretation that spirituality is the inexplicable feeling of connectedness with others and the universe. The cumulative percentage of respondents that both agreed and strongly agreed with the fact they feel connected to other people in the workplace was 67%, while the cumulative percentage of respondents that both agreed and strongly agreed that it is important for them to feel a sense of connection with the world was 71%. These results indicated the importance to establish networks and positive connections with colleagues both internally and externally to the workplace. Furthermore, it also showed the importance for organisations to provide the means for employees, through their daily work activities, to be connected to the society or community.

The majority (54%) of respondents strongly disagreed that their life lacks meaning and purpose. As stated in the literature review, Graber's (2001: 40) definition of spirituality is that it implies an inner search for meaning and fulfilment. The results indicated that this definition holds true as respondents showed a strong opinion that their life has meaning and purpose. A further majority (46%) of the respondents agreed that they seek meaning and purpose in the workplace. Milliman et al. (2003: 429) noted that it is foundational for spirituality in the workplace to be involved with work that gives meaning and purpose. The cumulative percentage of respondents that both disagreed and strongly disagreed that their life lacks meaning and purpose was 83%, while the cumulative percentage of respondents that both agreed and strongly agreed that they seek meaning and purpose in the workplace was 62%. These results indicated the importance for organisations to provide work that is meaningful for employees as it is in the nature of human beings to seek meaning in what they do and experience (Zohar and Marshall, 2000). An assumption can also be made that the reason why the life of these respondents had meaning and purpose is as a result of the inner experience of their spirituality. The majority (53.6%) of respondents strongly agreed that there is a connection between them and a higher power.

A further majority (66%) of the respondents strongly agreed that they believe in a higher power. As stated in the literature review, Kale and Shrivastava (2003:310) noted that spirituality involves a connection with a "higher power". In agreement, Niederman (1999:13) also noted that various definitions of spirituality involved a relationship with an ultimate other (or reality). The cumulative percentage of respondents that both agreed and strongly agreed that there is a connection between them and a higher power was 86%, while the cumulative percentage of respondents that both agreed and strongly agreed that

they believe in a higher power was 91%. These results prove to hold a strong connection with the majority of respondents' expression of their religion or faith which is Christianity. A general assumption can be made that Christians believe in God; therefore the Christian respondents' interpretation of a higher power could directly relate their belief and relationship to a connection with God. Green's (1987: 903) definition of spirituality directly bases this relationship as "striving for the presence of God …".

The results of the research and the literature review confirm that employees view themselves as spiritual, since it is an inner experience (Krishnakumar and Neck, 2002: 153). Respondents agreed that they felt connected to others at work and in the world (Zumeta, 1993: 26). Also, they agreed that their life has meaning and purpose (Milliman et al., 2003: 429), and that they felt connected to and believed in a higher power (Niederman, 1999: 13). The view that the majority of respondents identified themselves as spiritual may have been strengthened significantly by the Christians' responses. The results however, irrespective of the religion or faith that respondents proclaimed, could indicate that the elements mentioned in the definition of spirituality confirm the views of various authors on what the concept entails.

Link between company values and personal/spiritual values of employees

It appeared to the researcher that the actions of employees were misaligned to the company's values of excellence, innovation, integrity, customer satisfaction and accountability. However, the results of the research, as displayed in Figure 2, indicated this was not true for all the values. Respondents indicated that the values of customer satisfaction (44%), excellence (39%), accountability (45%) and innovation (48%) are indeed lived out in the company. On the other hand, results indicated that the majority (45%) of respondents felt that the value of integrity was not lived out.

As displayed in Table 3, the results indicated that respondents agreed that the negative behaviours of micro-management (42%), failure to give credit (40%), hidden agendas (41%), dictatorial management (37%), lack of accountability (42%) and unequal treatment of employees (40%) were observed in the company which could be seen as counter-productive to living out the company's values. Interestingly, the majority of respondents, though slight in relation to those that agreed, remained undecided that the negative behaviours of lying by employees (34%), distortion of facts to customers (35%) and lying to employees (34%) were evident in the company. The reasons for this indecision is uncertain; however, one can only assume that respondents did not have "evidence" to agree or disagree that these behaviours were evident in the company or that respondents did not

want to give a bad reflection of themselves or the company. Consequently, a number of interpretations can be drawn from these results in relation to the company values:

Firstly, although respondents agreed that the value of accountability (45%) was lived out in the company, a significant percentage of respondents (42%) still indicated a concern with a lack of accountability in the company, when compared to the results from the negative behaviours. Secondly, the negative behaviours of unequal treatment of employees, lying by employees, distortion of facts to customers and lying to employees could be related to management and employees behaving with a lack of integrity. Similarly, the negative behaviours of micro-management, failure to give credit, hidden agendas and dictatorial management could be related to its operation in an environment where there is a lack of trust. Therefore, trust could be assumed as one of the key elements necessary for a company and its employees to behave with integrity. Thirdly, the fact that the majority of responses indicated that these negative behaviours were evident led to a direct connection with the results which indicated that the value of integrity was not lived out in the company.

As was previously mentioned, one should note the significant percentage of respondents that remained undecided in their responses. The possible reasons for this indecision could be assumed that the respondents did not want to give a bad reflection of themselves and the company; or that they were unsure of how to answer as they may have observed isolated cases of these behaviours and did not want to give a skewed reflection; or that they viewed this information as sensitive and did not want to disclose their views.

Integrating and aligning spiritual values of employees

The research also attempted to establish whether employees integrate their spirituality at work or not. This was addressed by the following items: whether or not their personal values were different from the company values, whether or not employees bring their spiritual values to work and whether or not it is difficult for them to live out their spirituality and related values. As displayed in Table 4, the results indicated that the majority (37%) of respondents disagreed that their values were different from the company's values. A majority (49.7%) of the respondents agreed that they bring their spirituality and related values to work, while a further majority (41.5%) disagreed that it is difficult for them to live out their spirituality and related values in the workplace (Milliman et al., 2003:427). It can be deducted from these results that respondents claimed to share the same values of the company, that they bring their spiritual values to work (Marques, 2005b:149) and that it is not difficult for them to live out their spirituality at work. The results further

indicated that employees understood the company values which they perceive as an alignment between their values and the company values. According to the results, a majority (64.3%) of the respondents agreed that they were aware of what the company's values are (51.6%) and what is expected of them to live out the company's values.

From these responses, it could be assumed that a relationship exists in employees that integrate their spirituality in the workplace even though this scale resulted in a low alpha of 0.350. It could be further assumed that the reason why employees did not find it diffi-cult to integrate their spiritual values was because it is an integral part of who they are and it drives them to act accordingly (Udovičič and Mulej, 2006:994).

Personal/spiritual values of employees

As depicted in Figure 3, employees identified their personal values as honesty, integrity, respect, work ethic, empathy, equality and openness. The results that could not be clustered with one of these values due to the incongruity of meaning were labelled as "other". A number of assumptions could be made by way of comparing the personal values mentioned by employees and the values of the company. Firstly, the value of integrity was explicitly mentioned by employees and was drawn in parallelism with the company's value of integrity. Secondly, the personal values of honesty and respect could also be directly linked to integrity. Thirdly, employees' personal value of 'work ethic' could be related to the company's value of 'excellence'. Overall, it could also be assumed that another reason why respondents found it easy to integrate their spiritual values was because of the perceived alignment that existed between the company's values and the employees' personal/spiritual values.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The results determined that employees viewed themselves as spiritual. Firstly, spirituality is an inner experience for them. Secondly, they felt a sense of connection to others and the world. Thirdly, their life had meaning and purpose and lastly, they felt connected and believed in a higher power. The results also determined that employees integrate their spirituality and related values at work. Respondents indicated that they bring their spiritual values to work, although their spiritual or personal values were not different from the company's values and it is not difficult for them to live out their spirituality and related values at work.

In light of the results of this research, the research focus or problem statement, which presented probably the existence of a misalignment of the company's and employee's values by way of how the company's values of integrity, excellence, customer satisfaction, innovation and accountability were lived out, should be rejected. The

results indicated that a misalignment exists only on how the company value of "integrity" was lived out.

In conclusion, the premise of this research was that if a link can be established between the personal values of employees and the company values, the company should stimulate awareness of spirituality in the workplace. Since the results determined this link between employee and company values, it can therefore be proposed that the company should endeavour to stimulate awareness of spirituality in the workplace with relevance to improving the company value of integrity.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COMPANIES

On the basis of this research, the following recommendations can be made to companies. First, companies should note that spiritual employees will strive to integrate their spiritual beliefs and values in their daily activities at work as it is fundamental to their being (Udovičič and Mulej, 2006:994). Such employees regard their spiritual beliefs and values as their moral compass which guides factors such as their decision making, attitude at work and in overall, their mission and purpose in life. Companies should therefore endeavour to assist employees to integrate their spiritual dimension in the workplace (Marques, 2005b:149).

Secondly, companies should note that spiritual employees are concerned with values relating to moral or ethical conduct such as integrity, honesty, respect, equality, empathy, trust and openness. Companies that employ spiritual employees should note that when the moral or ethical values of spiritual employees are perceived to be degraded, such employees may become distressed and discouraged. Such employees may in time opt to leave the company. Given that employees spend most of their time at work (Lund Dean, 2004: 15), it becomes paramount for companies to pay attention to bringing the person wholly to work.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Companies constantly seek to engage the hearts and minds of its employees. Many companies are prepared not to let a single stone unturned to find an answer, or a way of enabling their employees to connect to the company's vision and values, its policies and procedures, and its mission and goals. Employers want their employees to be committed to the bottom line and to come to work with enthusiasm in order to give their best each day. However, as determined by the results of this research, many negative practices and behaviours are observed in the workplace. This may indicate that many employees come to work for their own interest and do not always have the company's interest at heart. By integrating spirituality into the workplace, employers and

employees may learn to move beyond self-interest and aspire for greater things that can make a meaningful contribution in life.

This research established the link between the personal values of employees and the company values. As a company's values system is assumed to be a set of beliefs, the company can endeavour to align their values with that of their employees' spiritual values in order to achieve better commitment and engagement towards the overall goals of the company. An avenue that should be explored is the involvement of HR. As stated in this research, one of the new perspectives for HR strategies is the implementation of spirituality in the workplace (Marques, 2005a:28). The Human Resources Department can play an important role in assisting management to create strategies that encompass spirituality in order to create a culture that is geared towards the successful achievement of both business and personal goals. These strategies may benefit the whole company and may assist HR professionals to gain strategic ground.

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The limitations in this research firstly lie in the reliability of the measuring instrument. The scales of "integration and spirituality influences the company values" and the "personal values" of employees both received very low coefficient alpha scores. This lead to subjective interpretations based on the responses received for these scales. Secondly, spirituality is a unique and personal construct with multiple definitions which makes measurement of the construct very difficult. For this reason, four elements of similarity were highlighted in the definition of spirituality in order to present a better understanding of the concept. Even though such guidance was provided in the questionnaire, it continually presented complications if participants experienced spirituality as a new concept and had to rely on their own interpretation in response to these questions.

Thirdly, the quantitative approach of this research limited the richness and uniqueness of the construct of spirituality. The construct had to be narrowed down to four elements of identification in order to find some way of making it measurable for quantitative purposes.

Fourthly, the breakdown of the personal values of employees should have been structured more thoroughly and labelled more accurately as a degree of misinterpretation may have existed in the process of grouping of these responses. If the grouping of these responses was done by an independent party, it may have been proven to be more advantageous to the research. Overall, subjective interpretations and conclusions in the research were made based on the responses of a single self-reported measuring instrument.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

For further research, it is recommended to supplement the quantitative approach with a qualitative approach in order to substantiate the results of the survey. A confirmatory factor analysis should be conducted to determine employees' spirituality and related values as well as how these values influence the company values on a different sample. Further research should be able to determine the best ways of stimulating awareness of spirituality in companies today. The significance and involvement of the Human Resources Department as a key role player in spirituality at work should be determined. Furthermore, whether or not spiritual values such as honesty, integrity and respect can improve the bottom line of the company should be determined. Spirituality has also been linked to retention, therefore further research should determine if a relationship exists between spirituality and what makes people stay in a company. In addition, further research could also determine the benefits of companies, to include spiritual development of their management and employees. Lastly, attempts to align the business are mainly seen in the overt actions of companies, for example through re-organisation, leadership shuffles, technology and equipment, etc. These attempts could be considered as an "outside-in" approach (Heaton et al., 2004: 62). Further research could determine whether an "inside-out" approach could be more valuable in situations where the conduct of employees is addressed at the core, which is the spirit (Heaton et al., 2004: 63).

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