

## The Effect Work Systems on Workplace Spirituality

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of adaptive work system on compassion and meaningful work of civil servants in the ministries of culture and tourism in South-South States of Nigeria. The predictor variable is adaptive work system (as a dimension of work systems) and the criterion variables are punctuality and honesty as measures of workplace spirituality. The study adopted a cross-sectional research design with individual employees as the unit of analysis with structured questionnaire as the research instrument, distributed to 359 civil servants within the ministry of culture and tourism in the south-south region of Nigeria. Out of the 359 questionnaire distributed, 339 questionnaire were useful for data analysis. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation with 0.05 level of significance with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The outcome of the data analysis showed that adaptive work system has positive significant effect on compassion and meaningful work respectively. We therefore, recommended that*

**Keywords:** *Adaptive Work System; Workplace Spirituality; Compassion; Meaningful Work*

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### Introduction

In light of the recent developments in the workplace and society, workplace spirituality has emerged as an important topic. That's why studies on workplace spirituality have been increasing in recent years as a way to give workplaces more value (Indradevi, 2020). Organizations are beginning to realize that workers aren't only content with money; they want more. This is why workplace spirituality is garnering a lot of attention in the management profession right now. Spirituality has emerged in the workplace as a result of a desire for more than just a paycheck: the belief that there will always be something more to strive for. As a result, workers want their job to be meaningful and to have an impact on others in the workplace, which may only be possible if spiritual values are introduced into the workplace. Companies that promote spiritual values recognize personnel with a mind and soul, who strive to find purpose and motivation in the job they are given, and who want to be related to other employees and be a part of the company (Indradevi, 2020; Ahiauzu & Asawo, 2010).

Spirituality at work is about employee connectedness and possessing similar purposefulness and implication at the workplace (Haryokusumo, 2015; Daniel, 2014). The essential part of workplace spirituality is linked to the workers' exchanging and experiencing some common connectedness, fascination, and inseparableness in the firm (Marschke, Preziosi & Harrington, 2009). It emphasizes actions in the firms associated with individual development, consideration, relevance and joy at work, trustworthiness, reliance, job commitment, and happiness of employees (Petchsawang & Duchon, 2012). It therefore helps in adding worth to the firm in significant ways. It includes kindness, punctuality, honesty, compassion, mindfulness, meaningful work, empathy and backing for others, together with truthfulness to oneself and others. An employee could be known as spiritual as far as he/she stays consistent in his feelings that are shown by his/her activities, and upholds the stability of his/her inner and outer world. More so, the capability to adjust to a varying situation with ease is increased with workplace spirituality, since there exist a synergy with the components of trust, obligation and comprehension of the working elements that could be altered, sustained or improved.

Organizations today's focused additionally on engaging in work system in other to improve their successes. This contributes to novel means of coordinating and supervising work structures that exceed those of methodical management from industrialized era to better work scheme that highlights the significance of the staff. The contemporary work systems in organizations must have the ability to support capability development of the staff through having an improvement strategy that is effective in addressing difficulties staff may encounter. Therefore, to build lasting improvement capability of the staff to succeed over time, it becomes vital for the firms' administration to design the right work system. To achieve and sustain operational or process excellence, a firm need to possess an effective work systems, however, many forms (for example, the civil service) see it to be difficult to plan *an operational* system of work (Jackson, Schuler & Werner, 2011).

In designing an effective work system, Bessant and Francis (1999) expressed that it must possess the capacity to link with the firms' strategic goals, satisfy the aspirations of the workers and include the whole structure. Today's work structure must also be able to adapt to the changing demands of workers, as well as to the needs of the company as a whole. An effective work system is very important in the modern work environment because it serves as a framework for enhancing compatibility, effectiveness and ease of performance as well as human well-being and value of human capital in the businesses (Karwowski, 2005). Consequently, management must devise a mechanism for improving the firm so that it can be an inspirational location to work while also encouraging spiritual values exhibitions.

Spirituality in the workplace may help individuals see and appreciate the value of their own lives, therefore boosting their productivity (Heaton, Schmidt-Wilk, & Travis, 2004; Lips-Wiersma, 2002). It may therefore be concluded that the development of the workplace spirituality can be seen as a means of promoting organizational growth via a well-functioning work system. Incorporating an efficient work system may improve workplace spirituality, allowing employees to feel more confident and connected to each other, resulting in an increase in productivity (Marques, 2005). Spirituality in the workplace, according to Campuzano and Seteroff (2010), may contribute to

employee success, self-actualization, and fulfillment via the correct work systems in firms, including the public service sector.

Also, Campuzano and Seteroff (2010) expressed that spirituality in the workplace potentially stimulate staff success, lead to self-actualization and employee satisfaction which may be achieved through the right work systems in organizations including the civil service sector. However, prevailing work structure in the civil service has today become so traditional, as the work system encourages repetition. Therefore, it is necessary to implement different work structure like adaptive work system, knowledge/information work system, automated work system and high performance work system vis-à-vis a balanced work system where all elements are considered and developed continuously towards better exhibition of workplace spiritual virtues to ensuring the productivity of the firm is enhanced and sustained. Hence, the purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship that exist between work system and workplace spirituality in Ministries of Culture and Tourism in South-South States of Nigeria. Consequently, the research question and hypothesis are: What is the relationship between work system and workplace spirituality of civil servants within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the South-South Region of Nigeria? And, there is no significant relationship between work system and workplace spirituality of civil servants within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the South-South Region of Nigeria.

## **Literature Review**

### **Concept of Work System**

Work system involves a collective effort and is designed when a specific job or goal is noticed as requiring more than one person to accomplish which incorporate technology, information and business resources to create services or products for stakeholders in the firm (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008). From the definition above, work systems exist to produce goods or services to satisfy stakeholders; thus, a work system's performance should be weighed based partly on competencies and other aspects of internal methods/activities, and partially on stakeholders' evaluations of products/services produced to offer value for stakeholders. Also, work systems may be sociotechnical systems where individuals perform methods/activities. Additionally, work system covers totally automated systems, including those revealed through decomposition of sociotechnical work systems during design processes.

Defining a work system necessitates a decision, and a decision necessitates a goal or an objective, just like any other option. Consequently, the purpose of a work system should be clearly defined. The examination of a firm's work system is a natural part of thinking about it as a system. It is immediately apparent that the patterns, machines, and connections in a work system must be in place in order to achieve the work system's goal, which means that all components and interactions must be aligned with the work system's purpose (Alter, 2010). To put it another way, the failure of many organizations may be attributed to misalignments and performance gaps in the components of the work system.

Organizational work systems are commonly referred to as sociotechnical work systems because of their complexity (Kleiner & Hendrick, 2008). An interconnected system of technological and social components constitutes a sociotechnical workplace. To put it another way: Technical subsystems include technology and work procedures that are designed for the goal of working, whereas social subsystems concentrate on the worker's perception of their work environment

(Carayon & Lim, 2006). Changing technology and tools have a direct impact on workers' attitudes and sentiments about work, as well as the social interactions they form in the workplace (Hatch & Cunliffe 2006). Firms/managers, on the other hand, must first establish and structure the system in a way that permits the objective to be realized when hiring others. For optimal efficiency, the system should be designed to know the kinds of personnel and machines that are required, and how each position is done and how duties are carried out from one to the other.

In the firm all work involves a process. Organization repeatedly executes chains of steps each day to manufacture products or render services which is attained via individuals, as teams, and via managers' decisions. A firm is an interacting work systems. Thus, typical business organizations contain work systems that procure materials from suppliers, produce products, deliver products to customers, find customers, create financial reports, hire employees, coordinate work across departments, and perform many other functions. However, the entire enterprises may be perceived as work system (Alter, 2013). Some work systems are formed to attain a mission and then end, like project like conferences, data collection or a specific product manufactured to meet a particular need then discontinued. Other work systems may be linked to build larger work system like work system that produces a firm regular product. For example, product production work systems (production lines) link the supply chain work system (material purchases), the design work system and the packaging work system (produces a purchase ready product).

### **The Concept of Workplace Spirituality**

There are several and different definitions to the concept of spirituality as many researchers have attempted to define it as an all-inclusive dimension although no generally agreed definition has been established as regards the concept. Spiritual is derived from the Latin word spiritus, meaning breath or giver of life or vigor to an organism (Zohar & Marshall, 2004). Earlier, Mitroff and Denton (1999) described spirituality to incorporate a broad range of concepts and values like transcendence, balance, sacredness, altruism, meaning of life, living with a deep connectedness to the globe, and the awareness of something or someone greater than oneself (God, or an energy force) that provides energy and wisdom that transcends the material aspects of life. Also, Cavanagh (1999) explained that it is a deep desire to discover the ultimate purpose of existence and the pursuit for meaning. It further has to do with seeking the purity in the normality of daily life, the sense of being connected with everything, having internal peace and quiet, including having an immeasurable source of faith and determination (Chand & Koul, 2012).

According to Karakas (2010) spirituality is a journey to finding a lasting, authentic, meaningful, holistic and profound comprehension of the existential self and its relation/interconnection with the sacred and the transcendent while Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003) expressed that it is about the manner in which human's approaches the query of transcendence. There are controversies over the idea of spirituality and religion as some scholars (such as Seidlitz, Abernethy, Duberstein, Evinger, Chang & Lewis, 2002) asserted that the two ideologies are the same; the reason been that religious behaviours are innately spiritual; thus, both should be regarded as same and not specially (Phipps, 2012), while others (such as Haryokusomo, 2015; Duffy, 2006; Dent, Higgins, & Wharff, 2005) claimed that the two are quite different. This is because, people can be spiritual and not be religious (Marler & Hadaway, 2002). Specifically, religion is an organized system of beliefs, practices, rituals and symbols designed to facilitate closeness to the purity or

transcendent and to foster acceptance of one's relation and obligation to others living together in an environment. Thus, religion is identified by a specific belief system, a specific body of faith and an organized set of beliefs (Afsar & Rehman, 2015). That is, religion is an organized institution that has faith in the existence of a certain divinity or practices that separates one from another. For example, there are different religions in the globe such as Christianity, Islamism, Buddhism, Atheism, Hinduism, Judaism, Sikhism, Jainism, etc; all of which have their own organized belief that differentiate one another.

Spirituality on the other hand, is about personal quest for understanding answers to ultimate questions about life, about meaning, and about affiliation to the sacred or transcendent, which might (or might not) eventually lead to an organized system of beliefs (Koenig, McCullough & Larson, 2000). Thus, in the words of Mitroff and Denton (1999) spirituality is non-denominational and non-prejudiced, it is personified by all faiths, genders, sexual orientations, races and disabilities or abilities. Spirituality signifies a quest for the implication of life and work that is both individual and personal which is not inclined to any denomination, dogma or teaching. Consequently, it is non-formal, regulated or organized; not affiliated to a religious denomination; inclusive, universal and eternal; corresponding to a quest for the value and goals of life; to a knowing of the transcendental and interdependence of everything; to a pursuit for inner peace (Schutte 2016; Fourie 2014; Mitroff & Denton, 1990).

Furthermore, workplace spirituality emerged as a school of thought in the last two decades of the twentieth century as a result of the advancement of business corporations including changing conditions of employee's involvement in work and the meaning attached to it (Schutte, 2016; Karakas, 2010). Today, more persons are finding inspiration and satisfaction in their work by exhibiting spiritual virtues and ethics in the workplace which has led to an increase in investigation on workplace spirituality over the years (Gross-Schaefer, 2009; Gotsis & Kortezi, 2008). Right from the 90s workplace spirituality has become an imperative matter in the workplace as many business organizations is beginning to encouraged its development since they believed that been spiritual in the workplace would provide lots of solutions to human resource problem of today's organization and establish a win-win state for both employees and organizations; thus, the investigation on workplace spirituality has turned out to be an essential concept (Claude & Zamor, 2003).

### **Methodology**

This study adopted a cross-sectional research design with individual employees as the unit of analysis of civil servants within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the South-South Region of Nigeria. The South-South region of Nigeria include Edo, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa-Ibom and Cross River State. Additionally, the research used questionnaire as the research instrument which was distributed to 359 civil servants within the ministry of culture and tourism in the south-south region of Nigeria. Furthermore, the choice of respondents from each ministry was determined via cluster sampling technique with each ministry representing a cluster. Out of the 359-questionnaire distributed, 339 questionnaire were useful for data analysis. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation with 0.05 level of significance with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The research instrument consists of four response choices with point scales ranging from 1 to 5 indicating strongly disagree, disagree, indifference,

agree and strongly disagree respectively. The independent variable is work system; it is used as a uni-dimensional variable while the dependent variables used is workplace spirituality and it is used as a uni-dimensional variable. We used face and content validity to make sure the instrument measured what it intended to measure while the reliability of the instrument was done through Cronbach Alpha and the result reveals 0.906 and 0.918 for work system and workplace spirituality respectively.

**Data Analysis and Result**

**The Association between Work system and Workplace Spirituality**

The table below shows the relationship between work system and workplace spirituality taken as a whole.

**Table 1: Relationship between work system and workplace spirituality of civil servants within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the South-South Region of Nigeria**

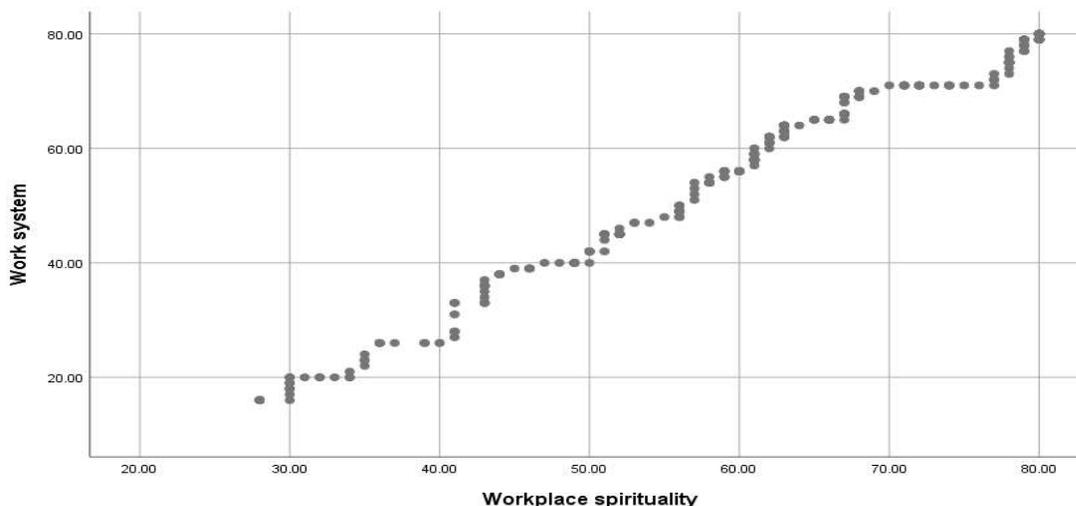
variables	n	r	df	crt.r	p-value	Remarks
Work system	339	0.966	337	.1045	0.000	Significant

**Workplace spirituality**

*P < 0.05; significant at 0.05 level of significance*

**Source: Field Survey Data, 2021.**

Table 1 revealed the nexus between work system and workplace spirituality of civil servants within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the South-South Region of Nigeria. The outcomes revealed a very strong and positive nexus between work system and workplace spirituality with  $r(337) = 0.966$ ,  $\text{crit.} = .1045$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ . It means a direct connection exist between work system and workplace spirituality of civil servants within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the South-South Region of Nigeria. The corresponding scattered graph is shown below:



*Figure 1: Scattered Graph of work system and workplace spirituality.*

### **Discussion of Findings**

From the empirical analysis between work system and workplace spirituality in table 1, showed that work system has a Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient ( $\rho$ ) = 0.966 and a P-value of 0.000 less than 0.05 on workplace spirituality which means that a very strong positive relationship exist between work system and workplace spirituality of civil servants within Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the South-South Region of Nigeria. Consequently, by adopting effective work system, workplace spirituality will be improved leading to enhancement of trust among employees, increased interconnectedness, and assist to build motivated organizational culture which would improve the firm's success (Marques, 2005).

Campuzano and Seteroff (2010) expressed that spirituality in the firm promote employee success, lead to self-actualization and employee satisfaction which can be achieve through the right work systems in organizations including the civil service sector. However, the existing work system in the civil service has today become so traditional, as the work system encourages repetition. The process people repeat each day as a part of a given work system may not produce the desired outcome. Thus, must organization fail to recognize that a system will give out the exact what is designed for: work systems with poor designs tend to consistently give substandard results, whether an organization know it or not. Nevertheless, work system that supports workers growth, the workers will have the willingness to reciprocate by display of spiritual virtues and values that will improve the firm's performance. Because, when one party (firm with appropriate work system) treats another well (the workers), the reciprocity norm obliges the return of favourable treatment (by displaying spiritual values) (Gouldner, 1960) that is essential to enhancing organizational success.

Work systems in nowadays modern firm must support capability enhancement of workers through improvement course that is effective in addressing challenges workers might encounter, and the capacity to adjust the improvement course when challenges change. Hence, to build an enduring enhancement capacity of the employees to succeed over time, it is essential for firm's management to employ the right work system. Because to attain and sustain operational or process excellence, an organization must possess an effective work systems, however, many organizations (like the civil service) finds it challenging to design an effective work systems (Jackson, Schuler & Werner, 2011). In designing a successful work system, Bessant and Francis (1999) expressed that it must possess the capability to link the firm's strategic goals.

The necessity to design an effective work system has become so significant in today's work environment as one framework for improving compatibility, effectiveness, ease of performance, human well-being and quality firm's human resources (Karwowski, 2005). Therefore, management have to create work system that enable the building of an encouraging working environment for workers and inspire workplace spirituality. The work system that emphasizes the significance of workers is crucial to their behavioural pattern within the firm. As work system that do not recognized the desires of employees produces physical, psychosocial and cognitive loads on the employees (Carayon, 2009) and employees reaction is often with detrimental effect of poor attitude like low motivation, satisfaction and negative work outcome that lacks spiritual undertone (Smith & Carayon, 2000) that might affect their display of spiritual virtues like punctuality, meaningful work, honesty and compassion.

Furthermore, organizations have to build and maintain an environment that encourage the exhibition of spirituality virtues in the firm through strategy that effectively encourage and facilitate the exhibition of workplace spirituality (Ravindra et al., 2017) via balanced work systems, and clear goals. A balanced work system considers human beings as major factor and as a vital aspect of work system. A well-balanced work system is not detrimental to employees' health, well-being or safety (Vayrynen, Koivupalo & Latva-Ranta, Snyder, 2012). Thus, an effective or a balanced work system improve the employee workplace spirituality such as integrity, compassion, punctuality and meaningful work. Adams, Snyder, Kings, Sigmon and Pulvers (2003) articulated that in organizations with improved spirituality, workers will be more flexible when encountering changes, they would usually not resist new ideas but manage the reforms. Therefore, when the environment significantly changes, organizational reform would become regular with workplace spirituality, the workers would be able to acclimatize, which increased organizational efficiency and overall performance of the firm. Because of spirituality, employees would experience confidence and rectitude or sense of self-realization, which reinforced their attachment within the organizations and reduced business costs and absence rates. Also, Krishnakumar & Neck (2002) indicated that in many organizations emphasizing spirituality, the workers becomes more honest possessing sense of self-realization important for organizational effectiveness.

Employees with a greater sense of spirituality at work are involved in the firm (Duchon & Plowman, 2005). Employees with high workplace spirituality will have less frustration in the firm, because spiritual firms encourage participation of workers and their inclusiveness in decision-making process. Fostering employee spirituality makes employees feel complete in the firm. This aid in facilitating higher level of personal contentment and improve workers morale towards better performance. This will also lead to better organizational performance through greater financial success. Thus, the necessity to enhance this qualities among employees in the firm especially by building effective work system.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The result of the research empirically showed that work systems is essentially important in enhancing workplace spirituality of civil servants in Culture and Tourism Ministry in the South-South Region of Nigeria. Thus, we conclude that work systems play important part in ensuring civil servants in Culture and Tourism Ministry in the South-South Region of Nigeria attained and enhanced workplace spirituality. Employees in organizations with high levels workplace spirituality are more flexible in adapting to any changes, which enlarged firm's competence and over-all performance that should be achieved through effective work system. The need to design an effective work system has become so significant in today's work environment as it is one framework for improving compatibility, effectiveness, ease of performance, human well-being and quality of human resources in the organization. Therefore, management need to develop work system that will facilitate the building of an inspirational working environment for their employees as well as encourage workplace spirituality. The work system that emphasizes the significance of workers is critical to their behavioural pattern in the firm. As work system that has not recognized the necessities for staff produces physical, psychosocial and cognitive loads on workers and their reaction is often with detrimental effect of poor results like low motivation, satisfaction and negative work outcome that lacks spiritual undertone that might affect their display of spiritual virtues such as punctuality, meaningful work, honesty and also compassion.

Therefore, we recommend that, in order to build and sustain spiritual virtues such as honesty, punctuality, compassion and other virtues among employees in the ministry of culture and tourism in the South-South, Nigeria, it is very essential to develop effective work system that encourage such behaviour.

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