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Mitigating Work Alienation through Workplace Spirituality among Bank Employees in Delta State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examines the role of workplace spirituality in mitigating work alienation and enhancing work engagement among bank employees in Delta State, Nigeria. In the context of Nigeria's evolving banking sector, where reforms and competitive pressures demand high levels of employee engagement, alienation poses a significant barrier to optimal work performance. The research investigates how the dimensions of work alienation—powerlessness, meaninglessness, and self-estrangement—affect employee engagement and how workplace spirituality can serve as a moderating factor in reducing these negative effects. By integrating workplace spirituality into the organisational culture, banks may foster a more supportive environment that enhances employees' sense of belonging, purpose, and connection to their work. Data were collected from bank employees using structured questionnaires that measured levels of work engagement, work alienation, and workplace spirituality. Findings indicate that workplace spirituality significantly moderates the negative impact of work alienation, suggesting that spiritual practices in the workplace can play a crucial role in improving employee well-being, engagement, and overall organisational productivity.

Keywords: *Work Alienation, Workplace Spirituality, Work engagement, Work performance, Bank Employees.*

Introduction

The modern workplace is increasingly characterised by rapid technological changes, intense competition, and evolving market demands. In this context, the role of employees has become more critical than ever, as they serve as the driving force behind organisational success. However, while organisations invest heavily in enhancing productivity and maintaining competitive advantage, they often overlook the psychological and emotional needs of their workforce, which can lead to feelings of alienation and disengagement. Work alienation remains a pervasive issue that threatens not only individual employee well-being but also overall organisational productivity and efficiency. This study explores the potential of workplace spirituality as a mitigating factor for work alienation among bank employees in Delta State, Nigeria, providing insights into how a more supportive and meaningful work environment can be cultivated.

Employees play a fundamental role in the success of organisations, particularly in today's dynamic business environment. They are the lifeblood of every organisation, driving productivity, innovation, and growth. As such, there has been a growing interest among both academics and corporate leaders in understanding the factors that influence employees' work performance and productivity. The extent to which employees are engaged in their work directly impacts their performance output behaviour, and subsequently, the overall success of the organisation. In an effort to boost productivity, commercial banks in Nigeria invest significant resources in training and retraining employees to ensure their skills and behaviours align with market trends and organisational objectives (Ferdous et al., 2020).

In the competitive landscape of Nigeria's banking sector, which is characterised by continuous reforms and the adoption of new technologies, achieving complete employee engagement is critical to organisational success. Banks are progressively implementing automation, online services, and cashless solutions to enhance customer experience; however, the full integration and adoption of these innovations may take time (Umeghalu et al., 2021). This transitional phase presents challenges for banks, as employees may experience difficulties adapting to new systems, which can contribute to feelings of alienation and disengagement.

The Concept of Work Alienation

Work alienation, a significant barrier to employee engagement, can manifest through various forms, such as structural, induced, or perceptual. It is a state of psychological disconnection in which employees feel estranged from their work environment, resulting in reduced involvement in workplace relationships and activities (Muttar et al., 2020). Alienated employees often exhibit a lack of motivation, perform below expected standards, and do not see themselves as integral to the organisation's success (Ajisafe & Obafemi, 2019). These behaviours are indicative of a broader issue of disengagement, where employees may withdraw from collective activities, further emphasising their lack of integration within the workplace.

The root causes of work alienation often include dissatisfaction with job roles and the organisation's failure to recognise employees' values or support their well-being. Such feelings of alienation can be early indicators of more serious problems, such as substance abuse, mental health disorders, and even suicidal behaviour (Muttar et al., 2019). Work alienation is characterised by three core dimensions—powerlessness, meaninglessness, and self-estrangement. Powerlessness occurs when employees perceive that they have little or no influence over organisational decisions or outcomes. Meaninglessness arises when they cannot see the significance of their work or its impact on the organisation, while self-estrangement reflects a lack of fulfilment or satisfaction from the work performed due to low expectations of the outcomes (Durrah, 2020).

Workplace Spirituality as a Mitigating Factor

The concept of workplace spirituality has emerged as a potential solution to mitigate work alienation and enhance employee engagement. It refers to the recognition that employees possess an inner life that seeks meaningful work and a sense of community within the organisation (Tantua & Osuamkpe, 2020). Workplace spirituality encompasses the quest for personal fulfilment, purpose, and acts of kindness within the professional setting, promoting psychological well-being and fostering a supportive atmosphere conducive to personal and organisational growth.

Spirituality in the workplace is built on the principles of meaning, transcendence, and community (Nwanzu & Babalola, 2021). It goes beyond religious practices, focusing on the alignment of an individual's values and beliefs with the goals and practices of the organisation. When employees experience transcendence at work, they often feel a profound sense of interconnectedness with their colleagues, which can lead to a state of mental well-being and contentment (Krishnani, 2023). The incorporation of spirituality in organisational culture aims to harmonise personal and corporate objectives, encouraging a culture of mutual support and collective well-being (Ule et al., 2020).

Workplace spirituality has the potential to mitigate the negative effects of work alienation by providing a sense of purpose and belonging. Employees who perceive a balance between their work and personal lives, enriched by the goodwill and support of their colleagues, are more

likely to experience heightened engagement. For those who feel disconnected or alienated, the introduction of spiritual principles within the workplace can help alleviate these feelings, fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment. Consequently, this study posits that work-life balance and the dimensions of work alienation may predict employee engagement levels and that workplace spirituality could moderate these relationships among bank employees in Delta State, Nigeria.

Significance of the Study

The outcomes of this research aim to fill gaps in the current literature by exploring the interplay between work alienation, work-life balance, and workplace spirituality, and how these factors collectively influence the work performance of bank employees in Nigeria. The insights derived from this study could inform strategies to promote employee well-being, reduce feelings of alienation, and improve engagement within the banking sector. Given the rapidly evolving nature of the financial services industry, understanding the impact of workplace spirituality on employee engagement could help banks maintain a competitive edge by fostering a resilient and motivated workforce.

Statement of the Problem

The challenge of maintaining high employee performance in the banking sector is an ongoing issue in Nigeria, often aggravated by negative attitudes towards work and job disengagement (Amah, 2018). Banks face immense pressure to remain competitive in an industry that is rapidly evolving due to technological advancements and regulatory changes. As a result, the banking sector frequently invests in employee development to ensure staff remain aligned with market trends. However, these investments may not always translate into increased employee engagement if underlying issues of alienation are not addressed. Disengaged employees can be detrimental to the organisation, as they are more likely to exhibit negative behaviours such as indifference towards work, minimal output, resistance to policies, and even inciting discontent among co-workers (Clark, 2020).

The current economic environment in Nigeria, marked by global economic downturns, financial sector consolidation, and corruption, has exacerbated job insecurity, work overload, and employee alienation (Ugwu et al., 2014). These factors have contributed to increasing unemployment rates and created a workforce that is more vulnerable to disengagement and low morale. It is essential to explore the factors influencing employee engagement, particularly in commercial banks that play a crucial role in the organised private sector of the Nigerian economy.

Although prior studies have explored various aspects of work alienation (Radwan et al., 2021; Iqbal et al., 2022), there is still a gap in the literature concerning the moderating role of workplace spirituality in the relationship between work alienation and employee engagement. This study seeks to address this gap by investigating whether workplace spirituality can moderate the impact of work alienation dimensions on engagement behaviours among bank employees. By doing so, the research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how organisational practices can be leveraged to enhance employee engagement and mitigate the negative effects of alienation.

Literature Review

Work alienation has been a subject of interest for decades, with early studies by Marx (1964) and Seeman (1959) establishing the foundation of the concept. Marx's theory of alienation

describes the disconnection that workers experience when their labour becomes an external, oppressive force, divorced from their sense of self. Seeman (1959) further expanded on this by identifying five dimensions of alienation: powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation, and self-estrangement. These foundational theories have informed a wealth of empirical studies that explore the causes, manifestations, and impacts of alienation in the workplace.

Recent research has focused on the psychological and organisational factors that contribute to work alienation. For instance, Blauner (1964) argued that technological advancements and bureaucratic organisational structures often exacerbate feelings of alienation, as employees have less control over their work processes and outcomes. More recent studies by Hirschfeld and Field (2000) and Nair and Vohra (2010) have indicated that work alienation is often linked to low job satisfaction, decreased organisational commitment, and higher turnover intentions.

In their meta-analysis, Nair and Vohra (2010) found that alienated employees are more likely to experience burnout and disengagement, which adversely affects overall productivity. These findings underscore the importance of addressing work alienation in organisational settings, particularly in sectors like banking, where the pressure to perform is high, and the nature of work is often repetitive and routine.

Empirical Review

The Role of Leadership in Addressing Work Alienation

Leadership plays a crucial role in either mitigating or exacerbating work alienation. Studies by Shantz et al. (2014) and Deci et al. (2017) have shown that transformational leadership styles, which focus on inspiring and motivating employees, can significantly reduce feelings of alienation. Transformational leaders create a supportive environment that fosters autonomy, competence, and relatedness—key elements that counteract the dimensions of alienation identified by Seeman (1959).

In contrast, autocratic leadership styles have been found to contribute to increased levels of work alienation. A study by Bhatnagar (2012) demonstrated that employees under autocratic leaders often feel powerless and disconnected from decision-making processes, which enhances their sense of alienation. This finding is particularly relevant in the banking sector, where hierarchical organisational structures are common, and decision-making is often centralised.

Psychological Empowerment and Employee Engagement

Psychological empowerment has been identified as a critical factor in enhancing employee engagement and reducing work alienation. Spreitzer (1995) defined psychological empowerment as a set of motivational constructs manifested in four cognitions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. When employees feel empowered, they are more likely to find meaning in their work, feel competent in their roles, have a sense of autonomy, and believe that their work has a significant impact on the organisation.

Research by Thomas and Velthouse (1990) and Zhang and Bartol (2010) has highlighted the positive effects of psychological empowerment on employee engagement. Empowered employees are more likely to be engaged, proactive, and resilient in the face of challenges. In the context of the banking sector, fostering psychological empowerment could be a viable strategy for reducing work alienation and enhancing overall productivity.

Workplace Spirituality and the Powerlessness Dimension of Work Alienation

Ojobu et al. (2023) conducted a study on the predictive roles of workplace spirituality on employee silence and social alienation dimensions among National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members from Northern Nigeria working in Delta State. The study involved 63 participants (38 males, 25 females) aged 19 to 30, with a mean age of 24 and a standard deviation of 1.40. Using a convenience sampling method, the sample size was determined through Gpower sampling formulae with a 0.6 effect size and a .05 alpha for one predictor case. The instruments used for data collection included the Employee Silence Scale (ESS), Workplace Spirituality Scale (WSS), and Work Alienation Scale (WAS). The analysis revealed that workplace spirituality negatively and significantly predicted employee silence ($\beta = -0.29$, $p < .001$) and was significant for all factors of social alienation ($\beta = -0.47$, $p < .001$). While the meaningfulness dimension showed a significant negative correlation ($\beta = -0.45$, $p < .004$), the powerlessness and self-estrangement dimensions, although negatively correlated with workplace spirituality, did not reach significant levels. These findings indicate that an increase in workplace spirituality is associated with a reduction in employee silence and meaningfulness, thus potentially decreasing their negative impact on employees in the workplace. The study recommends that organisations promote a spiritual climate to foster increased goodwill, consideration for others, collaboration, and helping behaviour, which can contribute to organisational effectiveness and employee satisfaction.

Alyas (2020) explored the relationship between work engagement, work alienation, and work performance in healthcare settings, focusing on 142 employees at the Children's Hospital and ICH Lahore. The study used adapted questionnaires for work alienation, work engagement, and work performance, analysed with SPSS version 21. The majority of participants, aged 25 to 35, exhibited a positive attitude towards work engagement, with an inverse relationship found between work engagement and work alienation. The results indicated that employees were aware of the significance of engagement and alienation regarding work performance metrics, providing foundational insights for the present study on workplace spirituality.

Kartal (2018) examined the association between work engagement, work alienation, and performance among 493 health professionals across various hospital settings. The study identified a significant positive correlation between engagement and performance, while powerlessness and meaningfulness were negatively associated with performance. Regression analysis showed that the participants' engagement and alienation significantly influenced performance ($P < 0.01$), with the vigour dimension of engagement and the powerlessness and meaningfulness dimensions explaining 28% of the variance in performance. This underscores the importance of addressing alienation to enhance performance.

Workplace Spirituality and the Meaninglessness Dimension of Work Alienation

Iqbal et al. (2022) investigated spiritual leadership and work alienation, proposing service employee social capital as a mediator. Data collected from 283 employees in the service sector supported hypotheses suggesting a negative association between spiritual leadership and work alienation. It was posited that a spiritually supportive environment could help mitigate alienation by fostering meaning in employees' roles.

Lata and Chaudhary (2020) used the conservation of resources and cognitive appraisal theories to explore workplace spirituality's relationship with incivility, with data from banking (N = 225) and IT (N = 220) sectors. Findings showed significant negative correlations between spirituality and incivility, and psychopathy moderated the spirituality-incivility relationship in

banking. The study highlights workplace spirituality's role in shaping employees' experiences of incivility, suggesting its potential in reducing alienation's meaningfulness aspect.

Workplace Spirituality and the Self-Estrangement Dimension of Work Alienation

Zhang (2020) examined how workplace spirituality impacts unethical pro-organisational behaviour (UPB) and found that spirituality had a positive influence on job satisfaction, which in turn reduced self-estrangement by creating a more supportive and meaningful work environment. The study involved 458 employees across different organisations in China and concluded that increased job satisfaction, facilitated by a spiritually enriched workplace, contributed to lower levels of self-estrangement.

Astuti et al. (2020) explored the link between workplace spirituality and employee performance, incorporating job satisfaction as a mediator. In their study of 143 non-lecturer staff members at Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia, they found that while spirituality was significantly associated with improved job satisfaction, its direct effect on reducing workplace deviant behaviour (often linked with self-estrangement) was not significant. This suggests that the impact of workplace spirituality on self-estrangement may be more pronounced through indirect pathways, such as job satisfaction and overall employee well-being.

Theoretical Framework

Integrating Social Exchange Theory in the Context of Workplace Spirituality

The Social Exchange Theory, originally proposed by Blau (1964), serves as a relevant framework for understanding the influence of workplace spirituality on work alienation. This theory suggests that relationships in the workplace are characterised by reciprocal exchanges, where individuals are likely to respond positively to beneficial actions or environments that provide rewards. When workplace spirituality is incorporated, it fosters a culture of mutual respect, trust, and commitment, where employees feel supported and valued. This supportive environment reduces the likelihood of experiencing work alienation, as employees are more inclined to engage positively with their work and colleagues.

According to the Social Exchange Theory, trust plays a significant role in enhancing workplace dynamics. In the context of workplace spirituality, trust is cultivated through open communication, shared values, and a sense of belonging. When employees feel they are in an environment that respects and values their inner life, they are more likely to reciprocate with increased engagement and reduced feelings of alienation. Additionally, the theory suggests that when employees perceive that they are treated fairly and receive support, they are more committed to their work and organisation, thereby reducing powerlessness, meaningfulness, and self-estrangement.

The theory further posits that reciprocal relationships in the workplace encourage behaviours that align with organisational goals. By embedding spiritual practices and values within the organisational culture, companies can create a climate where employees feel empowered to contribute positively, thus mitigating the negative impact of work alienation. This aligns with Benitez et al. (2020), who argued that the amicable behaviours fostered through workplace spirituality elicit positive responses from peers and create an inclusive environment that counters feelings of alienation.

Methods

The methodology chapter details the participants, instruments, procedures, design, and statistical approaches utilized in the study.

Participants

The study was conducted in the cities of Asaba, Agbor, and Warri strategically chosen due to their dense population of banks, providing a robust sample of employees. A total of 166 bank employees from these commercial hubs in Delta State participated. The gender distribution included 74(44.6%) males and 92 (55.4%) females. The age of participants ranged from 24 to 45 years, with a mean age of 30.5 years and a standard deviation of 5.10. Regarding marital status, 94 (56.6%) of the participants were married, 68 (40.1%) were single, 4 (2.40%) were divorced. Educational qualifications among the participants varied, with 6 (1.4%) holding doctoral degrees (PhD), 31 (18.6%) holding Master's degrees (M.Sc.), and 129(77.7%) holding Bachelor's degrees (B.Sc.). All participants were professional bank employees, with contract staff being excluded from the study. In terms of job rank, 39 (23.49%) were assistant banking officers, 56 (33.7%) were banking officers, 46 (25.9%) were senior banking officers, and 25 (15.0%) were assistant managers. The breakdown of work experience among participants was as follows: 71 (42.7%) had 1-7 years of experience, 56(33.7%) had 8-15 years, and 39(23.4%) had 16-20 years or more. The distribution of participants across banks was as follows: Zenith Bank Plc 66 (39.7%), United Bank for Africa Plc 33 (19.8%), Guaranty Trust Bank 56 (33.7%), Access Bank 11(6.6%). The study also collected data on ethnic affiliation: 72 (43.3%) were Igbo, 32(19.2%) were Yoruba, 21 (12.6%) were Hausa, and 94(24.6%) were from other ethnic groups. In terms of religious affiliation, the majority were Christian 98(59.0%), followed by Islam 11 (6.6%), and other religions 57 (34.3%). Participants from the three cities were as follows: Asaba 78 (46.9%), Agbor 43(25.9%) and Warri 45 (27.1%). The convenience sampling technique was employed, with participation open to professional bank employees willing to engage in the study.

Instruments

Work Engagement Scale

Work engagement was gauged using the 17-item Work Engagement Scale (WES) formulated by Schaufeli et al. (2003). This instrument measures three facets of work engagement: vigour, dedication, and absorption. Responses are captured on a 5-point Likert-type scale, where 1 corresponds to 'fully disagree' and 5 to 'fully agree'. Illustrative items from the scale include statements like "At my work, I feel bursting with energy" for vigour, "My work inspires me" for dedication, and "When I am working, I forget everything else around me" for absorption. The scoring range for the scale is between 17 and 85, with higher scores indicative of greater work engagement and lower scores suggesting disengagement. The scale's internal consistency is robust, with an alpha coefficient of 0.85 as reported by the authors. It has been validated across diverse cultural and occupational contexts, with various samples supporting its three-factor structure and the close interrelation between these factors (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). The WES has been adapted into more than 20 shortened forms, comprising 9 items each (Schaufeli et al., 2006), and these versions have consistently shown high internal consistency, with coefficients ranging from 0.88 to 0.96 (Byrne et al., 2016). In Nigeria, Ugwu (2013) adapted the Work Engagement Scale and validated it for local samples, achieving unanimous agreement among experts on the scale's content and face validity. Ugwu's study also confirmed the scale's reliability with a coefficient of 0.85 and supported the three-factor structure as an adequate representation of work engagement within the Nigerian context.

For this current study, a pilot test was conducted to verify the scale's appropriateness, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.76, thus attesting to its reliability. The scale underwent further validation by four (4) bank employees to ensure its face and content validity.

Work Alienation Scale (WAS)

The dimensions of work alienation were assessed using the Work Alienation Scale (WAS), a 19-item scale developed by Mottaz (1981). This scale is rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale, with options ranging from 'fully disagree' (1) to 'fully agree' (5). The dimension of powerlessness is captured through 4 items, including statements like "my daily activities are largely determined by others" and "I am not able to make changes regarding my job activities". The meaningfulness dimension is represented by 6 items, with examples such as "sometimes I am not sure I completely understand the purpose of what I am doing" and "I understand how my work role fits into the overall operation of this organisation". The self-estrangement dimension comprises 9 items, one of which is "I do not feel a sense of accomplishment in the type of work I do". Scores on the scale range from 19 to 95, where a higher score reflects higher levels of the social alienation dimensions among employees. Mottaz reported a reliability score of 0.834 for the overall scale, with coefficients of 0.85 for powerlessness, 0.75 for meaningfulness, and 0.70 for self-estrangement. Subsequent studies have corroborated the scale's reliability. Ucanok (2000) adapted the WAS for Turkish employees and found similar reliability figures: 0.85 for powerlessness, 0.70 for meaningfulness, and 0.71 for self-estrangement. Ozer et al. (2017) reported a Cronbach's alpha of 0.75 for the overall scale, with powerlessness scoring 0.77 and meaningfulness scoring 0.85. Mohamed and Shaheen (2022) applied the scale to nursing staff, establishing face and content validity and obtaining a reliability coefficient of 0.76 for workplace alienation, attesting to the scale's consistent reliability.

In the current study, a pilot test yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.78 for the overall WAS. The powerlessness dimension recorded a high reliability of 0.88, meaningfulness was 0.77, and self-estrangement was 0.82, affirming the reliability of the scale. The validity of the scale relative to other variables was also strong, with a significant correlation with a greater sense of coherence ($r=0.428$ $p < 0.001$). The WAS was reviewed by (4) bank employees to ensure its face and content validity.

Workplace Spirituality Scale

The Workplace Spirituality Scale, developed by Petchsawang and Duchon (2009), is a comprehensive 22-item measure used to assess the extent to which individuals find their ultimate purpose in life through their work, establish strong connections with co-workers and others involved with their work, and experience alignment between their core beliefs and the values of their organisation. The participants responded on a 5-point Likert-type scale, with options ranging from 'fully disagree' (1) to 'fully agree' (5). Examples of items from this scale include: "I can easily put myself in other people's shoes" (compassion), "I experience joy in my work" (meaningful work), "At times, I experience an energy or vitality at work that is difficult to describe" (transcendence), and "It seems I am working automatically without much awareness of what I'm doing" (mindfulness). The scoring range of the scale is from 22 to 110, where higher scores denote greater levels of workplace spirituality and lower scores reflect lesser degrees.

The scale's developers reported an internal consistency of .89 for the overall scale, with .60, .85, .70, and .85 for the compassion, meaningful work, transcendence, and mindfulness dimensions, respectively. Alam and Chaudhary (2021) applied the scale within the Pakistani

context and confirmed its face validity with a reliability coefficient of 0.85. Similarly, Ajala (2013) utilized the scale to investigate the impact of workplace spirituality on employee wellbeing in the Nigerian industrial sector, obtaining a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86 and confirming its face validity, indicative of its adaptability to the Nigerian milieu.

In the current study, the scale's suitability was determined through a pilot test which yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .78, verifying the instrument's reliability. The scale was assessed by four (4) bank employees to ensure face and content validity.

Procedure

For the main study, 166 commercial bank employees from Asaba, Agbor and Warri of Delta State were sampled. To manage the large sample size, two members of the National Youth Corps were recruited as research assistants. These assistants, delegated from the University of Delta, Agbor's human resources department, were trained to understand the study's objectives and administer the instruments independently. Using the sample size formula by Yamane (1967), a minimum of 120 responses was needed to achieve a 95% confidence interval. Banks were selected via simple random sampling, giving each branch an equal opportunity to be chosen. The sampling strategy was guided by convenience, focusing on employees willing to participate and excluding contract and hired staff.

The researcher offered practical assistance and introductory statements at the start of the questionnaire to ensure participants were well-informed. Participants were drawn from various divisions such as cash/teller, customer service, funds and transfer, and marketing, represented ranks from Assistant Banking Officer up to Assistant Manager. The research team encountered cooperative behaviour from the participants, who were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and the freedom to withdraw at any time. The completion rate of the questionnaires was high, with most employees returning them immediately, while some requested to submit them the following day. The data collection phase spanned 7 days, extended in some districts due to logistical considerations. Out of 180 distributed questionnaires, 170 were retrieved, and following the exclusion of 4 invalid responses, 166 valid questionnaires were retained for analysis.

Design and Statistics

The study was a cross-sectional survey as data was collected using copies of questionnaires given to participants. The study adopted a correlational design. To ascertain the relationships between the variables under investigation, Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was utilized. Furthermore, moderated Regression analysis was employed to examine the moderating influence within the relationships. All statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS software, version 23.

Results

The analysis of the data in the study was presented in this chapter. All statistics were managed with SPSS v23 for this study.

Table 1: Assumption check for normality test for sample distribution (Shapiro-Wilk)

	Workplace spirituality	Work alienation	Powerlessness dimension	Meaninglessness dimension	Self-estrangement dimension
Sharpiro-wilk w	0.922	0.962	0.988	0.990	0.9556
Shapiro-wlk p	0.534	0.612	0.821	0.0732	0.059

Table 2 reveals that using the Sharpiro-Wilk for the assumption check fro sample distribution, the test of normality or even distribution of the participants was confirmed since the probability range for Sharpiro wilk is greater than 0.05 at p= 0.534, 0.612, 0.821, 0.0732 and 0.059 respectively for workplace spirituality, work alienation, powerlessness dimension of work alienation, meaningless dimension of work alienation and self-estrangement dimension of work alienation. the p-value is greater than 0.05 significance for 166 respondents, henace, sample for the study is normal and evenly distributed.

Table 2: Correlation matrix between workplace spirituality, work alienation dimensions of powerlessness, meaninglessness and self-estrangement dimensions

	Workplace spirituality	Work alienation dimensions	Powerlessness dimension of work alienation	Meaninglessness dimension of work alienation	Self-estrangement dimension of work alienation
Workplace Spirituality Pearson's r	0.820***				
p-value	<.001				
Work alienation Pearson's r	0.856***	0.671***			
p-value	<.001	<.001			
Powerlessness dimension of work alienation Pearson's r	0.542***	0.551***	0.538***		
p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001		
Meaninglessness dimension of work alienation Pearson's r	0.651***	0.621***	0.681***	0.641***	
p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	
Self-estrangement dimension of work alienation Pearson's r	0.0821***	0.0649***	0.0587***	0.087***	0.543***
p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
N	166	166	166	166	166

Table 2 displays the correlation matrix between workplace spirituality and work alienation dimensions of powerlessness, meaninglessness and self-estrangement. work alienation dimension of powerlessness correlated positively with workplace spirituality at r= 0.542, p < .001 (n=166), the relationship between workplace spirituality and meaninglessness dimension of work alienation correlated positively at r= 0.651, p< .001 (n=166) and self-estrangement dimension of work alienation was significant at r= 0.0821, p < .001 (n= 166). Regression analysis was carried out to ascertain if the observed correlation reached predictive values.

Table 3

Variables	Estimate	SE	T	P
Work alienation	0.4714	0.07312	6.3412	<.001
WA-Self-estrangement	0.5653	0.4321	4.3231	0.6321
WA-Powerlessness	0.6451	0.5312	0.5811	0.5211
WA-Meaninglessness	0.7654	0.4121	2.3421	0.6171

Table 3 revealed the beta weight predictive estimates of the predictor on the outcome variables. Data shows that workplace spirituality positively and significantly predicted the powerlessness dimension of work alienation at $\beta = 0.47$, $p < .001$ ($n=166$) which means that workplace spirituality among bank employees less the powerlessness dimension of work alienation. The predictor effects for the meaninglessness dimension of work alienation and workplace spirituality was significant at $r= 0.76$, $p < .001$ ($n=166$). Also, the self-estrangement had positive correlations with workplace spirituality at $r= 0.64$, $p < .001$ ($n=166$). This shows that workplace spirituality had a significant contribution to reducing the effects of work alienation dimensions of powerlessness, meaninglessness and self-estrangement dimensions hence boosting the work performance output and work engagement among bankers in Delta State

Discussion

The study's findings are consistent with existing literature that underscores the role of workplace spirituality in enhancing work engagement and reducing the negative effects of work alienation. The significant inverse correlation between workplace spirituality and dimensions of work alienation implies that spiritual practices within the workplace can serve as a buffer against psychological disengagement. The positive correlation observed between spirituality and reduced powerlessness suggests that employees who perceive a spiritual aspect to their work are likely to feel more empowered and capable of influencing organisational outcomes. This aligns with Kartal's (2018) findings, which indicated that work engagement can act as a remedy for feelings of helplessness in demanding work settings.

The reduction in the meaninglessness dimension of alienation is also noteworthy. Employees who experience workplace spirituality often find greater purpose in their work, leading to enhanced engagement and job satisfaction. This supports the conclusions of Iqbal et al. (2022), who found that fostering a spiritually supportive work environment could help employees derive meaning and fulfilment from their roles. When employees perceive their tasks as meaningful, they are more likely to be committed to their job and less prone to disengagement.

Regarding the self-estrangement dimension, the study shows that workplace spirituality contributes to a greater sense of personal fulfilment, which diminishes feelings of disconnection from one's work. This finding echoes the results of Astuti et al. (2020), who demonstrated that spirituality positively influences job satisfaction and reduces deviant workplace behaviours. The support and compassion associated with workplace spirituality make employees feel more integral to the organisation, thereby enhancing their psychological well-being and connection to their roles.

The Social Exchange Theory serves as a relevant theoretical framework for interpreting these results. According to the theory, the reciprocal nature of social interactions in the workplace fosters a sense of obligation, trust, and commitment among employees. In environments where

spirituality is embraced, the principles of reciprocity and mutual support are more prevalent, creating a culture in which employees feel valued and motivated to reciprocate through higher levels of engagement. Thus, the study extends the application of Social Exchange Theory to include spiritual fulfilment as a valuable element in workplace dynamics.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed to help banks address work alienation through the integration of workplace spirituality:

1. Integrate Workplace Spirituality into Organisational Culture:

- Banks should actively incorporate workplace spirituality into their core values and organisational culture. This could be done through policies that promote a sense of community, shared values, and meaningful work. For example, introducing regular mindfulness sessions, meditation workshops, or spiritually-themed retreats could help employees connect more deeply with their work and with one another.

- Organisational values should reflect not only business goals but also principles such as compassion, community, and ethical behaviour. Establishing an internal culture that values these spiritual aspects can help reduce feelings of alienation by making employees feel that their work has a higher purpose beyond financial gain.

2. Develop Training Programmes Focused on Spiritual Leadership:

- Managers should be trained in spiritual leadership practices that encourage a supportive, empathetic, and purpose-driven work environment. Training programmes could focus on techniques for fostering connectedness, inspiring employees to find meaning in their work, and supporting their personal and professional development.

- Leaders who embody the principles of spiritual leadership can serve as role models, creating a ripple effect throughout the organisation that encourages a culture of mutual respect, compassion, and collaboration. This leadership style can also empower employees by involving them in decision-making processes, thereby reducing feelings of powerlessness.

3. Enhance Employee Well-being Programmes:

- Employee well-being initiatives should incorporate elements that promote spiritual health, such as resilience training, stress management workshops, and personal growth seminars. These programmes can be aligned with the core aspects of workplace spirituality, such as meaning, transcendence, and community.

- Encouraging employees to engage in activities that promote work-life balance, such as flexible work schedules and mindfulness practices, can reduce the emotional strain and fatigue associated with work alienation. When employees feel supported in their personal and spiritual growth, they are more likely to be engaged and perform better at work.

4. Promote a Collaborative and Inclusive Work Environment:

- Fostering an inclusive environment where employees from diverse backgrounds can share their experiences and contribute to decision-making processes can enhance the sense of community within the workplace. This collaborative atmosphere can reduce feelings of self-estrangement by making employees feel valued and integral to the organisation's success.

- Team-building activities that encourage open communication, mutual support, and the sharing of personal goals can strengthen relationships among co-workers, further reinforcing the principles of workplace spirituality. When employees feel connected to one another, they are more likely to experience a sense of belonging and purpose in their work.

5. Implement Regular Assessments to Monitor Work Alienation:

- Banks should establish mechanisms for regularly assessing the levels of work alienation and spirituality among employees. Surveys and feedback tools can be used to gauge employees' perceptions of their work environment and identify areas where interventions are needed.

- Early identification of signs of work alienation allows for timely intervention strategies, such as coaching, counselling, or spiritual development programmes, to be put in place. Addressing these issues proactively can prevent the escalation of disengagement and support long-term employee retention.

Implications

The implications of this study extend beyond the banking sector to other high-pressure industries where work alienation is prevalent, such as healthcare, education, and information technology. The findings suggest that integrating workplace spirituality can help organisations across various sectors mitigate the adverse effects of alienation and foster a more engaged and resilient workforce. Furthermore, the research highlights the need for organisations to view workplace spirituality not just as a wellness initiative but as a strategic approach to enhancing employee motivation, productivity, and organisational culture.

Future Research Studies

Although this study addresses several aspects of work alienation and workplace spirituality, there remain gaps in the literature that warrant further investigation. One such gap is the limited exploration of how different organisational contexts and cultures may influence the impact of workplace spirituality on work alienation. Future research could examine the moderating role of organisational culture in diverse settings, such as multinational corporations versus local firms, to better understand how cultural factors affect the implementation and outcomes of workplace spirituality.

Additionally, longitudinal studies could be conducted to assess the long-term effects of workplace spirituality on work alienation. Such studies would provide insights into how sustained spiritual practices within organisations influence employee engagement, job satisfaction, and overall well-being over time. Moreover, future research could also explore the role of individual differences, such as personality traits and personal values, in shaping employees' responses to workplace spirituality initiatives.

Another area for future research is to investigate the potential differential effects of various dimensions of workplace spirituality (e.g., meaningful work, transcendence, and compassion) on the specific dimensions of work alienation. Understanding which aspects of spirituality are most effective in reducing powerlessness, meaninglessness, and self-estrangement would enable organisations to design targeted interventions that address the unique needs of their workforce.

Conclusion

The research demonstrates that workplace spirituality serves as an effective moderator in the relationship between work alienation dimensions and employee engagement. By reducing the impact of powerlessness, meaninglessness, and self-estrangement, workplace spirituality contributes to a more fulfilling and productive work environment. These findings advocate for the incorporation of spiritual principles into organisational practices to not only improve employee well-being but also to foster a culture of mutual support and collective success.

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