1. Introduction

A new spiritual awareness has been stirring in workers’ psyches driving them toward a more humanistic work environment, more meaning at work, and a connection to something more than just functional work (Marques, Dhiman, & King, 2005).

There are three levels of spirituality at work: individual, work unit, and organisation-wide (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000).

- **Individual level**: how much an employee understands their own “divine” power; how it can help them obtain a satisfying internal and external life by finding individual meaning and purpose through work.

- **Work unit level**: how much employees have a sense of connection and community with colleagues, and the extent to which colleagues are caring and encouraging.

- **Organisation-wide level**: the extent to which an employee perceives a good relationship with their organisation, and perceives their own values and goals align with their organisation’s.

2. Research questions

What are the moderating effects of spirituality at work on job stress and health (well-being and ill-being) amongst Australian academics?

Based on Gall et al.’s (2005) spiritual appraisal model of stress and health, does spirituality at work moderate the relationship between job stress, work-life balance, and work-life conflict amongst Australian academics?

3. Methodology

139 academics in Australian universities and technical colleges anonymously completed a self-report questionnaire.

### Variables

- Spirituality at work (individual, work-unit and organisation-wide spirituality).
- Health (well-being and ill-being).
- Work-life balance.
- Work-life conflict.
- Job stress (job threat stress and job pressure stress).

### Measures

- Ashmos and Duchon’s (2000) meaningful work items were used to measure spirituality at work at the individual level.
- Millman, Craske, and Ferguson’s, (2003) sense of community items were used to measure the work unit level.
- Ashmos and Duchon’s (2000) alignment with organisational values items were used to measure spirituality at work at the organisation-wide level.
- Stanton, Balzer, Smith, Parra, and Ironson’s, (2001) Stress in General Scale was used to measure job threat stress and job pressure stress.
- Hill, Hawkins, Ferris, and Weitzman’s, (2001) Work-Family Balance Scale was used to measure work-life balance.

4. Key findings

**Significant correlations** between spirituality at work (individual, work-unit and organisation-wide levels), well-being, ill-being, job threat stress and job pressure stress, work-life balance, and work-life conflict. At the multivariate level each of the three levels of spirituality at work did not moderate the influence of job threat and pressure stress on both well-being or ill-being.

**Job threat stress** significantly predicted decreased well-being and increased ill-being, but job pressure stress was not predictive of health. Spirituality at work unsuccessfully moderated the influence of job threat and job pressure stress on work-life balance and work-life conflict.

**Job threat stress and job pressure stress** both significantly predicted decreased work-life balance and increased work-life conflict. The main effect of work-unit spirituality at work on work-life balance did reach significance.

In today’s high stress work climate, academics may be motivated to focus on lower-order needs, such as keeping up with work demands and balancing personal responsibilities with work commitments, rather than higher-order spiritual needs such as self-actualisation. This interpretation could be further explored in workplaces where employees experience lower levels of stress.

Universities should consider implementing stress management components into Human Resource Management employee well-being programs and initiatives. Work-life balance programs should also integrate stress management, and work-unit spirituality at work, as this aspect of spirituality demonstrated possible potential in helping academics achieve work-life balance.

**References**


