



# “Spirit or soul at work”: Myth or dependable reality

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## Abstract

This text examined extant literature on the socio-psychological construct of “spirit at work”, for organization-man, popularized as workplace spirituality to ascertain its dependable reality or otherwise. The paper critically reviews various scholars’ views regarding work-place spirituality by giving deep insight into the theoretical underpinnings of spirituality and distinguishing between spirituality and religion. The review of literature makes the following expositions: first, two main theoretical perspectives namely: the intrinsic-origin view (inner search for meaning) and the existential perspective (search for meaningful life and values), give rise to the hybridized perspective that conceptualizes spirituality on the dimensions of self-transcendence, interconnectedness, sense of purpose, and ultimate concern. The other perspective is the ambit that views spirituality through the lens of spirituality leadership for spiritual survival in the leadership and followership continuum. Second, a distinction between spirituality and religion was made. However, the point of emphasis is that the two concepts are interrelated and complimentary in nature; thirdly, Spirit at work manifests as a result of the interactions of personal and integrated factors. Finally, an avalanche of empirical-based individual (micro) and organizational (macro) level benefits associated with the construct were extensively examined and highlighted. In view of the foregoing therefore, we are inclined to infer that spirit at work appears a dependable reality. Some review implications are presented.

**Keywords:** Spirit at work, Spirituality, Myth, Reality, Religion

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## 1. Introduction

Intense competition, pressure triggered environmental changes, the enthusiasm to adapt to trendy changes and new management techniques informed by human-centric strategies, have sharpened the focus on the exploration of a fast growing socio-psychological construct for organization-man. "Spirit at Work" (Kingerski and Shrypnek, 2006:2), widely popularized as workplace spirituality or better still "soul at work" (Lewin, n.d), is a new lense through which the relationship between the individual and modern pluralistic workplaces could be viewed (McGhee and Grant, 2008:61). Uniquely, spirit at work, encapsulates profound feelings of wellbeing and a belief that one's work contributes meaningfully towards fulfillment and beyond self (Ashmos and Duchnon, 2000; Kinjerski and Shrypnek, 2004; Milliman, Czeplewski and Ferguson, 2003; Mitroff and Denton, 1995; Sheep, 2004).

Giacalone and Jurkieweiz (2004), note that the interest in workplace spirituality within the scholarship of management has experienced exponential growth over the last decade of the twentieth century and even into the new millennium. As aptly stated by Galen and West (1995:1),

*...a growing number of companies are setting off on spiritual journey. It's not about brining religion into the office or requiring that employees chant mantras at the work stations. Rather, the spirituality movement in the corporation is an attempt to create a connection between the company and its people".*

Consequently, celebrated companies like Ford, Nike, Boeing, AT & T, Lotus, Teen Bell and others alike, have all commenced incorporating spirituality into the workplace. On this score, Conlin (1999:2), did observe that today a spiritual revival is fast speeding across corporate America as the executives of most companies are mixing mysticism into their management as well as importing the tenets of the lessons preached in churches, temples and mosques into their offices.

Although, the interlace between spirituality and well being is impressively acknowledged (George, Larson, Koeing and McCollough, 2000; Pacoutzion, Emmons and Keortge, 2003), research has recently lent support to the viewpoint that the experience of spirituality at work parades more fulfilling lives to individuals as well as positive organizational outcomes (Fairholm, 1997; Geon, 2003; Kinjerski, 2004; Kinjerski and Shrypnek, 2006; Milliman et al 2002; Mitroff and Denton, 1999; Moxley, 2000). Spirit at work was reported to acts as an antidote to disengagement and disenchantment at work (Kinjerski and Shrynek, 2006). McGhee and Grant (2008), have similarly advanced the notion that spiritual individuals are ethical in business, thereby resulting teamwork and fairness (Biberman and Whittey, 1997), greater awareness for the needs of other employees (Cash and Gray, 2000), increased honesty and trustworthiness at the workplace (Brown, 2000), enhanced indices of organization citizenship behaviours - OCB's (Nurr and Organ, 2006), and evidence of servant leadership (Beezley and Gemmil, 2006).

It is against this background, this text reviews extant literature to appraise spirit at work as either mythical or a dependable reality. In accomplishing this, the text commences with an introduction, which is closely followed by an insight into the theoretical underpinnings, of spirituality. A distinction between

spirituality and religion is presented next. Directly this, individual and organizational level benefits associated with workplace spirituality are explored. The remainder of the paper finally presents the conclusion and implications for the review.

## 2. Defining spirituality at work

As it is the feature of most concepts and constructs in the social sciences, spirituality is one concept that is fraught with the problem of having a precise definition, meaning and exact characterization. Consequently, this has resulted to widespread and extreme differences in the use of the term, meaning and significance (McGhee and Grant, 2008). Resultantly, no one clear definition of spirituality or perspective of spirituality exist (Konz and Ryan, 1999; McCommick, 1994). Laabs (1995) has pointed out that it is much easier to explain what spirituality in business is, than defining it. In this discourse therefore, we shall attempt to examine a few of the multitudes of definitions offered by scholars under two most popular viewpoints of spirituality namely: the intrinsic – origin view point and the existentialist perspective. According to Krishnakumar and Neck (2002: 154), the intrinsic- origin view point of the concept presents spirituality as one that emanates from the inside of the individual. In contrast to this view, the existentialist perspective pertains to the arena of search for meaning in what people do at the workplace (Kashnweiler and Otte, 1997).

Under the intrinsic – origin view, Guillory (2000:33), defined spirituality as “our inner consciousness” and “that which is spiritual comes from within beyond our programmed beliefs and values”. The author further observed that a key characteristic that underlie this perspective is that spirituality is alienated from the rules of religion. Perhaps, this may have informed Grober’s (2001:40), argument that spirituality avoids the formal and ceremonial meanings of religion; it is non-denominational, non-hierarchical, and non-ecclesiastic. Under this guise, spirituality informs an inner search for meaning or fulfillment that may be undertaken by anyone irrespective of religion. Zinnbauer, Pargamant and Scott (1999), have argued that spirituality allows the individual to have a sense of the sacred without the conventional practices and limitations that are associated with traditional religion. Also, Turner (1999:41), defined spirituality as one coming from within, beyond the survival instincts of the mind; whereas Moore and Casper (2006), equally defined spirituality as some internal substance, a value, belief, attitude or emotions that affect people’s behavior.

A critique of the foregoing stream of scholarly opinion indicates that in tandem with the tenets of the intrinsic-views point, spirituality is a concept that is individual – centric and one that originates from the individual. Put differently, it transcends the individual, and places premium on the innate search for meaning or personal fulfillment by any one regardless of religious inclinations. Most a time, people would become interested in finding out how fulfilling the work they do is to them. Logically speaking, this informs the “inner search” or “soul search” for meaning or also a feeling of the sacred, without necessarily indulging in the rigors or protocols of religion.

Evaluating from the existentialist perspective, Kahnweiller and Otte (1997), as cited in Litzsey (2003:15), note that “this view of spirituality is perhaps the most connected to the notion such as the search for meaning

in what we are doing at the workplace". On this premise, some salient existential questions that frequently come to mind are:

- Why am I doing this work?
- What is the meaning of the work I am doing?
- Where does this lead me to?
- Is there a reason for my existence and the organization?

According to Litzsey (2003:10), the foregoing question are usually posed or readily come to mind when people are engaged in repetitive and boring jobs that result in existential ailments or angst. When workers don't have meaning for the job they do, it leads to separation and ultimately job alienation, frustration and less employee output. What is clearly portrayed in this perspective is the search for meaning in what people do at the workplace spirituality that ultimately addresses existential or emotional angst.

An examination of the intrinsic – origin view and the existential perspective clearly shows that, while the former presents spirituality as one that emanates from the inside of the individual that relates search for personal fulfillment devoid of religiosity, the latter typically perceives spirituality as the platform for the search for meaning in what people do at work. The obvious is that these two strands of conceptualizing spirituality appears restrictive and may not have encapsulated other realities and dynamics of the concept concerning the workplace.

Exploring further from another theoretical threshold that seemingly appear all encompassing and a hybrid of the intrinsic-origin and the existentialist perspectives, Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2004), defined spirituality as a framework of organizational value evidenced in the culture that provide employee's experience of transcendence through the workplace, facilitating their sense of being connected to other in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy. Accordingly, Carrette and King (2005), argue that spirituality has become the brand label for the search of meaning, values, transcendence, hope and connectedness in modern societies. Kinjerski and Shrypnek (2004; 2006b), may have also conceived spirituality as one that is characterized by engaging work (cognitive); profound feelings of well-being and engaging in meaningful work, a sense of community (interpersonal); a feeling of connectedness to others and common purpose, spiritual connection characterized by a sense of connection to something larger than self and a mystical experience depicted by a positive state of energy and experience of joy and bliss

Furthermore, Achmos and Duchan (2000) in their multi-dimensional approach, identified a model that is composed of three levels; the individual level encompassing inner life of hopefulness, personal values and concern for spirituality, the second level of creating meaning at work-energizing and joyful work and the third individual component as condition for community – fellowship dimension of spiritual development. The second main level involving the work-unit level involves a community (encouraging and caring), and getting identified with unit goals and mission; and lastly, the organizational level that shows how the individual perceive the organization.

An evaluation of the preceding lines of scholarly opinions on spirituality indicates some salient areas of convergence with specificity on the following individual behavioral dimensions. First, seeking for transcend personal ego or transcendence (self interests). In its simplest; transcendence informs something that calls an

individual beyond the “self” or ego to show concern for and linkages with others and with the ultimate “other”. According to Torrence (1994), spirited individuals transcend their egoistic self not through mystical realm but coming to terms with enlarging and transformative personality. This might also mean achieving heightened consciousness (Mayer, 2000), having peak experiences (Maslow, 1970), or experiencing a state of flow (Csikszantmihalyi, 1990).

Second, is the premise of becoming aware and the acceptance of interconnectedness with others, creation, and the ultimate concern (sense of community). The purport of this theme is that spirited individuals show the zeal to live a life of meaningful relationships. Invariably, spirited individuals get connected to the self, others and without feeling isolated as “atomistic ego subject” (Yu, 1987:143). Spirited individuals appreciate being in communion with others and the ultimate other (Buber, 1970).

Third, another arena that is equally apparent in the expressed scholarly views is, sense of purpose. Spirituality informs a higher echelon of understanding in contextualizing lower levels. A means through which answers to what McGhee and Grant (2008) referred to as “why” questions could be proffered answers as well as providing individual lives with integrated wholeness. (Mitroff and Denton, 1999). What is aptly portrayed here is how spirited individuals re-examine events in a way that relates spiritual meaning – process of meaning making (Baumiester and Voh, 2005).

Fourth, is the experience the spirited individual has with the ultimate concern. Indeed, these are “God values” that provides a pivoting power in our lives (Tillich, 1952). What is clearly brought to focus is the experience based belief the spirited individuals get through transcendences. In this guise, spiritual individuals believe in something that is beyond the material universe (Mitroff and Denton, 1999). Also, such individuals believe in the notion that contact with the unseen dimension to life is beneficial (Dierendonick and Mohan, 2006; WHOQQ SRPB Group, 2006), perhaps, this is the dimension Kinjerski and Shrypnek (2006), refer to as the mystical or unitive experience depicted by a positive state of energy that results in complete joy and bliss. In consonance with the tenets of this perspective, spirit at work or spirituality informs a distinct experience that is characterized by cognitive features, interpersonal dimensions, spiritual presence and mystical components (Kinjerski and Shrypnek, 2006:2).

Finally, another dimension through which spirituality could be x-rayed is the confluence between workplace spirituality and leadership. Fry’s (2003), conceptualization of spiritual leadership made a revelation on some set of critical values that underpin intrinsic-self motivation and other factors enhancing a sense of spiritual survival which correlates meaning, calling and organization membership.

Fry (2003), argue that spiritual leadership pervades the basic need of both leader and follower for spiritual survival that relates organizational commitment and increased productivity. According to his theory, the process should fundamentally entail the creation of vision in the organization in which member experience sense of calling or meaningful lives, establishment of a social/organization based culture that is a function of altruistic love, in which leaders and followers show-case genuine care, concern and appreciation for self and others that give rise to sense of organizational membership, understanding and appreciation.

Still within this circuit of reasoning Kibby (2007), in his Noetic leadership model proposed leadership skills that could facilitate spirituality through affect and cognition. The term Noetic was coined from the work

of Frankl (1963, 1969), who hinted that spirituality was the formation of meaning through values (Noos-Greek word for spirituality, and emotion – Noetic). Kibby (2007), noted that spirituality is formed through values that addresses existential gaps or one that triggers emotions. Therefore, what underlies Noetic leadership is the form of interaction in the leadership process that provides answers to existential angst. What is clearly portrayed in this segment of the review is that a nexus exist between spiritual leadership and spirit at work. Put differently, spirituality could also be viewed through the lens of spiritual leadership. Leadership and followership requires spirituality to harness organizational commitment and enhanced proactivity through the creation of vision, meaningful lives, altruism and emotion oriented values.

From the foregoing shades of theoretical perspectives, we are thus inclined to argue that spirit at work, alternatively circularized as workplace spirituality is a unique experience by employees typified by engaging work, profound feelings of well being and meaningful life, a sense of community (inner connectedness) and transcendence resulting completeness and joy. While the intrinsic origin view places premium on the innate search for meaning and value on the one hand, the existentialist perspective indicates reliance on the search for meaning that answers Key existentialist questions or proffers solutions to existentialist angsts on the other hand.

Further the hybridized perspective appears as an amalgam of certain spiritual realities that border on engaging work, feelings of well being and meaningful life, (interconnectedness) with self, others and the ultimate concern through transcendence that enhances holism and joy. Finally, the last perspective views spirituality through the medium of spiritual leadership that utilizes components of the construct and indices of motivational framework giving use to spiritual survival. In turn, the experience of spirit at work by employee is a function of the interaction between a compendium of personality factors (Kinjerski, 2004; Kinjerski and Shrypnek, 2006), personal actions (Kinjerski, 2004; Denzin and Lincoln, 1995), and organizational factors (Ashmos and Duchnon, 2000; Fairholm, 1997; Jacobson, 1994; Kinjerski and Shrypnek, 2006b; Mitroff and Denton 1999; Milliman et al, 2003). Having gone through the trajectory of the spirituality literature, we shall examine the distinction between spirituality and religion in the next phase of this review.

### **3. Spirituality and religion**

Many researchers have the sentiment that a synonym exist between spirituality and religion (Delher and Welsh, 1994; Mitroff and Denton, 1999). As noted by Garcia-Zamar (2003), spirituality is definitely not about religion. Spirituality appears a broader concept than religion in the strictest sense (McGhee and Grant, 2008:62) The clear line of distinction between the two is that, spirituality permits the individual to have a sense of the sacred without the conventional practices and limitations that are linked with traditional religion (Zinnbauer, Pargament and Scott, 1999). Laabs (1995:61), equally notes, “it’s not about converting people. It’s about knowing that we are all spiritual beings having a human experience” While religion is outward oriented with focus on rituals, adhering to dogma and attending church services, spirituality is inward looking with emphasis on personal experiences, manifesting itself through behaviors, principles and practices (Litzsey, 2006).

Attendantly, the renowned Dalai Lama (1999), also made a distinction between spirituality and religion, arguing that spirituality is concerned with features of the human spirit such as love, compassion, patience, tolerance, forgiveness, contentment and harmony, while religion concerns faith that is hinged on techniques, dogma, ritual prayer and the like.

In contrast to this position, some scholars think that a clear delineation between spirituality and religion do not exist. For example, Hill et al (2000), did advance that belief and experiences that are associated with religiousness, such as prayer and church attendance, are also co-terminus with spirituality, if they are part of an individual's search of the sacred. Also, McGhee and Grant (2008:62), did observe that many spiritual individuals are unknowingly, part of a non-traditional religion, while those that are not affiliated to any organized group practice a private form of religion. In view of the foregoing scholarly views on spirituality and religion, we are thus inclined to argue that both concepts are at best complimentary and interrelated in some aspects. In the ensuing phase of this review, the individual and organizational benefits associated with spirituality are appraised.

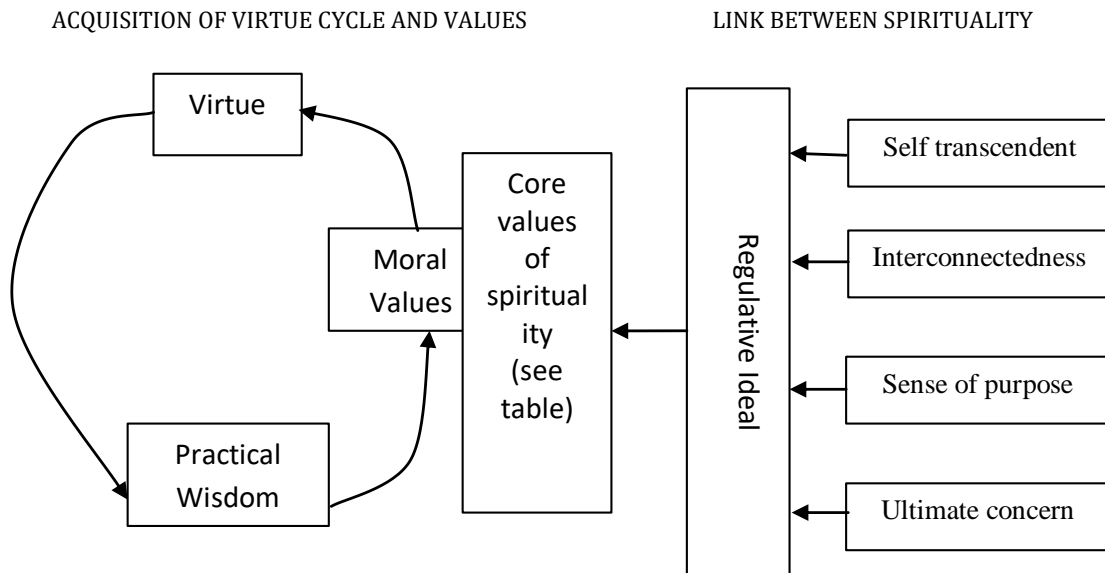
#### **4. Benefits of spirit at work**

In exploring benefits associated with spirit at work, Herman, Gioia Chalkley (1998:24), note thus "Today's worker is no longer willing to work in an authoritarian and dehumanizing environment. Workers want meaning in their work and balance in their lives". This contention appears positive and significant in x-raying aligning benefits of spirituality at work. Research suggests that employees are finding it difficult to alienate their spiritual lives from their work lives (Zimmerman, 2004). The premise of argument is that integrating spirituality in the workplace will afford workers meaning and purpose. On the same pedestal, organizations will also reap benefits of profits, high morale and reduced absenteeism. Similarly, Barret (n.d) as cited in Litzsey (2006:15), notes, "successful business leaders of the 21st century will need to find a dynamic balance between the interests of the corporation, the interests of the workers and the interests of the society as a whole". This is realizable, when organization relates the company's goal of profits with the employee's goal of finding meaning and purpose at work.

Garcia - Zamar (2003), has argued that spirituality in the workplace may get manifested in multiple ways, but chiefly at two distinct units namely: the personal (micro) and the organizational (macro) levels. In concordance with this view point, we are inclined to compartmentalize the associated benefits of spirituality into the two levels. Evaluating from the individual level (micro), research suggests that encouraging spirituality in the workplace can lead to benefit in the arena of creativity, process improvement, customer service, honesty and trust, personal fulfillments and commitment that will perforce increased organizational performance (Krishnakumar et al; 2002; McDaniel n.d; Miller, 1999). Accordingly, East (2005), in a study found that employees who experience spirituality at work have peace of mind, inner strength, serenity, patience, calmness, sanity and positive attitude (functional). Further, spirituality in the workplace leads to intention that ultimately results in creativity (Freshman, 1999). This view point is also supported by Turner (1999), by arguing that spirited employees become more creative which leads to happiness and satisfaction.

Kinjerski and Shrypnek (2006), have also reported a positive correlation between the presence of spirit at work and employee wellness and organizational performance. On the same score, spirit at work is reported to add meaning to one’s life, one’s creativity, commitment and zeal for work (Fairholm, 1997; Geon, 2003; Millimen et al; 1999; Moxley, 2000). Also, an empirical nexus between spirit at work and job satisfaction (Kinjerski and Shrypnek; Covney and Brewer, 2003), enhanced organizational commitment (Kinjerski and Shrypnek, 2006), and decreased absenteeism and turnover (Kinjerski and Shrypnek, 2006), is beginning to emerge. Still at the individual level, research has provided empirical support on the positive relationship between spirituality at work, operationalised by meaningful work, sense of community, an alignment of values with the organization, and employee job outcomes such an organizational commitment, intention to quite, intrinsic satisfaction with work and job involvement (Job-related attitudes).

Furthermore, Kinjerski and Shrypnek (2006) in their study found out that individuals with high spirit at work experience positive effect on their personal wellbeing, relationships, consumer relations and productivity. The authors also held in emphasis that certain benefits are associated with their ecological model of spirit at work as desirable outcomes for the employee, the consumer and the organization, which they christened as “win=win-win”. Within the same context of reasoning, McGhee and Grant (2008:66), have similarly advanced in their model that spirituality at work acts as a regulative ideal. The “ideal” generates as ingrained set of specific moral values that represents an internalized deposition to act and be motivated to act in specific ways that drives excellence. What is highlighted here is that spirit at work acts as a regulative ideal or mechanism for individuals in terms of motivation, decisions and attendant actions geared towards excellence. In essence, spirited individuals with general regulative ideal acts on specific values and beliefs that provides stability to them when things are in a state of flux (Emmons, 1999; Seidlit et al, 2002).



Source: Adapted from McGhee, P., and Grant, P. (2008). Spirituality and ethical behavior in the workplace: Wishful thinking or Authentic Reality, *Electronic Journal of Business Ethics and Organizational Studies*, Vol. 13 (2): 61 – 69.



Table 1. A comparison of scholarly articles comparing similar values relating to spiritual individuals in the workplace

AUTHOR(S)	SPIRITUAL VALUES	COMMENT
Jackson , (1999: 65-66) & Kriger & Hanson, (1999:304)	Equality, honesty, compassion, avoiding harm, respect, peace, justice, forgiveness, service, duty trustworthiness, being a good citizen, peace, thankfulness	Spiritual values from worl's main religioins (Sikhism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Bahaism, Confucianism & Jainism).
Synder & Lopez (2001)	Optimism, hope, humility, compassion, forgiveness, gratitude, love, altruism, empathy, toughness, meaningfulness	List of values linked to positive psychology and spirituality.
Giacolone & Lurkiewicz, (2003a, :14)	Integrity, humanism, awareness, meaningfulness, responsibility, love, inner peace, truth, humility, sense of community, justice	Manifestations of spirituality in the form of spiritual attributes.
Fry (2003:695)	Forgiveness, kindness, integrity, empathy, honesty, patience, courage, trust, humility, service to others	Specifically tied to spiritual leadership; all subordinate under a single value altruistic love.
Jurkiewics & Giacalone, (2004: 131)	Benevolence, generativity, humanism, integrity, justice, mutuality, receptivity, respect, responsibility, trust.	Values framework for measuring workplace spirituality.
Fry, (2005: 86)	Honesty, forgiveness, hope, gratitude, humility, compassion, integrity.	A set of core values reflecting a state of ethical and spiritual well-being experienced by a spiritual employee.
Marques (2005:86)	Respect, understanding, openness, honesty, giving trust, kindness, peace & harmony, acceptance, creativity, appreciation, helpfulness.	Vital themes for a spiritual workplace from the literature and compared with the statements of six business executives.
Reave (2005:658)	Meaningfulness, integrity, honesty, humility, respect, fairness, caring & concern, listening, appreciating others, reflecting practice.	Spiritual values and practices as related to leadership effectiveness.  Integrity viewed as the most crucial spiritual value for success.

Source: Adapted from McGhee, P., and Grant, P. (2008). *Spirituality and ethical behavior in the workplace: Wishful thinking or Authentic Reality*, *Electronic Journal of Business Ethics and Organizational Studies*, Vol. 13 (2): 61 – 69.

Other research suggestions on the associated benefits of spirit at work, at the individual level include greater organizational commitment (Milliman, et al., 2002) and Ferguson, 2002), increased job motivation (Jurkiewicz and Giacalone, 2004), increased productivity (Duchnon and Flourman, 2005), greater job satisfaction (Nurr and Organ, 2006), and organizational citizenship behaviors (Nurr and Organ, ). As observed by McGhee and Grant (2008:67), the quest for a higher purpose, personal meaning and transcendental values by spiritual individuals is not just outward-oriented; but also helps to create a design to integrate oneself; a state of being or wholeness. Finally, empirical evidence also suggest that a spiritual life has the likelihood of exhibiting positive satisfaction, a greater sense of fulfillment and a better quality of life (Dierendick and Mohan, 2006; Mohen, 2001; WHOQR; SRPB Group, 2006). Ultimately, a summation of the above factors yields a happier, healthier, and more fulfilled employee (McGhee and Grant, 2008:67). With this profound insight into the micro level benefits granted with spirit at work, the macro or organizational level or benefits will now be examined.

Logically, it seems lucid and arguable that since organizations are perceived as a web of people, what appears beneficial to the membership will equally percolate down the system in some specific ways. Research at the micro level suggests that encouraging spirituality in the workplace can result to individual level benefit in the areas of creativity, process improvement, customer service, honesty and trust, personal fulfillment and commitment that will on the long-run lead to organizational performance (Krishnakumer et al., 2002; McDaniel, n.d., Miller, 1999; Kinjerski and Shrypnep, 2006). The fulcrum here is that the above stream of benefits at the micro level will ultimately stimulate organizational performance which is contributory in nature (individual level → group level → organizational level).

Research also revealed that the encouragement of spirituality at work by organizations results higher profit and success (Mitroff and Denton, 1999; Turner, 1999; Thompson, 2000). On this premise, Thompson (2000), notes thus: "In some cases (research), the more spirited companies outperformed the others by 400 – 500 percent, in terms of net earnings, return-on-investment and shareholders' value". In addition, research has indicated that organizations perform better when they combine profitability and spirituality (see Dr. Benefiel article entitled Are Profitability and spirituality polar opposites?).

Furthermore, Neck and Milliman (1994), have also found that spirituality positively impact organizational performance. Equally, organization that practice spirituality record increases in creativity, satisfaction, team performance and organizational commitment (Freshman, 1999; Turner, 1999). Milliman et al (2000) and Pfeffer and Vegas (1990), have also acknowledged in evidence that the attitudes of employees in organizations with high levels of spirituality appears positively supportive of the organization and demonstrate high level of commitment when compared to organization without such values. The position of Wong (2003:3), equally lends credence to the above findings with the contention that for organizations to be effective, they need to integrate spirituality into the corporate culture as well as reflecting same into their policies and practices. By implication, an organizational transformation that integrates spirituality will attendantly reap its associated benefits at the micro and macro levels of the system.

## **5. Conclusion**

The preceding discourse examined extant literature on the socio-psychological construct of spirit at work; popularized as workplace spirituality to ascertain its dependable reality or otherwise. In consonance with scholarly opinions, spirit at work engirds profound feelings of wellbeing and a belief that one's work contributes meaningfully towards fulfillment and beyond self (Ashmos and Duchnon, 2000; Kinjerski and Shrypnek, 2006; Milliman et al., 2003; Mitroff and Denton, 1995; and Sheep, 2004). Put differently, it equally encapsulates cognitive features, interpersonal, spiritual and mystical dimensions (Kinjerski and Shrypnek, 2006).

Although spirit at work resists a generally acceptable definition and an exact characterization in literature, two main theoretical viewpoints underpin the construct namely: the intrinsic-origin (experience that emanates within the individual) and the existentialist (the search for meaning in what people do at work) perspectives. A hybrid of the two perspectives that utilizes transcendence, interconnectedness, sense of purpose, and ultimate concern as basis for conceptualizing spirituality also emerged. The fourth perspective involves the sphere of viewing the construct through the medium of spiritual leadership using vision, meaningful lives, altruism and emotional values to experience spiritual survival between leaders and followers. The review also unveiled that while some scholars make a distinction between spirituality and religion, others argue obversely that both concepts are synonymous. However, we have in this text acknowledged that at best both concepts are interrelated and complimentary. Showing reliance on the array of empirical benefits spirituality parades at the individual (micro) and organizational (macro) levels, which we have extensively examined elsewhere in this text, we are inclined to infer that spirit at work appeals a dependable reality. We also note that an interaction between personality features, personal action and organizational factors perforce spirituality at work.

## **6. Review implications**

The critique of existing literature on "spirit at work" has brought to the fore some implied expositions based on the antecedents and associated outcomes of the construct. First, spirit at work is perceived to be made manifest as a result of the interaction between personality integrated factors, personal actions and organizational factors. This implies that the interconnectedness between these factors ferment spirit at work and its associated outcomes at all levels of the organization. Hence giving recognition to these imperatives becomes inevitable in organizational setting. Second, it is also revealed that the nurturing of spirit at work is a mutual responsibility between employees and the organization, other than an exclusive domain of any side. This implies that efforts intended to materialize spirituality at work should be directed at these two levels. Third, some micro-level benefits, aligned with the construct such as decreased turnover and job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Kinjerski and Shrypnek, 2006; Freshman, 1999; Turner, 1999), have opened vents for both individual development and meticulous implementation at the corporate level. Finally, spirit at work could be made manifest through the use of various strategies that are human-centric, programs,

policies, enhancing organizational culture, human development and organizational transformation strategies. This review in our scholarly opinion has also ventilated arenas for future research interests on the construct.

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