RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Workplace Spirituality and Employee Wellbeing in the Hospitality Sector: Examining the Influence of Fear of COVID-19

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Abstract Drawing from the job demands-resources theory and the protection motivation theory, this study attempts to examine how the experience of workplace spirituality impacts employee wellbeing during times of remote work. This study also examines how fear of COVID-19 moderates the aforementioned relationship. Using a self-administered questionnaire, data were collected from 566 employees working in the hospitality sector in India. Results revealed that the experience of three dimensions of workplace spirituality (meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment with organisational values) had a significant positive influence on employee wellbeing, even during remote work. Fear of COVID-19 had an interesting significant moderating effect, and it was revealed that the higher the fear, the stronger the relationship between the workplace spirituality (in terms of meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment with organisational values) and employee wellbeing. The insights gained from this study will assist both the employees and the managers in devising personalised approaches towards individual wellbeing and the organisation at large during times of pandemics.

Keywords Workplace spirituality · Employee wellbeing · Fear of COVID-19 · Tourism and hospitality sector · Moderated-mediation model

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Introduction

The impact of the current coronavirus outbreak to date has long exceeded over 335 million worldwide, and the reported deaths due to the infection have crossed 5.5 million (https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/). The abrupt onset of a global pandemic has forced a significant workforce segment to create makeshift employment arrangements and work remotely, impacting their wellbeing and performance at large. Reports from McKinsey and Company (Pfeffer and Williams, 2020) revealed that 62% of employees on a global scale reports that their mental health issues are of paramount challenge during this pandemic crisis. In this context, beyond the essential priorities of information technology infrastructure and operations support, managers now seek strategies to sustain and improve their employees' wellbeing, engagement, and productivity, which are the pillars of organisational sustainability (ADB 2022).

The study gains relevance in the context of studies reporting that severe levels of fear of COVID-19 significantly result in higher levels of workplace panic anxiety and workplace avoidance behavior and a wide range of mental health problems, including anxiety, traumatic stress, insomnia, distress, and depression (De Man et al., 2022; Malik et al., 2021; Mathew et al., 2021; Pak et al., 2021; Satici et al., 2021; Şimşir et al., 2022; Traunmüller et al., 2021).

In their stride toward the sustainability goals for 2030, the United Nations envisions 'ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being at all ages is essential to sustainable development (Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being). The wellbeing of individuals is vital to the sustainable development of nations. The goal gains more relevance, particularly in the context of the contemporary pandemic that has

affected almost everyone across the globe. A significant segment of the workforce is forced to work remotely, which offers fewer opportunities for community collaboration and collegial support, which were sources of improved mental health (Bhattacharya & Gandhi, 2020; Elemo et al., 2021; Ramos-Vidal et al., 2020; Van Zyl et al., 2020). With remote work and social distancing being the new normal, the preceding year has undoubtedly been a difficult phase for many individuals, with a shortage of human interactions in relationship dynamics. This has eventually led to many mental health issues, including stress, anxiety, and depression (Deniz, 2021).

Employee wellbeing is of immense significance to employees themselves and also the organization at large, as wellbeing has direct repercussions on employee outcomes like work engagement, meaningful work-role fit, proactive employee behavior, turnover intention, and employee engagement (Boudrias et al., 2022; Galanti et al., 2021; Rasool et al., 2021; van Zyl et al., 2020). More than ever, organisations are putting in efforts to have a clearer vision of how they will support and nurture employees. Evidence in scholarly literature suggests that the concept of workplace spirituality is a determinant of employee wellbeing (Aboobaker et al., 2019; Garg, 2017). However, to the best of researchers' knowledge, hardly any study could be identified that examined the relationship between the experience of workplace spirituality and employee wellbeing during the times of COVID-19, when a majority of the workforce was working remotely. A bibliometric analysis of publications in positive psychology reveals that 'approximately 94.5% of the research stems from Western countries and only 5.5% from non-Western countries' (Hendriks et al., 2019). The state of affairs calls for innovation and research in these areas of inquiry to advance public policy efforts towards wellbeing, especially in non-western contexts, and add to the body of knowledge on psychological theories and principles of wellbeing among diverse groups.

The tourism sector is one of the most labor-intensive sectors, and this study gains more relevance in such a sector where the industry is trying to bounce back to pre-pandemic standards of performance. Even though the pandemic has caused havoc for the global tourism industry, international tourism experienced a 4% growth in 2021 compared to 2020 (415 million vs. 400 million) (World Tourism Organization, 2022). In Asia, the tourist arrivals are still 65% below 2020 levels and 94%, compared to pre-pandemic values, as many destinations remained closed to non-essential travel (World Tourism Organization, 2022). As the economy attempts to revive, managers need to address the challenges associated with ensuring employee wellbeing during times of the pandemic, and the current study attempts to fill this gap in the existing literature by examining the factors that would facilitate employee wellbeing in an emerging economy: India.

Workplace Spirituality and Employee Wellbeing

Several scholarly studies report a paradigm shift among the employees who now seek to find more meaning and purpose in what they do in their everyday work lives, rather than just materialistic outcomes (Aboobaker et al., 2019; Riasudeen & Singh, 2021). As an emerging theme in the organisational literature, workplace spirituality refers to the extent of connectedness that employees experience with their work, co-workers, and the organisations at large (Jeon & Choi, 2021; Milliman et al., 2003) and strives to propose and validate outcomes for organisational productivity and sustainability (Aboobaker & Zakkariya, 2022; Haldorai et al., 2020). Though several models of workplace spirituality are discussed in academic literature, the three dimensional model of workplace spirituality (experiencing meaningful work, a sense of community, and alignment with organisational values), as proposed by Milliman et al. (2003), has been the most widely used one in empirical studies. Meaningful work is about working together for a larger purpose for reasons beyond materialistic aspects and considering the work itself as valuable and warranties improved organisational outcomes (Arnold et al., 2007; Aboobaker et al., 2022; Milliman et al., 2003). The social dimension of the work, sense of community, denotes the 'degree to which the work requires dealing with other people and the amount of feedback received from others' (Oldham and Hackman (2010, p. 464) and has significant influences on employee job attitudes and outcomes. Alignment with organizational values refers to the notion that employees yearn to work in an organization whose goal is not merely wealth maximization but also has a high sense of ethics or integrity, making a more considerable contribution to the welfare of employees, customers, and society (Biggs et al., 2014; Milliman et al., 2003). As reflected in the extant conceptual and empirical literature in this domain, this paper too conceptualizes workplace spirituality as comprised of three dimensions: meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment with organizational values.

Experience of spirituality at work has been proved to have a significant impact on favorable employee outcomes like organisational commitment, employee engagement, intention to stay, employee wellbeing, job satisfaction, and unethical pro-organisational behavior (Garg, 2017; Haldorai et al., 2020; Milliman et al., 2018; Zhang, 2020). The growing body of literature on workplace spirituality and employee outcomes advocates that the advancement of spirituality in the workplace can improve employee outcomes. The concept gains more relevance, particularly

during these days, where a considerable share of employees are mandated to stay at home and work and probably will remain the same for some unforeseen period in the post covid era too. The concept of workplace spirituality gains even more relevance in the pandemic-induced remote work, where establishing a strong sense of work meaningfulness, community experience, and organisational congruence has become an increasingly pertinent yet highly challenging concern.

According to the Job Demands-Resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2017), various individual and contextual factors at the workplace have consequences on employee attitudes and behaviors (Pourtousi & Ghanizadeh, 2020; Riasudeen et al., 2019). In this study, workplace spirituality can be theorised as a psychological job resource facilitated at the workplace, which will help employees meet job demands and enhance their work outcomes (employee wellbeing in the current study). Though previous studies have examined the aforementioned relationship in a pre-COVID era, no empirical research could be identified that examines the extent of experience of workplace spirituality (meaningful work, sense of community and alignment with organisational values) in the context of remote work, where employees have limited access to social interactions and the work is mostly technology-dominant (Chatterjee et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2021). To address the gap in existing literature, drawing from the Job Demands-Resources model, the three dimensions of workplace spirituality (experiencing meaningful work, a sense of community, and alignment with organisational values) are postulated to have a positive influence on employee wellbeing:

H1   Experience of workplace spirituality will have a positive influence on employee wellbeing.

H1a   Meaningful work will have a positive influence on employee wellbeing.

H1b   Sense of Community will have a positive influence on employee wellbeing.

H1c   Alignment with organisational values will have a positive influence on employee wellbeing.

The Moderating Role of Fear of COVID-19

Of the many theories that explain fear appraisal, protection motivation theory (PMT) is a prominent theory that helps understand individual human responses to fear appeals (Rogers, 1975). Threats and coping appraisals are two characteristics that individuals use to protect themselves. Threat appraisal evaluates the circumstance and its seriousness, whereas coping appraisal evaluates how one response to the situation. PMT is a social-cognition theory

that explains how individuals respond to threats to their health (Rogers, 1975) and indicates how people deal with such threats and choose coping responses. Grounded on the PMT, a few recent studies have examined the impact of fear of COVID-19 on employee outcomes and found that their awareness of risks associated with the pandemic can influence their work attitudes and behaviors (Vu et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2021). Protection motivation theory assumes that 'the motivation to protect oneself from danger is a positive linear function of beliefs that the threat is severe, one is personally vulnerable, one can perform the coping response (self-efficacy), and the coping response is effective (response efficacy)' (Munro et al., 2007: 6). Drawing from the premises, it is postulated that the differences in the cognitive appraisal of fear of COVID can have varying effects on employees' cognitive appraisal of workplace spirituality (meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment with organisational values) as a job resource and thereby exert varying influence on their affective response: wellbeing at work. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H2   Fear of COVID-19 will negatively moderats the relationship between employee's experience of workplace spirituality and their wellbeing at work.

H2a   Fear of COVID-19 will negatively moderate the relationship between the experience of meaningful work and employee wellbeing at work.

H2a   Fear of COVID-19 will negatively moderate the relationship between the experience of sense of community and employee wellbeing at work.

H2a   Fear of COVID-19 will negatively moderate the relationship between the experience of alignment with organisational values and employee wellbeing at work.

Method

Participants

This study was conducted among a sample of frontline employees working in the hospitality industry in India as the sample was in primary contact with customers. To ensure homogeneity of human resource practices and their perceptions, only frontline employees working in top-tier (five-star) organisations operating in the customer service-based hospitality industry in India were selected for the study. According to the 2019 statistics of the Ministry of Tourism Government of India website, 1313 classified star category hotels exist (Tourism ministry government of India, 2019) across the country. The final sample

comprised 566 frontline employees (212 females and 354 males).

Procedure

After obtaining permission from respective human resource personnel and frontline managers in randomly selected five-star rated hotels, the employees were contacted for their free consent to participate in the study. Data were collected from 60 frontline employees (offline mode), and the questionnaire was found to have adequate reliability (Cronbach alpha > 0.70). At a later stage, using exponential discriminative snowball sampling, a total of 611 responses were collected. After eliminating responses with missing data, 566 data responses were selected for final data analysis, yielding a total response rate of 56.6%. The sample comprised 212 females (37.4%) and 354 males (62.5%), and the majority of them belonged to the age group of 22 years–25 years (81.9%), and 18.1% of them were in the age group of 26 years–30 years (average age = 23.6 years). Respondents held the position of front office manager/guest service executives/assistant front office manager/guest relation associates, and the average tenure with the current organisation was 3.2 years.

Instruments

The authors used validated instruments in existing literature to measure the focal constructs, which measured participants' responses on a five-point Likert-type scale.

Workplace Spirituality

The twenty-one-item 'Measure of Workplace Spirituality' scale developed by Milliman et al. (2003) was used to evaluate employees' experience of workplace spirituality across three dimensions: meaningful work ($\alpha = 0.852$), sense of community ($\alpha = 0.940$), and alignment with organisational values ($\alpha = 0.946$). Sample items included "I experience joy in my work", "I see a connection between my work and the larger social good of my community", "Working cooperatively with others is valued at my workplace", and "I feel connected with the mission of the organization I work with."

Affective Wellbeing at Work

Wellbeing at work was operationalised using the Job-Related Affective Wellbeing scale (short version developed by Basinka et al. (2014)). It consisted of two dimensions (positive affect ($\alpha = 0.913$) and negative affect ($\alpha = 0.890$)), measured using eight items on a five-point scale (1 = never and 5 = always). Sample items included

"Over the past 30 days, my job made me feel angry" and "Over the past 30 days, my job made me feel cheerful."

Fear of COVID-19

Fear of COVID-19 was measured using a 7-item FCV-19S scale as developed by Ahorsu et al. (2020) ($\alpha = 0.84$), and sample items included "It makes me uncomfortable to think about COVID-19" and "My heart races or palpitates when I think about getting COVID-19."

Results

Descriptive statistics of the focal variables in this study are as follows: Fear of COVID-19 = 2.79 (mean score); Meaningful work = 3.10 (mean score); Sense of community = 3.18 (mean score); Alignment with organisational values = 3.68 (mean score); Employee wellbeing = 3.17 (mean score). Preliminary checks for normal distribution were done, and all variables have acceptable values of Skewness and Kurtosis (± 1.5) (Hair et al., 2010). Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) statistics were also calculated to examine for multicollinearity and were found to be within the acceptable limit of VIF < 3.0 (Hair et al., 2010). Since all the constructs were self-reported, checks were conducted to examine common method bias. In addition to the procedural recommendations of ensuring anonymity, ordering items to reduce priming effects, and confidentiality of responses while administering the questionnaire (Podsakoff et al., 2003), we conducted Harman's test for examining common method bias. When all the measurement items were loaded onto a single factor, it was found that the total variance explained by the single factor alone was 23.14%, thus providing no indications of common method bias. Furthermore, confirmatory factor analysis of the proposed five-factor model was done. It was found that the five-factor model had better fit indices than other models, thus providing evidence for the absence of common method bias.

Confirmatory factor analysis using IBM AMOS 21.0 was done to validate the factor structure of variables under the focus of this study. The baseline five-factor model of meaningful work, sense of community, alignment with organisational values, fear of CVOID-19, and employee wellbeing showed a good fit for the data. All measurement items had loadings greater than 0.7 and the hypothesized five-factor measurement model had satisfactory fit indices ($\chi2 = 824.440$; $p < 0.001$; $\chi2/df = 2.476$; SRMR = 0.039; TLI = 0.923; CFI = 0.934; RMSEA = 0.052). The average variance extracted for each construct was above 0.50, ensuring convergent validity. Table 1 provides the square roots of the average variance extracted values for each

Table 1 Reliability and Validity of Constructs

	CR	AVE	1	2	3	4	5
1. Meaningful work	0.877	0.544	*0.737*				
2. Sense of community	0.959	0.768	0.165	*0.876*			
3. Alignment with org. values	0.945	0.685	0.216	0.317	*0.827*		
4. Employee wellbeing	0.913	0.636	0.710	*0.213*	0.196	*0.798*	
5. Fear of COVID-19	0.867	0.686	−0.580	−0.124	−0.134	−0.903	*0.828*

The values on the diagonal (in bold italics) represent the sq. the root of average variance extracted (AVE) for each factor, while the variables below the diagonal represent the correlations between each pair of factors, *CR* Composite Reliability

construct along the diagonal, confirming discriminant validity. Overall, there is adequate support for the measurement model, permitting us to advance with hypotheses testing.

The proposed hypotheses were tested using a path analysis procedure via SPSS PROCESS macro (Hayes et al., 2017), using the bootstrapping procedure at a 95% confidence interval. Model number 1 to test the hypothesised moderated relationship. Results indicated that experience of meaningful work was positively associated with employee wellbeing ($\beta = 0.192$; SE = 0.035; $t = 2.577$; LLCI = 0.0220; ULCI = 0.1630). Experience of sense of community and alignment with organizational values were positively associated with employee wellbeing ($\beta = 0.071$; SE = 0.035; $t = 2.577$; LLCI = 0.0150; ULCI = 0.1410 and $\beta = 0.093$; SE = 0.030; $t = 2.577$; LLCI = 0.0220; ULCI = 0.1240 respectively), thus supporting H1a, H1b and H1c. Results of tests of moderating (interaction) effects of fear of COVID-19 in the relationship between dimensions of workplace spirituality and employee wellbeing indicated significant moderation effects (Meaningful Work: $R2$-change = 0.0214; $F = 18.36$; $p < 0.01$; Sense of Community: $R2$-change = 0.0061; $F = 18.36$; $p < 0.01$, Alignment with organisational values: $R2$-change = 0.0187; $F = 18.36$; $p < 0.01$). The results indicate that fear of COVID-19 indeed influences the relationship between employees' experience of spirituality and their wellbeing at work. However, contrary to the postulation, there was a positive interaction effect (Fig. 1).

The interaction effects at three levels of fear of COVID-19: the mean, one standard deviation above, and one standard deviation below the mean is reported in Table 2. The results indicated that the conditional effects were significant at all levels of the moderator. Interestingly, the positive influence of meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment with organisational values on employee wellbeing at work increased as the levels of the moderator (fear of COVID-19) increased, and hence *H2a*, *H2b*, and *H2c* were not supported (Table 2). Refer to Fig. 2 for graphical illustration.

Discussion

This study sought to advance the scholarly literature on the influence of workplace spirituality on employee wellbeing under the context of fear of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this current study, employees' experience of workplace spirituality has a positive impact on their wellbeing at work, and all constructs were negatively associated with fear of COVID-19. The study corroborates the application of the Job Demands-Resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2017) in the context of remote work, too, and adds to the developing theories on workplace spirituality. Prior studies have identified that fear of COVID-19 results in lowered life satisfaction and job satisfaction, increased psychological distress, turnover intention, career anxiety, and depression (Simsir et al., 2021; Xu et al., 2021). However, contrary to our expectations, the fear of COVID-19 strengthened the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee wellbeing.

Protection motivation theory is a social-cognition theory that elucidates how individuals respond to threats to their wellbeing and specifies how people deal with such threats. Drawing from the evidence in the existing empirical studies, it was postulated that fear of COVID-19 will negatively moderate the positive relationship between the experience of workplace spirituality and employee wellbeing. However, contrary to the proposition, it was revealed that the higher the fear, the stronger the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee wellbeing. This is still in line with the protection motivation theory that in response to the fear of the pandemic, employees engage in more deliberate attempts to connect themselves with the work, their co-workers, and the organization. Similar results were revealed in recent studies, which identified that perceived risk associated with the COVID-19 pandemic positively influences employees' organizational citizenship behavior (Vu et al., 2022). Thus, it can be inferred that the variances in the cognitive appraisal of fear of COVID-19 can have differential effects on employees' cognitive evaluation of workplace

Fig. 1 Structural model estimates: effects of dimensions of workplace spirituality on wellbeing at work
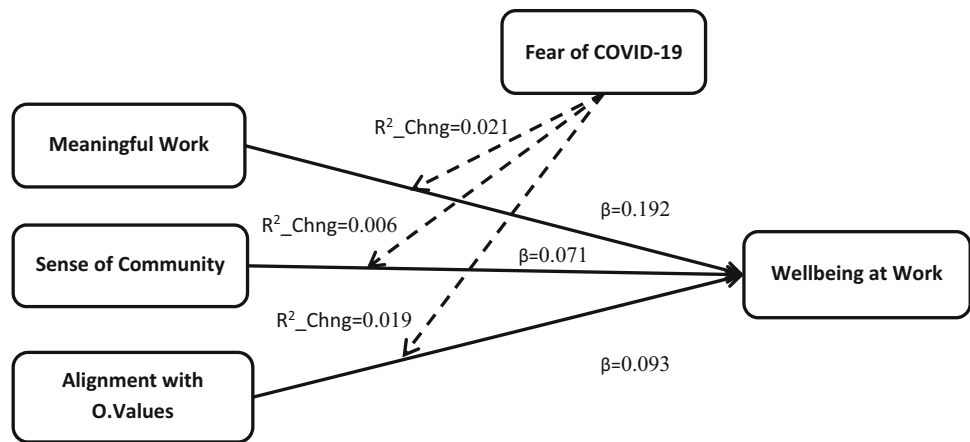

Table 2 Conditional effects of dimensions of workplace spirituality on employee wellbeing

Fear of COVID-19	Interaction effect	Boot_SE	Boot_LLCI	Boot_ULCI
Meaningful work employee wellbeing				
−1 SD (1.57)	0.1701	0.021	0.1289	0.2114
Mean (2.85)	0.2336	0.015	0.2035	0.2638
+ 1 SD (4.00)	0.2901	0.020	0.2497	0.3304
Sense of community employee wellbeing				
−1 SD (1.57)	0.0470	0.029	0.0047	0.0893
Mean (2.85)	0.0977	0.0150	0.0665	0.129
+ 1 SD (4.00)	0.1428	0.0226	0.0985	0.1872
Alignment with organizational values employee wellbeing				
−1 SD (1.57)	0.0353	0.0272	−0.0181	0.0887
Mean (2.85)	0.0770	0.0183	0.0410	0.1130
+ 1 SD (4.00)	0.1140	0.0255	0.0640	0.1640

[***]$p < 0.001$

Boot_SE Bootstrap standard error, Boot_LLCI Bootstrap lower limit confidence interval (LLCI), Boot_ULCI Bootstrap upper limit confidence interval (ULCI)
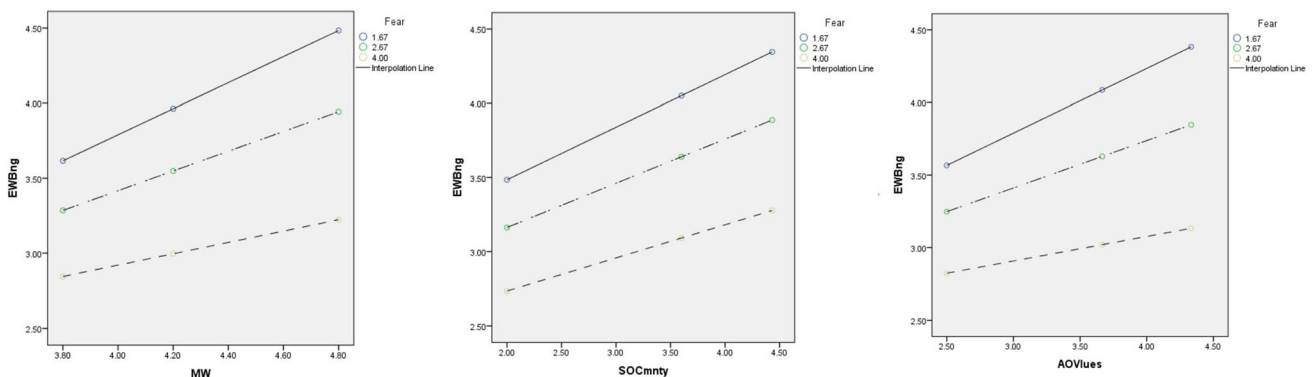

Fig. 2 Interaction effect of dimensions of Workplace Spirituality on Employee wellbeing as a function of Fear of COVID-19. EWBng Employee Wellbeing, MW Meaningful Work, SOCmnty Sense of Community, AOVlues Alignment with Organizational Values

spirituality (meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment with organisational values) as a job resource, which in turn exerts varying influence on their wellbeing at work.

Prior studies have identified that in high-stress scenarios, life satisfaction and sense of coherence are higher for people with higher fear of COVID-19, as an outcome of individuals revaluating their lives and satisfaction with the same (Dymecka et al., 2021, 2022). Even though individuals experience fear of COVID-19, it can be presumed that they might be perceiving restrictions and inconveniences as means towards a better tomorrow and for the greater good of society and are trying to put in more intrinsic effort towards an experience of connectedness with one's work, co-workers, and the organisation at large. When they experience higher fear, employees with higher workplace spirituality will find more meaning and purpose in what they do in their everyday work lives, establish a more heightened sense of community with co-workers and above all, when they experience congruence with their values and the values of the organisation, they will experience more positive emotions and wellbeing. Also, studies have identified that workplace spirituality improves self-compassion, which in turn reduces emotional distress, and depression lowers anxiety and enhances life satisfaction (Belen, 2022; Jnaneswar and Sulphey, 2021). In all, evidence gained from this study underlines the imperative role of workplace spirituality (reflected in dimensions of meaningful work, sense of community, alignment with organizational values) as a framework to strengthen employees' psychological wellbeing, consequently resulting in favorable short-term and long-term outcomes for the individual, organization and the society at large.

Travel and tourism sector was a flourishing industry in the Asia–Pacific region prior to COVID-19, with international arrivals mounting to 360 million in 2019 and it contributed to the socioeconomic growth of countries across the region (ADB, 2022). Nevertheless, the pandemic ceased international travel and had an overwhelming impact on tourism sector. Coupled with the unemployment and the panic generated by COVID-19 and the lack of social support, the pandemic has had a severe impact on the wellbeing of employees in the tourism and hospitality sector (Chen, 2020; McCartney et al., 2021). The Asia–Pacific tourism industry especially suffered from catastrophic job losses and a decline in work quality. "With tourism revenues at a standstill and tourism-related jobs among those most affected by the crisis, the pandemic has invited a 're-think' of medium- and long-term tourism strategies" (ILO, 2021). The current study being conducted in a non-western country, India, gains particular relevance towards advancing knowledge in the scholarly literature on employee wellbeing. Tourism businesses across the Asian region are reimagining the future of tourism and the insights gained will support managers and practitioners in devising strategies for employee wellbeing and organizational sustainability. The empirical results from the current study underline the relevance of facilitating workplace spirituality as an integral part of the corporate culture.

Implications

In today's highly competitive business environment, the sustainability focus has shifted the firms' focus from short-term profits to the organizations' long-term economic, social, and environmental performance (Rezapouraghdam et al., 2019). The role of spirituality in this transition is inevitable, and the insights gained from this study will help both the employees and the managers devise approaches for individual wellbeing and, consequently, the organisation's performance. The tourism industry can contribute significantly to the people and places' ecological, social, and economic wellbeing. Extending the Job Demands-Resources model, considering workplace spirituality as a job resource that can be facilitated at the workplace, managers should promote workplace spirituality by assisting employees help experience more meaningful work in terms of job autonomy and task variety and by promoting stronger interpersonal relationships among peers (Aboobaker et al., 2019). Also, regular training to build congruence with the employee and organisational values and ethics would be fruitful in the long run. Consistent and real-time communication and interaction with employees regarding the pandemic can strengthen the organisational culture and thereby connectedness with employees.

Psychological support for stress reduction workplace fun activities, flawless communication concerning updates on the COVID-19 outbreak, and instituting technology-enabled psychological counseling services will definitely support fostering workplace spirituality and wellbeing at work (Bakioğlu et al., 2020; Shen et al., 2022). New housekeeping practices, safe spaces, contactless interface and confidence-building, and judicious use of technology to create safe spaces for social distancing and adoption of relevant technology shall be the key to successful employee facilitation in the tourism and hospitality sector. Provisions for suitable personnel protective kits and free testing for COVID-19 exposure shall be another strategy that can be followed to mitigate feelings of fear. Establishing a pandemic prevention committee/team may help employees with managing the appraisal of the fear of the pandemic. Despite the insights gained, the study has some limitations worth mentioning. Unlike longitudinal studies, cross-sectional data limits the causal inference of the results. The role of other individual and organisational factors in influencing employee wellbeing needs to be examined. Procedural remedies were taken to limit self-report bias, but it remains a concern in online data collection. Qualitative works on the experience of workplace

spirituality during pandemic times can add more value to scholarly literature.

Conclusion

This study is a pioneer in examining the effect of employees' spiritual experiences at work on their wellbeing during times of an unforeseen pandemic and remote work. Also, the study adds to the emerging literature on the influence of fear of COVID-19. A deeper understanding of how the pandemic-induced abrupt shift to remote work in isolation has affected connectedness to one's work, co-workers, and the organisation as a whole and its influence on wellbeing assumes significance, especially in the purview of United Nations SDG Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being), which calls for ensuring healthy lives and promote wellbeing. Insights gained from the study will support academicians and practitioners in devising more effective strategies towards sustainability of both the individual and the organisation, thus the society at large.

Declarations

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