

## SPIRITUALITY AND HOSPITALITY EDUCATION: AN APPROACH TOWARDS SPIRITED HOSPITALITY

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### ABSTRACT

Spiritual Quest reflects the degree to which the student is actively searching for meaning and purpose in life, to become a more self-aware and enlightened person, and to find answers to life's mysteries and "big questions." The student who has a higher spiritual quest score is more eager to continue in the industry, has a higher thought process regarding the future and scope of one's career. The much professional approach is what is required by hospitality professional; however there are numerous times at situations when the stiff back attitude is not required and these demands for a humane and holistic approach toward hospitality.

We are practicing hospitality where we welcome guests mostly strangers however even some repeat visitors, into our lives with graciousness. To be hospitable, you need to accept pluralism as a natural condition in the world. Celebrate the diversity of the Creation. One particularly valuable spin-off of hospitality is inter-religious dialogue. Spirit speaks in many languages, and this spiritual practice helps us receive these multiple messages.

Equanimity plays an important role in the quality of undergraduate students' lives because it helps to shape how they respond to their experiences, especially experiences that are potentially stressful. The pilot study has indicated a change in the attitude of the budding hospitality professionals who have regularly practiced ethical academic culture. Undergraduates show significant growth in their capacity for Equanimity during the college years, and practices such as meditation and self-reflection can contribute to that growth. The traits like leadership skills, Satisfaction, Active Participation and specially Behavior have noticeable impressions of spirituality.

**KEY WORDS:** Spiritual Quest, Quest Score, Inter-religious Dialogue, Equanimity

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## Introduction

Hospitality is a term which is synonym to care, empathy, love, friendliness, welcoming, warmth, generosity, cordiality, sociable and Openness. These might be just words for some but these words carry a load of career for the hospitality sector. There is increasing evidence that spirituality is important to people for complete human functioning in the work place (Mitroff, 2003). Hence, interest in workplace spirituality has increased gradually and steadily over the past one and a half decade (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003). The unprecedented change and stress in the hospitality sector has made this concept particularly significant in the workplace for the workers as these conditions do exist. Various societies have already begun to develop need to find the inner meaning in what they do and who they are (Conlin, 1999). This means that one must understand the power of inner strength in order to satisfy the outer life which may lead to positive behavior for the organization (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). This development has great implications for educational institutions in a developing future workforce capable of coping with new challenges and expectations in the world of work. Universities in India and abroad have prescribed curriculum and are advising to start courses that deal with spirituality. We have to remember that higher educational institutions are not just places to impart technical knowledge and competence and profess the concept of materialism, but places to develop and enhance the student's development of affective competencies (Neal, 1997; Barnett *et al*, 2000).

The objective of higher education Institution is to provide quality and career oriented education whereas the designed programme should be aimed at not just imparting job-related competencies, but include also the growth of certain affective competencies. Successful completion of a programme does not, however, indicate whether a student has acquired the relevant career-related values and commitment to a career in his/her discipline. Higher educational institutions have to accept the fact that commitment is a manifestation of the individual's inner self and existence (Mottaz, 1988). Despite the fact that spirituality has become an important subject in education and the workplace (Burke & Hackey, 1999; Milliman, Czaplewski, & Ferguson, 2003), the hospitality sector has been lagging behind in taking the issue seriously.

Ironically, the hospitality work environment requires individuals who are "people people". The core of this lies in work and spiritual values. Hospitality school graduates entering the world of work lacking these values will not perform as expected and be unable to develop their future professional role. Hence, hospitality management schools should be more than places for academic development, and they should develop not only academic competencies but also a student's self-concept. This will lead to the development of 'awareness contexts' of a particular work, which is liable to change in the light of work experience and exposure.

Work values are the underlying beliefs that influence an individual's occupational choice. Values are often used to make decisions, yet many students do not have a clear idea of what

work values are. People whose career direction matches their expectations and work values' profile increase their probability of achieving job satisfaction and staying longer within their chosen career (King & Nicol, 1999; Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Dudeck, 2004). The probable reason for the high rate of attrition amongst hospitality graduates could lead to acceptance of the fact that the curricular feature is unable to match the characteristics of the students and the program's environmental features that will influence students' career choice.

The current scenario in the demand and supply of the industry can be calculated and analyzed by the report from the Ministry of Tourism data there are 41 governments owned Hotel Management Institutes along with 5 Food Craft Institutes. These along with 4 IITMs provide approximately 46,000 budding hoteliers to the sector. The unprecedented growth of more than 13% annually (World Travel and Tourism Council and IMACS Analysis, 2012-2022) has generated an exceptional demand for hospitality services. As the Industry expand so will the gap between demand and supply and so will the shortage of skilled labour will be evident as it is in the present scenario from the analysis done by IMACS for Ministry of Tourism. Hospitality programmes are striving to strengthen and expand their hospitality and tourism curricula. As such, it is imperative that hospitality schools have a thorough understanding of the student's spiritual and work values before any proactive initiatives are put in place.

The onus is on the hospitality schools to identify the ethical values for a student who transforms into a budding hotelier should have them developed before he or she starts a career. The schools should enforce to have curricula so as to have spiritual values implanted in their students which will help them to deal with the mostly stressful experiences which majorly contribute to the attrition strata.

### **Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between the spirituality and work values and identify the spiritual quest for various students studying at various locations in Kumaun region of Uttarakhand and who are enrolled in Hospitality and Tourism Programme at different institutes in the region.

The objectives specifically can be underlined as follows:

- To identify the work values and spiritual values specifically for hospitality Graduates
- To identify the relationship between them
- To generalize the theory probably based on the region and not on religion.

To accomplish these objectives, the study was organized as follows. First, the study reviewed the literature on spirituality and work values. Second, the research methodology employed was discussed, followed by the findings and conclusion of the study.

Spirituality being a sensitive subject the study has not been restricted to any particular religion or faith. To put the issue into perspective, this study attempts to address the concept of spirituality and human experience in a way that would contribute a better understanding of the student's inner-self and relate this to the multi-racial and multi religious nature of Kumaun region and even India and find a common denominator of values among the various faiths.

Nevertheless, the result of this study could not be generalized as in the present structure as the respondents were predominantly Hindus, Muslims and Punjabis.

### Literature Review

The health of the organization is dependent on the health of its employees (physically and spiritually). Spirituality in the workplace has become popular terminology and a researchable topic for researchers and practitioners these days that will enhance the quality of the individual and the organization (Gibbon, 1999). Human beings have long been trying to make sense of the environment surrounding them. One of the crucial elements in this sense-making involves finding a deep meaning and purpose in one's work (Milliman, Czaplewski & Ferguson, 2003). Ashmos and Duchon (2000, p.137) define workplace spirituality as

*'the recognition that employees have an inner life that nourishes by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community.'*

Subsequently, Gibbons (1999, p. 4), cited in Milliman et al (2003), conceptualizes the definition of spirituality at work as:

*"A journey toward integration of work and spirituality, for individuals and organizations, which, provides direction, wholeness and connectedness at work".*

Spirituality is about working with others to bring about a better world, about challenging oneself and others to be, to borrow the words of the advertisement for the US Army, "the best that you can be", which may or may not involve the doctrine of expressions within a religious institution.

According to the spirituality literature within secular society, religion and spirituality are two different concepts (Mitroff, 2003). Religion is seen as identifying people through dogma and has its emphasis on formal structure. On the other hand, spirituality is a basic human dimension that can be learned, understood, and incorporated into the workplace (Senge, 1990). A spiritual paradigm would provide a more holistic meaning of self and how it connects with others and the surroundings (Biberman & Whittey, 1997).

Apart from the spirituality which deals with one's deeper meaning of self and others, work values are also an important element in determining individual career choice and development. Assessment of work values is important to career intention or choice process (Chung et al, 1995). It has been highly recognized that there is a strong correlation between

job satisfaction and work values. In a pioneering effort, Super (1968) has developed the Work Value Inventory to measure extrinsic and intrinsic values in work. Decades ago, studies on work values on an individual's occupational choice showed that there is a strong correlation between work values and career choice. The concept of spirituality and work values can be used as an index of predicting students' career choices (Pietrofesa and Splete, 1975).

Work values are values that lead to understanding the concept of work, in which Dewey (1916) differentiates between the terms 'job' and 'work'. According to Dewey, the term job refers to 'a way of making a living'; on the other hand, work not only provides one with a salary to make a living, but also includes the deeper meaning of the purpose of life, personal well-being and one's chosen vocation. The Work Value Index (WVI) scale has been empirically tested in a variety of occupational behavior research works. Niles et al (1997) applied the WVI scale in their study concerning the relationship between occupational decision-making and perceptions of work values among college students. Their findings revealed that, if students were highly committed to a specific occupation before their graduation, they were likely to seek more intrinsic values and satisfaction in their job.

Super provides the following explanation of the 15 Work Values dimensions:

Altruism	Work value exists in work that enables one to contribute to the welfare of others. It measures social desirability.
Aesthetic	Value relates to artistic interest, to beautiful things, and to contributing beauty to the world.
Creativity	Opportunity to invent design or develop new things and new ideas.
Intellectual	Independent thinking and learning how and why things are significant in this intrinsic value. Individuals tend to be more abstract and want to use their own intellect and to make their own judgment.
Achievement	A satisfying feeling of accomplishment characterizes achievement. Individuals are task oriented and desire tangible results in a chosen occupation.
Independence	It represents the desire to work one's own way without undue interference.
Prestige	Respect /standing in the eyes of others. Highly related to intrinsic value that differs from status and power.
Management	It is associated with the desire to plan the work of others or at least plan one's own work.

Economic Return	Often referred to as materialism. This value attaches strong importance to tangibles and to earnings.
Security	A strong value for those who fear being out of a job. Security reflects the desire always to know where one stands.
Surrounding	Reflects an appreciation of pleasant working conditions.
Supervisory Relation	Concerns about the boss, whether he/she is fair, and for how one gets along with him/her are summarized by Supervisory Relation.
Associates	This value addresses concern for one's fellow workers, how one gets along with them, and whether one likes them.
Way of Life	This is associated with the kind of work that permits one to live the kind of life one chooses and to be the type of person one wishes to be.
Variety	It is highly rated by those who become bored easily and desire the opportunity to do a number of things in their occupation.

The purpose for organizations to develop spirituality at workplaces is to link spirituality and ethics, which echoes the organizational culture and improves organizational productivity. Organizational spirituality is the establishment of the identity and concerns shared within an organization. Employees feel a meaning to life that work creates via spiritual conversations, listening, and coping with pressures and challenges through spiritual learning and growth (Ming-Chia, 2012).

Students or Budding Hospitality Graduates need to find a balance in their organizational Spirituality and their work ethics and values. The Spiritual Quest needs to be on a higher scale to have a clear vision of attainment via work ethics and value.

## Methodology

The purpose of the study is to analyze the relation between "Spirituality" in terms of Work Values and Ethics and "Hospitality Education". This was aimed at developing competencies which might not be CORE in nature however plays an important role in decision making of the student to make a career out of Hospitality Degree programme and continue to be able to develop their growth in the industry. Students from 3 colleges in Kumaun region were contacted who are enrolled with faculty of Hotel Management. This is one of its kind researches which is supported by the initial list of Work values adapted from Super's (1968, Work Value Index). Spiritual values were inspired by Wheat's (1991). Complete adaptation was not evident in the research as inclination towards religious spirituality was not required for the study.

## Sampling and Data Collection

The population was drawn from the University Enrollment list for the region. The total size of the population is 325 students. This includes the students from Kumaon University, Uttarakhand Technical University, Uttarakhand Technical Board and Uttarakhand Open University along with 19 students from Privately run Graphic Era University, Dehradun. A 5-point Likert scale was used to test the degree to which each student rated the importance of each question in the Spirituality (20 items) and Work values (42 items) scales. The questionnaire was distributed through the assistance of the representatives of the respective cohorts. Students were asked to respond to the questionnaire that contained Super's (1968) Work Values Inventory and Wheat's (1991) Spirituality Scale, as well as five personal details questions. Composite scores for spirituality and work values were carried out by aggregating each response for each of the two categories. With a response rate of 72%, the sample obtained consisted of 196 male (83.7%) and 38 female (16.2%).

## Analysis

This distribution represents the student population of the Faculty. The mean scores and standard deviations (SDs) were performed on the data to measure the difference between the first year and final year students. In order to respond to the research objective, correlational (two-tailed) analyses and reliability tests were employed. To test whether there were differences between gender and the value scales, we first split the data into two sub-files (male and female) and obtained the desired correlation from each sub-file.

## Findings and Discussion

The overall scale for the Spirituality scale (Wheat, 1991) and the WVI scale indicated a higher reliability than the subscales. The overall Cronbach alpha for Work Values was 0.91 and the Spirituality scale was 0.75. Spirituality subscales (represented by 3 dimensions) ranged from 0.66 to 0.85 and the Work Values subscales ranged from 0.56 to 0.876. Table 1 shows the ranking of the work value attributes (15 dimensions) from the student sample.

The respondents considered having a good supervisor relationship as a very important dimension. The results reveal that dimensions not completely related but to some extent associated to "supervisor relationship", "Economic Return" and "Achievements" were among the top three attributes. In other words, they wanted to have a fair and reasonable supervisor, Good economic Returns and opportunity for career advancement in their future workplace. Majority of the students were inclined towards the financial implications and returns (probably due to the economic structure of the family or even due to various price hikes). "Creativity", "Prestige", "Altruism", "Variety" and "Aesthetic" were among the bottom five dimensions ranked by the respondents.

A two-tailed correlational analysis was conducted on career choice and values scales. A statistically significant relationship was found. The analysis revealed several negative relationships (Career choice and Surrounding,  $r = -.375$  significant at 0.01 level; Way of Life,  $r = -.220$  at 0.01 level; and Compassion,  $r = -.459$  at 0.01 level). A two-tailed correlational analysis was conducted on Spirituality and Work Values scales. A statistically significant relationship was found. However, there were several negative relationships identified between several dimensions of the Spirituality and Work Values scales: Awareness of Life and Surrounding ( $r = -.430$ ,  $p$  at the 0.01 level), Awareness of Life and Independence ( $r = -.171$ ,  $p$  at 0.05 level).

Table 1: Mean and Ranking of WVI Dimensions

Dimensions	Rank (mean)		
	Sample (n=234)	Male (n=196)	Female(n=38)
a. Supervisor Relationship	1(4.42)	3(4.31)	1(4.46)
b. Economic Return	2(4.34)	4(4.23)	3(4.31)
c. Achievement	3(4.29)	1(4.37)	4(4.27)
d. Security	4(4.27)	2(4.32)	2(4.38)
e. Surroundings	5(4.09)	6(4.11)	5(4.06)
f. Association	6(4.07)	5(4.25)	6(4.02)
g. Way of Life	7(4.05)	9(4.03)	7(4.01)
h. Intellectual	8(4.00)	8(4.04)	9(3.98)
i. Independence	9(3.98)	7(4.09)	8(3.99)
j. Management	10(3.89)	11(3.91)	10(3.96)
k. Altruism	11(3.84)	13(3.84)	12(3.91)
l. Prestige	12(3.80)	14(3.79)	14(3.84)
m. Aesthetic	13(3.78)	15(3.75)	13(3.87)
n. Creativity	14(3.75)	10(3.96)	15(3.82)
o. Variety	15(3.70)	12(3.89)	11(3.92)

The Explanation that Wheat (1991) gives of the three spiritual dimensions:

*Larger Context:* Looking at the purpose and meaning of life and moral behavior

*Compassion:* Significance of life and the awareness of pain and suffering of others.

*Awareness of Life:* Individuals with high levels of awareness are continually expanding their horizon and have the ability to create the results in life they truly seek and a connection with another life.

Table 2: Overall Ranking

Dimensions	N	Ranking	Mean	Std. Deviation
Supervisor Relationship	234	1	(4.42)	.465
Economic Return	234	2	(4.34)	.467
Achievement	234	3	(4.29)	.454
Security	234	4	(4.27)	.512
Surroundings	234	5	(4.09)	.433
Association	234	6	(4.07)	.469
Way of Life	234	7	(4.05)	.437
Compassion	234	8	(4.03)	.480
Intellectual	234	9	(4.00)	.373
Independence	234	10	(3.98)	.444
Management	234	11	(3.89)	.594
Altruism	234	12	(3.84)	.495
Prestige	234	13	(3.80)	.324
Aesthetic	234	14	(3.78)	.322
Creativity	234	15	(3.75)	.602
Variety	234	16	(3.70)	.529
Larger Context	234	17	(3.68)	.619
Awareness of Life	234	18	(3.64)	.663

A comparison between the dimensions of Work Values and Spirituality Values revealed that students did place greater importance on the majority of the extrinsic values as compared to the intrinsic values (majorly). This is evidenced in Table 2 where the Spiritual dimensions are among the last one with an exception of Compassion (seems like after all Students of the region do have a feeling of compassion after the Tragedy in Kedarnath). However the author assumes with this study that the students still are very raw to understand the use and relevance of these spiritual values in their world. The students did agree to have an inclination towards these values but the relevance of these and their implications in the industry were still very hazy for them. The students felt very surprised to see this study as it has never occurred to them about this dimension and its effect on their work ethics and behavior. The spiritual dimensions clearly relate to their behavioral pattern and the students were eager to find the solution for the same.

## Conclusion

This study was not attempted to provide any conclusive findings and prove a hypotheses, however it was more aimed at providing possibilities to the students, mentors and the faculty members to explore the horizons of spirituality and develop a pattern where in a student practices these ethics in the college time and becomes more eligible for a long haul in the industry. The students feel they do have a relationship between work values and spirituality and not only in terms of religiousness but even having a honest behavior is one of them. The Behavioral aspect where in the spiritual quest of most of the students was found to be average also suggests that the ethical values which a budding hoteliers as a graduate should possess helps them to become a better HUMANE professional.

The Males were very considerate for being economically strong and definitely they were applying this for the future to come even in the near one. Indeed, the respondent acknowledged the fact that the entry level jobs do not *offer much* however there is always a scope at the higher levels.

It is imperative for hospitality educators to integrate spirituality values into the curriculum to stimulate the necessary qualities for graduates to confront the turbulent business and working environment. The study of spirituality is not restricted to a particular religion or faith and it is recommended that for future research, a comprehensive study of spirituality at work on individuals and organizations is undertaken.

We will enter an era where Spirituality Quest (SQ) could well provide another perspective to better understand work behavior and human motivation. And according to Ian I. Mitroff, spirituality could be the ultimate competitive advantage in today's turbulent business environment.

An 'add-on approach' or 'assumption-based approach' to curriculum development and improvement has not proven to be effective. As such, an integrated curriculum that addresses the industry demands needs to be designed. Despite the recognition of the importance of spirituality in the workplace, religious or spiritual insensitivity among hospitality educators can have a very negative impact on graduates' career intentions, not to mention workers' productivity and commitment. The curriculum needs to have an insight of the practical implication of what is required to BE CALM at the time of a situation and how to manage it without hampering your reputation.

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