THE RELATIONSHIP OF SPIRITUALITY TO WORK AND ORGANIZATIONAL ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS IN A SAMPLE OF EMPLOYEES FROM A HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Dawn L. Affeldt, M.A.
Detroit, Michigan

Douglas A. MacDonald, Ph.D.
Detroit, Michigan

ABSTRACT: Using a sample of 446 employees from a multi-site religiously affiliated health care system, the study investigated the relationship of spirituality as measured by the Expressions of Spirituality Inventory (ESI) to a variety of work and organizational variables including work ethic, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors. Correlational (zero order and partial) and regression analyses revealed that spirituality is significantly related to all work and organizational variables with the ESI dimensions of Existential Well-Being and Religiousness being most consistently related to all work and organizational variables. Despite the statistically significant findings, examination of the magnitude of bivariate, partial, and multiple correlations suggests that the effect size is rather meager (e.g., bivariate r range from .09 to .29; squared multiple correlations in regressions ranged from .02 to .12). The article concludes with a discussion of the meaning of the findings, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research.

Interest in spirituality and religion has grown considerably in scientific and professional communities over the past three decades. While the bulk of that interest has found expression in research focusing on the relation of religion and spirituality to general health and well-being (e.g., Koenig, McCullough & Larson, 2001), growing attention in the last 15 years has been given to examining the relation of spirituality to workplace and organizational functioning (e.g., Biberman & Whitty, 1997; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003; Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Indeed, this attention has fostered an abundance of discussion (e.g., Begat, Ellefsen, & Severinsson, 2005; Benefiel, 2003; Dean, Fornaciari, & McGee, 2003; Garcia-Zamor, 2003; Gavin & Mason, 2004; Gockel, 2004; Heaton, Schmidt-Wilk, & Travis, 2004; Kale & Shrivastava, 2003; King & Crowther, 2004; Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004; Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002; Lips-Wiersma, 2002; Lips-Wiersma & Mills, 2002; Milliman, Czaplewski, & Ferguson, 2003; Neal & Biberman, 2004; Tischler, Biberman, & McKeage, 2002) and has led to the emergence of workplace spirituality as a discrete area of study.

While the surging interest represents a good start, as noted by Sass (2000) there has been little progress made in terms of developing a more rigorous and empirically informed science of workplace spirituality. Acknowledging this
trend, Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003) further state that there is an unambiguous need to go beyond mere dialogue and to develop satisfactory and well validated theories and measurement tools so as to facilitate meaningful and systematic inquiry. We could not agree more. Examination of the available literature reveals a wide array of definitions, and lots of wonderful sounding ideas but little by way of solid science. Akin to the conclusions of Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003), it is readily apparent to us that the problem primarily relates to a lack of an agreed upon model of spirituality.

Fortunately, when we consider spirituality from a general perspective, we have found a number of measurement models that hold promise for workplace spirituality (e.g., Elkins, Hedstrom, Hughes, Leaf, & Saunders, 1988; Piedmont, 1999). One that holds notable potential is the five dimensional model proffered by MacDonald (2000a, 2000b). Recognizing the lack of coherency in the literature with regard to how spirituality is being defined and measured, MacDonald attempted to devise a descriptive model through the conjoint factor analyses of about 18 different measures of spirituality and related constructs so as to provide an organizational framework for systematizing research. His efforts uncovered five stable factors which he labeled Cognitive Orientation toward Spirituality (COS; i.e., beliefs about the existence of spirituality and its relevance to daily functioning, including work), Experiential/Phenomenological Dimension (EPD; i.e., spiritual experiences), Existential Well-Being (EWB; i.e., perception of self as efficacious, as having meaning and purpose in life, and as being able to cope with the existential uncertainties of life), Paranormal Beliefs (PAR; i.e., beliefs that parapsychological phenomena are real), and Religiousness (REL; i.e., intrinsic religiosity or engaging in religious beliefs and practices, such as meditation, just for the sake of doing so). The vast majority of the measures used (16 out of 18) were found to significantly contribute to one or more of the five dimensions.

Concurrent to developing his model, MacDonald (2000a, 2000b) constructed a measure of the five factors called the Expressions of Spirituality Inventory (ESI) which has been shown to have satisfactory psychometric properties (see measures section for detailed information). The ESI has since been used in a variety of studies and has shown its utility in bringing order to some areas of research, most notably the voluminous spirituality-health literature where some dimensions appear to have positive relations (e.g., COS, REL, EWB), some negative associations (e.g., PAR) and some mixed (e.g., EPD) (MacDonald & Friedman, 2002; MacDonald & Holland, 2002a, 2002b, 2003). Given this, it seems to us that the Expressions of Spirituality Inventory may prove helpful in elucidating the association of spirituality to variables of interest to organizational and workplace spirituality researchers.

In this vein, the purpose of the present study was to examine the relation of spirituality operationalized in terms of MacDonald’s (2000a, 2000b) dimensions and measured by the Expressions of Spirituality Inventory to work and organizational attitudes and behaviors in a sample of employees from a multi-site health care system. In particular, after surveying the literature in applied
psychology, business, and leadership and managerial studies, we identified four
interrelated variables as being of import; job satisfaction, work ethic/motivation, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship
behaviors. Available studies, some of which look at all of these variables as
they relate to spiritual and religious constructs (e.g., Nur & Organ, 2006), point
to the existence of significant positive associations between them and spirituality (Milliman, Czaplewski, & Ferguson, 2003).

For example, job satisfaction, broadly defined as either or both an affective
and attitudinal evaluation of one’s job and one’s contentment with it (Brief &
Weiss, 2001; Weiss, 2002), has been found to be significantly associated to
spirituality (Clark et al., 2007; Robert, Young, & Kelly, 2006). For work ethic
and motivation, Biswas and Biswas (2007) found that while spirituality and
religiousness are significantly correlated to each other, spirituality but not
religiousness was predictive of intrinsic motivation and goal orientation in a
sample of service sector employees. In discussing the research on Protestant
work ethic, an ostensibly religious construct, Furnham (1990) stated that it had
been found to be related to “job satisfaction, beliefs in equity, competitiveness,
and desire to work hard…” (p. 384). With regard to organizational
commitment (i.e., the degree to which one is committed to one’s organization),
Trott (1997) conducted an exploratory study on spirituality in the workplace,
characterizing spiritual well-being in the workplace as having a sense of
meaningfulness, purpose, and connectedness. Results indicated a significant
positive relationship between spiritual well-being and organizational commit-
ment. Oberholster and Taylor (1999) reported similar findings. In a study by
Rego and Pina e Cunha (2008), workplace spirituality was found to be
significantly predictive of affective, normative, and continuance commitment
to one’s employer and organization. Finally, in terms of organizational
citizenship behaviors (OCBs; i.e., behaviors done by individual employees at
their own discretion which are viewed as beneficial to the effectiveness and
efficiency of organizations), Liu (2009) has found that spirituality serves as a
significant mediating variable in predicting the relation of transcendental
leadership to OCBs.

We elected to use a sample of employees drawn from a health care setting
because of the ostensible relevance of spirituality to such individuals (Kashi &
Ganesh, 2006); People working in health care settings are typically called upon
to provide compassion and support for those in need. If spirituality were to
have significance for work and organizational functioning, it seems reasonable
to expect it to be saliently manifested in such employee groups.

Based upon the available research, it was generally expected that spirituality,
deefined in terms of MacDonald’s (2000a,b) five dimensions, would be
statistically significantly associated to all work and organizational variables
with generally moderate effect sizes1 More specifically, the dimensions
involving non-religious spiritual cognitions (COS), religiousness (REL), and
existential well-being (EWB) were expected to be most consistently linked to
work ethic, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational
citizenship behaviors. Spiritual experience and paranormal beliefs, alternative-

1
ly, were expected to produce generally low and non-significant associations with all work and organizational variables.

**METHOD**

**Participants**

The sample consisted of 446 self-selected employees working in a multi-site suburban health care system in the mid-western United States. The system is a Catholic, spiritually driven community of health care providers whose organizational values include service to the poor, reverence, integrity, wisdom, creativity, and dedication. In the health care system as a whole, there were a total of 18,591 employees. Of this number, 19% were male and 81% female. The average age was about 40 years; 71% of the total number of employees were white, 23% black, 1% Hispanic, 4.75% Asian, and 0.25% American Indian. The sample used in the present study was comprised of 374 (83.4%) women and 74 (16.6%) men with a modal age between 44 and 58 years and with a mean job tenure of 6 to 10 years with the health care system. About 79.1% of the sample was European American with 8.3% African American, 8% Asian, 4% Hispanic, and 5% Middle Eastern. Roles held within the system varied from about 30% in business services, 19% in management, 17% in nursing, 14% director/clinical nurse managers, and 9% in clinical ancillary support (e.g., X-ray, therapy and radiology) to 2% administrative, 2% physicians and 1% support services. In terms of religion, most of the sample was Christian (84.8%) followed by no formal religion (10.8%), Jewish (0.9%), Buddhist (0.7%), Islamic (0.7%), and Sikh (0.2%).

**Measures**

*Expressions of Spirituality Inventory (ESI; MacDonald, 2000a).* Spirituality was measured using the ESI. This instrument contains 30 items taken from the 98-item parent version and selected based upon both uniqueness of item content as well as evidence of satisfactory psychometric properties. The ESI measures five dimensions of spirituality including: Cognitive Orientation toward Spirituality (COS) which pertains to beliefs, attitudes and perceptions regarding the nature and significance of spirituality as well as relevance for personal functioning; Experiential/Phenomenological Dimension (EPD) which concerns spiritual experience and includes forms of experience labeled spiritual, religious, mystical, peak, transcendental, and transpersonal; Existential Well-Being (EWB) pertaining to spirituality expressed as a sense of meaning and purpose of existence and ability to cope with life’s difficulties; Paranormal Beliefs (PAR) which relates to belief in parapsychological phenomena (e.g., ESP, precognition and psychokinesis); and Religiousness (REL) which relates to the expression of spirituality through religious means (e.g., prayer, church attendance, relationship to specific religious deity). Although correlated, each dimension has been found to be a unique aspect of spirituality (MacDonald, 2000b).
ESI was designed using a five-point rating scale ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). For the purposes of this study, the scale was changed to a seven-point rating scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). This allowed for response scale uniformity across all tests (all measures employed in this study used a seven-point scale) and greater ease of use to the volunteer. Additionally, studies suggest that wider response scales, such as between 7-point to 15-point, tend to produce more accurate results (e.g., increasing the number of responses allows for more information that can define benchmarks) and higher levels of reliability (Penny, Johnson, & Gordon, 2000). Inter-item reliability of ESI dimensions was examined with a sample of 938 which resulted in alphas of .87 (COS), .81 (EPD), .80 (EWB), .82 (PAR), and .89 (REL). Using data from the sample in the present study, alpha coefficients ranged from .76 (PAR) to .94 (COS) across the five dimensions. Evidence of validity comes predominantly from studies using the parent instrument. Support for convergent, discriminant, criterion, and factorial validity has been provided (MacDonald, 2000b).

**Organizational Commitment Scale (Allen & Meyer, 1990).** The Organization Commitment Scale consists of 24 items. There are three subscales with eight items each measuring (a) affective commitment (ACS) referring to an employee’s emotional attachment to, identification, and involvement with the organization, (b) continuance commitment (CCS) based on the costs employees associate with leaving the organization, and (c) normative commitment (NCS) which is the employee’s feelings of obligation to stay with the organization. A seven-point rating scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) was used. The internal consistency reliability for each scale using coefficient alpha was tested on a sample of 250 full-time, non-unionized employees within two manufacturing firms and a university, which produced results of .87 (ACS), .75 (CCS), and .79 (NCS). In the present study, inter-item reliabilities were found to range from .76 (CCS) to .89 (ACS). Allen and Meyer (1990) also report evidence of factorial, convergent, and discriminant validity.

**Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCB; Moorman & Blakely, 1995).** Organizational citizenship behaviors were measured using Moorman and Blakely’s (1995) OCB survey. The questionnaire consists of 19 items with 4 dimensions measuring what causes an employee to decide to perform OCBs. The dimensions of OCB are (a) Interpersonal Helping (IH): helping co-workers when help is needed, (b) Individual Initiative (II): communicating with others to improve individual and group performance, (c) Personal Industry (PI): performing tasks that go above and beyond the call of duty, and (d) Loyal Boosterism (LB): promoting the organization to outsiders. A seven-point rating scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) was used. The reliability for each scale using coefficient alpha was tested on a sample of 155 southeastern financial services organization employees and produced results of .74 (Interpersonal Helping), .76 (Individual Initiative), .61 (Personal Industry), and .86 (Loyal Boosterism). Using data from the present study, alpha values ranging from .71 (Personal Industry) to .93 (Loyal Boosterism) were obtained. Support for discriminant validity has also been provided (Moorman & Blakely, 1995).
Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ; Weiss, Davis, & England, 1967). Job satisfaction was measured using the 20 item short-form version of the MSQ. Dawis et al. postulate that job satisfaction is a function of the consonance between an individual’s needs and the reinforcers presented by the environment. Given that, in addition to measuring general job satisfaction, factor analyses have resulted in two distinct subscales of measuring satisfaction; Intrinsic (i.e., individual cognitive and personality influences) and Extrinsic (i.e., environmental influences; Hauber & Bruininks, 1986; Hirschfeld, 2000; Bledsoe & Baber, 1979). A seven-point rating scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) was used. MSQ has demonstrated good reliability with alpha ranging from .84–.91 for the Intrinsic dimension, .77–.82 for the Extrinsic dimension, and .87–.92 for General job satisfaction (Levinson, 1998). With the data obtained from our sample, reliability coefficients were .89, .88, and .92 for the intrinsic, extrinsic, and total scale, respectively. Evidence of validity comes predominantly from studies using the parent long form and inferred from occupational group differences (e.g., clerical, management, nursing, and banking) and correlations with measures of job satisfaction (Bledsoe & Brown, 1977; Baker & Baker, 1999; Butler, 1983; Gillet & Schwab, 1975).

Work Ethic Scale (Blau & Ryan, 1997). The questionnaire has 25 items with exploratory factor analyses identifying four dimensions of the Protestant work ethic concept. The four dimensions are (a) belief in hard work (i.e., one’s attitude about working hard), (b) leisure avoidance (i.e., the level of desire to work over any other activity), (c) independence from others (i.e., one’s desire to work independently over team collaboration), and (d) asceticism (i.e., a practice of avoiding physical pleasures and living a simpler life). A seven-point rating scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) was used. The reliability for each dimension using Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient was tested on a sample of 543 adults (from three distinct samples of Catholic priests and nuns belonging to orders in the northeastern United States, Catholic parishioners attending Sunday service in northeastern Pennsylvania, and university students from a large urban university in southeastern Pennsylvania) and produced results of .85 (Hard Work), .80 (Nonleisure), .75 (Independence), and .70 (Asceticism). In the present study, reliability coefficients ranged from .80 for Independence to .90 for Hard Work. Support for construct validity has also been found (Blau & Ryan, 1997).

Demographic variables were also gathered for analysis. They included age, gender, ethnicity, occupational and employment status, and religious affiliation.

Procedure

Volunteers were informed about the study via messages in a system-wide newsletter as well as through the corporate e-mail newsletter. Message content introduced the study objectives, directions on how to participate (i.e., the Web link to participate online or location to pick-up a paper version), and an endorsement by a senior manager to encourage participation. Additionally, management throughout the system verbally encouraged participation of their
subordinate employees. The survey was made available to volunteers online on a secured Web site where only the primary researcher had password-protected access to the data. Informed consent was obtained through an “agreement to terms” check box for their signature prior to survey initiation. To ensure access to all employees, including those without Internet access, a paper version of the survey was made available from their Human Resource Manager, including the previously mentioned informed consent requiring a written signature. Written consent forms and surveys were enclosed in a sealed envelope by the volunteer and placed into a locked dropbox centrally located at each facility and accessible only to the primary researcher. To maintain confidentiality, all consent forms were separated from survey data and kept in a secure place.

Results

Correlations between the Spirituality and Work and Organizational Variables

Product-moment correlations were calculated between the five dimensions of the Expressions of Spirituality Inventory and all measures of work and organizational variables (see Table 1). Also reported in Table 1 are partial correlations wherein each ESI dimension is correlated to all work and organizational variables while controlling for the other four ESI dimensions. This was done so as to best ascertain the unique relationship of each component of spirituality to the work and organizational variables. Additionally, in order to get a sense of how spirituality as a whole relates to work and organizational variables, multiple correlations, generated from standard multiple regressions using all five ESI dimensions as predictors, are included.

Examination of the multiple correlations revealed that when used collectively, all five ESI dimensions are statistically significantly associated to all work and organizational variables. The absolute size of these correlations, however, reflected a weak to moderate effect sizes with values ranging from .16 (p<.05) with the Nonleisure subscale of the Work Ethic Scale to .34 (p<.001) with the Minnesota Job Satisfaction scale total score. For zero-order correlations, a wide array of statistically significant coefficients was found with each ESI dimension, save Paranormal Beliefs, correlating statistically significantly with at least one subscale from every work and organizational measure. However, and in line with the multiple correlations, the absolute magnitude of significant coefficients tended to be small, ranging from .09 (p<.05) to .29 (p<.001). Both Cognitive Orientation toward Spirituality (COS) and Religiousness (REL) produced statistically significant associations with all three job satisfaction scores, (e.g., for intrinsic, extrinsic, and total satisfaction with COS– r=.28, p<.001; .20, p<.05, and .27, p<.001; with REL r=.24, .21, and .25, all p<.001) three of four Work Ethic subscale scores (i.e., all but Nonleisure), for COS, correlations ranged from -.19 with Independence to .23 with Hard Work, both p<.001; for REL, correlations ranged from -.20 with Independence to .27 with Hard Work, both p<.001)), two of three Organizational Commitment scale scores (i.e., Affective and Normative with COS r=.26 and .23, respectively, p<.001; with REL, r=.27 and .28,
TABLE 1.
Zero order, partial, and multiple correlations between the Expressions of Spirituality Inventory Dimensions and all work related and organizational variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESI Dimensions</th>
<th>COS</th>
<th>EPD</th>
<th>EWB</th>
<th>PAR</th>
<th>REL</th>
<th>R/R²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic</td>
<td>.28⁴/.12ᵇ</td>
<td>.17⁴/.07</td>
<td>.14ᵇ/1.1ᵃ</td>
<td>- .06/-.09</td>
<td>.24⁴/-.01</td>
<td>.32²/1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic</td>
<td>.20⁴/04</td>
<td>.04/-.02</td>
<td>.23ᵇ/2.1ᵇ</td>
<td>- .10²/-.06</td>
<td>.21⁴/06</td>
<td>.32²/1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>.27²/1.0ᵃ</td>
<td>.12²/03</td>
<td>.20²/1.1⁸</td>
<td>- .09/-.09</td>
<td>.25²/03</td>
<td>.34²/1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Ethic Scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard Work</td>
<td>.25³/-.02</td>
<td>.10²/02</td>
<td>.04/03</td>
<td>- .03/-.05</td>
<td>.27⁴/1.5ᵇ</td>
<td>.28⁴/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonleisure</td>
<td>.05⁴/-.05</td>
<td>-.03/-.01</td>
<td>.09/07</td>
<td>- .10²/-.07</td>
<td>.09/09</td>
<td>.16³/03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>-.19⁴/-.05</td>
<td>-.01/07</td>
<td>-.24²/-.2³</td>
<td>.09/03</td>
<td>-.20⁴/-.07</td>
<td>.32²/1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asceticism</td>
<td>.16⁴/-.05</td>
<td>-.01/-.06</td>
<td>.15²/1.4ᵇ</td>
<td>-.07/-.03</td>
<td>.22²/1.6⁸</td>
<td>.28⁴/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Commitment Scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>.26⁴/03</td>
<td>.11²/02</td>
<td>.14ᵇ/12ᵃ</td>
<td>- .05/-.05</td>
<td>.27⁴/10ᵃ</td>
<td>.30³/1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuance</td>
<td>-.00⁴/-.02</td>
<td>-.06/-.03</td>
<td>-.29⁴/-.3⁰</td>
<td>-.04/-.08</td>
<td>.02/05</td>
<td>.31³/1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative</td>
<td>.23⁴/-.06</td>
<td>.12²/07</td>
<td>-.02/-.04</td>
<td>-.03/-.08</td>
<td>.28²/1.8⁸</td>
<td>.30³/1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Citizenship Behaviors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Help</td>
<td>.22⁴/04</td>
<td>.16ᵇ/09</td>
<td>.09⁴/08</td>
<td>.01/-.04</td>
<td>.20⁴/04</td>
<td>.25³/1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative</td>
<td>.19³/09</td>
<td>.18ᵇ/10ᵃ</td>
<td>.20⁴/19ᶜ</td>
<td>.01/-.02</td>
<td>.15ᵇ/-.04</td>
<td>.30³/1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyal Boosterism</td>
<td>.26⁴/03</td>
<td>.12ᵇ/05</td>
<td>.15ᵇ/13ᵇ</td>
<td>-.08/-.09</td>
<td>.27⁴/10ᵃ</td>
<td>.32³/1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Industry</td>
<td>.16²/-.02</td>
<td>.09/04</td>
<td>.20⁴/19ᶜ</td>
<td>-.03/-.02</td>
<td>.18⁴/10ᵃ</td>
<td>.27³/1.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. For first five columns, first coefficient is zero order correlation and second is partial correlation wherein all other ESI variables are controlled. For partial correlations df= 440. For ESI, COS= Cognitive Orientation toward Spirituality, EPD= Experiential/Phenomenological Dimension, EWB= Existential Well-Being, PAR= Paranormal Beliefs, REL= Religiousness. R=Multiple correlation and R²= Multiple R squared. These latter coefficients were calculated using all five ESI as predictors in standard multiple regressions. Superscript a= p<.05, Superscript b= p<.01, Superscript c= p<.001

respectively, both p<.001), and all four Organizational Citizenship Behavior subscale scores (correlations with COS range from .16, p<.05 with Personal Industry to .26, p<.001 for Loyal Boosterism; for REL, correlations ranged from .15, p<.01 with Individual Initiative to .27, p<.001 with Loyal Boosterism). The Experiential/Phenomenological Dimension is statistically significantly correlated to Intrinsic (r= .17, p<.001) and Total Job satisfaction (r= .12, p<.01), the Hard Work subscale (r= .10, p<.05) of the work ethic scale, two of the Organizational Commitment subscales (i.e., Affective, r= .11, p<.05, and Normative, r= .12, p<.01), and three of four Organizational Citizenship Behavior subscales (i.e., all but Personal Industry; correlations ranged from .12, p<.05 with Loyal Boosterism to .18, p<.001 with Individual Initiative). Existential Well-Being is statistically significantly correlated to all job satisfaction scores (correlations range from r= .14, p<.01 with Intrinsic to r= .23, p<.001 with Extrinsic), two Work Ethic subscale scores (Independence-r= -.24, p<.001; Asceticism, r= .15, p<.001), two Organizational Commitment subscales (Affective, r= .14, p<.01; Continuance, r= -.29, p<.001), and all four Organizational Citizenship Behavior subscales (correlations ranging from r= .09, p<.05 with Interpersonal Help to r= .20, p<.001 with Individual Initiative and Personal Industry, respectively). Paranormal Beliefs produced only two statistically significant correlations: negative associations with
Extrinsic job satisfaction ($r = -.10, p < .05$) and the Work Ethic subscale of Nonleisure ($r = -.10, p < .05$).

Examination of the partial correlations shows a notable reduction in the number of statistically significant coefficients and a general decrease in the magnitude of correlations. Cognitive Orientation toward Spirituality only produced statistically significant partial correlations with the Intrinsic (partial $r = .12, p < .01$) and Total scores ($r = .10, p < .05$) of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire. Religiousness produced statistically significant partial correlations with two Work Ethic subscales (i.e., Hard Work, $r = .15, p < .01$, and Asceticism, $r = .16, p < .001$), two Organizational Commitment subscales (i.e., Affective, $r = .10, p < .05$ and Normative, $r = .18, p < .001$), and two Organizational Citizenship Behaviors subscales (i.e., Loyal Boosterism, $r = .10, p < .05$, and Personal Industry, $r = .10, p < .05$). Existential Well-Being generated statistically significant partial correlations with all job satisfaction scores (for Intrinsic, Extrinsic, and Total scores, $r = .11, p < .05$, .21, $p < .001$, and .18, $p < .001$, respectively), the Independence ($r = -.23, p < .001$) and Asceticism ($r = .15, p < .001$) subscales of the Work Ethic Scale, two of the Organizational Commitment subscales (i.e., Affective, $r = .12, p < .05$; and Continuance, $r = -.30, p < .001$), and three of the Organizational Citizenship Behaviors subscales (i.e., all but Interpersonal Helping, statistically significant correlations range from $r = .13, p < .05$ with Loyal Boosterism to $r = .19, p < .001$ for both Individual Initiative and Personal Industry). The Experiential/Phenomenological Dimension produced only one statistically significant partial correlation with the Individual Initiative subscale of the Organizational Citizenship Behaviors survey ($r = .10, p < .05$). Paranormal Beliefs was not found to produce a single statistically significant partial correlation.

**DISCUSSION**

The results of this study indicate that spirituality in general is statistically significantly associated to job satisfaction, work ethic, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors. This finding is most clearly manifested in the multiple correlations generated from the standard regression analyses; all multiple correlations were statistically significant, though of modest to moderate magnitude, for all work and organizational variables. Detailed examination of our findings at the level of the individual ESI dimensions, however, indicates that spirituality as operationalized by this instrument manifests a complex pattern of associations that are consistent with our research expectations and which appear to have import for future studies on spirituality and work.

Considering the findings for job satisfaction, bivariate correlations show that all five dimensions are statistically significantly related to at least one of the three Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire scores. Existential Well-Being, followed by Cognitive Orientation toward Spirituality (i.e., non-religious spiritual beliefs) and Religiousness (i.e., intrinsic religiosity) appear to be most strongly related to intrinsic, extrinsic, and overall job satisfaction. The Experiential/Phenomenological Dimension (i.e., spiritual experience) seems to
be linked to intrinsic and total job satisfaction as shown primarily through its statistically significant zero order correlations with the intrinsic and total scores. These associations, however, ceased to be significant after controlling for the other four ESI dimensions in the partial correlations. Last, Paranormal Beliefs produced a statistically significant negative zero-order correlation with extrinsic job satisfaction. Nonetheless and akin to EPD, the partial correlation controlling for other ESI dimensions was non-significant. These findings suggest that satisfaction with one’s job is linked most strongly to a sense of personal efficacy and meaning and purpose in life, as well as to general attitudes, beliefs, and practices regarding spirituality. That is, job satisfaction appears to increase for people who have both a sense of well-being, and who genuinely believe and subscribe to spiritual values and lifestyle practices. Further, intrinsic job satisfaction seems to be higher for people who report having had spiritual experiences.

For work ethic, Religiousness has the most salient statistically significant association with Hard Work, while Existential Well-Being followed by Religiousness are the ESI dimensions most substantively related to Independence, though both associations are negative. For Asceticism, Religiousness and Existential Well-Being are the most potently linked aspects of spirituality. With Nonleisure, only Paranormal Beliefs produced a significant negative zero-order correlation. However, that association ceased being significant once the other dimensions of spirituality were controlled in the partial correlations. This pattern of findings generally suggests that Religiousness and Existential Well-Being are associated with greater investment in one’s work, with greater preferences to work with others, and with tendencies toward living and working in a manner that minimizes the need for material possessions and sensual pleasures.

For organizational commitment, Religiousness demonstrates the strongest significant association to normative commitment and Existential Well-Being is most markedly, though negatively, linked to continuance commitment. Both Religiousness and Existential Well-Being were found to be significantly related to affective commitment. While Cognitive Orientation toward Spirituality (i.e., non-religious spiritual beliefs) and the ESI Experiential/Phenomenological Dimension (i.e., spiritual experience) were found to produce significant zero-order correlations with affective and normative commitment, both correlations were no longer statistically significant after controlling for the remaining ESI dimensions. These results indicate that Religiousness is associated with higher levels of commitment to one’s organization due to a sense of obligation to stay with the employer, Existential Well-Being is tied to lower levels of commitment to an organization due to perceived costs or benefits of leaving the job, and both Religiousness and Existential-Well-Being are associated with higher levels of commitment arising from a felt attachment to, and identification with, the organization.

Finally, considering the results for organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB), while all four behavioral components tapped by Moorman and Blakely’s (1995) scale are statistically significantly associated with all ESI dimensions collectively as found in the multiple correlations, at the level of the individual
dimensions, it appears that specific aspects of spirituality hold greater import
for each aspect of OCB. For Individual Initiative, spiritual experience (i.e., ESI
Experiential/Phenomenological Dimension) and Existential Well-Being are
significantly associated. Although ESI Cognitive Orientation toward Spiritu-
ality and Religiousness were found to be statistically significantly correlated, a
significant relationship ceased to be manifested after controlling for the other
ESI dimensions. For Loyal Boosterism, Existential Well-Being and Religious-
ness came out as statistically significantly linked. Although the ESI dimensions
measuring non-religious spiritual beliefs and spiritual experience generated
significant zero-order correlations, partial correlations controlling for the other
ESI dimensions produced nonsignificant findings. For Personal Industry,
again Religiousness and Existential Well-Being were found to be statistically
significantly related. ESI Cognitive Orientation toward Spirituality was found
to be significantly correlated initially but this association disappeared in the
partial correlations. Last, for Interpersonal Helping, though four of the five
ESI dimensions produced significant zero-order correlations (i.e., all but
Paranormal Beliefs), all partial correlations were found to be non-significant.

Our findings are generally in line with existing theory and research which posits
an association between spirituality and work variables (e.g., Connolly, 2000;
Obersholster & Taylor, 1999; Trott, 1997). With that stated, the more specific
findings obtained with the ESI dimensions indicate that future research may
benefit from the use of precise measures of spiritual constructs so as to best
uncover and elucidate the relation of spirituality to work and organizational
functioning. Religiousness (i.e., intrinsic religious orientation, aka ultimate as
opposed to instrumental religiosity) and Existential Well-Being are the ele-
ments of spirituality most consistently implicated in all work and organizational
variables included in our study and are likely to be the most fruitful concep-
tions of spirituality to utilize in future investigations of workplace spirituality.
Non-religious spiritual beliefs, as captured by ESI Cognitive Orientation toward
Spirituality, seems to have most relevance to job satisfaction and while found to
be statistically significantly linked to subscales for all four work and
organizational measures used as shown in zero-order correlations, does not
seem to be as potent of a spiritual variable; much of its association to the work
and organizational measures appears to be a product of common variance with
other dimensions of spirituality. Similarly, the remaining two ESI dimensions—
Paranormal Beliefs and the Experiential/Phenomenological Dimension— seem
to be of lesser importance. In the case of the former, only two statistically
significant zero-order correlations were found (i.e., with extrinsic job satisfac-
tion, and the work ethic subscale of nonleisure) and these associations were
observed to fall below significance after controlling for the other ESI
dimensions. The ESI Experiential/Phenomenological Dimension, which mea-
sures spiritual experience, was found to generate significant zero-order
correlations with at least one subscale from every work and organizational
measure. However, all but one of these correlations were found to be no longer
significant after controlling for the remaining four ESI dimensions.

Despite the appearance of generally favorable results, there are three caveats
and limitations to the present study which need to be kept in mind. First, the
sample was comprised of self-selected employees from a single religiously affiliated healthcare organization in the United States. It is possible that the use of such a sample may introduce bias such that the relationship of spirituality to the work and organizational variables may be overinflated compared to what might be found with samples drawn from other health care settings, industries, and/or cultures. Some research suggests that values, especially as related to work, appear to differ for employees in private versus public settings (Karl & Sutton, 1998) as well as employees in part-time versus full-time roles (Thorsteinsnson, 2003). Moreover, it has been suggested that one’s culture may affect the manifestation of spirituality, and thereby the belief system it fosters that affects one’s organizational performance (Garcia-Zamore, 2003; Wasti, 2003). For example, Yousef (1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2001) has examined the linkage of organizational commitment and job satisfaction among Arabic employees of Muslim faith as associated with what Yousef defined as the Islamic work ethic, which emphasizes cooperation in work, creativity and hard work through independence. Similarly, preliminary research has begun among Egyptian managers with regard to cultural beliefs, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behaviors (Parnell & Crandall, 2003). Consequently, future investigations aimed at replicating our findings across organizational settings, job roles, cultures and religious affiliations are warranted.

Second, and despite the threat of overinflated correlations, effect sizes as manifested in the absolute magnitude of correlations in all analyses are generally small to moderate. Given our relatively decent sample size, it is likely that some findings are likely significant due to the power of our analyses. Consequently, until our results are replicated, care should be taken to not overinterpret the associations of specific spirituality variables to the work and organizational functioning. This especially appears to be the case with paranormal beliefs and spiritual experiences which tended to produce very small correlations.

Third, while MacDonald’s (2000a,b) model represents a significant advancement in the delineation of spirituality as a scientific construct due to its breadth, inclusiveness, and empirical basis, it is a descriptive model of spirituality that essentially defines spirituality in terms of discrete traits. As noted by Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003), trait approaches to spirituality represent only one of at least two dominant approaches to studying the construct. In the other approach, spirituality is viewed more dynamically as “a set of skills, resources, capacities, or abilities that are evolving and developing and interact with the external environment” (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003, p. 13). Further in this vein, MacDonald’s model may be best viewed as applying to personal spirituality rather than to other more specialized conceptualizations emerging in the work literature including organizational and interactive workplace spirituality (Kolodinsky, Giacalone, & Jurkiewicz, 2008). As such, the findings obtained in this study may possibly be the product of our methodology (i.e., how we chose to approach the definition and measurement of spirituality). Future research that utilizes dynamic and/or organizational definitions of spirituality is clearly needed.
Notwithstanding the limitations of this study, our findings suggest that spirituality holds relevance to a variety of work and organizational outcomes. Further, it highlights the importance of spiritual values (e.g., believing in the existence of a higher power), lifestyle practices (e.g., engaging in meditation, prayer, and other activities as a part of day-to-day life), and well-being as components of spirituality which are most likely to contribute to positive employee and organizational functioning.

NOTE

While we hypothesized that we would find moderate effect sizes, it is important to note that the area of workplace spirituality is a relatively new area of study. Due to inconsistencies in how spirituality and workplace variables have been measured, it is difficult to determine the typical effect size that would allow for the development of a more specified hypothesis about effect size. We base this expectation on the typical effect size seen in other areas of spirituality-health and religion-health studies (e.g., Connors, Tonigan & Miller, 1996 indicate that the typical correlation found between spiritual and religious variables and addictions is a correlation of about .25).

REFERENCES


The Authors

Dawn L. Affeldt, M.A., is a graduate from the University of Detroit Mercy, a Reiki Practitioner and a Certified Clinical Hypnotherapist. Clinical practice in metro Detroit, Michigan includes working with all populations for a variety of issues including anxiety/OCD, mood disorders, PTSD, ADHD, stress management, workplace issues, grief and loss, and family/parenting. Her email is daffeldt@comcast.net

Douglas A. MacDonald, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Detroit Mercy and a licensed psychologist in the province of Ontario Canada. He is Associate Editor (Research) of the Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, Research Editor for the Journal of Humanistic Psychology, and Editor Emeritus of the International Journal of Transpersonal Studies. His email is macdonda@udmercy.edu
Author Note: This article is based upon a Master’s Thesis completed by the first author. Correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to the second author at the University of Detroit Mercy, 4001 West McNichols, Detroit, MI 48221-3038. E-mail: macdonda@udmercy.edu