

Measuring the Intangible: Development of the *Spirit at Work Scale*

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The *Spirit at Work Scale (SAWS)* is a new 18 item measure assessing the experience of spirituality at work. Three hundred and thirty-three employees of a large mid-western university, ranging in occupations from the trades through senior administration, responded to a 102 item instrument assessing aspects of spirit at work. Factor analyses revealed 4 distinct factors: engaging work, sense of community, spiritual connection, and mystical experience. Using the results of item analyses and factor analyses, 18 items were selected to constitute the new scale. Analyses reveal high internal consistency for both the total scale ($\alpha = .93$) and the four subscales (α 's from .86 to .91). There was no relationship between *SAWS* scores and age, gender, education, or income. However, *SAWS* scores were related to occupation and marital status. Management and professional staff reported significantly higher levels of spirit at work than did administrative, clerical, technical, or trades staff. Individuals who were separated, divorced, or widowed reported more spirit at work than those individuals who were single. Significant relationships between some demographic factors and some of the subscales were also found. *SAWS* is a short, psychometrically sound, and easy to administer measure that holds much promise for use in research and practice.

Keywords: spirituality at work, meaningful work, measuring spirit at work

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Recent years have witnessed an explosion of interest in the subject of spirituality in the workplace. This burgeoning interest has been attributed to aging baby-boomers with a growing interest in contemplating life's meaning (Leigh, 1977; Reker, 2000), increased curiosity about Eastern philosophies such as Buddhism (Brandt, 1996), and general increased public interest in spirituality in response to increasing levels of spiritual disorientation resulting from isolation, disconnection, and a lack or loss of meaning in life (Adams & Bezner, 2000; Elkins, Hedstrom, Hughes, Leaf, & Saunders, 1988). Others have suggested that the new interest in spirituality at work is a result of a dramatic change in the nature of work resulting from increasing globalization and a shift from the industrial age to the information age. For many employees, this shift has resulted in longer work hours and increased expectations for productivity, accompanied by less job security due to downsizing and layoffs and increased work-life conflict (Duxbury & Higgins, 2002; HRDC, 1997; Leigh, 1997). Thus, at the same time as employees are demanding more than economic reward from their work life (Caudron, 1997; Leigh, 1997; Lowe, 2000), employers are recognizing the need to look for innovative ways to retain their best employees and to gain a competitive edge (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Leigh, 1997). Regardless of the reason, the topic of spirituality in the workplace is a hot topic.

Although academic, practice, and popular literatures have given much attention to this new field of spirituality at work, relatively little empirical research has been devoted to the topic. Research in the field has been hampered by the lack of a clear, widely-accepted definition (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003; Tischler, Biberman, & McKeage, 2002) and a lack of measures. In particular, the lack of valid measures has delayed research that would advance understanding of the antecedents of spirit at work and the individual and organizational outcomes of spirit at work. The absence of valid measures has also prevented researchers from empirically investigating whether spirit at work positively impacts wellbeing or productivity as proclaimed by many organizational consultants and academics (Groen, 2003; Milliman, Czaplewski, & Ferguson, 2003; Mitroff & Denton, 1999). In addition, there is no "gold standard" by which to assess the effectiveness of interventions directed at creating spirit at work. "Precise measurements, *using validated instruments*, can help organizations understand the utility of workplace spirituality" (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003). Thus, in our work, we have sought to develop a clear, empirically grounded and theoretically defensible definition and to develop a psychometrically sound measure.

Conceptualizing and Defining Spirit at Work

What is "spirit at work"? The terms spirit at work, spirituality at work, workplace spirituality, and spirituality in the workplace seem to be used interchangeably to capture similar notions. Numerous scholars have provided definitions or identified components of workplace spirituality, and while there are differences in emphasis, there is also considerable overlap. Based on a review of the literature, Sheep (2004) argues that a conceptual convergence occurs in four recurring themes: a self-workplace integration; meaning in work; transcendence of self; and personal growth/development of one's inner self at work. For a fuller discussion of how these themes were derived, see Sheep (2004). Based on their reading of the same literature, Ashforth and Pratt (2003) suggest three dimensions to spirituality at work: transcendence of self, holism and harmony, and growth. Finally, Milliman et al., (2003) identify three dimensions of workplace spirituality: meaningful work, sense of community, and alignment with organizational values.

In spite of the obvious overlap in conceptualizations and Sheep's argument that a conceptual consensus exists, the field still does not have a clear definition from which to develop an instrument to measure the construct. To date, scholars have not yet agreed on a definition. For example, Dehler and Welsh (2003) differentiate between spirit and spirituality, viewing *spirit* as the inner source of energy and *spirituality* as the outward expression of that force (pg. 115). They posit that workers "act spiritually when their inner being believes and embraces a purpose larger than themselves" (pg. 114). Similarly, workplace spirituality has been conceptualized as either passive and static, having trait-like qualities, or as dynamic, that is having capacities and abilities that are evolving and interactive (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003). With that limitation in mind, these scholars describe workplace spirituality as a "framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promotes employee's experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy" (pg.13).

Whereas this definition of workplace spirituality combines elements of the organization and the experience of the individual, others differentiate the terms by where the focus lays—an organization-centred perspective or an

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individual-centred perspective (Gibbons, 1999; Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004; Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002). In this view, workplace spirituality at the organizational level refers to an organizational culture guided by mission statements, leadership, and business practices that are socially responsible and value-driven, that recognizes the contributions employees make to the organization, and that promotes individual spiritual development and wellbeing (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Guillory, 2000; Mitroff & Denton, 1999). With the focus at the individual level, spirit at work refers to the desire of employees to express all aspects of their being at work and to be engaged in meaningful work (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Mitroff & Denton, 1999) and to reach one's full potential (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002; Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Neck & Milliman, 1994).

Our work has focused on the individual experience of spirit at work. For the individual, is spirit at work something more than employees being able to bring and express their spiritual selves at work? A review of the various schools of thought on spirituality – including religious, metaphysical, and humanistic – revealed that the common essence of these views is that spirituality encompasses “a search for meaning, for unity, for connectedness, for transcendence, and for the highest of human potential” (Emmons, 1999, p.5). For example, spirit/spirituality has been variously defined as: “the basic feeling of being connected with one's complete self, others and the entire universe” in a common purpose (Mitroff & Denton, 1999, p. 83); “an animating life force, an energy that inspires one toward certain ends or purposes that go beyond self” (McKnight, 1984, p. 142); and, “a continuing search for meaning and purpose in life; an appreciation for the depth of life; the expanse of the universe, and natural forces which operate; a personal belief system” (Myers, 1990, p.11). Given that spirit at work is more than employees being able to express their spirituality in the workplace, but includes the expression of spirituality through work and because of work (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000), the existing measures of spirituality (Elkins et al., 1988; Ellison, 1983; Kass, Friedman, Leserman, Zuttermeister, & Benson, 1991; Piedmont, 1999), do not fully capture the uniqueness of the construct of spirit at work. Thus, the call for a new measure.

An Empirical Definition of Spirit at Work

In our earlier work, we sought out the “experts” – those professionals whose work involves researching or promoting spirit at work – for assistance in developing a comprehensive, conceptual definition of spirit at work. It was expected that these individuals would be in the best position to describe the construct and identify key elements of spirit at work. Quite unexpectedly, we found that we could not develop a clear definition based on participants' responses to explain, describe, or define the construct (see Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004). At that time, most of our “experts” had difficulty providing a definition of spirit at work and some even felt that it was not possible or desirable to define such an elusive construct.

In addition to asking the “experts” to define spirit at work, we also asked them to recall and describe a time when they had experienced spirit at work. In contrast to their inability to provide a clear definition of the construct, the “experts” were able to provide rich descriptions of their experience of spirit at work. These descriptions were strikingly similar. Based on qualitative analysis of these rich descriptions, we developed the following definition.

Spirit at work is a distinct state that is characterized by physical, affective, cognitive, interpersonal, spiritual, and mystical dimensions. Most individuals describe the experience as including: a *physical* sensation characterized by a positive state of arousal or energy; positive *affect* characterized by a profound feeling of well-being and joy; *cognitive* features involving a sense of being authentic, an awareness of alignment between one's values and beliefs and one's work, and a belief that one is engaged in meaningful work that has a higher purpose; an *interpersonal* dimension characterized by a sense of connection to others and common purpose; a *spiritual* presence characterized by a sense of connection to something larger than self; and a *mystical* dimension characterized by a sense of perfection, transcendence, living in the moment, and experiences that were awe-inspiring, mysterious, or sacred. (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004, p.37)

More specifically, we found that individuals who experienced spirit at work reported an awareness of physical sensations in their bodies. Many described the experience as a peak experience or a natural high. Others described it as total bliss or being in flow state and yet others reported sensations related to the charkras, tingling, pulsing, warmth, etc. Those who experienced spirit at work also reported profound feelings of joy and well-being. They described their work as enjoyable and fun and reported feelings of love and intimacy within the team. The experience of spirit at work also involved cognitions of authenticity, alignment, and meaningful work. Individuals

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who experienced spirit at work felt like they could be authentic at work and they reported alignment or congruency between their values, beliefs, and behavior at work. They also believed that their work really mattered, that they were making a difference, and/or that their work contributed to the good of the whole or to a higher purpose. They experienced a strong sense of connection to others and common purpose. Moreover, individuals who experienced spirit at work were also aware of a connection with something larger than self (e.g., a Higher Power or a God-within presence) and/or a deep connection to humankind or nature. And, for many, the experience of spirit at work had a mystical dimension which was characterized by a sense of perfection, living in the moment, and effortless energy. The experience was often awe-inspiring, mysterious, sacred, or had a transcendent nature.

We believe that our research-derived definition is consistent with the conceptual definitions of others (Ashforth & Pratt, 2003; Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Milliman et al., 2003; Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Sheep, 2004), but more clearly describes the nature of the individual experience of spirit at work. Moreover, this definition was confirmed in a study with lay individuals who experienced spirit at work, but were unfamiliar with the concept or spirit at work literature (Kinjerski, 2004).

Measuring Spirit at Work

The first attempt to measure spirituality in the context of work was made by Ashmos and Duchon (2000). Based on a review of the literature, these researchers derived the following conceptual definition of spirituality at work which formed the basis for their measure:

. . . the recognition that employees have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community. Thus, we see spirituality at work as having three components: the inner life, meaningful work, and community (2000, p. 137).

Items in the measure addressed three levels of interest: the individual, work unit, and organization. Ashmos and Duchon report that individual level items produced the cleanest factor structure. However, they suggest that the data addressing the work unit level were not as compelling and the organizational level items were disappointing as measures. It appears that as the items moved further away from the individual, it was more difficult to capture and assess spirituality at work. These results support distinguishing between the emerging ideas of individual- and organizational-centred spirit at work and suggest the need for separate measures.

Combining items that reflect individual and organizational workplace spirituality, Sheep (2004) proposed the Workplace Spirituality Person-Organization Fit scale based on what he suggests are the four recurring themes that characterize workplace spirituality: a self-workplace integration; meaning in work; transcendence of self; and, personal growth/development of one's inner self at work. This scale measures a combination of: (1) an individual's attitudes towards the workplace as a place for personal and spiritual growth and expression, and, (2) their perception of the extent to which their current workplace allows for such growth and expression.

Both Ashmos and Duchon's measure and Sheep's measure combine the assessment of attitudes towards spirit at work, aspects of personal experience, and characteristics of the workplace. Thus, the utility of such measures in assessing an individual's current experience of spirit at work, or changes in individual spirit at work over time, is less than ideal. Thus, we sought to develop a measure of individual experience of spirit at work based on our earlier empirically-derived definition (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004).

METHOD

This project was guided by the scale development literature, and in particular, DeVellis' (1991) work. The following describes the steps undertaken to develop the Spirit at Work Scale.

Phase I: Generation of the Initial Item Pool

Step 1: Generating items grounded in lived experience. An initial pool of 65 items was generated from participants' descriptions of their experience spirit at work to reflect the six dimensions of spirit at work that emerged in our definition. Many items used the actual words of participants [e.g., I experience "a real sense of trust and personal connection with my coworkers." I experience a "connection with a greater source that has a positive effect on my work." (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004, p. 35, 37).]

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Step 2: Review of instruments of related constructs. In addition to identifying scale items arising from the spirit at work definition, 25 instruments of related constructs, such as spirituality at work, spirituality, religiosity, peak experiences, mystical experiences, self-actualization, purpose in life, and job satisfaction were reviewed. The purpose of this step was to determine if items from these scales captured the experience as described by participants, but were not reflected in the initial pool. An additional 34 items that seemed to tap into dimensions similar to those that emerged in the definition were used directly or adapted to fit with the intent of assessing spirit at work. Ten items were taken directly [e.g., I have a sense of personal mission in life, which my work helps me to fulfill (Elkins et al., 1988)] and 24 items were adapted from other instruments [e.g., At times, while at work, I feel the oneness of myself with all things (Hood, 1975); My spiritual values influence the choices I make at work (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000)]. This resulted in an item pool of 99 items.

Step 3: Checking content validity through member checking. The 99 item draft *Spirit at Work Scale (SAWS)* along with the definition was sent back to the participants of the original qualitative study for member checking. Member checking is a procedure used to enhance content validity (Janesick, 2000) by ensuring that the experiences of individuals with spirit at work were captured in the definition and proposed instrument items and to determine the importance and priority of each item. Based on their feedback, an additional 26 items were added to describe aspects of the experience not adequately covered by the 99 items (e.g., At times I experience pleasant physical sensations like tingling, pulsing, or warmth in my body while I work), increasing the item pool to 125 items.

Step 4: Review of item pool by experts. This pool of 125 items was critiqued by a different group of experts attending the Spirituality in Organization Track at the International Academy of Business Disciplines 15th Annual Meeting. These individuals, comprised mostly of academics and researchers in the spirit at work field of study, reviewed the draft spirit at work scale in light of our definition. To maximize the face and content validity of the scale (DeVellis, 1991), each item was assessed on a scale of “1” to “6” according to its relevance to the overall measure, importance, and clarity. With a view to selecting 10-12 items per dimension and 8-10 items for each of the three cognitive sub-categories (authenticity, alignment, meaningful work), the items with the best ratings were selected. Items were added to reflect experiences that did not emerge in our research but that the experts thought were essential to the overall measure of spirit at work. This resulted in the retention of 102 items.

Phase II: Administration of the 102 Item Instrument

Procedure. Through e-mail, the 102 item instrument was distributed to a large sample of employees, across a wide range of occupations (including maintenance, clerical, technical, academic, and administrative), at a large mid-western university. Participants rated how true each item was for them along a 6-point scale ranging from “1=completely untrue”, “2=mostly untrue”, “3=a little bit untrue” to “6=completely true”. Basic demographic data on gender, age, occupation, income, years of employment with the university, hours of work per week were also collected. Although the instrument was completed anonymously, as an incentive to participate, interested participants recorded their names on a slip for draws for a DVD player and gift certificates for a local restaurant.

Sample. Responses were received from 335 individuals (248 female, 81 male, 6 missing), however, 3 survey results were excluded because of excessive missing data or data that was deemed unreliable.¹ Participants ranged in age from 20 to 71 years, with a mean age of 40. Approximately 70% of participants were between 30 and 55 years. The majority were married or in long-term relationships (62%), whereas 24% were single, and 11% separated/divorced or widowed. Their highest level of education included a graduate or professional degree (31%), undergraduate degree (34%), post-secondary diploma (14%), technical training (13%) and high school diploma or less (9%). Occupations represented included administrative or clerical (37%), professional (28%), management (12%), technical (12%), trades and service (4%), and other (7%). The vast majority (83%) worked full-time with 62% of respondents working between 35 and 40 hours per week. Ten percent of respondents reported incomes of less than \$25,000, 49% reported incomes between \$25,000 and \$50,000, 32% reported incomes of \$50,000 to \$100,000 and 4% reported incomes over \$100,000.

¹ One survey was returned blank, one was only partially completed, and one had a “6” for each item.

RESULTS

Factor Analysis

To ensure a minimum item to respondent ratio of one to five for factor analyses (Gorusch, 1974; Tinsley & Tinsley, 1987), item analyses were conducted to identify a subset of 65 of the original 102 items. The ten best items were sought for each of five dimensions (physical, affective, interpersonal, spiritual, and mystical), and the 15 best items were sought for the cognitive dimension. Because the cognitive dimension subsumed several qualities of spirit at work (e.g., meaningful work, alignment, and authenticity), more items were selected to capture this dimension. The subset of 65 items was chosen based on their contribution to the total scale score (high item-total correlations) and their ability to detect individual differences (larger variance). Only items with item-total correlations greater than .40 and standard deviations greater than 1.2 (on the 6-point scale) were selected. Even though some items exceeded these criteria, they were excluded because they were left blank by a number of respondents, which likely indicated that they lacked clarity. Finally, where inter-item correlations indicated that two items were highly correlated, the item best meeting the criteria was chosen.

These 65 items were then subjected to factor analysis using unweighted least squares analysis with promax rotation. Since there was no justification to argue that the six conceptual dimensions of the definition were orthogonal, oblique rotation was used (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989). With a view to confirming the six dimensions that emerged in the earlier qualitative study and to see if the items loaded as predicted on the expected factors, six factors were specified in the factor analysis. Although six factors with eigenvalues greater than one were obtained, only the first four reflected the dimensions of our spirit at work definition and spirit at work as conceptualized in the literature (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Sheep, 2004). The fifth and sixth factors only had a few items with factor loadings over .40. Rather than reflecting one of the dimensions expected, the fifth factor seemed to be somewhat reflective of emotional intelligence (e.g. “I express myself in a direct and honest way” “At work, I recognize and manage emotions well in myself and my relationships”) and the sixth factor was not conceptually meaningful, thus these two factors were dropped. Since the four strongest factors (accounting for 62% of the variance) confirmed the key aspects of spirit at work identified in our conceptual definition, these were retained for the final scale.

The four meaningful factors were labelled engaging work (EW), sense of community (SoC), spiritual connection (SpC), and mystical experience (ME). These four factors captured the essence of the six dimensions in our definition. The items loading on EW seemed to reflect primarily the cognitive dimension from the definition which was characterized by a sense of being authentic [e.g., “I bring my whole self (mind, body, and spirit) to work”], an awareness of alignment between one’s values and beliefs and one’s work (e.g., “I experience a match between the requirements of my work and my values, beliefs, and behaviors”), and a belief that one is engaged in meaningful work that has a higher purpose (e.g., “I am engaged in work that has a higher purpose”). EW also included a couple of items that were intended to measure *positive affect*, that in hindsight could be labelled enjoyment and fulfillment through work (e.g., “I am passionate about my work” and “I feel nourished by my work”). The items loading on SoC reflected the definition’s *interpersonal* dimension which was characterized by a sense of connection to others (e.g., “I feel like I am part of a community at work”) and common purpose (e.g., “I share a strong sense of purpose and meaning with my coworkers about our work”). The items loading on SpC reflected the characteristics of the *spiritual* presence dimension of a sense of connection to something larger than self (e.g., “I receive inspiration or guidance from a Higher Power about my work”). Finally, the items loading on ME reflected the *physical sensations* and energy dimension (e.g., “At times, I experience an energy or vitality at work that is difficult to describe”), the *positive affect* dimension (e.g., “At moments, I experience complete joy and ecstasy at work”), and the *mystical* dimension (e.g., “I have moments at work in which I have no sense of time or space”) of the definition. In hindsight, the physical and positive affect dimensions appear to be part of a mystical experience.

Choosing the Final Scale Items

Our goal was to develop a short, psychometrically sound measure. Thus, the best items loading on each of the four conceptually meaningful factors were selected. Only those items that loaded on one factor and items with a factor loading greater than .40 were considered. This resulted in seven items on the engaging work subscale, five on the mystical experience subscale, and three on each of the sense of community and spiritual connection subscales for a total of 18 items. The engaging work and mystical experience subscales ended up with more items than the other

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two subscales because these factors subsumed several aspects of spirit at work. For example, the engaging work subscale included items tapping meaningful work, alignment, authenticity, and aspects of positive affect. The mystical experience included items tapping physical sensations, aspects of positive affect, and mystical moments at work.

To confirm the reliability of these four factors, a second unweighted least squares factor analysis with promax rotation was conducted on the selected 18 items and the same four factors emerged. The 18 items retained for the final *Spirit at Work Scale (SAWS)* and their respective factor loadings are presented in Table 1. The table shows all factor loadings greater than .40. Item means, standard deviations, and item-total correlations are shown for each item in Table 2.

TABLE 1
Factor Loadings of Spirit at Work Scale

Spirit at work item	Factor loading			
	EW	ME	SpC	SoC
1. I experience a match between the requirements of my work and my values, beliefs and behaviours.	.61			
4. I am able to find meaning or purpose at work.	.64			
7. I am passionate about my work.	.80			
9. I am fulfilling my calling through my work.	.81			
11. I have a sense of personal mission in life, which my work helps me to fulfill.	.62			
14. I feel grateful to be involved in work like mine.	.78			
18. At the moment, I am right where I want to be at work.	.68			
2. At times, I experience a “high” at my work.		.59		
12. I have moments at work in which I have no sense of time or space.		.56		
5. At moments, I experience complete joy and ecstasy at work.		.83		
16. I experience moments at work where everything is blissful.		.69		
8. At times, I experience an energy or vitality at work that is difficult to describe.		.67		
10. My spiritual beliefs play an important role in everyday decisions that I make at work.			.78	
15. I receive inspiration or guidance from a Higher Power about my work.			.79	
6. I experience a connection with a greater source that has a positive effect on my work.			.98	
17. I feel like I am part of “a community” at work.				.66
3. I experience a real sense of trust and personal connection with my coworkers.				.99
13. I share a strong sense of purpose and meaning with my coworkers about our work.				.66

Note. EW = engaging work; SoC = sense of community; SpC = spiritual connection; ME = mystical experience. Factor loadings greater than .40 are presented.

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TABLE 2

Item Means, Standard Deviation and Corrected Item-Totals of Spirit at Work Scale

Spirit at work item	<i>M</i>	SD	Corrected Item- Total
1. I experience a match between the requirements of my work and my values, beliefs and behaviours.	4.01	1.33	.70
2. At times, I experience a “high” at my work.	3.44	1.56	.69
3. I experience a real sense of trust and personal connection with my coworkers.	3.90	1.33	.62
4. I am able to find meaning or purpose at work.	4.36	1.24	.69
5. At moments, I experience complete joy and ecstasy at work.	3.07	1.52	.75
6. I experience a connection with a greater source that has a positive effect on my work.	2.96	1.64	.47
7. I am passionate about my work.	4.26	1.41	.71
8. At times, I experience an energy or vitality at work that is difficult to describe.	3.30	1.49	.74
9. I am fulfilling my calling through my work.	3.34	1.52	.74
10. My spiritual beliefs play an important role in everyday decisions that I make at work.	3.45	1.72	.40
11. I have a sense of personal mission in life, which my work helps me to fulfill.	3.99	1.47	.71
12. I have moments at work in which I have no sense of time or space.	3.51	1.52	.38
13. I share a strong sense of purpose and meaning with my coworkers about our work.	3.93	1.29	.66
14. I feel grateful to be involved in work like mine.	4.47	1.30	.70
15. I receive inspiration or guidance from a Higher Power about my work.	2.49	1.66	.49
16. I experience moments at work where everything is blissful.	3.42	1.52	.66
17. I feel like I am part of “a community” at work.	4.43	1.30	.63
18. At the moment, I am right where I want to be at work.	3.57	1.67	.65

Descriptive Statistics for the 18 item SAWS

Ranges, means, standard deviations, and internal consistency reliabilities for the total scale and for each of the four subscales of the 18 item scale are presented in Table 3. The Cronbach alphas indicate very acceptable internal consistency reliabilities for the total scale ($\alpha = .93$) and the four subscales (α 's from .86 to .91). Measures of dispersion reveal a total scale and subscales that are sensitive to measuring wide ranges in variability in spirit at work and its four dimensions. Correlations among individual subscales and the total scale are presented in Table 4. As expected, all were significant at $p < .01$. The magnitude of correlations (ranging from .23 to .72) indicates related, but meaningfully distinct, factors.

TABLE 3
Psychometric Properties of the SAWS and Subscales

Subscale	Score				
	Min.	Max.	<i>M</i>	SD	Alpha
Total Scale	18	105	65.91	17.86	.93
Engaging Work	7	42	28.03	8.01	.91
Mystical Experience	5	30	16.74	6.09	.86
Spiritual Connection	3	18	8.93	4.50	.88
Sense of Community	3	18	12.30	3.50	.87

TABLE 4
Intercorrelations between Total SAWS Scores and Subscale Scores

Subscale	1	2	3	4	5
1. Total Scale	--				
2. Engaging Work	.92	--			
3. Sense of Community	.76	.68	--		
4. Spiritual Connection	.58	.36	.23	--	
5. Mystical Experience	.87	.72	.60	.36	--

Group Differences in the SAWS and Subscale Scores

The last step involved computing *SAWS* scores for the 332 respondents based on the 18 item scale and exploring the levels of spirit at work reported by different demographic groups in the sample. Given what is known about generativity – that making a contribution towards others and leaving a legacy becomes more important as we age – it was expected that age and spirit at work would be positively correlated. However, Pearson product-moment correlations revealed no relationship between age and total *SAWS* scores and a very modest, albeit statistically significant positive correlation between age and engaging work ($r = .13$), suggesting a tendency for engaging work to increase with age. As expected, *t*-tests revealed no gender differences on total *SAWS* scores or on any of the subscales.

It was expected that education, income, and occupation might be related to spirit at work. Although ANOVAs indicated no mean differences in total *SAWS* scores for education or income, a significant difference for occupation was found, $F(2,282) = 8.08$, $p < .001$. Scheffe post hoc analyses revealed that management and professional employees ($M = 70.66$) reported higher overall spirit at work than administrative staff, ($M = 63.26$) and sales, trades, or technical groups ($M = 60.50$), $ps < .01$. In addition, two subscales of spirit at work, engaging work and spiritual connection, were related to occupation, $F(2,290) = 17.59$, $p < .001$ and $F(2,228) = 4.25$, $p < .05$, respectively. Scheffe post-hoc tests revealed that management and professional employees ($M = 31.06$) experienced their work as more engaging than the administrative ($M = 25.72$) and sales, trades, and technical groups ($M = 25.78$), $ps < .001$, but staff in administrative ($M = 9.13$) positions experienced more of a spiritual connection at work than those staff in the sales, trades, technical groups ($M = 7.33$), $p < .05$.

Unexpectedly, an ANOVA revealed a statistically significant effect of marital status on *SAWS* scores, $F(2,306) = 3.92$, $p < .05$. Scheffe post hoc analyses revealed that individuals who were separated, divorced, or widowed ($M = 72.53$) reported more spirit at work than those individuals who were single ($M = 62.67$), $p < .05$.

DISCUSSION

The field has lacked a widely accepted, psychometrically sound measure of individual spirit at work, thus hindering research and further understanding of this elusive construct. We offer the *SAWS* as a promising measure to address the field's needs. *SAWS* is grounded in individuals' experiences of spirit at work and is compatible with existing literature on spirit at work.

How does the *SAWS* Compare with other Scales?

We are grateful to Ashmos and Duchon for their pioneering work in the development of spirituality at work scale. In spite of the different focus of each of the instruments, we found overlap between our scale and some of the "individual level" items in Ashmos and Duchon's (2000) measure. Whereas Ashmos and Duchon's goal was to assess spirituality at work at the individual, work unit and organizational levels, the focus of the *SAWS* is on individuals and, in particular, their experience of spirit at work. Considerable overlap was also found between the measure Milliman and colleagues (2003) designed to assess the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee attitudes and the *SAWS*. Two constructs selected to represent workplace spirituality were consistent with the *SAWS*, but the third construct was more reflective of the organization, making it different from the *SAWS*. The spiritual connection and mystical dimensions of the *SAWS* were not addressed in Milliman's measure. Finally, similarities were found among the conceptualization of the dimensions for the *SAWS* and Sheep's (2004) Workplace Spirituality Person-Organizational Fit, however the purpose of each instrument is completely different. The intention of Sheep's measure is to assess the individual's attitudes/expectations toward spirit at work and how well the organization supplies or facilitates these expectations.

Unlike the *SAWS*, where the purpose is to assess the experience of spirit at work as a state of being, these other measures attempted to assess some aspect of the organization. Yet, in spite of the different intentions of each measure, similarities exist in how the construct is conceptualized. All four instruments include components that address meaningful (engaging) work and sense of community. It is not surprising to us that all measures had a meaningful work component— which is included in our conception of engaging work – because the "engaging work" factor accounted for the largest portion of variance explained by the *SAWS*. Three of the measures include a component that relates to spirituality. However, only the *SAWS* has a component that relates to the mystical component of spirit at work. We believe that this is because the *SAWS* is based on a definition of spirit at work that is grounded in individual's experience of work. In our research, individuals' personal reports of spirit at work commonly included vivid descriptions of mystical experiences at work. We would argue that this is a key aspect of spirit at work that previous measures have failed to capture.

More importantly, what differentiates the measures is the purpose for which they were developed. The unit of analysis of the *SAWS* is only the individual and not the work unit or organization. Rather than assess employee attitude, which may very well reflect workplace attitude rather than real action, the *SAWS* assesses the experience of spirit at work as a state of being. See Appendix A for further comparison among these four measures.

Is Spirit at Work Different from other Personality Constructs?

Spirit at work is a distinct construct reflecting a particular human experience. Yet, it has characteristics in common with other personality constructs or states such as spirituality, spiritual intelligence, and flow. For example, the spiritual dimension of spirit at work has much in common with others' conceptions of spirituality, but reflects spirituality experienced in the context of work. It is this context that distinguishes spirit at work from spirituality. And, whereas Emmon's (2000) concept of spiritual intelligence focuses on the ability or capacity to have spiritual and mystical experiences, spirit at work focuses on the actual spiritual and mystical experiences during work endeavours.

Our mystical experience dimension of spirit at work reflects a positive state of arousal in which individuals experience a natural high at work in which everything flows effortlessly, where they have no sense of time and space, and which involves feelings of bliss, joy, and ecstasy. The combination of these experiences is suggestive of an altered state of consciousness similar to the concept of flow or optimal experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988). According to Csikszentmihalyi (1988), the main dimensions of flow are "intense involvement, deep concentration,

clarity of goals and feedback, loss of a sense of time, lack of self-consciousness, and transcendence of a sense of self, leading to an autotelic, that is, intrinsically rewarding experience” (p. 365). Like with spirit at work, when individuals experience flow they report a profound sense of well-being and sense of inner harmony. Thus, the experience of spirit at work, particularly the mystical dimension, has much overlap with flow. It is flow at work along with a sense of purpose or belief that one is engaged in meaningful work that contributes to the common good that differentiates spirit at work from flow.

The Transcendent Nature of Spirit at Work

Finally, this study revealed that spirit at work transcends gender, age, education, and socio-economic status. We found that employees in management and professional positions are more likely to report high levels of spirit at work and find their work more engaging than their counterparts in administrative or sales, trades, or technical positions. Perhaps this is as a result of employees in management and professional positions having more opportunities for creativity, flexibility, autonomy, decision-making, involvement and making a difference. Moreover, individuals in these positions likely see their work as a career or vocation as compared to a job.

The finding that employees who are separated, divorced, or widowed experience higher levels of spirit at work than employees who are single was surprising. Individuals who are separated, divorced, or widowed have experienced a significant change in their marital status. Although it is unknown whether these individuals experienced higher levels of spirit at work prior to their change in marital status, it is very possible that the event was life transforming and led to increased spirit at work. Perhaps these individuals became engaged in work as a means to cope with loss. It could also be that through their own grief and quest for renewed meaning that they became connected with their spirituality.

A Revised Definition of Spirit at Work

Conceptually, spirit at work has multiple factors. Although this research built on our earlier empirically-grounded definition of spirit at work, we are suggesting a tighter definition comprised of four, rather than six, dimensions: engaging work, spiritual connection, sense of community and mystical experience.

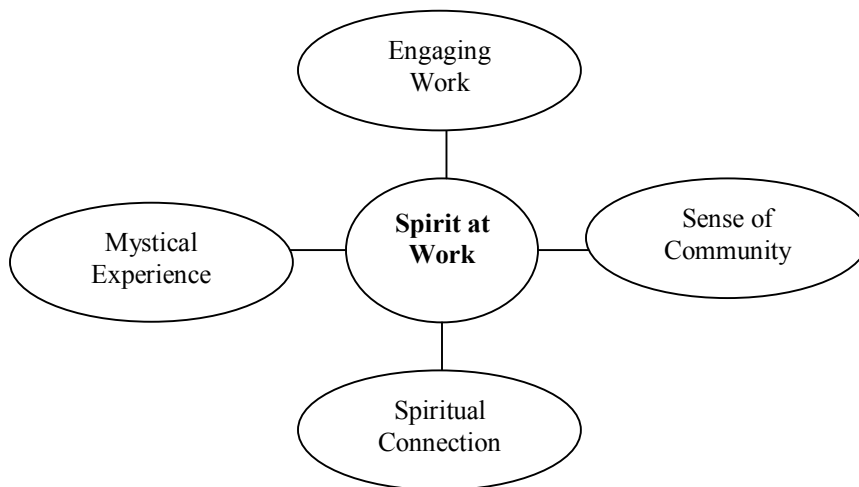


Figure 1. The Four Dimensions of Spirit at Work

Characteristics of the “physical” and “positive affect” dimensions in our earlier definition have collapsed into these four dimensions. Perhaps not surprisingly, items representing the “physical” dimension from the definition loaded onto the mystical experience subscale whereas the “positive affect” items loaded on the engaging work or mystical experience subscales. We initially identified these dimensions based on themes that emerged from a qualitative study with persons with spirit at work. Although we never expected the dimensions to be orthogonal, we did expect integrity. However, what we saw conceptually as distinct dimensions were not perceived separately by individuals.

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For example, it appears that individuals experience the physical and mystical characteristics of spirit at work together. Similarly, positive affect was experienced together with positive cognitions or mystical experiences. The characteristics in the descriptions for these two dimensions did not disappear; they just organized differently for individuals. Thus, we offer a refined definition.

Spirit at work is a distinct state that is characterized by cognitive, interpersonal, spiritual, and mystical dimensions. Spirit at work involves: *engaging work* characterized by a profound feeling of well-being, a belief that one is engaged in meaningful work that has a higher purpose, an awareness of alignment between one's values and beliefs and one's work, and a sense of being authentic; a *spiritual connection* characterized by a sense of connection to something larger than self; a *sense of community* characterized by a feeling of connectedness to others and common purpose; and a *mystical or unitive experience* characterized by a positive state of energy or vitality, a sense of perfection, transcendence, and experiences of joy and bliss.

Contrary to measuring attitudes towards spirit at work and characteristics of the workplace, the *Spirit at Work Scale* assesses individuals' experience of spirit at work. This new scale provides those interested in measuring the construct with the tool necessary to do so. Although the scale still needs to be validated and convergent and divergent validity determined, we believe that the instrument addresses a great gap in spirituality in the workplace field. *SAWS* is a short, psychometrically sound, and easy to administer measure that holds much promise for use in research and practice. We hope that we have developed a measure of individual spirit at work that will: (1) further our understanding of the construct; (2) stimulate research to validate the *SAWS*; (3) stimulate research to explore personal and organizational outcomes related to spirit at work; (4) assist in assessing the effectiveness of initiatives designed to increase spirit at work and finally, (4) have practical application in work settings.

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Comparison of Spirit at Work Scale with other Measures

<p>Spirit at Work Scale (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2006)</p> <p>Spirit at work is seen as a distinct state, thus the purpose of the SAWS was to measure individual's experiences of spirit at work. The Spirit at Work Scale is comprised of four dimensions: engaging work (cognitive), sense of community (interpersonal), spiritual connection (spiritual), and mystical experience.</p>	<p>Workplace Spirituality (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000)</p> <p>The purpose of this instrument was to observe and measure spirituality at work, which was conceptualized as having three components: the inner life, meaningful work, and community. Part 1 assesses individuals' own experience, thus is similar to the SAWS. Parts 2 and 3 were intended to assess spirituality at the work unit and organizational levels.</p>	<p>Workplace Spirituality (Milliman et al., 2003)</p> <p>The purpose of this measure was to examine the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee attitudes. The three core dimensions included meaningful work, sense of community, and being in alignment with the organizations values and mission. All dimensions were assessed at the individual level of analysis.</p>	<p>Workplace Spirituality Person – Organization Fit (Sheep, 2004)</p> <p>The purpose of the WSP-OF is to assess the individual's preferences, that is, their attitudes/expectations toward their work/ workplace and how well the organization supplies or facilitates these expectations.</p>
<p>Engaging Work <i>Engaging work</i> is characterized by a profound feeling of well-being, a belief that one is engaged in meaningful work that has a higher purpose, an awareness of alignment between one's values and beliefs and one's work, and a sense of being authentic.</p>	<p>Meaningful Work This dimension taps aspects of spirit at work related to positive affect, meaningful work, and alignment, but does not assess experiences of authenticity which are so often discussed as a key part of spirit at work in the literature (Cappanelli and Cappanelli, 2004; Lips-Wiersma and Mills, 2002) and were part of our "experts" experience.</p>	<p>Meaningful Work Considered as the "individual level", this dimension included: enjoy work, energized by work, and work gives personal meaning and purpose. Items for "meaningful work" were taken from Ashmos and Duchon (2000) and are similar to the items in the SAWS "engaging work" factor.</p>	<p>Meaning Viewed as a holistic approach to the meaning of work and self, this dimension is directed toward one's expectation of work, not one's experience of work. One expectation is "I expect my work to be significant to me." How well the organization meets this expectation is: "My work is significant to me."</p>

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<p>Spirit at Work Scale (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2006)</p> <p>Sense of Community A <i>sense of community</i> is characterized by a feeling of connectedness to others and common purpose.</p>	<p>Workplace Spirituality (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000)</p> <p>Conditions for Community Similar to the SAWS, this scale has items which refer to feeling like part of a community, however, the majority of this measure's items tap into the conditions or ways in which the work environment is encouraging and caring (e.g., I am evaluated fairly here. I am encouraged to take risks at work). Although these items tap characteristics of the work environment that would likely foster spirit at work, they do not assess the experience or state of spirit at work.</p>	<p>Workplace Spirituality (Milliman et al., 2003)</p> <p>Sense of Community Viewed at the "group level", the researchers developed items that focused on the sense of community experienced by workers (e.g., Feel part of a community. Feel free to express opinions). Items referring to a sense of connection with co-workers, employees support of each other, and linked with a common purpose are congruent with the "sense of community" factor in the SAWS.</p>	<p>Workplace Spirituality Person – Organization Fit (Sheep, 2004)</p> <p>Transcendence of Self Also referred to "rising above self to become part of an interconnected whole" Sheep purports that the experience of work as community is necessary for individuals to experience that feeling of connectedness with others and the universe. Examples include: "I want to be an integral part of a work community." / "Where I work, I am an integral part of a work community."</p>
<p>Spiritual Connection A <i>spiritual connection</i> characterized by a sense of connection to something larger than self.</p>	<p>Inner Life In addition to having a similar item to the SAWS "my spiritual beliefs play an important role in everyday decisions I make at work", this measure also includes several items which assess hopelessness, how spiritual one is, and how important prayer is to the individual – items that are not connected to one's experience at work. This dimension seems to assess "inner life" more generally as compared to "inner life at work".</p>	<p>Not Addressed The authors report that they did not focus on the transcendent aspect of workplace spirituality because they believed that it was more likely to impact an individual's personal life.</p>	<p>Integration Seen as a holistic approach to workplace and self, this dimension is described as the personal desire to bring one's whole being into the workplace. Examples include: "I should be able to show the spiritual parts of me at work." / "I can show the spiritual parts of me at work."</p>

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<p>Spirit at Work Scale (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2006)</p>	<p>Workplace Spirituality (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000)</p>	<p>Workplace Spirituality (Milliman et al., 2003)</p>	<p>Workplace Spirituality – Organization Fit (Sheep, 2004)</p>
<p>Mystical Experience <i>A mystical or unitive experience</i> characterized by a positive state of energy or vitality, a sense of perfection, transcendence, and experiences of joy and bliss.</p>	<p>Work Environment Part 2 describes the extent to which employees’ identify with the work unit’s values, goals, and mission. The authors reported that the data addressing the work unit level was not as compelling as the data addressing the individual level data.</p>		
	<p>Organizational Level Part 3 describes individuals’ observations of their work organization. The authors concluded that the organizational level items were disappointing as measures.</p>	<p>Alignment with Organizational Values Items were selected from Ashmos and Duchon’s measure and focused on: feeling connected to the organization’s goals, identifying with organization’s mission and values; and organization cares about employees. The items are reflective of one’s relationship with the organization rather than the experience of work thus has no parallel with any of the <i>SAWS</i> factors.</p>	
			<p>Personal Growth / Development This dimension involves the personal growth/development of one’s inner self at work. Examples include: “My work enables me to become a more complete person.” / “My workplace should enable me to become a more complete person.”</p>