Book review

Workplace Spirituality: Making a Difference
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Workplace Spirituality: Making a Difference, a compilation containing 20 chapters in five sections, inspires constructive interactions between a spectrum of disciplines, such as religion, human resource management, enterprise management, culture, public policy, psychology, health and technology. It also shares theories, know-how, practices and experience from contributors in Asia (including West Asia), Europe (encompassing East Europe) and North America. Its aim is to offer a platform of insightful dialogue among scholars and practitioners who are eager to apply spirituality and religion to the workplace to enhance occupational health, organisational engagement, productivity, creativity and effectiveness, achieving well-being in business communities.

The first section recalls the development of this cross-discipline since the early 1990s from the perspectives of the individual, family, group, organisation, community and environment, resulting not only in improved performance indicators (for example, market share and turnover) but more importantly, in workplace health in a multicultural context. Workplace spirituality, either inclusive or exclusive of religious beliefs or practices (entailing Abrahamic religions, Buddhism and Confucian mindset), nurtures employees' inner selves, increases life satisfaction and builds group cohesion and identity.

The second section analyses leadership, ethics, strategic management, organisational change and behaviour, human resource management and gender and diversity. Studying empowerment and engagement through meaningful work, it investigates the relationships between spiritual leadership, workplace spirituality and job satisfaction with the aid of professional ethics related to rights and responsibilities for all stakeholders. This positively impacts employee wellness and organisational performance. The book proposes connectedness and interconnectedness. The former looks into the situation from a stakeholder standpoint that influences the strategic management, focusing on bridging, bonding and connecting dimensions. The latter examines a spiritual view that goes beyond

stakeholders but serves as moral guidance for judging the consequences of management decisions, which will foster social entrepreneurship. These ideas accelerate innovative work behaviour through workplace spirituality. Faith-friendly organisations accommodate work-life balance, diversity and anti-discrimination, transformational and charismatic leadership and ethical behaviour and responsibility through human resource policies and practices. They advocate for corporate social responsibility.

Paying attention to research and practice, the third section reviews concepts of physical health, psychological well-being, spiritual vitality and ethical character. It initially proposes five advances and four challenges. The former is linked to positivity (in thoughts, emotions, physiology and behaviour), gratitude (a source of energy) and forgiveness (encouragement in facing harm to promote healing and recovery from trauma and tragedy), inner peace and spiritual fitness, compassion and leadership with character and emotional competence. The latter is associated with standardising processes, studying the variations within the human spiritual experience, overcoming totalitarianism and the tyranny of the majority in the workplace and effectively managing a dual authority system. This section discusses workplace spirituality and organisations with top-down hierarchies, such as the police and military, in which the staff always suffer from occupational, chronic stress. It also analyses how workplace spirituality can contribute to creative industries; for example, artists, musicians, designers and architects who boost a creative economy through spiritual awareness.

The fourth section explores key issues. For example, tensions between self-spirituality and one's organisation reflect on how a whole person who possesses higher ability to become an authentic self can achieve personal growth and self-actualisation in their workplace. Also, mindfulness training programmes, which are Buddhist-derived interventions, combine with wisdom to improve mental well-being on an individual scope and productivity from a corporate standpoint.

Specifying empirical studies, the last section presents research outcomes from various methodologies. Indigenous studies delve into the culture, experience and contemporary issues of specific entities or communities. Relational ontology seeks interdependence and the co-creation of reality, which distinguishes between subject and object, between researcher and the researched and between human beings and nature. Ethnography is context-sensitive, and thus the data interpretations are likely affected by the setting of the research, while auto-ethnography integrates autobiography (self) into ethnography (culture), reflecting personal experience, culture and practices. Psychodynamics, namely, psychodynamic psychology, assesses the influence of preceding experiences on psychological forces, emotion and behaviour, on the individual pursuance of meaningfulness and transcendence and on a collective view of unconscious patterns.

This edited volume offers a comprehensive discourse on workplace spirituality, which has room for development in ever-changing business settings. It has introduced different models of spiritual leadership for various religions and reminds stakeholders of intra- and inter-religious practices to manifest workplace spirituality.

However, the book may need deeper exploration into workplace spirituality where the organisations admit different cultures, in particular, the balance between global and domestic practices in multinational corporations, ultimately ameliorating productivity in an inclusive context. For instance, adaptation in facilities and flexible working hours may allow Muslims to fulfil their religious practices. Secondly, there is an absence of detailed inquiry of education and training on this issue when varied sectors of stakeholders require training to refine their skills for such secular humanism. Thirdly, the recent COVID-19 pandemic has expedited the notion of the home office, thus generating a review of workplace spirituality for such a new working mode, which invites further studies. Fourthly, studies on how small and medium business pursues workplace

spirituality are probably valuable for minimising their operative difficulties. Finally, integrative research is potentially an approach to expanding methods other than those that have been shared in this compilation.

This collection comprises a broad range of topics regarding workplace spirituality, from theoretical and practical notions that cultivate whole selves within the business arena. It also serves as a reference for corporate leaders, human resources managers, policymakers, religious workers, workplace counsellors, researchers and students, especially for those who are committed to promoting spirituality in the workplace and praxis of spiritual well-being.

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About the author
Fung Kei Cheng, PhD, focuses on applying Buddhist and Chinese cultural theories to a variety of disciplines, including counselling and psychotherapy, mental health, public health, complementary and alternative medicine, conflict resolution, management, gender studies, cultural studies, and sustainable development. Her research outcomes have been published in international peer-reviewed journals in English and Chinese.