

## Does workplace spirituality influence knowledge-sharing behavior and work engagement in work? Trust as a mediator

Jawad Khan<sup>a\*</sup>, Muhammad Usman<sup>b</sup>, Imran Saeed<sup>c</sup>, Amna Ali<sup>d</sup> and Hena Gul Nisar<sup>e</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Ph.D. Scholar-Iqra National University Peshawar, Pakistan

<sup>b</sup>Assistant Professor-Iqra National University Peshawar, Pakistan

<sup>c</sup>Assistant Professor, IBMS, The University of Agriculture Peshawar, Pakistan

<sup>d</sup>Associate Professor-Iqra National University Peshawar, Pakistan

<sup>e</sup>Lecturer, IBMS, The University of Agriculture Peshawar, Pakistan

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### ABSTRACT

Management scholars view workplace spirituality as the main factor behind building trust among employees and playing a pivotal role in enhancing the organization's positive outcomes, i.e., knowledge sharing behavior & work engagement. Underpinning social exchange theory, we explored the linkage between workplace spirituality, knowledge sharing behavior, and work engagement. We further studied to look at the mediating effect of trust between workplace spirituality and positive outcomes. Data was collected from six private companies, the total number of respondents was (n=196). The study's analysis showed that workplace spirituality substantially positively impacts knowledge sharing behavior and work engagement. Furthermore, the link between workplace spirituality, knowledge sharing behavior, and work engagement is positively and statistically significantly mediated by trust. Thus, this work contributes significantly to the research paradigm by presenting workplace spirituality as a solution for high-rise trust among employees, fostering employee engagement in their work, and improving the capacity of knowledge-sharing behavior. Additionally, at the end of this study, theoretical and managerial suggestions, future avenues, and limitations are stated.

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## 1. Introduction

Maintaining high performance in an uncertain and volatile economic climate is critical for gaining a competitive edge and organizational productivity (Oruh et al., 2021). Sadly, hundreds of redundancies occurred worldwide during the Covid 19 crisis, prompting confusion and frustration among employees. Hardly few individuals have the determination, approach, will-power, and capacity to maintain excellent performance on a daily and long-term basis (Harjoto & Rossi, 2021). The absolute importance of establishing a corporate culture that encourages employee well-being, engagement towards their job roles, and enhancing employee performance, has been stressed nowadays by the turbulent and unstable globalized economy combined with the Covid 19 pandemic. Workplace spirituality, however, is now one of the imperative concepts that have recently attracted more academic attention throughout the stressed situation (Jena, 2021; Utami et al., 2021). Since the last two decades, workplace spirituality has sparked a lot of scholarly curiosity to search and study this phenomenon from the base. Spirituality allows people to express their spiritual identities at work (Lata & Chaudhary, 2020). Employees throughout the world are encouraged to express their spiritual convictions in the workplace (Pandey, 2017). In the 1920s, the concept of workplace spirituality programs emerged; however, by the late 1990s, the campaign had acquired attention when businesses faced a slew

\* Corresponding author. Tel.: +923008005040

E-mail address: [jawadmarwat1@gmail.com](mailto:jawadmarwat1@gmail.com) (J. Khan)

of transformations inside and outside their structures (Khan et al., 2020). The results of these shifts, such as retrenchments, redundancies, re-engineering, mergers, and cost-cutting, resulted in a significant increase in competition among companies operating globally. Employees are expected to go beyond their regular employment duties and job expectations in such a competitive environment to counter all these challenges (Jena, 2021). As a result, employees could be encouraged to put their true essence into their jobs, which is only conceivable when their spirits are enthused (Lata & Chaudhary, 2020). Regrettably, the substantial changes in the structural organizational system due to globalization have contributed to the increased distress of employees' psychological well-being. Since then, it has implanted in employees a profound sense of job insecurity and role ambiguity, giving rise to a slew of psychological issues and low self-esteem (Haldorai et al., 2020). It is undeniable that an employee suffering from psychological problems become unable to perform at their best and go above and beyond the specified regular duties. According to upper management, stress may be improved by incorporating spirituality into the workplace (Otaye et al., 2020; Zhang, 2020).

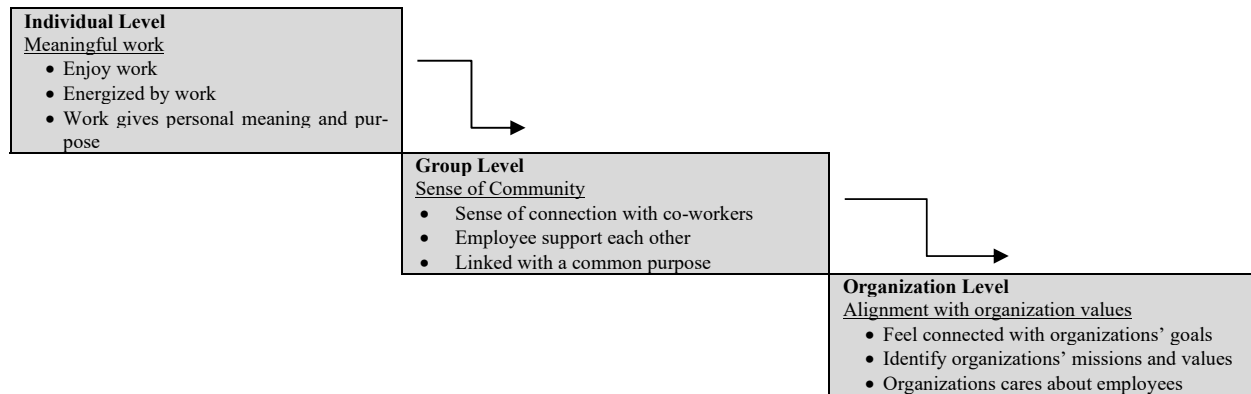
Ashmos and Duchon (2000) define workplace spirituality as "is the acceptance that employees have a spiritual core which nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work taking place in the context of a community". In the view of workplace spirituality, knowledge-sharing culture among stakeholders cannot occur unless the availability of a promising platform for employees to perform and practice spirituality in their respective communities (Rahman et al., 2016). As a result, to foster a culture of knowledge-sharing among employees, a company must foster a spiritual culture in the workplace (Kmieciak, 2020). Trust and the ability to collaborate among colleagues have substantial effects on the effectiveness of knowledge-sharing behavior and attitude (Khari & Sinha, 2018). Prior research also reveals the capacity of employees to share information may be linked to their level of trust (Abbasi et al., 2020). According to (Sibley et al., 2020), trust among coworkers substantially impacts how they transfer knowledge towards each other. Based on the academic research gap, the current study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on trust and its linkage with workplace spirituality among employees in the working boundaries. Workplace spirituality consists of interconnectedness and a sense of trust between employees who are a part of a specific working environment, encouraging harmonious sentiments and resulting in an overall work engagement culture (Khan et al., 2020). As a result, individuals' cumulative performance improves, adding value to overall organizational effectiveness, as indicated by Afsar and Rehman (2015). Employee engagement in their job roles is increasing due to fostering spiritual culture and encouraging trust among employees (Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019). The link between workplace spirituality and work engagement is highlighted through trust (Khan et al., 2020; Gupta & Mikkilineni, 2018). The scholarly gap exists since this subject is still in its infancy, even though much research has shown a statistically significant link between workplace spirituality and positive organizational outcomes (Khan et al., 2020; Sarkar & Garg, 2021). The literature on workplace spirituality and social exchange theory highlights the potential and positive effects of workplace spirituality experienced by employees in the working place (Sibley et al., 2020). Employees, who have inner awareness, perform meaningful work, have a feeling of connectedness, and are aligned with organizational core values. They would like to follow the norm of reciprocity, feel indebted and obligated to their job roles and organization and repay their trust by engaging in good behaviors just like knowledge sharing behavior and staff engagement towards work (Kodden & Groenveld, 2019). According to social exchange theory, when one person helps another person positively and constructively, that person will naturally urge others to reciprocate by expecting the same response in return (Blau, 1964). Accordingly, (Zhang 2020) suggests that employees can contribute positive outcomes by engaging in workplace spirituality to reciprocate beneficial exchange relationships with their employers. In this study, we will extend the study of (Otaye-Ebede et al., 2020) to investigate the effect of trust on the determinants of workplace spirituality in the stressed environment of Covid 19. In multiple ways, our research accords to the literature on workplace spirituality. First, we looked at the ramifications of workplace spirituality. This research contributes to the bank of knowledge and provides new information on workplace spirituality, and offers predictors for positive individual work outcomes, such as knowledge sharing and work engagement. Second, it adds to the body of knowledge by presenting meaningful information on the impact of trust in the workplace, the possible execution of activities that could promote employee engagement, they understand the significance of their job, and they can express their inner selves in the workplace (Kodden & Groenveld, 2019). Thirdly, this paper also adds to the workplace spirituality works by examining its consequences in the workplaces during the Covid 19 pandemic.

## **2. Literature review**

### *2.1 Workplace spirituality*

Over the last decade, researchers in management have developed more interest in identifying the significance and function of spirituality in the workplace. Several research studies have proposed various definitions by putting workplace spirituality in a larger framework, both from the business and an individual perspective (Saxena et al., 2020; Aboobaker et al., 2020). Workplace spirituality is about having a spiritual structure and a corporate culture reflected in the shape of the spiritual self, compassion, and care, sense of belonging, acceptance, honesty, kindness, and wholeness (Aboobaker et al., 2019). In the light of organizational perspective, Spirituality in the workplace is stated as "the personal experience and expressions of one's passion in the setting of one's employment and workplace." It is regarded as an essential paradigm from an individual's perspective. It seeks to assist workers in discovering pleasure in their job, inner awareness, and a feeling of satisfaction while working within an organizational structure (Anderson & Burchell, 2019; Lata & Chaudhary, 2020). During the initial studies on workplace spirituality, seven unique characteristics of workplace spirituality were found, including the transcendent aspect

(Ashmos and Duchon, 2000). According to Milliman et al., only three variables are substantially associated with organizational and job outcomes (2003). According to the study, the most widely accepted definition of workplace spirituality is a three-dimensional notion that includes meaningful work, a feeling of community, and alignment with organizational values. Employees' connections to their employment, colleagues and the organization are collectively known as workplace spirituality. At the corporate level, workplace spirituality earns higher efficiency, importance, and significance (Milliman et al., 2017; Karakas & Sarigollu, 2019; Mayer & Walach, 2018). According to research, employees' spiritual experiences impact their jobs commitment and sense of loyalty towards the organization (De Carlo et al., 2020).



**Fig. 1.** Extracting spirituality in the workplace: interactions at the individual, group, and organizational levels (Milliman et al., 2003)

## 2.2 Trust

The degree to which one believes in and is likely to act on the words, actions, and intentions is called trust (Diatmono, 2019). According to Boon and Holmes (1991), trust entails optimistic assumptions about another person's intentions under challenging situations. According to Barbalet (2009), an individual has trust and faith in another person if they willingly placed resources at the discretion of that person, i.e., that an individual makes themselves open to hope that another person will not take advantage of their weaknesses. When used in the context of a professional relationship, trust refers to a circumstance in which either the employee or the employer makes themselves open to the other with the expectation that the other will not take advantage of this openness (Luhmann, 2000; Pitlik & Rode 2017; Faruq et al., 2021). Trust is now regarded as a vital success factor in today's workplace settings. Working in a team, highly regulated structures, expectations for a flexible environment, inventiveness, and high levels of cooperation prevail (Schilke et al., 2021).

## 2.3 Knowledge Sharing Behavior (KSB)

KSB means an individual's approach to spread, share and communicate knowledge inside the organization (Khan & Zaman, 2020; Kwayu et al., 2021; Lei et al., 2021). The growth of an organization occurs due to such a practice of knowledge dissemination to coworkers within the organization in such a competitive environment (Agyemang et al., 2016; Swanson et al., 2020; Scuotto et al., 2020; Stock et al., 2021). KSB entails imparting explicit knowledge, such as concepts, techniques, practices, and expertise, such as sharing experiences and ideas, to other employees (Khan & Zaman, 2020). Knowledge sharing (KS) is an optimal behavior in today's changing corporate climate since it leads to reciprocal learning, expansion of knowledge and ultimately will enhance company performance (Ogunmokun et al., 2020). Employees can communicate their experiences, capabilities, skills, and judgments through knowledge-sharing behavior (KSB), critical for individual and corporate success (Agyemang et al., 2016). Primarily written communication, face-to-face engagement, and electronic communications platforms are used to accomplish this knowledge-sharing behavior among employees (Voelpel et al., 2005). Reflective practices, teaching, consultancy, and meaningful communication are all part of KSB in most scenarios (Seonghee & Boryung, 2008). KS is tied positively to achieving corporate goals and core competencies (Ho et al., 2013).

## 2.4 Work Engagement

According to Kahn (1990), engaged workers are psychologically, intellectually, and emotionally interested in their job duties and responsibilities. People who feel valued and meaningful in their jobs feel psychological safety (trustworthiness at work) and are readily available for employment (importance of having the physical and psychological resources necessary for the job). Work engagement is a pragmatic, functional, and pleasant mental state or feelings linked to high energy, passion and commitment, and an intense concentration towards work roles (Karatepe et al., 2020; Havold et al., 2020; Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). Work engagement has been linked to higher levels of innovation, goal attainment, work performance, and continuous improvement in today's public and private organizations (Bakker et al., 2014). Work engagement is a happy, joyous state of mind defined by energy, devotion, and total commitment to one's work (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Individuals who are fully

immersed in their job activities have high motivation and excitement levels and are thoroughly focused on their workplace activities (Karatepe et al., 2020). Employees who are positively engaged are happier and more productive, having a deeper emotional connection to their employer, and are less inclined to leave (Gutermann et al., 2017; Van Mierlo & Bakker, 2018). Additionally, engaged workers are more productive because they have a healthier lifestyle, are more prone to having feelings of pleasure (such as love and happiness), improve their psychological capabilities, and convey their engagement toward others. They are more devoted and connected to their company (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008).

### 3. Theory Underpinning & Formation of Hypotheses

#### 3.1 Social Exchange Theory (SET)

One of the most extensively utilized conceptual paradigms in contemporary management research is SET for explaining workplace interactions and behaviors; it can be traced back to 1920. However, George Homans, a sociologist, publicly presented it in his paper "Social Behavior as Exchange" (Homans, 1958). The social exchange has been classified as substituting different activities, i.e., tangible or intangible, substantially satisfying or unsatisfying, expensive or cost-prohibitive, but between at least two persons/parties (Homans, 1961). The theory's central premise is that in social situations, persons choose to participate in the activity that provides the maximum value and is consistent with their self-interests. The model of this scholarship is grounded on Social Exchange Theory (SET). According to SET, employees respond with improved work-related results (e.g., knowledge sharing behavior, work engagement) when they notice their employer is putting effort into supporting them and providing them with an enriched learning environment. Based on SET and the reciprocity norm, it has been proposed that an organization's support for its employees may have a beneficial impact on their intents and attitudes, allowing them to contribute more effectively to the organization's success (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960; Eisenberger et al., 1986). Furthermore, Demircan and Ceylan (2003) define trust as "the way an employee sees the assistance received from their organization, as well as his or her belief in organization processes or other stakeholders affiliated with the workplace that they are faithful and trustworthy to their word." Based on the above-stated literary gaps, this research aims to identify how workplace spirituality affects knowledge sharing behavior and work engagement through the mediating influence of trust.

#### 3.2 Workplace spirituality and trust among employees

An earlier study found a constructive connection between workplace spirituality and increased organizational honesty and Trust (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004; Rahman et al., 2016; Hashemi et al., 2020). Spirituality has been suggested as a factor in fostering employee-employer Trust (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004). According to Hashemi et al., 2020, spiritually driven employees are more enthused to trust colleagues, exchange information, and collaborate with teams and coworkers to achieve common goals. The previous study has revealed that trust is crucial for creating work commitment and organization, and exact in the case of spirituality, it enhances commitment by setting the direction of trust in the workplace, as evidenced by the reciprocating element of the social exchange theory (Hassan et al., 2016; Haldorai et al., 2020). Based on prior studies that found spirituality a strong predictor of trustworthiness (Hassan et al., 2016). We hypothesize that spirituality increases trust among organizational members based on the following argument.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** *Workplace spirituality is positively related to employees' trust.*

#### 3.3 Workplace Spirituality and Knowledge Sharing Behavior

Several authors have studied workplace spirituality's role in managing the complicated and stressful organizational climate (Smith and Malcolm, 2010; Khari & Sinha, 2018). Regardless of the increased attention in studying the role of workplace spirituality in organization development, the area of knowledge sharing considering the inner consciousness among employees as a forerunner is in the development stage, and the number of empirical research available is minimal (Hafni & Chandra, 2020; Islam et al., 2020). Workplace spirituality escalates feelings of community among employees to meet societal and safety concerns and boost their emotional well-being (Sorakraikitikul & Siengthai, 2014; Afsar & Badir, 2017). Consequently, positive sentiments among workers may inspire one another to have a spiritual culture through information sharing to form a more substantial commitment to the firm (Osman Gani et al., 2013; Wahid et al., 2019). Previous research suggested a significant relationship between spirituality and the desire to share knowledge in an organization, as Posner (2006) has studied the positive link of spirituality among employees to foster knowledge-sharing behavior. Employees always spent a substantial amount of time with coworkers; as a result, they feel purpose in their life, meaning in their job roles, and pleasure in their work by exchanging Knowledge (Osman Gani et al., 2013). According to Bindlish et al. (2012), Workplace spirituality fosters a sense of belonging and completion among employees, which motivates them to share important ideas and information with their colleagues. Based on the research examined above, we generated the following hypothesis:

**H<sub>2</sub>:** *Workplace spirituality is positively related to employees' knowledge sharing behaviors.*

#### 3.4 Trust and Knowledge Sharing Behavior

When it comes to employee knowledge-sharing behavior, trust is defined as the desire and willingness of individuals to share critical information with other workers to solve organizational problems (Rahman et al., 2016; Haesebrouck et al., 2021).

Previous theoretical and empirical research has demonstrated that trust can be built through reciprocal care and affection among employees, which stems from their trustworthiness (Ogunmokun et al., 2020). According to researchers, trust and knowledge sharing are reciprocal. Employees may have a stronger bond with one another upon promoting trust in the organization. Such a trustee atmosphere will enhance knowledge-sharing behavior that affects employees' respective areas of job roles and the business as a whole (Casimir et al., 2012; Swift and Hwang, 2013). In an organization with trust-based associations, employees are more enthusiastic about sharing valuable knowledge with coworkers (Rahman et al., 2016). According to existing and previous empirical research, employees are more willing to share information, expertise, and essential experiences with coworkers when there is a high level of trust between them (Holste & Fields, 2010; Wickramasinghe & Widyaratne 2012). In the context of information sharing, extensive research has demonstrated the importance of Trust (Holste and Fields, 2010). This study assumes trust has a positive relationship with employees' information sharing behavior. The following hypothesis is formulated from the literature:

**H<sub>3</sub>:** *There is a positive effect of trust on knowledge sharing behavior.*

### 3.5 Workplace spirituality and work engagement

Social exchange theory is based on the giving and taking principle; one party compromises while the second party exhibits flexibility and expectations in return positively (Blau 1964; Emerson 1976; Van Mierlo & Bakker, 2018). According to studies on the social exchange theory, employees with favorable exchange relationships are less likely to participate in unethical behaviors that may affect the organization, such as theft, cheating, and extortion (Petchsawang & McLean, 2017; Gutermann et al., 2017). According to Umphress and Bingham (2011), employees exhibit spirituality to reciprocate positive exchange connections with their employers. Therefore, employees who enjoy spirituality at the workplace will be engaged in positive work roles (Rahman et al., 2016). According to SET, people's pleasure with their spiritual lives crosses over into their professional lives (Giacalone & Kolodinsky 2008; Arokiasamy & Tat, 2020). They become more involved in their work when they are positively engaged in spirituality. In addition, encouraging spirituality in the workplace may positively impact employees' opinions towards their organization (Gutermann et al., 2017). Employees are more inclined to put in more effort and be more engaged when they think their company encourages their spiritual well-being (Saks 2006; Van Mierlo and Bakker, 2018). Employees practice spirituality at work enables them to achieve high levels of involvement and potential, which leads to higher work engagement by maximizing their intrinsic motivation, creativity, and devotion (Arokiasamy & Tat, 2020). According to Kahn (1992), employees are more engaged in their jobs when they are permitted to show themselves at work and are allowed to unleash their full potential. Many studies claim that workplace spirituality is favorably connected to organizational factors, i.e., work engagement (Albuquerque & Cunha 2020), organization citizenship behavior (Milliman et al. 2003), and organizational commitment (Ghamshadzahi & Nastiezaie, 2020).

**H<sub>4</sub>:** *Spirituality in the workplace has a positive relationship with work engagement.*

### 3.6 Trust and work engagement

Employees' openness to communicate honestly and remain loyal to their organization's activities is called organizational Trust (Miner et al., 2015; Gutermann et al., 2017; Havold et al., 2020). Whenever an organization's and job-related information are communicated to its employees via formal and informal channels, this commitment is to be demonstrated by employees towards the organization in the sense of work engagement (Tan and Lim, 2009; Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). There seems to be no single element that has such a profound impact on people's behavior as Trust because Trust between employees and employers is a vital component to play a crucial role in a company's long-term sustainability and employee engagement in their jobs (Tan and Tan, 2000; Bakker et al., 2014). Furthermore, work engagement shows employees' subsequent involvement in organization operations and passion for the work assigned by the organization. In contrast, organizational trust, on the other hand, shows individuals' confidence and expectations in their organizations' operations. (Gill, 2008; Engelbrecht et al., 2017; Havold et al., 2020). Organizational Trust has a three-fold favorable impact on work engagement, which comprises dedication, vigor, and absorption. First, employees are committed to the company as long as they have trusted ties (Bakker et al., 2014; Van Mierlo and Bakker, 2018). Second, organizational trust is one of the most crucial fundamental principles that keeps people motivated, innovative and engaged (Ingemarsson & Simmons, 1990). Third, organizational trust refers to how employees are absorbed and engaged in the organization's efforts to enhance organization performance (Townsend & Gebhardt, 2008). Employees' perception of a future with the organization grows as they trust their decisions (Spreitzer and Mishra, 2002). As a result, they will be more enthusiastic about their work (Chughtai and Buckley, 2007). Trust means that sentiments of personal commitments and reciprocity rules are essential components of a social exchange relationship (Blau, 1964). Employees trust in the organization's functioning and are more likely to consider themselves in social exchange relationships with their employers (Miner et al., 2015). As a result, individuals should be inclined to go above and beyond the call of duty for this organization (Engelbrecht et al., 2017).

**H<sub>5</sub>:** *There is a positive relationship between trust and work engagement.*

### 3.7 Workplace spirituality, trust, and knowledge sharing behavior

The level of trust and desire to share information among organization members significantly impacts the quality of knowledge-sharing behavior (Hashemi et al., 2020; Hafni & Chandra, 2020). Haesebrouck et al. (2021) defined knowledge sharing as "Individuals exchanging organizationally relevant appropriate knowledge, tips, insights, and experience." Previous research has also shown that the willingness of employees to share knowledge may be influenced by the level of trust among them (Ranasinghe & Samarasinghe, 2019; Haldorai et al., 2020). Trust is an inner state in which a person is anticipated to carry out a specific activity favoring the following person (Bartol and Srivastava 2002). Trust among colleagues opens space to transfer knowledge to one another (Rocha & Pinheiro, 2019). The past study has concluded that the level of spirituality influences an individual's trust determination in the workplace (Chawla & Guda, 2013; Wahid et al., 2019; Haesebrouck et al., 2021). Furthermore, workplace spirituality and mutual trust among employees influence staff practices to create a knowledge-sharing culture, a trustee working environment, acceptance of knowledge valuation, and the ability to work more profoundly (Shaw and Thomson, 2013; Hashemi et al., 2020; Hafni & Chandra, 2020; Haesebrouck et al., 2021). In this regard, knowledge sharing is impossible without a favorable environment for employees' spiritual practices and their trust in their organization's practices (Pardasani et al., 2014; Wahid et al., 2019). As a result, a firm must adopt a trusted culture to bring employees' spiritual lives into the workplace and encourage information sharing among staff (Rego & e Cunha, 2008; Haldorai et al., 2020). Upon the preceding arguments that workplace spirituality and trust have a substantial association with knowledge sharing behavior, we formulate the following hypothesis;

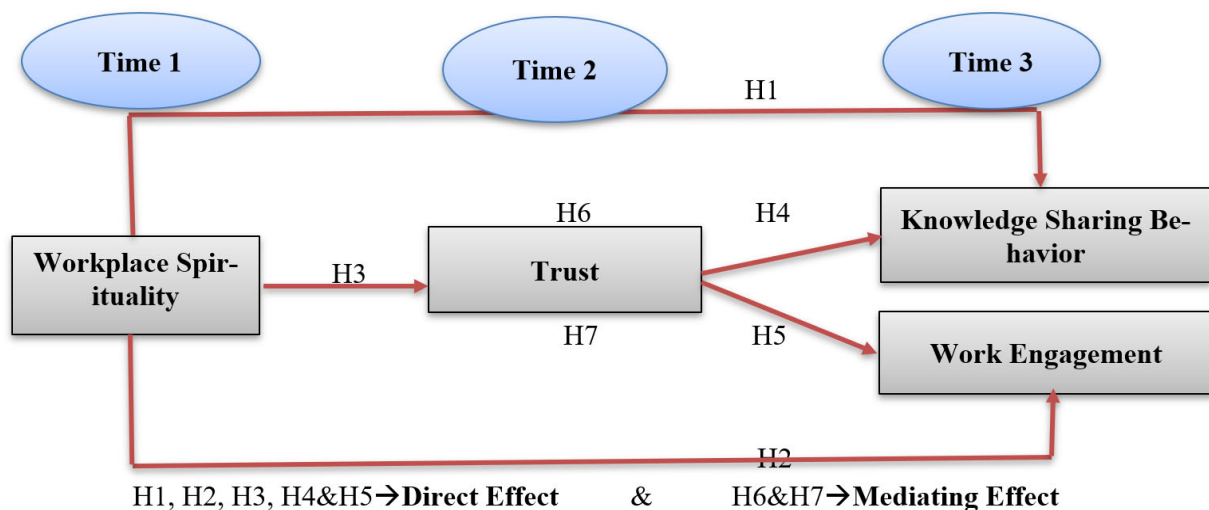
**H<sub>6</sub>:** *Trust mediates the link between workplace spirituality and knowledge sharing behavior.*

### 3.8 Workplace Spirituality, trust and work engagement

When it comes to trust and work engagement, it seems that workplace spirituality has obtained less interest in academic research in the past (Karatepe et al., 2020). While workplace spirituality has been linked to organizational trust significantly, organizational trust is a significant predictor of work engagement (Miner et al., 2015; Ghamshadzahi & Nastiezaie, 2020), suggesting that organizational trust serves as a bridge between workplace spirituality and work engagement. Whenever employees' spirituality declines, distrust in the organization rises, and employee job engagement suffers (Singh & Chopra, 2016; Karatepe et al., 2020). Previous research stated that organizational trust influences various job characteristics such as organizational commitment, work engagement, and citizenship behavior, all of which impact the organization's overall efficiency (Albuquerque & Cunha 2020). Organizational Trust generally constructs the expectation that the organization will maintain its commitments (Miner et al., 2015). As a result, if employees uncover that their employer has managed to fail its promises, trust between employee and employer is lost (Robinson, 1996), eventually leading to work disengagement. Employees who engage in spirituality at work are more likely to reach high levels of engagement, resulting in better trust levels (Ghamshadzahi & Nastiezaie, 2020). The hypothesis about the impact of organizational trust on workplace spirituality and engagement can be stated as follows:

**H<sub>7</sub>:** *Trust mediates the relationship between workplace spirituality and work engagement.*

## Research Model



## 4. Method

### 4.1 Sample Procedures

The information was gathered from employees working in a Saif Group of Companies-Pakistan, i.e., Saif Holdings Ltd, Saif Power Ltd, Saif Textile Mills Ltd, Kohat Textile Mills Ltd, Eighteen Islamabad, Kulsum International Hospital. The data were collected from officers and above ranks due to higher responsibilities and involvement in organizational matters. We randomly distributed 250 questionnaires to selected companies. Due to Covid 19 situation, 50% of employees were working from home, so we received 196 questionnaires in total. A three-wave survey was used to gather the information, which is the best technique to minimize the common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). We collected data regarding demographic and workplace spirituality in the first wave; a total of 237 out of 250 (94.8%) questionnaires were obtained (at time 1). After 15 days, we collected data regarding mediating variable 'trust,' in the second wave, 212 (89.4%) questionnaires were obtained (time 2), and exact after 15 days, we collected data for knowledge sharing behavior and work engagement in 3<sup>rd</sup> wave we obtained 202 (95.28%) questionnaires. Still, due to some missing values, we excluded six questionnaires from our study. A total of 196 questionnaires out of 250 left behind for our study (77.6%).

### 4.2 Questionnaire procurement and measures

In this research, a closed-ended questionnaire modified from different sources was utilized to assess four variables. All relevant factors were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree).

#### 4.2.1 Workplace Spirituality

Milliman et al. (2003) developed a 21-item measure to assess spirituality in the workplace. It is divided into three subscales that evaluate three aspects of workplace spirituality: meaningful work (6 items), sense of community (7 items), and alignment with organizational ideals (8 items).

#### 4.2.2 Trust

Robinson and Rousseau's (1994) seven-item scale was used to assess trust in the organization. This metric taps into employees' overall trust in the organization as a whole. "I fully trust my employer" and "In general, I believe my employer's motives and intentions are good" are two examples. This scale had a coefficient alpha of .92.

#### 4.2.3 Work engagement

Work engagement was measured using a nine-item scale developed by (Schaufeli et al., 2006). This scale is a shortened version of the original 17-item Utrecht work engagement scale with good construct validity. Because the three elements of work engagement (vigour, dedication, and absorption) are firmly linked, researchers have proposed that rather than calculating three distinct scores, researchers utilize the overall 9-item score as an indication of work engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2006). By averaging the nine elements, the total score (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .89$ ) was computed.

#### 4.2.4 Knowledge Sharing Behavior

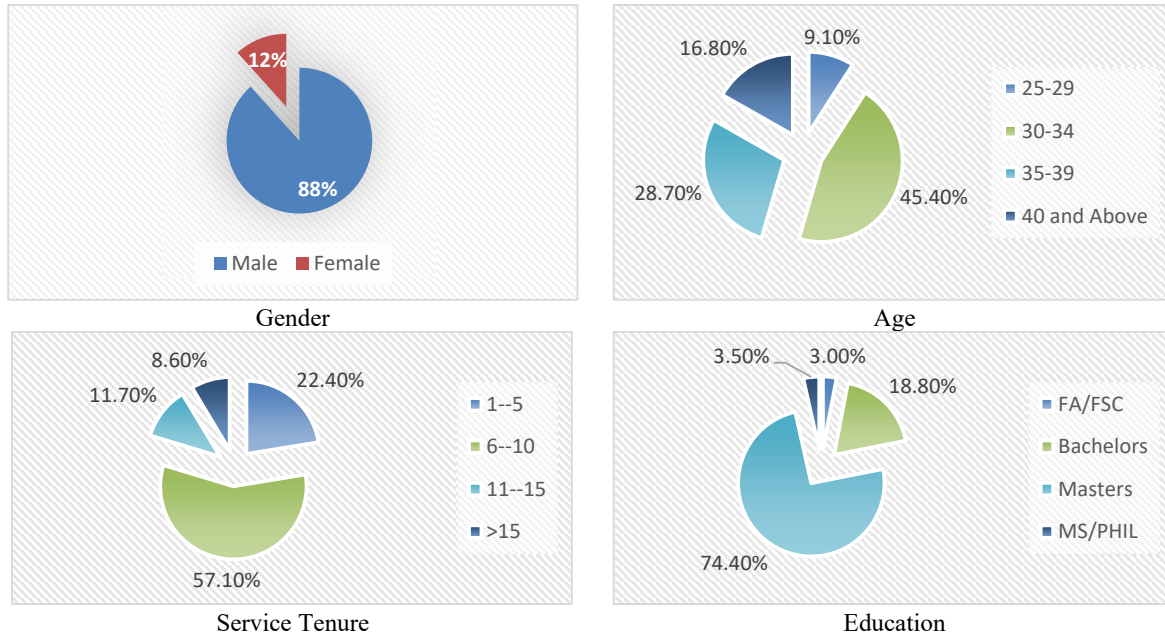
To measure knowledge-sharing behavior, Bock et al. (2005) created a five-item scale. Cronbach's coefficient was verified about the reliability measuring scale (0.92).

## 5. Data Analysis

We used metrics of central tendency, variability, correlation, and regression analysis to assess the data. All of the studies were conducted using SPSS version 25. In addition, we utilized SPSS PROCESS Macro (Model 4) to investigate the mediation effects (Hayes, 2013). AMOS 22 was also used for model fitness.

Fig. 2 shows the total number of responders, which was 196. The responders were mainly male (88.2%). The rest were females (11.7%), lies between 25 and 29 years of age (9.1%), percentage of employees falling in the age group between 30-34 years were (45.4%), similarly between 35-39 were (28.7%), and employees who were 40 and above having the percentage of (16.8). More than half of those polled had a master's degree or above (74.4%).

Before starting factor analysis, we performed the KMO and Bartlett's tests to ensure the data was appropriate. These two tests went smoothly. The KMO statistic ranges from 0 to 1. Accepting values greater than 0.5 is acceptable, according to Kaiser (1974). KMO values below 0.5 should encourage more data collection. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy range is (MSA)  $\geq 0.5$  (Table 1).



**Table 1**  
KMO and Bartlett's Test

Variables	WPS	TRUST	KSB	WENG
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	0.647	0.691	0.747	0.710
Approx. Chi-Square	4161.9	444.4	886.6	679.9
Df	210	21	10	36
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	.000	.000	.000	.000
Sig.				

5.1 Common Method Bias (CMB)

On the advice of Podsakoff et al. (2003), we used Harman's single-factor test to look for issues with common method variance. Biases either come from the respondent side, researcher side, or instrument used for the data collection. A single factor is extracted 27.647% of the total variance, far less than 50% (Harman, 1967), so we conclude no threat of common method bias exists.

5.2 Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA)

CFA analysis was used to quantify all significant factors in this research (workplace spirituality, trust, knowledge sharing behavior, and work engagement). Table 2 illustrates the CFA of all variables showing the best fit model. Mean, standard deviation, Pearson correlation, and reliabilities among all study variables are reported in Table 3. The reliabilities of all variables meet the threshold value of 0.70.

**Table 2**  
Fit indices of all variables

Variables	CMIN/DF	RMR	GFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
WPS	2.13	0.09	0.91	0.90	0.93	0.08
TRUST	1.25	0.01	0.98	0.98	0.99	0.03
KSB	2.37	0.01	0.99	0.98	0.96	0.08
WENG	2.11	0.07	0.92	0.91	0.95	0.05

Note: WPS=Workplace Spirituality, KSB=Knowledge Sharing Behavior, WENG=Work Engagement

**Table 3**  
Mean, Standard Deviation, Correlation, and reliability

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Gender	1.3	.48								
2. Age	2.8	.87	.182*							
3. Service	1.7	.80	.154*	.584**						
4. Education	2.8	.57	.021	.050	-.053					
5. WPS	3.8	.65	.061	.034	.054	.070	(.91)			
6. TRUST	4.2	.58	.009	.037	.051	.096	.271**	(.75)		
7. KSB	4.3	.66	-.025	-.008	.058	-.023	.306**	.636**	(.85)	
8. WENG	4.3	.46	.020	-.001	.035	.009	.343**	.595**	.879**	(.78)

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), & \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).



### 5.3 Measurement Mode

Indicator Loadings, Average Variance Extracted, and Convergent Reliability have stated in Table 4. Factor loadings of variables items and the AVE value of each variable are more significant than 0.5, supporting convergent reliability (Russell, 1978; Hulland, 1999).

**Table 4**  
The results of factor loadings

Construct	Items	Factor loadings	CR	AVE
Workplace Spirituality	<b>WPS1</b>	<b>0.70</b>	<b>0.95</b>	<b>0.52</b>
	WPS2	0.60		
	WPS3	0.73		
	WPS4	0.81		
	WPS5	0.77		
	WPS6	0.83		
	WPS7	0.76		
	WPS8	0.75		
	WPS9	0.66		
	WPS10	0.70		
	WPS11	0.68		
	WPS12	0.71		
	WPS13	0.77		
	WPS14	0.64		
	WPS15	0.77		
	WPS16	0.61		
	WPS17	0.88		
	WPS18	0.63		
	WPS19	0.64		
	WPS20	0.92		
	WPS21	0.70		
<b>Trust</b>	<b>TRU1</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>0.89</b>	<b>0.54</b>
	TRU2	0.65		
	TRU3	0.72		
	TRU4	0.85		
	TRU5	0.67		
	TRU6	0.76		
	TRU7	0.73		
<b>Knowledge sharing behavior</b>	<b>KSB1</b>	<b>0.90</b>	<b>0.90</b>	<b>0.65</b>
	KSB2	0.62		
	KSB3	0.60		
	KSB4	0.93		
	KSB5	0.92		
<b>Work Engagement</b>	<b>WENG1</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>0.90</b>	<b>0.50</b>
	WENG2	0.83		
	WENG3	0.60		
	WENG4	0.80		
	WENG5	0.63		
	WENG6	0.62		
	WENG7	0.79		
	WENG8	0.63		
	WENG9	0.71		

### 5.4 Hypotheses Testing

#### 5.4.1 Direct relationship

Workplace spirituality, as shown in Table 5, is positively correlated with knowledge sharing behavior ( $\beta=.298$ ,  $t=4.47$  &  $p < 0.000$ ), and also workplace spirituality is positively linked with work engagement ( $\beta=.478$ ,  $t=5.08$  &  $p < 0.000$ ), accepting the first and second hypothesis of the study. Workplace spirituality is positively correlated with mediating variables ( $\beta=.242$ ,  $t=3.92$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ), thereby endorsing the third hypothesis. Likewise, the study's fourth and fifth hypothesis was confirmed by

having a positive correlation between trust and Knowledge sharing behavior, trust and work engagement ( $\beta=.732$ ,  $t=11.46$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ), and ( $\beta=.478$ ,  $t=10.36$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ).

**Table 5**

The results of direct effects

Direct Effects	R <sup>2</sup>	F-Value	$\beta$	t	Decision
IV → DV1	.094	20.011	.298***	4.47	Supported
IV → DV2	.117	25.809	.478***	5.08	Supported
IV → M	.074	15.422	.242***	3.92	Supported
M → DV1	.404	131.542	.732***	11.46	Supported
M → DV2	.354	106.223	.478***	10.36	Supported

Note(s): \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; (IV: Workplace Spirituality, M: Trust, DV1: Knowledge Sharing Behavior, DV2: Work Engagement).

#### 5.4.2 Sobel Test

The aim of this research is also to examine the notion of mediation. To confirm mediation, we used the Sobel test (Sobel, 1982). The Sobel test yielded statistically significant results (Path 1.  $z=3.70$ ,  $p=0.000$ , and Path 2.  $z=3.66$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). We conclude that the effect is greater than the desired value because the z-score is more significant than 1.96 (Sobel, 1982, Mallinckrodt et al., 2006), indicating that both paths have a considerable effect.

#### Sobel test equation:

$$z\text{-value} = a \times b / \text{SQRT}(b^2 \times sa^2 + a^2 \times sb^2)$$

a = For the relationship between IV and mediator, the raw (unstandardized) regression coefficient was used.

sa = standard error of a.

b = raw coefficient for the mediator's relationship with the DV (when the IV is also a predictor of the DV), sb = standard error of b.

**Table 6**

The results of the direct effects

Paths	z	p
WPS → Trust → KSB	3.70	0.000
WPS → Trust → WENG	3.66	0.000

#### 5.4.3 Mediation Analysis

To find the effect of mediation, we used SPSS macro by (Hayes 2013) to test the mediation effect between dependent and independent variables. This method also follows the procedures defined by (Baron and Kenney, 1986). Mediation was analyzed through Hayes Model 4 (2013). Workplace spirituality is indirectly correlated with knowledge sharing behavior by Trust (Effect=0.166, BootSE=0.0502, BootLLCI=0.777, and BootULCI=0.2733), facilitating the sixth hypothesis of the study that workplace spirituality and knowledge sharing behavior is mediated by Trust (See Table 7). Similarly, workplace spirituality is an indirectly positive and significant effect on work engagement in the presence of Trust (Effect=0.105, BootSE=0.031, BootLLCI=0.0485, and BootULCI=0.1729), supporting the seventh hypothesis of the study.

**Table 6**

The Bootstrap results of indirect effects

Indirect path	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	$\beta$	t	Decision
IV → M → DV1	0.0502	0.777	0.2733	0.166***	10.50	Partial Mediation
IV → M → DV2	0.0312	0.0485	0.1729	0.105***	9.26	Partial Mediation

Note(s): \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; (IV: Workplace Spirituality, M: Trust, DV1: Knowledge Sharing Behavior, DV2: Work Engagement).

## 6. Discussion & Conclusion

This study aimed to understand how workplace spirituality influenced employees' knowledge-sharing behavior and engagement towards their work. We also examined trust as a mediator in the interaction between workplace spirituality, knowledge sharing, and work engagement. By explaining and using the theory of social exchange (Blau, 1964), we proposed that workplace spirituality significantly entails knowledge sharing behavior through trust, confirming the prior studies established by (Shaw and Thomson, 2013). As a result, researchers agree that workplace trust is critical in improving knowledge-sharing behavior (He & Wei, 2009). This study also indicated that a spiritual environment is necessary to enhance employee information-sharing behavior. English and Gillen (2000) assert that fostering spirituality in the workplace has a substantial impact on individual employee learning behavior. According to previous studies, promoting trust in a company can establish closer relationships between employees and encourage them to share their knowledge and experiences with other coworkers (Casimir et al., 2012; Swift and Hwang, 2013). This research also revealed that workplace spirituality is related to work engagement

via trust, supporting the findings (Lamberti and Lettieri, 2009). Trust in organizations is a crucial determinant of work engagement and knowledge sharing behavior, as investigated by (Chughtai and Buckley, 2007). This research offers substantial theoretical contributions to various fields of knowledge, including workplace spirituality, knowledge sharing behavior, and work engagement. The study significantly advances the literature on trust by examining its mediating role with different work outcomes, expressly between workplace spirituality, Knowledge sharing behavior, and work engagement. Despite significant empirical work on trust, much more work has to be done, particularly in terms of investigating not just the impact of trust on a variety of crucial work outcomes, such as workplace spirituality, but also its underpinnings. Organizational scholars' interest in understanding the antecedents and related concepts of workplace spirituality has grown. Our findings also show that workplace spirituality plays a crucial role in building a trustworthy atmosphere that encourages knowledge-sharing behavior among employees and positively engages them in their job.

## 7. The implication of the study

This research emphasizes the need for spiritual and trust-oriented culture for employers to foster the aim of improving Knowledge sharing behavior in their particular units and among employees, as suggested by Kuo (2013) and Rahman et al. (2016). The cornerstone of a supportive work environment is trust; therefore, managers must be diligent about establishing a spiritual workplace and developing a trustee atmosphere to engage in their job tasks positively. Furthermore, spirituality in the workplace has a vital role in knowledge exchange among organizational members. Based on the numerical findings, this study concludes that workplace spirituality is a crucial component to encourage workers to share information. As a result, researchers recommend that employers provide a spiritual atmosphere to support employees' evading hesitation while sharing knowledge and remaining involved in their jobs by fostering a trust-based environment among coworkers.

## 8. Limitation & Future Avenues

This research includes some limitations. First, this research only focused on the same group of employees. Secondly, very little information was obtained from female employees; the reason for this was that most female employees were on leave owing to the Covid 19 crisis in the country; according to the Pakistani government notification, only 50% of employees should be present at any given time. While the current research depends on a small sample size of just 196 individuals, this does not constitute a valid result. Increasing the size of the sample would lead to more reliable generalizations. Future study participants may be drawn from public and private organizations with various managerial roles and management styles. The maximum level of authentication, both in-depth interviews and questionnaire survey approaches, can be used. In the future, this leadership style may be used as a moderator to investigate the connection between workplace spirituality and positive work outcomes. To get a more profound knowledge of the area of workplace spirituality after the Covid-19 pandemic, when the entire workforce will be present, future researchers might employ both quantitative and qualitative techniques.

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