

Workplace Spirituality as an Antecedent of Meaningful Work: A Systematic Literature Review (2016–2026)

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Abstract

In recent decades, research on meaningful work has gained increasing attention within the fields of organizational psychology and human resource management. Employees today seek not only financial compensation but also meaning, purpose, and value alignment in their work. One factor considered to foster meaningful work is workplace spirituality—an individual's experience of finding meaning in work, building connections with colleagues, and aligning personal values with organizational values. This study conducted a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of research examining workplace spirituality as an antecedent to meaningful work between 2016 and 2026, adhering to PRISMA guidelines for the identification, screening, and analysis of articles. The review results indicate that workplace spirituality contributes to the formation of meaningful work through several key dimensions: sense of community, inner life, value alignment, self-transcendence, compassion, and mindfulness. Among these dimensions, sense of community and value alignment were the most consistently associated with the development of meaningful work. These findings underscore the importance of organizations creating work environments that support the development of workplace spirituality to enhance employees' perceptions of the meaningfulness of their work.

Keywords: workplace spirituality, meaningful work, meaning of work, work spirituality, systematic literature review

Keywords

Workplace Spirituality; Antecedent of Meaningful Work; Systematic Literature Review



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INTRODUCTION

The development of the world of work over the past decade has been highly dynamic as a result of digitalization, increasingly intense global competition, changes in organizational structures, and growing demands for productivity. These conditions have encouraged organizations to focus not only on achieving economic targets and operational efficiency but also on paying greater attention to employees' psychological aspects as an important factor in

maintaining organizational sustainability. One psychological aspect that has increasingly attracted attention in organizational behavior research is meaningful work, which refers to an individual's perception that the work they perform has value, purpose, and meaningful contributions both to themselves and to others.

Meaningful work is not merely associated with satisfaction with the work performed but reflects a deeper understanding of the importance of work in an individual's life. Individuals who perceive their work as meaningful generally demonstrate higher levels of intrinsic motivation, stronger work engagement, greater organizational commitment, and better psychological well-being. Therefore, meaningful work is currently regarded as an important outcome in modern human resource management, particularly in creating a productive and healthy work environment that supports optimal individual development.

In organizational psychology, meaningful work is understood as the outcome of various individual and contextual factors. One contextual factor that has increasingly received attention is workplace spirituality. This concept refers to individuals' experiences of finding purpose and meaning through their work, developing authentic relationships with colleagues, and experiencing alignment between their personal values and those upheld by the organization. Thus, workplace spirituality is not limited to the performance of formal tasks but also encompasses inner experiences, social relationships, and value systems that shape individuals' work experiences.

Various studies have shown that workplace spirituality is positively associated with several important organizational outcomes, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, work engagement, organizational citizenship behavior, workplace innovation, and psychological well-being. These findings indicate that workplace spirituality can function as a psychological resource that helps employees understand and experience their work as more meaningful. In this context, workplace spirituality is not merely part of organizational culture but also has the potential to become a key factor in fostering meaningful work.

Theoretically, workplace spirituality is explained through several major dimensions, including sense of community, inner life, value alignment, self-transcendence, compassion, and mindfulness. The dimension of sense of community emphasizes the importance of positive social relationships and a sense of belonging in the workplace, whereas value alignment refers to the degree of congruence between individual values and organizational values. These two dimensions are frequently reported as the most consistent factors in shaping meaningful work experiences because they provide relational foundations and value congruence that enable individuals to perceive their work as important and valuable.

Although the relationship between workplace spirituality and meaningful work has been widely examined, existing studies still demonstrate variations in several aspects, including the dimensions of spirituality employed, the organizational contexts investigated, and the magnitude of the influence of each dimension on meaningful work. Furthermore, research on this topic is distributed across various sectors, countries, and methodological approaches, resulting in a lack of an integrated overview of the development of this field over the past

decade. This situation highlights the need for a study capable of systematically integrating empirical findings to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the role of workplace spirituality in shaping meaningful work.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aims to conduct a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of workplace spirituality as an antecedent of meaningful work during the 2016–2026 period. This review applies the PRISMA guidelines to identify, screen, and analyze relevant articles, thereby producing a more systematic and objective synthesis of the dimensions of workplace spirituality that contribute to meaningful work. In addition to providing theoretical contributions to the development of organizational behavior literature, the findings of this review are expected to offer practical implications for organizations in designing work environments that can enhance meaningful work, employee engagement, and psychological well-being in a sustainable manner..

METHODS

This study employed a *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) approach to identify, evaluate, and synthesize research findings related to *workplace spirituality* as an antecedent of *meaningful work*. This method was selected because it enables the literature search and review process to be conducted systematically, transparently, and reproducibly. The review process followed the PRISMA framework to ensure that article selection was objective and aligned with the research objectives. The literature search was conducted using a combination of keywords, namely (*“workplace spirituality” OR “spirituality at work”*) AND (*“meaningful work” OR “meaning of work” OR “work meaning”*). This combination was used to capture variations in terminology employed in previous studies and minimize the possibility of overlooking relevant articles. Searches were conducted across Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, and ProQuest because these databases provide extensive coverage of management, organizational psychology, and work behavior research. Articles included in the analysis were required to meet several inclusion criteria, namely publication between 2016 and 2026, publication in reputable scientific journals, written in English or Indonesian, and directly addressing *workplace spirituality* and *meaningful work* within an organizational context. Meanwhile, excluded studies included conference proceedings, theses, dissertations, book chapters, and articles that did not focus on workplace or organizational contexts. These criteria were applied to maintain the relevance, quality, and consistency of the literature analyzed. All articles identified from the databases were subsequently screened through several stages, including identification, screening based on titles and abstracts, full-text assessment, and determination of the final articles eligible for analysis. This process ensured that only studies directly aligned with the research focus were included in the synthesis, while articles that failed to meet the criteria at any stage were excluded. The selected articles were then analyzed thematically to identify the most frequently examined dimensions of *workplace spirituality*, conceptual and empirical relationships between *workplace spirituality* and *meaningful work*, and the theoretical and practical implications of the findings. The results were

synthesized to provide a comprehensive overview of the development of research in this field during the 2016–2026 period. Through this approach, the study is expected to contribute more comprehensively to the literature

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the review indicate that publications on workplace spirituality and meaningful work have increased over the past ten years. This trend indicates that the issue of workplace spirituality has received increasing attention in the literature on management and organizational behavior, particularly because organizations are no longer viewed merely as spaces for achieving productivity targets but also as environments that shape psychological well-being and meaningful work experiences. The distribution of studies found predominantly in Asia, Europe, and North America also demonstrates that this topic is relevant across various cultural and organizational contexts. This confirms that workplace spirituality has developed into an important issue for understanding how employees perceive and interpret the meaning of their work more deeply.

Based on the synthesis of the literature, several dimensions of workplace spirituality were found to contribute to meaningful work, namely sense of community, value alignment, inner life, self-transcendence, compassion, and mindfulness. Among all these dimensions, sense of community was the dimension that appeared most frequently in the studies. This dimension emphasizes the importance of positive social relationships, a sense of belonging to the organization, and support among colleagues in shaping meaningful work experiences. When individuals feel that they are part of a supportive work community, they tend to perceive their work as something valuable and as having a greater purpose.

In addition, value alignment also emerged as a prominent dimension in explaining the relationship between workplace spirituality and meaningful work. The congruence between personal values and organizational values enables individuals to feel that their work is consistent with their beliefs and life goals. This alignment creates a more authentic work experience and strengthens the perception that work is not merely instrumental but also personally meaningful. Thus, value alignment can be regarded as one of the important foundations in the formation of meaningful work.

The inner life dimension also plays a role in strengthening meaningful work because it helps individuals engage in self-reflection and understand the contribution of their work to a broader context of life. Through a well-maintained inner life, individuals can perceive work as part of a life journey that has direction and purpose. Meanwhile, self-transcendence encourages individuals to view their work as a means of providing benefits to others and society. This orientation expands the meaning of work from merely achieving personal goals to making valuable social contributions.

Other dimensions also identified in the literature are compassion and mindfulness. Compassion strengthens the experience of meaningful work through caring and empathetic behaviors in the workplace, thereby creating more humane working relationships. Meanwhile,

mindfulness helps individuals engage in work activities with full awareness, allowing work to be experienced more deeply. These two dimensions demonstrate that meaningful experiences are shaped not only by organizational structures but also by the quality of interpersonal interactions and the awareness individuals bring to their work.

Overall, the findings of the review confirm that workplace spirituality makes a significant contribution to the formation of meaningful work. The dimensions most consistently identified across various studies are sense of community and value alignment, as both directly create a sense of connectedness and congruence that constitute the core of meaningful work experiences. These findings indicate that organizations need to build work environments that support positive social relationships, value congruence, self-reflection, compassion, and mindfulness so that employees can experience their work as something genuinely meaningful..

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this systematic literature review confirms that **workplace spirituality** is an important antecedent of **meaningful work** and has received increasing scholarly attention during the 2016–2026 period. The findings indicate that the dimensions of **sense of community**, **value alignment**, **inner life**, **self-transcendence**, **compassion**, and **mindfulness** contribute to employees' perceptions of meaningful work, with **sense of community** and **value alignment** emerging as the most consistently reported dimensions. These findings demonstrate that meaningful work is shaped not only by job characteristics and organizational structures but also by employees' social relationships, personal values, inner experiences, awareness, and orientation toward contributing to others. Therefore, organizations should develop work environments that promote supportive interpersonal relationships, alignment between individual and organizational values, self-reflection, compassion, and mindfulness to strengthen employees' experiences of meaningful work, psychological well-being, engagement, and sustainable organizational commitment.

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