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## The impact of leaders' spirituality at work and their reputation on teams' spiritual climate

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**Abstract:** Conceptual and empirical linkage between spiritual leadership and team climate or followers' attitudes, behaviours, and performance outcomes have not been fully developed. The focus of this article is to provide some initial foundation for the broader empirical evidences of how spirituality of leaders influence followers to co-create a spiritual climate. We argue that leaders' spirituality at work affects spiritual climate and a leader's reputation as a spiritual leader mediates this relationship. We draw from contemporary literature of spirituality in management and notion of *swadharna* and *loksangrah* (in Karm yoga in Bhagwad Gita) for development of instrument of spiritual climate at work. Interestingly, the findings did not reveal a direct effect of the spirituality of leaders' at work on spiritual climate, however leaders' reputation as spiritual showed strong association with to spiritual climate. The self-perception of leaders' spirituality at work does not relate to leaders reputation being spiritually connected to work.

**Keywords:** spiritual leadership; spiritual climate; team climate; identity; loksangrah; swadharna; karma yoga; leader reputation.

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## 1 Introduction

Spirituality at work is about search for meaning or higher purpose (Petchsawang and Duchon, 2012), connectedness (Pavlovich and Corner, 2009) and transcendence (Vandenberghe, 2011). There is a significant increase in the interest in spirituality in management in last two decades amongst practitioners and scholars (Saks, 2011). Intangible spiritual capabilities (i.e. spiritual intelligence and spiritual capital) are mentioned as important factors for building triple bottom line strategies in the organisations for sustainable development (Steady and Steady, 2014).

Workplace spirituality can be interpreted at both the micro (individual) and the macro (organisational) levels of analysis (Kolodinsky et al., 2008; Pawar, 2008). At the individual level people might participate in spiritual development programs (e.g. learning

meditation). At collective level organisation itself can use spiritual values to modify planning and strategy making, HRM practices (hiring, training, development, and evaluation), and, the culture that provides a context for daily life. The present study is conducted at meso (group) level. Relevance of choice of the teams or work group (interchangeably used in the present article) is based on the fact that teams are increasingly recognised as functional units or building blocks of an organisation (Cross et al., 2008; Singh and Muncherji, 2007). Work group is defined as the group that exists within the context of a larger organisation and share responsibility for a team product or service (Hackman, 1987).

The purpose of this study is to validate the spiritual climate inventory given by Pandey et al. (2009b) and to investigate the relationship between leaders' spirituality and spiritual climate in the work group using self-other assessment (SOA) process. In line of the suggestions of Dean and Fornaciari (2007) we attempt to move away from definitional arguments and following the suggestion we examine the linkage between the two levels of the spirituality related constructs on a multidisciplinary and broadly based conceptual foundation. The central proposition of this research is that leaders' spirituality at workplace is essential for creating a spiritual climate in his or her immediate group or teams and this relationship is mediated by leaders' reputation. In the current study we aim at knowing how and the degree to which individual or collective spirituality integrates and manifests itself in the workplace and affected by leadership. After this introduction we present brief overview of literature on spirituality in management in general and conceptual background of the construct of spiritual climate and spirituality of leaders at workplace. Third section elaborates on the hypothesised relationship in the article. Methodology and findings of the study are presented in the fourth section. Research findings are discussed and theoretical and managerial implications are drawn in the concluding section.

## **2 Review of literature**

### *2.1 Workplace spirituality*

Spirituality is a multidimensional (Lee et al., 2013) multilevel phenomenon (Pawar, 2009; Pandey et al., 2009a). Petchsawang and Duchon (2012) consider it a phenomenon comprises of the four factors: compassion, mindfulness, meaning at work, and transcendence. Saks (2011) considered three factors (transcendence, community, and spiritual values as constituents of spirituality at workplace. Pandey and Gupta (2008) reported the conceptual convergence in workplace spirituality literature in terms of harmony with self, harmony in the social and natural environment, and transcendence. Spirituality is defined as a dynamic balance among these three factors. Harmony with self denotes finding meaning and purpose in work that includes inner life, joy at work and self-actualising tendency (Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, 2003b; StratMiller and Ewest, 2013). The second dimension of spirituality is relational. This is manifested in relation to the environment in general, that is, in community (Pavlovich and Corner, 2009). It is about being comfortable with the world. Transcendence, the third aspect of spirituality at the workplace, refers to the connection to something greater than oneself (Ashforth and Pratt, 2003; Sheep, 2004). Ashforth and Pratt (2003) explain that this 'something' could be 'other people, cause, nature, or a belief in a higher power'.

Traditional wisdom schools are referred in many studies to elaborate the notion and concepts related to spirituality in management. Lessons from Bhagwad Gita on conflict management (by Satpathy, 2010), emotional intelligence from the lens of vedic literature (Mehta, 2013). Propositions about management by spiritual wisdom (Meera and Bonin, 2014) are the examples of studies where traditional wisdom is referred to explain the contemporary thoughts of in management.

Literature correlating the impact of workplace spirituality with employees' job behaviour demonstrates its positive connection with employees engagement (Saks, 2011), work performance (Petchsawang and Duchon, 2012), commitment (Vandenberghe, 2011), and managerial effectiveness (Sharma et al., 2013). Spiritual evolution is reported to have positive association and optimism and self-monitoring behaviour (Ratnakar et al., 2014). In terms of organisational performance, the positive impact is reported in better service (Lee et al., 2013), employee service (Pandey et al., 2009a, 2009b), and unit performance (Fry et al., 2011).

## 2.2 *Spiritual climate*

At the organisational level, spirituality can be seen as a reflection of spiritual values that is part of the organisation's culture and is thus used to inform behaviour, decision-making, and resource allocation (Kolodinsky et al., 2008) and form the climate (Pandey et al., 2009a, 2009b). Organisational climate is a gestalt ('whole') that is based on perceived patterns in the specific experiences and behaviours of people in organisations. Perception of the work environment refers to organisational climate (Rousseau, 1988). This is the intervening variable between the context of an organisation and its members' behaviour, and the attempt to understand how employees experience their organisations (Patterson et al., 2004). These perceptions can be descriptive (Schneider and Reichers, 1983) as well as affective (Patterson et al., 2004). They represent how work environments are cognitively appraised and represented in terms of their meaning to and significance for individual employees in organisations (James and Jones, 1974; James and Sells, 1981, in Patterson et al., 2004).

Schneider (1975, 1990, 2000) suggested general multidimensional measures of organisational climate and advocated for a facet-specific climate approach where climate is focused on something of interest. He suggests that the dimensions of organisational climate differ depending on the purpose of the investigation and the criterion of interest. This line of argument facilitates the development of measures of several dimensions of climate such as service (Schneider, 1990), innovation (Anderson and West, 1998), creativity (Hunter et al., 2007), etc., and extended to develop the construct of spiritual climate.

The prevailing perception about work and immediate work group that have spiritual content constitutes the spiritual climate. A broad definition of spirituality is employed in developing the construct of spiritual climate, which includes the general and pervasive characteristics of work groups. Two constructs *swadharm* and *loksangrah* are drawn from Bhagwad Gita, the most famous text of Indian traditional wisdom and constituting variable spiritual climate at work. *Swadharm* is translated as meaningful and meditative work and *loksangrah* is translated as doing work for world maintenance. *Swadharm* is operationalised as variables of meaningfulness and meditative work. *Loksangrah* is

operationalised as working with concern for social and natural environment. In the way of incorporating these constructs from India traditional wisdom we respond to the call of Panda and Gupta (2007) to develop indigenous organisation theories. Spiritual climate of work place is defined as the collective perceptions of employees about the workplace that facilitates harmony with the 'self' through meaningful and meditative work, with a sense of interconnectedness amongst members, and operates with larger social and natural environments.

Based on, the following variables drawn from the literature of spirituality in management constitute spiritual climate:

- *Meaningful work*: Meaningfulness refers to work for life not only for livelihood (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000), work as a means of inner self and fulfilment (King and Nicol, 1999).
- *Meditative work*: This is an experiential aspect of spirituality that is deeper than cognition, involving the affective, behavioural part of self. It refers to the experience of being absorbed in work, losing sense of self, and becoming one with the activity (McCormick, 1994).
- *Hopefulness*: 'Hope' is an element in the emerging theme of workplace spirituality (Fry and Matherly, 2006). Hope refers to individual determination that goals can be achieved and the belief that successful plans can be formulated and pathways can be identified to attain the goal (Snyder, 2000).
- *Authenticity*: Authenticity is not merely genuineness and openness. Even though these form a central part of being authentic, authenticity is socially situated. It involves helping others, relating to others, and caring for the authenticity of others around us (Avolio et al., 2004). It is about alignment of people's actions and behaviours with their core internalised values and beliefs, as per the definition by Pareek (2002).
- *Sense of community*: This facet of spiritual climate refers to interconnectedness and interdependence among employees (Jurkiewicz and Giacalone, 2004). This is manifested in workplace integration and connectedness (Ingersoll, 2003); compassion (McCormick, 1994); respect, common purpose (Kinjerski and Skrypnik, 2004).
- *Loksangrah*: *Loksangrah* refers to a concern for the larger social and natural environment, is drawn from traditional Indian literature and is defined by Radhakrishnan (1951) as 'working for world maintenance'. In contemporary management literature, *loksangrah* is echoed in terms of transcendence, which means 'connection to something greater than oneself'. Ashforth and Pratt (2003) explain that this 'something' can be 'other people, cause, nature, or a belief in a higher power'.
- *Respect for diversity*: This aspect denotes the adoption of a plural way of accommodating the multiplicities and diversities of societies and individuals, operating on shared opportunity, and shared responsibility (Zohar and Marshall, 2004).

### 2.3 Leadership and climate: the spiritual connection

Konz and Ryan (1999) indicated that spirituality and its role in leadership an emergent field of research. Authors like Conger (1998), Kanungo and Mendonca (1996), Marcic (1997), Mitroff and Denton (1999b) and Fry (2004) hypothesised that the roots of effective leadership are grounded in a leader's spirituality. These scholars argue that the roots of effective leadership are grounded in the spiritual dimension or the inner heart and soul of the leader.

Vaill (1989) posits that true leadership is in reality spiritual leadership that stems from the heart and incorporates values, beliefs, and a guiding purpose.

The spiritual leadership theory provides a comprehensive description of the role of leadership in facilitating spirituality at the workplace. Fry (2004) defines spiritual leadership as "comprising the values, attitudes and behaviors that are necessary to intrinsically motivate one's self and others so that they have a sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership". Thus, in this view, a sense of calling and membership constitute two aspects of the workplace spirituality experience. Fry (2004) mentioned the aspect of 'calling' to employees' feelings that 'their life has meaning and makes a difference'. He notes that a sense of transcendence – of having a calling through one's work or being called (vocationally) – and a need for social connection or membership are necessary for providing the foundation for any theory of workplace spirituality.

Though research on workplace spirituality is recent and vigorous, few studies relate leadership behaviours with workplace spirituality. The Maslowian notion of eupsychian management (*eu* means good, and *psyche* means mind or soul, 'toward a good mind or soul' or the 'well-being of psyche') showed that leaders' behaviour has an impact on how people perceive the organisation. Explanation by Kozlowski and Klein (2000, p.55) is consistent with Maslow's observation that when spirituality originates in the cognition, affect, behaviours, or other characteristics of individuals, it is amplified by their interactions, and manifests as a collective phenomenon. Over time, these individuals would begin to form shared or compatible mental models in relation to spiritual leadership. We recognise the influencing process of leadership and emergence of shared mental model, however, we maintain 'leading' as a position- and authority-driven phenomenon vested in individuals with authority and in this regard it is differently conceptualised from 'spiritual leadership' of Fry (2004) and Fry et al. (2011), who conceptualised and measured spiritual leadership as an emergent phenomenon.

The perspective of social information processing (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978) suggests that the source of information for effective group members' behaviours stem from the immediate work environment (including leaders). The social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) proposes that people define themselves in terms of whom they interact with and how they interact with them. This information provides cues that group members use to construct and interpret events, and which in turn guide their behaviour. Leaders' spiritual connection to work is reflected in their' interactions with their team members, decision-making skills, acceptance of others' inputs, and providing constructive feedback to their followers (Avolio et al., 2004; Gardner et al., 2005).

Shamir et al. (1993) demonstrated the importance of social and personal identification in the leadership process. Leaders affect the identities of followers, in turn influence their self-regulatory processes and working self-concepts (Day, 2000; Lord and Brown, 2001). Extending this suggestion, we propose that when leaders find their work meaningful to their life and view it as an opportunity to express their talent and true self, this is reflected

in their approach to work, which is being observed by their team members. Similarly when leaders are conscious of and aspire to create a sense of community and work and view their work as an opportunity to contribute to the development of the social and natural environment, these aspects are reflected in their conversations, leadership style, and work approach. Following Bromley's (1993) explanation, we propose that team members share with each other their impressions of their leaders, and these impressions are consolidated into collective impressions. These collective impressions then influence the attitudes, expectations, choices, and actions of the members within the social network and have a defining impact on team climate. Hence, we hypothesise that:

H1 Leaders' spirituality has a positive association with the spiritual climate in teams.

Organisations can be viewed as aggregates of individuals, forming a social structure (Pfeffer, 1991). An inherent part of organisational functioning is that some members need to influence others to meet organisational goals (e.g., French and Raven, 1959; Kipnis et al., 1980). Yet, in the current field of leadership study, House and Aditya (1997) suggest that there is still lesser understanding about the processes that contribute to effective leadership. Similarly, in another review on social influence processes, Ferris et al. (2002) observed that, although interpersonal influence has been studied for many years, we still know very little about the factors that contribute to the effective execution of influence efforts.

Leaders' reputation has been frequently referred to in social science research. In 1984, Tsui (p.64) observed that "many writers have suggested but have not systematically measured reputation as a form of managerial effectiveness". In so many years since Tsui's observation, reputation still remains a largely unexplored phenomenon in general and in the formative stage of spiritual leadership in particular. Leader reputation is a perceptual identity of a leader as held by others that serves to reduce the uncertainty regarding the expected future behaviour of that leader (Hall et al., 2004). Leader reputation may be conceptualised as both an individual and group construct. Furthermore, according to Hall et al. (2004), just as leaders may embrace several self-identities, they might also have multiple reputations, each signalling the likelihood of a behaviour specific to a given context.

In a comprehensive work on individual reputation, Bromley (1993) argues that reputation as a form of influence exerts itself in self-esteem, social identity, individual behaviour, and social interactions. Individuals share with others their impressions of individuals, these impressions become consolidated into collective impressions. There are different qualities, features, and characteristics of individuals that combine to varying degrees based on context, and as such contribute to leader reputations (Hall et al., 2004). Taking forward these foundational thoughts on reputation, we propose that when a leader finds meaning and purpose in work, values the sense of community at work, and performs his/her duties at work considering it an opportunity to positively contribute towards the social and natural environment, it positively contributes to his/her reputation as a spiritual leader. Hence we propose that:

H2 Leader's self-perceived spirituality at work positively contributes to the reputation of the leader being spiritual.

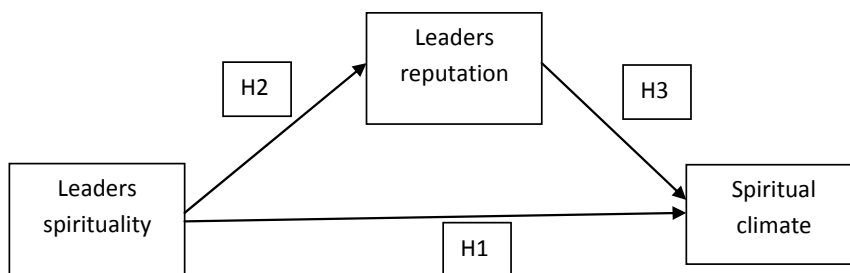
In the process of forming leaders' reputation, different qualities combine in complex ways to create a synergistic dynamic whole that is greater than the simple sum of the parts. Hall et al. (2004) suggest that these qualities fall into three categories: human

capital, social capital, and leader style. The human capital theory proposes that individuals generate increased worth or value for themselves from the extent to which they acquire knowledge, skills, and credentials through educational and experiential attainments (Becker, 1975; Schultz, 1960; Snell and Dean, 1992). Social capital at the individual level is the leveraging of one's human capital, personal skills, abilities and social networks. Within organisations, the value of one's reputation is strongly influenced by relationships and the influence yielded through those relationships. Social capital is based on the resources individuals obtain from knowing others, and a social identity (Baron and Markman, 2000). The third factor, leadership style, as House and Aditya observed, is another important component of leader effectiveness (Ammeter et al., 2002; Bolman and Deal, 1997; Gardner and Avolio, 1998). Ammeter et al. (2002) viewed leader style as an amalgam of the personal characteristics an individual possesses, and thus is reflective of one's intelligence, personality, social, and political skill. Hall et al. (2004) suggested that leaders' reputation is a perceptual identity of a leader as held by others that serves to reduce the uncertainty regarding the expected future behaviour of that leader. The result is a leader with a higher reputation is regarded with a higher degree of trust, monitored less, and held to lower accountability standards than a leader with a lesser reputation (Ammeter et al., 2002; Ferris et al., 2003, 2002).

The social identity theory of leadership (Hogg, 2001; Hogg and van Knippenberg, 2003) suggests that group members to a greater or lesser extent treat the group, and thus the group prototype, as a source of information about social reality and they are more open to the influence of group prototypical leaders. Both leaders and followers are active interpreters of the social reality. Consequently, it seems reasonable to argue that spiritual leadership variables like finding meaning and purpose in work, promoting a sense of community and working with the intention of contributing to the larger social and natural environment are reflected in leaders' interaction with team members and contribute to the social capital of the leaders and his or her reputation and consequently bring these elements in the team climate. Hence, we hypothesise that:

H3 A leader's reputation as spiritual has a positive association with the spiritual climate of the team.

**Figure 1** The causal path for leaders spirituality and spiritual climate





### **3 Methods**

#### *3.1 Procedure*

The current study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional survey design. This study aimed to understand the nature of spiritual leadership, reputation of a leader as spiritual, and how this affects the spiritual climate. The survey design suits the aim of describing and measuring a larger population (Rubin and Babbie, 2005).

The target population comprised of middle and junior-level managers in Indian manufacturing sectors of steel, automotive fluids, FMCG, pharmaceuticals and service sectors, and their respective team members. This was done to ascertain the spiritual leadership profile of such managers in the 24 organisations that were surveyed. The members of these teams – being direct reportees of such managers at various levels in the organisation-hierarchy – were the respondents for the spiritual climate inventory and a three-scale item of leader's reputation as spiritual at the workplace. This study is based on a cross-sectional survey design based on a convenience sample of 150 managers and team members who work in various organisations across a diverse range of industries, both in manufacturing and service sectors, in locations spread across the Indian states of Maharashtra, West Bengal, Bihar and Assam. Responses from a total of 44 teams in the aforementioned 24 organisations surveyed were collected.

The second author of this article personally visited all the companies included in the survey, and met the concerned managers and their respective team members to determine the managers' perceived spiritual leadership profile and their respective team members' notions about the prevailing spiritual climate as fostered by their managers' spiritual leadership. In some cases, responses were personally collected after a few days. In others, responses arrived through postal mail.

#### *3.2 Measures*

##### *3.2.1 Spiritual leadership*

The measure of spiritual leadership was adopted from the work of Fry et al. (2005) in addition to the *loksangrah* scale drawn from traditional Indian wisdom. As explained above, *loksangrah* at work refers to indulging in work as an opportunity to make a positive difference toward the social and natural environment. Leaders' responses on the spirituality scale were collected in a self-report format. Sample items for spiritual leadership included: "The work I do is meaningful to me"; "I am able to convey my respect to my team members and to their work", "I care about the spiritual health of my co-workers". Responses on this measure were collected in two formats; first, to check the agreement of a leader on this scale, disagreement-agreement was assessed on a scale of 1 to 6. The disagreement-agreement rating pertains to the current status of leaders' approach to work and work experience. Second, to determine the importance a leader places on these items, not important-important was assessed on a scale of 1 to 6. The unimportant-important rating pertains to the desired status of one's workplace/one's life experience, i.e., how important a particular aspect is, for an ideal workplace in one's organisation and work experience.

### *3.2.2 Leader's reputation on spirituality*

Leaders' reputation as a spiritual leader within the teams was assessed through a three-item scale adapted from Fry et al. (2005), and from the conceptualisation of spirituality at workplace by Pandey and Gupta (2008) and Pandey et al. (2009a, 2009b). Items for the leaders' reputation include "In my view my superior finds his/her work meaningful for his life"; "In my view, my superior promotes a sense of community in the team/department"; "In my view, my superior works here with the purpose larger than his/her personal goals (has consideration for society, community, environment at large)". The above scales utilised a 1–5 response set (from strongly disagree to strongly agree).

### *3.2.3 Spiritual climate of the team*

The spiritual climate of the team was assessed using the spiritual climate inventory of Pandey et al. (2009b). The questions represent different dimensions of the organisational climate rated on a 1–5 scale. The sample items include: "Working here is a means for realising my real self"; "People here perform their duties as if they contribute to the larger society, community, humanity"; etc. This scale utilised a 1–5 response set (from "truly represents my experience at work" to "not at all true to my work").

## *3.3 Data analysis*

Spiritual leadership is conceptualised as a characteristic of 'leading' where the designated leader upholds a certain approach toward work and his or her team members, which influences his or her conversation with them and style of work that has a generative affect on the team climate. Spiritual leadership is assessed through reflection of leadership based on the following aspects: finding meaning and purpose at work, promoting a sense of community at work, having inner life and supporting team members to nourish inner life, and doing work as an opportunity to serve the larger social and natural environment. Leaders' reputation and team climate responses are aggregated team wise and subjected to regression and correlation with spiritual leadership scores of the respective team leaders.

## *3.4 Results*

Data adequacy for the spiritual climate inventory was checked with the KMO test, the value of which is 0.734. A value higher than 0.5 indicates that the data is sufficient for factor analysis. The significant level of Bartlett's test of sphericity indicates the rejection of the null hypothesis that the variables are correlated. The spiritual climate inventory explained 68% variance on the given sample and its value of reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) was 0.852 while that for the leaders reputation scale was 0.66. We used AMOS with maximum likelihood estimation (Arbuckle and Wotho, 1999) to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis on the eight spiritual climate variables to examine whether the proposed variables constitute one construct. To assess whether the observed covariance matrix fit the construct model, we used the comparative fit index (CFI), normed fit index (NFI), incremental fit index (IFI), and the standard root-mean square

error of approximation (RMSEA). Results revealed that the five factor [swadharm (meaningfulness and meditative work), sense of community, authenticity and loksangrah] model fit the data well and that the higher order spiritual climate construct could be used for hypothesis testing ( $\chi^2 = 151.60$ ;  $df = 93$ ;  $pb.001$ ;  $CFI = .917$ ;  $NFI = .815$ ;  $IFI = .919$ ;  $RMSEA = .075$ ).

**Table 1** Means, standard deviations, and correlations of the variables at the group level, and coefficient alphas of the scales

Variables	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4
1 Leader's spiritual connection to work (leader's agreement)	4.92	0.46				
2 Leader's spiritual connection to work (importance for leaders)	5.16	0.56	0.47			
3 Leader's reputation as spiritual (finds spiritual fulfilment at work)	3.24	0.28	0.086	0.294	<b>0.66</b>	
4 Team's spiritual climate	3.55	0.35	-0.047	0.031	0.65	<b>0.85</b>

Table 1 displays the means, standard deviations, and correlations of the variables for the group level, and coefficient alphas for the scales. Hypothesis 1 predicted that leaders' self-perceived spiritual connection to work is positively related to spiritual climate whereas Hypothesis 2 suggested that spiritual connection to work of the leader is positively related to his/her reputation of being spiritual. Results demonstrate that the self-perceived spiritual connection to work – expressed in terms of finding meaning and purpose at work, promoting a sense of community, and working with intent of contributing to the social and natural environment – is not associated with a team's spiritual climate. A leader's reputation and self-perceived spiritual connection to work is also not significantly associated. Thus, Hypotheses 1 and 2 are not supported by our data. Hence, no further analysis was done to probe the connections a and b shown in Figure 1. Only Hypothesis 3 was substantiated by preliminary findings and further analysed through regression.

Hypothesis 3 predicted a positive relationship between a leader's reputation as spiritual and the team's spiritual climate. There is a significant positive correlation between a leader's spiritual reputation and spiritual climate ( $r = .663$ ,  $p < 0.005$ , two tailed). The regression model for the H3 is as follows:

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate	B	Durbin-Watson
1	0.552	0.305	0.280	0.297	0.552	1.937

However, reputation did not emerge as significantly associated with the perceived leader's agreement about spiritual leadership ( $r = .070$ ), and there is a minimal positive association with perceived leader's importance ( $r = .24$ ) on spiritual leadership.

**Table 2** Inter-correlations

	Leaders spirituality	Meaningfulness	Meditative work	Psychological empowerment	Hopefulness	Sense of community	Authenticity	Loksangrah	Leaders reputation
Leaders spirituality	1								
Meaningfulness	-0.05	1							
Meditative work	0.17	0.101	1						
Psychological empowerment	0.21	.542**	-0.09	1					
Hopeful	-0.03	0.15	0.237	0.20	1				
Sense of community	-0.04	0.288	-0.273	0.31	-0.15	1			
Authenticity	-0.14	.463*	0.307	0.04	0.20	0.02	1		
Loksangrah	0.18	.718**	-0.019	.415*	0.06	.407*	0.20	1	
Leaders reputation	-0.04	.388*	-0.323	0.29	0.03	.511**	-0.11	.680**	1

Notes: \*\*p < 0.09, \*p < 0.05.

#### **4 Discussion**

Attribution theory is an important tool in OB (Martinko, 1995) that can contribute to our understanding of 'reputation' of leaders. This study responds to the call of Hollander and Offerman (1990) and House and Aditya (1997) for considering the attributions in the models of leadership. Research suggests that followers observe the behaviours of their leaders and that they make attributions with respect to the intentions of their behaviours. These attributions, in turn, are critical in that they influence perceptions of leader effectiveness.

A leader's self-perceived spiritual connection to work does not show any positive correlation with the team climate. Neither is there a significant correlation between spiritual leadership and a leader's reputation as spiritual. This has been an interesting finding. Finding supports the claim of John and Robins (1994), that most individuals see them-selves as better than others see them. In this study, it is clear that leaders have rated themselves significantly higher than what their subordinates rated them on spiritual connection to work. This finding seems to be closer to the conclusion of Taylor and Brown (1988) about pervasive, enduring, and systematic departures of self-conceptions from reality which according to them stem from the basic motive toward self-enhancement. Taylor and Brown's (1988) conclusion is based on evidence from research in three different domains: unrealistically positive views of the self, illusions of control, and unrealistic optimism. Further interpretation of these findings in light of these three different domains is the future scope of work in the area of the present research study.

Meta analysis of Dunning et al. (2004) suggests the inflation in self-rating of traits and behaviour of leaders. The present study supports this claim in the field of spirituality at workplace.

Bass and Yammarino (1991) examined the congruence between self-rated leadership behaviour (transformational, transactional, laissez-faire) of U.S. Navy surface fleet officers in parallel to the leadership descriptions for the same dimensions provided by the officers' senior subordinates. The self-ratings of leadership behaviour tended to be inflated in comparison to subordinates' ratings. However, the more successful officers (based on the objective performance record maintained by Navy office) were less likely to inflate their self-described leadership behaviour. In view of this recommendation we examined the association between difference of self-reputation of team leaders and spiritual climate. We find a strong negative association between difference of self-reputation of team leaders and spiritual climate (adjusted R square: 0.346, F change: 16.346,  $p < 0.09$ ). Atwater and Yammarino (1992) suggested the possibility of relationship between self-other rating agreement and leader effectiveness and the investigation of differences between self- and other ratings may have important implications for research and practice, especially in the area of leadership development. Atwater and Yammarino (1998) posit that leaders whose self-ratings agree with others' ratings as to their high levels of effectiveness are more likely to be linked to positive individual and organisational outcomes. These in-agreement/good estimators are good performers with views of themselves that are similar to those of other raters. This relationship needs to be further examined more specifically in the field of spirituality in management. What predicts spiritual climate is leaders' reputation being spiritually connected to work and not the self-rating of leaders' on spiritual connection to work.

There are different explanations possible of these findings. Either self-other rating agreement is influenced by factors other than an individual's awareness of his or her spiritual connection to work, and thus is not a good measure of self-awareness; or immediate team members are not good at assessing spiritual connection of other at work. Self-other rating discrepancy, therefore, may reflect something other than low self-awareness.

Nevertheless self-other rating discrepancy inversely related to spiritual climate and this relationship is more pronounced in extreme cases. Looking at ten teams of highest and lowest discrepancy we get significantly lower and higher spiritual climate scores in these groups (averages of two groups 3.81 and 3.40,  $p < 0.09$ ). It may be a reflection of arrogance on the part of over-estimators. Leader while over-estimating may know how they are perceived by others, but choose not to believe it.

Another alternative explanation is that the definition of the spiritual connection to work covers harmony with self, others and large social and natural environment. A leader, high on harmony with self and others is likely to have less self-other discrepancy in spirituality related scores. These scores indicate that a manager high on self-awareness is not only aware of his or her strengths and weaknesses, and shows more congruence with ratings given by other on the aspect of spirituality at work. This may make the self-awareness more likely to be related to spiritual climate.

The finding is in line with that of presented by White and Lean (2008) about the impact of perceived leader integrity on subordinates in a work team environment. They confirmed that perceived leader integrity does indeed have an impact on the ethical intentions of team members. We find similar relationship between leaders' reputation as spiritual and spiritual climate of her or his team.

The findings corroborates with the observations and findings shared by Pandey and Singh (2009) in a case study-based article on a wholesome leadership development process, where they described the process and impact of leadership development intervention in a manufacturing organisation. The authors mentioned an observation about participants' self-rating and rating by others (their peers, superiors and subordinates) on different factors of leadership competencies. What is interesting to note about this observation was that, after the intervention, there was a significant increase in the rating given by others to the participants, but a decrease in the participants' own rating on the same competencies. Pandey and Singh (2009) explained that the downfall of self-rating after the intervention is a result of heightened self-awareness of the participants through their various reflective and experiential learning experiences during diverse modules of leadership development process. The finding in the current study about the disconnect in self-perception and leader's reputation as a spiritual leader indicates the importance of self-awareness and reflection on part of the leader to make the team climate more spiritual. This study suffers from natural limitations of conducting research in analytical paradigm. Interpretive approach to examine the question on what how leaders spirituality results in leaders reputation and its impact on the spiritual climate can reveal more in-depth dynamics of these variables. Mixed method approach, wherein interviewing the team leaders and team members on the findings of the survey could have also given better understanding of the hypothesised relationship. A larger sample too would have increased the generalisability of these findings. To extend this research, future researchers might utilise alternative sources of information and thus the model developed can be tested empirically. In addition, future research can be conducted, for

instance, on impact of spiritual leadership on other macro organisational outcomes like innovation, corporate governance etc.

#### *4.1 Theoretical and managerial implications*

Systematic scientific inquiry into the antecedents and consequences of leader behaviours may greatly increase our understanding of the complex interaction between personal and situational predictors (House and Aditya, 1997). Thus, although leadership has received much scientific and systematic study (House and Aditya, 1997), accountability (Frink and Klimoski, 1998), as well as reputation (i.e., as an individual-level construct) have not (Ferris et al., 2003). The current study is an attempt to address this research need. We find that leader's reputation affects the team climate but his/her self-perception may be grossly disjointed with his/her reputation. A stark discrepancy between the leader's self-perception and subordinates' perception about him/her may result in a lack of trust and communication (Whitmeyer, 2000) in the long run. Leaders' self-awareness and openness to feedback is important to bridge the gap between his/her self-perception and reputation. The findings in this study indicate the role of self-awareness of a leader and the importance of the channels and possibilities of open communication between the leader and other team members. Enhanced self-awareness makes a leader more open to see his or her areas of improvement and to put in effort in the right direction to bridge these gaps.

These findings indicate the several points as theoretical and managerial implications. This is significant in light of current trend in the business world. As executives and managers seeking more spiritual fulfilment through meaningfulness at work it is important to have leaders demonstrate their spiritual connect to work. That has positive impact on spiritual climate. Reputation can serve as a substitute for a history of personal interactions. Thus, the reputation that a leader achieves can serve as a proxy for role episodes, such that a leader's reputation provides information regarding that leader's abilities and values. Leaders reputation as spiritually connected to work can enhance the spiritual climate of the team which in turn may favourably impact other outcomes like learning and innovation reported and suggested to be associated with spirituality at work.

An empirical implication of this study is about the use of a self-rating scale for leadership studies and spirituality at work. Self-rating of leaders on spirituality at work turned out a poor predictor spiritual climate in team and self-other discrepancy as inversely associated with spiritual climate. Self-other rating discrepancies are useful information on multi-rater feedback instruments as discrepancies may play a motivational role in the development process. Those managers whose self-ratings are less in agreement with the ratings of others may be more surprised by their feedback than congruent raters. They may, in turn, be more motivated to re-evaluate their self views and change behaviours to improve their performance.

Yammarino and Atwater posit that individual and organisational outcomes are:

- a enhanced when self-perception is accurate
- b diminished when self-perception is inflated (over-estimators)
- c mixed when self-perception is deflated (under-estimators).

Their work is mostly focused on biodata, individual characteristics, cognitive abilities, job relevant experience, cognitive process and context. They report the need for development to be high in case of over estimators. Current study attempted to self-other rating difference in the field of spirituality at workplace. Future research studies in spirituality in management need to examine factors affecting self-ratings, congruence between self- and others' ratings and factors affecting others' ratings and correlates of agreement.

Taking responses of leaders' qualities from other respondents can be more valuable for drawing conclusions about the outcome of leaders' competence or attitude on the group level outcome. If the self-perception about a leader's spiritual connection to work is so disjointed with his/her reputation as a spiritual leader, it is important to examine what constitutes a leader's reputation as spiritual at the workplace.

The practical implications of this study can be explained in two aspects; first, the importance of self-awareness in the leader, and second different ways of enhancing self-awareness for reducing the discrepancy between a leader's self-perception and his/her reputation. The 180 or 360 degree assessment can be good starting point to sensitise leaders about any discrepancy between their self-perception and reputation. However, only assessment results may not be sufficient to bring sustainable improvement in a leader. An assessment should be followed and supported by opportunities for self-reflection and experiential learning to enhance self-awareness which in turn has a positive impact on the team's spiritual climate.

#### 4.2 Conclusions

Spirituality in management domain in general and the field of spiritual climate in particular lacks the unified body of micro and macro level scholarship on antecedents. Based on social exchange theory, social identity theory and human and social capital, and leadership style we attempted to examine leaders' impact on spiritual climate at workplace. Findings support the hypothesis of the impact of leaders' spirituality at work on spiritual climate but in indirect way; i.e. through the leaders' reputation being spiritual. Discrepancy in leaders' reputation and self-perception of spirituality at work is one of the most intriguing findings of the study. Within the spiritual climate construct *loksangrah* has strongest association with meaningfulness of work which indicates that possibility of contribution to the larger social and natural environment makes the work more meaningful. Leaders' reputation is strongly associated with *loksangrah* and a sense of community. That indicates leaders' ability to build a sense of community at work and showing the work as an opportunity to contribute meaningfully to larger social and natural environment impact the spiritual climate in most significant way. This study suffers from natural limitations of analytical research design and approach. The proposed relationship in the article can be nuanced through societal culture but this angle is not taken into account in the current study. Future study is required to tackle unanswered questions in the current study about how leaders inspire to take the work as *loksangrah* to the followers and the kind of conversations make the work meaningful to the followers which in turn enhance spiritual climate at work.



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## **Appendix A**

### *Spiritual leadership (1 to 5 rating on agreement)*

- 1 The work I do makes a difference in people's lives.
- 2 The work I do is meaningful to me.
- 3 The work I do is very important to me.
- 4 My job activities are personally meaningful to me.
- 5 I am able to interact with my team members with respect.
- 6 I am able to convey my co workers that they are valued as a person in their job.
- 7 I feel hopeful about working life.
- 8 I consider myself a spiritual person.

- 9 I care about the spiritual health of my co-workers.
- 10 I maintain a spiritual practice e.g., spending time in nature, prayer, meditation, reading inspirational literature, yoga and reading a journal.
- 11 My spiritual values influence the choices I make.
- 12 I perform my duties as if they contribute to (choose a response for each of following):
  - a. The community
  - b. The larger society
  - c. Mankind in general
- 13 I try to avoid wastage of any kind (paper, electricity, etc.).
- 14 I am concerned about the natural environment while working here.

## **Appendix B**

### *Spiritual climate inventory (1 to 5 scale on agreement)*

#### *Harmony with self at work*

- \_\_\_ 1 My job helps me to understand my life's purpose. (meaningfulness)
- \_\_\_ 2 Working here makes my life meaningful. (meaningfulness)
- \_\_\_ 3 Working here is a means for realising my real self. (meaningfulness)
- \_\_\_ 4 Work itself is enjoyable for me. (meditative work)
- \_\_\_ 5 I am deeply involved in my work here. (meditative work)
- \_\_\_ 6 I feel frustrated after working here (reverse). (meditative work)
- \_\_\_ 7 People here feel that they are in charge of their own destinies. (psychological empowerment)
- \_\_\_ 8 People here are able to use their talents at work. (psychological empowerment)
- \_\_\_ 9 People in the group/department are able to apply their creativity at work. (psychological empowerment)
- \_\_\_ 10 People generally believe that business targets of the group/department can be achieved. (hopefulness)
- \_\_\_ 11 People doubt the success of any new plan for business growth (reverse). (hopefulness)

*Harmony in work environment*

- \_\_\_ 12 When, stuck with a problem, people feel free to ask for (choose a number for each one): (sense of community)
- a. Advice from colleagues
  - b. Advice from a superior
  - c. Help from their colleagues
  - d. Help from a superior
- \_\_\_ 13 Peoples' actions here are aligned with their words. (authenticity)
- \_\_\_ 14 People own up to mistakes with others in the group. (authenticity)
- \_\_\_ 15 Manipulation is the way people perform their jobs here (reverse). (authenticity)
- \_\_\_ 16 Diversity of views is accepted in my group/department. (respect for diversity)
- \_\_\_ 17 People here are concerned about each other's family responsibilities. (concern for family)

*Transcendence*

- \_\_\_ 18 People here perform their duties as if they contribute to (choose a number for one): (*loksangrah*)
- a. The community
  - b. The larger society
  - c. Mankind in general
- \_\_\_ 19 People here try to avoid wastage of any kind (paper, electricity, etc.). (*loksangrah*)
- \_\_\_ 20 People are concerned about the natural environment while working here. (*loksangrah*)

*Leaders reputation*

- 1 In my view my superior find his/her work meaningful for his life.
- 2 In my view my superior promotes a sense of community in the team/department.
- 3 In my view my superior works here with the purpose larger than his/her personal goals (has consideration for society, community, environment at large).