



**Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development**

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY AND JOB SATISFACTION  
AMONG EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS**

**Set Bao Ning**

**62476**

**Bachelor of Science  
(Human Resource Development)**

**2019/2020**

UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK

Grade: A

Please tick (✓)

Final Year Project Report

Masters

PhD

✓

DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK

This declaration is made on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of JULY 2020.

**Student's Declaration:**

I Set Bao Ning, 62476, Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development hereby declare that the work entitled, 'The Relationship between Workplace Spirituality and Job Satisfaction among Early Childhood Educators' is my original work. I have not copied from any other students' work or from any other sources except where due reference or acknowledgement is made explicitly in the text, nor has any part been written for me by another person.

21<sup>st</sup> JULY 2020

Date submitted

SET BAO NING (62476)

Name of the student (Matric No.)

**Supervisor's Declaration:**

I Dr. Agatha Lamentan Anak Muda hereby certifies that the work entitled, 'The Relationship between Workplace Spirituality and Job Satisfaction among Early Childhood Educators' was prepared by the above named student, and was submitted to the "Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development" as a \* partial/full fulfillment for the conferment of Bachelor of Science With Honours (Human Resource Development), and the aforementioned work, to the best of my knowledge, is the said student's work

Received for examination by: agatha  
(DR. AGATHA LAMENTAN ANAK MUDA)

Date: 7<sup>th</sup> August 2020

I declare this Project/Thesis is classified as (Please tick (√)):

- CONFIDENTIAL** (Contains confidential information under the Official Secret Act 1972)\*
- RESTRICTED** (Contains restricted information as specified by the organization where research was done)\*
- OPEN ACCESS**

### Validation of Project/Thesis

I therefore duly affirmed with free consent and willingness declared that this said Project/Thesis shall be placed officially in the Centre for Academic Information Services with the abide interest and rights as follows:

- This Project/Thesis is the sole legal property of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).
- The Centre for Academic Information Services has the lawful right to make copies for the purpose of academic and research only and not for other purpose.
- The Centre for Academic Information Services has the lawful right to digitize the content to for the Local Content Database.
- The Centre for Academic Information Services has the lawful right to make copies of the Project/Thesis for academic exchange between Higher Learning Institute.
- No dispute or any claim shall arise from the student itself neither third party on this Project/Thesis once it becomes sole property of UNIMAS.
- This Project/Thesis or any material, data and information related to it shall not be distributed, published or disclosed to any party by the student except with UNIMAS permission.

Student's signature  \_\_\_\_\_  
(20<sup>th</sup> JULY 2020)

Supervisor's signature: agatha  
(7<sup>th</sup> August 2020)

Current Address:

137, JALAN LAYANG 4, TAMAN PERLING,  
81200 JOHOR BAHRU,  
JOHOR.

Notes: \* If the Project/Thesis is **CONFIDENTIAL** or **RESTRICTED**, please attach together as annexure a letter from the organization with the period and reasons of confidentiality and restriction.

[The instrument was duly prepared by The Centre for Academic Information Services]

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY  
AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS**

Set Bao Ning 62476

This project is submitted  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a  
Bachelor of Science with Honours  
(Human Resource Development)

Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK

(2020)

The project entitled 'The Relationship between Workplace Spirituality and Job Satisfaction among Early Childhood Educators' was prepared by Set Bao Ning and submitted to the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Science with Honours (Human Resource Deveopment).

Received for examination by:

*agatha*

-----  
(Dr. Agatha Lamentan Anak Muda)

Date:

21<sup>st</sup> July 2020  
-----

**Gred**

**A**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Firstly, I would like to thank God for giving me the idea and insights to conduct this research. In the process of completing this research, He gives me strength, persistence, endurance, knowledge, and wisdom. He is the One who leads me and never leaves while I'm facing struggles and difficulties in this research.

To my supervisor who is always beautiful, full of wisdom, loving and kind, Dr. Agatha Lamentan Muda from Human Resource Development Department, Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, I greatly appreciate her love, patience and encouragement. Her guidance not only leads me to the completion of this study but she has taught us to be strong towards the difficulties in life. She has supervised me with love and trust, which has helped me to grow into abundance and blessings.

Besides, I would like to thank the respondents of this study who have committed their time and effort in answering the questionnaires of this research. Their sincerity and patience is highly appreciated.

Finally, special thanks to my beloved family and friends who are always loving, kind and helpful in the journey of completing this research. Their support and words of encouragement has given me more strength to complete this research.

## **ABSTRACT**

In order to increase employees' satisfaction at work, a new paradigm of study, workplace spirituality was being explored. It is gradually drawing attention and gaining value among academicians and practitioners. The purpose of present study is to examine the relationship between workplace spirituality dimensions and job satisfaction among early childhood educators. A cross-sectional study was conducted with a sample of 60 kindergarten teachers by using simple random sampling. Pearson's Correlation Coefficient, Multiple Regression Analysis and ANOVA were performed to test the research hypotheses. The results showed that there are significant relationships between workplace spirituality dimensions and job satisfaction. Other than that, some demographic variables were also found to influence workplace spirituality and job satisfaction. These findings brought new insight to the significant role of workplace spirituality towards job satisfaction, bringing a new perspective to the workforce. The paper concludes with a number of implications and research directions.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, Workplace spirituality, Early childhood educators, Empirical study

## **ABSTRAK**

*Kajian ini mengkaji hubungan antara kerohanian tempat kerja dan kepuasan kerja dalam kalangan guru tadika. Seramai 60 orang guru tadika menjadi responden. Kaedah kajian yang digunakan adalah analisis pekali korelasi, analisis regresi berganda, analisis varians. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan terdapat hubungan antara kerohanian tempat kerja dan kepuasan kerja dalam kalangan guru tadika. Hubungan latar belakang responden, kerohanian tempat kerja dan kepuasan kerja juga diuji dan didapati tahap pendidikan responden mempunyai pengaruh terhadap kepuasan kerja. Kajian ini membawa pengetahuan kepada kerohanian tempat kerja dan kepuasan kerja dalam kalangan guru tadika. Kajian ini diakhiri dengan implikasi kajian dan cadangan kajian pada masa depan.*

*Kata kunci: Kepuasan kerja, kerohanian tempat kerja, guru tadika, kajian empirikal*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	i
Abstract.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Tables And Figures.....	viii
1.0 Chapter One: Introduction .....	1
1.1 Background of Study .....	1
1.2 Problem Statement .....	3
1.3 Research Objectives.....	6
1.4 Research Questions .....	7
1.5 Research Hypothesis .....	8
1.6 Conceptual Framework.....	9
1.7 Significance of Study .....	10
1.8 Definitions of Terms .....	12
1.9 Summary.....	13
2.0 Chapter Two: Literature Review .....	14
2.1 Introduction.....	14
2.2 Discussion on Variables.....	14
2.2.1 Workplace Spirituality .....	14
2.2.1.1 Definitions and constructs of workplace spirituality.....	14
2.2.1.1.1 Inner life .....	17
2.2.1.1.2 Meaningful work .....	17
2.2.1.1.3 Sense of community .....	19
2.2.1.2 Workplace spirituality from an organizational behavior perspective .....	19
2.2.1.3 Implementation of spirituality in the workplace .....	21

2.2.2	Job Satisfaction.....	22
2.2.2.1	Definitions of job satisfaction.....	22
2.2.2.2	Theories of job satisfaction.....	22
2.2.2.3	Measurements of job satisfaction .....	23
2.2.2.4	Factors of job satisfaction.....	24
2.3	Discussion on related theories and models .....	25
2.3.1	Job Characteristics Theory .....	25
2.3.2	Maslow Hierarchy of Needs .....	27
2.3.3	Model of workplace spirituality dimensions and job satisfaction .....	30
2.4	Discussion on past similar findings.....	32
2.4.1	Unidimensional workplace spirituality and job satisfaction.....	32
2.4.2	Multidimensional workplace spirituality and job satisfaction.....	33
2.4.2.1	Meaningful work and job satisfaction .....	33
2.4.2.2	Sense of community, meaningful work and job satisfaction.....	34
2.5	Summary .....	36
3.0	Chapter Three: Methodology.....	37
3.1	Introduction.....	37
3.2	Research design .....	37
3.3	Population, sample and sampling procedure .....	37
3.4	Instrument .....	39
3.4.1	Demographic information .....	39
3.4.2	Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) .....	39
3.4.3	Workplace Spirituality Questionnaire .....	39
3.5	Pilot study .....	40
3.6	Validity and reliability .....	40

3.7 Normality test using skewness and kurtosis .....	46
3.7.1 Normality test for job satisfaction .....	47
3.7.2 Normality test for inner life.....	48
3.7.3 Normality test for meaningful work.....	49
3.7.4 Normality test for sense of community .....	50
3.8 Ethics of the study.....	51
3.9 Data collection procedure .....	51
3.10 Data analysis procedure .....	51
3.10.1 Descriptive statistics .....	51
3.10.2 Inferential statistics .....	52
3.10.2.1 Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient.....	52
3.10.2.2 Multiple Regression Analysis .....	53
3.10.2.3 One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) .....	53
3.11 Summary .....	53
4.0 Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Results .....	54
4.1 Introduction.....	54
4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents .....	54
4.2.1 Gender .....	54
4.2.2 Age .....	55
4.2.3 Frequency of attending spiritual events.....	56
4.2.4 Highest academic qualification .....	57
4.2.5 Length of service in current organization .....	58
4.3 Relationship between job satisfaction and independent variables .....	59
4.3.1 Relationship between job satisfaction and inner life.....	59
4.3.2 Relationship between job satisfaction and meaningful work.....	60
4.3.3 Relationship between job satisfaction and sense of community .....	61
4.4 Contributions of independent variables towards job satisfaction .....	62

4.5 Demographic Variables and Job Satisfaction .....	65
4.5.1 Age and job satisfaction .....	65
4.5.2 Academic Qualification and Job Satisfaction .....	66
4.5.3 Length of service in current organization and job satisfaction .....	67
4.6 Demographic Variables and Workplace Spirituality .....	68
4.6.1 Age and workplace spirituality .....	68
4.6.2 Academic qualification and workplace spirituality.....	69
4.6.3 Length of service in current organization and workplace spirituality.....	70
4.7 Summary .....	70
5.0 Chapter Five: Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendation.....	71
5.1 Introduction.....	71
5.2 Research summary .....	71
5.3 Discussion of research findings .....	72
5.3.1 First research question.....	72
5.3.2 Second research question .....	72
5.3.3 Third research question .....	73
5.3.4 Fourth research question .....	74
5.3.5 Fifth research question .....	74
5.3.6 Sixth research question.....	75
5.4 Implications of the study.....	76
5.5 Limitations of the study .....	77
5.6 Recommendations and directions for future research.....	78
5.7 Conclusion .....	79
References.....	80
Appendix.....	87

## LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

<b>Table</b>	<b>Page</b>
2.1 Workplace Spirituality Definitions	16
2.2 Hierarchy of needs and workplace spirituality	27
3.1 Determining sample size from a given population	38
3.2 Reliability analysis for pilot study	41
3.3 Reliability analysis for actual study	41
3.4 Overall reliability for actual study	41
3.5 Descriptive Statistics for job satisfaction	47
3.6 Descriptive Statistics for inner life	48
3.7 Descriptive Statistics for meaningful work	49
3.8 Descriptive Statistics for sense of community	50
3.9 Strength of Correlation Coefficients	52
4.1 Gender	54
4.2 Age	55
4.3 Frequency of attending spiritual events	56
4.4 Highest Academic Qualification	57
4.5 Length of service in current organization	58
4.6 Correlation between job satisfaction and inner life	59
4.7 Correlation between job satisfaction and meaningful work	60
4.8 Correlation between job satisfaction and sense of community	61
4.9 Model summary	62
4.10 ANOVA	62
4.11 Coefficients	62
4.12 Age and job satisfaction	65
4.13 Academic qualification and job satisfaction	66
4.14 Tukey Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons	66
4.15 Length of service and job satisfaction	67
4.16 Age and workplace spirituality	68
4.17 Academic qualification and workplace spirituality	69
4.18 Influence of length of service and workplace spirituality	70
<b>Figure</b>	<b>Page</b>
2.1 Job characteristics theory	25
2.2 Maslow Hierarchy of Needs	27
2.3 Model of workplace spirituality dimensions and job satisfaction	30

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of Study

Revolutionary changes in the world have caused the organizations to face increasing employee-related problems such as high turnover rate, burnout and stress-related illness (Walt & Klerk, 2014). These problems are characteristics of organization where job satisfaction is inadequate. SEEK Asia signature market research (2017) reported that there are almost half (42%) of the employees experienced job dissatisfaction in Malaysia.

Employers usually try to increase job satisfaction through perks, compensations and tangible benefits. However, the changing structure and nature of the organizations leads employers to view job satisfaction from a new perspective. Employers have to rethink and redesign current systems and structures to increase employees' satisfaction. It is timely to investigate on how other variables can be correlate with job satisfaction from a new approach. Based on research findings, significant relationships were found between workplace spirituality and job satisfaction (Milliman, Czaplewski & Ferguson, 2003; Walt & Klerk, 2014; Hassan, Nadeem & Akhter, 2016; Nuzulia & Rupiati, 2016).

In order for the organizations to increase job satisfaction, it is necessary to focus on workplace spirituality. Organizations have to realise that “people work not only with their hands but also their hearts or spirits” (Petchsawanga & Duchon, 2012). Workplace spirituality connects the job to employees' spirit, soul and body which also facilitates them to bring their whole self to work resulting in higher job satisfaction (Chawla & Guda, 2010). Other than that, workplace spirituality brings value to the working community as it induces a more nourished inner-life, purpose at work and people will see themselves as part of the working community, where they feel valued, trusted, and supported.

People often associates certain professions with spirituality, their professions usually are viewed as a calling or noble work such as pastor, doctors, militarist, social welfare volunteer and educators. These professions are often challenging and requires a strong spirituality as only when a person is well-nourished in inner-life, having good connections with the community and meaning and purpose at work, will find more satisfaction in the job. (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000).

In this research, the researcher will focus on the education sector and establish whether relationships found in other sectors also applies to the education sector so that changes will be implemented with introduction of workplace spirituality.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Job satisfaction is one of the most widely researched variables and this reflects its importance in any modern organizations. This is because such expansive research on job satisfaction was often being linked to positive outcomes like higher career commitment (Adio & Popoola, 2010), organizational citizenship behaviour (Sawalha, Kathawala & Magableh, 2019), better health (Faragher, Cass & Cooper, 2005).

Despite of its importance, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) 2015 have indicated that 48.7% of teachers are not satisfied with their jobs and 27.4% of them plan to quit teaching. Dissatisfied employees tend to report lower organizational commitment and higher turnover rate (Salleh, Nair & Harun, 2012). Foong, Veloo and Dhamotharan (2018) reported that early childhood education centres (ECCE) in Malaysia suffers high rate of turnover. The rapid changing of early childhood educator not only interrupts children's learning process, it also affects the quality of the workforce.

In spite of previous researches and studies have indicated extrinsic rewards do influence job satisfaction (Artz, 2010), monetary reward is not the ultimate goal. The world has advanced in terms of science, technology, leisure, and also their perception towards work. In terms of work, they long for a more humanistic working environment, meaningful, and a connection to others and something higher (Marques, Dhiman & King, 2005). The centrality of work in life make people desire for a work that provides meaning to their life, they want to experience life satisfaction through a nourished inner-life and have a sense of contributing to the community. Walt and Klerk (2014) reported that job satisfaction depends on workplace spirituality rather than only materialistic basis.

However, the advancement of technology has depleted the resource of spirituality at work. Technology has leads to the dissolution of the working community. Less face-to-face communication due to new working policies such as work from home, flexible working hours. Invention of smartphones and new communication technology also leads to lesser quality time for organizational members' fellowship. Fellowship is a way to form sense of community, which is a dimension under workplace spirituality. With fellowship between the organizational members, they are able to confront disappointment, divergence, loneliness and pain at work, which helps them to experience job satisfaction.

Although there is an increased number of researches and publications on workplace spirituality with outcomes such as intuition and creativity, personal fulfilment, commitment, and organizational performance (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002), the study is still at its infancy stage (Walt & Klerk, 2014). Vasconcelos (2018) stated that the research of workplace spirituality is not abundant, for example, there are only 4.9 studies on average by year from 2000 to 2015. The empirical work of workplace spirituality peaked in 2012 with 12 publications according to Vasconcelos (2018). Zsolnai and Flanagan (2019) explained that the studies of workplace spirituality lack of a uniform set of measures to enable scholars to replicate and extend the studies of others. Therefore, the study of workplace spirituality must show clear and measurable effects to build a robust field of study. Academicians are still trying to investigate its relationships with various variables and its impact towards the field of organizational behaviour. The academic research gap is present as the topic didn't receive adequate attention.

In the context of education, spirituality is still new to the workplace. A few researches have been conducted in high school level (Nuzulia & Rupiati, 2016), university level (Suleiman, 2014; Hassan, Nadeem & Akhter, 2016), However, further confirmatory empirical studies with statistical analyses are needed to validate the findings obtained from

previous researches as this will help to build a more solidified theoretical foundation. Hence, the relationship between workplace spirituality and job satisfaction within the early childhood education context will be examined in this study.

## **1.3 Research Objectives**

### 1.3.1 General objective

To determine the relationship between workplace spirituality dimensions and job satisfaction among early childhood educators.

### 1.3.2 Specific objectives

1. To determine the relationship between inner life and job satisfaction among early childhood educators.
2. To determine the relationship between meaningful work and job satisfaction among early childhood educators.
3. To determine the relationship between the sense of community and job satisfaction among early childhood educators.
4. To determine the contributions of each independent variable which comprises inner life, meaningful work and sense of community towards job satisfaction among early childhood educators.
5. To determine the difference in job satisfaction based on age, academic qualification and length of service in current among early childhood educators.
6. To determine the difference in workplace spirituality based on age, academic qualification and length of service in current organization among early childhood educators.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

1. Is there any significant relationship between inner life and job satisfaction among early childhood educators?
2. Is there any significant relationship between meaningful work and job satisfaction among early childhood educators?
3. Is there any significant relationship between the sense of community and job satisfaction among early childhood educators?
4. What are the contributions of each independent variable (inner life, meaningful work and sense of community) towards job satisfaction among early childhood educators?
5. Is there any significant difference in job satisfaction based on age, academic qualification and length of service in current organization among early childhood educators?
6. Is there any significant difference in workplace spirituality based on age, academic qualification and length of service in current organization among early childhood educators?

## **1.5 Research Hypotheses**

Ha1: There is a significant relationship between inner-life and job satisfaction among early childhood educators.

Ha2: There is a significant relationship between meaningful work and job satisfaction among early childhood educators.

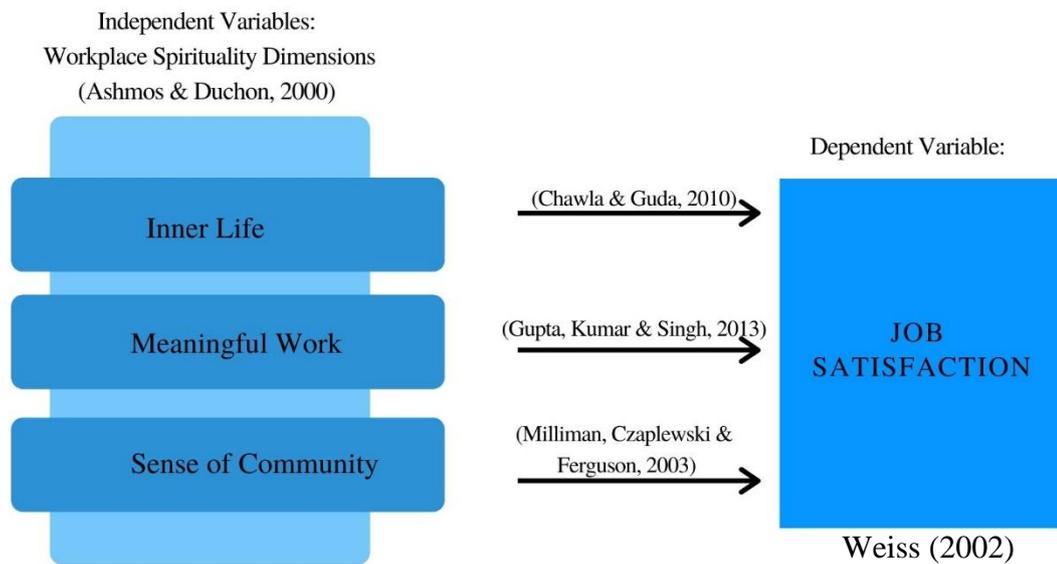
Ha3: There is a significant relationship between sense of community and job satisfaction among early childhood educators.

Ha4: There is significant contributions of each independent variable (inner life, meaningful work and sense of community) towards job satisfaction among early childhood educators.

Ha5: There is significant difference in job satisfaction based on age, academic qualification and length of service in current organization among early childhood educators.

Ha6: There is significant difference in workplace spirituality based on age, academic qualification and length of service in current organization among early childhood educators.

## 1.6 Conceptual framework



*Figure 1.1* Conceptual framework of workplace spirituality dimensions and job satisfaction

Source: Ashmos and Duchon (2000), Weiss (2002), Milliman, Czaplewski and Ferguson (2003), Chawla and Guda (2010), Gupta, Kumar and Singh (2013)

A conceptual framework is proposed to illustrate the relationship between workplace spirituality dimensions and job satisfaction. According to Houghton, Neck & Krishnakumar (2016), much of empirical research on workplace spirituality uses Ashmos and Duchon (2000) three-dimensional framework which are inner-life, meaningful work and sense of community. Workplace spirituality dimensions are found significant to job satisfaction as a few of similar researches have been published such as Milliman, Czaplewski and Ferguson (2003), Marschke, Preziosi and Harrington (2011); Gupta, Kumar and Singh (2014); Walt and Klerk (2014)

## **1.7 Significance of study**

Job satisfaction, with one significant reason to continue this interest is due to its linkage to many variables, such as employee effectiveness, organizational performance, loyalty and absenteeism (Aziri, 2011). It is significant that academicians will continue to explore the variable with new insights and perspectives. Previously, there were many studies on the outcomes of job satisfaction such as job performance, work motivation and work engagement, there are also studies on pay and promotion as the factors of job satisfaction, however the researcher has found that there is relatively little empirical research conducted on the relationship of workplace spirituality and job satisfaction (Lazar, 2010). Hence, in this study, a multidimensional measure of workplace spirituality and job satisfaction will be investigated.

Workplace spirituality have received increased interests by the scholars as indicated by Walt and Klerk (2014). Nonetheless, the study of the variable is still in developmental stage. Thus, it is significant to conduct relevant research to provide further evidence and support to the theoretical framework of workplace spirituality. This paper attempts to address the theoretical gap by contributing to current state of workplace spirituality and positive work-related attitudes such as job satisfaction. Noting that to construct more theories, this field requires more empirical research grounded in a more scientific and conceptualised way.

In addition, this study helps to provides further understanding to organizations as workplace spirituality can act as a new form of resource for the employers to enhance job satisfaction. They are able to institute new programmes and systems by tapping into the spiritual resource. If spirituality is more welcomed and accepted in the workplace, the employees will be encouraged to encounter and share spirituality experiences with colleagues. The contemporary workplace should be seen as one of the sources of spiritual

growth and sense of community. This is to retain talents in the times of the Millennials, as they are not only pursuing wages, instead they are seeking for something deeper inside, which is the spirituality paradigm.

The Millennials will continue to change the current work structure, working environment and programmes into a more mind-enriching and heart-fulfilling experience, making employees to work more connectively, reflectively and spiritually. Therefore, it is important to ensure the policy makers to have insights on the impact of workplace spirituality. Such insight should enable policy makers to design and apply policy to make education institutions serve the needs of early childhood educators better at the same time knowing that such policies are useful to employers and society as a whole. This research will also provide evidence and information to human resource practitioners in promoting spirituality practices and designing relevant programmes to enhance job satisfaction.