

Spirituality in human
resource
management religion
essay



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What is the role of spirituality in Human Resource Management practices of non-profit Organisations? The focus of this dissertation is to examine precisely that. The nature of spirituality, specific human resource management (HRM) practices and the integration of these two areas will be examined further in chapter two. For the purposes of this dissertation the determining criteria for non-profit organisations is that the organisation has a structure that is formal. Non-profit organisations are also private and are therefore separate from the government. Non-profit organisations must not pay any dividends or return any profit generated to the founders, owners or directors. Non-profit organisations must also control their own activities and have internal governance procedures. Finally the organisation must have a reasonable level of volunteer involvement. This definition was first outlined by Salamon and Anheier (1997) and further detailed by Donoghue et al (2006 p. 18).

1. 1: Rationale for Study

This study was undertaken for a number of reasons. Donoghue et al determined that over forty thousand people were employed in the non-profit sector in Ireland (2006 p. 56) and that non-profit organisations hold values that are significant to them. For example 79% of them consider community value to be important (2006 p. 75).

Donoghue et al also determined that employees were the greatest cost to any organisation at 53. 9% (2006 p. 51). As Sprinks (2010) outlines a sixth of Irish non-profit organisations may need to close if there are serious funding cuts, in light of this non-profit organisations need to ensure that they have the right people in their roles to ensure that their organisation can perform in <https://assignbuster.com/spirituality-in-human-resource-management-religion-essay/>

a reduced funding environment while still maintaining the values of the organisation.

Yet it is not clear why people chose to work in this sector and how to have the right people working in the sector and for an organisation. Spirituality of both the organisation and the individual could provide a way of integrating both the desires of the individual and the needs of the organisation and save precious resources for the organisation.

1. 2: Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the core elements of spirituality. The key human resource practices of non profit organisations will also be considered. The integration of these two elements and the benefits of doing so will be examined.

1. 3: Background to Study

In order to examine the role that spirituality currently plays in non-profit organisations it is worth examining where these organisations have evolved from. Donoghue et al (1999 p. 9) found that in Ireland traditionally, volunteering has focused on education, health and social welfare and the majority of this was done by Catholic Religious orders.

However before 1829 most support came from Lay Protestants and Quakers acting as philanthropists. They also offered medical support to those who needed it and this support helped to establish five volunteer run hospitals in Ireland by 1753.

With the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 charities and the care of the poor became a significant concern of Catholic Religious orders. In the 1830's Poor Laws were enacted which were the very basic first steps in social welfare provision. These first steps were extremely limited and there was still a need for additional support from charities. Donoghue et al (1999) argues that subsidiarity is the reason for the significant role played by religious orders involved in running charities. Donoghue et al (1999, p. 9) describe subsidiarity as

An important part of Catholic social teaching, this principle maintains that responsibility for the provision of social welfare lies primarily with agencies such as the family, schools and church. The state is seen as a last resort and is only called upon when such agencies have exhausted their resources.

The dominance of the Catholic Church as the key providers of these services continued when Ireland gained Independence and only began to diminish in the 1960's as the state started to significantly increase funding of social welfare provisions.

In the 1970's the focus on charities changed as volunteers became more involved in their communities and wanted to help empower others. Anti-poverty programmes were funded by the EU and these programmes focused on empowerment, participation and social involvement.

From the 1980's on, social partnership became a key element of policy negotiation and discussion. Donoghue et al (1999) determined that because of the increased activity of community groups in the 1980's funding was increased in the 1990's. This is reflected in Donoghue et al's (2006 p. 9) <https://assignbuster.com/spirituality-in-human-resource-management-religion-essay/>

mapping of non-profits in Ireland. This research found that although some organisations can be traced back to as far as the twelfth century half of the organisations mapped were established since the mid 1980's.

Clearly the traditional way of running charities has evolved over time as have the needs of those requiring the use of charities. This evolving role can be outlined in the changing classifications of non-profit organisations in Ireland as outlined by Donoghue et al (2006 p 38)

International Classification of Non-profit Organisations in Ireland

This research demonstrates that the focus of organisations have evolved over time, for example social services now account for 17.1% of the activities of non-profit organisations but previously this was only 5.8%. Yet the focus of organisations has also reduced over time. At one point 41.1% of organisations focused on education now that number stands at just under 11%.

As the organisations have evolved as have the nature of non-profit organisations in Ireland. Yet so to have the people who work for them. In the next section the history of human resource management will be examined.

1. 4: History of Human Resource Management

HRM as a management tool originates as far back as the industrial revolution in eighteenth century Britain. Gunnigle et al (2006 p. 1) point out that the dramatic changes in the way in which people worked meant that there had to be a change in the way they were managed as owners needed to provide new employees with direction. Work conditions were extremely poor and the

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level of HRM provided was minimal. It was not until the late nineteenth and then the early twentieth century that there was a significant change in the HRM process. These two changes were the welfare tradition and scientific management.

Kamoche (2001 p. 12) describes welfare management as both brave and tentative. The steps involved in this included improving working conditions and the then revolutionary principles of cooperation, partnerships and even profit sharing. At the time this was the act of visionaries. Gunigle et al (2006 p. 2) agree that it made a serious impact not least because it generally involved the appointment of a welfare officer who was the forerunner for the human resource (HR) manager.

The other significant change was the advent of scientific management also called "Taylorism". This approach was led by F. W. Taylor and called for a systematic approach to employment and payment systems and also to job design. Job analysis, time and motion studies and bonus schemes were also emphasised. Gunigle et al (2006 p. 3) believe that its greatest legacy is the belief that work planning should be separated from work doing. The former being seen as a task for management the latter as a task for employees.

Another important movement in the history of HRM was the behavioural science movement. This movement developed enough knowledge to support many aspects of HR practices such as training, selection and motivation. Gunigle et al (2006 p. 4) consider the interest it created in the application of behavioural science principles when considering the behaviour of workers and organisations to be its most important contribution.

HRM is itself a new term which emerged from America during the 1980's. It considered both the human capital approach which Gunigle et al (2006 p. 10) describe as the nurturing and development of the individual because they are a key resource for the organisation and as a result the individual's contribution should be maximised. At the same time there was increasing awareness of the benefits of considering HRM when making strategic decisions. This will be examined further in chapter two.

This chapter has examined the history of non-profit organisations in Ireland and the history of HRM however one element of this dissertation has yet to be considered - What is spirituality? This will be examined in the next chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature Review.

In this chapter several questions will be asked and answered. Questions such as what is spirituality? How do you define it? What is a spiritual leader? In addition HRM practices will be examined, what are the key requirements for effective HRM? What are the different types of practices? How do people influence an organisation? The final section of this chapter will consider the role of spirituality at work. The integration of spirituality and HRM will be analysed and the benefits of and difficulties faced in doing so will also be examined.

2. 1: What is Spirituality?

Spirituality is defined by the Cambridge Dictionary as

The quality of involving deep, often religious, feelings and beliefs, rather than the physical parts of life

This simple definition provides an understanding of the basic meaning of the word but it does not provide one with an understanding of spirituality and its impact on the individual or an organisation. Yet spirituality is not easy to define as Sheldrake (1991 p. 32) comments ‘ spirituality is one of those subjects whose meaning everyone claims to know until they have to define it’. Sheldrake (2007 p. 2) later defined spirituality from a Christian perspective as

The way our fundamental values, life-styles, and spiritual practices reflect particular understandings of God, human identity, and the material world as the context for human transformation.

Swinton (2001) considers spirituality to be the external demonstration of the internal workings of the human spirit. He further explains that it is spirituality that gives human life its humanness as it considers the significant events in life. This helps to give meaning or direction to the life of individuals and assists with coping with life’s daily stresses. Yet it also helps to people find meaning, purpose, knowledge, love, commitment and meaningful relationship and a connection with the sense of the holy amongst us.

As Swinton (2001, p. 9) describes it

Spirituality is an essential dynamic life force which vitalizes human being and provides motivation to discover God, values, meaning, purpose and hope

Although coming at this topic from a medical perspective, Cornah (2006) considers Swinton's (2001) definition to be appropriate. She also contends that spirituality has different meanings for different people in different cultures at different times. Whilst traditionally spirituality has been expressed through art, nature and of course religion, recently people have expressed spirituality in different ways or through different elements. She believes that these elements include a sense of purpose, the need for wholeness, the desire for hope or harmony, the sense of connectedness, activities that those activities that bring value and meaning to people's lives and a sense that there is more to life than material things.

Benefiel (2005, p. 9) defines spirituality as the "human spirit, fully engaged" and goes on to explain that spirituality involves

The intellectual, emotional, and relational depth of human character, as well as the continuing capability and yearning for personal development and evolution ... sometimes connected to religion, sometimes not.

Fairholm (2001 p. 40) describes spirituality as "the source of their overall perception of the world, or truth, beauty, and goodness" Fairholm's states that spirituality provides the definition for the emotional, physical and intellectual self. Fairholm comments that spirituality is sometimes linked to religion or the metaphysical, but he argues that spirituality is about the inner or private person and their life force. Yet Fairholm agrees that the values of an individual's religion may shape but should not limit one's spirituality. The inner conviction that spirituality relates to a force that is more powerful, higher or more intelligent than the individual is outlined by Fairholm who

comments that these beliefs are intangible and that individuals cannot depend on logic or physical evidence of these beliefs. Fairholm comments that it is spirituality that is the source of their vision and values. Spirituality also enhances the relationship that a leader of an organisation has with their stakeholders. The role of spiritual leadership will be examined further in the next section.

2. 1. 2: Spiritual Leadership

Fairholm (2001) describes spirituality at work by discussing the role of the inner self in terms of work, employees, leaders and other elements from a spiritual perspective.

Previously, Fairholm (1997, p. 111) defined spiritual leadership as

A holistic approach that considers the full capacities, needs, and interests of both leader and led, and the goals of the organization.

Fairholm (1997) further explains that it is the leaders of the organisation who create its spirituality. This corporate spirit is described as ' a spiritual force that honors high performance, compassion, empathy for others, and individual contribution.' (1997, p. 185).

Fairholm (2001, p. 187) argues that spiritual leaders also need to be moral leaders and as such they must be aware of and unwilling to compromise their core values. If these ideals are at risk they may choose not to participate in anything that may impact on these values. This means that these leaders follow their spiritual paths and adapt to new practices in order to ensure that their vision is nourished.

This type of leadership also requires a sense of service. Fairholm (2001, p. 113) considers spiritual leadership to be servanthood, which requires commitment to vision and values that matter to the individual and the organisation that it leads. Spiritual leaders do not dominate instead they demonstrate the renewal of their awareness of their values and encourage others to do likewise.

Fairholm (1997 p. 190) outlines the role that different elements play in spiritual leadership. A sense of community is important and recognising that organisations are like communities and therefore have their own culture and a desire for wholeness. Demonstrating Competence is another element of spiritual leadership, where credibility and trust are valued. Yet power and the need for balance is examined. A higher moral standard is another element of spiritual leadership. This is characterized by the leaders' presence, integrity, ethics and morals. Spirituality itself also needs to be considered.

Another element that Fairholm (1997 p. 190) comments on is that of vision, as a spiritual leader is often a visionary leader who recognises that the values held by the organisation and its stakeholders. Letting others achieve their greatest potential through continuous improvement is another element of spiritual leadership. Stewardship or the belief that power sharing leads to a strong united team is another trait of spiritual leadership.

Shared Meaning is another important tool for leaders, by finding the shared meaning of the organisation they can persuade rather than coerce or force and action. This persuasion can be influenced by the actions and values of

the leader who can demonstrate their awareness of the values and ethos of the organisation. (Fairholm, 2001, p. 188)

Influence and power are other elements of spiritual and moral leadership. Fairholm concludes that spiritual leaders will not attempt to manipulate others, they instead prefer to encourage and empower people. This empowerment rejects the notion of control instead it allows people to become reinvigorated as they become aware of their own power and in doing so they experience increased joy. (Fairholm, 2001, p. 188)

Whilst this style of leadership allows others to take action and have responsibility it is not without risk, and the ability to take risks is necessary for spiritual leadership. Kouzes and Posner agree that spiritual leadership challenges current work processes (2007, p. 189) and requires a pioneering innovative attitude.

Fairholm (2001 p. 44) considers these models reflect the practices and principles that have been held by a variety of different leader in a range of organisation. Fairholm also comments that are not simply values needed by leaders they also need to have an awareness of the technical skills required by the group and they need to be able to inspire and teach those that they work with. As Fairholm (2001 p. 95) explains if leaders want to engage with the spirituality of their employees and explore their true levels of motivation they must consider the needs that their employees have, this spirituality should be considered alongside their abilities and experience. In the next section the needs of the employees and managing those needs will be

examined. In section 2. 3 the integration of the skills and values of spirituality and the activities of HRM will be considered.

Plans from this point on!

2. 2: Human Resource Management

Human resource management (HRM) Definition

What's needed to Make it work

HR Practices

Why people matter

(Possibly specific issues for hrm in non profit orgs?)

2. 3: Spirituality at Work

Define Spirituality at work

Models of this

Benefiels transformation model

Benefiels integration with reference to HRM