

Individual Differences in Workplace Spirituality: Implications for Deep-Level Diversity and Team Outcomes

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Abstract

Purpose - This paper explores a new concept that is relevant to the mix of individual differences inherent in organizational teams: workplace spiritual diversity (WSD). The purpose of the research is to provide leaders with an additional and unique way to conceptualize group-level diversity while understanding its potential impact on important team outcomes.

Method - Conceptualization and theoretical model development are conducted at the intersection of two previously separate fields. Consistent with prior research, the WSD construct is operationalized along three key dimensions: inner life, meaningful work, and community.

Findings - The newly proposed framework suggests numerous possibilities for team composition along with WSD. We develop propositions suggesting that, under the right team conditions, this type of diversity can have positive effects on conflict, team satisfaction, cohesiveness, performance, and creativity.

Limitation - This study's conceptual framework offers a pathway for future research in this area, which is currently somewhat limited. Future work should examine the effect of WSD on organizational outcomes and the moderating effect of the diversity mindset.

Implications - This work should have important practical implications for team

composition and diversity in organizations. An enhanced understanding of deep-level diversity and WSD can provide additional insight for leaders in terms of team building and role assignment. Furthermore, the addition of the diversity mindset, as a key moderator variable in the theoretical model, can provide a further understanding of the conditions that would be conducive to an enhanced understanding of the importance of such group composition.

Originality - This conceptual research is the first to explore the intersection between concepts related to deep-level diversity and the growing interest in management spirituality and religion.

Keywords: workplace spirituality, teams, diversity, relational demography

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Introduction

In today's competitive, global landscape, organizations increasingly recognize the advantages of flexible, team-based structures where individuals contribute to collective performance through diverse attributes. Scholars and practitioners alike have advanced their understanding of team dynamics about group composition, process, conflict, and performance (Ayub & Jehn, 2014; Mohammed & Angell, 2004; Zhu et al., 2021). An area of study that has received much attention in recent years is diversity and its potential impact on various aspects of team functioning. The information and decision-making perspective of diversity suggests that "differences within a group's composition should be positively related to group performance as a result of a greater variability in skills, abilities and perspectives" (Khan et al., 2010, p. 290). These differences linked to functional performance go beyond the more immediate and salient attributes of surface-level aspects of diversity, such as race, age, gender, and ethnicity, to include deep-level aspects of diversity, such as values, personality, cognitive styles, and experience. Overall, research suggests that deep-level versus surface-level aspects of diversity show stronger correlations with employees' behaviors, attitudes, and performance (Casper et al., 2013; Harrison et al., 2002; Kim & Gelfand, 2003).

A growing area of interest in management and organizational behavior is workplace spirituality (WS) and its relationship to potential team performance (Jena, 2021). Leaders have recognized the need to encourage cultures that promote a sense of community, intrinsic satisfaction, personal identity, and inclusivity. Such cultures would

embrace WS, and, in terms of diversity, the organization would benefit from an enhanced understanding of employees' levels of variation across this construct. Researchers have recognized the need to continue investigating the role of, and the benefits of, individual differences in workplace environments that foster adaptability, innovativeness, and change (e.g., Story & Barbuto, 2011; van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). Furthermore, it seems useful to identify additional personal attributes that can help expand the range of variables used to conceptualize deeper-level diversity (Bell, 2007; Mohammed & Angell, 2004). Our paper addresses such needs by providing a framework for better understanding WS as an important component of deep-level diversity. Past research has not considered workplace spirituality in this fashion. In this paper, we develop the *workplace spiritual diversity (WSD)* construct using the dimensions of inner life, meaningful work, and community (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). In proposing our model of WSD, we hope to add more insight into how employees and team members may differ across spirituality and facilitate a better understanding of WSD's importance for team dynamics and performance. This aspect of deep-level diversity should provide useful information to organizational leaders who strive to manage diversity through teamwork effectively and appreciate the important linkages between diversity and potential competitive advantage (Aguinis et al., 2013).

In the following sections, we define and highlight the importance of workplace spirituality (WS) and justify its inclusion in a broader understanding of deep-level diversity. We then explain how this concept is important for an enhanced understanding of team diversity. A model of WSD is then presented with corresponding propositions identifying the conditions under which WSD should have favorable impacts on conflict, team satisfaction, cohesiveness, performance, and creativity. In this framework, we introduce an important concept, the diversity mindset. This moderator variable is considered a vital contextual factor that helps identify those conditions where WSD will have the strongest proposed impacts on the outcome variables. Both practical and theoretical implications are offered, followed by suggestions for future research.

What is Workplace Spirituality, and Why is it Important?

There is ample evidence for the emerging importance of workplace spirituality in organizations. In recent years, this construct has received a great deal of attention in the academic literature and change initiatives focusing on values-based leadership (see Benefiel et al., 2014; Marques et al., 2006; Oh & Wang, 2020). WS differs from faith-based institutional membership, whereby people feel obligatory loyalty to a defined group. The concept seems to be more about the positive personal connections people make to their identity, the workplace environment, and the nature of the job itself (Hicks, 2003).

Mitroff and Denton (1999) define spirituality in the workplace as "the basic feeling of being connected with one's complete self, others, and the entire universe. . ." (p.83). This framing similarly offers a clear distinction between spirituality and religion in a workplace context. For example, results from interview analyses suggest that while

religion tends to be organized, affiliation-based, and communal, WS is focused more on the individual and tends to be highly personal. This individual emphasis around WS is consistent with our premise that this construct should be an important variable to include in the broad conceptualization of deep-level diversity. Furthermore, WS is related to one's vocation, whereby employees feel a sense of calling through work and feel the need for affiliation and social connectedness through their organizations (Benefiel et al., 2014).

Rhodes (2006) has suggested that specific organizational attributes are central to an informed understanding of WS. For example, the organization's culture should contain elements consistent with values associated with sustainability, giving back to society, and work centered both within and outside the organization. Additionally, employees at all levels of the organization are encouraged to develop innovative and creative approaches as normal practice in their daily routines. The culture should foster the sharing of ideas and create safe zones that allow people to be rewarded for trying and failing. WS is also about inclusivity, or recognizing the value of all employees, with foci on ethical principles and the development of people's unique skill sets in their vocations (Rhodes, 2006). Together, such effects create workplace environments where people can express their identities through both personal and organizational values.

Others have expressed WS as a way of recognizing that organizational members have strong identities that are tied to the social context of important and significant work (see Javanmard, 2012; Salem et al., 2022). Therefore, it seems that leaders should take an interest in setting up workplace conditions that capture the advantages associated with humanistic environments that allow people to achieve performance through creative expression and fulfillment. Organizational cultures that embrace WS position interactional justice and respect as central tenets offer opportunities for team building and thinking proactively about work design (Brown, 2003; Daniel, 2010). Key outcomes linked to WS include trust, creativity, and processes tied to team effectiveness (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002). When such elements are present in team environments, there is a higher likelihood of more effective team processes through more functional conflict, healthier progression through stages of development, and better performance (Rezvani et al., 2019).

Because of the potential importance of WS in organizations, it is useful to define the construct across its key dimensions. Consistent with prior research that categorized and operationalized WS, we developed a framework based on three important aspects: *inner life*, *meaningful work*, and *community*. Ashmos and Duchon (2000) used these dimensions to develop measures for WS with the hope that researchers would begin to develop a better understanding of this important organizational phenomenon. Clarifying the definition of WS using these key components has proved useful for researchers who have continued work in this area (Benefiel et al., 2014; Duchon & Plowman, 2005). Ahmed et al. (2019) found that meaningful work and community each positively influenced helping behaviors within the organization. Lemoine et al. (2019) examined inner life,

meaning, and community in their review of servant leadership, recognizing these attributes as key bases for WS. Similarly, Williams et al. (2017) identified this framework (inner life, meaningful work, and community) as a valid foundation for empirically examining the relationship between servant leadership and creativity. They found support for this link by positioning WS as a mediator. Other research in the healthcare industry has found support for this dimensionalization of WS. For example, Iyer and Deshmukh (2018) found that WS moderates the relationship between role ambiguity and job satisfaction among a sample of nurses from India. While a full review of the WS literature is beyond the scope of this paper, these examples provide evidence for the appropriate framing of the construct around inner life, meaningful work, and community.

Dimensions of Workplace Spirituality

Inner Life

This dimension of WS is related to employees' spiritual needs, which are separate from cognitive, physical, and emotional motivators (Albuquerque et al., 2014; Rupa & Pallavi, 2020). Ashmos and Duchon approach WS regarding an individual's hopefulness, awareness of values, and concern for spirituality. They describe it as the "opportunity at work to express many aspects of one's being" (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000: 2). Related to this perspective is the idea of bringing one's whole self to work within an environment of flourishing interconnectedness (Laszlo et al., 2014). Adler and Delbecq even explored this idea through the lens of creative expression and reflection on beauty as part of inner life in an organizational context (Adler & Delbecq, 2018). Laszlo et al. (2020) suggest that the more individuals bring their "flourishing selves" to work, the more an organization will benefit.

As we explore WS as part of WSD, the component of inner life refers to organizational members' ability to express themselves and value their contributions via the teams they are a part of. For example, in conceptualizing and framing one's job role, emphases may be applied to team member relationships and the team's positioning in the organizational context. Importantly, self-concept operates as a spiritual dimension of identity, allowing people to express this identity within the organizational context (Williams et al., 2017). There is also evidence that such identity processes may be stronger for the affiliations to the unit or team where everyday interaction is experienced, as opposed to the larger organization (Fry, 2003; Javanmard, 2012).

In terms of team-related processes, needs related to inner life are linked to members' affiliations with their social units within the organization. In this space, we transition our focus from WS to WSD and shift from the dimension of inner life to that of community. This is consistent with social identity theory, whereby individuals seek to establish and develop salient cues in their environment to form common attraction and an understanding of their placement and standing in the social context. Those who

identify with their work groups develop a self-concept that aligns with a principle of spiritual leadership through team membership (see Duchon & Plowman, 2005; Fry, 2003).

Meaningful Work

The dimension of *meaningful work* refers to the extent to which organizational members fulfill essential life needs through the work they do on a daily basis. This component of WS is related to motivational theories that focus on job content and employee needs (Duchon & Plowman, 2005). Work structures that emphasize empathy, respect, and caring will naturally lead to feelings of positivity and experienced effectiveness, enhancing spirituality in the workplace (Javanmard, 2012). In designing employee jobs, organizational leaders should recognize the mechanisms through which specific task components inspire top performers. Meaningful work, in this sense, is often characterized by clear feedback, task significance, variety, empowerment, and responsibility (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). In identifying these inspirational job components, leaders provide clearer direction for employees and more enjoyment and commitment (Wrzesniewski, 2003).

Job design components are thus essentially tied to employee's needs. Work characterized by enrichment and satisfaction (as described above) provides key need-fulfillment mechanisms. Such drivers may be related to achievement, autonomy, a sense of social fit, esteem, and even self-actualization (see Maslow, 1954; McClelland, 1985). As needs become realized through meaningful work, employees can merge work with life, establish consistency between the two, and enhance a healthier level of WS. Importantly, this dimension addresses a sense of meaning that extends beyond the basic principles of job design. "Workplace spirituality is about employees who understand themselves as spiritual beings whose souls need nourishment at work. It is about experiencing a sense of purpose and meaning in their work beyond the kind of meaning found, for example, in the job design literature, which emphasizes finding meaning in the performance of tasks" (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000, p. 135). One's work and occupation are seen as a calling that reflects a sense of meaning and overall purpose, propelled by individual and prosocial sources of motivation (Duffy et al., 2018).

In summary, this dimension of spirituality brings a higher-level quest for meaning to the workplace, which ties into an employee's total immersion in the organization. Without meaning comes detachment and disengagement, which can be dysfunctional for team and organizational outcomes.

Community

The dimension of community in WS is based on the fundamental idea that our humanity rests in our interconnectedness with other human beings throughout our lives. Gergen (2011) suggests that we are relational beings in all aspects of our lives. In an

organizational context, this emerges as a form of co-creation that expresses itself through community and connection at various levels. While *inner life brings* our complete selves to work, the *community* is about affiliation through reciprocal interdependence, common purpose, and synergy (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). It is more likely to address the question, 'How does my organizational community offer interconnection and relationships that help everyone to flourish'?

The focus on this aspect of WS involves an appreciation for the power of teamwork and co-creation in helping to successfully live the values of an organization and engage in meaningful relationships with all stakeholders. Through cohesiveness, respect, and reliable team processes, the workplace culture reflects a social environment where vision and mission are shared, members rely on one another, and mutual accountability is as important as individual performance. In essence, "The unity for a common purpose (in one's team) brings a spirit of solidarity" (Javenmard, 2012, p. 1963). Boyatzis et al. (2020) explore this concept as the relational energy in an organization and describe it as a force that generates vitality, hope, and a positive willingness to act that derives from high-quality relationships.

Williams et al. (2017) discuss *community* as synonymous with a process whereby members' connections to others in the workplace provide spiritual sustainment. This type of spirituality, rooted in everyday work relationships, has become an important aspect of fulfillment (Conger, 1994). With the emergence of teams in present-day organizations, it makes sense for organizations to take stock of this dimension and provide avenues for employees to participate in socially designed, interdependent work. Furthermore, to the extent that the modern organization has become somewhat depersonalized, Vaill (1998) suggests that the community can bring back the *fellowship* aspect of work. Teamwork and shared vision connect members and give members a stronger sense of belongingness through community (Albuquerque et al., 2014; Ashmos & Duchon, 2000).

Workplace Spirituality as a Part of Deep-Level Diversity

The preceding section highlights the importance of WS and its three core dimensions. Prior research has examined the impact of these dimensions on important work outcomes. For example, Chawla and Guda (2010) found that sales professionals' workplace spirituality was positively related to job satisfaction and commitment and negatively related to turnover intentions. In another study of banking employees, there was considerable support for these dimensions of WS and their relationship to different components of organizational citizenship behaviors (Belwalkar et al., 2018). Albuquerque et al. (2014) found support for positioning the three dimensions of WS as antecedent variables to both objective and perceived organizational performance in a healthcare setting.

In light of such evidence linking WS to various aspects of organizational behavior

and performance, examining this construct as an important component of deep-level diversity in teams and other social units seems fruitful. Spickermann et al. (2014) have suggested that various attributes or variables must be considered to appreciate and understand the complexity of organizational and group composition. Research on individual differences has focused on surface- and deep-level aspects of diversity. Surface-level characteristics are primarily operationalized through demographic variables (age, race/ethnicity, gender, etc.), while deep-level characteristics are commonly defined through variables such as values, beliefs, and personality. Past work on deep-level diversity has produced mixed results. Studies using theoretical frameworks consistent with social categorization theory and the similarity-attraction paradigm often find detrimental outcomes linked to deep-level diversity. For example, this research has shown how differences in values and personality can lead to lower levels of team satisfaction and performance and higher levels of turnover and conflict (see Chou et al., 2008; Cunningham & Sagas, 2004; Jansen & Searle, 2021). However, results from this research are not always consistent. Liang et al. (2015) found mixed results when testing the general hypothesis that positioned both surface-level and deep-level diversity as antecedents to lower levels of helping behavior in teams. They note, "It appears that not all types of team diversity influence team outcomes in the same way. The widely accepted similarity-attraction perspective may thus be too broad and too general to explain the effects of team diversity on team processes and outcomes" (p. 48).

Under the right conditions, many have argued that team diversity yields mostly positive (or functional) outcomes, unlike dysfunctional outcomes (see Schaffer, 2019). Such thinking aligns with the value-in-diversity hypothesis, which purports the numerous benefits of heterogeneity in teams and other social units (Bazarova et al., 2012; Schaffer, 2019). This hypothesis focuses on the advantages of diversity gained through improved decision-making and communication, whereby members of diverse teams would be better situated to bring in a more complex and complete range of information and experience (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998; Zenger & Lawrence, 1989).

Especially for deep-level characteristics, this heterogeneity has the strong potential to offer teams a facilitative process that enhances group development, promotes the creation of positive norms, and supports improved performance (Ely & Thomas, 2001; van Knippenberg et al., 2007). For example, Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) found that members felt higher levels of affiliation with their team when they perceived dissimilarity in personality, namely extraversion. This finding is counter to the common notion of similarity-attraction. It suggests diversity itself offers opportunities for 'complementary fit', where an individual's attributes complete the social environment by offsetting observed gaps or shortcomings (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Muchinsky & Monahan, 1987). As team members understand the basis of their differences, they begin to appreciate the idea of complementary fit and recognize how key differences can provide important puzzle pieces for the complete solution.

Essential to this understanding is the recognition that deep-level diversity consists of many possible variables. Triana et al. (2021) suggested that not all forms of deep-level diversity are the same and that future research should examine other attributes and characteristics that are potentially related to important team outcomes. In fact, scholars have recognized that some studies operationalizing deep-level diversity appear to select these variables arbitrarily. As Harrison et al. (1998) note, "One of the problems inherent in the selection of which deep-level differences to study is that there are literally dozens of conceivably important work-related values, cultural values, and work-related attributes to pick from" (p. 104). They go on to note, however, that the appropriateness of such variables in each study is linked to particular situations, contexts, or cultures. For example, in an organization focusing on innovation and change, one's level of tolerance for ambiguity might be an important aspect of diversity. Values consistent with patience and empathy might be most important in a culture focused on personal relationships. Organizations focusing on employee retention may be especially concerned about differences in commitment or procedural justice attitudes. Whatever the case, "the crucial point is that the relevant deep-level variables in any situation are those that bear directly on the fundamental purposes of the organization" (Harrison et al., 1998: p. 105). This recognition of relevancy in selecting deep-level individual differences is consistent with the notion of person-organization fit and how such fit yields positive outcomes for both the organization and the employee (Kilroy et al., 2017; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

As others have noted, "spirituality should be considered a resource to be placed alongside other aspects of human diversity" (Miller & Ewest, 2015, p. 322). Including WSD in conceptualizing and operationalizing diversity frameworks seems fruitful and should help further such objectives. It should be noted that our efforts to expand the scope of deep-level diversity by introducing a new construct are consistent with other research efforts. For example, Organ and O'Flaherty (2016) examined individual differences in 'intuitive decision style' as a component of deep-level diversity. Similarly, Gebert et al. (2014) discuss religious identity diversity and recognize different forms of this construct in an attempt to distinguish it from other types of deep-level characteristics. The challenge for management lies in understanding the potential benefits of employee diversity and which aspects of deep-level diversity seem most applicable to the current context. As organizational leaders continue to learn more about the benefits of WS, it seems appropriate to examine WSD as a relevant construct to be included in our understating of deep-level diversity.

A Model of Workplace Spiritual Diversity

As team members differ in their levels of WS, the aforementioned dimensions allow us to examine such differences with more sophistication and understanding. To understand the nature of WSD, we can consider situations where someone may contain high to low levels across inner life, meaningful work, and community. In this respect, an individual claiming to have high WS may or may not experience fulfillment across all

three dimensions. Alternatively, people may consider themselves sufficient in all three areas yet may emphasize one area for identity purposes and their own personal guidance in the workplace. A breakdown of the dimensions and a description of the resulting possibilities for team composition provide more bases for these considerations. We suggest that lower and higher levels of each of the dimensions (inner life, meaningful work, and community) would yield a rich panoply of different possible WSD combinations. Some of these potential combinations are described below.

Some team members may find spirituality primarily through the dimension of inner life, focusing on self-concept around team membership and affiliation. They place value on the idea of bringing their whole selves to work, making connections between their work and life domains, and blending the personal identities from both areas. Spirituality at work is often framed concerning the team, and these values are readily shared with members. When team members find WS through meaningful work, occupations, and jobs, it becomes their purpose in life. They feel inspired by what they do and can be exceptional teammates when that enthusiasm bleeds over to the rest of the team. Organizational leaders should be aware of the types of intrinsic rewards that motivate and encourage this type of spirituality to ensure sustained commitment and performance. Alternatively, some team members may attain spirituality through the community dimension and appreciate the connections and relationships that lead to both team and organizational success. They derive spirituality from the relational energy in an organization, which yields a sense of unity and common purpose. Focusing on the 'fellowship' aspect of teamwork, functional processes associated with working together become paramount to the team's success. Communication with other team members often focuses on relationships, mutual accountability, and collective goals.

For members who find spirituality through both inner life and meaningful work, self-concept and identity are linked to this spirituality through their own work experiences. Job involvement, which refers to the level of psychological and emotional participation someone puts into their work, is a major source of this identity and drives feelings of spirituality (see Lodahl & Kejnar, 1965). Regarding team membership, pride in one's affiliation is rooted in the meaningful work one does that adds to the team's success and viability. For team members focusing on inner life and community, spirituality comes from self-concept and identity based on connections to others. Cohesiveness is based on both interpersonal attraction and shared commitment to team goals and objectives (Zacarro, 1991). The value associated with team affiliation is more focused on relationship dynamics within the group versus meaningful work (although both may be important).

In certain cases, team members might find WS through shared work experiences. These individuals place a strong value on the meaningful work they do in their teams and how that work brings people together in a unified (communal) way. While members glean spirituality from their day-to-day tasks, they are equally inspired by the comradery

resulting from the shared work. Members appreciate and value observed and recognized associations between functional team processes and their effect on performance. It is also possible that team members may derive spirituality, in relatively equal amounts, from each of the dimensions of inner life, meaningful work, and community. These members find inspiration from their connection to their teams, the sense of fellowship at work, and through the job itself. Such individuals are likely to have a broad understanding of others' needs and can relate to individuals in various ways. They are flexible in their outlook and can derive value in the workplace from many sources.

Finally, we recognize that some team members may be characterized by minimal spirituality because they are not strongly inspired by any of the dimensions of inner life, meaningful work, or community. Individuals in this category are not necessarily poor performers or bad teammates; they perhaps develop commitment and motivation from other sources. These sources might include monetary incentives, individual recognition, or career advancement opportunities. Spirituality itself is simply not part of the equation. Team leaders should recognize that these individuals may not be as responsive to initiatives specifically focused on outcomes that are typically linked to the benefits of WS. Given the array of differences possible with WSD, this aspect of deep-level diversity has the potential to impact important team outcomes. Our proposed WSD model is presented in Figure 1.

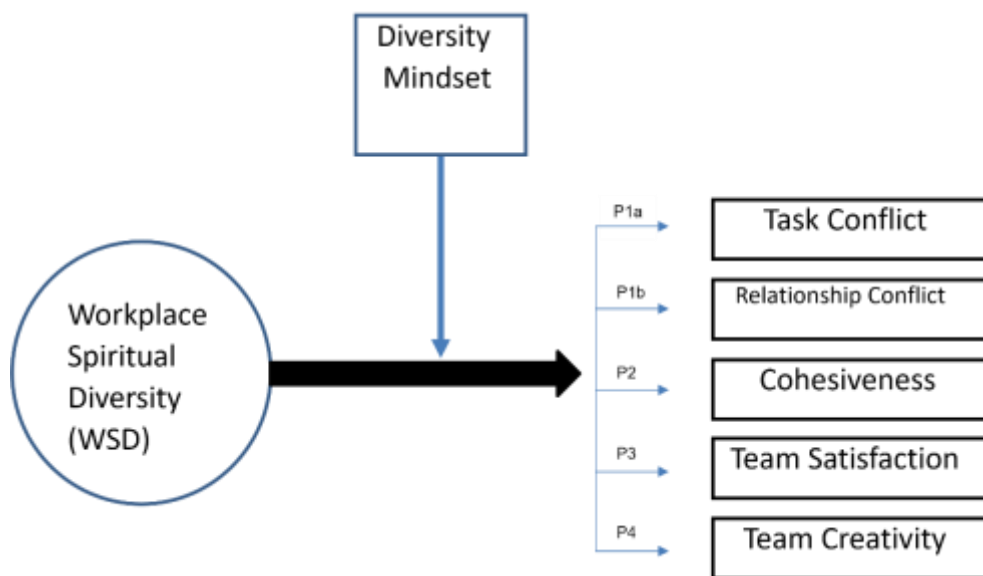


Figure 1: A Conceptual Model of Workplace Spiritual Diversity (WSD) and Team Outcomes

Conceptually, the constructs within this model should be examined at the individual level. For example, employee perceptions of their own levels of inner life, meaning, and community would be interesting. This would also apply to their related perceptions of

similarity or dissimilarity across such dimensions. Similarly, when talking about team climate, which we will explore as the 'diversity mindset', it is employees' *perceptions* of these concepts that are of interest. This is consistent with how other diversity and relational demography studies have operationalized key variables of interest (see Golderg et al., 2010; Sammarra et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, the focal points of analysis are around team and inter-team dynamics. As such, future research employing this model may involve some inherent multi-level complexities and variability.

Our model highlights WS as an important part of deep-level diversity and positions WSD as an important component of team composition. Specifically, we propose that WSD, under the right conditions, can lead to positive team outcomes. These outcomes include functional conflict, cohesiveness, team satisfaction, and creativity. Given some mixed results with prior research focusing on the outcomes of deep-level diversity, it is useful to examine potential moderators or contextual variables that would help clarify those conditions where WSD might yield beneficial outcomes for teams. Our primary contextual variable in the model is the *diversity mindset*. The sections below discuss this concept and explain how its inclusion in the model helps to develop propositions consistent with the idea that WSD has the strong potential to impact the dependent variables favorably.

The Importance of the Diversity Mindset

The diversity mindset suggests that employees in today's dynamic and global business environments begin to realize and appreciate the value of working in heterogeneous teams (van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). Especially when organizational leaders support such perspectives, the guiding principle within teams is consistent with the idea that diversity itself is essential for accomplishing team goals (see Adesokan et al., 2011). In essence, "diversity mindsets favoring diversity are expected to prevent intergroup bias and stimulate the integration of diverse information, viewpoints, and perspectives. As the (this) mindset continues to proliferate, initial perceived dissimilarity in teams will increasingly come to be viewed as an opportunity, not a threat" (Schaffer, 2019, p.61; van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007, p.531; see also Ely & Thomas, 2001). Organizational leaders can promote cultures that embody the diversity mindset by focusing on themes consistent with empathy, open-mindedness, and inclusive communication (Bong-Peer, 2021). The goal of such efforts would be to foster work environments where team members can flourish together in conjunction with greater diversity.

The diversity mindset is a relatively newer term, so there is not a wealth of empirical evidence for its role as a moderator variable in team diversity settings. However, the existing literature is encouraging. For example, van Knippenberg et al. (2013) positioned this variable as a moderator of the diversity-performance relationship.

They found support for the positive role of the diversity mindset. Schaffer (2019) suggests that, in work teams, diversity and perceptions of dissimilarity can lead to attraction and favorable group processes when the diversity mindset is predominant among members. Mayo et al. (2017) examined team information processing. They concluded that when teams fail, the presence of the diversity mindset can help reduce intergroup bias, allowing for more information elaboration and learning from the failure. Van Knippenberg and Van Ginkel (2022) showed a connection between team leadership and both inclusion and synergy when that leadership approach contained elements related to the diversity mindset. In sum, there appears to be sufficient evidence for research on teams and diversity to include frameworks that position the diversity mindset as an important contextual variable.

In our current framework, the main components of the diversity mindset provide explanatory processes for how the dependent variables are impacted. These components include accuracy and sharedness (van Knippenberg et al., 2013). Accuracy refers to the degree to which team activities (including goal pursuit) incorporate a general understanding of diversity as a valuable informational resource. Sharedness simply refers to overall similarity in team members' perspectives as they relate to diversity. When accuracy and sharedness are present, the diversity mindset has a strong potential to impact team performance favorably. Such performance can include a broad array of outcomes, including withdrawal behavior, team satisfaction, conflict management, and cohesiveness (Lee et al., 2011).

Other research has examined similar moderator variables in teams that can foster favorable perceptions of team heterogeneity. For example, a team-inclusive climate can boost the positive aspects of deep-level diversity and create conditions where members appreciate the opportunity to share ideas and promote creativity (see Ali et al., 2018; Guillaume et al., 2017).

Conflict can be an important component of team dynamics. As teams work toward goals, they may face both relationship-based and task-based conflicts. Task-based conflict is related to potential disagreements about the team's goals and how the work should be accomplished. Many studies have supported the idea that such forms of conflict are important for a team's potential to examine and recognize each member's ideas and perspectives (e.g., Downes et al., 2021). The presence of a diversity mindset should help create conditions within a team whereby members feel encouraged to engage in this productive type of conflict. For example, this mindset should encourage team members to see diversity as an informational resource, whereby key differences and perspectives garner value through task-based conflict. This is consistent with regulatory focus theory, where teams emphasize promotion goals (versus prevention goals) as an important part of the diversity mindset (van Knippenberg et al., 2013). Here, the team promotes engaged, collaborative discussion with participation from all members.

Recognized diversity across WS, for example, might indicate key opportunities for team members to express differences in how the team should accomplish its objectives. Some members may identify opportunities to achieve performance in terms of fulfillment experienced through working together (community). In contrast, others may be driven by their work's meaning and sense of purpose. Our model suggests that these differences in WS, collectively, add to productive conflict.

Proposition 1a: The degree of WSD in a team will positively affect task-based conflict when the climate is characterized by a diversity mindset.

Relationship-based conflict is often rooted in differences associated with values and personalities. It may also be directly related to the types of differences associated with WSD. In general, this type of conflict has the potential to hinder a team's level of performance (Lau & Cobb, 2010). This is because deeply rooted differences among people that are not based on the goals or tasks of the team will have the potential to detract from (not contribute to) reciprocal knowledge sharing and productive working relationships. In our model, we suggest that team climates promoting the diversity mindset will mitigate levels of potential relationship conflict as members recognize the value of diversity and the importance of working together.

In fact, regulatory focus theory (mentioned above) can also foster promotion goals that reduce the negative relational types of conflict that could exist with dissimilarity. The team begins to promote and favor the recognition of diversity across both surface-level and deep-level attributes. In this sense, relationship conflict is somewhat normative, representing an expectation that goes along with diversity and thus should not detract from the team's potential.

Proposition 1b: The degree of WSD in a team will not affect perceptions of relationship-based conflict when the climate is characterized by the diversity mindset.

Team cohesiveness can be defined as the social connectedness of members of a team and the degree to which they are committed to maintaining team membership (Harrison et al., 1998; Mullen & Copper, 1994; Trinh, 2016). A potential source of uncertainty within a team is diversity due to perceptions of reduced commonality and identification (Hogg, 2010). Ironically, the diversity mindset offers conditions where team homogeneity, as opposed to diversity, can result in more skepticism about potential team viability and sustainability (Schaffer, 2019; van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). This mindset offers strong uncertainty reduction mechanisms when diversity is present, whereby the differences among team members enhance felt affiliations among members, increasing perceived cohesiveness.

This is akin to Gaertner and Dovidio's (2000) Common Ingroup Identity Model, which suggests cohesiveness based on team affiliation and membership, as opposed to

similarities or differences across diversity-based characteristics. Under the diversity mindset, perceptions of WSD might represent cues for commonality in the sense that there is a shared appreciation of people's unique differences, resulting in higher cohesiveness. In addition, having a sharedness of this mindset within a team should be conducive to better coordination, team process, and bonding.

Proposition 2: The degree of WSD in a team will positively affect perceptions of cohesiveness when the climate is characterized by a diversity mindset.

Team satisfaction is a global term that represents the overall extent to which team members are satisfied with the team and the team's outcomes (Standifer et al., 2015). Similar to job satisfaction, there may be multiple facets of team satisfaction, including the relationships with other members, the assigned team roles, task interdependencies, team goals, and team leadership. Effective leadership and diversity management can create team climates that support more favorable perceptions and attitudes. As team members recognize that others on the team expect and appreciate diversity mindset-based actions (awareness of 'sharedness'), they realize that they can safely voice their perspectives while welcoming others' views. This psychological safety has favorably impacted many team outcomes, including satisfaction (Edmondson, 1999; Gerlach & Gochel, 2022). With WSD present in a team, there may be opportunities to create conditions for team members to experience higher perceptions of fit among the team, even though members are dissimilar across a key deep-level characteristic (McKay et al., 2007). Again, this fit may be based on values consistent with cosmopolitan beliefs and the diversity mindset, creating a context where team members better understand the necessity of group heterogeneity (Westjohn et al., 2009). Along with this understanding, team members develop more positive attitudes about various aspects of the team.

Proposition 3: The degree of WSD in a team will positively affect perceptions of team satisfaction when the climate is characterized by a diversity mindset.

Finally, *team creativity* may be enhanced in the presence of workplace spiritual diversity. Even with the absence of a diversity mindset, there is evidence from prior research that deep-level differences can lead to processes associated with creativity and idea generation (Harrison et al., 1998). In a sense, team members recognize that to recognize key challenges in their environment and develop creative solutions, it is necessary to interact with people who can bring in original perspectives based on differences. These ideas align with the information and decision-making perspective of diversity (Pichler, 2012; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Members who differ across key dimensions of WS may have the added capacity to appreciate individuals' various sources of inspiration and motivation. This could also be related to how they develop ideas and potential solutions. Other research has shown that deep-level diversity in teams can have positive effects due to its informational benefits, thus promoting higher levels of creativity and innovation (see Wang et al., 2019). The diversity mindset can help team

members integrate diverse information and viewpoints (van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007), strengthening this potential relationship between WSD and team creativity. Specifically, this mindset should promote exploration goals, focusing on innovation and learning, and over-exploitation goals that typically stress productive capacities (March 1991; van Knippenberg et al., 2013). As members differ in WS, they begin to learn about people's various sources of workplace inspiration, and this learning can encourage the exploration of novel and unique approaches.

Proposition 4: The degree of WSD in a team will positively affect perceptions of creativity (identifying problems and generating solutions), and this relationship will be amplified when the climate is characterized by a diverse mindset.

Discussion

This paper contributes to the body of research on workplace teams by expanding our understanding of individual differences and including a new WSD framework in the discussion. This is in line with other research that has recognized the need for such work. For example, Schaeffer and Mattis (2012) note that "attending in critical ways to matters of diversity would compel us to think about religiosity and spirituality as landscapes of diversity" (p. 320). Others have positioned deep-level diversity as an important antecedent variable to organizational outcomes. Such outcomes include team commitment, workgroup identification, and cohesiveness (Goldberg et al., 2010; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). In studying group creativity, Harvey (2013) recognized that a limitation in the analyses was using *task perspectives* as a somewhat narrow operationalization of diversity. Other dimensions, such as functional and educational background, can more effectively delineate this construct (Harvey, 2013; Mannix & Neale, 2005). Casper et al. (2013) looked at diversity and its importance in the recruitment function of HR, recognizing the need to continue identifying important individual difference variables (particularly deep-level attributes). In looking at relationship conflicts and team members' affective reactions, Tekleab and Quigley (2014) also called for future research to examine other types of deep-level diversity more fully. Our paper adheres to these recommendations, and we hope that our development of WSD can provide organizational leaders and team members with useful information related to team-level motivation, performance, and process dynamics.

What does this mean in terms of potential implications for team composition? Future research could investigate important issues related to the different types. For example, in some teams, it may be more desirable to have member heterogeneity across each dimension of WS. In doing so, the collective team may appreciate the separately unique contributions of favorably perceived identities, opportunities aligned with meaningful work, and felt affiliations with workplace peers. Alternatively, some teams may have goals that are consistent with very strong norms or values that align with perhaps one of the dimensions of WSD. For example, suppose a team's mission was

strongly aligned with providing its members with excellent person-job fit. Employees who find WS primarily through meaningful work may thrive in such environments. A team may also have values that focus on its common purpose and the unique ways that members rely on each other to achieve common goals. In this case, the community dimension might serve as the salient source of WS.

Such considerations can serve as an anchor for additional research and are directly related to competing notions of diffusion and intensity as they relate to the WSD dimensions. Variability in this type of diversity may be related to certain team member character competencies. Peterson and Seligman (2004) applied a similar approach to identifying distinct character strengths for each Big Five personality dimension. For instance, in our model, team members who strongly focus on the community may excel in relationship-building and gatekeeping functions for the team. Alternatively, those who emphasize identity may excel at managing competing stressors around work and family domains. In each of these instances, the member's orientation toward WSD carries intensity around one primary dimension of WS. Further, some team members may have dual emphases around the aforementioned foci, with a more diffuse (less intense) approach in each area. These statements are speculative but could be further examined by operationalizing separate cases of diffusion and intensity in future studies.

WSD can be viewed as a construct that is in the initial concept/elaboration stage of development. At this stage, it is important that future research examine the proposed WSD model by exploring four components that provide the necessary conditions for development. They must specify (1) the units or variables of interest, (2) establish congruence as defined by the relationships among units of the model that specify how they are associated, (3) look at the boundaries within which the relationships are to operate, and (4) explore contingency effects (Dubin, 1978; Fry & Smith, 1978). Furthermore, future research should continue to identify issues related to the type of diversity that might be present in a team. Following the advice of Triana et al. (2021), for example, it would be important to recognize that what might appear to be similar cases of diversity might, instead, represent very different team-process dynamics. A team might have three members whose WS is derived primarily from the community and two members whose WS is derived from inner life. Another team might have three members whose WS comes from inner life and two members whose inspiration comes from the community. While the 3-2 composition in both teams might suggest similar levels of diversity, important differences between the two teams are lost if the examination does not allow for a more sophisticated coding scheme across all three dimensions. Future research should examine the best ways to operationalize such intricacies in WSD potentially.

Using teams has become a basic organization design for work and organizational work behavior (Erden & Ozen, 2003). However, certain conditions must be present for teams to succeed and achieve their potential. Over the last few years, companies have

considered incorporating WS into their organizations (Aboramaden & Dahleez, 2021; Daniel, 2010). The objective of this paper is to offer an introduction to the WSD construct in order to create better team environments where their potential can be realized. As organizational leaders adopt frameworks that employ this WSD construct, they should be prepared to talk to employees about key issues related to spirituality. A common assumption may be that WSD is akin to religious differences; however, there are important distinctions that can be clarified among team members. King (2011) suggests that “while religion often looks outward depending on rites and rituals, spirituality looks inward - the wealth of knowledge, senses, aspirations, and feelings we harbor within ourselves” (p.62). This distinction between spiritual and religious workplace diversity seems important for both practical and theoretical reasons. Furthermore, it may be useful to recognize that, for some employers, the initial idea of WSD should be separate from work and that it would be inappropriate to frame one’s work ethic or behavior in the context of spirituality. “For years, employers compartmentalized workers, carefully separating business concerns from personal identities.” (Laabs, 1995: 1). Organizations that rely on teams can gain a greater understanding of the implications and effects of WSD as a new component of deep-level diversity. Organizations should be prepared to help team leaders and their team members understand the potential advantages of WSD to team effectiveness. Open conversations about people’s reservations should allow them to express concerns and apprehensions. Such interaction can build trust and develop the foundation for each WSD dimension to carry positive influences. Beyond enhancing the dynamics within current teams, exploring WSD considerations in hiring new team members may play a crucial role in collaborative practices that facilitate a team’s accomplishment of performance goals.

Finally, our introduction of the diversity mindset in this paper offers a promising avenue for future research. However, there may be many unanswered questions that need addressing. First, van Knippenberg et al. (2013) address the key question of how diversity mindsets arise. Such a perspective may come from key team experiences and interactions when diversity is present. However, such group processes need to be facilitated through exceptional leadership. Furthermore, this paper positions the diversity mindset as a contextual variable that influences the relationship between WSD and important team outcomes. One could certainly question whether or not this mindset could work alone and be sufficient to yield such outcomes without WSD. Future research should consider such possibilities. In addition, we provided some evidence as to how the diversity mindset works as a moderator for other variables. Nonetheless, the research in this area is somewhat limited, and future work should examine its effect on other types of diversity. Finally, our framework does not include more complex interactions between the diversity mindset and WSD. For example, are individuals with diverse mindsets drawn to organizations with high levels of WSD? Does this mindset actually create more WSD under certain conditions? All of these considerations are worth further investigation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the impact of deep-level diversity on team performance and organizational culture has been widely studied and has been found to contribute to positive organizational outcomes. Our proposed model contributes to this work by offering a framework for further exploring the influence of individual differences based on employees' varying degrees of workplace spirituality across organizational units. WSD can complement, in important ways, other aspects of diversity that have been shown to contribute to innovative problem-solving and decision-making. We hope that scholars and management practitioners can use our model to gain a unique and valuable perspective on team diversity that has not yet been fully explored.

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